

Ports work hand-in-hand with industry

■ Glenn Cordingley

Port bosses have formed what is thought to be an Australia-first alliance with the cattle industry to bolster the number of live exports from the region.

Kimberley Ports Authority commercial manager Sean Mulhall and commercial officer Christian Lee are behind the push.

Mr Mulhall said the aim was to establish a regional livestock communications forum to meet before and after each export season.

"We expect attendees will include pastoralists, exporters, logistics managers, trucking representatives, Customs, shipping agents, the Department of Agriculture, fuel distributors, feed providers, emergency service providers and other key stakeholders," he said.

"We aim to raise awareness of the livestock industry's value to our regional economy, and find out more of what is needed to support this end of the supply chain."

The importance of the Kimberley's ports at Broome, Wyndham and potentially Derby is they are central to the livestock export trade, with short sea routes to Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, the Philippines and Malaysia.

The Port of Broome expects to ship 105,000 head of cattle in 2014 compared to 69,606 in 2013 and 88,198 in 2012.

Mr Mulhall and Mr Lee have held consultations with livestock industry representatives including the Kimberley Cattleman's Association, the Northern Territory Livestock Exporters Association, transport and logistics contrac-

tors, Roebuck Plains Station, and managers of Roebuck Bay Export Yards.

During discussions a record shipment of 16,395 head of cattle was exported from Broome to Indonesia on the vessel Awassi, Mr Mulhall said.

"By chartering a vessel with the ability to carry a larger number of cattle, these livestock exporters had the opportunity to reduce their shipping costs," he said.

"Another way to reduce shipping costs is to minimise delays in loading livestock vessels, where for example the harbourmaster works with our shippers to minimise hold-ups caused by tidal restrictions.

"Because lengthy ship delays might incur expensive financial penalties against the exporter, a practice called 'demurrage', ship loading effectiveness, becomes very important."

Roebuck Export Depot manager Paul Heil said loading of livestock vessels, from his perspective, was the best it had been during his six years of local involvement.

The two export yards close to the Port of Broome can each carry about 20,000 head of cattle.

Northern Territory Livestock Exporters Association chairman Kevin Mulvahil was upbeat about the Kimberley's export future.

"As demand for live export grows we expect greater numbers to exit through Wyndham and Broome," he said.

"It is important that all stakeholders keep engaged and start preparing for 2015 in what could see the largest number of cattle exported out of the Kimberley ever."



Truckie Dale Tulloch was lucky to escape injury driving through Hal

Police advise drivers to

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dence of what was thrown or photos of damage because they just keep going," he said.

"There are probably more incidents that occur than get reported.

"But at the moment, there are a heap of kids out there and we have to prove beyond reasonable doubt one of them threw a rock at a truck and caused damage."

He said a core group of youths that congregated in the middle of town and stayed out late were doing "silly" things to keep themselves amused.

Fitzroy Crossing or charge Sen. Sgt Andy Stevens confirmed "occasional" reports of rocks thrown at trucks at the town site and on the bridge over the Fitzroy River.

"We have identified trouble throwers as being children live in town and have dealt with them under the juvenile court process," he said.

"I ask truck and bus drivers to report any such incidents to police as soon as possible so they can attend in time to deal with the offenders and stop this dangerous practice."