



**Aboriginal Peak
Organisations**
NORTHERN TERRITORY

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday May 14, 2024

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory welcomes the investment into community safety and education.

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) welcomes the recent investments in housing, community safety and education announced in yesterday's Territory budget. However, APO NT emphasises the need for a more comprehensive approach to meet the socio-economic targets outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CtG).

While the budget initiatives are welcome, APO NT highlights that they fall short of addressing key recommendations from the Productivity Commission's review. The review pointed to significant setbacks, including declining progress on eight of the 17 CtG targets, and a concerning rise in adult imprisonment rates – the highest nationally.

Health

The investment in health, while modest, is recognised for its long-term benefits, especially when combined with improved housing. This collaborative effort is expected to significantly improve overall well-being and stability within communities, leading to a healthier future.

Community Safety

Increased police presence alone won't guarantee safer communities. APO NT emphasises the importance of directing police funding towards a flexible and culturally sensitive community policing model. This model should prioritise ongoing cross-cultural training for officers, fostering respectful relationships with remote communities, and expanding the Aboriginal community police workforce.

Women's Safety

The concurrent announcement of funding for domestic violence initiatives and women's prisons is seen as concerning. This approach undermines progress in addressing the root causes of domestic violence through preventative and supportive measures, rather than relying solely on punitive responses.

Education

We welcome the investment in education and express their eagerness to collaborate with the Department of Education on culturally responsive programs. Empowering Aboriginal youth through such programs is crucial for their success.

Economic Development

NTIBN views the budget as prioritising punishment over preventative measures. The focus on police, prisons, and work camps overlooks wealth generation, economic development opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians, and job creation on country.

"The recent Northern Territory budget included some positive steps forward, particularly investments in housing, education, and community safety. However, to truly address the challenges facing Aboriginal communities, a more comprehensive approach aligned with Closing the Gap targets is needed. We at APO NT remain committed to working collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure long-term solutions and empower our communities through culturally-responsive programs and economic development opportunities." - Mrs. Nicole Hucks, Acting CEO, APO NT



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About APO NT: The Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory is a formal alliance that, through its membership, represents the majority of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. The alliance was formed to provide a more effective response to key issues of joint interest and concern affecting Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, including working in genuine partnership with governments to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians. The alliance comprises the Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), Central Land Council (CLC), Northern Land Council (NLC), Tiwi Land Council (TLC), Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC), Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) and the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NT IBN).

MEDIA: Interviews with spokespeople can be organised by contacting secretariat@apont.org.au