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NACCHO URGES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS HOUSING

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) which represents 143 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across Australia today urged the Federal government to invest in remote Indigenous housing.

Ministers from South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia have recently expressed concern that the Federal government will not renew the current Commonwealth State funding agreement for Indigenous Housing.

Mr John Singer, Chairperson of NACCHO said, “the recent review of the current agreement provided to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet highlights the key role of safe and effective housing for Indigenous health. In fact, it makes this point in its very first sentence,” said John Singer. The review documents progress in the provision of Indigenous housing by the current funding agreement. It stresses the need for funded long-term maintenance programs to sustain the gains made as well as further investment to address the continued need. It also proposes ways to better monitor whether new funding is making a difference.

“Closing the Gap in health disadvantage requires action on many fronts. One of these is to improve living conditions for Indigenous people. Housing facilities needs to improve to raise Indigenous health outcomes. I have been to many communities where the housing for Indigenous people is actually a driver of poor health and creates a cycle of disadvantage,” said John Singer.

As acknowledged by the Turnbull government last month in their publication My Life, My Lead housing is just one well known and understood social cultural determinant factor along with education, employment, justice and income that impact on a person’s health and wellbeing at each stage of life.
“NACCHO believes that the evidence both in Australia and from international experts such as the UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples* is very clear, that a lack of adequate and functional housing as well as overcrowding remains a significant impediment to improving all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. It is critical to fix this situation now,” said John Singer.

**NACCHO Media contact Julian Fitzgerald 0413 982 224**


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