NT allocated $30 million in Federal beef roads funding carve-up

The Australian Government announced in October that nearly one-third of the promised $100 million for the Northern Australia Beef Roads Program is being allocated to the Northern Territory.

NTCA Chief Executive Officer Tracey Hayes said the Territory had received a $30 million share of the funding to pay for major upgrading to flood-prone and dangerous sections of the Barkly Stock Route and Tablelands Highway.

“We argued strongly for a significant allocation so we’re very encouraged by this result. We asked for a fair share of the funding to reflect the vast trucking distances between our stations and markets, and our industry’s dominant role in the broader economy. This injection of funds is critically important for the future development of our northern cattle sector.”

The Territory allocation includes $20 million to upgrade sections of the Tablelands Highway to improve road train and general commuter accessibility and safety, and $10 million to flood proof a section of the Barkly Stock Route to reduce season closures and transport restrictions.

The breakdown also included $59 million for major beef road works in Queensland and $12.51 million for critical upgrades in remote Western Australia.

The NTCA had also nominated the Buntine Highway as one of the three major Territory cattle thoroughfares needing priority attention; it was left out of the funding carve-up.

“We’re disappointed that urgent upgrading needed on the Buntine Highway did not receive funding but we will continue to lobby both the Australian and Northern Territory Governments to invest in this critically important access route for Victoria River District producers needing to transport cattle to Darwin or across the Kimberley.”

The NTCA acknowledged the contribution of the NT Government which worked effectively with the association in making the case to Canberra.
NT cattlemen lobby for ongoing beef roads attention

The NTCA has called for the $100 million beef roads initiative to be become an ongoing program to build on the cooperative platform established between government and industry during the lead-up to funding distribution. CEO Tracey Hayes says the comprehensive submission process has resulted in a blueprint for the critical infrastructure spend required right across northern Australia and it's important that it be used to guide the future strategic allocation of funds.

“We've been pushing for the program to be continued,” she says. “In the lead-up to the $100 million being allocated last month, the various jurisdictions put a lot of effort into preparing the model that has guided the carve-up of these funds.

“We all made submissions on what we believed were our critical beef roads and would like to see the information retained. That information formed a blueprint of critical northern beef road requirements and we are not prepared to let the document sit on a shelf and collect dust.

“We're encouraging governments to consider continuing the process past this first $100 million and for it to become an annual program with $100 million in funding every year.

“It’s clear that many smaller rural roads also desperately need upgrading and the fact that in excess of $3 billion worth of projects have already been identified shows that there’s a critical need for more spending. We see such roads expenditure as enabling investment which will allow the northern cattle industry to grow.”

NTCA Cattlenews - November 2016

VALE
ROSS MORTIMER

The NTCA has expressed sorrow at the loss of one of its Life Members, long-time Territory pastoralist Ross Mortimer, who passed away on 1 October at the age of 87.

“Ross owned Brunchilly Station on the Barkly Tablelands, and was awarded with NTCA Life Membership in 1992 after more than 30 years in the Territory pastoral industry,” CEO Tracey Hayes said.

“He was also heavily involved with industry matters, and contributed significantly to the NTCA as Chair of the Barkly branch and as the NTCA's Cattle Council Representative.

Ross Mortimer was farewelled at a funeral Mass on 10 October at St Saviour's Church in Glen Osmond, South Australia. The NTCA extends its sincere condolences to Ross's wife Gillian and their family.
Kylie to focus on pastoral business development

The NTCA now has a staff member dedicated to business development.

Kylie Gracey began work in the Darwin office on 31 October and takes on the new role of Business Development Officer.

Kylie’s appointment expands the NTCA’s overall operational team to eight, with five based in Darwin, two in Mataranka on the Real Jobs Program, and one in Alice Springs at the Bohning Cattle Yards.

Kylie’s job will involve travelling widely throughout the Territory to talk to station owners about diversifying their pastoral land, and acting as the interface between industry and government in addressing any challenges associated with progressing various applications and permits.

Kylie was raised on a farm in NSW before finishing school and heading to university to gain a Bachelor of Agricultural Science Degree and a Masters in Environmental Science. She has worked for the NSW Government, mining companies and environmental groups, and has significant experience in negotiations, project development and writing management plans.

A list of grants available to pastoralists can be found on pg.11.

NTCA in top-level Canberra Ministerial talks

NTCA Chief Executive Tracey Hayes has continued a whirlwind round of engagements in recent months, with industry conferences, a trade mission to China with new NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner, and several trips to Canberra for talks with Federal Ministers and industry heads.

In a recent visit to the national capital, the CEO discussed crucial industry-related issues with North Australia Development Minister Matt Canavan, Rural and Regional Communications Minister Fiona Nash, and senior staff working for Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

“All the meetings were productive and addressed a wide-range of issues critical to our members and the industry’s growth in the north,” Tracey says. “Matters discussed included northern development; the ongoing beef roads funding situation; the status and potential expansion of our offshore export markets and the ongoing challenges of the Indonesian live export trade as that country works to position itself for industry growth and the burgeoning demands of population for protein.”

Tracey met with Minister Fiona Nash in a bid to iron out ongoing NBN service issues for rural residents, and Barkly region member concerns over the use of UHF repeater towers for communications.

In a more recent Canberra trip, the CEO met with Minister Joyce and represented NTCA members at the National Farmers Federal Annual Congress and the Live Exchange Annual Conference – both held on the same day.

NTCA CEO joins Chief Minister’s China visit

NTCA CEO Tracey Hayes was invited to join an NT Government delegation, led by Chief Minister Michael Gunner, to attend a major economic summit in China’s Rizhou Province in late October.

Tracey said the trip was an ideal opportunity to look at ways to continue developing the supply chain for products going into that province from Central Australia. “There’s now a solid critical mass of organically accredited cattle across Central Australia which are attractive to Chinese consumers,” she says.

“We have a strong natural competitive advantage so we’re looking at creating opportunities for northern producers to help satisfy their desire to eat healthy and nutritious protein.

The delegation group in Rizhao.

Mark Sullivan (Flying Fox Stn) & Tracey Hayes with the son of a Rizhao developer, who was given a stock whip by the NTCA.
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PIONEER TERRITORY
A reprieve on Barkly UHF Repeater Towers

The NTCA says common sense has now prevailed – at least temporarily – on the question of Barkly station owners and operators using the region’s UHF repeater tower network for their communication needs.

The NTCA has been in talks with the Federal Government to address members’ concerns that they’ve been breaching the law by bouncing signals between the towers.

Association CEO Tracey Hayes says that despite people being licenced for 30 years to operate in that way, the government legislated in 2011 to make it illegal for people to bounce signals from tower to tower. The policy was changed because of supposed interference in built up urban areas, and businesses in the bush were being issued with breach notices. "Licences were being issued as far back as the late 1970s and Access Electronics has been servicing pastoralists’ connections that whole time," Tracey says.

“This has been a major issue across vast sections of the Territory and needed a common sense solution. It was a ridiculous situation that these towers had to be delinked. The impact on pastoralists and other district users not being able to talk to each other via UHF in the event of bushfires, safety issues, staff management and the like could be quite profound.”

New Ministers introduce themselves at NTCA board meeting

The Northern Territory Government’s two new ministers who will work most closely with the pastoral industry have set the scene for a good working relationship by attending the recent NTCA Board Meeting.

Minister for Primary Industry & Resources, Ken Vowles, and Minister for Environment & Natural Resources, Lauren Moss, introduced themselves and their key staff to members and were keen to familiarise themselves with the issues impacting on cattle production across the Territory.

Minister Vowles comes to the job with some background knowledge of the issues, having served as the Opposition’s Shadow Primary Industry Minister in the previous Northern Territory Parliament. He has also visited the NTCA’s Bohning Cattle Yards near Alice Springs to meet manager Noel Cuffe and familiarise himself with activities there.

NTCA representatives will accompany Minister Vowles to Indonesia later this year when he makes his first visit as Minister to meet government and industry leaders there and inspect developments in the live export and other beef industry facilities.

Minister for Primary Industry and Resources, Ken Vowles (left) with Bohning Yards Manager Noel Cuffe during the Minister’s recent visit to Alice Springs.

23rd Chief Minister’s NT Export and Industry Awards

Prominent Australian and Northern Territory cattle producer, Consolidated Pastoral Company (CPC), was named Exporter of the Year in the 23rd Chief Minister’s Northern Territory Export and Industry Awards in September. CPC won both the Exporter of the Year and Agribusiness awards for 2016.

CPC is Australia’s largest privately owned cattle producer with more than 30 years’ experience in exporting Territory cattle to Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The company owns and operates 19 pastoral stations across Northern Australia, with a combined 375,000 head of cattle between them.

The annual awards recognised the outstanding achievements of Territory exporters and industry leaders and promote the importance of international trade. Oil and gas, mineral ores, live cattle and agricultural products are the region’s top exported commodities.

NTCA Cattlenews - November 2016
Four sales spell a big year for Bohning Yards

It's been a far better than average year for the NTCA's Bohning Cattle Yards which, for the first time since 2007, has held four sales instead of its normal two.

The spelling facility on the Alice Springs outskirts, has seen a whopping 45,000 head of cattle transited through the yards for sale or for spelling while on route mostly to interstate markets.

The four sales resulted in more than 11,500 head of cattle with a gross value exceeding $12 million, moved through the yards. They weighed an average 400kg and sold for an average $1,100 a head – slightly up on last year's average $1,016 a head. Some 70% of the cattle were bought by South Australian processors and feedlots, while the remaining 30% were sold as feeders to buyers in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

Bohning Yards Manager Noel Cuffe told local media the good prices followed the national trend but the Central Australian cattle stood out for their 'brilliant' quality. He also said this year's organic certification for the yards was a great achievement that was paying off for district pastoralists, with 6,000 organically bred cattle being channelled through the facility this year.

Kidman Springs celebrates 50 years of pastoral research

Past managers, researchers and station workers converged from around the country to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the NT Government’s Kidman Springs Research Station in August.

When Brian Hill arrived at the newly-gazetted Kidman Springs Research Station, there was little more than a boundary fence, no buildings, no electricity and no bores. The facility, 300km southwest of Katherine, and also known as Victoria River Research Station, began operations in 1966 with no buildings, electricity, bores or boundary fences, quickly developed into a major hub for pastoral research in the Territory's Top End region.

Brian Hill was appointed the first manager 1966 and he and his wife lived in a tent on the 300sqkm property in the early years. Future managers included Daryl Hill and former NTCA President Rohan Sullivan.

The station’s first cattle arrived in late 1968 - for use in research trials aimed at improving the genetics of locally-common shorthorn breed.

Brian told ABC Rural the breeding program was doomed to fail in the early years because the station was surrounded by VRD country with about 70% cleanskin cattle and ‘a hell of a lot of scrub bulls’. Hence, the team didn’t make much headway and, a few years later, abandoned the trial in favour of other work including pasture growth, fire management, soil erosion and bull selection.

Attendees at Kidman Springs for the 50th anniversary.
NIAPP PARTICIPANTS HOST 2016
INDONESIAN RECIPROCAL TOUR

Representatives from Northern Territory cattle stations attended the recent reciprocal tour of Indonesia as part of the NTCA's successful Indonesia Australia Pastoral Program (NIAPP). The trip provided an opportunity for Territory hosts and program managers to meet with the alumni on their home ground and take a close-up look at Indonesia's beef supply chain facilities.

NIAPP is now an internationally recognised program which engages the Northern Territory pastoral industry with Indonesian university students studying animal husbandry and science. Operating since 2012, the program provides a platform for selected students to travel to Australia to train in, work and experience our cattle industry first-hand; with the breadth to return to Indonesia and impart these skills and knowledge.

NTCA staff members Carley Bidstrup and Jo Shearn accompanied the large group, which included members from Manbulloo, Brunchilly, VRD and other NT cattle stations which hosted the 20 Indonesian students during station placement component of NIAPP this year. Real Jobs Program (RJP) mentor Jason Craigie also attended with two RJP indigenous employees from CPC's Newcastle Waters Station on the Barkly. The young cattlemen were on their first overseas visit and found the experience opened their views to the scale of industry.

The reciprocal tour from 3-12 October visited Jakarta, Bogor, Lampung, Jogjakarta and Denpasar. Highlights included the NIAPP Alumni Convention attended by an impressive 50 of the current 74 alumni members. This event held in Jakarta had a strong beef breeder focus and heard from key diplomatic, government and industry figures. Indonesia's Director of Breeding and Director General of Livestock Production, Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, Dr Surachman Suwardi, was a keynote speaker, and NT DPIF's Katherine-based Kieren McCosker facilitated an interactive workshop on Northern Australian breeder care principles for application in Indonesia.

With a broad scope on the future, the workshop included revisiting operational activities that occur on north Australian cattle stations, drawing from the experiences of the alumni during their station placement. This approach provided a platform for the workshop to progress into highlighting and reinforcing critical events and actions, and strategies to support and/or influence herd performance and productivity.

Delegates were challenged to think independently in small break-out groups; constructing an operational plan and herd flow model for a hypothetical Indonesian cattle farm. Each group then presented their blueprint back to the audience, with a continual positive flow of questions, queries, challenges and solutions. The Australian tour group were of enormous value to these exercises; assisting the alumni with concepts and practical application. An abundance of information was shared, along with the alumni finding renewed motivation for a long-term career in agriculture.

During the extensive industry tour that followed, the Australian contingent visited partnering universities, farms and feedlots, abattoirs, wet markets, traditional animal markets and other facilities supporting the live export trade from Australia and the beef supply chain. The trip allowed the Australian hosts to observe the alumni in their study and work environments, to network with their Indonesian industry counterparts, and to experience Indonesian culture and customs throughout the many activities, along with engagement and fellowship with the NIAPP alumni.
NHVR Chain of Responsibility workshop

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) will conduct workshops around Australia in February 2017 to help logistics supply chain stakeholders understand their Chain of Responsibility (CoR) obligations under the new Heavy Vehicle National Law. The workshops will follow a recent online survey for feedback on the proposed CoR.

The regulator has told industry groups including NFF and transport operators the CoR has the potential to impose significant impacts and risk to anyone involved in transporting good and or operating or using heavy vehicles. The workshops will be held in key metropolitan and regional locations across the country and are designed to help the regulator identify and determine national best practice within the freight and logistics sector.

Despite the Territory not being a signatory to the NHVR, the NTCA has urged members to participate in the impending workshops because of likely implications for Territory cattle producers.

For more information on the CoR program, please contact:

Michael Crellin (Manager, CoR)
p: (07) 33098577
e: michael.crellin@nhvr.gov.au

Kym Farquharson-Jones
(Senior Advisor, CoR)
p: (07) 3309 8606
e: kym.farquharson-jones@nhvr.gov.au

Strong NT contingent for Northern Beef Research Update Conference

The Northern Territory was solidly represented at the North Australian Beef Research Council’s major meeting and update conference in Rockhampton in late August.

Three NT Regional Advisory Committee Chairs, Jay Mohr Bell (KPIAC), Fred Hughes (BRAC) and Nicole Hayes (ASPIAC) travelled to Rockhampton for the program. NTCA Executive Officer Tom Ryan represented members at the meeting, before also attending the three-day conference.

Future NTCA member Grayson Webster also attended as an observer before joining fellow group members Georgie Chisholm, Kate Webster and Josh Steven at the conference.

The conference was titled ‘It’s Time to Connect’, with the agenda focussed on the theme, ‘Driving innovation for a prosperous northern beef industry’.

Tom Ryan said the Territory’s often leading-edge pastoral research and production work was reinforced throughout the conference.

“The Territory has some of the most experienced and dedicated researchers in the northern beef industry and a lot of the work they’re doing was showcased during the conference,” he says.

Producer Award for Keith Holzwart

A high point for the Territory contingent came during the wind-up dinner when innovative cattle producer Keith Holzwart, from Avago Station on the Sturt Plateau, was announced the 2016 winner of the NABRC Producer Award - ‘for excellence in production, research, development and communication in Northern Australia’. Keith and Roxie Holzwart attained Avago as a bare block in 1987 and have worked solidly since then to build up their station, the quality of their cattle and their profitability.

Keith told ABC Rural after his win that the results of Avago’s participation in research including heifer and calf-weaning trials, calf mortality and the ‘Cash Cow Project’ had greatly benefitted his family’s cattle operations.

Keith was a popular winner who received warm applause from the conference delegates as he stepped back after 10 years as Chair of KPIAC and many years as a valuable contributor to NABRC.
The Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association welcomes enquiries from government and industry groups, businesses and individuals interested in advertising in our quarterly newsletter, Cattlenews.

FOR DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT:

JO SHEARN - NTCA Office Manager
Phone: 08 8981 5976
Email: office.darwin@ntca.org.au

or

KERRY SHARP - Journalist
Phone: 0419 845 714
Email: kerrysharp.journo@gmail.com

The Territory’s energetic cattle industry leader, business woman and mother of four boys, Tracey, was nominated by the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) which operates a number of Territory pastoral properties and a large abattoir on the outskirts of Darwin.

The finalists represented 10 different categories and Tracey, the only Territorian on the prestigious list, was selected in the regional and rural category. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s wife Lucy was one of the judges.

“It’s a huge honour – and a great opportunity to meet and mix with a lot of incredible women who are national decision-makers and community leaders,” Tracey said as she headed south last month for the gala presentation dinner at the Sydney Town Hall.

“There are some prominent and inspiring women on the list – including Lisa Wilkinson, Gina Rinehart, and Dr Kerryn Phelps”.

NT Primary Industry Minister Ken Vowles congratulated Tracey on being included on the list and described her passion for the Territory cattle industry as exceptional. “While I know that Tracey doesn’t strive for recognition, this is a very proud achievement and well deserved,” he said.

The 100 Women of Influence Awards is an initiative launched by of the Australian Financial Review and Westpac five years ago to increase the visibility of women’s leadership in Australia and highlight the important contribution women make in creating a bold and diverse future for Australia.
Wild dog activity: Prevalence of bitten young cattle in the Northern Territory.

The Department of Primary Industry & Resources are calling for Northern Territory stations interested in monitoring the impacts of wild dogs. The overall aim of the study is to establish a practical system that captures frequency data on wild-dog damage on calves and weaners within breeding herds of the Northern Territory.

Data will be analysed to derive overall regional, and property estimates for the frequency mauled young cattle appear at muster. The variation in prevalence of young cattle with signs of non-fatal attacks will be described, and associations between risk factors (cow-age class, baiting attributes, location, proximity to a national park, etc.) investigated.

Equally of interest, is assessing the predictability of reproductive failure rates using indicators of wild dog activity, and gauging the effectiveness of practices to regulate the control of wild dogs.

Using email forms, paper-based forms, and electronic survey methods, collaborating stations will be asked to report, on a paddock or management group basis, the number of calves and weaners processed observed with wild-dog bite damage and the total number mustered. A draft version of the web-based form is available at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/dogbite. Alternative options will also be available to contribute bulk information or historical records.

For participating properties that also monitor, and are willing to contribute, information to calculate reproductive failure rates (losses from pregnancy diagnosis to branding/weaning), project staff will be available to assist in collating this information to compare with prevalence of mauled cattle.

The project team ensures that the identity of individual properties will be anonymous in any oral, written, or electronic reporting of the findings from the project. Each enrolled property will be identified in code within a database, with the key held by only the project manager. All project findings for individual properties will be reported directly only to the property owner/manager. External reporting of findings for specific properties will occur only after receiving written permission from the property owner/manager. The copyright for all data collected will be held by the project exclusively.

If you are interested in participating in the study, or would like to know more information, please do not hesitate to contact:

Kieren McCosker (Beef Production Scientist, Katherine)
P: (08) 8973 9771
E: kieren.mccosker@nt.gov.au

Note from the NTCA: The NTCA encourage members to participate in the above study - in order to support a case for wild dog control it is essential for us to have access to economic evidence that accurately illustrates the cost to industry of wild dog damage - please get involved if you can.

Connectivity message from MLA Australian Red Meat forum

NTCA CEO Tracey Hayes joined 300 delegates at the MLA Australian Red Meat Digital Strategy conference held in Canberra in October.

“It was very informative and demonstrated a high level of interest in the innovation and technology in our industry,” Tracey says.

“One thing that was clearly apparent from the excellent presentations was that our industry has collected an enormous amount of technology and data over the years. The trick now is working out how to convert it into something useful to our industry. It needs careful thought about what happens to it. An ongoing challenge for us is to enhance rural connectivity and we need to look towards the NBN, for example, to provide solutions to achieving connectivity.”

WATCH THIS SPACE!

NTCA survey on co-existence with the petroleum industry COMING SOON!

(keep an eye on your emails)
Current grants available to members:

There are a number of government grants available to new and expanding business that may be applicable to pastoralists implementing a new initiative or looking to develop or diversify their production system.

**Business Growth Programs: turnover of >$300,000**

**OVERVIEW PROGRAM**
Designed as a review of current business practices with the aim of providing recommendations that can be implemented immediately. The review includes:
- Finance
- Operations
- Marketing
- Human resources
80% of consultants fees will be reimbursed up to $5,000.

**BUSINESS PLANNING**
Aims to provide a structured plan and timeline for identified areas of improvement. Depending on the current maturity of the business, this program can be implemented following the Overview program or as a standalone project for businesses who already have a business plan and have already identified their areas of opportunity.
Examples of areas that may be improved include:
- Performance
- Market expansion/ diversification
- Product/ business expansion/ diversification
- Employment
- Possible export markets
50% of consultants fees will be reimbursed to a maximum of $10,000.

**INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**
Designed to provide an overview of systems, practices and documentation that exists for;
- Risk
- Work health and safety
- Quality management
- Environmental management
50% of consultants services will be reimbursed up to $10,000.

**MENTOR SUPPORT**
For business that are operating successfully, are implementing a formal business plan and have identified areas for improvement that would benefit from a mentor.
50% of consultants services will be reimbursed up to $5,000.

**Business Solutions Programs – turnover of >$75,000**

**BUSINESS SOLUTIONS**
Face to face advice to provide tools, strategies and resources to address a specific issue.
80% of consultants services will be reimbursed up to $4,000.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS**
Assistance in the analysis of;
- Technology utilised by and available to the organisation
- Opportunities for improvement in existing processes that could benefit from new or improved technology
- Gap analysis on current technologies with respect to future needs.
- Identification, costing and comparison of new technologies.
Examples applications include review of GPS systems, potential use of drones and options available in the market for stock management software.
80% of a consultant fees will be reimbursed to a maximum of $4,000.

**DIGITAL SOLUTIONS**
The digital solutions program offers assistance for;
- Website design and maintenance
- Digital marketing and social media plans
- Digital coaching
This funding can be used to produce a website. The funding cannot be used to purchase new software, hardware or related training.
80% of a consult's fees will be reimbursed up to $4,000.

**TENDER SOLUTIONS**
The purpose of this program is to provide support in regards to tender applications and addressing criteria. 80% of consultant service fees will be reimbursed up to a maximum of $4,000.

**EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS**
This program aims to enhance workforce retention and training by development and implementation of policies and practices that assist with sustainable employment.
It includes the development of an Enterprise Agreement (EA) or Individual Flex Agreement (IFA). NTCA have secured the services of consultant Warren Turner of Primary Employers Queensland, to offer NTCA Members a discounted rate for this service.
80% of a consultant's services to a maximum of $4,000

**SMARTER BUSINESS SOLUTIONS**
These grants are designed to help reduce day-to-day energy, water and material costs.
All of the following types of support are available to eligible applicants:
- free advice on current efficient technologies and practice
- free walk-through site survey to identify potential savings opportunities
- short site survey report on potential savings opportunities
- grants up to $20,000 for the installation of eligible efficiency saving initiatives
- grants up to $20,000 for the installation of a renewable energy system
- grants up to $300 for the purchase and installation of energy monitoring equipment.

For further details on any of these grants, or for assistance with your application or looking for a consultant, please contact:
Kylie Gracey, NTCA Business Development Officer
E: kylie.gracey@ntca.org.au
P: (08) 8981 5976.
The NTCA wishes all of our members and friends in the industry a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

We look forward to working with you all in 2017.

The NTCA Darwin office will close at midday on the 23rd of December and reopen on the 3rd of January.