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HORTICULTURE EXPANSION IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

The Northern Territory Government has signed a significant Indigenous Land Use Agreement that will pave the way for a major expansion of our horticulture industry in central Australia.

This agreement will allow three parcels of land to be developed as irrigated horticulture blocks.

Table grapes, mangoes, melons, vegetables and bush-foods are all expected to be grown on the three areas and will allow the extension of growing seasons between Darwin and Alice Springs.

“This land opens up exciting new opportunities for the table grape industry, traditionally strong in the region, but also for many other products,” Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, Chris Natt said.

“Mangoes in the Ti Tree area mature late in the Queensland season, thus providing scope for growers.

“This is a significant and exciting announcement with major implications for the entire NT horticulture industry, regional development and Indigenous employment and business engagement.”

“About 300ha of land on three blocks will be developed and irrigated at Pine Hill Station, near Ti Tree, about 190km north of Alice Springs,” Mr Natt said.

“Expressions of interest will be sought for two of the blocks, while the third block has been assigned to native title holder ownership under the Indigenous Land Use Agreement for Pine Hill,” Mr Natt said.

“Officials from my department and the Anmatjere Community Council will further develop their horticultural training for Indigenous people to help reduce the table grape industry’s dependence on interstate labour for pruning and harvesting.

“Many locals have indicated an interest in horticulture and have been gaining basic horticulture skills at my department’s Ti Tree Research Farm,” Mr Natt said.

“Not only does this mean jobs in our regions, but growth for our horticulture industry,” Mr Natt said.

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