Adams Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Accommodation camp for displaced residents on Elcho Island

25 February 2015

The Territory Government is working to establish an Emergency Accommodation Camp at Galiwin’ku on Elcho Island to house residents whose homes were damaged by Cyclone Lam in the immediate term.

“People whose homes are unsafe to live in are currently being safely looked after in the cyclone shelter at Shepherdson College where there is plenty of food and water," Mr Giles said.

“However, we are moving to set up a more appropriate facility where residents will be more comfortable over the next few weeks.”

After a detailed accommodation assessment by NT officials and Emergency Management Australia yesterday the NSW Rural Fire Service has agreed to work with us to establish an Emergency Accommodation Camp.

“This camp will include heavy duty shelters with hard floors that can safely accommodate up to 300 residents over the short term while homes are repaired. This portable ‘habitat’, as it’s called, has previously been used during bushfires in NSW,” Mr Giles said.

The mobile habitat shelter is being sent up to Darwin today and will go on the barge to Galiwin’ku tomorrow. It is expected to arrive in Galiwin’ku on Friday afternoon.

“The shelter takes 24 hours to construct, establish and set up. It is hoped this set-up will occur on Saturday with the shelter opening on Sunday,” Mr Giles said.

A team of NT Fire and Rescue and the NSW Rural Fire Service staff will be travelling to Galiwin’ku tomorrow to prepare for the arrival of the habitat shelter.

“Power and Water is working hard to ensure the site is ready to connect power, water and sewerage,” Mr Giles said.

“Importantly, the creation of an accommodation camp also means the school can reopen and kids can get back to class. This is an important step in the recovery process.

“This is an immediate solution for the next few weeks but we are looking at other accommodation options that can be provided by local Territory companies while the wider rebuilding work is done.”
A housing recovery plan is now being actioned following impact assessments in all four major communities affected by Cyclone Lam – GaliwINKu, Ramingining, Milingimbi and Gapuwiyak.

The focus for this is ensuring uninhabitable houses that only need minor repairs are targeted first by repair contractors.

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