Canberra eyes Northern opportunity

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The Giles Government is thrilled to see many of its ideas have been taken on board by the Commonwealth as part of its draft Green Paper on Northern Australia.

“It’s great to see the Territory is continuing to lead this debate as the Coalition Government shifts its gaze north,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“The release of this Green Paper is another important step in planning for the development of Northern Australia.

“It is positive to see the Federal Government acknowledging the challenges and opportunities presented by Northern Australia and developing a policy framework that will support Northern development.

“The Green Paper echoes many of the economic issues the Territory has been raising, including the availability of workers and the need to foster private sector investment.

“As I have been saying for many months now, infrastructure is the key to opening up the North and the Green Paper acknowledges the need for new roads and bridges as enablers of economic activity.

“It’s particularly good to see the Federal Government Green Paper looking at alternative ways to plan and prioritise infrastructure for the North. The Territory hopes this will see a departure from the cost-benefit formula which is traditionally used in assessing infrastructure projects, often to the detriment of Northern Australia.

“The Paper lays a platform for further discussion and action on welfare reform and migration policy, as well as consideration of Special Economic Zones – all important subjects for consideration.

“The Commonwealth has recognised the potential importance of international education to Northern economies and I look forward to working with the Prime Minister on this subject. I think it is a space where the Territory has a lot to offer.

“The Green Paper acknowledges that access to water will be a crucial consideration for companies wanting to explore agricultural opportunities in the North. It’s good to see that the Commonwealth has raised some ideas about how this should be managed.
“It’s now time for a community conversation about whether these ideas or other alternatives are supported here. Most Territorians recognise the need for good water management but that may not include support for dams which is the thrust of the Green Paper.”

The Green Paper will be available on the Territory Northern Australia Development website. www.northernaustralia.nt.gov.au

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