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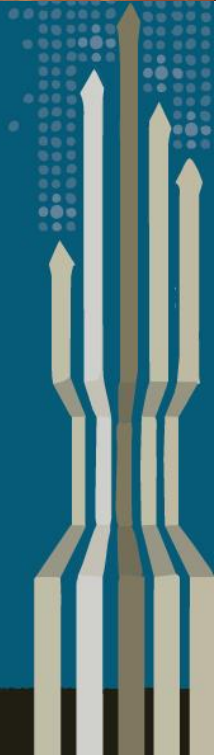


Tennant Creek Regional Economic Development Committee

TENNANT CREEK AND BARKLY REGION STRATEGIC & ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2016

Endorsed: 28 October 2014

www.regionaldevelopment.nt.gov.au



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1. INTRODUCTION

Tennant Creek is the fifth largest town in the Northern Territory and with its location on the Stuart Highway just south of the Barkly Highway.

The Tennant Creek Regional Economic Development Committee (REDC) is able to develop and drive opportunities for the Barkly region through action and advocacy. The REDC has significant opportunity to promote sustainable economic and employment growth, and develop the vibrancy and quality of life to support this objective. This document focuses on activities which are within the REDC scope of influence and are a combination of short term deliverable actions and longer term, aspirational goals that largely require an advocacy role for the Committee.

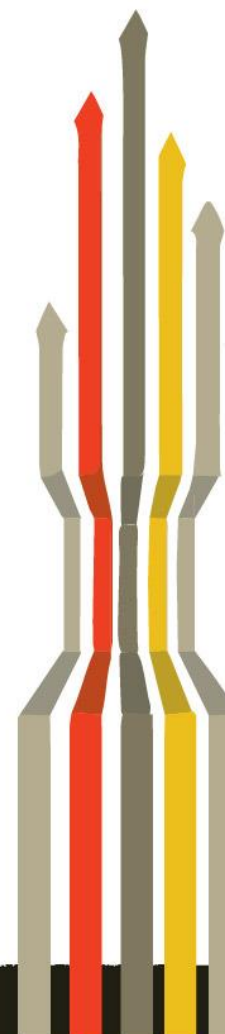
The Strategy focuses on regional industries with a comparative advantage or that can service unmet regional demand, and the infrastructure and systems needed to encourage and accelerate economic growth (the 'economic enablers'). The Strategy is informed by the NT Government's policy and strategic agenda, by the depth of local knowledge and experience of REDC members and by consultation with a range of community stakeholders.

It is envisaged that the strategic direction and actions outlined in this paper will form the basis of economic development advice from Tennant Creek and the Barkly region to the Northern Australia Development Office and the Australian Government in the development of Northern Australia.

2. REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Regional Economic Development Committee's purpose is to assist Tennant Creek and the Barkly region to grow its economic base. The REDC takes actions that include but are not limited to:

- Strengthening intra- and inter-regional networks and partnerships;
- Identifying and prioritising local economic development opportunities;
- Identifying barriers to economic development and pathways to resolve these issues;



- Developing and implementing proposals to drive economic growth, including activities that can be undertaken both with and without direct government support;
- Promoting economic and employment growth, and contributing to development and investment attraction in the region; and
- Engaging the NT Government on planning, policy development and priority setting for the region, including proposals and recommendations for consideration by the NT Government’s Economic Development Committee and the Regional Development Australia Northern Territory (RDA NT) Committee.

3. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC APPROACH

In the next 12 months, the Tennant Creek REDC will focus on:

- Creating partnerships across the region that provide enhanced ability to deliver on key objectives;
- Engaging the broad community to contribute to discussion and action on key objectives;
- Immediately implementing practical local actions to build a vibrant growing tourism industry;
- Investigating ways to broaden the economic base by exploring new defence, pastoral and construction opportunities;
- Trialing land development models that include investment, capital infrastructure, turn-key development, equity and revenue returns for land owners, sustainable commercial activities and community capacity building.
- Advocating for increased strategic attention and delivery of transport, infrastructure and government services;
- Securing increased investment in the region through proactively marketing resource and land assets and business capability.

Key industry sectors outlined in the REDC Strategic Plan are:

- Mining and energy;
- Land development, pastoral and agriculture;
- Tourism;



- Construction;
- Transport, freight and logistics;
- Defence; and
- Government, Non-Government Organisations and not-for-profit sector.

These industries have a comparative strength in Tennant Creek and the Barkly region, and the greatest potential to make positive and sustainable contributions to economic development. Tennant Creek is an important regional hub and significant centre for government services delivery.

Maximising the region's development potential also requires having the right 'economic enablers' in place. This includes appropriate policies that enable efficient access to land, water and labour resources, and ensuring there is adequate access to infrastructure and investment capital to support economic development opportunities.

4. PRIORITY INDUSTRY SECTORS – IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Mining and Energy

Mining is the most significant industry in the Barkly region, accounting for over 30% of Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 2012, or \$127 million¹. Mining has been a major industry in the Barkly since gold was discovered in the late 19th century. Key mining commodities in the Barkly region include gold, manganese, phosphate, bauxite, lead-zinc-silver, copper, iron ore and non-metallic minerals.

Mining is a highly cyclical industry, and activity is dependent on international supply and demand conditions and the pricing signals this creates. Supply chain logistics are critical to the success of mining projects.

As a capital-intensive industry mining employment is typically low relative to output, and the workforce is highly skilled, which is reflected in relatively high salaries. A challenge for regional communities is how to maximise economic, business and employment benefits from

¹ *Tennant Creek at a Glance Economic Profile*, Northern Territory Government, 2013.



mining projects, especially with fly-in fly-out employment becoming increasingly common. There are a small number of mining-related businesses, most of which are based around exploration. Emmerson Resources is the only locally-based resources company in the Barkly region that is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.

OM Holding's Bootu Creek Project – located 110 kilometres north of Tennant Creek – is the only mine currently operating in the Barkly. The project produces around 600,000 tonnes of manganese per annum and employs over 200 people, though the majority of employees are engaged on a fly-in fly-out (FIFO) basis. There are also numerous small quarries for sand, gravel and rock in the region. The Barkly is a highly prospective mineral province with over a dozen exploration companies active in the region. The Barkly also has among the highest exploration expenditures of the Territory's regions.

A small gold recovery operation based on crushing building materials from the Warrego Mine site is currently in the commissioning stage, and proposes to use the Battery Hill Mining Centre stamp. There are also four significant mining projects currently going through approvals processes in or close to the Barkly Region, namely:

- Aard Metals' Warrego Tailings Project (magnetite, copper), scheduled for development in Q1 2015;
- TNG's Mt Peake Project (titanium, vanadium and iron), scheduled for development in 2015;
- Minemakers' Wonarah Phosphate Project, scheduled for development in Q1 2016; and
- Rum Jungle Resources' Ammaroo Phosphate Project, scheduled for development in 2016.

There are also a number of deposits undergoing feasibility assessments, but which have not submitted development proposals including:

- Peko Resources' Peko Tailings Project (gold);
- Metals X's Rover 1 deposit (copper and gold);
- Emmerson Resources' Gecko (Goanna) deposit (copper and gold);
- Emmerson Resources' Chariot deposit (gold);
- Truscott Mining's Westminster Project (gold);
- Kidman Resources' Home of Bullion Project (copper); and



- Phosphate Australia’s Highland Plains Phosphate Project.
- Blaze International Limited’s Barkly Copper Gold Project: Bluebird Prospect

Rover 1 has approval for the construction of a \$10 million exploration decline for underground resource drilling.

Opportunities:

- Increase the local supply of inputs (labour, goods and services) to exploration and mining activities in the region promotion and development of regional capability and facilitating business collaboration to develop strategic alliances and partnerships in tendering.
- Increase national and international awareness of the region’s exploration and mining potential.
- Use the Mine Rehabilitation Fund to create practical initiatives.
- Creation of an Australian Mining Centre of Excellence in Tennant Creek.

Strategic Action:

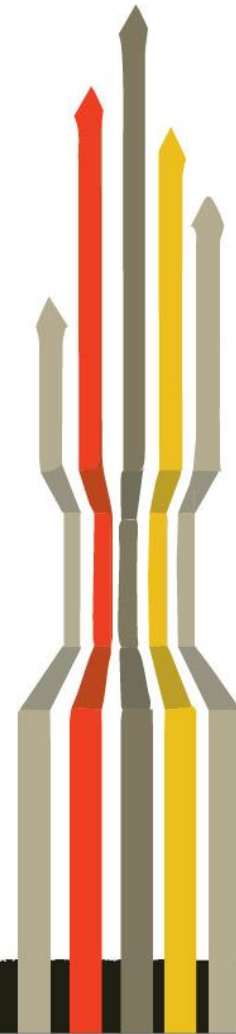
- REDC to work with local businesses and organisations to develop and present materials which highlight regional capability.

Action: EDO with REDC members Steve Edgington and Steve Baldwin to initiate a roundtable forum bringing together exploration and mining firms operating in the region and local supplier to (1) explore project development synergies and (2) increase awareness of local supply capability. **Timing:** by June 2015.

Action: Department of the Chief Minister (DCM) Economic Development Officer (EDO), with the support of the REDC member Greg Marlow, to work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Territory Industry Capability Network (NT-ICN) to develop a regional supply and service capability statement. **Timing:** by June 2015.

- REDC to work with Department of Mines and Energy (DME) and DCM Office of Asian Engagement, Trade and Investment (AETI) to present resource opportunities to potential miners and investors during trade and engagement missions.

Action: EDO, with the support of REDC member Steve Baldwin, to work with DME and AETI to design a presentation of



mining investment opportunities for the Barkly region. **Timing:** by June 2015.

- REDC to develop and publish a directory of regional investment opportunities.

Action: DCM Economic Development officers in Darwin, with support of Barkly EDO, to draft a directory of regional investment opportunities. **Timing:** by March 2015.

- REDC to advocate and take preliminary actions to develop an Australian Mining Centre of Excellence.

Action: EDO to outline in a one-page brief the concept of a Australian Mining Centre of Excellence which would encompass a multi-purpose facility for vocational training, leadership and professional development, and with access to open and underground mines. **Timing:** by June 2015.

- Using the Mine Rehabilitation Fund, plan projects and create practical initiatives in the region.

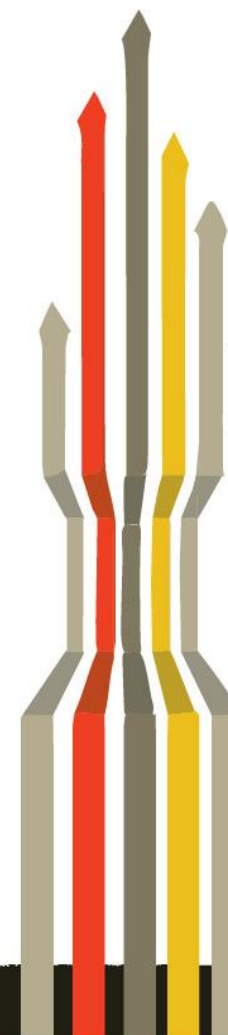
Action: EDO with support of REDC member Bob Baldwin identify potential projects for the Mine Rehabilitation Fund, REDC lead planning of projects to create practical initiatives in the region.

Timing: by June 2015.

4.2 Land development, pastoral and agriculture

The Barkly has over 200,000km² of actively managed pastoral land over 25 leases. The majority of leases are held by large pastoral companies, with a balance being family owned, or owned by Indigenous groups. The region runs around 600,000 head of predominantly Santa Gertrudis and Brahman cattle. There are two distinct markets for the Barkly's cattle – in southern Barkly it is dominated by rearing weaners to go to Queensland for fattening, and in north Barkly the focus is on the live cattle trade out of Darwin to South East Asia.

The Barkly is one of the Territory's major cattle regions and accounts for around 30% of production. As for most agricultural commodities pastoral operators are 'price takers' and subject to the vagaries of weather conditions when it comes to annual revenue. In terms of the



regional economy Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing accounts for 13% of GRP, or around \$45 million. In 2012-13 the farm gate sales revenue for the region was estimated at \$92 million from the sale of 175,000 animals.

Traditionally more than 40% of businesses in Tennant Creek service the pastoral sector in some form.

Opportunities:

- Consider land agreement models that result in optimum economic outcomes for the region.
- Increase REDC engagement with the pastoral industry.
- Increase agricultural production through a better understanding of soil and water capabilities.
- Diversify economic activity and revenue sources on pastoral land by exploring opportunities from changes to the *Pastoral Land Act* which allow up to 30% of pastoral lease land to be converted to other land use (e.g. horticulture, tourism).

Strategic Action:

- Invite a representative from the pastoral industry to join the Tennant Creek REDC.

Action: EDO, with support of REDC member Greg Marlow and Rebecca Healy, contact the Barkly Research Advisory Committee Chair (Michael Johnson, Brunette Downs) outlining REDC's keenness to support the sector and invite participation from a pastoral representative on the REDC. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Advocate for funding to undertake water, soil and vegetation capability assessments.

Action: REDC member Steve Edgington to maintain contact with the Northern Australia Development Office to indicate Barkly REDC's support for the NT Government proposal to the Australian Government to fund water, soil and vegetation capability assessments across the Barkly/NT. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Promote awareness of changes to the *Pastoral Land Act*, and work with pastoralists to identify economic development opportunities.

Action: EDO with support REDC members Greg Marlow and Rebecca Healy to work with Department of Land Resource



Management to increase pastoralist awareness of changes, and subsequent opportunities. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Draft and disseminate case studies of successful *Pastoral Land Act*-related diversification and income growth projects that have occurred on pastoral lands in the Territory.

Action: EDO, with support REDC members Greg Marlow and Rebecca Healy, to work with DPIF and the Barkly Research Advisory Committee to identify pertinent case studies of successful business concepts relevant to Barkly pastoralists (such as tourism and value-added pastoral activities at Brunette Downs Station, Banka Banka Station). **Timing:** by December 2014.

4.3 Tourism

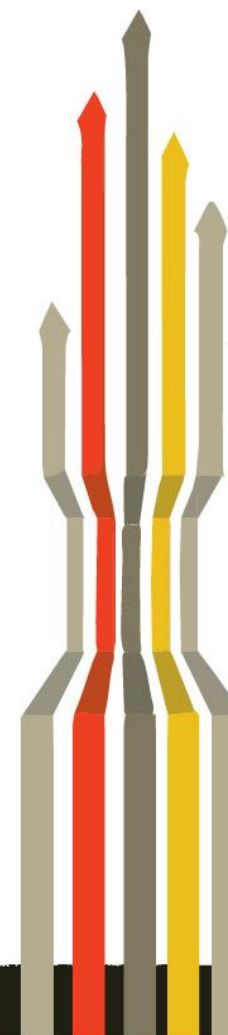
Tourism is a major contributor to the Barkly economy, generating significant revenue and employment in the accommodation and food services, retail and transport industries. The region averages around 90,000 overnight visitors per annum (8% of the Territory's overnight visitors) per annum. Around 20% of overnight visitors are from overseas. As in other regions of the Territory tourism activity is highly seasonal, and peaks during the Dry. Major tourist groups include bus tours, backpackers and Grey Nomads.

Safe, reliable and affordable transport infrastructure and services are critical to the tourism industry, as is a welcoming community and a broad range of visitor experiences.

The Local Tourism Advisory Council (LTAC) was established in April 2014 as a result of REDC advocacy to revitalise Barkly tourism. LTAC is industry specific while the REDC has a broader remit. LTAC will be the lead agency working to its tourism action plan, while REDC has an interest in being updated on initiatives and implementing complementary economic development actions. Many of the strategic actions identified below will be undertaken by the REDC and LTAC members in partnership.

Opportunities:

- Increase visitor length of stay and expenditure by:
 - Using research to inform product development and revitalisation;
 - Enhancing presentation of the region;



- Enhanced marketing and reputation management; and
- Product development

Strategic Actions:

Market research

- REDC and LTAC to work with Tourism NT to develop and implement a range of practical initiatives to increase the local understanding of the key motivators of major tourist groups visiting the region, and activities and products that appeals to the groups.

Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to liaise with Tourism NT to source visitor information and profiles to inform local tourism operators. **Timing:** November 2014.

Presentation

- Improve Tennant Creek and the region's reputation as a tourist destination by refreshing signage, shop fronts and improving the service culture.

Action: EDO to source REDC opinion for incorporation in LTAC liaison with Department of Infrastructure to identify signage priorities, implement new signage and replace old/ damaged signage. **Timing:** by November 2014.

Action: REDC member Greg Marlow to liaise with the Chamber of Commerce and Department of Business, to encourage businesses to improve their 'street appeal'. **Timing:** by November 2014.

Action: REDC member Greg Marlow to liaise with the Chamber of Commerce and Department of Business to investigate ways of enhancing customer service, through exploring synergies with the Golden Heart Awards and training opportunities. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Improve urban street-scaping through the coordinated use of landscaping, town beautification.



Action: REDC and LTAC members Jason Newman and Edwina Marks to use Tourism NT market research results, NT Department of Infrastructure and Barkly Regional Council capital works and town beautification programs, to maximise impact of landscaping mindful of tourism priorities. **Timing:** by April 2015.

- Improve visitor appeal through interactive public art.

Action: REDC member Alan Murn to develop a tourism project concept encompassing interactive technology embedded in sculptural format, perhaps located somewhere like Peko Park, in liaison with Barkly Regional Arts, Nyinkka Nyunyu and Barkly Regional Council, and identify funding sources from NT and Australian Governments (Australian Government’s Remote Jobs Community Program). **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Introduce a ‘brand an anthill’ along the Stuart Highway near Tennant Creek in a “sculpture by the people for the people” initiative.

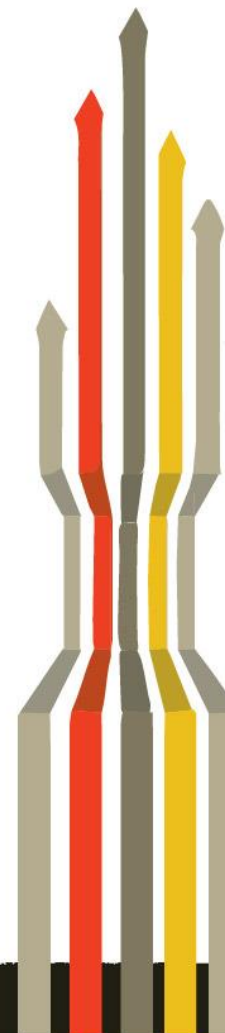
Action: EDO, with REDC member Alan Murn to instigate a social media project inviting travellers and locals to ‘brand an anthill’. To “take a photo of yourself and your anthill”, and pin it to notice board at VIC for free 15 minutes of internet. **Timing:** by December 2015.

Marketing and reputation management

- Create a distinctive and higher profile for the Barkly region and Tennant Creek by working with Tourism NT to develop the Tennant Creek/ Barkly brand, building on concepts such as Australia’s “golden heart” and “outback experience”.
- Install signage along Barkly and Stuart highways to promote tourism product and activities.

Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to work with LTAC and Tourism NT to identify branding and signage options. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Increase tourist visitation to the Visitor Information Centre.



Action: REDC and LTAC members Steve Baldwin, Jason Newman and Edwina Marks to work with Tourism NT to investigate most effective location, promotion and signage for the Visitor Information Centre. **Timing:** by September 2014.

- Work with regions to cross-promote activities and maximise tourism-related benefits across the Territory. A recent example is the Ulysses (motorcycle) Club’s annual general meeting in Alice Springs in 2014, and its flow on benefits to other regions.
- Produce tourism collateral for the region, such as maps, ‘top 10 things to do’ packages, postcards, pop-up displays etc.
- Improve the region’s digital presence through websites and branding, and monitoring social media for reputation management.
- Establish marketing ‘touch points’ and ‘famil’ sessions for wholesale tourism operators.
- Create a calendar of events to assist in identifying product gaps and opportunities.
- Gauge support for a ‘China ready’ campaign, whereby all Tennant Creek businesses (or the vast majority) install China ByPay, and promote the town as being 100% “China-Ready”.

Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to provide updates on LTAC / Tourism NT progress at scheduled REDC meetings. **Timing:** monthly at REDC Committee Meetings.

- Encourage positive tourism media by proactively working to disseminate positive media stories to mainstream press, tourism publications and digital media.

Action: Each REDC member, with the support of the EDO, to generate one positive economic development story each month for submitting to newspapers, regional organisation websites, Ministers, DCM Strategic Communications & Marketing, tourism, pastoral, mining, transport and construction industry publications. **Timing:** monthly from November 2014.

- Greater marketing of the region’s Indigenous culture and skills.



Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to work with Tourism NT an initiative on cultural awareness to shape positive visitor perceptions for tourists coming to Tennant Creek (looking at cultural differences and reputation management). **Timing:** by November 2014.

Action: REDC member Edwina Marks to work with relevant organisations in the installation of new local language signage at selected points across the region. **Timing:** by August 2015.

- Develop service skills of front-of-shop staff.

Action: REDC members Steve Baldwin, Greg Marlow and Bob Bagnall to liaise with the local businesses and the Department of Business to identify programs which develop staff service skills. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Offer visitor information through new technology platforms.

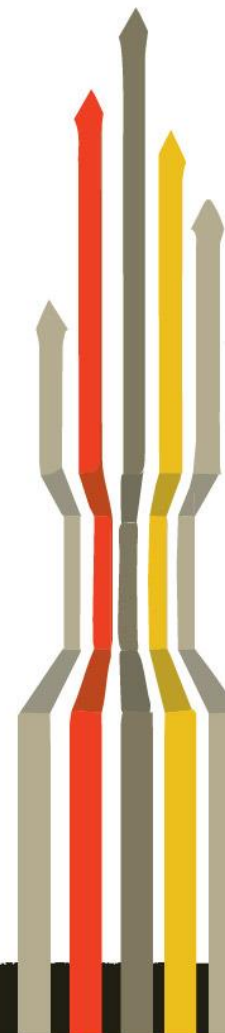
Action: REDC and LTAC members Steve Baldwin, Jason Newman, Edwina Marks and Bob Bagnall to support the development of audio tour guide for Tennant Creek and Barkly region. **Timing:** by March 2015.

- To be create more positives and influence the two-way radio conversation, establish a two-way radio presence to insert positive messaging, intervene in reputation statements, and provide answers to traveller's queries.

Action: REDC members Tony Civitarese and Steve Baldwin to canvass support for a two-way radio initiative with stakeholders and the Visitor Information Centre. **Timing:** by December 2014.

Product development

- Create reasons for visitors to stay longer and create opportunities to increase yields. Potential new opportunities include: horse riding trails, dirt bike/ motor bike trails, mining heritage activities, tag-along tours, UFO extra-terrestrial story, night sky and astronomy, bird watchers, golf clubs, aviation enthusiastic, self –drive 4x4, sculpture park, competition for unique Australian style buildings (station homestays), helicopter mustering, Indigenous experiences, bush tucker park, camping conferences, extra-



terrestrial and science fiction events (Wycliffe Well), arts products and activities, music festivals, Desert Harmony Festival, night-time experiences at Battery Hill Mining Centre (dinner, evening tours, sound and light show), Indigenous experiences, adventure tourism, Tennant Creek to Darwin bike ride, major drawcard festival.

Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to propose implementation of a brain-storming workshop to develop new product, liaising with Tourism NT, Department of Business and Indigenous Business Australia. **Timing:** by December 2014.

Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to engage with Great Southern Rail to identify opportunities for Tennant Creek tourism operators to enhance travellers' regional experience, liaising with Nyinkka Nyunyu and Barkly Regional Arts to draw/develop product. **Timing:** by December 2014.

Action: REDC to support Barkly Regional Council establish priorities for the upgrade of camping, walking and cycling and playground facilities that support tourism activity. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Greater product development focussed on the region's Indigenous heritage and culture.

Action: REDC and LTAC members Steve Baldwin, Bob Bagnall and Alan Murn to work with Traditional Owners and organisations such as Barkly Regional Arts and Nyinkka Nyunyu in liaison with the Department of Business and Indigenous Business Australia to develop a project plan for workshop focusing on the creation and nurturing of micro-business that deliver Indigenous tourism product. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Enhance key attractions such as the Telegraph Station, Mary Ann Dam, Battery Hill Mining Centre, Nyinkka Nyunyu Centre, Devils Pebbles, Banka Banka Station, Hatches Creek gold fossicking, Chinese settlements, Old Police Station Waterhole, Elliot Town Nature Walk, Lake Woods, Long Reach Waterhole etc.
- Investigate opportunities to develop tailored events and attractions (e.g. Ulysses Club).
- Investigate commercial feasibility for a tourism activity area on Council owned land at Mary Ann Dam.



- Support, facilitate and monitor Parks & Wildlife Commission NT's current expression of interest process for tourism investment opportunities in Barkly parks and reserves.

Action: REDC and LTAC member Jason Newman to update the REDC members at Committee meetings **Timing:** ongoing, at monthly REDC meetings.

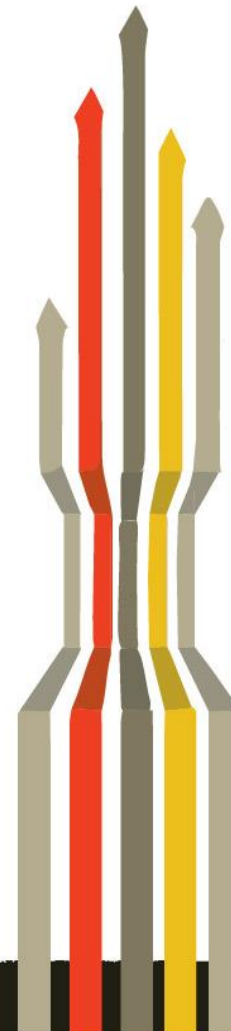
4.4 Construction

The construction industry comprises residential building, non-residential building (hotels, shopping centres, factories, offices, schools, hospitals, cinemas, etc) and engineering components (roads, bridges, railways, dams and pipelines, power generation and transmission infrastructure and telecommunications infrastructure, as well as construction for mineral and gas developments). Interest rates and business and consumer confidence are major influences on the building cycle.

Demographic, social and economic factors have a strong influence on demand for residential dwellings and construction, including the rate of new household formation, income and wealth and its distribution, availability and cost of housing, price of new dwellings relative to existing dwellings and government housing policies.

Opportunities:

- Develop Tennant Creek as a regional construction hub which delivers innovative approaches to achieve more cost-effective methods of construction.
- Advocate for funding of infrastructure projects in Territory and Australian Government capital works programs.
- Facilitate mining-related construction activity.
- Maximise opportunities for regional businesses to participate in tendering for projects.
- Consider avenues to provide advantage for regional businesses in Local Government procurement.
- Facilitate NT Government, Barkly Regional Council and regional organisations' capital works synergies to maximise outcomes.
- Consider the potential and interest of organisations such as Julalikari, Barkly Regional Council, Anyinginyi Health as non-traditional residential developers.



- Explore the potential of Tennant Creek as base for FIFO workers.
- Create employment pathways for young people in the construction sector.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop Tennant Creek as a recognised construction hub and investigate innovative approaches to achieve more cost-effective methods of construction.

Action: EDO with REDC member Tony Civitarese to contact leading housing and construction organisations (such as private sector construction and affordable housing firms and NTG Department of Housing) to explore opportunities and canvass support for a network of local firms to develop an ‘innovation housing hub’. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Advocate to NT and Australian governments for commencement of key prioritised infrastructure projects.

Action: EDO with REDC member Barbara Shaw to lead discussions with key stakeholders to develop top five regional infrastructure priorities, and prepare a short supporting business case. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Maximise opportunities for regional business to participate in tendering for projects.

Action: EDO, REDC members Steven Baldwin and Tony Civitarese to lead discussion with ICN-NT to facilitate creation of alliances of local firms to tender for large construction contracts, including opportunities for greater participation by Indigenous business ventures. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Engage government to include regional weighting in tender assessment criteria for government funded projects.

Action: REDC members Barbara Shaw and Edwina Marks to lead a review of Council procurement criteria and processes to maximise regional business contracts. **Timing:** by January 2015.

- Facilitate NT Government, Barkly Regional Council and major regional organisations’ capital works synergies.



Action: EDO and REDC member Edwina Marks with the Department of Infrastructure (Darcy Dunbar), Department of Community Services (Greg Taylor) and LGANT (Peter McLinden) to identify synergies in the prioritisation, coordination and delivery of capital works in the Barkly region. **Timing:** by February 2015.

- Consider the potential and interest of organisations such as Julalikari, Barkly Regional Council, Anyinginyi Health as non-traditional residential developers.

Action: EDO to facilitate a meeting with REDC members from Anyinginyi, Barkly Regional Council and Julalikari Council to explore options in relation to their organisations becoming developers. **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Explore the potential of Tennant Creek as base for FIFO workers.

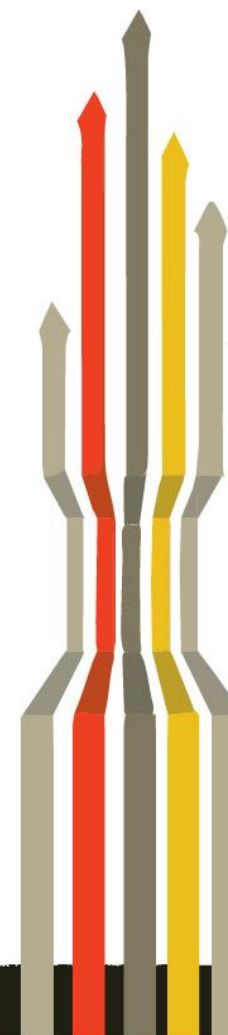
Action: EDO with REDC member Jason Newman to investigate opportunities and constraints for Tennant Creek as a FIFO base with mining companies. **Timing:** by January 2015.

- Investigate the supply and demand for equipment operators for construction (and mining) sectors.

Action: EDO with REDC member Tony Civitarese to quantify the current and potential future demand for equipment operators for construction (and mining) sectors. **Timing:** by February 2015.

4.5 Transport Freight and Logistics

Tennant Creek is the Barkly's major population centre and is located on the Stuart Highway 1000 kilometres south of Darwin and 500 kilometres north of Alice Springs near the intersection with the western terminus of the Barkly Highway. Genesee and Wyoming Australia (GWA) owns the 2,200 kilometre North-South rail line from Tarcoola-to-Darwin and operates six freight services a week on this line. The service does not stop at Tennant Creek, but does stop at Muckaty Rail Siding to collect and transport manganese from Bootu Creek mine to Darwin for export from East Arm Port. The rail is a key piece of infrastructure and is catalyst for future regional development.



Great Southern Rail operates The Ghan passenger service which stops at Tennant Creek twice a week – at 11:30pm. Most tourists come to Barkly and Tennant Creek by road or rail, and there are several coach operators serving the region, including AAT Kings, Top Deck, Contiki, Connections, Young at Heart and APTPC. There is no Regular Public Transport air service into the region.

A longer term vision for the region is to develop an inland port/ regional transport hub based in Tennant Creek. This would include establishment of a rail corridor and gas pipeline between Tennant Creek and Mt Isa, and potentially a connection to the national electricity grid. A rail line between Tennant Creek and Kununurra is also a possibility. These infrastructure projects would open up vast areas of highly prospective agricultural and mineral land, and create major new tourism and defence-related opportunities.

Opportunities:

- Maximise options for existing transport assets.
- Advocate for transport and logistics infrastructure – and particularly east west linkages – that opens up economic opportunities.
- Advocate for the development of Tennant Creek as an ‘inland port’ transport hub.
- Identify niche business and logistics opportunities for Tennant Creek.



Strategic Action:

- Advocate for transport and logistics infrastructure that opens up economic development opportunities, possibly including a rail-line from Tennant Creek to Mt Isa and the 'Iron Boomerang' proposal linking the west and east coast.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Jason Newman, to maintain contact with the Northern Australian Development Office supporting NT Government's advocacy for Tennant Creek to Mt Isa and Iron Boomerang rail proposals. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Advocate for the development of Tennant Creek as an 'inland port' transport hub and investigate business possibilities based on logistical position such as niche opportunities in storage, transportation such as cardboard boxes for melon transportation or furniture stage for personal storage, and waste management opportunities.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Francine McCathy to organise a meeting of key stakeholders to progress development of Tennant Creek as an 'inland port', and prepare a one-page overview of opportunities, investment, demand and 'next steps'. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Ensure Department of Infrastructure and Barkly Regional Council's transport management capital works align and support roads that matter in an economic development sense.

Action: REDC member Edwina Marks to meet with Department of Infrastructure (Darcy Dunbar) and LGANT (Peter McLinden) to align and prioritise roads that matter in an economic development sense. **Timing:** by November 2014.



4.6 Defence

The Barkly has abundant space and desert terrain with rail and road access for Australian and international defence personnel training. Road and air infrastructure could be used as asset. Defence does not currently have a strong presence in the region.

Opportunities:

- All-year arid environment and survival training and exercise area.
- Australian Defence Force and foreign aviation exercises using airport and unrestricted airspace.
- Renewing Norforce presence and activity capitalising on high indigenous population.
- Securing increased defence presence may stimulate infrastructure development, such as the Tennant Creek-Mt Isa rail line.

Strategic action:

Action: EDO, in conjunction with REDC members Francine McCarthy and Steve Baldwin, to:

- Identify suitable land (accessibility and tenure) as potential training/exercise areas.
- check military aircraft parameters against suitability of airport runway, fuel supplies and other aviation logistics
- Outline the defence opportunity in a one-page brief and circulate to for REDC members for input.
- propose agreed concept to NT Government and Australian Defence Force
- encourage busies to collaborate to pilot partnership tenders
- Map business capacity and prepare a statement ready for a potential defence opportunity

Timing: by December 2014.



4.7 Government, non-government organisation and not-for-profit sector

Government, non-government organisation (NGO) and not-for-profit organisations are regionally significant in terms of their operational and capital expenditure and employment. Three of the largest employing industries in the Barkly region are public administration and safety (25% of regional employment), education and training (13%) and healthcare & social assistance (10%) – representing almost half the all employment in the region. The relatively stable nature of government funding can contribute to economic stability. Government investment in the region is also significant, with combined NTG and Commonwealth infrastructure spending in the Barkly budgeted at almost \$50 million in 2014-15.

Opportunities:

- Advocate for increased government staffing in the Barkly.
- Advocate for relocation of a government agency or service to the Barkly.
- Increased connectivity between RDA and REDC to optimise strategic and project work.

Strategic actions:

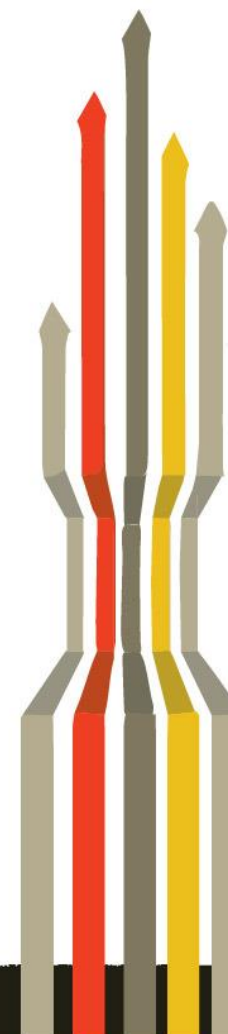
Action: REDC members Steve Baldwin and Trevor Sanders on prepare a plan to:

- Advocate directly to Australian Government Ministers for the maintenance of government funding for public administration and safety, education and training, healthcare and social assistance and arts.
- Advocate for location of an Australian or NT Government facility or agency in Tennant Creek.

Timing: by December 2015.

Action: REDC member Barb Shaw to brief REDC on RDA NT strategic thinking and projects and the RDA NT on current and planned work in the Barkly.

Timing: by November 2015.



5. INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Indigenous economic development contributes to greater Indigenous employment, business participation and ownership and wealth. There are many paths to supporting Indigenous economic development, including by encouraging the development of business models that encourage Indigenous participation in economic activities, and how to build social value into commercial models. One aspect that is recognised as being critical to greater Indigenous involvement in economic activity is education.

Opportunities and actions on engagement and advancement of Indigenous participation in economic development are embedded in this document as the REDC believes it is important to ‘mainstream’ strategic thinking and initiatives on Indigenous participation in the body of the document, rather than represented as a set of stand-alone initiatives. There are 18 actions in this Strategic Plan which have an Indigenous focus. Throughout the Strategic Plan actions with an Indigenous focus are identified by a green tab.

There will be opportunities in the Barkly that are specific to the Indigenous population by virtue of land tenure. Agreements to release land for development can have the potential to leverage economic development opportunities for Indigenous land owners. Land agreements provide opportunities for Indigenous people to attract development capital, create alliances with private sector firms, to establish their own businesses, to explore opportunities for employment ‘on country’ and to foster sustainable economic development and employment opportunities and pathways.

Partnership arrangements with Indigenous organisations will be essential to economic development for the Barkly. Regional organisations working in collaboration, creating alliances and delivering initiatives in conjunction with Indigenous groups is seen as a path forward in this Strategic Plan. Developing the leadership and governance capacity of regional Indigenous organisations will be essential to maximise benefits. Partnerships with other organisations can bring specific expertise, capital and business acumen.

Establishment of micro business enterprises is also identified as an important avenue to create jobs largely tailored to individuals’ existing skills and interests. Mentoring and support for new businesses will be critical. Small business establishment is highlighted through this document as a potential pathway for Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals to pursue employment.

The definition of wealth in an Indigenous context also encompasses connection to land, family and physical and spiritual health. Culture-based businesses opportunities (such as cultural tourism and arts) provide significant scope for low entry-cost business establishment founded on knowledge and skills unique to the Indigenous population.



Support for Indigenous business development can also be sourced from programs offered by the NT Department of Business Indigenous Business Development Program, Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network, Indigenous Economic Development Field Officers Network and the Australian Government’s Indigenous Business Australia and Aboriginal Benefits Account.

Opportunities:

- Secure land agreements that include economic development objectives.
- Test and develop models that deliver sustainable investment, equity, revenue and employment opportunities for land owners, as well as ‘public value’.
- Source partners that bring investment, development expertise, commercial acumen and experience in capacity building.
- Establish micro businesses that offer sustainable self-employment.
- Create tourism businesses based on unique cultural knowledge and skills.
- Build management and governance capacity of organisations.
- Be RJCP-ready to optimise opportunity.

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENABLERS

6.1 Land and Water

The timely release of, and access to, land is critical to economic and social development. Transparent land use planning frameworks increase business certainty, and best practice regulatory and approval processes minimise unnecessary red tape. Effective land access processes will increase the Territory’s attractiveness as an investment destination and accelerate development.

Reliable access to water is critical for communities, projects and the environment. A consistent framework for the allocation of water will ensure certainty for all stakeholders.

An adequate supply of suitably zoned and priced land is a critical enabler of economic development. The majority of the Barkly region’s land is held under the Aboriginal Land Trust and administered by the Central and Northern Land Councils, with the balance under mining or pastoral leases. In the urban centres there is a broader range of land tenures and zonings which reflect the broad range of activities that

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occur in these centres. Land development in the Territory is regulated by the *Planning Act* and Northern Territory Planning Scheme in urban areas, which aim to ensure appropriate and timely development of land consistent with community attitudes.

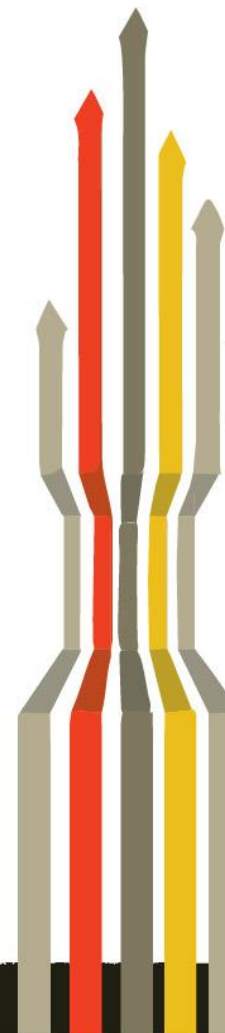
Planning and development on land subject to the *Native Title Act* and the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act (ALRA)* tends to be more resource intense as a broader range of regulation and stakeholder involvement is necessary. Section 19 of *ALRA* outlines the process and decision-makers. As the Australian Government manages the *ALRA*, the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, not Territory Ministers, make leasing decisions.

Barkly Regional Council also owns Juno, a 1200 hectare property five kilometres from Tennant Creek. Juno is the largest freehold land allotment in Tennant Creek. Council will pursue a scoping study to identify the potential and opportunities for the site. Possible uses include as a defence facility, refugee accommodation, jobs training centre, a tourism-related development and sub-division into rural living blocks. Special Purposes Lease land in the Barkly is also an untapped land resource.

The Barkly is a land-rich region, but agricultural development is inhibited by a lack of detailed information regarding soil types and water availability. The NT Government is working with the Australian Government to secure additional resources to strategically assess the Territory's land and water resources. These assessments will deliver more comprehensive data to facilitate agricultural investment, including in the Barkly. Recent changes to the *Pastoral Land Act* (discussed in Section 4.2) also provide for diversified land-use opportunities and new economic development activities.

Opportunities:

- Increase agricultural investment as a result of improved knowledge of regional land and water capability.
- Provide long term land use certainty through development of a Tennant Creek Land Use Master Plan.
- Reduce household and business costs through timely release of residential, commercial and industrial land for development.
- Develop Juno to create economic growth and diversification opportunities.
- Explore economic development potential of Special Purposes Lease land.



Strategic Action:

- Advocate for a master town plan for Tennant Creek.

Action: EDO in conjunction with REDC member Edwina Marks to draft a joint letter from the REDC and Barkly Regional Council to request the Northern Territory Planning Commission schedule development of Tennant Creek Masterplan.

Timing: by November 2014.

- Lobby for investment to undertake detailed land and water mapping in the Barkly, and to influence government decision makers with respect to planning for the staging of strategic assessments.

Action: EDO, with support of REDC member Greg Marlow, to maintain contact with Northern Australian Development Office expressing the Barkly REDC's support for the NT Government proposal to the Australian Government that it supports a broad scale land use data initiative (specifically for water, soil and vegetation capability assessments across Barkly region), and for accelerated investment in geoscience, exploration incentives and facilitation of land access to stimulate energy and minerals research, and requesting the Barkly REDC be updated with respect to these matters. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Support Barkly Regional Council to identify a range of suitable development options and developers for Juno.

Action: EDO to work with Barkly Regional Council in attracting suitable investors to develop Juno. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Source information quantifying the cost of living/ land costs in Tennant Creek and their impact on the Barkly region and schedule a brainstorming session of REDC members to identify potential ways to mitigating these costs.

Action: EDO, with support of REDC member Trevor Sanders, source information quantifying the cost of living/ land costs in Tennant Creek and their impact on the Barkly region and schedule a brainstorming session of REDC members to identify potential ways to mitigating these costs. **Timing:** by November 2014.



6.2 Labour

A skilled workforce is critical to economic development as it provides expertise to enable businesses to operate and expand. An under-supply of skilled labour will constrain economic growth prospects. Economic and employment growth also have substantial social benefits, and the capacity to make resources available for other purposes.

To operate effectively labour markets must be able to 'grow' the local workforce, and also have the flexibility to import labour to meet demand. Sustained employment opportunities will attract people to the Barkly and contribute to population stability and growth.

A regional asset is the young demographic and significant Indigenous population. In line with NT and Australian Government thinking, the REDC has a priority to maximise Indigenous employment in the region. The Barkly has an economic challenge in maintaining and building a skilled local workforce. The region has a labour force of around 2,000, an unemployment rate close to 9% and a participation rate of less than 50%. The unemployment rate is high relative to the Territory, and the participation rate is well below that of the Territory.

Labour is a critical input to economic development. It is widely recognised that a large section of the population is not actively engaged in the labour market (reflected in low participation rates), and this represents a significant untapped resource. Identifying and addressing fundamental motivating factors to encourage workforce participation is essential. Backpackers are an important source of labour for the Barkly and the health and education sectors supplement the local labour pool with qualified immigrants. There is further opportunity to tap into the international labour to secure skilled and professional labour for the region through the use of 457 and 415 Visas.

Despite significant investments in training in the Barkly (estimated at \$36 million in 2012) there are still significant skill shortages. Directing training to areas where there are needs, which is primarily blue-collar jobs, is a challenge. Investigating ways to increase use of existing training facilities will be important to achieve long-term regional benefits.

CDU's Tennant Creek centre is a key regional training facility and the majority of its clients are Centrelink clients drawn from the Federal Government's Remote Jobs Community Programs (RJCP). Other clients are organisations seeking training for their staff: Barkly Regional Council; firms with apprentices and Barkly Work Camp (NT Department of Corrections). Together these organisations represent a significant regional cliental for training organisations. Julalikari administers the RJCP contract at Tennant Creek and across the majority of the Barkly region. The Vocational Training Education Center focuses on Indigenous pre-employment training. Supporting ongoing efforts to link practical training to practical work is an obvious pragmatic approach.



Tennant Creek High School has a strong vocational stream, and offers courses in rural operations, agri-foods, VET, resources and infrastructure, community services, and school-based apprenticeships. The school could be supported in its vocational training endeavours by increasing information exchange between local businesses on work placement and work experience.

Opportunities:

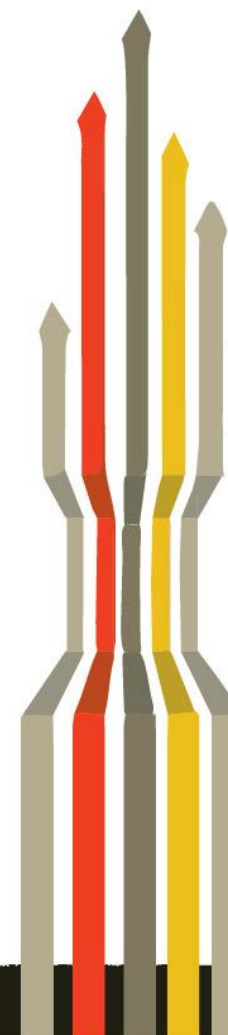
- To maximise outcomes build strategic alignment of three largest organisations in the region (Barkly Regional Council, Julalikari and Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation).
- To maximise labour force participation, especially in segments of the community that are under-represented, understand and lever off fundamental drivers of behaviour.
- Improve vocational training outcomes, especially in areas where there is immediate demand.
- Develop Tennant Creek as a training hub to maximise use of existing infrastructure.
- Explore opportunities for improved access to international immigration to alleviate skills shortages.
- Foster greater engagement between school vocational training programs and business /industry.
- Promote positive lifestyle and investment attributes of regional centres.
- Investigate regional ‘attractors’ to draw skilled people (back) to the region.
- Increase workforce through the use of 457 and 415 Visas.

Strategic Action:

Strategic alignment of major organisations

- Greater awareness by key regional organisations of the skill and training requirements of other organisations could create synergies and economies in the delivery of skills training.

Action: REDC member Edwina Marks to propose a regular meeting with CEOs of Barkly Regional Council, Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation and Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation with a view to review training and skills development requirements. **Timing:** by January 2015.



Workforce participation

- Labour force participation may be increased if there is a better understanding of the key economic and social drivers that encourage people to work, and a willingness to develop programs to facilitate participation.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Francine McCarthy to seek funding for an initiative to identify drivers of Barkly labour force participation. **Timing:** by March 2015.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Francine McCarthy engage with the Department of Community Services to create a circle of Barkly Indigenous role models based on the 'First Circles' concept. **Timing:** by March 2015.

- Encourage entrepreneurship and opportunities to establish micro-businesses through formal and informal mentoring and networking.

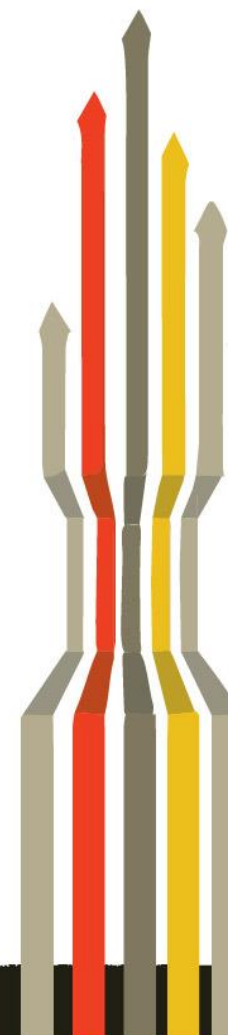
Action: EDO with support of REDC member Tony Civitarese work with the Department of Business to develop a micro-business and mentoring network in Tennant Creek tapping into Clontarf and NT Government and other support mechanisms, with a target of eight new micro-businesses established within twelve months. **Timing:** by November 2014,

- Maximise employment for existing unskilled population.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Edwina Marks, to create a local jobs exchange noticeboard for use by Barkly Regional Council, local training providers and community organisations. Noticeboard could be both hardcopy and electronic to be used by local employers to advertise job vacancies and job seekers. Noticeboard could promote employment support options, such as driving training for car and truck licences, work-focused literacy and numeracy, and OH&S knowledge. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Be RJCP-ready by planning projects now.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Bob Baldwin identify potential RJCP projects now and put concepts forward to the RJCP providers. **Timing:** by November 2014.



Training

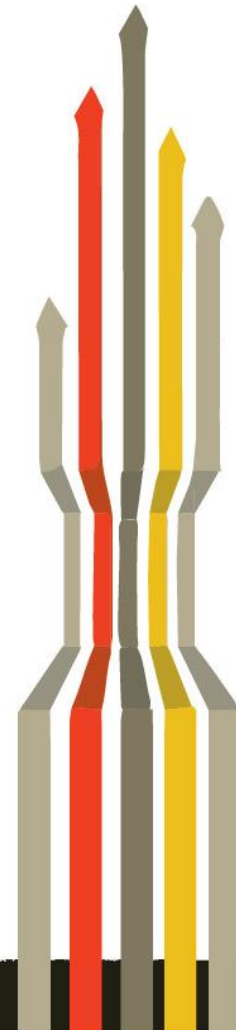
- Create a forum for information exchange and coordination of training initiatives.

Action: EDO with support of REDC members Tony Civitarese, Trevor Sanders and Edwina Marks to organise a forum of key stakeholders (Barkly Regional Council, Julalikari, Anygininyi, CDU Tennant Creek, Tennant Creek High School, Papulu Apparr-kari Language Centre, Group Training NT, Department of Corrections, RTOs and businesses active in training) to discuss coordination of course provision and sharing of resources. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Enhance links between training organisations and businesses to strengthen and expand opportunities for work placement/experience.

Action: REDC members Tony Civitarese, Trevor Sanders and Edwina Marks to include school–business liaison opportunities as a topic at Training Stakeholders Forum. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- To increase vocational training outcomes, especially in areas where there is immediate demand (e.g. skilled labour such as mechanics, trades, truck driving), upgrade the equipment at the Trade Training Centre to match industry standards and use.
- To increase work-ready vocational training graduates from the school system, explore opportunities to deliver Certificate 3 and 4 courses through the high school.
- To support to young people pursuing vocational pathways, offer wrap-round or social support (assistance with accommodation, introductions to teachers, inclusive social events and social skills) and create accommodation for CDU and Trade training students to stay in town.
- To increase demand for vocational training and increase utilisation of existing VET infrastructure, maximise the use of existing training assets.



- Investigate enhanced use of Tennant Creek High School facilities by a range of organisations, including training organisations.

Action: REDC members Tony Civitarese, Trevor Sanders and Edwina Marks to include these topics at Training Stakeholders Forum. **Timing:** by November 2014.

Business creation

- Develop and market unique 'gap year' experiences to attract youth to the region.

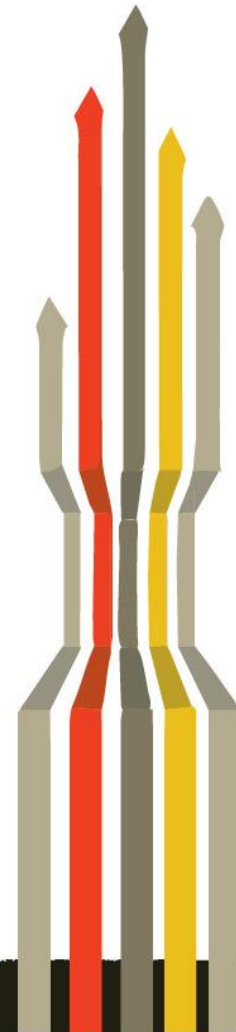
Action: REDC members Tony Civitarese, Trevor Sanders and Edwina Marks to include this topic for discussion at Training Stakeholders Forum. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Identify aboriginal enterprise opportunities that require seed capital, and apply to the Aboriginal Benefits Account and Indigenous Business Australia for start-up funding.
- Investigate a range of low start-up cost tourism-related business opportunities which encourage enterprise development and self-employment opportunities.

Action: EDO with REDC member Barbara Shaw to work with stakeholders such as CDU Tennant Creek Centre, Julalikari, LTAC and NT Department of Business-Indigenous Business Development Program and to approach Indigenous Business Australia for guidance and support for business start-ups and Aboriginal Benefits Account to fund major initiatives. **Timing:** by September 2014

- Leverage the horse skills of many Indigenous peoples in the Barkly and investigate opportunities to further development horse-based tourism activities and pastoral employment.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Barbara Shaw to meet with representatives of the pastoral industry (Barkly Research Advisory Committee Chair, Michael Johnson of Brunette Downs) and Tourism NT to explore opportunities and constraints. **Timing:** by November 2014.



- Explore options to increase the defence presence in the Barkly.

Action: EDO with REDC members Trevor Sanders in liaison with Tennant Creek High School to contact Defence Jobs to book career sessions at Tennant Creek. **Timing:** by January 2015.

Expand and retain population

- To improve access to housing and services, support Barkly Regional Council to investigate options addressing these issues.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Edwina Marks to support Barkly Regional Council to enable people to stay on country through considering mechanisms of retention of population and expenditure on communities (such vouchers for local community stores, more activity in communities, looking after country employment). **Timing:** by January 2015

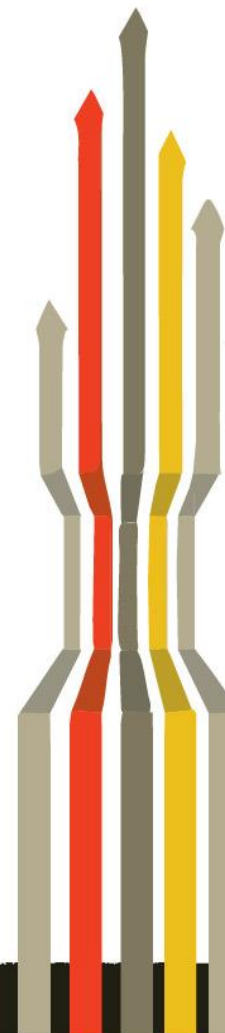
- Examine mechanisms to profile employment opportunities in the Barkly to international communities through the use of 457 and 415 Visas.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Edwina Marks to contact Department of Business - Business and Skilled Migration (Mary Martin) to investigate mechanisms to increase the profile of labour opportunities in the Barkly **Timing:** by September 2014.

- To attract residents to increase population base, advocate to NT Government to develop an initiative promoting lifestyle and investment attributes of NT regional centres to an eastern seaboard audience.

Action: EDO, with support of REDC member Steve Edgington, to supporting NT Government's Developing Northern Australia agenda, and NT Department of Business (Workforce Development) initiatives. **Timing:** by September 2014.

- To increase tourist and resident stay, build a welcoming culture across all levels of the community.



Action: REDC member Barbara Shaw, Steve Baldwin and Tony Civitarese to identify specific opportunities and implement initiatives to create a welcoming, inclusive culture in Tennant Creek. **Timing:** by September 2014.

- Advocate for relocation of non-client government departments to Tennant Creek.

Action: EDO with support from REDC member Jason Newman to write to the Federal Government and NT Chief Minister to advocate for re-location of a government department. **Timing:** by December 2014.

6.3 Capital Investment

Securing investment delivers the capacity for long-term economic and social development. The Territory and the Barkly region have vast untapped economic potential that investment can realise. Investment is necessary to expand locally based businesses, to facilitate the entry of new business to the Territory and for major new projects. This investment is not only for capital and equipment but also for developing skilled labour, and all capital must be sourced from competitive markets. Ongoing investment is necessary if living standards are to continue to rise

The Barkly region has three financial institutions: Westpac, ANZ and the Traditional Credit Union and is home to the ASX -listed Emmerson Resources. Credit availability is critical for private sector-driven economic growth, and is influenced by perceptions of specific business, industry and region-wide growth prospects.

Opportunities:

- Increase credit availability to support business development opportunities.
- Improve governance and financial management of not-for-profit and community organisations to ensure ongoing viability as significant community institutions.
- Increase opportunities for local businesses to contract on major projects by matching contract components with local capability.
- Advocate for a special economic zone for the Barkly region.
- Develop a stronger “buy local” network to retain capital in the region.



Strategic Action:

- Nurture and support local entrepreneurs to work with local people to identify business opportunities and to partner and mentor individuals to establish local micro-businesses.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Tony Civitarese to investigate development of a mentoring network in Tennant Creek tapping into Clontarf and NT Government and other support avenues, with a target of an operational network and eight new micro-businesses established within twelve months. **Timing:** by January 2015.

- Improve governance and financial management capability of not-for-profit, Indigenous and community organisations.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Edwina Marks to increase delivery of initiatives which provide governance and financial management guidance to not-for-profit, Indigenous and community organisations, tapping into the NT Department of Business' Non-Government Organisations Business Support Program. **Timing:** by September 2014.

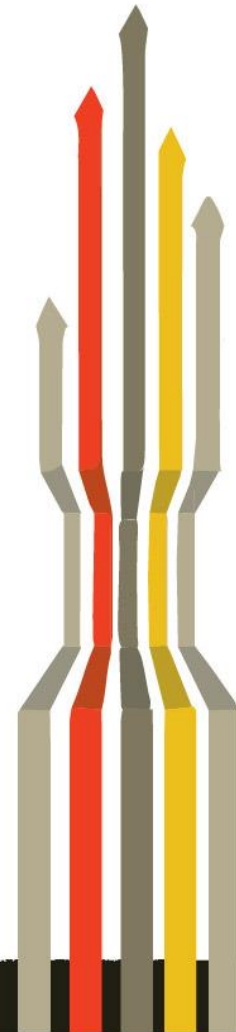
- Facilitate creation of regional alliances to enable consortiums of local firms to tender for major contracts in the region.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Greg Marlow to propose to the Chamber work with ICN-NT to encourage smaller contractors to form consortium style arrangements to access large tenders and lead an initiative which provides advance identification of NT, Federal and private contracts and facilitation of local alliances to tender for large contracts. **Timing:** by September 2014.

- Revitalise 'buy local' initiatives to maximise retention of capital expenditure in the region.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Edwina Marks, to liaise with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a 'buy local' initiative. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- Maximise Northern Territory and Australian government procurement opportunities in the region.



Action: EDO with support of Barkly Regional Council CEO (REDC member Edwina Marks) work with Barkley Regional Council, ICN, and NT Government to identify key procurement officers and networks, identify key existing unrealised procurement opportunities for the region, and develop tactics to maximise procurement. **Timing:** by November 2014.

- To advocate for a special economic zone (SEZ) for the Barkly region to attract investment.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Rebecca Healy to liaise with the Northern Australian Development Office to lobby the Australian Government for a special economic zone in the Barkly region. **Timing:** by November 2014.

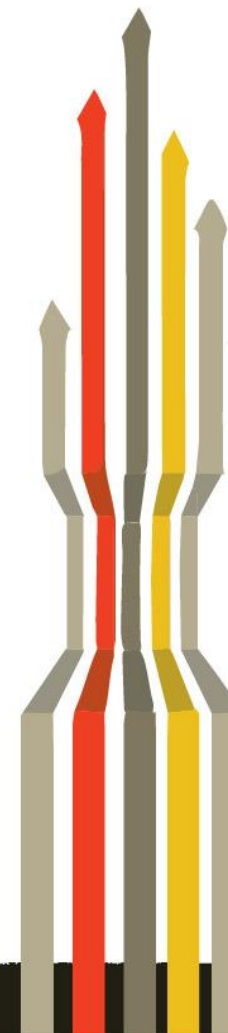
- Invite Indigenous Business Australia to the Barkly region to hold workshops on business concepts and planning.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Barb Shaw to liaise with Indigenous Business Australia to hold workshop(s) in Tennant Creek and the Barkly region. **Timing:** by December 2014.

6.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a critical enabler of economic development. It is essential to leverage private sector investment, which underpins productivity and economic growth. Examples include transport and telecommunications systems, which are critical to so many business activities. Access to appropriate and competitively priced infrastructure improves business efficiency and connectivity and allows local businesses to compete in national and global markets.

Improving infrastructure planning, prioritising, construction and lifecycle management is critical to ensuring a more prosperous regional economy. Investment may be for new infrastructure or to increase the efficiency of existing infrastructure. New infrastructure is needed in the Territory's regions to unlock economic growth potential and to increase the Territory's contribution to national economic growth. Partnering with private sector investors will leverage government expenditure and accelerate investment in critical infrastructure.



Water Infrastructure

Currently the bore water supply to Tennant Creek is hand dosed with chlorine, though a chlorination plant is currently being installed and will deliver continuous chlorination. There is sufficient capacity in the Barkly region to support significant increases in mining or agricultural activity, however the quality and location of the water sources is the key concern.

Electricity Supply

Electricity is generated at Tennant Creek with a spur line to Ali Curung. There are communities around Tennant Creek that are supplied by stand-alone diesel power. Some communities also have access to solar power. Tennant Creek has 17 generators and there is capacity to supply further demand.

Telecommunications

Tennant Creek has 3G mobile coverage out to around 25 kilometres. Elliot and Ali Curung also have mobile coverage. There are mobile transmitters at Arlparra, Ampilatwatja, Barrow Creek and Newcastle Waters.

Housing

Access to housing has a direct impact on education and employment outcomes, and is a key infrastructure issue in the Barkly. Issues include complexities of land tenure, land release, housing stock, dwelling type, affordability and the impact of a transient population. There are long waiting lists for social housing, driven by strong growth in the Indigenous population over the past decade, and high private rents. Housing and rental affordability has been improved by the NT Government's *Real Housing for Growth* program which has constructed 18 rental houses since it commenced in 2012. There are 78 houses in Community Living Areas, with funding for two new houses.

The NT Department of Housing contracts out tenancy and property services, and Julalikari administers the 78 houses in Community Living Areas. Significant training and employment opportunities exist in the construction and maintenance of housing stock in the Barkly region.

Opportunities:

- Identify the top three infrastructure priorities for the region to focus advocacy effort.
- Investigate innovative methods of delivering affordable quality housing.
- Investigate options for solar electricity generation.



Strategic Action:

- Identify the top three infrastructure priorities for the region to focus lobbying activity.

Action: REDC to convene a workshop to identify infrastructure priorities. **Timing:** by November 2014.

Action: EDO with support of REDC members Jason Newman, Barbara Shaw and Bob Bagnall to advocate for infrastructure investment based on evidence in the Regional Infrastructure Study (RIS). **Timing:** by December 2014.

- Stimulate construction industry activity and address long-term social issues affecting economic health by identifying options to increase the pool of affordable housing in the region.

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Trevor Sanders to begin discussions with the Department of Housing and private sector organisations to explore how additional housing can be secured. **Timing:** by December 2014.

7. ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

The importance of communicating the objectives of Strategic Plan with the wider community is recognised. Discussion and engagement with all groups in Tennant Creek and across the region is essential to create momentum and achieve the agreed goals.

Opportunities:

It is proposed that the document endorsed by the REDC be:

- a) shared with key stakeholders with a view to forming partnerships on key advocacy and action objectives;
- b) placed on public exhibition with invitations extended to the public to provide comment;
- c) discussed at a public forum – which could focus on an industry sector, issue or opportunity;
- d) outlined in an article in local newspapers (Centralian Advocate and Tennant & District Times);
- e) highlighted in the Barkly Regional Council newsletter;



- f) announced in the Tennant Creek primary and secondary schools' newsletters; and
- g) promoted by REDC members through their organisation and business networks.

Strategic Action:

Action: EDO with support of REDC member Rebecca Healy to draft an article to be forwarded to the Centralian Advocate and Tennant & District Times newspapers, and the two schools and Council for consideration for inclusion in their publications.

Timing: by November 2014.

Action: REDC members to liaise with their organisational, professional and business networks for inclusion of the article on the REDC Strategic Plan in their newsletters and noticeboards. **Timing:** by November 2014.

