The Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and the Northern Territory Minister for Public and Affordable Housing, Chris Burns, today met families in Wadeye living in better housing as a result of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH).

To date, 55 new houses and 57 refurbishments have been completed at Wadeye, under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP), part of the National Partnership.

There are more than 100 local families living in improved housing so far.

Ms Macklin said getting housing right was critical to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

“Decent housing and reduced overcrowding are essential for protecting children, and improving health, education and employment outcomes,” Ms Macklin said.

“In Wadeye we can see that housing is making a difference to people’s lives.”
Mr Burns said Wadeye’s remote location meant the housing program was ambitious and it was pleasing that so much progress had been made with community support.

“The program is also providing local employment and building local capacity," Mr Burns said.

“A total of 49 new houses in Wadeye will be built by the local Thamarrurr Development Corporation as sub-contractors. A number of local people have been employed to work on this project.

“In the future we want to see more local community organisations and shires with the capacity to win construction and maintenance contracts and NPARIH is helping build the remote workforce to do this.

More than 30 per cent of the current National Partnership workforce is made up of Indigenous employees.

The Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, said the Australian Government’s work in Wadeye extended beyond housing.

“ There is a great deal of work going on at Wadeye that will benefit locals. The Murrinhpatha Nimmipa Store, will undergo a $1.5 million refurbishment, and $700,000 of that funding comes from an Aboriginal Benefit Account grant," Mr Snowdon said.

The Government recently announced a $50 million package for 18 remote community stores across the Northern Territory through the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

“This project is providing new purpose-built or refurbished community stores and store manager accommodation to help ensure healthy and affordable food is stocked," Mr Snowdon said.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing is investing an unprecedented $5.5 billion nationally over 10 years to tackle the housing backlog across remote Australia.

This includes $1.7 billion for remote housing and housing-related infrastructure in the Northern Territory.

To date, 179 new houses have been completed and a further 142 new houses are underway. In addition, 1036 rebuilds and refurbishments have been completed, with a further 74 rebuilds and refurbishments underway.

Related files:
Burns Macklin Snowden.030211.Wadeye housing release.pdf (22.27 kb)