



MEDIA RELEASE

NT FARMERS RETURNS FROM A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY TRIP TO CANBERRA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- Tuesday 08 March 2016 -

NT Farmers President, Simon Smith and CEO, Shenal Basnayake returned from a trip to Canberra having advocated on behalf of farmers in the NT on a number of issues. Mr. Basnayake stated that the trip was quite successful as it allowed for quite lengthy discussions to be held with both Government Ministers and Senior Opposition parliamentarians. It not only helped elevate the profile of NT Farmers as the go to organisation for all matters related to plant industries in the NT, but also brought clarity to a lack of understanding around the economic contribution of plant industries in the NT.

A range of issues were discussed including taxation of working holiday makers, proposed changes to the horticulture award, definition of a working day in horticulture, the seasonal worker programme, telecommunications & NBN, inaccurate statistics on the size and contribution of plant industries in the NT, biosecurity and the possibility of increasing on-farm biosecurity through education and increased grower support.

Mr. Basnayake noted that Mr. Smith and he were informed of an internal review of the decision to increase the backpacker tax had been initiated by the Treasurer which would hopefully come up with an acceptable solution. Mr. Basnayake further noted that there was a general acceptance on both sides of parliament towards coming up with a more sensible approach to defining a work day in horticulture with an understanding that it would be better to look at a work week rather than a work day. Mr. Basnayake stated that NT Farmers would be continuing discussions with Canberra based officials to ensure that outcomes were achieved.

Mr. Basnayake thanked the offices of the Hon. Warren Snowdon and Mrs. Natasha Griggs for helping organise the meetings in Canberra.

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