Michael Gunner
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Creating Jobs and Better Housing: 24 Communities Named ‘Room to Breathe’

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The Territory Labor Government today announced 24 remote Indigenous communities would be the first to have additional living spaces built onto existing homes as part of the Room to Breathe program this financial year.

Chief Minister Michael Gunner said Room to Breathe – which is the first part of the Territory Labor Government’s 10-year, $1.1 billion remote housing election commitment - would create jobs, improve housing and restore local decision making and improve lives.

The 24 communities have been identified as having high levels of overcrowding and the local building capacity to deliver what people say they need.

“We believe Territorians are entitled to control over their lives and access to high quality services - when our remote communities and regions are strong, the Territory is strong,” Mr Gunner said.

“That’s why we have invested so heavily in remote housing because we know that a good home leads to a good education, good health and good community and social outcomes. It also creates local jobs and boosts the economy.”

The 24 communities are:

Ali Curung
Lajamanu
Ampilatwatja
Maningrida
Areylinga
Milyakburra
Beswick
Meeting with Indigenous leaders in Hermannsburg to listen to their views, Mr Gunner, Minister for Housing and Community Development Gerry McCarthy and Member for Stuart Scott McConnell, said the program would reduce overcrowding and allow families to continue living together.

Mr McCarthy said Room to Breathe will be guided by local communities with consultation well underway.

“Today we are listening to what types of new living spaces the people of Hermannsburg want built and we will then take action in the coming months - local people make the best decisions about their future and issues that impact them,” Mr McCarthy said.

“We are consulting with the 24 communities that have been identified as having high levels of overcrowding and the local building capacity to deliver what people tell us they need.

“Unlike the previous CLP Government, we are taking action. The Territory has significant housing problems so we are working with local people to build homes where families can raise healthy children - these houses will be delivered by a local workforce which will create local jobs and build the local economy.”
Mr McConnell said Hermannsburg has a high rate of overcrowding with an average of seven people living in each house.

“Remote housing in the Territory is inadequate, overcrowded and has resulted in poor health, education and social outcomes,” he said.

“We want to deliver good housing for Territorians that will lead to a good education, good health and good community and social outcomes – this will benefit all Territorians and is the right thing to do.”

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