

# No outstation support for the "lizards and wildlife": Alison Anderson

**We've got to take responsibility for our own things now. Those days are over".**

The Minister for Central Australia, Alison Anderson was speaking to more than 30 people living on outstations near Hermannsburg at a meeting at the Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre recently.

The Northern Territory Government took over responsibility from the Commonwealth for the delivery of essential and municipal services to outstations on July this year and will implement a new outstation policy "consistent with whole of government service delivery".

"The Commonwealth will supply \$20 million a year for the next three years for outstations," Ms Anderson told the meeting.

"The Northern Territory Government will provide this money to eligible organisations to support outstations."

The Minister earlier told the media that many outstations are uninhabited and occupied only

by "lizards and wildlife". These are the outstations which will not be supported under the new outstation policy.

"If only two or three people are there, don't expect it to be resourced," she said.

"More than 500 outstations in the NT have received Commonwealth support in the past. More than 100 are uninhabited.

"More than 250 have less than 20 residents and more than 100 have between 20 and 50 residents. 457 outstations received municipal and essential service support from the Northern Territory Government," the Minister said.

Chair of the Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre and outstation resident Roxanne Kenny said that while life on outstations is hard if you've got kids, it can be done and it is worth it.

"My kids are boarding in Alice Springs and we come in every day to work but I do look out at Mt Sonder from my outstation and that is pretty good. It can be done.

"There are about 50 people who have got jobs and live on

outstations that Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre services. In total it services 38 outstations," she said.

Tjuwanpa coordinator Jane Rosalski said they found once people are employed they tend to move back to their outstations as they have more money for repairs and fuel.

The difficulty for Tjuwanpa, she says, is that resources are too precious to be wasted fixing a tap which could easily be fixed by the residents themselves.

"If a simple thing like the tap breaks, fix it. It's draining the resources, the time and money. It's like \$2 turns into \$2000 by the time Tjuwanpa sends somebody out to fix it with all the fuel and time," she said.

The Central Land Council says there should be more than \$20 million available given the Commonwealth Grants Commission allocation to the NT and the NT Government's own contribution to servicing residents living on outstations.

**Clockwise from above: Minister Alison Anderson, Conrad Ratara and Roxanne Kenny**



# Government plans get thumbs down in Yuendumu

**Residents and traditional owners of Yuendumu have reacted angrily to how the Federal Government plans to go about building new houses in the community and refurbish others.**

The government says it won't spend any more money on housing or repairs to housing in the community unless it is given a long-term lease over housing.

The same plan is also being put by the government to the Lajamanu and Hermannsburg communities.

Many traditional owners and residents who attended an information meeting at Yuendumu on Tuesday, October 7 saw the declaration as a threat.

"They don't give us the right," Dennis Williams said. "This sort of thing is killing our people. This sort of thing is really important to our people.

"We pay the rent for these houses," he said. "We are going back to the 50s and 60s with these changes. Now we got no chance to talk. This sort of thing is hurting our people."

The Commonwealth says it will spend 13 million dollars on new houses and major repairs in Yuendumu, but only if the community's land trust agrees to a long-term lease with the Commonwealth or the Northern Territory Government.

The government says the new public housing system, which would have Territory Housing as the landlord and community members as tenants, won't work

without the long-term lease. A lease will ensure rights and responsibilities are clear and that government takes proper responsibility for the housing system.

The government offer includes two options. The first is a 60-year lease to Territory Housing over the housing areas. Under the 60-year proposal, the government will provide 13 million dollars for new housing and to fix up damaged ones.

The 60-year option doesn't provide for rent to be paid by the Commonwealth to traditional owners for the lease of the housing and requires the community to give up control over



**Above: Enid Gallagher and CLC Policy officer Jeremy Dore at the Yuendumu leasing meeting**

housing for 60 years.

The second option is a whole-of-community lease for 80 years to the executive director of township leasing, a Commonwealth office holder. Under this option the Commonwealth would lease the whole Yuendumu community for 80 years.

It would provide 13 million dollars for new houses and repairs to current ones as well as a two million dollar community benefits package.

The 80-year whole-of-community lease option would also pay two million dollars rent to the traditional owners.

Under the 80-year whole-of-community lease option, traditional owners and Yuendumu community members would give up control of their whole community to the Commonwealth office holder for the 80-year leasing period.

*continued page 21*