



Transitional housing scheme boost

■ Glenn Cordingley

Broome and Derby have been chosen for a multi-million-dollar scheme that will give Aboriginal families a chance to buy housing instead of renting.

The Department of Housing will receive \$33.89 million from Royalties for Regions over two years to fund the West Kimberley Transitional Housing Project.

Under the program, 40 new houses will be built in Broome and 20 in Derby to facilitate the transition of Aboriginal tenants who want to move from public housing to home ownership.

Construction of the first stage of new homes is expected to begin within the next 12 months.

Housing Minister Bill Marmion said Aboriginal people engaged in employment or training will be provided housing and support services to help them develop independence, and take an important step towards personal home ownership.

The goal is for them to buy the house they are renting.

Participants must ensure chil-

dren attend school and take part in the associated support program.

"This program includes setting lifestyle goals and financial management," Mr Marmion said.

"A similar project in the East Kimberley has delivered great results, with children of families participating in the program having a 95 per cent school attendance record."

He said financial counselling would be available to help participants develop the skills and habits to eventually become homeowners through creating a family budget and savings plan.

Kimberley Development Commission board chairman Ralph Addis said the KDC had worked closely with the DoH on a similar project in Kununurra.

"There is a real need to provide housing options for Aboriginal people who are currently living in public housing but have entered the workforce," he said.

Shire of Broome president Graeme Campbell described the announcement as a great win for Broome and Derby, as both towns needed more affordable housing

options.

"Several of the tenants in the Kununurra program are actively working towards buying their own home which is great, both for the individual families and the region," he said.

Shire of Derby West Kimberley president and KDC board member Elsie Archer praised the plan.

"We have seen the success this has had in Kununurra," she said.

"This program has been running for almost a year and they have seen some very good outcomes in terms of people engaging in the workforce and children going to school regularly."

Minister for Regional Development Brendon Grylls said transitional housing provided the stability required for participants to engage in employment, education and training.

"Families have the opportunity to purchase the house they are renting, which provides a strong incentive to stay employed and meet other requirements, such as ensuring their kids attend school," he said.



Some of the properties being used for the transitional housing program in Kununurra. Picture: Department of Housing