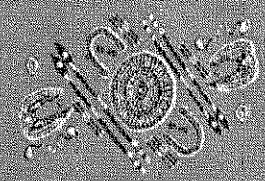


Provided at Alice Springs
29/4/08

Tangentyere Council Inc.
PO Box 8070
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871
Ph: (08) 8951 4222
Fax: (08) 8952 3521
Email: tangentyere@tangentyere.org.au



21 January 2008

The Hon. Jenny Macklin, MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and the Prime Minister in Darwin in December as part of your meeting with 25 Indigenous leaders from across the Northern Territory. This was an important indication of the government's willingness to sit down at the table together with Indigenous people.

The commitment made by you and the Prime Minister to meet regularly with this group and to bring Indigenous people into the process of the NT Emergency Response is particularly welcome. I believe that it is vital that people who are affected by decisions are involved in that decision making process. The Town Camp Housing Associations, and Tangentyere Council as their peak body, have always expressed their willingness to work with government, and see the election of a new Labor Government as an opportunity to move forward in true partnership to improve the lives of Indigenous people in the NT.

There are three areas that Tangentyere Council regards as priorities in enabling town camp residents to move forward. These are:

- The provision of safe and affordable housing through a partnership of Tangentyere Council, the Australian and NT governments, and housing industry experts;
- Strengthening families and creating environments where children are healthy, educated and safe;
- Economic opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The initiatives that Tangentyere believes will achieve sustainable outcomes in these areas are listed in the matrix that is attached herewith. Tangentyere Council has developed a number of more detailed papers on particular key areas including income management, child safety, night patrols and CDEP, which can be forwarded to you on request. We have already sent you our proposal for a Central Australian Affordable Housing Company, which relates to the first priority above and which is outlined in the table.

Tangentyere Council's support the Labor Government's comments on the need for evidence based policy and programs. Tangentyere Council attempts to document good practice, build on what has worked, and collect data on issues that affect Indigenous people. To this end we have established a Research Hub that works in partnership with three university partners, the National Drug Research Institute (Curtin University of Technology), the Centre for Social Research (Edith Cowan University) and the Centre for Remote Health (Flinders University and Charles Darwin University).

You may also be aware that the Northern Territory Government established a Town Camp Task Force late in 2005 that comprised of representatives from Local, Territory and Commonwealth Governments and local community organisations. The taskforce examined and assessed the social conditions relating to Alice Springs town camps and identified key areas of concerns to Town Camp resident, service delivery agencies and the wider Alice Springs community and finalised a report in June 2006 tabling a number of recommendations that we support. While few recommendations have been implemented, there are some that remain outstanding, that require commonwealth implementation and I ask that you read the comprehensive report and follow up these outstanding matters.

Tangentyere Council is committed to working with all levels of government and the community sector and private enterprise where appropriate to create conditions whereby Aboriginal people are able to accept opportunities to improve their lives and those of their children.

Yours sincerely



William Tilmouth
Executive Director

Attachment

cc: The Hon Nicola Roxon MP, Minister for Health and Aging, via email: Nicola.Roxon.MP@aph.gov.au
The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for Housing, via email: Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au
The Hon Warren Snowdon MP, Member for Lingiari via email: Warren.Snowdon.MP@aph.gov.au
Senator Rachel Siewert, Australian Greens, via email: senator.siewert@aph.gov.au
The Hon Paul Henderson MLA, Northern Territory Chief Minister, via email: chiefminister.nt@nt.gov.au
The Hon Elliot McAdam MLA, Northern Territory Housing Minister, via email: minister.mcadam@nt.gov.au

INTERVENTION POSITION OF TANGENTYERE COUNCIL

AG- Australian Government NTG - Northern Territory Government

MEASURE	TANGENTYERE COUNCIL	AG* /NTG
<p>Town Camp Leases.</p> <p>No notices for acquisition of town camps have been served. Previous government rejected proposed 20 year lease.</p>	<p>Tangentyere Council has proposed that existing Housing Associations sublease houses for 20 years to a new jointly managed entity, Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAH).</p> <p>CAAH would have six Housing Associations representatives, one Australian Government representative, one NT government representative, and two independent housing experts, one of whom would act as Chair.</p> <p>Security of tenure for White Gate and Namatjira Camps</p>	<p>Australian Govt Consider in 12 month review</p> <p>Supports effective partnerships with lessors and negotiated outcomes.</p>
<p>Housing</p> <p>(see above)</p>	<p>Evaluate housing tenders based upon delivery of training and employment opportunities to Aboriginal communities rather than on price and speed of construction. Houses must be buildable and cost effective utilising Indigenous employment based on the Central remote and town camp model.</p> <p>Funding for Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) of housing to establish evidence of successful and/or failed housing design and construction. Make POEs an essential part of housing procurement.</p> <p>Inclusion in all Commonwealth and NT Government housing tenders requirements for detailed consultation with communities and residents regarding housing needs. Develop a portfolio of housing designs that meet health and cultural objectives and are cost effective, in consultation with communities and town camps.</p> <p>Amend housing procurement processes to minimise spending on Capital Works Project Managers and maximise spending on actual housing infrastructure. Go straight to the housing providers.</p> <p>Re-commence the Connecting Neighbours Program, to upgrade infrastructure on town camps. A financial allocation was made to the NT government to undertake this work. All mapping and planning work was undertaken but the work itself has been put on hold.</p>	<p>Australian Govt Evaluate progress in 12 month review.</p>

<p>Welfare (income management)</p> <p>Income management began on town camps in Alice Springs on 7 January 2008</p>	<p>At present, 2 systems, income management and Centre Pay operate. This is extremely expensive on Centrelink resources, and also places demands on community organisations. Abolish Income management as a separate system and incorporate a predominantly voluntary system under Centre Pay, without the fees currently associated with Centrepay.</p> <p>Compulsory income management through Centre Pay to be based on a system that identifies those people, possibly through the court system, who are not looking after their children, perpetrating family violence, or who are abusing drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>Tangentyere Voluntary Nutrition Account to be supported and replicated.</p> <p>Support organizations/ communities to meet costs of voluntary income management (Tangentyere Council employs one full time person to manage a voluntary system that has provided approximately 850 food vouchers per fortnight, and over 15,000 food vouchers per year).</p> <p>Strengthen financial counseling and education programs. Legislate against key cards and pin numbers being held by dealers (second persons).</p> <p>Provide a local complaints system with an attached interpreter service to enable people to have their complaints resolved.</p> <p>Food Voucher bus to be funded to provide transport for clients to access supermarkets, Centrelink and banks.</p> <p>Provide regional banking services in remote communities to enable people to become familiar with mainstream banking and money management practices (Ref. S.McDonnell "Chasing the Money Story: An Evaluation of the Tangentyere Bank Pilot Project and its relevance to indigenous Communities in Central Australia." CAEPR Working Paper No. 21/2003. ISSN 1442-3871, ISBN 0 7315 4920 1).</p>	<p>Australian Govt Consider welfare measures in 12 month review.</p>
--	---	---

<p>CDEP / real jobs economic development</p> <p>Tangentyere CDEP was terminated in November 2007.</p>	<p>Support retention of modified CDEP by ensuring positions are project based (not government services), contribute to job readiness, and are time limited.</p> <p>Support rollout of <u>real jobs</u> that have been undertaken with CDEP participants and provide mentoring of new employees.</p> <p>Ensure that procurement policy includes training and employment of local indigenous people in all Government NTG/Commonwealth Contracts i.e. housing construction, infrastructure, roads, etc..</p> <p>Outsource wherever possible appropriate government contracts to proven Aboriginal organisations, eg. aged care, employment services, etc.</p>	<p>Australian Govt</p> <p>Retain / reinstate and modify CDEP.</p> <p>Commitment over 5 years of \$90M to train and employ and additional 300 Indigenous rangers, \$50M to expand the Indigenous Protected Areas Program, \$10M to enhance Indigenous participation in carbon trading.</p>
<p>Government Business Management.</p> <p>No government business managers have been appointed to Alice Springs town camps.</p>	<p>Empower communities to have to have agency in the decision that affects them via democratically elected councils that are provided with executive support and training.</p>	<p>Australian Govt Consider in 12 month review</p>
<p>Racial Discrimination. Act</p>	<p>Remove RDA exclusions</p> <p>Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>Enact Human Rights Bill for Australia</p>	<p>Australian Govt</p> <p>Remove RDA exclusions (legal advice suggests many measures unlikely to be RDA compliant).</p>
<p>Funding of Intervention measures</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate the targeting and outcomes of spending.</p> <p>Less spending on fly in fly out bureaucrats and more on positive local programs.</p> <p>Work with community organisations to spend money effectively on programs and services that have a proven track record.</p> <p>Formulate evidence based funding.</p>	<p>Australian Govt Consider current funding in 12 month review</p>

<p>Alcohol and Pornography.</p> <p>All town camps have been declared dry. Very large signs have been placed at the entrance to town camps specifying prohibition of pornography and alcohol.</p>	<p>One alcohol free day per week in Alice Springs</p> <p>Establish pricing benchmark for alcohol units</p> <p>Work with Liquor Commission to establish dry houses and public areas in town camps</p> <p>Establish and fund regional transport strategy to reduce number of people 'stranded' in Alice Springs</p> <p>Do away with invasive signs which serve to denigrate Indigenous people even further</p> <p>Establish outreach programs for drug and alcohol related problems.</p> <p>Develop programs that encourage responsible drinking and learning to live with alcohol.</p>	<p>Australian Govt Consider in 12 month review.</p> <p>NT Govt Against \$100 law needing to show ID</p>
<p>Policing</p>	<p>Support extra police but monitor and improve police practice, including training and cultural awareness training</p> <p>Strengthen and securely fund locally controlled Aboriginal community patrols</p> <p>Establish independent police complaints body as check and balance to extra powers.</p>	<p>Australian Govt Continue extra policing. Commitment of \$200M for an additional 500 Federal police officers in the next 5 years. Will implement an Indigenous Australia AFP recruitment strategy</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Town camps to have control of screening families for early childhood health and chronic disease management.</p> <p>Family Well Being programs to be available on all town camps. Men's Health Programs on town camps</p> <p>Town camp based "strong mothers strong babies" programs</p> <p>Environmental Health Programs developed by town campers for town camps.</p> <p>Ensure longevity of the successful Fixing Houses for Better Health program.</p> <p>Review NT Health Framework agreement to ensure additional participation from consumers, especially town camp residents.</p> <p>Tangentyere to be recognized in its role of Health Promotion, Health Prevention and Environmental Health on Town Camps and also to be recognized in its role in Injury Prevention and Indigenous research in Town Camps and Central Australia.</p>	<p>Aust Govt Aims to eliminate the 17 year gap in life expectancy within a generation. At least halve the rate of Indigenous infant mortality within a decade.</p>

Children	<p>The Federal Government establish a body to develop a national child protection strategy</p> <p>Federal Government and Territory Government develop sustainable bilateral agreements to fund out of home care, with an emphasis on out of home care provision for and by Aboriginal people.</p> <p>All Child Protection Staff attend and satisfactorily complete accredited cross cultural practice workshops.</p> <p>Provide continued funding for Tangentyere's highly regarded Safe Families program.</p> <p>Extend Aboriginal Child Care placement principles to residential facilities and appropriately resource such facilities.</p>	<p>Aust Govt Commitment of \$261M to early childhood development, child and maternal health, parenting support, and intensive literacy and numeracy.</p>
Education	<p>Engage with communities to provide appropriate education services (models like Larapinta Learning Centres and Hidden Valley Community Centre to be replicated)</p> <p>Town camps resourced to deliver child care centres as part of community centres to support early childhood education and development.</p>	<p>Aust Govt At least halve the difference between Indigenous and non Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks within 10 years. Pay for teachers for 2000 NT Indigenous children not enrolled in schools currently.</p>
Youth	<p>Provide sustainable youth services, particularly diversionary programs, for town camps and remote communities, that are resourced sufficiently to allow for ongoing staffing, involvement of families and communities, meaningful and culturally relevant activities, and involvement of role models, to be provided by local representative and community accepted organisations.</p>	
Permits	<p>Support retention of permits. Permit free access for journalists not simple (need to consult with land councils) and Lease Holders (SPL) ensure all screening of all people who are issued with permits i.e. Hawkers, Art Dealer, Transport and permit holders to be accountable to other measures and legislation, eg. public health act for hawkers.</p>	<p>Aust Govt Retain/reinstate but allow journalists and doctors permit free access</p> <p>NT Govt Support retention of permits</p>

Community Stores	<p>Ensure a pricing structure that encourages good nutrition and value for money.</p> <p>Ensure consumer rights and protection.</p> <p>Provide access to financial counseling services and to regional banking services in remote communities to enable people to become familiar with mainstream banking and money management practices. (Ref. S.McDonnell "Chasing the Money Story: An Evaluation of the Tangentyere Bank Pilot Project and its relevance to Indigenous Communities in Central Australia." CAEPR Working Paper No. 21/2003. ISSN 1442-3871, ISBN 0 7315 4920 1)</p>	Aust Govt Consider in 12 month review
Intervention Outcomes	<p>Scrap taskforce and establish working party with local Aboriginal representation (Town Campers) and a long term development plan.</p> <p>Need to inject community respect and community engagement in process.</p> <p>Complementary measures on child protection such as the Tangentyere Safe Families program.</p>	<p>Aust Govt Establish NT working party</p> <p>NT Govt Closing the Gap' response with funded initiatives</p>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of all intervention measures and spending in inclusive and transparent way</p> <p>Include monitoring and evaluation measures to capture unintended outcomes</p> <p>Tangentyere is about to commence its own research on the impact of the intervention on town camps residents, employing local indigenous researchers.</p>	Aust Govt Conduct 12 month review of the intervention

* Information on Australian Government commitments taken from a letter from NT Senator the Hon Trish Crossin to NTCOSS on 22 November 2007, outlining Labor Party commitments in relation to the NT Emergency Response.