



20 December 2017

Open letter to all South Australian Political Parties and 2018 State Election Candidates

Shelter SA held a workshop in November with sixty South Australians, representing more than forty Government and non-government housing and community service organisations. Participants were both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The focus of the workshop was to look at “what works” when it comes to times of transition for Aboriginal people who receive housing and support services. Transition is understood as the time when people are moving from institutions back to family and community. There are significant issues that State Government must address if we are serious about keeping Aboriginal people safe and able to live their lives.

We are asking you to outline your public policy position in five key areas listed below, prior to the election, so that we can disseminate the information to our members, stakeholders, workshop participants and the wider community through our enews, mainstream media and social media.

Our workshop participants agreed that the creation of an Aboriginal community housing organisation would overcome many of the housing and tenancy issues experienced by Aboriginal people, and this was seen as an ideal way forward. If elected, is this organisation something that you and/or your party would support and, if so, can you please detail how you would progress the formation of such an organisation? It is the next State Government’s responsibility to take action on the following solutions provided by our workshop attendees:

1. Create and implement an Aboriginal workforce development strategy

Aboriginal employment and leadership in the provision of housing and support services is the key strategy that is missing in South Australia, to improve the safety and recovery of Aboriginal people leaving institutions. It is acknowledged that the Office for the Public Sector is responsible for South Australia’s Strategic Plan Target 53: Increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector, spread across all classifications and agencies, to 2% and maintain or better those levels through to 2020. It is also noted that between 2003 and 2016 there was an increase from 0.92% and 1.77% in Aboriginal employment in the public sector and this is an improvement. Workshop participants would like to see the South Australian Government develop and implement an Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy, with Aboriginal peoples, not solely for their own agencies but also for the non-Government agencies they fund. We would also like to see more aspirational targets in the State Strategic plan that aim to achieve higher than a 2% level of Aboriginal employment. The term workforce development is taken to mean all aspects of recruiting, retaining, training, supporting and developing Aboriginal people to take up employment across the provision of government and non-government housing and support services.

2. Embed cultural competency in policy and service delivery

Mainstream housing and support agencies, government and non-government, must commit to systematically improving their cultural competency and embedding cultural safety in policy and service delivery through ensuring that all government and non-government staff achieve cultural training and this is measured in their personal and agency key performance indicators, strategies, policies and funding agreements.

3. Ensuring Aboriginal people do not fall through the gaps of service delivery

Aboriginal people exiting institutions require housing and support that works across government portfolios, departments and the community sector, in a collaborative way, to ensure people do not fall through the gaps of service delivery. Issues affecting Aboriginal people are complex and are not being served by working in silos. Ministers must commit to working together, across their portfolios and insist that their departments can provide evidence of coordinated, cross-departmental responses to vulnerable Aboriginal people.

4. Urgently increase the supply of social and emergency housing

There is not enough public housing, emergency accommodation, residential rehabilitation or transitional housing to safely accommodate Aboriginal people in South Australia. We need a housing strategy that contains clear targets for the housing system to provide the homes that South Australia needs and can afford, with specific consideration of Aboriginal people, in all types of accommodation – social housing, private rental and home ownership.

5. A more culturally appropriate justice system

Policy and guidelines must be developed to enable courts to sentence Aboriginal people to treatment or home detention, without prison, to reduce the harms associated with incarceration.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours faithfully

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We acknowledge and respect the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the ancestral lands we live and work on and their deep feelings of attachment and relationship to country