11 October 2006

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE ANNOUNCED

The Northern Territory Government has secured the future of bush communities by introducing far reaching reforms to local government structures.

Local Government Minister Elliot McAdam said local government in the bush needs reform to ensure better services and a sustainable future.

“These reforms focus on a system of regional shires and municipal councils operating across the Territory under an amended Local Government Act,” said Mr McAdam.

“Reforms will primarily focus on local governments in rural and remote areas.

“There is a need to establish a new framework for local government in the regions so they are secure and financially sustainable.

“This means better service delivery for Territorians, especially for those living in the bush.

“These reforms will make local governments in the bush robust, financially viable, and capable of delivering their vital services,” said Mr McAdam.

The proposed local government reforms will include:

- A new framework for local government in the Northern Territory based on a system of municipals and regional shires operating across the whole of the Territory under an amended Local Government Act;
- An Advisory Board with wide ranging representation and an independent Chair will soon be appointed to advise the Minister during the reform process; and
- The target date for implementation of local government reform in the Territory is July 2008.

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board will be announced soon and nominations for positions will be called for.

Mr McAdam said there will be consultation throughout the Territory during the transition process, and ultimately work between the three levels of government will deliver better services to the bush.

“Community councils have carried a heavy load for a long time, and these reforms will improve local government structures, expertise and services, creating financial security and a sustainable future,” said Mr McAdam.

Contact: Nicole Manison 0448 693 279 or 8901 4086