NT Government takes guess work out of diversification

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The Country Liberals Government has delivered on its promise to create economic opportunity through industry diversification, with the release today of two major land and water assessments.

Minister for Land Resource Management Willem Westra van Holthe said the documents take the guess work out for investors by identifying land that is suitable for new crops.

“Northern development is critical if the Territory is to reach its full economic potential; it’s also vital any growth is carried out in a sustainable way which uses the most contemporary science available,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“The Soil and Land Suitability Assessment for Irrigated Agriculture in the Larrimah Area, Sturt Plateau, along with the Daly Basin Groundwater Resource Assessment, have identified 22,000 hectares of land which is suitable for diversification.

“With up to 40GL/y of water available for use, potential crops include Asian vegetable, melons, nuts, root crops and forestry.

“The assessments are part of the Northern Territory Government’s commitment of $9.6 million over four years, announced in Budget 2014,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

Member for Daly Gary Higgins said there had been widespread consultation during the assessment works.

“The government has worked closely with the community including Aboriginal Land Councils, NT Farmers and pastoralists,” Mr Higgins said.

“More than 300 soil profiles have been taken to date and the information collated will be released publicly to ensure all Territorians can access the assessments.”

Shenal Basnayake from Northern Territory Farmers’ Association welcomed the release of the documents.

“This is the first time farmers across the Territory have had access to this type of information, it has the potential to transform their operations,” Mr Basnayake said.
“The data will undoubtedly underpin future development in the agriculture and horticulture sectors, taking away much of the risk for farmers looking to diversify.”

Similar assessment works are currently underway in a range of areas across the Northern Territory, including Wildman River, Barkly Tableland, Ali Curung, Ti Tree and Tennant Creek.

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