**COUNTRY LIBERALS**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF SUPPORT HURT KATHERINE ABATTOIR PLAN**

Willem Westra van Holthe MLA

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The Northern Territory Government sits on its hands while thousands of Territory cattle disappear over the border into other states,” says Shadow Minister for Primary Industry, Willem Westra van Holthe.

It was revealed yesterday on the ABC’s Country Hour program, that between 30 and 50 decks of Territory cattle a week are heading to Queensland and New South Wales meatworks,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

That equates to 900 and 1500 head a week heading to processing plants interstate.

On top of that, a further 10,000 head of Territory cattle have gone through Alice Springs to South Australia and Victoria so far this year with another 10,000 or so expected to follow suit in the next 5 months.

In the mean time, Primary Industry Minister, Kon Vatskalis, and the Labor Party have done precious little to support the backers planning to re-open Katherine abattoir.

Not once have I heard the Minister publicly support the Katherine abattoir. It is this lack of support that has dealt the Katherine project a potentially fatal blow.

When a Chinese-backed investor began working with the Katherine proponents, he was hopeful of Territory Government support.

In China, Government support plays a huge part in the investment decisions of private enterprise.

In light of the total lack of support and disinterest by the Henderson Government, this investor has walked away.

The Country Hour also recently reported that the cattle port of Wyndham did not export any cattle during the month of July, usually its busiest month.

This gives weight to suggestions that Kimberley cattle could also be a huge potential source of supply for a centrally-located meatworks in the Territory.

Jointly funded by the Territory and Western Australian governments, the Niethe Report into the feasibility of a multi-species abattoir in northern Australia found that there would be significant benefits to producers, clients and the community if a meatworks was situated in the Territory above the tick line.

It’s noteworthy that this Report was penned prior to Indonesia’s 350kg weight restrictions on our cattle, making a northern meatworks even more viable.

The report also pointed out that there would be a number of cost advantages to having a meatworks located at Katherine.

I’d support a Territory abattoir, not just in Katherine, but anywhere in the Top End.

I’m prepared to go out a limb and throw my support behind a revitalised meat processing industry in the Territory.

“It’s a shame the current Minister has neither the courage or acumen to do the same.”

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