

TANGENTYERE
COUNCIL
REPORT
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Senate Inquiry into Newstart and Related Payments

Adequacy of Payments and
Alternative Mechanisms to
Determine the Level of Income
Support Payments in Australia

WORKING
TOGETHER
WALKING
TOGETHER

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1.Executive Summary

Tangentyere Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into the adequacy of Newstart and related payments and alternative mechanisms to determine the level of income support payments in Australia.

TCAC will reflect upon the circumstance of jobseekers residing on the Alice Springs Town Camps and the broader region encompassed by Community Development Program Region 23. This region encompasses the Town Camps, Amoonguna and several Family Outstations/Homelands.

Responses to the criteria will be relevant to a broader region including: (1) the MacDonnell, Central Desert and Barkly Regional Councils; (2) the Anangu Pitjantjara Yankunytjatjara Lands; and (3) the Ngaanyatjarra Council. This assumption is based on knowledge gained through having a large service footprint and due to mobility between remote Central Australia and Alice Springs.

The TCAC submission will address several criteria as outlined by the inquiry terms of reference including (f), (g), (h), (j) and (l). These criteria are outlined below:

- f. the impact of the current approach to setting income support payments on older unemployed workers, families, single parents, people with disability, jobseekers, students, First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people living in regional and remote areas, and any others affected by the process;
- g. the impact of geography, age and other characteristics on the number of people receiving payments, long term unemployment and poverty;
- h. the adequacy of income support payments in Australia and whether they allow people to maintain an acceptable standard of living in line with community expectations and fulfil job search activities (where relevant) and secure employment and training;
- i. the economic benefits – including job creation, locally and nationally – of increasing and improving income support payments and supports, and decreasing poverty and inequality;
- j. the interactions with other payments and services, including the loss of any increased payments through higher rents and costs

In considering these criteria TCAC will reflect upon several relevant areas including the costs associated with: (1) Public Housing; (2) Energy Security; (3) Climate Change/Heat Mitigation; (4) Transport; and (5) Digital Delivery of Government Services.

2. Background

Tangentyere Council is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation that delivers human services and operates social enterprises for the benefit of Aboriginal people from Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia.

2.1. Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC)

TCAC is a community controlled Public Benevolent Institution delivering human services and social enterprise activities for the benefit of Aboriginal people from the Town Camps, Urban Alice Springs and Central Australia. TCAC was first incorporated in 1979. Between 1979 and August 2015 TCAC was incorporated under the Associations Act 2008 (NT). To comply with the Commonwealth Government requirement for Indigenous organizations to be incorporated under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI) in order to receive Indigenous Advancement Strategy funding in excess of \$500,000, TCAC transferred incorporation to the CATSI Act. TCAC transferred incorporation on the 14th August 2015. The organization was a finalist in the 2016 Reconciliation Australia, Indigenous Governance Awards and is one of the 8 largest Aboriginal Corporations in Australia.

The Corporate Members of TCAC are the Town Camp Housing Associations/Aboriginal Corporations and the members of these Associations/Aboriginal Corporations are individual members of TCAC. Today, TCAC has >600 members. The TCAC Board of Directors is composed of the elected Presidents of the Alice Springs Town Camp Housing Associations/Aboriginal Corporations.

TCAC was formed to assist the Town Campers to gain legal tenure and in order to obtain water, electricity and housing. From 1979 until December 2009 TCAC operated as an Indigenous Community Housing Organisation (ICHO) and service provider.

In 2009, 11 Town Camp Housing Associations and 3 Aboriginal Corporations executed Tripartite Alice Springs Living Area Subleases with the Executive Director of Township Leasing (EDTL) on behalf of the Commonwealth and the CEO of Housing on behalf of the Territory. The EDTL then entered a Housing Management Agreement (underlease) with the Northern Territory Government making the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (DLGHCD) the Housing Authority for the Alice Springs Town Camps. TCAC demonstrated its adaptability to this changed circumstance by re-positioning itself as a Human Services Organisation and by developing and founding the Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAHC). CAAHC was the first nationally accredited community housing provider in the NT. TCAC together with its subsidiary Tangentyere Constructions & CAAHC have proposed to the EDTL a collective strategy for the development and implementation a Community Housing Model. Both the EDTL and the DLGHCD through the Town Camp Futures Unit are receptive to this proposal.

Currently TCAC provides a broad range of Human Services including: (1) Community Centers; (2) Youth Development; (3) Tenancy Support; (4) Aged; (5) Municipal and Essential Services; (6) Repairs and Maintenance; (7) Construction; (8) Child Protection and Wellbeing; (9) Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Minimisation; (10) Community Safety and Wellbeing; (11) Violence Prevention; and (12) Employment.

TCAC is committed to the employment and capacity development of Aboriginal people. 55% of the TCAC workforce of 273 people is Aboriginal. Inherent within TCAC employment of local Aboriginal people is the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). An emphasis on CPD means that the organisation is well placed to recruit and develop jobseekers.

2.2. Alice Springs Town Camps

The following table provides an overview of the TCAC Town Camp Corporate Members:

Figure 1: Alice Springs Town Camps, Incorporation and Tenure					
Name	Alias	Incorporated	Tenure	Lot	Executed
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	14/11/1974	SPL-438	5150	22/12/1977
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	16/07/1974	SPL-426	3702, 3704, 1733	12/08/1977
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	8/03/1974	SPL-412	5146	8/11/1976
Aper-Alwerrkng	Palmer's Camp	17/04/1977	SPL-459	5180	25/07/1979
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	11/08/1977	SPL-473	5189	30/01/1980
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	25/10/1979	SPL-493	5713	2/07/1980
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	17/11/1978	SPL-450	5149	30/01/1979
Ilyperenye	Old Timers	22/08/1977	SPL-550	5708	14/09/1981
Inarleng	Little Sisters	28/02/1978	Crown-1112	3701	11/06/1973
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	28/10/1992	n/a	n/a	n/a
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's Farm	n/a	SPL-554	5123	16/07/1976
Karnte	Karnte	11/07/1983	Crown- 1111	7850	1/02/1988
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's Camp	6/08/1986	n/a	0	n/a
Mount Nancy	Mount Nancy	16/07/1974	SPL-409	5135	16/07/1976
Mpwetyerre	Abbotts Camp	25/10/1979	SPL-543	2664	4/07/1980
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	6/02/1975	SPL-449	5152	28/12/1978
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	17/11/1978	SPL-536	5195	23/06/1981

Further details relevant to the detail of this inquiry will be considered under the key impact areas later in the submission.

2.3. Community Development Program Region 23

Tangentyere Employment Service (TES) is the Community Development Program (CDP) provider for CDP Region 23 including the Alice Springs Town Camps, Outstations and Amoonguna.

The caseload in Region 23 is predominately Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse. Aboriginal people living in Town Camps, Outstations and Amoonguna have a shared experience of multidimensional disadvantage.

TCAC recognises the social determinants of health and the relationship between the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and inequities in health and wellbeing. These determinants relate to social, economic, environmental and cultural conditions. TCAC considers that the current levels of income support are inadequate and that they contribute to poor public health and wellbeing outcomes.

These locations are at best on the outskirts of Alice Springs and in some cases can be considered remote. In the case of the Alice Springs Town Camps these locations are considered part of Alice Springs but unlike the rest of Alice Springs the amenity of the Town Camps is inconsistent with the surrounding suburbs.

Within Region 23 all recipients of Newstart and Youth Allowance are required to participate in the Community Development Program. Given that TCAC is the CDP provider for Region 23 it is well placed to reflect upon the number of individuals residing in this region who receive Newstart and Youth Allowance.

The following table outlines the number of CDP participants across Region 23 by individual location:

Figure 2: CDP Region 23 Participants by Location			
Name	Alias	Location Type	CDP Jobseekers
16 Mile Camp	Bond Springs	Outstation	3
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	Town Camp	10
Alatyeye	Turners Camp	Outstation	12
Alkupitja	Gillen Bore	Outstation	13
Amoonguna		CLA	108
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	Town Camp	21
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	Town Camp	14
Aper-Alwerrkng	Palmer's	Town Camp	6
Apmere Mwerre		Visitor	3
Artekerre	Harry Creek	Outstation	7
Black Tank Bore	n/a	Outstation	6
Corkwood Bore	Morris Dam	Outstation	17
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	Town Camp	69
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	Town Camp	17
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	Town Camp	10
Ilpeye-Ilpeye	Golders	Town Camp	14
Ilyperenye	Old Timers	Town Camp	21
Inarleng	Little Sisters	Town Camp	31
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	Town Camp	5
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's	Town Camp	2
Karnte	Karnte	Town Camp	15
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's	Town Camp	6
Mount Nancy		Town Camp	7
Mpwetyerre	Abbott	Town Camp	22
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	Town Camp	21
Percy Court		Transitional	4
Rural		Rural Suburbs	17
Undoolya Bore	Mount Undoolya	Outstation	5
Werre-Therre	Hamilton Downs	Outstation	12
Yamba-Mpweringe	Burt Creek	Outstation	12
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	Town Camp	41
Total			551

NB- Of this caseload 85% of individuals receive Newstart and 9% receive Youth Allowance. The remaining group receive payments including Parenting, Carer and Disability Payments.

The data outlined in Figure 2 can be directly compared with the ABS data for both Amoonguna Indigenous Location (ILO) and Alice Springs Town Camps Indigenous Area (IARE).

This comparison between Region 23 Community Development Program participants who are jobseekers and individuals defined as being 'unemployed', 'away from work' or employed 'part time' by the ABS highlights a significant discrepancy in population estimates. This is outlined below:

Figure 3: CDP and ABS Comparison		CDP	ABS 2011			
Name	Alias	Jobseekers	Unemployed	Away from Work	PTE	Total
Amoonguna		108	50	4	18	72
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	10	42	12	24	78
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	21				
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	14				
Aper-Alwerrkng	Palmer's	6				
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	69				
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	17				
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	10				
Ilpeye-Ilpeye	Golders	14				
Ilperenye	Old Timers	21				
Inarleng	Little Sisters	31				
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	5				
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's	2				
Karnte	Karnte	15				
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's	6				
Mount Nancy		7				
Mpwetyerre	Abbott	22				
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	21				
Yarreny Arltere	Larapinta Valley	41				
Apmere Mwerre		3				
Percy Court		4				
Total		447	92	16	42	150

At the time of writing this submission TES has 551 people on its caseload. On this basis the population of jobseekers as identified by the ABS is 34% of that identified by Centrelink and TCAC through the CDP caseload.

There is significant linguistic diversity in Region 23. The following table outlines the language groups present in Region 23.

Figure 4: CDP Region 23 Town Camps, Outstations, Communities and Language Groups			
Name	Alias	Location Type	Languages
16 Mile Camp	Bond Springs	Outstation	Arrernte
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	Town Camp	Warlpiri
Alatyeye	Turners Camp	Outstation	Arrernte
Alkupitja	Gillen Bore	Outstation	Arrernte
Amoonguna		Community	Arrernte
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	Town Camp	Arrernte, Anmatyerr
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Aper-Alwerrkng	Palmer's	Town Camp	Arrernte
Artekerre	Harry Creek	Outstation	Arrernte
Black Tank Bore	n/a	Outstation	Arrernte
Corkwood Bore	Morris Dam	Outstation	Arrernte
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	Town Camp	Arrernte, Pertame, Luritja
Iperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	Town Camp	Warlpiri
Ilpeye-Ilpeye	Golders	Town Camp	Arrernte
Ilyperenye	Old Timers	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Inarleng	Little Sisters	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	Town Camp	Arrernte
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's	Town Camp	Arrernte, Kaytetye, Anmatyerr, Alyawarr
Karnte	Karnte	Town Camp	Luritja, Pitjantjatjara
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's	Town Camp	Arrernte, Pertame, Luritja, Anmatyerr
Mount Nancy		Town Camp	Arrernte, Kaytetye, Anmatyerr, Alyawarr
Mpwetyerre	Abbott	Town Camp	Arrernte, Warlpiri, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara, Warumungu
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	Town Camp	Arrernte, Luritja
Undoolya Bore	Mount Undoolya	Outstation	Arrernte
Werre-Therre	Hamilton Downs	Outstation	Arrernte
Yamba-Mpweringe	Burt Creek	Outstation	Arrernte
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	Town Camp	Arrernte, Pertame, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara

Anecdotal evidence suggests that most jobseekers living on the Town Camps, Outstations and Amoonguna are language speakers. This anecdotal evidence is not necessarily consistent with Department of Human Services data on the subject. TCAC will seek to quantify the prevalence of language amongst its stakeholders.

2.4. Other Income Support Related Stressors

TCAC provided a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee for the inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program. In this submission we identified that research undertaken by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at the Australian National University (ANU) demonstrated that Aboriginal people living in remote and very remote areas are breached from income support payments at ~56 times the rate of income support recipients in urban areas. During this submission we identified that the primary reason for this level of breaching was related to the significant level of participation required from remote income support recipients in 'Work for the Dole' and other mutual obligation activities. Activity requirements for remote income support recipients are far higher than that of urban job seekers.

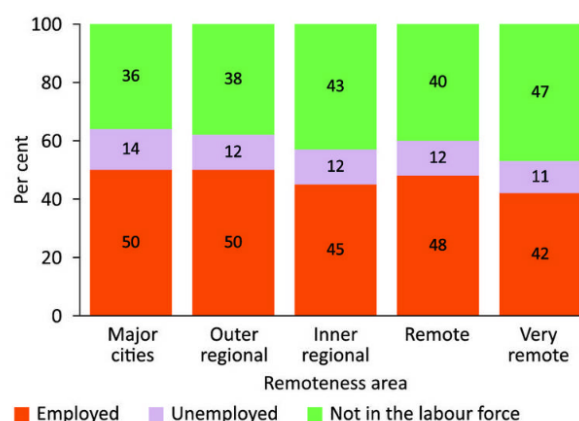
The rates of breaching and the number of people not receiving income support contributes to the low rates of income support and means that the income support safety net is failing. The failure of this safety net impacts significantly upon children, families and other areas such as tenancy sustainability. When a recipient's income support payments stop (even temporarily) all Income Management/Centrelink deductions stop. Stopped deductions result in debt including housing debts as rent deductions stop. This system can lead to significant additional financial stress on families who are already struggling financially, compounding other significant stressors they are often facing.

According to the following table only 42% of Aboriginal people aged 15-64 from very remote areas are employed, 11% are unemployed and the remainder are not in the labour force. Tangentyere is concerned that many people designated as 'not in labour force' simply don't receive any income. Once again, these figures and the following table have been outlined in our submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee for the inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program. It is felt that there are multiple determinants impacting upon these figures.

■ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
■ Non-Indigenous Australians

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2012-13
AATSIHS and 2012 SEW

Figure 2.07-3 Labour force status of Indigenous persons aged 15-64 years, by remoteness, 2012-13



3.Key Impact Areas

Aboriginal people from Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia are being impacted by the consequences of multidimensional disadvantage. The rates of income support are not adequate to promote positive public health and wellbeing outcomes. Rates of income support are too low, particularly in regional and remote areas.

3.1.Housing

The ability to obtain and to maintain housing reflects a major determinant of health and wellbeing. At present income support payments are inadequate to allow people to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The current level of payments undermines the sustainability of housing at the level of the individual, community and system.

The following table provides an overview of Town Camp housing to be considered in the context of rent.

Figure 5: Alice Springs Town Camp Housing								
Name	Alias	6 Beds	5 Beds	4 Beds	3 Beds	2 Beds	1 Bed	Total
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	0	0	4	6	5	0	15
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	0	1	5	7	6	0	19
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	0	0	3	7	5	0	15
Aper-Alwerrkngge	Palmer's Camp	0	0	0	5	2	0	7
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	0	0	7	32	8	0	47
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	0	0	6	7	0	0	13
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	0	0	1	6	2	0	9
Illyperenye	Old Timers	0	1	2	3	3	1	10
Inarlenge	Little Sisters	0	0	2	9	11	0	22
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's Farm	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Karnte	Karnte	0	0	2	13	4	0	19
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's Camp	0	0	1	9	4	0	14
Mount Nancy	Mount Nancy	1	0	0	4	6	0	11
Mpwetyerre	Abbotts Camp	0	0	4	2	0	0	6
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	1	2	4	9	10	0	26
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	0	0	4	22	8	0	34
Total		2	4	45	142	75	1	269

TCAC and its Corporate and Individual Members have concerns about rent affordability for residents of Urban, Town Camp and Remote Public Housing based on current levels of income support.

For the Town Camps (and Remote Communities) rent is currently based on the following table of maximum rents payable to the DLGHCD:

Figure 6: Remote Maximum Dwelling Rent				
Classification	4 Beds	3 Beds	2 Beds	1 Bed
New/Rebuilt	\$250	\$230	\$175	\$150
Refurbished	\$200	\$184	\$140	\$120
Existing	\$150	\$138	\$105	\$90

These maximum rents are significant when considered in the context of the current weekly single rate of Newstart which is \$278. TCAC acknowledges that rent is currently rebated to 25% of household income. On this basis a recipient of Newstart will be left with \$208.50 per week after paying rent. This amount is not enough to meet basic material needs let alone provide the basis for social and financial inclusion.

TCAC also considers that the current levels of income support will broadly challenge efforts to tackle the issue of multidimensional disadvantage at a population level on the Town Camps, Outstations and Remote Communities. Such low levels of income support mean that the work of development, implementation and operation of initiatives aligned with self-determination and community controlled are compromised. One example is in the development of sustainable Community Housing Models that balance individual material needs with the need for Community Housing Providers to collect rent in order to provide repairs and cyclical maintenance. Periodical upgrades and new housing stock also need to be considered.

TCAC considers that such low rates of income support lead to a disparity between the number of individuals residing in dwellings and how this is reported (to the DLGHCD and other agencies). The number of tenants is far lower than the number of residents identified by TCAC and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) including Aboriginal Medical Services. This mismatch may reflect a local strategy for the minimisation of rent on the basis that people are struggling financially. The acknowledgment of more tenants means that the value of 25% of household income climbs toward the maximum rent value. More rent reduces the availability of financial resources for other material needs. At present the true population of the Town Camps (and other locations) is hidden and is significantly underestimated. This masks demand for housing and services. Additionally, responsibility and risk are consolidated with a smaller number of residents than would otherwise be desirable.

The following table provides an overview of Population and Mobility (2005)¹ versus current reported tenant numbers. This table highlights the issue outlined above:

Figure 7: Alice Springs Town Camp Resident and Service Populations (2005) Versus Tenants (February 2005)				
Name	Alias	Residents	Service	Tenants (Feb 2019)
Akngwertnarre	Morris Soak	65	106	29
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Charles Creek	121	198	44
Anthepe Housing	Drive In	94	154	41
Aper-Alwerrkngge	Palmer's	51	83	19
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Hidden Valley	243	396	114
Ilparpa	Ilparpa	106	173	28
Ilperle Tyathe	Warlpiri	109	177	26
Ilyperenye	Old Timers	89	145	14
Inarlengge	Little Sisters	154	250	43
Irrkerlantye	White Gate	41	67	n/a
Itwiyethwenge	Basso's Farm	9	15	5
Karnte	Karnte	135	219	43
Lhenpe Artnwe	Hoppy's	167	272	30
Mount Nancy	Mount Nancy	63	102	20
Mpwetyerre	Abbotts Camp	74	156	13
Nyewente	Trucking Yards	148	241	57
Yarrenyty Arltere	Larapinta Valley	184	389	90
Total		1853	3143	616

¹ Foster, D, Mitchell, J, Ulrik, J and Williams, R 2005, Population and Mobility in the Town Camps of Alice Springs, A report prepared by Tangentyere Council Research Unit, Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Alice Springs.

It should also be noted that the 2005 figures reflect a period prior to the construction of an additional 86 dwellings as part of the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).

3.2. Environmental Health

Prior to December 2009 TCAC implemented repairs and maintenance in accordance with the National Indigenous Housing Guide (NIHG). The NIHG was developed by Health Habitat. TCAC partnered with Health Habitat on the Fixing Houses for Better Health (FHBH) and the Maintaining Houses for Better Health (MHBH) prior to the Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTNER) and the Subleases. Following the NTNER the Town Camps executed Tripartite Alice Springs Living Area Subleases with the Commonwealth and Territory Governments. The Tripartite Subleases had the impact of transitioning Town Camps from Community Housing managed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing Organisation (ACCHO) to Public Housing managed by the DLGHCD. This change resulted in the de-emphasis of some Health Living Practices (HLPs) and the NIHG in the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of Town Camp housing. Additionally, repairs and maintenance has tended to be 'responsive' rather than 'cyclical'.

The Health Living Practices are outlined below:

Figure 8: Healthy Living Practices	
Health Living Practices	Details
1. Washing People	Ensuring there is hot and cold water and that the shower and bath work;
2. Washing Clothes & Bedding	Ensuring the laundry is functional;
3. Removing Waste	Ensuring drains aren't blocked and that the toilets are working;
4. Improving Nutrition	Ensuring adequate infrastructure for food storage and preparation;
5. Reducing Overcrowding	Ensuring health hardware can cope with the actual number of residents.
6. Reducing the Impact of Vermin	Reducing the impacts of animals, vermin and insects on the health of people ² ;
7. Reducing Dust	Reducing dust ³ ;
8. Controlling Temperature	Ensuring adequate passive and mechanical cooling;
9. Reducing Trauma	Reducing trauma from non-life-threatening injury etc

The Centre for Appropriate Technology reported that the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) emphasised Safety and the first 4 HLPs at the expense of the remaining 5 HLPs in its report 'Housing Experience: Post Occupancy Evaluation of Alice Springs Town Camp Housing 2008-2011. Controlling the temperature of the living environment is HLP number 8.

The de-emphasis of 5 HLPs and changes to repairs and maintenance has resulted in the shifting of costs from the 'landlord' to the households themselves.

For example, houses built prior to December 2009 had solar hot water heaters installed. New houses constructed since December 2009 as part of SIHIP have electric hot water heaters. The reason for this change is about the cost of the construction process. The result is that the cost is shifted from the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development to the tenant. The outcome is increased power consumption and reduced energy security (this will be considered later).

Another HLP to suffer in the transfer from Community Housing to Public Housing is in the area of 'washing clothes and bedding'. TCAC purchased industrial washing machines for each household prior to SIHIP. These machines were included as part of the house and were maintained in the same way 'fixed' assets (e.g. water heaters and air conditioners) in recognition of their importance. With the transition from Community to Public Housing these machines have not been maintained by the DLGHCD. The lack of maintenance has meant that households have either had to replace their washing machines or that they

² Through ensuring adequate insect screens etc.

³ Reducing the prevalence of respiratory disease etc.

have been forced to go without. For those on income report such purchase present a significant challenge.

Other visible barriers attributable to inadequate income support that align with environmental health include the inability of households to manage hard rubbish and abandoned motor vehicles. Baker Heart and Diabetes has identified that ~25% of Town Camp households have access to a motor vehicle in an emergency and this lack of access demonstrates the logistical barrier for tackling the issue of hard rubbish.

TCAC seeks to support Town Camp communities to tackle a range of issues including those related to environmental health. This work happens at the level of the household and the community. One example is in the removal of abandoned motor vehicles, during 2017/18 and 2018/19 TCAC has worked with members to remove 370 abandoned motor vehicles.

TCAC has partnered with the University of Newcastle School of Architecture and Built Environment (SABE) to consider design-based approaches to both environmental health and crime prevention (through environmental design). TCAC is also working toward an interagency approach to animal management in partnership with Animal Management in Remote and Rural Indigenous Communities (AMIRRIC) and the Alice Springs Town Council.

TCAC, its Corporate and Individual Members want to progress toward the management of environmental health in the spirit of participatory development so that individuals, households and communities can manage these issues for themselves but feel that the current levels of income support are a major challenge to the most basic solutions. The issues arising from the low levels of income support are complicated by the cost shifting from program to individual (e.g. limited investment in passive cooling, installation of electric water heaters and the lack of cost-effective heating etc.).

3.3. Energy Security

TCAC, its Corporate and Individual Members and clients are concerned about the issues of Energy Security; Environmental Health and Debt.

At the time of drafting this submission TCAC has managed to achieve a small outcome with respect to the accessibility of power usage data for residents in receipt of pre-paid electricity. This has been done with the support of Jacana. This outcome has the potential to benefit energy consumers living in regional centers and includes the Alice Springs Town Camps.

TCAC raised concerns about Energy Security with the NT Minister for Renewables, Energy and Essential Services (and Jacana) that have been heightened since the introduction of new smart pre-paid meters in Town Camps; Remote Communities and Urban Public Housing. These new pre-paid smart meters have had a significant impact upon households with respect to: (1) how power is purchased; (2) limitations about who can purchase power; (3) changes to emergency and friendly credit; and (4) anecdotal feedback about the affordability of pre-paid power. Point 4 aligns with the suspicion that tariff rates in the old standalone pre-paid meters may not have been adjusted for many years prior to the installation of new smart meters. A feature of smart meters is that they can be adjusted remotely whereas the old meters needed to be adjusted on site. Point 3 relates to features designed as a safety net, e.g. friendly credit which is an involuntary function is particularly unpopular for reasons associated with debt, disconnection and challenges to re-connection.

TCAC on behalf of its stakeholders outlined to the Minister (and Jacana) the need to determine a way that individual tenants with pre-paid meters could access the same type of information provided to post-paid (credit) customers including a statement summarizing 'year to date'(YTD) data.

Post-paid statements show data including: (1) Service Address; (2) Billing Period; (3) NMI; (4) Meter Number; (5) Meter Read; (6) Balance; (7) Payments; (8) Current Read; (9) Total Usage (YTD); (10) Unit Price/Tariff; (11) Daily Average; and (12) Comparison with NT averages.

TCAC has proposed the collection of this data to assess the current context and to develop strategies for improving Energy Security.

The complexity of the demarcation of responsibility between individual Government Business Enterprises (GBEs) and Energy Regulators together with the ownership and licensing of data delayed the actioning of our request. The process can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.jacanaenergy.com.au/residential/metering/meter-data-requests>

Unfortunately, this process doesn't extend to those living in remote NT. This is on the basis that Jacana has no service delivery footprint outside of the larger regional centers of Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. TCAC has identified that it is the Power and Water's not-for-profit Indigenous Essential Services (IES) subsidiary provides services to remote NT under an agreement from the DLGHCD. TCAC has contacted remote service delivery agencies to highlight this issue.

Jacana has provided the National Meter Indicator (NMI) for each Town Camp household. It is our plan to seek consent from the head tenant from each dwelling. TCAC will also seek the consent from stakeholders living in urban Alice Springs who access TCAC programs.

It is unfortunate that data cannot be provided at the time of this submission due to the timing of the new consent process, but it is the feedback of TCAC Corporate and Individual Members that the installation of new smart meters has coincided with a significant increase in electricity prices. This has led to increased debt and increased power outages. TCAC is concerned on the net impact on a range of issues including: (1) food storage; (2) ability to wash people, clothing and bedding; and (3) ability to manage internal ambient temperatures (particularly in summer and winter).

The impact of heating and cooling will be considered in section 3.4 Climate Change/Heat Mitigation, but it should be noted that the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) produced houses that were not necessarily well constructed with respect to the cost-effective provision of optimal internal living environments.

The Centre for Appropriate Technology reported that SIHIP emphasised Safety and the first 4 HLPs at the expense of the remaining 5 HLPs in its report 'Housing Experience: Post Occupancy Evaluation of Alice Springs Town Camp Housing 2008-2011'. Controlling the temperature of the living environment is HLP number 8. Further evidence for the need for the consideration of climate change and heat mitigation comes from the DLGHCD commissioned Deloitte Report titled 'Living on The Edge: Northern Territory Town Camps Review'. This report does not consider climate change and heat mitigation as part of its assessment of the future housing and infrastructure needs of the Territory's Town Camps. Town Camp houses do not have heaters and individuals are forced to purchase their own and these are usually inexpensive to buy and expensive to operate. Previously the houses had combustion stoves and people collected their own firewood, but these were removed. Cooling in summer is also a significant issue but this will be addressed later.

The current rates of Newstart undermine household energy security and this impacts upon the storage of food and the maintenance of safe internal ambient temperatures.

Jacana provides data to the Utilities Commission that about the number of pre-paid meters, self-disconnects and the average duration of these disconnects by location. The data from the previous financial year is summarised below:

Figure 9: Smart Meter Installation and Self-Disconnects									
Prepayment Meters		2018-19: Q1		2018-19: Q2		2018-19: Q3		2018-19: Q4	
Type	Centre	Analog	Smart	Analog	Smart	Analog	Smart	Analog	Smart
	Darwin	466	0	466	0	50	416	3	457
	Katherine	862	0	649	213	265	587	18	834
	Alice Springs	717	0	717	0	390	327	6	570
	Tennant Creek	529	0	529	0	230	299	8	513
Meter Capable Reporting Self-Disconnect	Centre	n/a		Smart		Smart		Smart	
	Darwin	0		0		416		457	
	Katherine	0		213		587		834	
	Alice Springs	0		0		327		570	
	Tennant Creek	0		0		299		513	
Self-Disconnect (Number)	Centre	n/a		Smart		Smart		Smart	
	Darwin	Unknown		Unknown		260		331	
	Katherine	Unknown		140		304		413	
	Alice Springs	Unknown		Unknown		258		420	
	Tennant Creek	Unknown		Unknown		182		316	
Self-Disconnect Average (Minutes)	Centre	n/a		Smart		Smart		Smart	
	Darwin	Unknown		Unknown		395		454	
	Katherine	Unknown		416		479		460	
	Alice Springs	Unknown		Unknown		692		455	
	Tennant Creek	Unknown		Unknown		373		480	

Nb- this table outlines the transition between analog meters and smart meters. It also outlines the proportion of meters that have self-disconnected and the average time of each disconnect.

As at the 30th June 2019, 570 Alice Springs households had prepayment meters. Of these 570 houses 420 had at least one self-disconnection event for a mean duration of 455 minutes (7.5 hours). Most of these households are Public Housing. 285 of these households are located on Town Camps.

Self-disconnections occur when energy consumers are unable to purchase power for their prepayment meter. The resultant lack of power places people at further risk.

3.4. Climate Change/Heat Mitigation

The Bureau of Meteorology reports that between July 2018 and June 2019 that Alice Springs had a total of 129 days over 35°C and 55 days over 40°C. This period corresponded with a high volume of feedback to TCAC, its subsidiary Tangentyere Constructions and related party the Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAHC) that Town Camp housing has performed badly with respect to internal temperatures. CAAHC provides Tenancy Management and Tangentyere Constructions employs Housing Maintenance Officers (HMOs) both as subcontractors to the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (DHLGCD). Some residents have reported the failure of evaporative air-conditioners to TCAC, CAAHC and Tangentyere Constructions. It is however likely that the basis for the poor climatic performance of Town Camp (and other remote) housing is more complex than the failure of evaporative air-conditioners. It is likely that evaporative air-conditioners have been functioning but that they are insufficient to cool houses to optimal internal temperatures with such extreme weather conditions prevailing.

To provide some context the 2004 report, Climate Change in the Northern Territory (Hennessy, 2004) noted that Alice Springs averaged 90 days over 35°C and 17 days over 40°C (at the time of publication). This report predicted that by 2030 these figures would increase to between 96-125 days over 35°C and to between 21-43 days over 40°C. The figures for 2018/19 have surpassed these predictions.

TCAC together with the Central Australian Academic Health Science Network (CAAHSN) has applied to the CSIRO for a partnership approach to funding and co-designing a project to investigate the issues identified earlier. The purpose of this proposal is to seek CSIRO funding for a scoping project to investigate the viability of a collaboration between TCAC, the CSIRO and the Central Australian Academic Health Science Network to achieve the following 3 outcomes as follows:

- The survey of a statistically significant cohort of Town Camp housing stock to assess the status of passive and mechanical heat mitigation infrastructure;
- The monitoring of individual household power consumption; debt levels and power outages linked to prepaid meters;
- The monitoring of internal ambient temperatures for a period of at least 12 months in duration in a finite number of dwellings. This aspect of the project will contribute to developing a feasibility and scoping study for a larger successor project. TCAC would like to maximise the sample size but acknowledges the limitation of resourcing. The objective of this project is to understand the relationships between heat (internal and external), indoor activity and health (heart rate, steps, sleep quality). This initial study will not be statistically powered but will contribute to a large trial in the future

It is likely that this research coupled with the work of the proposed monitoring of energy consumption will demonstrate that: (1) houses are not healthy and safe during period of extreme heat; and that (2) houses are not cost effective in periods of extreme heat. Ultimately housing and services will need to adapt to the extreme heat that we can continue to expect.

The rates of income support will also need to be reconsidered in the context of climate change as people become more reliant on passive and mechanical cooling and transport (other than walking).

TCAC is working with the University of Newcastle (UON) on a range of projects aligned with the Built Environment, Environmental Health and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). It is a collaboration that began in 2016 and continues to be offered as a two-week Architectural Studio Project course. The architectural work produced over that 4-year period has been provided to TCAC in accordance with a Contract between UON and TCAC. Some of the conceptual work produced over this period has been subsequently developed for successful funding applications and built outcomes. TCAC and UoN have increased the scope of the collaboration to ensure design work is costed and shovel ready. TCAC is seeking to ensure that the partnership contributes to strategies for addressing Safety and the 9 Healthy Living Principles including: (1) Washing People; (2) Washing Clothes and Bedding; (3) Removing Waste Water; (4) Food Storage and Preparation; (5) Reducing the Negative Impacts of Overcrowding; (6) Reducing Vermin; (7) Reducing Dust; (8) Controlling Internal Ambient Temperatures; (9) Reducing Hazards and Trauma. Strategies for climate change adaption and heat mitigation will become increasingly important as part of this work.

These HLPs are directly related to range of issues aligned with Climate Change, Heat Mitigation and Energy Security. This work is collectively considered as a core component of our work, now and in the future. Tackling these issues not only protects the interests of our members and stakeholders but is also suggestive of work to be undertaken by our services and participatory development activities.

3.5. Transport

Transport is a significant issue for people living in remote or regional areas. Current rates of income support do not support sustainable vehicle ownership and yet options for public transport do not support positive outcomes for children and schooling; participation and employment; and public health.

The challenges to school transport for Town Camp children are outlined below:

Figure 9: School Buses

Name	Primary	km	Departure	Start	Interchange	Finish	Home	Time (Min)
Akngwertnarre	Bradshaw	2.3	7.33 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.28 pm	95
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Braitling	2.9	7.39 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.05 pm	66
Anthepe Housing	Gillen	6.7	7.40 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.37 pm	97
Aper-Alwerrkng	Braitling	1.8	7.35 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	2.55 pm	60
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Sadadeen	0.6	7.27 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.29 pm	102
New Ilparpa	Gillen	7.3	7.31 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	4.17 pm	146
Ilperle Tyathe	Braitling	2.7	7.33 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.33 pm	100
Ilyperenye	Bradshaw	5.4	7.37 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.30 pm	93
Inarlange	Bradshaw	4.3	7.44 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.31 pm	87
Irrkerlantye	Sadadeen	2.6	7.31 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.32 pm	101
Itwiyethwenge	Braitling	2.5	7.35 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	2.55 pm	60
Karnte	Gillen	7.6	7.42 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.35 pm	93
Lhenpe Artnwe	Braitling	3.7	7.39 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.05pm	66
Mount Nancy	Braitling	1.8	7.35 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	2.55 pm	60
Mpwetyerre	Gillen	3.2	7.39 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.42 pm	103
Nyewente	Braitling	2.9	7.34 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.29 pm	95
Yarrenyty Arltere	Gillen	3.2	7.30 am	8.30 am	Yes	2.50 pm	3.25 pm	95

To highlight this issue, please consider the example of a primary school aged child from New Ilparpa. This child needs to travel to Gillen Primary School which is 7.3 kilometres from New Ilparpa. This child will need to catch the bus at 7.31 am for an 8.30 am start. Whilst school finishes at 2.50 pm this child won't return to New Ilparpa until 4.17 pm. This circumstance extends the school day by 146 minutes or 2 hours and 26 minutes. Residents want their children to attend school and to achieve good outcomes, but the addition of 2 hours and 26 minutes makes these aspirations more of a challenge than required.

Public transport is also limited in scope from the perspective of start and finish times, number of buses on some routes, reduced services on Saturdays, no services on Sundays and distances to bus stops. Public transport doesn't encourage or support participation and social inclusion.

Public transport to Town Camps is outlined below:

Figure 10: Public Transport						
Name	CBD (km)	Bus Stop (km)	Buses	First	Final	Travel (Min)
Akngwertnarre	3.2	0.7	4	9.30 am	3.15 pm	10
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	1.7	0.4	4	8.45 am	2.45 pm	10
Anthepe Housing	8.2	1.0	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	37
Aper-Alwerrkng	4.1	0.3	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	16
Ewyenper-Atwatye	2.5	1.4	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	20
Ilparpa	8.5	0.4	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	19
Ilperle Tyathe	5.2	0.6	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	20
Ilyperenye	6.0	0.6	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	17
Inarleng	5.0	0.8	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	18
Irrkerlantye	3.9	1.6	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	27
Itwiyethwenge	4.6	0.8	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	22
Karnte	9.0	2.0	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	48
Lhenpe Artnwe	2.2	1.1	4	8.45 am	2.45 pm	19
Mount Nancy	4.1	0.3	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	16
Mpwetyerre	2.6	0.6	10	7.10 am	5.40 pm	13
Nyewente	2.8	0.7	4	9.30 am	3.15 pm	12
Yarrenyty Arltere	4.1	1.5	9	7.00 am	5.30 pm	30

To highlight this issue, please consider the example of an individual from Karnte who lives 9 km from the CBD. This individual needs to walk 2 km to catch a bus to Alice Springs. This individual can catch on of the 10 buses that run between 7.10 am and 5.40 pm (return) on weekdays. Saturday services are reduced to 4 buses and no buses operate on Sundays. Other locations have less options, for example Akngwertnarre residents can only catch one of 4 buses per day.

Generally, the options for transport are private cars and commercial passenger vehicles but both are prohibitively expensive for those in receipt of income support. The schedule of prepaid tax fares outlined below demonstrates that the prepaid fare for 5 km is \$17 and 10 km is \$28. For an individual trip this is not prohibitively expensive but where other transport is unreliable then the cost becomes expensive where multiple trips are required throughout the week.

Figure 11: Pre-Paid Taxi Fare Estimates		
Distance	Up to 4	5 or More
5 km	\$17	\$22
10 km	\$28	\$40
15 km	\$40	\$57
20 km	\$51	\$74
25 km	\$63	\$91
30 km	\$74	\$109
35 km	\$86	\$126
40 km	\$97	\$143

Current rates of income support mean that people living on the Town Camps are less likely to have drivers' licences (~25% of adults have drivers' licences) or to own and maintain registered motor vehicles. As previously identified Baker Heart and Diabetes estimated that ~25% of households had access to a motor vehicle in an emergency (this did not specify that these motor vehicles were registered). TCAC speculates that the reasons for low levels of drivers licensing are linked to resourcing and income support. Some barriers to licensing are as follows: (1) proof of identity; (2) outstanding fines; (3) drink driving offences; (4) literacy and numeracy; (5) spoken and written English; (6) poverty; and (7) access to a motor vehicle.

At the time of writing this submission, TCAC is commencing discussions with the George Institute of Global Health in consideration of a project to tackle licensing. TCAC has also collaborated with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics with respect to Drive Safe NT.

A tangible reminder of the ability to maintain motor vehicles comes from the number of abandoned motor vehicles removed in collaboration with our Corporate and Individual Members. This figure was 270 for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years combined.

Transport is crucial and people require the resources to purchase transport related goods and services. Transport is becoming a bigger issue with the extreme heat that is being experienced in regional and remote Australia.

3.6. Digital Delivery of Government Services

Increasingly there is an expectation that individuals and families will access government services online. TCAC is aware of the importance of online services including myGov, Centrelink (through myGov), My Health and the NT Concessions and Seniors Recognition Scheme to our stakeholders in Alice Springs, its Town Camps and Central Australia. Additionally, changes to pre-paid power and proposed changes to income management make the digital delivery of government services more important than ever. This technology has potential to promote better outcomes but without digital inclusivity and access to the NBN people will be left behind.

Access to the internet on the Town Camps present challenges. The following table outlines the state of communications on the Town Camps:

Figure 12: Communications on the Alice Springs Town Camps					
Name	Post Provider	Post Service	Post Frequency	Proposed NBN	Status
Akngwertnarre	Australia Post	Premises	Daily	FTTN	Pending
Anthelk-Ewlpaye	Subcontractor	Premises	Weekly	FTTN	Pending
Anthepe Housing	Subcontractor	Cluster Box	Weekly	Satellite	Available
Aper-Alwerrkngge	Subcontractor	Cluster Box	Weekly	FTTN	Pending
Ewyenper-Atwatye	Subcontractor	Premises	Weekly	Satellite	Available
Ilparpa	n/a	n/a	n/a	FTTN	Pending
Ilperle Tyathe	n/a	n/a	n/a	FTTN	Pending
Ilyperenye	n/a	n/a	n/a	FTTN	Pending
Inarlenge	Subcontractor	Cluster Box	Weekly	Satellite	Available
Irrkerlantye	n/a	n/a	n/a	Satellite	Available
Itwiyethwenge	Subcontractor	Cluster Box	Weekly	Satellite	Available
Karnte	Subcontractor	Cluster Box	Weekly	Satellite	Available
Lhenpe Artnwe	Subcontractor	Premises	Weekly	Satellite	Available
Mount Nancy	Subcontractor	Cluster Box	Weekly	FTTN	Pending
Mpwetyerre	Subcontractor	Premises	Weekly	FTTN	Pending
Nyewente	Subcontractor	Premises	Weekly	FTTN	Pending
Yarrenyty Arltere	Subcontractor	Premises	Weekly	FTTN	Pending

For the most part NBN services are pending. In other locations satellite services are available. Unfortunately, satellite services are more costly to consumers. Reliance on satellite will be the only option in remote Central Australia. TCAC is reviewing costs for satellite and fixed line services (once available) but income support is insufficient for this to be a priority compared with food, rent and utilities. The inability to obtain credit for post-paid internet, the lack of pre-paid internet and the cost of the access mean that those in receipt of income support from regional and remote Australia are further excluded. This reality has further downstream impacts for consumers. Access to internet would improve other systems that are currently in place for our stakeholders, one example is the ability to purchase pre-paid power online.

In recognition of this challenge TCAC is considering procuring filtered internet to be broadcast through WIFI from Community Centres on the Town Camps. TCAC is also considering options for Town Camps without Community Centers. This model will be more effective where fixed line services are available as plans with no data limit can be purchased. TCAC supports such a proposal because it will support the digital delivery of government services, financial inclusion, safe access of the internet (filtered) and WIFI calls from smartphones (this will enhance safety).

The cost of internet access in remote and regional areas is more expensive due to the type of service available. Income support rates make access to the NBN cost prohibitive. Lack of digital inclusivity creates financial exclusion and reduces participation.

4. Conclusion

Aboriginal people living in the Territory are significantly impacted by the consequences of multidimensional disadvantage. Rates of income support are too low, particularly in regional and remote areas. Poverty is a significant determinant and symptom of multidimensional disadvantage.

Deloitte Access Economics was commissioned by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) to provide an "Analysis of the impact of raising the rates of Newstart and other allowances". This report identified significant benefits to individuals, households, families and the broader economy of increasing the rate of Newstart by \$75 per week. TCAC recommends that the rate of Newstart and Related Payments be increased by a base rate of \$75 per week as a universal first step.

TCAC also recommends that the lack of access and equity in regional and remote areas together with the issue of minority and acculturative stress be considered in the calculation of equitable Newstart and Related Payments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and regional Australia.

Our response has been limited by time and immediate capacity. In some areas this submission has offered a qualitative assessment whilst demonstrating proposals to gather more quantitative data. In other areas the submission offers quantitative data that is striking. The fact that 420 of 570 houses in Alice Springs with prepayment meters have experienced at least 1 self-disconnection event lasting 455 minutes (7.5 hours) provides strong evidence that the safety net is failing many people. No power has implications for all aspects of people's lives and impacts severely on health and well-being.



Tangentyere
Council

Tangentyere Council

4 Elder Street
Alice Springs NT 0870

PO Box 8070
Alice Springs NT 0871

P 08 8951 4222

F 08 8952 8521

E info@tangentyere.org.au

WORKING
TOGETHER
WALKING
TOGETHER