



20 October 2023

**Indigenous Allied Health Australia submission in response to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper**

via email to: [Housingandhomelessnessplan@dss.gov.au](mailto:Housingandhomelessnessplan@dss.gov.au)

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) is a national, community-controlled, not for profit and member-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation. IAHA supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health workforce throughout the continuum of education and employment, across all settings, contributing to a health system that is more holistic and culturally responsive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities.

IAHA's vision is all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and futures generations are healthy, strong, thriving and self-determined<sup>1</sup>. To achieve this vision, and to address current inequities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must have access to adequate, safe, affordable and appropriately designed and maintained housing, that meets their cultural needs, preferences and priorities. Housing is a fundamental human right that can have impact on outcomes in health, education, employment, and training and other domains.

In providing feedback to the *National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper*, IAHA assert that all approaches to improve housing outcomes must also be culturally safe and responsive to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities.

In improving housing outcomes, governments must eliminate racism and discrimination to ensure equitable access to housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is crucial that all governments take responsibility for eliminating racism and discrimination, recognising the impacts and barriers it has on accessing housing. In reference to the Issues Paper, 'racism' is not mentioned once, but it is a well evidenced factor posing a significant barrier to accessing housing for Aboriginal

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iaha.com.au/workforce-support/training-and-development/cultural-responsiveness-in-action-training/>



and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities<sup>2</sup>. IAHA emphasise that it is imperative that racism and discrimination must be included within the future strategy as a barrier to housing.

IAHA's contribution to the *National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper* includes the providing an embargoed copy of the *IAHA Northern Territory Workforce Development (IAHA NTWD) position paper on housing and the workforce in Northern Australia* provided at [Attachment A](#).

Whilst the position paper focuses on Northern Australia the insights and recommendations have relevance and applicability to other jurisdictions throughout Australia. It provides a holistic perspective that encompasses cultural, social and economic factors all of which are vital for improving outcomes and for the government and housing providers to consider. The position paper also outlines the short- and long-term solutions required to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities have access to housing.

IAHA thank the Australian Government for the opportunity to contribute to the *National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper*. IAHA emphasises the importance of collaboration and partnerships between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organizations to effectively address housing and homelessness challenges and work towards the broader vision of healthy, thriving, and self-determined communities.

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<sup>2</sup> [Impact of racism and discrimination on the physical and mental health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Australia: a protocol for a scoping review | Systematic Reviews | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)