Geral McCarthy
Minister for Housing and Community Development

$1 million Boost for Interpreter Services to Enable Local Decision Making: Budget 17

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The Territory Labor Government will invest an additional $1 million from Budget 17 in the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) to help almost 35,000 Territorians who speak one of 35 Indigenous languages to engage in local decision making.

Funding for the AIS will create the equivalent of nine full time jobs for Indigenous Territorians and will strengthen and expand the services (which currently includes 300 casual interpreters), as well as create upskilling and training opportunities.

The Minister for Housing and Community Development Gerry McCarthy said interpreting services are important for many Indigenous Territorians to fully understand and use housing, health, legal and social services.

“We are a government that put Territorians first and empower people living in the bush,” Minister McCarthy said.

“Expanding the AIS in Budget 17 aligns with the Labor Government’s 10 year $1.1 billion remote housing election promise to ease overcrowding in remote Indigenous communities and improve social and health outcomes.

“We want to ensure our remote housing program will be rolled out in true partnership with remote Indigenous communities, because we recognise local people are best served by local decision-making and we are intent on restoring this to remote Indigenous communities.

“For too long governments have directed Indigenous communities, whereas this investment will help people achieve the goals they set for themselves.”

The AIS recently installed video conferencing facilities to operate more efficiently, save travel costs and travel time and allow more people in remote areas to access the service.

“We are fortunate to live in the Territory where such diverse Aboriginal languages are spoken and enhancing these services will support people in remote Indigenous communities to have effective good two-way communication with the Territory Government and other services,” Mr McCarthy said.

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