Multi-billion dollar Budget boost for Northern Development

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The Territory Government has welcomed tonight’s down-payment on the development of a sustainable Northern Australia with the creation of a multi-billion dollar concessional loan scheme for infrastructure.

“Tonight’s Federal Budget recognises that infrastructure development in the North holds the key to Australia’s economic future. This is a budget for regional Australia, the powerhouse of the country’s economy,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“As part of the $5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, the Commonwealth will provide concessional loans to support the infrastructure projects desperately needed to bring the North to its full potential. This includes ports, railways, pipelines and electricity generation.

“The aim is to increase private sector investment in Northern infrastructure and that’s exactly what my Government has been lobbying hard for.

“I’m especially keen to see how this loan scheme may support the work we have begun on a possible rail corridor between Tennant Creek and Mount Isa, as just one example.

“With the Northern Australia White Paper just around the corner, this is a practical demonstration of the Federal Coalition Government’s commitment to the cause.”

The loan facility will be open for applications from 1 July 2015.

“I know local small businesses, which make up the bulk of the Territory’s commercial activity, will be especially pleased with the $5.5 billion Jobs and Small Business package announced tonight,” Mr Giles said.

“At the centre of the package are tax cuts for all small businesses with annual turnover under $2 million and changes to depreciation rules which I know will be welcomed by Territory small businesses.

“Primary Producers are also winners out of these reforms with farm businesses sharing in the tax cuts and deductions.”
The Commonwealth is allocating $70 million to assist primary producers to claim accelerated depreciation for water facilities, fodder storage and fencing from 1 July 2016.

"The Palmerston Regional Hospital is a critical piece of medical infrastructure for Northern Australia and we are looking closely at the funding allocation in the Budget to ensure there are no surprises in the fine print," Mr Giles said.

“It is disappointing that there doesn’t appear to be any additional money for the Palmerston Regional Hospital but this was not unexpected and we will work through it to deliver the facility ahead of the original schedule.

“I note that there are changes to the way Aboriginal programs are funded as part of this budget and officials will be scrutinising this over the coming days to see what it means for the Territory."

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