

**Submission  
No 42**

## **OPTIONS FOR ESSENTIAL WORKER HOUSING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** NSW Aboriginal Land Council

**Date Received:** 12 September 2024



Via online: [essentialworkerhousing@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:essentialworkerhousing@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing,

### ***Inquiry into options for essential worker housing in NSW***

#### **Introduction**

NSWALC is the state's peak, democratically elected body representing Aboriginal peoples in NSW. NSWALC has functions to protect and promote the rights of Aboriginal peoples, providing support to the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Network. The Network is currently made up of 121 Local Aboriginal Land Councils (**LALCs**) and has a combined membership of over 30,000 Aboriginal people in NSW.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Network is the key vehicle to delivering social, cultural and economic outcomes to Aboriginal communities, and is the framework for achieving self-determination in NSW. The Aboriginal Land Rights Network has unique, first-hand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal peoples and has developed and continues to develop a range of innovative opportunities to support the economic prosperity and social and cultural aspirations of Aboriginal people in NSW.

As per our Strategic Goals, NSWALC is dedicated to pursuing economic independence and prosperity for our people and LALCs. NSWALC are pleased to see the Government's commitment to increasing housing supply for essential workers, and sees opportunities to elevate Aboriginal businesses, build the capacity of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and increase access to education, training and employment for Aboriginal peoples in the supply increase of essential worker housing.

#### **Closing the Gap**

NSWALC is a member of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (**NSW CAPO**), who is a collective of peak bodies representing Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations across NSW. NSW CAPO provides a strong, independent, and coordinated voice to address issues affecting Aboriginal people in NSW and are a partner to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (**the National Agreement**).

In NSW, the National Agreement identifies a fifth Priority Reform specific to Aboriginal employment, business growth and economic prosperity. Work towards this Priority Reform 5 and Socio-Economic Outcome 8 of the National Agreement has driven significant opportunities for progress, supporting genuine partnership approaches with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal-led economic activities.

In exploring options to increase housing supply for essential workers, NSWALC recommend that the Committee align options with commitments made in the National Agreement, particularly in relation to Priority Reform 5 and Socio-Economic Outcome 8, ensuring strong economic participation of Aboriginal people and communities and increased opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to flourish.

## Procurement targets and Aboriginal business development

Aboriginal organisations and businesses provide local opportunities, hire more Aboriginal people and address employment barriers in regional areas throughout NSW and Australia. Governments must recognise that Aboriginal organisations and businesses will create better opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal peoples than other service providers/organisations. This is particularly applicable in relation to opportunities for economic independence, growth, and employment. Therefore, the government has a crucial role to play in the employment and procurement of Aboriginal peoples and businesses.

The Aboriginal Procurement Policy (**APP**) will drive the NSW Government to meet important targets for Aboriginal economic participation in the supply increase for essential worker housing. However, NSWALC advocate that the government consider more ambitious targets for training and education, full-time equivalent employment opportunities and contract awards for Aboriginal-owned businesses, given the diverse opportunities in metropolitan, regional, and remote areas for engaging communities with innovative economic outcomes.

NSWALC encourages the Committee to recognise the potential in the diversity of the Aboriginal business sector and support the growth and development of a wide range of Aboriginal businesses when exploring opportunities to increase housing supply for essential workers. Aboriginal business development is a crucial opportunity to create economic independence for Aboriginal communities now and in the future.

**Recommendation:** Options to increase supply of essential worker housing in New South Wales should include ambitious targets for training and education, full-time equivalent employment opportunities and contract awards for Aboriginal-owned businesses.

## Strategic partnerships to achieve economic outcomes

The return and activation of Aboriginal land for economic benefit is a priority for NSWALC. As significant land holders, NSWALC and LALCs are critical in supporting strong economic outcomes through land activation in Aboriginal communities.

Through strategic partnerships, the Land Rights network has the capacity to unlock opportunities to develop underutilised land in regional communities to generate much-needed outcomes for Aboriginal economic independence and enhancing wider economic investment providing development opportunities for social, affordable, private, and essential worker dwellings.

The Land Rights network is making important contributions, with the potential to make more to the NSW community, the economy, and the environment, through strategic partnerships that can deliver diverse housing outcomes, including contributing to essential worker housing

**Recommendation:** Options to increase supply of essential worker housing in New South Wales should focus on economic development centred on the return and activation of Aboriginal land to

create large scale, land asset-based economic progress for Aboriginal peoples in NSW, while supporting development opportunities for social, affordable, private, and essential worker dwellings.

## Conclusion

NSWALC plays a critical role in strengthening the economic development of the Land Rights network and is committed to pursuing economic independence and prosperity for our people. When considering options to increase the supply of essential worker housing, NSWALC ask the NSW Government to fulfil commitments under Closing the Gap Priority Reform 5 and Socio-Economic Outcome 8, to establish ambitious procurement targets for Aboriginal training and employment and Aboriginal business development, and identify opportunities for strategic partnerships that will achieve stronger economic outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities, and have flow on benefits for the broader community.

We trust that the information provided in this submission will be meaningfully considered. If you have further questions, please contact the NSWALC Strategy and Policy Unit on

Sincerely,

Yuseph Deen  
Chief Executive Officer  
NSW Aboriginal Land Council

Date: 12 September 2024