



NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Media Release

Rural road network reduced to half

Embargoed until
Friday, January 22, 2010

Lucky Prime Minister Kevin Rudd won't be getting out of Darwin during his visit to the Northern Territory because as of 5pm last night, more than 50 per cent of the rural road network was experiencing closures, restrictions, blockages or impeded access and movement, the NT Cattlemen's Association said today.

"When you consider that the rural road network makes up 99 per cent of the NT road network, this is a massive impediment to Territorians' ability to conduct their business and go about their daily lives," Executive Director Luke Bowen said.

"Only 24 per cent of the entire network is sealed, leaving 76 per cent dirt and frequently impassable for the entire Wet season or after rainfall events.

"This does not only affect the pastoral industry. The rural road network is the lifeblood of rural indigenous communities, the tourism industry and mining sector as well."

Mr Bowen said the association would continue to work with the NT Government to lobby the Federal Government for Infrastructure Australia funding to seal and upgrade more roads in the secondary network, despite the NT being overlooked in last year's round of grants.

"The NT Government is working with the resources it has but we need the Federal Government to come to the party on this.

"In the NT, cattle production is a 365-day-a-year industry. Poor roads and a lack of access restrict economic development and growth for the whole of the Northern Territory."

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Background information

The Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc (NTCA) is the peak primary industry group in the NT.

It represents 95% of the NT cattle herd – from small family operations to the large corporate organisations. NTCA membership manages more than 2 million cattle, producing more than 550,000 quality animals per year to supply local and overseas markets. In 2008, more than 365,000 cattle were exported live through the Port of Darwin.

Members successfully manage a landmass in excess of 620,000 sq kms, 9.6% of the Australian landscape and 45% of the NT. The pastoral industry generates more than \$400 million in direct benefits for the Australian economy, with flow on benefits worth around \$800 million. The pastoral industry accounts for over 60% of the NT gross value of Agricultural production.

The industry directly provides in excess of 2000 jobs annually. Indirectly it supports around 3000 jobs in related goods and service supply and support industries.

The industry has contributed to the growth of the Territory for almost 150 years. It continues to increase in size, productivity and efficiency while more than 85% of members are active participants in conservation, environmental and Landcare groups.

By area, employment and economic contribution, the pastoral industry is the dominant industry and land steward, with a focus on long-term sustainable production.

For more information go to www.ntca.org.au