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Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
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Monday 17th February 2014

Dear Dr Pender,

RE: Submission to the Joint Select Parliamentary Committee Inquiry on Northern Australia.

Regional Development Australia Far North Queensland & Torres Strait (RDA FNQ&TS) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into the development of Northern Australia. RDA FNQ&TS provides a significant role in strategically facilitating, supporting and promoting regional development to deliver cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits across the region. We work in collaboration with key stakeholders, industry, local government, State and Federal Government and the community to deliver on our broad agenda to secure a prosperous future for the region and its communities. Our work is directed by the [Regional Road Map](#) underpinned by six pillars and delivered through twelve [Strategic Priority Packages](#).

RDA FNQ&TS and Advance Cairns held a regional stakeholder workshop on 30th January in Cairns to facilitate discussion on the White Paper process, generate ideas and identify commonalities. This submission will provide introductory comments on the status of Northern Australia and brief comment on the overarching strategic needs of the region in relation to securing a prosperous future for Northern Australia. It is informed by previous work of RDA FNQ&TS (Strategic Priority Packages, submissions¹, Northern Queensland Strategy policy factsheets²), other critical documents such as the Tropical North Queensland Regional Economic Plan and the outcomes of the regional stakeholder workshop and individual conversations with the Cairns Regional Council, Advance Cairns, Ports North,

¹ <http://www.rdafnqts.org.au/index.php/resources-a-links/rda-fnqats-submissions>

² <http://www.rdafnqts.org.au/index.php/rda-initiatives/northern-qld-strategy-nqs/nqs-information>



Gulf Savannah Development, Cape York Sustainable Futures, Far North Qld Regional Organisation of Councils and Chamber of Commerce & Industry Qld. This submission reinforces elements raised by these organisations but it does not seek to represent their views. Please refer to our regional partners submissions for complementary and more detailed commentary on key issues.

RDA FNQ&TS views the Inquiry as the starting point for more intensive engagement and detailed exploration of matters raised, to inform the design and delivery of the Northern Australia White Paper. We flag our interest in participating in public hearings associated with the Parliamentary Committee Inquiry to expand upon issues identified and explore potential solutions and approaches. RDA FNQ&TS welcomes the long term, strategic view offered in the Coalition's 2030 Vision for Developing Northern Australia.³ We will engage on specific policy options presented through the Green and White Paper process.

1.0 Opening comments

RDA FNQ&TS and regional stakeholders would like the Northern Australia White Paper (NAWP) to provide a positive and unifying position in balancing development across the region. The success of the NAWP is reliant on securing bipartisan support to develop and deliver an integrated, strategic and long-term plan with a focus on solutions. Effective and strong cross-jurisdictional arrangements, governance and institutions will form a key component in leading and implementing the NAWP. All levels of government need to commit to driving this process in partnership with regional communities and industry. The coordination and integration of relevant programs and policy approaches will require dedicated effort.

Northern Australia has an abundance of assets – natural, cultural, human, physical resources, tropical expertise – which need to be developed and leveraged in a balanced manner to deliver environmental, cultural, economic and social outcomes with equitable benefits. A key challenge is to acknowledge and address the variation across Northern Australia through effective strategies and policy initiatives. Whilst there are several common characteristics and challenges running from East to West, there are distinct types of regions. The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) identifies three types of regions:

1. northern cities – such as Cairns;
2. mid-sized towns (often mining centres, tourism hubs or intensive agricultural regions – for example Normanton, Malanda and Cooktown; and
3. the very remote areas predominantly Indigenous communities and pastoral stations – for example, Mapoon, Coen and Hope Vale.⁴

³ P.4 The Coalition's 2030 Vision for Developing Northern Australia, June 2013 – "*It must also ensure a 'whole-of-government' approach that achieves concrete, tangible outcomes within clearly defined timeframes.*"

<http://www.liberal.org.au/2030-vision-developing-northern-australia>

⁴ Regional Australia Institute, *Rethinking the future of northern Australia's regions: more than mines, dams and development dreams*, November 2013. <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Rethinking-the-future-of-northern-Australias-regions1.pdf>



RDA FNQ&TS supports the RAI approach to consider each type of region when assessing specific barriers to growth, understanding opportunities and developing potential solutions.⁵

Northern Australia is viewed differently by those who live and die here, compared with Australians living in the rest of the country. Reconciling these often competing views of Northern Australia and its opportunities and constraints to deliver a sustainable future is a key challenge for the Inquiry and the White Paper process. Everyone in Northern Australia wants good roads and transport infrastructure; fast speed broadband and reliable telecommunications; high class education, training, health and other social services; a range of employment opportunities; thriving industry and SMEs; secure, reliable and affordable energy; clean water; and natural places to go fishing, swim, play and relax. The crux is how to leverage economic development that can deliver these services and meet community aspirations and needs.

2.0 Overarching Strategic Needs: enablers and impediments

The regional stakeholder engagement identified nine key themes (refer to Figure One) and numerous specific comments on issues, barriers and solutions specific to a range of industries and sectors (refer to Appendix 1). At the heart of discussions was the need for devolved decision-making at local/sub-regional/regional level; boosted regional engagement with local government, community and industry; and decentralized delivery of State and Federal programs and policies.⁶ This approach would empower regional community and industry, and increase informed participation in decision-making and policy development as well as improve delivery of government programs. For example, basing environmental assessment capacity in the region would:

- a) build expertise and local/regional knowledge of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) by assessment staff – prudent given the high proportion of MNES in the region (including the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas);
- b) reduce proponent frustrations with turnover of Canberra based staff;
- c) contribute to progressing one-stop-shop for development assessment;
- d) improve communication and information sharing – within the Department, with Local, Qld and Federal Governments, with proponents and the broader community.

Brief comment is made on the other strategic priority areas.

⁵ RAI, *Rethinking the future of northern Australia's regions*, p.4.

⁶ For exploration of governance issues in Northern Australia please refer to Dale, A. (2013). *Governance challenges for northern Australia*. Cairns: James Cook University.

http://www.jcu.edu.au/cairnsinstitute/public/groups/everyone/documents/working_paper/jcu_128813.pdf



Figure One: Thematic outcomes from regional engagement on NAWP.



2.1 Reform of regulatory processes and policy frameworks

Key areas requiring reform include:

- **Tenure** – including pastoral leases (diversity of economic activity, security of tenure), Indigenous freehold (enabling leveraging investment for economic development); facilitating and supporting resolution of Native Title and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) etc. Northern Australia land tenure issues have been usefully analysed in "Land tenure in northern Australia: opportunities and challenges for investment"⁷ and recommendations regarding future reform opportunities are identified. We recommend consideration of this paper by the Parliamentary Committee.
- **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. We acknowledge the existing efforts particularly by the Queensland Government to simplify and stream line assessment and planning processes.
- **Land use planning** – consider arrangements for Regional Land use plans to deliver a consistent and coordinated approach clearly identifying development opportunities, siting of infrastructure, conservation and other land uses. The current issues around the draft Cape York Regional Plan provide a case in point for improving approaches to land use planning to meet community, industry and government needs.⁸

The lack of certainty regarding planning and development assessment processes, coupled with environmental policies (for example, previous decisions on Wild River declarations and conservation reserves) has a significant impact on investor confidence and in some cases has severe, immediate, negative economic outcomes, for example, Cape Alumina's Pisolite Hills project.⁹

⁷ NAMF Paper, (2013) *Land Tenure in Northern Australia: opportunities and challenges for investment*, <http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/ona/land-tenure/pdfs/land-tenure-executive-summary-20130717.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.cairnspost.com.au/business/forum-of-community-leaders-to-focus-on-the-future-of-cape-york-peninsula/story-fnjpusdv-1226807352791> Full report from the Cape York Forum can be obtained from RDA FNQ&TS.

⁹ http://www.capealumina.com.au/media/32427/20131122_asx_release_pisolite_hills_-_final.pdf



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.

2.2 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 and building governance capacity of Prescribed Body Corporates (PCBs) and other Indigenous structures.

RDA FNQ&TS commends the work of the North Australia Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development and urges the Parliamentary Committee to consider the Prospectus and recommendations.¹⁰

2.3 Infrastructure

We are focused on the need to address infrastructure bottlenecks and deliver catalytic infrastructure specifically transport (roads, rail, sea), telecommunications, and water and energy (addressed below in 2.4 and 2.5). RDA FNQ&TS has been working with other RDA colleagues as part of the Northern Queensland Strategy¹¹ to facilitate prioritisation of regional roads. The first stage of this process was the facilitation of the Regional Roads Forum held in 4th December 2013 in Longreach.¹² We have also worked with a range of partners to secure a \$210M commitment to the Peninsula Developmental Road and other roads in Cape York, and the significant investment of \$6.7B for the Bruce Highway.¹³ The

¹⁰ NAILSMA, Issue: 020/2013 – Policy Paper, *An Indigenous prospectus for northern development: setting the agenda* A policy from the Second Forum, North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development. http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/ona/files/NAIEF_2_Indig_prospectus_position_paper_0813.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.rdafnqts.org.au/index.php/rda-initiatives/northern-qlld-strategy-nqs/nqs-information>

¹² Queensland Regional Roads Forum Outcomes -

http://www.rdafnqts.org.au/images/Nth_QLD_Strategy/Regional_Roads_Forum/Key_Outcomes.pdf

¹³ Coalition Fixing the Bruce Highway Policy, June 2013, <http://www.liberal.org.au/fixing-bruce-highway> note total funding in combination with the Queensland Government of \$8.5B

http://www.minister.infrastructure.gov.au/wt/releases/2013/October/wt013_2013.aspx



upgrading of the Bruce Highway is of critical importance we also support consideration of sealing the remaining section of the Hann Highway; upgrading Kuranda Range Road to cater for b-doubles and sealing of the Savannah Way, from Cairns to Broome to dual carriageway.

Appropriate port infrastructure is also an issue for FNQ and Northern Australia more broadly. We support the Cairns Shipping Development Project and consideration of regional ports including Karumba as playing a key role in the future growth of the region more broadly whether resulting from tourism, mining activity, pastoralism, energy generation etc. Opportunities for strengthening marine industries and expansion of existing Australian Defence Force facilities are key for the future development our region.

Another important dimension to be addressed in the development of Northern Australia is meeting **social infrastructure** needs, both hard (sporting, health, education facilities) and soft (skilled workforces, training, sporting programs, healthy lifestyle initiatives etc). In particular consideration of the role of Social Impact Assessment in the development assessment process (see 2.1) to leverage greater investment from major projects in social infrastructure – potentially through an "offsets" program, specific investment attaching to approval conditions etc.¹⁴

RDA FNQ&TS promotes 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. We note current efforts by the Federal Government to start addressing some of these issues through the Strategic Review of the NBN and the Mobile Coverage

¹⁴ Summary of Key Recommendations from Cairns Alliance of Social Services (CASS) Northern Australia input

- 1) Increasing development will increase populations naturally placing a strain on health and social services infrastructure;
- 2) Involve and resource the social services sector at a regional level to participate:
 - in the beginning of planning processes;
 - in any agreements regarding development and
 - in Social Impact Assessments for significant development .
- 3) Explore opportunities for a social services "offset" to be delivered as part of major proposed projects to address the social impact of the proposal, for example, funding investment in delivery of social services and infrastructure securing long term community benefits (legacy projects – housing, transport etc).
- 4) Locate departmental capacity in the regions deliver effective services for Northern Australia i.e. not from Canberra.
- 5) Develop regional economic development programs that target vulnerable people, long-term unemployed etc to move to economic participation.
- 6) Invest and prioritise action research and data collection to better inform and improve social services delivery and understanding of the community's needs.

Full paper available from Helga Biro, Chair CASS, Director Centacare Cairns – Helga.biro@centacarecairns.org



Program discussion paper.¹⁵ Future development of Northern Australia will be underpinned by an efficient and reliable telecommunication services.

The infrastructure audit and 15 year priority projects plan, as per the 2030 Vision for Developing Northern Australia should be key drivers for addressing issues raised above. We need to maximize the use of existing infrastructure but acknowledge the need for strategic, long-term investment in critical infrastructure.

2.4 Water

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. RDA FNQ&TS recognizes the need for securing long term water supplies not only for the Cairns region but also for Gulf and Cape York communities and industry. It may be useful to link the Water Project Development Fund (as flagged in the 2030 Vision for Developing Northern Australia) with the other infrastructure initiatives including the audit of existing infrastructure and development of a 15 year rolling priority plan for infrastructure investment.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

¹⁵http://www.minister.communications.gov.au/malcolm_turnbull/news/strategic_review_of_the_national_broadband_network#.Uvx07kKSwhw http://www.communications.gov.au/mobile_services/mobile_coverage_programme

¹⁶ Coalition's 2030 Vision for Northern Australia p.5, 23

¹⁷ Northern Australia Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance, Policy Paper 017/2013 *Indigenous peoples right to the commercial use and management of water on their traditional territories*

(<http://www.nailsma.org.au/hub/resources/publication/indigenous-peoples-right-commercial-use-and-management-water-policy>) and Wet Tropics Water Resource Plan (<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WaterReWetTP13.pdf>) and RDA FNQ&TS submission to the draft Wet Tropics Water Resource Plan (http://www.rdafnqts.org.au/images/submissions/SUB_13.05.13_0-PP_WTWRP_FINAL.pdf)



2.5 Energy

Like water, energy is the twin 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, and Northern Australia as a whole have access to a range of alternative energy sources 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.

RDA FNQ&TS is promoting a strategic regional approach to security reliable, cost-effective and efficient energy supply into the future to meet community and industry needs. Pathways to support innovative, flexible and place-based options for energy generation and distribution need to be developed.

2.6 Natural Resource Management

Maintaining healthy ecosystems underpins the economic activity of tourism, fisheries, agriculture, natural resource management (NRM) and Indigenous ranger activity. Effectively managing our natural and cultural assets supports maintenance of cultural connections for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 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 on agriculture, for example. We also have obligations to ensure that the outstanding natural and cultural assets of our region including the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics, combined with other 'jewels' across Northern Australia, and the intact, savannah landscape spanning from East to West, are appropriately managed.

In relation to marine and coastal management, we welcome the Federal Government's review of the Marine Protected Areas (Northern Region and Coral Sea Region) to ensure appropriate consideration of



regional economic impacts resulting from conservation decisions regarding no-take zones within the MPA.¹⁸ RDA FNQ&TS and regional stakeholders look forward to participating in this process.

2.7 Disaster management and building resilience

Approaches to improve community and industry resilience to natural disasters are required with reform to insurance arrangements and improved funding and delivery of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Program. Addressing critical issues around high premiums and lack of access to appropriate insurance is a fundamental barrier to investment and a significant burden on industry, small business and homeowners. Investigations of a range of options to address insurance barriers including international entries into the insurance market, or government support for a Northern Australia regional insurer for example TIO.

In a broader sense the climate and disaster resilience of community and industry needs to be firmly addressed as part of effective Northern Australia development approaches with current significant impacts on the Torres Strait, recovery efforts for coastal towns and industries affected by various cyclones already indicating the need for effective mitigation, planning and resilience approaches.¹⁹

2.8 Research needs and capacity

RDA FNQ & TS seeks focused investment to meet the research needs of community, industry and government in Northern Australia, 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).

¹⁸ <http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/marine/marine-reserves/marine-reserves-review>; see also RDA FNQ&TS submission to the Marine Parks process – <http://www.rdafnqts.org.au/images/submissions/Coral-Sea-and-North-Region-Marine-Reserves-Submission-14.02.13.pdf>

¹⁹ RAI, April 2013, *From Disaster to Renewal*, <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/From-Disaster-to-Renewal.pdf> The Queensland Reconstruction Authority also has interesting material – <http://www.qldreconstruction.org.au/>



2.9 Health and the social services sector

Specific mention needs to be made of the importance of the health and social services sector within regional contexts and across Northern Australia. Challenges regarding improved service delivery, building long-term sector capacity and improving business models, under increasing cost constraints, need to be addressed. Provision for health and social sector services should be a consideration of planning and development processes. Constraints and challenges will vary within remote, rural and regional contexts. We urge the Committee to consider how the Inquiry and NAWP will relate to and influence health and social service sector budgets and program design and delivery, to provide strategic long-term outcomes. Consideration of the Cairns Alliance of Social Services submission is recommended.

3.0 Industry and related issues

While we haven't provided industry specific comment RDA FNQ&TS supports the growth of agriculture (including fisheries, forestry, pastoralism and horticulture); tourism; mining and resources; infrastructure and construction; small business; maritime services; aviation and freight; and defence activities. There are significant opportunities within our region and across Northern Australia.

We also believe there are opportunities to be explored regarding the development of digital and innovative industries, ecosystem services (including carbon farming, biosecurity etc), education and training; localised/sub-regional micro businesses, and exploiting our tropical expertise.

Other regional stakeholders submissions cover these matters and we commend these to the Committee including considerations around taxation reform, maximizing trade opportunities (through Free Trade Agreements for example), addressing labour mobility and workforce development needs, exploring options to address supply chain costs and strategies to leverage private investment.



Conclusion

RDA FNQ&TS seeks to raise key themes for consideration by the Parliamentary Committee and is confident that these are commonly raised issues by our regional stakeholder partners as well as other groups and individuals from across Northern Australia. We reinforce the need for a strategic, committed, long-term approach driven by strong partnerships with local government, community and industry.

RDA FNQ&TS would be happy to participate in public hearings to expand on the issues raised in our submissions and promote potential initiatives and solutions. RDA FNQ&TS welcomes ongoing engagement with the Northern Australia Taskforce regarding the Green Paper and White Paper process and will facilitate regional stakeholder engagement in this processes, as appropriate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries regarding our submission or to discuss related matters. I look forward to working with our Local Government partners, the Queensland and Federal Governments to progress this important work.

Yours sincerely



Sonja Johnson
Chief Executive Office
RDA FNQ&TS Inc.

CC:

The Premier of Queensland, The Hon Campbell Newman MP – Premier@ministerial.qld.gov.au



APPENDIX ONE – Cairns Stakeholder Workshop Outcomes (30/1/2014)

Terms of Reference	Issues / Policy constraints	Existing work / documents / references	Solutions / Opportunities / Recommendations
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT			
Mining	<p>Conflicts between State/Fed economic vision & land use, ie Draft Cape York Regional Plan (SEAs vs mining areas – open cut and strip)</p> <p>Approvals processes / green tape (EPBC) & Lack of certainty for new mining activities – need clarity in the process for approvals</p> <p>Limited processing of raw materials due to high costs, including energy</p> <p>Transport / port constraints, ie Karumba – deep water access</p> <p>Workforce planning needs a revisit, taking into account better outcomes for local communities, especially Indigenous</p> <p>Evidence-based decision making / Data gaps and</p>	<p>Cummings Mining Opportunity Study 2010</p> <p>RDA SPP 7 Business and Resources Sector NQS Factsheet Mining</p> <p>RDA Submission Productivity Commission Major Project Assessment Process</p> <p>RDA Submission Qld Assessment Bilateral (EPBC)</p> <p>EIS</p> <p>Mining JV (Cape York)</p>	<p>Feds must be engaged in CY regional planning process</p> <p>Provide certainty for mining companies in the approvals process – set environmental benchmarks</p> <p>Equity positions for TOs, incl mining JVs with TOs (think WACCA), and environmental offsets for TQs</p> <p>Better access to advice and capacity building for TOs/PBCs, & commitment to CSR partnerships</p> <p>Accelerate Native Title determinations</p>



	<p>lack of information sharing across agencies</p> <p>Bipartisan support for mining industry development is needed</p> <p>Sustainable use of water resources</p> <p>Impact of loss of TO land for mining purposes</p> <p>Social costs of FIFO</p>		<p>across Cape York</p> <p>Continued support for Cairns as a FIFO hub – what’s needed?</p> <p>Support the infrastructure required to support development in the mining industry, ie roads, rail and ports</p> <p>Social support programs for FIFO families</p>
Energy	Govt must commit to supporting regional generation of base-load electricity	<p>RDA SPP – Energy & Water RDA Submission Qld 30 yr Electricity Strategy</p> <p>NQS Energy, Water & Climate Adaptations Factsheet.</p> <p>Energy White Paper subs due 7/2</p> <p>Renewable Energy Industry</p>	<p>Regional generation, eg supporting outcome of Pentland study?</p> <p>Consideration of alternative solutions for off grid power generation</p>



		Development Plan Pentland study (pending finalisation)	Increase power generation at existing generators
Agriculture	<p>Water reform / shared use of water / underutilisation of existing water allocations – better policy needed</p> <p>Water allocations for Indigenous useage</p> <p>Land tenure / pastoral leases – diversification difficult</p> <p>Support for Indig ag development – navigating the minefield of pastoral issues</p> <p>Cape York Regional Plan not conducive to development of dry land and irrigated agriculture and horticulture in Cape York</p>	RDA SPP – Agricultural Futures, NQS Agriculture RDA Submission National Water Initiative – Triennial Review RDA Submission Qld 30 yr Water Strategy RDA Submission Draft Wet Tropics Water Resource PlanGSD investment prospectus, CYSF investment prospectus Ag force issues Coalition Ag policy / White Paper (Issues Paper Feb TBC) CYPLUS land use QLd Govt land audit	<p>Maximise the existing assets of the agricultural industry through better targeting of farm support programs / supporting producers to build their operations</p> <p>More effective partnerships between R&D and the ag sector, particularly support for farmers to understand and implement new technologies & farm practices</p> <p>Build regional resilience, including support for bank/farmer models (as per Gulf) and extension support</p>



	<p>Succession planning & farm profitability</p> <p>Support for innovation and best practice</p> <p>Limited value add in the region</p> <p>Lack of industry cohesion / fragmentation</p> <p>Access to data / new science for evidence-based decision making, incl land use capability leads and ways to maximise efficient and effective use of land</p> <p>Impact of large scale land clearing (needed to support irrigated ag) on Govt achieving KYOTO targets</p>	<p>TCI/RIRDC place based ag development paper / building regional resilience</p> <p>Tropical Agriculture CRC (RIRDC)</p> <p>Beef industry development CRC (UQ)</p> <p>NASFP / NAMF, incl NQIAS/CSIRO reports</p> <p>National Food Plan</p> <p>NFF Blueprint for Australian Agriculture</p> <p>QFF Planning for Healthy</p>	<p>Enhance supply chain efficiency and demand creation for local produce</p> <p>Provide support for the development of partnerships between large corporatized producers and local operations, ie Hopevale banana farm partnership with DOLE</p> <p>Implement programs which support Indigenous agricultural development, including recognition of Indigenous water allocations</p> <p>Infrastructure planning (picked up in Economic Infrastructure)</p> <p>Support for development of ATSI teams to provide bio-security services, including croc management, and turtle</p>
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	<p>Impacts of climate change need to be considered in any long term planning</p> <p>Lack of transparency regarding foreign investment in agriculture, and potential for reduced competition in the supply chain</p> <p>Urban development leading to loss of land for agricultural use, also driving up cost of land</p> <p>Is food bowl vision achievable / realistic?? Does this vision need to be revisited</p> <p>Value vs quantity of agriculture</p> <p>Lack of transport Infrastructure and/or high costs restricting access to markets – must be addressed</p> <p>Northern Australia is the front line to manage</p>	<p>Agriculture</p>	<p>and dugong management</p> <p>Revisit CYPLUS?</p> <p>Adopt recommendations made under the Northern Australia Sustainable Futures program – what is the Govt’s response to these recommendations? What is the future of this programme?</p>
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	<p>biosecurity issues. Currently, there appears to be a lack of long term vision/investment into the region. Focus on pest flora, fauna and biological (current and potential) impacts which have a significant impact on grazing and agriculture seem to have been left as a lost cause or ignored. (case studies include Siam, Hymenachne, myrtle rust and Yellow Crazy Ant to name a few). The financial impact of weeds (alone) on agriculture, horticulture and forestry across Australia is estimated at \$4bil per year. We have some significant weed species only found within this region which have been controlled through collaborative effects and local determination of priorities. Over the past few years, the efforts of the region to work collaboratively have been eroded through contestable funding allocations. The focus back to contestability has deteriorated the collaborative efforts in this region which was supported by the old NHT program. We are now competing against each other and others across the nation instead of other regions. This has resulted in adhoc 'unstrategic' application of funding. Pest flora and fauna is not eradicated or manageable through short term funding. A long term commitment is required manage current infestations as well as deal with sleeper invaders. A clear proactive commitment to biosecurity will assist confidence to grow agricultural, horticultural and forestry in this region. This proactive</p>		
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	<p>commitment will also aid to protect the unique natural assets this region has which supports the tourism industry.</p> <p>Rethink of carbon fund programs</p> <p>Contestability of funding for NRM – eroded collaborative efforts – concerns with funding not necessarily going to most effective groups for delivery on ground.</p>		
Tourism	<p>Air access critical to achieving 2 million international visitors</p> <p>Cruise shipping development</p> <p>SuperYacht chartering / EMDG – regulatory reform</p> <p>Industry development issues – lack of support for new business start ups/incubation (particularly for Indig), lack of co-ordination of programs and</p>	<p>TTNQ Position Papers,</p> <p>QTIC briefs</p> <p>RDA SPP – Tourism & Aviation Futures</p> <p>NQS Infrastructure to support tourism</p> <p>2013 Fed election priorities</p>	<p>Need for aviation incentivisation fund</p> <p>Commitment to aviation reform which allows cabotage to regional airports in Northern Aust</p> <p>Commitment from Feds to make happen Cairns Shipping Development Project</p>



	<p>initiatives which support new business development and sustainability</p> <p>Land tenure issues restricting tourism development opportunities, particularly for Indigenous</p> <p>Underpinning values (ie environmental – Wet Tropics and GBR) need to be valued and protected</p> <p>GBR brand decline – both levels of govt need to be committed to meeting OUVs set by UNESCO</p> <p>Recognition of regional environmental attributes and strength of World Heritage brand</p> <p>Ensuring that planning development considers the needs of the tourism industry</p>	<p>GBR SuperYacht Group</p>	<p>Commitment to reviewing import arrangements for International Super Yachts to allow International SuperYacht chartering in Aust</p> <p>Industry development programs (support for business mentoring and incubation, and entrepreneurial activity) & new money for product development, eg volunteerism</p> <p>Review global best practice for nature-based tourism – what works well elsewhere and seek to adopt those approaches to sustainable development</p> <p>Strengthen GBR brand and leverage OUVs of World Heritage Wet Tropics and GBR</p>
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	<p>Apply sensibiliites and a balanced approach to tourism in protected areas</p> <p>Greater encouragement of PPPs – govt can support by streamlining processes</p> <p>Development of strategic partnerships with Asian partners - tourism industry needs to be sitting at the table</p> <p>Long term infrastructure planning is top priority</p> <p>Linked to soft infrastructure, ie skills agenda, greater regional skilled migration and how regions can be more supportive</p>		<p>Material Change of Use on Pastoral leases to allow new tourism opps, particularly by Indig</p> <p>Stronger commitment to language learning in all schools, with focus on Chinese, Indonesian</p>
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Defence	<p>Increased presence in FNQ</p> <p>Dredging at Cairns</p>	<p>AC ADF Defence Posture Review and White Paper submissions</p> <p>RDA ADF White Paper Submission</p> <p>RDA SPP Regional Connectivity</p>	<p>Recommendations as per submissions (ie expansion of HMAS Cairns, relocation of hydrographic unit, etc)</p> <p>Commitment to Cairns Shipping Development Project</p>
Other	<p>Aviation</p> <p>Marine</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Health</p> <p>ICT</p> <p>Eco-systems services as new industry eg, creation</p>	<p>RDA/AC & Others, incl 2013 Fed election priority docs</p> <p>Australian Airports Association policy docs, via Cairns Airport</p> <p>RDA SPPs</p>	<p>Aviation skills training and development – support for CASC and its development, as well as Cairns and Mareeba as Northern aviation training and service hubs. Linked to development at Mareeba airport</p> <p>Support for GBRIMC – increase training offered to delivery MC1, as well as developing marine service industry recognition as Centre of excellence for patrol boat and customs maintenance</p> <p>?</p>



	of biodiversity income streams – policy needed to enable as viable industry		
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Coalition’s 5-pillar economy – Manufacturing Innovation, Advanced Services, Agriculture, Education and Research, and Mining Exports

Consider interplay with State Govt’s 4 pillar economy – Agriculture, Tourism, Resources, Construction



ISSUES CONSIDERATION			
<p>Enhance trade and other investment links with the Asia-Pacific</p>	<p>Reduce barriers for trade/business between Aust & PNG</p> <p>Export of tropical expertise to Asia-Pacific</p>	<p>AC Position Papers – PNG Trade and Investment</p>	<p>Commitment to supporting Aust-PNG pre-clearance for immigration & customs</p> <p>Geo-political relationships need to be identified (noting differences across the nth Darwin and Timor, Cairns and PNG etc)</p> <p>Weipa Port</p> <p>Regional bilateral agreements (city to city, with focus on building the relationships)</p>
<p>Establish a conducive regulatory, taxation and economic environment</p>	<p>Lack of any real devolved decision-making</p> <p>Better taxation arrangements for how Indigenous people benefit from mining activity on TO land – charitable</p>	<p>Previous subs to Henry Tax Review? CCIQ?</p>	<p>Relocation incentives?</p> <p>Personal and business tax incentives?</p>



	<p>trusts are too restrictive</p> <p>Governance, and lack of coordination across Govt departments</p> <p>Heterogeneous nature of Northern Australia</p> <p>Regulatory environments eg</p> <p>EPBC (Turnover of staff (federally) having an impact on large scale development. Continuing differing opinions, studies and approvals needed. Lack of understanding of this region),</p> <p>NDRRA – (This region ‘generally’ has a declared event each year. More and more, there is a lack of clarity around the support offered / available through NDRRA. This is an additional cost burden to rate payers in our region)</p>	<p>CCIQ FNQ Business Priorities report</p> <p>AC Regionalisation Strategy</p> <p>RDA SPP Devolved Governance</p> <p>Governance Challenges for Northern Australia – Dr Dale</p> <p>RAI Northern Australia paper</p> <p>RDA Submission Productivity Commission Major Project Assessment Process</p> <p>RDA Submission Qld Assessment Bilateral (EPBC)</p>	<p>Decentralised govt departments – state and fed</p> <p>CY Heritage Act – regional solutions (legislation)</p> <p>Tax incentives for new start up industries eg.ecosystem services</p> <p>Better tax system for royalty \$</p> <p>Special Economic Zones?</p> <p>Risk mitigation for balance between environment and economic development</p>
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			<p>CBA for communities based on triple bottom line</p> <p>Look for commonalities across the north – do business west instead of south</p> <p>Devolved governance (LGA) – FAG (Fed financial assistance grants) greater share to northern australia</p> <p>Understood and agreed governance across 5 tiers, ie multi sector approach - Local, Sub-regional (eg Cape York), Regional (RDAFNQ&TS), State, National</p>
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<p>Address impediments to growth; and</p>	<p>Water security –</p> <p>Nullinga needs an urgent revisit. Hydro power linked to this. Previous 50 year study undertaken with the State and Federal mantra – “no new dams”. This region is able to access water but it cannot store it. Population growth and agricultural potential is stifled due to the lack of storage for use by both sectors.</p> <p>Sustainable use of water resources</p> <p>Competition for water</p> <p>Cost of energy / energy security /No regional electricity generation</p> <p>Two fronts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for locally supplied energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commercial – business pays 100% of transmission losses. Transmission loss to this region is 50%. Business in this region is paying substantially more than those closer to point of supply. 	<p>RDA SPPs Energy & Water (revised version being finalised – end Feb)</p> <p>NAILSMA – An Indigenous prospectus for northern development: setting the agenda</p> <p>RDA SPP – Energy & Water</p>	<p>Maximise uses of existing assets (cuts across water – can we use it more efficiently and effectively to avoid need to build a dam, infrastructure, agriculture eg. Don’t need to expand with greenfields, utilise existing production areas better)</p> <p>Micro grids</p> <p>Linking communities to grid when developing roads</p> <p>Tidal energy on TSI, hydro energy locally</p> <p>Generation baseload locally</p> <p>Increase generation at existing generators</p> <p>R & D funding into renewables</p>
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	<p>We cannot calculate how much we have lost because business has not located here due to energy costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Residential – currently the State government subsidises the cost of transmission loss for residential properties. This is in excess of \$600mil per year. This is not sustainable. ○ Social cost of energy – low income earners or those on fixed incomes cannot continue to meet the rising costs of energy <p>Australian Energy Regulator – lack of consistency between the states in terms of cost and operational ability. This then links to cost of energy and our ability to do things such as use LED’s where Ergon maintains the asset</p> <p>Land tenure –</p>	<p>RDA Submission Qld 30 yr Electricity Strategy</p> <p>NQS Energy, Water & Climate Adaptations Factsheet.</p> <p>Energy White Paper subs due 7/2</p> <p>(Upcoming QCA review regional UTP and AER distribution determination Qld network)</p> <p>Renewable Energy Industry Development Plan</p> <p>Pentland study (pending finalisation)</p>	<p>technology</p> <p>Investment in NT process</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deed of Grant in Trust (DoGIT) (note: needed to support economic development for indigenous communities) - Leasehold - Unspecified State Land (USL) - Land uses in Cape York (note: needed to support economic development for indigenous communities) - Aboriginal freehold tenure – can’t use it for collateral - Need to speed up NT resolution and ILUA development - Build capacity of PBCs <p>Aviation access</p> <p>Transport infrastructure (picked up below)</p> <p>Digital connectivity, including access to high speed</p>	<p>Land tenure in Northern Australia report</p>	<p>Alternative solutions to Aboriginal Freehold Tenure – cash hed in trust to underwrite</p> <p>investment from banks (philanthropics/corp)</p> <p>Funding for capacity building PBCs/NT bodies/land trusts</p> <p>Review of aviation charges which currently disadvantage regional</p>
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	<p>broadband and mobile communications</p> <p>High insurance costs</p> <p>Health of the environment – important to tourism etc</p> <p>Government procurement policy needs 180 degree turn – focus on partnerships and social/capacity/business</p>	<p>RDA SPP Tourism & Aviation Futures</p>	<p>airports.</p> <p>Priority rollout of highspeed broadband across Northern Australia, and significant improvement in mobile telecommunications (adopt recommendations in regional submission to Mobile Blackspots program)</p> <p>Work with insurers to ensure evidence-based assessment of risk, as well as support risk mitigation strategies for vulnerable communities</p>
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	<p>outcomes NOT per unit cost</p> <p>Concerted approach needed to design and implement processes for Indig to benefit from economic & business opportunities</p> <p>Need concerned effort to support development and incubation of Indigenous business</p>		<p>Link Northern Australia development with local capacity building and local business development (including need for increasing local content for public procurement contracts.</p> <p>Change procurement assessment models to incorporate social development</p> <p>Assessment to include how proposal links with other groups and projects in community</p>
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			Link business incubation and start up support to National Indig programmes, eg under Mundine/ILC/IBC – concerted effort required
Set conditions for private investment and innovation	<p>Inconsistency in planning processes across LGAs</p> <p>Private Investment/Innovation</p> <p>What engagement with foreign investors and proponents?</p> <p>Partnerships – capability development</p> <p>What do investors see as impediments?</p> <p>Tropical Knowledge as export industry – investment \$ -</p>	<p>CCIQ FNQ Business Priorities report</p> <p>RDA SPP Tropical Knowledge</p> <p>NQS Tropical Knowledge Economy Factsheet</p>	<p>Business incubation and support for entrepreneurial activities</p> <p>Greater support for Public Private Partnerships – streamlining of processes</p>



	globally emerging issues eg. biomimicry		
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INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS			
Economic	<p>Road links, including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bruce Highway - Peninsula Development Road (PDR) - Cairns to Melbourne (inland) - Cairns to Western Australia (via Alice Springs) - Cairns to Darwin <p>Rail (east-west) , ports (sea & air), including Karumba Port</p> <p>Water, energy</p> <p>High speed broadband & general telecommunications</p> <p>Natural assets not seen as infrastructure</p>	<p>Hann Highway Study</p> <p>RDAs regional roads forum outcomes</p> <p>SPP Regional Connectivity</p> <p>NQS Infrastructure Initiatives</p> <p>2013 Fed election regional priorities</p> <p>Productivity Commission current Inquiry into Public Infrastructure – draft report due March</p> <p>AC Qld Port Strategy submission</p> <p>CCIQ FNQ Business Priorities report – Infrastructure which supports economic growth</p> <p>Cape York Institute / Cape York Land Council submissions</p>	<p>30? Year infrastructure plan / Infrastructure Australia Audit – need a base-level plan for sustainable development</p> <p>Embed ‘natural capital’ into lexicon and value environmental infrastructure, ie value of the reef and rainforest</p> <p>Category for micro/small infrastructure projects in communities in next iteration of RDAF and other infrastructure grant programmes</p> <p>Maximise existing infrastructure / investments</p>



	<p>Micro-infrastructure needs must not be overlooked</p> <p>Cross-jurisdiction planning processes – need a consistent approach between state and fed</p>		<p>Better support for incremental or staged infrastructure development – take an iterative approach to infrastructure development</p> <p>Social/growth/catalytic infrastructure categories and funding models for each</p> <p>Close links between NAWP and State Govt to address land administration</p> <p>Consider the social implications (positive) of major infrastructure projects, eg value of upgrading roads in Cook Shire and impact on regional liveability</p> <p>Outcomes of RDA Regional Roads Forum Roads - Bruce Highway upgrading,</p>
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			<p>Kuranda Range Road to b-double standard, Sealing the remaining sections of the Hann Highway, continued upgrade of PDR & Sealing of Savannah Way (Cairns to Broome) to dual carriage way</p> <p>High speed rail infrastructure to improve freight efficiencies, including consideration of east-west rail links</p> <p>Commitment to support development at Mareeba airport</p> <p>Nullinga dam / water for the future</p> <p>High speed broadband and greatly improved mobile telecommunications infrastructure to allow Northern Aust to compete on a level playing field</p>
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<p>Social</p>	<p>Aged care</p> <p>Schools / hospitals?</p> <p>Education & Training/Skills development</p> <p>Regional skilled migration programs</p> <p>Funding cuts to TAFE will have implications for positioning Northern Australia as Vocational or Higher education hub</p> <p>Development of service sector needs to be integrated across all service industries</p> <p>Indigenous involvement to support better economic outcomes</p> <p>Social service infrastructure severely lacking, including appropriate and affordable housing and</p>	<p>RDA SPPs Social Services Sector (in development)</p> <p>CASS NAWP subs (refer end of this document)</p> <p>CCIQ FNQ Business Priorities report</p> <p>CCoC – regional certification body</p>	<p>Better targeting of regional skilled migration programmes</p> <p>Alternative delivery of social services, eg mobile vans, tele-links</p> <p>‘nodal liveability criteria’ – lifestyle hubs for a strength based / asset based position</p> <p>Youth facilities linked to school attendance</p> <p>Alternative ‘health’ providers, eg community members vs nurses</p> <p>Planning processes/schemes critical,</p>
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	<p>supported accommodation</p> <p>Support for outreach of social services</p> <p>Lack of funding across whole of social services sector</p> <p>Improve liveability of communities</p> <p>Improved social infrastructure for youth</p> <p>Need better coordination of social infrastructure requirements across all portfolios</p>		<p>including planning for climate change impacts on communities in the future</p> <p>Outstation amenities/utilities</p> <p>Centres of Excellence, eg tropical expertise, biosecurity, heathcare</p>
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