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NATIONAL NEWS

Tuesday Mar 11 13:30 AEDT



'Racism' victim wanted to cry

Tuesday Mar 11 08:47 AEDT



An Aboriginal woman in a group ejected from a Northern Territory hostel says the incident made her want to cry.

Bethany Langdon and other members of her remote community are reportedly considering legal action against the Alice Springs hostel's management following their weekend ejection.

"When we booked in, the manager, she gave us the keys to the rooms and we went and put our stuff in the rooms.

"We all went outside and the manager came out and told me that we weren't suitable to stay there," Ms Langdon told ABC Radio on Tuesday.

"They said (it was) because we were Aboriginal. Other customers were making complaints that they were scared of us.

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"I felt like I wanted to cry because it made me feel like I wasn't an Australian, like I wasn't wanted there."

Ms Langdon was one of 16 Aboriginal women and children from the Yuendumu community who had travelled to Alice Springs to attend classes organised by Royal Life Saving.

ABC television reported on Monday night the management of the Haven Hostel asked the group to leave following complaints from other guests.

The hostel's management later said the Haven catered specifically for international backpacking tourists.

Royal Life Saving chief executive officer Rob Bradley said the incident soured the occasion for the Yuendumu community.

"We have worked over a long period of time to build the partnerships, to build the trust with 11 indigenous communities around the NT," he told ABC Radio.

"This is a big stumbling block. I hope it doesn't put people off."

The territory's anti-discrimination commissioner, Tony Fitzgerald, said the women could have a strong case.

"If the story is true, it's disgraceful but it is not the only story exactly like this that we

have heard anecdotally at the commission," he said.

"The challenge for us is to convince people who do suffer this sort of unfair treatment to make a complaint so that we can investigate it and follow it through."

The Haven Hostel's statement said alternative accommodation had been arranged for the group.

"We also offered to pay for that night's accommodation," it said.



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