More accommodation for Aboriginal visitors to Alice Springs

The Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, the Northern Territory Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, and the NT Minister for Central Australia, Karl Hampton, today opened an $11 million visitor park providing Aboriginal visitors to Alice Springs with a safe place to stay.

Ms Macklin said the Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park contained a mix of self-contained units, cabins and camping facilities, offering a range of short-term accommodation options for up to 150 people.

“The Park meets a very real need to provide families and vulnerable people with safe and secure accommodation where drugs and alcohol are not tolerated,” Ms Macklin said.

“Importantly, it will also help to alleviate overcrowding in the Alice Springs town camps.

“Apmere Mwerre means ‘good place’ in the local Arrernte language, and was the name suggested by the Traditional Owners of Alice Springs.

“The Park will be managed by Aboriginal Hostels Limited, which has more than 30 years experience in providing accommodation services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“I’m also pleased that under the management of Aboriginal Hostels Limited, the Visitor Park has created 18 new jobs for locals,” Ms Macklin said.

The Australian Government’s $11 million funding for the Visitor Park is part of the $150 million Alice Springs Transformation Plan ASTP - a partnership between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments to improve the lives of Aboriginal residents and visitors in Alice Springs.

“Aboriginal people from remote communities visit Alice Springs for a variety of reasons, such as accessing medical services, attending sporting events, visiting
family and purchasing goods and services, and the Visitor Park will provide a much needed accommodation option for an affordable fee,” Mr Henderson said.

“The park will be supported by regular public transport services to make it easier for people to get to medical treatment and appointments. “

“The Alice Springs Transformation Plan recognises the need for a short-term accommodation facility to help tackle homelessness and overcrowding in the town camps,” Mr Hampton said.

“Together with other projects to ease accommodation shortages in Alice Springs, and the 85 new houses being built under the ASTP, there will be more than 500 additional beds available in town by the end of this year.”

“It’s important that the many Aboriginal families and other people that make the trip into Alice Springs can access accommodation that is safe and secure and not crowded. The Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park helps achieve that and is another positive development in the $150m Alice Springs Transformation Plan,” Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon said.