

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Wood

to Minister for Housing

Itinerant accommodation needs

1. Has the Minister identified any existing organisations that have the expertise and experience to accommodate the complex needs of our itinerant population together with the potential capacity to physically accommodate the needs of itinerant groups regardless of culture, nationality or gender.
2. If so, what existing facilities have been identified or considered to ensure that the duplication, or the enormous added expense of establishing new sites, can be avoided.

ANSWER

1. The Community Harmony Project (formerly the “Itinerants” Project in Darwin and Palmerston), in response to the *‘The Long Grassers’ A Strategic Report on Indigenous ‘itinerants’ in the Darwin and Palmerston Area*, established four Working Parties to provide specialist advice in the areas of accommodation, alcohol and patrolling, education and regional, and data collection and research. There are some 50 organisations involved in the Community Harmony Project.

These working parties are advising the Project Management Committee on the implementation of strategies, including those organisations best placed to accommodate the needs of the group. In this way the Minister receives effective advice from the organisations themselves, from project staff working with those organisations and from Departmental officers with expertise in those areas.

There is a number of existing organisations within the service network that meet the criteria raised in part 1 of this question, and negotiations are continuing through the Working Party process to ensure that all strategies to be implemented by the Project are managed by the most appropriate organisation/s.

In the Darwin and Palmerston region, the construction and management teams have been working very closely with a broad range of stakeholders to assist organisations to develop and define infrastructure requirements including accommodation, health care and day facility options. These include:

ACCOMMODATION**Knuckey Lagoons, 11 Mile, Aboriginal Development Foundation**

The facility includes refurbishment of a women/families facility, a men’s facility and an ablution block, construction of a community centre (incorporating overflow camping capacity) and a two room basic shelter dwelling suitable for two families. The target date for completion is December.

Christian Outreach Centre, Crerar Road, Berrimah

The facility comprises two large buildings, each with four rooms, shared ablutions and kitchen facilities and significant breezeway and verandah area for outside living. The target date for completion is early December.

Catherine Booth House, Salvation Army, Stuart Park

Planning approval has been recently received for the construction of an additional one-room facility for single women. The target date for completion is late December.

HEALTH TREATMENT AND CARE

Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services, Boulter Road, Berrimah

Site work has commenced for two new duplexes with additional beds for six clients and six support people. It is anticipated that this additional accommodation will be completed by January 2004.

A New Start to Independence, Bees Creek

An additional accommodation block is nearly completed at A.N.S.T.I. which will provide 16 places for people with complex alcohol and drug dependency whom are in need of long term care.

DAY FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES

Malak Shopping Centre, (June Mills is the project facilitator)

The Artspace Project that commenced in June 2003 continues to operate effectively with a strong youth focus.

Knuckey Lagoons, 11 Mile, Aboriginal Development Foundation

A day facility is included as part of the accommodation development proposal.

Ozenam House, St Vincent de Paul Society, Stuart Park

An additional ablution facility is nearing completion. Art activities that commenced at Tamarind Park in the CBD have re-located to Ozenam House while Tamarind Park remains unsuitable until after the wet season.

Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Mechanisms for referrals are now being developed, with protocols to be developed and agreed between the Larrakia Nation Information and Referrals Office and the range of service providers participating in the network.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS/DEVELOPMENTS

For the medium to long term, the Accommodation Working Party has proposed some substantial strategies which can be explored and developed over a five year period. The proposed concepts will require thorough consultations with the client group, service providers and design, architectural and planning consultants. It is envisaged that pilot projects will be developed that will test models for appropriate accommodation options. Conceptual models include the following:

- Cluster village concept - approximately six living units with self-contained kitchen and ablutions, a small private exterior space and access to communal living spaces.
- Purpose built facility for renal and other complex needs clients who require a managed reception area with additional facilities to cater for communal activities, families and visitors.

In major regional centres outside of Darwin and Palmerston, consultations with regional stakeholders including community organisations, peak Indigenous organisations and government agencies are ongoing to determine effective strategies, processes and program delivery for the itinerant population.

ANSWER

2. The development of the conceptual models for appropriate accommodation options envisages that the proposed facilities may most effectively be implemented by either expanding existing services, or by identifying the most appropriate service to manage the conceptual models.

The lack of suitable accommodation for the client groups is a key component of the development of a range of facilities through the expansion and enhancement of existing services.

I am greatly encouraged by the inclusive nature of the development of this strategy, which has arisen out of consultation and discussion and has the support of a wide range of community groups and service providers.

I am confident that this process will develop appropriate accommodation models that will avoid unnecessary duplication and establishment costs, and that can be adjusted and replicated as appropriate. I am also confident that this process will identify the right group to manage the right facility.