



Media Release

Cattlemen drive issues to Canberra

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Northern Territory cattlemen rode into Canberra this morning with a simple message for the Federal Government – that lack of investment in NT roads and infrastructure is crippling one of Australia's most important export industries.

The news came in the form of a pre-budget submission highlighting the critical development needs of the NT and northern Australia.

The submission was presented to Agriculture Minister Tony Burke by Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Executive Director Luke Bowen, who travelled to Canberra specifically to deliver the funding plea.

"Telecommunications, health and education are just part of the picture," Mr Bowen said.

"It is hard to comprehend that the NT road network is less than 24 per cent sealed and that last month when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visited, more than 50 per cent of the network was closed or under serious restrictions.

"The ability of Territorians to go about their business and bring up families in a safe manner is seriously hindered.

"The Federal Government needs to make a long-term commitment to invest in a region that has huge potential, located on the doorstep of Asia."

The NTCA pre budget submission is in line with calls made to the NT Government for a greater investment in the road network.

"This has been made even more critical as we see a plan to move responsibility for the NT road network to newly-formed local shires that have no capacity to maintain or upgrade the road network as it is," Mr Bowen said.

"The cattlemen's association is making this call on behalf of our industry, which manages around 45 per cent of the NT land mass.

"But it is important to understand that roads and infrastructure in the NT are used by everyone. Remote communities, mining, tourism and Defence are all dependent on a proper network."

Mr Bowen will also be presenting a copy of the Budget submission to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Anthony Albanese.

Inquiries: Luke Bowen, Executive Director of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association.
(08) 8981 5976, 0427 815 990.

Dale Webster, Michels Warren Munday – (08) 8981 6445; 0448 656 668.



NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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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