



The Northern RDA Alliance (NRDAA) comprises of eight RDAs whose regions make up Northern Australia. This network, representing the Gascoyne in Western Australia to Gladstone in Central Queensland, has been meeting regularly and providing input to the Australia Government on the development of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia and the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. Our aim is to support all governments to develop policies and to prioritise investment opportunities to ensure the sustainable development of Northern Australia.

The NRDAA met recently in Broome WA to discuss major policy issues across water, energy and communications across Northern Australia. Broome also showcased several successful economic projects that have the potential to be replicated in communities in other regions.

Issues discussed included:

- Development of a Northern Australian Energy Strategy**
CSIRO presented an overview of the possible change scenarios in the Energy sector and its impacts on Northern Australia. Several providers updated the Alliance on new technology and delivery systems. Members considered that the development of an overall Energy Strategy for Northern Australia is an important issue that the Alliance will continue to develop with State & Federal Governments, energy generators and providers in Northern Australia to understand future opportunities for energy demand, generation and supply to provide secure, reliable and affordable electricity across the north.
- Inland Queensland Roads Action Plan (IQ-RAP)**
The Alliance was updated on RDA TNWQ progress on working with stakeholders to adopt IQRAP road prioritisation process and plan for Queensland and to migrate the methodology across to other jurisdictions to assist with strategic road infrastructure across northern Australia. The IQ-RAP has the support of 33 Local Governments in Queensland and is considered a valuable planning and decision-making tool for investments into road networks to support regional economic development. We also explored the potential application of IQ-RAP principles and approaches in the NT and WA.

- Development of a Northern Australian Water Security Program**

Allan Dale, Chair - RDA FNQTS has been appointed to the Northern Australia Water Resource Assessments Program Governance Committee.

The Australian Government has engaged CSIRO to lead the \$15 million Northern Australia Water Resource Assessments (the 'Assessments'), in collaboration with state and territory governments, which will provide greater confidence about the scale and nature of the opportunities in these regions and an understanding of the risks involved.

The Assessments will focus on three areas: Mitchell river basin in Queensland; Darwin river basins (Adelaide, Finniss, Mary and Wildman) in the Northern Territory and the Fitzroy river basin in Western Australia.

Functions of the Program Governance Committee

- Provide guidance to the Assessment Area Steering Committees and the Implementation Team regarding the efficient monitoring and delivery of Assessments milestones, budgets and project outcomes.
- Provide high level leadership and strategic direction to the Assessments.
- Advise on regional and community issues, government and industry priorities and relevant program risks.
- Review progress and report Assessment outcomes and risks to the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum.
- Oversight the Communication Strategy and ensure effective communication and dissemination of results.

NRDAA will continue working with stakeholders to deliver secure, quality water supplies across Northern Australian regional centres and communities.

Updates were also provided on the projects RDAs are already delivering in collaboration:

- Northern WA Prospectus**
Delivering an investment prospectus for projects across Northern Western Australia which could be used as a model for Northern Australia investment attraction, which will be launched at an event in Perth soon.
- Investigation of Alternative Solutions to Shortfalls in Regional Telecommunications**
Delivering the High Speed Wireless Technology Pilot to test the potential of long-distance point-to-point microwave links as a low-cost strategy to expand the benefits of existing fibre infrastructure. This installation of equipment will commence shortly and the service should be live by June 2016.

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