

# PROGRAM



# The Aboriginal Housing & Homelands CONFERENCE 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Esplanade, Darwin  
WEDS 20 & THURS 21 MAY 2026

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY – DAY ONE		
08:00–17:00	Registration desk open Foyer	
08:00–17:00	Exhibition open Ballroom Foyer	
BALLROOM		
09:00–09:05	Master of Ceremonies Neil Willmetts > CEO Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland	
09:05–09:15	Welcome to Larrakia Country Mary Williams	
09:15–09:45	Opening Address > Leeanne Caton, Chief Executive Officer – Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT) Welcome to Conference > Alan Mole – AHNT Chair	
09:45–10:00	Ministerial address > Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy MP	
10:00–10:10	Platinum Sponsor NAB – Michael Bedwell, Head of Government & Education Banking	
10:10–10:20	Platinum Sponsor Power & Water Corporation – Jason Howe, Executive General Manager, Customer, Strategy and Regulation	
10:20–10:45	Keynote Address > Julie-Ann Guivarra, Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)	
10:45–11:15	MORNING TEA	
BALLROOM		
11:15–11:45	Keynote Address > Dan Kelly, Solicitor, Remote Rental Framework, Coronial Inquiry	
11:45–12:15	Keynote Address > Tom Leeming, Chief Executive Officer Northern Territory Department of Housing, Local Government & Community Development	
12:15 – 12:45	Keynote Speaker > Ben Grimes, NAAJA CEO	
12:45–13:15	Presentation > History of the Homelands Movement Presenter > Leeanne Caton, AHNT CEO Homelands Panel > Wayne Wauchope, Jozan Collins, Joyce Jones, Maxine Carlton	
13:15–13:30	AHHC 2026 Group Conference photograph Join us in the ballroom for the official conference group photograph	
13:30–14:30	LUNCH Featuring Manual Dhurrkay Performance	
BALLROOM		
14:30–14:45	Census 2026 Presentation Neville Khan Assistant Director – Remote Engagement NT	
ROOMS	LITCHFIELD	BALLROOM
14:45–15:15	Presentation > Philanthropic funding to construct new housing on homelands & has the potential to be a game changer. Presenter > CEO Glenda Abraham, Janos Kerekes > Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation	Presentation > When I say Aboriginal community-control of housing, what do you see? Exploring the future models of Aboriginal community-controlled housing in the Northern Territory. Presenter > Clive Rosewarne AHNT
15:15–15:45	AFTERNOON TEA	
ROOMS	LITCHFIELD	BALLROOM
15:45–16:15	Presentation > Collaborations on homelands via cultural hubs allow for better service delivery for homelands residents. Presenter > Kira Bourke – Bawinanga Homelands Aboriginal Corporation	Presentation > Stronger communities building better futures Presenters > Dushy Thangiah CEO-Yumba Meta
BALLROOM		
16:15–16:45	Presentation > NAB – Michael Bedwell, Head of Government & Education, Matt Tybsell, Director Government & Education, and Annie Ashworth, Associate Director Indigenous Business & Community Banking	
16:45–17:00	DAY 1 RECAP/Summary – Master of Ceremonies Neil Willmetts	
17:00	Day concludes > evening free for delegates	

THURSDAY 21 MAY – DAY TWO		
08:00–17:00	Registration desk open Foyer	
08:00–17:00	Exhibition open Ballroom Foyer	
BALLROOM		
09:00–09:15	Master of Ceremonies Neil Willmetts	
09:15–09:40	Keynote Address > John Lawrence KC Presentation > Intersection between Justice & Housing	
09:40–10:15	Keynote Address > Leeanne Caton AHNT CEO Presentation > AHNT the organisation & our roles.	
10:15–10:45	MORNING TEA	
BALLROOM		
10:45–11:15	Keynote Address > Yingiya Mark Guyula MLA, Independent Member for Mulka (via on-screen presentation)	
11:15–11:45	Presentation > Māori Housing in Māori hands > Key challenges for Kāinga Māori in the face of accelerating climate change flood events. Presenter > Professor Rau Hoskins > Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan, Mr Eruera Lee-Morgan, Mrs Ngāhūia Eruera	
ROOMS	LITCHFIELD	BALLROOM
11:45–12:15	Presentation > The Noongar Housing First principles embed Noongar culture, land, & family within the Housing First model to strengthen outcomes for Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness. Presenters > Tina Ugle, Leonie Pickett – Noongar Mia Mia	Presentation > Stock Transition Presenter > Yvette Park CEO Yili Housing
12:15–12:45	Presentation > Reframing Homelands > Housing, Health, & Participatory Economies in Country. Presenters > Marcus Mungal Lacey MEO & Peter Solly CEO Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre	Presentation > Local Government Reform and Empowering the Bush Presenter > Rebecca Stavrou Department of Housing, Local Government & Community Development
12:45–13:45	LUNCH Featuring Manual Dhurrkay Performance	
ROOMS	LITCHFIELD	BALLROOM
13:45–14:15	Presentation > New Housing Design > Climate Resilience as Heat Rises. Presenter > Phoebe Snep CLC	Presentation > Protecting People & Country > Community-Led Approaches to Climate Retreat. Advocating for Holistic Community Development in the Northern Territory. Presenter > The Fulcrum Agency > Kieran Wong, Ron Poantumului, Wurankuwu Traditional Owner
14:15–14:45	Presentation > Health Impacts of Thermal Comfort in Housing, Energy insecurity in Alice Springs Town Camps Presenters > CSIRO > Professor Ray Mahoney, Vanessa Napaltjari-Davis, Michael Klerck	Presentation > Homelands Policy Presenter > Liam Grealley > Menzies School of Health Research
14:45–15:15	Presentation > Working together for Healthy Homes in remote communities Presenter > University of Melbourne – Lesley Martin, Michelle McMasters, Emma Stanford	Presentation > Wilya Janta and our Explain Home – showing how it should be Presenters > Wilya Janta > Serena Morton Napanangka, Norman Frank Jupurrula, Jimmy Frank Jupurrula & Simon Quilty
15:15–15:45	AFTERNOON TEA	
BALLROOM		
15:45 – 16:00	DAY 2 RECAP/Summary – Master of Ceremonies Neil Willmetts	
16:00 – 16:15	Closing Address Leeanne Caton, AHNT CEO & Directors	
17:00–19:00	Post-Conference canapés & drinks Cash bar available for alcoholic beverages	

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**Leeanne Caton**  
CEO Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT)

Leeanne is the Chief Executive Officer of Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT). A proud Kalkadoon/Waanyi woman raised on Larrakia Country, she is a veteran leader in Aboriginal affairs with over 40 years of experience across government and community controlled sectors.

Her career is defined by her focus on the social determinants of health, with a firm belief that successful life outcomes begin with stable housing. She has over 10 years of experience as a CEO within Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations.

Leeanne previously served as the CEO of Yilli Housing, a Darwin-based provider of housing and infrastructure services for Indigenous people and became the Executive Director of Aboriginal Affairs in the NT Government. Her public service career spans the Commonwealth, WA, and NT governments.

As CEO of AHNT, she is a central figure in the Partnership Agreement for Remote Housing and Homelands (2024-2034), advocating for self-determination and Aboriginal-led governance in the remote housing system.



**Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy MP**  
Minister for Indigenous Australians

Malarndirri is a Yanyuwa Garrwa woman from the Gulf Country in the Northern Territory. She was first elected as Senator for the Northern Territory in 2016, and in July 2024 was appointed as the Minister for Indigenous Australians, focussing on creating real jobs and economic opportunities for First Nations people, believing that improving housing is central to Closing the Gap.

She has driven significant investment to reduce overcrowding and improve outcomes for Aboriginal families in remote communities, including the landmark \$4 billion agreement with the Northern Territory Government in partnership with Aboriginal Housing NT and Aboriginal Land Councils. Under this agreement, partners committed to delivering 2,700 new homes over 10 years, along with local employment opportunities. She has also supported significant investment in upgrades and repairs in remote homelands.



**Dan Kelly**  
Director ALRAR

Dan is a prominent solicitor and legal advocate in the Aboriginal housing sector, best known for his work with Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights (ALRAR). His career is marked by high-profile litigation aimed at securing safe and habitable housing as a fundamental human right for First Nations communities.

He serves as Principal Solicitor for ALRAR, and also Redgum Legal and Consulting, providing legal and advisory services on public interest matters, such as Aboriginal agreement-making and land rights. He was previously General Counsel for the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations and a Legal Practice Manager for the Central Land Council in Alice Springs. His work centres on housing justice, native title, and corporate governance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Dan helped develop the ALRAR app, a digital tool that allows remote tenants to directly report housing repairs, automating a process that previously faced significant administrative hurdles. He advocates for better remote housing conditions, for structural reform and compensation for affected tenants.



**John B. Lawrence**  
Kings Counsel

John is a prominent Darwin-based barrister with over 30 years of experience in the Northern Territory, known for his vocal advocacy regarding justice, human rights, and the treatment of Aboriginal people. His primary focus has been on the criminal justice system and legal aid and his work frequently intersects with the social factors affecting Aboriginal communities, including housing instability and its relationship to incarceration.

John has highlighted the "dysfunctional" nature of the NT justice system, noting that it disproportionately affects Aboriginal people. His advocacy points to the failure of systems to provide adequate support, which correlates with poor outcomes in health, education, and housing.

Lawrence has been a vocal critic of the handling of Aboriginal legal services, and has strongly criticized government policies that fail to address the underlying drivers of crime in vulnerable communities, arguing they are more focused on politics than effective, evidence-based solutions.



**Yingiya Mark Guyula MLA**  
Member for Mulka

Mark is a Yolŋu man of the Liya-Dhalinyirr Djambarrpuyru clan and the Independent Member for Mulka in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. A former aircraft mechanic, pilot and university lecturer, he is a prominent advocate for Aboriginal self-determination, with a specific focus on the critical importance of remote homelands.

Guyula's work in the housing sector is driven by the belief that homelands are the key for cultural preservation and economic independence. He has called for urgent investment to address deteriorating conditions and to provide new housing and infrastructure directly on ancestral lands. Guyula identifies that many current issues, such as overcrowded housing, poor health, poor school attendance, limited job options, and youth issues can be resolved through committed investment in homelands. He advocates for the distribution of new housing to be extended across both hub towns and homeland communities.

He supports capacity building, community-led solutions, and local decision-making through the development of local Aboriginal building and maintenance teams to ensure continuous, sustainable construction and local employment. He emphasizes that government-provided housing must be appropriate for the local climate, environment, and the specific cultural needs of the community being housed.

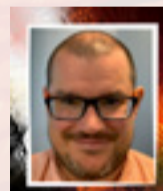


**Julie-Ann Guivarra**  
Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)

Julie-Ann is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). Julie-Ann was born in Cairns and is proud to be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Julie-Ann joined the NIAA in 2021 and during her time with the agency she has held several Senior Executive positions where she led the coordination of Commonwealth policy development, program design and implementation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Prior to joining the NIAA, Julie-Ann held various senior roles at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These included Australia's Ambassador for Gender Equality, becoming Australia's first female Indigenous Ambassador, and Australia's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain, Andorra and Equatorial Guinea.

Julie-Ann has also been posted to New Delhi and Geneva, serving as the Counsellor (Agriculture) in the World Trade Organisation. Prior to that appointment, she served as Australia's lead services negotiator for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) while she was Assistant Secretary of the South East Asia Investment & Services Branch.



**Tom Leeming**  
CEO Northern Territory Department of Housing

Tom was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development in October 2025. He has a twenty-year public sector career across 6 jurisdictions and 3 continents, including 10 years in senior roles in the Western Australian public sector.

He also worked as a management consultant for seven years across WA and the NT, supporting a broad range of organisations. He returned to the public sector in 2023 as a Deputy CEO in the NT Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet.

Across his career, Tom has worked across a range of sectors, driving policy and reform across social, economic and environment and Aboriginal affairs spheres. He is passionate about systemic change to improve economic and social outcomes for all in the Northern Territory.



**Ben Grimes**  
NAAJA CEO

As an experienced CEO and manager, with a strong local and national reputation as a lawyer and linguist, Ben has been the CEO of Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Aboriginal Corporation (ARDS) since 2020 and has overseen a period of organisational growth and the development of innovative new programs.

Ben is widely recognised as a leading expert in legal and courtroom communication with people who speak English as an additional language.

Ben was a lecturer in law at Charles Darwin University where he spearheaded the Indigenous pre-law program, and a senior manager at the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, managing 400 staff, developing the court interpreting system used in the Northern Territory. He has worked as a criminal lawyer with NAAJA, was a member of the NT Mental Health Review Tribunal and spent several years doing linguistic work in eastern Indonesia. Ben is a long-term Territorian who has spent most of his career working with Aboriginal groups across the Northern Territory and supporting Aboriginal community control.