

Katherine has been overlooked on short-stay visitor accommodation – it is time to put this right

We, the organisations listed below, have come together to seek a commitment from all parties contesting the August election that they will, if elected, deliver appropriate short-stay visitor accommodation for the Katherine / Big Rivers region.

With a service footprint the size of Tasmania and Victoria combined, Katherine is a major regional hub, yet it does not have visitor accommodation infrastructure in place needed for Aboriginal visitors coming to town from outlying communities.

With a homelessness rate 31 times the national average, people visiting Katherine for medical treatment should not have to sleep by the riverbed.

Short-stay visitor accommodation is already in place or has been committed to in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. For unknown reasons, Katherine has been overlooked and neglected.

The costs of homelessness, including frequent attender presentations at Katherine emergency department, are high. It makes good economic sense to provide safe and secure visitor accommodation. But most importantly, it is the right thing to do.

The people of the Katherine Big Rivers region are no less deserving of a culturally appropriate, safe, and affordable place for visitors to stay when coming to town. We call on all parties to heed the lessons of Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Darwin and work with local community organisations to put this right once and for all.

