

# Submission

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics  
Inquiry into Indigenous Economic Development in Queensland and  
Review of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010

Prepared by: Wild Rivers Interdepartmental Committee

Authorised by:  
Andrew Tongue  
Deputy Secretary  
Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
GPO Box 7576  
Canberra Business Centre  
ACT 2610

Telephone: 02 6121 4045

**Signed**..... **Date**.....

# Contents

Foreword .....	v
<b>Inquiry into issues affecting Indigenous economic development in Queensland - Terms of Reference .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Existing environmental regulation, legislation in relation to mining, and other relevant legislation.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Wild Rivers legislation .....	4
The <i>Wild Rivers Act 2005</i> (Qld) .....	4
Recent Amendments to the <i>Wild Rivers Act 2005</i> (Qld).....	5
2.2 Impact of the Wild Rivers legislation on development opportunities.....	6
Development opportunities in declared areas .....	6
Impact of declared areas on prospective projects .....	7
Small to medium enterprises .....	7
Large enterprises.....	8
Cape York mineral deposits and mineral prospectivity .....	10
Mineral Resources and proposed projects in the Cape York region and declared Wild River areas .....	11
2.3 Mining .....	11
Background to mining in northern Australia .....	11
Indigenous workforce participation in the mining industry – The Australian Government /Minerals Council of Australia MoU.....	15
The Western Cape Regional Partnership Agreement (Weipa) .....	15
2.4 National environmental legislation .....	16
2.5 Other national legislation.....	18
2.6 Interaction between the <i>Wild Rivers Act 2005</i> (Qld) and the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cth) .....	19
<b>3. Potential impact of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 The Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 interaction with native title.....	20
<b>4. Options for Indigenous economic development and environmental protection .....</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	22
4.2 Indigenous land tenure issues and options for Indigenous economic development .....	23
4.3 Indigenous economic development and native title .....	25
4.4 Existing opportunities for Indigenous economic development.....	27

Conservation and natural resource management .....	28
Tourism .....	29
Agriculture .....	31
Mining.....	34
4.5 Government programs and initiatives .....	37
Framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia .....	37
Knowledge infrastructure .....	42
Conservation, carbon farming and natural resource management....	48
Indigenous lives and livelihoods .....	59
Industry and enterprise .....	70
Infrastructure and liveability .....	78
Institutional capacity and governance .....	82
<b>5. Issues for consideration .....</b>	<b>83</b>

### **Case studies and discussion points**

WEIPA – a mining community case study .....	14
Australian Research Council project example 1 .....	47
Australian Research Council project example 2 .....	47
Australian Research Council project example 3 .....	48
Discussion: Natural resource management and Indigenous economic development .....	53
Discussion: Overcoming barriers to starting or running businesses.....	62
Learn. Earn. Legend! Year 12 Destinations Project.....	65
Napranum Project .....	66
Mossman Gateway Project .....	69
Enterprise Connect success story – Northern project contracting.....	77

### **Tables**

4.1 Unemployment figures for Cape York Communities 2006.....	68
4.2 Overall labour market indicators for Cape York Communities 2009/10 .....	68
4.3 Industry Projects in Far North Queensland .....	74
4.4 Northern Australia Sustainable Futures projects .....	79

### **Figures**

4.1 A framework for sustainable development of northern Australia .....	38
---	----

### **Appendices**

1. Australian Government departments jointly responsible for this submission ...	86
2. Map of Queensland declared and potential Wild Rivers.....	87

3.	Maps of Queensland coal and non-coal minerals and energy major development projects and Wild River areas.....	88
4.	Table of minerals and energy major development projects in Wild River areas .....	90
5.	Maps of mining tenements in declared, proposed and potential Wild River areas .....	91
6.	Map of Cape York geological regions .....	101
7.	Map of Queensland mineral mines, deposits and Wild River locations .....	102
8.	Map of Queensland non-renewable energy resources and Wild River locations .....	103
9.	Map of Cape York land tenures .....	104
10.	Map of native title applications and determinations in Cape York region.....	105
11.	Examples of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) in the Cape York region providing economic opportunities.....	106
12.	Map of Cape York farming-suitable land and Wild River areas .....	108

# Foreword

This submission is made jointly on behalf of the Australian Government departments listed in **Appendix 1**.

Central to the submission is the question of balancing economic, social and environmental outcomes. Deciding what defines an appropriate balance lies at the core of public discourse on Wild Rivers, and indeed economic development more generally. Adequately pulling together a complete picture of all the issues and all the activities relevant to the Inquiry in one document is a complex task. Adding to the complexity is the multiplicity of views across the community. In developing this submission some of the views of the larger industry sectors operating around Cape York are described. Their inclusion is not a specific endorsement of those views, but rather intended to give a sense of the diversity of issues relevant to industry.

Nearly one third of northern Australia is Indigenous-owned and almost one third of the population is Indigenous. Northern Australia's rapidly growing Indigenous population has a significant stake in the north's economic future, and the success of northern economic development will be increasingly connected with Indigenous livelihoods.

The north of Australia is vastly different from areas in the south, and Cape York is unique, having a distinct topography and climate. Cape York's population is noteworthy for many reasons.

Cape York is a centre of Indigenous culture. Of Cape York's 14,406 inhabitants, 55 per cent are Indigenous, compared with a Queensland State average of 3 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Cape York is also remarkable for its levels of economic disadvantage. Eighty-three per cent of Cape York's population is in the most disadvantaged quintile (lowest 20 per cent of the State), while none are in the most advantaged quintile.<sup>2</sup> Fifty-four per cent of Cape York's people aged 15 years and over have a gross weekly income of less than \$400 per week, compared with 40 per cent for the rest of Queensland,<sup>3</sup> and this relative economic disadvantage exists in all income bands.

Cape York's residents are also more likely to have lower indices of social advantage than their 'average' State counterparts. The unemployment rate in a range of Cape York communities (19 per cent) is about three times the State

---

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, Indigenous Profile - I02*, s.l., Commonwealth of Australia, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indices for Areas (SEIFA), Catalogue no. 2033.0.55.001*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile - B16*, s.l., Commonwealth of Australia, 2006.

average (6 per cent).<sup>4</sup> Cape York's residents are 50 per cent more likely than residents of the rest of Queensland to live in a single parent family (25 per cent cf. 16 per cent).<sup>5</sup> Social disadvantage can also be indicated by the higher than average percentage of young people in the population; 28 per cent of Cape York's residents are under 15 years old, almost 50 per cent higher than the State average of 20 per cent. In addition, population turnover (as indicated by the proportion of people living at an address that differs from five years ago) is much lower in Cape York (29 per cent) than in the rest of Queensland (48 per cent).<sup>6</sup>

Cape York's residents are amongst the most disadvantaged in Queensland. A range of socio-economic and educational indicators suggest that institutional capacity and ability to engage with governance processes is low. This disadvantage is compounded by limited access to a range of services as well as 'soft' and 'hard' infrastructure.<sup>7</sup>

Cape York is large and comparatively underdeveloped. It comprises 15 per cent of the area of Queensland, yet supports only 0.3 per cent of the State's population.<sup>8</sup> The large size, low population and lack of development can make access to available services difficult. Roads are overwhelmingly classified as minor and unsealed,<sup>9</sup> and only one airport has a scheduled service (Weipa).

This submission focuses attention on the Cape York region, in response to stakeholder interests and subsequent media attention. However, the Wild Rivers legislation, current and proposed, has application to a broader area of Queensland, including the Gulf of Carpentaria (the Gulf) and Channel Country regions. In these regions, economic, social and environmental conditions share some similarities with Cape York and this submission's general comments on the way forward apply. Indigenous, pastoral and mining industry support for Wild Rivers varies considerably across these regions; however, the submission does not consider the implications for Wild Rivers in great detail outside of the Cape York region.

This submission has been developed to mirror the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry by addressing each of them in turn.

---

<sup>4</sup> DEEWR, Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Small Area Labour Markets Australia*, s.l., Commonwealth of Australia, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistic, *Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile - B24*, s.l., Commonwealth of Australia, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> *Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile - B38*, s.l., Commonwealth of Australia, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this submission, the term 'infrastructure' should be understood as a broad term that is often publicly owned or regulated. Responsibility for infrastructure planning, investing and funding spans across the three spheres of government, and also rests with the private and industry sector.

<sup>8</sup> Office of Economic and Statistical Research, *Queensland Regional Profiles, derived using Local Government Areas*, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, *Northern Australia Statistical Compendium*, s.l., Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 181.

# Inquiry into issues affecting Indigenous economic development in Queensland and review of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010

## Terms of Reference

The Committee should examine the scope for increasing sustainable Indigenous economic development in Queensland and including in the Cape York region having regard to the aspirations of Indigenous people and the social and cultural context surrounding their participation in the economy.

The Committee should consider:

1. Existing environmental regulation, legislation in relation to mining and other relevant legislation including the *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
2. The impact which legislation in the form of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 would have, if passed; and
3. Options for facilitating economic development for the benefit of Indigenous people and the protection of the environmental values of undisturbed river systems.

The Inquiry should pay particular attention to the following:

- The nature and extent of current barriers to economic development and land use by people, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, including those involved in the mining, pastoral, tourism, cultural heritage and environmental management;
- Options for overcoming or reducing those barriers and better facilitating sustainable economic development, especially where that development involves Indigenous people;
- The potential for industries which promote preservation of the environment to provide economic development and employment for Indigenous people;
- The effectiveness of current State and Commonwealth mechanisms for appropriate preservation of free-flowing river systems which have much of their natural values intact, including the preserving of biodiversity;
- Options for improving environmental regulation for such systems;
- The impact of existing environmental regulation, legislation in relation to mining and other relevant legislation on the exercise of native title rights and on the national operation of the native title regime and the impact which legislation in the form of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 would have on these matters.

The Committee should also make recommendations as to what initiatives might be pursued in order to promote economic development while preserving environmental and cultural values. The Minister has proposed that the Committee report by no later than **March 2011**.

## Abbreviations

AGD	Attorney-General's Department (Australian Government)
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Australian Government)
DCCEE	Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (Australian Government)
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australian Government)
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management (Queensland Government)
DIISR	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (Australian Government)
Regional Australia	Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government (Australian Government)
DoIT	Department of Infrastructure and Transport (Australian Government)
DRET	Department of Resources Energy and Tourism (Australian Government)
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i>
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Australian Government)
ONA	Office of Northern Australia (Australian Government)
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australian Government)
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (Australian Government)
RDA	Regional Development Australia



# 1. Introduction

Over recent years, Australian Governments, including state and territory governments, have marshalled significant resources and inclusive agreements to work across governments to address Indigenous disadvantage and close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Since 2008, all Australian governments have committed over \$4.6 billion in new resources to close the gap under a new partnership approach agreed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Significant reforms have been forged through National Partnership Agreements on Remote Housing, Early Childhood, Health, Remote Service Delivery and Economic Participation.

Recognising the importance of land and culture to Indigenous peoples, efforts continue to ensure they play a strong role in land-related industries, including the resources and tourism industries. Promotion of jobs in environmental protection, land management, and emerging industries linked to the carbon economy is one clear pathway.

A driver for the future is finding ways for Indigenous people to be economically independent and play a greater role in the economic life of the nation. This driver also needs to acknowledge Indigenous peoples' relationship to country.

For Indigenous people to be economically engaged, they need access to the basics of secure housing, education, and training. They need the skills to get and keep a job and to take advantage of business opportunities. Ultimately, they must have a sense of financial security and independence.

Central to this submission, and to the Inquiry generally, is the need to integrate sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes, and Indigenous economic development opportunities.

There remain a great many challenges in the effort to increase opportunities for sustainable Indigenous economic development in Cape York. It is acknowledged that encouraging private investment and development projects is essential to providing Indigenous economic development, employment opportunities, and revenue that can be reinvested in communities. Effective Indigenous engagement and involvement at the outset of projects is an important factor in increasing their potential outcomes.

This submission recognises that the most effective outcomes are achieved when governments work with communities on the basis of mutual respect, cooperation and mutual responsibility.

Effective engagement requires strong communication, particularly for individuals living in remote areas in times of change, where information is less easily delivered and received. Clear and regular communication about proposed changes or opportunities which may impact on people living in remote Australia is one way to assist regional planning and economic

development. Conducting regional planning in situ allows for the community to have input and share stories about how the region would like to move forward and how individuals can take advantage of opportunities.

A balance needs to be struck between delivering on commitments to economic development and jobs for Indigenous people, while honouring environmental and heritage responsibilities. Cape York has conservation values of national and international importance. Its water resources and terrestrial ecosystems have remained relatively intact and their continued health will support the opportunities for sustainable economic development outlined in this submission. Substantial work has been done in recent years to better understand the environment of northern Australia and Cape York and its values, opportunities and constraints. This work supports more ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources. It recognises the role of Indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity and promotes the use of Indigenous peoples' knowledge of biodiversity in co-operation with the owners of that knowledge.

While the demographics show that there are many comparative disadvantages and barriers to economic development, this submission also highlights the many competitive advantages that already exist. Cape York has significant natural resources and strong Indigenous natural resource management expertise. The environmental values of Cape York are an important economic, as well as a conservation and social asset, and the level of Indigenous ownership and control of land in Cape York is high by national standards. These comparative advantages could be further developed within a culturally appropriate context, to provide a sustainable and bright economic future.

Government, the private sector and local stakeholders are working in partnership to combat barriers for Indigenous people in the region including reduced access to employment, health and education, the capacity to participate in education, training and employment and limited opportunities to start and successfully maintain private businesses. This submission further details the strategies and investment across government and the private sector – particularly in the tourism, mining, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and conservation industries – which are already in place to improve Indigenous economic participation and outcomes, as well as future opportunities.

Home ownership is the fundamental building block of wealth creation. Land tenure reform that enables home ownership and that unlocks the economic value of Indigenous land is a basic first ingredient in sustainable Indigenous economic development. In Cape York, there has been solid progress towards Indigenous home ownership and the Queensland Government has also taken significant steps to further land tenure reform.

Governance, in the purest sense of the word – how people organise – is another piece of the puzzle. As the submission demonstrates, there is a significant amount of government activity and programs in Cape York. While

there is substantial activity, it becomes apparent that it could be better coordinated and more strategically focused. Drawing together a coordinated, strategic approach to Indigenous economic development across the three tiers of government, and including community and service delivery organisations, will require a more effective governance structure. The possibility of using the new *Framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia* is explored in detail in this submission.

The barriers to Indigenous economic development in northern Queensland are significant. The limited level of infrastructure available, making it difficult to get goods to and from markets, as well as the risks and extra transaction costs of doing business on communally held land present significant challenges. Also of significance are the lack of well developed human capital, scarcity of finance, often caused by low credit histories, and underdeveloped governance arrangements, both in terms of government coordination as well as within communities. These barriers are significant.

Delivering economic development with Indigenous people while also honouring environmental and heritage responsibilities, which themselves also present opportunities for economic and commercial outcomes, is the fulcrum around which any discussion must turn. Striking the correct balance between these elements remains the fundamental challenge, not just in Queensland, but anywhere there is a debate about economic development.

## 2. Existing environmental regulation, legislation in relation to mining, and other relevant legislation

### 2.1. Wild Rivers Legislation

#### The *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005*

The purpose of Queensland's *Wild Rivers Act 2005* (the Act) is to facilitate the preservation of the natural values of declared Wild River areas. In order to do so, it defines:

- The processes for making a declaration;
- The content of a declaration;
- The classification of areas within a declaration (High Preservation Areas, preservation areas, floodplain management areas and sub-artesian areas);
- The effect of a declaration on particular development activities; and
- The relationship between itself and other Acts.

A map of Queensland potential and declared Wild River areas at June 2010 is at **Appendix 2**.

Thirteen pieces of legislation have been amended to include reference to the Act. When a Wild River declaration is made, the Wild Rivers related provisions of other regulatory Acts apply.

When making a declaration, the Queensland Minister must consider all submissions as well as outcomes of any community consultation. This may give rise to an amendment of the Act subject to considerations raised in those consultations.

The Minister has some discretion as to what activities or taking of natural resources are to be regulated or prohibited and the area to which the declaration applies. Accordingly, the effect of a Wild River declaration on interest holders may differ from one declared area to another.

The Wild Rivers Code (the Code) is a tool that is used in conjunction with the legislation and outlines a number of conditions that must be met in relation to potential development activities before the development can be approved. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that development and other activities in a declared Wild River area do not impact on the health of the river system.

Applications are made in accordance with the same legislation as prior to a declaration (for example the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*, the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*). Applicants use the

same processes as prior to a declaration, which typically relate only to one or two of the 13 amended acts.

The Code directs assessors to the particular declaration for specifics on development activities and solutions for potential problems, such as set back distances from the watercourse. It is the responsibility of the assessor to ensure any proposed activity complies with the Code and the specifics of any declaration.

### **Recent amendments to the *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005***

The recent *Water and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2010 – Wild Rivers* (the Act) was assented to on 1 December 2010. This Act provides for amendments to the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* to alter several technical aspects of the Wild Rivers scheme. One effect of these amendments is to enable the proposed declarations for the Cooper Creek and the Georgina-Diamantina river systems (colloquially known as “the Channel Country”) to be specifically tailored to meet the unique circumstances of the Lake Eyre catchment.

The Act responds to and addresses certain issues raised by interest groups about the Wild Rivers scheme, which have been identified as contributing to the impact on economic development opportunities within a declaration area. These issues related to specific matters such as market gardens, the ability to store water for growing population needs and the need to extract gravel for developments in designated urban areas. The Act:

- Provides clarity on the issue of market garden developments, which can now go ahead without assessment as long as they are no greater than four hectares;
- Allows new in-stream dams to be constructed for town water supply, thereby providing for continued population growth;
- Allows access to in-stream gravel for a range of purposes, including roads and for use in building homesteads and outstations where no alternative off-stream sources can be found within a reasonable distance;
- Defines a Special Floodplain Management Area (SFMA), and ensures that the area is described in any Wild River declaration for the Lake Eyre Basin rivers;
- Amends regulation of new mining activities to ensure consistency of approaches;
- Formally recognises that a Wild River declaration will not override existing Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV);
- Includes a website url and contact officer details in a public declaration notice; and
- Clarifies that changes to a declaration as a result of legislative change is a minor amendment as is the change of a designated urban area as a result of a town planning scheme change.

Other amendments to the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* to date include the *Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006*, assented to on 7 December 2006, the *Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007*, assented to on 28 February 2007, and the *Environmental Protection and Other legislation Amendment Act 2008*, assented to on 21 May 2008.

The *Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006* amended the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* (and a number of associated Acts) as well as other related legislation. These amendments ensure low-impact development can proceed in a declared Wild River area, while retaining the original intent of the Wild Rivers policy. These development activities include low impact mining, transport and agricultural development, and development in urban areas.

The *Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007* amended the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* to declare the Settlement, Gregory, Morning Inlet, Staaten, Fraser, and Hinchinbrook Wild River areas. The amendments also approved the Wild Rivers Code and provided a process to amend the code if required.

Through the *Environmental Protection and Other legislation Amendment Act 2008*, amendments were made to Environmentally Relevant Activities (ERA) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. Amendments were also made to the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* to reflect these changes; however, there are no substantive changes affecting how development applications are dealt with.

## **2.2. Impact of the Wild Rivers legislation on development opportunities**

### **Development opportunities in declared areas**

Various opportunities for development, both Indigenous-specific and not Indigenous-specific exist in declared areas. Some of these opportunities existed prior to declarations and some are a result of Wild River declarations.

The unique natural beauty and relative underdevelopment of northern Queensland, Cape York in particular, offer significant tourism opportunities. Protecting Wild Rivers helps to keep intact the natural values they support and ensures these areas will continue to strengthen Cape York's attraction as a tourist destination.

An Indigenous-specific opportunity resulting from the Wild Rivers arrangements is the Queensland Government's funding of the 'Wild River Rangers' program. This program aims to care for and promote the natural values of Wild Rivers through sustained and diverse investment in land and sea management. The program actively contributes to building economic opportunities for remote parts of the State through the management of natural resources. Thirty-five Indigenous Rangers in northern Queensland are currently employed under the Wild River Rangers program.

Other development opportunities, for example in the agriculture, fishing, tourism and mining industries, continue to have significant potential for development in and around Wild River declared areas but, depending on the nature of the venture, in some cases an economic activity has to be managed to account for a Wild River declaration. The sections below discuss in more detail some of the effects of Wild River declarations on small and large projects.

### **Impact of declared areas on prospective projects**

There are two distinct types of enterprise opportunities within a Wild River area – small to medium enterprise development and major projects, which are largely associated with development in the resources sector.

#### **Small to medium enterprises**

Interest groups have stated that the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* (the Act) increases the complexity of the application process, which inhibits potential developers from making an application. To date, the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has advised that it has not rejected a development application made in a declared area.

There is a range of communication tools available to assist in understanding the implementation and potential impacts of the Act. For example, in order to support applicants in navigating the development application process, DERM has provided a phone helpline and pre-application conference process. DERM has indicated that by the time an application is lodged using these supports, it is most likely to be approved. These particular resources are only available in major centres, by phone or on-line. Therefore, further opportunities exist to make these supports available in communities most affected by a declaration.

Other supports that are available outside major centres include a range of facts sheets which are available online for landowners. These tools use a variety of media to assist individuals; however, opportunities exist to make these supports more readily available without requiring the use of the internet in communities most affected by Wild River declarations. Having ‘on the ground’ assistance would help individuals to understand the application process and planning requirements of new ventures, and would allow for the provision of direct feedback on why an application may or may not be successful. This would assist in communicating what types of applications are likely to be successful and why.

Business advisers that work with small to medium enterprises in the Cape York region as part of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) Enterprise Connect program have not reported any particular barriers to businesses wanting to operate in the region. For example, matched funding available through Tailored Advisory Service (TAS) grants are reported to be supporting projects that are typical for businesses of a similar size and industry located elsewhere in Australia. The types of supported projects include:

- Strategic and business planning;
- Implementation of quality systems;
- Financial management, human resources and workplace health and safety training;
- Succession planning; and
- Environmental impact planning.

The support of small to medium enterprises in the Cape York region through TAS and similar grants, both within and outside of Wild River declarations, will continue to be an important element in supporting enterprise development, particularly for Indigenous business, in a region where new business ventures are relatively few. Through the Enterprise Connect Program the Government supports businesses to develop the skills, tools and knowledge needed to improve their competitiveness and productivity and to maximise their growth potential. It also encourages innovation in economic development activities while maintaining a sustainable approach to environmental management for a stronger, cleaner, greener future.

### **Large enterprises**

Organisations undertaking major projects or large developments are more likely to have extensive experience and/or the necessary resources for navigating application processes and are unlikely to view the application process as a deterrent.

A number of public statements have been made regarding the impact of the Act on a particular large scale development project – the proposed Pisolite Hills bauxite mine located 50k north-east of Weipa and adjacent to the Wenlock River (declared a Wild River on 4 June 2010).

Cape Alumina Ltd is an Australian-based resources company listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX). It was formed in February 2004 to explore for metallurgical bauxite resources in Queensland. Cape Alumina Ltd lodged tenement applications for Pisolite Hills in early 2004.

Cape Alumina Ltd lodged a mining tenement application under the Queensland *Mineral Resources ACT 1989* (Qld) and also lodged an associated application for an environmental authority for the project under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (Qld). The project was also separately referred to the Australian Government for consideration under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

At around this time, the Queensland Government released a Wild River declaration proposal for the Wenlock River, which included parts of the Cape Alumina Ltd proposed mining area. Following the consultation, and consideration of relevant matters, the area was declared a Wild River area and included a 500 metre High Preservation Area around the 'Coolibah Springs Special Feature' in the vicinity of the Wenlock River.



Cape Alumina Ltd announced on 18 October 2010 that its Pisolite Hills project had been rendered unviable by the Wild River declaration. The company claimed that the amount of bauxite able to be mined at Pisolite Hills had been reduced by 45 per cent as a result of the Wild River declaration but noted that reducing the HPA to 200m or 300m could allow the project to proceed subject to a definitive feasibility study.<sup>10</sup>

However, Cape Alumina Ltd has not withdrawn the project from the development application processes under the relevant Queensland legislation nor has it informed the Queensland government that it will not be proceeding with the environmental impact statement (EIS) process. In 2008, Cape Alumina Ltd's Pisolite Hills project was approved as a controlled action under the EPBC Act. The federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities (SEWPaC) provided Cape Alumina Ltd with guidelines to prepare an EIS. This EIS has not as yet been received by SEWPaC. Should an EIS be prepared and submitted it will be released for a period of public comment.

The details of this project demonstrate that the impact of the Wild Rivers legislation on major developments will be highly dependent upon the details of each particular proposal, and particularly its location.

However, interest in Cape York bauxite resources continues to be demonstrated by the resources sector. For example, Monax Mining recently announced it has bought two prospective bauxite tenements in Queensland's Cape York. This was undertaken as an option agreement with Delminco for five tenements within the Pretender Creek area early last year. The tenements contain large areas of potentially high grade bauxite. Monax is reported to be planning a major drilling programme after April 2011 to test the extent and quality of the bauxite within its tenement in Cape York.

Other areas in Queensland outside the Cape York region may be affected by the Wild Rivers legislation with future potential declarations. In particular, the mining and resource sectors may be impacted in areas such as the Cooper, Diamantina and Georgina Catchments which are all potential Wild River areas as identified in **Appendix 5**.

Major project developments can be significant to Indigenous economic development in a number of ways, most notably through providing training and employment opportunities, royalties and revenue, and due to their potential multiplier effect in the regional economy.

An examination of the maps at **Appendix 3** and the corresponding table at **Appendix 4** shows three projects (1. Rio Tinto – South of Embley Project; 2. Laramide Resources – Westmoreland Project; and 3. Cape Alumina – Pisolite Hills Project) in the Cape York region that could potentially be affected by Wild

---

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.capealumina.com.au/documents/20101018\\_ASX\\_release\\_project\\_updated-FINAL.pdf](http://www.capealumina.com.au/documents/20101018_ASX_release_project_updated-FINAL.pdf), p.3

River declarations. Companies undertaking projects in these areas will need to manage the effects of working within a Wild River declared area. Outside of High Preservation Areas where surface mining cannot occur, projects can be managed effectively through consultation, negotiation and mitigation. The maps at **Appendix 5** show the mining tenements across Wild River declared areas in Cape York as well as declared, proposed and potential Wild River areas in the Gulf and Channel Country, providing a more granular level of detail on potential mineral projects in Wild River areas.

### **Cape York mineral deposits and mineral prospectivity**

Location: Cape York, north of 16 degrees south, Queensland

Cape York consists of four main geological regions with differing mineral prospectivity. The four regions from west to east are the Carpentaria, Coen, Quinkan, and Cairns regions (**Appendix 6**). The maps at **Appendices 7** and **8** show that a number of the mineral and non-renewable energy deposits that exist in the Cape York region could be affected by Wild River declarations.

The Carpentaria region is of major mineral significance as it contains extensive world class bauxite deposits developed at Weipa (~3900 million tonnes (t) at ~50 per cent available alumina) and Aurukun (about 70 kilometres (km) to the south). Many other bauxite deposits are known and occur in an area over 300 km in length along north western Cape York, to the north and south of Weipa. Quality deposits of kaolin are also known to occur in the same area and have been exploited in the past but production has met difficulty in competitively accessing world markets. Mineral sands including rutile, zircon, ilmenite, and monazite (source of thorium and rare earth elements) are widely distributed and occur in both alluvial and beach strandline settings. In terms of un- or little-tested mineral potential in the region, the Carpentaria region includes the same sequence of rocks that host oil shale, vanadium and molybdenum deposits at Julia Creek to the south of the area. At Groote Eylandt (Northern Territory), 300 km to the west of the area, world class manganese deposits are hosted by sediments of similar age to those in the Carpentaria region and thus the region may also be prospective for manganese.

The Coen region consists of 'basement' rocks which host numerous and widespread small lode-gold deposits. Historic gold production has been relatively minor in national terms (8.2 t gold cf. current Australian annual production of ~230 t). Minor base metal deposits (copper, lead and zinc) are known; however, production has been minimal. An inferred iron resource is located at Iron Range in the north of the region while minor tin and tungsten deposits are spatially associated with granite and adjacent rocks. The region also contains mineral sands deposits including ilmenite, zircon, rutile and monazite located between Cape Sidmouth and Princess Charlotte Bay in the northeast. The older rocks of the Coen region are of similar age to rocks of the Georgetown and Mt Isa regions located 100 to 300 km to the south and southwest respectively and are interpreted to extend under the Carpentaria region to the

west, and the Quinkan region to the east. The Mount Isa region in particular hosts major world class lead-zinc-silver and copper-gold deposits and therefore rocks of the Coen region have mineral potential for these styles of deposits.

Little mining has been undertaken in the Quinkan province with only minor production of coal and alluvial gold recorded. The Bathurst Range coking coal deposit is a potential underground resource however its sulphur content of 1 to 1.5 per cent is considered high by Queensland standards. Limited petroleum exploration has been undertaken in the region and several holes have intersected minor hydrocarbons including gas in muddy water.

The Cairns region hosts many small lode-gold deposits and, as with the Quinkan region, numerous granite related tin-tungsten deposits. The largest tin resource is at Collingwood, south of Cooktown (600 000 t at 1.3 per cent tin). Silica sand is mined from dunes at Cape Flattery in the north of the region. Immediately south of the reviewed area the region hosts significant copper, zinc and lead at Mungana, and gold at Mungana and Red Dome. Similar deposits are likely to be present within the reviewed area.

The Cape York region provides significant impediments to mineral exploration and the understanding of prospectivity and mineral potential. These impediments include remoteness, limited road access and challenging vegetation. The region is regularly subjected to wet season cyclone activity and has laterally extensive cover of older prospective rocks, particularly in western Cape York.

### **Mineral resources and proposed projects in the Cape York region and Wild River declared areas**

An analysis of the table at **Appendix 5** (which corresponds to the maps at **Appendix 3** showing major resource projects in Queensland) shows that, if the Indigenous workforce participation benchmark in the Australian Government's Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) of 20 per cent is met by companies, there is potential for up to 2065 construction and operation jobs to be generated directly through major resource projects in Queensland. These predictions are made on the current employment claims project managers are making. It should be noted that some of these are major projects on the margins of Wild River areas, and that none of the projects are at the point of a final investment decision.

## **2.3. Mining**

### **Background to mining in northern Australia**

Mining is Cape York's largest industry and, notwithstanding regulatory and resource constraints, it has the greatest growth potential. A detailed account of the north's mining industry is given in Chapter 8 of the *Northern Australia Land*

and *Water Science Review 2009*<sup>11</sup> and a case study of Weipa operations is given in Chapter 29.<sup>12</sup> The following excerpt is from the *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009 Chapter Summaries*:<sup>13</sup>

*Mining has the potential to grow in northern Australia*

Mining has a substantial role to play in developing northern Australia and needs to be considered in the mix of future development activities. Mining can have significant positive and negative impacts on the wellbeing of regional and remote communities and on the environment. The mining industry can manage these impacts by working with governments, Indigenous people and others, through the whole mining lifecycle from exploration through to mine closure.

*Mining contributes to social and economic development*

Minerals have played an important role in social and economic development across northern Australia, and have significant potential to further contribute to sustainable outcomes across the region. The industry is likely to continue to expand in existing areas of high activity, such as the North West Mineral Province and Western Cape regions of Queensland, where deposits of base metals and bauxite continue to attract strong interest.

Mining growth will depend on global demand, financial markets and a range of local factors. These include water availability, energy supply, available skills, transport and infrastructure development, relationships with Indigenous communities, access to land, and government policy and incentives.

Most mining in the north happens as isolated operations located well away from major population centres; Weipa is one of several exceptions and its economy is very largely dependent on nearby mineral operations. Most non-gold operations extract and concentrate minerals into a product that can be economically transported for further processing elsewhere in Australia or offshore.

Mining operations in northern Australia have generated considerable wealth, as reflected in annual revenue, tax and royalty payments, contributions to state/territory economic outputs, creation of direct and indirect job and business opportunities, as well as through development of infrastructure. Companies have increasingly moved towards employing more local people, using local contractors and supporting non-mine related enterprises and industries. Mines face an ongoing challenge to make sure a greater proportion of benefits generated by regions stay in the regions.

Mining projects have often also led to large-scale infrastructure development, giving rise to a number of modern-day regional centres, such as Weipa. However,

---

<sup>11</sup> Brereton, D, et al., 'The minerals industry and land and water development in northern Australia' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land & Water Science Review*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Klimenko, V and Evans, R., 'Bauxite mining operations at Weipa, Cape York: a case study' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Brereton, D, et al., 'Mining development in northern Australia' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009, Chapter Summaries*, s.n., Canberra, 2009.

the trend towards 'fly-in, fly-out' operations from the 1990s onwards has meant mines with less development of associated infrastructure than previously. Often, the labour workforce itself is attracted to the 'fly-in, fly-out' arrangements and mining operators respond to this such that the infrastructure that mining companies do build often address the needs of the 'fly-in, fly-out' community specifically.

#### *Mining provides Indigenous people with employment and business opportunities*

If mining projects are to be an effective mechanism for delivering improved employment outcomes for Indigenous people in the northern regions, a concerted effort is required by companies and state and federal governments to address underlying impediments to employment and grow the labour pool. This will require collaboration rather than competition between companies working in close proximity to each other. In addition, there needs to be a continued focus on creating effective agreements to leverage greater benefits from mining developments for remote Indigenous communities.

#### *Mining and water resources*

Several mines in northern Australia are located in or near important groundwater resources. Rigorous ongoing monitoring of groundwater use and impacts is needed to manage this, as are stronger processes for assessing the cumulative impacts of all other water users on groundwater resources...mining operations need to follow best practice guidelines in designing and monitoring their water systems, and regulation should be designed to encourage appropriate treatment and discharge processes.

Availability of water is not usually a major constraint to mining, but management of groundwater impacts will be a key focus in several areas, particularly where there are several mining operations in the one area.

#### *Mining is just one part of the jigsaw*

Mining should be considered as part of an integrated development approach, along with other industries and regional priorities. There has been some progress in using the presence of mining operations to improve conditions for Indigenous communities in the region through Indigenous employment initiatives and local business development. However, mining in itself is not a panacea. In designing and managing mining operations and planning for eventual mine closure, a key focus needs to be delivering positive long term outcomes for the region. Outcomes can include physical infrastructure (e.g. buildings, power, airstrips), a skilled and mobile workforce, and a more diversified economic base. Closer alignment with regional planning processes and greater coordination of development in mining intensive regions, such as the Western Cape and North West Queensland is needed. Such coordination could lead to better use and management of resources such as energy and water.

## **Case study – WEIPA – a mining community case study**

### **Weipa - Bauxite mining**

The following is based on excerpts from the *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009*<sup>14</sup> and Chapter Summaries.<sup>15</sup>

### **Weipa - The economic significance of bauxite mining**

In 2006 Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA) contributed \$364 million to the Weipa economy, representing 77 per cent of Weipa's total economic output. Of this, \$316 million was direct contribution. In the same year, RTA provided the equivalent of 86 per cent of the jobs in Weipa; 25 per cent (734 jobs) were created directly. Local industries such as retailing, manufacturing, construction and business services are particularly reliant on mining. Any withdrawal or decline of the mining industry would have fundamental repercussions for the Weipa economy and community.

### **Weipa - Mining flow on benefits to infrastructure, affordable housing and growth**

Weipa relies heavily on mining infrastructure such as the airport, road networks, a port, power, water and sewerage facilities, and housing. In 2007, RTA approved over \$30 million in infrastructure projects and in 2008 it spent almost \$20 million upgrading the power and sewerage facilities and developing land. The company is also a major sponsor of community services and manages an annual community investment fund. It operates a child-care facility, funds general practitioners and subsidises bulk billing. The lack of available and affordable housing is a major issue affecting Weipa's future sustainability. Private housing and rental prices are extremely high, with non-RTA employees being the most affected. Unless the town boundary is expanded, future development for residential and industrial purposes will be limited.

### **Weipa - Demographic changes**

The population of Weipa (about 3000) is becoming more diversified—an indicator of the town's evolution from a purely working mining town to a more diversified community. With RTA employees now able to buy dwellings from RTA, more employees are likely to retire in Weipa. This will put more pressure on health services and aged-care facilities, adding to the existing pressure on housing and child-care facilities. Comalco established the township of Weipa and the Weipa Town Authority has managed the town on RTA's behalf since 1994. However, it is not a recognised local government body, and is not eligible to receive state or federal government funding (such as the recent stimulus packages) to support the expanding portfolio of social services.

<sup>14</sup> Klimenko, V and Evans, R., 'Bauxite mining operations at Weipa, Cape York: a case study' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce, 'Weipa Bauxite Mining - a case study' in *Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce, Chapter Summaries* [Online], 2009, [http://www.nalwt.gov.au/files/337388\\_NLAW\\_Review\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nalwt.gov.au/files/337388_NLAW_Review_2009.pdf).

### **Weipa - Indigenous relations**

The mining operation at Weipa was established with little consultation of local Indigenous people. It was not until 30 years later, after the introduction of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), that Comalco sought to recognise Aboriginal interests and rights in the land, formally acknowledging them in the 1997 Ely Bauxite Mining Project Agreement and the 2001 Western Cape Communities Co-existence Agreement (WCCCA). The WCCCA provides for a range of benefits to Traditional Owners in return for land access. Under the terms of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement, 60 per cent of an annual \$2.5 million payment is placed in long-term investments. RTA also agreed to fund and run employment and training programs, set up a cultural awareness fund, transfer ownership of a pastoral property to the Traditional Owners, and relinquish to the government parts of mining leases no longer in use for return to Aboriginal ownership.

Relations between mining companies and Indigenous peoples have improved substantially since the passage of the *Native Title Act 1993*. As part of this, companies have increased their focus on providing Indigenous people with employment and business development opportunities.

### **Indigenous workforce participation in the mining industry – The Australian Government /Minerals Council of Australia MoU**

In 2005 the Australian Government and the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Indigenous Employment and Enterprise Development (the MoU) which seeks to contribute to developing self-sustaining and prosperous Indigenous communities in mining regions, in which individuals can create and take up employment and business opportunities.

In early 2009 the MoU was revised to focus more closely on Indigenous economic development goals and to better align with the Government's Closing the Gap policy agenda.

This will be achieved by a strong partnership between the minerals industry and government that works with Indigenous people on a local or a regional basis.

Implementation of the MoU has been focused on eight sites across Australia, supported by a Regional Partnership Agreement.

### **The Western Cape Regional Partnership Agreement (Weipa)**

The Western Cape Regional Partnership Agreement is an agreement between four Cape York Indigenous Councils, the Minerals Council of Australia, and the Australian and Queensland governments, established under the Australian Government MCA MOU.

In Queensland, the site is in Cape York centred on Weipa and extending south to Aurukun and north to Mapoon.

It seeks to "...share a vision for the region in which to the fullest extent possible Indigenous disadvantage is overcome and Indigenous people are supported to take up opportunities in the mainstream economy." The agreement is directed at:

- Work readiness – including addressing issues of work culture and job readiness;
- Intra-region transport – access to employment and social independence;
- Youth engagement – including innovative models of education and training linked to labour market participation; and
- Indigenous business development – creating and supporting business development.

The federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has supported a work readiness program designed to support Indigenous employment under the Western Cape Regional Partnership Agreement and a process is underway in which the department will jointly fund a coordinator for MOU activities with the Queensland Government.

DEEWR is currently working with Aurukun Traditional Owners who are seeking to progress mining related enterprises. DEEWR is also working with Traditional Owners at Aurukun and near Coen to progress small scale, nature based enterprises.

## **2.4. National environmental legislation**

The Australian Government administers the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The objectives of the EPBC Act are to:

- Provide for the protection of the environment, especially in relation to matters of national environmental significance;
- Conserve Australian biodiversity;
- Provide a streamlined national environmental assessment and approvals process;
- Enhance the protection and management of important natural and cultural places;
- Control the international movement of plants and animals (wildlife), wildlife specimens and products made or derived from wildlife;
- Promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources;
- Promote a co-operative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, land-holders and Indigenous people;
- Recognise the role of Indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity; and



- Promote the use of Indigenous people's knowledge of biodiversity with the involvement of and in co-operation with the owners of that knowledge.

Section 8 of the EPBC Act provides that the Act does not affect the operation of the *Native Title Act 1993* or the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

The EPBC Act focuses on the protection of certain defined matters of national environmental significance (NES). These matters of NES include world heritage properties, national heritage places, wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, listed threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species protected under international agreements, the Commonwealth marine environment, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and nuclear actions.

Consistent with the 1997 Heads of Agreement on Commonwealth/State Roles and Responsibilities for the Environment, the EPBC Act was intended to apply in addition to State or Territory environmental legislation. As noted, the EPBC Act specifically focuses on the protection of matters of NES, whereas State or Territory environmental legislation is often broader in scope and may be focused on different environmental objectives.

Any proposed action that is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of NES requires prior approval under the EPBC Act before proceeding. Where assessment and approval of an action is required under the EPBC Act, consideration must be given to, among other things, economic and social matters associated with the proposal as well as the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

A number of current proposals in Queensland, including in Cape York, are subject to the requirements of the EPBC Act. The EPBC Act assessment and decision-making processes consider the impacts of each proposal on matters of NES, including any that may occur within declared Wild River areas. Relevant socio-economic impacts and benefits of these proposals, including to Indigenous communities, will also be considered as required under the EPBC Act.

Where it is likely that a proposal will have a significant impact on a matter of NES, any necessary EPBC Act approval must be obtained before proposals can commence. A proposal may also require separate approval under relevant State environmental legislation before proceeding. Where a development proposal requires approval under both the EPBC Act and the *Sustainable Planning Act (Qld) 2009*, a bilateral agreement for assessment exists between the Australian and Queensland governments. This agreement accredits assessments under the *Sustainable Planning Act (Qld) 2009* and so allows a single assessment process to be used in respect of the assessment requirements of both pieces of legislation (noting that the separate approval processes of both Acts remain in place). The bilateral agreement applies

irrespective of the application of Wild River declarations, noting that the *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005* is not accredited under this bilateral agreement and plays no part in the assessment of projects under the EPBC Act.

If a proposal is located in an area covered by a Wild River declaration, it may be subject to additional requirements as a result of the *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005*. However, there is no interaction between the requirements imposed by the Queensland Government under the *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005* and those imposed by the Australian Government under the EPBC Act; they are separate pieces of legislation administered by two different levels of government. In instances where both pieces of legislation are applicable, they simply operate in addition to one another in that both sets of requirements must be complied with. As such, the potential implications of Queensland's *Wild Rivers Act (Qld) 2005* and the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 for individual proposals is a matter for the respective proponent and the Queensland Government to consider.

Only a small number of projects in areas covered by Wild River declarations have been referred under the EPBC Act. For example, in the area north of Cooktown on Cape York Peninsula there have been a total of approximately 20 projects referred under the EPBC Act. Since 2005, four projects were considered unlikely to have significant impacts on matters of NES and did not require further assessment or approval under the EPBC Act. Four mining proposals are currently either under determination regarding whether they require assessment under the EPBC Act or are in the process of being assessed. One of these projects (the Pisolite Hills bauxite mine) is under review by the proponent following a Wild River declaration, although the project's referral under the EPBC Act has not been withdrawn.

The EPBC Act was required to be independently reviewed within ten years of its commencement (that is, by July 2010). The review was conducted by Dr Allan Hawke and provided to the Government on 30 October 2009. The Government is considering the final report of the review and remains committed to responding to it.

## **2.5. Other national legislation**

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (ATSIHP Act) enables Aboriginal people to apply to the Australian Government for protection of places that are significant in accordance with Aboriginal tradition where the places are under threat of injury or desecration. The *Wild Rivers Act 2005* does not affect the operation of the ATSIHP Act.

The declaration of Wild Rivers under the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* may reduce the potential for threats of injury or desecration to places that are significant in Aboriginal tradition, resulting in less need for Aboriginal people to have recourse to the ATSIHP Act.

## **2.6. Interaction between the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* (Qld) and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth)**

In the 1992 Mabo decision, the High Court found that the common law of Australia recognises rights and interests to land held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under their traditional laws and customs, known as native title rights. On 1 January 1994, the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) (the Native Title Act) commenced. The Native Title Act has a number of functions including setting out processes through which native title can be recognised and providing protection for native title rights and interests. The Attorney-General is responsible for the administration of the Native Title Act.

The nature of native title rights vary depending on the Indigenous group's traditional laws and customs. The rights may include the right to possess and occupy an area of land to the exclusion of all others. These 'exclusive' native title rights are limited to certain land tenure such as unallocated or vacant Crown land and certain areas already held by, or for, Indigenous Australians. This is often the case in Cape York. In other areas, native title rights may include the right to live on the land, hunt, to fish, gather food or carry out traditional ceremonies. These are 'non-exclusive' native title rights as they can co-exist with other types of rights such as a pastoral lease.

A declaration under Queensland's *Wild Rivers Act 2005* prohibits or regulates certain types of developments and activities in Wild River areas. Section 44(2) of the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* confirms that Wild River declarations, as given effect under other Queensland legislation, cannot 'have the direct or indirect effect ...of limiting a person's right to the exercise or enjoyment of native title.' Section 13A of Queensland's *Acts Interpretation Act 1954* provides that Queensland legislation can only affect native title if it expressly provides. The *Wild Rivers Act 2005* does not make this express provision.

The Australian Government's view is that in light of Section 44(2) of the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* and Section 13A of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954* (Qld), if a person has a native title right to carry out an activity in a declared Wild River area, then under the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* they can still exercise that native title right, despite a Wild River declaration having been made that would otherwise have the effect of prohibiting or regulating that activity.

### **3. Potential impact of the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010**

#### **3.1. Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 interaction with native title**

The Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 (the Bill) states it is 'a Bill for an Act to protect the interests of Aboriginal people in the management, development and use of native title land situated in Wild Rivers areas.' The Bill provides that the development or use of Aboriginal land in a Wild River area cannot be regulated under the relevant Queensland legislation unless the owner of the land agrees in writing.

There are a number of uncertainties about the potential scope and application of the Bill. One of these relates to the term 'owner.' The Bill is not clear as to whether the agreement of all persons who are 'owners' of the land in question is required. For example, it might be possible that native title exists over land which is also subject to the grant of Aboriginal freehold under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Qld). In this situation, it would assist for the Bill to make it clear whether both 'owners' of the Aboriginal land, namely the native title holder (through the prescribed body corporate) and the trustee (through the land trust), would need to agree to the proposed regulation.

In addition, in some situations, the 'owners' of the Aboriginal land may be composed of different people.

While there may be some overlap, members of the native title holding group may not always correspond to beneficiaries of the Aboriginal freehold. This is because under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*, land can be transferred to Aboriginal people who have a historical association to the land and not necessarily a traditional affiliation. This can result in two land holding entities for the one parcel of land. The Australian Government is aware of at least one circumstance where the prescribed body corporate and the land trust were at odds over how Aboriginal freehold land subject to a native title determination was to be managed.

Also, through its definition of 'native title land,' the Bill applies to land over which native title exists. Because native title is a pre-existing right, native title could exist over land which is not yet subject to a native title claim or determination. There is no compulsion for a claim to be lodged, so the proposed definition could have the effect of requiring the agreement of the owner of land over which no claim need ever be lodged, and over which native title may not exist. Due to this, it is possible that the Bill could enable Indigenous land owners who have not lodged native title claims, or do not have a native title determination, to prevent regulation of land in a Wild River area. This may create practical problems as it may be difficult to

ascertain who the relevant owners of the land are in order to obtain their written agreement to the development or use of the land as required by the Bill.

The Bill would also provide the owners of Aboriginal land in the areas to which the Bill applies with greater rights than those provided to other native title holders and registered claimants under the Native Title Act. This means native title holders and registered claimants who are in areas not subject to the Bill will not receive these rights. Nor will interest holders in that same land covered by the Bill, such as pastoralists. This means the requirement of the agreement of the owners of Aboriginal land in a Wild River area to the regulation of the development or use of land will have more extensive (and expansive) procedural rights than any provided to native title holders and registered claimants under the Native Title Act. This right is also provided to a potentially broader group of people than native title holders and registered claimants.

There is concern that by providing more extensive rights to Indigenous groups in the Cape York region, which are not available to Indigenous groups in any other part of Australia, the Bill effectively creates one set of rights for native title holders and registered claimants outside Cape York, and a more expansive set of rights for native title holders and registered claimants in Cape York. The Bill also would allow for a scenario where holders of non exclusive native title rights could withhold consent. This is wholly inconsistent with the freehold test in the Native Title Act, which allows for acts to occur where they could also occur in respect of ordinary land owners.

Under the future acts regime contained within the Native Title Act, native title holders and registered claimants are provided a range of procedural rights regarding acts that might affect their native title rights and interests. These procedural rights range from a right to be notified and make comment to a right to negotiate an agreement regarding the act. If after a period of six months the parties involved cannot negotiate an agreement, they are entitled to seek arbitration of the matter before the National Native Title Tribunal. However, this right does not amount to a 'right of veto' to prevent a regulation proceeding.

## 4. Options for Indigenous economic development and environmental protection

### 4.1. Introduction

The Inquiry's Terms of Reference include not only matters around Wild Rivers, but more broadly, the scope of increasing sustainable economic development in Queensland, including the Cape York region, having regard to the aspirations of Indigenous people and the social and cultural context surrounding their participation in the economy. The Government is pursuing a wide range of activity, including the development and administration of programs and initiatives, across numerous government departments.

There is a range of programs supporting economic activities in the region, including in the sectors of mining, government administration and agriculture, and various programs and initiatives reflect this support.

The Australian Government also has a responsibility for the area's outstanding environment and heritage values. The Australian Government administers national environment legislation and supports natural resource management initiatives, including for Indigenous land and sea management, which make an important economic and social contribution to the region.

Numerous Commonwealth and State statutes apply to land and water activities in Queensland. Many of these statutes come into play in establishing new land uses or enterprises, in making material change of use or in the reconfiguration of a lot that involves accessing land or resources or impacts on the environment. There are various compliance processes under these statutes. The relevant Queensland acts are the:

- *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*;
- *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*;
- *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007*;
- *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*;
- *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*;
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999*; and
- *Wild Rivers Act 2005*.

Key Commonwealth acts include the:

- *Native Title Act 1993*;
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act); and

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (ATSIHP Act).

The operation of the EPBC Act, the ATSIHP Act and the Native Title Act are, respectively, discussed in sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 above.

Section 4.2 outlines land tenure related to Indigenous held lands and discusses options for Indigenous economic development, particularly in Queensland, provided for by resolving land tenure issues and undertaking land reform.

Section 4.3 discusses the role that native title can play in Indigenous economic development, including through Indigenous Land Use Agreements, particularly in the Cape York region.

Section 4.4 outlines the opportunities for Indigenous economic development that exist in Cape York independent of, though often supported by, government.

Section 4.5 goes on to discuss the wide ranging initiatives across Australian government departments relevant to both natural and cultural resource protection and management and Indigenous economic development in Queensland, particularly in Cape York.

These programs and initiatives are largely organised under the six policy themes of the *Framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia*, an outline of which is presented at the beginning of the section and its potential role explored. The six themes are: knowledge infrastructure; conservation and natural resource management; Indigenous lives and livelihoods; industry and enterprise; infrastructure and liveability; and institutional capacity and governance. Carbon farming has been included in the conservation and natural resource management section for the purposes of this submission. Many of these programs and initiatives support the existing industries and economic development opportunities in the region.

## **4.2. Indigenous land tenure and options for Indigenous economic development**

Indigenous land reform is necessary to facilitate economic opportunity and to secure government investment to improve housing, infrastructure and service delivery. Leasing can provide long term individual transferable title while preserving underlying communal land rights.

Approximately 20 per cent of Australia is Indigenous held land, mainly through State/Territory based land rights legislation and exclusive possession native title. The land is generally communally held and inalienable. While individual interests can usually be created (for example,

through leases), the process is constrained by cumbersome approval processes (for example, Ministerial and Land Council approvals), and limits on the use, term and purpose of the interest. There is also a substantial backlog in survey, subdivision, and town planning processes.

Remote Indigenous communities are generally on Indigenous held land. Indigenous land holding arrangements in Queensland primarily consist of Indigenous Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) land. This is land granted in fee simple in trust under the *Land Act 1994* or the *Land Act 1962* (repealed) for the benefit of Indigenous inhabitants or for Indigenous purposes. Between 1984 and 1986, 15 Indigenous DOGITs were granted in Queensland. Indigenous Shire Councils are the trustees of Indigenous DOGIT under the *Land Act 1994*, and may grant leases for public and private housing, and economic purposes under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and the *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* (Qld). There are 31 Indigenous communities on DOGITs in Queensland.

A map of the various types of land tenure across Cape York is at **Appendix 9**.

A significant number of individual perpetual leases approved under the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985* (the Land Holding Act), primarily located in the Cape York region and often referred to as 'Katter leases,' have also been granted throughout remote Indigenous townships under the Land Holding Act. The Land Holding Act formerly enabled community members to apply for individual leases over areas of DOGIT or reserve land for residential or commercial purposes.

COAG Closing the Gap National Partnership Agreements (NPAs) for Remote Indigenous Housing and Remote Service Delivery require secure land title to underpin government investment. Legislative reforms in Queensland are delivering results, particularly in securing government investment in social housing. The Queensland Government is also pursuing a number of strategies to encourage economic development on Indigenous land.

Under the NPA for Remote Indigenous Housing and the NPA for Remote Service Delivery, the Queensland Government committed to reform land tenure and administration to enable commercial investment and home ownership on Indigenous land.

Consistent with these commitments, the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* were amended to allow long term leasing (up to 99 years) of Indigenous land for private residential and commercial purposes.

Utilisation of these reforms has so far been limited. The provisions for private leasing of Indigenous lands need to be supported by policies and



procedures to enable efficient land administration in Indigenous communities.

The Queensland Government is taking steps to improve land administration in Indigenous communities. It has established an interdepartmental agency, the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office, to develop land administration systems in remote Indigenous communities. This includes, for each community, surveying the land, establishing statutory town planning schemes to guide land use and development, negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements to facilitate social housing and private leasing, and negotiating leases to secure government investments. This work is ongoing.

Aboriginal Shire Councils have a significant role in leasing and town planning functions. DERM has established the Indigenous Land Trustee Service Support Unit to help build the capacity of councils to undertake their functions relating to private residential and commercial leasing.

The Queensland Government is also working to resolve a number of relevant policy issues. For example, the Department of Communities is developing programs and policies to support home ownership on Indigenous lands, including determining methods for the valuation of leased lands. It released a discussion paper on this topic in November 2010.

In December 2010, DERM released a discussion paper concerning possible amendments to enhance the utility of 'Katter leases' for commercial and private residential purposes. The proposed amendments also provide measures for regularising Land Holding Act estates with the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* to facilitate future economic development.

### **4.3. Indigenous economic development and native title**

Native title is an important part of the Government's agenda to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. As a native title holder or registered claimant there may be a number of social and economic development opportunities available through the leveraging of native title rights in return for practical benefits such as via an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). Those benefits may include direct financial benefits as well as employment, education and training, housing, cooperative land management and environmental and heritage initiatives. Economic development is a key focus underpinning the Australian Government's native title strategy of promoting quicker, more flexible and broader land settlements to resolve native title claims.

Presently in the Cape York region there are 25 active native title claims. To date, 10 native title claims have been determined covering an area of approximately 28,332 square kilometres (see **Appendix 10**). Fifty one

ILUAs in the region have been registered. These ILUAs cover an area of approximately 53,390 square kilometres and can provide economic opportunities to Indigenous people. Examples of ILUAs in the region providing economic opportunities are at **Appendix 11**.

The Government promotes leading practice in native title agreements to ensure strong governance of native title payments, sustainability and Indigenous economic development. Work across Australian Government departments aims to better enable native title holders and registered claimants to leverage economic development opportunities from their native title rights and interests. While the native title system applies Australia-wide, it is particularly relevant to Cape York due to the large population of Indigenous people in that region.

There are a number of forums where this work is continuing and input is received from a range of Indigenous groups, including in Cape York. The National Native Title Council (NNTC) is a national representative body with membership open to all Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs) and Service Providers (SPs) across Australia. It meets regularly with the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to discuss native title issues.

Another is the Native Title Consultative Forum. This is a multi-lateral stakeholder forum and membership includes representatives from the Australian Government, all State and Territory governments, the Federal Court, the National Native Title Tribunal, NTRB/SPs (includes Cape York Land Council), the Australian Human Rights Commission, the National Farmers' Federation, the fishing, mining and petroleum industries and local government. It provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the native title system to discuss and exchange views on recent developments in the native title system.

The Cape York Land Council has also provided submissions to recent Government discussion papers on better native title agreement governance, and economic development and tax.

The first, 'Leading Practice Agreements: Maximising Outcomes from Native Title Benefits,' was released by the Attorney-General and Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on 3 July 2010. The paper builds on the work of the Native Title Payments Working Group, comprising experts from the Indigenous community, mining, academia and legal professions. This body was tasked with developing tangible suggestions for ensuring that benefits accruing to Indigenous communities under native title agreements contribute to addressing the economic and social disadvantage facing current and future generations. The key measures canvassed in the discussion paper include the governance of native title agreements as well as measures to streamline the future acts regime under the Native Title Act. Twenty-nine

submissions were received in response to the 'Leading Practice Agreements Discussion Paper,' including a submission from the Cape York Land Council.

The second, 'Native Title, Indigenous Economic Development and Tax,' was released by The Treasury for consultation on 18 May 2010. This paper sought views on a range of tax options aimed at reducing complexity in tax rules for native title payments, promoting economic development and supporting effective benefits management under native title agreements. Thirty-two submissions were received in response to Treasury's consultation paper, including a submission from the Cape York Land Council.

This stakeholder feedback is vital to progress initiatives which ensure native title can continue to deliver economic development opportunities in a deliverable manner to Indigenous people in Cape York and across all of Australia.

#### **4.4. Existing opportunities for Indigenous economic development**

The region of Cape York offers a wide range of development opportunities, particularly through its abundance of natural resources that can be exploited through the mining industry as well as the significant tourism opportunities offered by its natural beauty and relative underdevelopment. The land also offers significant opportunities in the agricultural and forestry sectors, as do the rivers and sea in the fishing sector.

Industry in Cape York is currently dominated by mining, which has significant prospects for growth, though the sustainability of employment growth in the industry is debated.<sup>16</sup> There are almost 900 residential workers at the bauxite and silica mines of Weipa and Cape Flattery.<sup>17</sup> Together, these provide over \$500 million ex-mine value of production, 42 per cent of which comes from Weipa.

Employment across the Cape York region (as of the most recent 2006 census) was dominated by public administration (approximately 2300 jobs), other public services such as health care and social services (approximately 800 jobs) and manufacturing (approximately 700 jobs).<sup>18</sup> Education and training (approximately 500 jobs), construction

---

<sup>16</sup> Rio Tinto Australia, *Submission to the Commonwealth Government on the draft Indigenous Economic Development Strategy*, December 2010, viewed 20 January 2011, <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Employment/Documents/RioTinto.rtf>>

<sup>17</sup> Brereton, D, et al., 'The minerals industry and land and water development in northern Australia' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land & Water Science Review*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, Community Profile Series*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2006.

(approximately 400 jobs), retail trade (approximately 400 jobs), accommodation and food services (approximately 400 jobs), and agriculture, forestry and fishing (approximately 300 jobs), rounded out the main sources of employment in Cape York.

Within these industry sectors, Indigenous people in Cape York were predominantly employed in public administration. Indeed, of the 2300 people employed in this sector, nearly 1800 were Indigenous. Health care and social assistance is the second largest employer of Indigenous people, with approximately 500 Indigenous people employed in these jobs. This is followed by education and training with approximately 170 Indigenous people employed, manufacturing, with approximately 120 Indigenous people employed, and agriculture, forestry and fishing, with approximately 110 Indigenous people with jobs. With a new census set for 2011, updated statistics will help form a clearer picture.

### **Conservation and natural resource management**

Cape York is an outstanding natural asset and includes important dune fields, rainforests, wetlands, mangroves, biodiversity values and large areas of relatively undisturbed savannah. Many of these values are of potential national and international significance. Cape York Peninsula's unique environment and its productive landscapes are central to its identity.

The environmental values of Cape York are an important economic as well as a conservation and social asset. They are a drawcard for its tourism and the basis of its pastoral industry. Healthy wetlands and clean water are important for commercial and recreational fishing. A significant part of the future economic potential of Cape York is likely to be realised from its environmental assets through agriculture, mining and tourism.

Natural resource management initiatives utilising Indigenous natural resource management expertise are an important economic activity and have the potential to enable engagement in emerging markets for environmental and land management services.

Cape York is a significant contributor to the national conservation estate. Its park and forest estate (national park, state forest, timber reserve, forest reserve) occupies 24,311 km<sup>2</sup>, which is 20 per cent of the Queensland total (from 15 per cent of the state's area). National parks comprise 98 per cent of the total protected area in the region.<sup>19</sup> The Cape York bioregion is well represented in the National Reserve System with 13.8 per cent of its area protected in reserves.

---

<sup>19</sup> Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service), *Digital Cadastre Data Base*, 2010.

The conservation estate, and the natural values that it supports, is an important contributor to the regional economy as it is a major attractor for tourism and related industries, and is likely to be an important indirect influence on the region's fishing industry.

## Tourism

Tourism is a minor but important contributor to the economy of Cape York. Data from the largest and northern most statistical area in Cape York (Cook) is illustrative of the main features of Cape York's tourism industry: as at June 2010, total domestic and international visitor numbers average approximately 79,000 annually, or about four per cent of those for Tropical North Queensland.<sup>20</sup>

Cape York Visitors are mainly self-drive, couples and families (two adults and children) between 45 and 64 years of age. Young couples between the ages of 26 to 35 are the region's secondary market. The majority of visitors are motivated by the desire for adventure, and for the sense of achievement of making it all the way to the top. Other motivating factors include the scenery, the unspoilt environment, the excellent fishing and bird watching opportunities, and simply 'getting away from it all.' Cape York visitors generally expect to camp during their stay and also expect that there will be next to nothing in the way of built accommodation and amenities, as they want to experience a truly natural holiday.<sup>21</sup>

There is an inherent tension in the notion that Cape York's tourism industry might expand. "One of the most appealing attributes of Cape York as a destination is that of true wilderness. Consequently, there is not the same level of visitor demand for support facilities that are usually expected in alternative leisure destinations. Amenities are not expected to be of a luxury standard; clean, comfortable and value for money options are preferred. Development of accommodation options should be monitored to ensure they do not negatively impact on the natural environment. Mass tourism is not a feasible option for the Cape York Peninsula."<sup>22</sup>

In terms of economic development and opportunities to make Cape York a more appealing tourist destination, Tourism Queensland makes the following points:<sup>23</sup>

- It recommends strategies for effective dissemination of visitor information to attract visitors, and to respond to the information

---

<sup>20</sup> Tourism Research Australia 2010 (unpublished data).

<sup>21</sup> Tourism Queensland, *Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait Tourism Development Action Plan 2008-2011*, viewed January 13 2011, <[http://www.tq.com.au/destinations/tropics-and-great-barrier-reef-zone/tropical-north-queensland/plans-and-strategies/the-cyp-and-tst-tsm-deve-action-plan/cyp-and-ts-tourism-action-plan\\_home.cfm](http://www.tq.com.au/destinations/tropics-and-great-barrier-reef-zone/tropical-north-queensland/plans-and-strategies/the-cyp-and-tst-tsm-deve-action-plan/cyp-and-ts-tourism-action-plan_home.cfm)>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

needs of potential and/or actual visitors, through the development of:

- A Cape York Interpretation Manual;
  - Local interpretive signage;
  - Effective communication of the Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) – including visitor responsibilities;
  - Stinger and crocodile safety signage;
  - Cultural awareness protocols programs (electronic and print); and
  - A communication system to better inform drivers of weather forecasts and road conditions.
- It notes that “successful tourism development within Cape York will require significant initial financial and other in kind assistance, in order to develop the destination to a level of capacity and competency that enables increasing numbers of long term private sector investors to feel confident about the long-term sustainability of tourism in the region.” Tourism Queensland recommends the preparation of a “Cape York Tourism Investment Prospectus,” outlining public and private investment opportunities and likely funding sources for distribution to potential tourism developers and potential joint venture partners.
  - It identifies the following infrastructure development opportunities, noting that “the design and ‘look and feel’ of tourist infrastructure should reflect a strong Cape York character in keeping with the wilderness style of the Cape”:
    - Continue to improve the standard of dry weather access for tourism operators and communities using the Peninsula Development Road and other key local roads;
    - In conjunction with local and regional planning processes, deliver priority tourism projects including:
      - Redevelopment of the Pajinka site;
      - Development of the Mitchell River Loop Road;
      - Campgrounds at Kowanyama and Lockhart River; and
      - Upgrade of Regional airports (e.g. Bamaga-Weipa-Coen).
    - Utilise available mechanisms to secure long term tenure, Indigenous Land Use Agreements and/or leasing of traditional lands for tourism developments and investors;
    - Address infrastructure needs on the Cooktown waterfront in recognition of its importance as a key tourism asset by developing a strategic plan to upgrade marine moorings, slipway and harbour dredging;
    - Upgrade the presentation, visitor facilities and information at all community airport terminals throughout Cape York; and

- Identify options for overcoming difficulties and dangers at the Seisia jetty and boat ramp being presently utilised for both tourism and industrial purposes.
- It makes recommendations for the development of tourism products and experiences on Cape York including:
  - Establishing and implementing a bush camping sites development program for Cape York on all land tenure types;
  - Identifying and developing new and redevelop existing visitor and tourism opportunities and facilities in:
    - Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; and
    - Cape York national parks, with a particular focus on day use, camping and walking facilities in the Lakefield, Iron Range, Jardine River and Mungkan-Kaanju National Parks; and
  - Developing and marketing a drive tourism route for Cape York.

Tourism currently makes a small contribution to the Cape York economy. To preserve and enhance its value, any expansion of the industry would need to occur in a way that does not compromise the unique natural values on which it relies. Enhancing access to the region's history and culture would be consistent with meeting these competing requirements and may occur through enterprise scale initiatives.

Many of the developments identified above as most likely to enhance tourism are modest proposals and highlight the important role that improved infrastructure could play in Cape York to increase tourism while being modest enough to preserve and enhance Cape York's natural and cultural values.

The necessity for such developments to be managed and maintained by the local population emphasises the importance of fostering effective leadership, good governance arrangements and developed capability. Opportunities exist for all spheres of government and non-government stakeholders to further invest in supporting and working with Indigenous organisations to build and strengthen these fundamental building blocks. Analysis of and agreement on local infrastructure needs, opportunities and priorities also highlights the potential for the local population to be involved in developing, managing and maintaining tourism assets in Cape York and the infrastructure necessary to support them.

### **Agriculture and the northern cattle industry**

The cattle industry in northern Australia and Cape York is significant. It dominates the agricultural industry in the northern Australia region and has the potential for growth. However, it also faces various challenges, which will be explored below. Land suitable for cattle in Cape York is

plentiful. As shown at **Appendix 12**, some parts of land suitable for intensive farming fall in Wild River declarations, while other parts do not. Regardless, it should be noted that grazing, including improved pastures, can occur within a High Preservation Area within a Wild River declaration.

The following discussion of the northern cattle industry is based on excerpts from the *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009*<sup>24</sup> and Chapter Summaries. It should be understood that this information relates to the cattle industry in northern Australia as a whole and is not specific to Cape York. Furthermore, Cape York is not the most favourable area to increase the cattle industry as compared with other parts of northern Australia.

Discussion based on the *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review*:

The northern cattle industry could double production with increased access to water and better transport infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Increased irrigation for pasture could also provide increased water for cropping.

Australia is the world's second largest beef exporter, and its export industry is worth \$8 billion annually. The beef industry is the nation's second largest agricultural industry, and one third of the nation's 28 million cattle are in northern Australia. The cattle industry provides five per cent of the jobs in the north and covers 95 per cent of the agricultural land area. It provides 75 per cent of the value of Northern Territory's agricultural production.

#### *The cattle industry dominates northern agriculture*

Continued growth of the beef industry is likely due to a promising export outlook and water scarcity in the south. Further growth can be achieved by investment in finishing cattle (fattening the cattle to market size) and processing meat in the north, and broadening farming business to include mixed crop-livestock systems based on irrigated pasture, fodder and other crops.

Growth of the industry will depend upon:

- An increased water allocation for the cattle industry; and
- Improved road transport, made possible by increased infrastructure spending on all-weather roads and bridges and maintenance of local fuel availability, possibly using biofuels.

---

<sup>24</sup> Cribb, J, Harper, G and Stone, P., 'Sustaining growth of the northern beef industry' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.



### *Increased food output needs increased water input*

The challenge to global agriculture is to double food output using less land, less water, fewer nutrients and less energy – in the face of spreading drought. In this context, the relatively underdeveloped pastoral and agricultural opportunities of northern Australia become more significant both internationally and nationally.

By developing the northern water resources and increasing water allocation to cattle farming, the industry can achieve year-round local feed availability using irrigated pastures or fodder crops. This continual feeding will allow the industry to increase live exports and finish more cattle in the north, rather than sending them south to feedlots or finishing areas.

Developing northern water resources may also allow the production of grain crops (e.g. maize), energy crops (for biofuel) and high-value horticultural crops for export to Asia, as part of a mixed crop-livestock farming system. This type of farming would reduce market and production risks by moving away from reliance on a single commodity and more effectively using existing labour and capital in the beef industry.

Irrigation infrastructure to support these developments need not be large in scale. Small-scale irrigation, scattered throughout the landscape (termed mosaic irrigation), may be the best way to incorporate improved pastures or crops into existing beef farms.

### *Beef expansion needs more infrastructure*

Industry expansion in the north requires increased access to water and increased infrastructure spending on roads and locally produced fuel to reduce transport costs.

Intensification of the beef industry, based on small-scale irrigated cattle-feed production and fenced 'stand and graze' feeding systems would provide improved year-round access to stock and the ability to fatten the cattle during the dry season.

To expand in the north, the cattle industry has identified that it needs:

- A detailed assessment of the northern water resources to see how much water can be diverted to agriculture;
- Technologies and regulations that allow sustainable development of the northern water resources for food production;
- Renewable energy resources (wind, solar, locally produced biofuels) and tools for 'clean green' cattle production, including methods for reducing methane emissions and offsetting current emissions, for example through tree planting and pasture management;
- Public and private investment in bridges, all-weather roads, ports, abattoirs and communication networks for year-round production and movement of animals;
- More knowledge about suitable pasture improvement, grain production and alternative cropping options for the north;
- More cattle to be grown on Indigenous-owned stations;

- Greater engagement of Indigenous Australians in station management (older people with experience to work on stations and motivate younger generations to work there); and
- Ways of attracting and retaining labour.

The beef industry's status as a major part of the economy, culture and landscape of northern Australia makes it clear that its future and that of the north are inextricably linked.

## Mining

Industry in Cape York is dominated by mining. There are almost 900 residential workers at the bauxite and silica mines of Weipa and Cape Flattery.<sup>25</sup> Together, these provide over \$500 million in ex-mine value of production, 42 per cent of which comes from Weipa.

The mining industry also has significant prospects for growth, for example, Rio Tinto's South of Embley bauxite project for which a feasibility study was being undertaken in 2009.<sup>26</sup> There are also other well known bauxite deposits in the region.

The mining and resources sector presents Indigenous communities and businesses with opportunities for employment and contract work. The mining and resources companies operating in Cape York come to their own commercial arrangements with Indigenous communities and businesses regarding on country work and environmental management contracts. These arrangements are all commercial in confidence, negotiated between the mining and resources companies and the Indigenous communities and/or businesses.

The Rio Tinto Alcan bauxite mining operation at Weipa is economically significant and provides a variety of services to the community as discussed earlier in section 2.3, which provided an outline of the significance of the mining industry to northern Australia and Cape York. The mining operation in Weipa also has the potential to play a role in addressing Indigenous disadvantage and providing economic development opportunities. The following discussion of the Rio Tinto Alcan mining operation is based on excerpts from the *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009*<sup>27</sup> and Chapter Summaries:

---

<sup>25</sup> Brereton, D, et al., 'The minerals industry and land and water development in northern Australia' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land & Water Science Review*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Cribb, J, Harper, G and Stone, P., 'Sustaining growth of the northern beef industry' in [book auth.] CSIRO, *Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review 2009*, Canberra, CSIRO, 2009.

### *Rio Tinto Alcan - Addressing Indigenous disadvantage*

About 18.5 per cent of Weipa's population is Indigenous. This is in stark contrast to the predominantly Indigenous populations of the nearby communities of Aurukun, Napranum, Mapoon and New Mapoon where at least 91–94 per cent of residents are Indigenous. Greater collaboration between Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA) and Indigenous communities has resulted in more jobs for Indigenous people onsite. The company's annual target for Indigenous employment is 17.4 per cent of the total workforce. In 2008 Indigenous employees (181) made up 19.8 per cent of the workforce. In Western Cape communities, social barriers continue to limit people's readiness for work. As a result, RTA is taking a long-term approach to employment and training and is targeting specific communities rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

The company has signed a regional partnership agreement to address socio-economic impediments to local Indigenous people engaging in the local economy. RTA has worked closely with the state government to establish the Western Cape College which focuses on the school-to-work transition and has helped lift rates of school attendance and performance. Since 2000, the number of Indigenous students has increased from 160 to 450. RTA sees itself as a facilitator of small business development, rather than a direct training provider and/or funder of Indigenous enterprises.

In the late 1990s, RTA adopted a change in practice to enter into joint ventures with newly formed Indigenous enterprises. As an example, under the Western Cape Communities Co-existence Agreement (WCCCA), sub-trusts can allocate funds to establish or support local Indigenous businesses. In 2007, the Weipa Multi Purpose Facility passed into the ownership of the Mapoon, Aurukun and Napranum communities, becoming the Western Cape Centre Ltd, an accommodation, training and conference facility located in Weipa which provides cultural awareness training for all employees and contractors in the region, including RTA's workforce.

### *Rio Tinto Alcan - Land and water management*

RTA reports that almost 10,000 hectares have been disturbed since mining commenced, with about 9,000 hectares under rehabilitation – a relatively small proportion of the total land holding of 264,667 hectares. The company's long-term rehabilitation target is a ratio of disturbed to rehabilitated area of as close to 1:1 as possible. The primary uses of water at Weipa are for washing bauxite, suppressing dust on haul roads (particularly in the dry season) and for supplying the workforce and communities. In 2008, RTA used 19,553 mega litres (ML) of water, up by about 2000 ML from 2007. In the same year, it recycled 14,902 ML of water, up from 10,633 ML in 2007. RTA sources water first from tailings dams, then runoff storages, then shallow underground storages (aquifers), and lastly the Great Artesian Basin aquifers.

### *The future of bauxite mining*

In 2008, RTA began a feasibility study to develop a new bauxite operation about 50 kilometres south of Weipa. The new mine would take total annual production to 35 million tonnes, and expand the current operation's mine life by 40 years. New infrastructure required includes a plant, a power station, a

warehouse, workshops, a barge, ferry facilities, and port and ship loading facilities. Chalco and Cape Alumina are also looking at new ventures in the area. This will inevitably place additional pressure on infrastructure and services in the region.

### *Timber salvage on mining leases and plantation forestry opportunities*

Two areas in which contributions can be made to the Cape York economy are currently being proposed by traditional owner groups in Cape York. These are timber salvage from bauxite mining leases and plantation forestry opportunities. Wik Projects' timber salvage proposal on the Rio Tinto/Alcan mining lease south of the Embley River is at an early stage of development but the plan is to harvest up to 8,000m<sup>3</sup> of saw logs per year. It is likely that this would result in employment for at least 20 people for the harvesting and haulage operation.

North of the Embley River, an Indigenous-owned business called Nanum Tawap ('tawap' combines the first letter of each of the five main clan groups in the Napranum area), has been operating a small scale timber salvage and sawmilling operation based on lands covered by the Rio Tinto/Alcan mining lease, as outlined in the Australian Government's 2005 National Indigenous Forestry Strategy. Plans are currently being developed by Nanum Tawap to expand the scale of their timber salvage and sawmilling operations.

Timber salvage has been a largely untapped economic opportunity for Indigenous people. Indigenous people are in a position to negotiate favourable conditions leading to economic and community outcomes with companies mining on their land. Negotiating to fell and process timber identified as valuable and useful prior to clearing for mining has the potential to provide employment, training and economic opportunities for Cape York Indigenous communities.

The National Indigenous Forestry Strategy also identifies agroforestry<sup>28</sup> opportunities on mining leases, which are demonstrated by activities in the Napranum Indigenous community. Over the past few years, the community of Napranum has established agroforestry plantation systems, with support from Rio Tinto/Alcan and the Queensland state Department of Employment, Economic Development and Industry (DEEDI). Recent plantation trials have included high-value species such as Sandalwood and African Mahogany. The results of these trials can be used to assist in the development of plantation forest development proposals in Cape York, particularly in areas cleared for mining.

---

<sup>28</sup> Agroforestry is a type of plantation forestry which aims to combine other agricultural values along with plantation forestry values; for example mixing crops with trees or mixing livestock with trees.

In regard to plantation forestry opportunities more generally, there is opportunity under the *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007* for Indigenous communities to clear native vegetation for the purpose of establishing plantations. This opportunity is unique to Indigenous communities in Cape York and allows for economic development while protecting the unique environmental values of Cape York. There is also potential for the development of a native forest harvesting and milling industry over aboriginal freehold land to supply local housing development and, potentially, supply other markets/communities in Cape York. Good timbers, such as Darwin stringy bark, would lend themselves to harvesting, but would require investment in silviculture practices appropriate for sustainable harvesting in Cape York.

#### **4.5. Government programs and initiatives**

##### **Framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia**

The Australian Government's approach to the sustainable economic development of northern Australia has been the development of the Government's policy framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia and the establishment of the Office of Northern Australia (ONA).

ONA was established in March 2008 to provide advice to Government on priorities and initiatives to promote sustainable economic growth and on barriers that impede northern development, as well as to broker solutions to improve coordination between governments, business and communities across the north. The role of ONA includes:

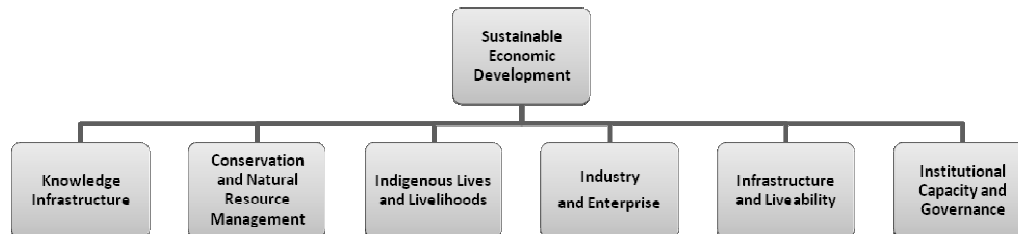
- Awareness: Building consensus across the diverse range of stakeholders in northern Australia on their future aspirations and priorities;
- Advocacy: To be an informed and proactive advocate for northern Australia and its sustained economic development; and
- Alignment: Fostering cooperation and collaboration to deliver positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

Through ONA, the Australian Government has identified those policy initiatives that are aimed at the sustainable economic development of northern Australia. These can be defined across six themes:

- Support for good science and the development of critical knowledge infrastructure;
- Active natural resource management;
- Respect for Indigenous peoples' interests in land and water and recognition of the need to improve Indigenous lives and livelihoods;
- Support for efficient industry and enterprise;

- Investment in critical infrastructure and improving the liveability of communities; and
- Ensuring strong and effective institutional capacity and governance.

Together these policy themes make up the Government's *Framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia* (the Framework) (see figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1 A framework for the sustainable development of northern Australia**

Within each policy stream, or pillar of the Framework, there are a range of programs and initiatives being pursued by the Australian Government, which are described more fully in this section. Together these programs and initiatives represent a substantial and broad based commitment by the Government to the sustainable development of northern Australia generally and, in some cases, to north Queensland and the Cape York region more specifically.

In addition to this, there are also a range of Government initiatives which strengthen implementation of the Framework. These initiatives are focused on: building consensus among northern stakeholders; improving collaboration across the northern jurisdictions; and improving coordination across the Australian Government. These initiatives are part of the Government's recently announced Northern Australia Sustainable Futures initiative (an initial response to the Northern Land and Water Taskforce) and coordinated by ONA.

#### *Building consensus through meaningful engagement*

A challenge facing all governments is balancing the competing views and values of a diverse range of stakeholders. The sustainable development of northern Australia requires governments to balance the development of the region's significant economic potential with the protection of its unique cultural and environmental landscapes.

This task is complicated by significant gaps in our understanding and knowledge of the nature and scale of natural and economic resources in northern Australia. In Cape York these tensions are amplified.

Meaningful engagement with all key stakeholders is critical and a strong sense of local values, informed by those who have a genuine stake in the region, is vital if governments, industry and communities are to deliver outcomes that are genuinely sustainable. Indigenous Australians have an intrinsic connectedness to their country. Further, desired outcomes for the community will only be realised if the community itself is involved in planning and development.

In Cape York, the Far North Queensland and Torres Strait Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committee provides an effective means of engaging with the local community and informing government of community views. The Australian Government has undertaken to strengthen the RDA network across Australia, including in Queensland and the Cape York Region.

Through the recently established *Northern Australia Ministerial Forum*, which includes the Australian Government and the governments of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, a Northern Australia Indigenous Forum is being established to ensure the voice and views of Indigenous leaders is heard in policy debate on the sustainable development of northern Australia.

#### *Collaboration to address key barriers*

Northern Australia is a vast, but largely underdeveloped region. Remoteness, coupled with the topography and monsoonal weather patterns of the region presents a host of challenges. Access to infrastructure, energy (3-phase power), services (health and education), skilled labour and business support – which are often taken for granted in urban and many regional areas of Australia – is typically costly, problematic, or both.

Addressing these barriers requires strong leadership and effective collaboration between Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, as well as across the three tiers of government.

The Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce (the Taskforce), which reported to the Australian Government in December 2009, provided a valuable and concise assessment of key opportunities and barriers to development in northern Australia. The \$6 million *Northern Australia Sustainable Futures* program was developed as an initial Australian Government response to the Taskforce. The program includes measures that address the need for:

- National leadership and inter-jurisdictional dialogue and collaboration;
- Enhanced Indigenous and community engagement in policy and planning;

- Development of sustainable careers and business opportunities for Indigenous people in northern and remote communities;
- Improved understanding of regional infrastructure investment priorities;
- Improved water management; and
- Improved understanding of opportunities and risks to sustainable development in the northern beef industry.

*A new ministerial forum for the north*

The establishment of the *Northern Australia Ministerial Forum* (the Ministerial Forum), and its supporting infrastructure (the Standing Committee of Officials, the Indigenous Sustainable Development Forum and Experts Panel), is a key part of the *Northern Australia Sustainable Futures* program. The Ministerial Forum provides a focal point for improving strategic leadership and strengthening collaboration between the Australian Government and the three northern jurisdictions. Through the Ministerial Forum, governments are working together to promote opportunities and address key constraints to growth across the north.

At the inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Forum on 13 December 2010, Ministers agreed to focus on the following priority areas:

1. Infrastructure;
2. Water;
3. Energy;
4. Indigenous employment and skills shortages; and
5. Service delivery, with a focus on the National Broadband Network and the delivery of health and education services.

Building on work anticipated in the *Northern Australia Sustainable Futures* program, Ministers have agreed to collectively fund further work to scope northern Australian infrastructure priorities, including:

- Future infrastructure needs;
- Future energy needs; and
- Future skilled labour needs.

When future infrastructure needs are identified, it will be necessary to target funding for project development and implementation in areas such as Cape York and the Gulf. Indeed, a successful model undertaking such work is already underway in the Kimberley through the East Kimberley Development Project, which is a cross portfolio and cross government project. Opportunities exist in Cape York to work closely with the RDA network, state counterparts and shire councils in administering projects.

Through its *Northern Australia Sustainable Futures* program, the Australian Government has committed \$1.9 million to assess contemporary risks and opportunities facing the northern beef industry.



Through the Ministerial Forum, this work is being further developed to reflect priorities and initiatives underway across the three northern jurisdictions, including the *Queensland Beef 2020 Framework*.

Access to water and the sustainable development of water resources is also a critical challenge for governments. Across northern Australia, water is a seasonally scarce, valuable and contested resource. In the National Water Initiative, COAG set a framework for a fair, evidence-based and sustainable distribution of water between users and across uses. Any new development in northern Australia demands research, consultation and planning – and it must be consistent with the principles of the National Water Initiative.

#### *Coordination to promote critical opportunities*

ONA is working with other Australian Government agencies to better coordinate the delivery of national services and the implementation of programs to support development in northern Australia. Identifying and promoting new development opportunities, and expanding key sectors such as the mining, tourism, pastoral, horticulture and fisheries industries, are priorities for the Australian Government.

The minerals, land and water resources of northern Australia offer enormous economic potential, including in the Cape York region. If properly managed, these resources will not only ensure the long term economic future of the north but will also underpin the nation's long term future prosperity. The region's natural and cultural landscapes are also of significant economic value. They help underpin the multibillion dollar tourism industry, as well as the commercial and recreational fishing industries of northern Australia. Moreover, the conservation economy (including natural resource management) is a critically important part of the northern economy.

A key challenge facing governments is how to best support increased participation of Indigenous Australians in natural resource management, through programs such as the Caring for Country Indigenous Ranger program. Support needs to consider the organisational capacity of Indigenous groups, appropriate timeframes for new groups to build governance and administrative capacity to host ranger positions and processes to ensure that activities appropriately engage Traditional Owners and deliver on the aspirations of Indigenous people more broadly.

The Framework, and the three initiatives described above designed to strengthen its implementation, shows the significant industry opportunities present in the northern Queensland region and Wild River areas as well as the wealth of government activity aimed at taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming the various natural barriers facing the region.

The governance structure provided through the Ministerial Forum, with consultation, communication and coordination through the RDA network, is one way of drawing together in a coherent way all the disparate elements of government activity relating to Indigenous economic development across the north.

### **Knowledge infrastructure**

The following government programs and initiatives assist in the Framework's aim to support good science and the development of critical knowledge infrastructure.

#### *Northern Australia Water Futures Assessment*

The objective of the Northern Australia Water Futures Assessment (NAWFA) is to provide an enduring knowledge base to inform protection and development of northern Australia's water resources, so that any development or protection proceeds in an ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable manner.

Funding of \$13 million from the Raising National Water Standards program is committed, over the period 2007/8 to 2011/12, to projects designed to take forward the work of the NAWFA.

The NAWFA is comprised of four programs:

- The Water Resources Program, which develops a better understanding of water availability in northern Australia;
- The Ecological Program, which aims to identify and understand key water dependent ecological assets in northern Australia, and to understand the risks to the values of those assets arising from changes in the hydrological regime;
- The Cultural and Social Program, which aims to understand the socio-cultural values, beliefs and practices associated with water and how they may be affected by changes in water availability; and
- The Knowledge Base Program, which aims to provide a central point of access to information, both existing and generated by the NAWFA, which will assist decision making by stakeholders.

The Northern Australia Sustainable Yields (NASY) project was undertaken by CSIRO as part of the Water Resources Program. Results of the NASY project were released in September 2009. A key finding of the work was that despite popular perceptions that northern Australia has a surplus of water, the climate is extremely seasonal and the landscape may be described as annually water limited.

### *Northern Australia Data Development project*

The Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce highlighted the critical lack of data on northern, regional and remote Australia. Knowledge and data gaps are impeding the evidence base for investment priorities and decisions in northern Australia. The sustainable development of northern Australia needs to be underpinned by quality data, targeted research and thorough analysis.

In response to the Taskforce findings, ONA will implement the *Northern Australia Data Development* project. This project will work with regional leaders to identify how government can build on the work of the Australian Bureau of Statistics to improve the coverage and quality of regional and remote social and economic statistics.

### *Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation*

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rural Development Research and Development (R&D) Plan 2010-15 aims to outline the rationale for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rural Development R&D Program that RIRDC will manage on behalf of Indigenous people and the Australian Government. It will also provide clear signals concerning R&D needs and priorities for the period 2010 to 2015. This plan has a national approach.

### *James Cook University funding*

DIISR provides research and infrastructure funding to James Cook University (JCU) to support the development of world class research facilities across northern Queensland such as the Australian Tropical Forest Institute, the Queensland Tropical Health Alliance and the Australian Tropical Science and Innovation Precinct;

Additionally, in 2010, JCU will receive a university research block grant (RBG) of approximately \$17.85 million, placing the university 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 41 universities receiving RBG funding. In 2010, the university will receive funding for 32 commencing Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) places as part of the *Scholarships for a Competitive Future*; (which was the same as last year). It also received funding for three commencing International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) places, which was a decrease from four in 2009.

The Australian Research Council (ARC) provides funding to JCU (campuses in Townsville, Cairns and on Thursday Island) for a range of activities through the *Discovery Projects* scheme, and the *Linkage Projects* scheme. JCU has been awarded funding for 18 research projects commencing in 2010. JCU is the administering organisation for the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies and is the recipient of funding under the *Super Science* initiative, for example to investigate 'Resilience of Coral Reef Ecosystems to Climate Change'.

Total funding for research projects commencing in 2010 at JCU is \$7.9 million (over the life of the projects). JCU has also been awarded two *Super Science Fellowship* projects, one commencing in 2010 and the other in 2011. The funding for the two projects is worth \$0.56 and \$0.84 million, respectively.

The outcomes of these research projects are a critical contribution to the knowledge base used to ensure sustainable economic development and environmental management in the Cape York region.

#### *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies*

DIISR supports the work of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), a leading institution for information and research in the field of Australian Indigenous studies. The activities of AIATSIS aim to improve Australian and international knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies, and raise awareness of the richness and diversity of Australian Indigenous cultures, which has a direct connection with many Aboriginal communities in Far North Queensland.

AIATSIS, under its Return for Materials to Indigenous Australians (ROMTIC) program, has provided items from its audio-visual collection free-of-charge to Indigenous families and communities across Cape York (in particular Doomadgee, Yarrabah, Hopevale and the Cape York Land Council) for both personal and family use.

AIATSIS' Native Title Representative Unit (NTRU) has also been assisting Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBC) and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) including the Djabugay in Kuranda and the Torres Strait PBCs, with whom it has entered into Research Action Partnerships through its PBC project. Both have been the focus of case studies which will be published in 2011 and of planning workshops, facilitated respectively by Toni Bauman and Dr Lisa Strelein. Representatives of PBCs from Far North Queensland including Hopevale Congress Aboriginal Corporation, Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Kuku Yalanji, Ngan Aak Kunch Aboriginal Corporation (Wik and Wik-Way Peoples), Thaa-Nguigaar Strathgordon Aboriginal Corporation and Walmbaar Aboriginal Corporation were invited to two national PBC meetings coordinated by the NTRU and are part of a national email network managed by the NTRU.

#### *Cooperative Research Centres Program*

The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program supports end-user driven research collaborations to address clearly articulated major challenges facing Australia, many of which are global challenges. The Invasive Animals CRC has professional research staff located in Far North Queensland. The Invasive Animals CRC aims to counteract the

environmental, social and economic impacts of invasive animals through new technologies and integration of strategic pest management approaches across agencies and jurisdictions. The Invasive Animals CRC is receiving \$29.6 million in CRC Program funding from 2005-06 to 2012-13. The CRC for Beef Genetic Technologies' research programs focus on improving the competitiveness of Australian beef businesses. This CRC is receiving \$30 million in CRC Program funding from 2005-06 to 2012-13.

The CRC for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) is receiving \$32.5 million in funding to support the Government's commitment to close the gap. The CRC-REP has three principal research goals:

- To build resilience and strengthen regional communities;
- To build new enterprises and strengthen existing industries; and
- To improve education and training pathways in remote areas.

The Centre's research programs will focus on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities, and the industries that provide the economic lifeblood of remote Australia – mining, pastoralism, energy production and tourism.

#### *Australian Institute of Marine Sciences*

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) conducts research that underpins the protection and sustainable use of the Great Barrier Reef. AIMS is receiving \$55 million through the Super Science Initiative for the Tropical Marine Research Facilities project at their bases in Townsville and Darwin. The infrastructure developed through this project will be used to conduct research for and in areas such as the Great Barrier Reef.

The Australian Government places continued focus on collaborative research and involvement with the Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility and with CSIRO, AIMS and the Queensland Government to build critical mass for research capacity.

#### *Daintree Rainforest Observatory*

JCU is receiving \$9.37 million to establish the Daintree Rainforest Observatory (Observatory), to be built on Cape Tribulation. JCU will co-invest \$4.5 million over five years to run the Observatory.

The Observatory will be funded from the \$35 million investment in the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN). The observatory will complement elements of the TERN project, which is being developed now to enhance ecosystem research.

The project will establish a world-class and unique research, education and outreach facility in Australia's wet tropics.

### *Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation*

*Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)* is conducting far reaching research into water in the Top End (including Far North Queensland). Through the use of isotopic and nuclear techniques, ANSTO scientists (and their collaborators) are creating a map of the water sources and availability in the Australian interior and Top End.

For example, Gregory River, Riversleigh: The Gregory River is located adjacent to the Gulf of Carpentaria in far north-western Queensland. It is one of the most renowned perennial systems in the Top End of Australia that supports multiple species living along and adjacent to the river banks. The Gregory River has been classified as a 'Wild River' under the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* and *Wild Rivers and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007*. To date, the understanding of the water in this region and its source has been scarce and under researched. However, through the use of nuclear tools, this research is investigating the degree of connections and interchange between ground and surface waters, which is providing a baseline understanding of the available water and where it comes from. This understanding is important for water resource management in a region where water is a scarce commodity.

### *Australian Research Council*

A total of 40 research projects relevant to issues affecting Indigenous economic development across Australia have been approved for funding since 2005 (inclusive) under the ARC's Discovery Projects, Linkage Projects scheme and Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development schemes. ARC funding for these projects totals approximately \$11.6 million. While not focusing on Queensland, these research activities are likely to have broader impacts on Indigenous economic development across Australia into the future.

This research builds the capacity of Australians to effectively develop sustainable economic development plans that support and progress responsible environmental management of the country's natural resources and habitats. Industry and research agencies are supporting and working towards improving the balance being sought between long term sustainable economic development and the preservation of environmental and cultural values.

### **ARC Project example 1**

#### **Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development (commencement year – 2011)**

*Total funding* \$198,824                      *Administering organisation* University of South Australia

*Investigators* Mr Lewis W O'Brien; Dr Irene Watson; A/Prof John W Boland;  
Dr Suzi J Hutchings

*Project Title* Indigenous knowledge: Water sustainability and wild fire mitigation

*Abstract* This project examines the relationship between Australian Indigenous practices of vegetation, water management, "fire-stick" farming, tree planting and strategic land clearing to that of Australian mainstream environmental practices. The available research on Indigenous practices of environmental management is mostly from non-Indigenous perspectives. The project is led by an Indigenous Kurna elder with considerable knowledge of Indigenous methods and practices and will engage in cross-cultural translation of environmental management methodologies and practises. The project will contribute to and expand upon the existing research knowledge base and create a space in which Indigenous knowledge engages with science and environmental management.

*National Benefit* Sustainable management of the environment in Australia is currently informed by science. This project will create a space for cross-cultural translation between Indigenous knowledge on environmental management practices and mainstream science practices.

### **ARC Project example 2**

#### **Linkage Project (commencement year – 2011)**

*Total funding* \$254,682                      *Administering organisation* Charles Sturt University

*Investigators* Morrison Prof Mark D; Prof Dennis L Foley; Prof Jock H Collins; Dr Branka Krivokapic-Skoko; Dr Parikshit K Basu; Mr David K Brudenall; Mr Matthew B Nogrady; Ms Anne M Redman

*Project Title* Determining the factors influencing the success of private and community-owned Indigenous businesses across remote, regional and urban Australia

*Abstract* This project will provide the strengthened research base necessary to enhance the development of evidence based strategies that can improve the uptake rate and success of Indigenous Enterprises. The project will collect information about the current types of Indigenous Enterprises, factors influencing their success, and programs that could be provided to assist with their establishment and development. To achieve these aims, the project will use a mixed method approach, including stakeholder interviews and surveys. This research will be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of academics from Charles Sturt University, University of Technology Sydney and the University of Newcastle.

*National Benefit* The main benefit of this project is a thorough understanding of the challenges facing Indigenous enterprises in a range of geographical, economic and social settings. The research will identify and determine the importance of a broad range of factors that influence the success of Indigenous enterprises.

### **ARC Project example 3**

#### **Discovery Projects (commencement year – 2008)**

*Total funding* \$536,666      *Administering organisation* The Australian National University

*Investigators* Prof JC Altman

*Project Title* Hybrid economic futures for remote Indigenous Australia: Linking poverty reduction and natural resource management

*Abstract* Featuring a new Indigenous hybrid economy model that recognises a distinctive customary sector alongside market and state sectors, this project will promulgate a path-breaking means to address entrenched Indigenous Australian under-development and dependence in remote Australia. Focusing on the 20 per cent of the Australian continent that is under Indigenous ownership, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural approaches and international collaborations will investigate how enhanced engagements in the hybrid economy can improve the livelihoods of Indigenous people. Such engagement will generate national biodiversity, social and financial benefits. This new approach will interest encapsulated Indigenous minorities elsewhere in the world.

*National Benefit* In the 21st century the Indigenous population of sparsely-settled Australia will increase rapidly. This population has historically experienced extremely low socioeconomic status. With land rights and native title, a significant ecologically intact estate, now over 20 per cent of Australia is under Indigenous ownership. This research will explore how enhanced Indigenous involvement in customary (non market) activities, natural and cultural resource management, and new industries can generate economic and social benefits for remote Indigenous communities that lack access to the market. National benefits will be generated from enhanced biodiversity conservation, and from cost savings associated with improved socio-economic status.

### **Conservation, carbon farming and natural resource management**

The following government programs and initiatives assist in the Framework's aim to support active natural resource management. A discussion of carbon farming is also included in this section.

The conservation of the natural heritage assets of Cape York Peninsula and the efficient and sustainable use of its natural resources are important to ensuring sustainable communities.

Initiatives including Caring for our Country and Working on Country and the National Reserve System and Indigenous Protected Area programs contribute to Indigenous economic development by supporting the management of these environmental assets and by providing community skills, knowledge and training for real job opportunities in the natural resource management and other sectors.

#### *Caring for our Country*

Through the Caring for our Country initiative, the Australian Government funds natural resource management (NRM) projects across Australia.



Caring for our Country business plans acknowledge the unique knowledge and skills that Indigenous people bring to the delivery of conservation outcomes. Priorities for government investment therefore include the reinvigoration and use of traditional ecological knowledge and the implementation of land and sea country management plans by Indigenous communities to underpin biodiversity conservation outcomes.

Caring for our Country focuses on six national priority areas: the National Reserve System, biodiversity and natural icons, coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats, sustainable farm practices, natural resource management in northern and remote Australia and community skills, knowledge and engagement.

The Reef Rescue component of Caring for our Country includes a \$10 million commitment to the Indigenous Land and Sea Country Partnerships Program which is delivered by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Through this program, Traditional Owners are being supported to undertake sea country management activities that involve expanding Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs) in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and strengthening communications between local communities, managers and reef stakeholders to build a better understanding of Traditional Owner issues.

Caring for our Country also provides funding of \$9.1 million over four years to the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance to examine the science and applicability of Indigenous burning approaches in four regions in northern Australia (including Cape York) and the potential opportunities that these might present in the emerging carbon and related markets.

The Cape York region receives \$1.53 million annually in base-level funding under Caring for our Country. In the past this has been provided to a number of organisations for NRM initiatives. In May of 2010 a regional NRM organisation was formed in Cape York with financial assistance from the Australian and Queensland governments. The organisation's elected Board has 50 per cent Indigenous membership and will be responsible for developing projects until 2013 for the \$1.53 million annual base-level funding. All of the current regional projects in Cape York, as well as the successful 2010/11 Caring for our Country competitive grant projects (totalling \$405,000) have strong Indigenous involvement.

#### *Working on Country/Indigenous Rangers*

The Working on Country program is part of the Caring for our Country initiative and is the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' (DSEWPaC) most significant contributor to Indigenous natural and cultural resource management and economic development in Queensland.

Working on Country aims to:

- Support Indigenous aspirations in caring for country;
- Protect, conserve and manage Australia's environment and heritage values;
- Contribute to Closing the Gap targets by providing a career pathway and opportunity for Indigenous people to enter into real jobs in the land and sea management sector; and
- Provide nationally accredited training for Indigenous people in land and sea management, in partnership with industry and others.

Over five years to 30 June 2013, \$67.5 million has been committed to employ approximately 200 Indigenous people in land and sea management in northern Queensland. Of this, around \$36 million (employing around 100 Indigenous land managers) is in proposed and declared Wild River catchments, though it is important to note that the Australian Government investment is independent of Wild River declarations and policy.

Indigenous Rangers are also funded through the Cape York regional allocation, with \$557,500 allocated across three projects in 2009-10.

#### *National Reserve System*

The National Reserve System (NRS) protects over 102 million hectares (13 per cent) of Australia's landmass in a network of over 9,400 protected areas, including Indigenous Protected Areas.

Under the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative (2008-2013), the NRS is a priority area of investment and the initiative aims to expand protected areas by at least 125 million hectares (a 25 per cent increase) over the five years.

NRS funds are used to help purchase land to establish permanently protected areas, and support projects to establish protected areas on private land. Both of these uses provide opportunities to increase Indigenous title and management of conservation land on Cape York.

The NRS funding program has invested \$8.5 million over 12 years in the Cape York Peninsula bioregion to support the purchase of four properties covering a total of 576,900 hectares. The management of these reserves is integrated into regional and local economies to build community capacity and facilitate delivery of environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits.

#### *Indigenous Protected Areas*

The Australian Government supports Indigenous communities to manage Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) for conservation as part of Australia's

network of protected areas. IPAs are non-legislative arrangements where Indigenous landowners have committed to managing their land for conservation.

IPAs are an element of the Caring for our Country initiative. The goals of IPAs are to:

- Support Indigenous land owners to develop, declare and manage Protected Areas on their lands as part of Australia's National Reserve System;
- Support Indigenous interests to develop cooperative management arrangements with Government agencies managing protected areas; and
- Support the integration of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge with contemporary protected area management practices.

The three Indigenous Protected Areas projects in Cape York cover approximately 835,000 hectares and are supported by \$1.2 million of committed funding.

There are strong links between IPAs and the Working on Country program as the IPA management plans provide a basis for ongoing employment for Indigenous Land Managers.

The declared Kaanju Ngaachi IPA, which encompasses Kaanju traditional homelands along the Wenlock and Pascoe Rivers, employs both Working on Country as well as Queensland Government funded Wild River rangers to deliver land management outcomes.

### *Carbon Farming Initiative*

Under the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI), the Government intends to establish a mechanism for crediting abatement from a range of land based emissions sources and sinks. The initiative will provide new economic opportunities for farmers, forest growers and landholders and will help the environment by reducing carbon pollution. The Government will develop legislation for the scheme to provide long-term certainty to participants and underpin the environmental integrity and market value of carbon credits. The Government intends to introduce legislation for the CFI in the first half of 2011.

The scheme could enable crediting of a range of land sector abatement activities, including:

- Reforestation and revegetation;
- Reduced methane emissions from livestock digestion;
- Reduced fertiliser emissions;
- Manure management;

- Reduced emissions or increased sequestration in agricultural soils (soil carbon);
- Savannah fire management;
- Avoided deforestation;
- Forest management;
- Reduced emissions from burning of stubble/crop residue;
- Reduced emissions from rice cultivation; and
- Reduced emissions from landfill waste deposited before 1 July 2011.

The Government has released a consultation paper, draft legislation and draft methodology guidelines for the scheme. Information will continue to be released as details of the scheme are developed and the Government makes further progress towards implementation.

## **Discussion: Natural resource management and Indigenous economic development**

The Australian Government's Natural Resource Management (NRM) programs employ a significant number of Indigenous people in Cape York. The Australian Government is committed to further developing the Indigenous natural and cultural resource management sector to better contribute to efforts to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The issues surrounding Indigenous employment in Cape York have been visited a number of times in the past.<sup>29</sup> Most stress that there is no one-solution-fits-all approach, and that the circumstances of individual communities are powerful drivers influencing the degree of work-readiness and attitudes of its citizens, including their willingness to move to where jobs may be had or to be involved in local enterprises. In many aspects, programs such as Working on Country have addressed the issues raised in these analyses, with a recent evaluation of the program undertaken by Walter Turnbull indicating that:

“Working on Country is a well functioning program and feedback received from participants, community and other stakeholders in relation to the program was overwhelmingly positive. The opportunity for Indigenous people undertaking environmental work on their own land has been recognised as one of, if not the most appropriate means of promoting employment and economic wellbeing within an Indigenous community.”

Caring for our Country initiatives position Indigenous people as key partners with governments in managing Queensland's natural estate. These programs provide important economic activity, especially in remote parts of northern Queensland, where Indigenous Australians have a competitive advantage (Indigenous owned land; traditional and cultural knowledge; natural resource management expertise and proximity to regional opportunities such as mining). The Australian Government's soon-to-be finalised *Indigenous Economic Development Strategy* will be a key driver of Indigenous and mainstream government programs, creating the incentive and environment for greater Indigenous economic participation in the natural and cultural resource management sector.

The Australian Government is undertaking an analysis of the Indigenous land and sea management sector in northern Australia (including Queensland) to explore the potential for this sector to support increased participation in environmental and land management services.

Research has shown that active Indigenous involvement in cultural and natural resource management (via the above programs or similar) has a range of benefits, including

---

<sup>29</sup> Kleinhardt-FGI Pty Ltd/Business Mapping Solutions Pty Ltd (2005) *Cape York Indigenous Employment Strategy - Local Jobs for Local People*. Report prepared for the Department of Department of Employment & Workplace Relations, Department of Employment & Training.

The Department of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Policy and Cape York Institute (2007) *Creating an effective natural resource management economy for Cape York Peninsula*. Cairns: Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation.

improved environmental outcomes, health benefits, economic development and other socio-cultural benefits.<sup>30</sup> These programs provide a practical basis for converting Indigenous rights and interests (including native title rights) into concrete economic opportunities. In this regard these programs make a valuable contribution to the Closing the Gap targets, especially those related to economic development.

Indigenous people have, through their uptake of the Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Area programs, demonstrated their determination to be active in the landscape. One of the most powerful recent expressions of that determination is the Indigenous ranger movement, where Indigenous land and sea management groups have developed in the majority of Indigenous communities in northern Queensland. A significant number of participants in the ranger movement have used this opportunity as an entry point into other NRM based enterprises.

The clear way to increase Indigenous economic development while preserving environmental and cultural values is through the expansion of programs such as Working on Country and Indigenous Protected Areas. There are already a number of Indigenous groups and communities in Queensland that have expressed a strong interest in these programs but are currently unable to participate due to funding availability. In addition, the continued determination of native title claims and tenure resolution processes in Queensland are adding significant tracts of land to the Indigenous estate; the management of these areas is not adequately supported as part of those determinations.

The Indigenous land and sea management sector requires ongoing support to continue to deliver environmental, cultural, employment and economic development outcomes. Indigenous groups operating in the sector need sufficient operational capacity, organisational stability and robust corporate governance. With these foundations in place a number of land and sea groups have expanded their operations to work with a variety of businesses, government agencies and industries operating in, or with responsibilities for, cultural and natural resource management.

---

<sup>30</sup> CSIRO (2007) *Healthy Country, Healthy People: Supporting Indigenous Engagement in the Sustainable Management of Northern Territory Land and Seas*. CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems.

## *National and world heritage*

The Australian Government, through DSEWPaC, identifies, protects and promotes Australian places of outstanding value to the nation and world, including through national heritage and world heritage.

The National Heritage List has been established to list places of outstanding heritage significance to Australia. It includes natural, historic and Indigenous places that are of outstanding national heritage value to the Australian nation.

World heritage sites are places that have universal value that transcends the value they hold for a particular nation. These qualities are expressed in the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (the World Heritage Convention). The World Heritage Convention aims to promote cooperation among nations to protect heritage from around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations.

Sites that are nominated for world heritage listing are inscribed on the list only after they have been carefully assessed as representing the best examples of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Only the Australian Government can nominate Australian places for entry on this list. The World Heritage Committee assesses nominated places against set criteria and makes the final decision as to the places that are included on the World Heritage List.

There are many benefits to a property being inscribed on the World Heritage List, including increased tourist visitation, increases in employment opportunities and income for local communities, and better management and protection of the place. Listing is often accompanied by greater scrutiny of a place, given its internationally acknowledged importance. The Australian Government assists world heritage properties by providing resources for strengthening management and improving interpretation and visitor facilities.

In the case of properties such as the Tasmanian Wilderness, the Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, world heritage listing has featured in promotions that have resulted in greatly increased tourist visitation from overseas and within Australia.

A 2008 report to the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts into the economic activity of Australia's world heritage properties highlights the value of these universally significant places to Australia's national, regional and local economies.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Gillespie Economics, *Economic Activity of Australia's World Heritage Areas*, Report to the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2008.

The report examined 15 of Australia's then 17 world heritage properties. In accordance with the standard practice in regional economic impact assessments of protected areas, the methodology analysed all expenditure associated with visitors to the world heritage areas. The world heritage areas in Queensland considered by the report were Fraser Island, the Wet Tropics of Queensland, the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh) and the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia. The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area was not included in the report.

At a regional level, Queensland's world heritage areas were estimated to contribute over \$4 billion in annual direct and indirect regional output or business turnover; \$1.8 billion in annual direct and indirect regional value added; and \$1.2 billion in direct and indirect regional household income. Queensland's world heritage areas were estimated to contribute over 24,000 direct and indirect state jobs. The report estimated the gross economic value of tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area at \$426 million in 2007.

The Government is committed to working with the Queensland Government and Traditional Owners to pursue world heritage listing for appropriate areas of Cape York, recognising the importance of Australian Government leadership and the consent of Traditional Owners.

A successful world heritage nomination will require thorough assessment of the special values of Cape York, the involvement of all key stakeholders, and the consent of Traditional Owners. The completion of a world heritage nomination is likely to take a number of years.

A draft Roadmap to World Heritage agreed by the Australian and Queensland governments provides for agreement of a Traditional Owner consent model and process and the conduct of social and economic cost benefit analyses to inform Traditional Owner consent.

#### *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*

The Australian Government is committed to protecting and sustaining the Great Barrier Reef as it has enormous heritage and tourism value. The Great Barrier Reef is a significant element in the Australian economy which, along with other attractions in the region, contributes \$6.9 billion annually. A 2007 Access Economics report concluded that the total economic contribution of tourism, commercial fishing, and cultural and recreational activity to the Great Barrier Reef Catchment Area in 2005-06 was around \$4.5 billion.<sup>32</sup> The Great Barrier Reef Catchment Area includes the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and much of the Cape York

---

<sup>32</sup> Access Economics Pty Ltd, *Economic Contribution of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park*, 2007.



Peninsula. The contribution to employment was about 44,000 persons. Tourism dominates these economic and employment contributions, comprising about 80-85 per cent.

In December 2008, the Australian Government, under the Caring for Our Country initiative, committed \$10 million over five years towards the Reef Rescue Indigenous Land and Sea Country Partnerships Program. The program, delivered by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) aims to establish collaborative and sustainable sea country management arrangements with Traditional Owners to conserve biodiversity, protect all heritage values and contribute to the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. The GBRMPA's Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee provides strategic advice in regards to the conduct of the program. The Program is designed to:

- Expand the Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement program within the Reef catchment;
- Develop sea country management plans; and
- Strengthen communication between local communities, managers and reef stakeholders and build better understanding of Traditional Owner issues about the management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The GBRMPA has accredited a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) prepared by the Wuthathi Traditional Owners from Cape York and is a signatory to an Indigenous Land Use Agreement covering sea country with the Kuuku Ya'u Traditional owners.

The program is presently supporting engagement with a number of other Cape York Traditional Owner clan groups with a view to developing TUMRAs. The program supports additional Indigenous Project Managers and Indigenous Community Compliance Liaison Officers working in Cape York and also provides a range of opportunities for Traditional Owners. These opportunities include training on compliance and sea country management related matters and a range of responsible sea country management related activities and exercises.

The program is closely coordinated with other Caring for our Country Indigenous Partnerships initiatives, in particular the Indigenous Protected Areas initiative and the Working on Country initiative. The program will also contribute to the Government's Closing the Gap initiative.

### *Water for the Future*

Through programs under the Government's 'Water for the Future' framework, the Australian Government contributes to the delivery of economic development for Indigenous people in northern Queensland.

The National Water Initiative (NWI), agreed to by all jurisdictions, is Australia's enduring blueprint for water reform. Through it, governments across Australia have agreed on actions to achieve a more cohesive national approach to the way Australia manages, measures, plans for, prices, and trades water.

The NWI provides for:

- Indigenous representation in water planning;
- Water plans to incorporate Indigenous social, spiritual and customary objectives and strategies; and
- Water plans to take account of the possible existence of native title rights to water.

### *Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy*

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) administers the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS). Through this strategy, AQIS conducts animal and plant health surveillance activities in remote coastal areas between Broome and Cairns (including the Torres Strait).

NAQS surveillance activities (since the program's inception in 1989) have routinely included engagement with Indigenous communities in coastal areas of northern Australia, noting the unique role that they play in assisting detections of exotic pests, weeds and diseases, and facilitating NAQS survey delivery on their lands.

As part of Australian Government initiatives to address biosecurity risks arising from foreign vessel activities in northern Australia, NAQS has increased its level of formal engagement (via fee-for-service arrangements) with Indigenous communities on a variety of measures that support NAQS surveillance and monitoring in relation to the foreign vessel risk pathway. Activities include insect trapping, blood collection from feral animals, weed and plant disease collection, wood boring pest surveillance, and participation in NAQS field surveys.

The NAQS program currently operates eight service delivery contracts with various Indigenous ranger and other representative groups in Cape York.

NAQS currently employs several Community Liaison Officers at various locations within the NAQS surveillance zone (including Weipa and Bamaga in Cape York) in order to support the Program's Indigenous engagement and pest and disease surveillance activities.

In addition to the measures above, NAQS operates a network of officers on each inhabited island in Torres Strait, and Bamaga in Cape York's Northern Peninsula Area (NPA), to help manage quarantine risks moving southward from Papua New Guinea to Cape York and other mainland

regions via the Torres Strait. Current program resourcing includes employment of 21 Indigenous staff from the Torres Strait and NPA communities.

### *Building Markets in Environmental and Land Management Services*

The Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce found that that conservation and management of the land and water resources are critical to the economy of northern Australia. The Taskforce also found that economic opportunities exist for Indigenous people to build on their comparative advantage in providing customary and commercial services on the vast Indigenous estate.

In response to the Taskforce findings, ONA will implement the *Building Markets in Environmental and Land Management Services* project. This project proposes to test the concept of a market based approach to pursuing the dual outcomes of active land management and increased Indigenous enterprise and employment in northern Australia. The project will be a joint research effort with Government agencies, led by ONA and DSEWPaC.

### **Indigenous lives and livelihoods**

The following government programs and initiatives assist in the Framework's aim to respect Indigenous peoples' interests in land and water and recognise the need to improve Indigenous lives and livelihoods.

#### *Cape York Welfare Reform trials*

The Cape York communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale, and Mossman Gorge have been participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) trials since the commencement of their implementation stage in 2008. The trials will continue to be implemented until January 2012, coordinated by the Cape York Institute, in partnership with the Queensland and Australian governments. The CYWR trials involve various projects from four streams of activity – social responsibility, economic opportunity, housing and education.

The Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) has been operating for two years and there have been promising trends in the CYWR communities, particularly associated with improvements in social responsibility and education. Developments in the participating communities include implementation of normalised arrangements around social housing, conversion of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) positions into properly paid jobs, a calmer and safer environment and growing leadership by local people allied with optimism for the future.

The Australian and Queensland governments are working with the Cape York Institute to resolve land administration issues that are obstacles to home ownership in Cape York, as well as improving support for people who are considering home ownership. The trial partners are also continuing to focus on employment, economic development and housing related projects to increase self-reliance and discourage welfare dependence. For example, work is underway in Aurukun to construct a business precinct that will provide infrastructure for small businesses and work on the Mossman Gorge Tourism Gateway development is advanced, with many community members involved in pre-employment preparation. In the small community of Coen, over 20 local people are employed in properly paid full time employment as rangers under the Caring for our Country initiative. In Hope Vale, an area with rich agricultural land, various forms of support are being given to re-establish local Indigenous agricultural businesses.

### *Indigenous Economic Development Strategy*

The Australian Government is in the process of completing the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy. This Strategy will form the Australian Government's long-term strategy to guide and inform future policy decisions in Indigenous economic development.

In a consultation process held in November 2010, the Australian Government heard that the major barriers to economic development are often dictated by place. In the relevant areas of Queensland, the barriers most often identified by stakeholders were inadequate infrastructure, the fly in-fly out economy, and remoteness. In Queensland, meetings and workshops were held in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Mount Isa, with the rest of the consultation process taking place in towns and cities in other parts of Australia.

The barriers identified in the relevant areas of Queensland impact the lives of the people facing them in a range of ways, including:

- Access to employment, health and education;
- Capacity to participate in education, training and employment;
- Ability to start up business ventures (see the discussion point at the end of the section for an analysis of ways to address this impact); and
- Availability of future choices given these barriers.

The Australian Government is currently refining the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy to reflect findings of the consultations including the diversity of barriers in urban, regional and remote areas.

Location specific approaches to economic development recognise the different needs between regional and remote Australia. For remote locations like Cape York, with limited access to markets, there is a need to

identify new opportunities, support access to existing opportunities and remove barriers to genuine commercial ventures.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will require a collaborative approach to increasing Indigenous economic engagement. This includes genuine engagement with Indigenous Australians as well as ensuring that governments, the private sector and the broader Australian community work in partnership with Indigenous Australians and communities.

The draft Strategy also recognises the need to address generational economic development. It encompasses education, aspirations, sustainable jobs, Indigenous business and entrepreneurship, financial security and incentives for economic participation.

This is in keeping with the approach adopted through the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials in Hope Vale, Coen, Mossman Gorge and Aurukun, discussed in detail at page 59 of this submission. The trials include a number of projects that are being delivered within four streams of activity - social responsibility, economic opportunity, housing and education.

### **Discussion Point: Overcoming barriers to starting or running businesses**

Barriers Indigenous people face when starting or running businesses or undertaking other economic activities falls into the following categories:

1. Start up barriers, including business knowledge;
2. Capacity constraints, including human capital and infrastructure;
3. Development of new or emerging business areas, such as carbon farming, and access to these new employment streams; and
4. Difficulties in leveraging opportunities from established businesses and sectors.

#### **Addressing these barriers**

1. Start up barriers: The Australian Government provides assistance to new business opportunities through a range of programs, including loans and grants to assist with the high costs of business setup.

2. Capacity constraints: The Australian Government is committed to providing access to services for individuals for education, health and training as part of the Closing the Gap agenda.

There is also a requirement to reflect on place when addressing capacity constraints - that is infrastructure reform, investment and planning - and the ability of all levels of Government to work together to achieve outcomes. A renewed focus on place and region will enable better planning and provide opportunities to individuals living in that area.

3. Development of new or emerging business areas and access to these new employment streams: Opportunities for employment and business development frequently change with new technologies, differing social and environmental policies, and the capacity of people to harness these changes. An example is discourse on the impacts of environmental change and developing economies stemming from carbon farming or a carbon credits scheme.

To increase the likelihood that these opportunities be developed into businesses, there needs to be in place a regional economic development plan. This plan should address current activity, opportunities, and the necessary training to provide the best chance to succeed. It should also contain input from all levels of government and from key stakeholders in the region.

Being able to adapt to the new and emerging business areas and employment opportunities stimulates growth for regions. The Indigenous Ranger program is one example of a successful employment opportunity taken up by Indigenous Australians in northern Australia. There are likely to be more opportunities in the natural resource management area and many regions are well equipped to take advantage of them.

4. Difficulties in leveraging opportunities: As the land owners of a large proportion of northern Australia, Indigenous Australians have a unique opportunity to negotiate with industry and businesses during their start-up phases. More can be done to support Indigenous Australians in agreement making with larger companies to ensure that there is a focus on economic development in the region, not just business development.

### *Smarter Schools National Partnerships*

DEEWR manages the three *Smarter Schools National Partnerships* entered into by the Australian Government and state and territory governments aimed at addressing disadvantage, supporting teachers and improving literacy and numeracy. A number of schools in the Cape York region are covered by the *Smarter Schools National Partnerships*. Indeed, together with the Focus Schools initiative (described below), the *Smarter Schools National Partnerships* covers schools across the Cape York region such that 81 per cent of the Indigenous students in the Cape York region are enrolled in a school covered by one of these two programs.

### *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*

DEEWR is driving the 27 National Collaborative Actions within the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) Action Plan. Ministers have agreed in this Plan to identify a key group of schools called 'Focus Schools.' By monitoring and taking action in Focus Schools, Ministers will be assured that the benefits of national reforms are reaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and that resources are used effectively to support the Closing the Gap targets. The Action Plan encompasses a number of Focus Schools across Australia. Fifty-eight per cent (46/79) of the schools in the Cape York Region are Focus Schools. As identified above, 81 per cent of Indigenous students in the Cape York region are enrolled in a school that is covered by the *Smarter Schools National Partnerships* or by a Focus School.

### *Learn. Earn. Legend! Year 12 Destinations*

This project is a DEEWR funded initiative of \$1.4 million in partnership with the Queensland Department of Education and Training to provide all Indigenous Year 12 students across Queensland with an education or employment destination. It targets approximately 2100 students in 2010 and an equal number in 2011. The project provides notional allocations of funding to all Education Queensland regions to support the implementation of Regional Project Plans. The plan for the Far North Queensland region, which includes Cape York, aims to have 100 per cent of Indigenous persons of a school leaving age remain engaged through tailored pathways and case management.

### *Student Education Trusts*

*Student Education Trusts* provide the capacity for parents and caregivers in Aurukun, Hopevale, Coen and Mossman Gorge to make provisions for the costs associated with educating their children in community or in boarding schools. The project is administered by Cape York Partnerships. The approved funds are \$1 million.

## *Parental and Community Engagement*

*Parental and Community Engagement* (PaCE) is a community driven program focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to engage with their children's education. It supports community driven projects designed by parents/care-givers and communities to enhance their capacity to engage with schools and education, to build strong community leadership that supports high expectations, to establish and maintain community-school partnership agreements and to support and reinforce children's learning at home, with the ultimate aim of improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and young people. DEEWR has invested over \$4 million in Cape York through PaCE.

## *Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy*

The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) was incorporated as a not-for-profit organisation on 23 December 2009. The Academy is an alternative education provider within the Queensland public school system that will run primary school campuses – and early childhood programs – where parent communities so wish.

The Academy proposes to deliver a “best of both worlds” approach to education for Indigenous students. It aims to close the academic achievement gap between Indigenous and mainstream students and to support Cape York children's bicultural identity.

The Academy is focusing on the four communities currently participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform trials, which would have the opportunity to 'opt-in' to the Academy. The Academy began operations in the communities of Aurukun and Coen in February 2010 (Term One), and proposes to expand into Mossman Gorge and Hope Vale and then further expand into more communities, which would result in the Academy expanding beyond the scope of the four Cape York Welfare Reform trial communities.

## *Youth Connections*

Youth Connections provides an improved safety net for youth at risk through the provision of tailored case management and support to help young people re-connect with education or training and build resilience, skills and attributes that promote positive choices and wellbeing. The program has national coverage and providers are able to deliver services in a flexible way, responding to the diverse and changing needs of individual communities. Each provider brings together education providers, parents, young people, business, industry and government to achieve a coordinated approach to addressing youth transitions.



The Youth Connections provider in the Cape York area is Capricornia Training Company Ltd. The approved funds for Cape York are approximately \$400,000 annually.

#### **Case study - Learn. Earn. Legend! Year 12 Destinations Project**

DEEWR is working with the private sector and non-government organisations to build aspirations for economic participation beyond school through initiatives like the Learn. Earn. Legend! Year 12 Destinations Project.

The Learn Earn Legend Year 12 Destinations Project is a \$1.4 million DEEWR funded initiative (funded through a combination of Indigenous Employment Program and Parental and Community Engagement Program funding). The project is being conducted in partnership with the Queensland Department of Education and Training.

The project is targeting approximately 2,100 students in 2010 and an equal number in 2011. It aims to provide all Indigenous Year 12 students across Queensland with an education or employment destination. The project provides notional allocations of funding to all Education Queensland regions to support the implementation of Regional Project Plans. The plans were developed to consider local education and employment priorities.

The plan for the Far North Queensland region, which includes Cape York, aims to have 100 per cent of Indigenous persons of school leaving age remain engaged through tailored pathways and case management. To implement the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, DEEWR, together with the Queensland Department of Education, held a workshop in early November with relevant stakeholders in Cairns to reflect the specific issues and needs of that region, with elements of the project developing as students progress through Year 12.

Initially the project aims to identify all students in all schools, determine those students at greatest risk of not remaining in education and developing appropriate levels of intervention and support. Critical to the project's success will be effective relationships across DEEWR and State funded education and transitions services. The project includes the critical sustainability element requiring schools to engage and partner with Indigenous parents in the review of existing Student Education Trust plans and the development of Individual Pathways Plans.

The project was developed to build on the existing "Service Guarantee" of the Western Cape College. This College has been active in providing effective pathways of support for a number of years.

The project is still in the early stages of implementation with students being tracked and assessed. Case management services are being developed to respond to individual needs. However given the outcomes of the recent cross sector/agency workshop, DEEWR is confident that this project is tracking well in the region.

### **Case Study – Napranum Project**

A successful project funded under DEEWR's Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program is the *Napranum Project*.

DEEWR has funded Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council \$584,250 to implement a project to better equip parents to participate in their child's education through an understanding of school systems and processes, nurturing positive parental attitudes toward education and strategies to maintain high levels of attendance and increased parental learning support at home.

A key element of the project provides for the engagement and mentoring of a core group of parents and community representatives, to extend this support at home and the journey to and from school. To date the project has assisted in successfully stabilising declining primary school attendance and identifying parent and community strategies that support the reengagement of secondary school age students with an acute need for assistance.

The project will run until the end of 2012 and has become an important part in building momentum behind the success story of the Napranum community.

### *Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services*

Job Services Australia (JSA) and Disability Employment Services (DES) providers are engaged in Cape York to deliver individualised services across the region using a case management approach. The JSA providers in Cape York are JobFind and ITEC Employment. The DES providers are JobFind, ITEC Employment and Tableland Employment Agency.

From 1 July 2009 to 31 October 2010, 3065 job seekers were registered with Job Services Australia in Cape York region and 82 per cent of these were Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Government's employment programs are primarily focused upon addressing barriers to employment, such as poor numeracy and literacy, work readiness, and mentoring. This is a collaborative approach involving CDEP providers, JSA providers and support from the Indigenous Employment Program.

From 1 July 2009 to 31 October 2010, JSA providers in Cape York have achieved over 1000 job placements for Indigenous jobseekers and 345 Indigenous job seekers had reached a 13 Week Employment Outcome while 56 Indigenous job seekers had achieved a 26 Week Employment Outcome.

Pathways to employment, training and further education are negotiated depending on the specific needs of jobseekers and are developed into a plan to support ongoing action towards agreed goals. Services are

delivered by contracted providers using a variety of means including fulltime and outreach sites.

Employment Service providers are encouraged to work closely with stakeholders, including CDEP and major employer and industry groups, particularly where ongoing potential for sustainable employment can be identified.

### *Employment initiatives*

The Australian Government has been active in the creation of government service delivery jobs previously provided by CDEP participants. A total of 267 positions in the Cape York region, which previously relied on CDEP to deliver government services, have been transitioned into fully waged positions by the Australian and Queensland governments (205 of these positions were funded by the Australian Government and 62 were state funded).

Two hundred and twenty-six (164 Australian Government funded and 62 state funded) positions were funded under the Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership. A further 41 positions have been created by the Australian Government under the Cape York Welfare Reforms (CYWR). The jobs are in education, health, municipal services, night patrols, art centres, broadcasting, language and culture, childcare, rangers and sport and recreation.

The Australian Government is continuing to work with the Queensland state government to ensure jobs for Indigenous people in its areas of responsibility are funded and created.

The most reliable source of unemployment data at the remote community level can be obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census of Population and Housing. Unemployment figures for Cape York communities using this data are presented at **Table 4.1**.

More up-to-date unemployment data can be derived from the DEEWR publication Small Area Labour Markets, June 2010. Labour market indicators for Cape York communities using this data are presented at **Table 4.2**.

This data does not reflect those not in the labour force, and presents the total unemployment rate without separating Indigenous people. It is widely accepted by Cape York locals that the actual unemployment rate is much higher than the reported unemployment rate.

**Table 4.1 Unemployment figures for Cape York communities 2006**

Selected SLAs, Indigenous and Overall labour market indicators, 2006 Census								
Statistical Local Area	Indigenous				Overall			
	Unemployment rate (%)	Participation rate (%)	Percentage NILF (%)	Labour Force (persons)	Unemployment rate (%)	Participation rate (%)	Percentage NILF (%)	Labour Force (persons)
Aurukun (S)	9.9	45.7	54.3	283	8.1	48.9	51.1	334
Cook (S)	9.0	62.1	37.9	221	6.4	66.9	33.1	1561
Hope Vale (S)	6.1	72.0	28.0	358	4.6	73.0	27.0	393
Kowanyama (S)	1.3	60.9	39.1	398	0.0	63.3	36.7	449
Lockhart River (S)	8.3	48.8	51.3	156	7.7	53.3	46.7	196
Mapoon (S)	6.0	65.4	34.6	100	2.7	67.3	32.7	113
Napranum (S)	8.2	46.8	53.2	232	5.7	49.5	50.5	265
Pormpuraaw (S)	4.5	64.2	35.8	244	4.5	66.6	33.4	289
Weipa (T)	3.0	79.2	20.8	202	1.2	88.2	11.8	1641
Bamaga (IC)	6.3	68.0	32.0	268	6.1	71.1	28.9	329
Injinoos (S)	7.6	76.3	23.7	171	7.3	76.2	23.8	179
New Mapoon (S)	0.0	60.8	39.2	104	0.0	64.0	36.0	126
Seisia (IC)	5.9	66.2	33.8	51	0.0	78.9	21.1	86
Torres (S)	7.0	62.8	37.2	824	5.0	70.9	29.1	1390
Umagico (S)	14.6	70.1	29.9	89	12.8	69.4	30.6	86

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2006, Indigenous and Basic community Profiles*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2006

**Table 4.2 Overall labour market indicators for Cape York communities 2009/10**

Selected SLAs, Overall labour market indicators, 2009 and 2010					
Statistical Local Area	June 2009		June 2010		
	Unemployment rate (%)	Unemployment (persons)	Unemployment rate (%)	Unemployment (persons)	Labour Force (persons)
Aurukun (S)	12.0	52	20.0	89	444
Cook (S)	16.9	341	25.3	525	2072
Hope Vale (S)	19.0	97	27.7	145	524
Kowanyama (S)	11.9	70	19.5	118	604
Lockhart River (S)	11.8	30	19.6	51	260
Mapoon (S)	8.8	13	11.3	17	151
Napranum (S)	9.0	31	11.1	39	352
Pormpuraaw (S)	12.1	45	20.2	77	381
Weipa (T)	9.0	190	11.2	243	2176
Bamaga (IC)	8.7	37	15.0	66	439
Injinoos (S)	8.6	20	15.1	36	239
New Mapoon (S)	8.9	14	15.4	25	162
Seisia (IC)	8.7	10	14.4	17	118
Torres (S)	7.3	131	9.0	166	1846
Umagico (S)	8.9	10	14.7	17	116

Source: DEEWR Small Area Labour markets, June 2010

### **Case Study – Mossman Gateway Project**

Over the past five years, DEEWR has collaborated and continues to collaborate with the community of Mossman Gorge, the local ICC/ROC and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to assist jobseekers' transition from CDEP, to engage in the local economy outside of the Gorge and to prepare for opportunities arising from the Mossman Gateway Project.

DEEWR has invested \$1.5 million to support the Mossman Gateway Project, which is the development of the Indigenous Land Council's Visitors Centre at Mossman Gorge, a popular tourist destination within the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. The Centre is scheduled to open around July 2011 and will provide jobs in tourism, hospitality and environment management for local Indigenous people.

The Visitor Centre is expected to contribute enduringly to the economic base of the community.

Over the last three years, Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) providers have been funded to develop and deliver programs focusing on work readiness in order to develop and build the capacity of local job seekers for jobs expected from the Gateway project. The programs delivered work readiness training, targeted pre-employment assistance and work placement and mentoring.

DEEWR is also funding the Indigenous Land Council for the engagement of a Human Resources/Recruitment Manager to consult with local stakeholders and to recruit local Indigenous people into the 40 jobs guaranteed at the Visitors Centre.

To date, 42 local people have been offered a Job Guarantee. Of these, many have commenced individual Training and Employment plans. Several (14) have also commenced traineeships and 10 are in employment under the arrangements with host employers in Port Douglas and Mossman, to gain workplace experience prior to starting at the Visitor Centre.

Group Training Organisation Skills 360 is arranging traineeships and Redi-teach is providing Work Readiness training. The Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), is providing 19 First Start Traineeships using Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding.

The Indigenous Employment Program provider ITEC Employment has been funded by DEEWR to engage four mentors and a coordinator to support, mentor, provide additional training and transportation for participants who have received a job guarantee.

## **Industry and enterprise**

The following government programs and initiatives assist in the Framework's aim to support efficient industry and enterprise.

### *National Long-Term Tourism Strategy*

Australia's *National Long-Term Tourism Strategy* provides the long-term policy framework to position the Australian tourism industry as a sustainable and economically vibrant industry. The Australian Government is working with industry and state and territory governments across nine specific working groups to progress key supply side issues. The Strategy identified the development of Indigenous tourism products as a priority. An Indigenous Tourism Working Group (ITWG) has been convened and is examining ways to improve the quality of Australia's Indigenous tourism product offering and to maximise participation of Indigenous Australians in the tourism industry. The Working Group is progressing a range of priority actions and initiatives, the outcomes of which will inform Indigenous tourism development in regions throughout Australia.

### *TQUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects*

Under the Australian Government's *TQUAL Grants* program, \$40 million will be available over four years from 1 July 2011. The program is aimed at stimulating sustainable economic growth in the Australian tourism industry by making available funding for tourism projects that enhance and refresh Australia's tourism offering and its competitiveness as a destination. Funding of between approximately \$15,000 and \$100,000 is available for projects to support collaborative community tourism industry development projects, particularly those which stimulate private sector investment.

### *Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait Tourism Development Action Plan 2008-2011*

Regional tourism planning is the responsibility of the state and territory governments. Tourism Queensland has developed *The Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait Tourism Development Action Plan 2008-2011*, aimed at providing long term sustainable development of tourism in Cape York and the Torres Strait that respects and celebrates the culture, traditions and lifestyle of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, enhances environmental integrity and creates economic and social growth.

A major focus of the Plan is to increase the involvement of local Indigenous people in all facets of tourism by generating opportunities for locally owned and managed businesses and joint commercial ventures with the commercial tourism industry. It is important that any tourism development in Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait is sustainable and protects the local culture, traditions and the environment. The rich

cultural and natural environment of Cape York is recognised as key to its tourism opportunities.

#### *Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Five Year Business Plan*

Current government projects supporting Indigenous involvement in the fisheries industry include the development of a Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Five Year Business Plan. This Business Plan will be used by the Protected Zone Joint Authority to identify strategies and programs to increase the level of Indigenous participation in the fisheries sector. The federal Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) is working closely with the Torres Strait Regional Authority and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority in finalising the development of the plan for the Protected Zone Joint Authorities consideration.

#### *Indigenous Aquaculture Unit*

The Domestic Fisheries Branch within DAFF implements the Indigenous Aquaculture Strategy. The strategy facilitates projects that provide opportunities for Indigenous involvement in the expansion of aquaculture in Australia.

#### *National Indigenous Forestry Strategy*

Several initiatives within the forestry sector, which are also administered by DAFF, affect Indigenous involvement in primary industries in the Cape York region. The Forestry Branch administers the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS). The primary aim of the NIFS is to increase the participation, employment and business opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the forest industries. The strategy brings together government support agencies, industry representative bodies, and interested Indigenous communities to develop projects for mutual benefits.

The NIFS outlines opportunities that exist for Indigenous groups to engage in hardwood timber extraction and sawmilling of otherwise wasted trees on mining leases. This economic opportunity within the mining sector is explored in detail above (page 36). NIFS had ongoing discussions with traditional owner groups in Cape York, and the Queensland Department of Environment, in regards to timber salvage from potential bauxite mining leases and plantation forestry opportunities. NIFS supports the opportunity for an economic development strategy that creates future partnership opportunities for training and employment of traditional owner groups across Cape York.

#### *Australia's Farming Initiative: Community Networks and Capacity Building*

*Australia's Farming Future*, through its *Community Networks and Capacity Building* component, provides funding to increase the involvement of target groups, including Indigenous Australians, in primary industries.

Under this component, the *Cape York Economic Development Opportunities for Indigenous Australians* project aims to identify existing knowledge and identify self sustaining employment and economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities in the Cape York region. This project is managed by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), and has been funded \$250,000.

#### *Northern Australia Beef Industry Strategy*

DAFF is coordinating the Northern Australia Beef Industry Strategy, a three part assessment of risks and opportunities facing the northern pastoral industry.

The *Northern Australia Beef Industry: Assessment of Risks and Opportunities* project will provide an assessment of emerging risks to the live cattle trade and identify opportunities and constraints to the diversification and growth of the northern beef and meat processing industries.

A study of the sustainability and prospectivity of mosaic irrigation and its application in the northern beef industry will be undertaken in the *Mosaic Irrigation in Northern Australia: Assessment of Sustainability and Prospectivity* project.

The *Indigenous Pastoral Industry: Building Capacity and Partnerships for Sustainability in Northern Australia* project will also contribute to the overall resilience of industry and enterprise development in northern Australia. This project will consider the Indigenous and non-Indigenous asset base (including skills and knowledge of Indigenous peoples themselves) and the scope to develop commercial alliances of mutual benefit to Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests in the northern cattle industry. Details of the project are still being considered and Cape York is part of the scope for the project. It is proposed that the project be delivered through a partnership between relevant Australian Government agencies, stakeholder groups and corporate partners.

Through the *Northern Australia Ministerial Forum*, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory have also agreed to work collaboratively with the Australian Government to broaden the scope of this work.

#### *AusIndustry*

AusIndustry is the Australian Government's principal business program delivery arm within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). AusIndustry delivers more than 35 programs worth over \$2 billion annually. AusIndustry programs are delivered through a national network, including the AusIndustry Regional Manager network which



operates out of 15 regionally located offices. These offices provide on-the-ground information, advice and assistance to access both Australian and state government business assistance. There is an AusIndustry office in Townsville.

AusIndustry offers both entitlement and grants programs. For grants-based programs, customers compete for limited funds, based on the merit of their application. For concessions, such as a Research and Development Tax Concession, a customer makes a claim, based on their self-assessed eligibility.

Through AusIndustry, the Australian Government has provided a range of assistance to firms or organisations in the Far North Queensland region. Between 26 November 2007 and 30 September 2010, AusIndustry provided:

- Over \$300,000 in funding through programs supporting small businesses in the region;
- Close to \$700,000 in funding to over 50 customers through programs supporting business innovation and Research and Development Tax Concession assistance to over 40 customers; and
- Over \$4 million of duty concessions through programs supporting general industry competitiveness (approximately 10 customers in the region have benefited from duty concessions).

AusIndustry Regional Managers and other DIISR representatives attend and present at numerous and varied business events in the region to promote and inform members of the business community about the suite of AusIndustry programs.

**Table 4.3** provides a listing of industry projects in Far North Queensland as identified by the Queensland Heavy Engineering Industry Reference Group. This organisation is a state level partnership group between industry, unions and the Queensland Office of Advanced Manufacturing in the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.<sup>33</sup> Projects are spread across northern, north western and far north Queensland, though **Table 4.3** focuses specifically on projects in Far North Queensland.

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.heirg.com/projects/list.php>.

**Table 4.3 Industry Projects in Far North Queensland**

Project	Est. Project Value (\$million)	Stage
<b>Minerals &amp; Mineral Processing Projects</b>		
Chalco – The Aluminium Corporation of China Limited (Chalco) Ltd is proposing the Aurukun Bauxite Project – East Coast Alumina Refinery and Port development. The project will comprise: Development of an alumina refinery with a capacity of 2.1 Mtpa for processing bauxite from the Aurukun bauxite mine. Construction of port facilities including bauxite unloading, alumina loading, jetty and wharf; conveyor system from the port to the refinery; and slurry pipeline from the refinery to a residue storage area. The site selected by Chalco to locate the refinery is within the Abbot Point State Development Area north of Bowen	2,930	On Hold
Einasleigh Copper & Zinc Project Treatment facility.	108	EIS
Embley South Bauxite Project Development of a new bauxite operation	1,053	EIS
Hodgkinson (Northcote & Tregoora) Gold Project	Not available	Bankable feasibility study
<b>Minerals &amp; Mineral Processing Projects</b>		
Mungana Gold Project Open Pit Expansion Open pit mining	80	EIS
NORINCO Nickel Project (Bell Creek) Shallow pit mining	350	EIS
Pisolite Hills Development of a greenfield bauxite project	Not available	EIS
<b>Project</b>	<b>Est. Project Value (\$million)</b>	<b>Stage</b>
Watershed Tungsten Project (Mt Carbine) At pre-feasibility stage	70	On Hold
<b>Energy Projects</b>		
Archer Point Wind Farm (Cooktown)	350	Under Study
Arriga Wind Farm Project	Not Available	Under Study
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd reinforcement of supply	37.621	Ongoing
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd customer initiated work	54.426	Ongoing
High Road Wind Farm Project	200	Planning
Tolga Wind Farm Project	100	Trials
Windy Hill 2 Wind Farm Project	Not available	Under Study
<b>Ports Projects</b>		
Cairns Port Cruise Facility Terminal	11.2	Construction
Cairns Port Marlin Marina (extension to Finger G)	20	Committed
<b>Tourism &amp; Urban Development Projects</b>		
Edmonton Business & Industry Park Precinct A	100	Planning
Edmonton Business & Industry Park Hospital Precinct B	60	Planning
Edmonton Business & Industry Park Precinct C	500	Planning
Ella Bay Integrated Resort	1,400	EIS
Metricon Seaborne Development	347	Planning
Metricon Sea Haven Marina Development	130	Construction
Oceans Edge: Palm Cove Residential Resort	110	Construction
Tropical Paradise Report	2,500	EIS

### *Indigenous businesses*

The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy recognises the importance of building Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurship. Business ownership enables direct participation in economic markets, provides an important entrepreneurial foothold in the Australian economy and acts as a strong incentive to stay in business.

In remote regions like Cape York, supporting the development of genuine commercial ventures is critical to building the economy. Key priorities under the strategy in relation to supporting Indigenous businesses include improving access to capital, increasing private sector engagement with Indigenous businesses, exploring new industry opportunities, supporting Indigenous role models and business leadership, and assessing regional economic development opportunities to encourage local Indigenous business development.

Through its Indigenous Employment Program, the Australian Government has invested in a number of projects to support business development in Cape York. This includes funding for Indigenous economic and business mentors and working closely with Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation on a range of place based projects, which range from accommodation enterprises to small scale agricultural projects.

### *Enterprise Connect*

Enterprise Connect is a \$50 million a year Australian Government initiative that delivers practical support to small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to boost their competitiveness and productivity. The program is run through a national network of 12 centres that provide high quality business advisory services to established SMEs.

Enterprise Connect supports businesses through its network of over 100 experienced Business Advisers and Facilitators (including 29 located in regional Australia), a targeted Remote Enterprise Centre which deals with the specific needs of firms in the most remote areas of Australia, and through the Innovative Regions Centre which works with its identified ten Innovative Regions. Since its commencement in 2008, Enterprise Connect has established a client base of over 3000 SMEs with over 1000 of these firms regionally located. Enterprise Connect provides advisory services and funding to firms to assist them to become more productive, innovative and competitive through access to skills, knowledge and technology.

Enterprise Connect's Resource Technology Innovation Centre is located in Mackay and one of the Innovative Regions is Central Queensland. Two Business Advisers are located in Cairns. Business Advisers provide companies with a Business Review to help identify opportunities to improve their firm. Companies may then apply for a Tailored Advisory

Service (TAS) grant, which provides matching funding to implement the recommendations of a Business Review. A business is eligible for a TAS grant for each Business Review recommendation it implements up to a total combined value of \$20,000.

Enterprise Connect is taking a proactive stance toward Indigenous engagement. Its Resources Technology Innovation Centre in Mackay has a specialist Indigenous Engagement Adviser who can assist Indigenous businesses operating in the mining and resource sector. The Indigenous Engagement Adviser can also help non-Indigenous businesses in the sector find opportunities to work with Indigenous businesses.

Enterprise Connect has conducted a number of Business Reviews of housing construction (including electrical) companies. Although the companies are predominantly based in Cairns or other centres, many provide housing solutions to communities in Cape York, often using or developing modular and pre-fabricated building techniques. This activity is largely funded by the Australian Government and managed through the Queensland Government. Business Advisers have assisted existing tourism operators in the region and are monitoring the emergence of a number of eco-tourism proposals, for example an interconnected wilderness walking network throughout Cape York.

Northern Project Contracting (NPC) is a Queensland-based company that specialises in contracting and training services for the civil construction and mining industries throughout Queensland and Australia. It has operations in Mt Isa and Townsville, and is in discussion with local communities to establish operations in Cape York. It commenced in 2004 as a joint venture between an Indigenous company and an experienced mining contracting firm. Its Indigenous partners acquired 100 per cent ownership in 2008 and have since rapidly expanded the business.



An Australian Government Initiative



## Success story

# NORTHERN PROJECT CONTRACTING

Capalaba QLD 4157

Discover how Enterprise Connect has supported Northern Project Contracting to make a great business even better.

### Background

Northern Project Contracting (NPC) is a unique Queensland based company that specialises in contracting and training services for the civil construction and mining industries throughout Queensland and Australia.

It started life in 2004 as a joint venture between an indigenous company and an experienced mining contracting firm. Its indigenous partners acquired 100 per cent ownership in 2008 and have since rapidly expanded the business.

One of NPC's guiding philosophies has been to involve local Aboriginal people in their workforce so they can share in the long term economic benefits flowing from wealth generating activities on their traditional lands.

Today, NPC specialises in mining site preparation, crushing, mine rehabilitation and it offers a labour hire service to the broader mining sector. To this end it has established a training school to help prepare Aboriginal people for careers in the mining industry.

NPC's Business Manager Mitchell Rimmer said the company felt it was on the right track, but the opportunity to have an arm's length top to bottom analysis of the business from Enterprise Connect at no cost was very appealing.

"Part of our ethos at NPC is that we are not happy to rest on our laurels. We are always looking for ways we can improve and we were happy to invite Enterprise Connect in to have a look around", Mr Rimmer said.

NPC's Business Adviser used the latest business diagnostic tools to benchmark NPC against other businesses of similar size.



Narassa, Northern Project Contracting, on site at Century Mine in the Gulf of Queensland

"The report highlighted areas needing attention, so it was good to get that outside perspective on ways we can analyse our systems and improve them."

### Outcome

"Our Business Adviser really understood the industry we work in."

NPC has already embarked on formal strategic and marketing plans with the assistance of a \$20 000 Tailored Advisory Service (TAS) Grant from Enterprise Connect.

Enterprise Connect not only conducts health checks on your business but is here to help you change and make your business the best it can be. NPC remains in close contact with its Business Adviser and enthusiastically takes part in other networking and learning opportunities offered by Enterprise Connect.

"In August, NPC won a National Teistra Business Award, which was great and we're successfully moving forward with lots of new business on the horizon."

"We have every reason to look towards a pretty exciting future for NPC", Mr Rimmer said.

### Further Information

Visit [www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au](http://www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au) or call the hotline 131 791

20101007NPCSS

## Commercialisation Australia

*Commercialisation Australia* is a key part of the Australian Government's ten year innovation agenda - *Powering Ideas: An Innovative Agenda for the 21st Century*. *Commercialisation Australia* provides assistance to innovators to help take their intellectual property to market. Each program participant is assigned a Case Manager to guide them through the commercialisation process and to facilitate access to experienced Volunteer Business Mentors.

*Commercialisation Australia* has three Case Managers located in Queensland, all with extensive experience in the commercialisation of intellectual property. Their expertise spans a broad range of technology, including agribusiness, life sciences and engineering. To date, one project has been supported in the Far North Queensland region. CatchLog Trading Pty Ltd will use its \$48,000 Skills and Knowledge grant to commercialise an onboard electronic logbook software program for commercial fishing vessels. This program has the potential to support ventures in the Cape York region that can take advantage of the many opportunities presented to build businesses that are successful and preserve environmental and cultural values.

### **Infrastructure and liveability**

The following government programs and initiatives assist in the Framework's aim to support investment in critical infrastructure and to improve the liveability of communities.

#### *Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program*

As discussed in the introduction, in August 2010, the Australian Government announced its initial response to the Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce report's recommendations, committing more than \$6 million to the *Northern Australia Sustainable Futures* (NASF) Program. The program addresses various needs, as discussed earlier in this section, through 10 projects and is scheduled to run from 2010-11 to 2012-13. The NASF projects are listed in the table below.

It is anticipated that, through the *Northern Australia Ministerial Forum*, which is a key part of the NASF program, the remaining NASF projects will be built-upon, either in depth or scope, as a broad agenda for sustainable development in northern Australia is developed by the Ministerial Forum.

**Table 4.4 Northern Australia Sustainable Futures projects**

<b>Northern Australia Sustainable Futures program</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Relevant agencies</b>
1	Northern Australia Ministerial Forum	Australian Government, QLD/NT/WA
2	Standing Committee and Regional Facilitation	All agencies, QLD/NT/WA
3	Northern Australia Indigenous Sustainable Development Forum	AIATSIS, FaHCSIA, RET, DEWHA, NWC
4	Community based planning: addressing barriers and opportunities to collaborative community participation	TRaCK, DEWHA, DAFF, NAILSMA
5	Northern Australia local government and household water management initiative	ACELG, NWC, DEWHA
6	Northern Australia Data Development	ABS, CSIRO, FaHCSIA, BITRE, RET, BOM
7	Sustainable development: building markets in environmental and land management services	FaHCSIA, DEEWR, DEWHA, DAFF, RET
8	Partnership with the CRC for Remote Economic Participation	CRC for Remote Enterprise, Innovation
9	A timetable for infrastructure investment in northern Australia: regional development priorities	ABARES, RET, Infrastructure Australia
10	Northern Australia Beef Industry Study	
	Northern Australia beef industry: strategic assessment of risks and opportunities	DAFF, ABARES, Industry partners
	Indigenous pastoral industry: building capacity and partnerships for sustainability	DAFF, ILC
	Mosaic agriculture in northern Australia: assessment of sustainability and prospectivity	CSIRO, Industry partners

### *National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns*

The *National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns* will provide a financial contribution of \$8.5 million to Queensland to provide sustainable, secure and safe water supplies and wastewater services under the COAG Strategy on Water and Wastewater Services in Remote (including Indigenous) Communities. This funding is being delivered through the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on 'Water for the Future' and is consistent with the Remote Service Delivery and Remote Indigenous Housing NPAs being delivered through FaHCSIA.

The contribution will include \$3.35 million to implement Phase 1 of the Long Term Capacity Building and Sustainability Strategy. The project locations include Aurukun and Hope Vale located within the Cape York region; and Doomadgee and Mornington located in the Gulf region, which are Remote Service Delivery priority communities. The project also includes two communities - Wajul Wajul located in the Cape York region and Woorabinda located west of Rockhampton. These communities will benefit from Indigenous Councils that manage water and waste water services ensuring these services meet minimum service standards and regulatory requirements, primarily by building capacity in the management of water supply systems including operations and maintenance tasks in those communities. Other benefits include the ability to employ and retain qualified staff, improve water management technologies and implement waterwise programs.

The balance of the funding for Queensland involves \$866,000 to upgrade water supply infrastructure at Wajul Wajul and \$4.2 million to replace a water supply pipeline at Woorabinda.

### *Priority Regional Infrastructure Program*

The Australian Government will invest \$800 million in a new Priority Regional Infrastructure Program. This program will operate over five years after the conclusion of the current Regional Local Community Infrastructure Program in 2010-11, which it will replace. Arrangements to deliver these commitments are being developed but \$350 million will go to flood recovery and reconstruction.

### *A Timetable for Infrastructure Investment in Northern Australia: Regional Development Priorities*

At the first meeting of the *Northern Australia Ministerial Forum* in Darwin on 13 December 2010, Ministers agreed to collectively fund further work to scope northern Australia's infrastructure priorities including:

- future infrastructure needs and alternative funding options;
- future energy needs; and
- future skilled labour needs.

These priorities are intended to complement the work of other agencies with responsibility for transport, water, energy and communication infrastructure, and Infrastructure Australia in its identification of priorities for nationally significant infrastructure investments.

### *Regional Infrastructure Fund*

The Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) is intended to benefit the major resource states of Queensland and Western Australia. It will allow the Government to invest the proceeds of the resurgent resource boom to address urgent infrastructure needs – more rail, roads, ports and other crucial infrastructure – while supporting the mining industry, boosting export capacity and developing and growing regional economies.

The base criteria for project selection – announced on 9 June 2010 – establish a firm connection to mining communities and to Australia's resource and export capacity. Projects should:

- Promote development and job creation in mining communities, and communities which support the mining sector;
- Provide a clear benefit to Australia's economic development, and to investment in Australia's resource or export capacity;
- Address potential capacity constraints arising from export production and resource projects; and



- Provide \$573 million for regional communities to fund large scale infrastructure projects, which are critical to economic development and growth.

The RIF will be funded from the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT), subject to the passage of MRRT legislation, the timing of which is a decision for the Government. The establishment and ongoing operation of the RIF – including the prioritisation of funding and project selection – remains subject to further Government consideration.

### *Northern Australia Local Government and Household Water Management Initiative*

The *Northern Australia Local Government and Household Water Management Initiative* aims to support communities in northern Australia to better conserve and manage their water use through providing investment in infrastructure and community information and management practices.

This project complements current Australian Government and state based initiatives.

### *Other programs*

The Australian Government is also currently investing in several other major infrastructure projects across northern Australia through the:

- Nation Building program – initiatives include funding for road and rail projects and other land transport infrastructure;
- Roads to Recovery program – funding for local roads;
- Black Spots program – funded measures include traffic signals and roundabouts;
- Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program;
- Remote Aerodrome Safety program – funding for safety equipment and repairs, upgrades and investment in infrastructure; and
- Department of Defence's Major Capital Facilities Program.

Since 2007-2008, the Australian Government has provided over \$150.3 million in funding – through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government prior to the 2010 machinery of Government changes, and now through the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government – for community and regional infrastructure to Shires affected by the Wild Rivers legislation.

## **Institutional capacity and governance**

The Framework's aim to ensure strong and effective institutional capacity and governance is assisted, in particular, through the Regional Development Australia framework. Opportunities exist to further strengthen institutional capacity and governance through future programs and initiatives.

### *Regional Development Australia*

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between the Australian, state, territory and local governments to develop and strengthen the regional communities of Australia. It has a pivotal role in supporting the long-term sustainability and productivity of Australia's regions.

The Government is providing over \$60 million over four years to support 55 RDA committees across the country. Committees are made up of over 600 volunteers and work with local communities to identify issues, articulate priorities and drive solutions.

The RDA network is an established mechanism which provides an environment for collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders and governments to identify regional issues and propose solutions which respond to local and regional issues, but which also contribute to national reform agendas.

RDA is working with all sectors of the community, including women, young people, Indigenous Australians and people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. A key focus of RDA is on the economic, social and environmental issues affecting communities. RDA committees are important contributors to and drivers of:

- Regional business growth plans and strategies, which help support economic development, the creation of new jobs, skills development and business investment;
- Environmental solutions, which support ongoing sustainability and the management of climate change (including the impact of drought, flood or bushfires); and
- Social inclusion strategies, which bring together and support all members of the community in responding to local and regional issues, as well as contributing to national reform agendas.

The *A Better Deal for Regional Australia* statement of 7 September 2010 sets aside funding of \$573 million to fund projects identified by RDA committees.

## 5. Issues for consideration

There is no question that there are a number of significant barriers to Indigenous economic development in northern Queensland. Equally, this submission demonstrates, there is significant Australian Government activity to try to ameliorate this disadvantage and enable participation – indeed, government is the largest employer in Cape York. Successfully increasing Indigenous economic development in the area will require cross portfolio co-ordination and strategic planning of all government activity as well as further attention in the areas of infrastructure, human capital, local governance, communication, finance, land tenure and environment. Attention also needs to be paid to drawing together all government activity into an effective and coherent structure.

This submission highlights many of the infrastructure challenges and opportunities that remain in the Cape York region. It draws on the views of the largest industries operating in far north Queensland – the agriculture, tourism, and mining sectors. These industries are important sources of economic opportunity and employment. A common theme from these sectors is the adequacy of infrastructure to either address current issues or provide the potential for growth.

Infrastructure is a term often used to describe a wide range of investments – a point that comes out clearly in this submission. It is therefore important to identify priority areas and coordinate activity to deliver infrastructure that provides the greatest returns on investment in terms of economic, social and environmental outcomes.

This submission also gives emphasis to the importance of ongoing cooperation between the three spheres of government and the role of the private sector to ensure that infrastructure is appropriately prioritised and funded. An important first step would be to define where the greatest infrastructure challenges lie in Cape York and the Gulf (in order for subsequent prioritisation). The establishment of RDAs is an important initiative that provides such a useful mechanism.

Physical infrastructure is undoubtedly a key prerequisite for economic prosperity in many communities. It has been a strong focus of the Australian Government since late 2007, which is described in preceding sections of this submission. As this submission shows, infrastructure investment is an ongoing task and the continuing contribution of state and local government will be crucial.

The further development of some sectors of the economy, such as mining and tourism is constrained by underdeveloped local human capital. Developing the human capital base of Cape York is an important underpinning of economic development. Priority investment in education and training in Cape York, and further development of human capital is an important priority for governments.

Effective governance frameworks are slowly becoming more prevalent. Strong governance is the key to ensuring that gains made in economic and human capital development are grown and managed effectively.

One of the major concerns of people living in Wild River declared areas is the lack of communication on the impact and implementation of the Act. As discussed, a range of communication tools are available to assist in understanding the implementation and potential impacts of the Wild Rivers Act; however, there is scope to provide more assistance in the places where people are most affected. This concern is not limited to Wild River areas, but is a concern of many individuals living in remote areas when change occurs. Clear and regular communication about proposed changes or opportunities which may impact on people living in remote Australia, which strengthening of the RDA network should assist with, is necessary to assist regional planning and economic development.

The availability of investment for Indigenous economic development remains problematic. Whilst there is some argument that there is plenty of capital available in the abstract sense, the ability to invest is constrained by the lack of appropriate governance structures, local capacity and appropriate securitisation through mortgagable interests, such as land. At one end of the investment scale sits minor investment through home ownership, which represents the fundamental building block of wealth creation. Further along the investment scale there is a need for land tenure reform on Indigenous land that unlocks its economic potential. Land tenure reform to support home ownership and economic potential is a priority of both the Australian and Queensland governments.

Outstanding environment and heritage values are an important asset and opportunity for Cape York. The sustainable management of these assets, including through conservation and natural resource management initiatives, underpins and has potential to contribute further to the economic and social development of the region.

Given the array of government activity outlined in this submission and the continuing difficulty in increasing Indigenous economic development in the area it becomes clear that there is a need for a strategic approach to the whole of Cape York and the Gulf. Such an approach could draw together the various areas of government activity and set clear goals and a pathway forward – setting governance frameworks and informing government policy around future infrastructure development, land tenure reform and financing.

As the submission notes, there is a considerable amount of government activity in the Cape York region that endeavours to foster Indigenous economic development. The difficulty lies in coordinating and leveraging this activity to the best and most efficient effect. An effective, workable solution must make use of existing resources and structures. One possible governance structure that can incorporate this function is the *Framework*

*for the sustainable development of northern Australia* outlined in the submission in section 4.5 – Government programs and initiatives. It is by no means the only option, but is an example of how existing structures can be used.

## Appendix 1

### Australian Government departments jointly responsible for this submission

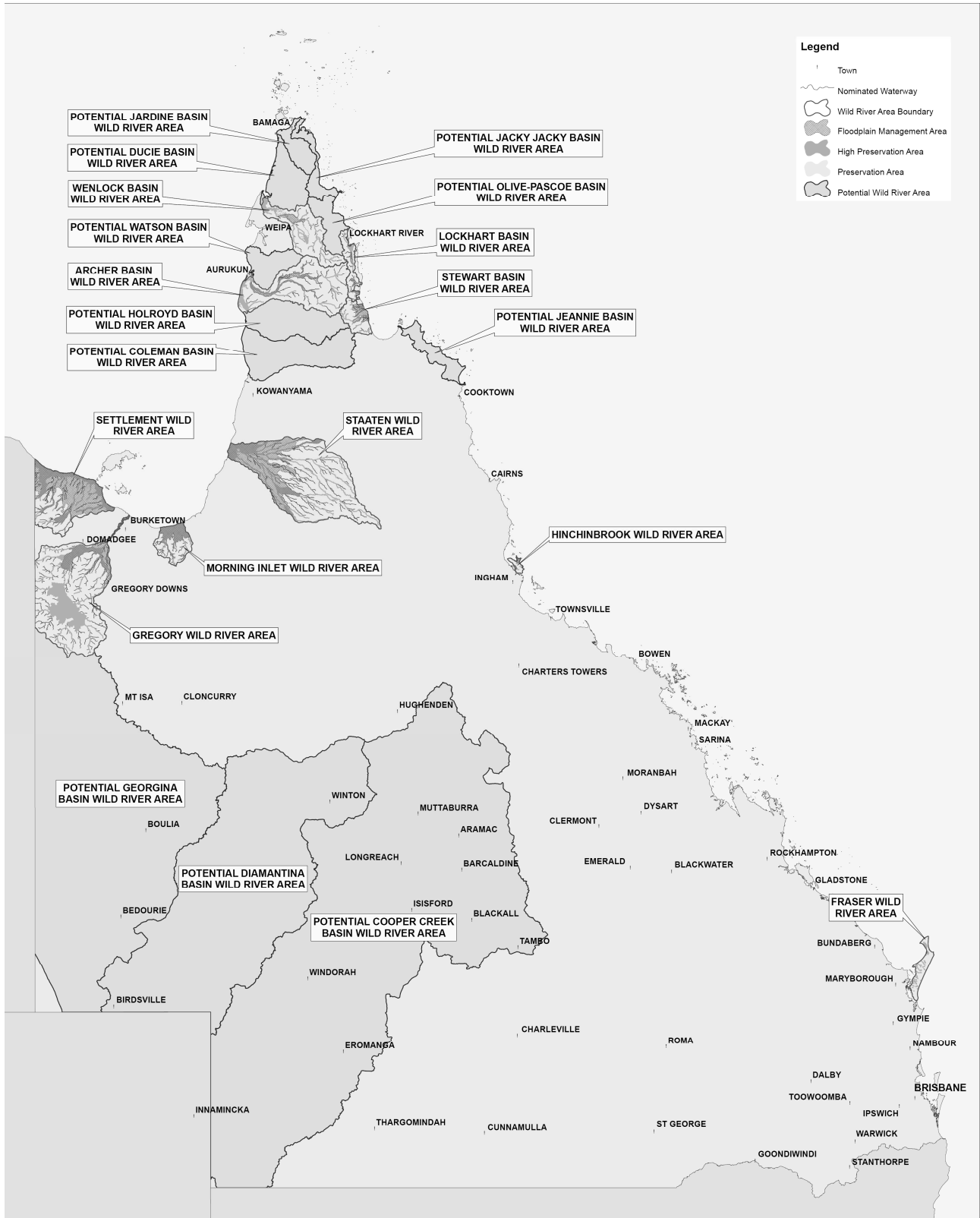
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DCCEE	Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIISR	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Regional Australia	Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
DoIT	Department of Infrastructure and Transport
DRET	Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
ONA	Office of Northern Australia
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
CSIRO	Australian Government Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

# Queensland declared and potential Wild Rivers

Department of Environment and Resource Management

Produced by Water Allocation and Planning

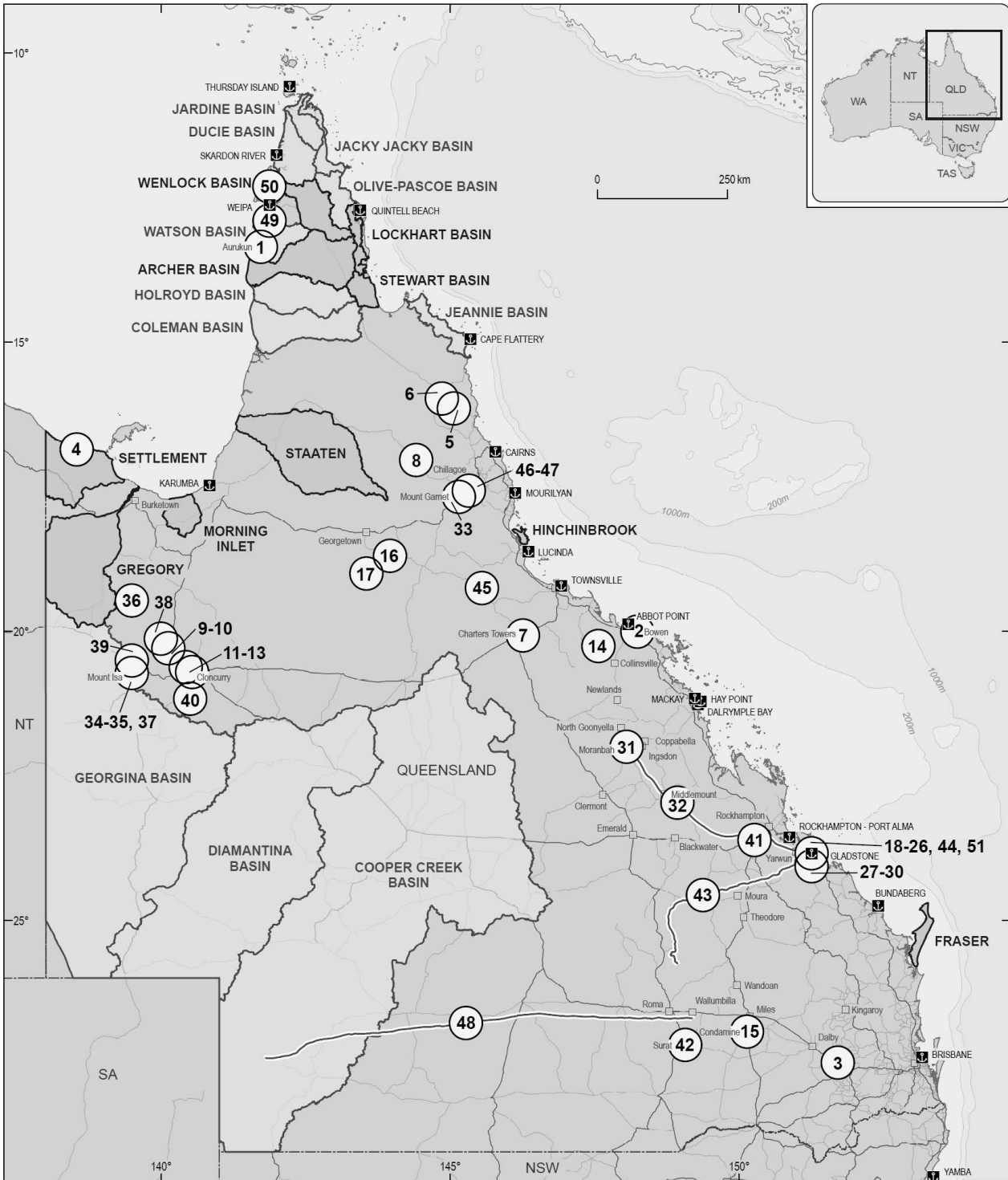
Disclaimer: This map is a guide to the location of the Wild Rivers Program. It is not intended to be used as a legal document. The Department of Environment and Resource Management makes no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness or suitability of the information provided in this map for any purpose. The user of this map is advised to verify the accuracy and completeness of the information provided in this map for any purpose.



QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT WILD RIVERS PROGRAM  
JUNE 2010



Queensland coal and non-coal minerals and energy major development projects and Wild River areas



Queensland Minerals and Energy Major Development Projects (Oct 2010) and Wild Rivers Area Locations (Map 1 of 2) non-Coal

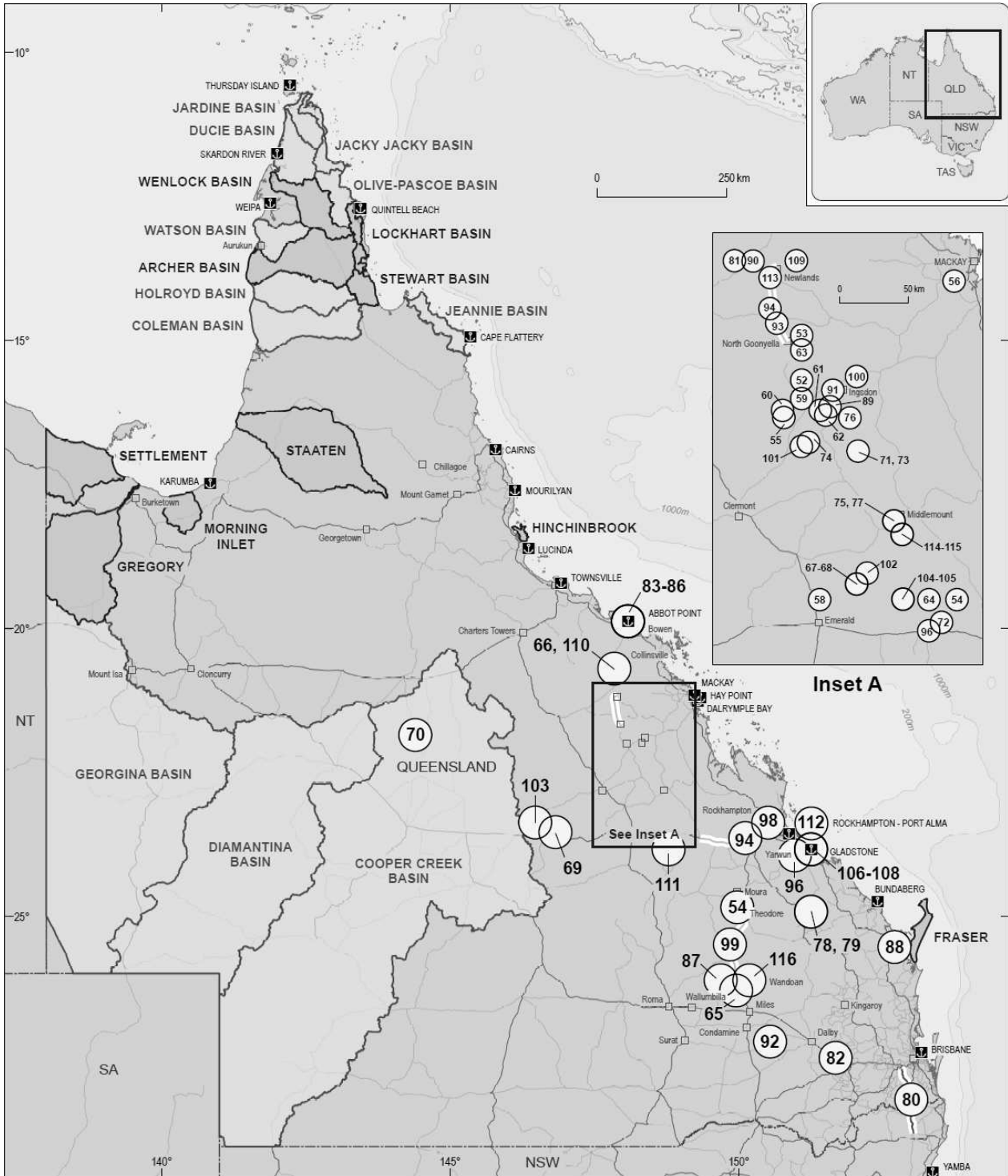
- Declared Wild River Area
- Potential Wild River Area
- Major road
- Minor road
- Major port
- City/town
- Major development project
- Proposed pipeline



Australian Government  
 Department of Resources,  
 Energy and Tourism  
 Geoscience Australia

© Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2010.  
 This material is released under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence, <http://creativecommons/licenses/by/3.0/au>  
 Data for Declared Wild River Areas sourced from the Department of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland.





**Queensland Minerals and Energy Major Development Projects (Oct 2010) and Wild Rivers Area Locations (Map 2 of 2) Coal**

- |                           |            |                           |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Declared Wild River Area  | Major road | Major development project |
| Potential Wild River Area | Minor road | Proposed pipeline         |
|                           | Major port | Proposed railway          |
|                           | City/town  |                           |



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Resources,**  
**Energy and Tourism**  
**Geoscience Australia**

© Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2010.  
 This material is released under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence. <http://creativecommons/licenses/by/3.0/au>  
 Data for Declared Wild River Areas sourced from the Department of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland.  
 Minerals and energy, major development projects – April 2010 listing, Lampard, M, et al. 2010, ABARE, Canberra, May.

10-5051-4

## Appendix 4

### Minerals and energy major development projects in Wild River areas

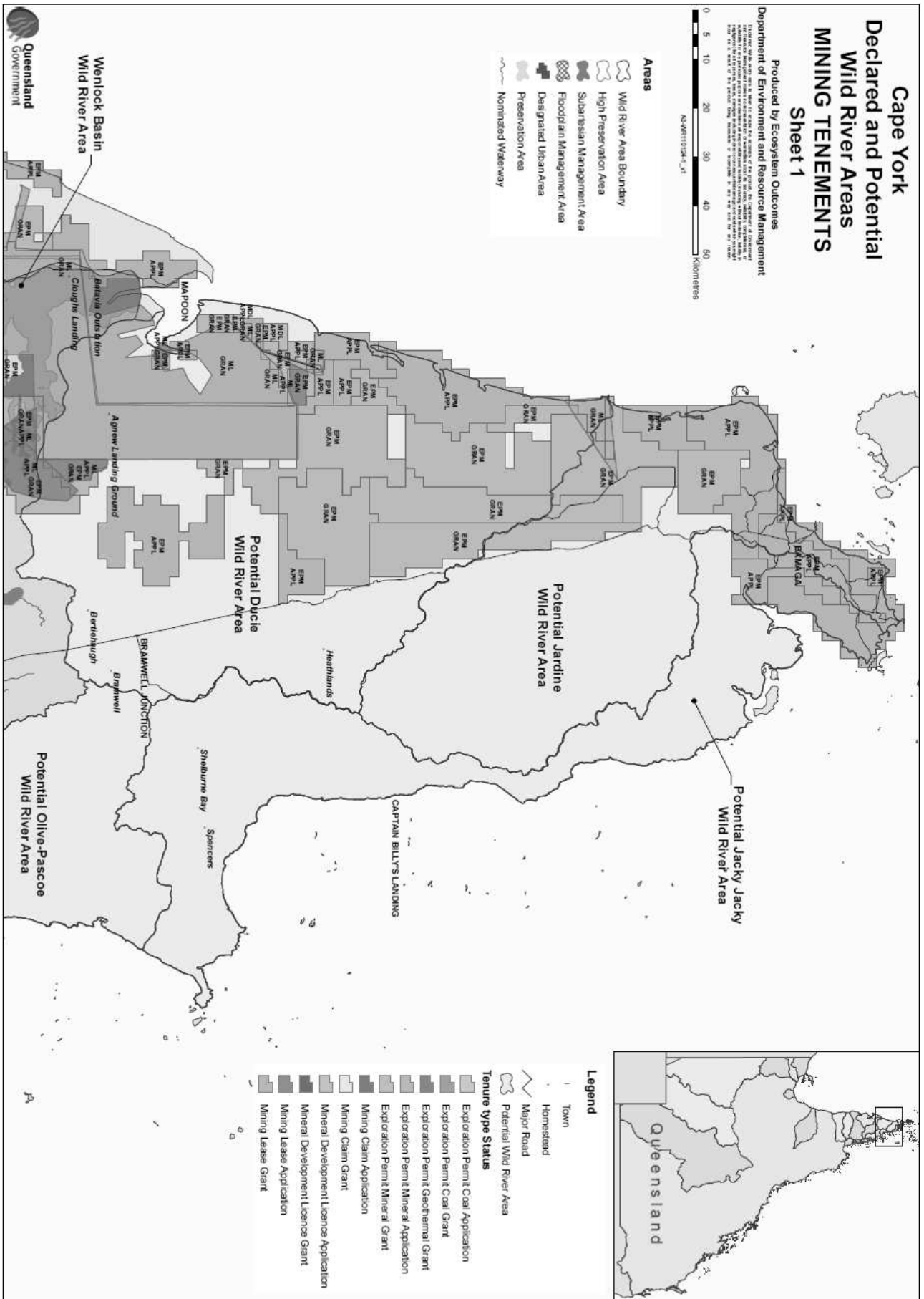
Minerals and Energy Major development projects - in declared or potential Queensland (Oct 2010)

Keys Statistics	<b>Total</b>
Capital Expenditure (\$m)	10,476.0
Employment - Construction	8,110
Employment - Operation	1,920
Potential 20% Indigenous Employment	2,065

Wild Rivers Area	Map Reference ID	Company	Project Title	Category	Location	Status	Status Comment	Commitment Level (Note 1 & 2)	Startup	New Capacity	CAPEX (\$m)	Construction Employment	Operation Employment	Potential 20% Indigenous employment	Comments
Less Advanced Project Summary (No Financial Investment Decision or Construction) - Within Wild Rivers Areas (Declared or Proposed)															
Copper Creek Basin - Proposed WRA (On Margin of WRA Basin - Checking further on location TBA)	103	Warath Coal	China First Coal project (Warath - Galilee)	Black coal - Old mining projects	1450 km W of Rockhampton	New project	awaiting govt approval	Less Advanced Project	na	up to 40 Mt thermal	7,500	6000	1500	1500	DERM have advised that of the 12 tenement applications or grants that are within the proposed Cooper Wild river area boundary, only two have a proposed high preservation areas within their boundaries
WATSON River Basin - To Be Proposed WRA	49	Rio Tinto Alcan	South of Embley project	Bauxite	30 km S of Weipa	Expansion	feasibility study under way	Less Advanced Project	2013	15 Mt bauxite	1,111	350	Not available	70	DERM have advised that RTA are authorised to take and use the land for a range of activities associated with the removal of bauxite from this area under the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957. As per S 17 of the Wild Rivers Act 2005, this is recognised as an existing authorisation, and therefore is exempt from the application of the Wild River Act.
Settlement Basin - Declared WRA	4	Larandle Resources	Westmoreland	Uranium	156 km NW of Burketown	New project	On hold - Currently uranium mining not allowed in Queensland	Less Advanced Project	NA - Currently uranium mining not allowed in Queensland	1.36 kt U3O8	317	Not available	Not available	Not available	
Wentlock Basin - Declared WRA	50	Cape Alumina	Piscolite Hills	Bauxite	35 km N of Weipa	New project	On hold - Wild Rivers declaration buffer zone, mining lease current and EIS continues.	Less Advanced Project	na	7 Mt bauxite	450	500	350	170	Refer to company announcement made on website: <a href="http://www.capalumina.com.au/documents/20101018_ASX_release_project_updated-FINAL.pdf">http://www.capalumina.com.au/documents/20101018_ASX_release_project_updated-FINAL.pdf</a> p.3
May potentially be within the Georgina / Diamantina proposed WRA (not yet confirmed)	12	Ecco Resources	Cloncurry Copper project	Copper	near Cloncurry	New project	feasibility study under way	Less Advanced Project	2012	25 Mt Cu, 19 koz Au	200	200	70	54	
May potentially be within the Georgina proposed WRA (not yet confirmed)	37	Legend International project	Paradise Phosphate project	Other commodities	5 km S of Mount Isa	New project	feasibility study completed	Less advanced Project	Stage 1: 2013 Stage 2: 2017	600 kt ammonium phosphate, 15 kt AP3	898	1060	298	271	DERM have advised that Legend were recently successful in obtaining a Mining lease tenement over the Drees North project within the Declared Glegory WRA. Legend praised DERM for the efficient dealing and approval of the application.
<b>TOTAL</b>											<b>\$ 10,476.11</b>	<b>8,110</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>2,065</b>	

Source: ABARE Oct 2010 [http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/pe\\_abarebrs99001758/MEP\\_Oct2010\\_report.pdf](http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/pe_abarebrs99001758/MEP_Oct2010_report.pdf)

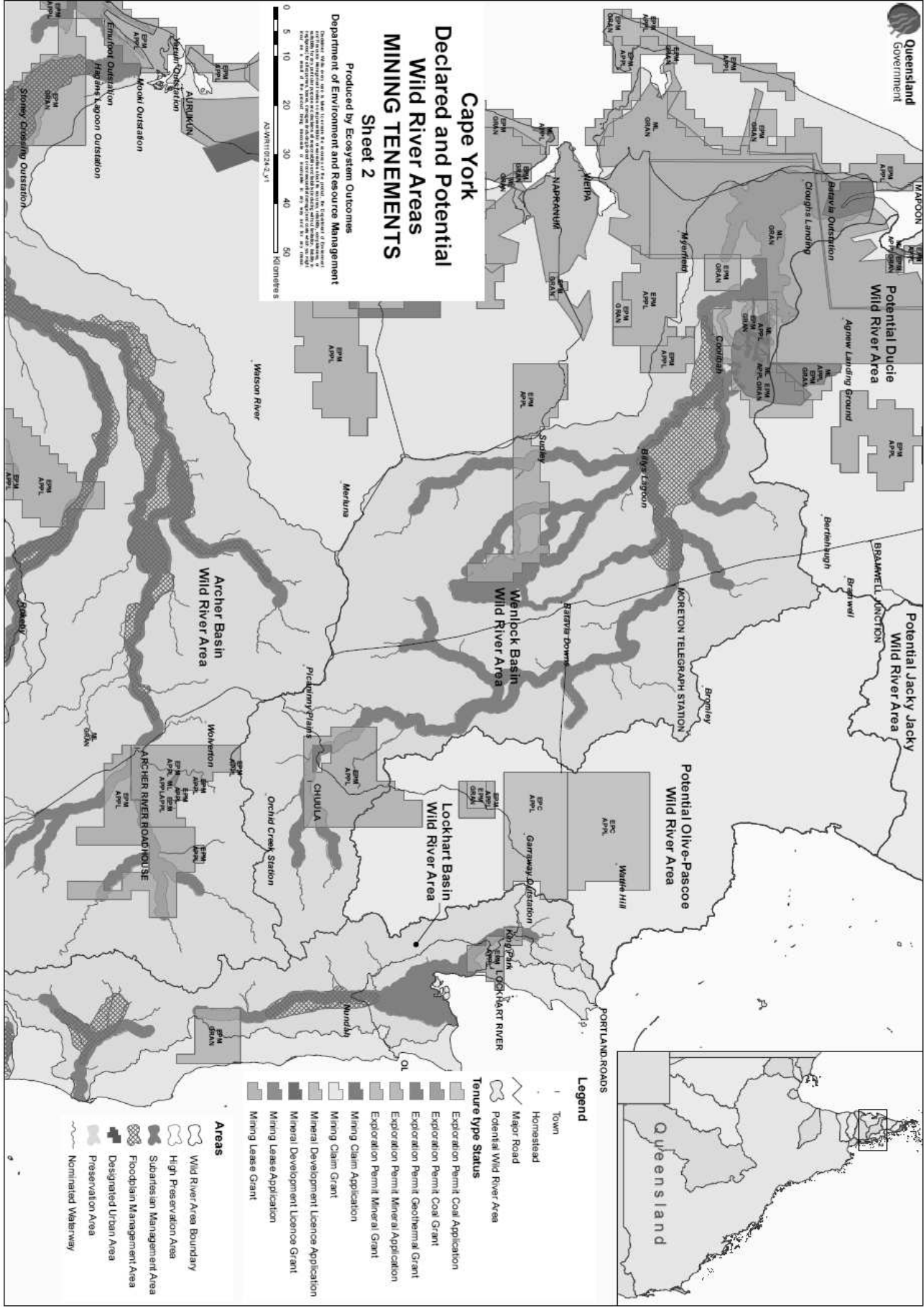
Mining tenements in Wild River declared, proposed and potential areas



# Cape York Declared and Potential Wild River Areas MINING TENEMENTS Sheet 2

Produced by Ecosystem Outcomes  
Department of Environment and Resource Management

Copyright © 2011 Queensland Government. All rights reserved. This map is a Crown copyright work. It is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license. For more information, please visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.  
Scale: 1:50,000. Date of publication: 10/2011. Data source: Queensland Government, Department of Environment and Resource Management, 2011.



**Legend**

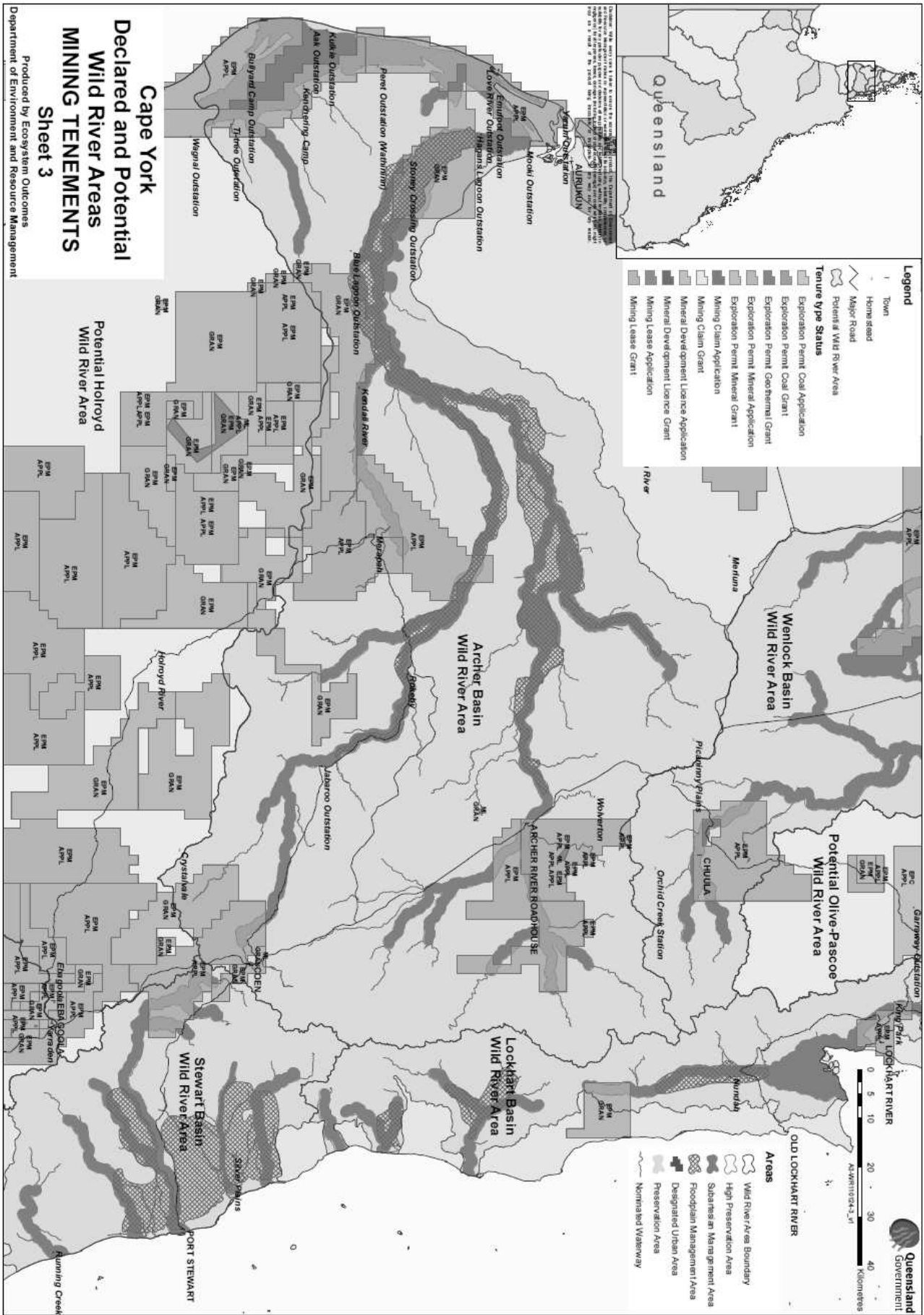
- Town
- Homestead
- Major Road
- Potential Wild River Area

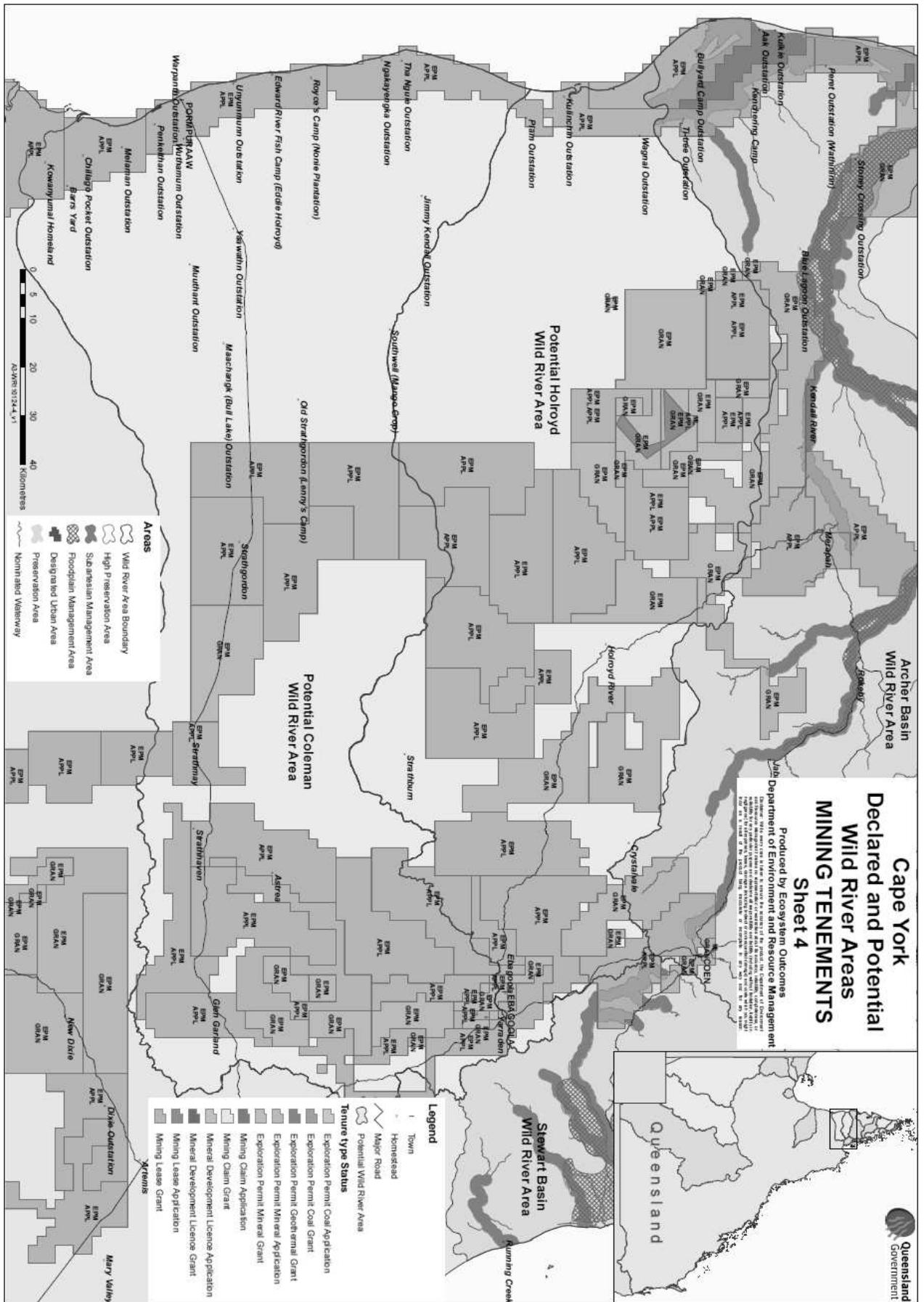
**Tenure type Status**

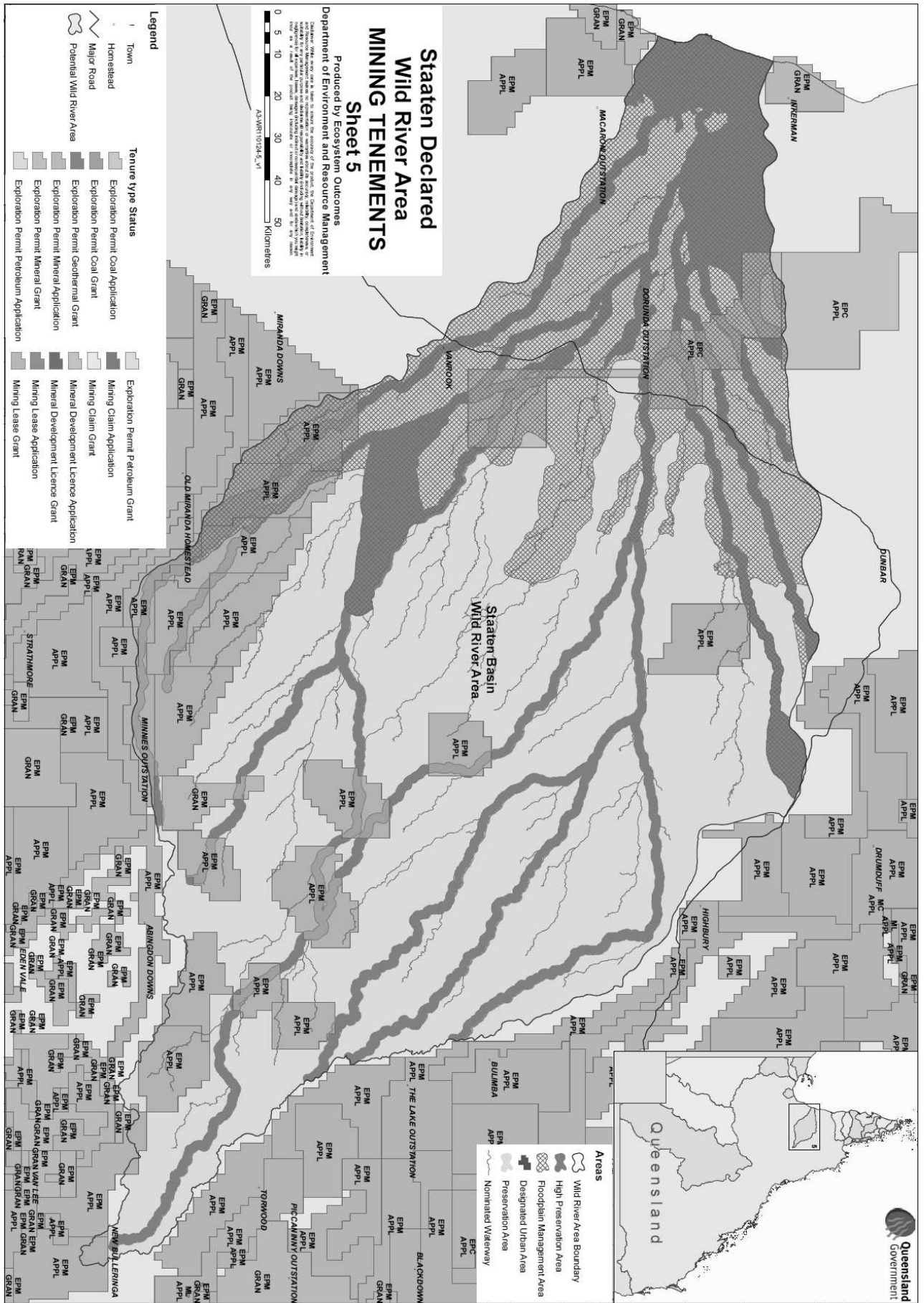
- Exploration Permit Coal Application
- Exploration Permit Coal Grant
- Exploration Permit Geothermal Grant
- Exploration Permit Mineral Application
- Exploration Permit Mineral Grant
- Mining Claim Application
- Mining Claim Grant
- Mineral Development Licence Application
- Mineral Development Licence Grant
- Mining Lease Application
- Mining Lease Grant

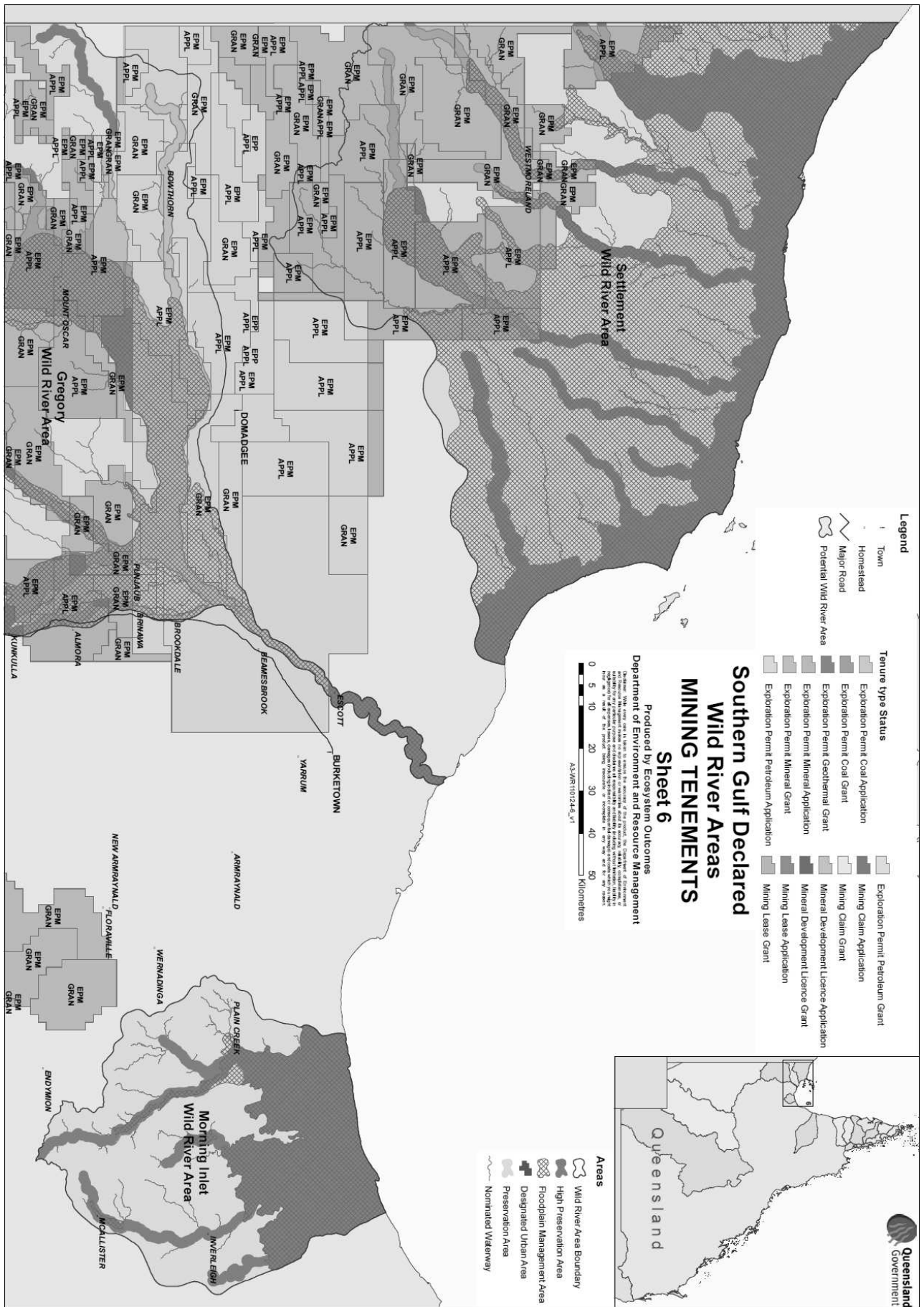
**Areas**

- Wild River Area Boundary
- High Preservation Area
- Substantian Management Area
- Floodplain Management Area
- Designated Urban Area
- Preservation Area
- Nominated Waterway







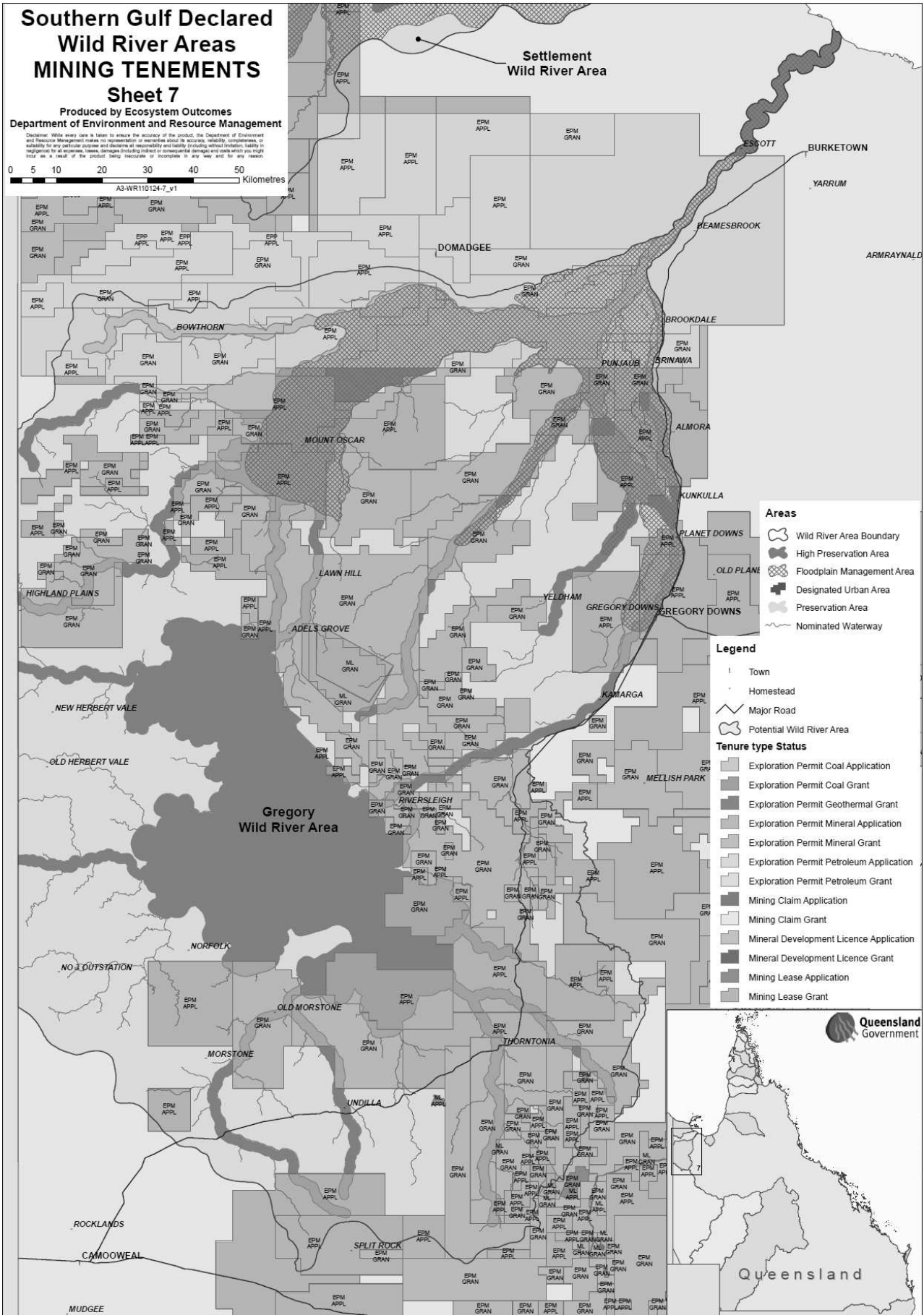




# Southern Gulf Declared Wild River Areas MINING TENEMENTS Sheet 7

Produced by Ecosystem Outcomes  
Department of Environment and Resource Management

Disclaimer: While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the product, the Department of Environment and Resource Management makes no representation or warranty about its accuracy, reliability, completeness, or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims all responsibility and liability including indirect, special, punitive or consequential damages, losses, expenses, or claims which may arise out of or in connection with its use.



- Areas**
- Wild River Area Boundary
  - High Preservation Area
  - Floodplain Management Area
  - Designated Urban Area
  - Preservation Area
  - Nominated Waterway

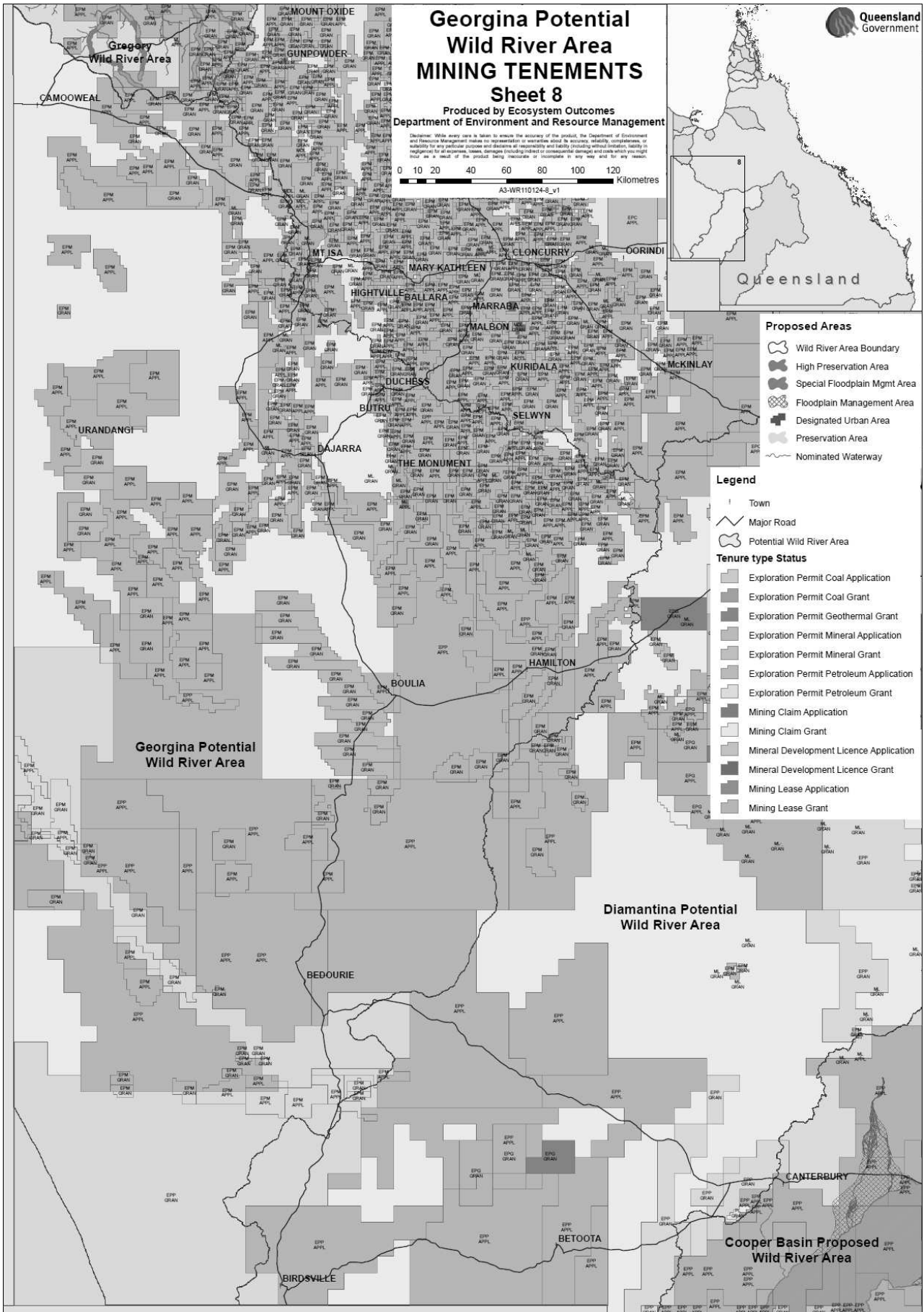
**Legend**

- Town
- Homestead
- Major Road
- Potential Wild River Area

**Tenure type Status**

- Exploration Permit Coal Application
- Exploration Permit Coal Grant
- Exploration Permit Geothermal Grant
- Exploration Permit Mineral Application
- Exploration Permit Mineral Grant
- Exploration Permit Petroleum Application
- Exploration Permit Petroleum Grant
- Mining Claim Application
- Mining Claim Grant
- Mineral Development Licence Application
- Mineral Development Licence Grant
- Mining Lease Application
- Mining Lease Grant





# Diamantina Potential Wild River Area MINING TENEMENTS Sheet 9

Produced by Ecosystem Outcomes  
Department of Environment and Resource Management

Disclaimer: While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the product, the Department of Environment and Resource Management makes no representation or warranty about its accuracy, reliability, completeness, or suitability for any particular purpose and declines all responsibility and liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damage) and costs which you might incur as a result of the product being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason.

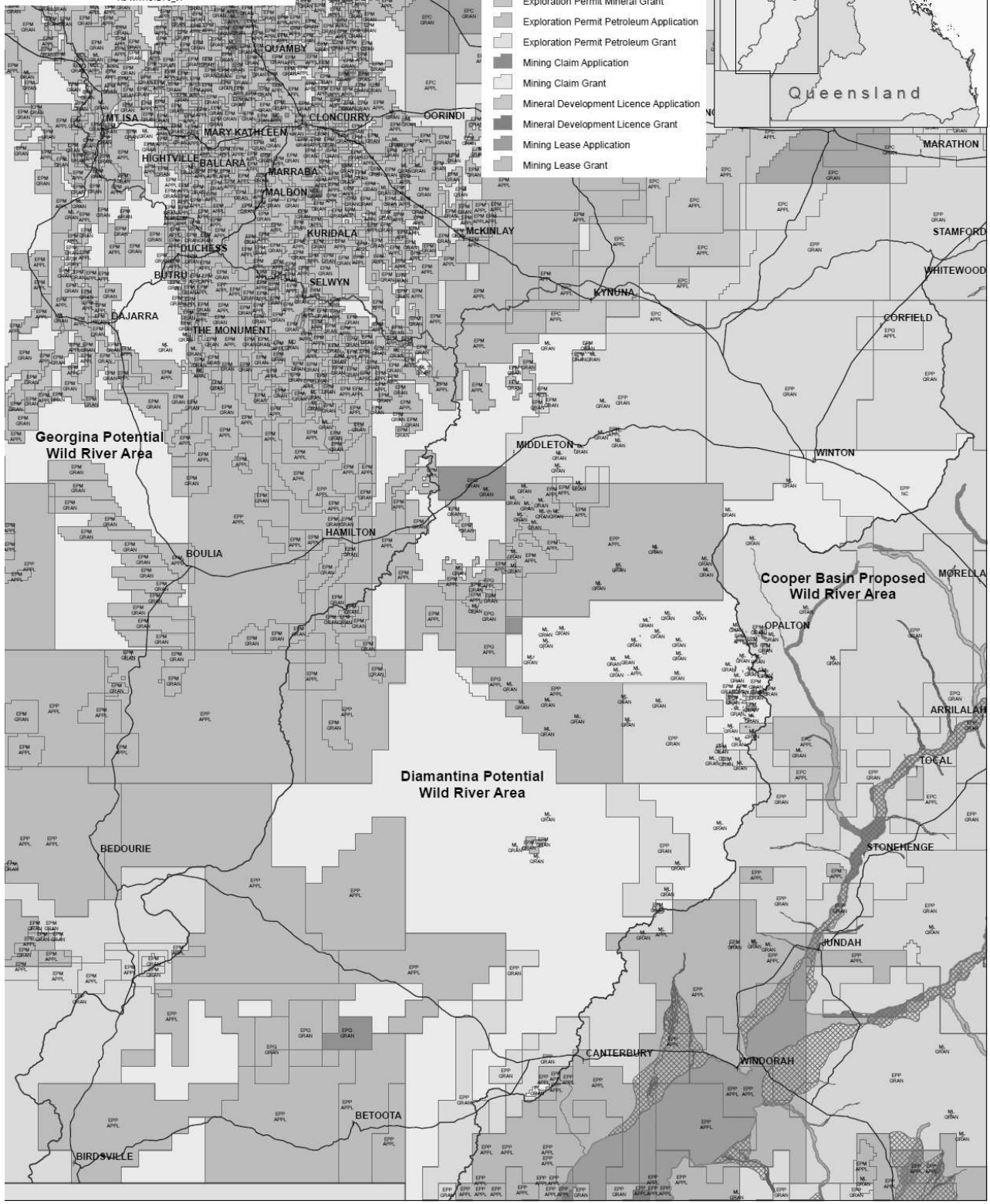
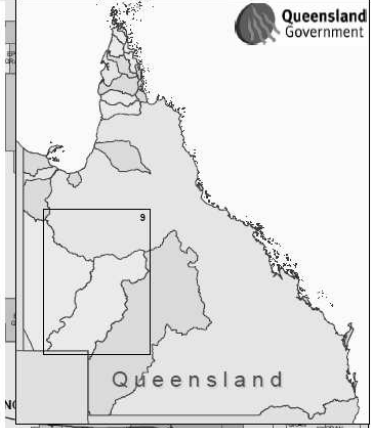
0 10 20 40 60 80 100 120 Kilometres  
AS-WR10124-9\_v1

### Proposed Areas

- Wild River Area Boundary
- High Preservation Area
- Special Floodplain Mgmt Area
- Floodplain Management Area
- Designated Urban Area
- Preservation Area
- Nominated Waterway

### Legend

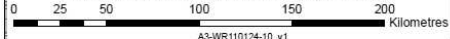
- Town
  - Major Road
  - Potential Wild River Area
- #### Tenure type Status
- Exploration Permit Coal Application
  - Exploration Permit Coal Grant
  - Exploration Permit Geothermal Grant
  - Exploration Permit Mineral Application
  - Exploration Permit Mineral Grant
  - Exploration Permit Petroleum Application
  - Exploration Permit Petroleum Grant
  - Mining Claim Application
  - Mining Claim Grant
  - Mineral Development Licence Application
  - Mineral Development Licence Grant
  - Mining Lease Application
  - Mining Lease Grant



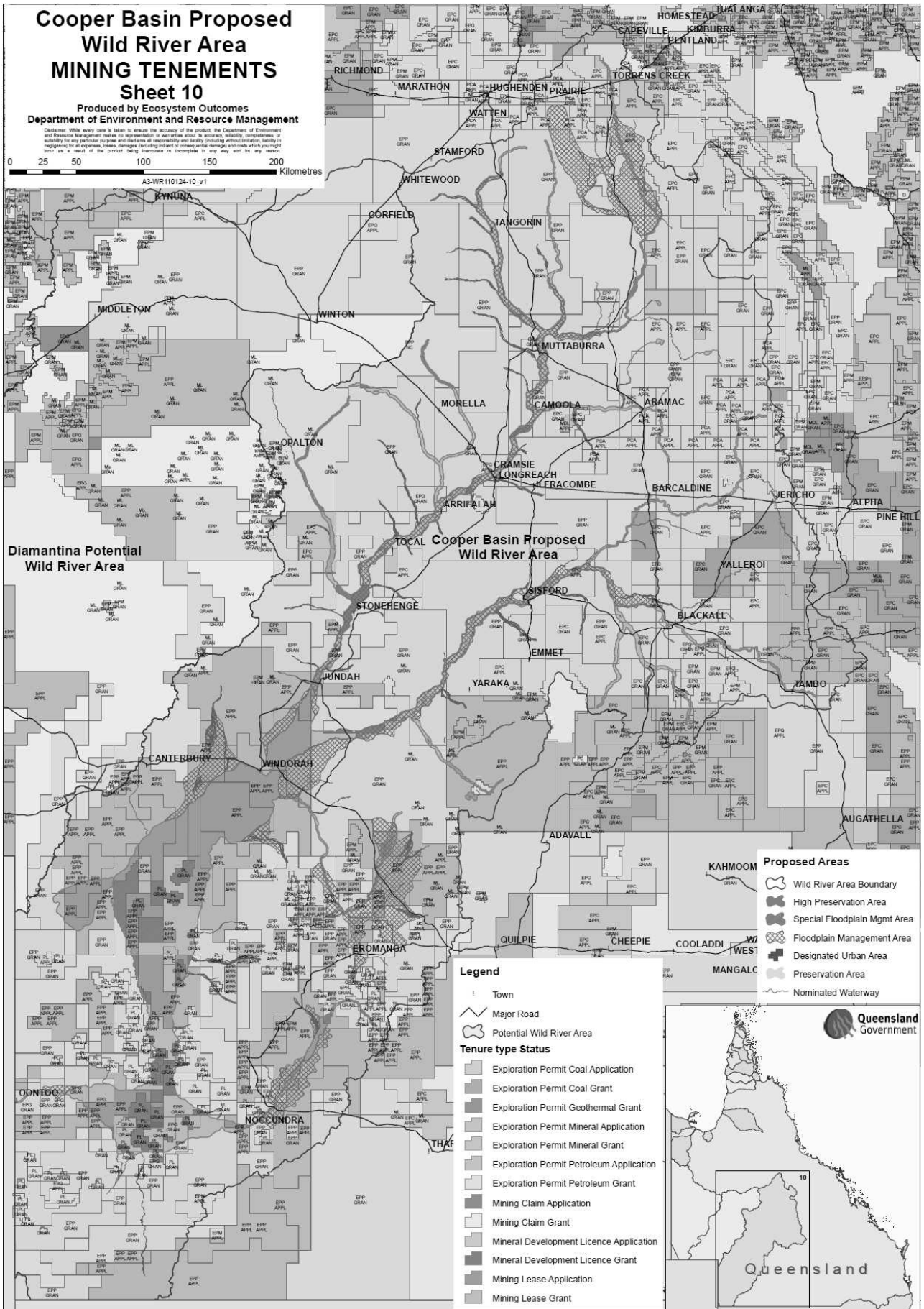
# Cooper Basin Proposed Wild River Area MINING TENEMENTS Sheet 10

Produced by Ecosystem Outcomes  
Department of Environment and Resource Management

Disclaimer: While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the product, the Department of Environment and Resource Management makes no representation as to the extent of accuracy, reliability, completeness, or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims any liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for an economic, financial, or other loss (including consequential or special damages) which may be incurred as a result of the product being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason.



A3-WR110124-10\_v1



### Proposed Areas

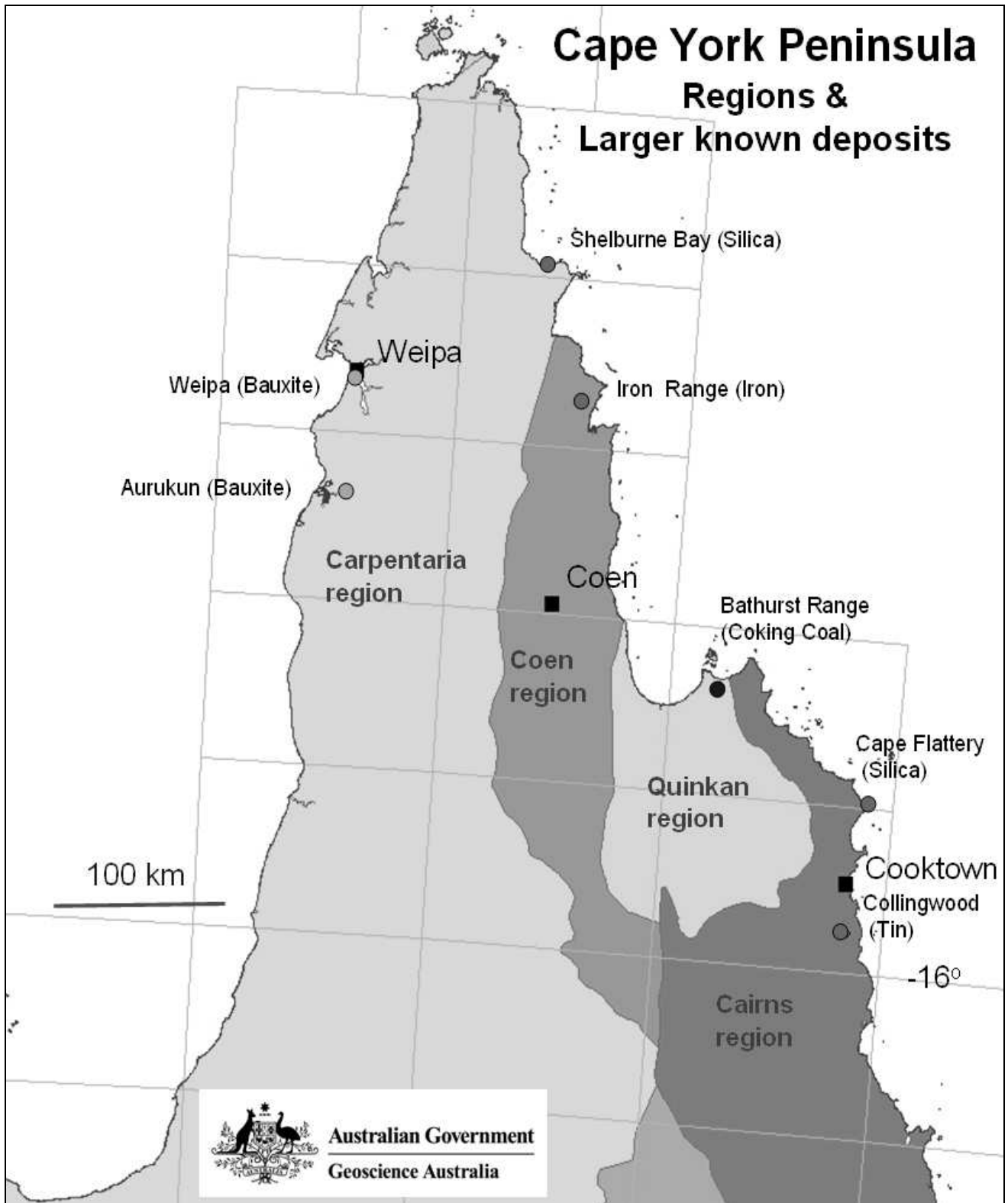
- Wild River Area Boundary
- High Preservation Area
- Special Floodplain Mgmt Area
- Floodplain Management Area
- Designated Urban Area
- Preservation Area
- Nominated Waterway

### Legend

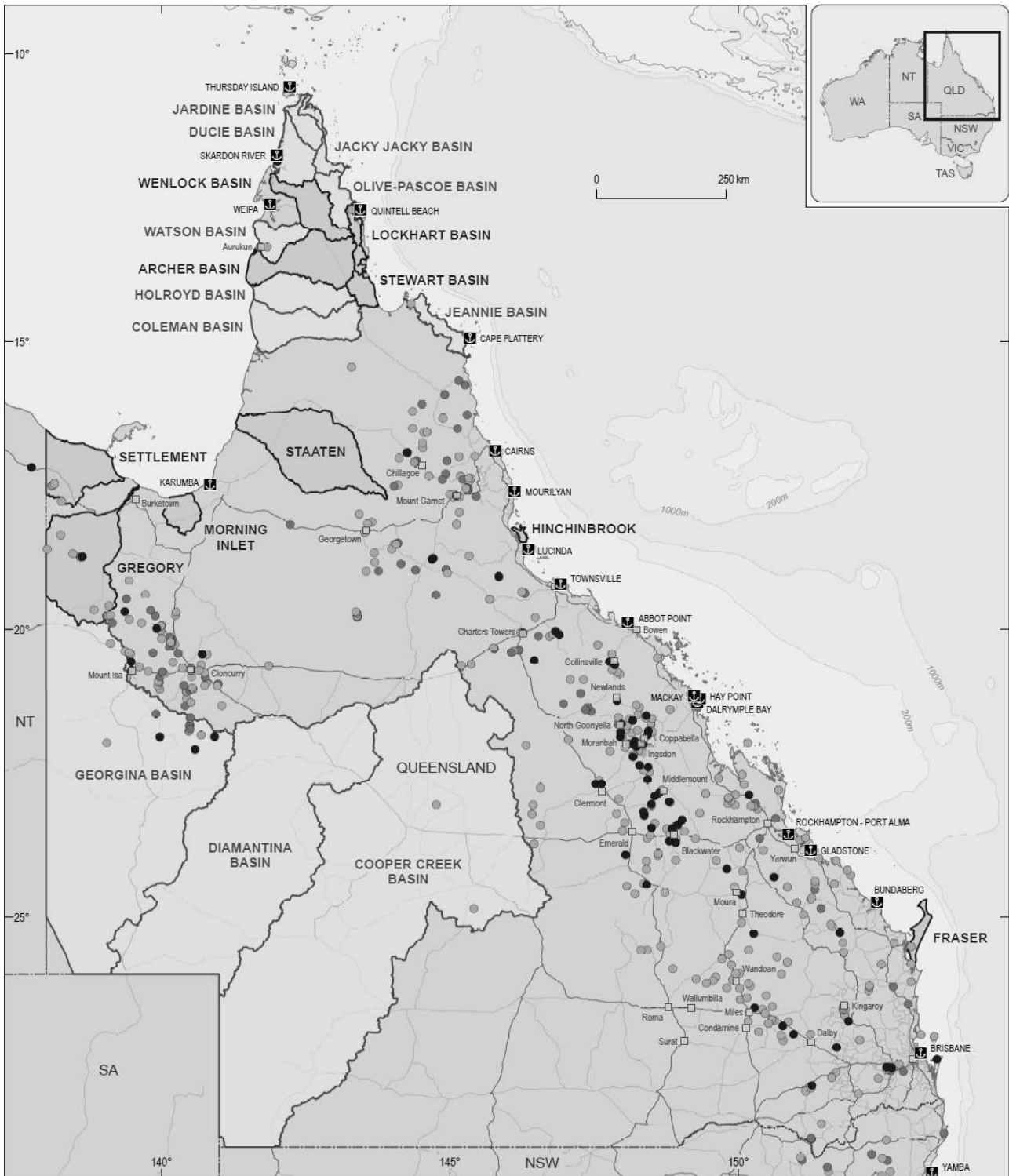
- Town
  - Major Road
  - Potential Wild River Area
- #### Tenure type Status
- Exploration Permit Coal Application
  - Exploration Permit Coal Grant
  - Exploration Permit Geothermal Grant
  - Exploration Permit Mineral Application
  - Exploration Permit Mineral Grant
  - Exploration Permit Petroleum Application
  - Exploration Permit Petroleum Grant
  - Mining Claim Application
  - Mining Claim Grant
  - Mineral Development Licence Application
  - Mineral Development Licence Grant
  - Mining Lease Application
  - Mining Lease Grant



Cape York geological regions



Queensland mineral mines, deposits and Wild River areas



Queensland Mineral Mines, Deposits and Wild Rivers Area Locations

- |                           |            |                 |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Declared Wild River Area  | Major road | Mineral deposit |
| Potential Wild River Area | Minor road | Operating mine  |
|                           | Major port | Developing mine |
|                           | City/town  | Historic mine   |

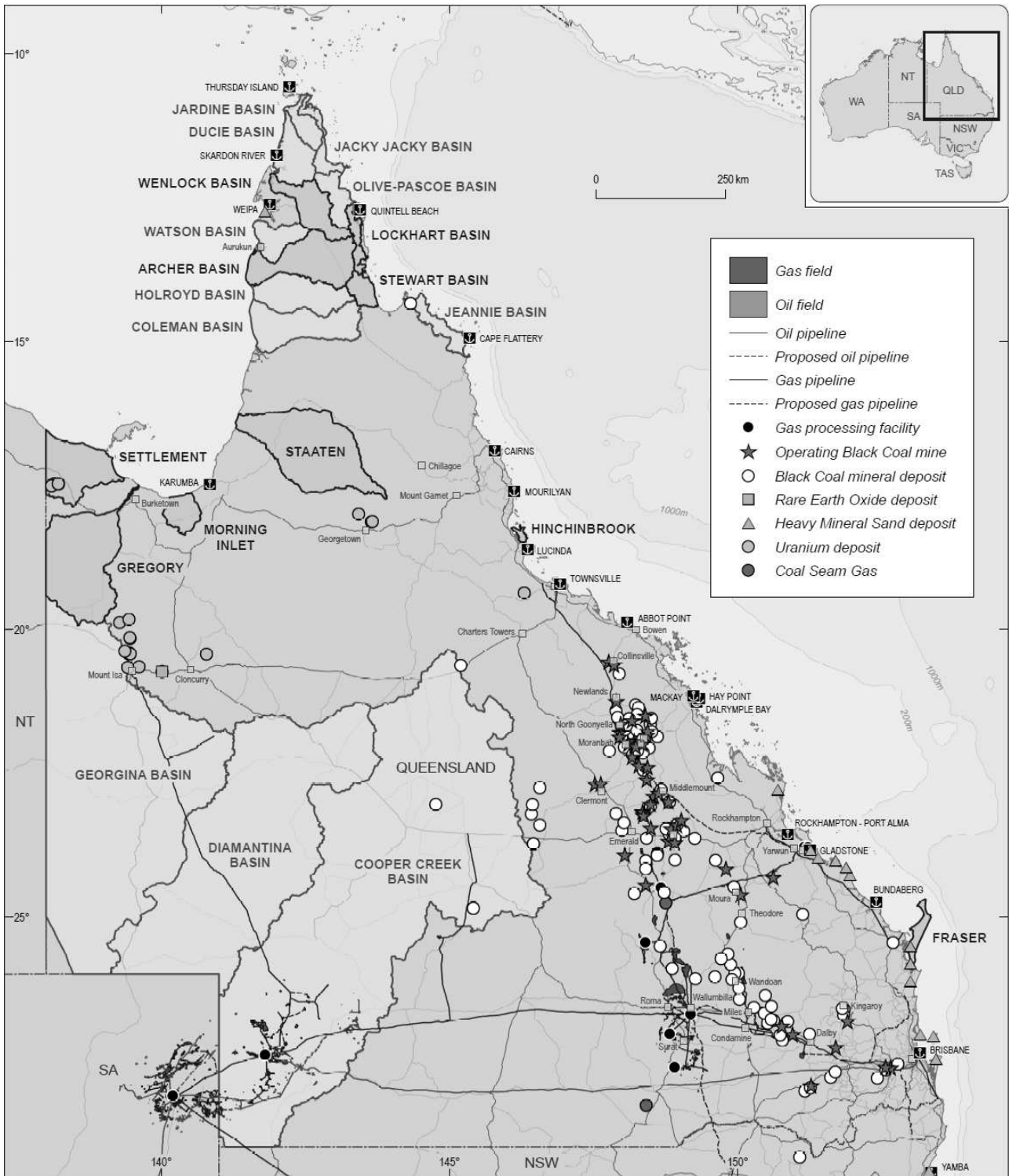


Australian Government  
 Department of Resources,  
 Energy and Tourism  
 Geoscience Australia

© Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2010.  
 This material is released under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence. <http://creativecommons/licenses/by/3.0/au>

Data for Declared Wild River Areas sourced from the Department of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland.

Queensland non-renewable energy resources and Wild River areas



Queensland Non-Renewable Energy Resources and Wild Rivers Area Locations

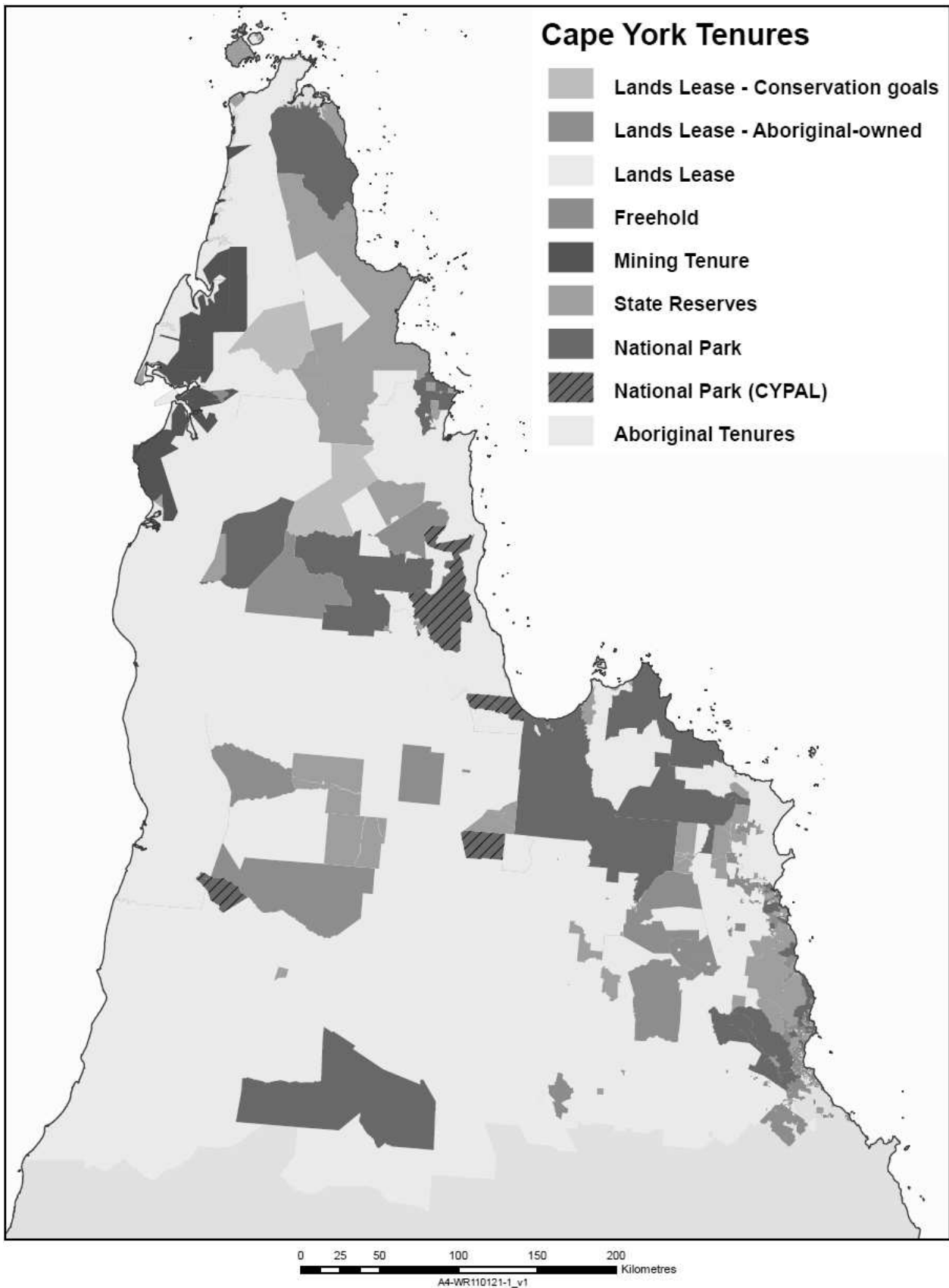


Australian Government  
 Department of Resources,  
 Energy and Tourism  
 Geoscience Australia

© Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2010.  
 This material is released under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence. <http://creativecommons/licenses/by/3.0/au>

Data for Declared Wild River Areas sourced from the Department of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland.

Cape York land tenures



Disclaimer: While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the product, the Department of Environment and Resource Management makes no representation or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness, or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims all responsibility and liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damage) and costs which you might incur as a result of the product being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason.

Produced by Ecosystem Outcomes





**Examples of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) in the Cape York region providing economic opportunities**

***The Comalco Indigenous Land Use Agreement***

The Comalco ILUA is an agreement over land and waters in the vicinity of Weipa and Port Musgrave on Western Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. The parties include the Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Comalco Aluminium Limited, the State of Queensland, Napranam Aboriginal Council, Mapoon Aboriginal Council, New Mapoon Aboriginal Council, and numerous named native title parties comprising 11 traditional owner groups

The ILUA validates Comalco's mining activities in the area and provides regional development, employment opportunities, training, community assistance, and financial advice to local Indigenous communities. The Comalco owned 'Sudley Station', a 1,325 square kilometre pastoral property was transferred to the Traditional Owners and parts of the Comalco lease that are no longer needed for mining will be relinquished to the Queensland Government for its return to Aboriginal ownership.

***The Minh Way Warr Sewerage Works Indigenous Land Use Agreement***

The ILUA is between the Minh Boro people, the Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Community and the Queensland Government, for the purpose of constructing sewerage works and associated infrastructure in the remote Pormpuraaw Community of Cape York.

Some of the benefits of the agreement for the Minh Boro people include protection of cultural heritage sites, the creation of employment opportunities and improvements in community health.

***Kuuku Ya'u Marine Park and Protected Area Indigenous Land Use Agreements***

The marine park ILUA is between the Kuuku Ya'u people, the Queensland Government and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on behalf of the Australian Government. The agreement regulates the exercise of native title rights and interests in a determination area that falls within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park and ensures good environmental management of these areas.

The protected area ILUA is between the Kuuku Ya'u people and the Queensland Government and relates to the exercise of native title rights and protection, use and management of the Forbes Island National Park, the Quoin Island national Park and the Piper Islands National Park.

Benefits to the Kuuku Ya'u include training and appointment of Kuuku Ya'u people as voluntary marine park inspectors and conservation officers, biennial meetings with the Department of Environment and Resource Management to review the marine park inspector's and conservation officer's roles and further training.

### ***Running Creek Indigenous Land Use Agreement (Stewart River)***

The ILUA was signed in 2008 supporting an Aboriginal land grant to the Lama Lama Land Trust. The agreement covers an area of 38,570 hectares which is subject to a nature refuge agreement.

The Queensland Government has provided two years of funding to the Land Trust to support on ground conservation works including planning, cultural heritage mapping, weed and feral animal control. These funds are also being utilised by the Land Trust to develop a carbon sequestration strategy for the area.

Under the Australian Government's Working on Country program a number of full time and casual rangers have been employed under this initiative to manage the area as a nature refuge. The Land Trust has leased part of the grant area for residential and low key tourism purposes and is developing a comprehensive management plan for future use and development of the area.

### ***KULLA (McIlwraith Range & Mt Croll) Indigenous Land Use Agreement (parts of Stewart, Archer and Lockhart WRA)***

The ILUA with the Queensland Government supports the KULLA (McIlwraith Range) National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land) totalling 158,358ha. The ILUA also provides for the grant of Aboriginal land to the Toolka Land Trust (18,014ha), the Muluna Land Trust (4,441ha) and additions of 856ha to the Kulla Land Trust.

The agreement provides for ongoing funding to the Land Trust for the training and employment of rangers as well as undertaking contract based natural and cultural heritage work programs.

Cape York farming-suitable land and Wild River areas

