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Shadow Minister for Education
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians
Federal Member for Berowra

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Shadow Minister for Small Business
Shadow Minister for Skills and Training
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MEDIA RELEASE

CHILDREN ARE LIVING IN UNSAFE CONDITIONS

BUT WHERE IS THE ACCOUNTABILITY?

Officials from the National Indigenous Australians Agency confirmed in Estimates today that the Tangentyere Council, which runs town camps around Alice Springs, is receiving over \$70m in taxpayer money across 19 different grants and 2 ongoing contracts, despite ongoing concerns about safety and living conditions in town camps.

Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price questioned the agency about child safety concerns in town camps following the tragic death of Kumanjayi Little Baby.

NIAA officials confirmed they were aware Tangentyere had nearly doubled its executives' salaries in the last year despite dire living conditions in the camps but said they were "comfortable" with the outcomes that had been provided.

The \$70m in grant funding related only to the funding provided by NIAA, and not any other agency. Officials stated that the NIAA was "one of many" Commonwealth funders. Officials told Estimates that "we are not the only funder of Tangentyere...globally they have a bigger budget than just our budget that we apply".

During Senate Estimates, NIAA acknowledged concerns regarding conditions in some town camps, confirmed it regularly visits the camps, and confirmed it had spoken directly with Tangentyere Council about improving repairs and maintenance outcomes.

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians Julian Leeser said vulnerable children deserved safe living conditions and taxpayers deserved accountability for how public money was being spent.

"The Australian people are entitled to ask why Labor is paying \$70 million to Tangentyere while the conditions in the camps are so poor. What have we got for our money?" Mr Leeser said.

“What’s more, it seems that \$70m is just the tip of the iceberg. The NIAA has told us they are one of many funders, but do not know how much Tangentyere receives across the Commonwealth.”

“Australians deserve to be told how their money is being spent, who is accountable, and how it is improving outcomes on the ground.”

Senator Nampijinpa Price said governments could not continue accepting poor outcomes despite significant public expenditure.

“Anyone with eyes in their head can see there are still children living in conditions that no Australian child should be living in,” Senator Nampijinpa Price said.

“The question is why, after tens of millions of dollars in Commonwealth funding, there are still children living in unsafe conditions.”

ENDS

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