

## More housing for Queensland remote communities

Written by Tim Mander

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Brisbane 5 July 2013. More than 150 remote indigenous houses have been built in Queensland over the past 12 months under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH).

Touring new houses in Aurukun and Napranum today, Housing Minister Tim Mander said the new homes would boost the standard of housing in remote communities and help reduce overcrowding.

“The lack of suitable accommodation in remote communities means too many people are forced to endure substandard or overcrowded conditions,” Mr Mander said.

“Having access to safe and affordable housing is crucial to all aspects of life. Kids can’t grow up healthy and get a good education without a safe and stable home environment.

“New homes like the ones we’ve built over the past 12 months are a critical part of closing the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.”

Mr Mander said the delivery of 152 properties last financial year was a significant increase on

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prior years and marked the beginning of a surge which would continue for the next three years.

“Next year we plan to deliver an additional 175 homes, with 186 the year after and 180 the year after that,” he said.

Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs Glen Elmes said the social housing program was an important part of the Newman Government’s efforts to improve the stability and sustainability of discrete Indigenous communities.

“We are working with communities to develop economic opportunities and increase employment options, which wouldn’t be possible without suitable housing for people,” Mr Elmes said.

“Housing is a basic need which must be satisfied before other parts of a person’s well-being can be developed.

“My department, through the Remote Program Office in Cairns, plays a significant role in the provision of the housing through the work it does with land surveying, appropriate house design and overseeing the provision of essential services like roads, electricity and water.”

Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin said the Australian Government was making unprecedented investments in remote Indigenous housing.

“Since our National Partnership began in 2009, we have invested more than \$382 million in Queensland to support the construction and refurbishment of houses, employment related accommodation and ongoing property and tenancy management,” Ms Macklin said.

“In Queensland more than 320 new houses have now been built and more than 1,200 houses have been refurbished.

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“Our investment means more families in Indigenous communities across Queensland are living in decent housing.”

NPARIH is a 10 year partnership between the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments worth more than \$1.1 billion which will deliver 1,141 new properties and 1,216 upgrades over the life of the program.