



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

## Petition

Registration No:	27
Title:	Transitional Housing Proposal
Presented on:	21 October 2009
Presented by:	Mr Styles
Referred to:	Housing (Knight)
Date referred:	22 October 2009
Response due:	29 April 2010
Response received:	9 December 2009
Response presented:	16 February 2010

### Petition

**TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:**

**WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH**

That in light of the absolute and comprehensive failure of the Henderson Labor Government to release land and building social housing, there is now a critical shortage of land and housing and as such both the rental price and build/purchase price of a house in the Darwin and Palmerston area is so high that it is out of reach of many people. The state of the housing market now means that there are families with good jobs who simply either cannot get houses or cannot afford houses and have resorted to sleeping in their cars, friends lounge rooms or in tents. This situation is a disgrace and immediate action by the Government must be taken.

**YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT**

We, the undersigned, call on the Henderson Labor Government and Gerry Wood to support Terry Mills and the Country Liberals' action plan for transitional housing on the old ConnocoPhillips workcamp site near Palmerston and in doing so provide transitional housing for up to 60 families giving the Territory Government time to get land released and social housing established.

**AND YOUR PETITIONERS, AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.**

### Response

The Northern Territory Government has looked into the proposal forwarded by Mr Mills. The proposal does not provide any in-depth cost analysis. Recent experience of the Department of Local Government and Housing holds that the cost of developing and operating an 'emergency transitional housing' facility on the scale and location suggested would run to several million dollars.

I also convened a meeting of the non-government sector regarding this proposal and options to address homelessness during the wet season. The majority of the non-government sector was not supportive of Mr Mills' proposal and did not believe it would bring about good outcomes for potential tenants of the Conoco Phillips site.

The challenge of homelessness in the NT housing system is complex and has several root causes. Therefore it is important to tackle this issue from a number of angles. Government is currently working hard to deliver more housing and supported accommodation options across the Northern Territory.

Under the stimulus package, the Northern Territory Government received from the Commonwealth Government:

- \$4.11 million for repairs to public housing stocks to bring them back online;
- \$7.1 million to construct new public housing dwellings; and
- \$48.4 million for new construction of a variety of projects.

Repairs are well underway with 289 dwellings to date have received repairs and / or maintenance under this program.

The \$7.1 million has meant an additional 22 dwellings under construction in the Northern Territory. Four four-bedroom homes will be completed in the coming weeks with the remainder of the properties due to be completed by mid 2010.

The \$48.4 million will bring almost 200 additional dwellings across the Territory. Projects include:

- 45 x 1 bedroom units at the Wirrina Redevelopment;
- 18 units at Berrimah;
- 8 units of transitional accommodation (26 beds) at Malak;
- Construction of a 12 bedroom Group Home at Catherine Booth House to be managed by the Salvation Army;
- 20 units at Coconut Grove to be managed by the St Vincent de Paul Society;
- 4 x 2 bedroom duplexes at Bellamack;
- 35 units for renal patients in Alice Springs;
- Construction of 8 units at Goyder Street, Alice Springs to be managed by the Salvation Army;
- 4 apartments at The Gap; and
- 24 units of transitional accommodation in Alice Springs.

The majority of these construction projects is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

In the interim, I recently announced \$2.2 million for transitional accommodation options. Successful non-government organisations were:

- YMCA – 83 rooms, 63 of which were due to close. The funding will enable those rooms to stay open and bring online 15 additional rooms, a three bedroom house and two bedroom unit.
- Mental Health Association of Central Australia – 6 rooms.
- Salvation Army – case management of clients at hostel and outreach program
- Continuing negotiations with the St Vincent de Paul Society to increase capacity of their services through demountable accommodation.

This funding is expected to deliver an additional 100 beds as quickly as possible.

In January 2010, we anticipate the opening of the Christian Outreach Centre's transitional accommodation located at Berrimah. This will also deliver an additional 80 beds.

I have also announced more than \$1 million in Federal funding has also been allocated for homelessness support services in the Territory under the Crisis Accommodation Program and Community Housing Program.

The Northern Territory Government and Commonwealth Government has also signed the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. This Agreement will deliver \$54 million of projects over the next four years across the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to providing more housing and support options for families. We are committed to working with the non-government sector to ensure the best outcomes possible.