



Northern Australia Oversight Committee

Annual Report

September 2017

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Progress Report	4
3. Analysis	8
4. Two Year Outcomes	12
5. The Next Steps	18
6. Sensitivities and Other Developments	18
7. Recommendations	21
Appendix A	23
Appendix B	85

**The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

Dear Prime Minister,

I am pleased to provide to you the second Annual Report of the Northern Australia Oversight Committee (the Committee).

The Committee was formed on the same day that the *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* (the White Paper) was released, with the purpose of ensuring that the Executive Government maintained focus on the implementation of the measures presented in the White Paper.

The Committee is delighted to report that in the twelve months since its last Annual Report an additional 47.06 per cent of total measures are now completed measures, and a total of 87.25 per cent of total measures are now completed or in progress.

The Committee can also report that 77.95 per cent of the Two-Year benchmark outcomes articulated in the White Paper have been achieved.

This is an outstanding result.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their commitment to ensuring the people of Northern Australia have an effective voice in developing the North.

I would also like to thank all Ministers and departmental personnel who have applied themselves and their departments to the implementation of the White Paper with great enthusiasm.

The Committee looks forward to the next phase of Northern Development policy.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Macdonald', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald
Chair
Northern Australia Oversight Committee**

Introduction

1.1 The *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* (the White Paper) was announced and released on June 17, 2015 by then-Prime Minister the Hon Tony Abbott MP. The formation of the *Northern Australia Oversight Committee* (the Committee) was announced by the then-Prime Minister on the same day.

1.2 This is the Committee's second Annual Report to Government.

1.3 The Committee was created as a committee of Government.

1.4 The Committee's membership comprises Government Senators and Members from and/or representing Northern Australia. The current members are:

- Senator The Hon Ian Macdonald (Queensland) (Chair);
- Senator Barry O'Sullivan (Queensland);
- Senator Dean Smith (Western Australia);
- Senator The Hon Nigel Scullion (Northern Territory);
- Mr. Ken O'Dowd MP (the Member for Flynn);
- Ms. Michelle Landry MP (the Member for Capricornia);
- Mr George Christensen MP (the Member for Dawson);
- The Hon Warren Entsch MP (the Member for Leichhardt);
- Ms. Melissa Price MP (the Member for Durack); and
- Mr David Littleproud MP (the Member for Maranoa);

1.5 The original membership of the Committee also included the then-Member for Solomon Ms. Natasha Griggs MP, the then-Member for Herbert Mr. Ewen Jones MP, and the then-Member for Maranoa the Hon Bruce Scott MP, and former Senator for Western Australia Chris Back. The Committee thanks Natasha, Ewen, Bruce and Chris for their unique insights and strong advocacy

for the development of Northern Australia both as Northern Australian parliamentarians, and as members of the Committee.

1.6 The Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR) were settled on August 18th, 2015 following consultation with the office of the Prime Minister. The relevant ToR are as follows:

- 1 The Northern Australia Oversight Committee will monitor the implementation of the White Paper on Developing of Northern Australia and play a key role in keeping Ministers and officials honest on delivery of actions in the White Paper.*
- 2 The Committee will report directly to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. (NB: the latter in his then-role as the relevant Minister for Northern Australia) An annual report will be provided to inform an annual statement to Parliament by the Deputy Prime Minister (NB: this annual statement to the Parliament is now delivered by the Minister for Northern Australia).*
- 4 The Committee will be able to request written information and request oral evidence from Ministers responsible for various elements of the White Paper and officials from their departments. Ministers have been asked to ensure their officials engage constructively with the Committee.*
- 5 The Deputy Prime Minister will arrange for updates from the Office of Northern Australia on progress with the White Paper including at least three meetings with the Office of Northern Australia every calendar year.*
- 6 The Oversight Committee will also interact with proponents of submissions and proposals made as a result of the White Paper, and will liaise on behalf of the Government with people and entities of Northern Australia on the implementation, and provide feedback to relevant Ministers and departmental officials.*

1.7 The Committee was created to augment the Government's Northern Australia policy architecture. The primary purpose of the Committee is to scrutinize the implementation of the measures detailed in the White Paper and address, within Government, any deficiencies in that process.

1.8 In contrast, the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia - which under the auspices of the Northern Australia White Paper has now become the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia (JSCNA) - chaired by the Hon Warren Entsch MP was formed as a parliamentary committee with a wide remit to inquire into and report on issues relating to Northern development generally. The Committee welcomes the decision of Government to re-form the JSCNA as a permanent standing committee of the Parliament.

1.9 In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR clause 6) the secondary purpose of the Committee is to give a voice to the people and communities of Northern Australia and to ensure that their insights and objectives are properly represented in the development of Northern Australia.

1.10. The inaugural meeting of the Committee took place on August 19th, 2015. The Committee has met subsequently as required.

1.11 The Committee supports the creation of the Northern Australia portfolio as an essential element to the development of the North. Clearly, however, many of the commitments and funding in the White Paper are within the jurisdiction of other Ministers, particularly within the Indigenous Affairs, Agriculture and Water, Trade, Infrastructure, Employment, Education, and Environment portfolios.

1.12 The Committee appreciates that the breadth of work required to deliver Northern Australian development and notes the importance of independent monitoring, within Government, of the implementation of the White Paper.

1.13 The Committee has sought regular updates from Ministerial offices regarding the implementation of the measures in the White Paper and has been reassured by the willingness of Ministers and their staff to provide these updates where possible. The Committee does, however, acknowledge the workload of Ministers and their staff and is cognizant that the Committee's requests for updates do not always coincide with the relevant information being available.

1.14 The Committee most recently wrote to relevant Ministers in May 2017 to re-iterate the Committee's on-going commitment to monitoring and encouraging the effective implementation of the White Paper, and to seek updates on progress.

1.15 The Committee acknowledges the Minister for Northern Australia's first statement of progress to the Parliament on Tuesday October 11, 2016, and

anticipates that the Minister will provides a subsequent statement to the Parliament later this year (2017).

1.16 The Committee notes a general perception encountered across the North that there has been a ‘softening’ of momentum and that progress on Northern development has slowed. The Committee does not agree with this view and believes that the data presented in this Annual Report disproves the perception.

Progress Report

2.1 The Committee notes that the Department of Industry (within which portfolio Northern Australia Development sits) recognizes a total of fifty-one (51) White Paper commitments. The Committee, however, recognizes one hundred and two (102) (see Appendix A).

2.2 The Committee is delighted to report that in the twelve months since its first Annual Report in September 2016 an additional twenty-nine (29) of the one hundred and two (102) commitments detailed in the Northern Development White Paper have been completed.

2.3 The 102 commitments recognized by the Committee extend beyond the financial and specific regulatory measures detailed in the White Paper, and include all commitments to action: some have budget appropriations, some are changes to policy settings, and others are statements of intention that reflect the Federal Government’s methodology for enabling the development of Northern Australia. The Committee acknowledges that some commitments are so closely aligned as to invite concurrent consideration. However, the Committee elected early in its lifespan that its ‘oversight’ remit would be best served by tracking the progress of each item individually. It is the Committee’s view that proper oversight of the implementation of the White Paper includes the monitoring of all statements of action and intention.

2.4 As at August 1st, 2017 the Committee has identified that:

- Forty-eight (48) of 102 commitments in the White Paper are completed;
- Forty-one (41) of 102 commitments in the White Paper are in-progress;
- Eleven (11) of 102 commitments in the White Paper are not actioned; and,
- Two (2) of 102 commitments in the White Paper are abandoned/discontinued (*the White Paper on the Reform of Federation, and the Regulation Repeal Day 2016*)

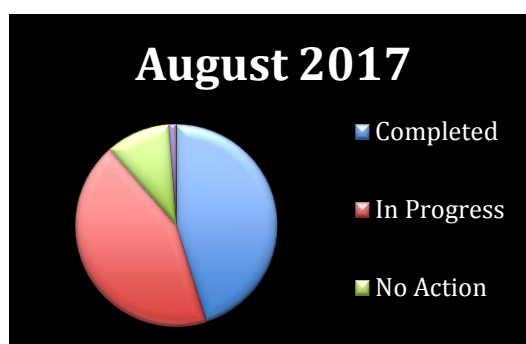
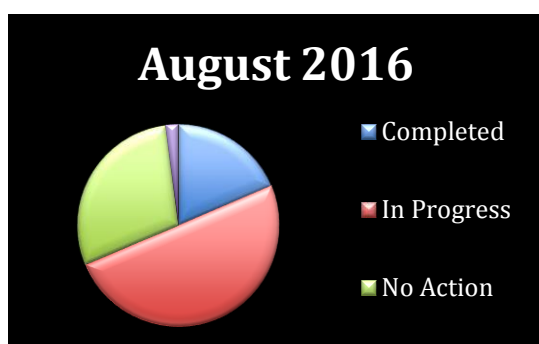
2.5 The percentage of progress on commitments across the entire White Paper from 2016 to 2017 is as follows:

White Paper August 2016:

- 18.63 per cent completed
- 50.00 per cent in progress
- 29.41 per cent no action
- 01.96 per cent discontinued

White Paper August 2017:

- 47.06 per cent completed
- 40.22 per cent in progress
- 10.76 per cent no action
- 01.96 per cent discontinued



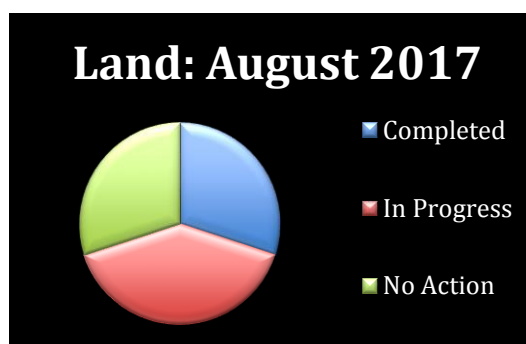
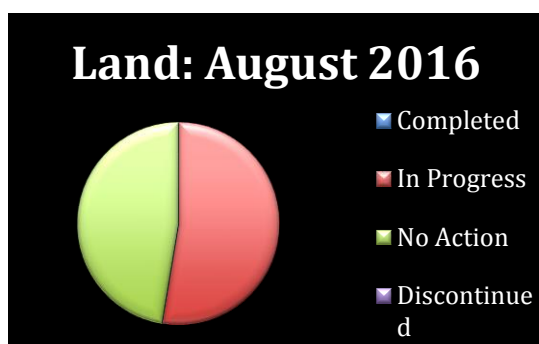
2.6 The percentages of progress specific to the Land section of the White Paper from 2016 to 2017 are as follows:

Land August 2016:

- 00.00 per cent completed
- 52.60 per cent in progress
- 47.40 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued

Land August 2017

- 30.00 per cent completed
- 40.00 per cent in progress
- 30.00 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued



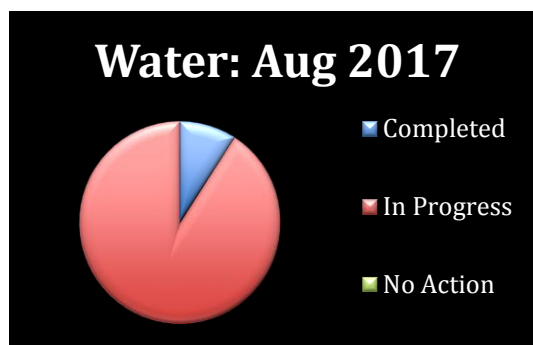
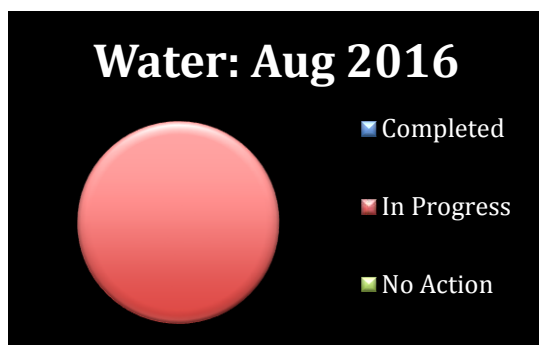
2.7 The percentages of progress specific to the Water section of the White Paper from 2016 to 2017 are as follows:

Water August 2016:

- 00.00 per cent completed
- 100.0 per cent in progress
- 00.00 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued

Water August 2017

- 09.10 per cent completed
- 90.90 per cent in progress
- 00.00 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued



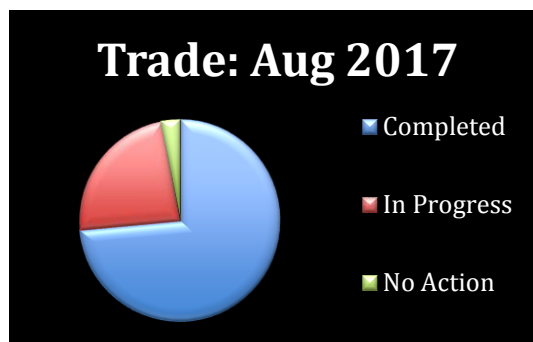
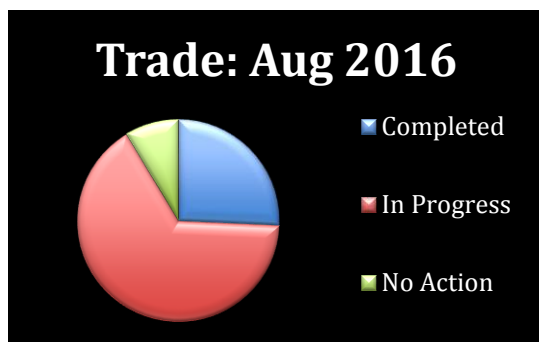
2.8 The percentages of progress specific to the Trade section of the White Paper from 2016 to 2017 are as follows:

Trade August 2016:

- 25.70 per cent completed
- 65.70 per cent in progress
- 08.60 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued

Trade August 2017:

- 73.53 per cent completed
- 23.53 per cent in progress
- 02.94 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued



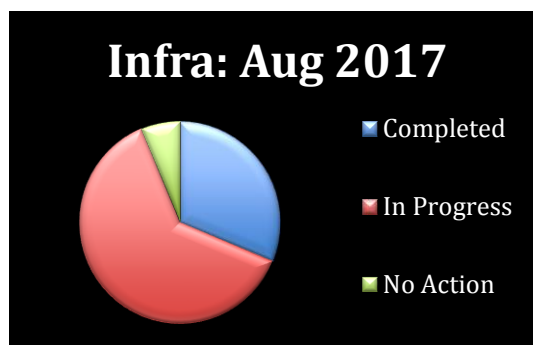
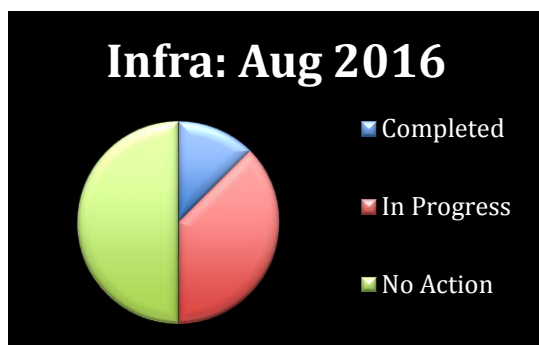
2.9 The percentages of progress specific to the Infrastructure section of the White Paper from 2016 to 2017 are as follows:

Infrastructure August 2016:

- 12.50 per cent completed
- 37.50 per cent in progress
- 50.00 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued

Infrastructure August 2017:

- 31.25 per cent completed
- 62.50 per cent in progress
- 06.25 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued



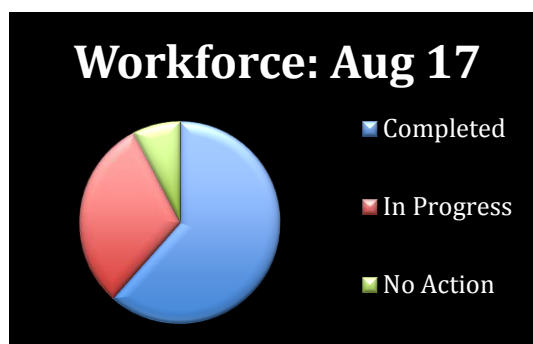
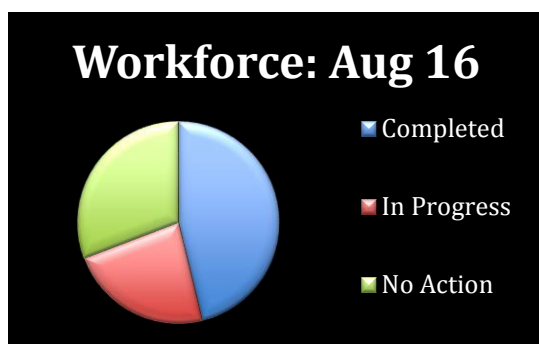
2.10 The percentages of progress specific to the Workforce section of the White Paper from 2016 to 2017 are as follows:

Workforce August 2016:

- 46.20 per cent completed
- 23.00 per cent in progress
- 30.80 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued

Workforce August 2017:

- 61.55 per cent completed
- 30.80 per cent in progress
- 07.65 per cent no action
- 00.00 per cent discontinued



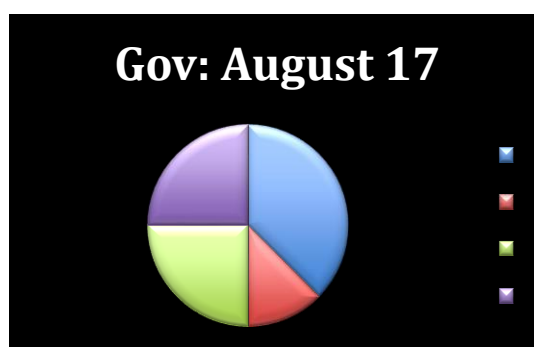
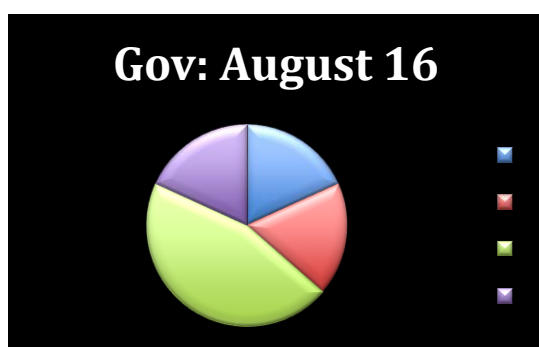
2.11 The percentages of progress specific to the Governance section of the White Paper from 2016 to 2017 are as follows:

Governance August 2016:

- 12.50 per cent completed
- 25.00 per cent in progress
- 37.50 per cent no action
- 25.00 per cent discontinued

Governance August 2017

- 37.50 per cent completed
- 12.50 per cent in progress
- 25.00 per cent no action
- 25.00 per cent discontinued



(NB: Blue = Completed, Red = In Progress, Green = No Action and Purple = Discontinued)

Analysis

3.1 The six-theme format of the White Paper (Land, Water, Trade, Infrastructure, Workforce and Governance) allows individual commitments and initiatives to be understood in context of a broader policy framework. Attention is often directed at the large-scale catalytic commitments in the White Paper, and the impact that these measures will have on employment and economic activity. The Committee is mindful, however, that the potency of the White Paper lies in the interaction between its substantial funding commitments, and its less notable, but nonetheless transformative, changes in policy settings.

3.2 The Committee is pleased to note that in all six of the thematic areas of the White Paper the progress of the deployment and completion of measures has remained strong. It is noteworthy that the combined total of 'Completed' and 'In Progress' measures was 68.63 per cent of all measures in August 2016, and is 87.25 per cent of all measures in August 2017. This increase indicates that, overall, the number of White Paper measures to have been activated - to any degree - has grown steadily over the past twelve months.

3.3 The Committee is also pleased to note that the overall number of measures classified as ‘No Action’ has reduced from 29.41 per cent of total measures, to 10.76 per cent of total measures. This would indicate that individual departments are maintaining a rate-of-work through the commitments relevant to their portfolios. The Committee notes that half of the persisting ‘No Action’ measures are related to land tenure and are therefore reliant upon collaboration between Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and as such sit outside the direct control of the commonwealth government. These land tenure measures are discussed further in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.7 below.

3.4 The Land section of the White Paper was identified in the Committee’s 2016 Annual Report as an area of concern due to the apparent lack of progress on the commitments in that section at that time. In August 2016 no commitments in the Land section had been completed, and almost half had attracted no activity at all. In the 2016 Report the Committee recommended that renewed leadership and guidance be applied by the Executive to the White Paper’s Land commitments, particularly in relation to the measures relating to native title and Indigenous Affairs.

3.5 The overall progress in the Land section over the ensuing twelve months has been positive, with 30 per cent of the Land commitments now completed. The Committee acknowledges that much of this completion-rate has been achieved in the Indigenous Affairs portfolio.

3.6 Despite this improved completion-rate, the ‘No Action’ percentage in the Land section remains high at 30 per cent which is the highest ‘No Action’ percentage across all six thematic streams. The bulk of these ‘No Action’ commitments relate to pastoral leases and land tenure. The Committee acknowledges that these issues are within the jurisdiction of State and Territory Governments and, as such, require a collaborative approach between the Commonwealth and the governments of Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The Committee recommends that progress on these issues be pursued through the Strategic Partnership created under the auspices of the White Paper (comprising the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers of Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia), and/or through COAG.

3.7 The six (6) commitments in the Land section of the White Paper that, after two years, have not received any attention are:

- Bring forward the point at which leaseholders can apply for renewals (White Paper page 38);
- Introduce template leases for large capital investments (e.g. 100 years) (White Paper page 38);
- Transfer control of 'inputs' to other legislation (White Paper page 38);
- Redistribution of compensation costs to prospective grantee or lessee (White Paper page 38);
- Renew leases with minimum conditions (White Paper page 38); and
- Improved data and mapping for tenure including surface and subsurface details.

This lack of action across issues of land tenure has impacted the achievement of the Two Year Outcomes relating to the Land section of the White Paper (see Chapter 4 below).

3.8 The Committee is delighted by progress on the commitments in the Water section of the White Paper. The bulk of these commitments involve in-depth evidence-based study into the current state of water assets, and the feasibility of proposals to augment existing water storages. These projects will drive economic and community development in Northern jurisdictions for decades. The Committee is confident that significant and important work is being done behind the scenes in order to inform Northern Australia's water policy and water management functions over the next 5, 10 and 20 years, and into the future.

3.9 The Committee notes that in the North the Commonwealth has no constitutional jurisdiction on rivers, streams and water management and has to rely on action by State and Territory governments. The Commonwealth Government can and does encouraged activity by funding feasibility studies and offering funding for construction (as in the case of the Rockwood Weir). The Committee strongly urges the Federal Government to continue and renew its efforts with State and Territory governments to advance into action any recommendations of these feasibility studies, and to pursue these matters through COAG and Northern Ministerial Forums.

3.10 The Committee applauds the outstanding progress made on the commitments in the Trade section of the White Paper. In August 2016 25.70 per cent of these commitments had been ‘Completed’. One year later that figure has risen to 73.53 per cent. Almost all other measures detailed in the Trade stream of the White Paper are rated as ‘In Progress’. The Committee is delighted by this achievement, especially as many of the Trade measures involve the regulatory and policy changes that are foundational to building a development- and investment-friendly environment in Northern Australia.

3.11 The Committee is pleased to note an increase in the ‘Completed’ measures in the Infrastructure stream over the past twelve months from 12.5 per cent to 31.25 per cent. The Committee is also very pleased to note that the number of ‘In Progress’ measures in this stream has increased dramatically from 37.5 per cent to 62.5 per cent. These ‘In Progress’ commitments include some of the most significant Commonwealth funding allocations made under the auspices of the White Paper. These include the ‘Northern Australia Roads Program’(NARP) and the ‘Beef Roads Program’ which have already seen hundreds of millions of dollars allocated to specific road projects, many of which are currently under construction. The Committee looks forward to Northern Australia benefitting from the enhanced economic development that comes with better functioning supply chains, the improved amenity/access for residents and emergency services, from better tourism access, and from the improved agricultural outcomes that these major road infrastructure projects will deliver.

3.12 The Committee is delighted to acknowledge excellent progress in the Workforce area of the White Paper where the percentage of ‘Completed’ items has increased from 46.2 per cent to 61.55 per cent in twelve months. The percentage of measures rated ‘In Progress’ has also increased, from 23 per cent to 30.80 percent. This means the overall ‘Actioned’ figure has risen from 69.2 per cent to 92.35 per cent. This is an outstanding result. The Committee is not concerned by the few ‘No Action’ items that remain, which include Secondment of APS employees to the Northern territory to fast track implementation of the streamlined occupational licensing process, although the Committee notes the Deputy Prime Minister’s mention of other APS positions in Darwin. Following high completion-rates in this portfolio stream thus far, the Committee is confident that the remaining measures will be actioned swiftly.

3.13 The Committee is also pleased with the solid progress that has been made on measures in the Governance section of the White Paper. The ‘Completed’ percentage has risen from 18.2 per cent to 37.5 per cent, and the ‘No Action’

percentage has almost halved from 45.4 per cent to 25 per cent. The Committee notes that it is the National Map Open Data Initiative - Northern Australia layer, and the update of Land surveys, area plans and zoning maps across a range of Indigenous communities in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory to support changes to land tenure that are more consistent with freehold title, that have so far received 'No Action'. As mentioned previously, successful actioning of such measures requires the commitment of State and Territory governments.

3.14 The Committee is generally encouraged by the pace of implementation across the second year of the White Paper's life. A combined 'Completed' and 'In Progress' figure of 87.25 per cent amply demonstrates that the momentum of the implementation of the measures in the White Paper has been steady and strong across the first two years of the White Paper's life. The Committee cautions, however, against allowing the evident tempo of work to foster any complacency in the on-going implementation of the White Paper, and in the further development of Northern Australia policy.

3.15 A detailed progress report on the implementation of the White Paper is at Appendix A.

3.16 The five-year, ten-year and twenty-year benchmark objectives of the White Paper are detailed at Appendix B.

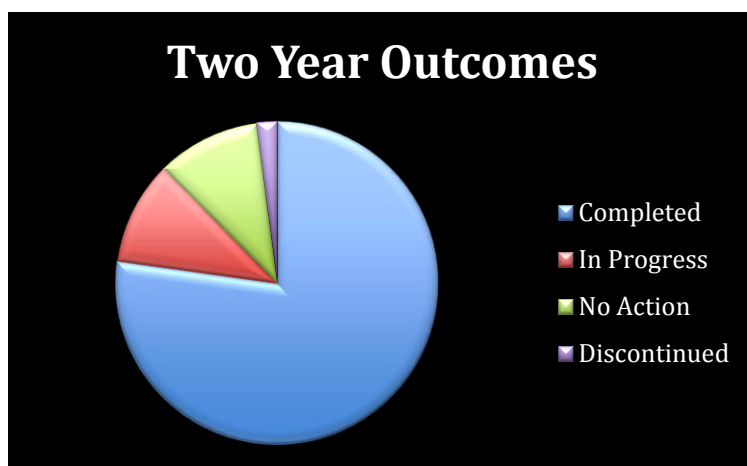
3.17 The Two Year Outcome benchmarks detailed in the White Paper are discussed in the next chapter of this Report.

Two Year Outcomes

4.1 Pages 125 to 131 of the White Paper detail the impacts and outcomes on Northern Development intended to be achieved by the White Paper at two, five, ten and twenty year benchmarks from the release in June 2015.

4.2 The Committee is delighted to report that on the second anniversary of the release of the White Paper fifty-three (53) of the sixty-eight (68) outcomes proposed for the two-year benchmark, have been completed. Of the remaining fifteen (15) outcomes, five (5) are in progress, eight (8) remain idle and two have been discontinued. As such, the following 'Two Year Outcome' completion rates have been achieved:

- 77.95 per cent completed;
- 08.82 per cent in progress;
- 10.28 per cent no action; and,
- 02.95 per cent discontinued.



4.3 The status of each individual Two-Year Outcome is as follows. It should be noted that many of these outcomes are ‘conceptual’ in nature and refer to the state of play in the north as a result of the implementation of the measures in the White Paper. Only a limited number of specific measures from the White Paper are mentioned.

4.3 Two Year Outcomes Completed:

Land

- Commence Land Tenure Pilots.
- COAG to report on Indigenous land use and administration.
- Progress COAG land investigation outcomes.
- Develop new business-friendly information on land tenure.
- Roll out additional support for native title bodies.
- Progress options to support the use of exclusive native title rights for commercial purposes.
- Introduce new outcomes-based funding for native title bodies.

Water

- Establish the \$200m National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

- Roll out fourth phase of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative to cap uncontrolled bores.

Trade

- Commence business links programme with Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and East Timor
- More Indigenous rangers undertaking biosecurity surveillance.
- Introduce 10 year multiple-entry visitor visa and trial visa applications in simplified Chinese.
- Productivity Commission to investigate and report on more streamlined regulation of fisheries and aquaculture industries. – report published 19 December 2016: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/fisheries-aquaculture/report>
- Host major investment forum in the North: Darwin 2015, Cairns 2017.
- Facilitate more collaboration between Australian research institutions and regional partners on tropical health.
- Commence new tropical research and commercialisation programme.
- Extend environmental approvals for low risk fisheries to 10 years.
- New Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia up and running.
- Roll out e-lodgement of tourist visas in China and India and trial fast-tracking services.
- Increase Northern business access to advisory services.
- Strengthen biosecurity arrangements for Northern Australia.
- Recommend actions from Northern Australia Insurance Premium Taskforce – final report 4th March, 2016.

Infrastructure

- Establish the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.
- Commence four-year extension to the Regional Aviation Access Programme and the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Programme.
- Commission CSIRO to identify areas to improve productivity in the Northern cattle supply chains - April 2016 formal proposals, compiled using TraNSIT results, submitted for assessment.
- Invest in additional border and biosecurity activities to support more regular international flights at Townsville airport.

- Announce details for the \$600 million roads package: The Government announced projects to be funded under the Northern Australia Roads Program throughout 2016 (see Appendix A item # 67).
- Announce Beef Roads Fund projects: The Australian Government announced projects to be funded under the Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme in October 2016 (see Appendix A item # 70).
- Commence pre-feasibility of Mount Isa to Tennant Creek railway.
- Announce construction dates for roads package transport projects.
- Release IA's audit of Northern Australia's infrastructure.
- Establish a business group to prepare a plan for improving aviation connections to Northern Australia.

Workforce

- Commence new national jobactive employment service.
- Progress Designated Area Migration Agreements in Northern Australia, including the Northern Territory.
- Expand and streamline the Seasonal Worker Programme, including for broader agriculture and accommodation sectors.
- Enable Working Holiday Maker Visa Programme participants to work for longer in high demand areas.
- Commence lower skilled worker pilot programme for workers from the Pacific Microstates.
- Broaden availability of Industry Skills Fund to support business in the North.
- Put in place Indigenous employment and supplier use targets for road projects.
- Review Working Holiday maker Visa to assess impact on the domestic labour market.
- Tourism industry to submit proposals to trial seasonal worker programme.
- Productivity Commission Inquiry report on Workplace Relations Framework released.
- Release Productivity Commission Inquiry report on Migrant intake into Australia.

Governance

- Continue Strategic Partnership between the Prime Minister and the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian First Ministers.
- Seek support of the Parliament to establish the Joint Select Committee as a standing committee - The Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia is appointed under a resolution of appointment which was passed by the House of Representatives on 1 September 2016 and the Senate on 12 September.
- Commence public sector secondment programme.
- Deputy Prime Minister's (Minister's) inaugural statement to Parliament on developing the North. Now Northern Australia Minister's report – delivered on Tuesday October 11, 2016.
- Release of the 2015 Defence White Paper
- Shift the Office of Northern Australia to the North.
- Establish a Single Point of Entry in Darwin.
- Joint select Committee's annual report to Parliament.
- Strengthen biosecurity functions in the North with more frontline officers.

4.4 Two Year Outcomes In Progress:

Water

- Complete Nullinga Dam and Ord Stage 3 feasibility assessments and progress projects based on results.
- Complete resource assessments in priority catchments – Mitchell River, west Kimberley and Darwin.

Trade

- Release value proposition on investor-ready projects in the North.
- Consult with Indigenous Australians and business on accrediting jurisdictions' heritage protection regimes.
- Devolve aquaculture management in Commonwealth waters to the States and Territories.

Infrastructure

- Finalise plan for improving aviation connections to the North.
- Deregulate the current coastal shipping framework to ensure efficient and reliable coastal shipping services.

4.5 Two Year Outcomes No Action:

Land

- Undertake cadastral surveys in targeted communities to support property rights.
- Consult on new models for managing native title funds for development.

Infrastructure

- Publish Northern Australia Infrastructure Pipeline (to be updated continually).
- Consider options to lower the cost of tick investigation and treatment.

Workforce

- Support Northern territory to streamline occupational licensing processes.
- Expand streamlined automatic recognition of occupational licenses in more sectors in the Northern Territory.

Governance

- Continue to expand 'National Map Open Data Initiative' with geospatial datasets on the North.

4.5 Two Year Outcomes Discontinued:

Governance

- Northern Australia themed red tape repeal day.
- Release White Paper on the Reform of Federation.

The Next Steps

5.1 The Committee notes the substantial progress achieved over the past 12 months indicates consistent momentum in the implementation of the measures in the White Paper.

5.2 It is crucial to the future prosperity of the North – and to ensuring the North’s continued contribution to the prosperity of the nation – that this momentum continues.

5.3 The Committee notes, however, that full implementation of the White Paper is only the beginning of the development of Northern Australia. Alongside the implementation of the White Paper, the Government should be developing additional plans for the on-going development of the North in order to ensure that the pace and momentum of development continues, and that Northern Australia is able to capitalize on the foundations being laid by the implementation of the White Paper.



Sensitivities and Other Developments

6.1 The Committee notes a number of activities and plans for new developments, across Northern Australia that should be acknowledged when compiling strategies to complete the implementation of the White Paper, and progress Northern Australia’s development beyond the scope contemplated by

the White Paper. There are also a number of sensitivities. These include but are not limited to:

- \$2.25bn Australia Singapore Military Training Initiative which is a component of the Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP);
- Adani's Carmichael Mine and Abbott Point developments;
- Coal mining across the Galilee Basin;
- Water Security across Northern Australia;
- Energy Security and Energy costs across Northern Australia;
- Major Projects such as Sea Dragon aquaculture development and Ord Stage 3;
- Infrastructure developments outside the scope of the White Paper (e.g., \$100m commitment to sealing entire Outback Way);
- Location of manufacturing and maintenance hubs for ADF upgrades e.g., Land 121 and Land 400
- Recovery across mining and resources sector;
- Unemployment in Northern Regional centres;
- Queensland Nickel insolvency;
- The fact that many of the commitments in the White Paper – particularly those related to water, land tenure and pastoral leases – are within the jurisdictions of State or Territory Governments;
- The need to re-focus attention and engagement on Local Government Authorities across the North as the statutory bodies “at the coalface”;
- On-going Local Government NDRRA funding and compensation issues;

- Reversal of the shrinkage of the Northern skills/knowledge base following skilled employees seeking opportunities elsewhere during the mining downturn;
- Continuing tension between Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia due to the erroneous perception that it is a ‘North Queensland White Paper’ and that Queensland gets the bulk of the funding and attention; and
- Issues with construction activity funded by governments and the impact of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules on the ability of Northern businesses and work-forces to extract full benefit from the Federal Government’s Northern initiatives.



Recommendations of the Northern Australia Oversight Committee

Recommendation 1

7.1 That the commonwealth renew its efforts in implementing the land tenure and pastoral lease commitments made in the White Paper (detailed at paragraph 3.6 of this Report) in order to foster certainty for holders of native title and for pastoralists, and to foster investor confidence.

Recommendation 2

7.2 That the remaining of the commitments referenced in Recommendation 7.1 be referred to the Strategic Partnership between the Prime Minister and the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian First Ministers for further inquiry, and/or to COAG.

Recommendation 3

7.3 That the Commonwealth Government renew its efforts to secure the cooperation of Western Australia and Queensland for developing a Single Point Of Entry/Major Projects Approvals Agency similar to the one established in the Northern Territory under the auspices of the White Paper.

Recommendation 4

7.4 That the Government and the relevant Ministers devise proposals to reverse the shrinkage of knowledge and skills in the North that occurred due to unemployment and contraction in the resources and energy sector.

Recommendation 5

7.5 That the relocation of Commonwealth public sector employees to the North be achieved at the earliest opportunity and be made a priority across the entire public service, noting that the Deputy Prime Minister has embarked upon such a program in other parts of Australia, including the proposed relocation of some functions of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory to Darwin.

Recommendation 6

7.6 That the newly-formed Ministry for Home Affairs have its training and logistical centers based in Northern Australia.

Recommendation 7

7.7 Acknowledging the benefit of input to policy from key stakeholders, that the Northern Australia Advisory Group, chaired originally by the Hon Shane Stone AC, be re-convened to make recommendations to Government on the next phases of Northern Australian development.

Recommendation 8

7.8 The Committee recognizes the importance of the coral reefs to the ecological biodiversity of Northern Australia (White Paper page 147) and the contribution such reefs make to the economy of North Eastern and North Western Australia through tourism (White Paper page 151) and therefore small business. The Committee recommends that the Government re-double its efforts to promote the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and marine parks generally, and is proactive in countering misleading reports of the health of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park which have had a deleterious impact on tourism and small business in the North.

Recommendation 9

7.9 That the relevant Ministers be briefed on the White Paper's Five-Year Outcomes (White Paper pages 126-131) to ensure that planning can commence on achieving these benchmarks by Q3 2020.

Recommendation 10

7.10 That the Commonwealth Government give further consideration to proposals to develop pathways for immigration into regional and remote areas of the North to assist in stimulating population growth and skills diversity, as discussed on pages 111 to 114 of the White Paper.

Northern Australia Oversight Committee

Annual Report: Appendix A

Commitments of the ‘Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.

LAND

1.

\$10.6 million Pilot Land Tenure Initiative

White Paper Page 18

The Australian Government has invited northern jurisdictions and stakeholders to identify possible proposals for consideration as pilots. **Funding is available for new pilots**, which should be completed by 30 June 2019. Proposals should focus on Indigenous land holders and deliver practical improvements to their communities.

Twenty proposals were received by 18 March 2016. The Australian Government aims to ensure the pilots selected cover a range of development projects and land tenures and are spread across the three northern jurisdictions. The first tranche of pilot projects cover a range of development projects and land tenures. There is one in Queensland, two in Western Australia and two in the Northern Territory.

The reforms will broaden commercial development on land in northern Australia and increase the diversity of activity in business and Indigenous communities. Proposals need to demonstrate effective processes and lessons learnt so these can provide guidance and be applied to other communities across the north.

For further information contact the Department's Regional Network on 1800 079 098.

(See also Item Number 10, below).

Status: **In Progress**

2.

COAG investigation of land administration and consultation on use of native title rights for commercial purposes

White Paper Page 21

The Australian Government has commenced a range of reforms as outlined in the Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia and in the report of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Investigation into Indigenous land administration and use. These initiatives will support Indigenous Australians to use their rights in land and waters for economic development as part of the mainstream economy.

Particular projects include supporting land reform pilots which illustrate the benefits of innovative land use, funding for native title corporations to engage effectively with proponents of development and reforms to support streamlined approval processes for Indigenous land use.

Status: **Completed**

3.

Accelerate Native Title Claims

White Paper Page 22

The Attorney-General's Department is developing proposals for legislative reform arising from the COAG investigations into Indigenous Land Administration and Use and examining other possible measures which may assist in the expedited resolution of native title claims.

Projects under this measure were on hold pending work on the *Native Title Amendment (Indigenous Land Use Agreements) Bill 2017* which has subsequently passed both Houses.

Status: **In Progress**

4.

More efficient Native Title Claims process to create certainty for investors and create opportunities for native title holders and claimants (through COAG land review)

White Paper Page 23

The Attorney-General's Department has developed a range of options to improve efficiency of the native title system, including a simplified Indigenous

Land Use Agreement process. These options are being developed in consultation with jurisdictions, Indigenous Australians, businesses and key stakeholders.

Status: **Completed**

5.

\$20.4 million for native title bodies to engage with potential investors

White Paper Page 24

In June 2015 the Minister for Indigenous Affairs announced as part of the Northern Australia White Paper process an additional \$20.4 million in funding over an initial four years to be targeted at capacity building for Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs). The funding will assist these native title holding corporations to generate economic benefits through the effective and sustainable management of their land. Although the new funding was announced as part of the developing Northern Australia process, it will be available to PBCs throughout Australia.

The Department is now inviting eligible applicants to apply for PBC capacity building grant funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

There are three elements to this funding:

- Direct support to increase the capacity of PBCs to take advantage of economic Opportunities;
- Support for training to build long-term organisational capacity within PBCs and to obtain professional expertise (for example, business or agribusiness consultancies, accountancy or legal services); and
- Direct support for effective native title agreement-making.

Applications will be accepted from individual PBCs, groups of PBCs, or third parties authorised to administer funds on behalf of PBCs. Applicants must meet other eligibility criteria outlined in the IAS Grant Guidelines and undergo financial viability checks and a risk assessment.

There is no closing date for applications and the Department will consider applications throughout the year.

Any further questions about the funding or application process should be directed to the department's Regional Network on 1800 079 098

Status: **Completed/Implemented**

6.

Assist Indigenous land owners to create transferable interests that can be used as collateral for commercial loans without extinguishing native title

White Paper Page 25

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments have committed to give further consideration to removing the legal barriers to creating bankable interests on exclusive possession in native title land, while retaining underlying native title.

This issue was referred to a COAG investigation. COAG agreed on 11 December 2016 that all jurisdictions would implement the recommendations in relation to their circumstances.

Status: **Completed/Implemented**

7.

Improved land planning arrangements and negotiation of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)

White Paper Page 28

The Attorney-General's Department is developing proposals for legislative reform arising from the COAG investigations into Indigenous Land Administration and Use and examining other possible measures which may assist in claims resolution.

Projects under this measure were on hold pending work on the *Native Title Amendment (Indigenous Land Use Agreements) Bill 2017* which has subsequently passed both Houses.

Status: **In Progress**

8.

Develop template ILUAs to assist conversion of pastoral leases to freehold

White Paper Page 29

The Attorney-General's Department is developing proposals for legislative reform arising from the COAG investigations into Indigenous Land Administration and Use and examining other possible measures which may assist in claims resolution.

Projects under this measure were on hold pending work on the *Native Title Amendment (Indigenous Land Use Agreements) Bill 2017* which has subsequently passed both Houses.

Status: **In Progress**

9.

\$17 million to improve land administration and support new townships leases in NT

White Paper Page 31

Township leases simplify land use across a whole community and make it possible for individuals and businesses to obtain sub-leases to support a loan. Land administration arrangements, such as subdivisions, individual titling and proper planning, are required to support economic development and home ownership.

Examples include:

- The Mutitjulu township sublease was executed on 16 March 2017;
- The Binjari 99 year housing lease was executed on 8 March 2017 and puts in place long-term tradeable tenure arrangements over public housing in Binjari; and
- On 16 November 2015, the Northern Land Council Full Council approved a community entity township lease with Gunyangara. This

will be the first township lease that will be held by a community entity, rather than the Executive Director of Township Leasing, in Gunyangara.

Status: **In Progress**

10.

More business friendly information on land tenure arrangements

White Paper Page 33

Austrade has delivered a web-based business friendly guide to tenure in Northern Australia. The guide is investor-focused and provides a general introduction to systems of land tenure and native title in Northern Australia.

The second edition of the guide was completed in February 2016 and a third edition, building on the mapping capacity built into the first two editions, was released in June 2016. The guide is available at:

<http://www.austrade.gov.au/land-tenure/Land-tenure/about-land-tenure>

(see also Item 13, below)

Status: **Completed**

11.

Removal of restrictions on pastoral leases

White Paper Page 38

The government is working with and urging State and Territory governments to improve the security and bankability of pastoral tenure through the land tenure pilot measure.

The Land Tenure pilot process provides a sound framework through which jurisdictions can work with the Commonwealth, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to find potential pastoral tenure improvements.

Status: **In Progress**

12.

Bring forward the point at which leaseholders can apply for renewals

White Paper Page 38

Status: No Action

13.

Introduce rolling pastoral lease renewal

White Paper Page 38

The government has worked to improve the security and bankability of pastoral tenure through the land tenure pilot measure.

The Land Tenure pilot process provides a sound framework through which jurisdictions can work with the Commonwealth, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to find potential pastoral tenure improvements.

Status: In Progress

14.

Introduce business-friendly information on approvals

White Paper Page 38

Austrade has delivered a web-based business friendly guide to tenure in Northern Australia. The guide is investor-focused and provides a general introduction to systems of land tenure and native title in Northern Australia.

The second edition of the guide was completed in February 2016 and a third edition, building on the mapping capacity built into the first two editions, was released in June 2016. The guide is available at:

<http://www.austrade.gov.au/land-tenure/Land-tenure/about-land-tenure>

Status: Completed

15.

Introduce enabling legislation to allow transferable permits for non-pastoral use on pastoral leases

White Paper Page 38

The government is working to improve the security and bankability of pastoral tenure through the land tenure pilot measure.

The Land Tenure pilot process provides a sound framework through which jurisdictions can work with the Commonwealth, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to find potential pastoral tenure improvements.

Status: In Progress

16.

Introduce template leases for large capital investments (e.g. 100 years)

White Paper Page 38

Status: No Action

17.

Transfer control of 'inputs' to other legislation

White Paper Page 38

Status: No Action

18.

Redistribution of compensation costs to prospective grantee or lessee

White Paper Page 38

Status: **No Action**

19.

Renew leases with minimum conditions

White Paper Page 38

Status: **No Action**

20.

Improved data and mapping for tenure including surface and subsurface details

White Paper Page 38

Status: **No Action**

WATER

21.

Increased water resource assessments in priority catchments

White Paper Page 42

Water resource management is a matter for state governments. The Australian Government has committed \$15 million for the Northern Australia Water Resources Assessment project (see items 22 to 24 below).

Status: **In Progress**

22.

Immediate \$5million water resource assessment of the Mitchell River catchment

White Paper Page 43-44

CSIRO is delivering the \$15 million Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment project covering the Mitchell River, West Kimberly (Fitzroy River) catchments and Darwin region. The project is on track and will be completed by 30 June 2018.

Status: In Progress

23.

Immediate \$5million water resource assessment in the West Kimberley

White Paper Page 43-44

CSIRO is delivering the \$15 million Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment project covering the Mitchell River, West Kimberly (Fitzroy River) catchments and Darwin region. The project is on track and will be completed by 30 June 2018.

Status: In Progress

24.

Immediate \$5million water resource assessment in the Darwin region

White Paper Page 43-44

CSIRO is delivering the \$15 million Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment project covering the Mitchell River, West Kimberly (Fitzroy River) catchments and Darwin region. The project is on track and will be completed by 30 June 2018.

Status: In Progress

25.

Accelerate secure water rights in Northern catchments by determining sustainable yield (State and territory Governments to action)

White Paper Page 47-48

This measure requires action by State and Territory governments. The Australian Government has made it a condition of funding under the capital component of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund, and the National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility, that the water resources associated with new water infrastructure must be managed in accordance with the principles of the National Water Initiative.

Australian Government investments in water infrastructure through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund will only be provided to projects where State and Territories Governments agree to implementing the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund principles and appropriate water planning, including regulatory frameworks for water ownership and trading, in respect to the project.

(see also Items 26 – 28, below)

Status: **In Progress**

26.

Accelerate secure water rights in Northern catchments by establishing a regulatory framework for water trading (State and territory Governments to action)

White Paper Page 47-48

This measure requires action by State and Territory governments. The Australian Government has made it a condition of funding under the capital component of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund, and the National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility, that the water resources associated with new water infrastructure must be managed in accordance with the principles of the National Water Initiative.

Australian Government investments in water infrastructure through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund will only be provided to projects where State and Territories Governments agree to implementing the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund principles and appropriate water planning, including regulatory frameworks for water ownership and trading, in respect to the project.

Status: **In Progress**

27.

Accelerate secure water rights in Northern catchments by publishing water plans - including allocations (State and territory Governments to action)

White Paper Page 47-48

This measure requires action by State and Territory governments. The Australian Government has made it a condition of funding under the capital component of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund, and the National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility, that the water resources associated with new water infrastructure must be managed in accordance with the principles of the National Water Initiative.

Australian Government investments in water infrastructure through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund will only be provided to projects where State and Territories Governments agree to implementing the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund principles and appropriate water planning, including regulatory frameworks for water ownership and trading, in respect to the project.

Status: **In Progress**

28.

Accelerate secure water rights in Northern catchments by auctioning water entitlements that are tradeable, secure, and separate from land (State and territory Governments to action)

White Paper Page 47-48.

This measure requires action by State and Territory governments. The Australian Government has made it a condition of funding under the capital component of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund, and the National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility, that the water resources associated with new water infrastructure must be managed in accordance with the principles of the National Water Initiative.

Australian Government investments in water infrastructure through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund will only be provided to projects where State and Territories Governments agree to implementing the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund principles and appropriate water planning, including regulatory frameworks for water ownership and trading, in respect to the project.

Status: **In Progress**

29.

\$509.5 million National Water Infrastructure Development Fund

White Paper Page 49

(\$59.5 million national feasibility study funding)

(\$200 million earmarked for Northern Australia)

The Government has honoured its commitment to investigating and investing in water security across the North, and work is progressing on feasibility studies as follows.

Time Line:

- June 17th , 2015 the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund (NWIDF) announced in Northern Australia White Paper;
- July 3rd , 2015 the NWIDF announced in the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper;
- November 19th , 2015 feasibility component funding guidelines released;
- November 19th , 2015 Federal Government called for Expressions Of Interest (EOI) in the feasibility study funding component;
- January 21st , 2016 EOI close for the feasibility study funding component;

- March/April 2016 successful feasibility study projects announced; and,
- 2017/18 - capital component funding is expected to be released.

Feasibility Studies Queensland:

- Nullinga Dam Feasibility Study – Funding of \$5,000,000.00 ex GST. Assessment of the economic feasibility of the proposed Nullinga Dam on the Walsh River and other potential options to service future urban demand in the Cairns area and rural demand in the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area. Study being conducted by Queensland State Government – Sun Water.
- Bundaberg Channel Capacity Upgrade Feasibility Study – Funding of \$750,000.00 ex GST. Assessment of potential locations for new broad scale irrigation developments in the Wide Bay Burnett region, supported by concept level engineering to identify options for water delivery to these areas. Study being conducted by Queensland State Government – Sun Water.
- Gayndah Regional Irrigation Development (GRID) Project Feasibility Study – Funding of \$1,231,024.00 ex GST. Investigating the feasibility of developing water resources through reinstating the crest level of Claude Wharton Weir, utilising existing water reserves and the transfer of unutilized water allocations to service priority irrigation areas in the Reids Creek and Byrnestown/Wetherston areas. Study being conducted by Isis Central Sugar Mill Company Limited.
- Burdekin Falls Dam Raising Feasibility Study – funding of \$400,000.00 ex GST. Assessing potential costs, demand for water from, and environmental impacts of, raising the Burdekin Falls Dam to provide water and supply security for urban, agriculture and industrial developments in the region. Study being conducted by Queensland State Government – Sun Water.
- Burdekin Haughton Channel Capacity Upgrade Feasibility Study – funding of \$1,915,000.00 ex GST. Investigating the channel capacity limitations and feasibility of options for augmenting the Burdekin Haughton Water Supply Scheme to facilitate the use of available water allocations. Study being conducted by Queensland State Government – Sun Water.
- Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure Project Business Case – funding of \$2,000,000.00 ex GST. Assessing the feasibility of the project to address water supply security and economic development opportunities

within the region. Study being conducted by Queensland State Government – Sun Water.

- Clermont Water Security Feasibility Study – funding of \$225,000.00 ex GST. Assessing the feasibility of securing reliable long term water supply for Clermont and development in the Galilee Basin through new and upgraded major water infrastructure for Clermont and augmentation and remediation works on the Theresa Creek Dam. Study being conducted by AECOM Australia Pty Ltd engaged by Issac Regional Council.
- North West Queensland Strategic Water Storage Feasibility Study – funding of \$1,765,000.00 ex GST. Assessing the feasibility of the preferred water storage option to provide water security and support economic growth in the Cloncurry/Mt Isa region (with a focus on Cave Hill Dam). Study being conducted by MITEZ.
- Urannah Dam Feasibility Study – funding of \$3,000,000.00 ex GST. Undertaking a Preliminary Business Case for the proposed Urannah Dam on the Broken River to provide water and supply security for regional economic growth. Study being conducted by Initiative Capital Pty Ltd and Urannah Properties Association Inc, with Bowen Collinsville Enterprise Inc.
- Lakeland Irrigation Area Feasibility Study – funding of \$825,000.00. Assessing the feasibility and economic viability of new water supply and storage options to support the expansion of irrigated agriculture in the Lakeland Irrigation Area.
- Hells Gates Dam Feasibility Study – funding of \$2,200,000.00 ex GST. Undertaking a cost benefit analysis, including assessing the potential agricultural and urban water demand requirements, to assess the economic viability of the Hells Gates Dam. Study being conducted by SMEC engaged by Cape York Sustainable Futures.
- Southern Atherton Tablelands Irrigation Project – funding of \$750,000.00 ex GST. Assessing the feasibility of the Southern Atherton Tablelands Irrigation Scheme. Study being conducted by Tablelands Regional Council .
- Hells Gate Dam Feasibility Study - Funding of \$2,200,000 ex GST - Study being conducted by SMEC who have been engaged by Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL).
- Mitchell River catchment – water resource assessment (Part of \$ 15 million for 3 studies) - this is a stand-alone commitment in the White

Pater on Developing Northern Australia. Study being conducted by CSIRO.

Feasibility Studies Northern Territory:

- Northern Territory Irrigation Feasibility Study – funding of \$985,000.00 ex GST. Study being conducted by the Northern Territory Government.
- Ord Irrigation Stage 3 – feasibility study (shared with Western Australia) funding of \$2,500,000.00 ex GST. Study being conducted by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NTDENR).
- Darwin region – water resources assessment (Part of \$ 15 million for 3 studies) - this is a stand-alone commitment in the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. Study being conducted by CSIRO.

Feasibility Studies Western Australia:

- Western Trade Coast Managed Aquifer Feasibility Study – Funding of \$693,000.00 ex GST. Study being conducted by the Western Trade Coast Industries Committee, Western Australia State Government.
- Pilbara Irrigated Agriculture Feasibility study – funding of \$960,000.00 ex GST. Study being conducted by Western Australia State Government.
- Ord River Siphon to the West Bank – funding of \$162,000.00 ex GST. Study being conducted by Ord Irrigation Co-operative.
- Fitzroy Basin catchment – water resource assessment (Part of \$ 15 million for 3 studies) this is a stand-alone commitment in the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. Study being conducted by CSIRO.

Status: **In Progress**

30.

\$5 million for detailed examination of economic feasibility of Nullinga Dam***White Paper Page 53***

The Queensland Government, Department of Energy and Water Supply, through Building Queensland, is delivering the Nullinga Dam feasibility

study. The study is on track and will be completed by 30 April 2018 with the assistance of Advance Cairns.

Discussions with Queensland for the \$5 million Nullinga Dam feasibility study assessment and the Western Australia/Northern Territory Governments for Ord Stage 3 feasibility study, including a detailed examination of soil suitability, are well advanced.

(see also Item 31, below)

Status: **In Progress**

31.

\$5 million for detailed examination of economic feasibility of Ord Stage 3

White Paper Page 53

The government is providing \$5 million to the Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australian (WA) Governments for the Ord Stage 3 feasibility study.

The NT Government, Department of Environment and Natural Resources is assessing the suitability of the Keep River plain for development for irrigated agriculture.

The WA Government, Department of Water is examining the feasibility of raising the Lake Argyle spillway to increase water storage to provide a secure water supply for Ord Stage 3.

Both studies are on track and to be completed by April 2018.

Status: **In Progress**

\$15.9 million extension of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative (GABSI)

White Paper Page 49

On-foot at the release of the White Paper.

On October 2014 the Australian government announced the extension of the GABSI program for an additional three years through to 30 June 2017.

A National Partnership Agreement (the Agreement) on the fourth and final phase of GABSI (GABSI 4) was agreed between the Commonwealth and the states of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory in 2014. The Agreement promotes sustainable groundwater management systems for the Great Artesian Basin through strategic investments in groundwater infrastructure renewal and related activities.

In accordance with agreed Annual Implementation Plans, highly skilled state agency engineers and planners, in collaboration with field technician contractors, implement the bore rehabilitation and water reticulation work in partnership with the participating landholders

<http://www.gabcc.gov.au/basin-management/sustainability-initiative-gabsi>

Status: **Completed/extended**

Additional \$9.5 million in National Water Infrastructure Development Fund

Related to White Paper

Budget Measure (2016-17) in the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio.

The Government provided an additional \$9.5 million in 2016-17 for the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund, bringing the feasibility study total to \$59.5 million.

This measure will help the Government respond to strong demand by funding additional water infrastructure feasibility studies in northern Australia.

The cost of this measure will be offset by redirecting funding from the *Rural Research and Development for Profit* program.

Status: **In Progress**

\$2 billion National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility

Related to White Paper

Budget Measure (2016-17) in the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio.

The Government will provide \$2.0 billion in concessional loan funding (for a 10 year period from 1 July 2016) to establish the *National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility*. Loans will be provided to the States and Territories to support major water infrastructure projects.

Applications for loans will be assessed against projects' cost effectiveness and financial viability. The loan recipient will make interest-only payments for up to the first five years of the loan term and will then have a further 10 years to repay the principal and any additional interest.

The cost to the Government of providing concessional loans will be offset over the life of the program by the interest revenue collected from loan recipients.

This measure is deployed nation-wide and as such is not specific to Northern-Australia, but will complement the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund (Northern Australia component - \$200million).

Water security is critical to development generally, and to the development of Northern Australia specifically. Developing industry, agriculture, tourism or communities requires certainty of water supply. Northern Australia receives an average of more than 2 million GL of rainfall every year - over 60% of Australia's total rainfall. Around 35% of this water finds its way into aquifers and rivers. While issues such as topography and evaporation may pose some challenges, effective water catchment and storage can enliven agriculture and also contribute to regional baseload power supply.

Status: **In Progress**

TRADE

32.

Promoting Trade by attracting greater investment and building business and education links with regional partners

White Paper Page 60

Business links fostered through Trans Pacific Partnership, the Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and the Korean, Japanese and Chinese Free Trade Agreements all confer benefits to Northern Australia. Education and business links are also consolidated by measures such as the \$3 million tropical health and medicine short course for Indonesian professionals, and the program of Northern Investment Forums (see Item 36).

Status: **Completed**

33.

Promoting Trade by fostering innovation and leadership through dedicated R&D, biosecurity and tropical health measures

White Paper Page 60

The Australian Tropical Medicine Commercialisation (ATMC) program launched in November 2015 is an \$8.5 million grants program designed to develop pathways to commercialise Australian research on new tropical medicine therapeutics, vaccines and diagnostics in partnership with international companies.

The program is fully allocated and initial payments totalling \$1.02 million were made to successful applicants in 2015-16, with \$1.24 million in payments being made to projects in 2016-17. Twelve projects from eleven recipients were successful in receiving grant funding. The successful applicants include five commercialisation projects, six proof of concept projects and one combination proof of concept and business planning project. All but two have matching foreign investment. Eleven projects have commenced and are progressing well.

This program builds upon the Coalition Government's commitment to Tropical Medicine and research, as shown by the Government's major investment – in partnership with the then QLD State LNP Government – in the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine (AITHM).

Status: **Completed**

34.

Promoting Trade by 'getting out of the way of business' through the provision of favourable regulatory and economic environments

White Paper Page 60

Austrade has worked with Data61 to produce an online guide for businesses and investors on land tenure and native title regulations and legislation to

facilitate international business and investment opportunities in Northern Australia. The guide is accompanied by an interactive map identifying how various forms of land tenure are distributed across Northern Australia, and is accessible via the Austrade website at:

www.austrade.gov.au/land-tenure

Austrade and Data61 are now working with investors to develop priority specific sets of data overlays for the Northern Australia map to help identify further investment opportunities.

Status: Completed

35.

The Government will showcase business opportunities to attract more investors to the North, and reach out to its neighbours, building on business, education and industry links

White Paper Page 61

Darwin Investment Forum conducted November 2015 with a further forum scheduled for November 19-21 2017.

Major international investors from ASEAN and APEC countries invited to participate in the second Northern Australia Investment Forum in Cairns on 19-21 November.

Status: Completed

36.

Major Investment Forum - Darwin Nov 8-10, 2015.

White Paper Page 62

Investment Forum held, with subsequent Forum scheduled for Cairns on 19-21 November 2017.

Status: Completed

37.

\$2.5 million to foster business-to-business links and improve business-enabling environments in Indonesia, Timor-Leste and PNG

White Paper Page 62

Funding under this program is supporting aid activities and programs identified as priorities in both Timor-Leste and PNG. Funding is allocated to reduce red tape in Timor-Leste for business registration and licensing to help private sector development and improve connectivity between Timor-Leste and Northern Australia, and to support entrepreneurs in PNG to connect with business partners and investors in Australia.

In Timor-Leste the International Financial Corporation (IFC) and Timor-Leste's Agency for Business Registration (SERVE) have finalized the recruitment of two national ICT staff to manage SERVE's website. The expectation is that business registration will be simplified and more people will find it easier to register their business online, including prospective investors in the Northern Territory.

In PNG there has been progress on a number of fronts towards the establishment of a new PNG Agricultural Company (PNGAC) which is being implemented by the 'Indigenous to Indigenous Development Projects Pty Ltd' ('i2i') business. This comp[any will also establish a one-million-kinja base of working capital for PNGAC. Establishing PNGAC has turned 200 small-scale cocoa farmers into shareholders in their own company. i2i has also been enhanced by its involvement with 'Pacific RISE's' program for investment in Social Enterprise and Gender lens training. Considering business from a female perspective should enhance i2i's existing all female working groups in creating a 'Women's Distributive Leadership Strategy'. All aspects of PNGAC's implementation are being conducted with the potential to replicate the model for wider application.

Status: **In Progress**

38.

Closer connection between the North, ASEAN and APEC countries

White Paper Page 63

Pacific Mircostates – Northern Australia Worker Pilot Program.

The Northern Australia Worker Pilot Program is a five-year pilot program to provide up to 250 citizens of Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu access to multi-year work visa to work in low and semi-skilled occupations in Northern Australia. The program is on track with all three countries having signed an MOU with the Australian Government. Twenty-eight Kiribati workers are already employed by businesses in Northern Australia and work has commenced with Tuvalu and Nauru to identify a pool of suitable workers. DFAT will commission an independent review of the pilot in its penultimate ye4ar 2018-19.

(see also item 94 below)

Major international investors from ASEAN and APEC countries invited to participate in the second Northern Australia Investment Forum in Cairn on 19-21 November.

Status: **In Progress**

39.

Commonwealth to work with Northern jurisdictions to attract investment in 'gateway' infrastructure projects that link with Indo-Pacific region

White Paper Page 63

As noted at items 38 and 94, Austrade and the Office of Northern Australia will deliver the second Northern Australia Investment Forum in Cairns on 19-21 November 2017. Austrade is working with Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australian governments to deliver the event and organize site visits for investors, in close collaboration with the Office of Northern Australia.

Status: **Completed**

40.

Lowering of EIP minimum threshold from \$1.5 million to \$750,000 (Increased accessibility to the Entrepreneur's Infrastructure Programme for small and medium businesses in the North) – see item 41 (below)

White Paper Page 65-66

Minimum threshold amended from \$1.5 million to \$750,000 for businesses in the North on 15 July 2015.

Status: Completed

41.

\$13.6 million extension of EIP program services to Northern Tourism sector

White Paper Page 66

The Northern Australia Tourism Initiative is one of a suite of new programmes announced in response to the Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. This \$13.6 million initiative was launched in February 2016 to provide more help to tourism businesses in Northern Australia to grow, be smarter and be more internationally competitive. It extends both the Entrepreneurs' Programme and the Australian Small Business Advisory Services programme to better target the needs of the Northern Australian tourism industry.

The Entrepreneurs' Programme provides Northern tourism businesses with practical support to build management and business capability, helping businesses to improve their performance and grow. A new tourism service has also been developed to assist small groups of businesses to address a joint challenge so they can work together to make the most of Northern Australian tourism market opportunities.

Under the Australian Small Business Advisory Services programme, not-for-profit small business advisory services can now apply for funding to improve their capability to provide low cost advisory and information services to Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism small businesses in Northern Australia. Small business advisory services will be available to small businesses in Northern Australia from mid-2016.

Status: Completed

42.

National Environmental Science Programme - \$23.88 million Northern Australia Environmental Resources hub at Charles Darwin University to examine Northern sustainable development

White Paper Page 67

The National Environmental Science Program (NESP) is a long-term commitment by the Australian Government to environment and climate research.

NESP projects deliver collaborative, practical and applied research to inform decision making and on-ground action.

NESP funding of \$145 million over the six years from 2015 to 2021 supports six themed research hubs, along with projects to address emerging environmental research needs.

The hubs connect scientists, policy makers, industry, Indigenous people and communities

<https://www.environment.gov.au/science/nesp>

(see also Items 43 & 44, below)

Status: Completed

43.

National Environmental Science Programme - \$31.98 million Tropical Water Quality hub led by Reef and Rainforest Research Centre to examine coastal water, coastal management and GBRMP

White Paper Page 67

The National Environmental Science Program (NESP) is a long-term commitment by the Australian Government to environment and climate research.

NESP projects deliver collaborative, practical and applied research to inform decision making and on-ground action.

NESP funding of \$145 million over the six years from 2015 to 2021 supports six themed research hubs, along with projects to address emerging environmental research needs.

The hubs connect scientists, policy makers, industry, Indigenous people and communities

<https://www.environment.gov.au/science/nesp>

Status: **Completed**

44.

National Environmental Science Programme - \$29.98 million Threatened Species Recovery hub led by University of Queensland to examine recovery of threatened species and biodiversity in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems

White Paper Page 67

The National Environmental Science Program (NESP) is a long-term commitment by the Australian Government to environment and climate research.

NESP projects deliver collaborative, practical and applied research to inform decision making and on-ground action.

NESP funding of \$145 million over the six years from 2015 to 2021 supports six themed research hubs, along with projects to address emerging environmental research needs.

The hubs connect scientists, policy makers, industry, Indigenous people and communities

<https://www.environment.gov.au/science/nesp>

Status: **Completed**

45.

\$75 million to establish a CRC for Developing Northern Australia

White Paper Page 67-68

The CRC will assist businesses, governments and researchers to work together to identify opportunities for business and growth in the north. The CRC will be industry led, located in the north, and have an initial focus on areas where the north has particular strengths, including agriculture, food and tropical health. It will bring together industry, research organisations, all northern jurisdictions and international partners in a collaborative industry-led R&D venture.

The CRC will build on existing research, expertise and networks to quickly identify areas where collaborative research can deliver real-world outcomes and commercial opportunities that will benefit industries in northern Australia.

The Australian Government announced in April 2016 that the City of Townsville will host the administrative headquarters of the CRC for Developing Northern Australia.

On 20 February 2017, the Australian Government announced the following members of the board that will lead the establishment of the CRC:

- Ms Sheriden Morris, Chair
- Mr Don McDonald AM OBE
- Cr John Wharton AM
- Cr Peter Long
- Ms Tracey Hayes
- Mr John Bearn
- Ms Melissa George

Applications for the first round of grants opened on 20 February 2017 and closed on 22 May 2017.

Status: **Completed**

46.

\$15.3 million funding injection into Tropical Health and Medicine - \$6.8 million to support a new tailored tropical health and medicine strategy

White Paper Page 69

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) called for applications in early 2016 for the Northern Australia Tropical Disease Collaborative Research Programme (NATDCRP) - a new programme

announced as a \$ 6.8 million budget measure by the Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon Andrew Robb on May 10th, 2015.

The NATDCRP contributes to implementing policies outlined in Australian Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia, released on June 18th, 2015. The programme will be administered through the NHMRC under the direction of a Scientific Advisory Panel including scientific experts, health policy officials, health practitioners and consumers.

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research/northern-australia-tropical-disease-collaborative-research-programme>.

Applications closed April 22nd, 2016 and will be followed by peer review with external assessors. The Peer Review panel will make the initial ranking and funding recommendations.

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/nhmrc-funding-rules-2016/NHMRC-funding-rules-2016/northern-australia-tropical-disease/2>

DFAT is expected to receive the Peer Review Panel recommendations by early June with proposals to be sent to the Minister for approval in after that.

(see also Item 47, below)

Status: Completed

47.

\$15.3 million funding injection into Tropical Health and Medicine - \$8.5 million to lift Australia's position in global supply chains specifically targeting collaborations in tropical medicine

White Paper Page 71

The Australian Tropical Medicine Commercialisation Grants Programme (ATMC) is an \$8.5 million programme to develop pathways to commercialise Australian research on new tropical medicine, therapeutics, vaccines and diagnostics in partnership with international companies.

The ATCM will build connections between Australian research institutes and global players in the health sector, including pharmaceutical companies and philanthropic organisations.

The ATCM programme was launched by the Minister for Trade and Investment at the Northern Australia Investment Forum on November 8th, 2015. Austrade is responsible for decision-making for the ATMC and works in partnership with AusIndustry which is responsible for ATMC administration (the ATMC is delivered by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science on behalf of Austrade). Applications for grants closed on March 4th, 2016 with the program fully allocated.

Grant funding totalling \$7.1 million will help build connections between Australian research institutes and the global health sector, including international pharmaceutical companies and philanthropic organisations.

Status: **Completed**

48.

\$2 million to strengthen links between tropical health institutions, health research institutions and regional partners

White Paper Page 71

The National Health and Medical research Council (NHMRC) has established a separate arrangement with DFAT for a combined application and assessment process that will enable applicants to apply for separate funding from DFAT under the Tropical Disease Research Regional Collaboration Initiative. For more information visit:

www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/tenders/Pages/tropical-disease-research-regional-collaboration-initiative.aspx

(see also Item 49, below)

Status: **Completed**

49.

Introduction of Tropical health and Medicine research theme for fellowships under the Australian Awards programme

White Paper Page 71

The National Health and Medical research Council (NHMRC) has established a separate arrangement with DFAT for a combined application and assessment process that will enable applicants to apply for separate funding from DFAT under the Tropical Disease Research Regional Collaboration Initiative. For more information visit:

www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/tenders/Pages/tropical-disease-research-regional-collaboration-initiative.aspx

Status: **In Progress**

50.

\$3 million to establish a tropical health and medicine short course for Indonesian professionals

White Paper Page 71

Two (2) courses with twenty-five (25) participants each commenced in early 2016 at Melbourne University's Nossal Institute.

In 2016 two short courses on "Malaria Prevention and Treatment for Infants, Children and Pregnant Women in Eastern Indonesia", were delivered for 50 Indonesian professionals. Further courses are being delivered across 2016-17 and 2017-18.

These courses are part of the commitment to transform northern Australia into a centre of excellence for tropical medicine research. They will also stimulate new business and investment opportunities and increase international student enrolments. These courses will bring together various stakeholders working in the area of tropical health and equip them with the knowledge and skills to be better able to respond to malaria through strengthened malaria prevention and treatment strategies

Status: **Completed**

51.

\$12.4 million to boost Indigenous ranger programme and work co-operatively with neighbours to address biosecurity risks - this means sharing

expertise with scientists and officials in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste***White Paper Page 73***

The Government is providing \$12.4 million from 2015/16 to 2018/19 to expand biosecurity surveillance in Northern Australia through Indigenous ranger Groups.

28 additional ranger groups have been funded (on top of the existing 40 groups).

(see also Item 52, below)

Status: **Completed**

52.

Build on the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy to help safeguard new and existing investment and resist the incursion of pests and disease***White Paper Page 73-74***

Additional relevant Biosecurity measures can be found in the 2015 Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper.

Status: **In Progress**

53.

Single Point Of Entry, Darwin***White Paper Page 75***

The Major Projects Approval Agency is a national facility that provides services to the Northern Territory and Tasmania to ensure that investors and developers are aware of all regulatory approval and compliance obligations that affect their project.

The Major Projects Approval Agency is a 'single point of entry' into the Australian Government and works closely with State and Territory

Governments to complement their activities. It provides information and advice across all tiers of Government and across jurisdictions.

The Major Projects Approval Agency's Darwin office was established in January 2016 as part of the Northern Australia White Paper initiative and has received \$2.1 million in funding.

The Major Projects Approval Agency in Darwin is co-located with the Office of Northern Australia.

Status: **Completed**

54.

Electronic Visa applications for all visitors from China and India (items 54-57 represent a \$26.9 million 2016-17 budget measure)

White Paper Page 78-79

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection commenced allowing Chinese passport holders to apply online for Visitor (subclass 600) visas on 20 February 2017.

As of 30 April, 16,608 online applications from individual Chinese passport holders have been lodged.

The expansion of online lodgement of Visitor visa applications to Indian passport holders is on track for delivery in July 2017. Online lodgement is already available to visa applicants in India through selected agents and Foreign Affairs offices.

Evaluation of the project will continue through until 30 June 2017 to identify any further enhancements to deployed functionality.

(see also Items 55 – 57, below)

Status: **Completed**

55.

Fast Track service (48 hour turnaround) for Visa applications for all visitors from China

White Paper Page 78-79

Initiative commenced on 16 March 2016. Information is available on the Beijing embassy website at:

<http://china.embassy.gov.au/bjng/VisitorVisaPriorityServiceFAQ.html>

Status: **Completed**

56.

Visa duration extended to ten years for visa applications for all visitors from China**White Paper Page 78-79**

A trial of a 10-year validity Visitor visa for eligible Chinese nationals for a fee of AUD 1000 commenced on 12 December 2016. This new visa is a premium visa tailored for frequent visitors from China.

As of 30 April, 2,396 10-year validity visas have been lodged.

Migration Act 1958 changes to support regular revalidation during the lifetime of the 10-year visa and a Ministerial power to temporarily cease

10-year visas were introduced into Federal Parliament on 19 October 2016 in the *Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and Other Measures) Bill 2016*, which was passed in the House of Representatives on 9 February 2017 and is currently before the Senate.

Implementation of the project's revalidation component is dependent on these legislative changes.

Status: **Completed**

57.

Application lodgement in Chinese language for visa applications for all visitors from China

White Paper Page 78-79

The Department's trial of an online lodgement product to allow Chinese applicants to complete a Visitor visa application form in Simplified Chinese (both questions and answers) through a service delivery partner (VFS) commenced on 12 December 2016.

As of 30 April, 2017 2,466 applications have been lodged through the service delivery partner portal.

The trial is being evaluated from the benchmark date of 30 June 2017 to inform further enhancements to support Chinese applicants in Mandarin.

Status: **Completed**

58.

Consult with Indigenous Australians and industry on possible amendments to ATSI Heritage Protection Act to reduce duplication and red tape across heritage protection regimes

White Paper Page 79

Reform working group established, comprising representatives of the Australian Heritage Council and the Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Status: **In Progress**

59.

Within two years Government will consult with Indigenous Australians and Industry on developing a new accreditation system (consultation initially progressed through Indigenous Advisory Council and Minister for Environment)

White Paper Page 79

Status: **No Action**

60.

Introduction of a single jurisdiction oversight of fisheries and aquaculture operation, along with longer licence periods and third party environmental accreditation

White Paper Page 81

The Northern Australia Fisheries Committee developed a road map to transition Northern Joint Authority Fisheries to single jurisdiction, aiming for staged implementation from 2017, if appropriate. Longer licence periods are dealt with below and considering third party accreditation is a broader issue that fisheries managers are considering.

The National Aquaculture Strategy was provided to the Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF) for endorsement at the end of July 2017. The most significant action for the Australian Government in the Strategy is to allow the states and the NT to regulate aquaculture in Commonwealth waters if they chose to do so.

The preference of the Australian Government is to amend the Fisheries Management Act 1991 to remove references to aquaculture, allowing any jurisdiction which chooses to do so to amend their current aquaculture laws to include Commonwealth waters adjacent to their jurisdiction. The Australian Government is discussing this approach with the jurisdictions and other relevant Commonwealth agencies. Particular attention is being given to considering the practical implications of such a proposal on related state and territory legislation and other uses of the marine environment adjacent to any future aquaculture development. It is expected that this legislation change will be considered in the Autumn 2018 parliamentary sitting

Status: **In Progress**

61.

Commonwealth to establish new fisheries 'Northern Shopfront' in cooperation with Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia State Governments

White Paper Page 81

This issue is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment and is being progressed outside of the context of the White Paper. The committee understands that significant progress has been made in establishing this initiative which will provide benefit to potential aquaculture developments.

Status: **In Progress**

62.

Aquaculture management to be devolved to State and Territory Governments and to be incorporated into the Government's 'One-Stop-Shop' policy for environmental approvals

White Paper Page 81

The National Aquaculture Statement has been released and underpins the development of the National Aquaculture Strategy, targeted for release in mid-2016. Arrangements for aquaculture in Commonwealth waters were discussed with state and territory fisheries ministers at a meeting on April 29th, 2016 and the outcome of these discussions will be considered in the finalisation of the Strategy.

Aquaculture in Commonwealth waters: The National Aquaculture Strategy was provided to the Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF) for endorsement by the end of July 2017. The most significant action for the Australian Government in the Strategy is to allow the states and the NT to regulate aquaculture in Commonwealth waters if they chose to do so. The preference of the Australian Government is to amend the Fisheries Management Act 1991 to remove references to aquaculture, allowing any jurisdiction which chooses to do so to amend their current aquaculture laws to include Commonwealth waters adjacent to their jurisdiction. The Australian Government is discussing this approach with the jurisdictions and other relevant Commonwealth agencies. Particular attention is being given to considering the practical implications of such a proposal on related state and territory legislation and other uses of the marine environment adjacent to any future aquaculture development. It is expected that this legislation change will be considered in the Autumn 2018 parliamentary sitting.

The Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia also conducted an Inquiry into Aquaculture and presented its Report to the Government on 22 February, 2016:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Former_Committees/Northern_Australia/Aquaculture/Report

Status: **In Progress**

63.

Maximum duration of Commonwealth environmental approvals for low risk fisheries to be extended from five to ten years

White Paper Page 81

Since the Northern Australia White Paper's release in June 2015, 20 Western Australian, five Queensland and five South Australian low risk fisheries suitable for 10 year export approvals have had their export approvals extended to 10 years, with more under consideration.

Status: **Completed**

64.

Productivity Commission to report to Government on any other existing duplicative or poorly implemented regulations that are harming investment in Australia's fisheries and aquaculture industries

White Paper Page 82

The Inquiry was announced in December 2015. It is delivered from a White Paper implementation perspective. The Inquiry report was submitted to Government on 19 December 2016. The Report and the Government's response were released publicly on 24 May 2017 and can be accessed via:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/about/reporting/obligations/government-responses/regulation-marine-fisheries-aquaculture>

Status: **Completed**

65.

Government to remove export permit requirements for low-risk native species

White Paper Page 82

Consultations on potential measures to streamline the processing and issuing of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) permits have been completed. Proposals include the removal of permit requirements for tourist souvenirs containing wildlife where the Australian requirements are stricter than the international requirements.

Status: Completed

INFRASTRUCTURE

66.

\$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)**White Paper Page 86-87**

The *Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Act 2016* was passed by Parliament on 3 May 2016 and the headquarters has been established in Cairns on 1 July 2016. NAIF is a major long term initiative of the Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia (*Our North, Our Future*). The NAIF is being supported by the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (Efic), Australia's export credit agency.

Ministerial responsibility for the NAIF lies with the Hon Barnaby Joyce, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Minister for Resources and Northern Australia. NAIF is led by an independent board chaired by Ms Sharon Warburton (WA) who is joined by:

- Mr Barry Coulter (NT)
- Mr Justin Mannolini (WA)
- Mr Khory McCormick (QLD)
- Mr Bill Shannon (QLD)
- Ms Karla Way-McPhail (QLD)

The NAIF offers up to \$5 billion over 5 years in concessional finance to encourage and complement private sector investment in infrastructure that benefits Northern Australia. This may include developments in airports, communications, energy, ports, rail and water.

The Investment Mandate sets out the guidelines to the Board when making investment decisions. It includes consultation requirements and eligibility criteria, and the types of financial assistance that can be offered.

Status: **Completed/operational**

67.

\$600 million Northern Roads package

White Paper Page 88-89

The Northern Australia Roads Programme comprises a \$600 million commitment to enable upgrades to high priority roads in Northern Australia that are essential to the movement of people and freight to support the North's economic development.

Roads identified in Infrastructure Australia's Northern Australia Audit, along with other roads identified as priorities by States and Territory governments - such as those connecting communities, or regional towns to ports - were considered for funding.

Works to be undertaken include upgrades and safety and productivity improvements, such as road widening, overtaking lane construction and pavement renewal.

The Australian Government announced projects to be funded under the Northern Australia Roads Programme throughout 2016. See below for a list of current projects:

Queensland

- Flinders Highway (\$33.60m). 8km of pavement strengthening and rehabilitation over three sections. Replace 5 culverts on the A6 part of Flinders.
- Hann Highway (\$42.66m). Seal 36 kilometres of unsealed sections of road between Hughenden and The Lynd, and duplication of the single lane road onwards to Mount Garnet.

- Barkly Highway - Mt Isa (\$4.96m). Upgrade nine city intersections in Mt Isa on the Barkly Highway.
- Capricorn Highway (\$59.99m). Duplication works along a 5 kilometre stretch of the Capricorn Highway between Rockhampton and Gracemere and construction of a new two-lane bridge over Scrubby Creek; four intersection upgrades; and cross-drainage works to mitigate flooding.

Northern Territory:

- Outback Way (\$27.98m). Seal 8.4 kilometres of unsealed sections of the Tjukururu Road, and seal 34 kilometres of the Plenty Highway to a single lane road and 53 kilometres of the Plenty Highway to a two lane road, including flood immunity improvements.
- Arnhem Highway (\$62.30m). Flood access improvements at the Adelaide River floodplain on the Arnhem Highway to provide all-weather access between the Stuart Highway and Mount Bundy.
- Keep River Road (\$39.91m). Upgrade the Keep River Road (section B-C) to support Project Sea Dragon and development of Ord Stage 3.

Western Australia:

- Great Northern Highway - Maggie's Jump Up and Wyndham Spur (\$44.91m). Construction of overtaking lanes and improved surfacing at Maggie's Jump Up and widening, strengthening and flood resilience works along a 22 kilometre section of the road at Wyndham Spur.
- Marble Bar Road (\$43.58m). Realign and reconstruct a 4 kilometre section of the Marble Bar Road which passes through the Coongan Gorge.
- Funding is available over four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

Status: **In Progress**

68.

\$5 million Mount Isa to Tenant Creek freight rail feasibility study

White Paper Page 91

The Australian Government entered into an MOU with Queensland and the Northern Territory to progress strategic and technical studies in the Mount Isa to Townsville rail corridor, in the context of the broader transport and supply chain corridor from Townsville to Darwin.

\$1.5 million from the available \$4.9 million has been committed to support this work.

The tender for the Strategic Options paper was awarded to Port Jackson Partners in September 2016. The Strategic Options paper is expected to be finalised in late 2017. Further analysis will be considered in partnership with the relevant jurisdictions once the scheduled feasibility work on the Mount Isa to Tennant Creek corridor is complete.

Status: **In Progress**

69.

\$3.7 million over 4 years for development of an Infrastructure Projects Pipeline to provide information and help the private sector to expedite bids

White Paper Page 92-93

The Government has committed to providing \$3.7 million over four years from 2015-16 to develop a new infrastructure projects pipeline which will be informed by the priorities identified in Infrastructure Australia's Northern Australia Infrastructure Audit.

The pipeline will be developed by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development in consultation with Northern jurisdictions and will provide business and jurisdictions with information on potential roads, rail, water, electricity, ports, airports and communications projects. It will also form part of the broader National Infrastructure Construction Schedule, complementing Infrastructure Australia's national infrastructure priority list, and relevant state and territory infrastructure plans.

This measure was originally announced on May 8th, and forms part of the Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia

Status: **In Progress**

70.

\$100 million Northern Beef Roads Program

White Paper Page 95-96 & 129

The Australian Government has committed \$100.0 million from 2016-17 to 2018-19 to improve the productivity and resilience of the cattle industry in Northern Australia.

Funding will be used for road infrastructure upgrades, with contributions also being provided by Northern State, Territory and Local governments and (potentially) industry, for projects which aim to reduce costs to the Northern Australia cattle industry. Opportunities to improve productivity will be modelled using state-of-the art transport logistics developed by CSIRO, (the ‘TranSIT’ model). These opportunities will then be assessed and prioritised in consultation with the Northern State, Territory and Local governments.

Time Line:

- June 17th, 2015 Beef Roads Program announced in Northern Australia White Paper;
- October 2nd, 2015 first Beef Roads Forum held in Rockhampton;
- November 17th, 2015 second Beef Roads Forum held in Kununurra;
- March 9th, 2016 third Beef Roads Forum held in Darwin; and,
- April 2016 formal proposals, compiled using TraNSIT results, submitted for assessment.
- October 2016 projects selected for funding announced.

The Australian Government announced projects to be funded under the Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme in October 2016. See below for a list of projects:

Queensland:

- Rockhampton Road Network—Road Train Access (Stage 2): Upgrading between Gracemere saleyards and the Rockhampton abattoirs to provide access for Type 1 Road Trains.

- Burke Developmental Road - Chillagoe to Almaden (Package 1) - Progressive sealing works.
- Burke Developmental Road - Chillagoe to Almaden (Package 2) - Progressive sealing works.
- Clermont - Alpha Road (Package 1) - Progressive sealing works.
- Clermont - Alpha Road (Package 2) - Progressive sealing works.
- Clermont - Alpha Road (Package 3) - Progressive sealing works.
- Ootann Rd - Almaden to Kennedy Hwy (Gunnawarra) (Package 1) - Progressive sealing works.
- Ootann Rd - Almaden to Kennedy Hwy (Gunnawarra) (Package 2) - Progressive sealing works.
- Gregory Developmental Road (South of Charter Towers) - Widening a section of the Gregory Developmental Road, approximately 2 kilometres south of Cape River.
- Richmond-Croydon Road (Package 1) - Progressive sealing works.
- Richmond-Croydon Road (Package 2) - Progressive sealing works.
- Cloncurry - Dajarra Road - Progressive sealing works.
- Diamantina Developmental Road (Boulia - Dajarra) - Rehabilitation and widening works.
- Richmond - Winton Road (Package 1) - Progressive sealing works.
- Richmond - Winton Road (Package 2) - Progressive sealing works.

Northern Territory:

- Barkly Stock Route - Upgrading a section of the Barkly Stock Route to a two-lane standard seal.
- Tablelands Highway - Upgrading selected sections of the Tablelands Highway to a two-lane sealed standard.

Western Australia:

- Great Northern Highway – Ord & Turkey Creek (Section 1) - Road reconstruction and realignment including installation of passing lanes on a section of road between the Ord River and Turkey Creek.

Status: **In Progress**

71.

Commission CSIRO to identify areas to improve productivity in the Northern cattle supply chains

White Paper Page 96

TranSIT assessments completed for Beef Roads Program (see Item 70 above).

Status: Completed

72.

Consider options to lower the cost of tick investigation and treatment

White Paper Page 96 & 129

Status: No Action

73.

Heavy Vehicle Road reform - investigation of reform to road-user charges

White Paper Page 97

Phase two of the Heavy Vehicle Road Reform roadmap is underway and aims to bring the way heavy vehicle charges are regulated into line with other utility networks, such as telecommunications and water.

Substantial progress has been made on phase one of the reform, with the publication of the second editions of the asset registers and expenditure plans in early 2017 and the development of a framework for operators to negotiate and pay for improved access (particularly for local roads).

The asset registers and expenditure plans are updated on an annual basis and continue to be refined and improved over time. They will be progressively extended beyond the key freight routes into the future

Status: **In Progress**

74.

\$39.6 million for airstrip upgrades and additional essential air services under two funding components of the Regional Aviation Access Programme. \$33.7 million over four years has been committed to continue the Remote Airstrip Upgrade funding component and \$5.9 million over three years for the Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme

White Paper Page 98-99

This measure is an extension of existing programs within Department of Infrastructure designed to provide ongoing certainty for the industries and communities that depend on regional aviation services.

On May 12th, 2015 the program extension was announced in 2015-16 Federal Budget.

Through the Regional Aviation Access Programme (RAAP), the Australian Government provides targeted support for aerodrome infrastructure and air services to remote areas where they are not commercially viable. Although RAAP is not specifically directed to Northern Australia, it does assist communities in that region. Since 2015-16,

\$15.1million has been approved for 47 remote aerodrome projects in Northern Australia. Subsidised weekly air services are also provided to 200 remote locations in Northern Australia at an estimated annual cost of \$7.9 million, providing residents with access to regional centres, and essential deliveries.

Status: **Completed**

75.

Invest in additional border and biosecurity infrastructure to support more regular international flights from Townsville airport

White Paper Page 100

As part of the 2015-16 Budget, the Australian Government announced that it would provide \$26.2 million dollars over four years, including \$6.9 million of

capital funding, to support international services at Townsville (and Sunshine Coast) Airports.

The funding was allocated to cover border agency costs related to staffing, equipment purchase and specific fit-out associated with border clearance activities.

The Departments of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) and Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) currently support 3 international flights between Townsville and Bali every week.

Townsville Airport Corporation has since announced a \$50 million investment in infrastructure upgrades.

Status: **Completed**

76.

DPM to convene a Business Stakeholder Group to assist in preparing a plan for improving aviation and surface transport connections in Northern Australia

White Paper Page 100

The business stakeholder group was established to assist the Government in preparing a plan for improving aviation and surface transport connections to northern Australia ('the Northern Australia Transport Study'). The business stakeholder group is comprised of representatives from the aviation, maritime and logistics industries, and the broader business community. First meeting held in Townsville in January 2016. The Group will identify existing impediments to aviation and maritime activity for passenger and freight services as well as exploring opportunities for further growth in the region.

Status: **Completed**

77.

Substantial deregulation of current coastal shipping framework to ensure sufficient and reliable coastal shipping

White Paper Page 101

The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which contained the reforms to the coastal shipping regime, was negated by the Senate in November 2015. Since that time the Minister for Infrastructure the Hon Darren Chester has undertaken extensive stakeholder consultation including through a discussion paper process on potential amendments, and intends to progress amendments to the current regime through 2017.

(see also Items 78 – 81, below)

Status: **In Progress**

78.

Amendment of Coastal Trading Act to introduce single permit system. Permits will provide unrestricted access to Australian coast for both foreign and Australian ships for up to 12 months

White Paper Page 101

The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which contained the reforms to the coastal shipping regime, was negated by the Senate in November 2015. Since that time the Minister for Infrastructure the Hon Darren Chester has undertaken extensive stakeholder consultation including through a discussion paper process on potential amendments, and intends to progress amendments to the current regime through 2017.

Status: **In Progress**

79.

Superyacht licencing clarified to allow benefits to broader economy through tourism and maintenance

White Paper Page 101

The Australian government is now issuing temporary superyacht charter licenses for non-Australian vessels as part of the Coastal Trading Act 2012.

Status: **In Progress**

80.

Any vessel undertaking more than 183 days coastal shipping in permit period required to employ two senior Australian crew for entire permit period and pay wages under Australian law for that period

White Paper Page 101

The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which contained the reforms to the coastal shipping regime, was negated by the Senate in November 2015. Since that time the Minister for Infrastructure the Hon Darren Chester has undertaken extensive stakeholder consultation including through a discussion paper process on potential amendments, and intends to progress amendments to the current regime through 2017.

Status: **In Progress**

81.

Australian Shipping Register to be changed to improve the viability and attractiveness of the register

White Paper Page 101

The Australian Government is committed to coastal shipping reform to ensure safe, secure and efficient coastal shipping as part of Australia's national transport system.

Operators and agents of both Australian and foreign flagged ships have raised a number of concerns about the operation of the current regime that regulates coastal shipping in Australia, specifically with regards to the administrative burden that it imposes.

On 21 March 2017 the Government released a discussion paper to seek the views of stakeholders on proposed amendments to the regulatory regime to address these issues. This consultation process sought to:

- identify any implications of the proposed changes to the regulatory regime and related legislation; and
- identify any further possible improvements to the regulatory regime.

Submissions were encouraged from stakeholders including, but not limited to: ship owners and operators, employee and employer representatives, users of shipping services, industry associations, maritime unions, government agencies, and interested members of the public.

The deadline for submissions in response to this discussion paper was Friday 12 May 2017, the Government is currently considering the feedback from this process before proceeding with any potential reform

Status: **In Progress**

WORKFORCE

82.

Streamline Northern Territory Occupational Licensing process

White Paper Page 107-108

Commonwealth Department of Education and Training in engaging with the Northern Territory Government to fast-track streamlined licensing processes.

Status: **In progress**

83.

Secondment of APS employees to the Northern territory to fast track implementation of the streamlined occupational licensing process

White Paper Page 108 & 120

This measure is forms part of an overall decentralisation policy being pursued by the Federal Government, as shown by the Deputy Prime Minister's

announcement in September 2017 that some functions of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory may be re-located to Darwin.

Status: **No Action**

84.

Broaden availability of the \$664 million Industry Skills Fund to Northern businesses seeking to expand their operations

White Paper Page 108

Northern Australia-specific elements included in the policy update on 19 September 2016. The *fund* will support the long term growth of *Northern Australia*. Reduced *contribution* rates for businesses in or entering into *Northern Australia*, the availability of dedicated skills advisers in *Northern Australia* and skills advice tied to business strategies will encourage investment in up-skilling or re-skilling workforces.

The *fund* will focus on promoting indigenous participation and encourage business to think of the opportunities for expanding operations to and within *Northern Australia*. *Contribution* rates for businesses located within or entering into *Northern Australia* must be made in line with the following table:

Table 2 –Contribution rates within Northern Australia

Business Type	Business Size	Business Contribution Rate
Micro Business	(0 – 4 <i>FTE</i> employees)	25%
Small Business	(5 – 19 <i>FTE</i> employees)	25%
Medium Business	(20 – 199 <i>FTE</i> employees)	25%
Large Business	(200+ <i>FTE</i> employees)	50%

Status: **Completed**

85.

Create opportunities for jobseekers to complete their work for the dole requirements as a placement at a local business

White Paper Page 109

The Community Development Program (CDP) commenced on 1 July 2015 and is our remote employment and community development service. The CDP supports job seekers in remote Australia to build skills, address barriers and contribute to their communities through a range of flexible activities. It is designed around the unique social and labour-market conditions found in remote Australia and is an essential part of the Australian Government's agenda for increasing employment and breaking the cycle of welfare dependency. For more information:

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/employment/community-development-programme-cdp>

Status: **Completed**

86.

The Government will work with jurisdictions to achieve Indigenous employment and/or supplier use target for road projects in the North - targets will reflect the working age Indigenous population in the area

White Paper Page 110

Indigenous procurement targets are a benchmark of projects funded under the auspices of the Northern Australia White Paper. In particular the Commonwealth is working with Northern jurisdictions to maintain engagement targets for Northern Australia Roads Programs.

Status: **In Progress**

87.

Expand the operation of Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) to provide greater flexibility for Northern Australian businesses to respond to economic and labour market conditions - and seek cooperation in this scheme from all State Governments in Northern Australia

White Paper Page 111

A Northern Territory DAMA has been operational since February 10th, 2014. Discussions around a possible Pilbara Regional DAMA are ongoing and DIBP is ready to fast-track a Pilbara DAMA should an endorsed proposal be received from the Western Australian State Government. DIBP has promoted the DAMA programme with the Queensland Government. The Queensland Government has advised DIBP that they will consider DAMAs as part of their overall workforce strategy.

Status: In Progress

88.

Possible Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) in North Queensland following consultation with Queensland Government, business and communities

White Paper Page 111

A Northern Territory DAMA has been operational since February 10th, 2014. Discussions around a possible Pilbara Regional DAMA are ongoing and DIBP is ready to fast-track a Pilbara DAMA should an endorsed proposal be received from the Western Australian State Government. DIBP has promoted the DAMA programme with the Queensland Government. The Queensland Government has advised DIBP that they will consider DAMAs as part of their overall workforce strategy.

Status: In Progress

89.

Amendments to the Working Holiday maker (WHM) Visa Programme to allow Working Holiday (Subclass 417) and Work and Holiday (Subclass

462) visa holders to work an additional six months with one employer in these high-demand areas in the North: agriculture, forestry, fishing, tourism, hospitality, mining, construction, disability and aged care

White Paper Page 112

On 21 November 2015 WHM guidelines were amended to allow subclass 417 (Working Holiday maker) and subclass 462 (Work and Holiday Maker) visa holders to work an additional six months with one employer in certain industries in Northern Australia.

Additionally, subclass 462 (Work and Holiday Maker) visa holders who complete three months' work in the tourism, hospitality, agriculture, fishery or forestry industries will be eligible to apply for a further Work and Holiday visa.

There are no caps on the number of Working Holiday visas issued and the number of grants has increased substantially (from just over 2,690 in 2005–06 to 41,339 in 2014–15) since the option of a second working holiday visa was introduced in November 2005. This option was initially only available to those who had been employed in seasonal agricultural work in regional Australia for three months.

The second Working Holiday visa is valid for a further 12 months. The six month restriction working with a single employer resets and applies again in the second year, although it is possible to return to the same employer from the previous year for another six months. In 2006 the option of a second visa became available to those working in any regional primary industry, such as mining. In February 2008 the option extended to people who had worked for three months in construction industries in regional areas.

On 8 February 2016, the Australian Government announced further expansion of the Seasonal Worker Programme, from primarily horticulture to the broader agricultural sector. Employers in a range of agriculture industries including cattle, sheep, grain and mixed enterprises will now be able to apply to be part of the Seasonal Worker Programme.

On 6 May 2016, the Australian Government announced the commencement of a tourism pilot under the Seasonal Worker Programme, specifically for Northern Australia. This pilot is one of the workforce measures announced as part of the *White Paper on Developing Northern Australia*. This builds on the current operation of the programme in the accommodation sector in selected locations in Australia.

Approved employers will be eligible to place seasonal workers in a range of tourism occupations in Northern Australia. The tourism pilot will help businesses in the tourism industry overcome seasonal labour shortages,

providing an alternative source of reliable workers for employers who cannot find enough local Australian workers to meet their needs.

March 2017 policy change that no longer need to seek permission came into effect.

Status: **Completed**

90.

Removal of national cap on number of workers able to participate in the Seasonal Workers Programme (SWP)

White Paper Page 113

The restrictions on the number of seasonal workers that Australian employers can recruit each year were removed in July 2015. The limitations on numbers are now determined by demand within Australia.

New Seasonal Worker Programme measures announced by the Government on 7 September 2017 include:

- removing the requirement for employers to organise training for seasonal workers, this will be administered from 1 July 2018 by the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- consulting with industry on identifying changes to the application and recruitment plan processes to find ways to streamline administration while ensuring protections for seasonal workers remain.
- pilot the introduction of a 24/7 information line for seasonal workers that will complement the pastoral care provided by approved employers
- changes to issuing visa grants providing greater flexibility for approved employers
- introduction of a multi-year visa for returning seasonal workers
- piloting ways to lower upfront costs for employers seeking to access the programme, including the requirement to pay the first \$500 for every seasonal worker's airfare to Australia; and

- piloting ways to help seasonal workers access their superannuation once they have left Australia.

Status: **Completed**

91.

Expansion of the SWP to the broader agricultural industry and accommodation sector and invite Northern Australia Tourism industry to suggest proposals for trialling SWP in tourism sectors other than accommodation from 01.07.2015.

White Paper Page 113

The Department of Employment (DoE) leads the whole-of-Government implementation of the Seasonal Worker Programme, including its expansion and changes. Further information about the Programme is available from the DoE or the Office of Northern Australia.

The expansion was announced and implemented on May 6th, 2016 with the exception of the trial of SWP in tourism sectors other than accommodation. This is subject to final ministerial agreement.

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- introduction of a multi-year visa for returning seasonal workers
- piloting ways to lower upfront costs for employers seeking to access the programme, including the requirement to pay the first \$500 for every seasonal worker's airfare to Australia; and
- piloting ways to help seasonal workers access their superannuation once they have left Australia.

Status: **Completed**

92.

In support of expansion of SWP programme Government will remove the 14-week minimum stay requirement provided nett financial benefit of at least \$1000 during their stay

White Paper Page 113

Under the Programme, DIBP is responsible for processing the Special Program (subclass 416) visa, monitoring visa compliance and providing training assistance to participating countries on Australia's visa requirements.

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- consulting with industry on identifying changes to the application and recruitment plan processes to find ways to streamline administration while ensuring protections for seasonal workers remain.

- pilot the introduction of a 24/7 information line for seasonal workers that will complement the pastoral care provided by approved employers
- changes to issuing visa grants providing greater flexibility for approved employers
- introduction of a multi-year visa for returning seasonal workers
- piloting ways to lower upfront costs for employers seeking to access the programme, including the requirement to pay the first \$500 for every seasonal worker's airfare to Australia; and
- piloting ways to help seasonal workers access their superannuation once they have left Australia.

Status: **Completed**

93.

Simplification of cost sharing arrangements by combining employer' contribution to each seasonal worker's international and domestic airfares to a total of \$500 - further measures to cut red tape will be announced by 01.07.2016

White Paper Page 113

The Inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration is complete and Government is considering its recommendations.

New Seasonal Worker Programme measures announced by the Government on 7 September 2017 include:

- removing the requirement for employers to organise training for seasonal workers, this will be administered from 1 July 2018 by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

- consulting with industry on identifying changes to the application and recruitment plan processes to find ways to streamline administration while ensuring protections for seasonal workers remain.
- pilot the introduction of a 24/7 information line for seasonal workers that will complement the pastoral care provided by approved employers
- changes to issuing visa grants providing greater flexibility for approved employers
- introduction of a multi-year visa for returning seasonal workers
- piloting ways to lower upfront costs for employers seeking to access the programme, including the requirement to pay the first \$500 for every seasonal worker's airfare to Australia; and
- piloting ways to help seasonal workers access their superannuation once they have left Australia.

Status: **In Progress/Completed**

94.

Pilot multi-year work visa program for 250 citizens from the Pacific microstates of Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu

White Paper Page 114

DFAT is the lead agency on this commitment - A Legislative Instrument for the provision of a nil Visa Application Charge for pilot programme participants came into effect on May 1st, 2016. DFAT are currently developing MoUs with Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu. Visas will be processed in accordance with the Migration Regulations and the MoU.

Pacific Mircostates – Northern Australia Worker Pilot Program.

The Northern Australia Worker Pilot Program is a five-year pilot program to provide up to 250 citizens of Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu access to multi-year work visa to work in low and semi-skilled occupations in Northern Australia. The program is on track with all three countries having signed an MOU with

the Australian Government. Twenty-eight Kiribati workers are already employed by businesses in Northern Australia and work has commenced with Tuvalu and Nauru to identify a pool of suitable workers. DFAT will commission an independent review of the pilot in its penultimate year 2018-19.

Status: **Completed**

GOVERNANCE

95.

Regulation Repeal day in March 2016 with a Northern Australia focus

White Paper Page 115(also see p.74)

Status: **Discontinued**

96.

National Map Open Data Initiative - Northern Australia layer

White Paper Page 118

Status: **No Action**

97.

Land surveys, area plans and zoning maps across a range of Indigenous communities in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory to support changes to land tenure that are more consistent with freehold title

White Paper Page 118

Status: **No Action**

98.

Seek the support of the Parliament to establish the JSCNA as a standing committee

White Paper Page 119

The Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia was appointed under a resolution of appointment which was passed by the House of Representatives on 1 September 2016 and the Senate on 12 September.

Status: Completed

99.

Office of Northern Australia (ONA) to be re-located to the North

White Paper Page 119

The Office of Northern Australia opened its new Head Office location in the Darwin CBD on 18 December 2015.

Status: Completed

100.

Public service secondments - Government invites the private and not-for-profit sectors to participate

White Paper Page 120

An agreement between the ONA and the Australian Public Service Commission confirmed that processes are in place and secondments are occurring in the North.

Additionally, the Commonwealth Government is pursuing a policy of 'decentralisation' through which additional public sector positions will be based in the

Status: **In Progress**

101.

Increased Defence presence in the North

White Paper Page 120

The Committee acknowledges \$12.4 billion in Defence spending in Northern Australia that was detailed in the 2016 Defence White Paper as part of the Turnbull Government's \$200 billion commitment to Defence infrastructure over the next decade. The Committee also notes the \$2.25 billion investment in defence infrastructure in Townsville and Shoalwater Bay/Rockhampton by the Singaporean Government under the auspices of the Australia-Singapore Military Training Initiative.

Status: **Completed**

102.

Release White Paper on the Reform of Federation

White Paper Page 131

Status: **Discontinued**

Northern Australia Oversight Committee

Annual Report: Appendix B

Long-Term Outcomes of the ‘Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia’ (*White Paper pages 126-131*).

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES – LAND

- Roll out lessons from pilot land tenure across the North.
 - Negotiate long-term township leases.
 - Less prescriptive requirements on pastoral leases.
 - Simple arrangements in place for more individual ownership (or very long lease term arrangements) on indigenous land across the North.
-

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES – WATER

- Identify new priority water infrastructure to be funded under the NWIDF (and the complementary \$2 billion Concessional Water Infrastructure Loan Program).
 - Determine total entitlement caps for priority catchments.
 - Promote water markets in priority catchments through auction of new tradeable water entitlements.
 - Consider options for further resource assessments for catchments with potential to support industry.
 - Substantial progress in repairing the Great Artesian basin bores.
-

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES – TRADE

- New joint fisheries Northern shopfront operational.
-

- Streamlined agreements in place for trade in crocodile products, indigenous art using listed species and export of kangaroo and emu products.
 - Consult with Indigenous Australians and industry on possible amendments to ATSI Heritage Protection Act to reduce duplication and red tape across heritage protection regimes.
 - Extend export approvals to ten years for well-managed fisheries.
 - Review Single Point of Entry and consider establishing offices in Queensland and Western Australia.
-

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES – INFRASTRUCTURE

- Substantial progress in first major projects funded through the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.
 - Roads package delivering targeted improvements to priority roads - Arnhem Highway, Barkly Highway, Flinders Highway, Great Northern Highway, Hann Highway, The Outback way and the Tanami Road.
 - Upgrades to key shorter and more direct routes to market under beef roads funding.
-

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES – WORKFORCE

- Possible Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) in North Queensland following consultation with QLD Government. Business and communities.
 - Review pilot programme for lower skilled workers in the Pacific Microstates.
-

FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES – GOVERNANCE

- Continuing leadership from the Strategic Partnership.
 - Implement Defence investment priorities in the North based on the 2015 Defence White Paper.
-

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES – LAND

- All prescriptive pastoral lease requirements removed.
 - Aspire to leasing of exclusive native title rights.
 - Easily accessible information on agricultural potential of Indigenous and pastoral land to attract more investment.
 - Aspire to have all existing (2015) native title claims finalised.
-

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES – WATER

- On-going Northern Water Infrastructure Development Fund projects.
 - Five-yearly review of Statutory Water Plans (NT, QLD, WA).
 - Investors knowing where water is to support developments.
-

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES – TRADE

- Tropical Health research translated into commercialisation opportunities.
-

- Industry-led outcomes from CRC research with strong collaboration with foreign partners.
 - Northern Australia seen as global leader in tropical health.
 - Closer connection between the North, ASEAN and APEC countries.
 - Growth in the agricultural sector informed by world-class R&D.
-

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES – INFRASTRUCTURE

- Better remote airstrips.
 - Better information to support business cases for Northern infrastructure development.
 - More productive beef roads capable of supporting larger, heavier vehicles.
 - A more productive and resilient cattle industry.
-

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES – WORKFORCE

- More Australians working in the North.
 - More employment opportunities for Indigenous communities.
 - More access to working holiday makers for Northern businesses.
-

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES – GOVERNANCE

- Greater capacity in governing bodies through secondments.
-

TWENTY-YEAR OUTCOMES – LAND

- More secure land rights underpinning investment and development on pastoral, indigenous and native title land.
 - More opportunities for indigenous Australians from land.
-

TWENTY-YEAR OUTCOMES – WATER

- Clear and legally secure water rights across the North.
 - Greater access to water across the North.
 - Efficient mechanism for trading rights within catchments and aquifers.
-

TWENTY-YEAR OUTCOMES – TRADE

- Clear low cost regulatory framework that supports flexibility and entrepreneurship.
 - More investment projects in a wider range of sectors.
-

TWENTY-YEAR OUTCOMES – INFRASTRUCTURE

- Better use of Northern infrastructure.
 - More modern, efficient infrastructure funded in partnership across Governments and business.
-

TWENTY-YEAR OUTCOMES – WORKFORCE

- Business demand for labour is easily met in the North.
 - Skilled, flexible domestic workforce supplemented by low-cost, efficient foreign worker programme.
-

TWENTY-YEAR OUTCOMES – GOVERNANCE

- Improved links between different levels of Government and strong collaboration on actions that further develop the North.
-