

Call to help shape future of Territory

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THE call has gone out to find the Territory's future forefathers to help draft a constitution we can call our own.

Statehood Steering Committee executive officer Michael Tatham said that Territorians have a rare opportunity to tell Government how it should work.

"Everyone is happy to criticise governments but here is the opportunity to set the procedures in place," he said.

"No one, in their generation, has had the opportunity to draft their own constitution before."

Mr Tatham said the committee has worked hard to get people thinking about the Territory's future, by answering questions ranging from the Territory's name to whether fireworks would be legal in the state.

Yesterday, the Committee released a discussion paper called Constitutional Paths to Statehood, which identified the key issues that must be addressed before the Territory becomes a state.

Mr Tatham said issues such as customary law, prior ownership, or the Land Rights Act, which are highly emotive, need to be discussed.

"These are the big issues that we have to talk about if we're going to move forward," Mr Tatham said.

The discussion paper asks whether the Territory should have a governor, an upper house or even a bill of rights.

Committee co-chairwoman Sue Bradley said the paper will be open for consultation for 32 weeks.

"The paper has been developed as a result of preliminary discussions the committee has undertaken with the Northern Territory community about what a Northern Territory Constitution may look like and draws together the work of previous Legislative Assembly committees and the Land Councils," she said.