Northern Territory students will benefit from up to 50 specialist teacher positions in Budget 2011-12.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie said the $1.2 million initiative would lead to better education outcomes by keeping our best teachers in the classroom and delivering quality, affordable education to Territory students.

“Education is a hallmark of this government and we are committed to supporting Territory students and teachers throughout their schooling and professional careers.” Ms Lawrie said.

“The new Specialist Teachers will work in classrooms of nominated Territory schools throughout the school year and will draw on their experience and specialist expertise to assist in developing new materials, deliver professional development, provide advice and mentor teachers.”

Ms Lawrie said the initiative aims to retain teachers in the profession and improve quality.

“We have great teachers here in the Territory, and this investment allows us to offer them a new career path to keep their skills in the classroom for the benefit of students and other staff.”

Within this additional funding is $100,000 to fund reimbursement of Higher Education Loans Program up to $3,000 in study costs for teachers who complete 3 years of service in hard to recruit positions.

“It is well recognised that length of stay for teachers in a school has a direct impact on learning outcomes for students, particularly in remote areas,” Ms Lawrie said.

“This scheme will provide encouragement and incentive for graduates to commit to teaching in the bush, bringing great benefits to both the students and the community as a whole.”

Ms Lawrie said the announcement formed part of the Territory Government’s broader efforts to attract skilled workers in the education sector.

“Recruiting and retaining skilled workers is an ongoing challenge and our government continues to support teachers across the Territory.”

“By fostering the careers of educators and attracting new talent to our remote schools, we can build a smarter Territory.”

The positions deliver on an enterprise bargaining agreement between teachers and the NT Government.

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