



Malarndirri McCarthy
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

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Historic Decision to Pay the Rent to Lease Aboriginal Land

The Northern Territory Government today announced its historic decision to pay the rent to Aboriginal traditional land owners in return for long term leases over parcels of Aboriginal land where sole possession by the Government is required.

Indigenous Development Minister, Malarndirri McCarthy said this historic decision lays the foundation for a proper working relationship between Land Councils, Aboriginal traditional owners and the Northern Territory Government.

“This is a very important step the Henderson Labor Government has made and I am very proud to announce our decision,” said Ms McCarthy.

“This will allow vital remote infrastructure projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars to proceed.

“The Territory Government has agreed to make lease payments based on the unimproved value of the land, through either 'up-front' or annual payment options.

“Initially the lease payments will be in the order of \$3 million per year and will rise to around \$5 million per year when all parcels are surveyed and leased.

“We acknowledge that lease payments are private payments to traditional owners, however we encourage Land Councils and Traditional Owners to direct lease payments towards commercial developments and projects of broad community benefit.

“The way that the Anindilyakwa Land Council on Groote Eylandt has directed royalties towards the Umbakumba Road (in partnership with the NTG and the Commonwealth) is a good example of the benefits that can flow from this approach.

“The next phase is to complete the surveying and sub-division processes required to execute leases.

“The Territory Government has already invested significantly in this important town planning work under the *Working Future* policy and we look forward to working closely with Land Councils, Shire Councils, Traditional Owners and the Commonwealth Government to ensure this work is carried out as quickly as possible.”

Media Contact: Ursula Raymond 0457 825 507

