Willem Westra van Holthe, Member for Katherine  
Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

New NT export market promotes Indigenous employment opportunity

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The Country Liberals Government is supporting Indigenous industry development, with a trial shipment of Northern Territory grown Giant Clams being exported to the United States.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe said scientists at the Darwin Aquaculture Centre are working closely with industry partners and remote communities on the pilot project.

“This is a leading edge trial which is examining growth rates, survival and marketability of Giant Clams in both Australian and overseas markets,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“We have a shipment of 50 Giant Clams scheduled to leave for Chicago next week, where larger clams (10 to 15 cm) can fetch a premium price of around $10 per centimetre.

“Once viability is proven, information around the pilot program will be collated and distributed to industry to assist them to export Giant Clams on a regular basis.

“This trial provides the opportunity for remote Indigenous communities to become involved in the international aquarium trade which is active across Asia, Europe and America,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

Minister Westra van Holthe said communities including Goulburn Island, Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt are part of the pilot program.

Over 20,000 clams have already been successfully produced through the project and have been sold to the Australian domestic aquarium market.

“Growing Giant Clams could provide business opportunities for Indigenous people across the Top End, giving them culturally suitable employment within their community,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“There is enormous potential within the industry; worldwide the aquarium trade is worth in excess of $1 billion annually and we hope the brilliant blue colour of Territory Giant Clams can grab a slice of that market.”

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