



**Our Community.
Our Future.
Our Homes.**

Local Decision Making Framework

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DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



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Acronyms: The following acronyms are used in this document	
ABE	Aboriginal Business Enterprise
AIS	Aboriginal Interpreter Service
APO NT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory
DLGHCD	Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development
HRG	Housing Reference Groups
LDM	Local Decision Making
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NPRHNT	National Partnership for Remote Housing Northern Territory
RECS	Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy
RPDO	Remote Program Delivery Office

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

To achieve a genuine and mutually respectful formal partnership between government and Aboriginal people from the Northern Territory, the **Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes**. Remote Housing Investment Package (the Program), incorporates the principles of Local Decision Making (LDM) to inform housing outcomes at the community level.

The purpose of this Framework is to outline the rationale and approach to LDM within the Program.

1.2 Overview of *Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes*.

In 2016, the NT Government committed \$1.1 billion into remote Aboriginal community housing and an additional \$426 million into essential land servicing and infrastructure to be delivered through **Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes**.

The Program consists of the following commitments from the NT Government over ten years:

- HomeBuild NT – \$500 million to construct new homes in remote communities.
- Room to Breathe – \$200 million to build rooms, granny flats, spaces designed to provide more living space, sleeping space and outdoor cooking places.
- Expanded Government Employee Housing – \$200 million to build additional Government Employee Housing, providing access to Government Employee Housing accommodation for locally recruited government employees.
- Additional Repairs and Maintenance – an additional \$200 million for the repairs and maintenance of remote community housing.
- \$426 million over eight years to provide essential land services and infrastructure for remote community housing.

In 2018, the Australian Government also committed \$550 million over five years through the National Partnership for Remote Housing Northern Territory (NPRHNT), to deliver additional capital works and property and tenancy management (PTM) services. The Agreement was signed on the 30 March 2019. As part of the NPRHNT, both Governments agreed that the primary mechanism for the delivery of the \$550 million Australian Government contribution to remote housing will be through the NT Government's **Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes**. program, incorporating LDM principles and procurement policies.

The program aims to support the development of remote Aboriginal communities through the following objectives:

1. Community engagement and local decision making

- a. Identify and develop accommodation options through community engagement and local decision making bodies with capacity building, where appropriate.
- b. Aboriginal Employment and Business Enterprise Development Framework
- c. Build positive relationships based on openness and transparency.

2. Reducing overcrowding and improving accommodation outcomes

- a. Reduce overcrowding by increasing the supply of new housing and extending existing homes.
- b. Increase access to a range of appropriate, place-responsive accommodation options to meet community needs.
- c. Upgrade and maintain existing houses to an appropriate standard.

3. Improving social and economic outcomes

- a. Contribute to social and economic development of remote Aboriginal communities by ensuring, to the maximum extent possible, that housing services are delivered by local Aboriginal Territorians and businesses.

4. Value

- a. New housing is appropriate without being excessively expensive.
- b. Reduce whole of life cost of delivering and managing accommodation through innovation and economies of scale at pace with industry and community capacity.

2. Local Decision Making Framework

This Framework outlines the programs rationale and approach to LDM, to inform housing outcomes at the community level. LDM and community engagement are key principles of the Program, providing communities the opportunity to have input into improvements to housing through a rigorous community engagement and design process.

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Framework includes:

- ensuring the construction of additional and replacement houses and extensions are informed by LDM, with each community having input into their future and homes;
- facilitate an enhanced working relationship between Aboriginal communities, governments and Land Councils;
- communities are consulted about where or when work will happen throughout the Program; and
- reduction in overcrowding is informed at the tenant level.

2.2 Scope

Inclusions

The LDM Framework applies to the OCOFOH Program, land servicing program and the Commonwealth contribution under the NPRHNT.

Exclusions

GEH and Remote Program Delivery Office (RPDO) activities not directly related to the OCOFOH Program.

2.3 Constraints and assumptions

A limitation of this Framework is the ability to identify or the presence of LDM bodies in each community. It is assumed that all communities have at least one form of formal governance structure, which includes a Housing Reference Group (HRG) and/or Local Authority and that communities will want to participate in LDM.

The OCOFOH Program may be constrained by the presence of community based ABEs with the capacity to deliver the various capital works and repairs and maintenance programs. It is assumed that communities are workforce ready to support local employment initiatives. However, it is acknowledged that the level of local employment may vary from community to community.

3. Local Decision Making Approach

3.1 Why Local Decision Making?

The NT Government has an ambitious reform agenda to transform the relationship it has with Aboriginal Territorians in order to support self-determination.

The NT Government, in collaboration with the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT), established the LDM Framework Policy to help achieve the goal of building strong Aboriginal organisations and benefiting local economies and employment, service provision, culture and control.

The principles of the LDM Framework Policy embody the spirit and substance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and grew out of a need to change from a narrow service delivery focus in Aboriginal communities to one based on a development approach. The principles of the LDM Framework Policy are aimed at empowering Aboriginal organisations and communities in the Northern Territory to take control of their futures.

3.2 Principles and concepts

What is Local Decision Making?

LDM is about people determining their own futures. It is a process for community control. LDM aims to facilitate a new working relationship between Aboriginal communities and government agencies, setting out a pathway for communities to have control over service delivery and programs. To be successful, LDM requires genuine agency participation, and a public promise from government to share authority and decision making.

What is local?

In different places and different projects, the question of what is local has been handled differently. It is important to be clear on the meaning of local for each LDM project, and ensure this understanding is shared. What government might consider local, community may consider regional. Neither is right or wrong, placed-based and regional models can work. Shared understanding must be built, so when one group is saying 'local' it is understood in the same way by everyone.

For the OCOFOH Program, the NT Government has adopted a placed-based or community-based approach to ensure local residents have a say in the delivery, design and timing for the delivery of housing and housing related works in their communities.

What do we mean by decision making?

LDM means enabling people to have a say in what happens in their community with the ability to influence the outcomes.

What does Local Decision Making mean for the Program?

LDM is about supporting Northern Territory communities to make informed decisions about housing. To ensure the OCOFOH program is developed in true partnership with Aboriginal leaders, communities and tenants, the Department will enable and support choices about housing options and local business development. The OCOFOH program will utilise existing bodies, such as HRGs and Local Authorities, to ensure housing designs and solutions are appropriate for community needs.

The process for community-wide engagement in LDM is driven by the Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy (RECS), which is underpinned by the following key values and principles:

- Respect and Integrity;
- Commitment;
- Accountability;
- Clarity;
- Inclusion; and
- Working together.

How are Local Decision Making groups identified?

Community representation is key. The process for identifying LDM bodies requires the Program to liaise closely with Land Councils, communities, Traditional Owners, HRGs, Local Authorities, and government agencies (including Commonwealth) that have a regional and local presence to seek advice on who the appropriate stakeholder groups are to consult with in regards to decision making and the most appropriate method of engagement for community (i.e. meeting forum, community meeting, extended HRG, LA meeting, Board meeting, Traditional Governance group meeting). Consideration is also given to the LDM Agreements and Multi-Agency Partnership Agreements that have been established between the Department of the Chief Minister and the communities.

The Programs flexible approach to LDM provides the opportunity to develop capacity within established decision making groups, by supporting community groups and decision makers to use their own governance systems to consult internally and make informed decisions.

How does Local Decision Making occur in remote communities?

The Program LDM approach delivers consultation by:

Effective Regional and Community based planning

- Using a place-based approach.
- Planning effectively with key Regional DLGHCD teams.
- Liaising closely with community based stakeholders and decision makers to establish and maintain strong communication.
- Developing and maintaining relationships with community and regionally based teams, key Regional Council staff, ABE's and senior community leaders and decision makers.

Culturally Respectful Governance during LDM/extended HRG meetings

- Existing Governance Structures
 - Where possible, use existing governance structures in an LDM meeting and encourage the LDM group to use their designated chairperson to chair the consultation meeting.
- Strong governance
 - Providing information and agenda papers prior to meeting days to ensure decision makers and stakeholders are well inform of discussion topics and opportunities for input and decision.
- Communicating in first languages
 - Where possible, an AIS Interpreter will be available to interpret key information to ensure decision makers and community residents are consulted in language.
- An opportunity for LDM
 - The LDM group are advised this an opportunity for decision making and valuable community input, however it is not a requirement that a decision be made on the day of a meeting.
- Flexible timeframes
 - The LDM group advise an appropriate timeframe for the decision is making process to occur, if required, to allow for internal community consultation and traditional governance structures input. This is place based and varies across regions and communities.

LDM guiding principles for the Program?

To ensure that the Program is developed in true partnership with Aboriginal communities, housing solutions are co-designed with local decision makers and individual families to ensure they are place based, directly related to local priorities and are underpinned by sustainable local employment initiatives.

The following principles are designed to guide DLGHCD and communities in LDM, with regards to the development and delivery of the Program:

- Recognising there is no “one size fits all” for remote communities or individual families. Communities will have input into the design of their houses to ensure they are culturally appropriate and meet the needs of people, without being excessively expensive.
- The Program offers flexibility on the delivery of infrastructure programs, recognising local priorities and cultural sensitivities. Communities will have input about when and where work will happen over the life of the Program.
- Consistent with the NT Government’s Remote Contracting Policy, the Program supports Aboriginal Business economic development. Communities are provided the opportunity to identify locally operating ABEs with the capacity to deliver works under the Program. This will support and further develop sustainable ABEs in remote communities, and in addition, the creation of long term employment and training opportunities for locals in the community.
- Communities will have a greater say over the term of future leasing arrangements required to underpin future housing investment.

Examples of the parameters applied to the local decision making process by individual program is highlighted in the following table.

	<u>HomeBuild NT</u>	<u>Room to Breathe</u>	<u>Land Servicing</u>
<u>LDM decisions in scope</u>			
Location of new dwellings, subject to leasing approvals	✓		
Housing options (e.g. 3-4 bedroom or duplex)	✓		
Floor plan designs including bathroom, veranda and kitchen	✓		
Fabrication (e.g. brick or cladding)	✓		
Air conditioning provisions	✓		
Community input into determining priorities for overcrowded dwellings requiring works		✓	
Requests for works are to improve liveability to an overcrowded household (e.g. increased size of lounge rooms)		✓	
Requests for addition of bedrooms and/or living spaces to existing dwellings		✓	
Requests to add outdoor areas, such as kitchens or undercover areas, to existing dwellings		✓	
Requests for unattached dwellings (e.g. granny flats for elderly)		✓	

	<u>HomeBuild NT</u>	<u>Room to Breathe</u>	<u>Land Servicing</u>
Location of additional bedrooms and/or living spaces		✓	
Improved health hardware within existing dwellings (e.g. wet areas)		✓	
Improved amenities within existing dwellings (e.g. disability modifications)		✓	
Lot locations suitable for the construction of new houses, subject to lease approvals			✓
Location of new subdivisions, subject to lease approvals			✓
Design of new subdivisions			✓
Input into contractor involvement subject to provisions of remote contracting framework	✓	✓	✓
Timeframe for the delivery of works that does not unreasonably impact on costs	✓	✓	✓
Input into workforce participation subject to community being work force ready	✓	✓	✓
<u>Non-Negotiables</u>			
Lot or dwelling must be DLGHCD leased site	✓	✓	✓
Any works which exceed the essential services capacity of a community	✓	✓	✓
Any works which are not considered reasonable in cost or value for money	✓	✓	✓
Compliance with planning zones and building standards	✓	✓	✓
To receive works, dwelling is to be identified as overcrowded or have justification by LDM group for works to be approved (e.g. residents with disability, special needs or kinship care)		✓	
Modification of dwellings which are classified as beyond economic repair		✓	
Any work which is not within reasonable distance of existing infrastructure	✓		✓
Locations which would put any newly constructed asset at risk (e.g. flood zones)	✓		✓
Request for works that do not improve overcrowding levels in existing dwellings		✓	

Through the LDM process, community members are encouraged to consider innovative ideas and solutions as to how the Program can be utilised to improve economic development within their community.

4. Relevant Documentation, Tools and References

This Framework is underpinned by the following references, tools and supporting documents:

- NT Government's [LDM Framework Policy](#) and [website](#)
- DLGHCD Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy [website](#)
- DLGHCD RPDO Program Management Plan
- National Indigenous Housing Guidelines
- [Room to Breathe Program Design Guidelines](#)
- [Capital Works Design Guidelines](#)
- [OCOFOH Aboriginal Employment and Business Enterprise Development Framework](#)
- [OCOFOH Procurement Framework](#)
- DLGHCD Internal RPDO Community Engagement Hub (contains the approved Community Engagement process and internal templates)

5. Local Decision Making Responsibility Matrix

#	Step	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
1	Planning of Community Engagement visits	Community Engagement team	Executive Director, Governance and Government Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPDO Planning team RPDO Program Delivery team Service Delivery Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Tenure Land Servicing AIS
2	Identifying LDM groups and decision making structures	Community Engagement team	Director, ABE Development and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Delivery Community Development Other regional NTG agencies NIAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RHP Teams
3	Informing stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement team Service Delivery 	Community Engagement team	Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIS Other regional NTG agencies
4	Identifying cultural protocols	Community Engagement team	Community Engagement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Delivery Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RHP teams
5	Coordination and Delivery of LDM meetings	Community Engagement team	Director, ABE Development and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPDO teams Service Delivery Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIS Other regional NTG agencies
6	Reporting LDM meetings	All attending teams	Community Engagement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPDO Teams Service Delivery 	Community Development
7	Closing the loop - informing Regional and Community stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Delivery Community Development 	Community Engagement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Delivery Community Development 	Other regional NTG agencies