



National Shelter

Aboriginal & Torres Strait

Islander Housing in Australia

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing¹

While there is a growing level of home ownership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Australia, there is also overrepresentation in cohorts of citizens experiencing homelessness and requiring affordable secure housing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up 3% of the general population but hold 18.3% of social housing tenancies² and constituting 25% of the clients accessing specialist homelessness services in 2016–17: an estimated 64,644 clients³. In 2016 15% of ATSI households in rural areas were deemed to be overcrowded, compared to 9.0% in urban areas.⁴ Indigenous Australians face complex struggles in all jurisdictions and without trying to oversimplify those complexities there are two key areas that must be addressed by national policy – urban housing and rural/remote housing. The majority (79%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households are urban and the focus of much policy and program development is on housing for people in remote communities. National Shelter acknowledges the depth of housing shortage in remote communities and the success of the Remote Partnership on Housing. We consider it to be a major infrastructure program, mainly across the remote north of Australia which should link to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility and policy. The requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acute in every area of Australia. We promote addressing this housing need across different geographic areas by including the following:

- 🚧 The National Partnership on Remote Housing (NPRH) and its predecessor the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH), be renegotiated for a further 10 years with States and Territories contributing on a dollar for dollar basis;

1 This document should be read in conjunction with National Shelter's Housing and Infrastructure Plan [insert link]

2 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia-2017/data>, supplementary table 4

3 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-2016-17/contents/client-groups-of-interest/indigenous-clients>

4 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Population%20Article~12>

- 🏠 An additional urban linkage strategy to allow for travel between remote and urban communities and the development of linked accommodation facilities in cities and towns used by remote communities;
- 🏠 NHHA allocate funding for an extra 20,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social housing dwellings by 2028;
- 🏠 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community housing providers (CHPs), including remote and non-remote local councils, be supported to play a significant role in developing and managing additional housing;
- 🏠 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CHPs (IHOs) be engaged around capacity and capability through a specific strategy;
- 🏠 An audit of properties under IHO management and ownership be undertaken and funds for identified urgent maintenance be released without delay to enable the upgrade of substandard housing;
- 🏠 Australian, State and Territory governments engage in good faith with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their representatives over housing issues and to support access to private rental and home ownership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households;
- 🏠 To financially support the National Aboriginal Congress to auspice a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing peak body;
- 🏠 Acknowledging that mainstreaming of Aboriginal housing and services fails to uphold principles of self-determination and does not work as well as Aboriginal community controlled service provision; and
- 🏠 Australia needs an improved strategy to lift the levels of home ownership among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including reviewing the roles of:
 - Indigenous Business Australia
 - Banks and mortgage lenders

- The role shared equity products like Keystart⁵ can play to increase home ownership

⁵ <https://www.keystart.com.au/home-loans/shared/shared>