



Cape York Sustainable Futures Inc.

An aerial satellite photograph of the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, Australia. The land is shown in shades of brown and tan, with some green vegetation. The surrounding ocean is a deep blue, with white waves breaking against the coast. Several locations are labeled: "Bamaga" at the northern tip, "Weipa" on the western coast, "Karumba" at the southern tip, and "Innisfail" on the eastern coast. The text "SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OF CAPE YORK A PLAN FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION" is overlaid in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OF CAPE YORK A PLAN FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Karumba

Innisfail



A FUTURE FOR THE PEOPLE OF CAPE YORK

Almost 16,000 Queensland citizens call Cape York home. They are fighting for a future where the environment and cultural heritage of Cape York will continue to be nurtured and cared for by the people of Cape York **whilst balancing economic and social growth and community health.**

The people of Cape York espouse 5 core values: community ownership; accountability; long term perspective; sustainability; collaboration.

Prior to the election, CYSF appealed to all political parties to commit to genuinely listening to the views and wishes of Cape York people and taking those views into account when developing policies. We ask the incoming Government to consider our priorities as a matter of urgency and we have developed a plan for the future in this document as a guide for consideration.

The following priorities were given to CYSF at workshops and meetings across Cape York over the past few months.

- 1. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**
- 2. RESOLVE LAND TENURE CONFUSION**
- 3. SMALL BUSINESS AND TOURISM SUPPORT**
- 4. INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE**
- 5. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**
- 6. HEALTH & WELL BEING**
- 7. POTENTIAL WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION**

1. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

A recent survey undertaken by CYSF demonstrates clearly that the people of Cape York lack confidence in the future, feel there is a misuse of power and are constrained by rigid restrictive systems that hinder progress.

Actions: Engage community in policy and program development

- ◆ Introduce an immediate Moratorium on major policy decisions.
 - Revoke the Wild Rivers legislation.
 - Moratorium on World Heritage proposal activity in Cape York.
 - Launch investigation on status and justification of land tenure resolution process currently underway.
 - Investigation of impact of grazing land buy back scheme

- Identify potential future uses for land already purchased to develop an economic base for future community development.
 - Seek moratorium of pastoral lease dealings under the Delbessie process in Cape York until future land tenure arrangements are resolved as outlined above.
- ◆ Undertake community forums involving all stakeholders to establish an agreed consultation and decision making process/framework as a blueprint for future government engagement.
 - Through elected local authority representation establish a community reference panel process that recognizes traditional ownership and land trust responsibilities and delivers on a broad community ownership of future policy direction.
 - Support forums to engage broader community in the outcomes, direction and priority actions arising from the environmental management future workshops for Cape York run by CYSF. Seek broader endorsement of this program's direction by:
 - Resourcing the facilitation of 8 regional community forums across Cape York and report back to government
 - ◆ Establish whole of community governance in partnership with government to determine and implement policy. Robust community governance frameworks are essential to the delivery of a community ownership framework that delivers on a broad consensus around policy direction.
 - Seek direction from individual communities on workable community governance and community ownership models.
 - Develop a concise and inclusive leadership structure is critical to the workability and functionality of the future governance arrangements to ensure inclusive representation.
 - Provide a supporting mechanism such as appointed committees to provide technical, scientific, administrative and policy advice.
 - Provide Mentoring to ensure accountability, transparency and equity of process until each community is confident in process and systems.

2. RESOLVE LAND TENURE CONFUSION

Confusion and lack of clarity surrounding land tenure on Cape York is inhibiting growth.

Actions: Commit to urgent actions aimed at resolving land tenure issues to include freehold

- ◆ Facilitate leases for commercial and community uses on leasehold and Aboriginal land.
 - Identify areas where existing blocks are available and under utilized and develop appropriate support and incentive arrangements
- ◆ Facilitate tenures for home ownership.
- ◆ Ultimate goal for tenure resolution process identified and program completed urgently.
- ◆ Seek moratorium of pastoral lease dealings under the Delbessie process in Cape York until future land tenure arrangements are resolved as outlined above.

3. SMALL BUSINESS AND TOURISM SUPPORT

CYSF has identified small business and tourism as being sustainable enterprise development opportunities in Cape York and a key weapon against welfare dependency.

Actions: Commit to a range of initiatives to encourage small business and tourism investment:



- ◆ Support tourism branding and ongoing marketing of Cape York.
 - Resource CYSF to complete the creation of a tourism support organisation to represent Cape York Peninsula and create a unity of purpose for all tourism interests to “speak with one voice” to represent the region.
 - Under this structure, develop a tourism small business support service to assist new enterprise development and achieve the aspirations of local people.
 - Review the previous CYPDA Cape York Tourism Strategy.
- ◆ Further develop visitor facilities on public lands such as national parks and foster commercial tourism and self drive visitor access to key areas.
- ◆ Allow for leases and planning approvals for commercial development on a wide variety of land tenures.
- ◆ Provide areas for community growth and consequential retail and service industries.
- ◆ Allow for leases and planning approvals for agribusiness development in suitable areas.
- ◆ Long term programs be established which train, employ and empower indigenous and local community staff.

4. INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

The people of Cape York have declared a major priority for the region is basic infrastructure to facilitate growth. Sealing of the Peninsula Development Road is a priority. Identify necessary infrastructure. Recent CYSF initiatives such as the Cape York Investment Prospectus – New Horizons and Opportunities, The OTL Project Final Report along with the current DEEDI project Growing Eco-Tourism on Cape York is a source of further information.

Action: Commit to provision of quarantined funding per annum for completion of the bitumen road to Weipa by 2020 and other infrastructure.

- ◆ Facilitate development approvals for sustainable uses with an economic benefit such as ecotourism and cultural tourism.
- ◆ Maintenance and ongoing development of community infrastructure such as roads, mail service delivery, telecommunications (Mobile phone coverage) and information technology, TV coverage from FNQ, power lines, water supplies and marine facilities.
 - The construction of bitumen road from Laura to Weipa (a distance of over 450 km) will provide a lifeline for all residents and become a potential tourism route for over 2 million visitors to the Cairns Region annually. The magnitude of this project is on a scale not seen since Western Australia opened up their North West Coastal Highway.
 - Improve access to existing knowledge resources, baseline data, natural resource condition trend information and computer based mapping services through regionally specific internet databases and online interactive mapping websites.

5. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The people of Cape York Peninsula want sustainable growth and protection of the regions intrinsic values.

It is widely acknowledged that we need to break the vicious circle of despair, welfare dependence and social breakdown which prevails on Aboriginal communities and end the uncertainties and stress relating to all landholders over lack of security and an unknown future. Enabling an environment in which personal and community wealth can be created will go a long way towards achieving that objective.

Actions: Commit to removing the impediments to regional growth

- ◆ Recall or remove the impediments of major constraint/concern to the communities imposed by the Wild Rivers legislation.



Sustainable social and economic growth of Cape York A plan for immediate action

- ◆ Postpone current consultation on World Heritage. Urgently finalise work on cultural and natural values and their threats/conservation needs. Engage the whole of the Cape York community when there is a management framework and proposed boundaries which reflect values and management needs.
- ◆ Confirm that any new mining lease/new mine will be assessed in accordance with stringent environmental impact and in the context of the social, cultural and ecological values of Cape York.
- ◆ In order to foster a stronger economic base, there needs to be linkage to and close collaboration with a significant population base. Ideally consider Cairns as a key service delivery centre for Cape York and the Far North Queensland region.

6. HEALTH & WELL BEING

Action: promote all aspects of healthy, educated and safe communities and provide for growth in social change management and opportunities

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND WORLD HERITAGE

Conservation groups and outside interests intent on declaration of Cape York Peninsula as a World Heritage area are ignoring the needs and wishes of the 16,000 residents.

CYSF supports the conservation of the Cape's natural and cultural values for future generations. CYSF considers this can be achieved with or without world heritage listing. The concerns with world heritage listing are the potential loss of local self-determination, the additional environmental impact/approval process and potential land use constraints on economic development of the Cape.

The potential to nominate parts of the Cape for world heritage listing for natural value and as a cultural landscape is because of the landscape stewardship of current and past landowners. The most important aspect for the future environmental management of Cape York is resourcing broad acre land conservation and stewardship. There is a need to resolve tenure issues and build community capacity before there is any consideration of World Heritage as an option.

Action: Commit to Strategic Conservation and Stewardship:

- ◆ Focus on identifying and highlighting key conservation and overall habitat values across Cape York, determining stewardship priorities and establishing long term programs for these (fire, weeds, feral animals, catchment integrity, protecting riparian, wetland and identified key habitats etc.)
 - Support 5 year programs to plan and implement fire, weed, feral animal, threatened species, catchment management and biodiversity programs.
 - Create a high profile program of excellence in environmental and community stewardship.
 - Support jobs, training and stewardship programs to build community skills and knowledge.
 - Support carbon and biodiversity market opportunities and commercial social responsibility and partnership programs to broaden long term employment and capacity building efforts.
 - Cape York Peninsula is one of the last strongholds for nesting sea turtles remaining in the world. Feral pigs and abandoned fishing nets are a major threat to their future. Committed long term support is required to expand conservation activities and reduce the impact of these threatening processes.

- Determine the Cape York boundary in the area of the Joint Management Area (JMA) ideally by engaging the residents of the area as opposed to existing bodies or bureaucrats being engaged.

Action: Commit to a transparent and inclusive community consultation process

