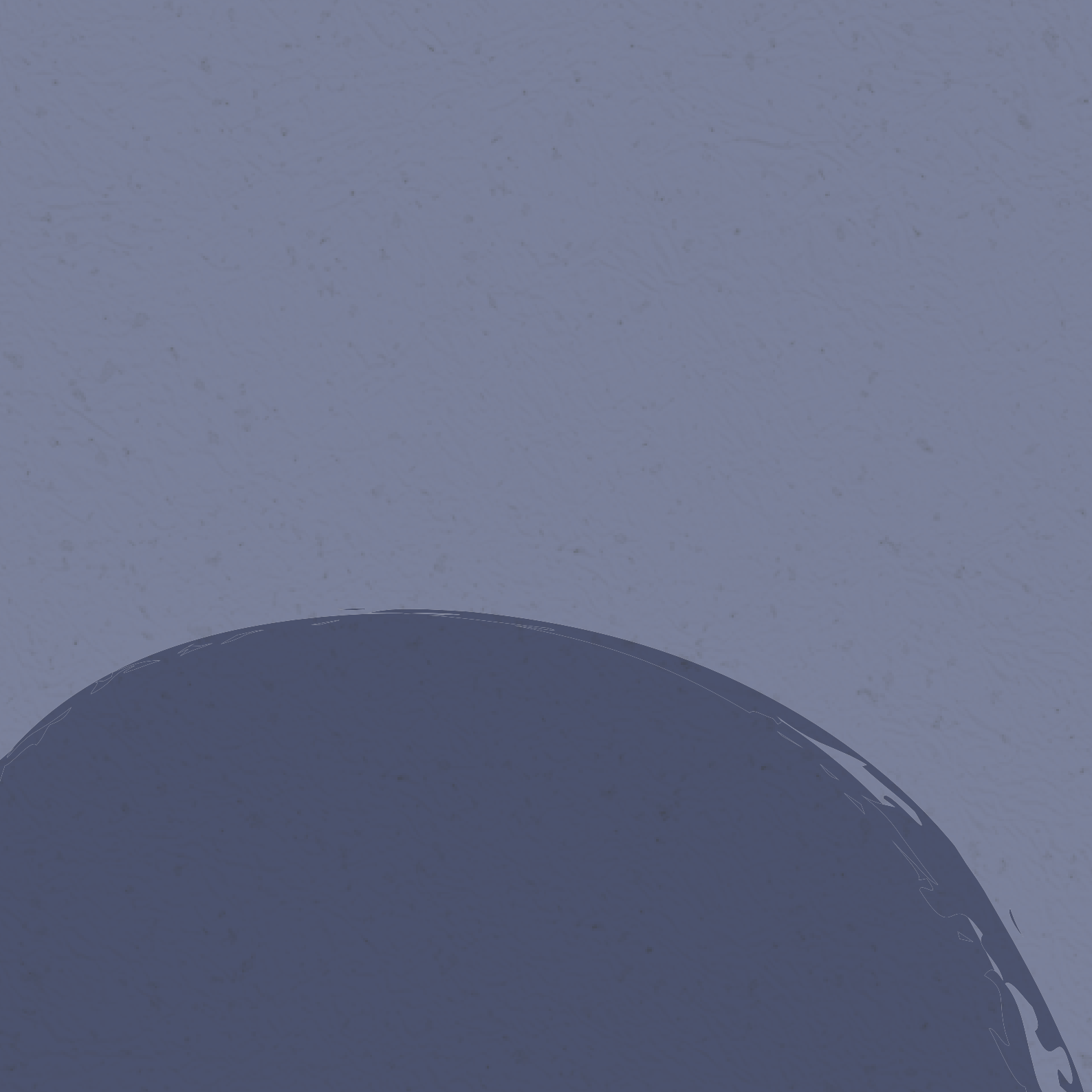


Northern Territory Government **Initial Response** to the **Homelands Policy Review**





Contents

- 01 **ONE** About the Review
- 02 **TWO** Our Commitment
- 03 **THREE** Our response to the Review Recommendations
- 07 **FOUR** Recommendations



ONE ABOUT THE REVIEW

In October 2019, the Northern Territory Government commissioned an independent review (the Review) of the Homelands Policy and Programs for the delivery of services to Northern Territory homelands.

The Review was to provide a new direction for the delivery of services to homelands following the handover from the Commonwealth to the NT Government in 2015 of policy and financial responsibility for homelands services.

The Review addressed four priority policy areas:

1. **Homelands Eligibility Criteria** – to review the existing guidelines which restrict funding to occupied homelands locations with viable housing and infrastructure, and to establish new or revised policy principles including a definition for ‘Homeland’ and criteria for funding.

2. **Grants programs** – to evaluate current grants programs, including: Municipal and Essential Services; Housing Maintenance Services; Homelands Jobs grants; Special Purpose Grants; and, the Homelands Extra Allowance.

3. **Model of Service Delivery** – to assess the current model for the delivery of services through approximately 40 service providers and to recommend on continuation of the current service delivery model.

4. **Homes in homelands** – to examine opportunities for better homes in homelands and to recommend on pathways for the provision of new dwellings.

The Review assessed submissions from 18 homelands stakeholders and conducted over thirty face-to-face and telephone interviews.



TWO OUR **COMMITMENT**

The NT Government is determined to drive improved outcomes for all Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory and recognises homelands as being intimately connected to Aboriginal social, cultural and emotional wellbeing.

We acknowledge that this review addressed only the current policy and so was limited in scope. Given this, we commit to undertake further engagement with land councils, the Australian Government, homelands residents and other relevant stakeholders to develop a sustainable and holistic homelands policy that provides clarity and empowers homelands residents.



THREE OUR RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Table: NT Government response to the Review recommendations (full list of recommendations at Attachment A).

| Priority Areas | Brief Summary of Recommendations | NT Government Response |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Homelands Eligibility Criteria | <p>Recommendation 1: Re-engage with the Australian Government and Land Councils to develop a sustainable policy.</p> | <p>Agree NT Government commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homelands residents to develop a holistic homelands policy framework.</p> |
| | <p>Recommendation 2: Homelands be defined on the basis of population size and land tenure: as small discrete Aboriginal communities of less than 100 people living on Aboriginal communally-owned and controlled land.</p> | <p>Support in principle NT Government commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homeland residents to develop sound evidence based definitions and criteria for homelands and homelands funding.</p> |
| | <p>Recommendation 3: Homelands experiencing strong growth pressures with economic development potential can explore Local Decision Making opportunities.</p> | <p>Support in principle NTG commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homeland residents, to consider Local Decision Making opportunities that encourage and support economic development.</p> |



| Priority Areas | Brief Summary of Recommendations | NT Government Response |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>Recommendation 4: An eligible homeland must be the principal place of residence of the occupants.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: An eligible homeland must have an adequate potable water supply.</p> | <p>Agree NT Government will maintain the existing eligibility criteria for homelands and commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homeland residents to develop sound evidence based definitions and criteria for homelands and homelands funding.</p> |
| | <p>Recommendation 6: An eligible homeland must have a serviceable electricity supply. Where the department makes an investment in updating power infrastructure it should secure the rights, through negotiation with the appropriate Land Council, to repurpose or move the asset should the Homeland become unoccupied.</p> | <p>Support in principle NT Government commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homeland residents to develop sound evidence based definitions and criteria for homelands and homelands funding.</p> |
| <p>Grants Programs</p> | <p>Recommendation 7: Existing homelands grants to be combined into one single un-tied grant to allow maximum flexibility.</p> <p>Recommendation 8: Shift the focus of program monitoring from inputs to outputs, with the onus placed on providers to illustrate progress against targets.</p> <p>Recommendation 9: Grants be allowed to rollover from year to year provided services have been delivered in accordance with the previous year's terms of agreement.</p> | <p>Agree The NT Government commits to implement these recommendation immediately. By removing red tape and streamlining the funding program, homelands residents will have greater flexibility and increased decision-making to target the use of funds against identified works on their own homes. This will be supported by a shift to monitoring program outcomes and the development of a more holistic outcomes framework with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homeland residents.</p> |



| Priority Areas | Brief Summary of Recommendations | NT Government Response |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Model of Service Delivery | <p>Recommendation 10: Public expressions of interest should be called for the delivery of Homelands' services. One service provider should be sought per region (not precluding the delivery of homelands' services through sub-contracting, joint venture or partnership arrangements).</p> | <p>Support in-principle NT Government commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homelands residents, to develop a holistic homelands policy framework.</p> |
| | <p>Recommendation 11: That a function of the Homelands Service Group to support the institutional capacity building of Homelands' service providers be established and funded by the Department.</p> | <p>Agree NT Government will maintain existing capacity building activities and examine new ways to build on regional networks to facilitate good practice and information sharing.</p> |
| Homes in Homelands | <p>Recommendation 12: Where Homelands residents have access to funds to contribute to co-funding new housing on Homelands, this should be managed through LDM agreements, and include the relevant Land Council.</p> <p>Recommendation 13: To reduce reliance on the NT Government, guidelines should establish who has responsibility for upgrades and maintenance when new housing is constructed.</p> | <p>Support in principle NT Government commits to working with Land Councils, the Australian Government and key stakeholders including homelands residents, to develop a holistic homelands policy framework.</p> <p>Our key priority is to explore opportunities for co-investment in homelands, including new housing.</p> |

WHERE DO I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Further information on the Northern Territory Government's initial response to the Independent Homelands Policy Review, please visit www.dlghcd.nt.gov.au



