



It's all about the Territory

Media Release

HIGH STAKES

Terry Mills MLA

12 Jun 2011

With the right political will, Indonesian abattoirs that comply with the highest international and Australian standards could be accredited within days. Opposition Leader, Terry Mills, said the Legislative Assembly should be recalled this week to send a clear statement to the Federal Government that while animal cruelty is abhorrent, there is overwhelming support in the Territory for live beef exports to Indonesia. "A recall of Parliament is a chance to show Canberra there is a way forward on this serious issue," Mr Mills said. "What is required is the collective will of the Parliament and a unified voice from the floor of the Chamber." Mr Mills today inspected the giant Santori abattoir west of Jakarta and believes shipments of live beef from Australia should resume immediately. The same applies to the Elders abattoir. "All cattle are stunned before slaughter and the highest standards are in place at both these facilities," he said. "These two abattoirs can process almost 8000 head of cattle a month, which would help ease the pressure on northern Australian pastoral properties and holding yards caused by the Gillard Government's ban on live beef exports to Indonesia. "In acting swiftly we also set a standard that other abattoirs in Indonesia can then be measured against. "Santori and the Elders abattoir already operate to an international standard, are accredited and have export licenses. It is sheer stupidity to deny these facilities a supply of Australian beef. "If an in-principle agreement can be worked out, Australian officials should immediately be put on the ground to ensure best practice processing takes place. "Today at Santori's facility an Indonesian inspector was on site to ensure the highest standards were maintained. The abattoir owners would welcome a similar presence from qualified Australian inspectors at any time. "Political will and leadership should drive this process because: • The damage to the Australian industry in the short and long term will be immense and difficult to recover from • A reduction in supply to the Indonesian market will force up prices which could lead to social unrest. "A number of countries are desperate to fill the void left by Australia's live export ban; the United States and Brazil have circled for years and haven't lost a moment in moving in aggressively to take our place." Mr Mills will this evening meet with Indonesian Government officials to identify processes to have other abattoirs accredited. "I will make it clear that animal cruelty is unacceptable but that abattoirs using best practice techniques should not be punished by the ban," he said. "The Northern Territory needs to re-establish a representative office in Jakarta. This crisis highlights the need to have someone on the ground representing the Territory to manage and maintain relationships on a daily and on-going basis and more effectively co-ordinate our efforts for the benefit of the Territory." Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594