Port Inquiry unanimously supported by Parliament

18 February 2015

The Territory Assembly has unanimously agreed to establish a Parliamentary Select Committee to explore how we can best inject private sector finance into Darwin Port.

“The reality is that our Port must grow so that it can meet the needs and opportunities of the future and we need to find private investment to make that happen,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“Our Port is not for sale but a private sector partnership provides an opportunity to attract the capital we need to improve infrastructure at this critical facility.

“The Parliamentary Committee that has been established today should give Territorians confidence that a lease arrangement will help grow local jobs and help drive down the cost of goods going through the Port.

“It’s great to see the Opposition and Gerry Wood getting on board to secure the future of Darwin Port by agreeing to this Select Committee.”

Member for Blain Nathan Barrett has been confirmed as the Committee’s Chair.

“Nathan Barrett previously worked at Patrick Stevedores down at the Port before entering Parliament and is well qualified to investigate this issue,” Mr Giles said.

He’ll be joined on the Committee by the Member for Drysdale Lia Finocchiaro, Member for Fannie Bay Michael Gunner and the Independent Member for Nelson Gerry Wood.

“This committee is the best vehicle to make the economic case for developing the Port. It’s also a forum to gather evidence on the most appropriate lease model to attract investors and ensure value for taxpayers,” Mr Barrett said.

“The Committee will look at lease duration and how we maximise the benefit to Territorians from any partnership both in terms of ongoing financial returns and long term expansion of the Port.
“I’m also keen to explore existing Northern Territory public/private partnerships such as the Marine Supply Base and the lessons that can be learnt from the process undertaken when the former Labor Government privatised this section of the Port.”

The inquiry will now report back to Parliament on 27 April when the legislation enabling Port leasing will be debated.

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