A Safe House will finally be built for Borroloola thanks to a $700,000 shared funding agreement between the NT Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Community Development Minister John Ah Kit announced today.

"The idea of a Safe House was raised by the community almost five years ago as a temporary respite measure for women and children who are victims of domestic violence," Mr Ah Kit said.

"But progress had been delayed due to Native Title issues and difficulty securing recurrent funding to assure the Safe House longer term viability.

"The Labor Government has successfully negotiated an Indigenous Land Use Agreement to finally allow this significant project to get underway."

Mr Ah Kit said this is a fantastic coup for the community of Borroloola – especially for the women who have been waiting for this announcement for the last four and a half years.

"Aboriginal family violence is a very sad reality in the Northern Territory, with these crimes having devastating effects on individuals, families and the community.

"The Safe House will work as an integral link in the broader community’s drive to manage domestic violence, and will work in concert with the Government’s Domestic Violence Strategy which will create a stronger and better co-ordinated approach to this problem."

Mr Ah Kit said Labor Government’s recently launched Stronger Regions Strategy was about improving outcomes for Indigenous Territorians, and would also provide realistic solutions to tackling regional social inequalities.

Mr Ah Kit’s Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs will provide $400,000 for construction of the Safe House. ATSIC will provide $50,000 in 2003/04 and intends to provide $50,000 in the following two years, and the Department of Health and Community Services is contributing $60,000 for establishment costs as well as $20,000 recurrent for three years.

The Safe House will be managed by Mabunji Council, with the Borroloola...
Women’s Committee responsible for the day-to-day operations under a
shared arrangement with Mabunji.

The construction of the Safe House, expected to be completed before the
end of this year, will be undertaken by the Department of Infrastructure,
Planning and Environment, according to plans developed together with the
Women’s Committee.

"This has been a whole-of-Government effort right from the beginning and
is a wonderful example of collaboration between the NT Government,
ATSIC and Mabunji," Mr Ah Kit said.

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