

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Housing & Homelands:

Houses in Yirrkala

1. I have great concerns across our communities that the new houses are very hot and require people to run Air Conditioning all day and night – impacting on cost of living and environmental concerns.

We need houses that have more under cover outdoor living spaces, bigger bedroom spaces for families, more bathrooms. As well as cooler houses. What consultation is happening about the ongoing building of houses in our communities?

2. The houses that have been built most recently in Yirrkala are built very close together. This is a very poor design for large Yolŋu families, and there is no space for ceremonies. What was the community consultation process around the design of these houses?
3. What are the processes to address issues like these after the work has been completed? And how can we avoid these problems in future designs?

RESPONSE

In response to questions 1, 2 and 3, Yirrkala is receiving significant investment as part of the 'Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes.' \$2.1 billion joint Remote Housing Investment Program between the Northern Territory Government and the Australian Government. Yirrkala will receive 40 homes in total, which includes 33 new homes being built in the new subdivision through the HomeBuild program. A further 7 homes will be built throughout the community. In addition, 38-bedrooms are programmed to be added to existing homes through the Room to Breathe program, with 12-bedrooms complete.

Multiple community consultations have been held with local decision makers from Yirrkala and key stakeholders with regards to the design of the new homes to be built under the program, including the location and size of the lots in the new subdivision, along with intensive consultation with the tenants of the homes receiving modifications in the Room to Breathe program. Consultation continues to occur with the community around the ongoing construction of new housing in Yirrkala, through the Housing Reference Group.

All new homes have an energy efficiency rating between 6.5 and 7.9-star energy rating, which is above Northern Territory minimum requirement of 5-star energy rating.

Increasing the lot and house size would result in significant cost increases and would therefore reduce the number of homes able to be built in the community, and would exacerbate current levels of overcrowding in Yirrkala.

At commencement of the program in 2018, the proportion of overcrowded homes in Yirrkala was 57 per cent. This has reduced to 49 per cent as a result of the new homes built to date. With more new housing and extensions to existing homes yet to be delivered in the community, the overcrowding rate will progressively reduce as the program is delivered.