

MEDIA RELEASE

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20,000 Indigenous housing shortfall leads to overcrowding and homelessness

Following a forum of National Indigenous Representatives, National Shelter has called for an urgent injection of resources to improve the housing supply available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has identified that there are 20,000 too few properties available for Indigenous people nationally, adding to overcrowding and homelessness.

“In some regional communities there are as many as ten people living in one house, simply due to a lack of available properties,” Adrian Pisarski, Chairperson of National Shelter said.

“Overcrowding like this would not be accepted in urban centres, so it is unfathomable that it is accepted elsewhere,” he continued.

National Shelter also emphasised that discrimination within the private rental market urgently needs to be addressed in order to give Indigenous people fair opportunities to access appropriate housing.

“Indigenous people face some of the most severe discrimination experienced in the private rental market,” Mr Pisarski said.

“As a group we would like to work with the government to develop programs which facilitate relationships between Indigenous communities and real estate bodies in an effort to minimise the discrimination and maximise housing solutions,” he said.

With an emphasis on improved housing outcomes and enhanced self determination, the forum called for:

- more resources to be urgently directed to producing the needed 20,000 dwellings;
- support for Indigenous community housing providers to play a central role in meeting this need;
- the involvement of Indigenous communities in all aspects of the response, from high level policy to on the ground delivery and management.
- mainstream government and community providers to engage with Indigenous communities to develop appropriate housing and support in order to address issues of overcrowding and sustain tenancies;
- programs to be developed to support Indigenous people to access market housing, including home ownership and private rental; and
- the establishment of an Indigenous owned and controlled National Indigenous Housing body

The final report from the forum is available on the National Shelter website, www.shelter.org.au

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For further information:

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