The Giles Government is about to embark on the most ambitious remote home ownership drive ever announced with hundreds of public housing tenants being encouraged to buy their homes.

“The Country Liberals Government is determined to give Aboriginal people in our remote communities the same opportunities as Territorians living in urban areas and that includes the chance to buy their own home,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“The Territory Government is committed to bringing jobs and development to Northern Australia and facilitating private home ownership in remote areas is a key part of achieving that goal.

“We want to build an economic future for Indigenous children and give them the opportunity to work and pay off their own home.

“We want public housing to be a pathway to home ownership, not an end in itself.”

In Budget 2014, $4.5 million has been set aside over the next three years to begin this process.

Up to half the Territory’s remote housing stock could be made available for sale in communities with a 40 or 99 year township lease to those tenants who wish to purchase their home. This currently includes communities on Groote Eylandt, Bickerton Island and the Tiwi Islands.

“Most homes would be available for purchase in the $80,000 to $150,000 range and will be offered on a first come, first served basis to tenants,” Minister for Housing Matt Conlan said.

“This new Indigenous home ownership strategy is a major milestone for the Northern Territory. It will instil a sense of pride that is needed to help get people in the bush off welfare and into work.

“At the completion of the sale, owner occupiers will be supported with a special incentive grant of $20,000 to help them upgrade and maintain their home.”

To be eligible for the scheme, tenants must have a good rent payment record and good property condition history for two years or more, they must undertake mandatory education training and have finance approved by a lending institution.

Consultations with stakeholders will occur over the coming weeks with plans for the first homes to be ready for sale before the end of the year.

Further details of the scheme will be announced over the coming months.

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