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## *MEDIA RELEASE*

### **Call for moratorium on homelands funding cuts**

**A study released today by the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory [AMSANT] calls for an immediate moratorium of funding cutbacks to homelands and outstations, AMSANT Executive Director John Paterson said today.**

“The study by Sydney University health economist Professor Gavin Mooney suggests that governments may get more bang for their buck on maintaining—if not increasing—investment in homelands,” said Mr Paterson.

“The evidence on the positive benefits of homeland life on Aboriginal health are solid, but the trouble is that moves by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments to shift money from homelands to central townships threaten to throw those health gains away, and widen rather than close the gap.

“From Kevin Rudd to Paul Henderson, both governments claim they work from an evidence base—but they appear to be ignoring the positive evidence from homelands and outstations.

“This report—*Health and Homelands: Good Value for Money?*—points a way forward to look at the economics of investment into homelands.

“Professor Mooney looks at existing evidence, and suggests feasible, rigorous and defensible research that should be undertaken on the economic and equity considerations that our leaders should look at.”

The report was commissioned and funded by AMSANT, Miwatj Health Services and the Institute for Cultural Survival. The report argues that the evidence on costs ought to give little cause for concern to finance officers in the relevant government departments, and that investments into homelands may even lead to cost savings.

“It is impossible to understand why governments who claim to believe in evidence based policy are hell bent on going down the road of centralising rather than building on the benefits we know derive from homelands,” said Professor Mooney.

“Let’s get the evidence and then make policy.

“Isn’t that how these things are supposed to be done?”

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