

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2013-14 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 7

**Question No:** 427

**Topic:** Alice Springs Town Camps

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Scullion** asked:

In relation to the \$150 million Alice Springs town camps plan - can you tell me:

1. How many new houses and how many refurbishments have been completed will stop how much do they cost?
2. How much was spent on infrastructure like roads sewerage etc?
3. How many indigenous people were employed on the projects and how many remain off benefit and in full-time employment as a result?
4. The lease between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory government for the town camps was due to expire at the end of the year. What is the current state of play?
5. What are the terms of the new lease? How much is the Commonwealth paying the Northern Territory government to continue to manage the properties?
6. Can you explain why the Alice Springs Town Council is not providing municipal services for the town camps when they do for other parts of Alice Springs?
7. Is it true that this major subdivision off Larapinta Drive to the east of Alice Springs is not at all weather accessible and because of this the council has refused to provide municipal services?
8. Was Tangentyere Council promised \$380,000 by the Minister to manage the town associations? Has this money been paid? If not, why not?
9. Could you tell me the cost of the temporary accommodation facility to the south of Alice Springs? Why is the average occupancy rate only 50 per cent?

**Answer:**

1. Eighty-six new houses, 103 rebuilds and 93 refurbishments were completed in the Alice Springs town camps. Details of costs will not be known until the Northern Territory Government releases the cost details.
2. As infrastructure works are in their final stages and commercial closure is incomplete, the total cost of housing and infrastructure cannot be provided. The Northern Territory Government will release details once completed.
3. There were 92 Indigenous people employed in Alice Springs and 13 transitioned to other employers. Current employment status post transition is not monitored.
4. In December 2012, the Australian and Northern Territory governments agreed to a one-year extension of the three-year Housing Management Agreements over 17 of the Alice Springs town camps.

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In the recently agreed Municipal and Essential Services and Alice Springs Transformation Implementation Plans under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement, the Australian and Northern Territory governments committed to negotiating longer-term arrangements for the Northern Territory to enter into and hold under-leases over the Alice Springs town camps, prior to the current leases expiring on 2 December 2013. In the event that the negotiations are not completed by this date, both governments have agreed that leases currently in place will be periodically extended until such time as the arrangements are completed.

5. The one-year extension is on the same terms as the original three-year Housing Management Agreement. The Northern Territory Government, under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement, has agreed to take fiscal responsibility for municipal and essential services in the Alice Springs town camps from 1 July 2012. The Northern Territory Government is also responsible for delivering housing services in the Alice Springs town camps in line with the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The Northern Territory Government also receives rent from tenants, which is put back into the management of houses.

6. The Northern Territory Government, under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement, has taken fiscal responsibility for municipal and essential service delivery to all Alice Springs town camps since 1 July 2012.

The Northern Territory Government has entered into contractual arrangements with the Alice Springs Town Council to provide weekly rubbish collection services to all households within the Alice Springs town camps.

7. On the assumption the question refers to Larapinta Valley town camp, the arrangements for this town camp are the same as in the response to question 6 above.

8. The Department is not aware of any previous specific funding commitment to Tangentyere Council for the administration of the town camps. The Department, together with the Executive Director of Township Leasing and Tangentyere Council, are in discussions about funding to support the administration of the town camp Housing Associations and Aboriginal Corporations in line with the terms of the subleases over 17 town camps in Alice Springs.

9. A total of \$11 million was funded under the Alice Springs Transformation Plan to construct the 150-bed Ampere Mwerre Visitor Park, which opened 2 February 2011.

The Ampere Mwerre Visitor Park was constructed to manage high volumes of visitors during peak times such as sporting events and school holidays periods. Ampere Mwerre Visitor Park has been operating for 27 months, of which there have been 16 months where occupancy rates have exceeded 70 per cent, ranging from 73 to 103 per cent and five months where occupancy rates ranged from 56 to 69 per cent.