M E D I A R E L E A S E

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS IS A CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Minister, Clare Martin, should be flying to Alice Springs today to bring Tangentyere Council to its senses in respect of the $60 million offered by the Federal Government for the improvement of the town camps.

“Offers as generous and potentially beneficial as this one come but rarely and the Chief Minister, who is also Minister for Indigenous Affairs, should be making that point forcefully,” says Dr Richard Lim, Shadow Minister for Central Australia.

“I believe the Chief Minister was instrumental in having the offer’s deadline extended to this Wednesday – now it’s time she took up the challenge of convincing the Tangentyere Council of the sense of accepting the Federal Government’s offer.

“The prospect of new beginnings for the town camps cannot be allowed to evaporate until every avenue is explored.

“I despair of the camps continuing in the current state of appalling disrepair and dysfunction.

“When Parliament came to town it was obvious the Chief Minister had failed to grasp the gravity of the law and order situation in Alice Springs.

“The violence and deprivation found in the camps is one of the drivers of increasing violence on the streets of Alice.

The Chief Minister is best placed to deliver the message that the continued failure of the camps will deliver no political advantage to Territory Governments of either persuasion.

“Indeed the best outcome for the Territory Government is the normalisation of the town camps, with indigenous people living as equal citizens with suburban amenities and thereby reducing the call on its health and justice budgets.

“Just weeks ago I heard the Chief Minister tell the people of Alice Springs that she is the Minister for Major Projects and the town of Alice Springs was one of her major projects.

“She has the opportunity to prove that is the case.”

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