Students from Katherine’s School of the Air have written to Prime Minister Julia Gillard, asking that she respond to a list of questions they want answered.

The Prime Minister appeared via a video link from Darwin to open a new classroom this week, but dashed off before the students' concerns could be addressed.

“Determined to be heard, they’ve now put pen to paper and in doing so have shown a real clarity and understanding of the issues affecting them, their families and their community,” says Member for Katherine Willem Westra van Holthe.

“Showing the honesty and directness that children are known for, they quickly tackled the issue of live cattle bans which have devastated cattle producers and businesses in and around Katherine.

A student named Brian asks;

“Can you please open up the live export trade before hundreds of cattlemen go bankrupt?”

Another student Tammy writes;

“What is the point of building a new classroom when there won’t be any kids left on the stations to use it? The best part of KSA is living on a station where you can help with the cattle.”

Mr Westra van Holthe is helping the students have their say.

“Bush kids are very astute and won’t be satisfied with the stage-managed political rhetoric that was the hallmark of the Prime Minister at the Community Cabinet held in Darwin last week”, Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“The ban on live beef exports to Indonesia has hit the local community hard and it’s clear that these children are also feeling the pressure that their families are under.

“The live trade must resume as soon as possible to abattoirs that use best practice.

“The industry, families, businesses and workers are waiting for the Prime Minister to turn things around.

“So too, are the students from Katherine’s School of the Air.”

(Letter attached)

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430