

MEDIA RELEASE



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ANTaR backs calls to support homeland communities

ANTaR supports Amnesty International Australia's call for governments to support the right of Aboriginal people to live on their traditional homelands.

"Recent funding changes affecting remote community housing, infrastructure and services pose a serious threat to the viability of Aboriginal homelands communities and outstations in the Northern Territory," said Jacqueline Phillips, ANTaR National Director.

"As a result of recent reforms, funding for remote service delivery is directed to larger communities while leaving smaller communities out in the cold. This is despite the proven health benefits of living on homelands."

In particular, homeland communities will no longer receive any funding for new housing and only very limited funding for housing maintenance. This is despite severe overcrowding and a backlog of housing need.

"The shift towards service delivery in larger towns is having a range of negative effects on homelands communities as well as on the towns, which are ill-equipped to cope with increased demand for services."

"The changes deny Aboriginal people living on their traditional lands the right to develop sustainable, on-country livelihoods supported by basic services that are the right of all citizens."

"We urge the Federal and Northern Territory Governments to review current policies with a view to securing the free, prior and informed consent of homeland communities before making future funding and policy decisions."

ANTaR is a national advocacy organisation dedicated specifically to the rights - and overcoming the disadvantage - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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