Mr John Ah Kit, Minister for Housing, today announced the first ever triennial Agreement between the Northern Territory Government, Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, and NT Shelter. The Agreement will provide $195,175 each year over three years, ensuring continuity of funding for NT Shelter programs and services with workers based in Alice Springs and Darwin.

"NT Shelter is a highly regarded organisation and is part of the Australia-wide network, National Shelter.

"This independent peak body provides valuable advice to government, the community sector and tenants, and is in line with my new direction for public housing under Home Territory 2010".

"Building on the excellent work of the past, this new triennial agreement marks a new beginning in our partnership with NT Shelter.

"Of course we won’t always see eye to eye on all issues, but the Martin Labor Government is committed to adequate support to community sector advocacy groups of the calibre of NT Shelter," said Mr Ah Kit.

"This Government is commitment to providing essential housing services that are suited to the needs of our clients, targeted to client needs and well managed. NT Shelter will continue to provide an important link between clients, key housing community organisations and Government".

The Agreement for 2003-06 provides $195,175 each year. $42,721 per annum has been set aside to fund a position in Alice Springs in recognition of the uniqueness and diversity of Central Australia.

"In the past funding has been provided annually, however this new three-year Agreement will enable NT Shelter to plan longer term which will enhance the organisation’s research, development and operational goals," said Mr Ah Kit.

Key priority areas in the Agreement for 2003 – 2006 include:

- Establishment of peer support and information exchange networks for housing workers;
- Identification of gaps and opportunities within the current housing services;
- In partnership with the Department of Justice, developing client protocols for housing workers;
- Identification and innovation of projects such as the Housing and Literacy Project;
- Promoting Northern Territory housing and homelessness issues nationally.