

***Statement from a spokesperson for the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion:***

**FRC**

- Deputy Premier Trad's reported comments that "there is no federal funding for the FRC beyond December this year" is just plain wrong and misleading.
- Officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet have been working with their Queensland Government counterparts for some time seeking to clarify the Queensland Government's intentions for the FRC beyond December 2018.
- In the absence of any clarity from the Queensland Government, Minister Scullion wrote to Deputy Premier Trad stating the Commonwealth's commitment to supporting the FRC as a cultural authority model, to ensure we don't lose the hard won gains of the last decade of welfare reform in Cape York.
- In that letter the Minister also raised his concerns that the Queensland Government was intending to walk away from supporting the FRC when the current term of Local Commissioners under Queensland legislation expires on 31 December 2018.
- We want to continue to work with the people of Cape York and the Queensland Government on sustaining and improving the FRC – instead, it is the lack of commitment from the Queensland Government to support the FRC Local Commissioners to address community concerns over the destructive effects of passive welfare.
- Local Commissioners in the four Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge have been at the cutting edge of addressing welfare dependency since 2008.
- Their model centres on the restoration of local Indigenous authority.
- We have worked in partnership over the last ten years with community representatives, the Family Responsibilities Commissioner (FRC) and the Queensland Government on delivering these reforms.
- The FRC is the most critical component underpinning the CYWR agenda.
- Communities have stabilised over the past ten years, but much remains to be done.
- This is why the Commonwealth will continue to work with the Commissioners and calls on the Queensland Government to do the same.

**Remote Indigenous Housing:**

- Our position has always been clear. Housing is a state government responsibility, however the Commonwealth remains committed to future investment in remote Indigenous housing to bring severe overcrowding down. This has not changed.
- We have no further detail on the Queensland Government's so-called \$1 billion remote housing commitment as yet, and based on the information provided there is no certainty whatsoever as to how much of these funds will be actually be spent on new houses as these communities require.
- Minister Scullion made Minister de Brenni an offer when they met in June, contingent on matched funding for new houses in remote Indigenous communities.
- We will have to see if Queensland's so-called funding commitment is a genuine investment, but the Commonwealth wants to progress an agreement as soon as possible to provide certainty for communities.
- Under the previous national housing agreement Queensland received \$1.126 billion over 10 years and delivered:
  - o 1,144 new builds
  - o 1,490 refurbishments.
- Based on 2016 census data, the Commonwealth estimates that
  - o 387 houses are needed to address current levels of overcrowding
  - o 57 additional houses are needed per year to accommodate population growth.
- In June the Minister also approved a payment of \$115 million to the Queensland Government for work completed and further work to continue into next year.
- Outside of NPARIH, the Commonwealth has made investments of over \$2.687 billion to the Queensland Government for housing over the past ten years.