

Travel report

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Member for Hammond

Title: Northern Territory Study Tour – Infrastructure, Industry and Transport
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Darwin Waterfront Development

Site inspection included viewing and discussing the original settlement of the precinct, including remediation processes for contaminants caused by leaking fuel tanks associated with World War II infrastructure.

New development will include a convention centre accommodating up to 1500 people at any one time. Housing accommodation includes in the first instance 132 apartments.

Development is a partnership between private investors and public funds.

Development displayed the success of private/public partnerships to remediate contaminated sites and to upgrade public facilities. Development will dominate the Darwin skyline, along with many other excellent facilities, ensuring that Darwin has state-of-the-art facilities that will assist to attract new industries/business/residents to the city. Further benefits to the NT will be via greater opportunities to attract visitors looking for a sophisticated tourism experience as well as a frontier experience.

Northern Territory Minerals Council and CAMECO (Uranium Export)

Discussions focused on barriers and opportunities in the mining industry in NT.

Many barriers identified with respect to Aboriginal consultation for mining on Aboriginal Freehold land and resourcing/costs associated with ensuring consultation processes are deemed appropriate (eg. engaging with those charged with the task of speaking for country). Isolation and distance in the NT is a challenge.

Aboriginal Land Councils (Northern and Central) are the statutory bodies in the NT recognised by the Australian Government, representing 25-28% of the total NT population.

Discussions identified the lack of incentives to mine in NT due to barriers. Workforce and tradesperson shortages add to the barriers identified above. Also, lack of staff in NT Mines Department causes further delays. Access to water and power also limit opportunities, however, there is some talk of future power being accessed from Qld and also talk of using biodiesel for power purposes.

Royalty regimes will also need to be addressed in the future to ensure feasibility of mining operations into the future.

Parallels in South Australian mining and other primary industries with respect to length and resource hungry consultation processes plus under-resourced State Government departments causing lengthy delays in processing permits and paperwork associated with development.

NT Cattlemen's Association

Cattlemen's Association is made up of members and runs entirely on membership fees (no government funding). Members need to run at least 1000 animals to obtain membership, therefore only 14 properties in NT are not represented. In the past four separate groups represented cattlemen; however, merging of these groups was undertaken in the best interests of members to form the Cattlemen's Association. Association lobbies government both at territory and national levels.

95%+ of cattle enter Asian markets – going directly into feedlots to finish off. Care of cattle is paramount as Asian markets are very particular and require total animal presentation.

Future expansion of the industry is limited due to moratorium on land clearance (0.2% of total vegetation cleared in NT). Guidelines for land clearance are being developed in an attempt to lift the moratorium.

Cattle industry is the third largest industry in NT with 4.6% of GDP (behind mining [22% GDP] and tourism [4.9% GDP]).

Workforce is an issue therefore the NT cattle industry is using the 457 Immigration Ruling to access workers. Parallels identified between cattle industry in NT and workforce issues in Hammond and the use of 457 Immigration Ruling in Murray Bridge to enable expansion in the meat processing industry.

Australian Trucking Association NT

Trucking Association identified crime and lack of police presence as an issue for the industry, noting that the current Labor Government in the NT is too soft on crime and criminals.

Issues associated with the railway that were identified and raised by ATA NT included:

- vibration of freight on train (Adelaide – Darwin rail);
- poor interaction between the Port of Darwin and railway;
- gamble associated with refrigerated freight on railway (although Woolworths use railway as a policy);
- major rough section of line between Tarcoola and Alice Springs.

Hence, road freight is often chosen over the Adelaide-Darwin railway.

Issues associated with trucking industry in NT that were identified and raised during discussions included:

- shortage of truck drivers;

- massive maintenance backlog on roads.

Parallels identified with issues in South Australia with different modes of freight transport and roads maintenance backlog causing freight delays and increased dangers for professional and unprofessional road users.

Freightlink – Darwin to Adelaide Railway

Inspected 2km freight terminal which displayed a simple but effective method of freight handling while leaving containers readily accessible for despatch utilising large-scale container lifters.

Minerals handling of bulk manganese using skips was also visited at the wharf. New bulk handling facilities for manganese are at concept phase.

Other site inspections included the newly built biodiesel plant which was built in modular form to facilitate easier expansion to double or triple production.

Adelaide-Darwin railway will become increasingly feasible over time and it is anticipated it will become the primary freight mode for transport of Uranium ore from the Great Artesian Basin in South Australia to markets via Darwin Harbour.



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