Minister for Central Australia, Dr Peter Toyne launched a new ground breaking approach to training Aboriginal people in housing management and construction at Laramba Community today.

The $6 million Central Remote Regional Council Indigenous Housing Program funded through the Indigenous Housing Association Northern Territory (IHANT), will for the first time include the employment of trainers and mentors to work with Indigenous trainees over a period of three years.

Twenty trainees will work on the construction of houses within their communities whilst at the same time doing accredited Certificate level courses.

Six Trainer/Builders have been appointed for a term of three years. Five of the six appointees are indigenous and are experienced trainers with a track record of successful training outcomes.

"The employment of experienced trainers over a term of three years will contribute significantly to the success of this project and result in trained indigenous builders who can contribute to the provision of housing in their communities"

"This project is a momentous step forward in Indigenous housing programs for a number of reasons including the whole-of-government approach taken here between the Federal and Territory Governments and ATSIC," said Dr Toyne.

"Working together we can achieve much more than any Government can individually," said Dr Toyne.

Dr Toyne said the focus on a long-term commitment of three years for this project is encouraging and recognises the past failures of short-term training in this area.

IHANT have secured the project managers QANTEC; Tangentyere Jobshop to employ the trainers and mentors and Tangentyere Construction, who will provide building expertise and construction back-up

Six communities have been chosen to participate in the program: Papunya, Laramba, Urapuntja, Santa Teresa, Ntaria and Yuendumu.

The Trainers/Builders will be housed at the participating communities in specially prepared accommodation, which will remain as community assets following completion of the project.

Two houses will be constructed at each community by the Building teams. Each Builder/Trainer will look after four trainees in a similar relationship to a master/apprentice. In addition a roving Mentor will work one-on-one with trainees.

Each trainee will be given the opportunity to reach one of three accredited
Certificate levels: Certificate 1 in Construction; Certificate 11 in General Construction; and Certificate 111 in General Construction.

Off-the-job training is being organised through Centralian College of TAFE and funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Training will be provided in a six month block on a rotating basis so that each community will have an equal amount of training.

Dr Toyne said this Government is delighted to be a partner in this program.

"It is through community based, realistic and long term programs such as this that we will get a real increase in the capacity of communities to manage their own affairs," said Dr Toyne.

"Congratulations are due to the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, who developed the program at the request of Minister for Community Development John Ah Kit and the ATSIC Central Remote Regional Council," said Dr Toyne.

The $6 million dollar training program is part of a $13 million housing construction program in the Central Remote region over the next 12 months with a number of Alice Springs based private building contractors having won tenders for this work.