

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Embargoed until 12:01am,  
Thursday 8 September 2011**

## **Support NT communities to shape their own development**

**Releasing its submission on the future of Northern Territory Aboriginal communities today, ANTaR calls on both major parties to learn from the international development experience and work with Aboriginal people to plan the transition from intervention to sustainable futures.**

“With Government consultations on the future of the Northern Territory Intervention drawing to a close and key Intervention measures due to expire in June next year, we are now at a critical policy and funding juncture”, said Jacqueline Phillips, ANTaR National Director.

“From this point on, the language and style of intervention must be abandoned. Instead, the Government should seek sustainable solutions that empower local people and support economic development, informed by the international development experience.”

“Specifically, governments should adopt a community development approach based on partnership, capacity-building and enterprise development.”

“Recent policy changes have reduced Aboriginal community control and centralised decision-making. Governments must now walk with Aboriginal people in planning the next stage.”

“Despite recent investment, serious housing and infrastructure gaps remain. Decades of neglect cannot be addressed overnight. A long-term bipartisan commitment to invest the funds required to address these gaps is now critical. Without housing, water or electricity, economic development is a hollow promise.”

“The Government also has work to do to remove all remaining discriminatory measures. This must be the starting point to build trust in planning for the future.”

Drawing on lessons from international development, key recommendations in ANTaR's submission include:

- Reforms to existing NTER measures (including income management and compulsory 5 year leases) to ensure compliance with racial discrimination laws, including free, prior and informed consent to any 'special measures'.
- Discontinuing the current sanctions-based approach to improving school attendance and instead addressing the gaps in education infrastructure and lack of culturally responsive programs in communities as a priority.
- Creating a new community employment and enterprise scheme for regional and remote Australia which includes a partial social security offset and is administered by community organisations and agencies.
- Increased capital investment in remote communities to stimulate local community enterprise development.
- Additional funding and support for communities to develop alcohol management plans, expanded and ongoing funding for alcohol and drug services and the adoption of a range of effective supply, demand and harm reduction strategies.
- The adoption of a justice reinvestment framework within which funds are diverted from prisons to communities, to support early intervention and diversionary initiatives. This approach will prevent crime and reduce the prison population from remote communities. It should include ongoing support for existing community safety measures, like night patrols.
- Support for a range of innovative food security strategies, including self-sustaining agriculture and permaculture and fresh food and transport subsidies to improve access to affordable food in remote communities.
- Support to build the capacity of the Aboriginal community housing sector in the NT.
- Sustained investment in new housing and maintenance of existing stock (current funding ceases in 2013), including homelands communities.
- Additional investment to support community governance and develop local capacity.

ANTaR's submission complements [A Better Way – Success stories in community control in the Northern Territory](#) published last year, which documented Aboriginal organisations and programs working successfully on the ground in the Northern Territory. The booklet called for a transition from top-down control and design to a community development strategy as a better way forward.

**Media contact: Jacqueline Phillips – 0423 773 395**