

New super agency won't be given additional funds

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THE super agency being set up to develop northern Australia will not be given any additional staff or funding, the Federal Opposition said.

The Office of Northern Australia was an election promise to co-ordinate the regional development efforts of multiple government agencies in Darwin and Townsville.

But Coalition Senator Ian Macdonald questioned officials during Estimates this week and said existing offices of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development in Townsville and Darwin would simply be "rebadged".

"The staff will remain the same, the office location will remain the same, the money will remain the same - only the name will change."

The Federal Budget included \$8 million to set up an Office of Northern Australia in Darwin over the next five years.

Solomon MHR Damian Hale said he was working with his federal colleagues to establish the super agency.

"It's about properly engaging with stakeholders including community, educational institutions, business and industry bodies across multi-jurisdictions and all tiers of Government in north Australia," he said. "