



## High rate of power disconnections is causing harm in remote communities

The Central Land Council has called on governments to reform electricity prepayments to keep remote Aboriginal people connected to power.

Remote community residents prepay for their electricity, while most Australians enjoy the flexibility of post-pay arrangements, and can access hardship protections when needed.

Remote community residents pre-paying for their electricity, don't get adequate warning before their power cuts out. While for most Australians, disconnections are rare, they are a regular event in remote NT Aboriginal communities.

Research by community organisation Original Power found that remote NT Aboriginal households suffer on average 59 disconnections a year. By contrast, households in remote South Australian Aboriginal communities averaged 14 disconnections due to their tariff being a third of what's charged in the Northern Territory and have an automatic application of concession payments and other wrap around supports.

At a meeting of their full council in Yulara last week, Central Land Council members heard disconnections rise dramatically in the NT when temperatures hit 40 degrees Celsius.

The Central Land Council's delegates fully endorsed the recommendations in Original Power's report, [Right to Power: Keeping First Nations' communities on prepayment connected](#).

Central Land Council General Manager, Dr Josie Douglas said, "The report looked at prepayment electricity across the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia and the evidence shows that the level of energy insecurity in remote NT is worse than anywhere in the country".

"Closing the Gap target 9B commits governments to ensuring that by 2031, all first nations households receive the same level of essential services and consumer protections as all Australians regardless of where they live. To achieve this target, prepayment reform is critically needed."

Council member Jimmy Frank Jupurrula from Tennant Creek said, "I would like to know why we don't have the same power arrangements in the NT as they do in remote South Australia, we are remote too."

Houses being built in communities aren't designed to keep people warm in winter and cool in summer.

"When it's hot, people stay inside and use more power, and most new houses only have one room with air conditioning. If the power gets cut off, we all go to a relative's house where the power is on, this puts further stress on families. It creates overcrowding and you get issues with scabies and rheumatic heart disease."

Council member Ingrid Williams from Santa Theresa said living in community is very expensive and power is her highest cost.

"We get cut off a lot. We pay a lot for rent and for power. We have to cut back on money for food so we can have enough money for the power," she said.

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