Joint Media Statement

15 June 2014

Darwin at the centre of northern development

ACTING Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss says the Northern Territory is well-placed to drive the development of northern Australia.

Having released the Australian Government’s Green Paper on Developing Northern Australia last week, Mr Truss joined the Northern Territory Chief Minister Adam Giles and Member for Solomon Natasha Griggs today to inspect Darwin’s port facilities.

“Darwin is shaping as Australia’s gateway to Asia – one of the fastest growing regions in the world, which will soon be home to half of the world’s middle-class by 2020. In terms of northern Australia’s development, Darwin is the linchpin,” Mr Truss said.

“This Green Paper reminds us that the northern Australia is vital to our national economy, with 55% (or $121 billion) of Australia’s exports shipped from our northern ports.

“The Northern Territory has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country and investment activity is set to increase by 7% in 2014-15.

“According to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, the value of exports through Darwin’s port has increased with an average annual growth rate of more than 12% a year over the five years to 2012-13.

“And there is potential for increased exports from current and new mines in the Northern Territory, LNG from the Browse Basin and growing live cattle and beef exports. A new abattoir able to process up to 200,000 head annually is under construction south of Darwin.”

NT Chief Minister Adam Giles welcomed the Green Paper as a major step in planning the future of northern Australia.

“I welcome the opportunity to discuss the opportunities and challenges in the north and develop a framework for the development of Darwin and the Northern Territory more broadly,” he said.

“I am glad to see us leading this national conversation through our new Northern Australia Development office which was used by more than 650 people in May.

“Our port continues to hit new highs, more than quadrupling its loading and unloading capacity and setting a new record in December with the export of 70,000 cattle in a single month,” he said.
Member for Solomon Natasha Griggs said the launch of the Green Paper heralds the Australian Government’s commitment to new business and job opportunities in the Northern Territory.

“The new Coalition Government has wasted no time with getting on with the job of driving development across northern Australia,” she said.

“We moved quickly to restore confidence in the live cattle trade with Indonesia and establish new opportunities for the industry to broaden the trade around the world.

“This Green Paper is proof-positive that this government is committed to talking to local people about the growth and prosperity we want for our part of the country.

“I urge everyone with an interest in the future of the Northern Territory to get actively involved in the Green Paper process. It will make a real difference.”

Submissions close 8 August 2014. For an online copy of the Green Paper and to lodge submissions, visit: http://northernaustralia.dpmc.gov.au

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