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Minister for Planning and Housing

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MEDIA RELEASE

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\$55 MILLION TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN NSW

Ten Aboriginal communities across NSW will receive significant infrastructure and service upgrades, thanks to a \$55 million investment by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government.

Minister for Planning and Housing Anthony Roberts and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Sarah Mitchell today announced the funding, which is part of the new *Roads to Home* program, aimed at improving the quality of life and economic opportunities in discrete Aboriginal communities.

“This is about connecting with some of our isolated communities in NSW and providing them with the facilities and services that they deserve,” Mr Roberts said.

“Some of these communities are facing challenges such as emergency vehicles having difficulty locating patients due to lack of street signs, waste not being collected due to unpassable roads, and school buses being unable to reach children because of road and drainage issues.”

The investment will deliver essential road upgrades to improve the connectivity of these communities, including road surfacing, stormwater and drainage, kerbs and footpaths, street and public space lighting, and power and telecommunication upgrades.

The Government will also update land tenure rules in these communities, which have been a primary barrier to home ownership and land development.

Ms Mitchell said the upgrades will have more than just a physical effect on the local communities.

“As a Government, it is crucial we do what we can to ensure these communities have access to the same standards and ongoing maintenance as their neighbours,” Ms Mitchell said.

“These upgrades will make it easier for people to get to and from work and school, improve road safety, and allow communities to grow and start new businesses and ensure these communities have access to the same standards and ongoing

maintenance as their neighbours."

NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) Chairman Roy Ah See welcomed today's announcement.

"This announcement will change the lives of First Australians in discrete communities for the better. This has been a priority for NSWALC, and I appreciate that the Liberals & Nationals Government has listened to and acted on our concerns," Mr Ah See said.

"This announcement will help build up Aboriginal communities, unlock opportunities and provide the ability for many to move toward home ownership and greater economic independence. This is another example of what can be achieved when government works with Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people."

The first 10 communities to benefit from the NSW Government's initial \$55 million investment are:

- Bellwood Reserve, Nambucca (Nambucca Shire LGA)
- Bowraville, Nambucca (Nambucca Shire LGA)
- Cabarita, Forster (Mid-Coast LGA)
- Gingie Mission, Walgett (Walgett Shire LGA)
- Gulargambone Top, Weilan (Coonamble LGA)
- La Perouse Mission, La Perouse (Randwick LGA)
- Namoi Reserve, Walgett (Walgett Shire LGA)
- Narwan Village, Armidale (Armidale Dumaresq LGA)
- Three Ways, Griffith (Griffith LGA)
- Wallaga Lake Koori Village, Merrimans (Eurobodalla LGA)

Work will start in these communities this year.

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