

Large scale NT agricultural land developments a step closer

NT Land Corporation (NTLC) has now finalised its assessment of submissions received for the Keep Plains Agricultural Development, Wildman Agricultural Precinct and Larrimah Agricultural Precinct.

NT Farmers Association CEO Paul Burke says that Agriculture is Australia's fastest growing sector, and these three large scale agricultural land developments will see northern Australia capitalise on the increasing demand for premium quality Australian produce, ensure sustainable continuity of food supply for domestic and export markets and enhance the profitability and economic resilience of the region.

Keep Plains Agricultural Development (67,500ha): Adjoining WA's iconic Ord River agricultural developments with its existing infrastructure and irrigation channels, Keep Plains on the NT side of the border, is the single largest land release for agricultural development in the Territory to date. Earmarked for agricultural development since the 1990s, this land release is a prime opportunity for a suitably qualified party to acquire two significant land holdings, under long-term lease arrangements, in a fertile agricultural area which offers the potential to produce a wide range of commercial broadacre crops, including maize, melons, legumes, cotton, fodder and trees.

NT Land Corporation will now be seeking detailed proposals from 3 shortlisted parties for the Keep Plains Development before a preferred proponent is selected and the final stage of negotiations are entered into, by the end of the year.

Wildman Agricultural Precinct (26,000ha): Wildman is located 135 kms east of Darwin, north of the Arnhem Highway along the Point Stuart Road. This large-scale agricultural Precinct benefits from high wet season rainfall and has the capacity to accommodate multiple agricultural and horticultural activities and high yield crops such as bananas, as well as rain fed forestry such as mahogany, and cattle production. The Precinct comprises four areas of land which are available to one experienced entity with a proven track record.

NTLC has selected a suitable applicant to enter into direct negotiations, with the intention of being ready for a proponent to get on-ground in 2022.

Larrimah Agricultural Precinct (5,712ha): Located approximately 180 kms from Katherine, around the township of Larrimah, the Precinct comprises four areas of land and has direct access to logistics routes both north and south along the Stuart Highway. The Larrimah area has a unique seasonal advantage, suitable for crops such as the Territory staples of mangoes, citrus and melons, as well as presenting opportunities for a range of dryland and irrigated crops and the development of intensified beef operations.

No suitable applicant was shortlisted through the formal EOI process. NTLC will now look to engage with other interested parties for Larrimah through direct negotiation.

NTLC General Manager Kassi Picken says the caliber of submissions, and proponents, received through this publicly competitive process was extremely encouraging. The opportunities available to the Territory with developments of this type and nature are beyond compare and will establish economic returns for northern Australia long into the future.

“NT Land Corporation has worked closely with various Government agencies and NT Farmers Association to ensure these parcels of land are suitable, and ready for release to the market, and that applicants were as informed as they could be about the opportunities and constraints of each of the sites, which will assist to ensure economic prosperity for the Territory long into the future,” said Ms Picken.

Mr Burke says that these agricultural releases will bring significant long-term opportunities and sustainable economic as well as regional development and investment outcomes. The flow on from these three agricultural land releases is expected to create new jobs and training opportunities and to grow northern Australia’s capacity to lead with new innovation, technology and infrastructure and environmental stewardship.

“The Northern Territory has diverse and well-established agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, and significant opportunity for development and growth as Australia’s closest capital city to Asia’s key trading markets, with efficient supply chains by road, rail, air and sea.” said Mr Burke.

Minister for Agribusiness and Aquaculture, Nicole Manison said the NT Government is proud to support these agricultural land releases through investment in our roads infrastructure.

“These large-scale projects will create more jobs and training opportunities for Territorians and grow the Territory’s agribusiness sector.

“Developing sustainable agricultural precincts will enable the Territory to capitalise on the increasing demand for quality Australian produce. I want to congratulate the NT Land Corporation for managing these releases in collaboration with industry and Government.”

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