

Homelands Program Guidelines

2026-2027



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Acronyms	Full Form
ABE	Aboriginal Business Enterprise
AG	Australian Government
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
DHLGCD	Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development
EOI	Expression of Interest
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HCG	Homelands Capital Grants
HHIP	Homelands Housing Infrastructure Program
HMS	Housing Maintenance Services
HMES	Housing, Municipal and Essential Services
IER	Infrastructure and Equipment Register
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MES	Municipal and Essential Services
NGO	Non-government organisation
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
RCD	Residual Current Devices
SDP	Service Delivery Plan
SPFR	Special Purpose Financial Report

Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 About the Program	5
2. Eligibility.....	6
2.1 Funding allocation to homelands	6
2.2 Establishing a new homeland.....	6
2.3 Adding a homeland to the Program.....	6
2.4 Adding a new house to the Program.....	7
2.5 Removal of a house/homeland from the Program.....	7
2.6 Transfer of a homeland from an existing service provider	7
3. Grant funding arrangements.....	8
4. Service delivery	9
4.1 Municipal and Essential Services	9
4.2 Housing Maintenance Services	13
4.2.1 Preventative repairs and maintenance.....	15
4.3 Program exclusions.....	16
4.3.1 Regional and Remote Burial Areas Grant Program.....	16
4.4 Diesel for power generation	16
4.5 Homelands Capital Program	17
5. Operational requirements.....	17
5.1 Operational Work Plan and Budget	17
5.2 Service Delivery Log.....	18
5.3 Infrastructure and Equipment Register	18
5.4 Emergency plans	19
5.4.1 Wet season – no declared emergency.....	19
5.4.2 Wet season – declared emergency.....	19
6. Service delivery contributions.....	19
6.1 Resident contributions	19
6.2 Other organisations operating on homelands.....	20
7. How we will monitor your grant.....	20
Reporting process and timelines.....	21
7.1 Audited Special Purpose Financial Reports	21
7.1.1 Unexpended funds	21
7.1.2 Over expenditure.....	22
7.1.3 Goods and Services Tax ruling.....	22
8. Performance	22
8.1 Performance Review	23

8.2 Site visits	23
8.3 Keeping us informed.....	23
8.4 The grant agreement	23
9. DHLGCD support for service providers.....	24
10. Contact	24
11. Glossary	24

1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the NTG's Homelands Program (the Program).

You need to read these guidelines before entering into a new grant agreement with DHLGCD to deliver housing, municipal and essential services to eligible homelands.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the Program
- eligibility criteria
- how grant activities will be monitored
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to grant funding.

This grant opportunity is available by invitation only to existing homelands service providers funded under the Program.

In these Guidelines, 'we' refers to DHLGCD, and 'you' refers to the Service Provider.

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at [section 11](#).

1.1 About the Program

The NTG allocates grant funding through the Program to support the delivery of HMES to eligible homelands, town camps and selected communities.

The objectives of the Program are to:

- contribute to the delivery of HMES to eligible homelands, town camps and selected communities
- support homelands to remain viable places to live.

The intended outcomes of the Program are to:

- improve access to safe and reliable water, power and sanitation systems on funded homelands
- improve the amenity and liveability of eligible homelands.

Homelands and outstations are interchangeable terms used to describe small, often remote, Aboriginal communities where people have traditional ownership or historical association. They play a critical role in the social, cultural and economic life of Aboriginal people and the Territory as a whole. The NTG recognises and supports Aboriginal Territorians' fundamental right to live on, develop and maintain their homelands.

The majority of homelands are located on Aboriginal land, held by Aboriginal Land Trusts established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. However, there are a small number of homelands on other statutory tenures, such as community living areas (land excised from a pastoral lease), or parcels of land within national parks.

Homelands are a shared responsibility. The NTG does not own or lease the land, houses or fixed infrastructure on homelands. The Program provides a basic level of services to homelands. Residents will need to pay a contribution towards service delivery if they want improvements in the level of services and maintenance provided to their homelands.

Generally, homelands are not considered part of the NT's remote housing system as the NTG does not own homeland housing. Homeland houses are privately owned and are not managed as public housing but

are regarded as communally owned structures located on Aboriginal land which are managed by the residents. There are some exceptions where a homeland has been included in the public housing system.

Town camps are Aboriginal urban living areas usually located on Crown land, which has been leased or granted to an Aboriginal community organisation for communal living purposes. The Program provides funding to support HMES in town camps, which are not subject to NTG leasing or are part of the NT's remote public housing system.

DHLGCD administers the Program according to the *NTG's Grants for Service Provision – Rules and Guidelines*.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, a homeland must:

- have a reliable water supply
- have a water supply in operating condition
- have its own operating power supply
- have a working sanitation system
- have safe and secure housing
- be accessible
- be the principal place of residence (for at least 6 months of the year)
- have a service provider recognised under the Program willing to undertake responsibility for servicing the homeland and to be able to deliver services in a safe environment.

2.1 Funding allocation to homelands

DHLGCD calculates funding for homelands based on the number of occupied houses at each eligible location. DHLGCD sources occupancy data annually from the Homelands Occupancy and Population Survey submitted by Homeland service providers. The data is verified by DHLGCD's Homelands Services Group.

Funding is allocated on a per-house basis, with a house-based levy applied uniformly across all locations as a flat, unweighted amount per house.

The Program's funding model applies different base rates and weightings for homelands, town camps and communities. Funding may be weighted for factors such as remoteness, access/supply of water and power.

DHLGCD reviews funding allocations to homelands annually and grant funding amounts may change based on the number of homelands and houses funded under the Program.

2.2 Establishing a new homeland

The Program does not fund the establishment of new homelands. Establishing a new homeland generally requires engagement with the relevant Land Council.

2.3 Adding a homeland to the Program

If a homeland is established but is not currently funded, residents can approach the service provider within their region or DHLGCD to find out if it is eligible for funding.

The service provider will need to contact DHLGCD to consider the homeland for funding.

DHLGCD will undertake a technical assessment of the homeland to ensure that it meets eligibility requirements.

After DHLGCD has completed the assessment, the service provider is responsible for notifying residents whether DHLGCD approval has been given for the Program to fund the homeland.

If the service provider does not wish to take part in servicing an eligible homeland, another provider can be engaged. Where an alternative service provider is engaged, DHLGCD will make the final decision on the suitability of the provider. If no service provider can take on service provision, the homeland will remain unfunded.

2.4 Adding a new house to the Program

If a resident constructs a new house on their homeland, they must ensure that existing essential infrastructure (for example, power and water supply) can support the additional services required. DHLGCD will consider infrastructure capacity before approving any new service connections.

Once the resident has consulted with the Homelands service provider, the provider will contact DHLGCD to confirm the house's inclusion in the Program and to discuss any changes to service delivery requirements, including funding arrangements.

If existing essential services infrastructure cannot support the additional housing, the resident will be required to either:

- fund the necessary upgrades to the relevant infrastructure, or
- seek grant funding through the service provider to support these upgrades.

2.5 Removal of a house/homeland from the Program

Removal of a house or homeland from the Program considers a range of information. This includes advice from service providers, regular monitoring, departmental checks and site visits and an understanding of local circumstances.

Service providers are required to let DHLGCD know if a house or homeland no longer meets eligibility requirements. This should be supported by occupancy data and what they observe during service delivery and visits.

Before any funding is reduced or stopped, a range of factors are considered. These include whether the house or homeland has been unoccupied for a period of time, seasonal use (such as weather or access issues), cultural practices, and advice from service providers and communities.

If a house or homeland is no longer being used as a main place of residence and this is unlikely to change, funding may be reduced or stopped in line with Program requirements.

2.6 Transfer of a homeland from an existing service provider

Homelands are Aboriginal-owned land, and residents may request to change (transfer) their HMES service provider.

DHLGCD is a neutral party in this process. The department considers all transfer requests based on the information provided. This includes speaking with residents, the current service provider, the proposed new service provider, and the relevant Land Council where required

To start the process, the following minimum requirement must be met:

- written confirmation from homeland residents requesting the transfer to a nominated service provider (this can be provided by letter or email to the HMES Grant Coordinator)
- evidence that the transfer is in the best interests of residents.

Once a request is received, DHLGCD will assess it in consultation with all relevant parties. This includes considering:

- continuity of services
- the new provider's capacity and readiness
- funding arrangements
- any potential risks.

The outcome will be provided to residents and/or service providers in writing.

If the nominated service provider does not accept the transfer, or if the transfer cannot proceed, DHLGCD will work with residents to identify alternative service delivery arrangements.

3. Grant funding arrangements

This grant funding supports the delivery of HMES at eligible locations.

Service providers have operational flexibility within the scope of the grant agreement. Any expenditure incurred outside or in excess of the scope of this agreement, must be supported by audited documentation. Service providers will be required to submit this documentation to DHLGCD for review to ensure transparency, accountability and value for money.

Service providers will be required to allocate funding for the delivery of services in line with the following parameters for eligible expenditure of funding:

Administration costs may be claimed up to 20% of expended grant funds in the relevant financial year, including:

- salaries of administration staff
- audit and accounting fees
- travel allowance, training and professional development for staff funded to deliver HMES services
- office stationery, printing and consumables.

Services – including, but not limited to:

- wages for internally employed trade staff and other staff directly involved to HMES delivery
- wages to employ Aboriginal residents living in homelands to assist in the delivery of local services
- payments to external contractors and subcontractors involved in the delivery of services
- materials for delivering HMES
- vehicle and boat costs used exclusively for the delivery of homelands services.

Further information regarding prescribed grant arrangements is provided in relevant reporting templates provided by DHLGCD. Service providers are to refer to the HMES Reporting Template provided by DHLGCD for a full breakdown of eligible expenditure items for this program.

4. Service delivery

Under these guidelines, service providers have the flexibility to plan and manage their budgets and deliver services in accordance with their Operational Work Plan (refer to [section 5.1](#)).

Service providers should base the delivery of housing, municipal and essential services at eligible homelands on:

- program outputs, outcomes and requirements set out in these guidelines
- local factors within homelands, including the environment, the age and condition of housing and existing infrastructure
- consultation with residents which is to be documented in the work plan for each funded location
- where applicable, compliance with relevant Australian professional standards (for example, electrical and plumbing services).

Notwithstanding this flexibility, service providers should prioritise the following **minimum requirements**:

- provision of basic municipal and essential services to support safe and functional community living
- maintenance and operation of water, power, and sewerage systems to ensure the homeland remains eligible under the program
- implementation of measures to protect essential infrastructure from contamination, damage, or fire
- undertaking essential grounds maintenance (including firebreaks) to minimise fire hazards and reduce risks to health and safety
- ensuring waste is managed and disposed of in a manner that prevents disease, environmental harm, and injury
- identify and address emergency housing safety issues as a priority

4.1 Municipal and Essential Services

Municipal and Essential Services (MES) includes repairs and maintenance, minor works and general operational costs for the delivery of.

- municipal service activities primarily concerned with waste disposal, firebreaks, landscaping and dust control in common areas, animal control, road and aerodrome maintenance, environmental health activities and other municipal services
- essential service activities primarily concerned with the operation and maintenance of electricity supplies, water supplies and sanitation systems.

Service providers are required to submit a request to DHLGCD to use grant funding to deliver services outside the standard scope of municipal and essential services set out below in Table 1. Requests will be assessed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

For any approvals granted, the service provider is required to record the approval date and the name of the Approving Manager in the Service Delivery Log for audit and reference purposes.

Service providers will be required to treat the loss of power, water and/or disruption to sewage or septic systems as the highest priority for homeland service delivery.

Service providers will be required to request approval from DHLGCD for MES-related capital purchases over \$15,000. A quote for the proposed purchase needs to be provided to support the request. No project management fees are to be included in any request.

Table 1: Scope of MES and Outputs

Category	Outputs	Scope
Water system	Provide a continuous water supply to residents for reasonable domestic uses	Refer to Water for Homelands - A Best Practice Guide for Remote NT Water Systems - Inspect, repair and maintain water supply infrastructure to ensure it is operational, functioning as intended, and at low risk of failure. - Ensure residents know how to contact the service provider and report an outage. - Ensure water pipes outside of compounds are buried at a safe depth. - If there is a loss of water, the service provider is required to attend and restore water within 48 hours of being informed. DHLGCD must be informed immediately if not resolved within timeframe.
	Protect the aquifer and bore from extraction beyond a sustainable yield	- Make efforts to monitor the volume of water being extracted from the supply bores over time. - Ensure supply bores have automatic start/stop based on the storage tank levels. - Notify DHLGCD if water production amounts do not meet homeland water volume requirements or bore shows signs of failure.
	Minimise the risk of contamination at all points in the system	- Ensure all compounds and areas around infrastructure are clean and clear of vegetation to reduce risk of fire and structural damage. - Ensure active and unused bores are correctly sealed to prevent contamination. - Ensure bore heads are raised above flood

		levels. • Ensure bores are at least 100 metres away from any wastewater disposal area. • Make efforts to keep large animals away from the water infrastructure. • Ensure all tanks are sealed and fitted with locked lids. • Ensure tanks are not overflowing and automatic backflow prevention devices are installed for all users. • Inspect for and repair any water leaks in infrastructure and at houses. • Ensure water reticulation where possible is buried to a safe depth to reduce risk of damage. • Ensure fences and gates around water infrastructure are secure. • For elevated tanks, ensure any ladders are locked and unauthorised access is prevented.
Power systems	Provide a safe and reliable power supply	• Inspect, repair and maintain power supply infrastructure to ensure system is operational and working as intended to achieve the specified outcomes. • Ensure all compounds and areas around infrastructure are clean and clear of vegetation to reduce risk of fire and structural damage. • Inspect and repair all wiring and connections to ensure a safe condition and ensure there is no potential hazard to residents. <u>Power stations</u> • Ensure generators and controls are maintained and serviced in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. • Ensure compounds, gates and fencing are secure and locks are operational. • Ensure bulk fuel storage is securely contained, being only accessible by

		authorised personnel. • Remove all decommissioned or disconnected solar panels from the site. • If there is a loss of power, the service provider is required to restore power within 48 hours of being informed. • DHLGCD must be informed immediately if not resolved within timeframe.
Sewerage and septic systems	Sewage disposal systems are to be constructed, located, maintained and operated to: • prevent direct and indirect contact between people and infectious organisms • minimise the risk of contamination of drinking water supplies, food crops or other supplies • prevent the breeding of mosquitoes.	• Inspect, repair and maintain sewerage and septic infrastructure to ensure system is operational and working as intended. • Ensure all compounds and areas around infrastructure are clean and clear of vegetation to reduce risk of fire and structural damage. • Ensure septic tanks are secure and there is no risk of accidental access. • Identify any maintenance or repairs required at the next maintenance visit. • Service providers are required to attend and restore services to the sewerage or septic system as soon as practical to minimise disruption of services. If this cannot be achieved DHLGCD must be informed immediately.
Grounds maintenance	Communal areas should be maintained to a standard that: • reduces the risk of fire • minimises the risk of disease • provides a level of safety to residents • reduces the opportunity for snakes and other animals to shelter in and around the location.	• Install and maintain fire breaks. • Removal of unsafe vehicle wrecks from homeland compound. • Removal of hard waste from homeland area to reduce vermin and maintain resident safety. • Maintain communal lighting. • Homelands located in cyclone-prone areas should take proactive measures during the pre-season to identify and remove hazards. • Clear vegetation to a level that achieves the stated outcomes but does not add to the generation of dust or erosion.

Waste disposal	Waste management practices applied to: • prevent the transmission of infectious disease • reduce risk of injury and trauma.	• Area around tips must be clear of waste and all rubbish must be placed in tips. • Old tip sites must be filled in. • If the level of rubbish around the location is deemed a health hazard, the service provider must ensure rubbish is removed and disposed of correctly. • Where a homeland is located near a service provider hub, preference would be to provide a regular waste collection service.
Internal roads	Allow the use of roads and minimise erosion	• Ensure roads are clear of fallen vegetation. • Identify any maintenance or repairs required.
Airstrips	Maintained on a regular basis to allow the safe operation of light aircraft	• Operational airstrips only – does not include abandoned or out of service airstrips. • Inspect airstrip and ensure surface is clear of roots, undulations, large rocks, ants and termite mounds, saplings and erosion. • Drag airstrip as required. • The immediate 15 metres either side of the strip surface should be cleared of any obstacles including ant hills, tree stumps, large rocks or stones and fencing wire.
Environmental	Reduce the risk of disease, poor health, water contamination and damage to infrastructure due to environmental influences	• Assess the need for animal control around homelands and ensure appropriate animal management is carried out. • Ensure minimal disturbance to soil on homeland by works or animals to prevent erosion and dust.

4.2 Housing Maintenance Services

Under the Program, Housing Maintenance Services (HMS) contribute to repairs and maintenance to funded houses, including:

- responding to emergency electrical, gas, fire and structural safety issues
- general or routine repairs and maintenance to extend the life of houses and minimise deterioration.

Service providers are required to request approval from DHLGCD for HMS capital purchases or projects over \$15,000 funded from the current year allocation. This requirement ensures that priority works are delivered as intended and that expenditure remains within the approved budget (for example, solar hot water systems and disability modifications).

DHLGCD may also consider requests to use HMES funding where it clearly supports another approved capital homelands project at an eligible location (excluding HHIP). All requests must include a quote with no project management fees.

For approved requests, service providers must record the approval date and the name of the approving manager in the Service Delivery Log.

Emergency electrical, gas, fire or structural issues must be treated as the highest priority. These must be addressed within 48 hours, and DHLGCD's Homelands Services Group must be notified immediately.

Scope of Housing Maintenance Services (HMS)

Category	Scope
Structural	• Check for, and repair rust, corrosion, rot, termite damage, and other signs of structural deterioration. • Check for and fix water leaks. • Check for damage and correct operation of doors/windows in accordance with service delivery plan.
Plumbing	• Inspect for water leaks and repair as required. • Check the operation of hot water systems and undertake repairs where necessary. • Inspect wastewater systems for damage, rectify faults, and ensure correct operation. • Check sewerage and septic systems for leaks, blockages, or back-ups and resolve issues promptly.
Electrical	• Confirm, prior to installation, that any air conditioners, electric stoves, or other high-load electrical appliances proposed for solar-powered sites are compatible with the available system capacity, including inverter and battery limitations. • Test the operation of Residual Current Devices (RCDs). • Check that earthing wires are correctly connected to the earth stake. • Inspect all power points and electrical fittings to ensure they are: ○ operational, undamaged and securely fixed to walls or ceilings, and ○ free of exposed wiring. • Confirm there are no exposed electrical cables. • Inspect the low-voltage connection to the house to ensure it is undamaged, has no exposed wires, and presents no electrical safety risk.

Gas	• Check that gas fittings are secured and working correctly. • Check for and repair any leaks.
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4.2.1 Preventative repairs and maintenance

Service providers' planning and delivery of general housing repairs and maintenance services should be based on:

- 9 Healthy Living Practices set out below – noting order of priority from 1 (the highest) to 9 (the lowest)
- implementation of a preventive maintenance schedule, which includes regular and routine maintenance of housing fixtures and hardware
- works should be batched to reduce mobilisation costs and achieve greater efficiencies.

9 Healthy Living Practices

Priority	Category	
1.	Washing people	Ensuring there is adequate hot and cold water, taps and drainage.
2.	Washing clothes and bedding	Ensuring the laundry is functional with provision for a washing machine.
3.	Removing wastewater safely	Ensuring toilets and all drains are working.
4.	Improving nutrition through the ability to store, prepare and cook food	Ensuring the sink, taps and stove work.
5.	Reducing the negative impacts of overcrowding	Ensuring health hardware (for example, hot water and septic systems) can cope with the number of people living in the house.
6.	Reducing the negative effect of animals, insects and vermin	Ensuring adequate insect screening and other measures that protect people from exposure.
7.	Reducing the health impacts of dust	Introducing ways to limit the movement of dust to reduce the risk of respiratory illness.
8.	Controlling the temperature of the living environment	Looking at the use of insulation and passive design to reduce health risks, particularly to small children, the sick and elderly.
9.	Reducing hazards that cause trauma	Considering aspects of housing that can cause non-threatening injury.

For more information, please visit: [Safety and the 9 Healthy Living Practices](#)

4.3 Program exclusions

Funding allocated under the Program can only be used for the delivery of services to eligible housing, residents and communal infrastructure, such as power and water supply.

Funding cannot be used for:

- private or commercial enterprises
- schools
- clinics
- ranger stations
- insurance for assets not owned or leased by the service provider
- tourism ventures
- council rates for land not owned/leased by the service provider
- depreciation expenses which are not directly attributable to the delivery of grant activities.

Non-residents of homelands are not eligible to receive program funding and therefore, are not required to make any contribution towards the provision of services.

Please contact DHLGCD regarding any issues which are not captured by these guidelines.

4.3.1 Regional and Remote Burial Areas Grant Program

DHLGCD offers a Regional and Remote Burial Areas Grant Program that supports effective management of burial ground areas in remote communities and homelands. Further information about this grant program can be found on DHLGCD's [Homelands webpage](#).

Applications can be submitted online via GrantsNT. General questions about this grant program can be emailed to burials.dhlgcd@nt.gov.au.

For queries outside of the regional and remote burial area grant program, please contact DHLGCD for further assistance.

4.4 Diesel for power generation

Power generation in homelands can include connection to grid, solar, solar and generator, or generator only.

The amount of diesel required to operate the above systems is highly dependent on location, technology, the age of the power system and community demand for power.

As a result, service providers are responsible for deciding which of the following approaches will be used to allocate program funding for diesel:

- supply of diesel is a resident responsibility
- service provider supplies a set amount of diesel per week/month
- service provider supplies diesel as required to ensure power generation
- service provider supplies diesel under a fee for service cost recovery arrangement.

Service providers are required to advise in their Operational Work Plan which approach has been agreed with residents for power generation in individual homelands.

4.5 Homelands Capital Program

The Homelands Capital Program provides grant funding for the purchase and construction of capital infrastructure and equipment that supports the delivery of housing, municipal and essential services.

Under this program, service providers can apply for the following grant opportunities:

- one-off grants for capital items or projects for improving or replacing existing infrastructure
- ad hoc emergency grants for unforeseen and urgent project works
- Expression of Interest (EOI) or Direct Selection by the NTG for the delivery of selected priority projects.

For more details, please see the *Homelands Capital Grants Program Guidelines 2026-27* published on DHLGCD's website.

5. Operational requirements

Service providers are required to complete the following documents and processes to deliver HMES in line with these guidelines:

- Operational Work Plan and Budget
- Financial Reporting
- Service Delivery Log
- Infrastructure and Equipment Register (IER)
- Emergency planning.

DHLGCD has the right to request the following documents from service providers throughout the life of the grant agreement.

5.1 Operational Work Plan and Budget

All service providers will be required to submit a high-level Operational Work Plan and Budget within 10 business days of DHLGCD executing the grant agreement.

The Operational Work Plan and Budget must:

- clearly outline the organisation's plan for the 2026–27 funding period, in line with the minimum service requirements (refer to section 4)
- consider and reflect current resident requests for each homeland, where reasonable
 - service providers may use the Service Delivery Plan (SDP) template or their own consultation template and include within the work plan
- identify and provide context for any proposed variations to funding allocations outlined in Attachment A of the grant agreement (if any)
- outline the key activities and deliverables for the 12-month grant period at funded locations.

Service providers may submit the budget documentation separately, via email.

As consultation is ongoing throughout the year, resident requests should be based on the most recent consultation. Work plan may be submitted without SDP; however, service provider must outline plan to ensure engagement.

Where operational plans change, service providers are required to submit a revised plan to DLGHCD.

5.2 Service Delivery Log

Service providers must maintain a Service Delivery Log to record all maintenance activities and works undertaken at funded locations, in line with approved grant funding allocations.

The Log should be updated as works are completed to ensure records remain accurate and current. This supports accountability and transparency in the expenditure of grant funding.

Service providers may use the DHLGCD template or their own system, provided it captures all required Service Delivery Log information.

At a minimum, the Service Delivery Log must record:

- location
- house number
- date of work
- description of works undertaken and associated costs.

Service providers are required to submit the Service Delivery Log to DHLGCD in accordance with scheduled reporting dates and as part of performance reporting.

5.3 Infrastructure and Equipment Register

You are required to maintain an Infrastructure and Equipment Register (IER) for all assets purchased with program funding, including, but not limited to:

- generators
- bore pumps
- solar hybrid systems
- equipment used in the delivery of HMES services (for example, tractors).

Service providers are required to maintain and update the Register using the IER Infrastructure Tab on the HMES reporting template. The IER should be submitted at scheduled reporting dates and as part of the service providers' performance reporting.

Service providers are required to update DHLGCD IER template to record all infrastructure and equipment changes at funded locations.

On request, DHLGCD can assist with data transfer into latest templates.

All new items funded through the Homelands Capital Grants Program must also be included on the IER on completion.

5.4 Emergency plans

You are required to have an up-to-date Emergency Plan that sets out how you will:

- communicate with residents during an emergency
- participate in local emergency management arrangements led by NT Police
- identify key contacts and personnel who can be contacted during and after an emergency
- restore housing, municipal and essential services once access becomes available
- communicate with residents about preparing for the wet season.

5.4.1 Wet season – no declared emergency

Residents should prepare for regular weather events, such as wet season flooding. This includes planning for extra food and supplies based on the number of people in the homeland and accessibility.

If a homeland is cut off and supplies run low, residents should follow their wet season plans. This may include arranging food drops through local airlines or other organisations.

You may assist residents with these arrangements; however, residents are responsible for the associated costs.

If you become aware of serious welfare issues in a homeland (for example, people without critical medication), you are required to report this immediately to local police.

5.4.2 Wet season – declared emergency

During an emergency, you support the response but do not replace emergency authorities. NT Police lead the response and activate local emergency plans.

You should monitor homelands in your area, including:

- the number of people present
- any welfare concerns
- the impact of weather on housing and infrastructure.

We will work with you to share information with emergency committees, which will decide what actions are required, such as evacuations or food drops.

During recovery, we will work with you to assess damage and support the restoration of essential services.

We can also provide a basic Emergency Plan template on request.

6. Service delivery contributions

You are required to record any contributions made by residents or other organisations towards housing, municipal and essential services.

6.1 Resident contributions

Homelands are a shared responsibility. Residents are expected to contribute by paying a service fee to you. We recognise that contributions will vary between homelands.

Where residents make a contribution, you are required to work with them to agree how these fees will improve services. You are required to document this in the operational work plan.

Where residents do not contribute, you are only required to deliver basic services within available program funding.

The Program also supports shared responsibilities with residents, including the management of services such as power generation.

6.2 Other organisations operating on homelands

Organisations operating on homelands (such as clinics and ranger stations) must contribute to the cost of shared services and infrastructure. This includes services such as power systems, water infrastructure, roads, and airstrips.

You should work with these organisations to determine a fair contribution based on the actual cost of delivering services. This may be agreed using cost breakdowns or tools such as individual meters for buildings or facilities.

On request, we can provide a generic letter for organisations operating on homelands outlining expected contributions for the use of HMES services.

7. How we will monitor your grant

You will be required to complete reporting requirements as specified in these guidelines and in the grant agreement.

All reports and supporting documentation need to be submitted electronically through the GrantsNT portal.

If we find that a report is incomplete or unclear, we may ask you to submit a revised report within 30 business days (unless otherwise advised). We may also request reports more frequently if needed.

You are required to allow us access to records related to the grant at any reasonable time. This includes accounts, documents and other information about how the grant is managed and funding is used.

These records may be accessed by:

- DHLGCD (or authorised representatives)
- the Commonwealth Auditor-General
- the Commonwealth Director of Evaluation and Audit (or authorised representatives)
- residents of the relevant homelands.

We will aim to assess reports within a reasonable timeframe. Timeframes may vary depending on the complexity and risk of the grant, and whether you have provided enough information.

We encourage you to submit reports as early as possible to support timely assessment.

Please note that keeping your reporting up to date in GrantsNT is essential. Late reporting is recorded in the system and may affect your eligibility for other NT Government grants outside the Homelands Program.

Reporting process and timelines

Reports	Due dates
Half year financial report including Service Delivery Log and IER	28 February 2027
Full year financial report including Service Delivery Log and IER	28 August 2027
Audited Special Purpose Financial Report	15 November 2027

There will be some instances where service providers are on alternative reporting timeframes*

You need to ensure that all information provided in your reports is accurate and reliable. We may request copies of supporting information or additional reports at any time if needed.

We will review your reports and notify you through the GrantsNT portal whether your report is satisfactory.

Your Full Year Statement of Financial Position and Service Statement Report must identify any unspent grant funds.

In addition to these reports, you are required to submit a Budget and Operational Plan and an annual occupancy survey.

Plans and Data collection	Due dates
Budget and Operational Work Plan	2026–27 Funding Period: Submit within 10 business days of grant agreement signing
Homelands Occupancy Survey data	15 November 2026

You are required to submit these to us at Homelands.Program@nt.gov.au.

7.1 Audited Special Purpose Financial Reports

You are required to submit an Audited SPFR for grant funding received in a financial year.

Acquittal of funding is conducted under the prescribed arrangement in the grant agreement that requires SPFRs to be prepared and independently audited by a registered company auditor (RCA) for the period ending 30 June each year.

The audited financial report must be submitted on the RCA's business letterhead. Independently audited SPFRs are to be provided to DHLGCD by 15 November via the GrantsNT portal. Audited SPFRs will be assessed by us, and you will be formally notified accordingly via the Accepted Audit Letter.

You are required to present a copy of the previous year's Accepted Audit Letter to the auditor. The Accepted Audit Letter identifies the accepted grant surplus for the funded grant.

Audited financial report categories of costs on the Income and Expenditure Audited SPFR must correspond to the performance financial report.

7.1.1 Unexpended funds

You are required to report all unexpended funds for grants as part of half year and full year reporting processes. You may only claim administration fees on the expended portion of the funds. For example, if

you receive \$100,000 grants and expend only \$50,000 in the current financial year, the maximum administration fees claimable is 20 per cent of \$50,000 (i.e., \$10,000).

You are required to continue delivering services until we provide written advice about whether the unexpended funding is to be retained or returned. This ensures that works from previous financial years are not disrupted and can continue.

Unexpended funding approved to be carried forward, as set out in the Accepted Audit Letter, must be spent by 30 June the following year.

You are required to clearly itemise all grant funding balances accepted via the Accepted Audit Letter in:

- your half year financial position and service statement report
- your annual audited SPFR.

Carryover funds exceeding \$100,000 require delegated approval from us.

You are required to be fully compliant with your grant requirements to retain and re-invest unspent HMES funding.

If you meet service performance requirements, you may request our approval to re-invest unspent funding into a funded service or identified project. This will be treated as a variation to your grant agreement.

When requesting approval, you need to:

- ensure the proposed use of funds aligns with your original grant agreement
- submit quotations for any proposed projects before spending any unexpended funds
- project management or administration fees are excluded.

Once a project is approved, we will prepare a formal variation to your grant agreement.

7.1.2 Over expenditure

You are required not to carry forward over expenditure from a previous financial year for any grant funded through the Homelands Program.

You will need to absorb any over expenditure in HMES grant funding unless we agree otherwise in writing.

7.1.3 Goods and Services Tax ruling

DHLGCD has determined that the ATO's private tax ruling no. [1051410180505](#) in relation to the treatment of Goods and Services Tax (GST) is applicable to grants issued under the Homelands Program.

The ATO ruling provides that no taxable supply is made in the provision of some grant funding arrangements, and consequently there is not creditable acquisition from the recipient to the NTG. Consequently, all payments will be made without allowance for GST.

8. Performance

DHLGCD performance requirements for service providers are set out in these guidelines and the grant agreement. The requirements identify the minimum expected levels of servicing, maintenance and standard of infrastructure on funded homelands.

To assess performance, DHLGCD has developed reporting templates for service providers to complete and submit by scheduled dates.

When a service provider is assessed as not meeting minimum requirements, DHLGCD will undertake a review of performance.

8.1 Performance Review

We may conduct a Performance Review to assess the quality of your services and your compliance with the grant agreement.

You may be required to provide us with full access to employees, records, documents, and other information that relates directly or indirectly to service delivery.

We may conduct a Performance Review where there are concerns, including:

- ongoing complaints from residents or stakeholders
- limited or no service delivery recorded
- major delays in capital works
- late reporting or missing documentation
- failure to respond to urgent or life-threatening repairs
- failure to meet operational requirements (see section 5 of these guidelines).

If a Performance Review is required, we will notify you. This will include details of the issues identified and the actions required to address them.

We will assess whether your actions have satisfactorily addressed the issues. If they have not, we may take further action, including implementing alternative service arrangements, suspending funding or terminating the grant agreement.

8.2 Site visits

We may visit you during or after completion of your grant activity to review delivery outputs and compliance with the grant funding agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any site visit.

8.3 Keeping us informed

You are required to inform the HMES Grant Coordinator if anything may affect the delivery of services, your work or organisation. Refer to the contact details in your grant agreement.

You are also required to inform us of any significant changes to your organisation or its activities, especially if they affect your ability to deliver the grant.

8.4 The grant agreement

If you accept this service offer, you will be required to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the NTG. This agreement will be through a Letter of Offer.

The grant agreement will include a detailed description of the funded activities and the specific terms and conditions, including:

- scope of activities to be delivered

- a funding payment schedule
- acquittal and reporting requirements.

You will work with your DHLGCD Grant Coordinator to manage the grant agreement.

You are required to enter into the grant agreement with us before we can make any payments.

If you choose to start your grant activities before the grant agreement is executed, you do so at your own risk, including any costs that may not be covered under the agreement.

9. DHLGCD support for service providers

We will provide guidance to assist with the completion of reporting, grants access and delivery of municipal and essential services to homelands.

Supports include:

- training and guidance on using the GrantsNT portal to manage HMES grants
- assistance with questions and clarification related to HMES financial and performance reporting
- technical advice to help identify projects and activities, including how to use carryover funds.

10. Contact

If you have questions about performance under the Program, you should contact our Homelands Services Group:

- Phone: 1800 031 648
- Email: Homelands.Program@nt.gov.au

11. Glossary

Term	Definition
Accepted Audit Letter	Is a formal written notice issued by DHLGCD following DHLGCD's review of a grantee's Audited Special Purpose Financial Report
Administration costs	Additional costs that are not directly incurred by service providers in delivery of the project
Completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
Funded housing	An occupied house at an eligible homeland, town camp or selected community that is approved for funding under the Homelands Program and is used to calculate grant allocations under the program
Eligibility criteria	Refers to minimum requirements that a homeland must meet to be eligible for program funding to deliver housing, municipal and essential services
Eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a service provider which is eligible for funding support as set out in the program guidelines and the grant agreement
Grant activity/activities	Refers to the services that the grantee is required to undertake
Grant agreement	A legally binding contract that sets out the relationship between the NT Government and the service provider for the grant funding, and specifies the details of the grant

GrantsNT	The NTG's whole-of-government grants management portal
HMES Report template	Refers to DHLGCD's template for service providers to use to complete half year and full year reporting. Service providers are required to complete the following tabs on the template for reporting: Declaration, Financial Report, Maintenance Log, IER Infrastructure, Vehicle Log, Capital Program Reporting, HEA-MESSPG Report, Feedback. The template also includes Financial Report Description and Homeland SP Listing tabs.
Objectives	Objectives are clear, measurable statements of what the Program aims to achieve. Program objectives align with DHLGCD's Strategic Plan and the NTG policies or objectives
Outcomes	Refers to what changes or benefits will result from the delivery of Outputs. Outcomes describe what difference the services delivered will make for homelands. For example, improved infrastructure in homelands.
Outputs	Refers to what the service provider will deliver – activities, services. Outputs describe what the provider will do and what will be produced during the grant funding period. For example, water bores serviced and tested
Unspent funds	Any part of the funding allocated that: i. has not been spent by the recipient ii. has not been legally committed to pay to a third party by written agreement in accordance with the funding agreement
Value for money	The extent to which a proposal achieves its intended outcomes while ensuring the efficient and effective use of public funds
Variation	Amendments to the original grant agreement that may include, but are not limited to changes in scope, funding value, timelines, or terms and conditions