Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today joined senior representatives of Alcan, the Territory's largest exporter, to congratulate the company on the announcement of the go-ahead for the $2 billion Third Stage Expansion Project of the Alcan Gove Pty Ltd Alumina Refinery on the Gove Peninsula in Arnhem Land.

Ms Martin said that the decision is a major vote of confidence in the Territory and gives the green light for construction to start on one of Australia's largest industrial projects.

“At $2 billion dollars, this is the biggest investment ever undertaken in Territory history - bigger than the Alice to Darwin railway and the Wickham Point LNG plant,” she said.

“This project will employ 1500 to 1700 people directly in the construction phase during its peak and will support many more indirectly in the Territory's supply and service industries.”

Once completed, exports of Alumina will increase from $560 million per year to $980 million and, along the way, establish the refinery as a world class facility.

“I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of Alcan Bauxite & Alumina Pacific Operations, Mr Richard Yank, and Mr David Sutherland, Director, Projects and Technology, Alcan Australia, for today’s success,” Ms Martin said.

“This announcement has been reached through the professional work and determined spirit of the project team and their partnership with my Government's Alcan Taskforce.”

Ms Martin said that the project will offer the potential for local Territory business to secure significant construction and servicing contracts, to develop expanded and specialised services and provide opportunities for the development of indigenous enterprises. The Chief Minister confirmed that the NT Government will assist with the provision of government services to support the refinery expansion. Mr. Sutherland said that Alcan is also committed to working with the Northern Territory Government to optimise investment opportunities for local businesses.

The NT Government has already provided key facilitation services to this project including environmental, legal, mining and land matters.

Sanction of the Expansion Project also opens the door for two other great projects to potentially move forward, pending initial approval in 2005. They are:
● the $450 million Blacktip Gas Development in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf off Western Australia; and the
● $500 million Trans-Territory Pipeline bringing this gas from Wadeye to Gove.

“In the past few years, the Territory has seen massive investments in rail, LNG and now Alumina - collectively, these projects represent $4.9billion of investment in the Territory's future,” Ms Martin said.

“The dividends of this investment are going to dictate real economic opportunities for Territorians well into the future.”

Footnote: Alcan will be providing industry briefings on the expansion project to Territory business on:

● Gove – 15th September
● Darwin – 16th September

For more information and fact sheets: Alcan Gove alumina refinery expansion

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