MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

POPPY LEGISLATION PASSED

15 May 2014

Legislation has been passed in the Northern Territory Parliament today to allow for the cultivation and processing of opium poppies in the NT under a strict licensing regime.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe said this now paves the way for the establishment of a potential $30 million industry in the NT.

“This industry will ultimately be able to supply the international pharmaceutical industry with opium which is a key ingredient in pain-relief medicines that include morphine, thebaine, codeine, papaverine and noscapine,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“This new agribusiness will not only support our economy and provide employment but will also provide medicinal benefits, with the pharmaceutical ingredients being used in drugs such as codeine and morphine.

“Our government is supportive of the establishment of this industry as it will help broaden the Northern Territory’s existing agricultural base and help with economic development through the creation of employment opportunities.

“We are continuing to drive the development of Northern Australia and will continue to support industries which provide further boosts to the Territory’s economy.”

The passage of the Poppy Regulation Act will also facilitate a new agricultural industry in the NT, bringing jobs and economic development to rural and regional areas.

Mr Westra van Holthe said in 2013 the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries facilitated small-scale poppy trials at both the Katherine Research Station and the Douglas Daly Research Station which demonstrated the viability of growing opium poppies in the Territory.

“The strong regulatory controls included in this Bill will assist to reduce the risk to the safety and security of persons both within the poppy growing and processing industry, and in the wider community,” he said.

“It is this Government’s strong intention to work proactively with licensees to build a successful and sustainable poppy growing and processing industry here in the Northern Territory.”

It is expected that the Act will commence operation in late May 2014.

Media Contact:
Lucy Buhr 0417 977 322