

# HOPE VALE AGREEMENT

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Parties signing the agreement: Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Affairs Mal Brough and Hope Vale Community Council  
Location signed: Hope Vale, Queensland  
Date signed: 12 May 2007

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A mutual obligation agreement has been signed between the Federal Government and the Queensland community of Hope Vale, which numbers approximately 1200 Indigenous residents.

Community members who opt to take part in the Agreement will be obliged to sign tenancy agreements and participate in a Family Income Management ('FIM') scheme. The scheme, based around the idea of 'mutual obligation' would involve quarantining and redirecting welfare payments to individuals judged to be in breach of their obligations to their family or community, for reasons of failing to ensure children attend school, involvement in drug, alcohol or criminal abuse, or breach of tenancy agreements.

In return, those participating in FIM will gain access to financial benefits and home renovations. Additionally, a proportion of rent payments made by households successfully participating in home improvement and school attendance programs will be deposited into home ownership accounts, increasing community members' financial capacity to purchase homes in the future.

As part of the agreement, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough, has committed to enacting legislation to set up a tribunal to administer the scheme. This proposed new body, called the Families Responsibility Commission, has been developed and detailed in the policy paper *'From Hand-Out to Hand-Up'- Cape York Welfare Reform Project* by the Cape York Institute for Leadership.

As a result of the agreement, Hope Vale will also receive over \$10 million of Federal Government funding to be put towards improving levels of health and education. Currently, communities such as Hope Vale have some of the worst standards of child literacy in Queensland.

The signing of the agreement has met with a mixed response from community members. While some traditional owners have claimed they were not consulted about the details of the proposed plan, Hope Vale's mayor Greg McLean stated at the agreement's signing that 122 people had already signed up to the voluntary plan.

***The announcement of the signing of the Hope Vale Agreement appears on the website of the Hon Mal Brough MP: <<http://www.facsia.gov.au>>. The policy paper 'From Hand-Out to Hand-Up'- Cape York Welfare Reform Project appears on the website of the Cape York Institute for Leadership: <<http://www.cyi.org.au>>.***