Media Release

Willem Westra van Holthe
Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

Gary Higgins, Member for Daly

**Poppy plantation delivers economic opportunity**

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The Country Liberals Government is driving new agricultural development in the Northern Territory, with the successful cultivation of a commercial trial crop of 100 hectares of poppies in the Douglas Daly region.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe said the government had paved the way for the industry through the reduction of red tape and new legislation.

“I’m absolutely thrilled the hard work of the Country Liberals Government has paid off, with the Territory’s first commercially grown opium poppy crop almost ready for harvest,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“Australian-owned company TPI Enterprises Limited will harvest the capsules, seed and some stalk over the next month; it’s expected up to 150 tonne of product will be produced.

“It will then be processed in Victoria, before being sold to the international pharmaceutical industry. Opium is a key ingredient in pain relief medication including morphine, codeine and thebaine.

“The Northern Territory Government is committed to creating economic and employment opportunities; that’s why we put in place the *Poppy Regulation Act 2014* to get this new industry off the ground,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

Based on increased crop areas there is potential for the farm gate value of poppies to grow to $12 million over the next five years.

CEO and Managing Director of TPI Enterprises Jarrod Ritchie said the worldwide demand for pharmaceutical opiates is increasing.

“The expansion of growing to the Northern Territory is an important part of TPI’s strategy to diversify its sources of supply of poppy straw to help the company meet the growing international demand for narcotic raw material product,” Mr Ritchie said.

“The introduction of poppy crops to the NT offers new opportunities for Territory farmers, as well as strengthens Australia’s position as a reliable supplier of high quality raw materials for the global pharmaceutical industry.
“TPI welcomes the support of the Northern Territory Government for the introduction of commercial poppy growing to the Northern Territory.”

Member for Daly Gary Higgins said the new industry is a major boost for the local region and assured residents their safety is paramount.

“Security at the TPI cultivation site is in accordance with strict requirements approved by the Poppy Licensing Authority,” Mr Higgins said.

“I’m confident that a successful and sustainable poppy industry can be developed in the Douglas Daly region, improving local employment and economic outcomes.”

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