

# “Our North, Our Future”

Government White Paper, 2015



## DEVELOPING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

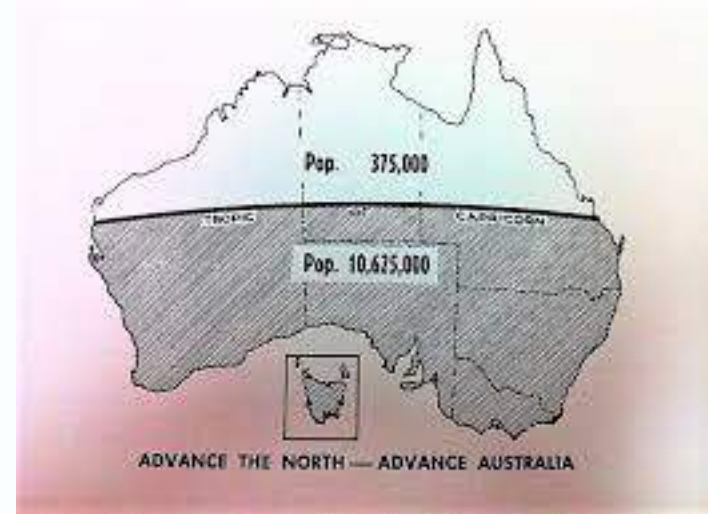
Conference 2017

Progress, Growth  
and Investment

Pullman  
Cairns International  
19 - 20 JUNE 2017



[northaust.org.au](http://northaust.org.au)



1914, 1924, 1937, 1947, 1983, 2000s

Economically, Socially,  
Sustainably

2015, Townsville

Above the line - unleashing the  
North's potential

2016, Darwin

ILC, CYP, NLC, NAILSMA, CYLC



# Road map for 2035

1. Simpler land arrangements to support **investment**
2. Developing the north's **water** resources
3. Growing the north as a business, trade and investment **gateway**
4. Investing in **infrastructure** to lower business and household costs
5. Reducing barriers to **employing** people
6. Improving **governance**



# Can Indigenous Australians lead the Northern Development Agenda?

Some Far Northern Queensland  
Observations and Opportunities

## **Allan Dale – Chair RDA FNQ&TS and Professor of Tropical Regional Development**

Allan's focus is on supporting tropical nations, regions, communities and institutions to build healthier governance systems. His focus is in northern Australia, the Great Barrier Reef, climate adaptation and tropical regional development.



# The Northern Whitepaper and TOs

Traditional Owners in northern Australia have seen past attempts at northern development that:

- Are about facilitating investment from outside players into northern Australia
- See Indigenous land and water tenures, rights and interests as barriers to development
- Seek to import cheap outside labour.....

This despite Traditional Owners having rights/interests across at least 94% of the north.

*What will make a new agenda different?*



# Eventual Considerations In Northern White Paper

- Supporting the native title system (\$110 million pa) to finalise in a decade
- \$20.4 m to support native title owners to engage potential investors
- \$10.6 m to support TOs to pilot reforms to broaden economic activity
- COAG Indigenous land review to explore use options for exclusive native title
- \$17 m to support freeholding/ leaseholding in townships
- Limited focus on Indigenous water rights.



## A Bold Prediction

With the right supports and governance systems, Traditional Owner institutions will likely be the primary economic units across much of the northern Australian landscape by 2050.




## *Progressively resolving ongoing native title/ALRA claim issues and further exploring new resource use rights*

- Need for continuous improvement in the claims process
- Greater internal/ external reconciliation in claims
- Actively managing tenure information and building understanding of all communal tenure holders.



## *Supporting and resourcing the capacity of Traditional Owners to develop effective country-based /spatial land use planning*

- Thinking of the estate in tenure blind terms
  - What's the cultural foundations for protection and opportunities for economic development and wealth generation
  - What's the interface with township-based planning.
- 

*Exploring further tenure and financial mechanisms for facilitating investment leverage (within the ALRA, trust and Indigenous leasehold/freehold estates)*

- Being clear about where development will occur and governance arrangements around those developments.
- Deciding the distinction between owners and managers.
- Trialing new legal approaches to raise finance or subleases.
- Communal tenure is not a barrier to sensitive development.

## *Supporting Traditional Owners to explore new and innovative governance models for driving planning, development and managing emerging “wealth funds”*

- Seeing the entire tribal/clan population as an asset in both leadership, management and cultural strengthening /renewal
- New governance approaches that more successfully separate ownership from management
- Sorting the difference between wealth distribution and investing back in the governance and the strengths of group individual
- Innovative financial management mechanisms to grow wealth both within and beyond tribal/ clan boundaries
- Supporting Traditional Owners to explore innovative governance models for managing planning and emerging “wealth funds”.

## *National mechanisms to grow financial guarantees*

- Exploring some form of northern Australian “guarantee or trust fund” to support Traditional Owners with sound business investment projects to secure commercial finance.
  - Funded either from amendment to existing or new government funds, private sector investment or innovative investment of local Traditional Owner-based sovereign wealth funds at local scale.
  - Partnering, at the northern Australian level with international and national lending institutions to build investment confidence.
- 



costs Commonwealth opportunities  
 Australia infrastructure through  
 environment information economic potential region  
 White industries million new right support  
 land supply workers pastoral project  
 Australians create business prime allow  
 further tourism governments national more  
 communities improve years growth visa Many time Australia's  
 skills red scale trade workforce all needs benefits  
 people high other major native better provide  
 investment water tape first over cost role expand work  
 services industry title Paper Highway identify challenges  
 tropical development Western risk Minister  
 Australian Darwin markets benefit including governance need Developing  
 projects secure northern Territory businesses  
 investors population Indigenous Government  
 jurisdictions

***Afford opportunity for northern TOs to think about what we're doing....***

## Discussion

***TO angles not yet met by the current northern development agenda?***

***What would need to change if there is a second generation northern Australia white paper?***

***Is there an appetite for a conversation across the Northern Australian TO leadership around these issues?***





# Thank you

For further discussion visit the Development in the Tropics Facebook Page:

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