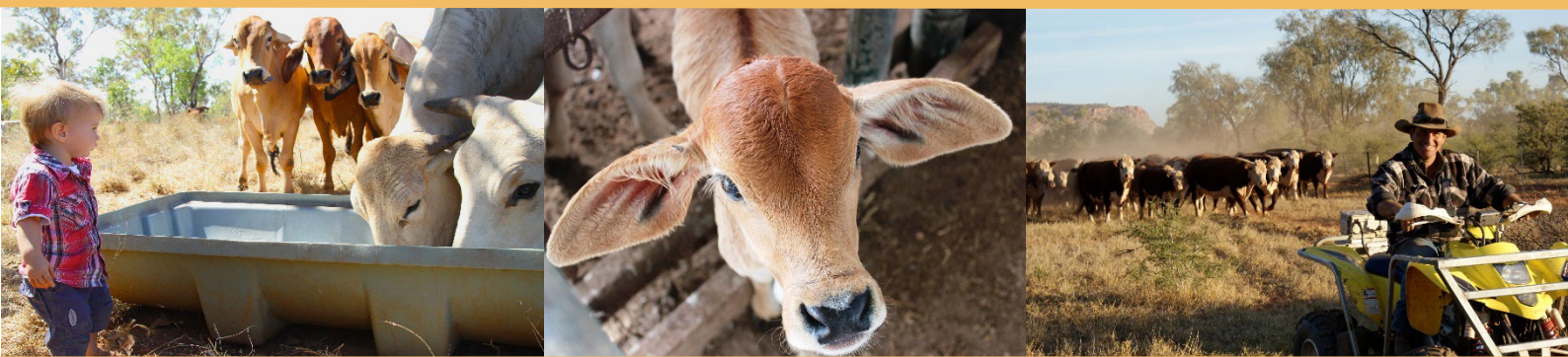




NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Regulation of Mining Activities Environmental regulatory reform

Date: 25th January 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA) is the peak body for the NT cattle industry, providing leadership at the Territory, national and international level on industry, trade, resource management, and economic and social policy. Representing over 90% of the Territory industry the NTCA maintains a unique position as Australia's most representative producer body and single conduit for engagement.

The NTCA has been a leader in driving positive change while also defending the position and integrity of the cattle sector, its producers and connected supply chains operating into domestic and international markets.

As the predominant primary industry sector, the cattle industry underpins the economic, social and environmental foundations of the NT and Northern Australia. The NTCA has taken a proactive approach on environmental policy around renewable energy, sustainable development and social responsibility connected to the reengagement of Indigenous land and people in the modern beef industry.

The NTCA provides policy leadership across the primary industry sector including pastoral land conservation, market development and trade, regional development, Indigenous employment and international engagement.

In representing the interests of members, the NTCA is critically interested in the policy position of the government, opposition and independents on a range of important issues.

2. BACKGROUND – NTCA

NTCA's membership ranges from small family and indigenous operations, to large corporate organisations. The NTCA exists to advance and protect the interests of Northern Territory cattle producers.

Our Northern Territory members are environmental stewards responsible for a landmass in excess of 680,000 square kilometres (45% of the NT landmass), producing 600,000 high quality cattle per year.

The pastoral industry is the Northern Territory's third largest GDP earner, **equating to more than 80%** of primary production in the NT. With an investment of \$4.5 billion in the NT, our industry generates over \$750 million (ABARES) directly and in excess of \$1 billion indirectly into the Northern Territory's economy.



The beef industry employs 10, 000 people directly and indirectly and has contributed to the growth of the Territory for over 150 years. It continues to increase in size, productivity and efficiency.

NT producers supply cattle to all mainland states and produce quality animals suited for the live export trade to South East Asia, including, on average up to 400,000 head exported to Indonesia and Vietnam annually.

The NTCA:

- Is a leader in building effective, long term and strategic international relationships assisting in providing an effective engagement platform for industry and government in our crucial markets;
- Continues to invest in indigenous training and employment with over 400 youth trained and mentored by our qualified staff, resulting in employment in the pastoral industry.
- Also focuses on development and capacity building for our industry youth, creating opportunities and the encouragement to maintain linkages to the NT pastoral industry and its future.

2.1.1. Membership Base

The NTCA membership base draws on the NT herd of 2.2m head, across Indigenous and non-indigenous family operations, corporate organisations and foreign owned enterprises running on 680,000 kms² of pastoral lease, crown lease, freehold and Aboriginal freehold land (ALRA 1976).

The membership base includes corporate operations spanning Northern Australia. These iconic companies collectively manage vast areas of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales, and make a major contribution to regional development, employment, Australian food production and overseas trade.

The NTCA, like no other representative body in Australia can claim close to full industry membership.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Today the NT is entirely blanketed by petroleum exploration licences and mining exploration and extraction licences. There are significant reserves of minerals, oil and gas in the NT, exploitation of these reserves in most cases has a high above-ground impact on land, water, vegetation, livestock and business operations. It is also likely that as intensity of exploration and exploitation increases, there will be increasing impacts and tension between primary producers and mining and petroleum licensees.

Pastoralists now have the right to negotiate access agreements at the point of exploration requiring a petroleum environment plan and a minimum set of standards – 24 in total including



compensation. Negotiating agreements with the resources industry takes considerable time and impacts on pastoralists' businesses. Petroleum legislation has recently been changed to ensure there are mandatory Land Access Agreements in place before land can be accessed. No land access agreement, no land access. There is no such requirement in the Minerals Act. This means landholders are faced with dealing two sets of rules when faced with a petroleum company and a mining company.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

23. In what ways could the management and administration of land access arrangements be improved for both mineral title holders and affected landholders or leaseholders?

NTCA maintain that extending the current Petroleum Act to include the Minerals Act will create greater certainty for everyone involved. Having strong legislation and regulation around mining exploration and extraction ensures there is no threat to the integrity of:

1. Above and below ground water resources;
2. Livestock and agricultural production systems;
3. People and associated primary production businesses in the NT;
4. It also ensures that there is a pre-defined set of rules and standards that must be met to correct any imbalance of power between landholder and the resource company.

Land access agreements will give pastoralists a greater say over what happens on their land and their capacity to manage things such as access, water resources, biosecurity, soil erosion and relationships when mineral title holders enter their properties. The process to establish land access agreements will ensure balance is struck between the rights of Mineral Title holder to explore and the rights of pastoralists to be advised, informed and consulted before exploration begins.

Land access agreements will provide a mechanism for certainty for Mineral Title holders and for pastoralists who will continue to manage the land for many generations to come.