

Written Questions – Town Camps
Department of Local Government and Community Services

1. What data does the department keep on the outcomes of its housing maintenance grants?
 - Maintenance logs are also collected from each service provider. These logs contain information which is specific to works undertaken and completed. The department is able to clearly see outcomes of housing maintenance grants through the reports. Inspections are undertaken by technical officers within town camps to monitor the quality of the works undertaken by service providers.
 - b. What variation in results can be seen from this data?
 - Variation indicates the level of activity. The data enables the department to identify infrastructure requiring maintenance and can assist in identifying the condition of assets. Trending is achieved through the data within the maintenance logs and workplace inspections.
 - c. What conclusions can be drawn from those variations?
 - The data provides an understanding of the priority work that's been undertaken by the service provider and enables the department's technical officers to evaluate work quality and capacity.
2. The Department of Local Government and Community Services has announced new funding to be provided to the Elliott Town Camps for Repairs and Maintenance (functional refurbishment).
 - a. How much of the \$3M has been committed specifically to the 13 houses in the Town Camps due to be refurbished?

The entire \$3M has been allocated to refurbish (including where feasible extending current properties) in 48 houses in Elliott Town Camps, north, south and Marlinja Outstation.
 - b. Is the provision of funding reliant on changes to the land tenure of Elliott Town Camps?
 - No
3. Has the department engaged in negotiations to increase funding with leaseholders of town camps other than Elliott?
 - No
 - b. If so, what was the outcome of these negotiations?
 - N/A
4. The Homelands Program funding agreements are due to expire at the end of June 2016. Can you provide any information on future funding for the town camps currently funded through Homelands Program Grants?
 - All Homelands Program funding agreements have been extended for a further 12 months.
5. The department provides grants to Yilli Rreung Housing Aboriginal Corporation to deliver repairs and maintenance to seven town camps.
 - a. What processes does the department have in place to ensure that the correct amount of funding is spent on each of the town camps?
 - Funding allocated for each town camp provided to service providers is based on need. In almost all instances needs from house to house will vary and service providers will work with residents to allocate the funding. Maintenance logs are also collected from each service provider. These logs

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contain information which is specific to works undertaken and completed. The department is able to clearly see outcomes of housing maintenance grants through the reports. Inspections are undertaken by technical officers within town camps to monitor the quality of the works undertaken by service providers.

6. The majority, if not all, houses on town camps are held by housing associations by perpetual leases.
- a. What rights, responsibilities and interests does the Department of Local Government have in relation to the houses on town camps?
 - The Department of Local Government and Community Services does not have any rights. Town Camps are essentially private lease holdings.
 - Key arrangements such as the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (signed in 2010), and the National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures Northern Territory (signed in 2012), have provided the platform through which Town Camp residents have received support such as housing repairs and maintenance, and municipal and essential services.
 - Town Camps are considered as privately owned under the lease arrangements;
 - residents are responsible for meeting the costs and upkeep of their houses and shared facilities with a contribution provided by the Northern Territory Government.
 - The department makes a contribution towards upkeep and maintenance of the houses through the Housing Maintenance program. Included as part of the contribution is Municipal and Essential Services program funding contribution.
 - b. Does the Department of Local Government and Community Services have policy responsibility for houses on town camps?
 - The Department of Local Government and Community Services has recently taken over administrative responsibility for all town camps. Policy in relation to housing on town camps is the responsibility of the lease holder, working with the residents.
 - c. Does the Department of Local Government and Community Services have any responsibility for the regulation of housing associations?
 - While the Department of Local Government and Community Services has administrative responsibility, regulation of housing associations rests with the Department of Business.
 - d. Does the Department of Business have any responsibility for the regulation of housing associations?
 - Yes, as advised above in question c.
 - e. Does the Department of Local Government and Community Services work with the Department of Business to promote proper governance of housing associations?
 - Yes, the Department of Local Government and Community Services does work closely with the Department of Business.
 - As previously discussed during the department's appearance at the Public Accounts Committee, the independent Town Camp review will be undertaken by a third party and will assess each of the 43 funded Town Camps located in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Elliot, Borroloola, Jabiru, Pine Creek and Mataranka.

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- The review will assess these Town Camps with reference to land tenure status, housing asset condition, existing infrastructure condition, economic opportunities, home ownership, and capacity of lease holders to take responsibility for obligations under relevant legislation and funding agreements.
- This will provide further insight into housing association governance.