



Australian Government

Australian Government interim response to the
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia report:

Pivot North – Inquiry into the Development of Northern
Australia: Final Report

December 2014

The Australian Government welcomes *Pivot North – Inquiry into the Development of Northern Australia: Final Report*, the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia's (the Committee's) final report into developing northern Australia. The Committee's work is invaluable in helping the Government prepare the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia (the White Paper), especially through its consultations with stakeholders and identification of potential policies and actions to support economic development. The Committee received a total of 352 submissions from interested parties, and held 27 public hearings across northern Australia.

The report addresses important issues covering the economy, trade, industry, Indigenous communities, land, liveability and the environment. It also highlights a range of challenges to northern development, including in relation to population, costs of living and doing business, infrastructure and the regulatory environment. The report makes recommendations spanning economic infrastructure, private sector investment, the northern workforce, regulatory reform, governance, agriculture, power and land.

The Committee's report is informing the Government's White Paper, which is being prepared. The White Paper will set out a clear and well defined policy platform for unlocking the full potential of the north, including actions through to 2030. The Government will respond to the Committee's specific recommendations through the White Paper.

The White Paper is also drawing on around 180 submissions to the Government's Green Paper (released on 10 June 2014) and stakeholder consultation. The Government is engaging with the Queensland, Western Australian and Northern Territory governments, including through a Strategic Partnership of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the First Ministers of the northern jurisdictions. A Northern Australia Advisory Group, chaired by the Hon Shane Stone AC QC, is also providing advice to this Partnership.

While the White Paper is being prepared, the Government is continuing to demonstrate its serious commitment to northern Australia, including through investing in roads and other transport infrastructure, opening livestock export markets in the Middle East and southeast Asia, settling a new Designated Area Migration Agreement for Darwin to help address critical labour constraints, and funding a range of other initiatives. The Government has also established Free Trade Agreements with China, Japan and Korea, which will eliminate high tariffs on Australian goods of importance for northern Australian producers.