

# Culturally and Environmentally Appropriate Economies for Cape York Peninsula

Edited by R. Hill  
and S. M. Turton



# CULTURALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ECONOMIES FOR CAPE YORK PENINSULA

Proceedings of an  
Appropriate Economies Roundtable  
5-6 November 2003, Cairns

Edited by

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Rainforest CRC



Australian  
**Conservation**  
Foundation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Appropriate Economies Roundtable brought together a diverse array of participants including scientists, economists, Cape York Traditional Owners, representatives of Indigenous and environment groups, small business operators, and government agency staff for some very interesting and fruitful discussions over two days.

A key outcome of the discussions was the identification of a range of exciting options for economic development that is truly compatible with the natural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula, a region of outstanding global importance for its natural and cultural values, and a potential future World Heritage property. Options identified as being environmentally appropriate for the Cape York region include cultural industries, land and sea management, traditional medicines, nature-based and cultural tourism, protected areas, education and training, communications and information technology, eco-commodities including carbon-credits, non-destructive research, feral animal and weed management, language renewal, market gardens, seed collection, bush foods, small-scale novel crops and nurseries. The example of Eco-Trust, a group established by Indigenous nations and environmentalists in north-west America, generated real excitement about the potential to generate a way forward for development that embraces cultural, environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation inspired a lot of interest with their Business Hubs model and their approach to encouraging partnerships with the corporate sector. A very honest, open dialogue occurred at the Roundtable, and key concerns from Traditional Owners and others about trust and understanding of the environmental agenda led to the identification of the need to enhance opportunities for mutual exchanges of knowledge and ideas, particularly through working together on specific projects and pilots. Balkanu called for the establishment by governments of a 'Cape York Land Fund' to acquire properties of high natural and cultural conservation significance and to return these lands to Indigenous ownership and conservation management as a critical means of enabling sustainable Indigenous economic development for the region, whilst ensuring its ongoing protection. Indigenous people at the forum stressed the need for decisions to be made by each cultural group about economic development, and gave examples of enterprises in tourism, pastoralism, conservation management, and eco-forestry that were regarded as sustainable and highly appropriate for the people involved.

The issues of land tenure and conservation management arrangements were identified as important barriers to enabling Indigenous peoples to secure economically viable futures on Cape York Peninsula. Participants at the Roundtable agreed to work together to develop a proposal for reforms that would allow better recognition of Traditional Owners' rights and responsibilities over land, and in conservation management of their traditional lands. In addition, participants agreed to work together to foster pilot projects that implement sustainable options based on both scientific and Traditional Knowledge systems, to undertake an exchange program, and to further investigate how a concept like Eco-Trust or Eco-Culture Bank could be applied for Cape York Peninsula. Participants from other states and territories asked that results from the Roundtable be fed into similar discussions in the Kimberley and Northern Territory contexts.

R. Hill

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
ANU	Australian National University
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
BBN	Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku
CAFNEC	Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CREDC	Cairns Regional Economic Development Corporation
CYLC	Cape York Land Council
CYP2010	Cape York Peninsula to the Year 2010 Action Plan
CYPDA	Cape York Peninsula Development Association
CYPHOA	Cape York Peninsula Land Use Heads of Agreement
CYPLUS	Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy
CYPRAG	Cape York Peninsula Regional Advisory Group
DNR	Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Queensland)
DSD	Department of State Development (Queensland)
ECNT	Environment Centre of the Northern Territory
EK	Environs Kimberley
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland)
FNQ	Far North Queensland
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
JCU	James Cook University
KLC	Kimberly Land Council
NHT	National Heritage Trust
NLC	Northern Land Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
QCC	Queensland Conservation Council
TWS	The Wilderness Society

# KEYNOTE OPENING ADDRESS

## **R. Aken**

Chair, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation

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The Keynote Address from Richard Aken is reproduced here to provide a preface and context for the workshop outcomes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the invitation to address this forum. I will start the conversation over the next two days by outlining:

- some points relevant to the principles upon which Balkanu is founded; and
- some of our experiences and lessons relevant to the topic addressed by this workshop.

Balkanu was founded in 1997 with a mission to build on the foundation of our sister organisation Cape York Land Council.

While the notional reason for our existence ranges from land management, to improving peoples' engagement with government, to improving access to mainstream economies, our core mission is the same today as it was ten years ago.

This mission is to secure peoples' rights in land.

It is from this core aspiration that all our other activities arise. From Horn Island to Cooktown, Lockhart to Kowanyama, Aurukun to Coen, the message of Traditional Owners remains the same.

Strong culture, strong people and strong economies are based on the fundamental principle of ownership of country.

In this mission we are unequivocal and clear.

Cape York Peninsula is Aboriginal land.

Balkanu has, at its core, a dedication to see this proposition realised through the title tools at our disposal, and until this work is complete our organisation remains focused on the key task of returning country to people and people to country.

Cape York people have fought well documented battles over these principles, which are clearly recounted elsewhere.

But it is worth reminding this audience about some recent history.

Cape York is a place that attracts stakeholders, be they environmentalists, pastoral or mining industry players or simply city dwellers for whom the Cape represents a remote and imagined wilderness.

However, there was a time in the recent past when Cape York Aboriginal people fought battles to earn a right to be considered relevant players.

These battles, fought over seats and representation amongst the endless lists of 'stakeholders', occurred most forcefully in debates about the use of Cape York land and found expression in the processes of CYPLUS and the formation and subsequent forced election of Indigenous members to organisations like the CYPDA.

This fight culminated in the Mabo decision, which secured Cape York people a guaranteed role in the debates to come over how their country was to be used.

Despite this, the legacy of earlier debates remained and being heard amongst the throng of stakeholders was still a major challenge.

As a result of this legacy, in the 1990s the Heads of Agreement which secured prominence for the key stakeholders in the Cape was born. Its presence has ensured that the role of Cape York's key players has remained central to government policy to this day. It is a reflection of the enduring nature of this agreement that sees us all here today.

In northern Australia the key to the conservation agenda rests with your ability to successfully engage Aboriginal people on their own terms.

Yet nearly a decade on from the \$40 million dollar promise which spawned the Natural Heritage Trust Mark 1 in Cape York, are we any closer to our goals?

The answer is NO.

- Land use debates remain unresolved and Aboriginal employment in land management and decision making remains marginal;
- Opportunities for the proper management and protection of country are still going begging; and
- Innovative arrangements that would allow for sustainable development and conservation outcomes are still elusive.

It is time for an end to money wasted on more pig shooting from helicopters.

It is time for a new deal on the allocation of NHT money in Cape York.

Today we call on the State and Federal Governments to support our push for substantial Natural Heritage Trust funding to deliver a Cape York acquisition fund (see Media Release in Appendix 1).

Properly implemented and resourced, the Cape York acquisition fund will deliver on Aboriginal land justice, regional economic opportunity and the protection of key natural and cultural values. In critical areas, it will allow for the strongest and most immediate protection available.

It will enable land uses that will guarantee economic development opportunities that support properly resourced land management and finance the protection of country.

These reforms can form a central plank in the delivery of our joint aspirations for sustainable economic opportunity and protection of country.

While the land story of Cape York is compelling, there is an equally compelling story that has long demanded the attention of all thinking citizens, and forms the second part of Balkanu's charter.

This story is written large in the statistics but begins with real people and real families.

- Mortality rates are two to three times higher than that of Queensland's population overall.
- Median age at death is at least twenty years below that of non-Indigenous people.
- Suicide rates among Aboriginal males in remote communities are over six times higher than that of Queensland's population overall.
- The highest prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases in Queensland.
- Alcohol-related death rates are over 21 times the general Queensland rate, and for homicide and violence (much of it alcohol-related) eighteen times higher.

The position of the leaders and people of Cape York is that finding solutions to this situation rests with them.

It does not require more processes and programs defined and decided by government.

It does not require more imposed solutions.

It does not require restrictions of choice on individuals and families.

It requires partnerships.

It requires resources and expertise directed and applied by those who know from direct experience how their own problem can be solved.

It requires the resources and expertise of government and our other partners in the Cape York project, directed by Aboriginal people.

Ultimately, it is our conviction that one of the keys to solving the problems of despair, dysfunction and disenfranchisement in Cape York lies in the development of a strong regional economy and the creation of preconditions necessary for Aboriginal peoples to engage in it.

The solutions to the problems of Cape York lie in the examples of Willie Gordon and the Walkers.

The solutions lie in engaging the expertise and resources of corporate partners like Westpac and BCG, who have received international recognition for their foresight.

The solution lies in our partners having the courage and commonsense to allow these resources to be directed by those who are living the statistics and understand the most effective way to tackle them.

This means that regional economic development is a primary goal of organisations such as Balkanu.

It is these opportunities that will underpin strong country, strong cultures and pay for the real cost of managing country.

Let us be very clear. The seriousness of the social situation in Cape York is matched only by our conviction to beat it.

This means that at the end of the day, the test of our activities that matters most is not our relationship with stakeholders, but our responsibility to our constituents, the Traditional Owners of Cape York.

This bottom line and a vigorous engagement in the pursuit of economic opportunity mean that on occasion our vision will conflict with the goals of other Cape York stakeholders.

On occasion, these stakeholders will be the Greens.

When this occurs, as it has in the past and inevitably will in the future, we need leadership not panic.

We need to rely on the foundation of a relationship developed over the years, when our interests have intersected rather than diverged.

We need to understand the capacity of peoples' concern for country and to recall the responsibility held heavily by the senior decision makers for country.

In addition, I can say with some confidence that no decision made in relation to how country will be used, or managed or impacted, will be felt more keenly or weighed more responsibly than by Traditional Owners.

I can think of no example in Cape York where this sense of responsibility for the use of country has not prevailed.

Sensible engagement in the key question of economic development in Cape York requires loyalty to outcomes rather than process. It means delivering for individuals, families, clans and sub-regions.

Cape York is growing the infrastructure for the delivery of these outcomes through existing Aboriginal infrastructure. These include important initiatives such as:

- Business Hubs;
- Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships; and
- the Indigenous Stock Exchange.

It is incumbent on our partners to support and engage through these mechanisms rather than to reinvent, compete with or subvert them.

This workshop represents the start of a conversation about the place of the Greens in an important and necessary policy imperative on Cape York, one that is critical to the social wellbeing of our people.

Over the coming days, I ask that you focus on the areas where our common interests overlap, this is the place for honest discussion, and start to think about how you might contribute to these, on our terms, using the existing infrastructure and process.

# INTRODUCTION

## **R. Hill**

Australian Conservation Foundation and  
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The Appropriate Economies Roundtable was brought together in November 2003 by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management (Rainforest CRC), with strong support from Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, in response to a growing requirement to better understand sustainable land use options for northern Australia.

The ACF has committed to supporting economic activity in northern Australia that is ecologically, culturally and socially sustainable, and has participated particularly in Cape York Peninsula through a number of plans and agreements over the last decade, including the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Heads of Agreement (CYPHOA) and the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS). As the premier environmental research organisation based in the region, the Rainforest CRC has access to expertise and information essential for identifying and supporting a sustainable future, as well as many researchers familiar with northern Australian environments. The ACF and Rainforest CRC framed the methodology for the Roundtable around the parameters of ecological economics (see next Section).

Following a Planning Day for the Roundtable held in August 2003, the ACF and Rainforest CRC decided to initially focus on a Cape York Peninsula Case Study. The Roundtable therefore is building on much of the previous work that has occurred in Cape York Peninsula, bringing planning and land use initiatives together with economic development initiatives to chart a sustainable future for the region. Participants in the Roundtable included Traditional Owners, scientists, economists, environmentalists, business people, pastoralists and government agency staff. The engagement of Traditional Owners greatly enhanced the Roundtable, and the background and process for that engagement was an important outcome in itself (see Fenton and Salmon, this volume).

Bevan Bessen from Bessen Consulting Services acted as a facilitator for the Roundtable, and also provided an outcomes report, including the material developed through Workshops and Discussions. The Agenda for the Roundtable, and the list of Participants, appear in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the Appropriate Economies Roundtable was to learn more about how to support economic activities that enhance the well-being of Indigenous peoples on Cape York Peninsula, and at the same time look after country and culture.

Objectives included:

- Bringing together leading Cape York Traditional Owners, scientists, economists, conservation group workers and government workers with common interests in economy, culture and country, so we can all get to know each other better;

- Building on the work that has gone on before in CYPLUS, the Natural Heritage Assessment of Cape York Peninsula, Cape York Partnerships and other important studies;
- Putting down our ideas about how economy, country and culture can work together;
- Providing more options for Traditional Owners when considering how to use their country for economic benefits;
- Suggesting new projects, ideas, policies and knowledge that could help economy, country and culture; and
- Finding people who want to continue to work together on these important issues.

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ROUNDTABLE BACKGROUND  
AND METHODOLOGY

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# ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS METHODOLOGY

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## ECONOMICS AND MARKET REFORM FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Neoclassical economic theory, currently the dominant economic paradigm, emphasises the efficient operation of the market as the most important means of ensuring economic well-being and sustainability (Hamilton 1997). The central concept is that of an 'economic agent', motivated to maximise his/her welfare through buying and selling in the market, operating in free, open competitive conditions. Economic and social problems appear through 'market failures', for example monopolies, inadequate information, government subsidies, or 'externalities', factors that are not included in the market.

Neoclassical economic theory view sustainability problems as arising from the fact that many environmental factors are essentially external to the market, including for example:

- the resource base, both renewable and non-renewable;
- the operation of the environment as a waste sink, particularly of pollution; and
- the operation of the environment as a producer of amenities, such as undisturbed forests or clean rivers.

Economists therefore suggest that environmental problems can be solved by means such as:

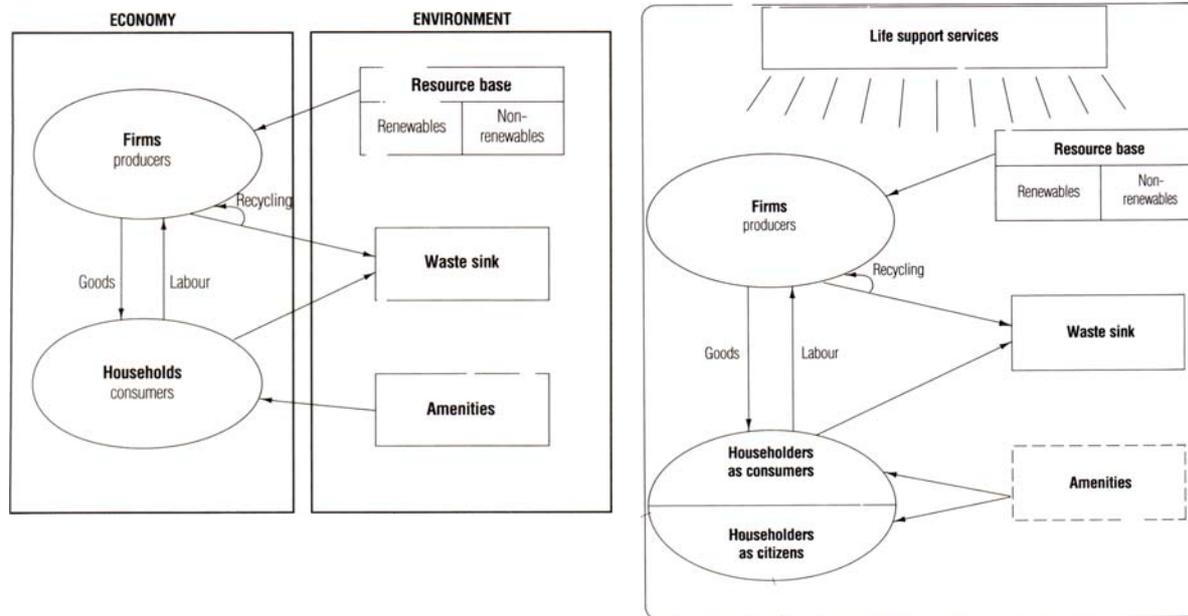
- creating new markets for environmental goods by creating new property rights, e.g. water licences, tradeable forest licences, taxes;
- eliminating subsidies that distort the free operation of the market; and
- estimating prices of non-priced goods through valuation techniques.

Such techniques have proven very useful to helping achieve greater sustainability, for example by highlighting the roles of perverse subsidies in fuelling environmental destruction (Myers 1998), and demonstrating the global values of ecosystem services to be worth at least \$20 trillion annually (Daily 1997). These techniques have the potential to be usefully applied in northern Australia. However, concerns remain about the validity of the whole concept of extending the market to encompass entities that are essentially non-market goods, and the difficulties of estimating prices for goods like culture are extremely large. The Roundtable has therefore turned to the emerging discipline of ecological economics (Diesendorf and Hamilton 1997, Hamilton 1997).

## ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Ecological economics starts from the viewpoint that the market of human consumers and producers is situated within the biosphere, and completely dependent on the biosphere for its life support services. In this model, items viewed as 'external' to the market, like the natural resource base, are, like the market, actually situated within the biosphere (see Figure 1). As well as operating to maximise their welfare through buying and selling, people also have roles as 'citizens'. As citizens, humans participate in social interactions, acting not only to

maximise their individual welfare through consumption, but also to develop institutions and processes that protect the welfare of the community, and the biosphere as a whole. The role of these institutions and humans as citizens is viewed as important to solving environmental problems, not simply the expansion of the market to factor in externalities.



**Figure 1.** Contracting depictions of the market: (left) as external to the environment (neoclassical theory); and (right) as embedded within the environment (ecological economics) (Source: Diesendorf and Hamilton 1997).

## ROUNDTABLE ECONOMICS METHODOLOGY

The Appropriate Economies Roundtable is situated within this ecological economics methodology, and focuses on the roles of people with scientific and cultural knowledge to set the limits of economic activity to ensure sustainability. The Roundtable promoted the use of multi-criteria analysis and other tools to understand how the people value Cape York Peninsula, and thereby the context of sustainability for the region. Complex interdependence, feedbacks and the scale of economic activity are critical to sustainability, and the Roundtable discussion and analysis recognises that much more work is needed to chart sustainable development for the region. Nevertheless, a strong foundation in ecological economics, building on the role of humans as citizens, using science, ethics, culture and other knowledge, provides a reliable platform from which to understand the nature of economic activity that will ensure safety, sustainability and the protection of ecological, cultural, and social systems.

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# BACKGROUND TO CAPE YORK PENINSULA PLANNING, LAND USE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

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## PLANNING AND LAND USE INITIATIVES

The Cape York Peninsula Land Use Heads of Agreement (CYPHOA) signed between Aboriginal, pastoral and conservation interests (including the Australian Conservation Foundation) in 1996, was a critical document in establishing the current context of land use planning and sustainable economic development in this region. The CYPHOA contained clauses that supported the purchase of land of high environmental and cultural values and agreed that:

“the management regime to apply to land purchased through the fund shall be negotiated between the Commonwealth and State Governments and traditional owners and shall be based on culturally and ecologically sustainable use of the land’s resources to achieve Aboriginal economic viability.”

A significant number of properties have since been purchased through funds made available by governments including Silver Plains, Kalpowar, Lilyvale, Starcke, Boynton, Bromley, Melsonby and Archer Point, providing impetus and urgency to the need to better understand sustainable land use options.

“Our Land Our Future”, the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy, was released by the Cape York Regional Advisory Group in 1997 (CYRAG 1997). CYPLUS was the result of extensive community participation, research and decision making from 1994 to 1997 which resulted in an agreed vision for the region based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development, self-determination, respect, the continuation of multiple cultures and voluntary partnership approaches. Key further actions required to enable the implementation of the CYPLUS vision and strategies were identified as a Peninsula-wide assessment of the significance of natural conservation values and management needs, and the preparation of an overall Natural Resource Management Strategy and a Cultural Resource Management Strategy.

The first recommended action, the Peninsula-wide assessment, was implemented by the Queensland Government who funded the report Natural Heritage Significance of Cape York Peninsula (Mackey *et al.* 2001). The assessment found that Cape York Peninsula is globally significant for the high integrity of its natural systems and processes, including rainforests, open forests, woodlands, shrublands, heaths, sedgeland, grasslands, mangroves, seagrass, coral reefs and saltmarsh systems. Mackey *et al.* (2001) recommended the whole region be given special status, recognising its special values and providing for regional scale and truly integrated planning and sustainable development.

The development of an overall Natural Resource Management (NRM) Strategy as recommended by CYPLUS has not occurred. Preliminary work in the CYPLUS report recognised four different categories of land use in the region – nature conservation; extensive land uses; cropping and mining; urban and infrastructure – and recommended

future work to develop management criteria for economic development in each category. The first two categories together comprise 95% of the area of Cape York Peninsula, and the Roundtable was envisaged as a first step in identifying criteria for sustainable economic development in these categories of land use.

The development of an overall Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Strategy as recommended by CYPLUS has also not occurred. Nevertheless, the CYPLUS report made recommendations about self-determination; maintenance and practice of multiple cultures; places, sites and moveable cultural property of traditional significance; respect and communication; land; and the outstation movement, all of which have some relevance to the concept of culturally appropriate economies. Regarding economic futures, the CRM Strategy desired outcome is that:

“Economic and other development proposals are negotiated with culture in mind and in agreement with residents.”

Other desired outcomes included recognising and supporting Customary Law, lore, historical and traditional associations, health practices, lifestyles and places and objects of cultural significance.

The Cape York Peninsula 2010 Action Plan was established by the Queensland Government as a means of advancing the recommendations of CYPLUS, under the continuing guidance of the CYRAG, and in addition to those actions being advanced through the Cape York Peninsula Natural Heritage Trust Plan (CYPNHT, see below). The Action Plan brings together government responses across a range of initiatives in education, health, training and other service delivery areas, now supplemented by action through Cape York Partnerships (see West, this volume). The CYRAG is currently on hold while the Government reviews institutional and community consultative arrangements on Cape York Peninsula.

The CYPNHT came about in response to a bipartisan commitment during the 1996 Federal Election to provide \$40 million to support the protection of the natural and cultural environment of Cape York Peninsula. The overall goal as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments was “to protect the natural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula through an integrated regional initiative” (Environment Australia and Queensland Department of Natural Resources 1998). Objectives of the plan contained in the same MOU included conservation, restoration, and protection of natural and cultural values and the encouragement of ecologically and economically sustainable land use. The only strategy directed towards sustainable economic use within the CYPNHT was voluntary property planning, which aimed to provide funding for expert advice and planning assistance on realising the economic and conservation potential of the land. However, despite five years of operation and the expenditure of substantial resources, not one property plan was completed through the CYPNHT process (Schneiders and Hill 2003).

Beyond Cape York Peninsula, the need to identify more sustainable economic activities has been particularly recognised by the Northern Australia Environment Alliance (NAEA). NAEA came together in 2002 when ten non-government environment groups agreed to coordinate their work towards protecting natural and cultural heritage across the northern Australia in partnership with local communities and the wider Australian community. Groups involved are the Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS), Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC), Conservation Council of Western Australia (CCWA), Environs Kimberley (EK), Environment Centre of the Northern Territory (ECNT), North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC), The Wilderness Society (TWS) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The groups also agreed to progress work on issues

including understanding the ecology of the region better; analysing current threats to natural and cultural values; ensuring institutional reform, including that of protected areas; engaging with Traditional Owners; ensuring the well-being of the human communities and in particular identifying and supporting appropriate economic activities and models.

## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Cape York Partnerships is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Indigenous peoples on Cape York Peninsula that was released by the Government in May 2000 to focus on addressing Indigenous social and economic well-being through whole of government negotiated approaches. The Economic Framework for Partnerships is summarised in a later paper (see West, this volume).

The far north Queensland (FNQ) overall framework for economic development (Cairns Regional Economic Development Corporation, CREDC 2003) has identified a number of key strategies for the region's future, including aviation, creative industries (film, television, information and communication technologies), international education and training, bio-industries, tourism, tropical foods/processing, super yachts, sports, heavy engineering and manufacturing. CYPLUS economic strategies, which form part of the FNQ Framework, are for mining, tourism, commercial fishing, pastoral industry, cropping and horticulture, aquaculture and forests.

FNQ Sustainable Industries study was commissioned by the Queensland Government to set broad principles for the development of sustainable industries in FNQ (Blackwood 2003). This study recommends the strategic directions for sustainable industries as being: the positioning of the region as world leader for tropical reef and rainforest preservation and management; the establishment of a regional sustainability taskforce, business network and regional branding; and the creation of a centre for cleaner production training. Although the FNQ region as defined by this study does not include Cape York Peninsula, many of these strategic directions may be of relevance.

Beyond Cape York Peninsula, the Northern Territory Government has been particularly active in addressing Indigenous economic development broadly. The Northern Territory Government hosted a series of three forums "*Seizing our Economic Future* Indigenous Economic Forum" (see Whitehead 2003). Strategies discussed at these forums included governance, carbon accumulation through better fire management, caring for country, cultural industries (arts, crafts, music, performance and media), tourism, wildlife farming as well as sustainable pastoralism and mining.

At the global level, the Financing Protected Areas Task Force of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of IUCN, in collaboration with the Economics Unit of IUCN (2000), has produced guidelines on generating revenue for protected areas and supporting conservation economies. Some of their ideas and suggestions include:

Biodiversity Enterprise Funds:	Highly flexible investment funds that provide support for sustainable small and medium size enterprises (see Schneiders, this volume).
Carbon offsets:	Selling carbon credits to greenhouse gas emitters.
Donor funds:	Philanthropic, corporate, Green Trusts, workplace donation schemes.

Tourism:	Transport
	Food
	Accommodation
	Publishing: postcards, calendars, books, CDs, films, music.
	Crafts and Arts: modern objects from tradition, paintings, sculpture, beading, weaving, natural jewellery.
	Performance: music, dance, theatre, radio, media.
	Specialist guiding: cultural interpretation, sport fishing, adventure.
	Self guided: trails, walks, camps.
Cause-related marketing:	Sale of items for which the main value lies in the purchaser's knowledge of having helped conservation/Indigenous futures.
Bioprospecting:	Benefit sharing agreements that provide for companies to access natural resources.
Adoption programs and conservation concessions:	Leasing or "selling" areas for protection.

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# INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN THE ROUNDTABLE: CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

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## CONTEXT

Conservation groups and Aboriginal people (particularly Traditional Owners) on Cape York Peninsula have an historical relationship, which continues to influence the nature and parameters of their dialogue. Much of the ongoing interaction remains affected by the legacy of joint campaign and political experiences rooted in the Land Rights and Native Title era, and processes like the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Heads of Agreement. These shared experiences, often founded on expedient political alliances, have produced an assumption by some that Aboriginal people of Cape York Peninsula hold 'green' aspirations. In recent times, this assumption has been tested by two developments: firstly, the securing of title, return to country and subsequent search by Traditional Owners for management and development capital; and secondly the rise of a policy environment that favours economic development as the model for social development.

In Cape York Peninsula particularly, and northern Australia generally, recognition of Aboriginal title has been largely successful. While there remains much work to be done to bring this to a conclusion, it is likely that for much of the Peninsula Aboriginal title will be recognised. In addition, the contentious and vitriolic nature of the 1990s Native Title debate is now largely concluded, and political attention has shifted. Today the focus is on initiatives relevant to fundamental social reform, based on economic development (see next section).

In such an environment the more obvious benefits of the Green-Black alliance and the mutual benefits it delivers become less clear. Nonetheless Indigenous groups recognise the political leverage exercised by Green groups and their entrenched 'stakeholder' status in Cape York Peninsula. Similarly, conservation groups such as the Australian Conservation Foundation are addressing the new reality that increasingly the economic future and, more relevantly, the types of industries and endeavours which constitute that future in the region are now being decided and directed by Indigenous groups and their new corporate partners. It is in this context, devoid of the immediately obvious potential for political advantage, that the new relationships between green groups and Aboriginal people are being negotiated. This represents a much more sophisticated and subtle context for interaction and is the underlying rationale for the Roundtable and closed Indigenous session discussed in this report.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology related to Indigenous involvement in the Roundtable process, and the principles and processes employed, were informed by the above context. The first element in the overall process centred on the inclusion of regional representative bodies and similar organisations.

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, in particular, has been the active vehicle for the development of Indigenous-corporate partnerships in Cape York Peninsula. These partnerships have found concrete expression through the founding of 'business hubs' in a

number of locations throughout the region. These hubs (essentially staffed business development resource offices) are the basis for economic research, new enterprise development and capital investment in Indigenous Cape York and represent a substantial investment by the Indigenous people of the region, State and Federal Governments, Westpac Banking Corporation, The Boston Consulting Group and other corporate partners. The nature of this investment, and the relationships that hubs represent, make them significant both politically and economically. As a result, attempts by other Cape York stakeholders to develop 'appropriateness' criteria are generally perceived as restricting or fencing in economic development opportunities or particular industry types. By extension, 'appropriateness' criteria can be viewed as an obstruction to the improvement of social conditions. Given this reality, the involvement of key Indigenous organisations at the planning stage, including general agreement to the validity of the issue posed, is critical. This involvement began with framing the nature, purpose and structure of the Roundtable, and was central in this exercise to ensuring meaningful Indigenous engagement. The formation of relationships with Indigenous organisation staff at two levels was critical to developing the participation – firstly at the staff level, and secondly at the leadership level. While the former is of immediate importance, an ability to engage and gain a leadership level imprimatur is critical.

The second critical element in the overall process centred on appropriate participation. Indigenous participation in the Roundtable was not designed to be either exclusive or representative, rather discussants were invited subject to the advice of Indigenous groups on the basis of their influence and involvement in representative industries in Cape York, their importance in traditional decision-making structures, and their experience in regional decision-making processes. This model of involvement was particularly critical to ensuring Indigenous engagement in the first instance. In a number of cases (including gaining the imprimatur of Cape York leaders), participation of existing Indigenous representatives relevant to economic infrastructure and industries of Cape York was a precondition. The importance of this element to the design of the Roundtable methodology should not be underestimated.

The third element centred on establishing the parameters for the discussion and how the outcomes of the Roundtable would be used. While there was recognition of the fact that each party would bring and develop its own perspective, approaching the question of appropriate development as complementary to existing 'Indigenous owned' business development infrastructure was critical to gaining meaningful engagement.

Despite the current Cape York policy environment and a corporate-State-Indigenous consensus related to economic development, many of the concrete initiatives are relatively recent. As a result there remain genuine concerns that discussions of economic development criteria outside these partnerships have the potential to split existing scarce resources towards non-core activities, or activities outside Indigenous control. As a result, a methodology that attempted to operate by progressing appropriate economic development initiatives within or complementary to existing business development infrastructure represented, was a key element in gaining meaningful engagement.

## **Case Study – Methodology for Engagement by Jean Fenton**

I was employed by the Australian Conservation Foundation on a three-month contract as the Cape York Program Officer to primarily organise the Appropriate Economics Roundtable, essentially focusing on Indigenous engagement in the process.

ACF were very much aware that for Indigenous engagement to occur they needed the support and help of the Cape York Indigenous Representative Bodies, in this case Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation. Balkanu's involvement was imperative, due to being the organisation primarily responsible for economic development for Aboriginal people in the region.

Engagement with Balkanu was established through the then Property Planner, Matt Salmon, and we collaboratively staged a series of meetings where ACF put forward their agenda in relation to economic development. The Manager for the Caring for Country unit, Jim Davis, with whom I also enjoyed an existing friendship, also provided considerable support, including supplying contact details of representatives whom Balkanu saw as key individuals to take part in further defining the notion of culturally appropriate economic development. This led to Balkanu agreeing to work with ACF where common ground was sought.

I contacted and invited the majority of the Indigenous people on the list provided by Balkanu, as well as Indigenous contacts provided by Rosemary Hill, the Northern Australia Program Coordinator for ACF, and made follow up phone calls with each of the individuals to further discuss the agenda. Balkanu provided further support, in that when contacted by these particular individuals regarding the Roundtable, Balkanu supported the process, advising participants to attend not only to discuss appropriate economic development, but also to have discussions with 'Green' organisations and individuals. This showed that ACF followed due process and that the Representative Body had been engaged from the beginning, rather than gone around.

In this case, engagement with Balkanu was relatively straightforward. I already had an existing relationship and friendship with Matt Salmon which was based on trust and respect, and which enabled us to speak openly and frankly about both ACF's and Balkanu's agendas.

I suppose one of the most important themes to highlight is that when I approached Balkanu, I ensured that the agenda was also driven by this organisation; as an Indigenous person myself I saw that if Balkanu drove their own agenda into the process, and had genuine input on how the Roundtable was organised, ACF would ultimately gain greater support from this group and a dialogue would flow.

The Roundtable was attended by the majority of the Indigenous people invited and was deemed a success, especially in relation to facilitating a process for dialogue between these two groups who have had somewhat strained relations of late.

It is my opinion that engagement was successful due to the already existing friendships that I shared with Matt Salmon and Jim Davis, and that our friendships are founded on trust and working together. The other major factor for success was the transparency of the agendas, and the real steps ACF were taking to build a relationship and partnership with this organisation, and Indigenous peoples, to explore appropriate economic development in Cape York.



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INVITED PAPERS

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# NATURAL HERITAGE VALUES AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

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## INTRODUCTION

To date, economic activity has been characterised as development that pollutes the environment, and mines what could be renewable natural resources, causing habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation leading to the loss of biodiversity. As such, the natural environment is seen largely as a resource to be exploited and consequently landscapes become increasingly dominated by human land use activity. The exception are protected areas where natural processes dominate and the impacts of threatening processes associated with modern technological society are minimised. However, protected areas are unlikely to cover much more than their current extent of around six to eight percent of land in Australia. In any case, how the remaining plus ninety percent is managed will have more influence on the long-term future of biodiversity and related environmental values.

This is particularly so for Northern Australia, much of which is characterised by a high degree of variability in the distribution through space and time of landscape productivity and how the products of that bio-production are allocated and made available to food chains. As a result, many species are nomadic or highly dispersive such that they need to move around very large areas to acquire the necessary food and related habitat resources. Thus, the locations providing critical habitat and food resources for these taxa can and do vary from year to year depending on the prevailing climatic conditions.

In considering what might constitute environmentally appropriate economic activity it is useful to consider what it is about the environment that we value and seek to protect. In Australia and internationally these have been described in terms of natural heritage values. The Australian and state governments all give legal recognition to natural heritage, and Australia is of course a signatory to the World Heritage Convention. The concept of natural heritage is therefore well recognised and provides a useful context for thinking about environmental values.

Recently, myself and two colleagues (Henry Nix and Peter Hitchcock) prepared a report for the Queensland Government in which we presented a framework for identifying and assessing the natural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula. A full copy of our report can be found on the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency website at:

[http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/nature\\_conservation/biodiversity/conserving\\_biodiversity/cape\\_york\\_peninsula/](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/nature_conservation/biodiversity/conserving_biodiversity/cape_york_peninsula/)

This framework reflects an integration of Australian natural heritage value and World Heritage natural value criteria. However, in addition our framework was informed by advances in ecological understanding about the conservation significance of natural ecosystem processes, and relationships between environmental determinants of biotic response, habitat, community organisation, and disturbance regimes. Our terms of

references required us not to address issues relating to Indigenous values. However, our framework recognises that the process of valuation is culturally based – though in our case scientifically informed.

## NATURAL HERITAGE CRITERIA

To begin, we defined natural heritage value as:

“Those elements of biodiversity, geodiversity, and those essentially natural ecosystems and landscapes, which are regarded as worthy of conservation or preservation to future generations in terms of their existence value or for their sustainability of life and culture”

The basic idea is that a set of criteria are established and used to evaluate the natural heritage significance of a landscape. It is therefore possible to compare and rank landscapes according to how they rate against these criteria. The eight criteria are best considered as related pairs; (1) Geodiversity and (2) Geoevolution; (3) Biodiversity and (4) Bioevolution; (5) Natural Integrity and (6) Ongoing Natural Processes; and (7) Contributions to Knowledge and (8) Aesthetics. Criteria 1/2 and 3/4 are largely self-explanatory. Criteria 6/7 and 8/9 warrant additional comment here.

The meaning of natural integrity (Criterion 5) can be understood as a measure of the relative impact of modern technological-based land use activity on the functioning of natural phenomena. Thus, natural integrity can be measured along a continuum and does not merely represent a binary state. Neither does the concept of natural integrity reflect any notion that denies the very long-term presence of humans in northern Australia prior to European colonisation. Rather, natural integrity aims to provide an indication of the extent to which natural phenomena versus modern technology dominate the land. Criterion 6 – Ongoing Natural Processes – is an attempt to draw attention in particular to processes that often escape attention, such as catchment hydrology.

Admittedly, the term ‘natural’ is problematic. Scientifically, humans are the product of evolution and hence are natural. And, it is likely a concept that implies a distinction between nature and humans is limited from traditional Indigenous perspectives. Nonetheless, it remains very useful and scientifically meaningful to distinguish between elements of the world that are derived from human culture and technology and those that do not.

Criterion 7 is intended to incorporate but not be limited to knowledge stemming from modern systematic scientific understanding. Thus, if it were desired, the value of a landscape to traditional knowledge could also be reflected in this criterion. Criterion 8 – Aesthetics – does not reflect a scientific understanding of the natural world. Rather, it is acknowledged that beauty is in the eye of the beholders and reflects their cultural context. Nonetheless, landscape aesthetics is a powerful economic lever for the tourist industry and is thus amenable to some degree of quantification. Again, this criterion could be used to include Indigenous values relating to landscape aesthetics if this were deemed useful.

## APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Given the above, the main result of our analysis was that Cape York Peninsula is of national and world natural heritage significance when evaluated against all criteria. Of particular significance however was the high ranking for Natural Integrity. This reflected the relatively low impact the region has received from broad-scale clearing, large-scale impoundment of water resources, the relatively low intensity of commercial grazing, and the lack of intensive agriculture and heavy industrial production.

We consider appropriate economic activities to be those that maintain and do not substantially degrade the existing natural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula as defined in our study. This implies that certain forms of economic activity common in Southern Australia may not be appropriate in Cape York Peninsula. Thus, some forms of economic activity could be ruled out as inappropriate in any form. However, other activities may be appropriate so long as their negative impacts on natural heritage values are subject to strict management prescriptions. Other activities may be largely compatible with maintaining natural heritage values and hence are not of concern. One way forward therefore in considering the economic future of Cape York Peninsula is to develop three lists as a guide to policy formulation: the first detailing economic activities which are unavoidably degrading of natural heritage values; the second list activities which are permissible subject to management prescription; whilst the third lists those of no current concern. This approach implies the need to consider economic activities on a case-by-case basis and to evaluate their potential impact against the natural heritage criteria.

The extent of the impact of an economic activity on natural heritage values is often a question of scale. Many activities are only economically viable at a scale at which they have a significant negative impact. Often this impact will be accumulative over space and time. Other activities may remain economically viable at a reduced scale at which their impact on natural heritage values is minimised and acceptable. It is also useful to make a distinction between intensive and extensive economic activities. It may be that some extensive land uses can be carefully managed to protect natural heritage values. Similarly, it may be possible to contain intensive activities thereby minimising their harmful impacts.

If Cape York Peninsula follows the same course of economic development as southern Australia it is difficult to imagine how large-scale degradation of natural heritage values will be avoided. The challenge is to promote new patterns of production and consumption that simultaneously sustain natural heritage values and deliver social and economic justice to the people and communities of the region.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA: THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Compared with much of the continent, the landscapes of northern Australia have suffered comparatively little structural modification. Many areas have retained their tree cover and support woodlands and forests that probably look much like they did prior to European settlement. Unfortunately, that intact appearance hides a number of important changes.

## EVIDENCE OF CHANGE

In many areas, important components of the fauna have suffered. Granivorous (seed-eating) birds are less numerous, and many species have been entirely lost from places where they were previously common (Franklin 1999). Small mammals also appear less abundant than previously and have also gone from large parts of their prior range (Woinarski *et al.* 2001a). Even large animals such as Emu appear to be declining in parts of the savannas. Some people have suggested that we may shortly be facing extinctions and range contractions of an order similar to the appalling losses from arid lands that followed a few decades after intensification of land use by the pastoral industry (Woinarski *et al.* 2001b).

## CAUSES OF CHANGE

Causes of such losses, in landscapes that look to be in reasonable condition, remains uncertain, but a number of likely contributors have been identified.

### **Fire**

Changes in the way fire was used, after Aboriginal people were displaced from their lands or adapted practice to suit pastoralism, may be involved. For example, in parts of northern Australia altered fire regimes show in the death of native Cypress Pines (*Callitris intratropica*). In the Top End of the Northern Territory, Cypress pine are doing better in places where Aboriginal people still use fire in the customary way (Bowman *et al.* 2002).

### **Grazing and Feral Animals**

Grazing by both managed stock and feral animals causes changes in relative abundance of different grass species. Some grasses that are important for wildlife are displaced or their seed production reduced by heavy grazing (Crowley and Garnett 2001). Grazing also changes the way fire behaves as well, because it reduces fuel loads and hence the size and intensity of individual fires. Deliberate or incidental reduction of fire incidence and intensity in pastoral lands can lead to 'thickening' of vegetation (Dyer *et al.* 2001). Increased numbers of trees and shrubs can ultimately damage pastoralism because there is less grass, and also affect wildlife. The decline of the Golden-shouldered parrot in Cape York is thought to be due to increased abundance of woody *Melaleuca* stems in the low-lying areas in which it builds its nests and forages. Feral pigs actively seek out the juicy bases of tussock grasses and reduce abundance of grasses (and seed) used by the endangered Gouldian Finch, *Erythrura gouldiae*, in lands near Katherine (Milton Lewis, pers. comm.).

As well as feral stock, northern Australia also suffers from the presence of some feral predators, including cats, which can adversely affect wildlife. Cane toads poison other native animals like quolls and goannas when those native predators try to eat them, like they would other native frogs. Cane toad impacts extend beyond concerns about conservation to include damage to the customary economy of Indigenous communities (Altman *et al.* 2003).

## **Weeds**

It is unlikely that any of the major wildlife problems described so far can be attributed solely to weeds. But this situation will almost certainly change. Agricultural scientists have brought a huge array of alien plants into Australia and for many decades have been releasing them to 'improve' pastures in northern Australia. Most turn out to be useless for pastoralism, a few provide some advantage, but many more become weeds (Lonsdale 1994). Some weedy species (e.g. Para Grass and Olive Hymenachne) do damage mainly by displacing other plants that provide food for animals like Magpie Geese. Others do great damage to the drier savannas, not only by taking over from native plants but by also altering fire behaviour. Gamba Grass, which has been introduced in the Top End and Cape York, dries later in the year and then burns hotter. Because it is very tall, Gamba Grass carries fire into the canopies of trees. If it is allowed to invade the savannas unchecked, it is likely that many areas will become virtually treeless grasslands. In Cape York there are particular problems with Rubber Vine, which can smother trees and fundamentally change the vegetation along rivers and streams, where it does particularly well.

## **Harvest of Wildlife**

The changes causing greatest concern for conservation in northern Australia have nothing to do with hunting or harvest of wild plants or animals for food. However, some Aboriginal people have expressed concern at the breakdown of customary controls over hunting and have sought assistance to examine trends for some species, like the Bustard.

## **NEW CHALLENGES**

Although north Australia has so far avoided the worst of the impacts that follow poorly considered development, pressures on savanna landscapes are increasing. Extensive land clearing is proposed for a number of areas, and there are proposals to turn northern rivers inland, to help correct past mistakes in management of southern waters. Groundwater is being extracted in large volumes. Relatively small areas of fertile soils are being progressively converted to various forms of agriculture.

Given problems with wildlife of the sort outlined above, losses of resource rich patches from the landscape can have effects that spread much further than the patches themselves. Many wild animals and plants, especially in northern Australia, fluctuate so much in abundance under the influence of the weather and other factors like fire, that their ability to hang on at all depends on the availability of refuges which retain the food resources they need even under difficult conditions. They can disperse to and use these areas until conditions improve. But these especially resilient and productive places are the very sites that are targeted first for development. Their loss or degradation will displace animals from very large areas.

How can northern Australia respond to these new pressures, while finding solutions to the existing problems?

## RESPONSES TO CHANGE

Perhaps the most important point to take from this brief summary is that many of the most pressing problems demand active intervention. Depending for conservation solely or even mostly on a system of reserves invites continued losses, because no system of widely spaced sites can protect the full range of 'refuges' or resource-rich patches needed under different conditions. Weeds, feral animals and fire cannot be managed by walking away and treating places like Cape York Peninsula as 'wilderness'. More, rather than fewer, people active on country may be needed to deal with the existing threats.

However, these people need to be supported in some way. How can they derive a living from north Australian landscapes and support their land management activity without adding new problems or increasing the severity of existing ones? This is a very large question and I touch on only some of what I think are the most critical issues and options.

First, developments of any sort need to be much better planned, implemented and monitored so that the worst sorts of mistakes can be avoided or corrected. But it should also be acknowledged that even the best planned large scale developments will involve some losses. The warning in displacement of many species from relatively intact unfragmented landscapes should alert us to the great risks that the addition of large scale developmental tinkering will involve.

This leads to the second important issue: that orthodox agricultural developments in the poor soils and harsh climatic variation of northern savannas often fail, but do a great deal of damage in the process (Woinarski and Dawson 2002). Other ways of generating incomes should be examined closely. Indigenous people in some areas will wish to enhance or restore elements of the customary economy, which in parts of the savannas accounts for more than fifty percent of total cash and non-cash income (Altman 1987; Altman *et al.* unpublished data). Tourism based on natural and cultural values is another obvious option (e.g. Ellis 2003). Commercial use of native species is another (Whitehead 2003). Both will require investments of time and money and will not bring results overnight, nor benefit all parts of the Cape. Commercial use of wildlife faces many regulatory barriers that are unrelated to sustainability, and the support and active involvement of government will be necessary to overcome formal barriers and prejudices against the use of native species in commerce (Whitehead 2000).

A third issue also touches on the role of Governments. The harsh reality in the harsh physical and social environment of northern Australia is that there is no simple single solution to land management problems or economic disadvantage and its social consequences. All interests in the economic, social and environmental future of northern Australia must look beyond the well-trying and orthodox for options and opportunities. In parts of the savannas, Indigenous people have responded to this challenge by forming 'Ranger' groups who both carry out land management work themselves and assist others to be more active on their country. These groups may be involved in tourism and commercial use of wildlife to help fund their work, but the primary objective is to 'care for country' by managing fire, feral animals and weeds. Preliminary analysis suggests that the cost of achieving arguably similar conservation outcomes in this way (see Yibarbuk *et al.* 2001) is much lower than the alternative formal reserve management model.

Unfortunately, there has been little recognition of the contribution of this work to the national good and our capacity to meet national commitments to conservation of biodiversity and sustainable resource use, or to enhance biosecurity by monitoring remote areas for exotic animal disease. Despite the commitments in Federal legislation (the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999) to engage Indigenous people and apply Indigenous knowledge to conservation and sustainability issues, Ranger groups have to

cobble together bits and pieces of funding and depend heavily on CDEP, so the movement remains fragile. Much greater and more coherent government support is needed.

In the short to medium term, perhaps the most plausible economic target for large parts of the Cape will be a mix of these options. An effective and equitable mix could include targeted and adequate government support for local people to care for some of Australia's most biodiverse landscapes. Concurrent use of natural resources for subsistence and small scale commerce will also provide exposure to and experience in meeting the demands of the market economy, and so in time build access to a greater range of options.

From a conservation perspective, the great advantage of such a path will be a dependence on the maintenance of natural systems providing natural products, rather than acceptance of the orthodox assumption that the only economically productive landscape is a grossly altered and subjugated one.

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# ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Northern Australia is a region with a unique natural and social setting (Johnson *et al.* 1999). The tropical lands and seas of Cape York Peninsula, the Gulf, the Top End and the Kimberley display a high diversity of habitats, including mangrove forests, fringing coral reefs, tropical savannas, rainforests, heathlands and mound springs. This region includes the largest extent of near-natural tropical savanna landscapes in the world – Cape York Peninsula is outstanding globally for its high natural integrity; in the Kimberley region less than one percent has been cleared (Mackey *et al.* 2001; Department of Local Government and Regional Development 2003).

Key features in the socio-economic profile of northern Australia highlight the distinctive nature of the region when compared to southern Australia (Reynolds and Lavery 1998). Population density is very low, around 0.1 people per square kilometre (Whitehead *et al.* 2003). The proportion of Indigenous peoples, particularly outside the major urban centres, is high when compared to Australia as a whole – more than sixty percent in Cape York Peninsula, around 46% in the Kimberley, and 66% in Arnhem Land (CYRAG 1997, Government of Western Australia and the KDC 2001, Tropical Savannas CRC 2002).

The employment and production characteristics of the region differ from southern Australia. Nationally some 46% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and financial/property services, while these account for only 26% in the north. Conversely, government administration, health and education account for 21% at the national level and 31% in the north (Johnson *et al.* 1999). The economy in terms of relative value of production is dominated by mining, with agriculture and tourism also making an important contribution. However, the relative value of mining does not translate directly to employment – for example, in the Northern Territory, whilst mining is by far the largest industry in terms of production, it rates only tenth in terms of employment. Pastoralism is the dominant use in terms of land, with substantial areas also allocated to nature conservation and Aboriginal tenures – much of the region is recognised as marginal for pastoralism (Roth *et al.* 1998)

## CULTURE AND NATURE—THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NORTH

### **Nature**

Northern Australia has outstanding significance on the global and continental scales for many of its key natural features and places. A recent assessment of the natural heritage significance of Cape York Peninsula found that much of the region would qualify for World

Heritage listing (Mackey *et al.* 2001). The sunken coastline of the Kimberley and the associated extremely large tides produce an unusual array of coastal formations and extensive island archipelagos of great scientific interest while Kakadu and Purnululu National Parks are already listed as World Heritage sites.

Northern Australia is characterised by predominantly summer monsoon rainfalls and an extended dry season when little or no rains fall – dynamism and seasonal extremes have shaped the biota (Whitehead *et al.* 2003). As a result, different parts of the landscape become critically important for certain animals at different times – the management implication is that protection of wildlife populations may require an extraordinarily high degree of natural integrity across the landscape, regardless of tenure. Recent assessments as part of the National Land and Water Resources Audit have highlighted the better ecological condition of northern Australia within the continent, as well as worrying signs of accelerating decline (Satler and Creighton 2002).

## **Culture**

At the global level, northern Australia stands out as a region of very high ethno-linguistic diversity (Oviedo *et al.* 2000). Differences in language, material culture, social and political relations, art forms, music, and resources across the region highlight the uniqueness of each group (Martin 2001, Mangglamarra *et al.* 1991). Nevertheless, connections to 'country' are central for all these Indigenous peoples (Rose 1996). As well as being places of great natural value, the northern regions are places travelled, known, inscribed in song, dance and design, with stories passed on from generation to generation "a humanised realm saturated with significations" (Stanner 1979, Rose 1996). Knowledge of changes in seasons and environments also comes with connections to country – fire management is one of many Indigenous land management techniques underpinned by such connection and knowledge (Hill and Baird 2003).

Indigenous peoples in Australia generally are engaged in a period of intense cultural renewal and revival, associated with increasing recognition of human, cultural and land rights. In the north, specialised Indigenous local and regional land and cultural management agencies are growing in number and strength – examples include the Northern Land Council Caring for Country unit, the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, the Kimberley Land Council Land and Sea Management Office and Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation (Jaireth and Craig 2002). Indigenous groups in northern Australia have also been at the forefront of campaigns to protect their country from industrialisation – the Mirrar people's heroic work to keep Jabiluka free from uranium mining and to ensure ecologically sustainable industries in the future has won them global honour (Sweeney 2001); the Wuthathi people of Shelburne Bay on eastern Cape York Peninsula finally achieved the cancellation of mining leases over country after twenty five years of work (Wallis and Nursey-Bray 2003).

## **CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CURRENT TRAJECTORY**

### **The Current Development Trajectory**

Large scale resource development, through mineral exploration, large-scale irrigated agriculture based around impoundments like the Ord River Dam, and pastoral intensification have long been viewed as the basis of economic development for the north (Johnson *et al.* 1999). The north is seen as a cornucopia, with few willing to face the reality that lands marginal for pastoralism are unlikely to be suitable for intensive agriculture (Holmes 1990). For example, the recent Northern Australian Forum Investment Strategy (Anonymous 2001) recommends development of irrigated horticulture, intensification of beef production, expansion of mineral exploitation and clearing for forestry plantations – whilst at the same time acknowledging an environment in good condition as a key competitive advantage for the

region, and noting the significance of a spectrum of tropical environments – deserts, floodplains, woodland, savannah, complex coastal fringes including mangroves and reefs. However, growth of these industries is not compatible with protecting the most globally important values in the north – nature and culture.

### Consequences for the Land

Despite its relative good condition, northern Australia is showing signs of environmental deterioration (Sattler and Creighton 2002). For example, the Kimberleys and Top End of the Northern Territory are now reporting declines in mammal numbers and granivorous birds, and three mammals on Cape York Peninsula are endangered. Whitehead *et al.* (2003) have provided a useful summary of the impact of these threatening processes across northern Australia, quoted here. Evidence is that habitat change associated with grazing has decimated granivorous and many other birds across the north and is associated (together with changed fire regimes) with ongoing decline of mammal species. Frequent and widespread fires are associated with the loss of a number of endemic plants in the rainforest and heath micro-habitats. In pastoral and heavily grazed landscapes, reduction in fuel loads leads to infrequent fires, contributing to woody weed invasion, which is associated with the decline of the endangered golden shouldered parrot (Hill *et al.* 2001, Crowley and Garnett 1998). Although exotic plants make up a small proportion of the flora across much of northern Australia, pasture agronomists have introduced and established many new weeds. Feral cats and pigs are widespread and numerous, preying on many small vertebrates. Water impoundments place at risk flows to springs and their dependent habitats and to dry season discharges from underground sources. Clearing and irrigated agriculture in the Ord River has already caused rising groundwater salinisation (Community of Kununurra 2000).

### Consequences for Indigenous People

Indigenous peoples have the lowest economic status of all Australians, without qualification (Altman 2000). Key indicators such as life expectancy, income, employment status and educational level demonstrate the dramatic differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Table 1). The Kakadu Regional Social Impact Assessment highlighted how the socio-economic wellbeing of the people has not been improved by money injected through either major mining investments or income from the National Park. The key indicators of employment and unemployment rates, levels of welfare dependency, degree of household overcrowding and educational achievement have showed no overall signs of improvements since the 1980s (Taylor 1999).

**Table 1.** Selected socio-economic indicators from the 1996 Census (Source: Altman 2000).

Socio-economic Indicator	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Ratio
Unemployment rate	22.7%	9%	2.5
Median income (adults)	\$190	\$292	0.7
Post-school qualification	23.6%	40.2%	0.6
Male life expectancy at birth	57 years	75 years	0.8
Female life expectancy at birth	64 years	81 years	0.8

## TOWARDS CULTURALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC MODELS

Creating an ecologically sustainable northern Australia requires that we pass onto future generations the same opportunities that we ourselves enjoy, and means the protection of the natural assets on which our wealth is based, as well as the cultural diversity which is the basic fabric of human life. The Appropriate Economies Roundtable focused on furthering understanding of environmentally and culturally appropriate economies for Cape York Peninsula (see other sections in this report). Mackey (this volume) provided a framework for assessing environmental appropriateness:

“We consider appropriate economic activities to be those that maintain and do not substantially degrade the existing natural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula.”

These existing natural heritage values are presented in Mackey *et al.* (2001). Researchers and environmental experts at the workshop used this definition to categorise economic activities as mostly compatible, appropriate under management conditions, or inappropriate. All participants recognised that a continuum exists within most activities from appropriate to inappropriate. Examples of largely compatible activities included cultural industries; land and sea management; protected areas; education and training; and communications and information technology. Activities considered appropriate under conditions included food production; renewable energy; human services; pastoralism without land clearing or feed-lotting; natural resource utilisation and some forms of research. Inappropriate activities were identified as broad-scale land clearing and associated large scale cropping; large-scale water impoundment; uranium and sand mining; and industrial scale logging.

Indigenous people at the workshop advised that cultural appropriateness is not a concept that can be generalised, and that it will change, as each clan or cultural group will define cultural appropriateness differently. Some of the culturally appropriate activities supported by the Indigenous people present were cultural eco-tourism; cattle and pastoralism; cultural knowledge-sharing under Indigenous control; weed management; salvage logging and small scale timber harvest to meet community needs; national park management; ranger positions; and bush tucker gardens

Indigenous peoples also emphasised the importance of social processes – of how economic activities were carried on, and by whom. Cultural appropriateness is related to factors such as Indigenous people setting the agenda; addressing social dysfunction; developing financial management skills; protecting Intellectual and cultural property rights; and using conservation governance models that properly support Indigenous people on Indigenous land (i.e. not National Parks and conservation agreements in their current form).

## CHARTING SUSTAINABILITY – OR HOW DO WE STEER IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION?

A synergy is emerging here – a glimpse of a future where economic development is based on activities that both protect the important natural values, and enhance the lives of the people, particularly of the Indigenous cultures. The challenge is to find a means of creating that future. Clearly, support, recognition and respect for Indigenous leadership and community is central to enabling economic development to be truly culturally sustaining. We also need to act decisively to protect our natural heritage – to put in place the regulatory, policy and incentive measures that will ensure vegetation is protected from clearing, and the rivers remain free flowing. In addition, the broader mainstream Australian community needs to be provided with information about the benefits of linking cultural diversity to protection of

natural values, thereby ensuring that the government policies gain the long-term support necessary to their success in a pluralistic democracy.

Creating a truly sustainable northern Australia is a great challenge. However, embracing this challenge will not only ensure that all of our children can enjoy a lifestyle that is already acknowledged as one of the best globally, but will place us at the forefront of generating solutions to the great questions of our time, achieving environmental sustainability and reconciliation with the First Nations peoples of our global community.

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# SUPPORTING CULTURAL VALUES THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## LINKING CULTURAL VALUES AND ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES

Many if not all cultural values held by a group of people are connected in some way to the economy of those people. For example, language, knowledge of bush food and medicines and hunting techniques are all essential for the economic wellbeing of people who live off the natural resources of their local area. As social, political and economic conditions change, the link between some cultural values and the contemporary economy also changes. When languages and knowledge of bush foods, for example, are not necessary for daily survival these cultural values may diminish or be lost.

When people wish to maintain cultural values in the face of changing social and economic conditions, one option is to develop economic activities that restore the link between cultural values and economic wellbeing. Examples of this approach include the use of Aboriginal languages, bush knowledge and stories by local Aboriginal people employed in cultural tourism enterprises, or the requirement of National Park rangers to be able to speak the local Aboriginal language.

## CULTURAL INDICATORS

Cultural indicators are used to monitor changes in cultural values of a particular group, with the aim of assisting that group to actively nurture those values that they wish to keep. In a pilot study on the development of cultural indicators for the management of the Wet Tropics (Smyth 2002), one of the indicators developed by people from Jumbun Community was “Incentives to learn language (e.g. in education and tourism)”. This is a way of actively seeking and supporting measures taken by government, private enterprise or community organisations to provide incentives to learn the local languages, for example by providing job opportunities that require the language. This approach could be taken for any cultural values – that is, seeking economic activities that support cultural values, rather than allowing economic values always to dictate cultural change.

Cultural indicators can also be used to monitor the extent to which policy and legislation support the link between cultural values and economic enterprises. This approach recognises that there is a role for community and government agencies to develop policies and legal frameworks that support culture-friendly economic enterprises, in line with local peoples’ priorities for both economic development and maintenance of cultural values.

## DEVELOPING CULTURE-FRIENDLY ECONOMIES

A key to developing economic enterprises that support cultural values is to recognise that those values are held by particular groups of people, at a particular location or region, at a particular time. If cultural indicators are to be used to support this process, those indicators need to be developed locally and applied locally. While they may be similar from place to place and group to group, they are not automatically transferable. As a result, what may be a culture-friendly economic enterprise in one place, may not be culture-friendly in another.

Not only do cultural values differ from place to place, but peoples' priorities about which values are most important to nurture also differ from place to place and from time to time.

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# BALKANU BUSINESS HUBS STRATEGY

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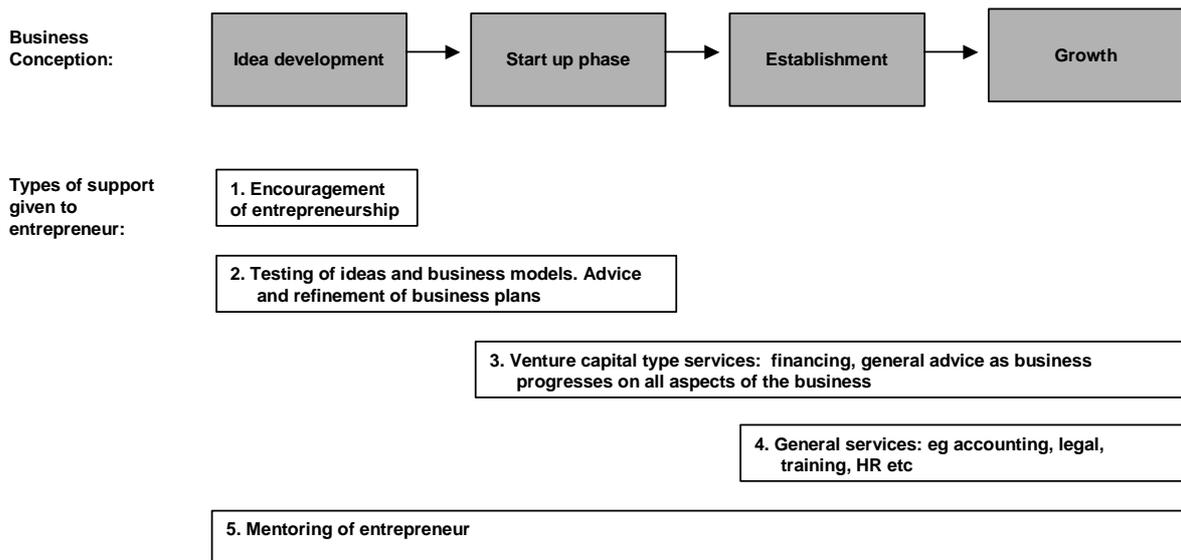
## INTRODUCTION

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation now has three 'Business Hubs' operating in Cape York with nodes in Weipa, Coen and Cooktown. They are supported by a Business Planner in Cairns and have access to a wide range of support through our corporate and philanthropic partners.

Balkanu's analysis of business support required in Cape York begins by looking at what successful businesses everywhere need in order to develop, grow and survive. A wide range of support mechanisms (formal and informal) underpin successful business creation – this is true in New York, Hong Kong, Cairns, and Sydney as well as in Aurukun, Mossman Gorge and Lockhart River. Different types of support are needed depending on what stage the business idea has progressed to.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services underpin nearly all successful business creation (Figure 1 and Table 1). For Indigenous entrepreneurs in remote areas, however, gaining access to this support has been traditionally very difficult. Failure to find the right support at the right time means that the idea will not become a successful business. Failure to find the right support makes starting and running a business riskier.



**Figure 1.** Support Services underpin nearly all successful business creation.

**Table 1.** For Indigenous entrepreneurs, however, gaining access to Support Services has traditionally been difficult.

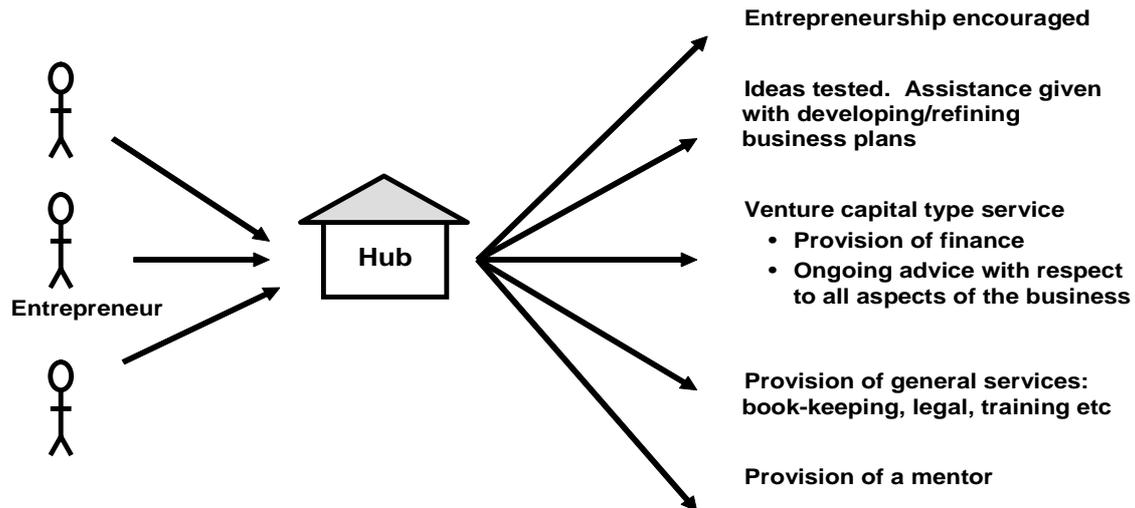
<b>Support Service</b>	<b>Provider of Support Service in non-Indigenous communities</b>	<b>Provider of Support Service in Indigenous communities</b>
Encouragement of entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Family or friends involved in business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship rarely encouraged unless the individual happens to have business contacts</li> </ul>
Testing of ideas and business models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues in business</li> <li>• Family members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliant on individual having business contacts (which is rare)</li> <li>• ATSIC process expects applicants to have developed model prior to submission</li> </ul>
Venture capital type services; Financing; Ongoing advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venture capital firms</li> <li>• Banks</li> <li>• Family or personal wealth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to banks difficult; no venture capital firms in the Cape; little personal wealth</li> <li>• ATSIC has funds available, however their policies can be conservative and/or time consuming</li> </ul>
General services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local firms</li> <li>• Not necessary if individual trained in these areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No services in the community. Reliant in individual's contacts</li> </ul>
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family connection</li> <li>• Colleague in business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditionally few mentors available</li> </ul>

## BUSINESS HUBS

The goal of the Business Hub Model is to provide the type of support to Indigenous entrepreneurs that non-Indigenous entrepreneurs receive by virtue of their location and contacts. Only then will talented Indigenous individuals (who don't have their own business contacts) be encouraged to start businesses and be able to operate their businesses in a lower risk environment.

In most cases our Hubs staff do not try to do everything required to support our clients. If possible we try to identify and provide a quality resource that meets our clients needs at that time. This might be, for example:

- to attend a motivational workshop run by First Australians Business;
- to talk with a business planner (this could be our Balkanu Planner, a secondee from Westpac Banking Corporation or a volunteer sourced through Indigenous Community Volunteers);
- to prepare a cash-flow project (could be with a Westpac Banking Corporation secondee);
- to negotiate a contract with a supplier (we could source pro-bono legal advice); or
- to apply for relevant licenses with government regulators.



**Figure 2.** The goal of Business Hubs is to be the gateway to accessing the suite of Support Services available.

The majority of government-sponsored support to business aspirants provides access to a business planner (consultant), or provides staff to assist with application processes. We argue that this is only a small part of the support required. Our strategy is to provide a local accessible resource that can bring a wide range of support types that can be managed to match the different needs at each stage.

Our ability to do this is greatly increased because of the support of our partners. Some of these include Westpac Banking Corporation, Boston Consulting Group, Bodyshop and individual business mentors.

Westpac 'lend' us 25 secondees per year, each for four week periods. We can then apply them to work with and for clients on various projects. These secondees normally spend the four weeks with clients in Cape York. Boston Consulting Group provide staff to us at below actual cost. These staff are typically available for several months and can take on major projects, normally based in Cairns.

IEP (Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships) have introduced us to a number of individuals who offer their expertise in a range of areas. This could be legal, architectural or specialist in Art. IEP have also helped us secure high level students including fourth year practical projects, and MBA students from Oxford and Harvard.

These extra resources mean that the Business Hubs are able to tap into a wide range of expertise. Our corporate partners are able to 'do what they do well' and make a contribution without being asked to manage local politics or be responsible for the long-term attention and follow through that is required.

Some examples of current clients include:

- Tourism;
  - Tapping into the existing tourism market (Mossman through Cooktown);
  - Developing new tourism market (remote low volume, high value small groups);
- Mustering contract team – extraction of cattle from National Park areas;
- Block plant – concrete block production;

- Earthmoving (subcontractor to Comalco); and
- Community store – purchase options, development options.

# CAPE YORK PARTNERSHIPS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

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## BACKGROUND

The Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Policy Framework (the Framework) supports the overarching commitments, enunciated in the Cape York Partnerships document, released by the Queensland Government in May 2000. The goal of the Framework is the creation of strong and sustainable Indigenous economies, which are a necessary prerequisite for achieving the broader goals of reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination. In essence, the Framework provides the platform to change the way Government and communities work together. A key element of the Framework is the recognition that for sustainable outcomes to be achieved, the drive and commitment must come from the communities, rather than be imposed or 'thought up' by bureaucrats a long way from the action.

The generation of real and sustainable economic and employment opportunities is critical if we are to break the social and community dislocation that characterises many Indigenous communities. In essence, community development can be seen in the context of potential viable industry and enterprise development underpinned by triple bottom line principles. Whilst the Framework has identified a number of economic development opportunities that have immediate application, it is critical to remember that the goal is to realise significant and sustainable change. This will not happen quickly or easily. The changes sought will take at least a generation and will require ongoing commitment and support of all parties. It will also be likely that not all the initiatives undertaken will be successful. This is a reality and must be accepted. It is reasonable to make mistakes and occasionally fail, if we learn from those lessons.

It will also be essential that the Cape York Peninsula economic development initiatives recognise and build upon the broader activities in the Cape. For example, the work of the CYPLUS (now CYP 2010) process and the activities of the CYNHT provide a framework for the integration of specific Cape York Peninsula actions. Whilst there is a diverse range of development opportunities available to Indigenous communities in the Cape, there are also significant impediments to the realisation of these possibilities. Unless these impediments are overcome, the economic development objectives of Cape York Partnerships will remain unfulfilled.

The broad thrust of the Framework is to empower Indigenous communities, through the stimulation of economic development and employment opportunities. A number of specific economic development objectives and principles are proposed. Whilst these need to be integrated, to ensure synergy each will have a range of specific and not always closely linked objectives.

At the strategic level, the objectives of the Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Policy Framework are to:

- provide a framework for government action and input into the Cape York Peninsula Negotiation Table process on economic and employment matters;
- support the development and maintenance of social, cultural and capital capacity and infrastructure within the region;
- establish specific economic development and employment projects within each Indigenous community on the Cape;
- increase total employment within the region;
- increase the proportion of Indigenous people within the labour force in the region;
- increase the volume of cash circulating within the regional economy;
- increase the Gross Regional Product (GRP) of the region; and
- facilitate the growth of Indigenous owned enterprise on Cape York.

To progress these objectives, it will be important that the Framework builds upon other relevant initiatives. In particular, the recent agreement between the Queensland Government, Comalco and the Western Cape Indigenous people provides not only a framework but also a resource that could be used to complement and support the Cape York Partnerships economic development outcomes.

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

In working towards achieving the broad economic outcomes of the Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Policy Framework, a number of guiding principles are proposed. These are:

- recognition that the identification and consideration of preferred economic development projects must be led, and supported, by the Indigenous communities;
- a willingness to learn from past experiences, including mistakes, and build upon successful practice models used elsewhere;
- recognition that the development of community capacity to progress the economic development agenda will be a long-term and complex process;
- recognition that not all communities and Indigenous groups will be interested in achieving the same outcomes or progressing at the same pace;
- recognition that the State is only one of the key stakeholders, and will need to encourage an integrated approach by all levels of government;
- building upon other initiatives and programs that complement the objectives of the Cape York Partnerships; and
- recognition of the importance and relevance of both traditional (clan, culture, community, etc.) and commercial principles in the development of Indigenous business opportunities.

A number of broad strategies will also need to be pursued to achieve the overarching Cape York Partnerships Economic Development objectives. The elements of these strategies have been articulated at the Premier's Business Summit, at Cape York Partnerships Negotiation Tables and in the REDS report, commissioned by the Department of State Development as part of the Government's Cape York Partnerships program. In essence, these strategies should include:

### **Import Substitution**

- encourage the establishment of Indigenous businesses, particularly for the provision of goods and services within Aboriginal communities; and
- give priority to the development and encouragement of businesses and activities that can substitute for goods and services that are currently 'imported' into the Cape.

### **Regional Enterprise Development**

- foster Indigenous economic and business development, within the context of core 'whole of government' policies, such as CYP2010, Tenure resolution, the Ten Year Indigenous Partnership, Growing Tourism, Regional Economic Development, Access Queensland, Crime Prevention and the Cape York Natural Heritage Trails;
- ensure that government economic development, employment, training and infrastructure policies, services and programs, particularly for Indigenous communities, reflect the objectives of Cape York Partnerships (for example the Public Art Policy could give priority to supporting Indigenous artwork);
- recognise the need for, and support the development of, regional business development and service delivery structures that nurture and support Indigenous economic development; and
- complement the strategies of other groups in the region (e.g. CYRAG) who may not be explicit Cape York Partnership partners.

### **Small Enterprise and Export Development**

- focus on those sectors of the economy that will provide the greatest opportunity to encourage a range of inter-related businesses (i.e. economic clusters where a number of micro-businesses can be developed as a consequence of the initiation of a larger project);
- identify and facilitate micro-business opportunities;
- identify actions required by government to stimulate and encourage targeted and priority Indigenous economic development opportunities, including the consolidation and integration of existing government services and programs.

### **Education and Training**

- in conjunction with the Indigenous Enterprises Partnership, facilitate business development by, and to transfer relevant skills and knowledge to, Indigenous people, whether individuals, families, clans or communities; and
- ensure that government industry development and training programs are specifically targeted to reflect the needs of those sectors that offer the greatest and most immediate development opportunities.

### **Developing Enabling Structures**

- ensure that the facilitation of economic development and employment opportunities recognises the unique needs and characteristics of the different Indigenous communities;
- facilitate the identification of 'champions' in both the public sector and the Indigenous communities for various economic development projects; and
- foster the development of community based indicators of progress and triple bottom line auditing of community performance.

These strategies will provide a framework for government action, and for input into the Cape York Partnerships Negotiation Table process. The initial identification of preferred specific economic development projects that will underpin these strategies must be led by the relevant Indigenous community and not dictated by government departments. From a government perspective, the key elements are to:

- set the broad principles and objectives for economic development;
- assist Indigenous communities, through appropriate resourcing, in their identification of preferred development opportunities;
- provide a framework and process for 'whole of government' action, within and across departments, to:
  - 'flesh out' the likely broad priorities for development;
  - facilitate any investigative work, or research, needed to better define the potential of these opportunities;
  - prepare relevant background information for input into community discussions on preferred economic development projects; and
  - incorporate, respond to, and progress the specific development ideas that come from community consultation.

## IDENTIFYING SECTORAL COMPONENTS OF, AND PRIORITIES FOR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As already noted, there are a number of economic development opportunities in Cape York Peninsula. In essence, these can be considered under the following broad themes:

- Forestry products;
- Fishing and Aquaculture;
- Agricultural and Pastoral;
- Tourism, Art and Culture;
- Land and Sea Management; and
- Community Development, Micro-business and Infrastructure provision.

Within these groups, a range of project ideas have been identified. A number of these appear to be able to be established in the short term. Others are essentially 'blue sky' ideas, which require considerably more assessment before any final decision can be made. Thus, immediate priorities for action are further refinement of project ideas, more detailed analysis of specific project ideas that are likely to be commercially viable, and identification of implementation requirements. The identification and progression of various economic project ideas will also need to be an iterative process, as matters are progressed through the Cape York Partnerships negotiation table process.

To achieve these outcomes, a number of specific actions will be necessary. Many of these will require collaborative effort by government and other key stakeholders. A related issue will be to ensure that, where possible, existing government policies and programs complement and support the process of identifying and progressing economic development projects in Cape York Peninsula.

## PROGRESSING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Traditional approaches by the government to service delivery and encourage economic development have not been very successful, due partly to the non-inclusive approach to the

development of these programs. Accordingly, a fundamental principle for the identification and progression of economic development projects is that the Indigenous communities must play the lead role in determining the sort of economic development projects that they are comfortable with. At the end of the day, the projects must be strongly supported by the community otherwise there is a significant risk of project failure.

With this in mind, it is critical that the Government's Cape York Partnerships economic development policy framework reflects the importance of fully engaging Indigenous communities, both through the Negotiation Table process and other relevant mechanisms, in the identification and progression of project ideas. This engagement must be from the outset, meaningful and ongoing. Accordingly, the process must also give emphasis to building relations with the Indigenous communities and in identifying what they really want as the basis of economic development in their communities. In short, the Cape York Partnerships economic development processes will need to:

- involve the communities in discussion about development options, from the outset;
- recognise that the discussion on the sort of development preferred must be led by the communities;
- resource and assist the communities to allow them to engage in an equal and proactive manner in such discussions;
- identify the specific development requirements of communities and jointly plan implementation actions;
- largely be driven at the local level to ensure relevance and full understanding of local needs and practicalities; and
- determine the 'entry points' (and the specific actions required) for government agencies to assist communities to progress their economic development goals.

As already noted, a number of particular economic development priorities have been proposed by the REDS report, the Cape York Partnerships Business Summit and through ongoing roundtable discussions with key government, Indigenous, and business stakeholders. From these deliberations a number of possible project ideas have also emerged. The immediate task now is to further examine these project proposals and identify which of these:

- have immediate and practical benefits;
- are strongly supported by the Indigenous communities; and
- should be given priority by Government.

The most practical way to assess the potential of project ideas, and to identify what is needed to convert them to reality, is to deal with them on a project by project basis.

This will involve identification of economic development projects that:

- are wanted and supported by the Indigenous communities;
- have immediate prospects for successful implementation;
- may be attractive for joint venture arrangements;
- have significant longer term potential but which may require further development; and
- appear to have potential but require further research, development and demonstration.

Specific projects are to be identified for follow up action. To maximise the chances of success, each project will need to have a designated 'champions' to ensure that there is ongoing action (and coordination of effort across relevant agencies). Such a champion will be required at both the community level (where the project is to be implemented) and within government. The issue of establishing a network of community champions is critical. One of the major problems confronting Indigenous communities is the lack of appropriate resources and skills to allow the communities to fully engage with government and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of new ideas or projects. By way of example, most communities have considerable trouble in applying for government grants, or in the preparation of submissions for funding.

Generally, communities do not have the in house skills or resources needed to facilitate the development of the community's project ideas. Accordingly, a critical component of the economic development strategy (given the principle that development ideas have to first be initiated from within the communities if they are to attract ongoing support) is to ensure that the Indigenous communities have the resources necessary, to allow them to progress their development ideas. In the first instance, as part of the Cape York Partnerships program, it is proposed that Government fund a limited number of positions, to be used as resources by the Indigenous communities in the development of project ideas and the preparation of appropriate submissions and representations to governments. In addition to resourcing the communities, such positions could also undertake training and skill transfer to community representatives, so that in the future the communities have the required skills base in-house.

In exploring the potential of identified economic development opportunities, the issues to be addressed and the potential roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (government agencies, the private sector and Indigenous) will need to be analysed. Comment will also be required on how best to progress implementation, having regard for the specific characteristics, needs and expectations of the Indigenous communities (or proponents) where these projects are proposed. This can be achieved through a number of mechanisms, including:

- building upon the development objectives of Indigenous communities, as outlined in the various Community Development Plans;
- reviewing economic development expectations from earlier Cape York Peninsula Negotiation Tables; and
- through ongoing consultations with communities, identify the specific economic development principles and outcomes sought.

This should also include identification of the range of specific actions required of government agencies to support/facilitate these economic development projects. Identified government actions (e.g. more research on native/plantation forest opportunities, including optimum species, yields) would then need to be developed and incorporated in the CYP2010 and the Ten Year Indigenous Partnerships processes for consideration as part of the budget process. As part of this, the appropriateness of existing government policies and programs (in terms of supporting the Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Strategy) will also need to be analysed.

In addition to obtaining Indigenous community views on, and progressing, preferred projects, it will be necessary to continue to broker and build relationships and alliances between Indigenous leaders and the business and government sectors. A focussed way to do this is to continue the 'round table' process initiated at Weipa, and to bring parties together to explore specific project opportunities.

# THE CONSERVATION ECONOMY IN NORTH AMERICA

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## INTRODUCTION

On the Pacific north-west coast of North America, a remarkable initiative aimed at the promotion of genuinely sustainable economic development is underway.

A new form of economic development is being fostered by the entrepreneurial EcoTrust non-profit organisation and community partners who develop industries that deliver both jobs and training and the protection of the remarkable natural and cultural environments of the region.

## THE PACIFIC NORTH WEST

The Pacific north-west stretches from the North American states of Oregon and Washington in the south and includes the Canadian province of British Columbia and the southern section of the North American state of Alaska in the north.

Found in the northern section of the Pacific north-west is the world's largest remaining area of coastal temperate rainforests. Less than two hundred years ago these coastal rainforests of western red cedar, sitka spruce, western hemlock, yellow cedar and douglas fir covered the entire length of the Pacific north-west. Today the majority of these forests have been lost to a range of developments including agriculture, urbanisation and intensive commercial forestry.

The remaining high conservation value rainforests protect one of the global strongholds of the Grizzly Bear and coastal wolves. Both these predators have thrived on the once bountiful Pacific salmon fisheries.

Indigenous people have lived on these lands for at least 11,000 years following the retreat of the massive ice sheets that blanketed the region during the last major Ice Age. The key foundations of the traditional Indigenous economy and society were the Western Red Cedar and rich marine resources, particularly species of Pacific salmon.

Although contact between Indigenous communities and Westerners first occurred in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, it was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century that Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities directly clashed over land and resource rights and use. Several waves of disease endemics decimated many Indigenous communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century as colonial governments and industry began to systematically exploit the forests and the salmon fisheries. Indigenous peoples were pushed to the margins of society and fortunes were made by those who exploited the seemingly limitless forest and fisheries.

This path of totally unsustainable development could not last and now with the region's forest badly over cleared and degraded, and the once limitless marine resources at the brink of collapse through over fishing and destruction of salmon breeding habitat by industrial logging, the people of the region are trying a new path of development.

## ENVIRONMENT IN DECLINE

Following the displacement of coastal Indigenous communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, colonial governments encouraged the exploitation of the two primary natural resources of the region, the massive Pacific salmon fisheries and the timber resources of the seemingly limitless coastal temperate rainforests. Although these two industries generated significant economic activity and wealth, by the 1980s concerns were being raised by scientists, conservationists, government departments and Indigenous communities that the fisheries and forests were being overexploited and were in danger of collapse.

For example, in the waters of British Columbia, independent scientific reports have estimated that there has been a 50%–75% reduction in the salmon over the past 150 years. The collapse of the salmon fisheries has also had a dramatic impact on the populations of key salmon predators, Grizzly Bears and coastal wolves.

Now as a result of the decline in availability of salmon, the destruction of prime old growth habitat through clear-cut logging and the impacts of recreational hunting, Grizzly Bear numbers have been reduced by half.

## THE CONSERVATION ECONOMY

By the early 1990s, in response to community and scientific concerns about serious land and marine environmental degradation linked to intensive forestry operations and over fishing, members of the conservation movement, the financial sector, the scientific community and many Indigenous communities decided to investigate the opportunities for the development of methods to encourage the creation of a 'conservation economy'.

The 'conservation economy' concept encourages development of economic enterprises and strategies that do not deplete the 'natural capital' on which all life depends, and that develop and promote economic alternatives to more environmentally harmful industries.

According to the leading advocate of the 'conservation economy' in the Pacific north-west, EcoTrust, the conservation economy is one that sustains itself with so called 'principled income' that encourages economic activities that protect and restore rather than deplete natural capital, and which provide long term and stable employment in remote communities rather than the traditional boom and bust cycles of resource sector industries such as large scale commercial fishing, intensive forestry operations and non renewable mining activities.

EcoTrust, which is a private non-profit organisation, promotes a ecologically sustainable economic development strategy of 'get rich slow' that maintains and restores ecosystem health, reduces the disparity between the rich and the poor and which increases economic opportunities for as many people as possible.

EcoTrust promotes the development of the conservation economy through two key strategies:

1. Investment in conservation economy initiatives through providing low interest and flexible loans; and
2. Networking and the provision of expert opinion and advice.

Low interest loans and financial support are offered by EcoTrust to small businesses throughout the coastal regions of British Columbia and the United States of America who share a commitment to the development of economic opportunities than protect and support the natural environment rather than those activities that destroy it.

Through the establishment of the world's first environmental bank in the early 1990s, EcoTrust has accrued assets of approximately \$US57 million, a portion of which are made available to be invested in loans to support the development of the 'conservation economy'.

At present, \$US22 million has been provided in loans to 'conservation entrepreneurs' and it is estimated that approximately one thousand long term jobs have been created in remote regions of the Pacific north-west.

Although the loans provided are low interest and quite flexible, they are only offered to those businesses that can demonstrate proof of measurable conservation outcomes associated with economic development.

EcoTrust invests in a wide range of business initiatives that include:

- Eco and cultural tourism;
- Ecoforestry;
- Sustainable agriculture;
- Alternative building and energy practices;
- Sustainable fisheries projects;
- Educational and research projects; and
- Training and skill development.

EcoTrust also supports the 'conservation economy' through networking services and the provision of high level and expert advice to 'conservation entrepreneurs' including:

- Market assessments and the development of business plans;
- Creation of information systems;
- Convening regular networking forums; and
- Developing natural resource inventories and analysis.

The 'conservation economy' initiative being spearheaded by EcoTrust and conservation entrepreneurs in to build a new economy based on the principals of ecological sustainability whilst helping to generate economic opportunities and the improvements in the quality of life for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

For further information visit [www.ecotrust.org](http://www.ecotrust.org) or [www.ecotrustcan.org](http://www.ecotrustcan.org).



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**SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP  
DISCUSSIONS AND OUTCOMES**

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# KEY THEMES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SESSION

**B. Bessen<sup>1</sup>, R. Hill<sup>2</sup> (Eds.)**

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## FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

Dr Brendan Mackey provided a presentation on his paper (this volume) “Natural Heritage Values as a Framework for Assessing Environmentally Appropriate Economic Activity”. He suggested that eight criteria could be used to determine the natural heritage significance of a landscape:

- geodiversity and geoevolution;
- biodiversity and bioevolution;
- natural integrity and on-going natural processes; and
- contribution to knowledge and aesthetics.

Against these criteria, Cape York Peninsula is of national and world natural heritage significance. He suggested ‘appropriate economic activities’ as:

“Those that maintain and do not substantially degrade the existing natural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula.”

Following from this definition, three broad categories of economic activities were suggested:

- largely compatible;
- appropriate under strong management prescription; and
- inappropriate in any form.

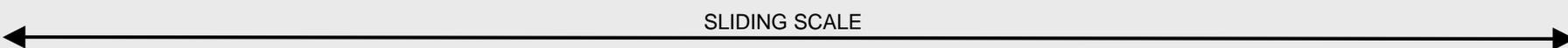
Using these broad categories, participants attempted a first cut at economic activities within this continuum. All present recognised that the categories form a continuum. The place of any particular economic activity in the continuum can really only be determined through the well-established techniques for environmental impact assessment and are related to the intensity, duration, frequency of disturbance to key ecosystem components and processes. However, the broad categorisation is very useful as an indication of the most suitable areas of economic activity for ensuring long-term sustainability.

Table 1 presents a summary of the pooled views of the whole groups, with the three broad categories summarised into eight to give a sense of the gradation across the continuum. Far many more activities emerged as largely or potentially compatible than those seen as incompatible. The material produced by each the three working groups is presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

**Table 1.** Combined sliding scale of environmentally appropriate economies.

Largely compatible		Potentially compatible with good management prescriptions			Incompatible		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural industries: <i>arts, craft, architecture, events</i></li> <li>• Land and Sea Management: <i>monitoring, enforcement, local employment</i></li> <li>• Protected Areas: <i>management, monitoring</i></li> <li>• Education, training and mentoring for local communities</li> <li>• Communication and information technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food: <i>market gardens, bush foods, nurseries, seed collection</i></li> <li>• Eco-commodities <i>carbon credits</i></li> <li>• Renewable energy technologies <i>information technology for remote communities</i></li> <li>• Non destructive research <i>Human and community services</i></li> <li>• Traditional medicines and health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature based and culture based tourism (community based)</li> <li>• Protected Areas: <i>access fees</i></li> <li>• Feral animal and weed management</li> <li>• Education and training for fee paying</li> <li>• Language revival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoralism: <i>no land clearing; no intensive practices: feedlotting, improved pastures, subdivision fencing (minimal)</i></li> <li>• Eco timber: <i>community based forestry</i></li> <li>• Aquaculture: <i>low impact low input</i></li> <li>• Feral animal harvest.</li> <li>• Sport and extreme sports</li> <li>• Bioprospecting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale novel crops, e.g. Sandalwood</li> <li>• Recreational fishing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquaculture: <i>commercial; high input; introduced species</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale cropping</li> <li>• Industrial scale forestry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadscale land clearing</li> <li>• Large scale water impoundment</li> <li>• Uranium mining</li> <li>• Sand mining</li> <li>• Mining exploration</li> </ul>

**Table 2.** Working Group One sliding scale of environmentally appropriate economies.

Largely compatible	Potentially compatible with good management prescriptions	Incompatible
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural heritage protection management</li> <li>• nature based and culture based tourism</li> <li>• recreational fishing</li> <li>• non destructive research</li> <li>• education</li> <li>• field trips</li> <li>• campus</li> <li>• feral and weed management; quarantine buffer</li> <li>• reef management</li> <li>• music, art, crafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rain farming (selling water in bottles)</li> <li>• pastoralism</li> <li>• rangeland (min fences, water holes, etc.)</li> <li>• no improved pastures</li> <li>• pig hunting</li> <li>• trophy hunting</li> <li>• harvesting feral animals / pest control</li> <li>• must be transitional</li> <li>• aquaculture</li> <li>• small scale and community based for local consumption</li> <li>• local species</li> <li>• commercial fishing</li> <li>• small scale novel crops, e.g. Sandalwood</li> <li>• ecotimber / community based forestry</li> <li>• film location sets and documentary fixing</li> <li>• sustainable harvesting on native plants</li> <li>• managed roads, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large scale cropping</li> <li>• extensive / large scale mining</li> <li>• extensive plantation forestry</li> <li>• intensive grazing (requiring land clearing)</li> <li>• massive intensive tourism, e.g. Gold Coast</li> <li>• space base</li> <li>• refugee camp</li> </ul>

**Table 3.** Working Group Two sliding scale of environmentally appropriate economies.

Largely compatible	Potentially compatible with good management prescriptions	Incompatible
 <p>SLIDING SCALE</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• renewable energies, e.g. Bushlight \$15,000 'saving resources';</li> <li>• food:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>market gardens.</i></li> <li><i>bushfoods / nursery.</i></li> <li><i>seed collection;</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• training education and mentoring;</li> <li>• contracts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>weeds,</i></li> <li><i>ferals,</i></li> <li><i>patrol,</i></li> <li><i>enforcement,</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• eco commodities, e.g. Carbon Credits;</li> <li>• cultural products and entertainment;</li> <li>• arts, crafts, architecture;</li> <li>• CAT designs for living in Cape York Peninsula;</li> <li>• appropriate Information Technology and other information systems;</li> <li>• research activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing and aquaculture;</li> <li>• grazing and revegetation;</li> <li>• plantations (native);</li> <li>• Protected Areas fees or rent?:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "incentive based";</li> </ul> </li> <li>• cross cultural interpretation;</li> <li>• bioprospecting?:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>intellectual property;</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• tourism:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>eco fishing,</i></li> <li><i>diving,</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• community farm;</li> <li>• festivals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mining;</li> <li>• logging;</li> <li>• land clearing;</li> <li>• anything large-scale;</li> <li>• new weeds.</li> </ul>

**Table 4.** Working Group Three sliding scale of environmentally appropriate economies.

Largely compatible (YES)	Potentially compatible with good management prescriptions (YES, BUT WITH CONDITIONS)	Incompatible (NOT AT ALL)
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• land and sea management: <i>monitoring, enforcement, maintenance, weeds and ferals management;</i></li> <li>• appropriate housing;</li> <li>• cultural industries;</li> <li>• dance, music, art, publishing;</li> <li>• research: <i>science, Indigenous knowledge system;</i></li> <li>• Information Technology;</li> <li>• Protected Area management;</li> <li>• lifestyle and cultural tourism, e.g. fishing with Traditional Owners;</li> <li>• horsepersonship;</li> <li>• ecotourism;</li> <li>• traditional resource harvesting;</li> <li>• education and training</li> <li>• ethnobiology;</li> <li>• human / community services: <i>traditional medicines, health, etc;</i></li> <li>• language revival;</li> <li>• renewable energy technologies;</li> <li>• communications, finance and tertiary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing:</li> <li>• commercial, <i>recreational;</i></li> <li>• feral eradication and harvesting;</li> <li>• wildlife harvesting;</li> <li>• building, construction and engineering,</li> <li>• tourism;</li> <li>• killer herd;</li> <li>• sport;</li> <li>• extreme sports;</li> <li>• bioprospecting;</li> <li>• carbon sequestration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• broad-scale land clearing (anything that requires it);</li> <li>• anything that requires large-scale water impoundment;</li> <li>• uranium mining;</li> <li>• industrial scale forestry;</li> <li>• evil resorts (from hell). cows;</li> <li>• small scale / non-exporting forestry;</li> <li>• agriculture;</li> <li>• aquaculture.</li> <li>• horticulture</li> </ul>

## CONSERVATION ECONOMIES

Lyndon Schneiders (this volume) related his observations of a conservation economy initiative in Canada, called Eco Trust.

EcoTrust:

- an environmental bank;
- has US\$65 million assets;
- invests in NW (Canadian) Coast in Sustainable Development;
- involves a program called 'Salmon Nation';
- provides low interest loans to invest in restoring the country;
- operating since 1991;
- has an extraordinary success rate;
- Board of First Nation and conservation people;
- has created 1,200 long term jobs over the last ten years;
- small scale development, training and technical support is all covered with the initiative.

After the presentation, Lyndon responded to lots of questions from the group about how EcoTrust achieved its success, overcame welfare dependency problems, and how relevant the concept was to Cape York Peninsula.

Vision and shared dialogue is the key to the success of EcoTrust, with an unambiguously green bottom-line. EcoTrust leverages \$2.00 for every \$1.00 of public subscription. The key to applying the concept in Cape York Peninsula is to understand what is significant about the region and to develop a concept similar to that of 'Salmon Nation' for promotion purposes. EcoTrust projects are regenerating hope in communities. All of the projects started small, it just needed a few projects to show that they are working. The British Columbia government provided policy and financial support.

The corporate policy of EcoTrust is to invest in activities that are already up and running, plus to give seed money to some new projects, plus to make available a tool kit of what is needed for successful business. For Cape York Peninsula, we need to find what it is that we think constitutes sustainable enterprise. Remote and inaccessible country does not need to be a barrier with good marketing, especially to corporate investors and non-local investors.

Lyndon's presentation stimulated a lot of interest and discussion. The conservation movement needs to be careful not to become gatekeepers, the conservation economy needs to be firmly grounded in the Cape people together with the conservation movement. Some important differences exist between the two situations – 'Salmon Nation' is coming from a restoration position, whereas the Cape is coming from a protection position. Marketing is a key element. The vital first step is building a strong coalition.

## WAYS FORWARD

In order to generate some good ideas on how to support conservation economies, the three working groups addressed the following two questions.

"What has the input on conservation economy sparked for you?"

"What can we do practically, to break the inertia?"

### **Response from Working Group One**

The example of EcoTrust Has illustrated the current inertia and demonstrated the need to identify a new direction to potential investors such as:

- charitable organisations and institutions;
- trusts;
- multinational goodwill.

Given the many different and conflicting perspectives on Cape York Peninsula, it has highlighted the need for realistic and shared vision and honest dialogue. Implementing such a concept for Cape York would require land and sea (environmental) sustainability assessment, in terms of access, geography and seasonality. Some tools for appropriate projects assessment would be necessary, looking at aspects such as culturally and environmentally appropriate, and socio-economic and population impacts.

The conservation sell could be based on the intergenerational advantages, benefits (cost benefit analyses), Indigenous Land Use Agreements, conservation agreements and local development.

### **Response from Working Group Two**

There is an opportunity on Cape York for recognition of regional distinction, to develop a strong non-government coalition and overcome the Australian tradition of government being the funder of regional development.

We would need to build a strong coalition of environmental groups, First Nations peoples, philanthropists and progressive corporates while considering the potential for other sectors such as unions to contribute. Can we muster government and non-government philanthropy? Private investment could be leveraged through taxation and accreditation policies. We would need an appropriate infrastructure strategy. The key is combining Indigenous and environment sectors as the drivers of investment vehicles and philanthropy.

Important challenges exist in providing motivation to get people off the welfare drip, and in fixing the tenure issues.

### **Working Group Three Response**

Relying on government hasn't worked. We need a suite of companies that will provide capital in an ethical way (that would be endorsed with a set of criteria). How do we get access to ethical investment funds? We need a corporate investment policy with a set of sound principles to base businesses on.

To move forward, the conservation and Indigenous movements need to establish a clear set of criteria of sustainability for new economic enterprises that are considered compatible with the Cape. Evaluating existing industries would be useful. We would also need to develop a draft corporate policy for potential investors, and found an investment body or agency.



# KEY THEMES OF THE INDIGENOUS CLOSED SESSION

**J. Fenton<sup>1</sup> and B. Bessen<sup>2</sup> (Eds)**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Closed Indigenous Session was facilitated by Melissa George and Jean Fenton and structured as a roundtable discussion involving all Indigenous participants (see Addendum 1 to this section). The central theme of the discussion was ‘culturally appropriate economic development’. There was a particular focus on what constitutes ‘appropriate’, how it is defined, and by whom.

At the commencement of the session participants defined the following key themes:

- How the green movement can support existing Traditional Owner economic development initiatives;
- Better relationship building between Indigenous people and Green organisations;
- Current barriers to building better relationships;
- Existing industries and development initiatives, who decides these are ‘appropriate’ and whether they can or should be designed, reformed or amended;
- The value of cultural knowledge;
- Greater acknowledgement of the social context of the Cape;
- Is caring for country economically viable? and
- Linking culture to economy and what is culturally appropriate?

The further exploration, discussion and resolution of these themes and questions was viewed as central to the development of ‘appropriate’ economic development on Cape York.

## THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Appended to this report are some tables and commentary (refer to Addendum 2) that illuminate prevailing social and economic conditions on Cape York. The region is widely acknowledged as experiencing extremely high levels of socio-economic disadvantage in relation to other Indigenous people nationally as well as the wider Australian community. As a result, the regional policy environment is focused on economic development as a priority. While recognition of peoples’ responsibility to the management of country is clear, the task of defining what is environmentally or culturally appropriate economic development is generally perceived as a lower order priority. The following quotes from participants of the Indigenous closed session relating to the social climate of Cape York highlight this:

“people are looking at grabbing onto anything to get them out of the rut. It is a luxury for people to actually look at what options are available”

“[we need to] fix the social issues first. It is a long-term thing. It isn’t going to happen overnight”

“the principal drive of economic development in Cape York is to fix social dysfunction”

“[there’s] too much focus on statutory obligation. However, [there] is a need to focus on the statistics side of things, for example, death rates, housing etc. They [Greens] can be used [here] and can support us with funding etc. Help us”

“we Cape people are first and second generation on CDEP. This has created barriers to real economic development. We want the Greens to make it easier, there are already enough barriers”

“We have the right to take responsibility and that’s what people want to do”

## CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Most participants found defining what constituted ‘culturally appropriate’ forms of economic development, inappropriate. This is related to the diversity of cultural groups living in Cape York Peninsula, and laws about speaking for the country of others. It was, however, agreed that Traditional Owners are the “mechanism” through which sustainable economic development will be achieved.

As a result much of the discussion relating to appropriate economic development focused on process issues, rather than establishing criteria relevant to determining ‘appropriateness’. These included for example:

- issues associated with Traditional Owner involvement in decision making;
- questions of who controls the economic development agenda on Cape York;
- how much if any of this responsibility should be shared with other interests and how; and
- the development of trust between Traditional Owners and conservation groups involved in influencing notions of appropriate economic development in George Street (site of Queensland Government administration) and the wider community.

The group noted that for meaningful and quantifiable culturally appropriate economic development to be identified, there is a requirement that reasonable baseline data exists against which to define the actions required, and to provide the ability to monitor progress and trends toward achieving culturally, environmentally and economically appropriate economic development. In order to address this issue, it is proposed that quantifiable information be established at a grass roots level through an assessment and research program, and that funding for this is supported and collaboratively lobbied for by the Green movement and Indigenous peoples.

Despite a reluctance to engage in the provision of hard criteria related to ‘appropriateness’ (cultural, or otherwise), several individuals discussed the concept of culturally appropriate economic development and the meaning of this term in the context of achieving sustainable economic development for their mobs. The following quotes emphasised that defining culturally appropriate economic development amongst Traditional Owners will require further research. In particular it will be necessary to firstly ascertain Traditional Owner aspirations for economic development at a clan-estate level:

“Defining culturally appropriate development will change dependent on different clan groups. You would have to deal with every individual group”

[Need to] “recognise each clan group and the differences among them, there is no pan concept of Aboriginal people’s connection to country”

“Need to understand that we are plenty of nations”

The following quotes, also illustrate the repeated emphasis that culturally appropriate economic development is reliant upon process and long-term relationship building measured against the establishment of universal criteria. Also notable are themes relating to Indigenous involvement in processes such as decision-making, reaching agreements and Indigenous control of the economic agenda.

“Agreements [need to be] driven by the Traditional Owners and Traditional Owner outcomes are the priority. [The] outcome has to be best suited to Bama. Bama live in the Cape so of course it should be driven by Indigenous people”

“Aboriginal economic development needs to be 100% managed by Aboriginal people. When we enter into partnerships that’s when we can enter into negotiations. An example of this is the tourism industry where Quicksilver have incorporated culture into mainstream tourism process”

“Indigenous people need to be controlling the agenda”

“Incorporate Traditional Owner structures into agreements”

It is notable that a number of participants did recognise that Aboriginal peoples’ views on economic development were shifting in relation the consideration of further options for sustainable economic development practices. The general consensus is that there is scope for this debate to take place among Traditional Owners in Cape York. This shift in thinking is emphasised in the following quotes.

“An example of culturally appropriate economic development is cultural eco-tourism”

“Attitude is changing with Bama, they are looking for better avenues for economic development”

## **CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Cattle**

Many themes were raised in relation to what particular Traditional Owners deemed to be culturally appropriate economic development. In relation to the pastoralism industry, particular individuals discussed the long connection between this industry to people, culture, the social fabric of the Cape, economics and the environment as reflected in the following quotes:

“I am a cattleman from the Cape. Cattle are a business for our people to get them off welfare. Cattle have lived in the Cape for hundreds of years. We already control cattle and look after cattle and protect the country. Land is different than the Wet Topics. If we want to start enterprises on our land, it is our choice and its Cape people’s prerogative. Cattle are culturally appropriate and a long-term industry. We want a little herd that we can make a profit out of. We have enough experience to look after our land and cattle. Cattle will aid social wellbeing in the Cape”

“cattle are a long-term investment and a market already exists”

### **Conservation as an Industry**

Caring for Country or conservation as an industry was also discussed. Many of the participants of the session discussed the long-term viability of this strategy, some of the short-comings associated with it and ways in which to drive this strategy forward:

“You can get more money on the dole, [in relation to CDEP] that’s what’s killing our young people; we need to get our young people back on country and start caring for country and make a bit of money”

“[there are] no long-term or permanent jobs [in this industry]”

Better management for country from a grass-roots level is required. Certain participants of the Closed Indigenous session identified caring for country as a viable option for economic development and better management of country involving Aboriginal people:

“[Bama are there to do] day to day management”

“natural and cultural resource management, for example weed infestation, this work could be undertaken by Traditional Owners, to work on riparian areas, no-one is really caring for country. Traditional Owners should be managing those issues on country and being resourced to do it”

“In the Cape people are just brought in to spray weeds etc, [caring for country] isn’t approached holistically and is really token management”

“In relation to Yalanji tourism, we would like the National Park to start to control the number of people on country. At the moment there are around 600,000 tourists accessing the Gorge per year. The main access road is through the Mission. Tourists should pay a levy to enter the park and Yalanji could use the monies for land management”

“in relation to enforcement, partnerships need to be funded properly, resourced and recognised”

“Black and white management. Work in partnership. The European way and the cultural way”

“community governance – elders committees (relying upon traditional structures of governance)”

### **Logging and Agroforestry**

The following quotes highlight the participants’ views on logging and agro-forestry, where people again had differing views based upon what they perceived as appropriate. These different views related to timber use and development for local community use, using country for logging and salvaging. Some participants were not in agreement, with different views on the extent to which logging was an appropriate economic development strategy:

“logging for infrastructure, harvest for local community development”

“utilising country for economic opportunities”

“in the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) looking at it as providing wood for the Torres Strait Islands and the NPA”

“not everyone is in agreement about logging”

“Yalanji are undertaking salvage logging and money is going back to Yalanji”

### **Cultural Knowledge and its Economic Viability**

Much of the discussion generated around the use of cultural knowledge as a form of economic development for Traditional Owners, which was regarded highly by most participants. People did raise reservations regarding the protection of intellectual and cultural property and protection against the bastardisation of culture, as emphasised more emphatically in the following quotes:

“Bush-tucker gardens, cultural development and re-educating ourselves with cultural knowledge because that is where we are making our money”

“Spearing, cattle drives etc are reliant upon cultural knowledge”

“Education in cultural knowledge [is required]”

“benefits for family from cultural tourism”

“cultural knowledge does make money – a one hour talk at Silky Oaks Resort once a week, over a year equates to \$10,000”

“Knowledge can be provided to a certain degree if Bama have control over it that is okay”

“we don’t want our cultures to be commercialised or bastardised”

“require protection of cultural and intellectual property rights”

“A lot of knowledge is used for commercialisation for example, the bush-tucker man, what happens to the profits of that knowledge”

“Recognition of Traditional economic rights, for example traditionally if you entered some other clan’s land you payed (user pays). This was a payment to travel through country, this has been taken away from Bama and is no longer recognised properly”

“we know how to look after country. Current practices are not managing country properly. Bama are there to day-to-day management”

### **What it Really Means to Support Traditional Owners**

An issue raised among the participants of the Closed Indigenous session was the perceived lack of real support of Aboriginal people and their inherent rights to country by Green groups. The perception was that the Green movement is more intent on blocking or stalling economic development for Aboriginal people rather than providing support to Aboriginal people in dealing with the social climate of communities and families. Suggestions raised by several participants are reflected in the following quotes:

“the Greens need to back their own rhetoric. The Greens have to support Aboriginal people. In a lot of cases, cattle stations are better-managed lands than the National Parks. The test of the rhetoric is Aboriginal people on Cape York on Aboriginal land”

“[Greens need to] understand Traditional Owner issues and problems instead of pushing their own agenda”

“Greens need to understand the history and context of current economic development and support what Bama want to do on their land in terms of economic development, even if this means cattle”

“[Greens can] provide technical support, using their techniques and expertise to support Traditional Owners in looking after country”

### **Reaching Agreement, and Some of the Barriers to Doing so**

The following quotes relate to some of the barriers and issues relating to Aboriginal people and Green organisations forming working relationships. Many barriers exist in relation to these two groups working together and many of the suggestions related to better communication, greater awareness of Aboriginal peoples' inherent rights to country, building better relationships and building trust between the groups. These themes are reflected more concisely in the following quotes from the Indigenous Closed Session:

“Greens view the environment as more important than people”

“[there] is no cross-cultural interaction; relationship with the Greens lacks a social context”

“[it needs to be understood that] traditional trade and economics existed, this needs to be recognised, land and country have always had an economic base”

“establish a common language in relation to caring for country so that we can understand each other and get a dialogue happening”

“[there] is no trust between Indigenous people and the Greens, the Greens are using us as a tool against Government, and they don't trust us to look after country properly”

“[we need to] balance different values and find common ground with the Greens”

“need better interaction and communication between Green staff and the Traditional Owners”

### **Building Green Capacity**

The use of the term capacity building in this context relates to the development of strategies to raise awareness within the Green movement of Aboriginal peoples' inherent rights to country. Much of the discussion focused on the need for the Greens to improve their knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and peoples. It was identified that much of where capacity is required, rests in colonial paradigms of thinking in relation to Aboriginal people and rights to country. A paradigm shift is required, which acknowledges and respects and informs the wider community of Aboriginal rights to country, and that acknowledges that there are different ways of perceiving the world and in particular the environment, where Green interests don't always take priority. It is these Green Organisations responsibility to not only build their own capacity, but also the capacity of their membership in relation to Aboriginal

inherent rights to country. It was discussed that it is no longer acceptable for Green organisations to bend to the views of their constituents, it is time for these groups to back their rhetoric and to 'recognise and respect the rights of Aboriginal people', which requires good leadership. Until Aboriginal people enjoy the same rights as that of other Australians, a true relationship between these groups will not exist, and if it does it will be one based on contempt.

"Greens should understand that Aboriginal people should have the same rights as every Australian in determining what they want to do on country"

"Greens need to understand and respect the people of the land"

"We have cultural, commercial and economic rights which can't be taken away from us"

The Indigenous Closed session also identified ways in which the relationship between Aboriginal people and the Greens can be strengthened. This focused on communication, education and forging a strong social link and relationship between the groups:

"cross-cultural awareness training at all levels"

"sitting down on country for extended periods of time [with Traditional Owners]"

"[understanding] education is a two-way street"

Also identified by the Closed Indigenous session are ways to push the appropriate economies agenda forward in collaboration with Traditional Owners. It was agreed that Traditional Owners and representative Aboriginal organisations are interested in working with the Greens on this issue and the following recommendations were put forward.

"[need to] form a Traditional Owner Steering Committee to push this [appropriate economies agenda] forward"

"[need to] employ more Aboriginal people in the Green movement"

## **ADDENDUM 1: PARTICIPANTS IN THE CLOSED INDIGENOUS SESSION**

Mr Alan Creek, Cape York Land Council

Ms Ariadne Gorrington, Land and Sea Management Unit, Kimberley Land Council

Mr Brandon Walker, Kuku Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours

Mr Chris Clifford, Lockhart River Land and Sea Management Agency

Mr Clary Flinders, Ambilmungu-ngarra Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Claude Beeron, Girramay Traditional Owner Committee Member

Mr Eddie Woibo, Cooktown Business Hub

Ms Emma Birchall, Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Walks

Ms Francis Walker, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Ms Jean Fenton, Australian Conservation Foundation

Mr Linc Walker, Kuku Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours

Mr Matt Salmon, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation

Ms Melissa George, Burdekin Dry Tropics Board

Mr Michael Storrs, Caring for Country Unit, Northern Land Council  
Mr Noel Gertz, Burdekin Dry Tropics Board  
Mr Phillip Baru, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation  
Mr Phil Rist, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation  
Mr Richard Aken, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation  
Mr Sunlight Bassini, Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation  
Ms Thelma Coconut, Nanum Tawap Economic Development Corporation

## ADDENDUM 2: INDIGENOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

In 2000 the Commonwealth Grants Commission commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics to develop Indigenous indices of disadvantage that would allow relative comparisons of disadvantage to be made across ATSI regions.

Disadvantage indicators were derived from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS), and the National Perinatal Statistics Unit of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The indicators that were derived represent levels of education, income, housing, family structure, and employment in low-paying occupations, health and access to community services. As yet there has been no similar index derived from the 2001 census information.

Table 1 ranks all ATSI regions in Australia in relation to the index of socio-economic disadvantage. Given that there are some data quality issues, the index should only be used in summary form and for this reason the values of the index have been grouped into four quartiles: 'least disadvantaged', 'less disadvantaged', 'more disadvantaged' and 'most disadvantaged'. As shown in Table 1, the Cooktown region which represents the wider Cape York Peninsula ranked 32 relative to all 36 Australian ATSI regions and is located in the fourth quartile of disadvantage, that being the 'most disadvantaged'.

In addition to the development of a general index of disadvantage for ATSI regions as shown in Table 1, the ABS at the same time also developed several other more specific indices for disadvantage. This included indices of economic, habitat, education, housing and health disadvantage.

Table 2 shows the relative ranking of the Cooktown ATSI region in relation to each of the indices of disadvantage. In relation to economic disadvantage, the Cooktown ATSI region is ranked 29<sup>th</sup> ('most disadvantaged'). The index of economic disadvantage included variable such as:

- Persons over 15 years of age with no post-school qualifications;
- Household's income below the poverty line;
- CDEP as a percentage of the total working population; and
- Males and females over 15 years of age classified as labourers or related workers.

The habitat index, as reported in Table 2, is an index that reflects disadvantage relating to health, housing and infrastructure. The index, in which the Cooktown ATSI region is ranked as 32 ('most disadvantaged'), includes variables such as:

- The quality of housing;
- Households with no motor vehicles;

- Households with no electricity or gas;
- The number of foetal deaths; and
- The number of perinatal deaths.

Table 2 also shows the relative disadvantage of ATSI regions in relation to education and training, where the Cooktown ATSI region is ranked 30 ('most disadvantaged'). The index includes such variables as:

- Persons with no post-school qualifications;
- Persons who never went to school;
- Persons attending school;
- Persons who left school below year 10; and
- Persons lacking fluency in English.

The housing and infrastructure index (Table 2) places the Cooktown ATSI region as 32 ('most disadvantaged') relative to other ATSI regions and includes such variables as:

- Households with two or more families;
- Households with high person-bedroom ratios;
- Households in impoverished dwellings;
- Households with inadequate bathing facilities; and
- Households that are in 'need of repair'.

The health index of disadvantage places the Cooktown ATSI region as 36 ('most disadvantaged') across all 36 ATSI regions nationally and includes a wide range of variables drawn from the hospital separations and national perinatal data sets (i.e., suicides, diabetes, alcoholism, number of separations etc.).

**Table 1.** Indigenous disadvantage in ATSI Regions, Overall Rank.

	Rank	
Hobart	1	Least
Brisbane	2	Least
Wangaratta	3	Least
Queanbeyan	4	Least
Adelaide	5	Least
Perth	6	Least
Sydney	7	Least
Rockhampton	8	Least
Ballarat	9	Least
Wagga Wagga	10	Less

Darwin	11	Less
Roma	12	Less
Coffs Harbour	13	Less
Geraldton	14	Less
Tamworth	15	Less
Narrogin	16	Less
Alice Springs	17	Less
Cairns	18	Less
Kalgoorlie	19	More
Townsville	20	More
Mount Isa	21	More
Ceduna	22	More
South Hedland	23	More
Bourke	24	More
Torres Strait Area	25	More
Broome	26	More
Port Augusta	27	More
Kununurra	28	Most
Warburton	29	Most
Katherine	30	Most
Derby	31	Most
Cooktown	32	Most
Jabiru	33	Most
Tennant Creek	34	Most
Nhulunbuy	35	Most
Aputula	36	Most

**Table 2.** Indices of disadvantage for Economic, Habitat, Education, Housing and Health (rankings).

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Habitat</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Health</b>
Hobart	1	1	5	13	1
Sydney	2	19	1	22	3
Brisbane	3	4	2	3	2
Ballarat	4	13	6	20	7
Wangaratta	5	2	8	2	4
Adelaide	6	9	4	1	19
Queanbeyan	7	5	10	10	5
Darwin	8	11	9	9	12
Coffs Harbour	9	22	3	25	8
Perth	10	7	7	5	18
Rockhampton	11	6	16	6	11
Wagga Wagga	12	3	14	4	14
Tamworth	13	17	12	18	15
Narrogin	14	15	13	21	20
Kalgoorlie	15	20	18	17	35
Roma	16	10	19	8	17
Cairns	17	14	11	11	23
Alice Springs	18	12	21	15	25
South Hedland	19	23	23	19	34
Geraldton	20	8	25	7	33
Townsville	21	18	24	16	22
Mount Isa	22	21	26	14	28
Torres Strait	23	27	17	28	13
Bourke	24	24	22	23	30
Broome	25	25	15	26	27
Ceduna	26	16	20	12	32
Port Augusta	27	28	27	27	29
Kununurra	28	30	28	31	26
Cooktown	29	32	30	32	36

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Habitat</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Health</b>
Katherine	30	31	33	29	16
Nhulunbuy	31	36	29	36	9
Jabiru	32	34	31	34	6
Tennant Creek	33	33	35	33	24
Derby	34	29	32	30	31
Warburton	35	26	34	24	21
Aputula	36	35	36	35	10

# PLENARY SESSION

**B. Bessen<sup>1</sup> and R. Hill<sup>2</sup> (Eds.)**

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School of Tropical Environment Studies and Geography, James Cook University, Cairns  
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## PRESENTATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND INDIGENOUS SESSIONS WITH DISCUSSION

### Indigenous Working Session

The outcomes from the Indigenous working session were summarised by Richard Aken:

- Each clan determines what is culturally appropriate for them;
- Cattle are culturally appropriate for some communities;
- Community governance issues are important:
  - are there reservations about Traditional Owners' management within environment groups and the broader Australia community?
  - partnerships need to be resourced;
- Cultural and social aspects are two different issues in sustainability;
- Trust needs to be enhanced between the conservation and Indigenous communities:
  - conservation groups need to back Indigenous management and Traditional Owners' aspirations;
- Capital, money and financing structures are needed;
- Technical support is needed for Traditional Owners to look after country;
- Conservation movement needs to build their capacity to engage with Traditional Owners, to run with Traditional Owners' agenda, and support existing initiatives;
- Cultural and scientific relationships can be complementary;
- Statistics are the prime argument for funding support; and
- Traditional Owners want a **real economy** in the Cape.

### Environment Working Group

The outcomes from the environment working session were summarised by Rosemary Hill and Lyndon Schneiders:

- The EcoTrust concept created a buzz of excitement because it:
  - recognises the real needs of the communities;
  - requires honest and open dialogue between environmentalists and Traditional Owners;
  - can involve those who want to be involved.
- To take it forward, a strong partnership is needed.
- Goal is more money, with tenure and Aboriginal management in place.

- Needs people interested in sustainability to come forward and create an investment fund for appropriate projects.

Rosemary and Lyndon also responded to the input from the Indigenous closed session with the following points:

- Conservationists recognise the need to build more trust and better communication;
- Have already worked hard on processes like the Heads of Agreement and still adhere to all the commitments made through that process;
- Environment groups support Indigenous groups on the issue of land rights;
- Have been able to work together to deliver land outcomes, including the Silver Plains Aboriginal Freehold now held by the Kulla Land Trust;
- Recognise the problems with national parks, have lobbied the government not to create National Parks on Cape York Peninsula, McIlwraith Range is still USL because of this lobbying, still working for better conservation arrangements that will recognise Traditional Owner rights and interests;
- Are working hard for more acquisitions of land with high conservation values, and have committed to supporting the return of these lands to Aboriginal ownership under statutory law.

## DISCUSSION

### **Jim Pietrich, Chairperson, Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy**

Jim drew on his experiences with the Cattlemens' Union and through his role as Chairperson of the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy. Key points in building the partnership between pastoralists and Traditional owners included:

- Recognition of the Murri paradigm “the land owns us, whatever happens to it”;
- Accepting the principle of never making a decision about anyone, until you've stood in their shoes, e.g. fishing, cattle;
- Getting to the stage where cattlemen, black and white, can look each other in the eye;
- Engaging a 'reality check' about what can be done to pull our mob out of the hole?
  - light on the hill is fine, but must act to get out of the hole now.

The challenge to the Green movement is:

- How can we assist, how can we develop trust to pull people out of the hole?
- No matter how much vision, people need to be trained, people need to live healthy, long lives;
- Takes ten to fifteen years to develop the trust of Indigenous people.

In terms of economic development, we need to recognise that people want sustainability, that people have a right to earn a living and that people have a right to equity in the process. In a practical sense, for economic development:

- Import replacement is a first step;
- Fishing is important:
  - tag and release programs can be viable and sustainable;

- hand-back of commercial rights within some areas is important.
- Cattle will not go away:
  - minimise the impact;
  - work towards better breeds, to get better returns.
- Mining will not go away.

### **Tony Varnes, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation**

Tony gave an outline of the Business Hubs structure and made the following points:

- Hubs are now established in Cooktown, Coen and Weipa;
- Hub is the gateway to access the suite of support services;
- Westpac support the hub concept and continue to bring staff exchanges into them;
- There is an infrastructure that exists with Government and corporate sector resources;
- Infrastructure can be better used;
- Encourage Lyndon's ideas on an initiative such as EcoTrust.

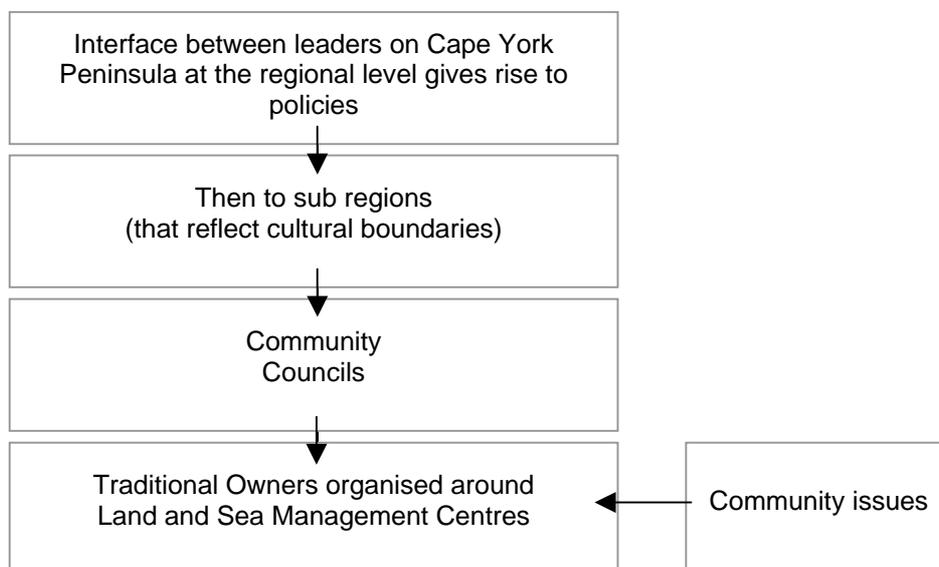
### **Eddie Woibo, Cooktown Business Hub**

Eddie made the following comments:

- A big mindshift is needed;
- Don't want barriers, we want you guys to support us, we want Greens to help us tap into those funds;
- Have got things happening ourselves;
- Need to tap into seed funding.

### **Gerhardt Pearson, CEO, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation**

Our current focus is on partnerships, especially how the government proceeds on structural reform:



The critical issue is the reluctance of government and particular bureaucrats at State level and to a lesser degree, Commonwealth level, to give up responsibility in policy, to forums at the regional/sub regional level. The thinking is there and the negotiation process is going forward, but government hasn't given up its control.

The last thing wanted is government controlling information and funding. Government structural reform is achievable – Premier Beattie is committed, and many CEOs are committed. Achieving reform is central to a whole range of aspirations over the next few years. At the end of the day, allowing some bureaucrats to run to the communities with bits and pieces, will not achieve wholesale change. We need a properly resourced process at the community level, through the Land and Sea Management Centres that can prepare submissions, and seek resources from Departments. The State leaders recognise that they have allowed too much ground to bureaucratic power. We must focus on regional interface or direct interface with the community on land and economic development issues.

## WORKING GROUPS AT THE PLENARY SESSION

Participants responded to the following question:

“How can the conservation sector best assist Indigenous communities to overcome the barriers to appropriate economic activities?”

### Working Group One

- Conservation sector offer to provide advice or facilitate external advice on business proposals and environmental impacts;
- Help sort out land tenure, e.g. through implementation of Heads of Agreement;
- Improve information distribution networks regarding status of processes, etc.;
- Encourage our memberships to support businesses on the Cape, e.g. free advertising in magazines or websites;
- Let people know where our expertise lies, who we are and what have we done:
  - break down tree hugger Greenie stereotype,
  - help foster useful skill sharing;
- Get up there! Sit down, listen and talk, get the dialogue happening two ways, explain where we are coming from;
- Help to establish a fund to support eco-business;
- Investigate paid positions (by Green groups) for Traditional Owners to be working as conservation and relationship building / liaison officers on-country;
- Acknowledge the validity of oral history and traditional knowledge and resource management practices;
- Look at investing in scholarships for community-based research or other initiatives;
- “Environmental Deadly Awards” to recognise good work in natural and cultural resource management.

### Working Group Two

- Financing (need more funding through political support);
- Political support relies on trust;
- Environment movement needs to advocate for environmental outcomes;
- Need for a **shared** agenda to get funding, e.g. philanthropy;

- Need better understanding and agreement on types of projects that the Greens could support, maybe need a negotiated policy on types of projects to work together to get funding on;
- Priority for community needs that have environmental outcomes, e.g. public toilets at camps;
- Start with individual projects to develop trust and then work towards 'bigger picture' outcomes;
- Volunteer programs provide 'sweat equity' to deliver non-financial services;
- Use of networks;
- Possibility of work exchanges;
- Getting Greens into communities to hear what opportunities exist to work together on;
- Bringing in expertise to build environmentally friendly structures.

### **Working Group Three**

- Specific projects that involve Traditional Owners, conservation groups, scientists and economists in generating sustainable economic development:
  - pilots
  - strategies;
- EcoTrust funding for environmentally and culturally appropriate projects;
- More face-to-face contact with Traditional Owners on-country (clan groups);
- Make the distinction between conservation groups and government national parks;
- Requests to conservation groups to inform, build awareness and work in collaboration in Traditional Owners' land;
- Mutually opposing 'bad' development (i.e. common ground issues);
- Protected area reform, e.g. access and economic rights;
- Land back to Traditional Owners'; (support negotiation on Aboriginal freehold);
- Other protected area models, e.g. pay rent;
- Public and private support for communities (clan groups) and land and sea centres in protected areas and for land and sea management;
- Increase the visibility of green groups in communities, through communication, and long-term relationship building;
- Employment strategy for communities by conservation groups;
- Greater discourse and information:
  - more two-way,
  - less one-way;
- Doing the cultural tour, at the time of meetings.

## Working Group Four

### *Financial Capital (Supply):*

- Ethical fund – environmental and cultural criteria;
- Taxation and accreditation to create pools of joint venture capital;
- Green levy with portion for Indigenous management;
- Reapportioning day-to-day management funds;
- Lobbying for NHT2 rollout for Land and Sea Management.

### *Human Capital (Demand):*

- Environment expertise through industry secondment in Land and Sea Management Centres;
- Greater clarity from the environmental movement on positive developments that would be supported;
- Need to demonstrate alternatives (also need a process to pick strategic options);
- Are there ways in which sustainability practices and knowledge can add value to the work of the Hub? (i.e. a separate pool of expertise available on call);
- Recognising local people as resources for managing country and protecting natural assets.

## THEMES FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

From the options generated, participants worked in small groups to identify the common themes emerging from the workshop sessions.

### **Working Group One**

- Communication and understanding:
  - talk to Traditional Owners and the regional leadership;
  - exchange workers between green and Indigenous organisations.
- Conservationists delivering networks, ideas and resources to assist.
- Reform:
  - policy and legislative, administrative, structural.

### **Working Group Two**

- Acquisition, tenure and legislative reform for 'country' (land and sea) to enable community conservation.
- Joint (pilot) research and development projects on traditional lands (CRC, CSIRO, etc).
- Placement (secondment) or exchange of people driven by incentives (cross-cultural)
  - rewards;
  - value experiences;
  - mutual learning;
  - bridging information gaps.
- EcoTrust funding options
  - environmentally and culturally appropriate 'Salmon Nation' concept.

### **Working Group Three**

- Working together:
  - secondments and placements.
- EcoTrust.
- Two demonstration projects.
- Policy reform:
  - land tenure and protected areas, workshops and lobbying for reform;
  - resources to local land and sea management.
- Working group ('taskforce') for the co-ordination to deliver what needs to be done.

### **Working Group Four**

- Land tenure resolution:
  - protected area reform;
  - cultural land trust/native title;
  - supporting acquisition of land for Traditional Owners.
- Eco/Culture Trust Bank!
  - pilot projects;
  - supply some financial capital;
  - expertise (business planning impacts, etc.);
  - shared agenda for philanthropic.
- Networking:
  - working with Traditional Owners;
  - Green movement working in communities;
  - regular dialogue (speaking);
  - two way communication;
  - three to four extensive trips in 2004.



# ROUNDTABLE OUTCOMES

**B. Bessen<sup>1</sup> and R. Hill<sup>2</sup> (Eds.)**

<sup>1</sup>Bessen Consulting Services, Perth

<sup>2</sup>Australian Conservation Foundation and School of Tropical Environment Studies and Geography, James Cook University, Cairns  
(email: r.hill@acfonline.org.au)

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The Roundtable Plenary Session agreed on the following major initiatives as positive ways of supporting appropriate and sustainable economies on Cape York Peninsula.

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## REFORM TO LAND TENURE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The participants expressed their support for:

- acquisitions of land of high natural and cultural value and return to/recognition of Indigenous ownership;
- reform of the conservation, protected area, land tenure and management arrangements (policy and legislation) and options, to better take account of Traditional Owner rights and interests and facilitate community-based conservation; and
- resourcing of conservation and land management by Traditional Owners.

There was recognition of the need to lobby for reform to policy, legislation and resource arrangements for land and sea management, tenure, and protected areas, ensuring a balance of land and sea:

- advocacy role;
- development of a policy framework; and
- working towards united (consensus) conservation positions between Indigenous and environment groups.

A specific proposal needs to be developed for the Queensland Government:

- come to a common Indigenous / conservation position for the specific reform proposal for Cape York Peninsula and Sea Country in relation to conservation, land tenure and management and protected areas.

National Oceans Office – an opportunity exists for input to their marine planning process:

- discuss and work together on common interests and actively engage in the planning process.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The development of an exchange program for secondments and placements between Indigenous and conservation organisations was supported:

- swapping people in different organisations or on leave arrangements;
- regular interaction and face-to-face contact;
- providing resources and expertise;
- shared experiences on country; and
- awards and celebrations.

## PILOT PROJECTS

Pilot projects were viewed as a good way of fostering positive initiatives:

- combining traditional knowledge and Western knowledge;
- building trust; and
- capacity building and partnerships.

## ECO TRUST OR ECO CULTURE BANK

Developing another capital stream directed towards environmental and social ends is viewed as a positive way forward:

- work in with Business Hubs:
- identify projects via the Hubs;
- complementary process;
- use existing structures to support; and
- first point of contact is to the Eco Culture Bank.

## ACTIONS

It was agreed:

- To form a Working Group to carry the outcomes forward, consisting of:

Rosemary Hill and Anthony Esposito	Environmental groups
Steve Turton (or representative)	Science groups
Matt Salmon	Traditional Owners and Indigenous Communities

- Balkanu will brief their Board on the Roundtable and subsequently advise on their capacity to participate in the ongoing processes;
- Working Group to complete during early 2004:
  - a Situation Statement that details what is currently happening;

- a Work Plan for the next two years that fleshes out the steps, people and resources required.
- Working Group to feed successes and challenges into other Regional Roundtables (e.g. Kimberleys).

## NEXT STEPS

It was agreed that:

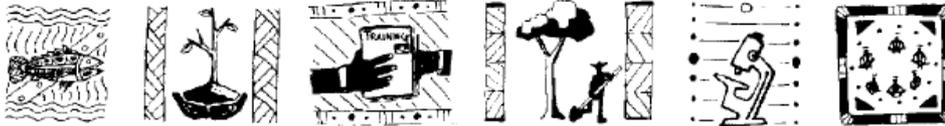
- A quick, short summary of the workshop would be sent to all invitees and apologies, by e-mail where possible, within two weeks;
- A full report of the workshop, including extra papers delivered on the day, would be completed as an Australian Conservation Foundation/Rainforest CRC publication during 2004.



## APPENDIX A

### MEDIA RELEASE

**Balkanu**  
Cape York Development Corporation



MEDIA RELEASE: EMBARGO 10.00 AM 5 NOVEMBER 2003

## LAND FUND FOR CAPE YORK WILL BREAK THE NHT DEADLOCK

**The establishment of a Cape York Land fund to acquire country for Traditional Owners will break the ongoing deadlock around the use of National Heritage Trust (NHT) funds, and provide a secure base from which economic and conservation goals can be achieved. The current regime is failing to deliver and needs to be refocused to protect Cape York and provide for its people.**

“Cape York is Aboriginal land,” said Richard Aken, Chairman of Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, speaking at a two day forum convened by the Australian Conservation Foundation and Rainforest Cooperative Research Centre at James Cook University in Cairns. “The first step on the road to our people taking control of their lives is to take control of their land. Nearly a decade after a commitment of \$40 million from the NHT we are still being prevented from taking this first step”.

An independent review of the NHT indicated that of the \$8 million allocated for land acquisitions only \$143,333 had been spent. This represents a significant lost opportunity that can be rectified by the establishment of a Cape York Land Fund to use these funds to acquire land. This will ensure the money is invested in a concrete outcome rather than being wasted on shooting pigs from helicopters.

“Land is both an economic and spiritual resource for Indigenous people,” says Mr. Aken. “Without it we will continue to experience high rates of suicide, poor health and alcohol abuse. We call on the federal and state governments to target NHT and other programs to acquire land for aboriginal people, and to work with us to develop new conservation models that protect sensitive areas and promote sustainable economic development. We all love the country and want to see it cared for. Together we can achieve that in Cape York”.

#### **Background:**

The forum will take place on the 5th and 6th of November at the Student Lodge, 24 Faculty Close, James Cook University, Cairns.

#### **Contacts:**

Richard Aken, Chairman of Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation – 0427 519 089  
Sebastian Jake, Balkanu Public Relations – 0428 832 887

## APPENDIX B

### ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

**Wednesday 5 November 2003**

8:30 am	Welcome to Roundtable
9:00 am	<b>Opening</b> Traditional Owners Australian Conservation Foundation: Mr John Connor, Campaigns Director Rainforest CRC: Professor Nigel Stork, CEO
9:20 am	<b>Introductions</b>
9:40 am	<b>Keynote Welcome</b> Mr Richard Aken: Chairperson, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation
10:15 am	<b>Roundtable Context and Goals</b> Dr Rosemary Hill: Australian Conservation Foundation Northern Australia Coordinator
10:45 am	Morning Tea
11:15 am	<b>Rainforest CRC Partnership</b> Associate Professor Steve Turton: Deputy CEO, Rainforest CRC
11:25 am	<b>Feedback from World Parks Congress</b> Mr Phil Rist: Acting CEO Giringun Elders and Reference Group Ms Melissa George: Aboriginal Land Management Facilitator, Burdekin Dry Tropics Natural Resource Management Board Mr Claude Beeron: Jumbun Community, Giringun Board Member
11:55 am	<b>Linking Cultural Indicators to Appropriate Economies</b> Dr Dermot Smyth: Smyth and Bahrtd Consultants, Rainforest CRC
12:15 pm	Preparation for Afternoon Sessions
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm	<b>Two Separate Sessions on Linking Culture and Environment to Economies</b> See separate agendas below and over page
4:45 pm (to 5:00 pm)	Closing Plenary Session, preparation for second day
6:00 pm	Roundtable Dinner by the Pool

<b>Linking Environment to Economies: Non-Indigenous Participants</b>	
1:30 pm	<b>Linking Cape York Peninsula's Natural Heritage to Economies</b> Dr Brendan Mackey: Reader in Environmental Science, Australian National University
2:30 pm	<b>Defining Environmentally Appropriate Economies for Cape York Peninsula</b> Discussion and Writing Workshop
3:30 pm	Afternoon Tea
4:00 pm	<b>Practical Examples of Environmentally Appropriate Activities</b> Canadian Examples: Mr Lyndon Schneiders, The Wilderness Society Discussion of other examples, both current and potential
4:45 pm	Return to Plenary

<b>Linking Culture to Economies: Indigenous Participants Only</b>	
1:30 pm	<b>Linking Culture to Economy</b> Discussion and writing workshop (implementing the CYPLUS desired outcome that economic development is negotiated with culture in mind)
2:30 pm	<b>Reaching Agreement with Residents</b> Processes for Indigenous control of decision-making about economic activities
3:30 pm	Afternoon Tea
4:00 pm	<b>Practical Examples of Culturally Appropriate Economic Activities</b> Burdekin Dry Tropics Examples: Ms Melissa George, Mr Noel Gertz Discussion of other examples, both current and potential
4:45 pm	Return to Plenary

#### Thursday 6 November

9:00 am	<b>Plenary Session</b> Report back and discussions from workshops on linking culture and environment to economy
10:30 am	Morning Tea
10:30 am	<b>Enhancing Appropriate Economies</b> Identifying current barriers and policies that would provide support for appropriate economies – small group writing workshop

2:00 pm	<b>Plenary, Recommendations of Ways Forward that will Support Appropriate Economies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research and development</li><li>• Pilot projects, follow-up in Kimberley and Kakadu</li><li>• Policy directions</li><li>• Interested participants</li></ul>
4:00 pm	Finalise Recommendations and Close
4:45 pm	Final Comments and Closing Session
5:30 pm	<b>Living Culture, Living Green Seminar</b> For those interested, final seminar of the year focusing on the World Parks Congress, Small Crowther Lecture Theatre

## APPENDIX C

### ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Participants at the workshop were:

Name	Organisation
Mr Anthony Esposito .....	The Wilderness Society
Ms Ariadne Goring .....	Land and Sea Management Unit, Kimberley Land Council
Mr Brandon Walker .....	Kuku Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours
Dr Brendan Mackey.....	Australian National University
Mr Chris Clifford .....	Lockhart River Land and Sea Management Agency
Dr Chris Margules .....	CSIRO Tropical Landscapes
Mr Clarrie Flinders.....	Ambiilmungu-ngarra Aboriginal Corporation
Mr Claude Beeron .....	Girramay Committee Member
Dr Dermot Smyth.....	Smyth and Bahrdt Consultants; Rainforest CRC
Mr Eddie Woibo.....	Cooktown Business Hub
Ms Emma Birchall .....	Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Walks
Ms Francis Walker.....	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
Mr Henry Boer .....	Environment Centre of the Northern Territory
Mr Ian Curtis.....	James Cook University
Ms Jean Fenton.....	Australian Conservation Foundation
Mr John Connor.....	Australian Conservation Foundation
Mr John Rainbird.....	Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
Ms Karen Gibson.....	Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc.
Ms Kerry O'Connor.....	The Wilderness Society
Mr Linc Walker .....	Kuku Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours
Mr Lyndon Schneiders .....	The Wilderness Society
Mr Matt Salmon .....	Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation
Ms Maria Mann.....	Environs Kimberley
Ms Melissa George .....	Burdekin Dry Tropics Board
Mr Michael Storrs .....	Caring for Country Unit, Northern Land Council
Mr Mark Annandale .....	Department of State Development
Ms Nicky Hungerford.....	Queensland Conservation Council
Professor Nigel Stork .....	Rainforest CRC
Mr Noel Gertz .....	Burdekin Dry Tropics Board
Ms Peta Standley .....	Environment Protection Agency
Mr Peter Hitchcock.....	Old Cassowary Consulting
Mr Phil Rist .....	Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
Mr Phillip Baru.....	Balkanu Aboriginal Corporation
Mr Richard Aken.....	Balkanu Aboriginal Corporation
Dr Romy Greiner .....	CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
Dr Rosemary Hill .....	Australian Conservation Foundation
Mr Rowan Foley (first day only) .....	Department of Natural Resources and Mines
Dr Sandra Pannell.....	Rainforest CRC

Associate Professor Steve Turton..... Rainforest CRC  
Mr Sunlight Bassini..... Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation  
Ms Thelma Coconut ..... Nanum Tawap Economic Development Corporation  
Mr Tony Varnes..... Balkanu Business Hub  
Mr Gerhardt Pearson (second day only) ..... Balkanu Aboriginal Corporation  
Mr Richard Jenkins (second day only) ..... Outstations, Balkanu Aboriginal Corporation

## APOLOGIES

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mr Arnold Wallis.....	Wuthathi Land Trust
Mr Buzz Symonds.....	Environment Protection Agency
Mr Justin O'Brien.....	Gundjehmi Corporation
Mr Michael Winer.....	Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships
Mr Mick Linnan.....	Department of State Development
Mr Tim O'Reilly.....	Coen Business Hub
Mr Willie Gordon	
Mr Allan Dale	
Ms Eileen Walker	
Mr Michael Ross	
Mr Peter Whitehead	
Mr Tim McGreen	
Ms Raelinda Woibo	



*From left:* Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation Chair, Mr Richard Aken; Koola Land Trust Chair and Traditional Owner, Mr Sunlight Bassin; and Australian Conservation Foundation Northern Australia Coordinator, Dr Rosemary Hill (Photo: The Cairns Post).



*From left:* Mr Anthony Espisito, The Wilderness Society, with Dr Sandra Pannell, Aboriginal Research Facilitator, Rainforest CRC.



*From left:* Dr Brendan Mackey, Reader, School of Resources, Environment and Society, Australian National University, with Mr Brandon Walker, Director, Kuku-Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours.



*From left:* Ms Ariadne Goring, Manager, Land and Sea Management Unit, Kimberley Land Council, with Ms Francis Walker, Regional Councillor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and Director, Wujal Wujal Walker Family Tours.



*From left:* Mr Chris Clifford, Coordinator, Lockhart River Land and Sea Management Agency; Associate Professor Steve Turton, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Rainforest CRC; and Dr Brendan Mackey, School of Resources, Environment and Society, Australian National University.



*From left:* Ms Peta Standley, Environmental Protection Agency with Dr Romy Greiner, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems.