The Northern Territory has taken an important step forward in strengthening its relationship with the Government of Sabah through a Memorandum of Cooperation which will continue the partnership for livestock industry development and breeding programs.

Primary Industry Minister, Kon Vatskalis, today welcomed the Sabah Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry, Dr Datuk Haji Abdul Rahim Ismail, to the Northern Territory prior to the signing of the Memorandum at a special ceremony at Parliament House.

“The Territory Government has been working with Sabah’s Department of Veterinary Services and Animal Industries to improve cattle production in the country, with an aim of increasing self-sufficiency in beef production,” said Mr Vatskalis.

“Today’s signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation builds upon the working relationship we have developed with Sabah and I’m sure that it will be mutually beneficially to the future economic development of both regions.

“Through such partnerships, the Martin Labor Government is moving the Territory ahead. We are driving economic growth because it means jobs for Territorians.”

Mr Vatskalis said the Memorandum of Cooperation sees the Northern Territory and Sabah agree to:

1. Encourage exchange visits of government and business sector between regions to strengthen ties and identify and develop opportunities for economic cooperation;
2. Participate in key trade and investment promotions in each other’s regions;
3. Facilitate government processes for trade and investment opportunities between the Northern Territory and Sabah, Malaysia;
4. Support industry development, particularly in the sectors of:
   - Livestock and livestock services
   - Education and training in tropical beef production.
5. Establish a working group representing each region to develop action plans and review cooperative activities on an annual basis.

The Memorandum of Cooperation is effective as of today, for a period of three years, by which time the Organisations will review the terms and conditions of any extension of the Memorandum.

This new agreement strengthens the previous ties between the two regions as well as acknowledging the previous working relationship which included the Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development’s (DBIRD) provision of technical assistance and training to improve cattle production in Sabah. Other programs have included quality assurance and work experience with DBIRD.
Dr Datuk Haji Abdul Rahim Ismail is being accompanied on his Territory visit by a delegation of senior government officers and private sector livestock producers from Sabah.

The delegation has toured DBIRD’s Veterinary Services, and attended technical presentations from senior staff and a highlight of the visit will come this afternoon at the Beatrice Hill Buffalo Research Farm, when Dr Datuk Haji Abdul Rahim Ismail will inspect buffalo destined for Sabah as a gift from the Northern Territory Government.

Contact: Nikola Lekias 0438 323 660