



Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT)

BUSINESS PLAN

2016 - 2018

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1 Summary

1.1 Purpose of this business plan

The Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory (APO NT) has been working to highlight the problems with Aboriginal housing in the NT, and propose an alternative housing model. Following from the successful Remote Housing Forum held in March 2015, a new Aboriginal committee, Aboriginal Housing NT, was formed to progress these critical issues. While very new, and currently auspiced by APO NT, the committee is working to become independent. This business plan sets out the purpose and proposed activities of Aboriginal Housing NT, in addition to detailing initial resourcing needs.

1.2. Vision and objectives of Aboriginal Housing NT

Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) works to create a new Aboriginal housing system which is diverse and flexible, allows for local control over services, generates local employment and suits the needs of our people. There is a need for more effective use of funds available, and a diversification of funding sources, to provide better housing management outcomes and increased housing stock to address overcrowding.

AHNT aims to be an independent peak body for Aboriginal housing. Specifically AHNT's objectives are to:

- Provide a strong Aboriginal voice on housing issues through advocacy and representation to government and the wider community;
- Work with governments and other key stakeholders to address the Aboriginal housing crisis in the Northern Territory and to work towards developing an Aboriginal community controlled housing model;
- Engage with Aboriginal communities to explore innovative and effective housing management models that are appropriate and will meet the unique housing needs of the communities and homelands.
- Undertake research and policy development work as required;
- Pursue implementation of pilot models of new housing arrangements in collaboration with housing providers and participating communities;
- Develop networks and alliances with relevant professional housing entities and knowledgeable individuals.

1.3 Funding requested

The AHNT is not aiming to become a large organisation but requires funds for secretariat support for the Committee meetings, and policy and advocacy work to provide capacity to achieve the objectives above. Funding is requested to support the activities of the AHNT over the next three years (2016 – 2018). The total amount sought for the three-year period is **\$1,001,022**.

1.4 Benefits of the AHNT

Currently there is no Aboriginal 'voice' on housing issues in the NT. It is a significant gap in terms of the responsibilities of existing peak body arrangements and an avenue for government to liaise with and seek advice. AHNT aims to provide credible, professional advice to governments and other stakeholders to ensure that future housing arrangements are appropriate for Aboriginal people, generating better housing and employment outcomes. Given the fledgling committee has emerged

from the Aboriginal Remote Housing Forum, it reflects Aboriginal priorities, aspirations and determination to change the current system. It will be a legitimate and important source of advice and advocacy regarding housing issues.

2. Background

2.1 Housing Policy in the Northern Territory

Over the past eight years there has been a significant transformation in the way Aboriginal housing is delivered and managed in the Northern Territory (NT). During the 1970s and 80s, many Aboriginal housing organisations set up to manage housing in communities as part of the push for self-management were replaced by public housing policies, procedures and contract arrangements.

From 2007, a series of reforms were rolled out by the Australian and Northern Territory governments that changed Aboriginal housing from a model based on self-management to a public housing model managed by the NT Government. These changes included, amongst other things, compulsory five-year leases over communities under the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation, the abolition of Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs), and the transfer of community housing to the NT Government.

The broader framework for the changes was the COAG Closing the Gap measures which included a series of National Partnership Agreements between the Australian, State and Territory governments. In 2008, the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) committed \$2 billion over 10 years for the NT. The objective was to reduce severe overcrowding, increase the supply of new housing, improve existing housing and implement tenancy management standards in remote communities. This agreement is now being replaced by a new bilateral agreement between the Australian and NT Governments.

Aboriginal people for the most part have felt sidelined from these changes and have had limited opportunity to influence the roll-out of the new changes. Further, the on-ground experience of these reforms is that housing supply and conditions have not improved and management approaches are contributing to a greater sense of alienation and lack of local control. The contractual arrangements for some of the larger private companies has disengaged and disempowered local communities in the housing construction phase, and in particular in relation to lack of local employment of skilled people in the community and loss of income for local community organisations. The establishment of Aboriginal Housing NT is a signal that Aboriginal leaders want to have greater control over housing development and management in their communities.

Encouragingly, the NT Government appears to be heeding the concerns of Aboriginal residents about the current housing system, and is preparing for change. The NT Government has commissioned KPMG to prepare an NT Housing Strategy. The NT Housing Strategy development and implementation should provide an opportunity to involve Aboriginal leaders in shaping the future of housing provision and management, and monitoring outcomes. AHNT is a critical mechanism for providing advice, oversight and monitoring of the new Housing Strategy, and is currently preparing a response to the draft KPMG report.

2.2 The Remote Aboriginal Housing Forum, Darwin 2015

The findings from the Remote Aboriginal Housing Forum 2015 highlighted housing as a critical issue for remote Aboriginal communities in the NT. Poor housing exacerbates the socioeconomic status of communities, contributing to poor outcomes across health, education, employment and general well-being of Aboriginal people.

The Remote Aboriginal Housing Forum received considerable interest and was attended by approximately 150 Aboriginal community leaders and representatives from communities and organisations across the Northern Territory, interstate and New Zealand.

Delegates spoke of the current housing system, stating that it is “failing; it is expensive, ineffective and wasteful, disengaged from communities and tenants and working against local capacity building.”¹ Although these issues were overwhelming, the forum also heard inspiring examples of local, national and international Indigenous and community housing organisations, such as Professor Paul Memmott, Daphne Habibis (AHURI), Victoria Kingi (NZ), Kirsty Dadleh (Port Augusta) and Maureen O’Meara (Derby).

One of the key recommendations from the Forum was to establish an Aboriginal controlled housing body to provide a voice for Aboriginal people on housing in the Northern Territory. Since then, action has been taken to select an interim committee and APONT and the AHNT committee are seeking funding to assist with implementation and work of the new committee.

3. The AHNT Committee

The Aboriginal Housing NT Committee was elected at a subsequent workshop following the Housing Forum. Committee members comprise 13 members (including men and women) from across the NT. They represent issues facing Aboriginal people and their communities with regard to housing and related needs.

The committee has gained considerable support from their respective communities, organisations, traditional owners and service providers.

The committee members have extensive experience and expertise in dealing with housing issues from both their lived experiences and through their work with Aboriginal organisations and government.

AHNT has a Chairperson and Co-Chairperson. There are 13 members on AHNT and they derive from regional and remote areas of the NT:

- Lajamanu
- Beswick
- Alice Springs Town Camps
- Katherine
- Robinson River
- Yirrkala Homelands
- Elliott

¹APO NT, Aboriginal Remote Housing Forum Report, 12-13 March 2015. To find this report, click on this link: http://www.amsant.org.au/apont/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/APONT-Housing-Forum-12-13-March-2015-Report_LOW_RES.pdf

- Yarralin
- Maningrida
- Tennant Creek
- Peppimenarti

Collectively, the committee is seeking to improve the Aboriginal housing sector, so that benefits are delivered across remote communities in NT. The committee is seeking partnerships to deliver these outcomes, and is likely to work towards pilot projects that can form an evidence base and experience needed to achieve systemic changes in housing delivery and management.

4. Work priorities and activities for Aboriginal Housing NT

In order to progress the AHNT objectives outlined above, a number of action areas are being developed. The funding for AHNT positions will be used to support the work of committee, particularly in developing their policy and advocacy, but also to progress initiatives and/or pilot projects to improve housing outcomes in communities.

The table below provides a broad outline of the activities AHNT is proposing to undertake in the coming three years against key objectives.

Objectives	Action	Deliverables
Provide a strong Aboriginal voice on housing issues through advocacy and representation to government and the wider community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and influence policy developments including NT Government Housing Review, National Partnership/bilateral Agreements • Develop a partnership to undertake a housing research project with researchers • Develop an NT election campaign on remote housing issues and options for future • Progress internal AHNT governance requirements: confirm governance and membership arrangements, progress to legal independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a response to NT Housing Review – Consultation Draft Paper • A Partnership Plan for Researchers, Governments and other key stakeholders • Endorsement of a AHNT Governance Rule Book • A AHNT Aboriginal Housing Position Paper
Work with Governments and other key stakeholders to address the Aboriginal housing crisis in the Northern Territory and to work towards developing an Aboriginal community controlled housing model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular meetings with Department of Housing and establish a strong relationship • Input into NT Government Housing Review and its implementation • Develop a pilot project in consultation with NT Government for alternative housing provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Dept. of Housing at least 6 times a year • Identify and implement a pilot project with a housing provider that is endorsed by AHNT and the Dept. of Housing
Engage with Aboriginal communities to explore some innovative and effective housing management models that are appropriate and will meet the unique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop and progress ideas, models and solutions identified in 2015 report on the ‘Aboriginal Remote Housing Forum’ • Promote the work of AHNT in remote communities and town camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHNT and Researchers identify suitable housing models that are appropriate for NT Aboriginal communities and town camps • Implement a AHNT Communication Strategy and provide feedback from Aboriginal

<p>housing needs of the communities and homelands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop mechanisms to ensure community feedback to AHNT on housing matters 	<p>leaders, Community organisations and other relevant stakeholders on key housing issues and recommendations</p>
<p>Pursue implementation of pilot models of new housing arrangements in collaboration with housing providers and participating communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop conceptual idea of remote pilot project • Liaise and seek feedback or partnerships with current alternative Aboriginal housing providers in NT (CAAHC, Kalano, Yilli Rreung Housing Association, etc.) • Oversee implementation of a pilot project on alternative housing arrangement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Pilot Project has been identified, implemented, operational and evaluated during this term
<p>Develop networks and alliances with relevant professional housing entities and knowledgeable individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue discussion with Housing Advocacy groups (NT Shelter, etc.) • Develop a strong network of community housing providers and finalise governance arrangement to formalise their relationship with AHNT • Continue to monitor housing situation across NT communities through committee's lived experiences, networks, workplaces and other relationships • Plan for possible follow-up Housing forum in 2017 • Continue discussions with key researchers in housing and remain up-to-date with their work (AHURI, Daphne Habibis, Paul Memmott) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal partnership arrangement is established with key housing bodies in the NT with mutually agreed objectives, tasks, monitoring, outcomes and review processes • AHNT members, Aboriginal people and communities provide regular updates on housing issues in their respective communities and regions • An Aboriginal Housing Forum is held in 2017 with clear plan of objectives, and outcomes and outlined in a formal report.

5. Funding Request

The AHNT requires funding to build the capacity and resources of the committee to carry out the important work that seeks to improve Aboriginal people's voice, influence and participation in housing matters. In order to achieve these outcomes, the committee is looking to employ 2 staff members to implement the business plan of AHNT and provide support for three meetings of the committee each year. As AHNT is not yet a legal entity, the funding and employment arrangements will be auspiced and managed by the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT (AMSANT). A description of the positions and funding request is outlined below. Detailed job descriptions are available on request.

5.1 1 x Senior Research Policy Officer

To operationalise and manage the work of AHNT based on advice and direction of AHNT. To supervise a staff member and consultancies in AHNT. To undertake and seek partnerships for extensive research into improving the current NT housing situation for Aboriginal people and communities and to explore some appropriate housing models to improve diversification of the sector. To assist AHNT in further develop their governance model and operational structure.

5.2 1 x Housing Project Officer

To undertake the operational and administrative requirements to carry out activities for the AHNT. To establish a network of key housing stakeholders and organise 2017 forum, meetings and other significant events in this role. To carry out the necessary work as outlined in this Business Plan.

6. Proposed Budget for AHNT

6.1 AHNT Meetings

It is projected that there will be three meetings per year for the AHNT Committee in various locations around the NT. The meeting locations will be determined by AHNT. The funding sought is for the following:

- Venue hire and catering
- Travel, transport and accommodation for some AHNT members
- Stationery and other miscellaneous items.

It is estimated that the total cost per meeting will average \$7,000. **9 meetings @ \$7,000 = \$63,000.**

6.2 Staffing Positions

- 1 x AHNT Senior Research Policy Officer - \$270,000 for 3 years
 - 1 x AHNT Housing Project Officer - \$195,000
- Total costs for staffing - \$573,822 (inc. super, workers comp, etc.)**

All APO NT and AHNT activities are conducted in the most cost effective way to ensure the funding allocated is maximised to meet the shared outcomes of the Aboriginal leaders, community organisations and community members. Refer to detail budget on the next page. The budget excludes GST.

6.3 Annual funding requirements for 3 year period 2016-2018

	2016	2017	2018	Total
Wages and on costs	191,274	191,274	191,274	573,822
Computers and equipment	5,000			5,000
Travel and vehicle hire	16,666	16,666	16,666	50,000
Publications and information resources		5,000	5,000	10,000
Training and development	5,000	10,000	5,000	20,000
Management fees	44,300	51,600	44,300	140,200
Telephone, fax and internet	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
AHNT Meetings	21,000	21,000	21,000	63,000
AHNT Forum (2017)		40,000		40,000
Consultancy and project costs	30,000	30,000	30,000	90,000
* In-kind contributions	202,700	189,050	189,050	580,800
TOTAL BUDGET (inc in-kind)	518,940	557,590	505,290	1,581,822
TOTAL Funding request	316,240	368,540	316,240	1,001,022

* The In Kind Support highlighted above, includes the sponsorship of various organisations throughout the Northern Territory. They are as follows:

- Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance of the NT
- Northern Land Council
- Central Land Council
- North Australia Aboriginal Justice Agency
- Central Australia Aboriginal Legal Aid Service
- Roper Gulf Regional Council
- Barkly Regional Council
- Kalano Aboriginal Corporation
- Vic-Daly Regional Council
- Laynhapuy Homelands Association
- Anyinginyi Health Service
- Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
- Deewim Kirim Aboriginal Corporation
- Tangentyere Council
- Yarralin Health Service/Katherine West Health Board

The above organisations sponsor and contribute to the **administration, salaries, travel, accommodation, meals and other associated costs** for the management and participation of the APO NT Members staff (CLC, NLC, AMSANT, CAALAS, NAAJA senior staff), APO NT staff and the Aboriginal Housing NT Committee members from all over the NT.