TREASURER

MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY

BUILDING ON OUR ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

13 May 2014

Budget 2014 provides resources to further develop Northern Australia and secure a bright future for the current and future generation of Territory children.

To harness and coordinate economic development strategies, $5.88 million has been allocated over two years for the Northern Australia Development Office to work with the Commonwealth Government and industry groups to capitalise on the Territory’s opportunities.

Key sectors of the Territory economy also benefit from funding in the Budget, with the resources sector, primary industries and tourism all receiving additional funding.

To encourage minerals exploration in the Territory, $23.8 million over four years will go towards a new program to assist exploration miners discover new resources.

The Creating Opportunity for Resource Exploration (CORE) initiative will create partnerships between exploration companies and the Government, where 50% of exploration costs are met by the Government in return for access to the results. These will then be used to produce a geological survey that will be used to attract investors.

Minister for Mines and Energy, Willem Westra van Holthe, said much of the Northern Territory’s mineral potential is unexplored.

“We have vast tracks of land that have never been tested to see what lies beneath the surface. The CORE initiative aims to find out what is beneath the surface and turn mineral potential into a reality,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“The program enables exploration companies to do even further explorations upon which they can use the information to attract investors and transform the potential resource into a producing mine.”

A four year, $8 million program to assess the Territory’s shale gas potential and resources will also be implemented.

The Territory’s primary industry sector will be strengthened through the establishment of a Food Industry Development Group to drive economic agricultural development. Budget 2014 provides $1 million over two years to progress this initiative.

The Budget commits $400,000 to lead the third stage of development of the Ord River irrigation scheme, involving 14,500 hectares of new agricultural land.

Tourism will receive an additional $8 million, including $500,000 for a regional tourism product development grant.

This new program is a part of our plan to boost visitor numbers to all corners of the Territory and achieve a $2.2 billion visitor economy by 2020.
The Government has made tourism an absolute priority and wants to see it returned to a thriving industry that provides jobs for thousands of Territorians and allows local businesses to grow. Marketing support for the tourism industry included $13.6 million for international marketing and $17.5 million for domestic marketing in partnership with tourism retailers, airlines and other partners highlighting the holiday experiences in the Territory.

Budget 2014 recognises the importance of local business and provides $5.5 million for a suite of industry development programs to grow capacity and capability of local business.

A Red Tape Abolition Squad will be formed within the Department of Business. The three year program will receive $450,000 per annum to identify red tape reduction priorities with business. The feasibility of having an identified red tape reduction day in the Legislative Assembly will also be investigated.

Support continues for Territory Business Centres, with $1.85 million to continue the provision of advice and license information to business and $1 million is provided to continue the Indigenous Participation Program to support Indigenous employment opportunities.

Minister for Business, Dave Tollner, said Budget 2014 provides support for businesses to expand and meet the opportunities presented by a growing economy.

“Equally, Government is providing resources to reduce the regulatory burden on our business and will form a partnership for red tape abolition in the Territory with the Commonwealth and Local Government.

“The Giles Government is committed to supporting our major economic sectors with targeted government assistance that expands opportunities for small and medium enterprises, whether they are in the tourism, resources, primary production or in our wider economy,” he said.

MEDIA CONTACT: Jon Taylor 0417710687 (Treasurer’s Office)