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14th February 2014
Committee Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: jscna@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Cape York Natural Resource Management Ltd is the designated regional natural resource management (NRM) body for the Cape York Region.

We work in partnership with Cape York's people, communities and industries to develop and deliver natural resource management activities

We deliver these outcomes through partnerships with the people and organisations on Cape York, and in particular we work closely with our Indigenous constituents, and with our agricultural and other economic sectors to ensure their long term sustainability and viability. Our work is supported by significant levels of Federal and State funds.

In addition to this Cape York specific response to the Australian Parliament's Northern Australia Committee's call for submissions to its inquiry into the development of Northern Australia we have also worked with Terrain NRM (our neighbouring Wet Tropics Region NRM body) to submit a combined, overarching response containing a set of key recommendations under the inquiry's terms of reference

Thank you for your consideration of the attached submission. We would be pleased to provide further clarification, data or evidence on any matters in our submission should the committee seek detail.

Yours Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Chairman.

Chairman

**Response to the
Australian Parliament's Northern Australia Committee's call for
submissions to its inquiry into the development of Northern Australia
by
Cape York Natural Resource Management Ltd.(Cape York NRM)**

1.1 Our Mission

To help people work together to care for the natural environment and to promote the sustainable use of Cape York's natural resources

1.2 Our Objectives

To carry out the role of a regional natural resource management body for the Cape York Region by:

- protecting, enhancing or improving Cape York's natural environment or a significant aspect of it;
- building the capacity of people and organisations within the Cape York Region to care for the natural environment and to practice sustainable use of natural resources, and;
- promoting the recognition and protection of the unique cultural heritage of Cape York including its sites, structures and objects of cultural significance as well as the intellectual property inherent in the traditional knowledge and practices of its Indigenous people.

1.3 Our Charter

To fulfil the role of a Regional Natural Resource Management Body for Cape York NRM Region including:

- The protection and enhancement of the natural environment;
- To support and facilitate the ecological sustainability and viability of industry to improve quality of life for the community;
- The provision of information and education, building community capacity, the carrying on of research about the natural environment and its management;
- Development of a natural resource management plan and investment strategy for the Cape York region;
- Development of funding applications for the regional and competitive components of State and Australian Government funding programs;
- Being accountable for Australian and State Government funding to implement the natural resource management plan and investment strategy for the Cape York region;

1.4 Our Values

1. Respect for the people before us, the people here today and especially the people of the future.

2. Healthy well managed natural resources, as a valuable existing capital, as they underpin the people of Cape York's cultures, economies, environment and lifestyles.
3. Democracy and full active participation in decisions that affect our lives and the lives of our children.

1.5 Our Principles

1. **Governance for Cape York reflects its unique geography, natural assets, people, communities and opportunities.** Cape York is remote from current mainstream governance arrangements, with difficult communications and significant climatic and distance barriers, however its people and communities hold a huge wealth of knowledge. Governance practice, public investment, policy (including all planning) and innovation that empowers local communities to 'drive' planning in a healthy and equitable partnership with government are essential for the maintenance of Cape York's environmental, social and cultural values as well as equitable and sustainable development. In particular, a lack of capacity and resources to participate in the social and political (mostly Brisbane and Canberra centric) networks which influence the discourse on the governance of Cape York's resources is a real barrier to informing and effectively engaging many of Cape York's people and communities of interest.
2. **Traditional Owners have rights and responsibilities for management of land and resources across Cape York.** They have knowledge and capacity essential for effective management of these resources. With this in mind Cape York NRM has adopted the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People as its framework for engagement of the Traditional Custodians of Cape York's land and fresh and salt water resources.
3. **Comprehensive knowledge of Cape York's natural and cultural resources informs decision making.** This will ensure that development decisions are well informed by the best available scientific and Traditional knowledge; do not impact adversely on the health of those natural and cultural resources; consider their impact on spatial or temporal connectivity, and; enable ecosystems to maintain their resilience to climate variability and climate change. Any approach must also acknowledge and demonstrate respect for, and fully exploit the knowledge and passion, of the people of Cape York.
4. **New wealth opportunities are purposely designed and supported so that they are sustainable and provide a long lasting and true legacy for the region and its diverse peoples.** Decisions are made within the context of systems rather than isolated single point developments so that cumulative impacts are well understood and managed. Long term implications, costs and benefits of projected changes and significant risks such as climate change must be fully considered in decision-making.

5. **The economic valuation of ecosystem services must be a strong underpinning decision making tool.** This allows a quantitative comparison of the benefits and costs of development, especially as the natural resource capital of Cape York are expected to play a key role in new economic developments.

1.6 Cape York NRM Stakeholders

Cape York NRM aims to represent the interests of people living in Cape York – which encompasses a wide variety of people from all walks of life. As a result, our response to this plan has to include many perspectives and sometimes directly opposing opinions.

2. Terms of Reference

We note that the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry have a limited definition of what constitutes economic development, and that there is no reference to the economic value inherent in the natural and cultural environment and Northern Australia's people and communities. A sustainable Vision for Northern Australia needs to balance these social, cultural and environmental values with the economic values of the region.

PART 2: “Examine the potential for development of the region’s mineral, energy, agricultural, tourism, defence and other industries”

This section examines the potential for development of Northern Australia's mineral, energy, agricultural, tourism, defence and other industries. Importantly we emphasise the management of the region's rich biological and cultural heritage values and ecosystems services as an important industry sector which must not be dismissed in this Inquiry.

Cape York's small and reducing population base (approximately 14,000 people, close to 60% of whom are Indigenous) is not due to a lack of the natural resources to support human and economic prosperity. Its economy is driven primarily by the extraction of resources (mining) and the use of natural resources (land and water) for extensive and intensive agriculture. Other economic uses of natural resources include commercial fishing and eco and cultural tourism.

An increase in Cape York's agricultural production is anticipated and resource assessment over past decades has indicated that a good percentage of Cape York's land mass has the physical attributes to allow increased production.

The reasons that such expansion has not occurred in the past are still valid. Barriers such as the impact on the ability and willingness of landholders to invest due to a lack of clear or secure land tenure, regulatory regimes, lack of appropriate tax incentives, lack of both public and private investment in enabling hard infrastructure such as roads, airstrips and ports, and a lack of consensus on future land use which needs to be developed through the coming together of good policy leadership, use of local knowledge and good science.

Potential areas for Agricultural Development on Cape York include (but are not limited to):

1. Endeavour and Laura River(Lakeland) basins
2. Hopevale-Mclvor-Starcke areas of Red soils (Red Kandosols)
3. Alluvial frontage to Palmer River etc.).

Based on the CYPLUS Soil Survey and Agricultural Suitability of Cape York Peninsula (A.J.W. Biggs and S.R. Philip, QDPI, 1995) - the agricultural land suitability assessment indicated these and other areas of Cape York were suitable for:

- a. peanuts and sorghum, maize (243 300 ha)
- b. sorghum & maize (1 8 12 000 ha)
- c. high input pastures (3 445 300 ha)

Other areas were identified as suitable for Forestry and much of Cape York was identified as suitable for extensive agriculture such as grazing cattle.

Whilst the capacity exists in the Cape York region for increased mineral and agricultural development, the existing natural environments also support significant economic activity and contain some of Australia's richest biodiversity values. As example there is just over \$7 billion dollars directly generated by the 'use' of the resources of the World Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef with a further \$5.7 billion value added economic contribution to the rest of Australia (<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/a3ef2e3f-37fc-4c6f-ab1b-3b54ffc3f449/files/gbr-economic-contribution.pdf>).

The potential of the World Heritage value of Cape York Peninsula was recognised as early as 1982 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). In 2013 a statement of the outstanding natural attributes of Cape York Peninsula that address world heritage criteria was prepared by an Independent Scientific Expert Panel (see: www.environment.gov.au/system/files/.../sciencepanelreport.pdf).

The panel was set up by the Australian Government in response to long-standing recognition of the outstanding qualities and potential world heritage attributes of Cape York. A number of Cape York Traditional Custodians groups are undertaking consultation and Country-Based Planning processes which include investigating the nomination of areas of their country for World Heritage status. The value of the conservation economy and the economic potential of ecosystems services needs to balance more traditional forms of economic development based on monetary values and resource exploitation. The conservation economy includes a broad range of employment, economic development, training, community and cultural activities in the areas of:

- natural and cultural resource management including biodiversity conservation;
- monitoring of land and resources and reporting illegal activities including poaching and illegal fishing;

- active participation in the sustainable economic use of land and resources in industry sectors such as tourism, wildlife utilization, sustainable use of plant products and the commercial provision of environmental services; and
- practical maintenance of Indigenous knowledge, culture, language and heritage.

The fisheries and extensive beef industries of the Cape rely heavily on native species and ecosystems within relatively intact natural environments and make a significant contribution the regional economy.

Whilst the mineral wealth of Cape York is well recognized as a major contributor to the Region's economy via employment and service provision, it is contended that the maintenance of healthy ecosystems underpins this and other economic activity such as the previously discussed agriculture, and tourism. The effective management of the Cape's natural and cultural assets also supports maintenance of all peoples' cultural connections, and active management of biodiversity, fire, feral animals and weeds (biosecurity) delivers ecosystem services of value in their own right as well as decreasing the economic impact of other industries like mining and agriculture.

We have obligations to ensure that the outstanding natural and cultural assets of our region including the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef and Cape York section of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, along with other icons like the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Mitchell Grass Downs and our savannah landscape spanning Northern Australia from East to West, are appropriately managed.

2.1 Barriers

There are number of barriers to realising the potential for development of the region's mineral, energy, agricultural, tourism, and other industries, including:

- The lack of appropriate scale and detail of the physical and biological characteristics of the Cape's natural resources. There is a need for in-field research to benchmark the physical and biological characteristics that allow confident decision making and investments for land use potential and developments. The lack of integrity and obvious error in much of the existing scientific knowledge, across Cape YUork, leads to conflict and mistrust.
- An aging and shrinking population especially in Cape York's agricultural industries as land is transferred to National Park and Aboriginal Freehold tenure is leading to a shortage in skills as baby boomers retire.
- The availability and employment costs for necessary skilled and unskilled labour even in existing enterprises impacts on scale and viability of operations..
- The services and resources formerly provided by key agricultural agencies such as the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Natural Resources have been withdrawn over the last 20 years. Of particular concern on Cape York are the soil conservation services. These services assist the design, development and sustainability of current and future agricultural practice and

will be in high demand should the Cape and northern Australia play a significant role servicing world food demands. This is an example of “market failure” where there is little or no incentive for private business to invest in providing a service. Government investment is the only feasible alternative, whether directly or often more cost effectively delivered through NRM groups.

- Price fluctuations in mineral commodity prices have significant impact on existing and emerging mine developments. Due to increased operational costs (environmental and employment) coupled by commodity price falls the viability of mining ventures such as Rio Tinto Australia’s bauxite operation at Weipa is at risk.
- There are a variety of tenures on the Cape however only 1% of the land is privately owned freehold. Close to 60% is aboriginal Freehold and the remainder State owned pastoral lease or National Park, conservation reserves and forestry reserves. Tenure often impacts on the ability of the landholder to leverage finance for suitable developments.
- Aboriginal Freehold land which is held under inalienable communal title can be leased but land trusts do not necessarily have the resources or capacity to pursue leasing as a possible option to generate economic development. Resources are needed to provide independent legal and financial advice and to engage community development or strategic planning experts to assist communities to plan for the complex legal, economic, cultural and social implications of leasing Indigenous- lands.
- There are recent Native Title Determinations across northern and northwest Queensland where Indigenous Land Use Agreements must be facilitated. The loss of assistance for Traditional Owners and landholders to engage in these agreements was decreased and withdrawn respectively in 2012 is a barrier to equitable and sustainable development and this support needs urgent re-instatement.
- Development assessment and approval processes including the environmental approval process – duplication, complexity, multiple timeframes and unclear decision-making frameworks contribute to creating barriers for major projects and associated investment. Whilst we acknowledge the existing efforts particularly by the Queensland Government to simplify and stream line assessment and planning processes, there is much legislation that needs to be addressed and reviewed to enable Economic Development and facilitate conservation and restoration works i.e. the Water Act 2000.
- Water is an essential element of the existing land and sea resource uses (including mining) and highly important for future development and ecosystem function to support all life into the long term. Basic surface water data is required to establish localised reliability and environmental flow parameters for all users. This includes establishing the refugia values of vegetation management of lagoons, and also seasonal resilience of in-stream lagoons,

establishing localised and accumulative overland flow rates and volumes, bed-sands and in-stream/of stream storage reliability curves. Similarly to mineral resource water issues, agriculture also requires a period of intense stream gauging over extensive networks to allow modelling of plausible long term watercourse and overland flow characteristics. Modelling may then establish the values associated with artificial infrastructure in the modified dry savannah landscapes.

- Accurately measured and modelled flows are available for many watercourses at specific 'nodes' in the catchment via Rustic or IQQM modelling. This modelling is insufficient to establishing dry season proof irrigation dams on lesser watercourses as overland flow works. Already SILO data is useful for insinuation of landscape water flows via modelling software, but the required data is a commercial item at some expense – a hindrance to the modelling of location and larger size of irrigation dams in the Gulf.
- Watercourse reliability is currently not easily established by non-specialised and skilled persons, and is a criterion to be assessed by investigation officers of DNRM regarding surface and groundwater applications. Water Resource plans are a government tool to manage water resource use by employing rules of limitations. These Water Resource Plans allow for proof of additional flow and volume availability to be accepted by the department in granting more water than the plans initially recognise. It places the onus of proof onto the applicant and demonstrates that the Plan restrictions are nominal and largely unfounded and non-transparent. If all information on water resource regulations /limitations were made publically available, it would be very much simpler to establish real world water availability and seek amendments commensurate with those observations to the respective plans. Additionally, it should not be necessary for an applicant to prove up water availability under a water resource plan as the plan should be comprehensive and identify all aspects of real water availability to the seasonal level. The onus of proof should fall back to the departments as demonstrated experts (they have a regulatory plan developed and in place based upon 'facts') and so they should presume the position of resource assessment under the Water Act 2000. Reverse onus of proof should be removed from the process.
- Insufficient Water allocations for Indigenous usage (refer Draft Strategy for Delivering Water Resource Management in Cape York). The draft Strategy claims to be in line with strategies and opportunities for indigenous growth and the State's Agricultural Strategy, yet removes the 20 000 Ml/a indigenous reserve water within Wild Rivers Catchments. This is another barrier to equitable and sustainable development on these lands.

- The Water Act 2000 needs to be consistent with other relevant Acts of government and it needs to be able to work for people and be practical and able to be implemented on the ground by industry.
- Contestability of funding for NRM has eroded collaborative efforts. The Natural Heritage Trust program allowed good integration of regional community, industry and science with government policy obligations and thus developed the most efficient and publically supported projects and outcomes. Top down funding processes by the Caring for Our Country program has largely eliminated community and industry participation and disempowered the effective collaboration that had been established creating ‘free-riding’ behaviour and less publically supported and or practical outcomes.
- The level of grazing operation debt on Cape York has in many cases become un-serviceable due to a variety of factors including input price increases, rapid land value/equity declines, impacts of wildfires and natural disasters, lack of comprehensive planning and poor financial serviceability tools. Innovation and best practice suffers when large percentage of grazing operations are under financial stress.

2.2 Recommendations

- Invest in tropical agricultural extension services including greater emphasis on soil conservation services. The NRM groups have a successful model in operation and have a proven capability of delivery and performance. The Landcare program needs to better integrate the knowledge and strategic recommendations of the regional community and industries for the most efficient and practical extension and service support.
- Re-instate economic support for landholders and Traditional Custodians to negotiate ILUAs.
- Revisit the Homelands Policy to support Traditional Custodians to move back to their traditional homelands to live and set up sustainable businesses and engage in the environmental services industry
- Continue support for existing programs such as Working on Country, Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous Heritage Program, which support the sustainable livelihoods of Indigenous Traditional Custodians on country, including ‘fee for service’ and stewardship programs.
- Support carbon farming initiatives by Traditional Custodians and other land holders including pastoralists.
- Fast track or prioritise existing grant funds for Traditional Custodian cultural recording in northern Australia for more effective ILUA and development negotiations.
- Northern Australia land tenure issues have been usefully analysed in “*Land tenure in northern Australia: opportunities and challenges for investment*” and

recommendations regarding future reform opportunities are identified. We recommend consideration of this paper by the Parliamentary Committee.

- Coordination, consistency and clarity need to be delivered through all reform processes in efforts to streamline assessment and planning processes, whilst ensuring checks and balances including rigorous processes applied where appropriate.
- Invest early in targeted applied science to set environmental benchmarks, including fresh and saltwater systems, and lay solid foundations for resource monitoring so that trends can inform new development applications and more efficiently manage existing development providing industry and public certainty.
- Maximise the existing assets of the agricultural industry through better targeting of farm support programs / supporting producers to build their operations – this includes business support in the form of expanding rural financial counsellors or business improvement packages.
- Land Management extension, Soil Conservation services, Natural Resource Management Extension to be resourced through NRM groups and engagement of qualified Land Management Consultancies by private Landholders or NRM groups.
- Resource technical specialists in soil conservation and storm water management to assist private landholders, local authorities, and State Agency Land managers to effectively address soil erosion and drainage problems which have been highlighted during the recent disastrous flood and cyclone events.
- More effective partnerships between R&D, through targeted Extension, and the Ag sector, particularly support for farmers to understand and implement new technologies and practices. This can be achieved through resourcing NRM groups.
- Repeatedly, in land assessments, consultants are producing better information, at finer scales for development applications i.e. High-value Agriculture at scales less than 1:100,000. This is better than published Government datasets that has implications for land management and Use and landscape planning. Such information should be incorporated into Government datasets and could be done in exchange for Government data and/or use of field equipment.
- Maximising Indigenous social, economic and cultural development - Nearly 20 per cent of the land-mass of Northern Australia is Indigenous land – whether leasehold or freehold and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be more than a ‘part’ of the NAWP work, they need to be front and centre. Economic, social, cultural development and well-being, including cultural vitality needs to be a focus of the NAWP work. A strong focus on Indigenous economic and social development needs and opportunities links with other considerations regarding tenure resolution, Native Title, ILUAs etc.

- Resource programs which support Indigenous agricultural development, including recognition of Indigenous water allocations.
- Groundwater data is insufficient even in Wet Tropics. Northern Australia groundwater is unknown and some people assume it is unlimited. Knowledge of relationship between groundwater and surface water is needed to inform decisions about types of development.
- Either hand stream gauging or modelling (generally both) is required to establish generalised flow trends in streams. This may (or may not) represent long term trends.
- A policy of equitable shared gain should be sought for water resource developments under legislation and policy. The adversarial nature of current legislation should be revised.

2.3 Enablers

- Catalytic infrastructure such as communication infrastructure, road and rail infrastructures to reduce freight imposts. Better access to communication infrastructure is vital for e-commerce, industrial internet systems for large mining and agricultural developments, science support, and liveability in terms of maintaining contact with families whilst working in remote areas.
- Road train access improvements for Cape York to Mareeba (Mount Carbine to Mareeba road needs overtaking lanes) and then Mareeba to the Hann Highway (potential to develop short section along Nimbool Road), and improvements to the Hann Highway would facilitate huge cost savings and efficiencies for the movement of produce between Cape York, northern centres and southern markets.
- A targeted science program for Northern Australia that incorporates the benchmarking and establishment of key monitoring of natural resource and environmental trends to ensure best practice in decision making by government and developments. This would lead to the protection of natural and manufactured wealth and reduce risk, unintended consequences and costs. Such a science program also needs to incorporate improvements in technology including hard infrastructure, machinery innovations, crop diversification, innovations in tropical water capture and management. Tropical aquaculture is mooted as having high potential in northern and western Queensland as a rapid and efficient source of food (namely protein) and support for feasibilities for emerging industries are needed.
- Existing federal science programs such as the National Environment Research Program, Terrestrial Ecosystem Network and Cooperative Research Centres could be reviewed and better integrated with end user (industry and community) needs in light of the potential for the development of northern Australia.

- A comprehensive program to identify current and future land use potential for northern Australia incorporating the social and economic elements would enable more efficient decision making and development directions as well as reduce conflicts. Marxan land use planning (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1364815209001418>) is showing to be an effective tool especially if potential for new developments/land uses are incorporated into the planning to effectively determine the most cost effective conservation versus development decisions. Current NRM planning processes is changing from an asset mentality to a systems thinking approach. The importance of recognising the linkages and causes behind trends and relationships. It seems like many decision makers are not considering the whole system – Quadruple bottom line. Need to consider the economic, environmental, cultural and social values as well as the characteristics of the north and how they contribute to the system and how change will influence all components.
- A targeted review of existing legislation and government program investments at the ‘in-field’ scale with community and business participation is needed to improve efficiencies in administration. Many layers of legislation have accumulated over time that are now mal-aligned and mal-administered resulting in perverse outcomes and costs without contributing to the original intent of the legislation. This is especially apparent in the northern and remote areas of Queensland and attributed to the lack of life experience and understanding within government for these land and water systems or the social and cultural frameworks within these areas. Cost savings are likely for both government and community.
- Far North Queensland requires focused investment to meet the research needs of community, industry and government, within a development context. Boosted research capacity could ensure industry specific focus (agriculture, pastoralism, tourism, resources, ecosystem services, microbusiness, digital and innovative) as well as regulatory, planning and institutional arrangements (including tenure, governance and social) are addressed in a holistic way, leveraging our existing tropical knowledge. An integrated approach to a research agenda for Northern Australia development, driven by government, industry and community partnerships, with a commitment to the practical application and uptake of research, would maximise outcomes delivering social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes. Improved access to data and information has also been identified as a need to support investment decisions of industry, evidence based decision making by government and community participation in relevant processes (planning etc.).
- Freehold land available for rural township and rural residential developments is needed to ensure a variety of lifestyle options are offered to attract workers to commit and ‘live-in’ regional centres and secure stable populations in human resource poor areas. FIFO is an alternative option, however studies show that

mines have had most success with staff retention when employees have a variety of options available to suit their personal and family circumstances.

- Cape York offers the largest regional potential for Forestry. It is currently a minor forestry production and timber processing region generating less than 5 per cent of Queensland's native hardwood forestry production and less than 5 per cent of plantation forestry production. Forestry production predominantly comes from timber resource areas (native and plantation) on state-owned lands administered under the *Forestry Act 1959*. Most of this land is also grazed and generally managed as silvopastoral systems—production systems that combine forestry and grazing in a mutually beneficial way.
- Native forestry in Cape York, predominantly hardwood, produces a number of forest products suitable for a number of uses including sawn construction and appearance timber, poles, bridging girders, fencing timbers and craftwood. In addition, native Queensland sandalwood is harvested for its aromatic timber properties. The key commercial native forestry hardwood tree species in Cape York include Darwin stringybark, various bloodwoods, Cooktown ironwood, Moreton Bay ash, forest red gum, Molloy red box and Queensland sandalwood, plus a broad range of other suitable tree species.
- In the Cape York region, there are a number of small facilities that process native hardwood timber. These are at Napranum, Lockhart, Mapoon and Aurukun. They process some of the region's current forestry production and the rest is processed outside the region. There are, however, a number of portable sawmills and fencing timber processors servicing the region's forestry production. Commercial haul distances can be 400 km or more, and increase with product value.
- The potential high, medium and low production areas identified for native forestry expansion in Cape York are substantial—2.4 million hectares, 3.9 million hectares and 3.2 million hectares. There are opportunities to increase native forestry production on a long-term basis while having minimal impacts on the other pastoral land uses, creating silvopastoral systems. It is estimated that without restrictions on volumes of harvest, the existing native forestry resource on state-owned lands in Cape York can annually yield at least 16 000 m³ of log timber, which is sufficient to support a viable timber industry and facilitate a long-term timber-related industry.
- There is significant potential for increased forestry production, in particular native hardwood, but also softwood and hardwood plantation resources. However, there is a high risk of severe cyclone damage, no medium to large processors and limited infrastructure in the region. These factors, plus the limited species trialling to date, need to be considered before development. Increased forestry production would provide further resources for existing timber processing facilities inside and near the region once increased supply comes on-stream.
- The region is considered reasonable for further plantation forestry development. It has with good rainfall (in the areas mapped as potential),

productive growth rates for plantation species (in the areas mapped as potential) and relatively affordable land prices. However, as above, there is a high risk of severe cyclone damage, no medium to large processor and limited infrastructure in the region. These factors, plus the limited species trialling to date, need to be considered before development. Most of the existing timber processors have only limited capacity to expand production. Investment in new or upgrading of existing processing facilities is required and would likely occur if industry were assured of a long-term supply of a large quantity of suitable timber. Demand for native hardwood forest products is high and demand for exotic and native softwood forest products is medium to high.

- Traditional Custodians have a strong affinity with the natural environment; it is their place of origin and belonging and is central to their personal and community identity. Land and sea is talked about like family, and is an integral part of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The health and management of traditional lands influences the entire well-being of Traditional Custodians, it not just about the environment, for Indigenous people their 'country' is their whole life. There are significant 'government' owned conservation reserves in the northern and northwest regions of Queensland where Traditional Custodians could be provided robust authority and financial resources for the care and management of these natural and cultural places. There are opportunities for economic development for Traditional Custodians within these reserves, however appropriate arrangements have to put in place that recognise Indigenous ownership, representation and governance, and resource Indigenous people to undertake management on their own terms.

2.4 Recommendations

- Government to be an enabler of Economic opportunity through Research into new crop varieties, land use management, marketing etc. (DAFF) and a regulator and administrative assessor of Development applications (DNRM).
- DNRM specialised soils equipment, currently underutilised, be made available to NRM groups and Consultants in exchange for Site Data. This becomes a win-win partnership approach that provides best possible outcomes for a Landscape Planning Approach.
- Support for innovation and best practice
- Tropical crop experts should be engaged by the Qld Government to establish farm scale Asian crop suitability exercises. An extension team should be deployed to Asia to investigate Asian crop demands, economics and market potentials with respect to North Australian cropping implementation. Establish a whole of market research and development team funded by government on capitalising on the food product market in Asia.

- A mineral exploration partnership policy is developed between those seeking to extract minerals in the long term, and DNRM water monitoring groups. This provides a clear way forward to bridging the information gaps in water resource reliability in smaller catchments where prolonged dry spells exist so prolonged dry spells can be properly accounted for in mine water demand budgets.
- Feasibility for enhanced road train network in Far North Queensland.
- Prioritise base communication infrastructure (4G, fibre optic to house or node as appropriate) to support population growth and industrial network systems.
- Invest early in targeted applied science to set environmental benchmarks, including fresh and saltwater systems, and lay solid foundations for resource monitoring so that trends can inform new development applications and more efficiently manage existing development providing industry and public certainty.
- Further develop and apply Marxan Land Use Planning incorporating resource development potential, conservation, cultural and social values.
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1364815209001418>)
- Targeted review with proper community and industry participation of existing legislation to remove mal-aligned, mal-administered and unnecessary law and regulations.
- Invest in a Tropical Agriculture Centre of Excellence for Northern Australia. An ideal location for such a Centre would be the Lakeland/Cooktown area where the three Savannah, Wet Tropics and Cape York bioregions intersect.
- Develop a Northern Australian e-library as a data and information hub using proper protocols.
- Freehold land for town and general population growth in regional and remote areas.
- Transfer existing resources for the management of conservation reserves to traditional owner trusts (based on the representative and governance structures agreed by the particular Traditional Custodians for the land) that allow full authority to manage and earn income such as through natural and cultural tourism, native foods harvesting, wildlife management within and external to reserves.

2.5 Innovations

- An economic valuation of ecosystem services should be developed to support effective decision making. Ecosystem services are inclusive of food production systems and other resource uses as well as the value of the natural environment. This tool will allow the decision maker to compare the 'whole' cost benefit of land use changes such as the impact of terrestrial developments to fisheries

and/or tourism. In every change there are winners and losers and this tool allows more honest and quantitative assessments.

- The technologies associated with Geographical Information Systems and Industrial Internet Systems are conducive to enabling effective and sustainable development. Innovations specific to the northern Australian landscapes should be encouraged.
- A web-based Citizens Jury tool was trialed in Perth Western Australia for a contentious development decision and allowed proper debate and full disclosure of all relevant information for local people to 'help' decide the development approval. Such a tool with improved technology could be customised to allow better local involvement, reduce false perceptions and empower final decisions.
- The northern and north-west regions of Queensland hold a massive diversity of minerals, geology and land forms and are likely to qualify as a Global Geopark (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/global-geoparks/some-questions-about-geoparks/what-is-a-global-geopark/>). If designated this could potentially create a new tourism precinct and purpose.
- It is known that many of Cape York's springs, mound springs and off-stream lagoons and extensive wetlands are water table reliant and are not dry season resilient. Early research indicates that a succession of low rainfall years coupled to global warming is reducing the refugia robustness of those essential landscape attributes. It is the case that larger man made ponded areas such as overland flow dams, crows nests and in-stream storages within seasonal watercourses act as water and therefore refugia buffers. These structures could therefore offset deepening concerns of climate change effects on refugia and additionally act as water nodes that prolong the viability of corridors for animal movement across larger landscape scale distances.
- Indigenous Traditional Custodians have a vast and detailed knowledge of water, climate, soil, species, resources, etc and there needs to be recognition of this and what benefit the utilisation of this expert knowledge would have on sustainable land and resource management.

2.6 Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive tool that assesses the economic value of ecosystem services and cultural heritage for application in trade off analysis of new developments.
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PART 3: “Provide recommendations to: enhance trade and other investment links with the Asia-Pacific; establish a conducive regulatory, taxation and economic environment; address impediments to growth; and set conditions for private investment and innovation”

Cape York is well positioned to service food, technical and educational demands from the Asia –Pacific. Being tropical it has the potential to diversify existing crops to better suit the culinary preferences of the growing middle class within the Asian Pacific. Due to existing wage and environmental standards the Australian product is more expensive to produce however this can be counter balanced with the quality and the lack of contamination of the Australian product. For example a product with potential emerging demand is Beche de Mur, with species harvested for existing markets being native to northern Australia. The development of aquaculture of this species may have merit in the tropical waters of northern Australia.

The region also has reasonable access to Cairns and its international airport and services. The city has been proposed as a supply and service gateway to the South Pacific and Asia in mining and resources sector workforce, agricultural products and tropical expertise.

3.1 Barriers

- Trade barriers exist between Australia and trade partners. Australia’s biosecurity is highly relevant in all final negotiations with priority given to avoid pest or disease incursions to Australia and to provide certainty of the quality of product being exported from Australia. Ongoing support for trade agreements and quality assurance programs are important and need to be maintained to minimise trade barriers for Australian export products.
- Anti-competitive behaviour such as ‘dumping’ must be eliminated or minimised to protect export orientated industries.
- Lack of cultural understanding and language familiarity of Australians with the Asia pacific region.
- The main asset of primary production, being the herd or the crop, is largely uninsurable. Natural disasters are a fact in the northern Australian landscape just as they are in southern Australia. The NDRRA does not have adequate steps in place for full and proper agricultural and environmental recovery. Thus under current arrangements the risk exposure of agricultural developments and the insurance costs of all other developments are unreasonably excessive.
- The regulatory environment is a significant issue for northern Australia largely due to the lack of life experience within government and a lack of genuine participation in legislative processes that capture the landscape, industry, social and cultural nuances of the northern and remote regions. Thus much regulation has reasonable intent, but often State wide regulations are nonsensical outside of the urban and southern Queensland or southern Australian environs and on

many occasions result in unreasonable costs and obstacle to innovation or development.

- Profit is the major impediment to growth. The natural resources of northern Australia have significant opportunity for growth including within existing industry footprints - most industries can produce more without needing extra 'resource' but are limited by the level of profit. Profits are particularly hindered by infrastructure, trade and regulatory barriers. With good planning and regulatory review, the northern regions will be able to significantly grow as world demand for product also grows.
- Many parts of the Far North Region, have a notable 'leakage' of resident workers - who travel to their places of employment outside the Region. As the region's population continues to grow, an increasingly critical issue facing the sub-regions will be their capacity to provide sufficient jobs across industry sectors to support a sustainable economic future. There is also an issue of some Industry sectors and community having difficulty in attracting Professional, white collar workers i.e. Solicitors, Medical and health practitioners, Engineers, Agronomists/Horticulturalists, accountants and other professional services (Tablelands Industry Workforce Group, 2012).

3.2 Recommendations

- Maintain and plan to enhance quality assurance and biosecurity for tropical product development and export.
- Create a Department of Northern Australia with an interdepartmental coordination role under the Office of the Prime Minister with staff primarily based in Northern Australia. Build regional resilience, including support for bank/farmer models (as per Gulf) and extension support.
- Enhance supply chain efficiency and demand creation for local produce.
- Value adding to agricultural industry supply chain to increase productivity and efficiency, with a focus on the beef industry. Facilitate and support private investment Regional Food processing / value adding opportunities. Whether this be in Horticulture (i.e. a Cannery); or a FNQ abattoir.
- Build a further understanding of the FNQ "point of differentiation along the value chain" and position accordingly, particularly via Grass Fed Tropical Beef.
- Identify other supply chain needs and gaps to be addressed and appropriate distribution hubs.
- Provide support for the development of partnerships between large corporatized producers and local operations i.e. On Cape York the Hopevale community banana farm partnership with DOLE, a major international producer is an example of what can be achieved.
- Work with industry to identify and scope new high-value local family, corporate, national and foreign investment opportunities that sustainably grow Cape York's economy and communities.
- Further analyse key export chain limitations/opportunities (e.g. aviation, shipping, etc.) and infrastructure needs.

- Development of strategic partnerships with Asian partners – tourism industry needs to be sitting at the table
- Material Change of Use on Pastoral leases to allow new tourism opportunities i.e. Eco, Farm and Nature-based, Food Tourism etc.
- Decentralised Government Departments – both State and Commonwealth.
- Review the potential to further expand development and/or new crops within existing major agricultural areas such as Weipa and South-East Cape York, including the Lakeland (Laura River) precinct, with focus on establishing new markets, sustainable production systems and infrastructure to secure critical mass for long-term viable enterprises.
- Facilitate clear connections between developers and Indigenous development groups to foster participation.
- Reinvigorate regional opportunities for the re-emergence and enhancement of a profitable and sustainable forestry and fishing industries.
- Progress scoping works and strategic investment for implementation of the stalled Far North Queensland Forest Products Development Strategy and industry body.
- NRM sector to work with industry to develop best practice and sustainable strategy for the trapping, shooting and baiting of feral pest animals. Should be linked to future Federal NRM/environment research funding.
- To become a key part of Northern Australia as a “region of choice”, we need to promote and actively sell Cape York’s:
 - Ready access to international airport
 - Rural (i.e. Hinterland and Peri-urban) and urban lifestyle with good educational, sporting, recreational services and other community services and facilities
 - Bountiful natural assets, rich cultural heritage, great climate and clean green environment
 - Affordable cost of living.
 - Promote and create more awareness of the opportunities available in existing industries and professional services.

3.3 Enablers

- An adjustment of the zone tax rebate to better account for the living disadvantages in remote areas in comparison to provincial and city living could re-establish the original balance intended by this rebate and encourage employment and general growth in Far North Queensland. This will encourage private investment and help reduce the current limitations that exist in northern Australia in sourcing and maintaining skilled and unskilled labour.
- New industry development program specific for the emerging tropical product opportunities assisting with demand recognition, product feasibility and trade connections. This should not be just agriculture based but inclusive of education (boarding schools etc), tourism, and service industries. A northern Australia

development bond could be a financial instrument for consideration. Regular trade shows in northern Australia inviting the small to large Asian-Pacific investors may also help build niche markets to substantial market opportunities.

- Potential new crops suited to climates in the Far North (which are major consumptive crops in China, SE Asia and Pacific islands include: Sweet potato, Yam bean, Yam, Taro, Cassava, Papaya, Mangos, avocados, lychee, rambutan, longans, Tamarind (Asian drinks), Pataya (dragon fruit), Bananas, Coffee, Tea, bamboo shoot and Australian dry land rice.
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- Goatmeat is the most widely consumed meat in the world. China, India and Nigeria are the largest producers and consumers of goatmeat. There is potential for Cape York people to contribute to meeting the substantial demand from Middle East and South-East Asia.
- Far North Queensland has the potential to grow an enormous diversity of tropical and native foods.
- Regulatory and tax tools can better reflect primary industries needs following a disaster event. The Farm Management Deposit Scheme could be adjusted to lift the cap from \$400,000 to \$2million and allow tax free withdrawal during a declared NDRRA event. This would be an incentive for agribusiness to self-build cash assets that are available for immediate recovery from natural disaster events – given that no reasonable insurance exists for the herd and crop assets of primary industries. Fisheries need better access to this scheme but also better regulatory recognition of the need to modify catch areas and quotas following natural disasters.
- Industry development programs (support for business mentoring and incubation, and entrepreneurial activity) & new money for product development, e.g. volunteerism.
- Business migration/Business attraction/incubation – campaign into larger centres – suburban Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne etc. - that can do business here. Cheaper land, housing, water, good services, better environment, safe etc.

Recommendations

- Adjust the zone tax rebate to better offset the cost of living disadvantages in remote areas.
- Establish a new industry development program.
- Review Farm Management deposit Scheme and other regulatory enablers that can assist primary industries recover from natural disasters.
- Expand Taste Paradise
- Remove the excise on biofuels produced non-commercially for use in the day to day operation of businesses, regardless of the location of their use (on or off-farm/property).

PART 4: “Identify the critical economic and social infrastructure needed to support the long term growth of the region, and ways to support planning and investment in that infrastructure”

Cape York region is remote and marked by dispersed populations and small town centres. These demographics pose many challenges in the provision of economic and social infrastructure especially if systems are ‘population’ driven rather than outcome driven.

Communication via internet has substantially reduced much of the ‘tyranny of distance’ for Cape York’s regional and remote centres, however these communities also have some of the greatest needs for access to new technologies in order to maintain a level of competitiveness. Improvement in communications is catalytic in that it will substantially shift the attractiveness of living and working and building the future of northern Australia.

Planning to support investments in economic and social infrastructure must analyse firstly the potential areas of growth. Given that growth appears to be strongly linked to the natural resource capacity of Far Northern Queensland it is paramount that this be the foundation of all planning, coupled with existing social and cultural characteristics such as ‘communities of interest’, centres of trade, centres of service etc. Regional areas tend to have naturally developed town networks as a ‘hub’ based layout with different towns or ‘hubs’ providing different services and/or goods for the region as a whole. The role of each hub is influenced by the services provided by the underlying natural environment (farming, mining, tourism, fishing etc), distance to major transport nodes such as airports, and cultural history.

Population growth will create both improved access to economic and social infrastructure for existing residents and new problems. The public must be effectively engaged in planning for future growth so that the necessary transitions can be made with minimal negative impacts. Effective public participation does not mean ‘getting the public on side’; rather, it means full, co-operative involvement in the actual process of making decisions – and it must be seen to be such.’

4.1 Barriers

- Distance between regional centres and markets are a current barrier for both economic and social growth. Improved transport and communications infrastructure is catalytic for these regions.
- Many plans exist but few are widely supported by the main contributors to the economic and social success of the region being the local people. Time and robust process should be allocated for a land use plan that captures the local knowledge, integrates the global demands, incorporates good science and has sign off and long term commitment by all three levels of government. This would minimise failures caused by the current ad-hoc approaches to development.

- A higher skills level, especially skills targeting tropical expertise in their field, is needed for the future and a well-educated and skilled workforce is essential to the region's economic growth and social wellbeing. Educated and skilled workforces assist in building social capital and facilitate productive engagement with government and community organisations.
- Non-sensical regulation based on 'bureaucracy' rather than the outcome. For example, removing tick clearing restrictions with respect to cattle transport across the top end could have saved the beef industry almost \$80 million over five years especially when cattle are going from 'ticky' country to other 'ticky' country such as transport from North Queensland, through Barkly Tableland, to Darwin.
- The flooding events of 2010, 2011 and 2013 in Queensland and the destruction of infrastructure caused by Cyclone Yasi and Oswald, have shown how vulnerable the supply chains can be. Flooding, in particular on the Bruce Highway and the east-west highways connecting to it and roads in the Gulf region, always has a significant negative economic impact on the flow of food products in both northerly and southerly directions. Additionally much of the infrastructure was replaced to the same design and standard as was in place before the disaster. If climate extremes are more likely into the future design and replacement should be based on 'betterment' or building better so as to better withstand the same event. Betterment is more cost effective over the long term.
- Nominal digital connectivity, including access to high speed broadband and mobile communications. Access to reliable and consistent high speed internet and mobile phone services has been identified as a constraint to business, attracting knowledge workers, global economy workers and tele-working from home. We need to ensure that Cape York has the internet and telecommunications infrastructure available to support business needs and investigate creative ways to connect Cape York and other FNQ communities through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- Ad hoc or 'ad-on' town planning. There needs to be a sensible approach to urban development with new houses not covering productive good quality agricultural land (GQAL), particularly the Atherton basalts, which is amongst the highest value and sought-after in the country. Protection of GQAL and food security will become paramount in future years, especially if Agricultural expansion is curtailed.

4.2 Recommendations

- NDRRA infrastructure replacement is based on betterment principles.
- Improve tropical skills in existing training and education programs to build a workforce better placed to implement the region's economic development.

- Planning that clearly articulates the potential areas of future development and high value natural resource areas as a foundation for strategic and well designed town and population growth centres.
- Urgently improve communications infrastructure as this is considered catalytic to population, skill and commerce growth now as well as supporting future developments. Priority rollout of high-speed broadband across Northern Australia, and significant improvement in mobile telecommunications (adopt recommendations in regional submission to Mobile Black spots program)
- As a region we need to develop a distinct regional identity and regional brand to promote the region not only to attract tourists and economic activity, but also to attract “knowledge workers” who would come to the Region for our unique lifestyles, climate and friendly communities while being able to work. The region continues to develop and promote itself as a tropical lifestyle destination of choice to attract knowledge workers, global economy workers, Fly In-Fly Out (FIFO) workers and home- based businesses in the professional services industries.
- Secure strategic regional meat processing and shipping capability linked to key beef industry infrastructure. A new abattoir in FNQ could reduce transport costs across northern producers and reduce food kilometres.

4.3 Enablers

- A comprehensive network of weather radar infrastructure across Northern Australia is urgently needed to provide credible and accurate rainfall data for improved water allocation decisions and to provide early warning and advice of impending floods and cyclones. The longer these stations are in place the more valuable the data becomes as it builds trends and calibrates other water information systems.
- Urgent capture of Indigenous cultural sites and story places before this knowledge base is lost. The culture of our First Peoples is a valuable social infrastructure and a critical element in planning.
- Ongoing improvements to the Peninsula Developmental Road and a continuous road train access route from Cape York through Mareeba to Gulf of Carpentaria and southern markets.
- Better consideration of the Cairns Shipping Development Project and consideration of regional ports including Karumba, Weipa and Mourilyan as playing a key role in the future growth of the region more broadly whether resulting from tourism, mining activity, pastoralism, energy generation etc.
- Mareeba Airport - funding would see that Airport become Queensland’s second major aviation service centre after Cairns. An upgrade would position Mareeba Airport as a training hub for the Asia-Pacific region, providing world-class facilities and attracting a larger share of the \$322 million local aviation sector. This would involve strengthening the existing runway, main taxiway and apron to accept aircraft up to 45,000kg in weight which will allow for the landing of

heavy aircraft such as the Dash 8-100, the C130 Hercules and some jet aircraft. This would create opportunities such as Heavy maintenance of up to Code 3C aircraft, predominately Dash 8-100 aircraft, Helicopter maintenance and flying training and General Aviation maintenance, workshops and storage hangers.

- The provision of good quality, reliable and secure water supply is a critical enabler to regional economic development and growth of communities, whether regional, rural or remote. We recognise the need for securing long term water supplies not only for the Cairns region but also for Gulf and Cape York communities and industry. We note regional stakeholder interest in linking electricity generation with a water storage facility in the Cairns region and support triple bottom-line assessment of water infrastructure needs. Strategic Indigenous reserves in water also need to be considered as providing an opportunity to safeguard water to meet the economic and social needs of Indigenous communities into the future.
- Like water, energy is a critical enabler for regional growth and has been the subject of significant regional discussion and policy activity. There is universal agreement that current and anticipated electricity prices cannot be sustained and present a restriction on future industry growth in the region and a cost-of-living expense that is beyond the capacity of many to meet. Far North Queensland has access to a range of alternative energy sources, such as Wind, Hydro and Solar, that could drive self-sufficiency, alternative business models to address supply, reliability and cost issues. Our region has an active alternative energy industry and this knowledge and expertise could be leveraged into other parts of Northern Australia and internationally. Energy efficiency measures and strategies to improve innovation are also important now and into the long term. We promote the importance of reliable telecommunications infrastructure not only to support economic activity and keep communities connected but in times of natural disaster these services are critical and potentially lifesaving.

4.4 Recommendations

- Improve the weather radar coverage of northern Australia to reduce natural disaster risks to existing and future developments.
- Urgent investment in Indigenous culture recording where Traditional Owners are resourced at the on-ground level to use GIS and high grade media to capture and store valuable knowledge base for future planning and economic development.
- Revisit Tully-Millstream proposal (now called “Kareeya B” to re-brand and dispose of any previous negative connotations - as there is already an existing small PowerStation “Kareeya”). This would be a 600MW PowerStation (as opposed to Barron Gorge’s 60MW). It is clean green energy and more efficient than Wind or Solar. See attached proposal. Overall the whole scheme involved the clearing/flooding of less than 150 Ha. This would partly address the growing massive deficit of power generation in the north and the need to unnecessarily import large amounts of electricity from the south. Its avoidance of major Greenhouse gas emissions. The negligible impact on the environment.
- The moderation/upgrading of the current irrigation system for the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area (MDIA) to reduce water losses.
- The Water Act 2000 should be amended to allow for smaller domestic or small scale commercial hydroelectric works to be exempt from a licence to take

requirement under the Act. Associated infrastructure for smaller works technically needs a development permit if a water licence is required. This impost for necessary small scale infrastructure should be waived under the Sustainable Planning Act and be deemed self-assessable works.

- A solid works such as a weir or dam should retain a requirement for a development permit if it is made of manufactured materials; however natural large rock weirs should be exempt from SPA and a licence to interfere by impoundment and be self-assessable development provided they don't entrap more water than is the requirement for the hydro scheme rated demand to assure power supply reliability.

4.5 Innovations

- A 'potential hydro-electric scheme' map should be developed and made publically available for considerations as the initiator of hydroelectric development.
- Solar thermal power generation is proving to be effective and the physical characteristics of northern Australia would be conducive to these technologies.

4.6 Recommendations

- Maintain incentives for the development of efficient hydro-electric, wind and solar thermal energy projects.

Part 5

5.1 Conclusions

The northern and northwest regional natural resource management groups confirm that there is enormous physical potential for 'hard' and 'green' development of these regions. However, in supporting growth we strongly advise that the governance and decision making process used by government be fit for purpose at appropriate scale, that foundational science investments be made to benchmark and monitor the health of natural resources, and that cumulative impact and long term legacy consequences be implicit in all policy and program initiatives. These key principles will achieve the desired outcome in the most efficient and effective manner with the least amount of conflict and risk. We also urge the balancing of social, cultural, environmental and economic values and the appropriate engagement of our community including Traditional Custodians when developing policy and program initiatives.

Our conclusions, and this submission as a whole, are based on the assumption that our food production needs to meet our own domestic needs, but also to help meet the growing demands of our neighbours in Asia. *"By 2050, world food demand is expected to rise by 77 per cent in monetary terms. Much of this growth will occur in Asia where demand will double. Through close productive relationships with our Asian trading partners, Australia will be able to make the most of these opportunities"* (The Australian Government 'National Food Plan' green paper 2012).

Northern Queensland is at the doorway to the Asian markets and able to diversify land uses to produce tropical crops suited to the preferred diets of the Asia-Pacific population. A major component of this initiative is to raise the awareness of Northern Queensland as a major resource region, not only for coal and minerals, but also for agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, tourism, education and skills. In order to make the most of our position to these emerging markets we need to reduce existing barriers and implement enabling strategies and innovations.

The costs of production hinder current competitiveness of existing industries in international markets. Therefore increased production of existing resource industries, or new greenfield developments, are likely to grow in a steady upward trend as demand and price is driven up for natural resource based commodities. This allows the Australian Government to act in a strategic manner and lay solid foundations so that future generations will gain substantial wealth from northern Australia's natural resources.

Conclusion

We call on the Australian Government to initiate policy, programs and a framework of governance that position Cape York as a key region of northern Australia as a sustainable provider of natural and manufactured wealth for all of Australia's next generation.