



ABORIGINAL TERRITORIANS MATTER

We condemn the recent comment made by Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro that the YiSSA homelessness facility is a waste of money. The Chief Minister's comments are hurtful to the hundreds of families who rely on YiSSA for safety.

Evidence shows that providing stable housing and targeted support services is less costly than relying on emergency, crisis, and reactive responses to homelessness, which generate higher ongoing costs across policing, health, and child protection systems.

The Australian Government has put \$3.5 million on the table to secure the \$6.5 million purchase of YiSSA infrastructure. This offer would keep the nation's largest and highly respected 300-room homelessness facility operating and servicing the Territory's most vulnerable. We urge the Northern Territory Government to show true leadership and rise above party politics. We call on the Chief Minister and her colleagues to lead with mercy, compassion and justice and continue to negotiate with the Australian Government in good faith to secure YiSSA's survival for the good of all Territorians.

Closing YiSSA does not make homelessness disappear. It pushes people into already severely overcrowded housing, rough sleeping and homelessness, and places greater pressure on the Territory's homelessness system which is already at breaking point.

Pushing hundreds of already vulnerable people and families into homelessness places unsustainable pressure on our hospitals. Medical professionals have made it clear that YiSSA provides much needed support to people travelling from remote communities for specialist treatment and provides somewhere for patients to be safely discharged.

Only weeks after passing the "Every Child Matters Bill", the NT CLP Government appears to be leaving the most vulnerable Territory families to face the instability and uncertainty of not having a safe place to live.

Inevitably, closing YiSSA will increase pressure on the Territory's already overloaded justice system. As reported in the 2024-2025 Australian Government Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, the Northern Territory Government spends more than \$121,000 per year to keep one person locked up in a Northern Territory prison.

With people languishing on remand for months, we ask what kind of future are we investing in? Actively taking away safe housing options while building the infrastructure to imprison more (overwhelmingly Aboriginal) people is not addressing crime, it is failing to address the underlying issues that contribute to offending such as housing insecurity, unemployment, disengagement from education and poor access to services.

Decades of evidence has shown that safer communities require investment in housing, health, families, early intervention, culturally safe services, and Aboriginal community-controlled solutions.

ABORIGINAL TERRITORIANS HAVE A VOICE AND VOTE

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