

MEDIA RELEASE



Embargo:

12:01am, Tuesday 26 October, 2010

Aboriginal community organisations show governments A Better Way

Launching *A Better Way: Success stories in Aboriginal community-control in the Northern Territory* in Darwin today, ANTaR calls on governments to empower Aboriginal organisations and communities to drive solutions to the challenges they face.

“It is time for governments to engage directly with Aboriginal communities to develop a long-term community development strategy for the Northern Territory. The strategy should strengthen community governance and capacity and 'put communities in the driving seat',” said Jacqueline Phillips, ANTaR National Director.

ANTaR's publication profiles 13 successful Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in the NT, working across a diverse range of sectors. All feature Aboriginal management and administration, are responsive to local community needs and priorities and work in partnership with other organisations.

“Individually, these organisations are tackling petrol sniffing, delivering health care, ensuring access to healthy foods, building self-reliance in times of financial crisis, supporting people to budget and eat well and delivering banking services to remote areas. Together, they offer an alternative response to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities based on community participation and leadership,” said Ms Phillips.

“We hope that the publication being launched today acts as a reminder to governments of the skills, capacity, ingenuity and innovation of many Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.”

“Aboriginal communities in the NT have faced myriad, complex policy changes in recent years, including the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and reforms to Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), housing, education and local government. Many of these changes have been imposed on communities without consultation or consent.”

In his second six-monthly progress report, released this month, the Coordinator-General of Remote Service Delivery called on governments to give 'a lot more attention' to 'communities being in the driving seat, not only driving but determining where, how and when to go.' ANTaR echoes this call.

“Recent reforms have missed opportunities to build the capacity of local communities and to work in partnership with Aboriginal people. In some cases, like CDEP, reforms have reduced the capacity of community organisations and threatened the viability of existing programs and services. The services we are profiling in the publication are achieving remarkable outcomes despite current policy constraints.”

The publication forms part of ANTaR's *A Better Way* campaign which seeks to raise awareness about discriminatory and coercive aspects of the NTER and related policies.

Organisations profiled in *A Better Way: Success stories in Aboriginal community-control in the Northern Territory* include:

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT), Sunrise Health Service, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Arnhemland Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA), Waltja Tjutangu Palyapayi, Laynhapuy Homelands Association Inc, Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (Mt Theo Program), Central Land Council, Mäpuru Homeland Community, Traditional Credit Union, Association of Northern Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA), Tangentyere Council Inc and the Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA).

Launch details:

What : Launch of ANTaR publication: *A Better Way: Success stories in Aboriginal community-control in the Northern Territory*.
When: 10am, Tuesday 26 October, 2010.
Where: Northern Territory Supreme Court foyer, State Square, Darwin.
Who: Speakers include:
Olga Havnen – Head of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy, Australian Red Cross
John Paterson – Executive Officer, Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance NT (AMSANT)
Jonathan Hunyor – Principal Legal Officer, Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

The publication will be available for download from the ANTaR website tomorrow at www.antar.org.au. Advanced copies available on request.

Media contacts:

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ANTaR is the pre-eminent non-Indigenous national advocacy organisation dedicated specifically to the rights - and overcoming the disadvantage - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.