Ken Vowles
Minister for Primary Industry and Resources

Exploring for the Future in the Barkly Region

9 December 2016

Ken Vowles, Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, today welcomed the commencement of the $100 million four-year Australian Government initiative Exploring for the Future.

Mr Vowles said the Exploring for the Future program focuses on Northern Australia, in recognition that this under-explored region offers enormous potential for industry development and is close to Asian markets. Northern Australia is rich in mineral deposits including zinc, lead, silver, gold and copper.

“The resources sector is an important contributor to the Territory’s economy,” Mr Vowles said.

“Through initiatives like Exploring for the Future we will be able to increase the knowledge of the resource potential in the Barkly region.

“The Barkly region focus extends east to the Queensland border incorporating Tennant Creek and Mount Isa, and extending north to Borroloola.

“I welcome the commencement of a $3.1 million project in the Barkly Region to map the electrical conductivity of the ground to better understand the location of mineral and energy resources.

“The Northern Territory Government is supporting Tennant Creek’s growth as the mining services capital of the NT. We will see Tennant Creek grow and develop as a vibrant town. This means attracting more people to the town by supporting industries that bring with them employment opportunities.

“In addition, a $3.8 million project will explore a 550 kilometre seismic line in north eastern Barkly which cuts across Queensland and the Northern Territory, to help identify the location and size of possible oil and gas resources.”

Geoscience Australia’s leading researchers will be working with the experienced Northern Territory Geological Survey team, in the Department of Primary Industry and Resources, to gather new pre-competitive data and information on what lies underneath the surface in the Northern Territory.
“This will be one of the most intensive pre-competitive geoscience acquisition programs ever undertaken in Australia, and is designed to stimulate new interest in mineral exploration,” Mr Vowles said.

“The program will cover a number of different geoscience techniques, including mapping, seismic surveys, stream sediment and water bore chemistry, geophysical surveys, and gravity surveys.

“This will support the Northern Territory Government’s own $23.8 million investment through the Creating Opportunities for Resource Exploration (CORE) initiative.”

Data gathered through this program will complement and value-add to the geoscience data currently being gathered through the CORE initiative.

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