WILLEM WESTRA VAN HOLTHE
SHADOW PRIMARY INDUSTRY MINISTER
MEDIA RELEASE

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BEEFING UP KATHERINE’S ECONOMY

Shadow Primary Industry Minister and Katherine MLA Willem Westra van Holthe, is in Western Australia to lend support to the proposed re-opening of the Katherine Abattoir.

Mr Westra van Holthe has had a number of top-level meetings with key agricultural and Government figures with a view to bringing business to the abattoir, which Teys Brothers hope to re-open sometime in 2010.

One of the key stakeholders he met was Western Australian Pastoralists and Graziers Association policy director Alex Burbury, who indicated he will encourage cattle producers to send their stock to Katherine when the abattoir is re-opened.

“As it stands, the nearest abattoirs are in Townsville and South Australia – the Top End is crying out for a facility to service local producers,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“Mr Burbury was very aware that there could be significant savings for graziers by freighting Kimberly cattle to Katherine instead of Queensland, South Australia or Perth.

“He made a commitment that he would float the idea with pastoralists from Western Australia’s north-west and that we would continue discussions into the future.”

Mr Westra van Holthe also met with representatives from Western Australia’s Farmers Federation, the States’ Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls and Agriculture Minister Terry Redman.

“Directors of Teys Brothers hope to re-open the abattoir next year – and plan to invest $6million to return the existing facility to production standard.

“There is talk of an abattoir being developed around the Kimberly region, but that could be several years away from development and cost upwards of $40million.”
“It’s important that Teys Brothers secure some substantial contracts before they commit to re-opening their abattoir and I’m delighted to help them with the some of the leg-work towards getting those deals secured.

“The decision whether to re-open the abattoir rests with the owners and will be based on economics. I see my role as to build contacts, bring parties together and facilitate discussion.

“When I return to the Territory on Saturday, I will again meet with Teys’ representatives and continue high-level talks with stakeholders over the next few weeks.”

Mr Westra van Holthe believes the Katherine Abattoir, which closed in 2001, could employ about 120 people if it re-opens.

“It would be a massive boost for Katherine’s economy,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“It would hopefully also focus the Henderson Government towards the shortage of available housing in the town which, like other major Territory centres, has been badly let down by poor land release policies.”

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