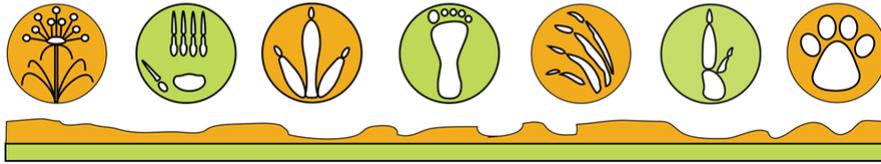


BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



MEDIA RELEASE

16 September 2015

Minister Price meets Elliott residents in ongoing housing crisis

The Minister for Local Government and Community Services, Bess Price, met with residents of the Elliott community on Wednesday, 9 September.

The Minister responded to an invitation to talk to residents about the Elliott housing crisis in a meeting facilitated by Barkly Regional Council (BRC).

"I would like to work together with all of you," Minister Price told the meeting including BRC President Barb Shaw, councillors Bob Bagnall and Ray Aylett and Elliott Local Authority Chair Chris Neade. "I am determined to make a difference."

Mr Neade had written to Ms Price on behalf of residents outlining the key issues including overcrowding, housing beyond repair and confusion over Land Tenure issues.

"I am a carpenter by trade and run the housing maintenance for the council in Elliott. Many of the houses are not worth spending money on because they are beyond repair but we try to keep them liveable because we have no choice but to try," he wrote.

"Why is this? Elliott sits in no man's land. We have Land Tenure issues, which no one seems to want to sort out and no one can actually tell us how to sort it out.

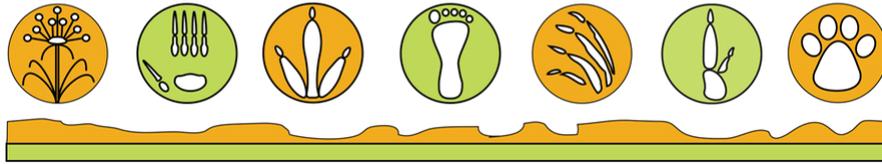
"We think responsibility falls back to the Northern Land Council (NLC) but they won't take responsibility. The Commonwealth Government is not interested in negotiating any new leases in communities and the Northern Territory Government says it has no money."

Currently the council receives \$3057 per house for maintenance and \$2970 for Municipal and Essential Services. "This does not even touch the sides. As the head of the program, I know how much it costs to do these jobs," said Mr Neade. "A collapsed septic absorption drain costs roughly \$8500 to replace and we have a quote to replace windows in one house for \$9500."

Minister Price introduced Mike Chiodo, Chief Executive Officer for the Department of Local Government and Community Services, to the community meeting.

Mr Chiodo said an independent organisation had completed a housing report last week, highlighting that none of the houses were beyond economic repair and that funding will be allocated by the Department to repair houses.

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He added that the NLC should be a part of any longer term conversations and asked for community feedback about the potential to create an Indigenous representative organisation that could operate through a business model to take on community housing issues.

He told community representatives he would provide a template as to what the representative organisation would look like and that his officers and council could work together to advance this.

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