First houses handed over in Galiwin’ku

15 February 2016

The first four of 40 ‘fast build’ houses being replaced at Galiwin’ku after the devastation of Tropical Cyclones Lam and Nathan have been completed and displaced families are now starting to move back from their temporary housing.

Chief Minister Adam Giles visited Galiwin’ku today ahead of the one-year anniversary since Cyclone Lam to see how the $100 million regional rebuilding program was progressing.

Mr Giles said 160 moderately damaged houses had been repaired in Galiwin’ku, barge landing works were completed and construction was well underway on new houses.

“Galiwin’ku community leaders have been clear that they want to see the rebuilding program maximise jobs and training opportunities for local people,” he said.

“We have heard the message that recovery and rebuilding is not just about repairing physical assets as quickly as possible, it is also about ensuring local people can get involved through employment, training and business opportunities.

“As such, it was agreed that the first 40 of 80 houses that need to be replaced will be built as quickly as possible with the second batch of 40 houses to be built over a longer period of time to deliver the community’s development objectives.

“The first four houses in the ‘fast build’ are now complete and the remaining program is well advanced with 36 houses to be steadily handed over to residents in the coming months.”

Mr Giles said the rebuilding works were achieving high levels of local employment, with half of the reconstruction workforce being Indigenous.

“More than 50 local Yolngu people from Galiwin’ku have gained employment through the rebuilding project across a full range of construction disciplines,” he said.

“The project has also enabled regional capacity building in material manufacture and supply, including timber trusses, concrete blocks and concrete batching.”

During the visit, the Chief Minister also discussed local projects being supported under the joint Commonwealth-Northern Territory Government $5 million Community Recovery Fund.
“The Galiwin’ku football oval surface was damaged by the emergency tent accommodation put in place immediately after Cyclone Lam and with $169,000 through the Community Recovery Fund, the oval will be restored and a water efficient irrigation system installed,” he said.

“The Community Recovery Fund will also support the continuation of an expanded mental health, resilience and wellbeing program being run by Miwatj Health using locally trained Yolngu counsellors,” he said.

“The program is helping support families who are still in temporary housing or have otherwise been significantly impacted by cyclones and I am pleased the program is able to continue with this new funding of $136,800.”

Mr Giles said the Country Liberals Government was determined to build the capacity of Aboriginal Territorians and remote communities so they can take full advantage of business and job opportunities.

“The work going on in Galiwin’ku clearly aligns with the objectives of the Country Liberals Government’s Aboriginal Affairs Strategy, which is focussed on providing economic development opportunities and decentralising decision making,” he said.

A community event, led by the East Arnhem Regional Council with the support of the Northern Territory Government, will be held this Saturday 20 February to celebrate the community’s resilience and participation in the rebuilding effort.

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