

Building our communities, together

Town Camps Reform Framework 2019-2024

Progress Report July 2019 to 30 June 2021



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Acronyms

CHCA	Community Housing Central Australia
LDM	Local Decision Making
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
TCAC	Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation
TFHC	Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities
TCFU	Town Camp Futures Unit
YRAHC	Yilli Rreung Aboriginal Housing Corporation or Yilli Housing

Building our communities, together Town Camps Reform Framework 2019-2024 - Progress Report July 2019 to 30 June 2021

Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities

Please be aware that this document may contain images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

Introduction

In March 2019, the Northern Territory Government approved *Building our communities, together* Town Camps Reform Framework 2019-2024.

The framework presents a medium to long-term commitment by government to work with town camp residents, their community, leaseholder organisations and other stakeholders to address key reform areas across the town camps and community living areas.

The framework has five outcome areas to support community change to occur.

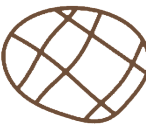


Building our communities, together
Town Camps Reform Framework 2019-2024



Outcome 1

Residents and their community are independent, safe and thriving.



Outcome 2

Housing choices and support services are people centred, flexible and suitable to town camps.



Outcome 3

Strengthen and develop the Aboriginal community housing sector through capacity building, regulation and transfer of housing and asset management.



Outcome 4

Land tenure, infrastructure and leasing arrangements are fit-for-community purpose.



Outcome 5

Create local jobs and support the local economy.

Regular progress reports are provided to government to ensure implementation of the framework through the five year action and investment plans.

An overview of the key achievements as at June 2021 is outlined across the five outcome areas of this report.



Wilyugu (South Camp Elliott)

Overview

Since 2018, the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC) has invested \$41.4 million of critical housing, municipal and essential services infrastructure upgrades across town camps. This investment has focused on the nine healthy living principles with significant investment into the upgrades of water infrastructure, the health hardware of the homes and critical functional areas of housing in bathrooms, kitchens and bedrooms. As well as investment to the safety of the homes with improved security screening and access points.

During this reporting period, COVID-19 has had an impact on work being delivered and the availability of the local workforce.

All works are being scoped and prioritised through engagement with local residents to ensure informed decision making throughout the projected works and in line with local decision making.

Underpinned by the principles of local decision making, work has commenced on the development of community-specific action plans that are developed in partnership with town camp owners, residents and key stakeholders. They will provide an accountable and clear way in which government, community and key Aboriginal controlled organisations will partner together to see social and economic improvements.

Housing and infrastructure achievements of the program as at 30 June 2021 include:

306 projects completed

\$41.4 million invested in housing and infrastructure projects (GST exclusive)

5 primary contractors are Aboriginal controlled organisations

9 local sub-contractors are Aboriginal controlled organisations

	Housing and associated works completed	Infrastructure projects completed	Service Provider
Darwin, Palmerston and Adelaide River	121	45	Yilli Rreung Aboriginal Housing Corporation (YRAHC)
Katherine, Mulggan and Pine Creek	58	23	Kalano Aboriginal Corporation, Kendel Building Co., Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Corporation
Elliott and Marlinja	58		Aus Projects NT

Infrastructure works includes: sewerage, water supply, roadworks, stormwater drainage, community structures, electrical (mains) and community lighting.

Outcome 1



Residents and their communities are capable, safe and thriving.

Outcome one is to ensure that residents' knowledge and capacity to manage their rent, homes, and essential services is strengthened through community engagement, and that they are actively engaged in local decision making.

During 2020 and 2021, the Town Camps Futures Unit (TCFU) undertook extensive field work to gather information on all 43 town camps to detail the investment and support for local decision making to develop sustainable housing models for town camps. Community actions plans have been developed in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs town camps. TFHC has focused on immediate works to ensure the health, safety and security of town camps residents.

The framework's outcome two is to upgrade housing to better support Aboriginal foster and kinship carers. In the Palmerston Indigenous Village, YRAHC sub-contracted DICE (Aust) Pty Ltd, an Aboriginal Business Enterprise, to refurbish a previously uninhabitable shelter into a modern four bedroom house which was tenanted by a foster carer of several young children. The transformation of the property provided security and privacy where previously there was none.



YRAHC sub-contracted Dice (Aust) Pty Ltd to refurbish a previously uninhabitable shelter into a modern four bedroom house.

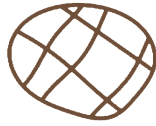
Case Study: YRAHC

To support residents to better manage their households, YRAHC was provided with funding to develop community educational material to assist people to understand rent and other financial contributions, and provide information to assist clients to better manage town camp residential properties and visitors. While YRAHC originally applied for a grant for information about the new Batten Road Short Stay facility, a suite of information was developed to be used for town camps and community living areas across the NT.

A number of resources were developed including posters, flyers and signage at town camp properties to promote information on healthy, safe living conditions for town camp residents and visitors.



Outcome 2



Housing choices and support services are people centred, flexible and suitable to town camps.

Outcome two is to ensure houses are maintained through preventative repairs and maintenance programs.

In 2020-21, there were 62 houses targeted for upgrades across Elliott town camps, including Marlinja homeland. The successful applicant for this grant was AUS Projects NT (formerly Power Projects NT) who are an Aboriginal business enterprise.

TCFU has worked closely with AUS Projects NT, and the Elliott and Marlinja communities to achieve cost effective housing upgrades which reflect feedback and are in line with regulation.



Bagot Community handover

TCFU conducted several community engagement forums including community meetings and barbecues to consult the local residents on the upgrades and construction of houses.

In 2020-21, AUS Projects NT delivered \$1.2 million of upgrades in Elliott town camps, including Marlinja homeland.

Since the program commenced, there has been 40 housing upgrades completed in Wilyugu (South), Gurungu (North) and Marlinja homeland and 18 associated works completed.

At Amangal in Adelaide River, priority was focussed on the development and implementation of a community education program about water management for residents and leaseholders. Residents were also provided support for the water management pilots through the introduction of water meters and resident education. The service provider YRAHC advised that Amangal now has town water supply. A priority action also included community education about the importance and use of rent and a policy and procedure for rent collection was introduced by YRAHC in 2021.

YRAHC have also completed all housing and infrastructure projects within Bagot Community.

Kalano Community Association have completed all works in Miali Brumby and Walpiri transit town camps within the Big Rivers Region.



Gurungu (North Camp Elliott)

Outcome 3



Strengthen and develop the Aboriginal Community Housing sector through capacity building, regulation and transfer of housing and asset management.

Outcome three is focused on improving the capacity and capability of Aboriginal controlled housing organisations towards appropriate national community housing regulation and to share good practice to build their capacity.

On 23 August 2019, Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) Aboriginal Corporation became registered under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and held the first AGM in November 2019 electing a strong, skilled Board of 12 Directors and five Associate Members. The full members of AHNT are:

- Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation
- Anindilyakwa Housing Aboriginal Corporation
- Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
- Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Services
- Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Kalano Community Association
- Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation
- Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Thamarrurr Development Corporation
- YRAHC

The associate members are:

- Anindilyakwa Land Council
- Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Central Land Council
- Northern Land Council
- Tiwi Land Council

AHNT is the NT's only independent peak body for Aboriginal community controlled organisations providing housing management and tenancy services in remote communities, homelands, town camps and urban areas.

AHNT will receive funding to provide support and engagement with its members and service providers on homelands policy and reforms.

The Town Camps External Advisory Group, which was previously established to guide and inform the critical reforms across the 43 town camps and community living areas has ceased. Since AHNT was established as an independent body, the remit of the External Advisory Group has been transferred to AHNT who has responsibility as the peak body to consult members on housing and tenancy management for town camps and community living areas and to strengthen the sector.

In late 2020, at the request of the Mabunji Aboriginal Corporation in Borroloola and Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation in Tennant Creek, TFHC supported funding to undertake a visit to Kalano Community in Katherine to study how their communities could better manage their housing program including tenancy management, repairs and maintenance and tenancy support. With both organisations having aspirations to attain community housing services provider status, the fact finding visit provided an opportunity to investigate and consider what they need to do to meet compliance conditions to achieve regulatory status.

Through the Closing the Gap reforms at a national level, there is strong interest in supporting and expanding the involvement of the Aboriginal controlled housing sector in the delivery of housing services for Aboriginal people. AHNT and the Remote Housing Reform and Programs Division are participating in the national Housing Sector Strengthening Plan Working Group as part of the Closing the Gap reforms.



Maili Brumby

Outcome 4



Land tenure, infrastructure and leasing arrangement are fit-for-community purpose.

Outcome four includes formalising the roles of leaseholders, residents and service providers, so that responsibilities and rights are clearly understood.

In Elliott, the Northern Land Council has supported the establishment of the Kulumindini Aboriginal Association. TFHC is currently working closely with the Kulumindini Aboriginal Association and the Northern Land Council which represents Gurugu, Marlinja and Wilguyu residents, to support the organisation to be established, which could take up the role of the housing service provider to manage tenancies and repairs and maintenance of properties and be the future lease holder entity. The association currently has three directors to represent each community.



Gurungu (North Camp Elliott)

Case Study: Alice Springs Town Camps

A consortium partnership between Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC), the Community Housing Central Australian (CHCA) and Tangentyere Constructions will work with the NT Government to enable the transition to a community housing model including the underpinning leasing arrangements as part of local decision making.

The Alice Springs Town Camps LDM Heads of Agreement was signed on 28 July 2020 by TCAC on behalf of the town camp residents and the Chief Minister on behalf of the NT Government.

The Agreement outlines the seven priority areas known as wellness domains identified by the Alice Springs Town Camp residents that will articulate the full scope of the areas to be transitioned to community control.

The Agreement is a commitment by the NT Government and TCAC to work together to guide the implementation of Local Decision Making in the Alice Springs town camps. The first of these, Shelter and Housing, forms Schedule 3.1 of the Agreement and includes a transition framework.

A contract for tenancy management of Alice Springs town camps was awarded to CHCA Australia in June 2021.

The Healthy Homes program will be implemented in Trucking Yards, Kunoth and Hoppys town camps with 44 houses to be inspected under this model. This data will be used to define the houses into low, medium and high function scores against Healthy Living Practices. The information will then be used to support the Department's preventative maintenance inspection data reports and repair work orders.

Under the Agreement the intention is to hand back housing related services by June 2023.

Outcome 5

Create local jobs and support the local economy.

Outcome five focusses on building the local workforce capacity across the sector through participation in training and skills.

Investment in housing and infrastructure in town camps is delivered where possible through Aboriginal controlled organisations, local sub-contractors and local suppliers. This ensures that the housing and infrastructure investment supports local employment and economic development.



Amangal (Adelaide River)

Case study: Elliott

When the program rolled out in Elliott, approximately 40 local people commenced training with AUS Projects NT. Workers received training in:

- white card
- forklift
- painting
- tiling
- trade skills in carpentry, electrical and plumbing
- road traffic management

For many people who did not have a drivers licence, AUS Projects NT implemented a program to assist people to obtain a drivers licence to be able to use the plant equipment and machinery including backhoes and trucks.

There were opportunities for women who were interested in employment and were able to be trained in grounds maintenance and building cleaning including the safe use, storage and disposal of chemicals.

The service provider also facilitated cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous local and non-local contractors which was delivered by traditional owner, Heather Wilson.

