Adam Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Economic Development and Major Projects

Darwin Port trade results bode well for the Territory’s economic future

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Trade results released today show the Port of Darwin had significant increases in key trade lines and was well positioned to drive economic growth and job opportunities for the Northern Territory.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Port of Darwin was on track to become a major distribution hub into Asia and a first class port in Australia.

“The Northern Territory Government is working hard to create opportunities to deliver more jobs, better services and improve our unique way of life,” he said.

“One way we are laying the foundations for economic growth for the Territory is by exploring opportunities for increased private investment in the Port of Darwin through a long term lease.

“The Northern Territory Government is currently considering binding bids to determine if a partnership arrangement can be reached that delivers on the Government’s vision for the future economic growth and development of the Territory.

“These results today show the Port of Darwin is already firmly established as Australia’s northern gateway of choice for trade, and there are strong prospects for the future, particularly if the right private sector partner can be found to operate and grow our port.”

Key figures from the Port of Darwin 2014/15 Trade Report include:

- World record cattle exports – 613,473 head, up by 51%
- 125% increase in cement imports;
- 36% increase in rig tender visits, supporting the off shore oil and gas fields
- Increased cruise ship visits
- Imported cargo increased by 5%
- China was the top trading partner with 48% of total cargo trade, including all dry bulk mineral exports.

Mr Giles said the Country Liberals Government had worked hard to rebuild the Territory’s economy, the Government’s finances and business confidence since coming to office.
“The Port is a central aspect of our future growth. A better developed port cascades opportunities throughout the Territory. Agribusiness, resources and the cost of our daily lives all benefit from having a well-equipped port,” he said.

“The viability of a range of future projects will benefit from a Port that has the right capital investment and ability to handle ships and cargo of varying natures.

“That’s why the Government wants a partner for the development of the port - a partner that will invest in the infrastructure that our Port needs but is beyond the financial capacity of Government alone to provide.

“Our Port is punching above its weight in terms of the volume of trade it handles but think how much better a transport logistics asset it could be if it can truly capitalise on its natural advantages.

“I sincerely hope the Labor Party can shed its union links on this important issue and support the Government’s plan for a long term lease over the asset.

“There is a real challenge for the Opposition Leader here. Do what’s in the interest of the Territory and back the lease or do the bidding of the unions and oppose the much-needed development of a fundamental piece of Territory economic infrastructure.”

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