BUDGET 2017-18

Investing for our Future – Jobs, Children, Community

Delivering for the Bush

When our remote communities and regions are strong, the Territory is strong. Budget 2017 delivers strategic projects to create jobs, improve regional infrastructure, encourage investment and restore local decision making.

Building Houses in the Bush

Budget 2017 delivers for the bush through the Remote Housing Investment Package – a $1.1 billion, 10-year package to improve housing, create jobs and restore local decision making.

The package is the largest ever Territory Government investment into remote housing infrastructure. In 2017-18, $106 million will be invested, including:

- $50 million for the Homebuild NT program;
- $26 million for the Room to Breathe program;
- $20 million for repairs and maintenance; and
- $10 million for locally recruited government employees housing.

Budget 2017 also includes an additional $44.5 million over two years to prepare land plots and establish electrical, water and sewerage infrastructure to support the Remote Housing Investment Package.

Local Decision Making

Budget 2017 delivers for our local communities through:

- $25.9 million to local councils from the Northern Territory Operational Subsidy grants pool;
- $5 million to establish and operate the Strategic Local Government Infrastructure Fund to invest in projects that will improve key infrastructure in remote communities;
- $1.3 million to plan and commence the implementation of Government's Local Decision Making agenda;
- $1 million to develop and support strong governance capability and capacity in Aboriginal organisations wanting to participate in the Local Decision Making agenda; and
- $800 000 for the First Circles Engagement program to support future Indigenous leaders from across the Territory to be the next generation of community leaders.

Creating Jobs

Budget 2017 supports jobs for remote Territorians, through:

- $7.9 million to continue the Indigenous Jobs Development Fund for regional councils to support core local government service delivery;
- $4.1 million over two years to support Indigenous ranger groups with the purchase of equipment;
- $3.6 million for Aboriginal employment programs;
- $2 million additional funding for the Remote Aboriginal Economic Development Fund to boost jobs and support governance and capacity-building initiatives;

- $1 million to employ additional Aboriginal interpreters to help the delivery of the Remote Housing Investment Package; and
- $500 000 for the establishment of an Indigenous Carbon Unit to provide advice and support to ranger groups and Aboriginal landholders to create sustainable enterprises through carbon abatement and sequestration.

Transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has commenced in the Territory in the Barkly and East Arnhem regions, and for Darwin supported accommodation participants.

NDIS is being rolled out across the Territory over a three-year period and will ultimately provide support to more than 6500 eligible Territorians.

The Territory Government is working collaboratively with the National Disability Insurance Agency and the Commonwealth, with a focus on maximising opportunities for Aboriginal economic participation, and local business and workforce development.

Budget 2017 also provides $8 million for early intervention and support to tackle challenging behaviours and support students with additional needs and mental health issues.

Connecting Communities

Budget 2017 includes major upgrades to regional roads to ensure Territorian's living and working remotely remain connected, and in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, is providing:

- $78 million to continue upgrading the Arnhem Highway on the Adelaide River floodplain;
- $40 million for upgrades to the Buntine Highway;
- $31.3 million to upgrade the Plenty Highway;
- $25 million to upgrade the Tablelands Highway;
- $12.5 million for the Barkly Stock Route;
- $10 million to upgrade Tjukaruru Road;
- $5 million to upgrade the Sandover Highway from Arlparra to the Utopia health clinic; and
- $3.5 million for pavement and seal widening on the Lasseter Highway.

In addition, the Territory Government is providing:

- $5 million for the Remote Community Sports Infrastructure Program;
- $1.5 million for the DriveSafe NT Remote, the Indigenous driver education and licensing program; and
- $760 000 to improve the regional bus program and to trial new passenger services in priority regional and remote areas.

Improving Homelands

Budget 2017 provides for homelands, including:

- $22.3 million to provide municipal and essential services to homelands and outstations;
- $1 million to expand the Homelands Extra Funding Program to improve existing housing in homelands; and
- $1 million for repairs and maintenance to homeland learning centres.