Adam Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Indigenous Affairs

 Territory Connect program resumes

16 July 2016

The Northern Territory Government has provided special assistance to enable the resumption of Territory Connect (formerly known as Return to Country) from Monday, July 18.

Territory Connect was announced on 28 November 2014 as a “bush travel enterprise ensuring continued access to remote community flights under a strict user-pays business model”.

Approximately 4000 people per year are returned to their communities under the program, which has been delivered by Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

The organisation was put under special administration by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) on 6 June 2016.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Government has provided a one-off grant of $300,000 to help Larrakia Nation resume the program.

“The NT Government recognises the value of Territory Connect, which provides a much-needed, important community service,” Mr Giles said.

“The results of not having the service are visible, with people who become stranded experiencing temporary homelessness, placing pressure on services like Night Patrol, crisis accommodation and public housing.

“Larrakia Nation has the existing relationships, commercial arrangements and infrastructure in place to be able to quickly resume the service.”

Mr Giles said the Government would closely monitor delivery of the service under the supervision of the special administrator to ensure Larrakia Nation makes the necessary changes to deliver a sustainable program.

Users of the service are obliged to repay the cost of the travel and administrative charges back to Larrakia Nation.

Special administrator Gerry Mier welcomed the Government’s assistance.

“We’re very appreciative of the support the Government has provided,” Mr Mier said.

“It will enable us to re-establish the Territory Connect program, and will help the organisation get back on a sustainable footing.”

People wishing to access Territory Connect should contact Larrakia Nation from Monday.

“We’ve worked hard with Larrakia Nation to get the Return to Country program back on track,” Mr Giles said.

“The Government is assisting Larrakia Nation to help those people who have been stranded in Darwin because of the administrative problems.
“It’s good that Larrakia Nation has a plan to trade out of its difficulties and we’re happy to support them.”

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