



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

Homeland communities must be preserved

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Northern Land Council (NLC) Chief Executive Officer Kim Hill has condemned the Federal Government's refusal to guarantee funding to remote Aboriginal outstation communities in the Northern Territory.

Mr Hill's comments followed the release of a report by Amnesty International, which accuses the government of "starving aboriginal communities of essential services".

Mr Hill said the preservation of outstation communities was a key tool in the fight to end Aboriginal disadvantage in the Northern Territory, but, sadly, this message is not being heeded by policy makers in Canberra.

"The evidence is indisputable," Mr Hill said.

"Outstation life provides better health outcomes, allowing people to live longer.

"Importantly many of our leaders reside in homelands. Closing them down will smash the Aboriginal art industry and other tourism enterprises which allow the world to get an insight into the oldest living culture on the planet.

"Forcing people off their traditional lands and into growth towns will only result in more dysfunction and more disadvantage."

Mr Hill also took a swipe at renegade Country Liberals MLA David Tollner, who hijacked the debate over outstations by labelling them as "disgraceful hell-holes".

"Dave Tollner is obviously over the moon to be back from political exile and out to chalk up as many headlines as he can," he said.

"His comments show a total lack of understanding and are an insult to Aboriginal peoples who work tirelessly to improve their lives."