



**Dr Kim Hames MLA
Deputy Premier;
Minister for Health; Indigenous Affairs**

RESPONSE TO MEDIA INQUIRY

Date: Friday, 03 December 2010

Inquiry from:

Re: Lake Gregory Horses

Response from: Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Dr Kim Hames

Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Dr Kim Hames, said a visit to Mulan community at Lake Gregory in the Kimberley had confirmed his view a mass aerial cull was not an appropriate way to reduce the number of horses in the region.

Dr Hames held a community meeting at Mulan where concerns were raised regarding the welfare of the animals in the event of an aerial shoot, and also the likelihood of horses being left to die in the area.

“It became very clear during our consultation the members of the Mulan community wish to save as many of these horses as possible. As a result, we will muster a big group of the horses next year and the best will be retained in the Kimberley to be owned and trained by the Indigenous community,” Dr Hames said.

An aerial survey conducted by the Department of Indigenous Affairs and horse mustering expert Max Nunn earlier this week confirmed there were about 2000 horses living near to Lake Gregory. The total number of horses on the pastoral lease was likely to be about 4000.

“I hope the remainder of the horses in good health and of a suitable age to train will be offered to members of WA’s – and Australia’s – horse community. The interest group Wild Horses Kimberley has offered to assist in coordinating the re-homing of as many horses as possible, and also collecting donations to assist in the agistment and keep of those horses.”

Dr Hames said the agreement with Wild Horses Kimberley was struck during a meeting in Broome with group founder Libby Lovegrove.

“I was impressed with the enthusiasm and common-sense approach taken by Wild Horses Kimberley to the horses of Lake Gregory,” Dr Hames said.

Dr Hames said unfortunately, some animals would still need to be humanely destroyed, due to age, injury or in-breeding.

“The aerial survey revealed a number of animals will still need to be humanely destroyed.

“I envisage these animals will be transport in small batches in compliance with animal welfare rules and trucked to the nearest suitable abattoir, with sufficient rest-breaks en-route.”

“My advice is that some weeks of calming will allow wild horses to be transported safely and humanely, as is done around WA and the country every week.”

“Our aim is not to make money from this venture, but to save as many Kimberley horses as we can and humanely destroy of those we cannot find a new home for.”

The first muster is likely to start early in the 2011 dry season, however planning has already started to prepare yards and watering points for the horses.

“One of the key things I hope to achieve from this muster is to ensure the people of Mulan are left with some infrastructure to help turn this pastoral lease into a viable business,” Dr Hames said.

The project will be funded by the Aboriginal Lands Trust. Costings are still being established.

ENDS

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