The NT Government will allocate an extra $1.3 million a year to new initiatives aimed at improving conditions for the 1700 public sector employees living and working in remote communities, including teachers and health staff, Acting Chief Minister Syd Stirling announced today.

Acting Chief Minister Syd Stirling announced the package today.

The initiatives, to be introduced from next financial year, will include:

- around $1 million to improve remote area employees’ access to skills development opportunities;
- enhancing the freight allowance system by allowing staff to freight in up to 25% more groceries and simplifying the reimbursement system;
- increasing accommodation allowances by 20% for employees travelling to towns for skills development courses – the first increase since 1993; and
- reviewing the current classification system for determining which areas are defined as remote localities.

Mr Stirling said the Government would also provide $158,000 this financial year, to allow the increased freight allowances and accommodation allowances to be introduced immediately.

"This is part of the Government’s commitment to improving the working and living conditions for staff and their families in remote and rural areas," he said.

"By improving conditions, not only are we further developing the NT Public Service as an attractive employer, it will also assist us to attract and retain..."
quality staff in remote communities.

"The initiatives follow Cabinet consideration of a review of NT Public Sector Remote Locality Working Conditions, undertaken by representatives of key government agencies and unions.

"Forty-one separate workplaces throughout the NT were visited as part of the review and I would like to thank everyone who participated and provided submissions."

Mr Stirling said a CEOs’ Committee, chaired by the Commissioner for Public Employment, would be established to determine how the additional $1 million for skills development would be used most effectively.

"We want to ensure that those employees who previously have been unable to access development training are able to, through the provision of such things as relief staff and other resources," he said.

"If we are to improve outcomes in remote areas, it is crucial that we strengthen the links between improved remote service delivery and workforce development."