



**Aboriginal Housing
Northern Territory**

ABORIGINAL HOUSING IN ABORIGINAL HANDS



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AHNT and NAAJA call for urgent action as YiSSA closure places vulnerable Aboriginal families at risk.

Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT) and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) are today calling on the Northern Territory Government to reverse the decision to close the YiSSA short stay accommodation centre and work with Yilli Rreung Housing Aboriginal Corporation (Yilli Housing) and Mission Australia to prevent hundreds of vulnerable Territorians from being displaced or forced into homelessness.

YiSSA was established in June 2020 as a safe, alcohol and drug-free accommodation service that has become a nationally regarded, critical component of the Northern Territory's housing and homelessness system. Australia is amid a housing crisis with the Northern Territory's homelessness rates reaching an eye-watering 11 times above the national average. YiSSA provides a critical circuit breaker to the Territory's homelessness crisis. The accelerated closure of YiSSA at short notice and without a plan in place is beyond comprehension.

There are currently 383 people including 145 children living at YiSSA with a further 300 people including 89 children awaiting accommodation. These are people receiving dialysis, women and kids escaping domestic violence, children with complex disabilities and families already experiencing homelessness. The Northern Territory Government's decision to close YiSSA effectively leaves all these people with nowhere to go and at severe risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.

AHNT's Chief Executive Officer Leeanne Caton said the announcement highlighted the Territory Governments continued failure to engage with Aboriginal organisations before making decisions that directly affect Aboriginal people.

"Aboriginal organisations have repeatedly warned that the Territory's housing system is under immense pressure. The Northern Territory Government must stop making decisions in isolation and start consulting and working in partnership with the people and organisations who know and understand these challenges best."

AHNT and NAAJA join broader sector calls and urge the Northern Territory Government to pause the closure of YiSSA. We call on the Northern Territory Government to return to the negotiating table and work towards a solution that safeguards the safety and wellbeing of our community's most vulnerable women and children, elderly and families.

AHNT and NAAJA stand ready to work closely with the Northern Territory Government and all affected parties to ensure a strong, sustainable and supported outcome that prevents the forced displacement of hundreds of vulnerable Territorians.

ENDS

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