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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs
PRESS RELEASE

The Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Allen Blanchard MP, criticised the delivery of support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in presenting to the House of Representatives the Committee's interim report on an inquiry into support services. Mr Blanchard said that while the report was only preliminary, it highlighted a number of problem areas in the provision of support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

Mr Blanchard said that the process of service delivery had become very complex with the involvement of a large number of players at all levels of government. "Poor coordination and co-operation between the agencies involved is a problem that has been identified in a number of recent reports and it is one that the Committee has found to be very apparent," he said.

Mr Blanchard also referred to a failure to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities the control over services provided to them that was in accord with policies of self-determination and self-management. He said, "Far from communities being in control of services provided, the services are often imposed, and are not meeting the urgent needs of the communities."

Mr Blanchard also pointed to problems in the quality of staff employed in management and administrative positions in communities. He said that urgent attention must be given to training and recruiting Aboriginal people to the management and administrative positions in their communities. He said that the Committee will pursue these issues in its future inquiry on the support services reference.

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