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Housing boss pledges sustainability support

■ Heather Chalmers

The head of a group which has taken over seven remote Aboriginal communities in the Goldfields has pledged he will do what he can to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Community Housing managing director Steve Bevington said the long-term plan was to provide training and employment for housing tenants and build on community engagement.

The comments came as a WA Housing Authority team visited Kalgoorlie-Boulder to carry out the first review into how the service was being run.

The organisation was appointed by the State Government in July to provide tenancy management services for 126 homes, with communities made up of between eight and 32 houses.

Communities managed under the three-year term include Bondini, Katampul (Nambi Village), Mt Margaret, Mulga Queen, Ninga Mia, Tjuntjuntjara, and Wongatha Wonganarra.

"Our job is to manage the public housing, but we will also support the communities to become stronger and more resilient," Mr Bevington said.

"Our ultimate goal is to facilitate the development and greater sustainability of these communities.

"We can set up training courses in construction and maintenance to provide local employment so they generate a stronger capacity for their sustainability.

Mr Bevington said the organisation's first task in the Goldfields was to put together a team, including remote housing officers, who would be based in Kalgoorlie.

"Two-thirds of them are from an Aboriginal background, and this is especially important where people are working closest to the communities," he said.

"We are now engaging in community liaison and have joined the Laverton Working Group.

"Many communities are very small and have their own internal system of self-governance but if they don't have that, we can help them to arrange it.

"We think we have something to offer and we are a supportive organisation."

Mr Bevington said staff from the State's Housing Authority were this week conducting random checks through their files as part of a first review.