

Inquiry into the Development of Northern Australia

Public Hearings — Brisbane — Friday June 20th.
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia



A 2030 VISION FOR DEVELOPING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA



LIVE-PLAY-WORK-INVEST

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to present supplementary information in support of our original Submission (Submission 17) by Capricorn Enterprise to the Inquiry Secretariat.

Introduction: Capricorn Enterprise is the peak Tourism and Economic Development Group in Central Queensland. We are a not-for-profit Group with two primary operational streams, being – Tourism marketing and destination promotion for the broader Capricorn Coast, Rockhampton and Central Highlands region and for Economic Development – Investment attraction and industry development for the Capricorn Coast and Rockhampton areas. Our structure and operational platform is based on the Townsville Enterprise model.

Background: The following overview will focus to those areas highlighted in our original submission – with a general observation and proposition as to the requirement to implement transformational change to ensure that Northern Australia benefits from this opportunity.

For the purpose of this inquiry, Northern Australia does not have boundaries – other than the southern boundary delineated by the Tropic of Capricorn.

A Northern Australia Development Strategy is not about physical location, it is about Partnering and Integration, utilising the existing strengths of key Northern Regional Centres to assist in the development and the implementation of strategic objectives and to the implementation of strategic policy in respect to the creation of a northern economic development zone that results in population growth, economic prosperity, improved infrastructure, investment attraction and social cohesion.

Composition of Northern Australia Advisory Group: We note with interest the Government's appointments to the Advisory Group, and note that there is NO strategic representation on the Group south of Townsville. This clearly is an oversight and we commend to Government that this anomaly be addressed as a matter of priority to ensure that the southern sector be appropriately represented on the Advisory Group by a qualified nominee put forward by Capricorn Enterprise.

Capricorn Enterprise's Submission Overview: "Utilising the Strengths of the Rockhampton and Central Queensland Region".

Regional Strength "Regionalisation": The Rockhampton Region in Queensland is one of only five centres in Northern Australia boasting a population of in excess of 70,000 persons. As a major population centre we offer a varied, diverse and affordable lifestyle, safe and inspirational communities, diversified economy, extensive career opportunities with significant growth opportunities in the areas of Education, Health and Medical Services, Tourism, Aged Care, Tourism, Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrifoods, Transport and Logistics, Resource Services, Construction and Defence.

Intermodal Transport Hub: Strategically located Rockhampton is the south-eastern Gateway and transport hub for both road and rail transportation to north-eastern and north-western Queensland with its primary road network being the Bruce Highway (National Highway No 1) – Rockhampton to Cairns, and Capricorn Highway – Rockhampton to the Northern Territory border.

Rockhampton is the central link for rail services north and west with both the main northern rail link (QRail, Aurizon and Pacific National) and Blackwater lines being the essential links for the conveyance of bulk resource materials (mainly coal), agriculture products and general freight.

Water Security: The Fitzroy River catchment is the largest in Eastern Australia being second only to the Murray/Darling catchment.

Environment Impact Assessments have been concluded for upgraded weir facilities on the Fitzroy River at both Rookwood and Ban Ban.

- A) Connors River Dam (Connors River): Sunwater proposes to construct a dam and associated water distribution infrastructure on the Connors River near Mount Bridget, due east of Moranbah and south of Sarina. The dam would have a full supply level (FSL) capacity of 373 662 megalitres (ML) and would inundate an area of approximately 5850 hectares (ha). The dam - when constructed – will service mine developments in both the Bowen and Galilee Basins – plus provide guaranteed water supply to associated communities and the agriculture sector.

Education: CQUniversity offers the full traditional range of tertiary studies and is committed to excellence in research and innovation. CQUniversity has been accredited as the top Australian Research Institute specialising in agriculture, power and rail engineering, safety and fatigue management, Indigenous engagement as well as VET – all pertinent to the development of the North.

With University campuses in both Rockhampton and Mackay – plus TAFE facilities in Rockhampton, Mackay, Emerald, Mooranbah and Longreach – CQUniversity has a significant foothold in providing graduate and post graduate education in Northern Qld.

- The July 1st, 2014, CQUniversity merger with CQ TAFE, will provide a more responsive, cohesive and flexible application to the full spectrum of post-school education in Central Qld and beyond.
- It is proven that if you train locally, you retain locally. CQUniversity Rockhampton campus delivers skilled graduates who build professional careers in the region.
- CQUniversity has historically been one of the international student giants in Australia, and is still one of the largest providers of education to international students; the International student market is Australia's 4th largest export industry.
- CQUniversity's research areas of excellence attract world-leading experts in their chosen field; from heavy-industrial rail application research driving our supply-chain efficiency for the resource sector, or leading resource economists analysing trends and forecasts for the mining sector, leading mental health nursing researchers growing the next generation of local health workers, or leading agronomists informing best practice for the Northern Australia beef herd.
- CQUniversity is very reactive to community and industry demand, responding to particular skills shortages and industry knowledge gaps quickly through introducing new courses and material, modifying existing offerings, or directing research and resources at areas of need. CQ will be a leader in defining how new education models can help Northern Australia unlock its full potential.
- Encouraging the Northern Australia Universities to collaborate on identified programs to benefit the Region is imperative.

Energy

- The Rockhampton Region has the 1,434 megawatt Stanwell Power Station – an environmentally friendly Power Station, supplying electricity to the national grid, with a

capacity sufficient to power 1.5 million homes and offers ample land, water, geothermal and wind resources for further energy generation investments.

Agriculture and food:

- Central Queensland accounts for approximately one-third of Agricultural production in Northern Australia;
- Providing additional water storages that support agricultural expansion will result in expanding commodity production;
- Land tenure across the Region is not adversely impacted by land title issues that currently constrain vast regions of northern Australia;
- Queensland exports more than \$3.4B in high-quality beef products annually to 79 countries. The Queensland Beef Industry employs more than 20,000 people directly and supports more than 8,000 jobs in the meat-processing industry.

International and Domestic Tourism:

- The approved Great Keppel Island resort development includes 575 hectares of environmental protection area, 750 eco resort villas and 300 eco resort apartments incorporating sustainable building design, rooftop solar panels and water tanks to provide for a developing tourist market.
- Iwasaki Sangyo Co, propose to develop a new 300-room, 5-star resort with fine dining and recreational facilities near its existing Tourist Resort at Yeppoon.
The resort site will be located on 9,000 hectares of land owned by Iwasaki Sangyo Co, with plans to declare 4,000 hectares of that as a nature conservation area.
Around 1,400 hectares of land will be used for the proposed integrated resort and other activities which will include: a residential community and village centre, a caravan park, a conservation precinct and an airstrip.
A cattle property on up to 3,500 hectares will remain.
If approved, the project could generate up to 19,000 construction jobs (with up to 8,500 on-site) over a 20-year development period and around 2,160 ongoing, operational jobs on-site.
The proposal is currently before the Queensland Co-ordinator General.

Defence

- Rockhampton Region is home to an Australian Defence Force Base and the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area. Exercises frequently involve in excess of 30,000 troops through ongoing Australian military training activities, annual military training activities of the Singaporean Armed Forces (SAF) and biennial training exercises with the US military (Talisman Sabre Exercises). Over 17,000 foreign troops are involved biannually, with rest and recreation as well as physical training and PR activities undertaken within Rockhampton.
- International Military Engagement contributes to the local economy and reinforces partnerships with industry and the community.
- The international, heavy-lift air freight capability in Rockhampton Regional Airport, allows unrestricted wide-bodied operations and a mix of wide-bodied aircraft including the B747 to B777 and A340 types. Recent international visitations include: B747 Jumbo (Air NZ, Qantas), B77 (Singapore Airlines), AN-124 (VDA), A330 (Air Luxor), MD-11 (FedEx), B757 (ATA).

- Classifying Rockhampton Airport at an International status will allow direct international connections (tourism and defence) plus export/import cargo's to benefit the Northern Regions.

Health

- The Rockhampton region has major public and private health facilities including the Base and Mater hospitals, with more than 6,000 persons employed in health care and social assistance providing services to the wider region.
- The CQUniversity community allied health clinic is a working tertiary teaching clinic that services up to 1000 patients a week in physio, oral health, podiatry, speech pathology, occupational therapy, nutrition etc.
- Developing Stage 3 of the CQUniversity allied health clinic, ward space would be provided for mental health & well-being services/aged care/respite care, effectively giving Rockhampton a non-acute teaching hospital. A non-acute teaching hospital would raise the profile of the city and act as a drawcard for professionals and their families.

Industrial Development:

- The Gracemere Industrial Area (GIA), comprising some 2,300ha, allows the operation of high impact industries 24 hour, 7 day a week operations. The GIA is accessed via a \$50M overpass on Capricorn Highway (opened May 2013). GIA approval equates to 2500 jobs and \$500M to local/regional economy for every 50ha developed.
- The Central Queensland Livestock Exchange (CQLX) and two of the largest abattoirs in the country are primary resources in expanding international trade opportunities.

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June 20th 2014.

Ends.