VIETNAMESE HORTICULTURALISTS BEAR FRUIT

April 22nd, 2013

The significance of Vietnamese horticulturalists to the Territory economy has been strengthened with the establishment of an Association to represent the interests of owners and growers across the Top End.

The NT Vietnamese Horticultural Association was officially launched in Humpty Doo on Saturday night, with the announcement of key office-bearers and local representatives.

Member for Daly Gary Higgins and Member for Goyder, Kezia Purick attended the event.

"The past 30 years has seen the transformation of significant sections of the Rural Area from bushland to productive farmland – and the Vietnamese community deserves great credit for this," Mr Higgins said.

"Many of the first generation of Vietnamese horticulturalists arrived in Darwin as refugees and have transformed their own lives as well as the Top End.

"This is a magnificent achievement and a credit to all involved.

"The contribution of the Top End’s horticultural sector to the Northern Territory economy is estimated at approximately $50 million a year and delivers hundreds of jobs around Litchfield Shire.

"As well as supplying tropical fruit, Lebanese cucumber and Asian vegetables to local markets, the sector also supplies major retailers in southern Australia with product during the winter months.

"The Association will provide members with technical support and a plan for growth as well as target increasing access to markets and services.

"It is expected the Association will increase the bargaining power of members as well as its influence with Government and key stakeholders.

"It will also mark special days for the Vietnamese community including the Moon Festival and Lunar New Year and support members experiencing difficulties such as illness."

The Vietnamese Horticultural Association will be linked with NT Farmers, the Territory’s peak agricultural body.

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