

Committee Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

12 March 2014

Dear Committee Members

The future of Northern Australia is founded on its Indigenous cultures, diverse communities, and its globally-significant natural environments including the world's largest intact savanna and network of free flowing rivers. This Inquiry has the opportunity to help realise the potential of Northern Australia and to safeguard its outstanding values. We believe it is necessary to maintain these values whilst building a stronger, more diverse and resilient economy. We ask that the Committee use the following principles as a basis for your Inquiry and recommendations for the development of the White Paper.

Principles to guide the future of Northern Australia:

- Northern Australia's unique, intact and globally-significant natural and cultural values must be recognised, utilised and safeguarded as a centrepiece of its future.
- Northern development and Indigenous socio-economic development must be pursued together, since neither is sustainable, nor equitable, without the other.
- Development options must involve genuine consultation with local communities and be compatible with local conditions.
- A strong, diverse and sustainable economy for Northern Australia is necessary to underpin the wellbeing of its communities, the long-term management of its resources, and its contribution to Australian and global society.

On this basis we urge you to:

1. Engage Northern Australians, especially Indigenous people, and others including industry, in a broad and genuine dialogue about future aspirations and development policies.
2. Heed the lessons of the past, the risks and constraints presented by science, and the knowledge of local communities, to ensure development options work within ecological limits.
3. Build on the work of Traditional Owner groups and Indigenous working groups, expert bodies and forums, such as the North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development and the Kimberley and Cape York Appropriate Economies Roundtables, and support mechanisms to receive direct advice from forums such as these.
4. Apply the Inquiry Terms of Reference to:
  - examine the potential for the development of the region's low footprint, high socio-economic benefit industries and land uses, including ecosystem service-based industries, and identify policy, regulatory, market and incentive instruments to support their long term sustainable development.
  - identify critical economic and social infrastructure, and critical environmental infrastructure and services, needed to support the long term wellbeing of the region, and ways to support planning and investment in this.

We look forward to working with you toward a more equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically resilient future for Northern Australia. For questions or more information regarding this submission please contact Dr Clare Taylor (email [kimberleytocape@inet.net.au](mailto:kimberleytocape@inet.net.au)).

Yours sincerely,



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Anindilyakwa Land Council Land &  
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Don Henry, CEO, Australian  
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Steve Roeger, Executive Officer,  
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Martin Pritchard, Executive Director,  
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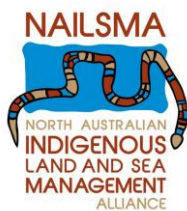
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Bishop Christopher Saunders, Diocese  
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