

Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program Monitoring and Evaluation Project - September 2025

THE PROJECT

Background

In October 2022, the Australian Government announced \$100 million in funding to be expended on urgent works at Northern Territory (NT) homelands. This was the first major funding commitment to homelands made by the Australian Government since 2012, and it constituted a significant investment in homelands, given the NT Government otherwise provides about \$40 million per annum in grant funding for the delivery of housing maintenance, essential services, and municipal services at homelands through its Homelands Program. In 2024, as part of a \$4 billion remote housing package, a further \$120 million over three years was committed to homelands by the Australian Government.

The \$100 million investment underpinned the establishment of the Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program (HHIP). The HHIP has involved the delivery of housing and essential services infrastructure upgrades at selected NT homelands, as well as NT-wide subprograms focused on fire and electrical safety, water testing and supply, and housing sanitation for a larger number of homelands.

Project Purpose

The purpose of the 'Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program Monitoring and Evaluation Project' was to monitor and evaluate the NT Government's Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program. Commissioned by the NT Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development (DHLGCD), the project examined the administration and delivery of the HHIP in relation to:

1. Housing and infrastructure upgrade projects at selected NT homelands;
2. Territory-wide subprograms focused on fire and electrical safety, water testing and supply, and sanitation across funded NT homelands.

The project was a developmental evaluation that sought to improve the delivery of the HHIP as it was underway, through the provision of ongoing feedback and the submission of draft case study chapters to the HHIP team and project Expert Advisory Group.

Final Report

The Final Report is the major output of the HHIP Monitoring and Evaluation Project. It opens with an Executive Summary and an Introduction outlining key findings and the background to the HHIP. Chapter Two provides an overview of homelands in the NT and Chapter Three summarises the monitoring and evaluation approach. Chapter Four provides a descriptive overview of the HHIP's implementation and Chapter Five provides an overview of HHIP outputs. The case studies that follow – Chapters Six to Ten – provide detailed examinations of specific HHIP projects, including project outputs but with extensive consideration given to the contexts in which such projects have been delivered, to demonstrate the challenges associated with delivering homelands services. This includes housing and infrastructural refurbishment projects delivered by Kalano Community Association at Rockhole (Chapter Six), by Ingkerreke Services Aboriginal Corporation at Anpanaye, Burt Creek, and Corkwood Bore (Chapter Seven), and by Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation at Gäṅgaṅ (Chapter Eight). Chapters Nine and Ten examine two of the HHIP's NT-wide subprograms, respectively, the Water Testing and Supply Program and the Housing Sanitation Program. The Conclusion and Recommendations complete the Final Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Final Report includes 39 recommendations. These are developed cumulatively throughout the report, represented in full at its Conclusion, and represented in Table 39 with regard to the specific party to which each recommendation is addressed. The recommendations summarised here in relation to six thematic areas.

Secure Funding

While the HHIP has made substantial changes where major projects have been completed, this follows a long period of government under-investment at homelands. Funding agreements for homelands must be extended to expand the program's impact and to support a sustainable

homelands sector, and specific funding for new and replacement housing should be sought.

Policy Development

The effectiveness of the HHIP has been hampered by the long-term failure to develop policy that clarifies responsibilities for housing and infrastructure at homelands. The Australian and NT Governments should provide their support for new and replacement housing on homelands, and the JSC-RHNT should progress homelands policy in relation to new housing, safe drinking water, and infrastructural standards.

Program Administration

The HHIP has successfully administered a large number of homelands housing and infrastructure projects since its recent establishment. At this point, there are opportunities to improve the relationship between identifying and fixing substandard infrastructure, to expand the collection and publication of program data, to widen the scope and reach of the NT-wide subprograms, and to review the ongoing separation of the HHIP and Homelands Program.

Grant Agreements

The HHIP has prioritised the award of project grant agreements to Aboriginal Business Enterprises (ABEs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). Future HHIP grants should continue to be used to support the growth of ACCOs in the homelands sector, including by supporting locally-based ACCOs to deliver projects via the NT-wide subprogram.

Sector Consultation and Support

Building on its positive engagement with the homelands sector thus far, there are opportunities for the HHIP to expand its sector consultation and support. These include increasing transparency about the processes for selecting projects, establishing processes for the award of project funding under revised NT-wide subprograms, developing resources related to householder consultation and sanitation system design, and ensuring grant agreements facilitate appropriate community consultation.

Essential Services Infrastructure

Among Australian housing programs, the HHIP is rare in its close consideration of the essential services infrastructures that support house function, as identified by the Closing the Gap Target 9B. The NT-wide subprograms should continue to be funded and expanded in their scope and geographic application.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation employed interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and analysis of program data (see Chapter Three). The project engaged extensively with Aboriginal representative and community controlled organisations, including peak bodies, land councils, and homelands service providers, as well as with public servants, and homelands residents. A total 62 formal interviews were completed involving 82 individuals across NT homelands and the homelands sector. Ethnographic fieldwork occurred at the case study communities considered in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, which was the outcome of working closely with homelands service providers undertaking HHIP projects in those homelands. Statistical analysis was based on data in the HHIP program Hive and project documentation supplied by homelands service providers. The project established an Expert Advisory Group including Aboriginal Housing NT, land councils, and Aboriginal community controlled homelands service providers. This research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the NT Department of Health and Menzies School of Health Research.

NEXT STEPS

The Final Report recommendations are based on close analysis of the HHIP during its initial two years of establishment and implementation. They are grounded in detailed empirical analysis of project delivery and their content is familiar to the HHIP team and members of the Expert Advisory Group, given the developmental evaluation approach undertaken by the project. The recommendations are intended to be clear and actionable, to mitigate against the possibility of their dismissal or deferral as too costly, ambitious, or politically risky.

To progress this work, the JSC-RHNT should consider the 39 recommendations provided by the Final Report, outlining how the recommendations it supports will be achieved through an implementation plan. Recommendations are addressed to specific parties to clarify who has the right or responsibility to address the specific issue. Actioning the recommendations should support the more effective implementation of the HHIP across the current funding agreement period (2024-27) and beyond.

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The Final Report is available [here](#).