Indigenous futures and sustainable development in northern Australia:
Towards a framework for full Indigenous participation in northern economic development

Discussion Paper
preparing for the Northern Australia Indigenous Experts Forum
19-21 June 2012

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd
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Disclaimer:
This Discussion Paper is aimed at providing information and to assist delegates prepare for the workshop at Mary River. It is not intended to cover all issues, nor challenges that Indigenous people face in northern Australia’s complex future. Feedback on this paper is sought from the delegates and will be presented back to the Indigenous Experts Panel for consideration.
**Summary**

Australia has yet to come to terms with a new northern reality: in which Indigenous people are major landholders, make up most of the population outside larger centres, have long standing connections, strong views and well considered plans for appropriate northern development. Indigenous futures are inextricably linked to sustainable northern development. So Indigenous people must sit at the centre of decision-making structures and processes.

Indigenous interests and the interests of the wider Australian society are not inherently in conflict. But achieving more benefits than costs from northern development for the north’s Indigenous people will not happen by default. Better Indigenous futures will require comprehensive and considered responses to the principal drivers of change and the opportunities and challenges they create.

The Indigenous Experts Panel (IEP) has commissioned this paper to stimulate and focus discussion at the first North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum (NAIEF) to be held at the Mary River from 19-21 June 2012. The paper is based on results of preliminary meetings of the IEP and consultations with the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum (NAMF). It also builds on the work of the 2009 Indigenous Experts Water Futures Forum who set down the Mary River Principles for resource management, and the recent National Indigenous Sea Country Workshop which reiterated those principles and their application to management of marine resources. A key component of those principles is to ensure that the Indigenous owners of northern Australia have access to the resources needed to participate equitably in the "development of policies, setting of allocations and management of regulatory schemes".

The Ministerial Forum and the Indigenous Experts Forum offer a unique opportunity to embed those principles in design of strategies for northern development and associated government programs. Outcomes from this forum and others to follow will inform the Australian, Western Australian, Queensland and Northern Territory governments about Indigenous goals for northern development. The Forums will establish an Indigenous agenda for delivering socio-economic benefits to Indigenous north Australians, while also ensuring that important natural and cultural values are protected or enhanced. Participants in the forum will construct a framework for ongoing interaction with governments.

The IEP does not wish to pre-empt conclusions and recommendations that might emerge from the forum, but has identified a number of key questions:

(1) what will northern development need to deliver if it is to meet the reasonable expectations of the region's Indigenous people?

(2) how can we construct a framework to encompass Indigenous socioeconomic, cultural and environmental goals and the principles that underpin them to improve shared understanding?

(3) how do we formalise future interactions with government, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives strongly inform and powerfully influence all government decision-making on northern development now and into the future?

(4) drawing on that framework, can we see gaps or deficiencies in the priorities so far put by governments for investments in northern development? and

(5) what are the priorities for policy change to correct those deficiencies and meet Indigenous needs?
Shaping northern development for Indigenous social and economic development

Prevailing strategies, policies and investments of public funds for northern development are not designed around Indigenous social and economic development. We regard this omission as inconsistent with the Mary River Principles and the international conventions on which they draw. This situation cannot continue given patterns of demography and land ownership in northern Australia, and continuing Indigenous disadvantage. Approaches to northern development designed to meet Indigenous needs and aspirations must:

- directly address Indigenous disadvantage and opportunity;
- design public investments in northern Australia to, in addition to other benefits, improve Indigenous well-being;
- acknowledge and work with customary connections between people and country;
- work with communal title to land and find new ways of securing capital for enterprise creation;
- support local, bottom up planning for generating incomes from Indigenous land;
- link Indigenous rights in resources, including commercial use, to ownership of land;
- recognise and give weight to new commercial uses like carbon farming and their relationships to orthodox use in land use planning;
- require existing and new industries seeking public support and approvals to work collaboratively for Indigenous enterprise and employment;
- emphasise initiatives that draw on the strengths of Indigenous culture and work with rather than against cultural norms; and
- chart pathways to reduced dependence on government, in part by actively building capacity within Indigenous communities.

Gaps in government priorities

The North Australian Ministerial Forum (NAMF) has identified infrastructure investment, growth in the beef industry, water and energy, improved service delivery and deepening community engagement as areas of government focus. Whilst the IEP supports work in all of these areas, it also believes that the considerations above highlight important gaps, including:

- failure to consider change in fiscal policy, specifically the way in which public funds are invested to support northern and Indigenous economic development;
- weak recognition of Indigenous interests in land and resources as determining factors in northern development;
- little consideration of emerging economic opportunities, including carbon and other offset industries;
- no apparent intention to deal with the idiosyncratic and sometimes conflicting approaches from different portfolios that compromise effectiveness of programs;
- absence or weakness of strategies to engage corporates in supporting Indigenous economic development;
- no indication of support for the maintenance of Indigenous culture and its role in enterprise for reducing dependence on government;
- lack of investment in Indigenous leadership; and
- no apparent strategy for formalising deeper and ongoing Indigenous involvement in decision-making for northern development.
Policy change for Indigenous social and economic development

Contemporary debate regarding Indigenous dependence on public funds confounds the distinct effects of public investments at different scales. Dependence on public outlays will remain a key feature of remote and regional economies, despite the disproportionately large contribution that the regions’ resources make to national production. Dominant industries operate in ways that generate comparatively little local wealth but have substantial local costs: benefits flow mostly to larger centres in southern Australia or overseas, and into public revenues. But immediate and often marked environmental and social effects are felt mostly locally. Increasing the proportion of revenues re-invested in the north will be an essential feature of any useful and equitable strategy for northern development.

Increased investments need to be about more than just infrastructure to increase rates or lower costs of resource extraction. They must directly address improvements in human and social capital that go beyond the basics of health and education, to encourage innovation in livelihoods based on ownership of land and use and management of their resources. Local people must be directly involved in generating wealth to reduce individual dependence on income support. Investments are also required to help offset the well-documented environmental and social costs of the coming and going of extractive industries.

Government interventions of this positive sort are entirely consistent with both the support already offered to the pastoral industry and proposals to invest in infrastructure to support extractive industries and agricultural development. Well targeted investments in people will be integral to any long term strategy to reduce welfare dependence.

Key shifts in policy for Indigenous development in northern Australia must include:

- hypothecation of a substantial proportion of resource revenues to Indigenous economic development, addressing both employment and enterprise creation;
- review of government environmental offsets and social benefits packages associated with major development projects, with redesign to favour creation and industry-supported incubation of Indigenous businesses to deliver on commitments;
- serious, integrated planning processes that:
  - instead of setting up competing development and conservation plans, treat both together
  - deploy economic development as a solution to improve and sustain environmental quality and address social problems;
  - support local and finer scale (property-level) planning to inform regional plans;
- changes in law governing access to resources associated with land ownership: to facilitate rather than inhibit economic use by Indigenous people, including native title interests;
- financial assistance to carbon farming enterprises to support them in the period between start-up and first sales of credits;
- processes for overcoming bureaucratic disjunctions and incompatibilities that inhibit coherent programs drawing on multiple sources; and
- greater flexibility to match government programs of all sorts to deeper understanding of local context and aspirations.
Indigenous influence on decision-making

The gaps identified here point to an obvious disconnect between the stated NAMF priority for deepening community engagement and presentation of priorities that do not capture Indigenous aspirations. Consultation on a subset of issues and proposed responses does not constitute deep engagement.

In addition to settling immediate actions to realise opportunities and deal with acute problems, there is clearly a pressing need for mechanisms to drive and sustain better, more meaningful and more frequent engagement at the highest levels. Engagement must be sufficiently robust to ensure that the voices of the majority of regional north Australia’s population are heard and responded to. The IEP argues that a framework for securing Indigenous futures must deal with both processes of engagement and response. Key features of a productive ongoing relationship with government might include:

- up-front government commitment of funds sufficient to provide real prospects of implementing the products of engagement;
- government commitment to a “positive intervention” program for employment and enterprise creation and incubation;
- government commitment to serious review of land tenure and resource access laws, directed particularly at removing barriers to commercial use of renewable resources by Indigenous people;
- corporate commitment to find better ways of realising local social and environmental benefits from major developments;
- community commitment to proactive local and regional planning to provide the context for improved implementation of programs;
- community commitment to build local institutions to improve capacity to engage with the mainstream and emerging green economy;
- processes for regular, open and productive dialogue that engage key decision-makers and Indigenous representatives;
- processes to guarantee that products of such dialogue reach the highest level of government and receive timely and considered responses.

Forum role and process

The role of this first NAIEF is to build the northern Australian Indigenous Futures Framework for unambiguous articulation of Indigenous goals and the preferred means of advancing them through informed, mutually respectful, and determined interactions with government and the private sector. That process will include examination of the issues raised in this paper and other brought by Forum participants to set the Indigenous agenda for future interactions with the NAMF.

Focus on these tasks could be achieved in many ways, but the IEP suggests that structuring discussion and outputs into 4 key inter-related areas will be helpful. They are:

**Governance:** The institutions and relationships that determine how decisions are made and actions taken to implement them. Different arrangements operate at many levels from national governments through to local organisations. At one end of this spectrum are models at the level of individual communities, which determine how information on community needs and goals reaches governments and how communities respond to government
programs. At the other end, are the way governments at various levels take decisions and ways of improving their capacity to deal effectively with Indigenous views of goals and knowledge of how to achieve them. Participants should consider how decision-making and implementation processes could be improved to make them work better for Indigenous people.

**Commerciality:** By this we mean opportunities to engage with the mainstream economy or emerging economies. We seek input on how to improve access to such opportunity and performance in realising benefits, including the potential roles of the public sector, the corporate sector, not-for-profit and philanthropic non-government organisations, communities and individuals. A key issue here is to develop Indigenous businesses that draw on the strengths of Indigenous culture and deal effectively with Indigenous cultural fit to corporate and orthodox workplace cultures.

**Community:** Here discussion is sought on how communities can take greater control over their futures. Key issues are about what structures, processes and systems we need to create; how current community leaders can be supported to increase the quality of their interactions with and influence on governments and industry; and how the next generation of leaders can be identified and developed. We will be seeking ways of strengthening communities through culturally appropriate economic participation.

**Planning and development:** A critical activity for active and dynamic communities who wish to take control over their futures is to develop their own visions of where they want to be in the short to long term future. Instead of just reacting to and making the best of program or projects developed elsewhere - without much knowledge of the local context - communities can ask stronger questions of government and industry that require responses to local aspirations and expectations. Local plans should influence and shape larger scale regional development and conservation plans so that they avoid conflict with and, with the right design, actually support local aspirations.

Under each of these headings, we expect to identify specific priorities for economic development, strengthening culture and protecting heritage, conservation of natural values, and building social capital, and associated planning arrangements. For each priority, we will consider the issues they raise, the principles we will apply to address those issues, a clear statement of the outcomes we seek and the strategies we propose to achieve them. All of this will be assembled into a draft action plan for initial discussion with the NAMF and refinement at future forums.
1. Introduction

Australia has yet to embrace fully the northern reality: in which Indigenous people are major landholders, make up most of the population outside larger centres, have long standing connections, strong views and well considered plans for appropriate northern development. Indigenous futures are inextricably linked to sustainable northern development. Indigenous people must sit at the centre of decision-making structures and processes.

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To support this process, this paper briefly describes the present social and economic conditions faced by Indigenous people, considers some of the explanations for those conditions, and explores options for turning dialogue about development among governments and Indigenous people into real and productive change. It poses a series of questions, which while capturing only some of the matters that might be considered, are intended to initiate discussion on issues that may warrant particular attention.

Background

The future of northern landscapes
The potential to accelerate development of northern lands is a recurring theme in Australian
political life and civil society. Renewed interest has been triggered by concerns about the capacity of southern Australia's agricultural systems - and in particular the Murray-Darling Basin - to maintain production for local consumption and export to meet anticipated increases in global food demand. Those who favour accelerated northern development promote visions of huge tracts of unused land irrigated by enormous quantities of freshwaters that now discharge to the sea. These views are challenged by counter-narratives about repeated failures of large-scale agricultural schemes, sober assessments of the poor quality of much soil and the practical difficulties and environmental impacts of capturing and using surface waters in lands of subdued relief and extraordinarily high rates of evaporation.

In 2009, the Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce summarised arguments for accelerated agricultural and related development (Ross et al. 2009), drawing on a comprehensive CSIRO-coordinated review of formal scientific knowledge of biophysical and social environments (CSIRO 2009). Arguably the most important conclusions for Indigenous interests in economic development are:

- developments requiring substantial modification of the landscape or extraction of renewable natural resources always confront trade-offs, even in relatively undeveloped regions: something is lost for every gain
- cumulatively significant areas of soils suitable for irrigated or rain-fed agriculture are present but scattered in mosaics rather than large, uniformly favourable tracts of country: most of the region lacks suitable combinations of soils and water for broad-scale agriculture
- options exist for productive livelihoods in delivery of ecosystem services and tourism that do not depend on major modification of landscapes or ecosystem processes
- Indigenous views of values that demand protection are too little considered in decisions about acceptable trade-offs
- in many parts of north Australia, existing Indigenous livelihoods do not depend entirely on monetary exchange and those aspects of livelihoods should not be compromised.

And in regard to water, connected arguments are:

- there is no waste water: runoff supports wetlands, estuaries and other coastal systems that support existing Indigenous and non-Indigenous livelihoods, so in addition to socioeconomic benefits, redirection of water to other use always has social, economic and environmental costs
- the volume of water realistically available for agricultural or mining use is constrained - by these trade-offs and topography poorly suited to impoundment - to a small proportion of the apparently available volumes.

**A vision for 2030**

Based on these considerations and projections of existing trends, the Taskforce drew broad conclusions about the type and scale of plausible development options, expressed as a vision for 2030. The Taskforce's vision saw about a 40% increase in the value of agricultural production, chiefly in the pastoral industry, supplemented by relatively modest potential for increases in irrigated agriculture in patchily distributed mosaics, rather than major broad-acre developments. They projected a substantial shift from employment in the government sector to other, chiefly non-agricultural industries. Tourism, mining, marine-based (including commercial fishing) and
environmental service industries are projected to account for 90 per cent of the gross value of production, compared with approximately 60 per cent in 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you agree with this vision?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Is anything important missing?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is it reasonable for governments and the Ministerial Forum to have selected the beef industry for special attention? What other sectors also warrant focus?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your community &quot;fit&quot; within this vision? Does it offer real options for favourable change?</td>
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**Indigenous participation in the north Australian economy**

Over much of northern Australia, especially outside the major centres, most of the population is Indigenous. The proportion will continue to increase (Taylor et al 2006) over the time horizon adopted for the Task Force report. Those demographic realities increase the obligation to seek creative solutions to high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

Solutions are complicated by the fact that many centres in which basic services are now aggregated were established primarily to administer welfare policies through the state or missions. They had no economic base when established and many have none now (e.g. McCrae-Williams and Gerritsen 2010) except as centres for delivery of basic services.

**Employment**

The Top End of the Northern Territory, Cape York, Gulf of Carpentaria and Kimberley are sites of entrenched Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage (Biddle 2009). In the economies of the major centres in these and other regions, Indigenous unemployment rates are much higher and labour force participation rates lower than in the non-Indigenous population. Indigenous people with poor education are outcompeted in these labour markets (Welters 2010) or are unable to seek employment due to poor health or obligations to care for others (Hunter and Gray 2012).

Outside major centres, labour force participation can be extraordinarily low (e.g. 16.7% in 2006 at Wadeye in the Northern Territory). Where participation rates are higher (e.g. 75.8% in Hope Vale in Cape York) most employment is in the public sector (93.8%). Private sector presence is negligible (Welters 2010).

Rapid and sustained improvement will be challenging, given the demography of remote and regional Indigenous populations. In the absence of positive regional development interventions, increase in the Indigenous population of working age in remote and very remote areas is likely to outstrip plausible rates of job creation (Taylor 2003; Biddle et al. 2008). Entry of major developments like mining into regional and remote settings does not lead automatically to increased employment because of skills gaps and companies importing many components of their workforce through fly-in fly-out arrangements (Cheshire 2010). Programs to increase local employment in major mines are getting better and now have some impact, but the total numbers involved appear likely to remain too small, benefits too unevenly distributed, and the effects too short term to, on their own, make enduring differences to local economies (Stanley 2010). Programs in land management supported by
government, especially Working on Country, Indigenous Protected Areas, and Caring for Country, have arguably made greater contributions to local and regional economies and reducing dependence on welfare (e.g. Allen Consulting Group 2011) but they too are also too small to be more than part of the solution.

In the absence of major changes in approaches to regional development and employment strategies, particularly in patterns of public and private investment, disengagement of large proportions of the Indigenous population from mainstream labour markets appears likely to continue (Welters 2010).

Enterprise

Little is known about Indigenous-owned and managed businesses in Australia (ATO 2009). Nationally about 6% of employed Indigenous people run their own businesses, about 1/3rd the non-Indigenous rate. Only 11% of self-employed Indigenous people were outside major cities and it is likely that fewer still would be operating in remote locations. The need for better information on Indigenous business is recognised. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has recently completed a process to define Indigenous small to medium-sized businesses (ABS 2012) with a view to collecting statistics at some future time. The ABS definitions exclude most community organisations because they "are not part of the market sector".

Failure rates of smaller businesses can be high (Bickerdyke et al. 2000), but there has been no systematic examination of whether businesses in remote areas or operated by people identifying themselves as Indigenous are more or less likely to fail. There are suggestions that prejudice against Indigenous businesses may compromise success (Foley 2006; ATO 2009).

Irrespective of rates of small business failure, promoting creation of new Indigenous businesses as a major pathway to greatly increased engagement with the mainstream economy is optimistic, given that entrepreneurs will face all of the challenges already outlined for those seeking employment, plus an array of business financing, regulatory and operational hurdles. Spontaneous increases in sustainable Indigenous (or non-Indigenous) businesses is improbable, given the present state of regional and remote economies and despite the resources boom which has in many situations failed to reach marginalised groups (Langton and Mazel 2008). As with employment, significant improvement will require change in patterns of investments in the regions, including specific support for unusually favourable opportunities.

2. Indigenous livelihoods and regional development

The north Australian economy is dominated by mining, tourism, pastoralism and public sector activity. Consistent with long-term trends in employment, Stoeckl and others (2011) report low economic multipliers for mining and agriculture (including pastoralism) in northern Australia, and limited local employment benefits. And the local economic activity generated from these sectors reaches relatively fewer Indigenous people than their representation in the local population. The Indigenous and non-Indigenous economies operate relatively independently, with the strongest links being the large proportion of Indigenous welfare incomes flowing to local retailers. There are few avenues for monies to flow in the other direction: from the mainstream, non-Indigenous economy to the Indigenous economy (Altman et al 2007; Stoeckl 2010).
This situation needs to change if more jobs and more diverse livelihoods are to be created, but improvement will require more than increasing the quantity of goods and services produced in north Australia: the way in which goods and services are produced must also change. Stoeckl and Stanley (2009) make the obvious suggestion that an essential step will be to position local Indigenous people to supply services that are presently sought outside the region. As well as better positioning to take up intermittent and thinly spread options to service the few substantial private businesses, this will often involve provision of services to government in health and education or, where assets of conservation or tourism value require management, to conservation and natural resource management agencies.

Although policies for local and Indigenous preference are in place, political will and agency commitment to make the greater effort necessary to source more inputs to public sector activities from regional Indigenous people appear relatively weak. When combined with problems of work readiness, limited progress is perhaps inevitable until decisive action is taken. Given the demonstration of acute need and the extreme social consequences of failing to act, it appears reasonable to expect government agencies to

(i) regionalise all relevant parts of their operations and
(ii) increasingly employ local people to deliver services, even if at the cost of some (temporary) reduction in efficiency
(iii) link these steps to coherent employment and workforce development processes.

However, there are limits to the economic benefits that can accrue to people servicing each other’s needs in a small community. As well as transferring employment now taken up by visiting workers to permanent, Indigenous residents, ways must be found to generate entirely new livelihoods.

Government policies in regional economic development to identify and support such new livelihoods are also weak. Systematic action, resourced well enough to address needs and pursue opportunities strongly and directly, is rare (Beer et al. 2005). Most private enterprises have few incentives to invest in the regions, with the notable exception of resource extraction (mining) industries that come and go as mineral assets are proven and then removed. But proximity to major mines has made no difference to the socioeconomic status of Indigenous people over periods of up to several decades (Taylor 1999; Taylor and Scambary 2005).

Failure of industry operational investments to reach local people or of governments to reinvest incomes gained from mining royalties or taxes in the regions have been improved to some extent by larger companies adopting social responsibility policies, through which they invest more directly in local communities. The way in which such investments are deployed can determine whether an industry leaves a positive or negative legacy. The quality of agreements between mining industries and Indigenous communities is improving (Langton and Mazel 2008). Prior planning by communities about the most productive areas of investment to support sustainable regional development will help industry to optimise the level and durability of community benefit from industry using social responsibility investments.

| What goods and services can be supplied locally that are presently sourced outside regions? |
| What changes in policy are needed to encourage local supply? |
What do communities need to do to become favoured suppliers?
How can local communities better position themselves to more quickly respond to opportunity generated by major developments?

What areas of enterprise offer the best opportunities to create new viable Indigenous businesses in regional centres and remote locations?
What sort of support will be needed to promote their establishment and success?
Can the large settlements offer sufficient employment and economic development opportunities in the absence of development in the associated homelands?

3. Planning for Indigenous economic development

Invoking trends in other nations, Holmes (1990, 1992, 2002, 2008, 2010) has over a period of several decades tracked a shift in the northern savannas away from orthodox production. A "post-productivist" status has been postulated for many landscapes in northern Australia, designating a shift from management regimes designed to maximise production of orthodox (agricultural) products in lands marginal for such use to other environmental and consumer benefits. This trend is said to be in part exemplified by Indigenous land rights shifting land use to Indigenous customary purposes. There is debate about the full array of drivers and significance of such shifts, but there is no doubt that landowners faced a different set of options and demands than applied a generation ago.

Recovery of land by Indigenous people has greatly outpaced access to the resources needed to support use or management, or even to take up residence, so adverse impacts from fire, weeds and feral animals often go unmanaged. Entrenched socioeconomic disadvantage demands urgent attention, so landowners feel obligated to extract incomes from their land. Taken together, pressure for commercial use and degradation that proceeds in the absence of use, place great pressure on traditional landowners to make important decisions about the future use of their lands; and now rather than later.

At present they face starkly contrasting options. One class of accessible options involves inclusion of lands in the state or national protected lands system. Joint management systems under which lands are formally declared as reserves and often held by the state under long term leases place the greatest constraints on future land use, in exchange for long term commitments to employment of community members in park and tourism management. Indigenous protected areas (IPAs) place fewer restrictions on use and the funding available and have proved highly attractive, even though government financial support is usually modest relative to formally declared, jointly-managed areas. Partnerships with conservation NGOs may also be proposed and funding from non-government sources is increasingly common.

Another distinct class of options for orthodox production derives entirely or mostly from access to large areas of land rather than other specific advantage. This may encourage proposals for marginal uses that depend for their viability on attribution of low or no value to the land on which they take
place, but which may generate some employment attractive to communities. For example, a valuer put an annual rental of $3 ha\(^{-1}\).y\(^{-1}\) on Tiwi lands (cited in SECARC 2009) used for a forestry venture which required total clearing of native forest from 30,000 ha. The project has now collapsed. Such ventures and their after-effects may also restrict future uses and discourage investors.

Some unusually favourable sites may be able to boost beef outputs or production of various crops by irrigation. Obviously such uses require substantial modification of lands and waters, unlike the "traditional" mainstream option in extensive pastoralism.

Landowners facing such stark choices require high quality, unbiased, non-ideological, advice that positions land owners to weighs up costs and benefits and openly acknowledges risks. Land owners have not always had access to comprehensive and quality advice. Consultations for formal approvals of particular proposals can be complex and costly and often require that landowners consider options in isolation from properly analysed alternatives.

Formal land use planning processes in Australia are not well-matched to Indigenous interests and approaches (Hibbard et al. 2008), although recent moves supported by the National Water Commission to develop a Water Resource Strategy for the Tiwi Islands that "will be developed and managed by the Tiwi people" and is due to conclude in 2012 may provide some pointers to better process\(^1\). Supporting Indigenous landowners and communities to develop land use and economic development plans as a framework for decision-making - rather than treating planning as a response to decisions already made (such as seeking an IPA or other specific land use change) - may be productive investments for governments, NGOs and Indigenous organisations. The use of scenario planning as developed as part of the Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK) program (Pantus et al. 2011) coupled with simple models capable of incorporating local knowledge (Collier et al. 2011) may provide useful approaches. Karjala and Dewhurst (2003) report that such methods can help reveal the complexity of Indigenous views of sustainable resource use in ways that permit meaningful planning responses. But whatever the approach to communication and exchange of knowledge, Indigenous land-holding groups will require considerable support to work through the options.

The IEP embraces the notion that Indigenous livelihoods can be advanced by appropriate planning at a range of scales. But while failure to plan is debilitating, planning without reasonable expectation of adequate resources to implement ideas is worse than useless, because it squanders time, money and energy. Greiner et al. (2012) have reported the research priorities identified by Indigenous peak bodies in northern Australia, covering those issues that they considered would place Indigenous landholders to make good decisions about their roles in northern development.

Roles for planning at different scales can be summarised as:

**Regional**
Planning at the regional scale provides for identification of powerful external influences on opportunities and challenges and broad understanding of community interests and capabilities. The Northern Land and Water Task Force provided the background for more focused regional plans. Through participation and formal endorsement of regional plans,
governments can indicate their commitment to directions in regional development, as well as understand specific issues that have strong community support and warrant investment or raise particular cultural or environmental concerns. Regional development plans provide context for more localised planning. Coherent regional development commitments from government will provide the confidence for communities and the private sector to invest in local initiatives.

**Country-based planning**
Cadastral boundaries rarely coincide with ecological or Indigenous estates and interests. Indigenous people in many parts of northern Australia have adopted tenure-blind, country-based planning in which they identify issues of interest or concern across all of their traditional country. These plans can then be used to create partnerships for achieving shared goals (Smyth 2012). If well-managed, such processes can provide essential community-based statements of both aspiration and capability to inform regional plans and influence government decisions on policy and investment. And communities can consider where and how they will access the resources needed to advance their ideas.

**Estate or property-level planning**
When plausible livelihood goals have been set and tested for technical plausibility and social acceptability, then individual landowning groups can plan for their on-ground achievement, taking advantage of the supportive policy and investment commitments, and identifying the investments and actions they and their local organisations must also make to succeed.

Communities of remote and regional northern Australia are presently challenged to act as more than troubled observers of plans made and decisions taken principally by external parties. Taking up more active bottom-up planning approaches will require support and, importantly, assurance that governments’ rhetorical commitments to regional development are real, backed by reinvestment of some of the (particularly mineral) wealth generated from the regions, and deployed to build on rather than discount the interests, skills and commitment of Indigenous communities.

Indigenous organisations will also need to play a stronger part in regional development. Investments in individual capacity-building and, particularly, stronger and more effective regional and local Indigenous organisations may be repaid relatively quickly through improved effectiveness. Groups that take a strong role in local (country-based) planning (Smyth 2012) will be better positioned to recognise opportunity, take advantage of funding programs for local development, whether organised under a northern regional development framework or more idiosyncratically.

| What commitments from government and industry are needed to make the effort of planning worthwhile? |
| How can access to information and technical and economic analysis be improved for Indigenous landowners? |
| What commitments must communities make to ensure that local aspirations and plans are treated seriously by governments, industry and interested (e.g. philanthropic) NGOs? |
4. **Review of native title and land rights law**

The federal government has announced its intention to reform native title law. Aims are to improve the negotiation process by allowing greater flexibility in agreements. Provisions relating to good faith negotiations are to be strengthened. Changes will clarify that neither income tax nor capital gains tax apply to native title settlements. Perhaps most relevant to this forum, the role and obligations of native title bodies will also be re-examined to ensure that real benefits can be gained from agreements and that the benefits reach the community, as efforts shift from regaining land or compensation to delivering benefits from ownership or access to land.

Some Indigenous leaders argue that the proposed reforms do not go far enough, and that real change such as less onerous tests of connections to land or even a reversal of the onus of proof (i.e. those opposing claims would need to demonstrate an absence of connection) will be necessary to make the law more equitable. Others argue for replacement of native title with national land rights laws.

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**What changes in laws and associated processes are needed to promote economic benefit from land ownership or access, positioning Indigenous people make a major contribution to northern development?**

**How should the Forum seek to influence the conduct of reviews?**

Improvements in recognition of rights to land alone will not overcome constraints on opportunity to derive incomes from land ownership. Rights to commercial use of the resources associated with those lands are also needed.

5. **Indigenous rights in (renewable) resources**

Rights to land and to control access to land and waters are essential features of north Australia’s Indigenous economies. The economic value of land assets is, however, compromised by the way in which Indigenous attachments to land have been viewed by the courts and interpreted in legislation.

From the earliest considerations of land rights, emphasis has been placed on the spiritual aspects of the Indigenous relationship with land rather than the utilitarian and economic. Langton (2011) identifies the failure of advocates of self-determination to take up related economic inequalities - that could never be resolved solely by a numerical minority deploying its political rights - as a significant factor in perpetuation of disadvantage.

Water is a key asset over which Indigenous rights remain ambiguous (O'Donnell 2011). The conceptual and practical difficulties created by this situation have been highlighted by the emphasis of the National Water Initiative (NWI) (COAG 2004) on separation of rights in water from ownership of land, as a precursor to markets in water. Rights to use water for customary and community purposes are protected, albeit ambiguously, under native title law (O'Donnell 2011). But with water allocation arrangements that set caps on total water use and then trade entitlements within that cap, separated entirely from ownership or other interests in land, Indigenous landowners may
struggle to gain access to the water entitlements needed to realise economic benefits from their land, robbing the recovery of lands of much of its potential social and economic value.

NAILSMA (2009a) and other Indigenous organisations and individuals (e.g. Anon. 2008; NAILSMA 2009b; MLDRIN 2010) take the position that rights in land must be accompanied by property rights in resources associated with the land, including water. And those rights should include use for commercial purposes. Queensland has provided limited recognition of such rights through the *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act*, which provides that water plans and wild river declarations in the region must provide a reserve of water for the benefit of Indigenous communities for economic as well as social purposes. In its Katherine water allocation plan, the Northern Territory had made provision for an Indigenous reserve based on the area of Indigenous land within a relevant catchment. Up to 2% of licensed extraction was allocated for future Indigenous economic development (NRETAS 2009), based on settlement of the Native Title claim over the township. In the draft plans for the Ooloo and Tindale aquifers, 24% and 25% respectively of the maximum water extraction limit have been tentatively allocated to an Indigenous reserve (NRETAS 2011; 2012). There appear to have been no formal moves by the Western Australian government to recognise Indigenous rights in water for economic development.

Despite growing acceptance of Indigenous economic interests in water allocations, Queensland law makes an arbitrary allocation of around 1% of flows. In the Territory, recognition is at the discretion of the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment. The first plan-based allocation was calculated solely on the likely area of land overlying the aquifer for Indigenous people may be granted exclusive access under the *Native Title Act*. Whilst welcome, such a "concession" makes no contribution to the livelihoods of the region’s substantial and growing Indigenous population with non-exclusive native title interests.

Indeed, the logic of allocations based purely on relative area of Indigenous land can be seriously questioned, given especially that there are no area-based constraints for other licence holders. Irrigators have received and prior to creation of markets presumably will continue to receive allocations greatly in excess of the relative area of land under their ownership and so have a disproportionate impact on availability to others. The quality of water originating on such intensively-used lands is also more likely to be compromised. Clearly, a more logical and equitable base is required for determining water allocations to Indigenous interests.

Water resources are highlighted in analysis and advocacy of resource rights because they have had the most sustained and best-supported attention from federal, state and territory policy-makers and regulators, and Indigenous advocacy for change. Unsatisfactory treatment of Indigenous rights in water policy stimulated articulation of the Mary River principles. But similar inequities exist in regard to living resources such as fish and wildlife. Allocation of access is done through processes that take no account of contributions of Indigenous land owners to the condition of the resource and habitats, conflicts with customary livelihoods, or to socio-economic disadvantage. Licences to take fish commercially, for example, are often issued at the scale of whole jurisdictions so that local people have little or no capacity to protect customary use or manage conflict with other commercial livelihoods like game fishing enterprises (Whitehead and Storrs 2003). Licences for local capture and

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sale of fish available to Indigenous entrepreneurs on their country cover only species not already "owned" by other licence holders in managed fisheries.

A more consistent and equitable approach to Indigenous rights in living resources will include dropping the discrimination against commercial use by Indigenous landholders and native title interests. But as with all similar high level policy initiatives, realising benefits will also require that local and regional Indigenous organisations position themselves, through high quality local, "country-based" planning to identify and access pathways for taking up opportunity.

What specific proposals should be put to government about change to law and policy to improve access to resources for commercial use?
Should change in rights of accesses to resources be directly linked to reform of native title law and process?

6. Indigenous culture and economic development

Strong commitment to cultural norms should not be treated as primarily an obstacle to participation in (or access to) the contemporary mainstream economy or the development of new enterprise and economic opportunity. Various aspects of cultural preference and expression of difference may be important assets in design and achievement of improved livelihoods (Daskon and Binns 2009). Dockery (2010) summarises evidence for positive associations between strength of attachment to traditional culture and various socio-economic indicators, including employment. Culture may be part of the solution to Indigenous disadvantage.

Promoting Indigenous economic development in ways that emphasise compatibility of economic aspirations with and draw on the strengths of Indigenous culture have been articulated under the rubric of a "culture-based economy" (Armstrong et al. 2006). Critical features of this concept are that it embraces existing mainstream economic opportunities based on use or management of lands, waters and natural resources, as well entirely new or emerging options in delivery of environmental services.

Armstrong and Morrison (2007) outline the concept as encompassing:

- definition and protection of values important to Indigenous people
- rejection of limitations on Indigenous capacity to engage with the contemporary economy based on external notions of customary beliefs and behaviours
- commitment to take advantage of mainstream opportunities while maintaining the cultural base of Indigenous people as custodians of large areas of land, their knowledge and resources
- engagement in existing industries under terms acceptable to Indigenous people
- engagement in new or emerging industries from a position of strength, whereby Indigenous people and their interests drive and shape development, particularly on the Indigenous land estate.

What steps can governments take to support development of the culture-based economy?
In addition to developing their own plans and proposals for culture-compatible developments on their lands, what actions should Indigenous people take to improve understanding among decision-makers of the significance of culturally-appropriate development?

What are the best immediate options for local economic development that draw strength from or are at least compatible with enduring cultural norms?

7. Payment for environmental services (PES)

A potentially promising avenue for purchase of local products by both governments and the private sector arises in payment for environmental services (PES). The Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) is the most prominent among a number of state and federal examples of related schemes. A current study funded by the federal Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport titled Building Markets in Environmental and Land Management Services may help bring serious attention to the opportunity in all of its forms.

PES responds to the failure of markets to maintain a public good: quality of biophysical environments. Because the services from natural systems and good natural resource management, like clean air and water, are available free of charge, the economically rational individual has no incentive to maintain them (Luckert and Whitehead 2007). Wunder (2005) provides a widely accepted definition of PES. Briefly, his definition posits a voluntary purchaser of a well-defined service that the provider is obliged to secure. Payment is conditional on demonstration of delivery.

The federal and, to a lesser extent, state and territory governments are already operating in the PES space. The federal Working on Country program funds Indigenous ranger groups who contract to undertake specified kinds of work in nominated locations. The Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program supports traditional owners of lands of conservation value to deliver on objectives set out in an agreed management plan for a defined site. The IPA arrangements are regarded as sufficiently robust to warrant recognition in Australia’s national reserve system. State and territory governments as well as some commercial entities, conservation NGOs and research agencies support Indigenous Ranger groups to undertake specified tasks. State support for Indigenous Rangers outside declared national parks are arguably most formalised under the Queensland Wild Rivers Act.

The national Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) to commence in July 2012 is a more rigorous system creating markets for carbon credits that must be reliably quantifiable and meet other standards. Particular efforts have been made to engage Indigenous people in carbon farming opportunities through specific funding arrangements. All jurisdictions also have environmental offsets policies backed, in the states and federally, by laws that require residual detriment from major developments to be compensated. This may be done by payments to funds established to acquire or


manage conservation areas or by direct relationships with offset providers capable of delivering other forms of environmental improvement. Some environmental services like fire management might also be delivered by Indigenous people working on a fee for service basis on non-Indigenous land.

The available and emerging mixes of policy measures as well as NGO investments in environmental management provide many opportunities for Indigenous land owners to enter PES markets of one sort or another. Governments can encourage Indigenous businesses by design of their environmental offsets policies to favour Indigenous providers in remote regions.

It will be particularly important for Indigenous groups considering conservation or other land management arrangements with government or NGOs to ensure that they do not inadvertently close off income-generating PES options by over-committing or using vague language that may be construed to cover multiple assets or products. Providers of environmental services must avoid implying that multiple benefits can be delivered at no additional cost. Potential impacts on other (mainstream) livelihoods also need to be considered. If poorly handled, PES markets may create "power asymmetries (that) contribute to reproducing rather than addressing existing inequalities in the access to natural resources and services" (Kosoy and Corbera 2010).

Savanna fire abatement is a particularly valuable PES option because quickly realised abatement incomes can support projects during the long process of accruing, demonstrating and working out how to design, deliver and share in the benefits that derive from the larger carbon bio-sequestration and associated co-benefits. It also requires no major shifts in prevailing land use because it is designed specifically to draw on culturally endorsed ways of managing fire. Incomes that accrue relatively quickly can help overcome an important barrier to implementation of more comprehensive schemes (see for example, Goldstein et al 2006) that accrue and validate benefits more slowly.

The PES literature also presents debates about the risk of crowding out other motivations for positive action (Redford and Adams 2009) to protect or promote environmental services, and/or rewarding behaviour that would have occurred anyway (van Hecken and Bastiaensen 2010a,b). In the case of many Indigenous groups, PES complement other motivations by providing additional means to get back onto country. Incomes are presently used primarily to fund access to traditional lands of a consistency and duration that could not otherwise be achieved: the scale of finances available appears sufficient to encourage alignment of the objectives of purchasers of ES with customary goals (Whitehead et al. 2008; 2009). In northern Australia, PES appears unlikely to displace other motivations but instead promote complementarity of targeted paid work and compatible customary activity (Luckert and Whitehead 2007).

The requirement for such services is likely to go on growing as existing problems like invasive species continue to expand their range and land use is intensified at some sites. Options presently under examination for "mosaic" agriculture (below) have the benefit of reducing risks of localised over-use of water, pollution and biodiversity loss associated with broad scale agriculture, but generate a different set of pressures that will require management. For example, mosaics of land use intensification for pastoralism will exacerbate weed problems from exotic pastures, by taking them into more parts of the landscape; native and exotic pest problems affecting exotic pastures and other crops will be exacerbated by embedding smaller areas of farmland in a less intensively
managed matrix. Projections of the benefits of such proposals should take account of the costs of managing their impacts in other parts of the landscape used for entirely different purposes.

As noted earlier, the federal Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (DRALGAS) proposes a proof of concept study for establishing an economic market in environmental and land management services in northern Australia, which will seek to identify barriers to participation for Indigenous communities in managing Australia’s environment and cultural heritage. In this context, however, it is important to note the risks inherent in promoting a single best, entirely market-based, approach to delivery of environmental services, whether publicly or privately purchased. Despite objections to government involvement in PES and the forms of conditionality this entrains (e.g. Winer et al. 2011), in some situations government co-investment in delivery may be a better, more equitable option than entirely market-based approaches (van Noordwijk and Leimona 2010).

What do communities need to do to position themselves to take advantage of emerging markets in environmental services?
How will communities fund ventures that require significant investments of time and effort before credits are recognised and can be sold?
Do communities need to pool their resources in cooperatives to access these markets?
What concerns about the design and management of markets for environmental and land management services should be taken to the managers of the DRALGAS study?
How should Indigenous input to the study be managed?

8. Devolution of statutory powers

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) occurs when communities have the legal rights, the local institutions and the economic incentives to ensure that use of natural resources is sustainable. Internationally, the demand for new approaches, including CBNRM, arose from concerns about the capacity of central governments to manage shared resources. In northern Australia, Indigenous CBNRM emerged as an early expression of self-determination and reassertion of rights to manage country, rather than external influences (Smyth 2012).

A guiding principle for CBNRM (subsidiarity) is that decisions should be taken as close as possible to the citizens affected by them (McKay and Jencroft 1996). The approach boasts some important successes, as well as some failures (Murphree 2009; Berkes 2010). CBNRM successes are most likely when objectives of governments, other (NGO) interests and the local community are clear and compatibilities and incompatibilities well-understood and acknowledged (Arambiza and Painter 2006). Agrawal and Gibson (1999) caution that a nuanced understanding of community is required that does not assume homogeneity of interests and capabilities and instead draws on understanding of local institutions.

Devolution of rights and obligations from the centre, including some presently statutory powers and obligations, is particularly relevant to north Australia. In the large states, the centre is too distant
both physically and in priorities and pre-occupations from the northern periphery to have the understanding needed for good decisions. And in all jurisdictions, the government resources to implement decisions effectively over large areas with diffusely spread populations are lacking (Whitehead and Storrs 2003; Whitehead et al. 2006). Chartre and Agrawal (2009) found that carbon storage was optimised in forest management when forests were under local ownership and rule-making for management was localised.

From time to time, various governments have raised options for devolution of powers in some areas of natural resource management, but have rarely gone beyond rhetoric. The Far North Queensland and Torres Strait regional plan (e.g. RDAFNQ 2011) call for a reconceptualised regionalism that strengthens local decision-making. With governments continuing to seek reductions in costs, opportunities for devolution of functions need to be examined more systematically and with genuine attention to resourcing implications, risks and benefits for regional communities. Such arrangements need to go well beyond the more or less tokenistic consultative mechanisms that operate in areas like commercial fisheries. When benefits are sought not only in incomes and resource condition but are linked to authority and responsibility "large increments in social capital can result" (Murphree 2009).

What responsibilities presently exercised by distant regulators can reasonably be devolved to local communities?

What support will be necessary to achieve productive devolution?

9. Industry support

Government support to agriculture has already been announced for three projects of interest to Indigenous land owners.

**Building capacity and partnerships in the Indigenous pastoral industry**

This project aims to improve Indigenous business and employment in the northern Australian beef industry by assisting under-performing Indigenous pastoral businesses "that are in a position to partner with other commercial operations". The first stage of the project will focus on developing a comprehensive and detailed step-by-step framework to provide Indigenous communities a pathway to follow. The second stage of the project (for which funding has yet to be finalised) will establish Community-Industry-Government partnerships to trial the application of the Guide in pilot projects in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

**Assessment of the sustainability and prospects of mosaic agriculture**

This project responds directly to key recommendations of the Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce to provide analysis of mosaic irrigation and its application to the northern beef industry. The first stage of this project, led by CSIRO, has been completed with industry and jurisdictional stakeholders consulted on the commercial, production, environmental and
regulatory opportunities and constraints presented by mosaic irrigation. To quote the DRALGAS website, "(s)ome key messages include;

- While there is agreement irrigation can be used to intensify beef production in the north, other factors will be critical to achieving full scale implementation and benefits.
- The production systems that utilise irrigation will be different in several important ways from most current systems. Some changes will be necessary at regional and industry levels and full implementation may ultimately require inter-generational change to address current skills gaps.
- The lack of an abattoir in northern Australia is seen as a constraint to achieving the full benefits offered by mosaic irrigation."

The project is now focusing on identifying the locations of field studies in WA, QLD and the NT and the specific focus of each case study. The project is due to be completed in December 2013.

North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy

This collaborative study is jointly funded by the Office of Northern Australia (ONA), the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF Qld) and CSIRO. The Strategy will deliver a comprehensive assessment of sustainable water resource development and the potential for new irrigated agriculture in the Flinders and Gilbert Catchments of north Queensland.

The Strategy will:

- evaluate water capture and storage options;
- test the commercial viability of irrigated agriculture;
- assess potential environmental, economic and cultural impacts and risks, to ensure development paths are genuinely sustainable; and identify potential water storages and development opportunities.

The first of these projects is of particular interest to a subset of Indigenous landholders. In regard to the second and third, there is no indication of particular focus on Indigenous economic development or of consultation with Indigenous people, despite the reality that increase in irrigated agriculture and any associated impoundments will almost certainly impact Indigenous interests in both land and water resources.

A significant positive aspect of these projects is the intent to support pilot studies in each jurisdiction. This approach could perhaps be applied productively to other opportunities on Indigenous lands in northern Australia including, for example, creation and operation of enterprises in provision of environmental services or commercial fisheries.

Are there additional pilot studies for other forms of enterprise development in one or more jurisdictions that warrant development of propositions to the NAMF?

Do the existing approaches by government support Indigenous interests?

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What strategies could better support Indigenous interests?

What messages does government need to hear about engagement of Indigenous interests in the way such initiatives are developed and their implications assessed?

10. **Piecemeal government investments**

The opportunity costs of investment in regional development or land management initiatives are inescapable, and are particularly prominent in northern Australia, where additional investments in housing, health and educational services and other basic infrastructure are urgently needed to improve well-being (see Attachment 1 for a list of programs included in the 2012/13 federal budget).

In the social policy sphere, Governments had turned away from remote landscapes and communities and instead emphasised support to larger centres. Government funds have reached remote areas, outstations and homelands chiefly through conservation programs like Caring for Country, Working on Country or Indigenous Protected Areas. More recently (in the 2012/13 federal budget), there has been some renewal of support for outstations⁶.

Coordination of government initiatives has improved with more recent programs, but relationships of various investments to developing sustainable regional or local economies remain unclear. Indigenous organisations have struggled to maintain continuity of focus, effort and employment when juggling the competing demands and onerous reporting requirements of many separate funding processes (Putnis et al. 2007). Disjunct objectives, mismatched timeframes, and different reporting methods and criteria for satisfying contractual obligations are more likely to evoke formulaic, form-filling responses, instead of the learning and adaptive loops that can contribute to improved performance and growing capability (Berkes 2010).

An orderly approach to northern development, whatever the mix of land uses and enterprises under consideration, capable of dealing with the needs and aspirations of the north’s growing Indigenous populations and their major land holdings and interests, will require ongoing improvement in awareness of their implications of Indigenous people and design to promote access by communities at varying levels of capability. At the same time, there is a need to guard against one-size-fits-all approaches that end up being better at exclusion than engagement. Better coordination does not require homogeneity. Some diversity of funding sources and goals can contribute to diversity of opportunity, provided options and demands encompass and can be matched case by case to the various capacities of regional, remote and Indigenous organisations. If appropriate levels of flexibility are available, different communities can accept responsibility for packaging a locally suitable mix of different programs in complementary ways (Sullivan and Stacey 2012).

All programs should ultimately be designed explicitly to deal with the biophysical and social realities of the north, rather than require north Australians to apply ill-fitting programs designed to meet the needs and capabilities of southern Australia. Well-informed regional and local development plans and strategies may help provide the missing context for better designed and more appropriately delivered programs of support.

What mechanisms are needed to improve Indigenous input into government program design?

What principles should be observed by government in program design to ensure fit to local and regional circumstances?

How can coordination and delivery be improved without over-centralising control in ways that create further inflexibility?

Do you agree that program design and delivery can be strengthened by local development planning initiatives?

11. Priorities for policy change

In this brief exploration of major issues in regional and Indigenous development, several factors and types of questions arose repeatedly. Arguably some of the most important include:

Fiscal policy

The manner in which governments have deployed public funds to encourage northern development often appear to be dictated by the needs of large developments rather than analysis of community need or to build future resilience into the resident population. The IEP anticipates that one of the major products of Forum processes will be to establish mechanisms for identifying additional investments in regional futures that will produce greater long term social and economic benefits.

An important option for encouraging more considered investments more directly supporting community development and well-being will be to hypothecate a proportion of commonwealth, state and territory revenues from resource extraction in the north to Indigenous development projects: in human and social capital as well as infrastructure. And proposals to allow tax credits for private sector investments in Indigenous enterprises should also be examined.

In addition to the broad proposal for increasing investment and targeting it better, what additional specific investments should be sought now?

• in physical infrastructure
• in enterprise development and support
• in community capacity to take up opportunity

What quantum of increase in investments in economic development will be necessary to make an appreciable difference?

What level of taxation benefits will need to be available to attract private investments?

If set at the right level, how significant might taxation benefits be in attracting capital for investment in Indigenous businesses?
Are there potentially viable enterprises in communities that have failed to get underway because of lack of capital?

What forms of security can reasonably be offered to investors?

What other direct contributions from industry and government to establish Indigenous enterprise should be sought?

Other policy measures
There are opportunities to support Indigenous groups seeking to establish businesses in environmental services. For example, under the Carbon Farming Initiative, credits generated under savanna fire projects may not be available for sale until at least 18 months after work has begun. Corporate support through this start-up phase could be treated as a contribution to Indigenous economic development under social responsibility policies or, more pragmatically, as leverage to access long term supplies of premium carbon credits at favourable prices.

Government can also assist with the establishment of such businesses by shifts in policy. All governments have in place policies for environmental offsets and social benefits packages designed to compensate for both social and biophysical impacts of major developments. These may sometimes emphasise Indigenous interests, but arrangements could be strengthened to require that in other than extraordinary circumstances, offsets and other packages must be delivered by local Indigenous organisations employing Indigenous people. This will be an important way of delivering employment opportunity to remote people based on the array of (land management) skills most likely to be readily available in such locations.

In addition to the pilot projects already agreed for the beef industry, what additional areas of resource-based Indigenous enterprise should be support by government for serious on-ground examination, preferably in partnership with relevant industry?

Fixing perverse laws and processes
Inalienable communal title is a fundamental feature of Indigenous land rights law. Transfers of rights in land are determined by traditional processes rather than exchange of title by sale or other means. Clan and family associations with, and obligations to, specific areas of land and their features mean that one area of land is not substitutable for another: the option to realise the capital value of land through sale cannot arise. Unlike holders of other marginal (pastoral) lands in northern Australia, large areas of which are not commercially viable on their orthodox productive potential alone (Holmes 1990), Indigenous landowners cannot realise capital gains from increasing land valuations.

For these and other reasons, communal ownership has been criticised as inhibiting economic development. However, objections appear to be at least in part ideologically based. Invocations of Marxism or "primitive socialism" to describe communal land ownership illustrates the strongly
ideological flavour of some commentary (see Bradfield 2005 for a discussion). Pearson (cited in Bradfield 2005) describes communalism as “the very basis of Aboriginal culture”. To attack this form of tenure is therefore to attack land rights and the determination of many Indigenous people to follow their religious beliefs, including defining, place-based obligations. It requires unusually flexible thinking to, on the one hand, support laws blocking sites from land rights claims when a continuing attachment to the place cannot be shown, and on the other to propose that successful claimants sell or otherwise alienate land recovered, actions that would clearly deny the significance of attachment.

If the form of land rights law is thought to require improvement, rather than communal title warranting special attention, attention might be more productively directed at more fundamental questions about denial of options for earning incomes from lands, because the resources they support are unavailable for commercial use. In important cases (fish and water) access has in the past been allocated entirely to others without regard to Indigenous interests. Native title laws expressly exclude rights to commercial use. Reviewing such laws and their consequences for Indigenous livelihoods and northern development should be given priority.

Notwithstanding, it should also be acknowledged that processes for gaining approval for enterprises on Indigenous lands or drawing on their resources can be slow and expensive, and some adjustment is desirable to facilitate timely responses to opportunity, particularly where restriction on other use is minor and/or scale of environmental change is modest. Prior local (country-based) and regional development planning should be employed to help accelerate examination and processing of individual development proposals.

A striking irony in contemporary debate is a juxtaposition of demands, on the one hand, for Indigenous people to accept greater responsibility with, on the other, a denial in law of rights to use resources of greatest customary interest, expertise, and sense of obligation. Any serious examination of resource management laws and their administration must take account of the mismatch among Indigenous aspiration, cultural obligations, responsibility rhetoric, and weaknesses in present regulatory performance (Whitehead and Storrs 2003; Whitehead 2012).

Can you identify additional areas where existing laws and associated processes work against the stated aims of government and the interests of communities?
What changes should be made to eliminate anomalous laws and clumsy or perverse processes?

**Real planning for real results**

Many planning arrangements for remote regions do little more than re-package initiatives already taken or provide frameworks to roll out very minor programs. Serious planning of the sort that requires sustained effort from community, industry and government also demands serious prospects of significant outcomes. In addition to pre-commitments to respond meaningfully to proposals arising from these forums and related planning processes, commitments to support planning at a range of levels (local, regional, jurisdictional) are needed. It will be particularly important that Indigenous participants are offered access to technical and economic analysis in tandem with the planning process.
How should access to technical and economic advice be obtained? By funding Indigenous landholding groups to access independent advice or relying on inputs from government or other agencies?

Should planning processes begin at the clan/estate community level and work upwards in scale, or be preceded by larger scale processes to provide context, including levels of government financial and other commitment?

Better designed and executed government programs

It is easy to criticise the ways in which government programs are designed and rolled out for their lack of coordination and sometimes apparently conflicting goals. But complexity and imperfect coordination is inevitable given the number of programs and diversity of interests served by them (illustrated in Attachment 1). And seeking to deal with complexity by demanding whole of government approaches can invite cumbersome processes of centralised control that slow responses and entrench inflexibility (Sullivan and Stacey 2012).

The IEP does not suggest tight integration of government processes where they intersect with Indigenous affairs. Instead the IEP suggests improved processes for serious ongoing dialogue as an essential pre-requisite to better program design. But formal processes for dialogue, such as these Forums, must be accompanied by guarantees that issues raised will reach the highest levels of government and trigger meaningful responses from all relevant agencies. Such processes will in themselves require formal decisions from government about the status of the Forums and their continuation.

Can you identify government programs that were well designed to meet community needs and capabilities and/or applied flexibly or with particular skill and sensitivity?

What made them work well?

How can their positive features be applied to other programs?

Governance for Indigenous economic development

Many of the fixes for current weaknesses in supporting Indigenous development require that:

- Indigenous people organise to provide well-informed and thoughtful analysis and credible proposals for policy and program change
- Indigenous views reach and are understood by key decision-makers
- Decision-makers are placed to respond meaningfully to Indigenous proposals
- Arbitrary boundaries to matters that may be raised and require response are avoided, or any bounds are negotiated and well understood by all parties.

None of these requirements will emerge by themselves from casual processes of consultation. They demand careful design, approval at the whole of government level, and assiduous effort from both
Indigenous organisations and government agencies. It is therefore essential that the NAIEF determine robust governance arrangements for formulating and presenting Indigenous positions, and puts clearly to the NAMF its expectations regarding government processes, especially the handling of submissions and status of responses.

A level of pre-commitment from both Indigenous organisations (including the NAIEF participants) and governments is necessary to justify the considerable effort and costs of the forums and subsequent long term arrangements to maintain effective dialogue.

| How should NAIEF validate with communities the positions it puts to governments through NAFM? |
| How should NAIEF report the results of dialogue and responses from government? |
| What are NAIEF expectations regarding handling of responses to dialogues and formal submissions? |
| - access to present arguments |
| - timeframes for responses |
| - levels of access and response (Minister, Premier/Chief Minister, Chief Executive) for matters of different types |

| What commitments are NAIEF members prepared to make regarding time commitment to the Forum and subsequent processes? |
| What commitments can be made on behalf of communities regarding participation in planning processes and implementation arrangements for NAIEF/NAMF-sponsored projects or programs? |
| Is it plausible to seek a minimum financial commitment from governments regarding planning processes and implementation of agreed projects? |
| In what areas of interest should such financial pre-commitments be sought? |

This paper has considered only a small number of many policy issues. Greater detail can be found in reports commissioned by NAILSMA and funded by the federal government under the Northern Australian Water Futures Assessment (Greiner et al. 2012; Sullivan and Stacey 2012; Whitehead 2012).

12. **Building an Indigenous Futures Framework**

If the history of economic and social development of northern Australia demonstrates nothing else, it shows that one-dimensional approaches to grasp opportunity or deal with problems will fail to deliver. Addressing Indigenous disadvantage through productive and sustainable use of land and
application of human and social capital demands action on many fronts. But well-crafted programs across many social and economic dimensions are impossible without the understanding of social context and options that will secure the commitment of Indigenous people and especially engage the interest of young people. The construction of an North Australian Indigenous Futures Framework is seen as an essential step in improving understanding by government and the Australian public more generally.

The IEP does not wish to pre-empt conclusions and recommendations that might emerge from the Forum, but has identified a number of key questions that the framework will need to deal with:

1. what will northern development need to deliver If it is to meet the reasonable expectations of the region's Indigenous people: for reliable prosperity and resilient communities?
2. how can we construct a framework to encompass Indigenous socioeconomic, cultural and environmental goals and the principles that underpin aspiration to improve shared understanding?
3. how do we formalise future interactions with government, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives strongly inform and powerfully influence all government decision-making on northern development now and into the future?

Answering these questions could be approached in many ways, but the IEP suggests that structuring discussion and outputs into four key inter-related areas will be helpful. They are:

(1) **Governance**: This topic deals with the institutions and relationships that determine how decisions are made and actions taken to implement them. Different arrangements operate at many levels from national governments through to local organisations. At one end of this spectrum are models at the level of individual communities, which determine how information on community needs and goals reaches governments and how communities respond to government programs. At the other end, are the way governments at various levels take decisions and ways of improving their capacity to deal effectively with Indigenous views of goals and knowledge of how to achieve them. Participants should consider how decision-making and implementation processes could be improved to make them work better for Indigenous people.

| Are there working collaborative governance arrangements that effectively support economic or social development in your region? |
| How do they work to ensure that cultural obligations can be met and values protected? |
| What values or principles of behaviour and shared goals are needed to support a satisfactory governance model? |
| Can these successful models be applied in other settings? |
(2) Commerciality: By this we mean opportunities to engage with the mainstream economy or emerging economies. We seek input on how to improve access to such opportunity and performance in realising opportunity, including the potential roles of the public sector, the corporate sector, not-for-profit and philanthropic non-government organisations, communities and individuals. A key issue here is to develop Indigenous businesses that draw on the strengths of Indigenous culture and deal effectively with Indigenous cultural fit to corporate and orthodox workplace cultures.

- What are the important economic initiatives occurring in your region or area of expertise?
- How does the community benefit from these initiatives?
- Are decisions required of government, industry and the community properly informed by reliable knowledge?
- In what areas is research required to provide new knowledge?

(3) Community: Here discussion is sought on how communities can take greater control over their futures. Key issues are about what structures, processes and systems we need to create; how current community leaders can be supported to increase the quality of their interactions with and influence on governments and industry; and how the next generation of leaders can be identified and developed. We will be seeking ways of strengthening communities through culturally appropriate participation in the mainstream and emerging economies.

- How can existing government or industry programs be used to increase the capacity of Indigenous communities to influence their economic futures?
- Are new programs of support needed to develop leadership or other community processes for taking greater control?

(4) Planning and development: A critical activity for active and dynamic communities who wish to take control over their futures is to develop their own visions of where they want to be in the short to long term future. Instead of just reacting to and making the best of program or projects developed elsewhere - without much knowledge of the local context - communities can ask stronger questions of government and industry that require responses to local aspirations and expectations. Local plans should influence and shape larger scale regional development and conservation plans so that they avoid conflict with and, with the right design, actually support local aspirations.

- Can Indigenous communities really take greater control over their futures and drive positive change through good planning?
What partnerships or collaborations will be necessary to create and implement better planning frameworks?

Priorities
Under each of these headings, we expect to identify specific priorities for economic development, strengthening culture and protecting heritage, conservation of natural values, building social capital, and associated planning arrangements. The IEP has identified the terms reliable prosperity and resilient communities as convenient shorthand for the sorts of outcomes that might be sought. Reliable prosperity is delivered when economic systems are built to meet - over the very long term - the fundamental needs of people and the ecosystems that sustain them. Resilient communities are those who bounce back from problems by actively influencing and preparing for economic, social and environmental change.

What are your key priorities for reliable prosperity and resilient communities?
What other values or principles will need to underpin economic development?

Actions
For each priority, we will consider the issues they raise, the principles we will apply to address those issues, a statement of the outcomes we seek and the strategies we propose to achieve them. All of this will be assembled into a draft action plan for initial discussion with the NAMF and refinement at future forums.

What are the key strategies and actions for achieving priority goals?
How well equipped are Indigenous organisations and communities for taking these actions?
How will individuals, groups and organisations work together to implement strategies and monitor their success?

Table 1 below is an IEP draft of areas of priority, principles, strategies and outcomes sought. This is not intended as a final view of the approach that the Forum might adopt to formulate its response to the opportunity offered by the NAMF and NAIEF processes. But it provides an essential checklist of the sorts of issues that will need to be considered and the relationships among them.
13. Concluding remarks

As was noted in the introduction to this paper, the interests of the nation in northern development and the interests of the north’s Indigenous permanent residents are not inherently in conflict. Finding ways to optimise national, regional and local benefits will, however, require goodwill and hard work. Indigenous people have demonstrated, despite active displacement, economic and social disincentives, and sustained criticism, a tenacious commitment to their traditional lands and seas and obligations to them. Approaches to northern development that fail to deal fairly and effectively with that Indigenous cultural imperative will create unnecessary confusion and conflict.

Participants in the northern Australian Indigenous Experts Forums have an extraordinary opportunity to influence process and practice so that the benefits of recovering land go beyond the satisfaction of seeing rights restored. The next step is to apply and extend those rights to improve the well-being of the north’s Indigenous peoples while making a major contribution to the national good.
Table 1: Issues, principles, strategies and outcomes identified against priorities identified by the Indigenous Experts Panel. This statement provides a potential structure and checklist for building a northern Australian Indigenous Futures Framework to ensure all significant factors have been considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics/commercial</td>
<td>Lack of capital</td>
<td>Developing a reliable income stream</td>
<td>Develop model</td>
<td>Prosperity (better education and health and well being outcomes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of business and commercial expertise</td>
<td>Learn about new models and engage reliable partners</td>
<td>Return assets at a maximum</td>
<td>Remain viable and competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monetarising culture</td>
<td>Utilise without destruction of culture</td>
<td>Develop cultural and social operations/business</td>
<td>Opportunity for family and local enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land use and surrender</td>
<td>Non alienation or extinguishment</td>
<td>Explore alternatives and maintain use and access</td>
<td>Sustain land asset base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and heritage</td>
<td>3rd party proponents</td>
<td>Conservation and cultural assessment and management</td>
<td>Agreements within legal and political context</td>
<td>Negotiation and engagement; political and legal recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information democracy</td>
<td>Access to data from all sources</td>
<td>Research and community participation</td>
<td>Informed decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of uniqueness</td>
<td>Maintenance of diversity and knowledge</td>
<td>Preservation of maximum integrity of bioregion</td>
<td>Healthy country and people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heritage silo</td>
<td>Integration of integration of knowledge systems</td>
<td>Combine concepts of heritage and conservation</td>
<td>Maintain continuity of connection and connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law and custom</td>
<td>Spiritual integrity and intelligibility of bioregion/topography</td>
<td>Respect for customary principles</td>
<td>Recognition of customary law diversity and laws of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Extraction industry and maintenance of northern bioregion</td>
<td>balance and sustainability; best practice research; advance technology</td>
<td>diversification; practice of modification</td>
<td>future opportunities; better models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance of biodiversity</td>
<td>good management plans; traditional knowledge and western science</td>
<td>participation of aboriginal and islander peoples in regimes and plans; autonomy back to local institutions</td>
<td>valuing socio cultural practice and protocols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting and animal welfare</td>
<td>respect for animals; respect for hunting practices</td>
<td>improve education and awareness</td>
<td>valuing socio cultural practice and protocols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>Principle</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environmentalists versus Indigenous decision making</td>
<td>respect and acceptance of diversity; free prior and informed consent; recognition</td>
<td>Develop better understanding of values and aspirations</td>
<td>constructive collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aligning western science and traditional knowledge systems</td>
<td>betterment of human kind</td>
<td>Dialogue and remodelling</td>
<td>developing resilient regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>political adversity or contrary opportunism</td>
<td>Political diversity</td>
<td>Raise awareness for improved decision making to mitigate adversity</td>
<td>commitment to resilience and reliable prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Labour market and cultural maintenance</td>
<td>Development value proposition and business model respectful of both drivers e.g. extractive industry and care for country rangers</td>
<td>Meaningful skills and life satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Strengthen own identity as well as being competent in western education</td>
<td>Relevant education and cultural negotiation over delivery</td>
<td>Capable of defending values and principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Ownership (private/communal/mix)</td>
<td>Leveraging assets and opportunities within risks</td>
<td>Affordable, secure, ‘family home for the extended family’; diverse in nature of need i.e. short or long term, manages fluctuation in number; transient accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Cultural and social primary health care</td>
<td>Resourced to be innovative and competent; educative role through services both environmental, social and mental; healing mental trauma</td>
<td>Full participation in decision making and opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community cohesion</td>
<td>Keeping people on country; unity in our diversity and function</td>
<td>Facilitating, mentoring, mediating</td>
<td>Reliable futures consistent with values and aspirations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. References


Native Title Research Unit, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra. 9 pp.


Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

Current Initiatives

- **Carbon Farming Initiative**: key measure that provides economic rewards for farmers and landholders who take steps to reduce carbon pollution or store carbon on the land. Participation in the CFI is voluntary; farmers and landholders can choose whether or not to be involved. Those that do participate in the CFI can receive carbon credits for the carbon pollution saved or stored by their activities. The CFI is a legislated scheme with an independent Administrator. The CFI Administrator commenced operations in December 2011 and is now part of the Clean Energy Regulator, which administers the carbon price mechanism. The Government allocated $45.6 million between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to implement the CFI. This includes funding for the CFI Administrator and $4.0 million for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to support Regional Landcare Facilitators and other groups working with farmers, Indigenous groups and other landholders to identify how they can participate in and benefit from the scheme. The CFI creates a new income stream for farmers, new jobs for rural and regional Australia and provides incentives to identify and implement low-cost methods of pollution reduction. Credits earned by farmers and land managers under the CFI can be sold to people and businesses to offset their emissions. The CFI also helps the environment by encouraging sustainable farming and providing a source of funding for landscape restoration projects.

- **Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund**: The Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund ($22.3 million over five years from 2012-13) will provide support to Indigenous Australians to participate in the CFI. The Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund comprises two streams: A research and development stream ($5.2 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) will provide funding for research to support and develop methodologies and reporting tools for CFI methodologies. This funding will support low-cost methodologies likely to have high Indigenous participation to help create real and lasting opportunities for Indigenous Australians; and A capacity building and business support stream ($17.1 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) will help Indigenous communities establish or participate in carbon farming projects.

- **Energy Efficiency Information Grants Program**: The Government has allocated $40.0 million to the Energy Efficiency Information Grants (EEIG) program covering the 2011-12 to 2014-15 financial years. The program is intended to improve awareness about energy efficiency amongst small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and community organisations. Under the program, funding will be provided to industry associations and not-for-profit organisations to deliver practical, tailored energy efficiency information to SMEs and community organisations.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

New Initiatives

- **Commitment to another five years of Caring for our Country** - From July 2013 Caring for our Country will be delivered through two streams — ‘national sustainable environment’ and ‘national sustainable agriculture’. The agriculture stream will be overseen by the DAFF, enabling a greater program focus on the role farmers play in keeping our land productive and the projects needed to support their efforts.
Current Initiatives

- **Caring for our Country and Landcare** - Through Caring for our Country initiative (2008 to 2013) significant support is provided to Landcare. Community Action Grants are small grants of between $5,000 and $20,000 to target established local community based organisations that are successfully delivering projects to support sustainable farming and to protect and enhance the natural environment.

- **Indigenous Pastoral Industry Project**: $500,000, component of the Northern Australia Beef Industry Strategy, an election commitment under the Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program. The project aims to increase the capacity of Indigenous people involved in the northern pastoral industry, complementing existing Indigenous Pastoral activities undertaken by the northern Australia state and territory governments. The project is focusing on the commercial viability and sustainability of the northern Australian Indigenous pastoral enterprises.

- **Carbon Farming Future: Filling the Research Gap** - $201.0 million to be invested over the next six years for research into emerging abatement technologies, strategies and innovative management practices that support farmers and other landholders to participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) and improve sustainable agricultural practices.

- **Action on the Ground** - $99.3 million ($89.3 million from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2017) to be invested into competitive grant funding for on farm projects over six years to June 2017. Up to $7.0 million will be spent for on-farm projects in 2012-13.

- **Extension and Outreach Program** - The third component of the Clean Energy Future: Creating Opportunities on the Land program. $64.0 million allocated from 2011—12 to 2016—17, to provide farmers, forest growers and other land managers with technical information and support about carbon farming and the CFI through trusted and credible sources.

- **National Indigenous Forestry Strategy** - Aims to encourage Indigenous participation in forestry through business partnerships that provide long term benefits to Indigenous communities and to the forest and wood products industry. During 2012-13 this ongoing program will continue to facilitate business partnerships between Indigenous stakeholders and the forestry sector to support Indigenous communities’ participation in the forest industry.

- **Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation** - RIRDC will invest $2.2 million to the National Hendra Virus Research program, $180,000 in 2012-13 ($1.5 million total investment) and partner with the Queensland Government on a four year project to gather lessons learnt from cyclones Larry and Yasi, $200,000 in 2012-13 on a collaborative primary industries health and safety project, $40,000 in the essential oils and plant extracts industry and $100,000 ($300,000 over three years) in the development of the Gubinge Industry to develop a foundational research project to underpin the further development of the Gubinge/Kakadu Plum industry to assist Indigenous communities in northern Australia.

- **Dynamic Rural Communities Transformation for Resilient Landscapes and Communities project**: This project is assisting the Cape York Natural Resource Management Board with transitioning to a more inclusive and locally responsive approach to natural resource management. Research and development to benefit Indigenous Australians The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) will invest $658,000 in 2012–13 in research and development to benefit Indigenous Australians.

- **Indigenous Development Scholarships**: In 2012–13 FRDC will also continue to offer two Indigenous Development Scholarships worth $10,000 each. These scholarships are awarded to individuals who seek to help shape the social and economic future of their community and/or region through engagement with the fishing industry, including fisheries management, commercial (including aquaculture) or customary use of sea resources.
Attorney-General

New and Current Initiatives

- N/A

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

New Initiatives

- Special Broadcasting Service: Free-to-Air Indigenous Television Indigenous Television Channel - The Government is providing $63.0 million over four years for SBS to establish a free-to-air national Indigenous television channel for all Australians, including those in regional areas. The channel will be available through the full reach of SBS’s terrestrial network and on the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service. SBS will launch the new Indigenous television channel during 2012-13. The new Indigenous channel on SBS, which replaces the National Indigenous Television Service, will realise the government’s aims to increase both the amount and overall quality of original Australian Indigenous content on free-to-air television. The new channel will have its own distinctive identity, a high level of editorial independence and appropriate Indigenous representation.

Current Initiatives

- Indigenous Broadcasting Program - The Government allocated $15.4 million to the Indigenous Broadcasting Program in 2012-13. Funding is aimed at assisting Indigenous community radio stations and support is provided to five urban, 23 regional and remote radio stations, nine Remote Indigenous Media Organisations and 124 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services situated in remote communities.

- Carbon Farming Initiative - The CFI is a key measure that provides economic rewards for farmers and landholders who take steps to reduce carbon pollution or store carbon on the land. The Government allocated $45.6 million between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to implement the CFI.

- Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund – Funding of $22.3 million over five years from 2012-13 will provide support to Indigenous Australians to participate in the CFI. The Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund comprises two streams: A research and development stream ($5.2 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the DCCEE) will provide funding for research to support and develop methodologies and reporting tools for CFI methodologies. This funding will support low-cost methodologies likely to have high Indigenous participation to help create real and lasting opportunities for Indigenous Australians; and A capacity building and business support stream ($17.1 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) will help Indigenous communities establish or participate in carbon farming projects.

- Energy Efficiency Information Grants Program - The Government has allocated $40.0 million to the Energy Efficiency Information Grants program covering the 2011-12 to 2014-15 financial years.

Defence

New and Current Initiatives

- N/A
Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

New Initiatives

- **Clontarf Foundation and Engagement Strategies for Girls** - $4.8 million provided over three years through the Sporting Chance program to encourage improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through sport and recreation activities. This funding will support the Clontarf Foundation to establish and operate new school-based academies targeting 348 Indigenous secondary school boys in New South Wales. Girls are currently under-represented in this successful program and this funding will enable it to be expanded to target an additional 348 Indigenous secondary school girls through new girls only academies.

- **Remote Jobs and Communities Program** – This program will replace four major programs in remote Australia: Job Services Australia (JSA), Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, Disability Employment Services (DES), and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). $1.5 billion will be provided over five years from 2013-14 to fund the program. More info at Attachment A.

- **Community Based Employment Advice Services** - This measure provides ongoing funding for five Community Based Employment Advice Services (CBEAS) through the provision of Government grants to the Working Women's Centres in Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia, the Employment Law Centre of Western Australia, and JobWatch in Victoria.

Current Initiatives

- **Building Australia's Future Workforce: Indigenous Ranger Cadetship Pilot** - To assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to complete school, this $4.1 million pilot program will provide culturally relevant training in a school setting linked to natural resource management, heritage-related activities and cultural studies. Students in regional and remote communities will be supported through the Indigenous Ranger Cadetship pilot to build capacity for further study, training, jobs and careers in natural resource management.

- **Building Australia’s Future Workforce: Indigenous Youth Careers Pathway Program** - In 2011-12, the Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program (IYCP) commenced to assist more Indigenous young people to make the transition from school to further education and work. It provides $50.7 million over four years to fund 6,400 School Based Traineeship commencements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 11 and 12.

- **Indigenous Employment Program** - Offers funding for a range of activities focused on employment, training, aspiration building and business support.

- **Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council** - The Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC) is an initiative that works to strengthen business-to-business links between Indigenous enterprises and corporate and government Australia. Due to the initiative's success, the Government is providing additional funding of up to $7.5 million from 2012-13 over three years through the IEP to support the ongoing work of AIMSC.

- **Funding for Homelands and Outstations** - Under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package, outstations and homelands in the Northern Territory will benefit from a $206.4 million investment from the Australian Government and $15.0 million from the Northern Territory Government. This funding supports the continuation of basic essential and municipal services over ten years.

- **Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program** - The Government is providing $19.1 million to create 50 new ranger positions in the Northern Territory under the Caring for our Country initiative. The program provides real employment and training for Indigenous people, many of whom live in very remote parts of regional Australia. The Working on
Country Indigenous Rangers Program measure is outlined in more detail in the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities section of this Statement.

- **Improving opportunities for Aboriginal people to get access to existing jobs in their communities** - The new 'Local Jobs for Local People' Indigenous traineeships will ensure up to 100 Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are supported to fill service delivery jobs in their communities as these become available. The package will also provide a jobs guarantee for Indigenous students from Northern Territory Growth Towns.

**Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**

**New Initiatives**

- **Helping Indigenous families to own their own home** - The Australian Government will assist up to an additional 545 Indigenous Australians to buy their own home in established housing markets over the next four years by merging the existing funding from the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land Program, which provides home loans and additional assistance in remote areas and the Home Ownership Program, which provides home loans mainly in urban and regional areas, into a single Indigenous Home Ownership program.

- **Remote Jobs and Communities Program** - The Australian Government is providing $1.5 billion over five years to introduce a new Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) on 1 July 2013.

**Current Initiatives**

- **Breaking the Cycle of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Indigenous Communities** - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Use in Indigenous Communities Initiative funds culturally appropriate substance-use prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare. In addition, the Breaking the Cycle initiative provides $20.0 million over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14 to support new community solutions for fighting alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities, including development of alcohol and substance abuse management plans.

- **Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program** - The Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) is a joint initiative between the FaHCSIA and the Australian Army. Each year the AACAP delivers a $6.0 million project to remote communities in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, or the Northern Territory. The AACAP site for 2012-13 is Fregon in Western Australia. Each project has a construction component, a health component and a training component. The construction component focuses on the provision of environmental health infrastructure such as housing, water, sewerage and electrical services as well as improving access to primary health care facilities by constructing or upgrading roads and airfields. The health component focuses on augmenting existing community medical, dental and veterinary programs. The training component focuses on specific skills required within the community and includes courses such as construction and building maintenance, vehicle and small engine maintenance, welding, concreting and cooking.

- **Remote Indigenous Energy Program** - The Remote Indigenous Energy Program (RIEP), announced in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, is a $40.0 million initiative and part of the Australian Government’s Clean Energy Future Package. RIEP will support smaller remote Indigenous communities reliant on diesel generators for power to transition to a Clean Energy Future by installing renewable energy systems. From July 2011 to June 2016, RIEP will install renewable energy systems in up to 50 smaller remote communities across South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. To complement the installation of renewable energy systems, service providers will provide community members with energy efficiency education and training in basic system maintenance. RIEP will provide employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.
Foreign Affairs and Trade

New and Current Initiatives

- N/A

Health and Ageing

New Initiatives

- N/A

Current Initiatives

- **National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program** - Competitive grant program that improves access to health services by funding projects in rural and remote communities where a lack of infrastructure is a barrier to both the establishment of new health services and the enhancement of existing health services. In 2012-13, Round Seven will be announced.

Immigration and Citizenship

New and Current Initiatives

- N/A Scheme

Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education

New Initiatives

- **Clean Technology Innovation Program** - $200.0 million program to support research and development, proof of concept and early stage commercialisation activities that lead to the development of new clean technologies and associated services including low emission and energy efficient solutions that reduce greenhouse emissions. It will support Australian companies, including small businesses and individuals, and applications involving collaboration with research institutions or other companies (domestic and/or international) will be highly encouraged. The program is scheduled to open in the second half of 2012.

Infrastructure and Transport

New Initiatives

- N/A

Current Initiatives

- **Regional Infrastructure Fund** - Funded from the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT) to address critical infrastructure needs in areas supporting the mining industry. In total, the RIF will invest around $6.0 billion over 2010-11 to 2020-21 in much-needed infrastructure. The RIF allows the Government to invest the proceeds of a resurgent resource boom to address urgent infrastructure needs, while supporting the mining industry, boosting export capacity and developing and growing regional economies.

There are three program streams under the RIF: Stream 1, administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, represents the implementation of commitments made in 2010 worth $916.0 million; Stream 2 will be administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, and comprises two elements: Economic Infrastructure projects and Regional Infrastructure Planning projects — worth approximately $4.5 billion; and Projects eligible for consideration for funding are economic infrastructure projects including rail, road, ports, airports, energy, communications and water, as well as other critical economic infrastructure.
(such as planning, feasibility studies and development work). Stream 3, administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, forms part of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF), worth approximately $1.0 billion, with $573.0 million of to be funded from the RIF.

Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

New Initiatives

- **Jim Stynes Achievement Scholarships** - The Government has allocated $3.0 million in the 2012-13 Budget as a one-off grant in 2011-12 to establish a sporting scholarships scheme in partnership with the AFL. It is expected that under the scheme, scholarships of up to $20,000 will be provided to around 37 recipients annually to provide both a pathway to employment and a pathway to develop skills and/or talents unique in youth (15 to 19 years of age) from multicultural backgrounds, Indigenous communities and socially disadvantaged communities.

Current Initiatives

- **Regional Development Australia Fund** - The Australian Government has allocated almost $1.0 billion, which includes $573.0 million from the passage of the MRRT legislation, to the RDAF for projects intended to address the infrastructure needs of Australia’s regions and promote economic and social development. The RDAF supports the economic, environmental and community needs of Australia’s regions by providing funding for projects that meet the identified priorities of regional communities, as articulated in RDA Regional Plans.

- **Community Infrastructure Grants** - During the 2010 election, the Australian Government made a commitment to fund projects that were identified by local communities across regional Australia as priority investments for their region. Funding of $188.4 million over the forward estimates period ($66.9 million in 2012-13) will be available to fund eligible community infrastructure projects.

- **Sport and Recreation** - The Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP) is administered by the Office for Sport as part of the Australian Government’s whole-of-government approach to assisting Indigenous Australians. The ISARP is a new name for the merger of the following two former programs: Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program; and Jobs Creation Package — Sport and Recreation.

- **Indigenous Arts and Culture Programs** - The Australian Government, through the Office for the Arts supports Indigenous culture, languages and visual arts through a number of initiatives.

- **Indigenous Repatriation** - This program returns Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral remains and secret sacred objects held in major government funded museums and in overseas collections to their communities of origin where possible and when requested.

- **Indigenous Languages Support Program** - The Indigenous Languages Support Program (formerly Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records) addresses the steady erosion and loss of Australia’s estimated 250 original Indigenous languages by providing support for the maintenance and revival of these languages to community organisations throughout Australia.

- **Indigenous Culture Support Program** - The Indigenous Culture Support program supports the maintenance and continued development of Indigenous culture at the community level, sustainable development of community organisations involved in cultural activities.
Resources, Energy and Tourism

New Initiatives

- N/A

Current Initiatives

- **Rum Jungle, Northern Territory** - The Government has provided $8.3 million over four years from 2009-10 to contribute to the resolution of environmental, economic development and Indigenous land access issues currently presented by the former Rum Jungle Mine site.

- **Working in Partnership Program** - Supports and encourages cultural change taking place in relations between Indigenous communities and the mining industries, promoting long-term, effective partnerships that benefit all stakeholders. It provides funding for regional workshops and support for committees and projects that address issues such as employment, education and training, business opportunities, cultural awareness, capacity building and economic empowerment.

Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

New Initiatives

- **Expansion of On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program** - Expansion of the Commonwealth-led On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program (OFIEP) (part of Water for the Future Program) will allow the Government to continue to provide grants to irrigators to modernise their on-farm irrigation infrastructure while returning water savings to the environment.

- **Ensuring the Resilience of the Great Barrier Reef** - A number of measures in the 2012-13 Budget will provide benefits to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) and surrounding communities. Funding of $8.0 million over two years under the Caring for our Country program will ensure the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) can continue its management of the GBRMP and community-based Reef Guardian programs effectively.

- **Remediation of Land Affected by the Tiwi Islands Plantation Project** - Funding of $1.0 million over four years from 2012-13 will be provided to the Tiwi Land Council to contribute to the implementation of the Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) for lands adversely affected by the Tiwi Islands Plantation project in the Northern Territory. This initiative will be funded using the return of an unconditional bank guarantee of $1.0 million held as security for the implementation of the RMP.

Current Initiatives

- **Caring for our Country** - The Australian Government has committed to a new phase of the ongoing Caring for our Country initiative. The next stage of the initiative from 2013-14 to 2017-18 will provide funding of $2.2 billion to continue investment in projects across regional Australia, including remote and very remote areas, to improve biodiversity and promote the adoption of sustainable farm practices.

- **Environmental Stewardship Program** – Part of the Caring for our Country initiative and aims to maintain and improve the condition and extent of targeted matters of national environmental significance under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The program contracts successful eligible private land managers for up to 15 years to provide agreed management activities to protect, rehabilitate and improve specific matters of national environmental significance.

- **Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program** - Working on Country is an ongoing program forming part of the Caring for our Country initiative, and provides funds to Indigenous ranger groups to deliver environmental services. On 14 November 2011, the Government
announced an expansion of the Working on Country Indigenous Ranger Program in the Northern Territory. The four year $19.1 million expansion, commencing in 2012-13, will deliver 50 more Indigenous ranger jobs and was one of several measures linked to the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package.

- **National Wildlife Corridors Plan** - The Australian Government is supporting the development of a national framework for wildlife corridor planning, to guide future investments in conservation management through an investment of $10.0 million over three years which commenced in 2011-12.

**Treasury**

**New Initiatives**

- N/A

**Current Initiatives**

- **Local Grants Program** - The Government has allocated $9.5 million over four years to establish a Local Grants Program to help communities across Australia conduct their own Anzac Centenary commemoration projects. It will provide grants totalling $7.5 million, spread over 2012-2013 to 2015-2016. Funding will be available from January 2013. Projects that may be eligible for funding under the Local Grants Program include local memorials restorations, commemorative publications and cultural or sporting events.

- **Arts and Culture Fund** - The Government has allocated $4.7 million over five years to support artistic and creative works, displays and events during the Centenary of Anzac commemorations. Individuals, artists and cultural institutions will be able to apply for funding. The Australian Government will be developing guidelines for the fund and these will be released during 2013-2014. Artistic and cultural organisations in regional Australia will be strongly encouraged to apply for funding.
Remote Jobs and Communities Program

This program will replace four major programs in remote Australia: Job Services Australia (JSA), Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, Disability Employment Services (DES), and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). $1.5 billion will be provided over five years from 2013-14 to fund the program. Under the new arrangements, each of 65 remote servicing regions will be serviced by a single provider, and each provider will have a permanent presence in their region. Providers will work in close partnership with communities and they will jointly develop Community Action Plans that will direct effort to meet the needs of individual job seekers and communities. There will be a 'jobs-first' focus which will see job seekers participating in activities in line with their participation requirements and capacities and that are meaningful to them because they provide work-related skills and help build better communities. A Participation Account will provide funds to address vocational and non-vocational barriers that are preventing people from getting work or participating in their communities. A new Remote Youth Leadership and Development Corps will be the flagship program for youth. The Youth Corps will assist young people aged 24 and under to make better transitions to work by providing up to 12,000 places over five years. A Community Development Fund will provide grants for larger projects to buttress community capacity building and economic development. This will open up opportunities for communities to become more involved in services delivered in their communities. This initiative is being implemented by the Departments of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.