Bess Price
Minister for Housing

**Budget funds for remote housing body**

24 May 2016

The NT Government has set aside $1 million in Budget 2016-17 to support the consultation, planning and establishment of the Remote Housing Development Authority (RHDA) which is due to become operational on July 1 next year.

The Government last week announced plans to establish the RHDA, an independent statutory body that will become a community-driven “one-stop-shop” for remote housing.

Housing Minister Bess Price said the RHDA, a not-for-profit business, heralded a new era in remote housing and would result in much more say for locals and generate new jobs and greater opportunity for businesses in the regional and remote communities.

“The authority will reduce bureaucracy, give locals more control, streamline processes and introduce higher standards of efficiency and service delivery,” she said.

“This will be a new way of doing business and the biggest reform to the remote housing model since the Territory was granted self-government 38 years ago,” she said.

Minister Price said a steering committee comprising Chief Executives of the Department of Local Government and Community Services (Chair) and the departments of Housing, Treasury and Finance and the Chief Minister was expected to begin meeting by the end of this month.

The steering committee would conduct an extensive period of consultation with all key stakeholders across the Territory, including housing organisations, peak bodies and land councils.

The first round of formal engagement was scheduled to take place between July 1 and August 31, with a discussion paper to be released on October 1. A second round of formal engagement would be completed by the end of November.

Minister Price said the RHDA would have full responsibility for the administration, construction delivery, tenancy management and the repair and maintenance of remote housing in the Territory’s 73 remote communities, the 43 town camps and the 400-plus homelands.

It was crucial that people in communities had their say and that they remained a pivotal voice in the delivery and management of remote housing.

“The input of traditional owners and other stakeholders to help ensure that we decide on the best possible structure for the new body which we see as becoming a one-stop-shop,” Minister Price said.
“It will be a true partnership between the Government and Aboriginal people in the remote regions.”

Minister Price said her Government was already turning things around for remote housing.

This was demonstrated by the Government’s latest funding agreement with the Federal Government which would build more than 350 new houses and refurbish more than 1000 others in remote communities over the next two years.

“This works schedule amounts to an additional 152 new houses which will help reduce the overcrowding problem that was created by previous Labor governments,” she said.

“The RHDA will build on this success and take the delivery and management of remote housing to a new level.”

The RHDA will be responsible for developing:

- A sound business model covering all aspects of remote housing, including governance, administration, finance, legal, HR, policy, processes and procedures, stakeholder engagement, new houses, tenancy management, and repairs and maintenance
- A place-based approach to supporting Aboriginal housing, including the establishment of community businesses to deliver remote housing services.
- New subdivisions for more new remote housing.
- Opportunities in remote communities to deliver as much work as possible for Aboriginal people and businesses in construction, repairs and maintenance and tenancy management.
- Opportunities for private sector investment, including liaising with funding institutions such as Indigenous Business Australia as well as commercial lenders.
- Streamlined systems to expedite land-leasing arrangements to enable the construction of new houses.

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