Budget 2016 is the Northern Territory Government’s commitment to securing future opportunities for Territorians, no matter where they live.

Major projects are delivering both jobs and the infrastructure to sustain growth. And we’re focused on protecting the lifestyle we enjoy through strong environmental regulations while ensuring we create the economic opportunities we need to prosper.

We understand the challenges faced by some in our small business sector and we are responding by ensuring that community and prosperity are at the centre of everything we do.

The recent Boosting our Economy stimulus package that injected $100 million into construction works, painting and upgrades to our schools, sporting facilities and tourism industry was an example of the support we provide to local tradespeople. Budget 2016 delivers a further range of initiatives designed to assist our small businesses and deliver wider benefits to the community at the same time.

As part of our focus on connecting communities right across the Territory, Budget 2016 sees infrastructure investment that will not only create opportunities for future development in our regions, but also ensure that those who choose to live in regional and remote parts of the Northern Territory have the infrastructure they need.

The Territory Government continues to advocate strongly for further Commonwealth investment in strategic Territory roads through the Northern Australia Road Program, Beef Roads Program and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program. If Commonwealth funding is secured, it will provide the Territory capacity to progress projects such as the access road to support the Sea Dragon project and Ord Stage 3, as well as extending the seal of the Tanami Road.

On behalf of the Northern Territory Government, I encourage you to find out more about how we’re investing for the future of this unique place we call home.

The Hon Adam Giles MLA
Chief Minister
Developing the north

The Territory Government is focused on ensuring Territorians who choose to live and work in regional and remote areas have access to lifestyle and economic opportunities.

The priority we have placed on developing the north has seen a greater focus on upgrading regional infrastructure and identifying economic opportunities in regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory.

Budget 2016 provides funding to upgrade strategic roads and transport assets including:

» $4 million to upgrade Rocky Creek Crossing on Fog Bay Road;
» $15 million over 2 years for Gunn Point Road upgrades; and
» $6 million over 2 years to upgrade the Sandover Highway from Alparra to Utopia Health Clinic.

We have worked closely with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the Territory is an integral part of the national push to develop northern Australia, successfully lobbying for the Office of Northern Australia to be located in Darwin.

$400,000 has been allocated to support the establishment of indigenous crocodile hatchery enterprises in Arnhem Land.

Budget 2016 also invests:

» $5.25 million over two years, including $1.75 million in Commonwealth funding, for bakeries in remote communities; and
» $7.2 million to continue the Community Champions Program.

The popular Regional Economic Infrastructure fund will also continue in 2016-17, with $10 million of grants available.
Connection

Budget 2016 also continues the Territory Government’s focus on connecting the bush

Budget 2016 also continues the Territory Government’s focus on connecting the bush and provides $5 million to continue the expansion of telecommunication services in the bush. A further $470,000 is provided for free public internet access in remote Indigenous communities.

Free community wifi will be delivered to another 12 communities, bringing the total number of connected communities to 36.

The Regional Bus Program has been allocated $360,000 ongoing to continue providing existing bus services, with $400,000 ongoing from 2016-17 to trial new intra-town passenger services in priority regional and remote areas.

A joint $4.25 million Territory and Commonwealth government investment for priority works at aerodromes will ensure the continued safety of those using remote airstrips.

The Government has also allocated $1 million for road upgrades to support open speed limits near Tennant Creek.

In the regions

The importance of transport infrastructure for regional economic development is recognised and supported through Budget 2016 with upgrades including:

- $27 million for upgrades to roads on Melville Island;
- $16.5 million over two years for Maryvale Road;
- $16 million over two years for the Arnhem Link Road;
- $5.9 million to continue to upgrade priority sections of Lajamanu Road;
- $5.45 million for Tanami Road;
- $2 million for the Wadeye barge landing upgrade;
- $6 million over two years for Sandover Highway; and
- $34.5 million, including Commonwealth funding, to upgrade the Little Horse and Big Horse Creek crossings on the Victoria Highway.
Improving remote education

Budget 2016 provides $43.7 million to improve Indigenous student outcomes as part of the Government’s Indigenous Education Strategy, including $4.9 million to support remote Indigenous students to determine their secondary school pathways.

Remote students will continue to be supported through $5.4 million to operate the new Northern Territory Open Education Centre to provide a world-class, contemporary distance education service.

Budget 2016 provides a significant boost for Indigenous education across the Territory, including:

- $11.1 million to continue and expand the Families as First Teachers program in remote Indigenous communities as part of the Indigenous Education Strategy;
- $4.9 million for the continued operation of the Transition Support Unit as part of the Indigenous Education Strategy;
- $4.5 million to replace infrastructure at Angurugu School destroyed by fire;
- $4.5 million to construct a multi-purpose hall/cyclone shelter on the Ramingining School grounds; and
- $1.4 million to establish operations of the Nhulunbuy regional boarding facility, which is currently under construction and due to open in January 2017.

Social infrastructure

Budget 2016 provides additional funding for essential services, housing and roads to support economic participation in the Territory’s regions.

There are investments in essential services for remote communities across the Territory, with a focus on water and sewerage upgrades to mitigate public health risks. Budget 2016 delivers $36.2 million over two years for capital projects, including:

- $12 million for sewerage upgrades at Angurugu and Ali Curung;
- $8.07 million in new water sources at Ngukurr, Barunga, Yuendumu, Imanpa and Wadeye Manthape;
- $5.48 million for grid connections from Nganmarriyanga and Peppimenarti to Wadeye;
- $5 million for water storage replacement at Numbulwar;
- $4.8 million for mains upgrades at Wadeye, Robinson River, and Laramba; and
- $850,000 for the Galiwin’ku gas chlorination plant.
New and upgraded health facilities

The growing demand for health services means government must focus on upgrading existing facilities and providing new ones.

The Commonwealth Government's health and hospitals funding program allocated $50.29 million for seven new remote health centres and upgrades to four existing centres. Work to date has included:

- Upgrade to Maningrida Health Centre completed in September 2015;
- New Ntaria Health Centre completed September 2014;
- Upgrade to Kaltukatjara Health Centre completed December 2015;
- Upgrade to Papunya Health Centre completed November 2015;
- New Canteen Creek Health Centre completed October 2015;
- New Elliott Health Centre completed March 2016; and
- Upgrade to Titjikala Health Centre completed December 2015.

Works are currently underway on:

- A new Galiwin’ku Health Centre – completion expected late 2016;
- A new Numbulwar Health Centre – completion expected late 2016;
- A new Ngukurr Health Centre – completion expected May 2016; and
A new $6 million health centre is also being constructed at Umbakumba under a partnership between the NT Government, Commonwealth Government and Groote Eylandt Bickerton Island Enterprises. Works began in March 2016 with completion expected in early 2017.

Healthy communities need more than just infrastructure. Considerable focus has been placed on developing a strong workforce to support healthcare in remote communities.

Batchelor Institute Indigenous Training and Education is now also available in Alice Springs, encouraging more trainees to undertake studies to become registered Aboriginal Health Practitioners.

21 of 28 remote primary healthcare centres now have either an Aboriginal Health Practitioner and/or trainee, ensuring both sustained employment opportunities in remote communities and a greater level of engagement with those communities.

Local government

The Territory Government continues to support the work of local authorities in the regions. Budget 2016 provides $2.5 million for Victoria Daly and West Daly regional councils to improve their financial sustainability.

Recognising the importance of providing morgue facilities that allow for culturally sensitive handling of bereavement in remote communities, the Government has identified locations and scope for upgrades to 16 morgues and four new morgues in remote NT communities. The $4.77 million investment, including $2.5 million from the Commonwealth Government, will see all upgrades and construction completed by the end of 2017, with community consultation underway.

Budget 2016 also allocates $300,000 for application based grant funding to Regional Councils to assist in establishing policies and processes for managing remote cemeteries.
A new approach to remote housing

Budget 2016 provides $1 million to establish a Remote Housing Development Authority, to improve the provision of housing services in remote communities.

The Remote Housing Development Authority will operate as part of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and will focus on local engagement, management and delivery.

The Government’s investment in remote housing continues in Budget 2016 with:

> $350 million over 3 years, under the National Partnership on Remote Housing, to construct new housing and upgrade existing housing in remote Indigenous communities;
> $2 million to construct new dwellings in Elliott and Kalkarindji; and
> $5.35 million to continue the Homelands Extra Allowance program.

Budget 2016 also includes $2.37 million to provide accommodation options for visitors to Alice Springs, including:

> $1.22 million for the operation of Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park; and
> $1.15 million for the management and operation of Stuart Lodge.

Budget 2016 also continues to progress cyclone rectification works, including:

> $6.6 million for the Ramingining and Milingimbi School rebuilds;
> $3.2 million for transportable dwellings at Galiwin’ku;
> $48.6 million for remote Indigenous housing cyclone rectification works; and
> A further $4.5 million is provided to construct a multi-purpose hall/cyclone shelter on the Ramingining School grounds.
Budget 2016 provides additional funding to enhance the Territory lifestyle, with investment in sport, active recreation, arts and environmental protection so all Territorians can enjoy a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

A $2 million grant program has been allocated to upgrade sporting facilities in regional and remote areas of the Territory, following a similar program in 2015 that approved upgrades to ovals at Wadeye and Lajamanu.

The grants will be used for upgrades such as installation of lighting at the Barunga community football oval.

The Government’s sport voucher program will continue to provide $200 for every school aged child each year towards sport, recreation and cultural activities. Improvements were made to the sport voucher program in February 2016 to make it easier for rural and remote students to access the scheme.

Alice Springs will benefit from $6.25 million, including external funding, to redevelop the netball facilities in Alice Springs. The enhanced facilities will include four new fully sprung courts in an enclosed stadium.

The success of the inaugural Red CentreNATS event in Alice Springs in 2015 will be repeated, with $3.66 million over five years ($690,000 in 2016-17) allocated to secure the event until 2020.

Additional grant funding of $2 million in Budget 2016 will be provided to Motor Sports Northern Territory to upgrade various motor sport facilities across the Territory.

Lifestyle

Budget 2016 also supports Northern Territory Show Societies with an investment of $2.8 million including:

- $2 million for Darwin;
- $400,000 for Alice Springs;
- $100,000 for Tennant Creek;
- $75,000 for Adelaide River;
- $200,000 for Katherine; and
- $25,000 for Borroloola.