

STATEMENT: in relation to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing Sector

Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT) and North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) extend our deepest condolences to the family and community of Kumanjayi Little Baby. Our thoughts are with all those affected, and we send strength and compassion during this time of mourning.

The tragic events of last week are not the result of deficits within the Aboriginal community-controlled sector's tenancy management practices on the Town Camps of Alice Springs, nor is it the result of problems inherent within the Alice Springs community.

The tragic events that have befallen Kumanjayi Little Baby and her family are firmly based on entrenched systemic policy and implementation failures.

Important questions remain around the broader welfare support available and provided for Kumanjayi Little Baby and her family. Was an NDIS provider in place, and what was the extent of engagement? Were strategies in place to support Kumanjayi and her family through the NDIS? What conditions were in place through the Department of Corrections upon release of the alleged perpetrator?

The quality of the housing on Town Camps is the responsibility of the NT Government as the landlord, and the Australian Government as the leaseholder. Alice Springs Town Camps receive almost no funding for housing repairs and maintenance and receive a bare minimum for municipal and essential services.

The NT Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development (DHLGCD) delivers and monitors the tenancy contracts on a regular monthly basis. If there are substantive issues with tenancy management, DHLGCD is responsible for working with the provider to manage identified issues. This is the ordinary contract management process used by all governments across all jurisdictions.

There is a chronic shortage of state-owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH) across all the Northern Territory - this remains a Northern Territory (NT) Government responsibility. The Northern Territory has the highest rate of **homelessness** in Australia, at **around 12 times the national average**. Around three-quarters of people classified as homeless in the NT live in severely crowded dwellings, far exceeding any other jurisdiction in Australia.

As of 30 September 2025, the Australian Government's Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) Rounds 1 and 2 committed funding for 18,650 social and affordable dwellings nationally. The **Northern Territory secured just 156 dwellings** under the first two rounds. Proportionally, the NT received **less than 1%** of total funded dwellings, broadly consistent with the Territory's population size but **well below its share of housing need, and jurisdictional target of 1200 dwellings**.

The Town Camps Housing Management Agreement gives the NT Government responsibility for all areas located within the Town Camp boundary and captures all infrastructures, including housing, open spaces, roads, parks, and community centres.

This tragedy could have unfolded anywhere across the urban and remote contexts, particularly where there is insufficient stable community housing coupled with severe overcrowding. **This should not be a matter of isolating Town Camps or blaming the Aboriginal community-controlled sector.**

AHNT and NAAJA remain committed to working with the Australian Government, Northern Territory Government, Anindilyakwa Land Council, Central Land Council, Northern Land Council and Tiwi Land Council and the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to improve housing conditions across the Northern Territory.

AHNT and NAAJA reject any assertion or attempts to cast this tragedy as the result of deficits within the Aboriginal community-controlled sector or to use this tragedy for political point-scoring.

ENDS

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Background: Alice Springs Town Camps Background and Tenure Responsibilities

- In December 2009, the Executive Director of Township Leasing (EDTL) entered into Sub-leases with 15 Housing Associations over 17 Town Camps on behalf of the Commonwealth. The term of each Sublease is for 40 years. The EDTL simultaneously granted under lease in the form of a Housing Management Agreement to the Northern Territory Government.
- The Housing Management Agreement gives the Northern Territory Government responsibility for all areas located within the Town Camp boundary and captures all infrastructures, including housing, open spaces, roads, parks, and community centres.
- Alice Springs Town Campers have **repeatedly called** on the NT Government for years for increased funding support for streetlamps, speed humps, increased resourcing for housing repairs & maintenance.
- The Northern Territory Government contracts property management services and tenancy management services out to external providers.
- The Parties to Alice Springs Living Area Sublease are:
 - Individual Housing Associations;
 - Executive Director of Township Leasing – on behalf of Commonwealth of Australia;
 - Northern Territory of Australia – C/O Department of Housing, Local Government, and Community Development;
 - Chief Executive Office (Housing).

Excerpt from: Northern Territory Remote Housing Federal Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other

Funding – Property and Tenancy Management (PTM)
Parties – Commonwealth and Northern Territory
Duration – 2024 - 2034
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The purpose of this schedule is to reduce over-crowding and improve housing quality in NT remote communities and Town Camps.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Schedule will significantly enhance the livability of existing housing, delivering comprehensive Remote Property and Tenancy Management which includes preventative, cyclical and responsive R&M.</i>• Northern Territory Remote Housing Footprint• 73 Remote Aboriginal Communities• 18 Alice Springs Town Camps• 7 Tennant Creek Town Camps• 2 Elliott Town Camps• Governance, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements outlined in Federation Funding Agreement - NT Remote Housing Schedule
Source - Federation Funding Agreement - NT Remote Housing Schedule

Excerpt from Australian Government – Office of Township Leasing

Tenure – Government Sub-leases	
Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive Director of Township Leasing (EDTL) – on behalf of Commonwealth of Australia• NT of Australia – C/O Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development• Chief Executive Office (Housing)
Duration – 2009 - 2049	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The EDTL entered into Subleases with 15 Associations over 17 Town Camps on behalf of the Commonwealth.</i>• <i>The term of each Sublease is 40 years.</i>• <i>The EDTL simultaneously granted an under-lease in the form of a Housing Management Agreement to the NT Government.</i>• <i>The Housing Management Agreement gives the NT Government responsibility for all areas located within the town camp boundary and captures all infrastructures, including housing, open spaces, roads, parks, and community centres.</i>• <i>The NT Government contracts Property and Tenancy Management services out to external providers</i>• <i>The NT Government has retained fiscal responsibility for MES in the Alice Springs Town Camps.</i>• <i>The CEO (Housing) is the landlord/housing authority.</i>
Source - Alice Springs Living Area Subleases	