BUY YOUR OWN HOME AND SECURE YOUR CHILDREN’S FUTURE

4 June 2014

Public Housing tenants on the Tiwi Islands, Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island will have the opportunity to buy their homes under a new ownership drive by the Territory Government.

“The Giles 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 allowing private home ownership in remote areas is crucial to 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 and I encourage all tenants in the eligible communities to consider buying their house as an investment in their children’s future.”

Communities with long term township leases are eligible which currently includes Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island and Milikapiti on Melville Island, as well as Angurugu and Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt and Milyakburra on Bickerton Island.

“We want eligible communities, like Milikapiti, to take full advantage of the opportunities these leases provide and it’s great to see so much local interest in this plan,” Mr Giles said.

“A range of communities on the Tiwis and other parts of the Territory are currently in negotiations about the possibility of signing new long term leases and we’d encourage them to sign up if they’re interested in exploring new economic opportunities, including home ownership.”

$4.5 million has been set aside over the next three years to begin this process and up to half the Territory’s remote housing stock could be made available for sale to tenants who wish to purchase their home.
“The price of properties will be determined via an independent evaluation but we expect most homes would be available for purchase in the $80,000 to $150,000 range. They will be offered on a first come, first served basis to interested tenants,” Mr Giles said.

“We understand that maintenance is a pressure point for many new home owners and we’re offering financial assistance to help people look after their properties.

“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.

“We have begun talking to community residents about this scheme and there are plans for the first homes to be ready for sale before the end of the year.”

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.

“This new scheme is part of a wider program of investment and support the Territory Government is providing on the Tiwi Islands,” Mr Giles said.

“Infrastructure is the key enabler of economic growth and the Country Liberals are proud to be building the transport links necessary for the development of the Tiwis.

“Millions of dollars has been allocated for the Tiwis in Budget 2014, including $2 million to upgrade the barge landing at Wurrumiyanga.

“We have also committed more than a million dollars to continue the popular Tiwi Ferry Service and design new ferry landing pontoons at Wurrumiyanga and Paru.

“It’s envisaged that this will ultimately form part of a new waterfront tourism precinct, boosting local job opportunities.

“Since SeaLink NT began operating the ferry to the Tiwi Islands in September last year, the service has been extremely well received. More than 5470 passengers travelled on the ferry up to the end of 2013 which is a fantastic outcome delivered by the Country Liberals.”

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