Media Release

Adam Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

**Port Melville: The Facts**

11 May 2015

It’s time for the Territory Opposition to get their facts straight about operations at Port Melville and stop using false information to tear this important economic development project down.

“Labor should be ashamed of their willingness to use misleading information to undermine one of the most promising Aboriginal enterprises anywhere in the Territory,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“The truth is that Labor doesn’t want the woodchip project, or Tiwi Islanders, to succeed and is willing to do anything it can to bring the project undone.

“This is a beat-up, pure and simple and I won’t allow Labor’s lies to put this project at risk.

“I want the public to understand the facts behind this facility and have confidence that the proponents have fully complied with their legal obligations.”

**Fact 1 – Port Melville is not a new Port**

Port Melville is a replacement of an existing floating facility which went through an initial approvals process in 2003 under the former Labor Government.

**Fact 2 - Port Melville is not a declared Port under Territory law**

The Territory’s only declared Port is at East Arm. Other ship loading facilities including Bing Bong and Nhulunbuy are privately owned and are not declared Ports. Port Melville is in the same situation because it is a private facility designed to service the local woodchip industry.

**Fact 3 – New legislation allowing the Government to officially declare more Ports was opposed by Labor.**

The Ports Management Act was recently passed by the Territory Assembly, despite opposition from Labor. For the first time, it gives the Chief Minister powers to declare new ports without the need for a separate act of the Parliament. It clearly establishes the difference between a private loading facility (Port Melville, Bing Bong and Nhulunbuy) and a commercial port (East Arm). Labor MLA’s including Natasha Fyles voted against this more comprehensive framework, despite now calling for stronger regulation of ports.
Fact 4 – Port Melville is on Aboriginal Land

Port Melville is on Aboriginal-owned land and so is not subject to the same planning rules that apply in major regional centres elsewhere in the Territory.

Fact 5 – Contrary to Labor’s claims, the proponents have already submitted extensive planning materials to the EPA.

In December 2014, the proponent provided a number of documents to the EPA to support their Notice of Intent including:

- An Operations Environmental Management Plan
- An Environmental Policy
- A draft Biosecurity Management Plan
- An Oil Spill Contingency Plan
- An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
- A Weed Management Plan
- Vessel Fuel Transfer Procedures
- And a Hazardous Chemicals Notification Report (Diesel)

The EPA has request some further information and it is understood the proponents are currently preparing that information in full cooperation with the EPA.

Fact 6 – The Federal Government has written to the proponents approving their use of the facility for woodchip loading.

The Federal Environment Department has written to the facility’s operators confirming their right to continue with plans for woodchip exporting through Port Melville.

Fact 7 – The facility will have to comply with a range of regulations and laws, the same as any Territory workplace.

Regardless of whether the facility is a declared Port, it will still have to comply with the rules and regulations applied to workplaces of this kind across the Territory. The Port still has to meet Occupational Health and Safety standards for workers and has to follow biosecurity rules for example.

Media Contact: Danielle Parry 0413 081 801