$24 MILLION PORT KEATS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETE FOR WET

14 December, 2012

The opening of a $24 million Top End bridge will significantly improve access to several remote communities during the Wet.

NT Transport and Infrastructure Minister Adam Giles and Federal Member for Lingiari Warren Snowdon today officially opened the 184 metre Bul Bul Bridge, near the community of Naiuyu at Daly River.

Mr Giles said the single-lane bridge, which is 13 metres higher than the existing low-level crossing, will improve access for tourism, the fishing and pastoral industries, and the more remote communities of Woodycupaldiya, Palumpa, Peppimenarti and Wadeye.

The project includes two kilometres of new road embankment and more than 60 people worked onsite during construction of the bridge which connects the existing Daly River and Port Keats roads.

"The pleasing aspect of this is it included 20 local Indigenous personnel who undertook a range of tasks including steel fixing, environmental management and machinery operation, with eight of them reaching Certificate Level 2 qualifications," Mr Giles said.

"These skills are transferrable and projects like this are hugely important to supporting real job opportunities and economic development for our remote communities."

"In such remote areas we know infrastructure is important, so we thank the Australian Government for their $11 million contribution to Port Keats Road on top of our contribution of $13 million, which has seen this project completed quickly and efficiently," Mr Giles said.

Federal Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, said the project was part of the Gillard Government’s $97 million Community, Beef and Mining Roads Improvement Program in the Territory.

"Opening this bridge just before the wet season is terrific news for communities in the area – it will reduce the wet season road closure from an average of 114 days to just three to five days per year," said Mr Snowdon.

"That means more secure access to food and services for the communities of Peppimenarti, Palumpa and Wadeye, along with pastoral stations tourist parks plus increased access to the area for those working on the maintenance of the Bonaparte gas pipeline."
“This bridge builds on our previous work upgrading the Tom Turners Crossing to a two-kilometre sealed full carriage-way and is part of our commitment to give people in the bush safe, secure roads,” Mr Snowdon said.

The bridge name, Bul Bul, was suggested by the traditional owners of the area, the Malak Malak people in honour of the renowned Aboriginal tracker who passed away in 1943.

Media Contact:
Giles: Bruce Cutler 0457509133
Snowdon: Lidija Ivanovski 0407108935