



Outstations/homelands policy

HEADLINE POLICY STATEMENT

Northern Territory Government
May 2009

Outstations/Homelands Recognition

- The NTG values the contribution of outstations and homelands to the economic social and cultural life of the Territory.
- Homelands is the preferred name for some, but not all, regions of the Territory. Outstations/homelands will be used as a generic description. Outstations or homelands will continue to be used interchangeably as appropriate to each location.
- The new Outstations/Homelands policy approach will:
 - assist to clarify outstation residents' expectations of support and service delivery
 - improve the transparency of service delivery arrangements
 - introduce a new disbursement model based on a more realistic framework for the allocation of limited government resources
 - be consistent with Government policy on remote service delivery.

Criteria for Support

- The following criteria must be met as a pre-condition for support to any outstation/homeland:
 - the outstation/homeland must be an existing outstation
 - the outstation/homeland must be the principal place of residence - defined as residing for a minimum of 8-9 months a year, in which each individual can only maintain one principal place of residence
 - there must be an adequate potable water supply (as per the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines), with "adequate" to be determined on a case by case basis. (Government will assist residents to develop management plans to ensure there is an adequate potable water supply)
 - outstation residents must commit to increasing self-sufficiency, including through reasonable levels of contribution towards services.

Support for Outstations/Homelands

- The NTG will not financially support the establishment of new outstations and homelands.
- The NTG is not opposed to Aboriginal people using their own resources to live in remote locations.

- In circumstances where new outstations are established with private resources, Government will negotiate on a case by case basis for appropriate levels of support and service delivery – in most cases it is likely that this may be limited to information on access to Government services, and education on the responsibilities of private owners.
- Non-residential outstations/homelands, or new outstations/homelands developed with private resources, may be eligible for support from program specific funding (e.g. business, land management, tourism or substance abuse programs). In these circumstances, continuing funding will be dependent on achievement of program outcomes.

Service Delivery

- Government services to outstations/homelands will in most cases involve a form of remote delivery, based from the closest or most accessible hub town.
- Government will work towards the development and publication of a Statement of Expectation of Service Delivery to Outstation Residents (SESDOR), identifying service delivery and access points (hub towns and service centres) for Government services such as education, health and police.
- A range of considerations will determine the nature and level of service delivery. This will include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - the number of residents (principal place of residence definition)
 - population mobility
 - population characteristics such as age groups represented
 - the number of dwellings
 - existing and planned service infrastructure
 - existing and planned service delivery models
 - proximity and access to hub towns and service delivery organizations
 - the level of local investment and economic activity.

Education

- All children must access education, which is a legal responsibility of their parents. Parents living on outstations/homelands need to consider the best schooling options for their children.
- Government will provide support to smaller outstations/homelands through a range of delivery models including transport to hub town schools, boarding facilities in hub towns and distance learning.
- Government will continue to provide support to larger outstations/homelands and homeland clusters through schools, homeland learning centres and residential models.

Service Delivery Organisations

- Government will coordinate negotiations and consultations over the appropriate organisations to deliver essential, municipal and other service delivery.
- Outstation/homeland service delivery organisations will be required to develop an annual service delivery plan (based on the SESDOR) for each outstation/homeland. Service delivery organisations will negotiate this plan with outstation/homeland residents and provide outstation/homeland residents with a copy of this plan.

Self-sufficiency

- Reasonable levels of financial contributions from outstation/homeland residents for the installation and maintenance of water, electricity and sanitation is a reasonable expectation of Government.
- Owners of houses on private and communal land are primarily responsible for repairs and maintenance of their assets, including water supplies.

Housing

- Outstation/homeland housing on Aboriginal land is privately owned and not suited for a public housing model.
- Any service provision arrangements for private housing must involve reciprocal obligations of service fees and care agreements.
- The Australian Government will not provide funding to construct housing on outstations in the NT (Memorandum of Understanding with the NTG, September 2007).

Information base

- A comprehensive information base on outstations/homelands will be developed and maintained to inform policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Economic Development

- The future of outstations/homelands lies in their successful innovation and utilisation of emerging economic opportunities and technologies and not ongoing reliance on government support.