Lauren Moss  
Minister for Environment and Natural Resources  

Mapping the Future for jobs and investment: Budget 2017  

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The Territory Labor Government has released its new $9.935 million Mapping the Future program which will support scientific teams to identify potential productive land for future use in regional areas and improve natural resources information.

Minister for Environment and Natural Resources said the program would map the soil, water and biodiversity assets in regional parts of the NT.

“The 2017 Budget has a clear focus on investing in our future and creating sustainable jobs right across the Territory and that’s why we are investing $9.935 million over five years to improve natural resource information in regional areas,” Ms Moss said.

“The Territory Labor Government is restoring trust and accountability in the bush by providing this crucial scientific information to landholders, investors and other stakeholders so they can help us further develop the Territory in an evidence-based and sustainable way.

“We understand that good environmental policy is good economic policy and we want to ensure that we are planning for the future effectively and responsibly in order to maximise economic growth, open up new jobs and protect the environment.”

The mapping that takes place over the five year period will;

- Provide data to underpin land use plans for regional growth areas which will identify areas that are highly suitable for land uses such as agriculture.

- Allow regional communities to make informed decisions on the location of natural resource-based economic development opportunities and local community-based land use planning.

- Attract private investment in natural resources industries based on accurate scientific data.

- Inform the long term management, protection and health of community drinking supplies, while ensuring sustainability of natural and cultural assets such as ground water-dependent ecosystems.
The first year of the program involves extensive planning and consultation with industry and community stakeholders from across the NT to identify prospective areas for mapping.

Scientific teams will be deployed from July 2018 once priority areas have been identified and land access agreements secured. When active, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will;

- Use drill rigs and corers to obtain soil samples for analysis.
- Measure the flow, quality and quantity of both surface and ground water in or near study areas
- Use a range of techniques to survey study areas to describe the distribution of native plants and animals, including threatened species.

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