Agricultural Opportunities Highlighted in the Katherine Region

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To support the Territory Labor Government’s development of Katherine as an agribusiness and logistics hub, Minister for Primary Industry and Resources Ken Vowles today launched the Agribusiness Potential of the Big Rivers Region document in Katherine.

“We want to grow the agricultural sector and create more jobs,” Mr Vowles said. “The Territory’s agricultural industry was worth around $736 million in the year 2015-2016, but there is plenty of room for growth. We are putting Katherine at the heart of that growth.”

Mr Vowles said the document outlines agribusiness opportunities in the Katherine area and, as a significant proportion of land in the Big Rivers Region is Aboriginal land, it highlights the opportunity to create more jobs on country for Aboriginal people.

“This document will be used to attract investors, and encourage existing regional agribusinesses to join with government to develop the region through diversification and expansion,” Mr Vowles said.

“It paints a picture of the real opportunities in the Big Rivers region based on the soils, water, climate, markets and willingness of regional stakeholders to invest their time, money and energy. This type of information can help potential investors understand how their plans will fit with the bigger regional growth story.”

Mr Vowles said there is potential for new crops and agribusiness activities in the Katherine region, as well as the possibility to further develop crops with strong markets, especially in South-East Asia.

“As we have seen recently with Territory mangoes succeeding in overseas markets such as the USA and Singapore, there is plenty of demand for Territory produce,” Mr Vowles said.

“The production of mangoes and melons could be increased, and there is the potential for crops such as soybean and cotton, and even donkey farming. I saw the demand for donkeys myself when I visited China earlier this year. Katherine could also become home to initiatives such as a bush foods hub, grain silos, fruit processing facility and peanut shelling plant.”

The Agribusiness Potential of the Big Rivers Region document was developed by the NT Government in consultation with NT Farmers Association, NT Cattlemen’s Association, the Katherine Region Economic Development Committee and regional stakeholders. It includes challenges investors could face, and outlines the actions the NT Government is taking to address them.

Member for Katherine Sandra Nelson joined Mr Vowles to launch the document.

“This is an exciting time for Katherine and the Big Rivers region,” Ms Nelson said. “Katherine is already a transport hub, connecting the Ord River and Kimberley to the west with Alice to the south and Queensland to the east. The north-south rail route passes through our town too. The
NT Government’s vision is to see Katherine grow into a major agribusiness hub, supported by efficient transport and logistics infrastructure.”

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