

WORKSHOP NOTES



Katherine

Date: 15 July 2014

Key issues raised:

- Lots of ideas of how roads would open up projects, from horticulture and tourism to road and rail links that would support Katherine's role as a transport 'hub';
- Strong views that development must support Aboriginal kids getting a better education. A story was told about a company taking on a student who had graduated from Year 12 at a Darwin College but couldn't write their name;
- Concerns about bureaucracy and red tape within both Government and the land councils, that there is a need for long-term tenure, that it takes too long to get projects up and the application of native title is confusing to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations.
- Aboriginal people want to play a stronger role in economic development but there are many barriers. There are many ideas but a lack of expertise to develop them. It was suggested that Gunjehmi in Jabiru got off the merry-go-round of royalties and employed excellent back up people to set them up in their business with good governance, audits and systems.
- Concern that many decisions are made without consultation and more government decision-making needs to happen across silos and in the regions.
- Katherine could play a role as a regional and industrial hub while land release in the region would help support projects, eg housing in Timber Creek to support the Ord project.
- In terms of who pays, if the nation wants to develop the north, the Australian Government needs to pay. But the focus on a social licence to operate by mining companies can also contribute to community infrastructure, eg McArthur River Mine's contribution to Borroloola.



Geoff Horni

(outlined the purpose of the project). There is a perception of over-consultation with the number of studies being done. But this is the study that will give government the detailed information it needs about how the Territory sees its future and how you see your region's future. The other studies are coming up with similar things.

Luke Bowen

Covered the role of the North Australian Development Office. He sees the future of the Territory as Asia's 'delicatessen' not the food bowl. We could produce enough food to feed only two large Asian cities. There is a perception that we have lots of land and water but there's more to it than that. We can be a niche supplier to China but we need to diversify and reduce the risk of shocks to industries, eg cattle exports. Framing the Future places the emphasis on balanced development: social, cultural, economic and environment.

Big Rivers Regional Economic Development Committee

Fay Miller is Mayor of Katherine and Chair of the Regional Economic Development Committee.

She was on the former economic development committee in 2003 and government didn't listen to its ideas very well. It did a lot of powerful work in the region. Members were a bit reluctant when asked to join the new committee as they feared it would be just another talk fest. That was 12 months ago. A challenge has been to cover the region from the WA border to Borroloola. The REDC quickly realised that Katherine was a major service centre and the REDC has to recognise the whole region.

The REDC was concerned it didn't have enough capacity but has had assistance from DCM, in particular Julie Wilson.

It identified a list of projects, considering horticulture, agriculture, arts, mining and defence, and has completed a 2014-2015 strategic plan. Some of the key opportunities have included a lot of things discussed today. That's positive because it means we are all thinking alike:

1. release of residential land
2. freight hub - Manballoo Station
3. heavy vehicle alternative route
4. Roper, Central Arnhem Highway, Carpentaria upgrade
5. Edith Farms to Daly River connector road, it's only 14 km but needs to get across the river
6. we have looked at tourism development

7. introduction of regional air services, which is under discussion
8. residential village for over 50s
9. short-term accommodation for rough sleepers.

We are keen to pursue identified opportunities across the region.

We had the ABARE summit here last week.

In relation to the White Paper, I feel we are in the best position for the long-term to develop in the region and hope we can get a decent slice of the Australian Government's funding. It's good to see government involving the regions. There is a lot of wealth in the region.

Lisa Mumbin, Chair of the Jawoyn Association

The foundation of economic development for the Jawoyn is ownership of the land. Jawoyn land covers 35,000 square kilometres it extends from the regional town of Katherine, south-east to the township of Mataranka, eastwards past Barunga and Beswick, then north-east in an arc crossing from Bulman in Arnhem Land across to the southern part of Kakadu National Park and south-west Arnhem.

It's a diverse land with a rich cultural history.

The majority of Jawoyn Lands are held under the Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT), obtained through the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976. Jawoyn land ownership is comprised of a combination of land trust areas, freehold and national parks, including:

- Jawoyn Aboriginal Land Trust
- Beswick Aboriginal Land Trust
- Eva Valley (Manyallaluk) Aboriginal Land Trust
- Banatjarl freehold
- Barnjarn (Northern Territory enhanced freehold)
- Jawoyn Lands include two national park areas - Nitmiluk National Park and Kakadu National Park. Nitmiluk National Park is wholly within Jawoyn country. Jawoyn Lands also include the Gunlom area in southern Kakadu National Park.

Background:

- In 1978, launched the Jawoyn Land claim
- 1985 the Jawoyn Association was established to resolve poverty, advance education, encourage culture among clans, advance the social welfare of the clans and represent the Jawoyn people in the development of Aboriginal land.
- September 10 1989 - Jawoyn traditional owners win their long-running land claim for Nitmiluk National Park. Following the Australian Government's formal declaration,

the Jawoyn immediately leased the land back to the Northern Territory Government to be operated as a national park “to be shared by all Australians”.

- Nitmiluk National Park established under a joint-management agreement between the Jawoyn people and the Northern Territory Government's Parks and Wildlife Service. The park is run by a board of management with Jawoyn holding the position of chair and majority membership alongside Northern Territory and local government nominees.
- 1991 - The Australian Government recognises the Jawoyn as traditional owners of southern areas of Kakadu National Park. Three Jawoyn representatives nominated to the Kakadu Board of Management. Brian Baruwei elected chairman of Kakadu Board of Management in 1992.
- 1991 - The Jawoyn successfully argue to the Resource Assessment Commission and the Federal Government that areas of their traditional lands incorporating many of their most important cultural sites in and around Guratba (Coronation Hill) should be protected rather than mined.

1994

- The Mt Todd mine opens with 27 per cent of mine work force made up by Aboriginal people. This equates to 4.25 of the 30 per cent of Aboriginal people employed in the Northern Territory's mining industry (1993, NTCM figures)
- Jawoyn buy out CDC share of Nimiluk Tours joint venture to take full 50 per cent equity in the company
- A five-year plan "Rebuilding the Jawoyn Nation: Towards Economic Independence" adopted, outlining economic and social strategies aimed at independence from the Federal Government by 2000. The plan includes proposals to spend up to \$2 million to establish tourist infrastructure at Nitmiluk National Park. The plan also adopts a long-term training and employment plan, with 60+ people already in work and 140 in various forms of training since January 1993. A regional land management strategy and a reconciliation strategy with the local Katherine council are also outlined.

1996

- Manyallaluk Tours enters the Australian Tourism Awards' Hall of Fame.
- Gimbat in Kakadu National Park returned to Jawoyn traditional owners.
- The Jawoyn Association develops a Best Practice project, including five year development plan.
- A \$160 million eight-year deal signed for stage 2 of the Mt Todd mine. Mirrkworlk Joint Venture awarded contractor to excavate ore body.
- Announcement of Nitmiluk Centre, \$3 million development at Nitmiluk
- Jawoyn were represented on the Minerals Council.

1997

- Nitmiluk Centre opens and subsequently wins major architectural prizes.
- Jawoyn representative elected to Northern Territory Minerals Council, the first Aboriginal organisation to be represented on peak mining organisation.

Challenges:

- funding for old infrastructure
- negotiation for land use through S19 is a very challenging area
- one Jawoyn Nation between Jawoyn members
- creating a strong commitment and management team
- balance between social and cultural programs and commercial
- maintaining culture heritage and employment
- land care programs
- increasing Jawoyn participation
- being able to access skills and expertise
- cattle and buffalo

The Association has made significant progress in the past 30 years. Planning has been a clear element.

We are building a strong Jawoyn Association.

- increasing land management
- preserving art
- opportunities for carbon trading
- tourism: increase tourism movement

(What happened two years ago) corrupted the whole organisation. There was some serious talk. Now I am back at the organisation, building the main core of the business and what it has been set up for.

Presentation

David Rolland (GHD) and Valerie Nullet (Parsons Brinkerhoff) spoke to the MomeNTum presentation.

(See slides)

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK**Group One**

A big issue for us is the red tape, whatever we looked at. There are instances of where things were being done but there is red tape of up to four years with government and the land councils.

Katherine High School has 51% indigenous students. Every school outside Katherine has Indigenous students.

Because the population is mainly Indigenous, eg Katherine is 30 to 50%. What are the opportunities that can be expanded on so Indigenous people can better participate in development, eg Gunjehmi in Jabiru. Why they got off the merry-go-round of royalties. They were able to, because they employed excellent back up people to set them up, eg KPMG from Sydney, to set up their business. Control, watching, do an audit every year. That's the successes all our organisations need to develop.

We see so many ideas but a lack of expertise to develop.

There is a lack of specialist TAFE Colleges. Ours is embedded in schools, eg CDU. Having been in TAFE in Queensland, where we provide TAFE services. There are different sizes of TAFE. Can buy in specialised services and everything is nationally accredited.

Main thing is we did background quality groups to help set up things.

Because of the time factor you miss the opportunity. eg mine has been mothballed, it had been developing for four years (ie didn't capture the opportunity).

- getting good staff.
- setting up wholesale distribution centre
- tours
- agriculture and horticulture
- aged care.

Group Two

Spent a lot of time drawing infrastructure. Current sealed roads, dirt roads that need upgrading. Would like to see some additional roads, eg linking to the Daly.

(with the roads we drew) we have now spent all the Australian Government's infrastructure budget.

Barriers:

- silo mentality
- decisions being made outside the area without consultation or communication
- essential services capacity, relies on electoral cycles, which isn't good
- decision-makers are not based in regional areas
- late payments by NT and AG

- Need to share across departments to maximise opportunities.
- Roads and bridges are crucial, need to open up opportunities for other development.
- Waste management: 100 hectare site in Timber Creek that has capacity for the storage of asbestos.
- Land release in regional areas, particularly Timber Creek, could create opportunities, eg for Ord Stage 3
- Katherine as an intermodal hub
- 500 hectares from Manballoo for freight hub
- heavy vehicle alternative route
- Katherine is at the crossroads.
- NTG needs to relinquish planning to Local Government
- We end up having to fix the problem that's made in Darwin. I am on the DCA and I am frustrated (Fay).

Who pays?

Roads: need partners, including mining, Indigenous communities. Needs to be a partnership, government can't pay all the time.

Social licence to operate, eg McArthur River Mine and the money they spend in the community each year.

All levels of government need to work together in partnership to progress the region.

Group three

- Looked at the big four.
- Transport is the top of the list.
- Need a rail line from Mt Isa to Tennant Creek and Katherine to Kununurra and the freight hub. Possibly a spur into the Roper region.
- Defence benefits: Won't be feasible to put a railway through to Kununurra for a long time but Bradshaw and Tindal will become vital to Australia's defence.
- Vital for land tenure and leasing arrangements to be resolved. For the expansion of Katherine long-term.
- Short-term, there is land available but if you think of Katherine in 30 years, we need to start thinking further ahead.
- Clusters and development of power infrastructure. If mines development there is energy/gas. Hopefully there would be other commercial possibilities.
- Possible growth industries: Land management within country, rehabilitation of mine sites and surveying.

Who pays?

The country is going down a user pays road but if the nation wants North Australia to be developed, then the rest of the country is going to have to pay for it.

Mr. Abbott said he was going to spend a week a year on Aboriginal land. He's going to Yirrkala. That's a start. If Nhulunbuy had a decent road, there is tourism potential.

But we have a handful of politicians in the NT. The NT is the same size as Geelong (we have 1% of Australia's population and political representation to match. We can't leave this to the politicians in Darwin and Australia because they have their own electorates to look after. It will take an effort from everyone.

Group Four

What new infrastructure?

- Community: Within the Katherine township to help economic development: Chambers Drive to the Victoria Highway, a connection is needed.
- Bridges on the Gorge Road need to be upgraded so they don't get shut down in the Wet. The Gorge is a lifeline for tourism in Katherine.
- Telecommunications: Dead spot along the highway is a big issue.
- Tanami was raised as needing development.
- Katherine needs an industrial hub not just a transport hub.

Biggest issue: When you are coming up with a great idea, you have a big picture of how you want it done, but you need to talk to people on the ground at the micro level. How will it work and what do people really need.

Opportunities:

- defence presence around Katherine
- Ord River Stage 2
- tourism
- oil, gas, mining
- major grocery retailer in Katherine

Issues:

- It was raised at the Mining Conference in Katherine that there was no DME representative in the area. Business needs support and a regular liaison officer.
- Department of Business is represented.
- Defence: Lack of accommodation – issues such as land release.
- Native title: lack of clear government direction on what is going on with Native Title. People have a different understanding.
- Lack of clear planning generally: high level strategic planning. Most of the little groups are doing planning but they are not talking to each other.

- Land councils do not have a good relationship with each other and with government.
- Parcel property sub-division for agribusiness.
- Lack of housing, police stations in communities.
- Lack of services to support infrastructure, ie lack of or poor quality.
- Red tape
- Permits to get out to community
- Lack of information – tourists might bypass because they don't know where to go.
- Development permits in Katherine and Mataranka are impeding development. How can government facilitate.
- Need to focus on jobs. Long-term not short-term jobs that end with funding.
- Department of Infrastructure were breaking packages for work into smaller packages to help communities.
- No one size fits all. Have to tailor it to the community.

Group Five

The big four: agriculture, tourism and mining and service industries (telecommunications and transport).

Developing human capital and what it means. Invest in all communities and giving communities more opportunities to people living in regional Australia.

Mentoring: Help people with pathways to a job.

ABA and royalties: Can they be used for training and to build human capital?

What high value-adding products can Australia produce in the future?

Tourism: Need some big ticket items. We are so close to Asia but what would they come to Australia for? What would Grey Nomads come here for? Could have fishing trips from Asia. There are beautiful spots but how can we make them more attractive?

Big projects.

- cost and capacity of the rail is taking away opportunities
- efficiency of the port: if it's the Port for Australia, everything has to go through there.
- connecting energy resources with power lines to the East Coast

Others:

- Water: wouldn't it be nice if we could bottle and send water to the East Coast.
- Build dams
- Possibility of a defence hub.

Who pays?

- mining
- PPPS – needs to be more efficient with the resources that we have
- SEZs
- Federal Government input

Government's role used to be to provide the backbone of infrastructure. Now they don't have so much money, need to attract overseas or Infrastructure Australia money or use mining royalties or ABA money.

Group six

Opportunities:

- Katherine hub with connectivity east-west
- gas pipeline
- Daly River, Florina area for agriculture
- opportunities in the Roper with iron ore... to extend Bing Bong port
- PPPs agreement
- land tenure: having regional hubs to service industry for expansion, land tenure is an issue, eg land for housing
- expansion of Tindal: impacts on Katherine, eg social, school
- opportunities for industry to tap into that
- value add with the existing agriculture industry
- old abattoir
- opportunities to export value added goods.

DISCUSSION

- possible research opportunity into what people in China want when they visit Nitmiluk.
- Concern that we are opening up blocks in Timber Creek with 1MW plus power requirement.
- Indigenous population will end up being 50%. Need education. If that isn't one of the biggest issues in the Territory. I went to school in Kununurra in the 60s. The education system is failing our children. Kids come out of school and they can't read and write.
- I tried to employ a Year 12 student from a well-known college in Darwin and she couldn't write her name. Force Indigenous kids to go to school.