



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Ministerial Forum on Northern Development: Joint Communiqué - September 2017

Publication Date: September 2017

Joint Communiqué

Darwin, 1 September 2017

The Forum was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP. Other members of the Forum are the Hon Michael Gunner MLA, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and Minister for Northern Australia; the Hon Coralee O'Rourke MP, Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland; and the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC, Minister for Regional Development from Western Australia.

Ministers reiterated the strong commitment to developing the north from all four jurisdictions and agreed the Forum will initially focus on the following shared development priorities: economic infrastructure (including transport, logistics, energy and digital); agriculture and aquaculture; resources and gas; Indigenous business, innovation and growth; defence; innovative economic incentives; and social infrastructure.

Ministers noted the Deputy Prime Minister's options to make the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility more flexible to better deliver transformative investment in the north.

Ministers will develop a programme of joint actions to be agreed at their next meeting. To avoid duplication and regulatory burden, these collaborative actions will be informed by an audit of existing government-led investments and policy measures being delivered across all four jurisdictions.

Ministers also noted the importance of understanding infrastructure needs across important sectors such as transport and logistics, energy, and resources and planning for new infrastructure in a collaborative manner. To this end, they agreed to invite relevant Infrastructure Ministers to attend the next meeting of the Forum to discuss strategic infrastructure priorities and ways to deliver these.

In terms of immediate actions, Ministers agreed to work together to identify roads of significance that will deliver productivity and safety improvements across the northern Australia road network, including roads used in the resources, agriculture, beef and tourism industries. This collaboration would build on the comprehensive engagement and

prioritisation approach developed as part of the \$700 million in Commonwealth funding for the Northern Australia Roads and Northern Australia Beef Roads programmes delivered through the Australian Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. Each jurisdiction will consider how longer term plans (focussing on initial priorities for the next five years) can be developed to provide certainty for industry, investors and communities.

The first meeting of the Forum was also attended by the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion and senior Indigenous leaders from across northern Australia. The presence of senior Indigenous leaders at this inaugural meeting ensures that the northern development agenda is inclusive of Indigenous interests and provides tangible benefits for Indigenous land owners, workers and businesses.

This first meeting focused on Indigenous business, innovation and growth. Ministers committed to support ongoing engagement with the Indigenous leaders. The leaders were invited by Ministers to bring to the next Forum suggested actions to develop the Indigenous business sector, grow the capability of Indigenous land owners to engage in development and support Indigenous innovation in northern Australia.

Mr Peter Yu, a Yawuru man from Broome and CEO, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, noted on behalf of Indigenous leaders that this was an historic day and that never before had there been such engagement at a senior level from governments of this matter of national importance.

Ministers agreed that the beef industry is part of the fabric of northern Australia, with common opportunities and challenges and there is potential to build greater cooperation and innovation through the entire supply chain.

Ministers noted the opportunity for new and exciting aquaculture developments in northern Australia and agreed to work together to assess actions required to accelerate the development of aquaculture industries in northern Australia to attract private investment and grow jobs.

Ministers also discussed the importance of the resources sector, including new and emerging opportunities in rare earth minerals.

The Ministers welcomed the invitation from Minister MacTiernan to meet in early 2018 for the next Forum in Kununurra, WA.



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Ministerial Forum on Northern Development: Joint Communiqué - April 2018

Publication Date: April 2018

Joint Communiqué

Kununurra, 18 April 2018

Economic development in northern Australia took a step forward today, with the second Ministerial Forum on Northern Development concluding in Kununurra.

Ministers from the Australian Government and the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australian governments kicked off discussion by acknowledging the good will and commitment to work together to create real opportunities for northern Australians.

The Forum provides cross-jurisdictional leadership to drive progress with the northern development policy agenda.

Ministers agreed to work together to continue to fund vital roads and water infrastructure across the north. Funding of more than \$1 billion dollars has been agreed for roads and water infrastructure across the north since 2015. Ministers committed to work together to fund future shared priorities including working towards a 10-year rolling roads program.

Ministers discussed the initial list of projects on the [Northern Australia Pipeline of Projects](https://www.nics.gov.au/project/NAPOPprojects) (<https://www.nics.gov.au/project/NAPOPprojects>), which has now been published.

Ministers also agreed to develop improved infrastructure assessment tools to enable better understanding of the benefits and costs of investing in infrastructure in the north.

Ministers welcomed the Australian Government's announced changes to the Investment Mandate of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, and agreed to work closely together to support the success of this new mandate. These changes will expand the types of infrastructure that the NAIF can fund and will increase the amount the NAIF can lend to any individual project. While the NAIF has developed a strong pipeline of projects, the conversion of these projects to financial close has been challenging. State and Territory Ministers have agreed to ongoing support of the NAIF and welcome the opportunity for a broader approach to the identification of infrastructure priorities to see projects that could be eligible under the amended Investment Mandate of the NAIF.

Ministers also agreed that senior officials would explore opportunities for an approach to regional development hubs.

Northern Australia - Australia's economic powerhouse

Unlocking the full potential of northern Australia requires collaboration by governments at all levels.

Ministers agreed to continue to advocate for and champion northern Australia, and promote investment opportunities following on from the success of the first two investment forums.

To date the Australian Government, in partnership with the Queensland, Western Australian and Northern Territory governments, have successfully delivered 35 of the 51 commitments made under the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. These commitments are already making the north an even more attractive place to live and do business.

There is still more to do and together we are expanding this nation building agenda by working together to a shared plan to further build northern Australia into an economic powerhouse through investment, innovation, and cooperation.

Collaborative vision

Today, the Forum has reconfirmed the importance of the northern agenda in addressing the joint priorities of through a shared [Development Statement for Northern Australia \(/data-and-publications/development-statement-for-northern-australia\)](/data-and-publications/development-statement-for-northern-australia) and agreeing to a program of forward work dedicated to actions that increase productivity, and encourage investment and create new jobs in northern Australia.

Economic Infrastructure

The Forum supports changes proposed by the Commonwealth to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility to remove the debt cap, re-define eligibility of infrastructure proposals, remove the requirement to comprehensively test the market gap for finance, and broaden the Investment Mandate. The Forum agreed to work together to support the NAIF and encourage the market to bring forward priority infrastructure projects for support through the Facility.

Ministers discussed the progress of the 37 projects under the \$600 million Northern Australia Roads Program (NARP) and the \$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Program. Ministers noted that as of April 2018, 27 projects had received formal Australian Government funding approval and that construction is underway on four of these projects. The projects underway are delivering critical upgrades to the Great Northern Highway between Maggie Creek and Wyndham in Western Australia, and the Kennedy Developmental Road, the Flinders Highway and the Clermont – Alpha Road in Queensland.

Ministers also acknowledged that construction on the first NARP project, which delivered upgrades to another key section of the Kennedy Developmental Road, was completed in February 2018.

Ministers discussed the initial list of projects on the Northern Australia Pipeline of Projects (NAPOP) and its intended role in guiding private sector investment in key sectors across northern Australia. Ministers noted that the NAPOP was not intended as a funding program, but to provide high-level information on possible projects that may be suitable for or facilitate private investment. Information on the NAPOP can be found at:

<https://www.nics.gov.au/project/NAPOPprojects>

(<https://www.nics.gov.au/project/NAPOPprojects>)

The next Infrastructure Australia Audit due in June 2019 will include an update on northern Australia, and through its evidence base, support the ongoing development of Infrastructure Australia's rolling 15 year Australian Infrastructure Plan as well as the Infrastructure Priority List.

Research across the north

The Forum noted the announcement by the CRC for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) to support the Cherabin aquaculture production project with funding of \$2.5 million over three years. The industry-led project is a collaboration between North Regional TAFE's Broome Aquaculture Centre (BAC) and the Ribinyung Dawang Aboriginal Corporation (RDAC) and will develop an Indigenous cherabin business opportunity, whilst building an Aboriginal workforce with transferable skills.

Indigenous leaders enhancing business innovation and growth

Ministers acknowledged the extensive body of work undertaken by the Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) to explore opportunities to unlock and maximise the economic potential of northern Australia for Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities.

Ministers agreed in principle to the 16 recommendations put forward to the Forum by the IRG and undertook to work closely to improve economic outcomes for Indigenous Australians in the north. They welcomed this opportunity to work closely with the Indigenous community and congratulated the members of the IRG for the positive proposals they have put forward.

The Northern Australia Advisory Council and the IRG met alongside the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development to discuss contemporary issues affecting the north including industry development, Indigenous business, economic infrastructure and long-term planning. Members of these groups represent a wide range of industries and groups that are essential for the jobs and economic growth in the north.

The Forum was chaired by the Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Senator the Hon Matt Canavan.

Other attendees were the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, and the Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Keith Pitt from the Australian Government; the Hon Michael Gunner, Chief Minister and Minister for Northern Australia, the Hon Nicole Manison, Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and Ms Selena Uiibo, Assistant Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for the Northern Territory; the Hon Alannah MacTiernan, Minister for Regional Development, for Western Australia; and the Hon Coralee O'Rourke, Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors, for Queensland.

Minister O'Rourke offered to host the next Forum in November 2018 in Queensland. Ministers agreed a focus of the November Forum would be around tourism and defence investment.



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Ministerial Forum on Northern Development: Joint Communiqué - November 2018

Publication Date: November 2018

Joint Communiqué

Mount Isa, Queensland, 8 November 2018

Accelerating growth of the northern economy is critical to a more prosperous and secure future for all Australians.

The third Ministerial Forum on Northern Development has today mapped out a joint approach to grow our northern tourism and defence industries sectors, and agreed to actions to further position Indigenous businesses as major players in the north.

Northern Tourism

Northern Australia is a tourism drawcard, filled with bucket list experiences, world-class natural wonders and a dynamic population passionate about the region's future.

Ministers acknowledged the report Northern Horizons – Unleashing our Tourism Potential produced by the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia. The Forum agreed that development of new tourism products and destinations, including investment in tourism infrastructure in northern Australia, is a priority to ensure the region can compete in the highly contested international and domestic tourism sectors.

Funding of \$150,000 was announced at the Forum to expand the Transport Network Strategic Investment Tool (TraNSIT) model to include tourism data. TraNSIT, which was developed by Australia's eminent science agency, CSIRO, is now used by governments and industry to support decisions on road investments and was first used for the Beef Roads in northern Australia. The tool has been expanded to all agriculture and forestry supply chains, and more recently to fuels and mining. It will now be expanded to include tourism which will provide greater understanding of tourism movements across Australia's vast road network which will receive an additional investment of over \$3.5 billion over the next 10 years to support Roads of Strategic Importance.

Defence

Northern Australia is strategically important for our nation's defence and national security. Ministers today endorsed a joint [Northern Australia and Defence Statement \(/data-and-publications/defence-statement-for-northern-australia\)](#) which affirms the ongoing commitment to defence and industry and ensures an ongoing strategic dialogue on defence investments and initiatives. This will equip the north with the right industry skills and technological capability to do its part in delivering upon the nation's strategic defence needs.

Ministers committed to maximising the Commonwealth's \$28 billion defence investment in northern Australia by strengthening defence capability. This investment will create jobs, expand the already skilled workforce and create a long term pipeline of infrastructure projects for future planning and investment.

Indigenous leaders enhancing business innovation and growth

Ministers acknowledged the importance and complexity of the work of the Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) to maximise the economic opportunity and contribution of northern Australian Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities. Ministers have committed to progressing the implementation of the IRG recommendations agreed in-principle at the second Ministerial Forum on Northern Development. The Office of Northern Australia and Forum Governments will work to progress key actions including expanding fee-for-service opportunities for ranger groups and scoping a Northern Australian Indigenous commercial research plan.

Ministers agreed to capture the extensive and collaborative work of the IRG on Indigenous economic development through a Northern Australian Indigenous Development Accord for consideration by the Northern Australian Strategic Partnership.

Other Activities

Ministers discussed the Northern Australia Water Resource Assessments for the Fitzroy River (WA), Mitchell River (QLD), and Finniss, Adelaide, Mary and Wildman Rivers (NT) and agreed to consider the assessments in line with water plans to inform decisions about future infrastructure and development options.

Ministers welcomed the changes brought about by the Australian Government's amendments to the Investment Mandate of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF), which has now approved loans totalling over \$1 billion, including conditional approvals.

Ministers discussed the progress of the 37 projects under the \$600 million Northern Australia Roads Program (NARP) and the \$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Program, and noted that 32 have approval with construction underway on 18 of these projects.

The Ministers acknowledged the Australian Government's Budget commitment for a 10-year \$1.5 billion rolling roads program through the northern Roads of Strategic Importance program and agreed to continue to engage further to ensure that projects are prioritised and funded to ensure a continuous pipeline of road upgrades across the north.

Ministers noted the importance of working in partnership with Infrastructure Australia to explore options for cost benefit analysis that better reflect northern contexts.

Ministers remain committed to a [shared vision for the development of northern Australia \(/data-and-publications/development-statement-for-northern-australia\)](/data-and-publications/development-statement-for-northern-australia) and are working together to increase productivity, investment and create new jobs.

The Hon Lauren Moss MLA, on behalf of the Northern Territory Chief Minister, offered to host the next Forum in the Northern Territory in the second quarter of 2019.

Details of the Forum

The Forum was chaired by the Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan.

Other attendees from the Commonwealth were Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs and the Hon Mark Coulton MP, Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment.

Representatives of the three northern jurisdictions were the Hon Jackie Trad, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Qld), the Hon Lauren Moss MLA, Minister for Tourism and Culture and Corporate and Information Services (NT), and the Hon Darren West MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Minister assisting the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade (WA).

MINISTERIAL FORUM ON NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

12 December 2019

Communiqué

The Ministerial Forum on Northern Development held its fourth meeting in Katherine in the Northern Territory today.

Chaired by the Hon Matthew Canavan, Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, the forum focussed on the next phase of the northern development agenda, and strategies to increase economic engagement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the north.

The Forum was attended by the Minister for Indigenous Australians the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Northern Territory Chief Minister the Hon Michael Gunner MLA, Northern Territory Minister for Primary Industries and Resources the Hon Paul Kirby MLA, Queensland Assistant Treasurer Mr Glenn Butcher MP, and Western Australian Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture, Food and Ports, the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC represented by Mr Ralph Addis Director General Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Ministers noted achievements delivered through the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. Under this plan the Australian Government has already delivered more than \$6.2 billion in projects and infrastructure across the north from vital road upgrades, water infrastructure, Indigenous economic development and industry-led research.

Ministers did not agree with the draft findings of the Productivity Commission report on Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments. Northern Australian Ministers ask the Productivity Commission to provide options for reform of the zone tax allowance and fringe benefit tax concessions to positively influence future population growth.

New refreshed plan for northern Australia

Ministers committed to work together to develop a new refreshed plan for economic growth in northern Australia. This builds on the progress made since the White Paper was released in 2015.

Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, the Hon Matthew Canavan said “we should be proud of the progress that’s been made to drive economic development across the north, but our job isn’t done yet. We must keep reviewing where we are at and what else we can do through the 20 year agenda to deliver more outcomes for northern Australia”.

Five overarching areas for action were agreed to by Ministers:

- Population, jobs and industry growth – fostering industry development, and diversification to strengthen the economy, create jobs and drive population growth
- Connective and resilient infrastructure – to enable industries in the north to be internationally competitive and take advantage of proximity to Indo-Pacific markets; and to build the resilience of communities to provide stable infrastructure through natural disasters and other disruptions
- Skills and workforce development – ensuring industry has access to the skills to be competitive, and regional workforce capability is developed
- Indigenous economic development – improving economic outcomes by further developing the Indigenous business sector, land owner involvement in development, Indigenous innovation, and capitalising on land, sea and culture

- Attracting investment and efficient regulation – de-risking projects with better data, and by removing unnecessary regulation to create the right environment to give investors certainty and drive economic development.

Ministers agreed to appoint an advisory group to advise the Ministerial Forum on the northern Australia agenda refresh. The Australian Government will work with the State and Territory Governments to develop specific actions under these areas.

Queensland Assistant Treasurer Mr Glenn Butcher said “it’s the job of governments to create the right environment for economic growth, we are excited to be moving into the second five year phase of northern development, working together with the state and territory governments and with the Australian Government”.

Indigenous economic development

Ministers have launched the *Northern Australia Indigenous Development Accord* to drive a coordinated approach to economic activity, innovation and business opportunities.

The Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP said “the Accord sets out the commitment of governments to strengthen Indigenous economic participation, and we will engage land councils and other Indigenous bodies in this nationally significant development agenda”.

This was reinforced by the Indigenous Reference Group Chair, Mr Peter Yu who said “the Accord is a landmark agreement and milestone achievement in moving toward more equitable participation of Indigenous people in the northern Australian economy.”

Ministers acknowledged the importance of the Indigenous Reference Group and their work to maximise the economic opportunity and contribution of northern Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities. Additional funding was committed to extend the important work of the Indigenous Reference Group.

The Indigenous Reference Group will continue to work with Ministers and across governments to develop further proposals that will strengthen Indigenous economic outcomes in alignment with the new refreshed plan for northern Australia. This will include a prospectus for a Northern Australia Indigenous Economic Development Body, implementation of a Northern Australia Indigenous Enterprise and Employment Hub Network, an Indigenous economic research roadmap, and a water rights framework.

Infrastructure

Ministers recognised the importance of economic infrastructure to the northern agenda, noting the success of existing initiatives, including the Northern Australia Roads and Beef Roads Programs, the Roads of Strategic Importance, aviation and water infrastructure, and Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) investment decisions.

The acting Chief Executive Officer of the NAIF, Ms Amanda Copping updated Ministers on the economic impact of investments made under the NAIF, on funded projects totalling over \$1.9 billion, and the exciting pipeline of projects to be considered in 2020.

Minister Canavan said “announcing the Northern Territory Ship Lift project and the Charles Darwin University city campus project this week is a terrific achievement and highlights the enormous commitment to northern Australia by the Australian Government.”

Northern Territory Chief Minister Michael Gunner said "the Territory Government's number one priority is to create jobs for locals, and these NAIF investments build on that priority by developing transformational infrastructure for sustainable long term jobs."

Infrastructure continues to be a major priority at the forum. Ministers heard from Infrastructure Australia Chief Executive Officer Romilly Madew AO about how the application of the Cost Benefit Analysis needs to evolve to give greater regard to intangible benefits. Ministers were pleased to see progress on the review of Project Appraisal Guidance for Remote Areas and greater engagement with states and territory on northern Australia projects.

North Queensland Livestock Industry Recovery Agency

The Hon Shane Stone AC QC, Coordinator-General and Chairman of the Advisory Board National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency, addressed the forum on the progress made through the North Queensland Livestock Industry Recovery Agency to improve the resilience of regional communities affected by the disastrous floods of 2019.

Mr Stone also gave an update on the new National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency, providing national leadership and a whole-of-government response to support farmers and regional communities as they respond to, and recover from, the drought and the north Queensland floods.

"The north offers the greatest opportunity for Australia to meet the agricultural production target of \$100 billion by 2030. We must develop the right water infrastructure and support the agricultural sector to get there" said Mr Stone.

Next meeting

The Ministerial Forum remains focused on transforming the north through economic activation across a variety of sectors, attracting new infrastructure, investments and creating significant opportunities for employment and business participation," Western Australia Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture, Food and Ports, the Hon Alannah MacTiernan said.

The next Ministerial Forum on Northern Development will be hosted by the Western Australian Government in Broome in early 2020, to drive long term, sustainable economic development across northern Australia.



Indigenous Reference Group Meeting Communiqué

9-10 July 2019, Karratha

The Indigenous Reference Group to the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development (IRG) met in Karratha, Western Australian on 9 and 10 July 2019.

Members reiterated their shared ambition to accelerate the economic development of Indigenous Australians in northern Australia, by providing pragmatic recommendations and advice to the Ministerial Forum.

Members noted the effectiveness of the IRG in influencing the policy agenda relating to northern development, by ensuring that Indigenous perspectives are reflected in government decision-making and gaining the support of government for their recommendations.

Members were pleased with progress on their recommendation for a Northern Australia Indigenous Development Accord. The Accord will capture the extensive and collaborative work of the IRG on Indigenous economic development. It will signify the commitment by the Commonwealth, Western Australian, Northern Territory and Queensland Governments to continue working to accelerate economic development by Indigenous Australians in the north.

IRG received an update on governments' progress in implementing its recommendations. Members noted progress on the actions endorsed by Ministers at the Ministerial Forum in November 2018. This included expanding fee-for-service opportunities for ranger groups and scoping a Northern Australian Indigenous commercial research plan.

As an expert panel on Indigenous economic development, the IRG welcomed insights from invited speakers with local expertise on the challenges and opportunities for economic development in the Pilbara.

The IRG received updates from policy leaders in northern Australia, including the Office of Northern Australia, the Northern Australia Infrastructure Investment Fund, the CSIRO, Austrade, Geoscience Australia, Intellectual Property Australia, Infrastructure Australia and the Centre for Corporate Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia.

The IRG will continue its work to advance the economic development of Indigenous peoples in northern Australia, and will hold its next meeting ahead of the Ministerial Forum planned for the fourth quarter of 2019.

Indigenous Reference Group Meeting Communiqué

22-24 October 2019, Alice Springs

The Indigenous Reference Group to the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development (IRG) met in Alice Springs, Northern Territory on 22-24 October 2019.

The IRG welcomed the development of a new five-year plan for northern Australia, recognising it is an opportunity to bring a focus to areas not covered in the White Paper, particularly practical measures to support Indigenous economic outcomes in the northern agenda.

The IRG noted it had identified a series of actions that governments can take to realise the opportunities for Indigenous economic development as part of the northern development agenda. The IRG noted that a strong evidence base is central to its policy development work.

The meeting provided the opportunity for IRG members to receive an update on strategic engagement activities undertaken since the last meeting; to review and provide comment on IRG project work; and to discuss the IRG's strategic vision, forward agenda and future messaging.

IRG members appreciated the opportunity to hear from local Indigenous business operators about the opportunities and challenges in the region. The insights of local economic and regional development bodies were also valuable as was a practical example of leveraging Indigenous-held land assets for economic development.

IRG strategic engagement

The IRG noted that communication processes going forward will be particularly important as it and the Ministerial Forum start to consider significant policy issues. To this end members received an update from the Chair on his recent engagement with key northern economic development stakeholders in Brisbane, Sydney and Darwin. Engagement with Commonwealth stakeholders how the IRG vision for unlocking the Indigenous economic potential of Australia's north can be further progressed by the IRG will be undertaken in November.

Members who attended provided their insights on the outcomes from the World Indigenous Business Forum, held in Vancouver from 8-10 October 2019. Key messages from this forum included the value of self-governance arrangements and a regulatory framework that provides for capital to flow and the use of bonds to underwrite impact investing.

Implementation update

The IRG welcomed jurisdictions' commitment to a Northern Australia Indigenous Development Accord and that it is expected to be launched in Katherine at the Ministerial Forum on Northern Development meeting on 12 December 2019.

Members appreciated the opportunity to further explore the linkages with the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy, and compatible actions that complement the IRG recommendations and vision for unlocking the economic potential of the north.

The IRG confirmed its next meeting would be in Katherine on 10-11 December 2019.

Outcomes from the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting

Darwin, Sunday 10 December 2017

Background

The Indigenous Reference Group (IRG), comprising of Indigenous leaders from across the North, met in Darwin on 10 December to discuss how Indigenous themes can be integrated into the Northern Australia reform and development agenda. Their consideration focused on key issues which will underpin the market advantage of the Northern Economy within the context of an emerging Indigenous Economy, which are:

- i) to activate their rights in land, water and sea to drive an economic reform agenda, creating the foundations for investment and wealth creation; and
- ii) to develop supply chain and investment pathways which position Indigenous business in capital markets while leveraging the unique Indigenous value proposition, including its intellectual property and knowledge.

The IRG was united in their desire to call out the immediate potential of a co-design approach to Indigenous economic engagement covering all aspects of the Northern Australia agenda including the infrastructure agenda.

Agreed Principles

The IRG are unanimous that it is time for a transformative agenda. It agreed to a set of guiding principles which should underpin this development of the agenda which:

- i) is culturally respectful;
- ii) adopts a magnetic policy approach;
- iii) meets Australia's obligations agreed on United Nations protocols;
- iv) is research based and relies on empirically based decision making
- v) adheres to the principle of non-extinguishment of Native Title
- vi) leverages unique Indigenous interests to facilitate regulatory and competition reforms;
- vii) places Indigenous interests at the heart of existing and emerging markets including rights in land, intellectual property, water resources and practices
- viii) is scalable and flexible to meet the needs of Indigenous business
- ix) takes advantage of the new paradigm of global technological disruption;

Partnerships

At its meeting, the IRG met with senior executives from government agencies (including s22(1)) were given a commitment to the development partnerships which will maximise the development of a coherent agenda. The ongoing work across agencies and organisations highlighted the need for an adaptive learning process which recognised successes and provided a mechanism to share experiences.

Developing Key Actions

The IRG forecasts the need to adjust policy parameters that will refocus the existing Northern Australia policy narrative to include a strong Indigenous development agenda into the future. The IRG forecast a coherent dialogue around key actions and themes which will transform the development of the North, under three broad banners.

1. **ACTIVATE - Indigenous Assets to Enable Investment Readiness**

This should be a National Indigenous Economic Development Policy composing of:

- a. Land, sea and water reforms, which de-risk investment while providing protections and equity.
- b. Capability building strategies.
- c. Investment and capital raising incentives such as fiscal reforms and tax incentives.
- d. Partnerships with key agencies such as s22(1) .
- e. The integration of Government commitments to the Nagoya Protocol in the development of Intellectual Property and Knowledge Ownership.
- f. An integrated design of institutional architecture which can deliver for the Northern Indigenous Economy.

2. **ACCELERATE - Indigenous Business Trade and Investment Gateway**

The focus is to grow successful Indigenous entrepreneurship by:

- a. Developing supply chains which address domestic and international markets focussing on:
 - i. demand, delivery and supply;
 - ii. social impact assessment (including the level employment, market size and composition and supply targets); and
 - iii. leveraging procurement policies which focus on Indigenous workforce and business.
- b. Market and industry based R&D framed toward the Indigenous end-user addressing
 - i. a commissioning function to marry indigenous business and capital; and
 - ii. the development of capability to engage capital investment.
- c. Developing an Opportunity Audit to support the Northern Australia White Paper, the Defence White Paper and other Government commitments.
- d. Support Indigenous Business to succeed internationally through:
 - i. Engaging International Trade pipelines including direct interface such as Trade Missions; and
 - ii. Building supply sustainability.

3. **OPTIMISE - a Capital Infrastructure Package**

Draw together a Capital Infrastructure Package through existing and new frameworks such as the s22(1) and the emerging Social Impact Investment market.

Next Steps

The IRG expressed its view that the timing of this approach is critical given the emerging trends internationally in both the demand for goods and services (in Asia and beyond) and the development of innovative products and financing options. Given the convergence of issues and imperative for social development of the Indigenous residents of Northern Australia, it is committed to an ongoing program of work over the coming months involving:

- a Forum in late January 2018, which can build on the success of its December 2017 meeting; and
- working with the Government to co-design proposed actions and policy reforms in the lead up to the Ministerial Council which is scheduled for Kununurra in April 2018.

s22(1) meeting notes

IRG Meeting

9.00 am – 4:30 Tuesday, 10 December 2019

8:30 am – 11:50 am Wednesday, 11 December 2019

s22(1) Katherine Office, Level 1, Randazzo Building, 14 Katherine Terrace, Katherine

- Peter Yu (Chair)
- Lawford Benning
- Joe Morrison (via video conferencing)
- Donna Odegaard AM
- Nigel Browne
- Colin Saltmere
- Vonda Malone and Fiona Jose were apologies.

Day 1 Tuesday 10 December

Session/ agenda Item	Time	Topic	Presenter
1.	8:30 am	IRG Closed Session	
1.1.	8:30 – 8:35 am	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of any conflicts of interest 	Peter Yu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting commenced with a closed session of IRG members. • When the meeting opened to other participants, Peter Yu declared that s22(1) auspices funding from the s22(1)) to facilitate the delivery of consultancies. • Peter noted that he does not have any pecuniary interests. • IRG members did not request any management action for the conflict of interest register. 			
1.2.	8:35 – 9:00 am	Chairperson Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadshow (Canberra meetings and consultations) 	Peter Yu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter reported on the brief meeting of four IRG members (Peter Yu, Vonda Malone, Donna Odegaard and Joe Morrison) with s22(1) on 25 November 2019. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ s22(1) reiterated their continuing support for the IRG and its work. • Peter noted that s22(1) is action focused and suggested that the IRG needed to spend more time with Ministers. • Peter also noted that the Accord had strong support of the s22(1) • Peter reported that the stakeholder meetings in Canberra were successful and he was pleasantly surprised by the high level of engagement by senior officials. • Peter's key points from the roundtables were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Co-design of the four projects was encouraging. ◦ There was no real push back on the body/hubs – including no claims of duplication. ◦ There was interest in how access to capital would work and what linkages to Section 22(1) ◦ There was strong support from key people in key departments. ◦ There were no apparent concerns with the business case for the hub. ◦ There was strong support for greater efficiencies and productivity. ◦ IRG will need to take clear recommendations to the next ministerial forum in 2020. ◦ Engaging and productive relationships are being built with the Section 22(1). Although the relationship is growing, work still needs to be done 			

- o IRG needs to remain focussed on the end game (June for budgetary processes).

- Donna noted that the s22(1) had changed its approach, the narrative now included respect for the IRG and for its work as a leader in the development of Northern Australia.

1.3.	9:00 – 10:00 am	Members updates	Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe noted that he is a member of the Native Title Claimant Group that lodged a claim for the Katherine area over 20 years ago, but there has been a more recent claim by s22(1) • Joe outlined that he had recently been in Kenya where the Indigenous development landscape is similar to northern Australia, with similar public policy and economic development challenges – noting that issues were compounded by less national wealth. • Colin noted that he sits on the s22(1), which had secured one year funding for an Indigenous Board to direct all science projects. He noted there was no conflict of interest. • Donna reported on her involvement in an s22(1) pilot project in Murray-Darling Basin communities, which will become active in 2020. 			
	10:00 – 10:20 am	Morning tea	
2.	10:20 – 12:45 pm	Consultant reports Part 1 (<i>all consultants invited for the session</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s22(1) (Water and Research Roadmap) (1 hour) • s22(1) (Body and Hub Projects) (1 hour) • s22(1) (IRG Policy, Strategy and Implementation) (25 mins) 	s22(1) (by phone/video conference) s22(1) (in person)

Research Roadmap

- s22(1) joined the meeting by videoconference from s22(1) Brisbane office and provided an overview of the project to date and worked through the initial thinking in relation to the key areas of focus; knowledge resources, decision support and research providers.
- s22(1) noted that roadmaps had been prepared for both hydrogen and space industries and she would be talking to those involved to about their thinking on Indigenous engagement.
- Colin raised concerns about the coordination of the large number of bodies involved in the field.
- s22(1) noted that she will be interviewing key agencies in January, with the coordination challenge a key objective to be addressed. It was also noted that while coordination is critical to the research roadmap, there is a need to be aware of the potential for a dilution effect of information.
- Colin also noted that the *Biodiscovery Act 2004* (Qld) was amended in late November with enactment of the changes to traditional knowledge recognition in February 2020.
- Colin noted that future research needs to include biodiscovery recognition and that there is a need to explore the traditional knowledge components of existing holdings.
- Colin provided members a copy of the s22(1) Indigenous Science Program.
- Peter noted that materials produced need to provide guidance as to how the delivery of the road map will be executed, including how it will sit in the northern architecture.

Water

- s22(1) joined by videoconference from Nhulunbuy.
- The project is still running on schedule.
- s22(1) worked through the context of the Indigenous Water Strategic Issues Paper and the stages of work being undertaken by s22(1) and s22(1)
- The current stage is focused on how the different jurisdictions and the Commonwealth are currently enabling Indigenous perspectives and considerations in freshwater planning. Questions being asked cover the extent of:

- o recognition in water plans

- involvement in water governance
 - Indigenous specific allocations
appropriate terminology
 - cultural protections
 - information and training
- Colin raised the need for a Queensland Indigenous representative on the Project Advisory Group and Peter indicated he would step aside if members nominated a replacement.
 - s22(1) noted that the project management role rested with IRG and the Project Advisory Group was a means to bring the jurisdictions in, without a decision making role.

Northern Australia Indigenous Economic Development Body

- s22(1) worked through a recap on the need for a body and the functions it would deliver.
- Further discussion noted the need for the body to align with the OECD report, with particular focus given to the key principles.
- He spoke through the co-design lab session in Canberra – explaining there was support for a body.
- s22(1) worked through the extensive level of consultation and co-design applied to developing the concept of the body.

Capital Access and the s22(1) review

- s22(1) explained the need for greater access to capital for northern Indigenous business
- He explained the s22(1) review and how there is appetite to include greater Indigenous engagement.
- He explained the current structural issues with the s22(1) mainly; the need for it to be budget neutral, have projects that are almost bankable and the difficulty under the legislation to provide grants.
- s22(1) put forward two models to the meeting. The first used future revenues from PBC's to issue bonds to the market, which are supported by government
- The second applied equity investment to Indigenous business with the market being supported by government in the investment.
- s22(1) explained there is a large market gap with regards to business that wish to move from start-up to early expansion (\$1-10m of capital requirement). He explained that the early expansion stage is generally funded by venture capital, but in the case of indigenous business, there isn't the level of access.
- The key question s22(1) wishes to answer is the deal flow and if it is great enough to support the volume of interest.

Business and Employment Hubs

- s22(1) recapped the work on the hub system including the need for the hub, s22(1) work to heat map where hubs could be located, and how the design process will work with the 80 programs of support.
- He explained that the Design lab in Canberra went well, and the big take-away was the need for a demand study.
- The project is more or less on schedule.

	12:45 – 1:15	Lunch	
3.	1:15 – 2:00 pm	Regional Development	s22(1) [redacted] [redacted]

- s22(1) [redacted] attended the meeting.
- s22(1) outlined the scope of the s22(1) [redacted] and the areas of economic potential it is focusing on across the Katherine region. Specific focus was given to the low level of land releases (particularly in remote communities), and the impact this was having on economic development. The high potential of tourism and art throughout the region with the right infrastructure, and how connective infrastructure from connectivity to roads and amenities would better enable an increase in tourism by travellers undertaking road trips across Northern Australia.

- s22(1) also noted that sectors like aged care need to be seen as having an economic benefit, particularly with an ageing population that requires support. This has an economic impact as people accessed serviced aged care, and provides significant employment opportunities.
- s22(1) talked about the resources sector and how it is engaged in skills development of Indigenous workers. He outlined the challenges of cyclical workflows, and how skills developed need to be transferrable across industries to offset the risk of downturns.
- s22(1) spoke about how the domestic focus of horticulture in the region was limiting potential. He spoke about:
 - the potential expansion of cotton production in the region and how production in the region was more water efficient than other regions in Australia;
 - the valuable irrigation potential is for finishing crops; and
 - the potential for on farm and on Indigenous land storage of overland flow water as providing further economic returns and opportunities in the region.
- s22(1) spoke about how her Department is looking at a pipeline of investment and how to get greater Indigenous employment outcomes.
- s22(1) spoke about the process of engaging in Native Title and how investors find it too complicated to envisage starting. Having said this the need to activate the Indigenous estate is real, as the amount of available non-Indigenous land is low.

4.	2:00 – 3:00 pm	s22(1)	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s22(1) joined from the s22(1) Townsville office by videoconference. • s22(1) recapped the role of the s22(1) and how it is applying research to major areas of economic development and the northern supply chain. • He outlined how importance of Indigenous consideration is in the north, particularly as it is expected that 94% of land will be Indigenous controlled in the future. • The s22(1) has a lot of work in the pipeline, which will be released towards the end of 2020. • The s22(1) sees the Accord as a real opportunity and wants to develop a strong link to the agenda it will create. • Peter spoke about how the IRG wants to see the narrative shift from a deficit approach to one that allows confidence for corporate investment. • s22(1) spoke about how the opportunities is the new industries and the need for young people to be obtaining technology skills. • s22(1) spoke about the process of water allocation and strategic Indigenous Water Reserves. 			
	3:00 – 3:30 pm	Afternoon Tea with guests	
5.	3:30-4:30 pm	Consultant reports Part 2 s22(1) (IRG Policy, Strategy and Implementation continued ...)	s22(1) (in person)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s22(1) continued from agenda item 2. • s22(1) spoke of the review of the CASTI Act and how IRG had an opportunity to make a submission, noting that it was IRG's decision. • s22(1) then moved the conversation to the development of the IRG vision and strategic communication documents. • s22(1) spoke through the drafts that were previously provided to IRG, seeking input. • s22(1) spoke through the language of the current recommendations seeking input. 			
	4:30 pm	Close	

Day 2 Wednesday 11 December

Session/ agenda item	Time	Topic	Presenter
6.	8:30 am	IRG Closed Session Review of day 1	Peter Yu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda items 6 and 7 were merged 			
7.	8:45 -10:15 am	Preparation for Ministerial Forum Meeting 12 December 2009. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Accord launch 5 Year Plan (60 mins) <i>Note: IRG is on the MFND agenda at 10:20 am for 40 minutes.</i>	Peter Yu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter raised the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia was in Katherine at the same time that the IRG was meeting. The IRG presentation to the Ministerial forum and the Chair's speech was tabled for discussion. Peter outlined that s22(1) was particularly interested in what the IRG had achieved and proposes to do to advance Indigenous economic development across northern Australia. Joe spoke about how the revised institutional arrangements is a key focus as the current arrangements are set in manner that will not achieve the desired outcomes as many are limited in their reach or broken and in need of refreshing. Colin summarised the issues are institutional, capability, fiscal and financial. Peter outlined the Accord is the starting point but more needs to be done. He drew a picture that showed the Accord above a revised architecture of a body, capital fund, research road map and hubs. Joe spoke of the need for a North Australia Business group. The five-year plan was discussed, including recapping that the s22(1) requested it be delivered by August next year, and that Indigenous economic development had been identified as a standalone area of focus amongst five areas. Indigenous engagement can be cross cutting through the remaining four areas of focus. 			
	10:15 – 10:30 am	Morning tea	
8.	10:30– 11:00 am	s22(1)	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s22(1) s22(1) and s22(1) from the s22(1) joined as observers. s22(1) spoke through the importance of s22 work and how it is shaping infrastructure investment. The approach to identifying infrastructure need was discussed, including how it is not pulling up issues such as remote Indigenous community infrastructure when it is below the acceptable standard. Remote housing has been used as case study to demonstrate this. The recent release of the Audit allows a national conversation and s would welcome submissions from northern Australia. s is aware of the link between remote infrastructure and the impact on Indigenous Australians quality of life. The Infrastructure Priority List can be used to call the issue out. In the past the Infrastructure Assessment framework was weighted against northern Australia, due to the low population. s has a working group looking at the issue, with s22(1) participating. s is keen for submissions on the Audit, even if they are just two pages. A submission would allow s to build a case to get funding to do further work on the issue. 			

- Colin will provide s22(1) with his details to further discuss the issue of the Indigenous Procurement Policy and how it is presenting issues with infrastructure delivery, particularly issues of compliance.
- Peter spoke about the need for the assessment criteria to be able to pick-up the infrastructure needs of traditional owners as there is a huge gap that isn't being recorded.
- Joe questioned the ability of infrastructure needs assessments to divorce themselves from politics and the danger that this presents to remote Indigenous residents, who have very little political power or voter base.
- s22(1) agreed that it is an issue and will invite the IRG to the next I Body meeting with the States.

9.	11:00– 11:30 am	Engagement with s22(1)	Peter Yu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s22(1) who joined the meeting were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ s22(1) ○ s22(1) • Peter spoke of the market failure in the north and acknowledged the strong commitment of government. • IRG explained they wish to provide s22(1) with a verbal briefing of the content of their presentation to the Ministerial Forum the next day, so that there is no surprises. • The content would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accord – acknowledging the effort and how it is a good starting point ○ The five year plan has opportunity, but it shouldn't be used to restrain Indigenous development ○ IRG wants to see the five year plan advancing its supported recommendations, including the institutional framework ○ The issue of capital and capability and how they hold back landowners ○ That Native Title is not a barrier, but it is an impediment ○ A northern business council is needed ○ The raising of capital on the bonds market and equity investment models were explained. • Peter outlined that the IRG wants to build its relationship with s22(1) • s22(1) outlined that the capital model is concept that could be floated with the Ministers as it is not a recommendation, she outlined the bond model was complicated, but the equity was promising and similar to what s22(1) are developing 			
10.	11:30–11:50 am	Finalise preparation for Ministerial Forum Meeting 12 December	Peter Yu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter asked s22(1) to further explain the Bond and Equity investment models. • Peter explained that he would reach out to s22 and s22(1) on the models • It was agreed that models and a business council/think-tank would be developed into the presentation for the Ministerial Forum • It was agreed that the s22(1) and the Chair would develop the presentation and share it with members, including holding a session the following morning to confirm the content. 			
11.	11:50 am	Meeting closed (IRG proceeded to the Ministerial Forum lunch at Galloping Jack's Restaurant, Ibis Styles)	

IRG Meeting 21 May

Agenda Item 2 – Indigenous Development Accord

Update

We have been working with jurisdictions to resolve a number of concerns around the action commitments Ministers will be approving in Schedule A. These have primarily revolved around concerns that the performance indicators may go beyond the actions supported by the Ministerial Forum.

The other main sticking point is at a much more fundamental level, relating to concerns about the premise of the agreement – particularly whether an agreement between governments is what the IRG was expecting and whether there should be an implementation plan. We understand that the Accord does reflect the wishes of the IRG and that to fulfil the IRG's objectives an implementation plan with specific performance indicators is essential.

Next steps

We are working to ensure that jurisdictional agreement has been achieved by the end of next week (Friday 1 June) to provide to our incoming ministers with responsibility for Indigenous Affairs and Northern Australia. We will ask ministers to commend the draft Accord to their jurisdictional colleagues, requesting they seek confirmation from within their governments that the text is suitable for provision to First Ministers through the Prime Minister.

Agenda Item 2 – IRG Implementation Working Group (IIWG)

Following the 3rd Ministerial Forum on Northern Development (MFND), the §22(1) members agreed to the establishment of the IIWG as a §22(1) working group to develop a strong governance framework and have day-to-day carriage of the agreed recommendations from MFND3 Agenda Items 4.1 (implementation plan) and 4.2 (IRG further advice).

The IIWG has met twice by teleconference (December and February) and provided draft Terms of Reference for consideration by §22(1). A recent focus of the IIWG has been on the draft Accord and members have had additional meetings on this item alone.

In addition to progressing the six first steps agreed by Ministers, the IIWG will also focus on better understanding the implementation requirements of the IRG's additional recommendations and oversight development of a proposed response at jurisdictional or whole-of-Forum level (whichever is relevant) in line with timeframes for the 4th Ministerial Forum.

NAIEDB

Hubs

Rangers

The IIWG has also establish a Rangers project team, to progress the expansion of fee-for-service and economic development opportunities for Indigenous Ranger Groups across northern Australia. The project team is chaired by the §22(1) and is expected to

meet shortly. In advance of the meeting jurisdictions have provided information on possible fee-for-service opportunities identified across governments.

Land use

The IIWG is also progressing the establishment of a Land Use project team to examine how land-use planning can address all relevant IRG recommendations. Work is being progressed on a paper that proposes the scope of the project is to focus on:

- the development of tools to assist Indigenous communities develop their own land use plans and work with the land use planning of others
- the identification of and measures to address key issues that may inhibit proper consideration of Indigenous interests in land and water use planning.

Ministerial Forum requirements and IIWG work plan

At their last Forum in November 2018 Ministers agreed that officials would work with the IRG on progressing a number of projects and bringing next steps to the fourth Ministerial Forum meeting as outlined below.

- Infrastructure – potential sources of feasibility study funding for consideration
- Regional Collaboration Areas – identify trial sites and an implementation approach in each jurisdiction
- Hubs – implementation decisions

Three areas of activity are mandated but without the need to take further options or decisions to the next Ministerial Forum:

- Land use – establish a working group to examine land-use planning from the perspective of addressing all relevant IRG recommendations in this area
- Rangers – expand fee-for-service opportunities for ranger groups across northern Australia to increase jobs and improve Indigenous economic development
- Research roadmap – scope and develop a Northern Australian Indigenous Commercial Research Plan so the knowledge priorities of Indigenous commercial decision-makers can inform research investment by northern Australia research institutions.

The four areas of activity relating to the IRG's further advice are all to have a proposed response developed at jurisdictional or whole-of-Forum level, with an expectation this would be considered at the next Ministerial Forum:

- Northern Australia Indigenous Economic Development Corporation/Body
- incorporating regulatory and fiscal reform within regional collaboration areas
- progress engagement with, and representation of, Indigenous stakeholders in water reform and water planning; and
- maximise protections and benefits available through intellectual property laws

In addition, noting that the four areas above action seven of the 'blue' longer term recommendations, the IRG indicated it reserved its further advice on its 13 remaining recommendations until the next Ministerial Forum. Specifically, the IRG identified that these recommendations remain entirely relevant, however it would be better placed to consider a strategic response once the implementation planning for the yellow recommendations is further progressed.

It would be difficult to do anything other than assess that the implementation planning for the yellow recommendations has some way to go.

A draft work plan for the IIWG has been developed with these considerations in mind, however work on the Accord taken most of the groups' attention, complicated further by the Commonwealth election period.

The next meeting of the IIWG is expected to consider the following topics:

- Regional Collaboration Areas – initiating the identification of potential areas from each jurisdiction based on the principles identified
- Infrastructure – formation of a project team to identify the processes each jurisdiction uses for infrastructure planning decision and to develop advice for Ministers on options to fund feasibility studies
-

Indigenous Reference Group Meeting Summary

9-10 July 2019, Karratha

DAY 1

Item 1: Welcome and overview of the s22(1)

- s22(1) provided an overview of the
- IRG members raised the need for avenues to address potential conflicts of interest between IRG members' duties and their private business interests. Members agreed to have a standing agenda item for meetings going forward.
- Members discussed drawing on IRG's work for the Ministerial Forum in their broader engagement including with government bodies and noted that while some documents remain Forum-only, IRG members should discuss their work when this is helpful to fostering knowledge sharing and informing relevant government initiatives.
- Members discussed responsibilities of IRG members and agreed the IRG should continue in its role as a panel of experts, and not seek to be a representative body. This discussion should continue as the IRG evolves.

Item 2a: Indigenous rangers

- s22(1) (s22(1)) spoke about her team's work to deliver a fee-for-service quick win and a broader industry strategy. A number of barriers still exist, particularly regarding skills gaps, which the former Minister approved funding to address, and regulatory issues. Funding of \$30m has been announced for the rangers program, including \$1m for the industry strategy.
- IRG members discussed the background and opportunities of Indigenous ranger groups, including success nationally and a greater focus on climate change and governance development.
- IRG members agreed a focus on mentoring and Indigenous leadership is critical to build a self-sustaining industry.
- *Action item: s22(1) to provide IRG with details of the Indigenous Stakeholder Group for the Capacity Building Strategy.*

Item 2b: Northern Australia Indigenous Development body; hub system

- s22(1) advised a project proposal and scope will be brought forward to the MFND5 in early 2020. It is an opportunity to link the work to the review of s22(1). The IRG will have the opportunity to make a submission to the review that references the potential options for capital funding.

Item 2c: Research roadmap

- IRG members noted the update and supported the proposal, subject to any additional comments provided by Friday 12 July.

Item 2d: Regional collaboration areas

- IRG members noted the update that jurisdictions will be asked to bring their process for selecting areas for consideration at the next Ministerial Forum, and nominate regional collaboration areas at MFND5 in early 2020.

Item 2e: Land use planning

- IRG members noted the update and iterated that transparency and implementation is critical for effective planning processes to succeed.

Item 2f: Feasibility funding

- IRG members noted the update. The s22(1) will present a further update to the next IRG meeting in advance of a paper to the Ministerial Forum.

Item 2g: Northern Australia Indigenous Development Accord

- IRG members noted the Accord is close to being finalised, which creates commitment and public expectation of outcomes. Members supported the Agency's work to have the Accord considered by s22(1) in early August.

Item 3: Implementation and further advice projects

- Members discussed the projects proposed and agreed to provide any additional comments by Friday 12 July.

Item 5: s22(1)

- s22(1) spoke about the challenges and opportunities of doing business in the north. Higher cost of doing business, including prohibitive insurance costs, and lower amounts of capital for lending were limiting development. High population turnover in towns like Karratha makes it difficult to map and plan workforce capacity. She also noted that good economic outcomes require good social outcomes first.

Item 6: Panel on Indigenous business in the Pilbara – challenges and opportunities

- s22(1) spoke about how PBCs have been drawn into delivering government services using their members' money. Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) trust funds are restricted and can't be used easily. One approach to PBCs is for it to act as a parent company and commissions Aboriginal corporations to do work, which frees them from PBC decision-making processes. Alternatively, PBCs deliver services themselves and become bogged down in decision-making processes. While Native Title creates silos within communities, circles of elders are being used as boards to resolve divisions. Working with companies like s22(1) has provided the opportunity to raise questions on behalf of PBCs, including with ministers.
- s22(1) shared how mining is destroying country, which is taking a toll on people's mental health. The question now is what opportunities they can leverage. While mining companies are often paternalistic with landholders, they should instead treat them like shareholders. Tourism is a sustainable activity that allows practice of culture and creates income. s22(1) mentioned the tensions that Native Title has created in the region through agreement making processes.

DAY 2Item 8: Welcome and review

- Members discussed s22(1) whether Indigenous people were accessing it and if not, why not? They noted s22 and s22(could to be realigned to better meet the needs of Indigenous Australians developing businesses.
- Members agreed the IRG would benefit from a stakeholder engagement strategy and communications plan in order to increase its impact.
- *Action item: IRG member contracts to be renewed (extended until December).*
- *Action item: IRG to develop a case study on the Pilbara through the 'Unlocking economic and social value' project to highlight the issues that Indigenous people face in northern Australian large scale developments (trickle down effects) and the socio-economic impacts faced pre and post development.*

Item 9a – Intellectual Property – Indigenous perspectives

- s22(1) confirmed s22(1) welcomed the IRG recommendations relating to intellectual property, particularly the need for a consistent whole of government approach. She discussed the outcomes of the recent consultation undertaken on Protection of Indigenous Knowledge in the IP system. In outlining the proposals s22(1) consulted on, relating to traditional knowledge and genetic resource², commercial use of Indigenous words and images; and for an Indigenous Advisory Panel and education and awareness, s22(1) worked through examples of how the system could be used.
- *Action item: IRG to provide contact details for individuals or groups members think would be able to assist s22(1) prioritise and develop proposals for improving the IP system to better protect Indigenous knowledge.*

Item 9b: Water policy

- s22(1) spoke about the implications of the national water policy agenda on northern Australia. Members discussed the impediment of landowners needing to negotiate an ILUA to access their own water, hence the focus on Indigenous led reform of the Native Title Act.

Item 10: Panel on data and research

- s22(1) expressed interest in exploring links between the s22(1) and the research roadmap being proposed by IRG.
- s22(1) explained s22(1) shift from being data-focused to knowledge-focused. Members discussed the need for data to enable Native Title holders to understand their land and work with developers, and the importance of data in supporting feasibility studies.

Item 11: s22(1) update

- s22(1) outlined how s22(1) is reviewing its assessment tools, particularly cost-benefit analysis. It is looking at housing, which is considered a nationally significant issue. s22(1) new s22(1) has a strong interest in Indigenous issues. Members discussed the need for infrastructure assessments to have a pan-northern approach – state boundaries are impeding infrastructure planning in the north, which is usually federally funded anyway.

Item 12: Panel on pan-northern economic development opportunities

- The IRG Chair emphasised this is the first time the Australian Government, s22(1) and other key stakeholders have spoken to Indigenous people about business. Members engaged in a rich discussion about future opportunities.
- s22(1) spoke about s22(1) increased funding to the north, and its investment in outcomes for Indigenous businesses. There is huge potential in agriculture and infrastructure, but so few projects – there are no shortcuts when pitching to overseas investors. Investors need to see beyond regulatory barriers and the higher cost of doing business in the north. s22(1) is useful in this regard. Indigenous

tourism is an immense opportunity for growth – it is northern Australia's competitive advantage, but is often dependent on infrastructure created by other industries. Increased ability to access debt and equity will be essential for businesses to grow.

Item 13: s22(1)

- In April, s22(1) broadened the definition of economic infrastructure, increased its funding amounts, reduced requirements around funding equity, and introduced a need for cost-benefit analysis of projects. It is planning to consult on the Indigenous Engagement Strategy (IES) requirement.
- s22(1) from the s22(1) explained the Act will be reviewed by the s22(1) and a revised version will likely consider Indigenous engagement, and the IRG will be consulted on an issues paper. A decision on extending s22(1) beyond 2021 has not yet been taken.

Item 14 – s22(1)

- s22(1) indicated he is pleased by the level of productive consultation with the IRG. He discussed early plans for a refresh of the northern development agenda, which he proposes will be underpinned by Indigenous engagement and human capital development.

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

12:00pm – 5:15pm Tuesday 22 October 2019

Level 3, Supreme Court Bldg, 14 Parsons Street, Alice Springs

9:00am – 5:30pm Wednesday 23 October 2019

9:00am – 12:30pm Thursday 24 October 2019

Double Tree Hilton, 82 Barrett Drive, Alice Springs

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Yu (Chair) • Lawford Benning • Joe Morrison • Donna Odegaard AM (via telephone) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin Saltmere • Vonda Malone (via telephone) • Nigel Browne • Fiona Jose (via telephone) |
|--|--|

Day 1	Tuesday 22 October
1.1.	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of any conflicts of interest

- Joe Morrison noted that he is a Director of s22(1) (agenda item 3.3)
- Peter Yu declared that s22(1) receives funding to deliver IRG consultancies. As CEO he receives no pecuniary interest. s22(1), s22(1) noted s22(1) performed an auspicing role for implementation of IRG's requested consultancies as IRG is not a legal entity. Decisions on consultancies are made by IRG.

1.2.	Chairperson Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadshow • World Indigenous Business Forum
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- The Chair provided an update on his Roadshow in September/October 2019, explaining the roadshow was aimed at reacquainting key stakeholders with IRG's vision.

Meetings were held with:

- s22(1)
- s22(1) is a s22(1) who is aligning corporate members to invest in Aboriginal projects. The role of social impact investment in Australia was discussed and s22(1) committed to engaging with the Northern Australia agenda and IRG
- s22(1)
- s22(1) provided detail on the 5 year plan and advised s22 supports the IRG's hubs and education recommendations.
- s22(1) Role of s22(1) and the future potential of rangers
- s22(1)

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

s22(1) indicated support for strengthening positive relationships going forward.

- s22(1) is resigning at end of October 2019 but is keen to continue to work with IRG, particularly on revisiting the criteria/threshold and building a northern centric capital fund
- s22(1) review of the CATSI Act and amendments – creation of economic vehicle and status in regards to PBCs. The amendments are currently before Parliament as part of the Native Title Bill.
- s22(1) the Statutory entities' concerns about duplication are now resolved. They are considering how to develop a capital fund, but there is a perception that the current Clth budget will not be able to fund. They see great opportunity in the Northern Agenda and recommendations of IRG.

World Indigenous Business Forum – s22(1) will prepare a report. Key issues:

- First Nations of Canada have more independence and more wealth
- They have greater access to capital
- Recent treaties have been important – including for allowing self-governance
- They are allowed to charge rent on their land, which is a fantastic source of income
- The Financial Management Act (FMA) allows capital to flow and the underwriting with bonds for impact investing

1.3.	Members updates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiona reported state engagement and accountability needs to be strengthened to deliver the Northern Development Agenda • Joe reported that he attended the s22(1) conference as an IRG representative and it was a useful opportunity to put the IRG agenda out into the broader environment.
1.4.	Ministerial Forum implementation/s22(1) updates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial Forum will be 12 December 2019 with a ministerial dinner on the 11 December. • IRG will meet on 10-11 December 2019 prior. • Aim is to launch the Accord at the Ministerial Forum 12 December 2018 • The Forum will look primarily at the framework for a new five year plan, also consider the s22(1) review. • The IRG is on the agenda from 10-10:40 am. • The meeting provides an opportunity for IRG members to discuss the 5 year plan and s22(1) review and forecast future milestones with Ministers.
2.	Barkly Deal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the deal were presented, including the governance arrangements • The deal was viewed by the IRG as a mix of coordinated social and economic investments. • The link to the economic opportunities of the Beetaloo basin in the north of the Barkley was discussed

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

- The IRG agreed more work needed to be actioned on linking the economic opportunities of Beetaloo with the region

3.	Regional and economic development	
3.1.	Regional development	s22(1) [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

- There is one s22(1) for the entire NT. It is one of nine across the north
- The s22(1) is very focused on supporting entities to advance projects, particularly matching them to funding
- The difficulty in getting projects to implementation phase, particularly on Indigenous land in the NT was outlined
- The focus of government on shovel ready projects is reducing potential outcomes.
- s22(1) is concerned that Cost Benefit Analysis allow bias against remote projects due to low population
- There is gap in the grant program space at the early stage of project development
- Getting funding for start up organisations is particularly difficult due to a lack of track record and ability to apply co-contribution (land is not considered a co-contribution)
- s22(1) and Building Better Regions' regions funding being applied to urban areas/capital cities was discussed as a challenge

3.2.	Regional development	s22(1) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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- The group is focused on leveraging the large opportunity from the 5 mines to open up in the area
- The group is focused on several opportunities like a retirement village and airline training

3.3.	Economic development leveraging land assets	s22(1) [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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- Provided a presentation and video of the Economic Development Strategy and s22(1) [REDACTED]
- Spoke about the need for capital to advance the s22(1) [REDACTED] projects
- The need for a road map to allow investor/ financiers to clearly see how the opportunity and capital needs
- s22(1) [REDACTED] capital fund will look to leverage s22(1) BBR Fund and s22(1) [REDACTED]
- The fungible leases will be in place and prospectuses released in 2023/24
- The system will use section 19 leasing through the Aboriginal Land Rights Act NT (1976) for a 40 year (head lease), then a sub-leasing to individual horticulture farmers
- The key risks identified were access to capital and corporate governance
- The attraction of good operators (farmers) is also a risk
- s22(1) [REDACTED] needs a 9% return on capital to be competitive
- The increasing water costs of southern horticulture makes s22(1) [REDACTED] more attractive
- The rental return for traditional owners is 3-4 times that of grazing

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

Day 2	Wednesday 23 October
4.	Review of day one

- Day one saw examples of the architecture in northern Australia needing adjustment as it is either not working or inefficient
- Access to capital is the emerging theme – through grants, investment or loans. s22(1) is developing a one page cheat sheet on capital that separates out different forms of capital
- The lack of coordination and gaps in services as well as an inability to advocate for change
- Barkly leads to the question of needing a crisis to get a response

5.	Briefing on IRG Projects ahead of consultant reports	s22(1)
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- s22(1) presented the progresses of the five projects on the body, hub, vision by s22(1) and Water/Research Road Map by s22(1)

6.	s22(1) (Northern Australia 5 year plan, s22(1) review)	s22(1)
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s22(1) on the 5 year plan

- s22(1) thanked the IRG for its commitment
- 41 of the 51 recommendations from the White Paper are finalised
- The s22(1) requested a new five year plan from s22(1)
- The s22(1) looks forward to the MFND presenting a plan
- Next s22(1) is to be confirmed as it is dependent on COAG
- In September 2019 workshops with jurisdictions were held
- MFND in December intends to agree on a framework for a new plan
- The plan will have 2-3 actionable concrete initiatives as 51 recommendations are viewed as being too broad
- Focus areas are:
 - Connective Infrastructure
 - Diversified jobs and industry growth
 - Skills and workforce development
 - Indigenous economic development
 - Attracting investment and efficient regulation
- s22(1) currently has Indigenous economic development as standalone and crosscutting components of the plan.
- There will be an implementation plan under the plan
- It is not expected that all of IRG's recommendations would be directly incorporated

IRG discussed with s22(1) the need for:

- A focus on the traditional areas like agriculture, tourism and defence
- There is a need to look at skills including how we see ourselves engaging where the markets are, e.g. S.E Asia and China/India.

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

s22(1) on the s22(Review

- A legislative review is required as per s22(1) legislation
- s22(has been reviewed by several different avenues
 - Senate Enquiry
 - s22(1)
 - s22(1)
- This review looks at if s22(will be extended beyond its life of mid-2021.
- Now that s22(is 3 years old, there is a track record to review
- The review is hearing there are gaps in the market – just not necessarily at the high cost end as initially anticipated
- Initially when s22(was developed, it was seen as meeting the needs of gaps in capital for ports, rails, dams etc.
- But the access for capital for these projects at low interest rates is mitigating this
- There is a an evident gap on small to medium enterprises that have equity but are not able to attract capital
- s22(has entered areas that banks do not back, areas that are feasible but banks do not want additional risk that comes with northern ventures.
- This means s22(is supporting areas outside of its initial target
- Risk is the key issue. Need to look at risk verses public benefit.
- The conversations are finding people do not want grants, they are happy to access loans.
- s22(is keen to see more Indigenous proponents and improve Indigenous engagement strategies.
- The question of public benefit can also be explored.

Discussion with IRG

- Embedding indigenous planning in/encouraging how proponents consider Indigenous engagement is important. E.g. Legune Station and the prawn farm. They will suppress native title rather than extinguish it as part of that development.
- The planning process needs to assess targets and how to lift involvement
- The definition of public benefit needs to look at activating investment – e.g. international investment.
- The current risk framework needs a 100 per cent return with no tolerance for failure. This isn't activating the north
- The option of an indigenous specific fund and how do you have a dedicated fund to obtain greater results should be explored
- The IRG raised that a standalone could be a carve out to the futures fund that provides capital over a long term
- The issue of a minimum amount for the s22(was raised. IRG questioned if there was a minimum or floor of \$10-15m. s22(1) confirmed there wasn't. IRG questioned, as consultation on the entity with s22(had raised the issue of a \$10m floor.
- The need in the Indigenous space is for lower amounts that have greater risk
- The use of scale (size) is killing off indigenous proponents
- s22(1) structure is not conducive to large book of small loans

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

7.	Indigenous Business Sector Strategy	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A presentation on the IBSS was provided The IRG discussed how the Recommendations of IRG and the IBSS have linkages The IRG should be considered in the process of standing up an Advisory group for the IBSS 		
8.	Consultant reports	
8.2	Water	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A power point explaining the scope was provided s22(1) spoke through the schedule for the project and how it is tailored to delivering for MFND5. Should the forum shift from the anticipated April 2020, then the additional time could be used to enhance the consultancy. The composition of the Advisory group was discussed with the need for the jurisdictions raised The IRG raised the Murray Darling Basin, its failings and how they need to be considered. Members also raised how cropping and non-conventional gas extraction proposed use of ground water can have significant environmental impacts It was agreed that the consultancy will focus on non-urban consumption of water The IRG raised that s22(1) is currently engaged to do work in Qld on the issue and the consultancy needs to consider the issues faced by local government It was clarified the consultancy will look at the quantity of water used/allocated rather than issues of quality – however the link to poor quality water and its impact on business need to be made. 		
8.1.	Research roadmap and plan	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A presentation was provided It was decided that the focus of the research will be on commercial needs of business particularly concerning the natural assets base - (land and water) being prioritised. 		
8.3	Hub system	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s22(1) outlined that more data is needed than the consultancy on the entity, as the entity has received more attention through the first phase of scoping. The presence of hubs in Qld and the Barkly was raised s22(1) explained the clusters of potential users across the north The group requested thought be put into how the validity or quality of current services can be questioned – metrics of performance. The group also raised that substandard services need a mechanism to be scrutinised, tweaked or reformed. It will be a hard process as the Cth and jurisdictions may be defensive. Rationalisation of services to a useful series of offering will need political support. 		
8.2.	Body	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s22(1) spoke through how an implementation plan and prospectuses will be developed The group agreed that s22(1) can refine the first phase of scoping (the discussion paper) and provide it to stakeholders The co-design process was explained 		

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

- A discussion regarding if MFND support or endorsement was needed, particularly if it is a public/private partnership
- The concept of all the pillars on northern development are represented by a body, such as s22(1) for research, yet Indigenous is lacking.
- The need for the entity to be private was raised as people do not want to provide commercially in-confidence material to a government entity that can be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

9.	Regional priorities, opportunities and challenges	
9.1.	s22(1)	s22(1)
9.2.	s22(1)	s22(1)
9.3.	s22(1)	s22(1)

Issues covered:

- The intellectual property rights of bush foods and how testing of food to ensure it is fit for consumption can result in IP being lost
- The potential demand of bush foods, but the lack of market information, including how to set a wholesale price
- The volume of approval to harvest bush foods was also questioned, with regards to s22(1) and Land Council approvals.
- The business support provided to the three local businesses by government was assessed as variable:
 - One business commenced with a loan from s22(1)
 - Another received well timed grants and assistance
 - One felt belittled when attempting to access support from the s22(1) and required the assistance of the s22(1) to obtain an outcome
- The arts industry and disempowered artists was discussed – including the issue of lock-ins
- The need for artists to know their rights and have access to transparent pricing and knowledge of appropriate business practices was raised.
- One business was looking at closing and spoke through how the elevating costs had resulted in the decision to close. The owner/operator owned the decision with all three businesses confirming that success or failure of their businesses was their own.

9.4.	Men from Amplatwatja	s22(1)
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- The local health centre presented the scale of health issues faced by the community.
- The state of housing and sewerage through septic tanks was raised

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

- The traditional owners had held talks with the s22(1) and s22(1) over the situation of the lease. A lease had been signed at a peppercorn rate on the provision that local government provided services. The Traditional Owners identified that the services were not being provided at an acceptable standard.
- The situation of those requiring dialyses was raised with the impact that no provision of dialyses has on community and the cost of service delivery.

Day 3	Thursday 24 October
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10.	Review of day 2	Peter Yu
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- The Chair noted that the IRG had heard about some great initiatives and that the endeavour and desire are there but there are systemic gaps in support and attitudes.
- The presentation from the senior men was a stark reminder that we haven't come that far in some instances.
- IRG agreed to write to responsible Federal and NT ministers regarding the presentation from the senior men and expressing concern about the provisions of services.

12	IRG Vision, Communications Resources and Implementation Plan – part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future priorities • MFND preparation 	s22(1)
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- IRG were provided with a draft vision to comment on
- IRG provided the following feedback on the draft preamble:
 - The vision needs to take a strengths based approach
 - The journey that northern Indigenous business is on and the ground made needs to be acknowledged
 - Unlocking the potential is a key issue that needs to be addressed
- IRG provided the following feedback on the draft preamble:
 - There needs to be language regarding the partnership and collaboration of private and public sector
 - The reader needs to be aware that Indigenous enterprises are willing to wear the risk
 - There needs to be language on return on investment, not return on guilt
 - Indigenous business is real and is a genuine opportunity to lift northern development
- IRG agreed with the goals presented
- The Chair requested the document be a real genuine business document that stands up with credibility to private and public audiences.
- The Chair then requested s22(1) look at how IRG will manage the risk of engaging with our critical partners

Notes of the Indigenous Reference Group Meeting 22-24 October 2019

- The Chair also requested s22(1) develop a table of tasks for the IRG of tasks that have occurred and will occur

11	s22(1) Major Economic Initiatives	s22(1)
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- s22(1) spoke through how capacity development in the economic development was being rolled out through the regional network
- IRG requested additional information on the s22(1) restructure - s22(1) noted the high prioritisation of the IRG and the Northern Agenda was reflected in the establishment of the s22(1) in the new structure.
- The IRG terms of engagement (renewal) was raised by members. s22(1) confirmed that s22(1) are currently reviewing the issue and with the aim of settling it prior to 31 December 2019.

13.	New five year plan – key messages	Peter Yu
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The Chair indicated that IRG messaging re the five year plan should be:

- IRG welcomes the development of a new five-year plan for northern Australia, recognising it is an opportunity to revisit areas not covered in the White Paper, particularly the importance of Indigenous engagement in the northern agenda.
- In particular, the IRG encourages the consideration of institutional reform with a more northern centric focus and with both government and the private sectors that ensures there is equity and parity in engagement.
- The IRG looks forward to negotiating with government around the tax system to ensure it deals with current inequities.
- The IRG notes the critical importance of closing the capability gap to facilitate unrestricted access to Indigenous engagement in business in the northern economy.

14.	Meeting communique	Peter Yu
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The Chair indicated that meeting communique should alert the Ministerial Forum to messages that are:

- positive
- framed around the need to take advantage of opportunities
- that IRG and the Ministerial Forum are coming into the serious side of business
- IRG's is focused on the importance of an evidence based policy platform
- Indicate that communication processes going forward will be particularly important.

IRG Meeting Meeting Notes

Held

Friday, 31 January 2020, Cairns

Attendace of IRG Members

- Mr Peter Yu (Chair)
- Mr Lawford Benning
- Dr Joe Morrison
- Dr Donna Odegaard AM
- Associate Professor Colin Saltmere
- Mr Nigel Browne
- Ms Fiona Jose
- Cr Vonda Malone (phone for the first hour)

Agenda Item	Topic	Presenter
1.	Welcome and Scene Setting	Peter Yu
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiona Jose gave an acknowledgement of country. 	
2.	s22(1) Briefing on IRG Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRG funding provided by the s22(1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding and decision making process – role clarity and administration ○ Update on active consultancies ○ Draft public statement in response to Mandarin article 	s22(1)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter opened talking about the Mandarin Article, and not wanting to dwell on it, but needing to discuss the issues and the management of confidential discussions. Further reference was given to the consequence of confidentiality of information not being maintained. • It was noted that there are often robust discussions and communication that inform the development of policy positions and proposals, and that the confidentiality of this needs to be maintained. • The discussion focused on the IRG needing to operate above politics, with all members requested to reconfigure the relationship to strengthen the confidence of discussions within IRG meetings. • Reflection was given to the successful outcomes achieved, including the ongoing support from the Ministerial Forum. • Joe provided feedback on the references to him in the article. It was noted that he ensured that processes were put in place to manage any conflict, including ensuring that management of the grant was removed from him. • Peter also identified that he was not directly involved in any management of the grants, and that the s22(1) was aware of the arrangements. • s22(1) will not be involved in the arrangement to auspice funding for the IRG. • Colin asked whether the s22(1) could provide advice on the appointment agreement. • The IRG agreed to not progress formal statement in response to the article. 	
3.	IRG Moving Forward	Peter Yu
3.1.	Membership and Disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership role and disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letter of Appointment (Role) ○ s22(1) Letter of Engagement (Disclosure) ○ IRG Operational Structure ○ IRG Terms of Reference Review 	Peter Yu s22(1)

- Discussions focused on the nature of information that has been developed, and that policy positions and proposals put forward for the consideration of the Ministerial Forum are not for public distribution.
- However, it was noted that there are a number of public submissions that have been made which can be distributed.
- It was also noted that the Water Discussion Paper and Research Roadmap are both being crafted as public documents.
- Colin requested why information can't be provided to consultants or experts that he is engaging with. However, it was noted that they can be involved in discussions on the development of policy positions and he was invited to put them in touch with s22(1) as the consultancy developing some of the key proposals.
- Further discussion occurred around the need to move the focus of IRG from public policy conceptual design to implementation as recommendations have been agreed by the Ministerial Forum for implementation planning.
- The role of the IRG, including forward thinking, identified the need to ensure that policy proposals linked to negotiations around State/Territory based treaties, and discussions about compensation in response to Timber Creek and Treaty discussions.
 - The work of IRG may link, and possibly influence these discussions.
 - Possible links between compensation to capital funding for economic purposes – Commonwealth, State or Territory based. Depending on constitutional requirements.
- The Taskforce will come back with a proposal Terms of Reference for the review, noting that this has to be developed in accordance with s22(1) agreements. It is anticipated that this will include
- Consultation will need to occur with the jurisdictions, with the possibility of moving toward a more formal structure.
- Information was provided that the s22(1) was established to support the implementation of the IRG, with the Accord providing a framework of authority to act.
 - Moving from secretariat to policy and program implementation.
 - s22(1) must shift to an implementation focus – transitioning to outcomes rather than concepts, working through the mechanics of government. Leveraging relevant bodies to enable this noting that the majority of levers are held outside s22(1) including Commonwealth and jurisdictional governments (policies, programs and legislation), and the corporate sector.

Additional discussion

- Further discussion noted the challenges with limited resources and scope of PBC's, and the need for the s22(1) to invest in approaches that better enable PBC's to move forward.
- No further commitment to additional funding and support for PBC's noting that the Ministerial Forum is receptive to proposals.
- The IRG discussed s22(1) request that IRG assist in reducing regulatory burden (red tape) that hinders economic development, with Indigenous proponents and Traditional Owners as part of the planning and decision making process.
 - This was particularly linked to the review of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
 - He raised whether government is doing enough around the recommendation from the 2013 NT review, and what has happened to action these and to remove red tape.
 - Five year framework inclusion of the Indigenous economic development pillar.
 - Trusting of the IRG to undertake activities to progress key recommendations.
- s22(1) is to provide further advice on the best tactic for IRG to be engaged with the regulatory taskforce and regulatory reform.
 - The regulatory reform committee is looking at reducing red tape as they assess each sector.
 - Linkages to EPBC Act review and repositioning the role of Traditional Owners as decision makers under the Act.
- Further opportunities to draw in expertise have been identified through the investment forum.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will progress between s22(1) and the IRG to develop the approach including membership. The Investment Forum is scheduled to be the week of 17 March 2020, bringing in a larger group of experts. IRG to nominate who would be engaged as part of the forum, and will provide an opportunity for Colin's nominated people to be engaged in discussions. The Investment Forum will inform the development of the think-tank. Work with s22(1) to develop program and attendance. Two half day roundtables: The pitch for the Investment Forum and subsequent work will be to identify revenue streams and investment required for Indigenous organisations, shifting from supports being a cost to Government revenue to successful Indigenous economic participation being a stronger source of Government income generation. Timeframes for distribution of IRG papers was raised, noting that this meeting was called at relatively short notice. 	
3.2.	Joint Select Committee on Northern Development: Engagement of Traditional Owners – Appearance 7th February 2020, Parliament House, Canberra	Peter Yu s22(1)
3.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter to appear at the Joint Select Committee on Northern Development. Brief to be provided to members once completed. 	
3.4.	Draft Communique, IRG meeting, Katherine	s22(1)
3.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IRG welcomes and are further encouraged by s22(1) focus on working with the IRG to ensure that there is a more efficient approaches And looks forward to working with the Ministerial Forum Additional text regarding the appointment of IRG members based on individual expertise, and s22(1) request regarding streamlining red tape regulation. Amended communique was agreed. 	
4.	CATSI Act review	s22(1)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s22(1) discussed the CATSI Review process and the proposed approach, including encouraging IRG members to provide comments in the CATSI Review paper which could then be consolidated and provided as part of Phase 1 of the CATSI Review process. It was agreed that a submission would need to be developed, and that this would follow an invitation for the Registrar to attend the next IRG meeting. This submission would be made as part of Phase 2 of the CATSI Review process. Discussions drew in the need to ensure s22(1) alignment to support the application of tax status that would enable Indigenous organisations drive economic opportunities. Restrictions of the CATSI Act were discussed, with particular focus on the need for the CATSI Act to include provisions that better support managing poor and disruptive behaviour of members. 	
5.	Draft IRG Submission to the s22(1) Audit 2019	s22(1)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The submission to the s22(1) Audit was discussed. IRG agreed that the draft letter covered off the needs of the IRG, but Lawford was to provide feedback on Monday. The letter was agreed in principle by the IRG. If no further feedback is provided by COB Monday, the letter will be sent. Lawford noted the need for capital investment for infrastructure to enable economic development. 	

6.	Land Management Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land management as an economic opportunity 	IRG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter noted the significant and traumatic impact of bushfires across Southern Australia, and the impact on Indigenous communities. Possible links to the Rangers Industry Strategy were discussed, noting the current economic and environmental climate due to national fires (predominantly in South East Australia). IRG continues to promote traditional land use strategies applied in the north, across Australia. Write to s22(1) and s22(1) that the catastrophic fires provide a link to the focus of the IRG. Key recommendations as to how Government can respond to the fires within the Northern Development Agenda. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to bring key stakeholders together s22(1) to discuss options to leverage traditional fire and land management processes in the North, and across Northern Australia as environmental programs. 	
7.	Draft IRG Calendar of Events	s22(1)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next IRG meeting in Cairns 24-26 March 2020. This is consistent with Vonda's suggestion at the beginning of the meeting. The meeting will include two days for IRG members to fully unpack the work by consultants. 	

IRG Meeting Agenda (via teleconference)

12.00 pm – 3:30pm Wednesday, 22 April 2020

IRG Members

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Peter Yu (Chair) • Mr Lawford Benning • Dr Joe Morrison • Dr Donna Odegaard AM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Professor Colin Saltmere • Cr Vonda Malone • Mr Nigel Browne • Ms Fiona Jose |
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Agenda	Time	Topic	Presenter
1.	12:00 pm – 12:05 pm	Welcome and Introductions	Chairperson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting started at 12:15 pm. Mr Yu opened the meeting welcoming all participants and noted that some of members would be joining the meeting late. Mr Yu acknowledged Country for all members. s22(1) was introduced to the IRG members, noting his experience with the s22(1) and the work that he is undertaking with the s22(1). s22(1) provided information on what s22(1) is working on for the s22(1). Apologies – Mr Lawford Benning 			
2.	12:05 pm – 12:10 pm	Conflicts of Interest	Chairperson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Yu declared no pecuniary interest, but that the s22(1) has been using s22(1) to auspice the management of consultants on behalf of the IRG. It was noted that this arrangement is expected to cease around October 2020. 			
3.	12:10 pm – 12:30 pm	Chair's report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus of Agenda Preparation for Agenda item 4. 	Chairperson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Yu noted that the meeting is an opportunity to unpack the current COVID-19 responses and impact, and mapping out what adjustments that the IRG may want to s22(1) was invited to speak on the current government position and environment. This is focused on addressing the initial health impacts with work going on in terms of recontextualising the Northern Development Agenda and the five-year refresh. Planning for the Ministerial Forum is underway on either 17 or 19 June 2020, for a two hour video conference. IRG will be invited to speak, but this will require some thinking from the IRG around what will be presented. Mr Yu spoke about the opportunity to partner with the Advisory Committee, and use that to further leverage influence over s22(1) and the s22(1). This is particularly relevant with the Advisory Committee's influence over investment approaches as part of the COVID-19 responses. 			

Released under the FOI Act by the
National Indigenous Australians Agency

4.	12:30 pm – 1:00 pm	Advisory Committee – Northern Australia Five-Year Plan	Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Yu introduced the participating members of the IRG, and the s22(1) from the s22(1). An introduction into the role and function of the IRG was provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that Mr Yu provided a summary of the priorities of the Northern Australia Development Agenda, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to capital and infrastructure investment that is targeted to the needs of Indigenous proponents. Northern Australia has been a failed economy because of the lack of Indigenous participation. This is focused on the majority of land across the north has some form of Indigenous tenure, and the large stable Indigenous population base across the north. Lack of institutions that have an Indigenous northern-centric approach, with national programs not optimising the return on investment or benefits realisation for Indigenous Australians. The development of Enterprise and Employment Hubs operating across the north, providing critical access to a range of services and opportunities, strengthening and supporting PBC's engagement in economic development opportunities, and providing more specific focus on the needs and opportunities that arise across the north. The institutional gaps, and gaps in infrastructure (housing) provide an opportunity for governments to reinvigorate essential infrastructure to address health and economic needs, but that this done differently with a focus on Indigenous businesses. The s22(1), asked the IRG to help them define the differences between Northern Australia and Southern Australia. This needs to be positioned to get 'cut through' so that policy and program decision makers from Southern Australia make informed decisions that are relevant to the environment of the north. Mr Yu highlighted the Indigenous land tenure as a defining point, which requires structural reforms to engage Indigenous land owners in a collaborative approach rather than current adversarial Mr Yu also noted the world's longest surviving culture and untouched unique wilderness which provides significant environmental and tourism opportunities across the north. Market failure because Indigenous people haven't been engaged in the economy – land tenure, enterprise development, and employment. Opportunities with ranger programs providing essential services, which should be underwritten by government to support biodiversity and environmental management. Need to move away from FIFO worker arrangements to better leverage the local workforce which is often Indigenous Australians. To support this, education and training as part of a pathway to employment is required in a targeted way that is led by Indigenous Australians. This is likely to address the systemic under-employment and other issues faced by Indigenous people. COVID-19 has highlighted and exacerbated the structural and institutional flaws across the north, which includes the reliance on FIFO workers now having economic and industry impacts. Further focus needs to be provided to the IRG and Advisory Committee working in parallel, and across jurisdictions to build instruments that will serve the needs of Indigenous Australians and the broader northern economy. 			

- Members of the Advisory Committee noted that this was a historic meeting with the IRG, acknowledging that the White Paper did not effectively or appropriately represent the complexity and impact of Indigenous economic development.
 - Future instruments need to reflect and represent this.
- s22(1) noted that this is the beginning of a discussion and that she will continue to work with Peter to ensure alignment and collaboration between the groups, with future opportunities for formal meetings and engagement.
 - Mr Yu noted that the IRG would support this, through both informal and formal approaches.
 - It was noted that the Advisory Committee may be meeting on 14 May 2020, which may provide another opportunity to reconnect.
 - s22(1) is on the Advisory Committee, and offered to be a further contact point with the IRG.
- Mr Yu noted the authority that is provided under the Accord, and the ability to leverage this and the forthcoming 'five-year refreshed plan for Northern Australia'.
- s22(1) noted the intent of the Advisory Group is to leverage the work of the IRG.

5.	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	IRG Members' updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections of short to longer term effects of COVID-19 in Northern Australia 	Members
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- Ms Jose noted the opportunity to reposition the work and contextualise the IRG's work in line with the post-COVID-19 environment. The Advisory Committee provides an opportunity to position that within a broader government context.
 - It was noted that the Advisory Committee and s22(1) are likely to be highly influential within this.
- Cr Malone noted that there was a good vibe from the Advisory Committee, and provides an opportunity to work together noting the Advisory Committee's leadership on larger scale projects and instruments ('five-year refreshed plan for Northern Australia').
- Mr Yu invited updates from each of the IRG members on the current operating environment.
- Dr Odegaard AM noted that s22(1) has been leading the broadcasting and bringing communities together with governments to ensure that the most remote and disadvantaged communities are getting what they need during the COVID-19 pandemic. This provides two way communication across 32 language groups.
- Ms Jose noted that there has been lots of anxiety in Indigenous communities across Cape York. They have been working with the s22(1) and local communities around local disaster management plans, which would lock down communities. Further focus needs to focus on bio-security and accessible services. There are challenges around the application of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Qld). There isn't any assessment criteria or instructions on how to re-enter communities, which is creating stress for people trying to return home. Cape York Partnership looking at how they can use some of their Cairns based facilities (schools, accommodation, etc) to provide support where needed. Many Indigenous people don't know what to do get home to their communities, and are confused with government responses.
- Mr Yu mentioned similar issues with governments expecting that they can fly people needing medical support with COVID-19 to Perth for treatment, which poses a number of challenges.
- Social distancing remains a challenge within many communities, particularly with overcrowding, lack of infrastructure, and social engagement.

- Mr Browne identified that there is a mixture of people able to work, those who are on standby, and many that have been put on stand-down. Focus is being given to cashflow, with a 30 per cent hit to current revenue and cashflow. Demands from external stakeholders continue on, while the focus is on maintaining services to community. Further focus is on maintaining the trust to ensure the long-term viability of s22(1).
- Associate Professor Saltmere spoke about the challenges with the permit systems to access communities, and the ability to get access to areas for work that is scheduled to be undertaken. It was noted that the Northern Territory has been challenging as people aren't allowed to travel between communities in the same language group, with further challenges with people accessing and then wanting to leave communities. This is particularly challenging where the Northern Territory requires 14 day isolation, and the lack of communication between the s22(1), and the s22(1). Lack of understanding of COVID-19 amongst community, and need for improved communication and awareness raising of the virus for communities. The stimulus payments are likely to have a further impact as people have access to additional funds, which may create further issues for virus transmission and an increase in anti-social behaviour when the restrictions are lifted and people go to other locations to spend the funds.
- Mr Yu noted the risks associated across the north with the 'running of alcohol' once restrictions are lifted, along with gambling. This is likely to pose significant risks where social distancing is disregarded, with an increase of alcohol, gambling and possible associated violence.
- Dr Morrison noted the issues raised by other IRG members and spoke about the opportunity that the current environment poses to establishing local supply changes, with a focus on food security. Further, consideration should be given to recontextualising the IRG approach to the current climate of COVID-19 responses, and position proposals as part of ongoing recovery.

6.	2:00 pm – 2:20 pm	<p>s22(1) Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accord implementation and the re-contextualisation of the Northern Development Agenda as part of the national economic response to COVID-19. • Update on where participating governments are focusing. • Next MFND dates. 	s22(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A follow up was provided from information provided by s22(1) (earlier in the meeting). • As noted earlier, the Ministerial Forum is being scheduled for mid-June 2020 for two to three hour meeting. The s22(1) has been advised that the IRG is likely to have 30 minutes allocated as part of the meeting. • IRG wants to consolidate the relationship with the Advisory Group. The s22(1) is working with the s22(1) to ensure that they are assisting to facilitate this. • The s22(1) is also working with the s22(1) to identify 'out-of-session' options to have IRG proposals and other key bodies of work progressed to the Ministerial Forum. This will allow key proposals to be progressed, noting the shift in format and focus of the June Ministerial Forum meeting. 			
7.	2:20 pm – 3:00 pm	IRG preparation for next MFND	Chairperson

- Following from the s22(1) update, specific focus has been given to positioning the IRG for the forthcoming Ministerial Forum.
- The IRG agreed to the following key submissions/priorities to take forward.
 - 1) Leveraging the authority of the Accord – commitment to the roll out of the Accord. This needs to be a commitment on two levels:
 - i. The development body
 - ii. The Enterprise and Employment Hub system
 - 2) Need to advocate significant investment from the COVID-19 responses, including:
 - i. Needs Indigenous specific northern COVID-19 stimulus where governments underwrite the ongoing security and safety of Indigenous organisations. The IRG will consider seeking investment commitment to enable good governance and organisational viability during the pandemic response.
 - ii. Identify critical infrastructure and capital projects and how would the IRG partner with the states and territory to provide immediate opportunities for Indigenous employment, specific northern commitment of a number/percentage regarding Indigenous organisations and employment – coordination and alignment of the IPP and workforce strategies.
 - iii. Recognition that housing is a critical infrastructure need.
 - iv. Rangers strategy is key to exploring new opportunities during and post-COVID-19.
- The IRG agreed to draft and send letter regarding ongoing emergency of COVID-19. This should also be targeted to the s22(1).
 - Follow up to see where the Minister's response is at for the correspondence regarding the 'Black Summer Bushfires' and COVID-19.
 - Further correspondence should follow this and maintain the relevance of the IRG's propositions in the changing environment.

8.	3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	IRG Submissions into the Review of the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) and the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements "Black Summer Bushfires",	Dr Joe Morrison
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission into the EPBC Act has been finalised, but could not feed in the information from Mr Benning before the deadline for submissions closed. • IRG members noted that the submission was well considered with sound recommendations. • The deadline for the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Management Arrangements has been pushed back, with a draft IRG submission to be provided next week for feedback before being lodged. 			
9.	3:15 pm – 3:30 pm	IRG forward schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting dates and structure during COVID-19 restrictions. 	Chairperson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to convene in two to three weeks, noting that the Ministerial Forum will require papers for mid-June 2020. • Next meeting to focus on the Ministerial Forum. • Propose a roster of meetings with three (3) hour sessions moving forward. 			
	3:30 pm	Meeting Close	

AGENDA ITEM 11.1: ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (1-2 FEBRUARY 2021)

Item	Action Item	Action
Northern Australia Whitepaper Implementation Refresh	IRG to write to the s22(1) and request a meeting focused on the Refresh and implementation of the Accord.	Action Ongoing. Draft letter in member's pack. Members discussion at Agenda item 11.
Northern Australia Whitepaper Implementation Refresh	IRG to follow up with a letter to the s22(1) and s22(1)	Action Outstanding. Members discussion at Agenda item 11. Members to discuss the approach.
Northern Australia Whitepaper Implementation Refresh	IRG to then seek a meeting with s22(1)	Action Ongoing. Members discussion at Agenda item 11 on progress of discussions with Ministers
Northern Australia Whitepaper Implementation Refresh	s22(1) to advise the IRG on potential meeting with s22(1)	Action Ongoing. Agenda Item 8 - s22(1) will be dialling into the session.
s22(1)	s22(1) to send the s22(1) papers on water and the Research Roadmap plus the Accord to s22(1)	Action Completed. IRG Research papers sent to s22(1) on 16 February
s22(1)	s22(1) to then follow up with s22(1) in Townsville about continued collaboration and potential shared programs of work.	Action Completed. s22(1) met with s22(1) on 17 February.
s22(1)	s22(1) to send the meeting invite for their meeting on 10 March 2021 with the view that as many IRG members should attend.	Action Completed. Agenda Item 15 - IRG invited to meet with s22(1) Board on 10 March.
s22(1)	s22(1) to provide a summary of recent deals.	Action Completed.
The Voice	s22(1) to provide advice to the s22(1) on Lawford's concern about the interaction with Empowered Communities/The Voice/PBCs.	Action Completed.
IRG Administration	s22(1) to circulate the IRG members' biographies for an update.	Action Completed. Members have updated their biographies through the Policy Position Paper. See Item 6a paper