



PLANNING FOR A VIBRANT FUTURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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Executive summary

This report describes the 2017/18 consultation program for the Planning for a Vibrant Future Discussion Paper, including analysis of the feedback provided through the consultation forums, pop-up consultation stalls, online survey, written submissions and general correspondence received through the Planning Minister's office.

The Discussion Paper posed 25 questions focussed on 10 key regions plus the Government's overall vision and economic direction for the Northern Territory. In many cases the written submissions and even survey responses did not directly address the questions asked. Where possible the key points of feedback have been aligned to relevant questions, while other consistent ideas and themes raised were grouped together under relevant categories. This allowed for all submissions to be assessed collectively and for general themes and comments to be highlighted.

The online survey, written submissions, consultation forums and information pop-up stalls provided a range of different views about the Planning for a Vibrant Future Discussion Paper.

While the Discussion Paper was intended to elicit commentary around 'planning' for a Vibrant Future, there was only limited feedback provided that directly related to 'guiding future planning so that development continues sequentially and builds on, and is supported by, sound planning principles and the NT Planning Scheme'.

The Discussion Paper format covered a wide range of regions and the open nature of questions posed provided respondents with a 'Blue Sky' opportunity to provide a vast array of responses that didn't necessarily reflect exactly what the document sought to achieve or seek specific feedback on.

In many cases, feedback contained quite specific information about individual stakeholder concerns which related directly to the nature of their business, specific region and/or particular subject matter interest, e.g., fracking, PFAS in Katherine, and the Barneson Boulevard project. Consequently, the feedback received was quite disparate, which made summarising comments for this report challenging. Below is a summary of key findings.

- **The vision:** There was mixed support for the vision outlined in the Discussion Paper with the general sentiment best described as neutral. Restoring trust was of high priority to many respondents citing more focus needed to be given to ensuring that the community fully supported projects and initiatives that were being planned. Many respondents indicated support for the redevelopment and renewal of existing infrastructure, and for providing better services to address the Territory's social issues rather than focusing on developing new projects.

- **Economic development opportunities:** The majority of respondents did not have a positive outlook about being on the right track to maximise economic development opportunities while maintaining Territory lifestyle. A perceived lack of forward thinking and a focus on projects that do not generate income were among the reasons cited for this perception.
- **Major themes:** A diverse range of themes were commented on by Discussion Paper respondents. The major themes most commonly commented about by respondents across the broad range of topic areas of the vision of Planning for a Vibrant Future were:
 - **Developing Green spaces:** Tree-shaded public spaces, community gardens, planting additional canopy trees at community facilities and naturally shaded pedestrian paths were strongly supported as important for incorporating in planning to enliven our cities and towns.
 - **Addressing anti-social behaviour:** This was a common theme raised by respondents in the consultation forums, written submissions and online survey, particularly for Darwin city, Palmerston, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Alice Springs. Better crime reduction measures and actions for dealing with itinerancy and youth crime were raised as needed by a number of respondents. It is notable that this was not a key issue raised for other specific locations highlighted in the Discussion Paper such as Nhulunbuy, Darwin rural area, Weddell, Cox Peninsula or the regional and remote areas.
 - **Encouraging Arts and community events:** An increased focus on providing a range of Arts and community events, including more festivals, was raised as both a means to revitalise cities and to attract tourists.

Other common themes that were raised included:

- **Pedestrian and cycling connectivity:** Investment in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to upgrade existing networks and create new links received broad support from respondents, particularly across the Greater Darwin region.
- **Public transport:** Respondents raised improving community connectivity through public transport for Palmerston and Darwin rural area residents and potentially Weddell residents. Developing new Darwin harbour transport options and/or light rail to Darwin was a popular option endorsed by a range of participants.
- **Activating disused building spaces:** Encouraging building owners to invest in improvement of CBD properties was supported by some respondents as a means of activating disused building spaces in Darwin and Alice Springs.

- **Community services and social infrastructure:** Increasing the availability of social activities and related infrastructure was endorsed by many respondents.
- **Appropriate planning and zoning:** Minimum lot size restrictions for urban and rural areas and a greater focus on ensuring recreation and open space opportunities are being incorporated into urban planning were strongly supported as important for creating a sense of place. This theme was especially of priority for respondents commenting on the Palmerston and Darwin rural areas.
- **Restricting urban sprawl:** There was strong support for restricting urban sprawl and that it should be a major consideration for the proposed infill development of Holtze and Kowandi, and the Darwin rural area. There was significant sentiment expressed by respondents that any new developments should not impact on the amenity and lifestyle of existing rural residents. Comments supported planning for wildlife corridors to ensure a buffer zone between new developments and existing rural residents.
- **Building height restrictions:** Restrictions to building heights was supported as being an important planning consideration for developments in the vicinity of the Darwin harbour and Alice Springs.
- **Environmental protection:** There was broad support for protection of the environment as being an important for residential development planning, especially in rural areas. Feedback recommended including buffer zones around future residential areas to protect native flora and fauna, maintaining significant trees and bushland, protecting wildlife corridors, ensuring development works in with natural features of the area and protection of Darwin harbour mangroves.
- **Protecting rural lifestyle:** There was significant sentiment expressed by participants that proposed new developments should not impact on the amenity and lifestyle of existing rural residents.
- **Sustainability and renewables:** There was strong support for ensuring sustainability and renewable values were incorporated into future developments and a desire for more eco-housing utilising clean energy technology.
- **Water security:** The majority of comments that highlighted water security as an issue of importance for development planning related to locations like the Darwin rural area and Cox Peninsula. A common theme of such feedback being that groundwater usage capacities needed to be investigated and understood first, or reticulated town water needed to be included in land use plans before approving large-scale developments in the rural area. Consultation participants and survey respondents cited resolving the PFAS issue in Katherine as the primary priority that needed addressing for the town to reach its tourism and business potential.

- **Noonamah Ridge:** The majority of feedback was not supportive of this development. A consistent comment raised for opposing the development of Noonamah Ridge was its urban density not being compatible with the rural area. A minority of respondents supported the development occurring.
- **Weddell:** The proposal to develop Weddell received a mixed response. Respondents that supported this development occurring expressed strong support for sustainability and renewable values being incorporated into Weddell planning. Other feedback raised many of the common themes such as developing green spaces, transport connectivity and environmental protection. There was a minority of respondents who did not agree with Weddell progressing citing that there was not a current housing need to drive the development, it being a poor location choice and that it may perpetuate social disadvantage for residents who live in the proposed city.
- **Darwin harbour:** There was a mixed response for what consultation participants considered should be put in place to manage development around the harbour. Support for development advocated a need to expand water transport services and for the redevelopment of the esplanade to create Darwin as a genuine harbour city. Other respondents raised protection of mangrove areas, building height restrictions and not allowing further development of canal estates like Cullen Bay as being important to include in harbour planning.
- **Glyde Point and Murrumujuk:** Only a small number of participants provided direct feedback about the potential for industrial land at Glyde Point and an urban area at Murrumujuk. The majority of this feedback was not supportive of development of these areas and raised that the area had conservation values which should be protected, or that it may be better served as a tourist area destination. One Stakeholder stated a comprehensive area plan should be developed for the location as a priority.
- **Cox Peninsula:** Tourism development, particularly cycling tourism, was a major theme that participants endorsed for the Cox Peninsula. There was strong support for preserving wetland areas, establishing a secure water supply and for an area plan to be developed for the Peninsula that introduced details such as housing density, building heights and block size restrictions.
- **Katherine:** Fixing the town's PFAS issue was the major priority raised for Katherine to reach its tourism and business potential. Infrastructure investment, expanding accommodation and dining options, addressing anti-social behaviour, and improving transport options were secondary themes raised as a means for attracting more tourists. A majority of respondents strongly endorsed the vision of Katherine as a logistics and agribusiness hub. There was broad support for enabling a growth in Defence assets in the region which could provide a positive economic effect for the town. Providing more activities for Defence personnel to keep them and their families in Katherine was generally supported.

- **Tennant Creek:** There was a mixed response to the vision for Tennant Creek to be a mining and logistics hub. Some respondents raised that the town could be a gas production hub, while other respondents expressed concern that there was little mining activity currently happening in the region and did not support the vision as being a reality reflective of current activities. Diversifying the local economy to industry other than mining, addressing anti-social behaviour, and leveraging the tourism potential of the town's mining history were common themes supported by respondents.
- **Alice Springs:** Addressing anti-social behaviour was the priority theme raised by respondents regarding Alice Springs. Sealing the Outback Way, building height restrictions to protect the visual landscape and celebrating local culture were all broadly supported for the town to achieve the vision of Australia's inland capital. The proposed National Aboriginal Art Gallery was largely supported as potentially having a positive impact on the CBD, as was improving parking services, developing additional social infrastructure, supporting arts and community events and providing business support. There was significant support, especially among business stakeholders, that additional land for industrial purposes would assist the town to become a services hub. The high cost of air travel was highlighted as a hindrance to making the town attractive for business and services. There was general support for diversifying the town's business focus wider than tourism and community services with the renewable sector raised as a potential means of activating new industry.
- **Nhulunbuy:** Sealing the Central Arnhem Highway was strongly supported as a way to improve supply chain connectivity and enable tourism to become a key economic driver for the region, especially for the growth of eco-tours and fishing activities. There was significant support for a greater focus on education and skills development in the region, in particular for enabling the Yolngu population to be better positioned to enter the workforce. Enabling Defence use and the tourism potential of cruise ships and yachts were the major themes supported by respondents for leveraging the Nhulunbuy port. A marine supply base and customs base were other possible port uses raised.
- **Regions and remote:** Improving supply chain connectivity to be affordable and accessible all year round was strongly supported as being able to deliver economic growth and social well-being for regional and remote areas. Meaningful community engagement to better understand local needs, encouraging self-determination, providing small business support and improving accessibility to training and trade school were all supported as opportunities to pursue. Education investment was the theme most strongly supported by respondents for providing the best opportunity for people in the bush. Agricultural and pastoral investment were endorsed as providing employment opportunities for remote communities. Investing in cultural tourism and eco-tourism opportunities were raised as having economic potential. There was broad support for consulting with remote communities and working with

traditional owners and land councils to best understand what additional investment would benefit bush areas.

Background

The Northern Territory Government is actively planning for the future and with the release of its Economic Development Framework and Ten Year Infrastructure Strategy, it is working to ensure business and industry have certainty to plan for future growth.

The Northern Territory Government is seeking to refresh the Territory's vision for future development and restore community confidence in the planning system, as well as ensuring that the unique lifestyle and character of the Northern Territory can be preserved.

Planning for a Vibrant Future aims to harmonise land use planning with the Government's overall strategy for developing the Northern Territory. It is intended to guide future planning so that development continues sequentially and builds on, and is supported by, sound planning principles and the NT Planning Scheme.

Planning for a Vibrant Future focusses on key growth areas including:

- Darwin - Australia's Northern Capital
- Palmerston - The Family City
- Darwin's rural areas - Unique Rural Lifestyle
- Weddell - A New Tropical City
- Cox Peninsula - Saltwater Living
- Katherine - A Logistics and Agribusiness Hub
- Tennant Creek - A Mining Services Centre
- Alice Springs - Australia's Inland Capital
- Nhulunbuy - Arnhem's Peninsula Paradise
- Regional and Remote - Our Cultural Landscape

The consultation and community engagement encouraged participants to provide feedback on ideas presented within the discussion paper, as well as allowing the community to share in their vision for a vibrant future for the Northern Territory.

While the aim of the Discussion Paper referred to land use planning, many respondents took the opportunity to provide feedback on a broader range of issues that were considered important for creating a vision of Planning for a Vibrant Future. While some popular themes such as developing green spaces and pedestrian connectivity were directly relevant to land use planning, other common themes commented on by respondents, including crime, anti-social behaviour and fracking, related to broader issues.

Objectives

The objectives of the consultation program were to:

- gather detailed and meaningful feedback from participants

- encourage and involve stakeholders in the ongoing development of planning ideas
- consider solutions that are sensitive to stakeholder needs and behaviour
- clearly communicate the benefits of community participation in the process
- help develop and manage realistic expectations about the contributions to the discussion paper
- identify key issues of public support and concern
- provide evaluation of the consultation process.

Methodology

The *Planning for a Vibrant Future* Discussion Paper was released on 17 October 2017 and invited the public and key stakeholders to provide their feedback and respond to the document, contributing to future growth and the vision for the Northern Territory.

This project included the following engagement channels:

Announcement of release of Discussion Paper and survey

A media release was issued on 17 October 2017 by the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics which outlined the Discussion Paper and encouraged feedback on the vision document. A link to the NT Government 'Have Your Say' website was provided which prompted visitors to complete the online survey.

A generic email was sent to over 600 email addresses of individuals and businesses that had recently engaged with the Northern Territory Planning System. Key stakeholders including councils, peak industry groups and community organisations were written to directly.

Regional engagement

Regional community forums were held Darwin, Palmerston, Howard Springs, Wagait Beach, Katherine and Alice Springs. Government advertising through print and social media invited members of the public to attend the forums and participate in the engagement process.

A public information stall was held at Nhulunbuy in the local shopping centre and the marketplace where participants were engaged to conduct the online survey and provide feedback on the survey questions. Officials from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics held a pop-up consultation session in Tennant Creek in addition to a joint community workshop with the Northern Territory Planning Commission Tennant Creek Land Use Plan consultation.

Engagement Outcomes

During the consultation there were:

- 112 online survey submissions received
- 22 written submissions received
- 63 people attended seven community forums

Topic findings

Topic 1: What will the Northern Territory look like as its population grows?

- **What are your thoughts on the Government's vision for the Territory?**
- **What are creative ways we could enliven our cities and towns?**
- **Are we on the right track to maximise economic development opportunities while maintaining and enhancing our valued Territory lifestyle?**

The opening topic sought to garner feedback on the community impression of the overall vision and direction presented by the Northern Territory Government. The response rate to this section of the Discussion Paper was high.

The feedback received on the Government's vision for the Northern Territory is best described as uncertain or negative. Of those that responded to this survey question 37% provided a response that would be considered negative, while a significant portion of respondents who provided a neutral response (40%) claimed they were unsure of what the Government's vision was.

Of those that supported the vision (23%) a number commented that it was positive the Discussion Paper focussed on all Northern Territory regions, not just Darwin. There was general support among the written submissions received for the Government's vision and the intent of the Discussion Draft document.

Many survey respondents that did not support the Government's vision noted that restoring trust was a high priority, and that more focus needed to be given to ensure the community fully supported projects and initiatives being planned. While community consultation was valued by participants, many cited they wanted to see more action being taken.

Many respondents indicated support for the redevelopment and renewal of existing infrastructure, rather than focussing on developing new ones. This was both in terms of projected money saved and recognising that the Territory has a strong base from which to work from with existing infrastructure.

When asked about creative ways to enliven our cities and towns, the principal themes supported by consultation participants was developing green spaces and addressing anti-social behaviour which was seen as impacting businesses and a turn-off for families and tourists. Improving pedestrian and cyclist connectivity through shaded pathways and better infrastructure was raised through all consultation modes.

Embracing the 'Territory Culture' by investing in more festivals and events was strongly supported as a means to create positive community and social outcomes. Encouraging greater arts and community events was also noted as a positive way to enhance the tourism sector.

Survey respondents did not believe the Government was on track to maximise economic development opportunities while maintaining and enhancing our valued Territory lifestyle. More than half of responses indicate a negative outlook, while only 1 in 10 felt the Government was on track. Written responses provided suggestions to improve economic conditions rather than comment on whether the Government was on track. Suggestions included increased investment in infrastructure to open up development opportunities as well as investment in transport and logistics infrastructure to improve connectivity to Darwin.

Many participants found it difficult to have a positive outlook given the current economic climate, while others suggested the Government needs to focus on projects that will generate long term economic benefits rather than short term construction jobs.

Topic 2: Darwin - Australia's Northern Capital

- **What ideas do you have for Darwin as Australia's Northern Capital?**
- **What do you see as the best opportunities to revitalise our CBD?**

The responses to the two questions in this topic generated similar themes and suggestions. Development of green space was the most strongly supported theme of respondents for enhancing Darwin as Australia's Northern Capital and to revitalise the CBD. More vegetation and gardens, less concrete was a general sentiment of many respondents to cool the city and improve its liveability with some citing Singapore as a good example that Darwin could replicate.

There was general support for improving community services and social infrastructure. Ideas raised by respondents in this theme included better utilisation of Lameroo Beach and developing cafes on the Esplanade similar to the Nightcliff Foreshore cafe, not charging for city parking, and developing Frog Hollow into a tourist attraction.

More arts and community events were broadly supported with respondents citing giving Smith Street mall a "market-feel" and encouraging more music events in the city. Creating other carnivals and events similar to the successful Darwin Cup Carnival and V8 supercars championship was raised as a way to enhance Darwin's tourism attraction credentials.

Many respondents wanted to see more done for addressing anti-social behaviour and ensuring the city was safe for families and visitors. Issues relating to itinerants were seen as a hindrance to creating a reputation and image of Darwin as Australia's Northern Capital for visitors with support expressed for creating a long-term plan to address the issue.

Improving public transport options was generally supported including encouraging the use of park and ride facilities for city workers. Support for this theme included introducing trams or light rail between Palmerston and Darwin, expanding harbour water transportation and improving the frequency, punctuality and accessibility of public buses.

Improving pedestrian and cyclist connectivity through shaded pathways and better infrastructure such as building a bicycle/pedestrian track near the foreshore below the Esplanade was raised by respondents.

There was general support for activating disused building spaces by encouraging building owners to invest in improvement of their CBD properties.

Topic 3: Palmerston - the family city

- **How do you think we could make Palmerston more family friendly?**
- **Holtze and Kowandi have been identified as our next residential infill development locations in the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan. What do you think is important to consider in developing these areas?**

The major theme of consultation participants responding to this topic related to addressing anti-social behaviour in Palmerston, particularly youth crime. Engaging youth with targeted programs, tackling school delinquency and funding training programs for youth offenders were some of the measures supported to address this issue.

Developing green spaces through providing more canopy trees and tree-shaded public spaces were strongly supported as important for Palmerston to be more family friendly. Some respondents raised that the Goyder Square redevelopment could be improved by incorporating more shaded green space.

Appropriate planning and zoning was valued by respondents with many participants raising that lot sizes of new land developments should not be too small in size. There was also support for a heightened focus on recreation and open space opportunities being incorporated into the city's urban planning to create a family friendly sense of place.

Improving community services and social infrastructure was strongly supported by respondents who raised the need for more playgrounds, accessible childcare facilities and family amusement activities. One stakeholder raised that a long-term delivery plan for the provision of community infrastructure was needed.

The major considerations that participants supported as important in developing Holtze and Kowandi was ensuring adequate green spaces were incorporated into the planning of the infill development.

There was strong support from respondents for a minimum block size of 700 -750 m² being appropriate for the area and that restricting urban sprawl should be a major consideration for development plans for the area. Some respondents felt strongly that Holtze should not be developed, or if it is, should retain its rural status and minimum 5 acre lot sizes.

Support was outlined by participants for incorporating solar power in building designs and green initiatives when developing the area. Water management planning for using run-off water across green spaces of the development was highlighted as a means to achieve this.

Maintaining significant trees and bushland, protecting wildlife corridors and ensuring development works in with natural features of the area was supported by many of the participants who identified environmental protection as important.

A number of submissions were critical of the Holtze and Kowandi development being listed in the Palmerston topic content of the Discussion Paper as it is in the Litchfield Council boundaries.

Topic 4: Darwin's rural area - unique rural lifestyle

- **Noonamah Ridge, Weddell East and Elizabeth Valley are identified in the Planning Scheme as areas that could accommodate population growth. What do you think is important to consider in any future development of these rural areas?**
- **Do you think there should be more housing options and a greater variety of lot sizes in the rural area?**

There was significant sentiment expressed by respondents that any new developments should not impact on the amenity and lifestyle of existing rural residents. This was also raised through general support by respondents for environment protection including wildlife corridors around development locations to protect native flora and fauna and create a buffer with existing rural residents. Ensuring appropriate planning and zoning was in place including building height and minimum lot size restrictions was broadly supported.

There was a mixed response on the proposal for more housing options and a greater variety of lot sizes in the rural area. A consistent comment of participants who opposed greater variety in lots and housing options was that blocks needed to be large to maintain the rural lifestyle.

Key industry stakeholders cited support for a variety of housing options, especially for people who want to stay in the rural area during older life stages and other participants endorsed smaller lots close to activity centres.

The majority of feedback from respondents who commented on Noonamah Ridge was not supportive of the development.

A consistent comment given for opposing the development was its urban density not being compatible with the rural area, particularly due to small block sizes. A number of respondents opposed to Noonamah Ridge also raised Weddell as a preferred location for future residential development.

Water security was raised as a significant concern, not only for Noonamah Ridge, but for other future development of the wider rural area with support raised for including the extension town water into future planning, and more investigation of groundwater resources.

Of the minority of respondents that expressed support for Noonamah Ridge, there was endorsement for the environmental focus of the development design, and the economic and employment opportunities it would create during delivery.

Only a small number of participants provided direct feedback about the potential for industrial land at Glyde Point and an urban area at Murrumujuk. Nearly all of the feedback received was not supportive of the development of these areas and commented that the area had conservation values that should be protected, or that it may be better served as a managed tourist area. One stakeholder stated that a comprehensive plan for the area should first be developed.

The majority of respondents appeared to make little distinction between Weddell and Weddell East.

Topic 5: Weddell - a new tropical city

- **What ideas do you have for the new city of Weddell?**
- **What do you consider to be important in planning for Weddell?**

There was strong support for the development of green spaces for Weddell including creating habitat corridors, community gardens and joined parklands with a density of trees. Similarly, environmental protection was highlighted by respondents as a key issue to incorporate in planning for Weddell. Participants cited preserving bushland and wildlife and developing the city in conjunction with retaining natural waterways and wetland areas.

Ensuring adequate community services and social infrastructure were delivered received strong endorsement with respondents citing the need for planning around the development of schools, shops, family-activity facilities and community spaces such as parks, playgrounds, a community hall, recreation areas, walking/cycle paths and sporting grounds.

There was broad support for Weddell's transport planning needing to consider light rail and harbour transport options to Darwin, access to public transport, and ensuring connectivity to the Coolalinga and Palmerston areas was established during planning.

Ensuring sustainability and renewable values were incorporated into the development of ecohousing and a city that incorporated sustainable, clean energy was also considered important by respondents.

There was a minority of respondents who did not agree with the Weddell proposal progressing raising that there was not a current housing need to drive the development, it

being a poor location choice and that it may perpetuate social disadvantage for residents who live in the proposed city.

Topic 6: Cox Peninsula - saltwater living

- **What do you think about planning for future development around the harbour?**
- **What type of development should we support at Cox Peninsula?**

There was a mixed response from respondents about what planning and zoning considerations should be put in place to manage future harbour development outcomes. Some respondents cited putting in place building height restrictions to protect the visual amenity of the harbour and not allowing further development of canal estates like Cullen Bay. One written submission gave enthusiastic support for the future development of the harbour as 'potentially the city's greatest asset'.

There was general support for harbour development to be sensitive to environmental needs to retain the amenity of the harbour area. A significant proportion of comments to this theme cited protection of mangrove areas as being important to include in future development planning.

An expansion of water transport services was broadly supported with comments citing a need to upgrade the current ferry service and incorporate water taxis and car ferries.

When asked about what type of development should take place at Cox Peninsula, there was significant support for enabling tourism opportunities. In particular, survey and consultation forum respondents cited developing bike tracks as a means to leverage cycling tourism to attract Darwin locals and visitors to the area.

Preserving the natural environment was broadly supported as being of importance for retaining the amenity of the peninsula. Some comments suggested that park status should be considered for important wetland areas and cycad gardens.

There was general support for an area plan to be developed for Cox Peninsula that introduced details such as housing density, building heights and block size restrictions. Establishing a secure water supply prior to large scale development taking place was considered a priority for some respondents.

Topic 7: Katherine - a logistics and agribusiness hub

- **How would you like to see Katherine further develop to achieve its tourism and defence potential?**
- **Does the vision of Katherine as a logistics and agribusiness hub fit with how you would like to see the town develop?**

The majority of feedback from respondents related to the town's PFAS issue as being the town's number one priority that needed addressing for Katherine to reach its tourism and business potential.

Investment in infrastructure for the town was strongly supported as a means of attracting more tourists. Respondents endorsed increasing spending on Katherine Gorge facilities, upgrading streetscape infrastructure and increased beautification of the main street.

Expanding dining and accommodation options, including camping areas, was broadly supported as opportunities to attract more tourists. There was also general support for improving transport options with comments citing the need for public transport to the Gorge and airport, and the need to improve road infrastructure in the region.

Better crime reduction measures and control of anti-social behaviour were raised by respondents as being necessary for visitors to the town to feel it was a safe tourist destination.

Only a minority of respondents commented on the defence potential of Katherine. Among these respondents there was support for enabling the continued growth in Defence assets in the region as it would have a positive economic effect for the town. There was also cited a need to provide more community activities for Defence personnel to keep them and their families in Katherine.

Around 60% of survey respondents and most of the forum participants strongly supported the vision of Katherine as a logistics and agribusiness hub. Respondents endorsed its location and connection link to Western Australia as being consistent with this vision. More strategic use of the railway including locating developing industrial sheds closer to the station was also cited as needed for achieving this goal.

Around 30% of respondents were neutral to the stated vision and 10% were not supportive.

Topic 8: Tennant Creek – a mining services hub

- **How could Tennant Creek be further developed, what would attract people to the town as a destination?**
- **Does the vision of Tennant Creek as a mining and services hub fit with how you would like to see the town develop?**

There was a notably divided response to the Discussion Paper's vision for Tennant Creek to be a mining and services hub. A majority of online survey participants who responded to this question were from locations other than Tennant Creek and endorsed the vision while most of the local residents who attended a community meeting did not support the vision. One written suggestion called for a more diverse vision to include 'tourism, arts, fossicking, logistics and mining services hub'.

Survey respondents who supported the proposed vision cited the region having infrastructure already in place for a mining and services hub to occur and that its proximity to the Beetaloo Basin would enable it to be a hub town to also support that industry with economic benefits resulting from the extra workers required.

Local respondents who did not support the vision expressed concern that there was little mining activity currently happening in the area that would support the vision becoming a reality.

When asked about what would attract people to the town as a destination there was strong support for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour to make the town safer and more attractive as a stop-over for tourists. Respondents also supported leveraging Tennant Creek's tourism potential through better marketing of its mining history and improving the streetscape.

There was general support for a focus on diversifying the local economy to embrace industry that has long term job prospects in the town itself rather than primarily mining, which residents cited as being cyclical with workers often not based in town.

Topic 9: Alice Springs - Australia's inland capital

- **What ideas do you have for the vision of Alice Springs as Australia's inland capital?**
- **What do you see as the best opportunities to revitalise our CBD?**
- **How do we build on Alice Springs as a business and services centre for the region?**

There was strong support for addressing anti-social behaviour as being necessary for Alice Springs as Australia's inland capital and the priority issue for revitalising the CBD. Respondents cited that some anti-social behaviour was causing unwanted media coverage and an emphasis on improving public safety would in turn boost the town's tourism credentials. Participants cited that the community do not view the area as a safe place due to anti-social and alcohol-related issues in the CBD and advocated for additional crime-prevention measures such as night curfews, more foot patrol police and CCTV in the city area.

There was significant support for celebration of the region's local culture if it was to be Australia's Inland Capital. Respondents cited the need to ensure Indigenous culture held a stronger place in the town's identity and for targeted promotion of Central Australian Aboriginal heritage as being opportunities to capitalise on.

There was strong support for ensuring appropriate zoning and planning guidelines were in place for the building approvals process. A common theme among comments was for there to be a building height restriction of five stories or less so that development was conducted without affecting the surrounding visual landscape.

There was broad support expressed by respondents that the sealing of the Outback Way would have a major positive economic impact on Alice Springs with it being the central location of the east-west axis connection.

An increased focus on arts and community events were endorsed as being good opportunities for revitalising the CBD. The development of the proposed National Aboriginal Art Gallery was largely supported as potentially having a positive impact on the CBD, as were celebrating arts and culture of the region.

There was significant support for improving community services and social infrastructure in the CBD. Respondents cited developing additional community space, more shade, street furniture and trees reflective of place and making the cleanliness of footpaths and streets a priority.

Improving parking services in the CBD, particularly during the high tourist season received broad support. Respondents cited development of a secure, undercover carpark, no paid parking and park and ride options as opportunities for consideration.

There was general support for providing CBD business support with respondents citing government offering new business and start-up assistance, and facilitating better use of empty building spaces.

When asked about how to build Alice Springs as a regional business and services regional centre the recurring theme of addressing crime and anti-social behaviour was raised. Respondents cited that local businesses could not continue to carry the costs of break-ins, damage and loss of property.

There was significant support, especially among Alice Springs business stakeholders, that the release of land for industrial purposes would benefit the town becoming a services hub. Comments cited a lack of adequate storage areas and improved industrial location positioning as considerations for building the town as a regional business and services centre.

Diversifying the town's business focus from primarily community services and tourism was endorsed by some respondents. There were general comments for Alice Springs to position itself as a "Solar City" as a potential means of activating new industry for the town.

There was broad support from participants that the high cost of air travel was a hindrance to making the town attractive for business and services.

Topic 10: Nhulunbuy - Arnhem's peninsula paradise

- **Supporting our peninsula paradise is important to us, what do you think the residents and visitors in Nhulunbuy would benefit from?**
- **How do we leverage off the strategic location and deep-water port at Nhulunbuy?**

There was strong support from consultation participants for cultivating tourism development as the key economic driver for the Nhulunbuy area. Respondents cited improving tourism activities and services, eco-tours and fishing activities to benefit the town.

Sealing the Central Arnhem Highway was strongly endorsed as the major infrastructure project that would benefit residents and visitors to the region. Respondents cited that delivering this project would hugely improve supply chain connectivity to the area and ensure more tourists could access the region.

There was significant support for a greater focus on education and skills development in the region, in particular for enabling the Yolngu population to be better positioned to enter the workforce.

When asked how to leverage the port at Nhulunbuy, the majority of responses strongly supported targeting marine-based tourism opportunities such as yachts and sea cruise companies. Comments cited targeted marketing to the international yachting community to raise awareness of the port and a proposed upgrade to the Boat Club tourism precinct as being opportunities to pursue.

There was broad support from participants for the port to be used for Defence or Customs purposes. Comments cited the opportunity for enabling Navy or Customs to use the Nhulunbuy Port as a marine supply base and in turn deliver economic benefits for local support businesses related to servicing vessels.

Topic 11: Regional & remote areas: our cultural landscape

- **How do we better work with our regions and remote communities to deliver greater opportunities for residents, land owners and visitors?**
- **What are the most important areas of investment to create the best opportunities for people in the bush?**

There was significant support from consultation participants for empowering regional and remote communities to set their own agenda. Comments cited restoring autonomy for regional and remote communities by involving them directly in planning and developing their regions. Meaningful community consultation, particularly with elders and traditional owners, was seen as an important process to better understand local needs that could be actioned to improve regional and remote communities.

Improving accessibility to regional and remote areas was strongly supported as being able to deliver economic growth and social well-being for residents, land-owners and visitors. Respondents cited the importance of expanding supply chain connections, whether by land, sea, air or digital, to be affordable and accessible all year round.

There was general support for enabling economic development opportunities in remote areas by providing small business assistance and support and ensuring work relating to servicing of communities is conducted primarily by community members. Some respondents wanted the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program restored as a successful program that benefitted remote and regional communities.

There was broad support for increasing the standards of education for remote and regional communities. Respondents cited increasing accessibility to training and trade schools as being opportunities to pursue.

There was broad support for consulting with remote communities and working with traditional owners and land councils to best understand what investment would benefit bush areas.

Education investment was strongly supported by many respondents for creating the best opportunity for people in the bush. Agricultural and pastoral investment was endorsed as providing employment opportunities for remote communities. Investing in cultural tourism and eco-tourism opportunities was raised as having economic potential.

Consultation evaluation

The Planning for a Vibrant Future Discussion Paper was released on 17 October and the official consultation period closed on 9 February 2018, with a number of written submissions also received after that date.

Written Submissions

The written submission process worked well, with considered responses being received to the discussion paper and provided to the department. The opportunity for key stakeholders and organisations to respond to the discussion paper was seen as a positive way to elicit feedback from the community and organisations supporting them.

However, as outlined in this report's Executive Summary, due to the open-ended nature of questions and the "Blue Sky" response opportunity provided, in many cases the written submissions and even survey responses did not directly address the questions asked. Instead many respondents provided gave feedback about subject matter areas aligned with their own individual subject matter interests.

Community Consultation

Throughout the consultation period, participants indicated that awareness of the discussion paper and community consultations was low. It was recommended by those participants that a greater awareness and advertising campaign would have been appropriate to encourage greater participation, with many only becoming aware of the consultations at the last minute, or through word of mouth.

The timing of the consultations leading up to the school holidays and Christmas period, were also noted as being a difficult time for many participants to be involved in consultations. This was particularly evident in the low numbers of participants prior to the Christmas period, and then following the holidays where greater turnout was experienced.

Online Survey

The online survey was the primary means of capturing a wide audience for feedback on the discussion paper. While it was recognised that the discussion paper covered a vast area of discussion, the survey was criticised by a number of participants for being too long and this was highlighted by the reduced number of responses to the questions as the survey progressed.

The Vibrant Future survey had 25 questions which was unrealistic to complete within the 10minute timeframe suggested at the beginning of the survey.

Using International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles, best practice for online surveys shows that a maximum of 5-10 minutes should be allocated for a survey to

ensure full participation in all of the questions, thereby providing an accurate analysis on the survey.

A number of the questions were very similar in structure and subsequent response, and it is recommended that future surveys be mindful of targeting themes and discussion areas into less, but more concise questions.

This was also evidenced in the location specific responses which were received by many participants who were unable or unwilling to comment on areas outside of their geographical location.

The use of mainly open-ended questions in the survey also provided an additional challenge in providing quantitative analysis of the responses. It is recommended that questions are structured around clearer themes and subjects to ensure a more targeted response can be assessed.

The survey was also criticised for not being mobile friendly. Many participants will use mobile phones or tablets to respond to surveys, and the length and open-ended structure of the questions restricted the user experience for many.

Written Submissions

In total, 24 written submissions were received. These were varied in source and included the Member for Nelson, residents, businesses, community and interest groups, councils, industry bodies:

- Alice Springs Rural Area Association - ASRAA
- Alice Springs Town Council - ASTC
- Arid Lands Environment Centre - ALEC
- Australian Institute of Architects NT - AIA NT
- B&B Steel Fabrications
- BG & SA Stanes
- City of Palmerston - COP
- City of Darwin - COD
- Department of Defence - Defence
- East Arnhem Regional Economic Development Committee - EAREDC
- Eavan Coyne, Zest Homes
- Environment Centre NT - ECNT
- Enviro Consult
- Gerry Wood MLA
- Grusha Leeman
- Heritage Alice Springs - HAS
- Ian Crawshaw
- Litchfield Council
- Local Government Association of NT - LGANT
- Mandy Webb
- Norberto Ayala Samalea
- Urban Development Institute of Australia NT - UDIA NT