




**The Hon Mal Brough MP**  
**Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**  
**Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs**

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Mr William Tilmouth  
Executive Director  
Tangentyere Council  
PO Box 8070  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

Dear Mr Tilmouth 

Thankyou for your letter received at my office yesterday asking for clarification in relation to my recent announcement of \$50 million and the earlier announcement of \$10 million under Connecting Neighbours to upgrade and normalise town camps in Alice Springs

It is over 12 months since I visited Alice Springs to meet with local people to develop a plan to address health, housing and social issues in Alice Springs of which conditions in the town camps are a key factor. The plan involved town camps becoming just like normal suburbs, with opportunities for home ownership, public housing managed by the Northern Territory Government in exactly the same way as other public housing in Alice Springs and municipal services delivered in the normal way by Alice Springs Town Council. The standard of housing and infrastructure was to be substantially upgraded.

I am frustrated that after so long that there has been no actual physical progress made to relieve conditions in the town camps. I expect that the men women and children that live in the town camps are even more frustrated. They have waited long enough.

My office spoke to Tangentyere Council on the weekend to convey my agreement that the current holders of the special purpose leases could retain those leases subject to their agreement to sublease the residential areas to the Northern Territory Government for a period of no less than 99 years and without conditions.

My office also advised that arrangements need to be finalised as soon as possible. I cannot agree to a 3 - 6 months negotiation period. Your letter refers to negotiating about management arrangements for public housing. Under my offer they will be managed by the Northern Territory Government as public housing in the normal way. You also say that you need time to negotiate one agreement with all the 18 town camps. I do not require agreement from all town camps. If some choose to participate they will be funded to do so, if other choose not too, as is their right, they will not be funded.

Town camps wishing to participate would need to agree to do so within one month. As I have said publicly, there are many other Indigenous Australians requiring improved accommodation in other parts of Australia. I will reallocate the funds if the time frame is not met.

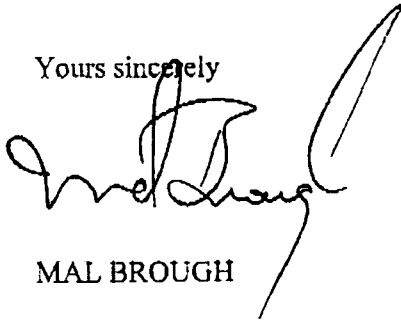
As I am sure you are well aware, these funding issues are in fact entirely the responsibility of the Northern Territory Government and I have only agreed to provide Commonwealth assistance following a personal request by the Northern Territory Chief Minister. Too much time has already passed so an urgent decision is required by individual lease holders so that I can reallocate the funding to other priority areas if necessary.

Regardless of the outcome I will respect the decision of individual lease holding groups and honour my agreement to those that decide to participate.

Thankyou for your assistance on these matters. My staff have indicated to you that I am available to discuss these matters with you directly by telephone today or to connect by telephone conference with participants at today's meeting at Alice Springs.

I look forward to your advice about the outcome of today's meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mal Brough', with a large, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

MAL BROUGH