



## Boss hits out at apartment waste

**Mitchell Smith**

The top executive of Bloodwood Tree has hit out at the Government for building the Cottier apartment complex in South Hedland, likening it to the Department of Housing's decision to purchase units in Karratha's Pelago East tower.

Bloodwood Tree chief executive Bob Neville said it was scandalous that so many apartments were sitting empty while the waiting list for State Housing in Hedland was "seven years long".

"They've sold off a lot of houses in Hedland. They've disposed of almost 100 State houses in this town and now they're saying they don't have any money for state houses because they invest in this sort of thing, so where's the taxpayer's money going?," he said.

"There's about four to six there that are occupied.

"It's not meeting the needs and requirements of the local people of this town, when we've got a waiting list of almost seven years."

But Department of Housing acting general manager commercial and business operations Greg Cash said the development was launched in response to "strong demand for housing in Hedland" and tenants had been moving in progressively since the building's

completion.

"Cottier Apartments is a mixed tenure development that includes five apartments for social housing, in line with the Department's policy of retaining approximately one in nine units in its projects," he said.

"All five apartments earmarked for social housing have been allo-

cated to applicants from the wait list."

Mr Cash said the waiting list for housing in Hedland had peaked in

2010 and had been "consistently reduced" since then.

Housing Minister Bill Marmion said last year the Cottier develop-

ment would support a number of affordable housing outcomes.

"This innovative housing initiative will help ease some of the pres-

sure on the shortage of housing in the town, with stage one delivering 44 units," he said.



**Bloodwood Tree chief executive Bob Neville says the Cottier Apartments in South Hedland are a waste of taxpayer's money.** Picture: Mitchell Smith