Adam Giles  
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

**NT and Kalymnos working on skills program**

9 November 2014

The Northern Territory Government and the governing council of Kalymnos have made an in-principal agreement to establish a pilot training program aimed at helping skilled workers in Greece access employment positions in Darwin that cannot be filled locally.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said agreement on the pilot training program was negotiated by his Parliamentary Secretary for Business Nathan Barratt who returned yesterday from two days of meetings with the governing Council of Kalymnos.

Also part of the meetings were the Head of the NT Department of Business Mr Michael Tennant, the Chairman of the NT Business Advisory Council Mr Andrew Bruyn and the Greek Consul Mr John Anictomatis.

Mr Giles said he has been having roundtable meetings with the Territory's ethnic community and this was one of the initiatives to flow from the meetings.

"The NT Government will always look to training local workers as the preferred option for filling workforce shortages," Mr Giles said.

"However past experience shows that despite every effort, training and national worker attraction activities are not satisfying workforce demands in our small business community.

"It made sense to trial this program on Kalymnos given its strong presence in the Territory's Greek community."

The program is intended to be run in conjunction with the Department of Business, Charles Darwin University and training providers in Kalymnos working with its governing Council.

Mr Giles said there are a range of visas that enable skilled overseas workers to be sponsored by employers to fill skill shortages in the Northern Territory.

"Territory employers are already sponsoring overseas skilled workers from a range of countries on these visas. However overseas workers who have family or friendship networks here are more likely to stay and make the Territory home."
"While it is apparent that Greek workers have a range of skills, many have not completed formal training in a skilled occupation and have difficulty in providing documentary evidence to support their on the job experience.

"As well as the challenge of demonstrating relevant skill levels, overseas workers need to achieve levels in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English."

Mr Giles said there are two programs that present opportunities for NT employers to access workers from Greece to address skill shortages.

They are:

- The Designated Area Migration Agreement which offers some concession for English.
- The Training and Research Occupational Trainee visa that allows an overseas worker to be sponsored by an Australian employer to undertake work based training to enhance their skill.

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