



Media Release
Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion
Leader of the Nationals in the Senate
Country Liberals Senator for the Northern Territory

More Labor lies on remote housing

Thursday 21 December 2017

Misleading and outrageous statements from Western Australian Labor Housing Minister Peter Tinley as well as South Australian Labor Housing Minister Zoe Bettison are undermining good faith negotiations between the Commonwealth and state governments about the future of remote housing.

Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion, said despite claims by the state Labor ministers, and despite the fact that housing still remains a state responsibility (last time we checked) no announcement or decision has been made by the Commonwealth Government to cease funding for remote housing.

“It is complete and utter nonsense to suggest that Commonwealth funding for housing is ceasing. This is a fiction created by certain Labor state ministers who are clearly trying to abrogate their own responsibility to their Indigenous housing tenants and it should be called out for what this is,” Minister Scullion said today.

“In fact, the Commonwealth commenced discussions with Western Australian Government officials only yesterday about a future funding contribution to remote Indigenous housing – clearly the hapless Peter Tinley is unaware of what his own department is doing.

“It is disappointing that after the first day of discussion, this incompetent Minister has decided to play politics rather than work cooperatively on future funding arrangements.

“The Commonwealth already supports public housing, which is a state and territory responsibility, to the tune of \$6 billion per year including \$1.5 billion per annum in direct payments to states and around \$4.5bn per annum through Commonwealth rent assistance.

“The states should prioritise some of the social housing funding for remote Indigenous residents. Why is there one standard for Indigenous residents and another for non-Indigenous residents?

“The National Partnership on Remote Housing was always scheduled to cease on 30 June 2018. Under the NPARH the Commonwealth paid the states \$5.4 billion to reduce overcrowding yet they abjectly failed to achieve this – this is why we are once again in

negotiation with the states.

“But the Commonwealth does not believe that the Western Australian Government should not take it’s responsibility for housing in Indigenous communities just like it does for housing of every other citizen in its state.

“Why is there one approach for Indigenous citizens and another for every other community?”

In contrast, the Northern Territory Government has taken responsibility and committed ongoing funding to remote Indigenous housing. That commitment, and the severe overcrowding in the Northern Territory, has meant the Commonwealth has been able to offer longer term funding.

Instead of playing politics with ‘indigenous Australia’, Peter Tinley and Zoe Bettison should take the time to work constructively with the Commonwealth on future funding arrangements.

Background on NPARIH/NPARH

- The Commonwealth Government provided \$5.4 billion over ten years to 2018 through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and the National Partnership for Remote Housing. This was a one-off National Partnership Agreement to assist states to undertake their own responsibilities for the delivery of housing to reduce overcrowding and increase housing amenity.

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