

Aboriginal voices to speak up strongly for better housing

ABORIGINAL voices will be heard loud and clear in the Northern Territory's housing reform discussion, thanks to a memorandum of understanding between NT Shelter and Aboriginal Housing NT.

The agreement is the first between an Aboriginal and a mainstream peak body in Australia and was signed in mid-July.

It aims to help both organisations to work well together as they tackle the Northern Territory's housing crisis.

Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) is the Territory's first Aboriginal housing peak body. Its members are Aboriginal organisations that represent town camps, outstations, homelands and remote communities, such as Ingkerreke Services in Alice Springs.

"It's an exciting time for Ingkerreke Services to be a member of Aboriginal Housing NT," Maria Thompson, a director of both AHNT and Ingkerreke Services, said.

"With the recent launch of the AHNT strategic plan and the signing of a memorandum of understanding with NT Shelter, real progress toward



Lawson Broad from NT Shelter and Leeanne Caton from Aboriginal Housing NT signed the memorandum of understanding in July at Parliament House in Darwin. Centre: Minister Chansey Paech.

better housing for Aboriginal people is underway."

NT Shelter Executive Officer, Peter McMillan, said together the two organisations are stronger than if they worked separately.

"In signing this memorandum we formally

recognise and confirm our support for AHNT. We wish them every success and rest assured we will be there with you for the journey."

He said NT Shelter wants "to grow strong, lasting partnerships that result in effective advocacy and the

identification of solutions that can address housing need".

The challenge is enormous, with one out of every five Aboriginal Territorians homeless and eight out of every 10 living in severely overcrowded houses.

A recent inquiry into

homelessness in Australia by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs recommended to include Aboriginal views more strongly in the development of solutions to the housing crisis.

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