Gerald McCarthy
Minister for Housing and Community Development

$2 million annual increase to strengthen local government

2 December 2016

The Minister for Housing and Community Development Gerry McCarthy has announced an annual $2 million increase to local government operational funding to assist in asset management and improve service delivery.

Minister McCarthy said at the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory’s (LGANT) annual general meeting in Alice Springs today, the new grant would expand the capacity of the nine regional and three shire councils.

“Local governments are vital to drive jobs and grow the economy in regional and remote areas, while delivering services such as improving road quality, waste management, storm water drainage, cemetery upgrades and the development of parks and green streetscapes,” Minister McCarthy said.

“These new funds will expand the capacity of councils to take on much needed projects.”

The Territory’s regional and remote populations are increasing, along with the demands on local government.

These new funds honour the pre-election commitment by the Chief Minister Michael Gunner, in response to LGANT’s request to increase local government funding.

This new funding commences this financial year and includes $1.5 million for NT Operational Subsidy, such as the purchase of plant and equipment and operational costs, while the other $500,000 will add to the Special Purpose Grants pool to assist councils in their delivery of services.

An additional $5 million for the Strategic Local Government Infrastructure Fund recently announced will commence in 2017-18.

The Department is developing guidelines on how the $5 million Strategic Local Government Infrastructure Fund will be administered to achieve the maximum benefit for local government infrastructure in remote communities.

“We also committed to more local decision-making because we believe this is how the right decisions are made,” Minister McCarthy said.
“We want to work with regional councils to encourage greater delegation of decision making to their local authorities.

“This will include investing in strategic infrastructure, providing high quality training for council members and staff and proposing the development of a new Local Government Act and new Cemeteries Act.

“The NT Government, local government and LGANT have to work in partnership to fortify the local government sector in the Territory.”

Consultation with stakeholders has commenced.

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