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The Hon Warren Entsch MP  
Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia  
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Dear Minister

Further to my letter dated 24 January 2019, please find attached the Northern Territory Government's Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia *Inquiry into the Opportunities and Challenges of the Engagement of Traditional Owners in the Economic Development of Northern Australia*.

My Department has also lodged a copy of the submission via the Joint Standing Committee's website.

Again, I would like to thank you on behalf of the Northern Territory Government for your invitation to lodge a submission to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

  
MICHAEL GUNNER

21 MAR 2019

## Joint Standing Committee of Northern Australia Inquiry into the Opportunities and Challenges of the Engagement of Traditional Owners in the Economic Development of Northern Australia

### Northern Territory Government Submission, February 2019

The Northern Territory (NT) Government appreciates the opportunity to provide a public submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia (JSC) *Inquiry into the Opportunities and Challenges of the Engagement of Traditional Owners in the Economic Development of Northern Australia* (the Inquiry).

Approximately 30% of the NT's population is Aboriginal, compared to the national average of three per cent. In addition, Aboriginal Territorians own or have rights and interests in a substantial portion of the Territory's land mass and a large majority of its coastline. This makes Aboriginal Territorians key drivers and partners in the NT's economic future, and this is reflected in the NT Government's Economic Development Framework (**Attachment A**).

Accordingly, the NT Government is pleased to share with the JSC the opportunities and challenges it sees with engaging traditional owners in the economic development of our economy and the key initiatives aimed at overcoming them.

### LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF ABORIGINAL LAND AND SEA OWNERSHIP IN THE NT

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth) (the *Land Rights Act*) and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) (the *Native Title Act*) provide the primary legislative foundations of Aboriginal land and sea ownership in the NT. The systems of ownership under each Act are quite different.

The *Land Rights Act* provides a scheme for the claim and grant of Aboriginal freehold title to traditional owners. Aboriginal freehold (ALRA land) is a communal land title held by a land trust for the benefit of all its traditional owners, and is registered on the NT Government's Torrens land title system. Unlike ordinary freehold, ALRA land cannot be sold or mortgaged, only transferred to another land trust or surrendered to the Crown. However, it can be leased by a Land Trust (with the involvement of a Land Council), and traditional owners have a high level of control over who can access their land via the permit system established by the *Land Rights Act* and the *Aboriginal Land Act 1978* (NT).

Approximately 48% of the NT's land mass and 80% of its coastline has been granted as ALRA land. While the last date for lodgement of new claims was 4 June 1997, 41 claims remain to be resolved. If these claims are successful, a further 2% of the NT's land mass and 12% of its coastline could be granted as ALRA land.

The majority of the remaining areas of land and sea are, or are likely to be, subject to native title.

Despite its name, the *Native Title Act* does not grant native title holders a title to land under the NT's *Land Title Act* system of land title registration. Rather, native title rights are recognised by a Federal Court determination.

Native title rights and interests are broadly categorised as being for exclusive or non-exclusive possession. Exclusive possession native title is the right to assert sole possession, occupation, use and enjoyment in relation to the land or waters as against the whole world. Non-exclusive possession native title rights co-exist with other interests in land (for example, pastoral leases). Examples of non-exclusive native title rights are the rights to hunt and fish, conduct ceremonies, and to use the resources of an area of land or water, subject to other valid interests and rights granted in the area by the Northern Territory and subject to the general laws of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth. Where the exercise of non-exclusive native title rights conflict with the rights of another non-native title interest holder, the rights of the non-native title holder prevail. Accordingly, non-exclusive native title rights do not provide a strong basis for investment.

Native title rights and interests may also be recognised over water where it is evidenced that the group (according to traditional laws acknowledged and customs observed) holds such rights.

For a summary of the key differences between the two regimes refer **Attachment B**.

Aboriginal Community Living Areas (CLAs) are established under Part 8 of the *Pastoral Land Act 1992* (NT). A CLA is a small portion of land excised from a pastoral lease and granted as conditional freehold to an Aboriginal community or family for residential purposes. CLA freehold title is held by an association under either the *Associations Act 2003* (NT) or the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* (Cth). Leasing of CLA freehold is possible, with the relevant Minister's approval required for leases longer than 10 years. Today, there are over 100 Aboriginal communities on CLA land in the NT, ranging in size from large townships to small family based communities.

In addition to CLAs, Aboriginal land holding bodies and associations hold ordinary freehold and various leases on behalf of traditional owners, in particular town camps.

Town camps are areas close to urban centres designated for Aboriginal communal living, and are generally held by Aboriginal owned or controlled corporations as freehold title or perpetual leases under the *Crown Lands Act 1992* (NT) or *Special Purposes Lease Act 1953* (NT) (the SPLA). The SPLA restricts subleases on these camps being issued for longer than 12 years. Any sublease of a Crown lease under the *Crown Lands Act* or Special Purpose Lease under the SPLA, requires ministerial consent. In accordance with the *Planning Act 1999* (NT) any leases (including subleases) in excess of 12 years require subdivision (with the exception of leases of land granted under the *Land Rights Act* for essential services infrastructure).

## CHALLENGES

Despite Aboriginal land representing a significant asset for Aboriginal Territorians, economic development opportunities across much of the Aboriginal estate are limited by:

- remoteness from key markets;
- high living and operational costs;
- infrastructure deficiencies;
- harsh and sometimes extreme climatic conditions;
- lack of access to professional expertise;
- the distance to major health and education and training services; and
- overcrowded public housing and limited alternative housing options.

Many Aboriginal communities also lack the basic building blocks of land administration (cadastral surveys, planning and zoning and adequate critical infrastructure and essential services) and some are also affected by social issues and lower than average life expectancy.

Aboriginal land and native title arrangements differ across jurisdictions and can be complex. Obtaining appropriate land tenure is a key issue on Aboriginal land, in National Parks, and for diversified activities on pastoral leases.

Economic development opportunities and initiatives on Aboriginal land face challenges in attracting private investment or loan capital from banks and private financiers.

Ensuring Aboriginal Territorians and their land holding and representative bodies have the human and organisational resources to engage and negotiate with proponents and make decisions in a timely way, whether that is in relation to large scale developments or small scale tourism enterprises run by traditional owners, will be vital as we move into the post-land claim land management environment.

These challenges were discussed in considerable detail the 2015 Council of Australian Governments' Report on its *Investigation into Indigenous Land Administration and Use*, and all the challenges identified then remain challenges now.

## CURRENT AND PROPOSED INITIATIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section of the Submission focuses on the key initiatives in the NT aimed at overcoming the challenges identified. While the more significant of these are discussed below, a more comprehensive list of key initiatives is at **Attachment C**.

### Treaty

On 8 June 2018 the NT Government and the four Land Councils signed the Burunga Agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the development of a framework for negotiating a Treaty (or treaties) with the Aboriginal Territorians that would acknowledge their sovereignty in respect of the land and seas of the NT.

The MoU recognises that any Treaty must:

- stand to achieve real change and substantive, long term, benefits for Aboriginal people;
- address structural barriers to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the NT; and
- provide for economic, social and cultural benefits.

Under the terms of the MoU, the NT Government will appoint an independent Treaty Commissioner who will lead the consultations with Aboriginal people and organisations across the Territory, and develop a framework for Treaty negotiations.

The Land Councils and the NT Government will make their extensive regional staffing networks available to the Treaty Commission to organise consultations in communities.

A copy of the Burunga Agreement is available online at:

[https://dcm.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/514272/barunga-muo-treaty.pdf](https://dcm.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/514272/barunga-muo-treaty.pdf).

### **Local Decision Making**

The NT Government recognises that building, supporting and investing in strong Aboriginal governance is necessary to ensure local people drive local solutions, and that Aboriginal organisations are supported in managing local decision making.

To this end, the NT Government has committed to Local Decision Making, a 10 year commitment to provide opportunities to transfer, where possible, government service delivery to Aboriginal people and organisations based on their community aspirations, thus enhancing the capacity of communities to manage and decide matters regarding the use of their land.

Local Decision Making enables Government and Aboriginal communities to work together on developing policies and practices for service delivery in areas such as housing; local government; education, training and jobs; health; children and families; and law and justice.

### **Aboriginal Contracting Framework**

The NT Government spends \$3.8 billion on contracting activities every year and would like the investment in these activities to increase job and business opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians.

To this end, the NT Government endorsed the development of a new Aboriginal Contracting Framework (the Framework). The Framework will support local Aboriginal employment and economic development through government contracting activities (procurement and grants).

An initial two rounds of stakeholder consultation has been finalised and a draft of the Framework is being developed with a view to release for public comment.

## 10 Year Infrastructure Plan

Infrastructure is a key enabler of economic development, which underpins our capacity to create jobs, increase productivity and stimulate growth. Infrastructure supports the quality of our social well-being, the future of our children, our cultural and lifestyle experiences and the services we use every day.

The Infrastructure Plan (the Plan) is informed by the NT Economic Development Framework and the Infrastructure Strategy, providing an assessment of where sectors have prioritised infrastructure investment and planned and proposed infrastructure projects over a 10 year horizon.

In the short term, the Plan will help industry with its own planning and workforce management and inform decision-making across all levels of government. Over the longer term, the Plan sets direction for planning and delivering infrastructure in the NT.

As infrastructure priorities can change in response to changing demands from the community, new technologies and changes to growth and essential sectors, the Plan will be a living document which is refreshed annually. Following its first annual review, an updated Plan was released in September 2018 and is available via the following link: <https://dipl.nt.gov.au/news/10-year-infrastructure-plan-2018-2027-released>.

## Remote Housing Investment Package

A good home provides firm foundations for positive health, education and employment outcomes, and helps to build a strong sense of community.

To this end, the NT Government has committed to improving housing in remote communities with an investment of \$1.1 billion over 10 years. The investment is funded through four programs:

- **Homebuild NT:** \$500 million over 10 years for the construction of new public housing;
- **Room to Breathe:** \$200 million over 10 years to increase living spaces in existing homes to ease overcrowding;
- **Repairs and Maintenance:** \$200 million over 10 years for repairs and maintenance; and
- **Government Employee Housing:** \$200 million over 10 years to expand Government Employee Housing to include locally recruited NT Government employees in remote areas.

The investment will be based on the principles of Local Decision Making, ensuring communities have input into what housing looks like in their community.

Another key component of the package is to ensure that the work benefits Aboriginal businesses, leading to job creation and capacity development.

## **Aboriginal Affairs Strategy**

The Department of the Chief Minister is currently developing a renewed NT Aboriginal Affairs Strategy in alignment with a refresh of the Council of Australian Governments' Closing the Gap Framework. This will be shaped through working in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities to drive community control and improve and strengthen cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes.

## **NT Government Aboriginal Land and Sea Action Plan**

The Department of the Chief Minister has developed an Aboriginal Land and Sea Action Plan (the Action Plan) to ensure land and sea ownership delivers on the economic and social aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians.

The Action Plan proposes the following 10 actions for implementation by the NT Government:

**Action 1:** *Resolve outstanding land claims*

The NT Government will work with Land Councils, Commonwealth and the Aboriginal Land Commissioner to resolve all 41 outstanding land claims.

**Action 2:** *Resolve Blue Mud Bay access arrangements*

The NT Government will work with NLC and key industry stakeholders to work out long-term access arrangements for waters overlaying ALRA land, providing certainty for traditional owners, industry and the public.

**Action 3:** *Progress the Aboriginal Land Commissioner's recommended changes to Part IV of the ALRA, which relates to exploration and mining on Aboriginal land*

The NT Government will continue to participate in a working group with land councils and the Commonwealth, to develop a position on which review recommendations of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner should be implemented.

**Action 4:** *Develop an NT Government Native Title Policy Framework*

The framework will provide for a more consistent approach to native title across the NT Government. As part of the development of the Policy Framework, consideration will be given to:

- how land subject to native title may be leased or sold without affecting the underlying native title rights and interests; and
- recognising and recording native title determinations in the Northern Territory Land Information System.

**Action 5:** *Develop a strategic approach to tenure and other issues in mining towns that will eventually become Aboriginal land*

The NT Government will work to provide certainty for towns transitioning to a post-mining future.

**Action 6:** *Work to enhance the opportunities for long-term leasing on Aboriginal land*

To facilitate economic development, the NT Government will work with land councils to develop long term leasing models that are recognised and supported by industry and financiers. Township leasing options will also be explored.

**Action 7:** *Support the management of Aboriginal land*

Given the Aboriginal Territorians have rights and interests over a large proportion of the Territory's land mass and coastline, it is important that they be assisted in their management of them by the NT Government.

**Action 8:** *Support economic development and employment on Aboriginal land*

The NT Government seeks to support the economic development initiatives of land councils and traditional owners to help deliver on the economic aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians.

**Action 9:** *Make improvements to Northern Territory legislation and administrative processes*

The NT Government has identified a number of legislative and administrative improvements it can make, including possible reforms to recognise the role of ranger groups through the provision of enforcement powers and to remove the need for development consent for leases over 12 years on Aboriginal land under the *Planning Act 1999* (NT).

**Action 10:** *Support improvements to Commonwealth legislative processes*

The NT Government will look to improve, among other things, the operation of the *Native Title Act* and ensure the *Land Rights Act* works seamlessly with the *Control of Roads Act 1953* (NT) and other NT roads legislation.

Implementing these actions will allow the NT Government to:

- take a partnership approach to reach agreement on Aboriginal land and sea matters with land councils, traditional owners, the Commonwealth Government and other affected stakeholders;
- strategically coordinate land and sea matters across NT Government agencies;
- remove administrative and legislative barriers that may be preventing traditional owners from benefiting from their land and sea rights; and
- support land councils as they begin to shift their focus from land acquisition to land management and economic development.

### **Proposed *Pastoral Land Act* Amendments**

The NT Government, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is currently developing reforms to the *Pastoral Land Act 1992* (NT) to enhance diversification opportunities for pastoralists by expanding the range of non-pastoral purposes for which a sublease can be granted. While activities such as forestry and agriculture may already be undertaken with a non-pastoral use permit, these do not provide the same security to banks and private financiers as long-term subleases.

Consistent with the concerns raised by the Northern and Central Land Councils regarding the potential impact subleases for non-pastoral purposes may have on coexisting native title rights and interests, the proposed reforms will also provide for an increased level of consultation and negotiation with native title holders, or registered claimants.



## **Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve Policy Framework**

In October 2017 the NT Government established the Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve Policy Framework (the Policy). A strategic Aboriginal water reserve is a volume of water, allocated in a water allocation plan, set aside for exclusive use or trade by eligible Aboriginal people. Eligibility is defined by ownership of land in particular categories and with direct physical access to water resources.

The Policy seeks to ensure water resources are more equitably allocated to support future economic participation, either through Aboriginal enterprise or partnerships or shared-equity in development projects.

It is also planned for the *Water Act 1992* (NT) to be amended to provide for a new beneficial use category known as 'strategic Aboriginal water reserves'. This will assist in the longevity of the policy.

A copy of the Policy is available online at:

[https://denr.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/457553/SWRC-Policy-Framework\\_A4\\_V1.pdf](https://denr.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/457553/SWRC-Policy-Framework_A4_V1.pdf)

## **Aboriginal Carbon Industry Strategy**

Across north Australia there are 80 registered savanna burning projects, 25 of which are located within the NT, producing fifty two percent of all savanna burning Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU). Fifty five per cent of the savanna burning projects in the NT are Aboriginal operated and generate 92% of all NT ACCUs generated from savanna burning projects. These projects create jobs and generate important economic activity on Aboriginal land while also allowing Aboriginal communities and ranger programs to realise other conservation, economic development, social and cultural outcomes.

To guide the NT Government's commitment to Aboriginal carbon projects and to support the sustainability, growth and long-term future of the NT's carbon industry, in October 2018, the Aboriginal Carbon Unit within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, developed an Aboriginal Carbon Industry Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy focuses on five key areas of action:

- developing a policy framework to provide certainty and a stable base for industry development;
- improving awareness by promoting the industry across government and the wider community;
- addressing impediments to long-term growth and project development;
- identifying new opportunities for industry development and growth; and
- streamlining access to support services for industry start-up and development.

A key role of the Strategy is to support traditional owners seeking to create sustainable enterprises through carbon abatement and sequestration.

The Strategy may be accessed online via the following link:  
[https://denr.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/584439/Aboriginal-Carbon-Industry-Strategy\\_A4\\_Digital.pdf](https://denr.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/584439/Aboriginal-Carbon-Industry-Strategy_A4_Digital.pdf).

### **OTHER PROGRAM / POLICY GAPS**

In April 2018, the Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) to the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development (MFND) presented to the MFND a paper on the *Audit of Programs – Indigenous Business, Innovation and Growth* (the Audit Paper), developed by the Northern Australian Senior Officials Network Group (NASONG).

MFND members provided information to the Audit about government-led programs and policy measures in their respective jurisdictions targeting Indigenous businesses, as well as those available to all businesses. Based on that information, NASONG identified the following policy and program gaps, all of which are relevant to helping traditional owners understand and realise the economic potential of their land:

1. alignment of programs – Indigenous procurement policies;
2. need to support Indigenous business to develop commercial business cases and investment proposals on Aboriginal land which will establish a pipeline of commercially viable and investment ready projects;
3. land use agreements and planning;
4. access to funding and commercial financing; and
5. building the capacity of Indigenous businesses to develop sound project proposals, pre-feasibilities' and business plans.

These are discussed in detail in the Audit Paper and are captured by the recommendations of the IRG to improve Indigenous economic participation in Northern Development.

### **Implementation of IRG Recommendations**

In April 2018, the NT Government, through the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development, publically endorsed 16 recommendations by the Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) across the following six areas of action to improve Indigenous economic participation in Northern Development:

1. creating jobs, fostering labour participation, entrepreneurship and business acumen;
2. knowledge management systems and research and development to support Indigenous commercial end-users;
3. infrastructure investment to support Indigenous economic development;
4. access to capital and domestic and international markets;
5. activating the economic value of land, water, sea and cultural resources; and
6. institutional arrangements that work to activate, accelerate and optimise Indigenous economic development across Northern Australia.

The NT government is already engaged in a variety of initiatives in these areas (refer **Attachment C**) and is committed to further implementation of the IRG recommendations through its participation in the cross-jurisdictional IRG Implementation Working Group.

# OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE

Increasing private sector investment to grow Territory jobs

NORTHERN TERRITORY ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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## CHIEF MINISTER'S FOREWORD

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*We are planning for the future with clear, long-term work plans for our economy.*

Progressing this Economic Development Framework will improve our living standards, provide certainty to business and industry, and ensure our children have employment and lifestyle opportunities into the future.

The Government recognises that development is a partnership between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors including Aboriginal land owners. The role of government is to support development – through investment in infrastructure, people and relationships – but growth and jobs must be driven by private sector investment. Private sector entrepreneurship and investment will accelerate the growth of our economy.

By working together we can identify and drive initiatives that will bring investment and jobs to the Territory. Key to this is having the right settings for economic development.

How our future growth and development proceeds depends on the settings we put in place now and progressing the agreed work program with urgency. We must implement the right policies and practices and provide certainty for investors to seize future opportunities for the Territory.

This means having the knowledge, policies and information to encourage the best and most sustainable use of our significant resources. It means Territorians having the skills to support development, having the right infrastructure and relationships to connect us with each other and to our key markets, and making sure the Territory is a place where people want to come and live.

It also requires a shared commitment to engage with Traditional Owners from the beginning of any proposal for development on Aboriginal Land. Aboriginal people represent almost 30 per cent of our population, own around 50 per cent of the Territory's land and are a critical partner in the Territory's economic future.

Our future begins with industry, business, the community and government defining our path and then consistently delivering against our work plans. That is the goal for this framework.

HON MICHAEL GUNNER MLA

Chief Minister

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*Partnerships with Aboriginal people are an integral part of shaping the economic future of the Northern Territory.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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*Why economic development? A healthy economy in which everyone meaningfully participates increases our quality of life. It increases job opportunities, population, standards of living, consumer choices and liveability; supports more social and cultural activities; and enhances services valued by the community, such as health care and education.*

It is a strong private sector that delivers the development and growth that a healthy economy needs. Governments fund services primarily through taxes. It is private sector investment, not government investment, which grows business and industry to provide jobs and generate wealth.

In modern economies, governments enable and support economic activity through policies, laws and regulations. And in regional, growing economies, such as our

Northern Territory, smart government investment can help catalyse private sector investment to accelerate development.

The Northern Territory is in a unique position. We have abundant and valuable natural resources, exceptional investment potential with fast growing markets on our doorstep. We are ready to work together to capitalise on these remarkable opportunities.

## The Economic Development Framework

This Economic Development Framework was developed through an Economic Summits process in partnership with Deloitte and involving the private and not-for-profit sectors, land councils and Aboriginal representative groups, unions and the community. The summits discussed the most important directions and actions we need to do to accelerate the Territory's economic development right now.

Between October 2016 and March 2017, about 240 organisations and 1590 people engaged in the consultation process. There were a wide range of ideas discussed and offered. Many formed the basis of this Economic Development Framework. More specific and individual ideas will inform future

strategies, plans and policies, capturing action at an industry, regional and community level.

The Economic Development Framework will inform the Northern Territory's long-term decision making and will deliver policy and regulatory certainty for investors. The Government's further work program is outlined at Appendix A.

The partners to this framework, industry, other representative groups, and government, will provide regular updates on progress, including a publicly released progress report. An annual summit involving all partners and other interested parties, will discuss progress and refine the actions and framework as needed, keeping everyone focused and on track.

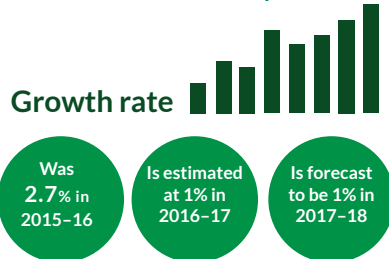


Snapshot of the Northern Territory economy



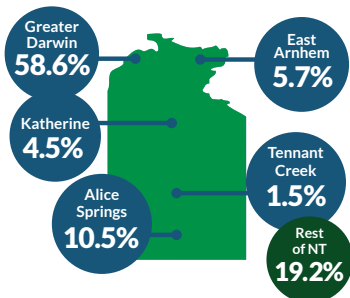
**NT Population**  
**245,000**

**Economic Growth Rate** **GSP \$23.6b**



**Annual Darwin Inflation rate**  
**0.5%**  
March 2016 to March 2017

**Population Distribution**



**Employment level** about

**140,000**  
are employed

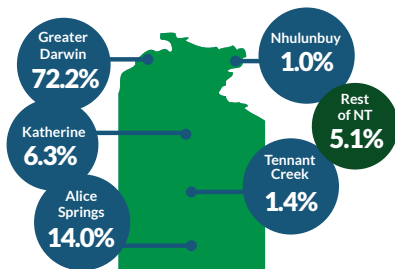
**Unemployment rate**

**3.5%**  
May 2017

**\$1,792**

**Average weekly earnings**

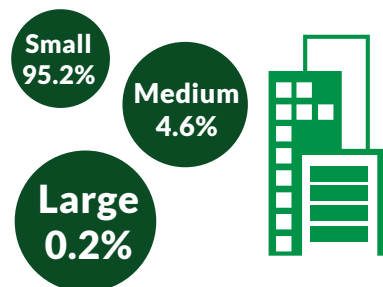
**Business Location**



**Private Business Investment**

**\$8.4 billion**  
2016  
(ABS trend data)

**Business Size**



**Median House Price**

**Darwin \$530,000**    **Katherine \$349,000**    **Tennant Creek \$254,000**

**Palmerston \$490,000**    **Alice Springs \$487,500**



Figures are based on NT Government data as at March 2017 unless otherwise specified

## 1.1 OUR UNIQUE ADVANTAGE

Our Northern Territory economy has grown rapidly over the past 10 years on the back of a stream of major projects. Between 2005–06 and 2015–16, we've seen:

- Gross State Product grow over 40 per cent, from \$16.2 billion to \$23.6 billion
- population increase 17 per cent, to more than 245 000 people
- workforce expand by 34 000, to over 140 000 workers.

The structure of the Northern Territory economy is unique. It is this uniqueness that provides our competitive advantage and massive potential:

- **We've space and capacity to grow** – we've one per cent of Australia's population living on one sixth of its land mass with significant distances between our population centres. There are considerable land, water, and mineral resources providing green-field development opportunities. We also have remarkable natural landscapes, such as the heritage listed Kakadu.

Territorians are experts in the opportunities available in tropical, arid and remote locations. We're innovative and self-reliant, with broad skills and a unique outlook created through necessity.

- **Our cultural diversity brings strength** – almost 30 per cent of the Territory's population is Aboriginal compared to the national average of three per cent, and Aboriginal Territorians are significant land owners and custodians of the land and coastline.

About 50 per cent of the Territory's land mass and about 80 per cent of the coastline is inalienable Aboriginal freehold granted under Commonwealth legislation, the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, with much of the balance subject to exclusive or non-exclusive native title, as recognised by the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1994*.

Aboriginal Territorians, the perspectives they bring, the land and resources they own, and the unique opportunities they pursue, are a key driver and partner in the Territory's economic future.

- **We're close to Asia** – and we have strong relationships with our northern neighbours. There are 24 million people within five hours south of the Northern Territory and 400 million people within five hours north.

We have a strong comparative advantage in industries that produce products in high demand in Asia, and there are promising opportunities to grow the international education sector, tourism, mineral, gas, petroleum, fisheries and agricultural resources.



- **We're young and growing** – the rest of Australia may have benefited from more than 200 years of development and industrialisation, but the Territory is in the exciting position of learning from that development, with significant opportunities to pioneer the sustainable growth and development needed by the world right now.
- **Our governments have strong track records** – in a young regional economy, Territory governments have a history of strategic investments in transformative infrastructure.

Past Northern Territory governments have made strategic investments in critical infrastructure and services such as the Port of Darwin, the AustralAsia Railway, the Darwin and Alice Springs Convention Centres and Charles Darwin University. These investments have made an important economic, cultural, intellectual and social contribution, and helped attract people and private sector investment to the Territory.

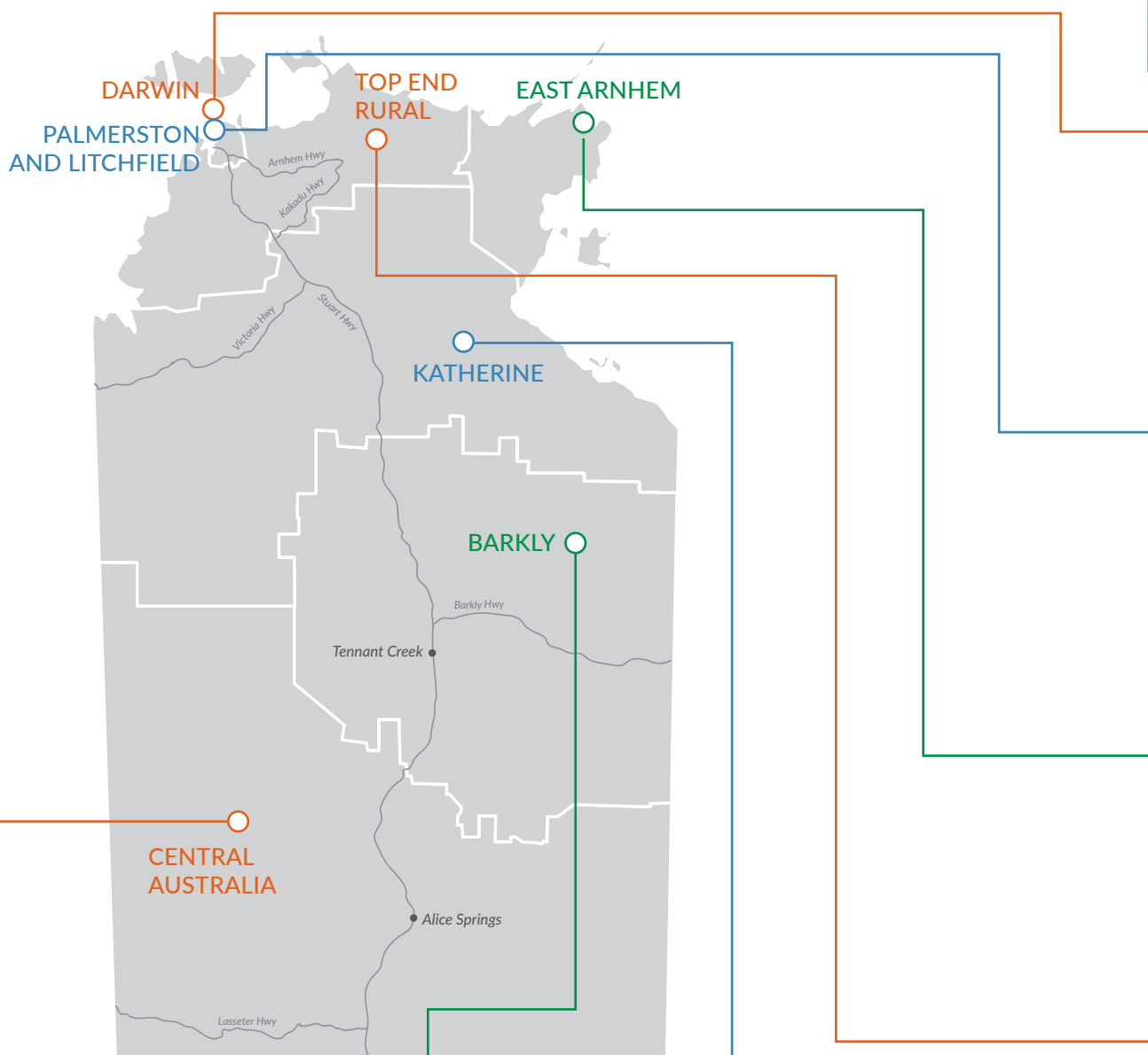
Territory governments have also facilitated major private sector investments, such as Ichthys – the largest overseas investment ever made by Japan and France.



Figure 1: The Northern Territory's unique position in the world



Figure 2: The Northern Territory's remarkable regions



### CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

**Population:** 40 715 people – 17 per cent of the Territory's population

**Main industries:** Pastoral, tourism, defence, Aboriginal arts and culture, mining, and oil and gas exploration

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Mineral production and exploration

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 13.8 per cent

### BARKLY

**Population:** 6 862 people – 3 per cent of the Territory's population

**Main industries:** Pastoral, tourism, Aboriginal arts and culture, mining activities

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Government services, pastoral and mining related activities

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 1.4 per cent

*The Northern Territory's position as a gateway to Asia, role as a key defence hub, our world renowned tourist attraction and rich diversity of mineral, gas, petroleum and agricultural resources all provide the strategic opportunities required to underpin future economic growth. These strategic advantages also provide opportunities for growth in service industries such as health, education and research.*

*The Territory has a population of 245 000 people and a land area of 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup> which is 17 per cent of the land area of Australia.*

### DARWIN

**Population:** 85 041 people – 35 per cent of the Territory's population

**Main industries:** Construction, defence, tourism, public administration, safety and tourism

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Tourism, Government and defence

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 73.4 per cent across the Greater Darwin region including Palmerston and rural areas

### PALMERSTON AND LITCHFIELD

**Population:** 58 588 people – 24 per cent of the Territory's population (35 065 Palmerston and 23 523 Litchfield)

**Main industries:** Aquaculture, horticulture, cattle, crocodile farming, defence and liquefied natural gas and helium production

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Retail and construction

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 73.4 per cent across the Greater Darwin region including Palmerston and rural areas

### EAST ARNHEM

**Population:** 13 935 people – 6 per cent of the Territory's population

**Main industries:** Mining and oil and gas exploration

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Mineral production and exploration

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 1.6 per cent

### TOP END RURAL

**Population:** 18 892 people – 8 per cent of the Territory's population

**Main industries:** Tourism, horticulture and mining

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Tourism and Aboriginal arts and culture

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 73.4 per cent across the Greater Darwin region including Palmerston and rural areas

### KATHERINE REGION

**Population:** 21 158 people – 9 per cent of the Territory's population

**Main industries:** Pastoral, tourism, defence, horticulture, mining, and oil and gas exploration

**Main driver of economic activity and employment:** Defence, mineral production and exploration

**Percentage of the Territory's businesses:** 6.1 per cent





## 1.2 INCREASING PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT TO GROW JOBS

The economic development of the Northern Territory depends on private sector investment – and we have exceptional investment potential.

Governments can only spend money they have already collected, or will collect in the future from households and businesses. Sustainable economic development and jobs growth relies on private sector investment and entrepreneurship, with the private sector growing faster than the public sector.

The Territory has benefited from solid growth driven by a flow of major projects over the past 15 years. We need to realise the major projects on the horizon. Our economic future also depends on becoming less reliant on major projects – we can do this by supporting sustainable economic development and diversification.

For private sector investment to grow in the Northern Territory, our business owners and investors need to succeed. Let's keep working on understanding how Territory

products and services can best benefit the markets to our north, capitalising on our competitive advantage. Let's keep working on understanding our supply chains and the best way to get products to our customers.

Let's reduce the risks of expanding or starting a business in the Territory. Our businesses need timely access to essential inputs. We need enough people to fill jobs in our urban centres, and enough jobs for people living in remote and regional areas.

Our intention is to partner with industry, business, not-for-profits, landowners and the community to deliver the elements of job creation through this Economic Development Framework. For the Government itself this includes:

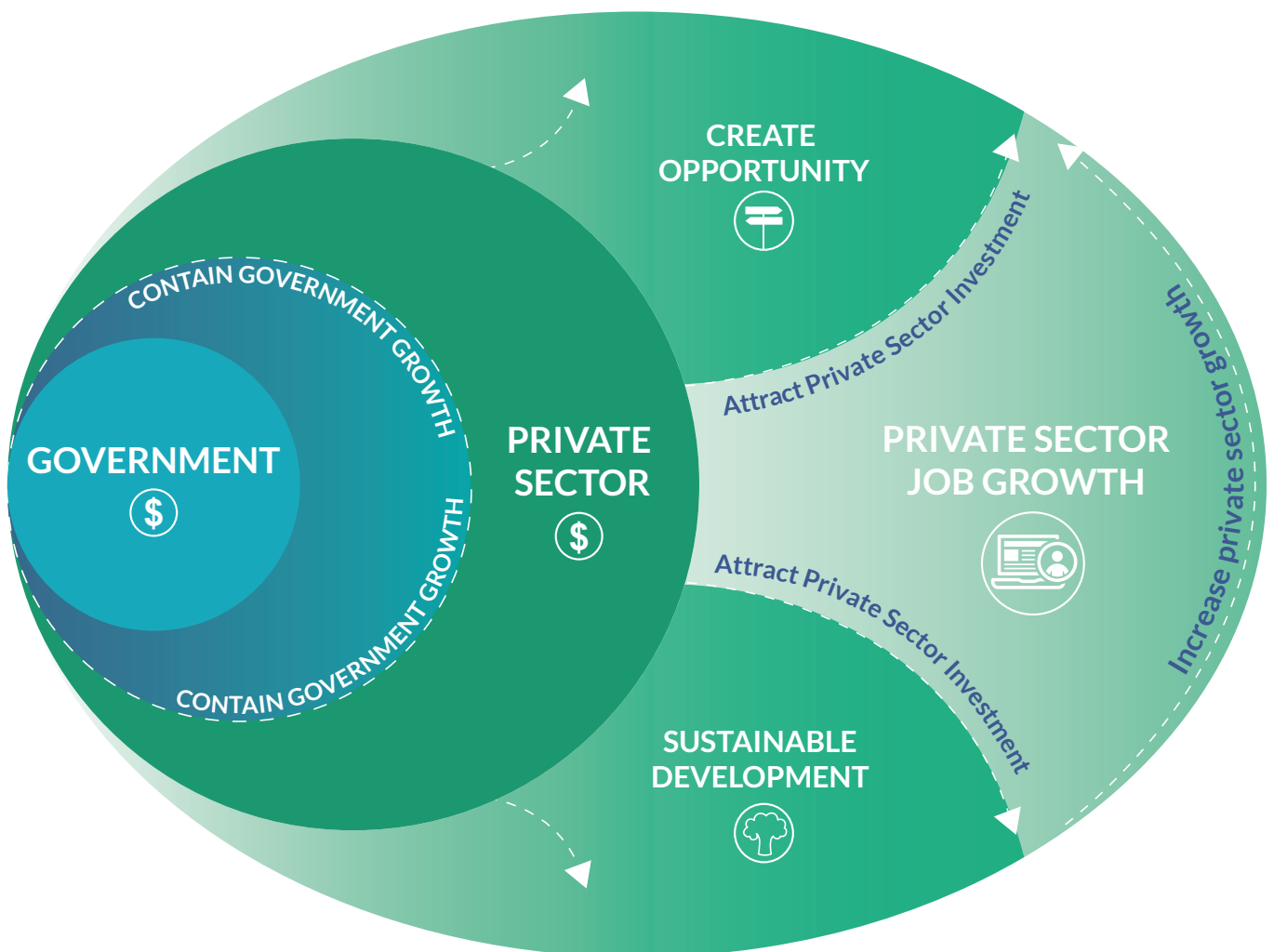
- providing certainty in government and policy
- transparency in our relationships and in our decision making

*Our unique advantages provide a powerful platform for sustainable development – valuing our environmental assets as part of the fabric of economic development and our rich social and cultural identity.*

- government investment that leverages private sector investment
- coordinated promotion and marketing of the Territory
- embracing innovation and emerging technologies and unleashing the creativity of the Territory's private and public sectors.

This Economic Development Framework is about working together to get the economic fundamentals right, accelerating sustainable economic development by attracting private sector investment to create jobs. Our future prosperity depends on it.

**Figure 3: To create opportunities we need to attract private sector investment to grow Territory jobs**



## 2. THE FRAMEWORK FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 HOW WE WILL GROW OUR ECONOMY

*We will grow our economy through the following development levers:*



Natural Resources

**Natural resources** includes the land, flora, fauna, soils, water, minerals, oil, gas, waterways, inshore fisheries, coastal areas, the entire biomass in the Northern Territory, and our knowledge about these things. These resources are integral to the Territory's economic growth and underpin priority industries, in particular agriculture, energy, mining and tourism.

.....



People

**People** have a two-fold impact on the economy – they are the consumers of goods and services and are the workforce that supplies labour and knowledge. For our economy to grow, we must increase our population and find ways to engage the future workforce. Helping people reskill, upskill and reinvent their jobs will be essential.

.....



Capital

**Capital** refers to different types of funding for businesses to invest in required technology, education, plant and equipment that support future growth. Capital also includes investment in the infrastructure that helps the economy function – road, rail, marine and air transport, pipelines, poles and wires, energy, water, buildings and telecommunications networks.

.....



Connectivity

Better **connectivity** is critical to ongoing economic growth to strengthen our supply chains to improve the movement of people, goods and information, as well as connect with people who may exchange information, buy our products and services, or help us build relationships and partnerships to develop and reach markets.

.....



Enterprise and Innovation

**Enterprise and innovation** occurs when entrepreneurs, university and governments strive to improve the products and services they deliver. Innovative structures and management strategies can help unlock the latent economic potential of our economy.

.....



Liveability

A constant focus on improving **liveability** is important to promote the Northern Territory as an attractive place to live, work, study, visit, research and raise families. Unless we can convince other people of this, we will find it difficult to sustain a workforce that can support business growth and grow our population. A small population limits the range of choices available to Territorians and affects the cost of living and the cost of doing business.

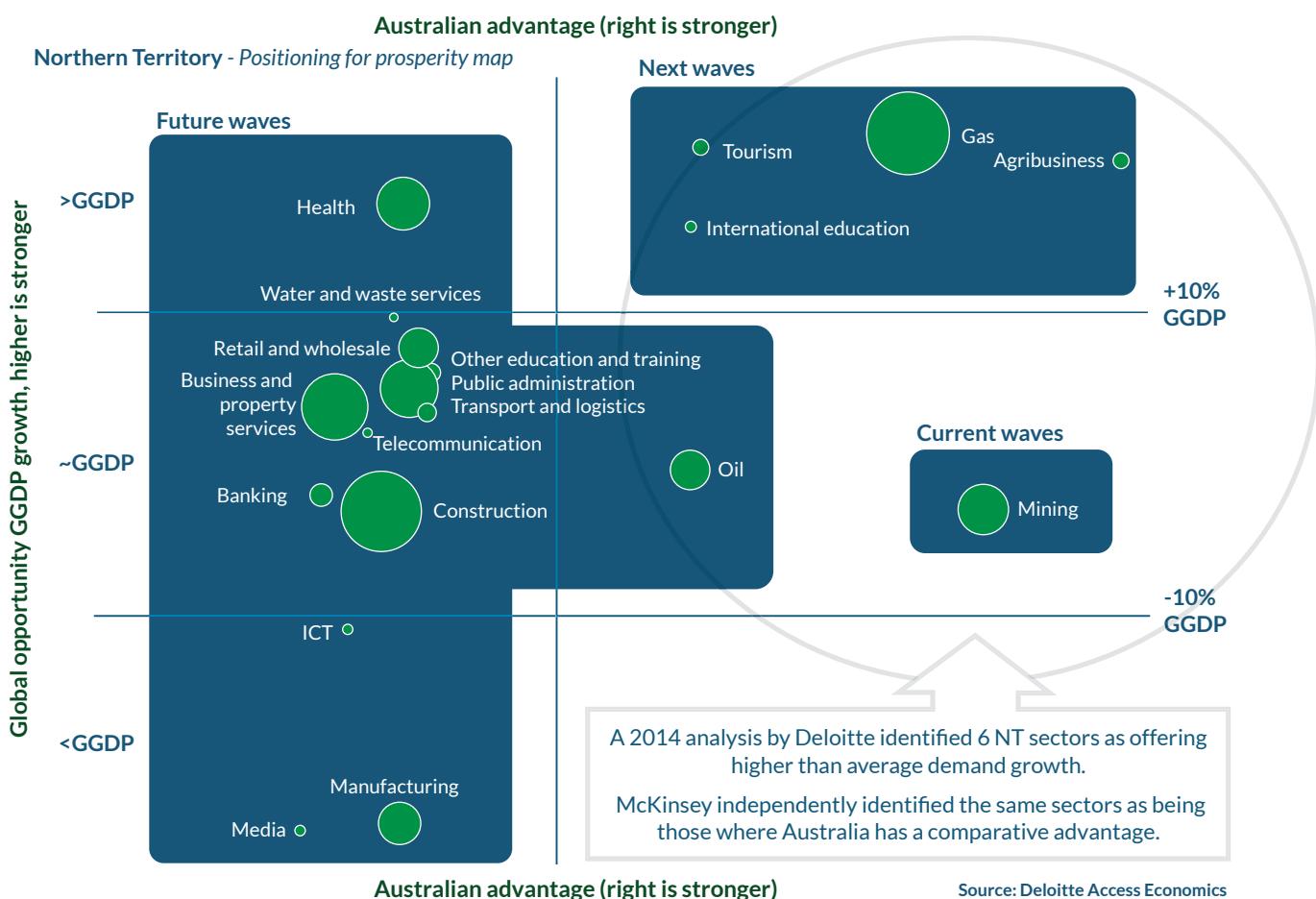
## 2.2 WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

### What we know from research

Independent analysis identified industries with significant global growth and demand in which the Northern Territory has a comparative advantage. Demand from Asia is the common driver of future growth:

- **Agribusiness:** as people buy Australia's fresh produce, including proteins
- **Tourism:** as people seek space, nature, holidays, luxury and genuine cultural experiences
- **Energy and minerals:** as more people move to cities, the Asian middle class keep expanding and countries seek to improve living standards
- **International education and training:** as students seek to study in an English-speaking country.

Figure 5: Positioning the Northern Territory for prosperity



**Defence** is also a historically important contributor to the Northern Territory economy, and will continue to provide significant opportunities in the future with national investments into defence and an increased presence of the United States and other allies.

Research identified additional sectors with smaller but significant opportunities for future economic development and employment growth, including **tropical health and research, creative industries, renewable energy, environmental services, and human services.**

It is those growth potential sectors that through trade and investment will bring additional wealth to our economy that will flow on to other sectors, including construction, retail, hospitality and services.

### **An increasingly competitive global market**

It is an increasingly competitive global market with rapid growth in trade between nations for goods and services. Focussing on the Northern Territory's comparative advantages offers the strongest opportunity for consistent job creation and income growth.

*We can use our diversity and uniqueness to think differently and create new products.*

To realise opportunities, businesses and industries need to be globally competitive – supplying goods and services to our target markets at competitive prices. Staying competitive means understanding your market and the competition. It means constantly finding ways to innovate, differentiating Territory products and services from the competition.

The Territory has proven that we can use our diversity and uniqueness to think differently and create new products and ways of doing business. This is something we all need to seek out, accelerating our efforts to always stay ahead of the competition.

Attracting and developing entrepreneurs, innovative products and services ready for commercialisation, as well as strong business investment, requires a balanced regulatory environment, policy certainty, a skilled and inclusive workforce and transformative infrastructure.

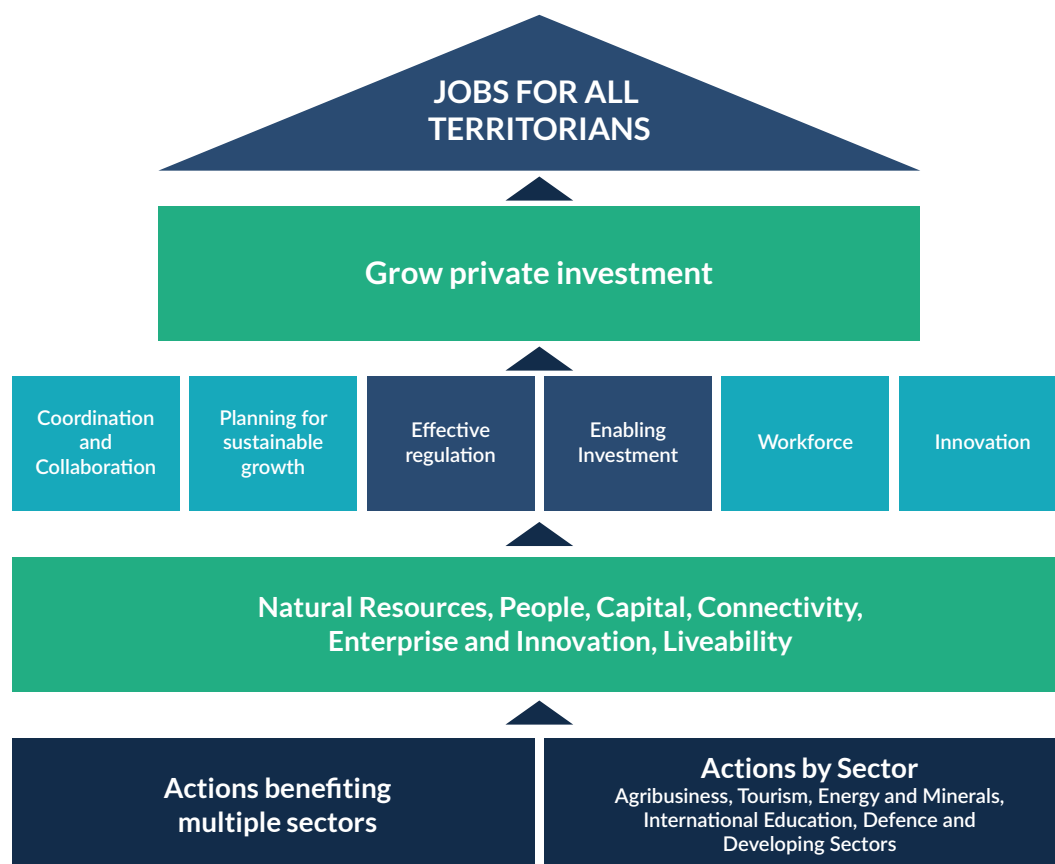
### **What we know from consultations**

Our consultations told us that these are the critical themes to accelerate economic development:

- **Improved coordination and collaboration**
  - All industries, regions and communities identified that improving coordination and communication will lead to better outcomes. Working together, we develop a shared vision, prioritise and plan, and carry out the actions that will make the biggest difference for our regions, communities and the Territory overall.

- **Better planning** – Businesses need certainty to invest and create jobs. Plans that are jointly developed and committed to by government, industry and communities help provide this certainty.
- **Effective regulation** – Effective regulation strikes a balance between protecting the community interest and providing businesses with the freedom to innovate and grow. This includes being aware of regulation that has the potential to limit competition within markets, delay the adoption of disruptive technologies, or hinder innovative ways of doing business.
- **Enabling investment** – Wise public sector investment that facilitates and catalyses private sector investment will significantly accelerate economic growth. To achieve the greatest and most sustainable economic benefit, government has to strategically assess where it invests across competing demands.
- **Workforce** – Business needs a Territory workforce with the skills to do the jobs of today and ready to do the jobs of tomorrow. We need to develop the capacity of our entire workforce, in particular supporting more Aboriginal Territorians to participate and succeed.
- **Innovation** – Innovation drives productivity and makes Territory businesses more competitive, profitable and sustainable. To capture the benefits of innovation, our economy needs a culture of innovation within all sectors including business, services, government, education, not-for-profits and the general community.

## 2.3 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



## Implementation

By working together, government, industry, land owners and other organisations, will deliver on the actions and commitments in this Economic Development Framework and propel the Territory’s economy forward.

Within Government, the Chief Executive Officers Jobs Standing Committee will drive delivery of the Government’s commitments, reporting to the Jobs Sub-Committee of Cabinet and Cabinet. Chief Executive Officers will work with partner organisations to progress the specific actions.

We will formally come together with all our partners every six months to discuss progress, resolve issues and learn from each other.

Every 12 months we will hold an Economic Development progress summit with all our partners and other interested parties, where we will discuss progress, emerging issues and refine the framework and actions as needed. We will publicly release an annual progress report.

## 3. ACTIONS THAT BENEFIT MULTIPLE SECTORS

*The consultation process identified a number of actions that benefit multiple industry sectors, as well as actions that primarily benefit individual sectors. These actions are presented in a separate chapter for ease of reference and to reduce duplication across the document. The majority of these actions involve working with the private sector, Traditional Owners, land councils, pastoralists and landholders to achieve the desired outcomes.*












Actions that impact multiple sectors	Measure	Lead/Partners	Levers
Continue to lead the Developing the North (DTN) agenda and work with other governments to advance shared interests in the north, while focussing on what is in the Northern Territory’s interest	Progress in jointly shared DTN initiatives that grow our economy	NT Govt (NTG) WA, Qld & Aust Govt	ALL
Progress a comprehensive, balanced and accountable regulatory reform agenda to provide a globally competitive environment to attract private sector investment and sustainable development	Regulatory reform agenda delivered	NTG	ALL

Actions that impact multiple sectors	Measure	Lead/Partners	Levers
<p>Identify land with high development potential and manage these areas as Priority Development Zones, with a focus on addressing risks and barriers to development.</p> <p>This includes coordinating land capability research (soil, water, geoscience capabilities etc.), logistics and infrastructure planning, investment and regulatory approvals, aligning development with community values, sharing information, and marketing opportunities to potential investors through a one stop shop online portal</p>	<p>Priority Development Zones established</p> <p>One-stop-shop online portal established</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Industry</p>	
<p>Implement a biosecurity strategy to protect the Territory's environment and 'clean, natural and safe' reputation for production, processing, trade and investment</p>	<p>Biosecurity strategy implemented</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Industry</p>	
<p>Improve environmental assessment and approvals processes</p>	<p>Improved assessment and approvals processes implemented</p>	<p>NTG</p>	
<p>Undertake a comprehensive review of water policies to provide certainty and secure and sustainable water allocations to drive economic growth</p>	<p>Review and reform of water policies completed</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Stakeholders</p>	
<p>Establish Strategic Indigenous Water Reserves to increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to access water to pursue economic development</p>	<p>Strategic Indigenous Reserves established</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Traditional Owners and Land Councils</p>	
<p>Partner with private enterprise to implement training programs that create a stable, long-term workforce, including by better preparing Aboriginal people to enter and remain in the workforce</p>	<p>Training programs designed and implemented</p> <p>Entry and retention rates published</p>	<p>Industry</p> <p>Training providers</p> <p>NTG</p>	
<p>Improve access to education for remote families</p>	<p>Improved education opportunities in the Territory for remote families</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Education providers</p>	
<p>Work with Aboriginal business enterprises to build capability</p>	<p>Increased participation in business support programs</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network</p>	
<p>Build partnerships between schools and innovation oriented organisations to strengthen the focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM)</p>	<p>Effective partnerships between schools and innovation oriented organisations</p>	<p>NTG</p> <p>Innovation oriented organisations</p>	
<p>Introduce coding training in schools to better equip students to participate in the global knowledge economy</p>	<p>Coding training implemented</p>	<p>NTG</p>	
<p>Create a 10 year infrastructure plan</p>	<p>10 Year Infrastructure Plan published and updated annually</p>	<p>NTG</p>	



Actions that impact multiple sectors	Measure	Lead/Partners	Levers
Develop and deliver a pipeline of NTG facilitated projects to leverage private sector investment in economic and iconic infrastructure and major projects	Capital expenditure on NTG facilitated projects  10 Year Infrastructure Plan published and updated annually	NTG Industry	
Identify priority economic infrastructure needs to inform government and industry investment decisions, including Industry Development Strategies and Priority Development Zones	Highest priority infrastructure gaps and projects identified  10 Year Infrastructure Plan published and updated annually	NTG Industry	
Develop a Northern Territory energy policy considering electricity supply, costs, reliability, competition etc.	Energy policy developed	NTG	
Support the Aboriginal Land and Sea Economic Development Agency (ALSEDA) to bring land, capital, labour and effective processes together to drive investment on Aboriginal land	Investment in ALSEDA driven investment	ALSEDA Land councils NTG	
Continue to support local Aboriginal communities, the regions and major centres of Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek, Palmerston and Alice Springs to develop and deliver economic development plans and priority projects that realise local aspirations	Economic development plans established  Priority projects progressed	NTG Land Councils  Regional Economic Development Committees (REDCs)  Regional peak bodies  Local government	
Enhance partnerships between land councils, Traditional Owners and the Australian and Northern Territory governments to better align aspirations and investment opportunities for all parties, including developing an investment charter and actions to expedite processing of applications	Reduced time for processing of applications  Reduced backlog of applications  Investment charter published	Land councils NTG Aust Govt Industry	
Collate and disseminate information on industry performance such as industry profitability, inputs consumed, industry output, the value added and captured in the Northern Territory	Information disseminated  Improved understanding of business development opportunities	NTG Industry	



Actions that impact multiple sectors	Measure	Lead/Partners	Levers
Work with the Australian Government to improve access to reliable high quality and high speed internet and mobile coverage	Improved high speed internet access and mobile coverage	NTG Industry	
Develop a calendar of events that engages locals and visitors beyond the current tourism peak periods in major centres and regions	Calendar of events developed	Industry NTG	
Explore business models that increase local service delivery, employment and business development opportunities across a range of sectors including delivery of human and community services	Business models established	NTG Industry	
Co-develop comprehensive Industry Development Strategies for key industries that cover innovation, technology, supply chain analysis, market analysis and development, workforce (including Aboriginal employment strategies) regulation and regional development opportunities	Industry Development Strategies completed	Industry NTG	
Co-develop a strategic maritime industries infrastructure and investment plan for priority ports to grow the offshore gas, seafood, naval, marine aquaculture, cruise ship, maritime freight, leisure, passenger services and maritime maintenance sectors	Maritime industries infrastructure and investment plan developed for Darwin and key regional ports	Industry NTG Aust Govt	
Make it easier to do business in the Territory through reducing unnecessary red tape and regulatory burden	Relevant legislation and government process reviewed and improved	NTG	
Implement an Open Data Policy to make government data available to industry and other stakeholders to enable innovation and business development opportunities	Open Data Policy implemented Business opportunities created Improved data quality	NTG Industry	
Work with industry, research and educational institutions and the business community to encourage, drive and adopt innovation	Increased competitiveness of Territory industries	NTG Stakeholders	
Adopt a whole of Territory information, communications and technology (ICT) Strategy including measures to support local ICT businesses	ICT Strategy implemented	NTG Industry	
Co-develop and co deliver an overarching Northern Territory branding and marketing strategy to promote the Territory – including regional destinations – as places to live, work, visit, study, invest, trade and do business	Strategy implemented Population data	NTG Industry Regional Economic Development Councils Local government	
Identify and implement strategies to reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, to reduce costs to the private sector and wider community	Reduction in anti-social behaviour Reduction in crime	NTG Industry Community	



## 4. GROWTH SECTORS

*As a small, export-oriented economy, the Northern Territory relies on identifying and meeting export demand to maintain and grow living standards. That means delivering products that international markets want. Research suggests that growing Asian economies to our immediate north will create strong demand for products the Northern Territory can produce competitively.*

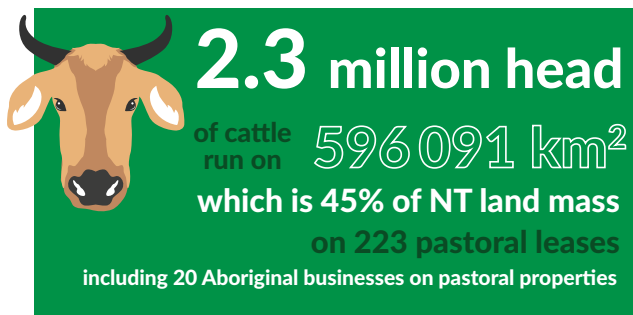
The Northern Territory industry sectors expected to experience strong demand growth include energy and minerals, tourism, agribusiness, and international education and training. Along with the opportunities emerging from the significant Defence investment program in the Top End, these industries are identified as the Territory's major growth sectors in the short to medium-term.

From the research undertaken and feedback received during the Summit process, it is clear there is a broad consensus that these six industries will be a major source of future private sector investment and jobs growth in the Northern Territory. There is a role for the public and private sectors to play a part in growing the Territory economy.


*Growing Asian economies will create strong demand for products the Northern Territory can produce competitively.*

## 4.1 AGRIBUSINESS

Northern Territory Government estimate  
of agricultural production  
**\$606 million**

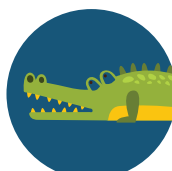


**1700 jobs**   
in agriculture,  
forestry and fishing  
Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016




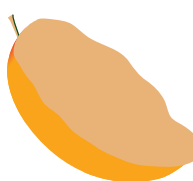
**\$1 billion**  
NT Cattlemen's Association estimate  
of value of the beef cattle industry

**\$244.4 million**   
NT Farmers Association estimate of  
Gate Value of Production (GVP) of  
farming industries for 2015



**\$28.5 million**  
Northern Territory Government estimate  
of the value of other livestock,  
including crocodile production

**\$81.5 million**   
Northern Territory Government estimate  
of the value of commercial fisheries and  
aquaculture industry

**50%**   
of Australian  
mango production  
grown in the NT  
NT Farmers Association, 2015



**125**  
mango growers produce

**4 million**  
trays of mangoes  
NT Farmers Association, 2015



**\$88.5 million**

NT Farmers Association estimate of  
GVP of mangoes grown in NT, 2015

Plant-based industries used:



**5000**  
freight vans

transport farming produce worth

**\$25 million**  
to southern states each year  
NT Farmers Association, 2015

**\$12.5 million**   
spent on packaging for produce



**\$80 million**  
in wages per year  
NT Farmers Association, 2015







## Agribusiness

Agribusiness encapsulates all aspects of agricultural production including livestock, horticulture and forestry, commercial fishing (including aquaculture) and bush medicine and foods.

The agribusiness support industries supply agrichemicals, farm machinery, fencing, irrigation equipment and seeds. Support industries also provide services such as research activities, breeding, manufacturing, packaging and product distribution.

Improving access to productive land and strategically managing critical inputs, such as water and infrastructure, are critical to the agribusiness sector and are addressed in section 3 – actions that impact multiple sectors.

There are also industry specific actions intended to improve agribusiness supply chains, increase the resilience of the agribusiness workforce, and enable agribusiness operators to capitalise on emerging technologies.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Investigate opportunities to develop Katherine as an agribusiness logistics hub	Feasibility study completed	NT Govt (NTG) Industry	
Support investment in technology that improves productivity	Improved productivity	Industry NTG	
Increase the profitability and performance of the pastoral, horticultural and aquaculture sectors through research and development into supply chains between producers and consumers	Greater economic output	NTG Industry	
Identify priority supply chains through the Territory wide Logistics Master Plan and co-design a 10-year planning program in the 10 Year Infrastructure Plan	Priority supply chains identified 10-year development program implemented	Industry NTG	
Continue to lobby the Australian Government for special working and immigration visa categories to attract and retain overseas skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers	Overseas workers fill labour force gaps	Industry NTG Aust Govt	
Explore the commercial potential for bush foods and medicine as a niche regional growth sector	Concept and business case developed	NTG Industry Land councils	

## 4.2 TOURISM

Year ending December 2016



Two thirds of international holiday visitors to the Territory

visited  
**Uluru**  
and surrounds

**\$1.8 billion**  
value to the Territory economy



**1.807**  
million  
total visitors

Of these, 840 000 visited for a holiday



**15 500** total  
tourism jobs  
(2014-15)



**2.2**  
million  
inbound  
airline seats  
(in year ending  
November 2016)

**\$1413** average  
spend per trip



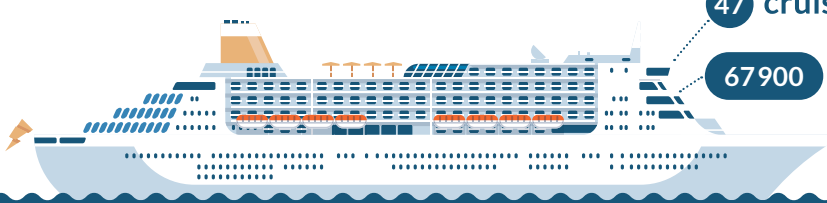
**7**

nights average  
length of stay

**• 8943 •**

tourist accommodation  
rooms available

**In 2016-17 we will reach a record:**



**47** cruise ship visits




**67 900** cruise ship passenger capacity

## Tourism









Tourism is a major employer and contributor to the Northern Territory economy, with the sector offering a range of unique natural and cultural experiences to national and international visitors. Tourism is a highly competitive industry and growing our visitor numbers and expenditure will require careful consideration of how we will compete with other destinations in Australia and across the globe.

To grow the tourism industry, government and industry need to work together to improve existing products and to identify, develop and promote opportunities for tourism infrastructure and products to ensure we meet visitor expectations and continually strive to improve the visitor experience.

The key determinants of tourism's impact on the Northern Territory economy are how many visitors come here, how long they stay, how much they spend, and the profits retained in the Territory by tourism operators. It is important that we promote the compelling reasons to visit the Territory, and make it as easy and safe as possible to experience what the Territory has to offer. Improving the suite of products and experiences for visitors is critical, as is removing unintended barriers to tourism businesses. Achieving this will require industry to work with all levels of governments to make it easier to create better visitor experiences.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Grow the value of the visitor economy in the Territory	Increase overnight visitor expenditure in the Territory	NT Govt (NTG) Industry	
Undertake market research to identify opportunities to develop tourism products to activate the regions, including leveraging national parks and the Crown estate, partnerships with Traditional Owners and leveraging private sector investment and expertise	Tourism products delivered	Industry Traditional Owners NTG	
Work with airlines to build demand for sustainable aviation services to, and within, the Territory, including attracting direct airline services from China and other high potential markets such as New Zealand	Increased aviation capacity New routes established	NTG Industry	



High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Develop niche market and product segments such as working holiday makers, luxury, bushwalking, birdwatching, mountain biking, sporting events, international study tour groups and Defence personnel	Increased visitor numbers	Tourism Traditional Owners Industry NTG	
Increase the number of quality Aboriginal cultural experiences, and develop Aboriginal people's interest and capacity to work in tourism	Increased number of Aboriginal cultural products listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse Increased number of Aboriginal tourism workers	NTG Industry Traditional Owners Aust Govt	
Work with local governments and property owners to reinvigorate the city areas of Darwin, Alice Springs and other regional centres	Central Business District (CBD) areas reinvigorated	NTG Local governments	
Ensure tourism issues are adequately considered in planning decisions to reinvigorate Darwin and Alice Springs CBDs	Revitalisation planning begins Agreed projects are funded	NTG Local governments	
Work with local stakeholders and the Australian Government to improve economic development opportunities in all of the Territory's parks, including Kakadu (with links to Arnhem Land) and Uluru-Kata Tjuta	Increased economic development opportunities Increased visitor numbers to national parks	NTG Traditional Owners Aust Govt	
Work with local stakeholders and the Australian Government to plan for the future of Jabiru	Clear objectives and strategies for Jabiru	NTG Traditional Owners Aust Govt	
Advocate to open attractions and develop infrastructure to attract more tourists to Kakadu	Current Parks Australia Plan for South Kakadu is implemented Increased visitor numbers to Kakadu	NTG Traditional Owners Industry	
Promote the Territory as a cruise destination, and Darwin as a home port for expedition ships	Number of cruise ships calling in to Darwin Port Number of expedition ships home porting in Darwin	NTG Industry	



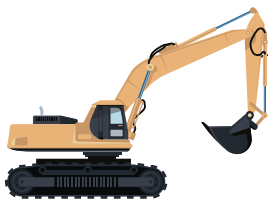
## 4.3 ENERGY AND MINERALS

**12%** of gross state product contribution



**\$101 million**  
spent on exploration in 2015-16

CLOSE TO **30 trillion**  
cubic feet of offshore gas reserves



**9** major operating mines in 2016

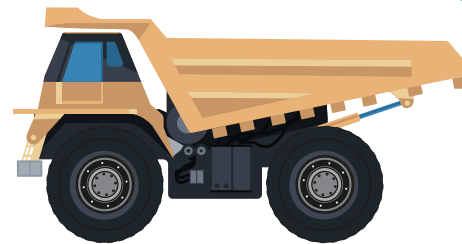
plus minor mines, quarries and extractive operations

**About 30**

potential mining operations under feasibility studies

**5** biggest mines in NT (all world class deposits):

- ▷ Gove (bauxite)
- ▷ Callie (gold)
- ▷ GEMCO (manganese)
- ▷ McArthur River Mine (zinc-lead)
- ▷ Ranger (uranium)



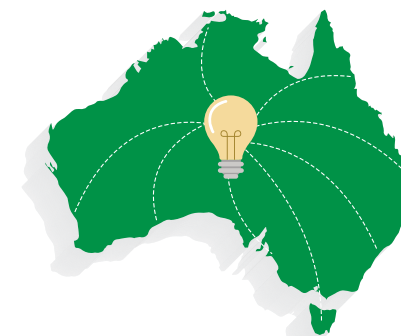
**\$5.2 billion**

value of the mining, energy and resource manufacturing sector



Estimated **200**  
trillion cubic feet

of gas resources in onshore basins



enough to power Australia for 200 years



**4800 jobs**

in the mining and resources sector

### Short distance from nine key markets



**30%**



of Australia's total known uranium reserves are in the NT









## Energy and Minerals

The Northern Territory has globally significant onshore and offshore energy reserves and a long history as a supplier of oil, gas and uranium to global markets. The Territory can contribute to improving global and national energy security, and in doing so deliver significant local economic growth opportunities.

However, development must be managed to minimise environmental impacts and to reflect community attitudes. This is why government is focused on establishing the right regulatory environment that supports investment, while protecting our environment and reflecting community values. To ensure the benefits of the industry are captured in the Territory, government is exploring opportunities to maximise local employment and participation of Northern Territory businesses.

The economic potential of the Territory's rich minerals deposits is substantial. World-class minerals projects contribute significantly to our economic growth, and government is continuing to invest in obtaining and disseminating pre-competitive geological information to attract investment in exploration and to support projects commencing.

To ensure Territorians benefit from our resource wealth we need to ensure there is community support for industry activities and that investors have confidence and certainty when they make investment decisions. In the near-term, government and industry need to work together to ensure key concerns held by the community are addressed and there is a clear, agreed and endorsed pathway to facilitate industry development.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Deliver the independent Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Onshore Unconventional Reservoirs in the Northern Territory	Report delivered	NT Govt (NTG)	
Drive exploration and growth in the energy and minerals sector by providing pre competitive geoscience data to industry and proactively promoting the Territory's resource potential and investment opportunities	Increased exploration activity and inbound investment into resources projects	NTG	
Develop a communication strategy to inform the community of benefits from energy and minerals industry activity, including business and job opportunities, and to clarify the impact on the environment	Strategy implemented	Industry	
Collaborate across industry to support the development of a mining service and supply centre in Tennant Creek, driven by industry demand and growth	Industry opportunities are identified and realised	Industry NTG	
Investigate the feasibility of a common-user mine processing facility in Tennant Creek	Feasibility study completed	NTG	
Review energy and mineral legislation to improve consistency in applying legislation	Review findings implemented	NTG	
Attract major gas corporations to establish regional or national headquarters in Darwin	National or regional headquarters established	NTG	
Work with the extractive industry to ensure ongoing supply of materials for the construction industry	Materials are available for use by the construction industry	Industry NTG	

## 4.4 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING



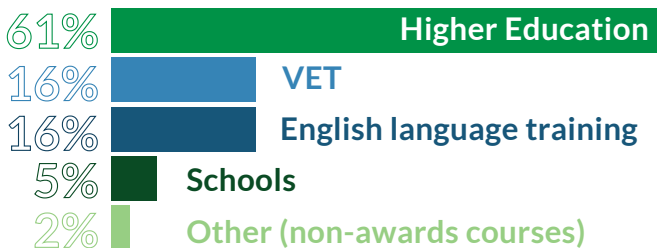
International student numbers  
in the NT have risen from



**471 in 2006 to 2300 in 2016**

### Top three countries of origin

**Nepal, India and the Philippines**



CDU has over  
**2700**  
students from

**over 60 countries**



contributed  
**\$81 million**  
to the NT economy

According to Times Higher Education  
World University Rankings, CDU is in the

**top 2 per cent  
of world universities**

created  
**444 jobs**

in 2014-15



## International education and training





Our international education and training sector is relatively small but has significant growth potential. The Northern Territory has international students studying in schools, vocational education and training, English language training, and in higher education at undergraduate, master and doctorate level. Global competition is strong so it is important that we develop and sustain our unique value proposition.







To grow international student numbers, government will work with education providers, businesses and multicultural organisations to increase the range and quality of education offerings and the Territory experience for students. Significant opportunities exist to attract higher education and school study tour groups and to provide work experience opportunities for students.

International education, research and training are also critical in growing relationships to support the Northern Territory’s diplomatic, trade and investment efforts.

International students strengthen cultural, social and economic partnerships, and bring the world to Territorians. International students contribute to creating vibrant economic, social and cultural precincts. International students who remain in the Northern Territory after completing their studies add diversity and skills to our workforce.

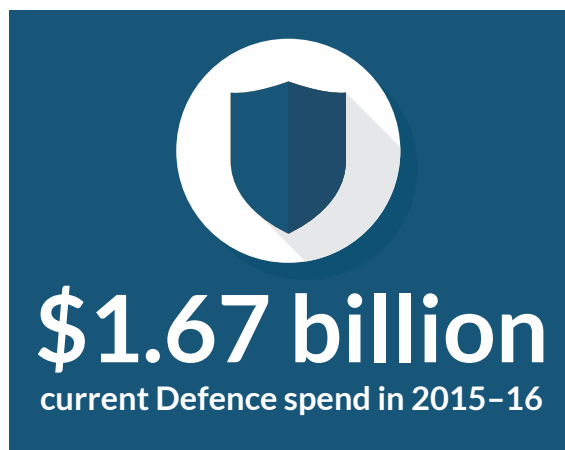
The actions identified recognise that the Territory’s offerings in international education and training are highly dependent on attracting researchers and academics of the highest quality, with facilities that are integrated with the broader community, offering students a high level of amenity and a unique experience.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Develop an international education and training strategic plan with a target to achieve 10,000 students by 2022 across higher education, vocational education and training (VET), schools and English language training	Plan delivered 10,000 international students by 2022	Education Providers NT Govt (NTG)	
International students experience life as Territorians	Collaboration between education providers, NTG, community and business to widen student experiences outside the classroom, measured through student satisfaction surveys	Education Providers NTG	
Locate Charles Darwin University faculties, other education providers and student accommodation in the Darwin Central Business District (CBD)	Innovative use of Darwin CBD buildings to provide learning spaces and student accommodation Numbers of students studying and/or living in the Darwin CBD	Charles Darwin University (CDU) NTG	
Darwin student hub opened in the CBD	Hub opened	NTG	

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Provide 'Study in Australia's Northern Territory' scholarships for international students to study in the NT	Number of scholarships jointly funded with education provider	NTG Education Providers	
Attract top academics to improve Charles Darwin University's rankings	Attraction and retention of top academics CDU's world rankings increase Increase in research funding	CDU Menzies	
Grow edutourism across the NT, using regional icons	Increase in edutourism student numbers	Education Providers Tourism Industry Land Councils Traditional Owners NTG	
Deliver a Homestay program for international students, focussing on high school and edutourism students	Number of Territorians hosting international students	Education Providers Territorians	
Deliver an NT alumni program in priority countries	Number of alumni program participants in priority countries	NTG Education Providers	
Showcasing the Territory to the world – increase joint marketing of the Northern Territory as a study destination	Number of joint marketing campaigns	Education Providers NTG	



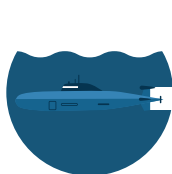
## 4.5 DEFENCE AND SUPPORT INDUSTRIES



**12000**  
strong Defence community = 5% of NT population

### Exercise Kakadu

is a major Defence naval exercise involving



19 ships and  
submarines

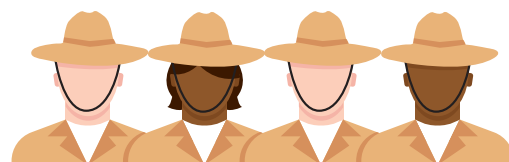


18 aircraft



and more than  
3000 personnel

from 19 Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean  
navies and air forces



**5400**

uniformed Defence personnel in NT

Defence major capital projects

**\$20 billion**

in Defence construction projects  
in NT over 20 years

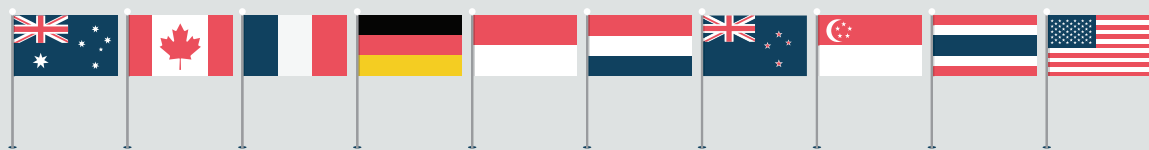
**\$8 billion by 2016-25**

**\$12.2 billion by 2026 - 2035**

# Exercise Pitch Black

is the largest Defence air force exercise in the NT and in 2016 involved

2500 personnel and 115 aircraft from



Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and the United States






## Defence and defence support industries







Defence industry supports the Australian Defence Force and Australian Border Force presence in the Territory and is characterised by a broad range of business types – primarily comprising small to medium enterprises with a focus on technical skills and technology.

Defence industry includes marine supply, heavy engineering, electrical and control systems, repairs and maintenance and logistics networks. These local support industries have the potential to provide significant cost savings for Defence and Border Force by allowing local repairs and maintenance and supply of local produce.

The security of Australia, in particular the imperative to guarantee the sovereignty of maritime borders, especially in the north, and to protect onshore and offshore critical infrastructure, is a national priority. It is also crucial to the economic and domestic security of Australia’s trading partners.

Darwin is the most likely location for supporting military, national security and humanitarian operations to Australia’s north and northwest and it is in the Territory’s interest to maintain a stable and strong defence presence. Darwin is rapidly growing as a key hub for home port maintenance for Defence, Border Force, offshore oil and gas and general maritime industries.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Maximise the use of local businesses, including Aboriginal owned businesses, in infrastructure development and procurement; and services, repairs and maintenance activities	Value of work secured by locally based businesses	NT Govt (NTG) Defence	
Identify and secure opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including Aboriginal-owned businesses, and local supply chains to supply goods and services, repairs and maintenance	Opportunities for local SMEs and supply chains to benefit from defence expenditure are identified and secured	NTG Defence	
Establish a Northern Territory Defence and National Security Advocate in Canberra to engage Defence	Advocate position established Local benefits from defence activities in the Territory	NTG	
Refresh the NT Defence Strategic Plan, including enhanced regional information to promote opportunities for defence facilities in the regions	Refreshed NT Defence Strategic Plan	NTG Industry Aust Govt	
Promote the Northern Territory as a more attractive place to live and work for Defence families while personnel are posted in the Territory	Increase in Defence personnel who choose to base their families in the Territory	NTG	

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Increase focus on Defence liaison and community support coordination	Improved coordination of Defence liaison and community support	NTG	
Increase local employment opportunities in Defence and Defence related work, particularly for Aboriginal Territorians	Increased local employment in Defence and Defence related work	NTG Defence Industry	
Increase employment opportunities for Defence spouses	Increase in Defence members who choose to base their families in the Territory	NTG Defence	
Prepare a Defence Engagement Strategy to develop relationships with land councils, Traditional Owners and the broader community, including opportunities to retain or develop Defence training areas across the NT	Engagement with Traditional Owners	NTG Industry Land councils Traditional Owners	
Attract defence industry corporations to establish national or regional headquarters in Darwin	Regional or national headquarters established	NTG	
Explore opportunities for the Australian Defence Force Academy and/or the Defence Science and Research Group or other military organisations to establish a campus in the Northern Territory	Concept and business case developed	NTG	





## 5. DEVELOPING SECTORS

### Creative Industries

In 2014-15 arts and recreation services (including sports and gambling)



employed

**3400** people

which accounted for **2.6%** of the total resident employment

**44**

industrial sectors

and over

**130** types of jobs



### Human Services



In 2014-15 government and community services accounted for

**19%**

of the Territory's GSP and 37.7 percent of the total resident employment

### Tropical Health

Menzies School of Health Research - the nation's leader in **Indigenous and tropical health research**



every dollar invested in Australian health and medical research returns on average \$2.17 in health benefits

### Environmental Services

Total supply and use of environmental-specific services for Australia in 2010-11 was estimated at

**\$31.9 billion**

Australian industry financed



**77%**

of the expenditure on goods and services related to environmental protection and natural resource management

Kakadu plums are selling for up to

**\$600** per kilo

and in Wadeye the 2016 harvest is expected to produce

**10 tonnes of fruit**

46 Indigenous Ranger Groups

employ approximately 1,000 rangers throughout the Northern Territory.

### Renewable energy

11% of NT dwellings had rooftop solar in 2011



## Developing sectors

The five growth sectors currently make a significant contribution to economic activity and employment in the Northern Territory, but there are several other industries that present significant growth and development opportunities that will contribute to diversifying the economy and creating jobs across the Territory. These sectors tend to be smaller than the main growth sector industries and are at different stages of development in terms of industry organisation, innovative capability and community awareness.

The commodity industries we rely on go through cycles, and variables such as

exchange rates and changing market access arrangements introduce unpredictability for these sectors from year to year. Hence it is important to diversify the Northern Territory economy into areas where there are emerging foundations we can build upon – sectors that may create job opportunities for Territorians in a range of businesses and locations.

Targeted support by government may see these sectors grow in a sustainable way in regional or remote areas that might not otherwise occur.










## 5.1 TROPICAL HEALTH AND RESEARCH

The Northern Territory has world-class research capabilities in tropical and Aboriginal health led by the Menzies School of Health Research, which is headquartered in Darwin and maintains a presence throughout the Territory, interstate and in neighbouring countries. Ensuring the world knows about the capability of Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Menzies will have flow-on impacts for world rankings, and its ability to attract international students.

Menzies, Royal Darwin Hospital, Darwin Private Hospital, Top End Health Service, Flinders Medical School and the smaller health and medical research institutes, create a critical mass of research and employment opportunities that has attracted medical researchers and medical professionals.

Strengthening and formalising the relationships between research bodies and funding entities has the potential to lead to rapid growth in these medical research fields.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Raise the profile of the tropical health and research industry in the Northern Territory to assist in attracting national and international investment	Increased diversity of funding sources	Health and medical research institutes CDU	
Develop funding strategies to support and grow critical health research priorities to benefit the Territory e.g. Aboriginal health and wellbeing, big data, genomics, clinical trials, multi-resistance and health security	Increase investment in emerging health research growth areas	Health and medical research institutes NT Govt (NTG)	
Support health research institutions to increase philanthropic funding	Increased philanthropic funding	Health and medical research institutes NTG	
Strengthen the Territory's health research capabilities through assisting health research institutions to secure more stable funding sources	Review of public and other funding sources and options to create greater certainty	NTG	
Encourage collaboration between health research institutions to attract grant funding from national agencies, international governments and institutes	Increased success rate in funding and grants from national agencies, international governments and institutes	Industry	
Increase collaboration between health research and health service providers in the Northern Territory	Increased number of co-funded joint positions between health and medical research institutes, CDU, Flinders and Northern Territory health service providers Development of a Territory health services research agenda	Health and medical research institutes NT health service providers NTG	
Explore opportunities to co-locate clinical teaching and research staff and students at the Palmerston Regional Hospital site	Concept and business case developed	NTG Menzies	







## 5.2 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The creative industries are driven by individual creativity, ideas, skill and talent. They have the potential to grow and contribute to innovative economies and communities. The creative industries contribute to the liveability and economic development of the Northern Territory. They can be a source of innovation that other sectors draw upon, and earn income from selling diverse products, services and intellectual property through entertainment, visual and performing arts, cultural collections, fashion, food culture, publishing, advertising, design, architecture, media, information technology and creative software applications.

The Northern Territory is well recognised nationally and internationally for its landscapes and settings and its Aboriginal communities, culture and art. There are significant opportunities to use these features to further develop the Territory’s creative industries sector and maintain a competitive advantage in business and tourism.

Our landscapes are often a canvas for artists – a source of stories and an inspiration for creative endeavour. Aboriginal history, customs, knowledge and connections to land create Aboriginal experiences, products and knowledge that many other sectors such as tourism, health and natural resource management draw upon.

The collective contribution of the creative industries sector may be under-appreciated by many Territorians because the industry is a diverse group of often small suppliers. There is a clear opportunity to strengthen the collaboration within the industry so that there are opportunities to discuss how resources could be used more effectively, how to innovate, how to sequence events and how to better integrate with the tourism sector. The Territory’s creative industries sector can be a strong drawcard to attract visitors and diversify and increase income for industry participants as well as drive truly innovative ideas and knowledge-led solutions to economic and social development.




High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Establish frameworks to measure the value and impact of creative industries to inform policy and strategy development	Frameworks to assess economic, social and cultural impacts developed and implemented	NT Govt (NTG) Industry	
Develop iconic arts trails in the Northern Territory incorporating galleries and museums with a focus on Aboriginal art and culture	Increased tourist numbers	NTG Industry Traditional Owners	
Work with stakeholders to develop a Creative Industries Strategy to focus on capacity building, partnerships and growth opportunities	Creative Industries Strategy developed	NTG Industry	
Establish a Creative Industries Business Council	Creative Industries Business Council established	Industry NTG	
Work with Aboriginal organisations to expand the range of Aboriginal cultural products	Increase the number of Aboriginal cultural products listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse	NTG Industry Traditional Owners	
Improve skills and knowledge of creative industry board members	Associations Act requirements met Improved industry capability, sustainability and growth	Industry	

## 5.3 RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Northern Territory Government has a target of 50 per cent of our electricity from renewable sources by 2030. Given our natural advantages, solar energy is the most promising way to achieve this. When the Roadmap to Renewables report is released it will contain recommendations for Government to consider. Government will then develop a strategy to pursue the 50 per cent target.

Renewable energy could improve the competitive position of a broad range of businesses if it could be harnessed to deliver lower cost electricity than alternative fuel sources.

The sector provides an opportunity for Territory businesses to integrate best-practice technologies in solar power generation, storage and management, and this expertise could be sold by Territory firms to earn income from outside the Northern Territory.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Achieve a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030	50 per cent renewables achieved by 2030	NT Govt (NTG) Industry	
Consider outcomes and recommendations of the Roadmap to Renewables report	Report delivered and recommendations considered	NTG	
Support Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) to attract research and development funds	Increased research funds sourced	CAT CDU NTG	










## 5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

A healthy and intact environment is the key to a sustainable economy. A healthy environment supports healthy and safe communities and ensures future generations can experience the natural beauty and wonder the Territory has to offer. The Northern Territory environment underpins our economy, from tourism to primary industry to our art and creative industries and our resources sector.

There is a range of environmental service providers in the Northern Territory that seek to generate wealth from managing the sustainability of our natural resources. These service providers include environmental consultants, ecologists, natural resource managers, scientists, remediation experts, agronomists, Aboriginal rangers, and researchers across a range of areas.

These specialists have expertise in tropical, arid and coastal environments which are replicated elsewhere in Australia and in some of our near neighbours. There is a good opportunity to use this expertise to better manage and further develop our natural resources, as well as to earn export income from selling these services to our near neighbours.

Science, research and robust analysis play a central role in understanding the likely outcomes of different management and development decisions. Charles Darwin University (CDU) leads a number of national research collaborations across the natural, spatial, physical and social sciences and is internationally recognised for its world class environmental science research.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Establish a Land Management and Conservation Fund to build the capacity of Aboriginal ranger programs and associated community-based land management enterprises	Land Management and Conservation Fund established Aboriginal ranger capacity increased	NT Govt (NTG) Aust Govt Land Councils Traditional Owners	
Establish an Aboriginal Carbon Unit and identify new opportunities for carbon farming and abatement initiatives	Carbon farming and abatement opportunities developed	NTG Industry Land Councils Traditional Owners	
Facilitate forums for environmental services providers to share information and develop relationships within the sector and with other industries	Forums facilitated	Industry	
Develop and implement an environmental offsets policy	Policy implemented	NTG	
Explore the potential for an Environmental Services Centre of Excellence to examine environmental issues the Territory has to deal with	Undertake scoping and feasibility studies undertaken with industry	NTG CDU Industry	
Establish an Aboriginal Water Unit to support economic development opportunities on Aboriginal land	Economic opportunities identified and realised	NTG	
Finalise and implement the Coastal Marine Management Strategy	Strategy implemented	NTG Industry Traditional Owners	

## 5.5 HUMAN SERVICES






Changing the way that governments deliver human services can create economic development opportunities in regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory. A greater focus on skilling local people to deliver services will have tremendous benefits for workforce development, participation and engagement at the local level, bringing with it significant economic and social benefits.

The opportunity for locals to deliver human services within their communities is an alternative to relying on a fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out workforce, and ensures a higher proportion of wages stays in communities. A mobile specialist workforce

will still be important, and these specialists will support a local workforce which recognises cultural sensitivities and customs.

The short-term catalyst for change will be the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) across the Northern Territory where there is a clear focus on providing opportunities for local service providers to deliver services. The same focus can be extended to public service roles such as teachers, police officers, nurses, trainers, child and aged care workers, teacher’s aides and youth workers.

This will require innovative contemporary organisational practices and new delivery models.

High level action	Measure	Lead/Partners	Lever
Develop a framework to deliver more human services using local businesses	Framework is developed and implemented	NT Govt (NTG) Industry	
Explore incentives and support that can encourage regional and remote service providers to deliver services using local businesses and staff, and build the capacity of local businesses	Viable incentives identified Funding opportunities identified Options provided to government for consideration	NTG Industry	
Explore the potential for a Centre of Excellence, including innovator-in-residence, for the innovative delivery of human services in remote settings, potentially based in Alice Springs but servicing all of northern and remote Australia	Feasibility study completed	NTG Industry	
Upskill, reskill, train and educate Territorians, particularly Aboriginal Territorians, to build capacity in the human services sector by delivering focussed education and training (including language, literacy and numeracy)	A better skilled workforce Language, literacy and numeracy improvements	Education and training providers NTG Industry	
Build the capacity of non-government organisations and their boards in contemporary organisational practices to prepare for new opportunities	Improved industry capability, sustainability and growth Organisations successfully deliver new service models	NTG Industry	

## APPENDIX A

### THREE-YEAR WORK PROGRAM AND REGULATORY REFORM AGENDA FOR NT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

#### Strategy/Plan/Policy

##### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Infrastructure Strategy	10 Year Museums Master Plan
Ten Year Infrastructure Plan	Iconic National Indigenous Cultural Centre in Alice Springs
Population Plan	Strategic Indigenous Water Reserves Policy
Climate Change Policy	Carbon Farming Strategy
Local Decision Making Policy	Coastal Marine Management Strategy
Regional Masterplan	Gas Minerals Industry Development Strategic Plan
Renewables Policy	Mining Environmental Approvals Regulatory Reform
Indigenous Economic Development and Jobs Plan	Agribusiness and Aquaculture Strategy
Strategic Water Review	Recreational Fishing Infrastructure Program
Defence Strategic Action Plan	Energy Policy
Local Industry Participation Policy	Tropical Health and Sciences Strategic Plan
NT Business Innovation Strategy	Northern Territory Digital Strategy
International Education and Training Strategy	
International Engagement, Trade and Investment Strategic Plan	<b>Regulatory Reform</b>
Investment Policy	Review of short-stay accommodation (e.g. Air BnB, Stayz etc.)
Offshore Oil and Gas Supply and Services Strategy	Review existing formal and informal infrastructure contribution policies
Annual Update – Rolling 10 Year+ Infrastructure Plan	Swimming pool safety review
Greater Darwin (Growth Areas) Planning Vision	Commercial passenger vehicle regulations
NT Wide Logistics Strategy	Planning Reform
Planning Reform Project	Regulations made under the <i>National Electricity (Northern Territory) (National Uniform Legislation) Act</i>
Tourism Industry Infrastructure and Product Strategy	Harper Competition and Productivity Enhancing Regulatory Reforms
Creative Industries Strategic Plan	



MyFuel NT

Amendment to the *Taxation Administration Act* to improve stamp duty collection processes

Insurance returns

Real property third party reporting

Royalty and petroleum returns

Electronic conveyancing

National Business Simplification Initiative

New *Local Government Act*

New *Cemeteries Act*

Local Government By-Laws Project

Environmental Regulatory Reform Program

Inclusion of Mining and Petroleum Activities under the *Water Act*

Minor amendments to the *Pastoral Land Act*

Proposed transfer of mining environmental regulations

Review of the *Petroleum Act*

Amendments to the *Mineral Titles Act* and Mineral Titles Regulations

Amendments to the *Mining Management Act*

Animal Protection Bill 2016

*Biological Control Act*

Fisheries regulations

Review of the *Racing and Betting Act*

Review of the *Agents Licensing Act* and accompanying regulations

Amendment to *Associations Act*



## Department of Trade, Business and Innovation

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**Deloitte.**



# Aboriginal Land vs Native Title Ownership: Key Differences

Feature	Aboriginal Land ( <i>Land Rights Act</i> )	Native Title ( <i>Native Title Act</i> )
Transferability	Aboriginal freehold land granted under the <i>Land Rights Act</i> cannot be sold. It can only be transferred to another Land Trust or surrendered to the Crown.	Recognition of native title at common law in accordance with the framework under the <i>Native Title Act</i> - native title cannot be sold or transferred but it can be surrendered to the Territory.
Acquisition	Aboriginal land cannot be compulsorily acquired by the Northern Territory. It can be compulsorily acquired by the Commonwealth.	Native title can be acquired by the Northern Territory in accordance with the <i>Lands Acquisition Act</i> and the <i>Native Title Act</i> .
Application of Northern Territory laws	Northern Territory laws will only apply on Aboriginal land to the extent that they are capable of operating concurrently with the <i>Land Rights Act</i> .	Native title is subject to all valid Northern Territory and Commonwealth laws.
Access	Access is regulated by a permit system.	Only exclusive native title holders may regulate access.
Leasing/licensing	Aboriginal land can be leased or licensed with the involvement of the relevant Land Council.	The holders of exclusive possession native title land can grant rights of access and use.
Mining and petroleum approvals	Mining and petroleum approvals are subject to a special procedure - a power of veto is available to Traditional Owners.	Good faith negotiations may be required to obtain mining approvals for mining and petroleum projects, but no power of veto.
Dealings with land under claim	Once land is subject to a land claim there are restrictions on dealing with the land.	Native title holders and registered native title claimants are entitled to the procedural rights set out in the <i>Native Title Act</i> prior to the grants of new rights and interests by the Northern Territory (e.g. right to negotiate).

## Key Initiatives for Overcoming the Challenges of Economic Development on Aboriginal Land

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
<b>Aboriginal Affairs Strategy</b>	The Department of the Chief Minister is currently developing a renewed NT Aboriginal Affairs Strategy in alignment with a refresh of the Council of Australian Governments Closing the Gap Framework. This will be shaped through working in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities to drive community control and improve and strengthen cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes.	The Department of the Chief Minister
<b>Aboriginal Business Development Program (ABDP)</b>	<p>The Aboriginal Business Development Program assists Aboriginal people to start or expand their business with grants between \$1000 and \$30,000. Business must be more than 50% Aboriginal owned and operated, and based in the NT. When applicable, application must show commitment from land councils.</p> <p>Those receiving grants will also be offered support from a local small business champion aimed at boosting business performance, profitability and sustainability.</p>	The Department of Trade, Business and innovation
<b>Aboriginal Carbon Industry Strategy</b>	<p>Across north Australia there are 80 registered savanna burning projects, 25 of which are located within the NT, producing fifty two percent of all savanna burning Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU). Fifty five percent of the savanna burning projects in the NT are Aboriginal operated and generate 92% of all NT ACCUs generated from savanna burning projects. These projects create jobs and generate important economic activity on Aboriginal land while also allowing Aboriginal communities and ranger programs to realise other conservation, economic development, social and cultural outcomes.</p> <p>To guide the NT Government's commitment to Aboriginal carbon projects and to support the sustainability, growth and long-term future of the NT's carbon industry, in October 2018 the Aboriginal Carbon Unit within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources developed an Aboriginal Carbon Industry Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy focuses on five key areas of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a policy framework to provide certainty and a stable base for industry development.</li> <li>• Improving awareness by promoting the industry across government and the wider community.</li> </ul>	Department of Environment and Natural Resources

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing impediments to long-term growth and project development.</li> <li>• Identifying new opportunities for industry development and growth.</li> <li>• Streamlining access to support services for industry start-up and development.</li> </ul> <p>A key role of the Strategy is to support traditional owners seeking to create sustainable enterprises through carbon abatement and sequestration.</p>	
<p><b>Aboriginal Contracting Framework</b></p>	<p>The NT Government spends \$3.8 billion on contracting activities every year and would like the investment in these activities to increase job and business opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians.</p> <p>To this end, Cabinet endorsed the development of a new Aboriginal Contracting Framework (the Framework). The Framework will support local Aboriginal employment and economic development through government contracting activities (procurement and grants).</p> <p>An initial two rounds of stakeholder consultation has been finalised and a draft of the Framework is being developed with a view to release for public comment.</p>	<p>The Department of Trade, Business and Innovation</p>
<p><b>Aboriginal Land and Sea Economic Development Agency</b></p>	<p>The Northern Land Council (NLC) and Central Land Council (CLC) have developed a joint economic development framework which includes, as a cornerstone, the establishment of the Aboriginal Land and Sea Economic Development Agency (ALSEDA). It is intended that ALSEDA provide funds to establish enterprises / businesses on Aboriginal land and coordinate the stakeholders required to ensure their success.</p> <p>Over the last three financial years the NT Government invested \$1.097 million in the establishment of ALSEDA.</p>	<p>Northern and Central Land Councils</p>
<p><b>Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program</b></p>	<p>In 2016 there were 46 established Ranger groups throughout the NT, with approximately 1000 Rangers (full time, part time and casual). These groups implement fire, weed and feral animal management, and protect and promote cultural resource knowledge. The programs are supported by a variety of resources including grant income from governments and philanthropic organisations; fee for service income for biosecurity, land and sea management and resource development; and commercial revenue from community-based enterprises and carbon abatement projects.</p>	<p>The Department of Environment and Natural Resources</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	<p>Most Aboriginal Ranger groups remain significantly under-resourced to tackle the scale of the management tasks they are faced with. Funding uncertainty and lack of resources, combined with gaps in capability and/or inadequate strategic planning, mean that conservation and other outcomes are often not fully realised.</p> <p>The NT Government's <i>Protecting Country, Creating Jobs</i> initiative supports Aboriginal rangers to continue to protect the environment and create jobs. This includes a Capital Grants Fund for Aboriginal ranger groups to help purchase essential items, with funding of \$4.1 million over 2 years; and a Land Management and Conservation Fund to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal land, with funding of \$2 million per annum from 2017/2018.</p> <p>Positive implications for employment, education, maintenance of culture, community well-being, economic development and maintenance of "healthy" country.</p>	
<b>Aboriginal Tourism Strategic Plan</b>	<p>In 2018 the Department of Tourism and Culture engaged local Territory firm Ambrose Indigenous Business Ltd, in conjunction with national agency MI Associates, to develop the NT Aboriginal Tourism Strategic Plan. A final draft of the document is expected by mid 2019. The Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Committee will be closely involved in the development of the strategy, as well as other Aboriginal people and businesses involved in tourism.</p>	Department of Tourism and Culture
<b>Proposed NT Coastal and Marine Management Strategy</b>	<p>The Northern Territory Government is currently developing a Northern Territory Coastal and Marine Management Strategy (the Strategy). Implementation expected from 2019 – 2028.</p> <p>Some of the guiding principles of the Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aboriginal ownership, obligations and cultural values should be recognised and traditional lifestyle practices sustained;</li> <li>• local and remote communities should be empowered to participate in decision-making processes;</li> <li>• a partnership approach to management that identifies common goals, and operates in good faith, should be adopted;</li> </ul>	

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management decisions should be based on the best available evidence, including scientific, Traditional, community and business/industry knowledge; and</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implementation of Indigenous Reference Group Recommendations</b></p>	<p>In October 2018, the NT Government, through the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development, publically endorsed 16 recommendations by the Indigenous Reference Group across the following six areas of action to improve indigenous economic participation in Northern Development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. creating jobs, fostering labour participation, entrepreneurship and business acumen;</li> <li>2. knowledge management systems and research and development to support Indigenous commercial end-users;</li> <li>3. infrastructure investment to support Indigenous economic development;</li> <li>4. access to capital and domestic and international markets;</li> <li>5. activating the economic value of land, water, sea and cultural resources; and</li> <li>6. institutional arrangements that work to activate, accelerate and optimise indigenous economic development across Northern Australia.</li> </ol> <p>As will be evident from this submission, the NT government is already engaged in a variety of initiatives in these areas. Nevertheless, we remain committed to implementing the IGR recommendations.</p>	<p>Whole of NT Government</p>
<p><b>Infrastructure Plan</b></p>	<p>Infrastructure is a key enabler of economic development, which underpins our capacity to create jobs, increase productivity and stimulate growth. Infrastructure supports the quality of our social well-being, the future of our children, our cultural and lifestyle experiences and the services we use every day.</p> <p>The 10 Year Infrastructure Plan (the Plan) is informed by the NT Economic Development Framework and the Infrastructure Strategy, providing an assessment of where sectors have prioritised infrastructure investment and planned and proposed infrastructure projects over a 10 year horizon.</p>	<p>Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics</p>



<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)</b>
	<p>In the short term the Plan will help industry with its own planning and workforce management and inform decision-making across all levels of government. Over the longer term, the Plan sets direction for planning and delivering infrastructure in the Northern Territory.</p> <p>As infrastructure priorities can change in response to changing demands from the community, new technologies and changes to growth and essential sectors, the Plan will be a living document which is refreshed annually. Following its first annual review, an updated Plan was released in September 2018</p>	
<b>Local Decision Making</b>	<p>The NT Government recognises that building, supporting and investing in strong Aboriginal governance is necessary to ensure local people drive local solutions, and that Aboriginal organisations are supported in managing local decision making.</p> <p>To this end, the NT Government has committed to Local Decision Making, a 10 year commitment to provide opportunities to transfer, where possible, government service delivery to Aboriginal people and organisations based on their community aspirations, thus enhancing the capacity of communities to manage and decide matters regarding the use of their land.</p> <p>Local Decision Making enables Government and Aboriginal communities to work together on developing policies and practices for service delivery in areas such as housing; local government; education, training and jobs; health; children and families; and law and justice.</p> <p>Importantly, Local Decision Making will only occur if the people and organisations in a community want to be involved. The Department of the Chief Minister will work with organisations like Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory to ensure that consultations with people and community are appropriate and transparent. In addition, an Aboriginal Affairs Sub-Committee of Cabinet has been established to provide oversight of the process.</p>	The Department of the Chief Minister
<b>Mapping the Future</b>	<p>Mapping the Future is a NT Government program focusing on improving natural resource capability to enable the sustainable use of resources and to support development. The five year, \$10 million program will provide data and baseline information to enable prefeasibility assessments for government and private sector investment, strategic land use planning, definition of priority development zones, and an evidence base to underpin the sustainable management and use of NT natural resources.</p>	The Department of Environment and Natural Resources

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	Aboriginal land in the following areas have been identified as priority areas under the program: Katherine (including Binjarri, Jawoyn and Barnjarn), Daly River/Port Keats (Wadeye), and Western Davenport (including Warrabri and Iliyarne).	
<b>Native Title System Reforms</b>	<p>The NT Government supports the proposed reforms to the native title system and notes that the following are of particular relevance in the context of streamlining consent processes, which can be complex and resource intensive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide native title groups greater flexibility around internal processes, including to allow a majority of the native title group to make decisions or sign native title agreements, rather than requiring all members to act together.</li> <li>• to enable native title groups to provide standing instructions to Prescribed Bodies Corporates authorising them to make certain decisions without the need to obtain consent in every instance, reducing the time and cost of following the consultation and consent process.</li> </ul>	Commonwealth Government
<b>NT Government Land and Sea Action Plan</b>	<p>The Department of the Chief Minister has developed an Aboriginal Land and Sea Action Plan (the Action Plan) to ensure land and sea ownership delivers on the economic and social aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians.</p> <p>The Action Plan proposes the following 10 actions for implementation by the NT Government:</p> <p><b>Action 1:</b> <i>Resolve outstanding land claims</i></p> <p>The NT Government will work with Land Councils, Commonwealth and the Aboriginal Land Commissioner to resolve all 41 outstanding land claims.</p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> <i>Resolve Blue Mud Bay access arrangements</i></p> <p>The NT Government will work with NLC and key industry stakeholders to work out long-term access arrangements for waters overlaying ALRA land, providing certainty for traditional owners, industry and the public.</p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> <i>Progress the Aboriginal Land Commissioner’s recommended changes to Part IV of the ALRA, which relates to exploration and mining on Aboriginal land</i></p>	The Department of the Chief Minister

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	<p>The NT Government will continue to participate in a working group with land councils and the Commonwealth, to develop a position on which review recommendations of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner should be implemented.</p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> <i>Develop an NT Government Native Title Policy Framework</i></p> <p>The framework will provide for a more consistent approach to native title across the NT Government. As part of the development of the Policy Framework, consideration will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how land subject to native title may be leased or sold without affecting the underlying native title rights and interests; and</li> <li>• recognising and recording native title determinations in the Northern Territory Land Information System.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 5:</b> <i>Develop a strategic approach to tenure and other issues in mining towns that will eventually become Aboriginal land</i></p> <p>The NT Government will work to provide certainty for towns transitioning to a post-mining future.</p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> <i>Work to enhance the opportunities for long-term leasing on Aboriginal land</i></p> <p>To facilitate economic development, the NT Government will work with land councils to develop long term leasing models that are recognised and supported by industry and financiers. Township leasing options will also be explored.</p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> <i>Support the management of Aboriginal land</i></p> <p>Given the Aboriginal Territorians have rights and interests over a large proportion of the Territory's land mass and coastline, it is important that they be assisted in their management of them by the NT Government.</p> <p><b>Action 8:</b> <i>Support economic development and employment on Aboriginal land</i></p>	

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	<p>The NT Government seeks to support the economic development initiatives of land councils and traditional owners to help deliver on the economic aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians.</p> <p><b>Action 9:</b> <i>Make improvements to Northern Territory legislation and administrative processes</i></p> <p>The NT Government has identified a number of legislative and administrative improvements it can make, including possible reforms to recognise the role of ranger groups through the provision of enforcement powers and to remove the need for development consent for leases over 12 years on Aboriginal land under the <i>Planning Act</i> (NT).</p> <p><b>Action 10:</b> <i>Support improvements to Commonwealth legislative processes</i></p> <p>The NT Government will look to improve, among other things, the operation of the <i>Native Title Act</i> and ensure the <i>Land Rights Act</i> works seamlessly with the Control of Roads Act and other NT roads legislation.</p> <p>Implementing these actions will allow the NT Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take a partnership approach to reach agreement on Aboriginal land and sea matters with land councils, traditional owners, the Commonwealth Government and other affected stakeholders;</li> <li>• strategically coordinate land and sea matters across NT Government agencies;</li> <li>• remove administrative and legislative barriers that may be preventing traditional owners from benefiting from their land and sea rights; and</li> <li>• support land councils as they begin to shift their focus from land acquisition to land management and economic development.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Procurement Framework</b></p>	<p>The NT Government's Procurement Framework has been updated to support Aboriginal employment and enterprise through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthened requirements for Aboriginal Development Plans for infrastructure tenders over \$5m; and</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Trade, Business and Innovation</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stronger emphasis on Aboriginal employment and supply opportunities in Agency Procurement Management Plans.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Proposed <i>Pastoral Land Act</i> Amendments</b></p>	<p>The NT Government, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is currently developing reforms to the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i> (NT) to enhance diversification opportunities for pastoralists by expanding the range of non-pastoral purposes for which a sublease can be granted. While activities such as forestry and agriculture may already be undertaken with a non-pastoral use permit, these do not provide the same security to banks and private financiers as long-term subleases.</p> <p>Consistent with the concerns raised by the Northern and Central Land Councils regarding the potential impact subleases for non-pastoral purposes may have on coexisting native title rights, and interests, the proposed reforms will also provide for an increased level of consultation and negotiation with native title holders, or registered claimants. However, no right of veto is being considered.</p>	<p>Department of Environment and Natural Resources</p>
<p><b>Remote Housing Investment Package</b></p>	<p>A good home provides firm foundations for positive health, education and employment outcomes, and helps to build a strong sense of community.</p> <p>To this end, the NT Government has committed to improving housing in remote communities with an investment of \$1.1 billion over 10 years. The investment is funded through four programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Homebuild NT:</b> \$500 million over 10 years for the construction of new public housing;</li> <li>• <b>Room to Breathe:</b> \$200 million over 10 years to increase living spaces in existing homes to ease overcrowding;</li> <li>• <b>Repairs and Maintenance:</b> \$200 million over 10 years for repairs and maintenance; and</li> <li>• <b>Government Employee Housing:</b> \$200 million over 10 years to expand Government Employee Housing to include locally recruited NT Government employees in remote areas.</li> </ul> <p>The investment will be based on the principles of Local Decision Making, ensuring communities have input into what housing looks like in their community.</p>	<p>Department of Housing and Community Development</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)
	Another key component of the package is to ensure that the work benefits Aboriginal businesses, leading to job creation and capacity development.	
<b>Small Business Champions</b>	<p>The Small Business Champion (SBC) team is a network of officers located across the Territory supporting NT small businesses to Start.Run.Grow and innovate through business support services and programs to boost business performance, profitability and sustainability.</p> <p>The SBC team manage the business growth program which offers businesses information, funding and development services to improve the performance, profitability, employment levels and market penetration of NT businesses, not-for-profit organisations and Aboriginal enterprises.</p> <p>Visitation schedules in place for 15 major remote communities. 25 Small Business Champions are located in all regions. In 2017-2018 SBCs engaged with 1,496 businesses, 335 of which were Aboriginal businesses.</p>	Department of Trade, Business and Innovation
<b>Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve Policy Framework</b>	<p>In October 2017 the NT Government established the Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve Policy Framework (the Policy). A strategic Aboriginal water reserve is a volume of water, allocated in a water allocation plan, set aside for exclusive use or trade by eligible Aboriginal people. Eligibility is defined by ownership of land in particular categories and with direct physical access to water resources.</p> <p>The Policy seeks to ensure water resources are more equitably allocated to support future economic participation, either through Aboriginal enterprise or partnerships or shared-equity in development projects.</p> <p>It is also planned for the <i>Water Act</i> (NT) to be amended to provide for a new beneficial use category known as 'strategic Aboriginal water reserves'. This will assist in the longevity of the policy.</p>	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
<b>Treaty</b>	<p>On 8 June 2018 the NT Government and the four Land Councils signed the Burunga Agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the development of a framework for negotiating a Treaty (or treaties) with the Aboriginal Territorians that would acknowledge their sovereignty in respect of the land and seas of the NT.</p> <p>The MOU recognises that any Treaty must:</p>	The Department of the Chief Minister

<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY(S)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• stand to achieve real change and substantive, long term, benefits for Aboriginal people;</li><li>• address structural barriers to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory; and</li><li>• provide for economic, social and cultural benefits.</li></ul> <p>Under the terms of the MOU, the NT Government will appoint an independent Treaty Commissioner who will lead the consultations with Aboriginal people and organisations across the Territory, and develop a framework for Treaty negotiations.</p> <p>The Land Councils and the Northern Territory Government will make their extensive regional staffing networks available to the Treaty Commission to organise consultations in communities.</p>	