Adam Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu, Member for Arafura

**Historic development agreement to drive the Tiwi economy**

5 March 2015

Chief Minister Adam Giles today visited the Tiwi Islands to inspect the new facilities at Port Melville and announce a landmark Tiwi Development Framework Agreement that opens the door to new economic opportunity for local people.

“The signing of the agreement between the Northern Territory Government, the Tiwi Land Council, Tiwi Resources Pty Ltd and the Tiwi Aboriginal Land Trust is an historic moment for the Tiwi people, paving the way for them to enjoy the benefits of jobs and investment on their country,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“This is a smart decision and a further step in breaking the cycle of welfare dependency. I want to commend the Tiwi Islanders on their vision.

“This agreement will give investors and banks the long-term certainty of land tenure they need in order to commit funds to projects on the Tiwi Islands.”

The agreement includes the potential for up to 10 000 hectares of land to be leased for pastoral or agricultural purposes, 10 hectares for residential development, 20 hectares of land for high end tourism, industrial and aquaculture projects, as well as 10 hectares of township land.

“This is a brand new way of doing business with benefits for both Traditional Owners and investors through the involvement of the Land Development Corporation (LDC) as an expert developer,” Mr Giles said.

“The LDC will work with communities to bring investors and projects that suit their vision for the local economy and maximise job creation.”

No leases to the LDC have yet been signed. Consent for any leases proposed by the LDC will need to be obtained from the relevant Traditional Owners and affected communities will be consulted. Once a proposal is signed and approved, the LDC will sub-let land it to the developer or investor for the length of time agreed.
“My Government is committed to seeing development on the Tiwi Islands and today I inspected the new facilities at Port Melville. Once complete, the facility will export Tiwi woodchips to the world and operate as a marine supply base to offshore oil and gas projects in the region,” Mr Giles said.

“The project has already created local jobs and is just one of many examples of the types of investment opportunities on offer on the Tiwi Islands.

“The Country Liberals Government will continue to work with the community to drive economic growth and create jobs for local Tiwi people.”

The Port facilities will include a wharf, laydown areas, fuel storage, workshops, office facilities, wash-down facilities and a 119 person accommodation camp, with the capacity to be expanded to a 150 person facility if needed.

Chairman of the Tiwi Land Council Gibson Farmer said it’s an exciting time for his people.

“The Tiwi Land Council sees the Tiwi Development Framework Agreement as paving the way for Traditional Owners to live and work on their country, supporting local enterprises, providing income for Tiwi people and providing opportunities for the generations to come.”

Local Member for Arafura Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu said the agreement is a big step towards economic independence for the Tiwi people.

“This agreement shows my constituents are committed to creating an economic future for their children and grandchildren,” Mr Kurrupuwu said.

“My people want to work and this new agreement is the key to creating jobs in tourism, agriculture, forestry and aquaculture.”

Last year, LDC paid $1 million upfront to facilitate these new development opportunities. This money will be repaid when leasing revenues come online.

“I’d like to thank all of the Land Council members and officers, Traditional Owners and public servants who have been working hard on this project for more than a year. I know that they, like me, are proud to be working in partnership on such a ground-breaking project that has the potential to transform local economies and lives across the Territory,” Mr Giles said.

The LDC has already developed an impressive prospectus about opportunities on the Tiwi Islands and now has two indigenous employees working to deliver on these opportunities.”

The prospectus is available at: www.landdevcorp.nt.gov.au/investment-opportunities/tiwi-islands

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