



Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory (AHNT), the **North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)** and the **North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service (NAAFLS)** are deeply disappointed by today's announcement from the Northern Territory Government that residents of YiSSA Short-Stay Accommodation will be relocated to Batchelor following the closure of YiSSA.

People and families who utilise YiSSA's services do so because they need to be in Darwin to access essential services, including medical treatment, dialysis, hospitals, specialist appointments, government services and other supports. Moving transitional accommodation out of Darwin raises serious questions about how residents will continue to access critical services. We remain deeply troubled by the continued lack of any discussion or consultation with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and the NT Government's decision to establish the Batchelor facility via media announcement.

This decision directly affects hundreds of Aboriginal people and the future of Darwin's largest short-stay accommodation service. A decision of this magnitude should not have been announced without meaningful engagement with the Aboriginal community-controlled organisation responsible for delivering that service. It reflects a deeply worrying trend of contempt toward the Aboriginal community-controlled sector by the NT Government.

Since 2020, Yilli has successfully delivered its contracted responsibilities at YiSSA, providing tenancy and property management together with reception, cleaning, catering, security, repairs and maintenance. Yilli was not contracted or responsible for securing longer-term housing or transitioning residents from YiSSA into alternative accommodation. Those case-management functions were the responsibility of a separately funded service provider.

Any suggestion that residents remained at YiSSA because Yilli failed to deliver housing outcomes therefore misrepresents both Yilli's role and the service model established for the facility. Throughout its involvement, Yilli has provided safe, culturally appropriate accommodation through an Aboriginal community-controlled model, supported by clients and a broad range of Aboriginal, homelessness and community-sector stakeholders.

The timing makes the lack of engagement even more concerning. YiSSA is scheduled to close in 25 days on the 11th of October. This leaves an extraordinarily short timeframe for the remaining 196 residents to be provided with safe housing and allow service providers and the Batchelor township community to understand the impacts and prepare for the significant relocation.

While today's announcement provides some information, many questions remain unanswered. There remains no clarity for the many people who regularly rely on YiSSA when travelling to Darwin or the hundreds of people on the waiting list for housing. It is also unclear how people accommodated in Batchelor will access the essential health, government and support services such as hospital and dialysis.



The media release from the NT Government is not a transition plan and lacks a clearly articulated and cogent plan with any substantive detail to provide stakeholders with certainty or confidence. The decision to close YiSSA and move people to Batchelor will have a far-reaching impact on people seeking accommodation for medical, health and other services, refuge from domestic and family violence, the Batchelor community and the broader Territory population just weeks out from YiSSA's closure.

We call on the Northern Territory Government to urgently convene a public forum to provide clarity and detail on their strategy, planning and costs, to listen to the concerns held by Territorians and respond to the people directly impacted by this decision.

ENDS

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