ADAM GILES  MLA  I  CHIEF MINISTER
FRANCIS XAVIER KURRUPUWU  MLA  I  MEMBER FOR ARAFURA

LABOR DENIES ABORIGINAL PEOPLE A JOB

25 November 2013

Chief Minister Adam Giles has challenged the Opposition Leader to explain what she has against Aboriginal people using their land to create jobs.

“Delia Lawrie should be ashamed of herself for wanting to deny Aboriginal people the right to an economic future,” Mr Giles said.

“Labor’s attitude to our negotiations with the Tiwi people has proven once again why nothing happened in Indigenous communities during its 11 years in government.

“For too many years Labor has funnelled money and energy into tackling the social problems facing our remote communities without addressing the root cause - a lack of economic opportunity. We want to change that.

“Labor simply cannot grasp the concept that people are willing and wanting to see their land used appropriately for economic advantage.

The Government has begun talking to a range of communities about a new approach which promotes jobs over sit-down money through the granting of long term leases.

“The Tiwi Islands are the first place to take up this conversation about financial independence. I will be traveling there in the coming weeks to sign a Memorandum of Understanding where both sides agree to work towards a lease arrangement,” Mr Giles said.

“The Tiwi Land Council is the only body legislated to act on behalf of Traditional Owners and they are facilitating all consultation and negotiations going forward.”

The Local Member for Arafura, Francis Kurrupuwu, has also been heavily involved in our talks.

“The Tiwi people have an open attitude to development and are talking with government about the kind of projects they would like to see on their land. They are active partners in this push to create jobs. Labor never offered this kind of support or economic direction,” Mr Kurrupuwu said.

The Government’s role in this process is as a facilitator, connecting willing communities with interested investors and agricultural developers.

“We are not purchasing land as the Opposition Leader has incorrectly suggested,” Mr Giles said.

“The Opposition Leader should admit her government’s failure to bring prosperity to the bush and get on board with a new way of doing business.”

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