



5-7 AUGUST 2026
MPARNTWE (ALICE SPRINGS), NORTHERN TERRITORY

northaust.org.au | [#DNAC26](https://twitter.com/DNAC26)

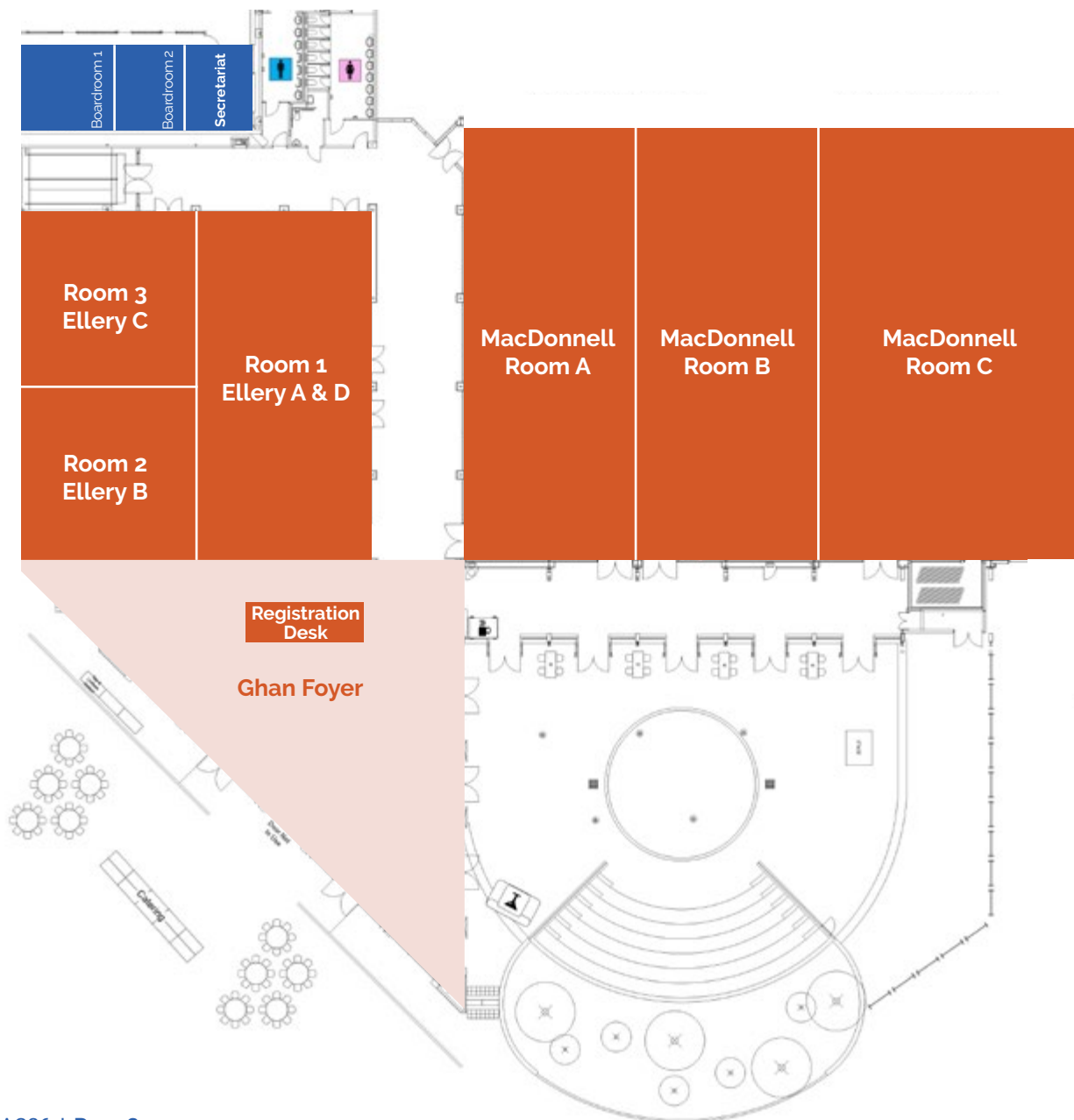
NORTHERN HORIZONS: LINKING PEOPLE, PLACE AND DEVELOPMENT



We acknowledge and thank the Central Arrernte people as the Traditional Owners of Mparntwe, the Country on which we hold this conference.

FLOOR PLAN

Main Plenary:	MacDonnell Room B & C combined
Breakout Rooms:	Room 1 - Ellery Room A & D combined Room 2 - Ellery Room B Room 3 - Ellery Room C
Meeting Rooms:	Boardroom 1 Boardroom 2
Speaker's Prep Room:	Secretariat
Catering:	Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A
Exhibition:	Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A
Poster Presentations:	Ghan Foyer
Registration:	Ghan Foyer



WELCOME



The twelfth Developing Northern Australia Conference returns to the wonderful Mparntwe (Alice Springs), bringing the conversation to the heart of the nation. Set against the backdrop of the stunning MacDonnell Ranges, Alice Springs is the beating heart of Australia's Red Centre, a place of ancient culture, creative energy and boundless horizons.

One of the things I am passionate about is creating spaces where the right people can come together to have meaningful conversations about Northern Australia — not just talk about challenges, but genuinely explore opportunities, partnerships and practical action. That's exactly what the Developing Northern Australia Conference has been doing for more than a decade.

Since the Cairns conference this time last year a lot has changed, not only within Australia, but globally, and while this brings with it many challenges for us in northern Australia it also creates exciting opportunities. This just further highlights the importance of attending the conference which brings together leaders from across government, industry, research and community to explore these opportunities and work together to drive progress that benefits all.

This year's program explores the major issues and opportunities shaping the north, including Economic Development, First Nations Leadership, Innovation & Technology, Environment & Climate, Health & Community and Growing Northern Talent. We have taken on board feedback on how we run sessions and provide some more time for questions and answers from the floor and we have an exciting and diverse range of speakers and events over the three days.

I would like to thank our sponsors and the volunteer Program and Local Steering Committees. Our Committees are made up of people from across the north. AST Conference and Event Management remain our key delivery partners and do a fantastic job. Thank you to all the speakers and presenters and finally to all those who have taken time out of their busy schedules to join us in Alice.

Looking forward to catching up with you all during the conference.

Craig Doyle
Conference Chair

We acknowledge and thank the Arrernte people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we hold this Conference.



COMPETITION
GET SOCIAL WITH US

Use **#DNAC26** and share your favourite conference moments for a chance to win a **COMPLIMENTARY REGISTRATION TO #DNAC27.**



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IPG: an Allcap Securities subsidiary

The IPG 'Project Velocity' envisions a best-in-class port/rail/road system connected to logistics hubs and industrial precincts, with a world-class automated rail-integrated container port at Gladstone and an inland port linked by a 48 km rail line to the waterfront. The initiative includes energy and storage components (e.g., substations, energy and fuel storage) to support heavy industry and manufacturing.

IPG is coordinating with stakeholders to deliver secure, compliant, and strategically critical infrastructure that supports Defence, mining, and export-oriented industries.

IPG is coordinating with Central Queensland producers to provide a quicker and more cost-effective pathway for produce export using and IPG Asian shipping service.

The program supports Queensland's role as a national gateway for freight, energy, and resources, while driving value-added completion of supply chains, regional diversification, and resilience. This will enable connectivity to the national inland rail initiative.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of all committee members and session chairs for their time and expertise with the conference program.

Program Committee



Professor Hurriyet Babacan AM
Chair, Regional Development Australia
(RDA) Tropical North



Jason Kidd
Deputy Director-General, Manufacturing
and Regional and Rural Development,
Department of Natural Resources and
Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and
Rural Development



Nerida Beard
Executive Director, Office of Water
Security, NT Government



Hannah Leu
Project and Extension Officer, NT Farmers



Belinda Carlson
Creative Content, CRCNA



Alinta McGuire
NA Indigenous Reference Group



Anthony Curro
Chief Executive Strategy and
Engagement, Cooperative Research
Centre for Developing Northern Australia
(CRCNA)



Brook Orr
Director, Northern Australia Universities
Alliance (NAUA)



Matt Derlagen
Associate Director, Stakeholder Relations,
NAIF



Kylie Porter
Outgoing CEO, Greater Whitsunday
Alliance, Incoming CEO, Queensland
Farmers' Federation



Craig Doyle
CEO, Northern Australia Infrastructure
Facility (NAIF)



Jade Ritchie
General Manager, Tellus Holdings



Kynan Gowland
Office of Northern Australia



Amy Savage
Manager - Economic Development,
Department of State Development and
Infrastructure



Terry Hill AM
Chairman, Pilbara Development
Commission Board



Jodie Summers
Associate Vice-Chancellor Central
Australia & Barkly, Charles Darwin
University



Barry Hunter
Chief Executive Officer, NAILSMA



Mary Watson
CEO LAGANT



Katrina Kawaljenko
CEO, Regional Development Australia
Northern Territory (RDA NT)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following information is provided to make your attendance at the **2026 Developing Northern Australia Conference** as pleasant as possible. If you require assistance, please visit the conference team at the registration desk.

REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION DESK

The registration desk will be located in the **Ghan Foyer** of the **Alice Springs Convention Centre**. Our team will be available during the following times:

Wednesday 5 August 2026	9:00am – 5:00pm
Thursday 6 August 2026	8:00am – 5:00pm
Friday 7 August 2026	8:00am – 1:30pm

NAME BADGE

Please collect your name badge from the registration desk and wear it each day as it is your official pass to all sessions, exhibition, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and the networking events.

DRESS CODE

The dress code is smart casual for all events.

WI-FI

Complimentary Wi-Fi internet is available in all event areas.

Network: Free Lasseters Wifi

MOBILE PHONES

Please ensure all mobile phones are switched to silent while in conference sessions.

CONFERENCE CATERING

All catering will be served in the Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A with the exhibitors and poster presentations.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation accounts must be settled with the hotel on checkout. The Committee and/or Conference Secretariat are not responsible in any way for outstanding accommodation accounts.

KEY CONTACTS

Conference Manager

Julia Cutler

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Want to Make the Most
of Your Conference
Experience?



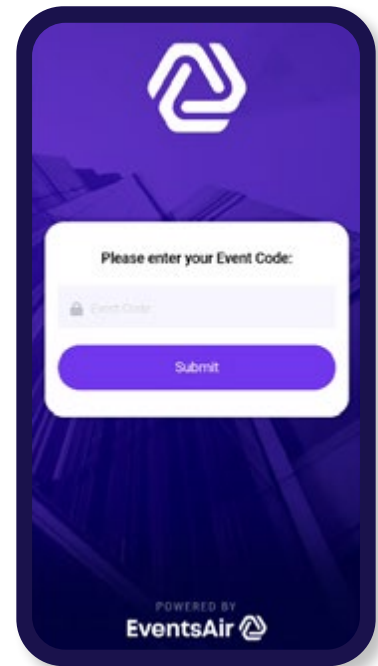
Download the conference app!

Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1 Visit the App store on your Apple or Android device
- 2 Search 'The Event App by EventsAir' and download



- 3 Open and enter event code **DNAC26**
- 4 Your name badge has your login and pin!



App Features

Stay up to date and connected during the 2026 Developing Northern Australia Conference.

PROGRAM

Create your own personal schedule and view the latest program details.

PRESENTERS

Read presenter biographies and presentation overviews.

NETWORK

Connect with fellow delegates and network via in-app messaging.

CONNECT

View who has joined us as an exhibitor and sponsor.

GAMIFICATION

Compete for prizes – it's fun and easy.

Proudly brought to you by CoolCore Safety



KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Kynan Barnes Ampetyan
Operations Manager, Kings Narrative

Kynan Barnes Ampetyane is a proud Arrernte man from Anarpipe and a Kwertengurle caretaker for his Country. As Operations Manager at Kings Narrative, he brings over a decade of experience working with young people and communities across Central Australia and Victoria. Holding a Bachelor of Education and a Master's in Narrative Therapy and Community Work, Kynan's work sits at the intersection of cultural resilience, healing, and community-led wellbeing. Known for his calm and thoughtful facilitation style, he creates culturally safe spaces for authentic dialogue, connection, and collective strength.

Healing Communities to Build the North: Cultural Strength as the Foundation for Development

Friday 7 August • 11:40am – 11:55am



Naomi Anstess
CEO, NT Indigenous Business Network

Naomi Anstess is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leader and economic strategist committed to building powerful, independent Blak enterprise. As CEO of the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN), she drives sector reform, national collaboration and unapologetic advocacy for Indigenous business rights. With deep experience across governance, policy and community-controlled organizations, Naomi has led structural transformation, forged high-impact industry partnerships and elevated Indigenous economic participation at state and national levels. Known for her direct leadership style and strategic clarity, she champions practical outcomes over rhetoric. Naomi is focused on shifting systems, strengthening institutions and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are visible, investable and unstoppable.

Aboriginal Business: A Major Force Driving the Northern Economy

Friday 7 August • 12:00pm – 12:30pm



Elizabeth Brennan
Managing Director, Agdots

Elizabeth is known for her ability to generate - as a development practitioner, facilitator, strategist and governance professional. She has facilitated numerous community, industry and leadership development programs in regional and remote WA, across Australia and in Papua New Guinea, predominantly focussed on agriculture, food security, climate resilience and inclusive economic growth. She is Vice President of the East Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has several other Board and leadership roles in community and industry, is a chronic volunteer and avid netballer. Elizabeth is an AICD Graduate, Fellow of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation and has completed a Master of Food Security.

Straight Talk, the Questions that Matter – Ministerial Panel

Wednesday 5 August • 1:50pm – 2:00pm

Keynote Panel: Economic Development & Growing Northern Talent

Friday 7 August • 10:50am – 11:35am



Michael Camerlengo
Deputy Chief Investment Officer and Executive Leader, Clients and Capital, Housing Australia

Michael is Housing Australia's Deputy Chief Investment Officer and oversees the teams responsible for Major Clients and Growth Clients. These teams are responsible for the Housing Australia Future Fund and work with clients to structure, execute and manage senior debt, junior debt and grant financial products to bring housing and critical infrastructure projects to life across the country. These teams work closely with state and territory governments, community housing providers, investors and real estate developers. Prior to joining Housing Australia, Michael worked with KPMG for approximately 20 years across their Sydney, Melbourne and Hong Kong offices. Michael was a Partner and KPMG's

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS

Asia Pacific Head of the Government Sector, and also held the roles of Head of the Infrastructure Sector for China and Hong Kong. Michael specialises in investment structuring, corporate and project finance, PPP and project structuring in the real estate and infrastructure sectors.

Beyond the Ridge: Charting a Way Forward for Housing Supply and Community Value

Wednesday 5 August • 2:50pm – 3:15pm



Romy Carey
*Chief Executive Officer,
Northern Territory Cattlemen's
Association (NTCA)*

Romy Carey is the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's

Association (NTCA), having served the organisation for more than six years, including two as Deputy CEO. A lifelong Territorian, she brings extensive experience representing the Northern Territory's pastoral sector on federal and territory committees and has played a leading role in strengthening biosecurity coordination across northern Australia. Romy is deeply committed to advancing the pastoral industry's contribution to the Northern Australian economy. Her leadership highlights the sector's billion-dollar scale, its focus on sustainability and innovation, and the critical importance of developing a skilled workforce across all areas of the supply chain.

Keynote Panel: Economic Development & Growing Northern Talent

Friday 7 August • 10:50am – 11:35am



Jimmy Cocking
*CEO, Desert Knowledge
Australia*

Jimmy Cocking is the CEO of Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA), a Northern Territory statutory corporation supporting

research, education, and partnerships for sustainable economic development in remote Australia. Based in Mparntwe-Alice Springs for over 18 years, Jimmy has held leadership roles in local government,

environmental advocacy, and community development. He is passionate about strengthening desert communities, where safe drinking water and renewable energy are essential for liveability. Through DKA, he works to create opportunities that deliver lasting change, guided by a vision of resilient, thriving futures for people living in remote Australia.

Keynote Panel: Environment, Climate & Natural Resource Transition

Thursday 6 August • 9:40 – 10:25am



Dr John Coyne
*Director, National Security
Programs, Australian
Strategic Policy Institute*

Dr John Coyne is Director of the National Security Program at the Australian Strategic

Policy Institute (ASPI), where he leads research on national security strategy, critical minerals and supply chains, border security, economic resilience and Northern Australia policy. With more than 25 years of experience in intelligence, policing and strategic analysis, he is recognised for bridging operational expertise with national policy priorities. John has authored numerous reports and commentary on strategic competition, supply chain security, transnational crime and national resilience. He leads major initiatives across the National Security Program, including convening the Darwin Dialogue, a high-level forum focused on critical mineral supply chains, and overseeing projects that connect government, industry and academia to deliver practical policy outcomes. His work has helped elevate the importance of critical minerals in national policy discussions, including contributing to momentum behind the Australian Government's decision to establish a strategic reserve for future national security planning.

Engineering the Northern Advantage: Innovation, Technology and the Systems Transformation of Northern Australia

Wednesday 5 August • 11:50am – 12:15pm

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Professor Scott Davis
*Executive Director, Tropical
Australian Academic Health
Centre Limited (TAAHC)*

Professor Scott R. Davis (PhD) is a public health and regional development specialist

dedicated to strengthening rural, regional and remote communities across northern Australia and the broader tropics. For more than 30 years, he has worked alongside Indigenous communities, governments and industry to build local capability, sustainable workforce pipelines and resilient regional economies. His work bridges research, policy and practice, ensuring evidence translates into tangible community benefit. Holding a PhD in Indigenous social and economic development and a Masters in International Public Health, Dr Davis is driven by a clear conviction: postcode should never determine opportunity, wellbeing, or a community's ability to shape its own future.

Health, Community and Cultural Resilience: Locally Led Research Development and Translation Driving Change Across Northern Australia

Thursday 6 August • 8:55am – 9:15am



The Hon. Stephen Dawson
*Western Australia's Minister
for Regional Development,
Ports, Science and Innovation,
Medical Research and the
Kimberley*

Stephen Dawson is Western Australia's Minister for Regional Development, Ports, Science and Innovation, Medical Research and the Kimberley. He also serves as Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council. Stephen was born in Dublin and migrated to Australia with his family. Through his role as Minister for Regional Development, Stephen is focused on driving the economy through diversification and job creation and advocating for the needs of those living and working in the regions. He has a wealth of knowledge on issues important to regional WA, having lived in the North West and holding a range of portfolios throughout his career such as Environment, Disability Services and Emergency Services.

Ministerial Keynote

Wednesday 5 August • 2:05pm – 2:15pm



Senator the Hon. Nita Green
*Assistant Minister for
Northern Australia, Assistant
Minister for Tourism,
Assistant Minister for Pacific
Island Affairs*

Senator the Hon. Nita Green represents Queensland and is based in Cairns. She is the Assistant Minister Northern Australia, Tourism and Pacific Island Affairs. Before entering Parliament, Senator Green was an Employment Lawyer at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers and worked for the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union as an Industrial Lawyer. Senator Green was elected in 2019 and has held several committee roles including Chair of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, and Chair of Joint Select Committee on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum. In 2022, Senator Green was appointed the Special Envoy for the Great Barrier Reef. Working closely with the Minister for Environment, this role was focused on the management of the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, including mitigating threats such as climate change and poor water quality. She lives in Cairns with her wife Lacey and daughter Stevie and is a keen football (soccer) fan.

A Place to Call Home

Friday 7 August • 10:30am – 10:45am

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Lisa Hewitt

Lisa Hewitt is an experienced senior executive and non-executive director with deep expertise across agribusiness, finance, infrastructure and real estate, as well as regional

development in northern Australia. Lisa began her career in accounting and insolvency before moving into agribusiness and commercial banking. She went on to lead ANZ's commercial and agribusiness team in North Queensland, managing complex corporate and high-risk portfolios across Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. She later served as State General Manager for Queensland and the Northern Territory at Elders, where she strengthened organisational capability and operational performance to deliver improved customer outcomes and financial growth. Lisa is an Independent Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committees of Queensland Rail and the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. Lisa is recognised for building high-performance cultures and translating operational insight into financial discipline and strategic leadership.

Keynote Panel: Economic Development & Growing Northern Talent

Friday 7 August • 10:50am – 11:35am



Kirsty Howey

**Executive Director,
Environment Centre NT**

Kirsty is the Executive Director of the Environment Centre NT, and is an advocate, researcher and strategist with

25 years experience. She has been based in the Northern Territory for over two decades, where she worked for a number of years as a native title and environmental lawyer for an Aboriginal land council, where she negotiated resource agreements, conducted native title and land claims, and ran strategic litigation. In 2020, she completed her doctorate analysing the intersection of the state, the environment, Indigenous institutions and extractive development in northern Australia, and she has published widely in these areas. Kirsty is an adjunct research fellow at Charles Darwin University, and a Councillor of the Australian Conservation Foundation. She is committed to ensuring the continued flourishing of the world-class landscapes and communities of Australia's Great North.

Keynote Panel: Environment, Climate & Natural Resource Transition

Thursday 6 August • 9:40 – 10:25am



Associate Professor Dylan Irvine

**Faculty of Science and
Technology, and Research
Institute for the Environment
and Livelihoods, Charles
Darwin University**

Dylan is originally from the south-east of South Australia. He completed his PhD in hydrogeology at Flinders University in 2014, and has worked at Charles Darwin University since 2021. Describing himself as a 'recovering groundwater modeller', his research spans the topics of groundwater recharge estimation, river-aquifer interactions, groundwater-dependent vegetation, remote sensing, 'big data' approaches, and climate change impacts on water resources.

Keynote Panel: Environment, Climate & Natural Resource Transition

Thursday 6 August • 9:40am – 10:25am

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Andrew Johnson, PSM
*Independent NT Controller of
Water Resources*

Andrew was appointed as the independent Controller of Water Resources in the Northern Territory in May 2023.

He has extensive State, National and International experience in environmental, natural resources and water resources management. He has been involved in major policy reform in the Murray Darling Basin, Lake Eyre Basin and South Australia including the establishment of NRM Boards across the state. Prior to his retirement from the SA Government in 2015 he was Group Executive Director in Primary Industries and Regions SA with responsibility for SA Research and Development Institute, Biosecurity SA, Rural Solutions SA and the SA River Murray Sustainability Initiative. Andrew was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2012 for services in environmental and natural resources management. He was the South Australian Water Industry Alliance's 'Industry Leader of the Year' in 2017 based on his many years of experience and leadership in water and environmental management.

Keynote Panel: Environment, Climate & Natural Resource Transition

Thursday 6 August • 9:40am – 10:25am



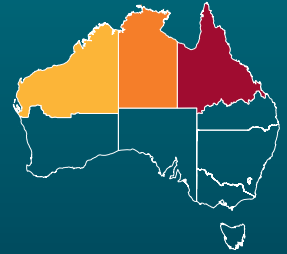
The Hon. Madeleine King MP
*Minister for Resources
and Minister for Northern
Australia*

The Hon. Madeleine King was first sworn in as Federal Minister for Resources and

Minister for Northern Australia on 1 June 2022 and was reappointed to the role after the re-election of the Albanese Labor Government in May 2025. Minister King was first elected to Parliament in 2016, representing the seat of Brand on the outskirts of Perth, where she was born and grew up. The seat encompasses the Cities of Rockingham and Kwinana and contains some of Perth's heavy industries, including the HMAS Stirling naval base on Garden Island and the Kwinana Industrial Area. Minister King was promoted to the shadow ministry in 2018 and has served as Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs and Small Business, Shadow Minister for Trade and Shadow Minister for Resources. Before entering parliament Minister King held senior executive roles at The University of Western Australia and served as the inaugural Chief Operating Officer at the Perth USAsia Centre. Minister King has a strong interest in ensuring the benefits of economic development are shared fairly and create opportunities for all segments of Australian society.

A Strong North Means A Strong Australia

Wednesday 5 August • 1:15pm – 1:30pm



Finance for the North.

We are a Commonwealth Government financier, providing concessional loans for the development of infrastructure projects in northern Australia and the Australian Indian Ocean Territories.

35
PROJECTS

\$4.5B
VALUE OF ID'S

\$33.4B
PUBLIC BENEFIT

18,700+
FORECAST JOBS

*as at 31 May 2026

“

A key aspect of enabling infrastructure development is a finance model that is tailored to the project.

Garry Mueller
Director, Investment



Find out more at
naif.gov.au

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Kumalie Riley Kngwarraye
Tingkabee

Kumalie Kngwarraye is an Arrernte woman from Alice Springs with deep cultural and spiritual connections to Arrernte Country through

her family and ancestors. Raised at Undoolya Station near Mparntwe, she overcame significant challenges, including being removed from her family as a child and educated in a mission dormitory. Throughout her life, Kumalie has worked across healthcare, education, and media, including as a Nurses Aid, midwife, teacher, and radio presenter with CAAMA. A passionate advocate for Aboriginal self-determination, language preservation, and cultural education, she continues to share Arrernte knowledge through cultural orientation programs, tourism experiences, and community leadership, empowering future generations to remain strong in culture and identity.

Welcome to Country

Wednesday 5 August • 10:00am – 10:15am



The Hon. Dale Last MP
QLD Minister for Natural Resources & Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional & Rural Development

Dale Last is the Queensland Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development. Born and raised in country Queensland, Dale has dedicated his career to serving regional communities. Dale joined the Queensland Police Service in 1981 and was awarded the National Police Medal in 1988 for diligent long service to the community. He was appointed Officer in Charge of Townsville Police Station in 2000, leading frontline law enforcement in Queensland's largest regional centre. Following his service in the Queensland Police Service, Dale was elected to Townsville City Council, where he served as both Councillor and Deputy Mayor. In 2015, he was elected to the Queensland Parliament as the Member for Burdekin. Dale is a fierce advocate for regional communities and rural development. His electorate of Burdekin is home to major resources projects and key transport infrastructure, including numerous mines and the Port of Abbot Point.

Delivering for Queensland: A Better Lifestyle through a Stronger Economy for Our Regions

Wednesday 5 August • 1:50pm – 2:00pm

Straight Talk, the Questions that Matter – Ministerial Panel

Wednesday 5 August • 2:20pm – 2:45pm

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Senator Susan McDonald
*Shadow Minister for
Resources and Shadow
Minister for Northern Australia*

From growing up on her family's cattle property in North-West Queensland to

running a business in South-East Queensland, Susan has a deep appreciation of the issues affecting Queenslanders across the state. Raised near Cloncurry, Susan was educated by Correspondence School and Mt Isa School of the Air before attending boarding school in Brisbane and studying commerce and economics at the University of Queensland. A qualified accountant and mum to three kids, Susan also ran a chain of butcher shops for six years, responsible for over 100 staff across five stores, before being elected to the Australian Senate for Queensland. Susan is based in Townsville, making her the Coalition's northernmost Senator in Queensland. Susan is the Shadow Minister for Resources and Shadow Minister for Northern Australia. Susan was elected to the Senate in May 2019 as a member of the Liberal National Party and sits in the Federal Nationals party room. Susan also held roles in the previous Coalition Government as Special Envoy for Northern Australia and Chair of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee.

Northern Australia – Securing the Nation

Thursday 6 August • 8:35am – 8:50am



Dr Sheriden Morris
Chair, CRCNA

Dr Morris is Chair of the CRC for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA), bringing a lifelong commitment to northern Australia shaped

by her upbringing in the Northern Territory, studies in tropical agronomy, and a career spanning agriculture, aquaculture, tourism and environmental research. She has led the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre for the past decade and is Deputy Chair of Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef. Sheriden is a strong advocate for intelligent, sustainable development in northern Australia, grounded in tropical expertise and regional knowledge.

A Decade of Impact with the CRCNA

Wednesday 5 August • 11:40am – 11:50am



KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Professor Martin Nakata AM
Chair, Indigenous Reference Group & Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education & Strategy, James Cook University

Professor Martin Nakata AM is the Chair of the Indigenous Reference Group. The IRG provides advice to the Minister for Northern Australia as well as the Minister for Indigenous Australians, on practical actions to enhance the economic and social prosperity for Indigenous peoples across northern Australia. He is also a Torres Strait Islander and works as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Education & Strategy at James Cook University in Townsville. He is a leading scholar in Indigenous Education, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and Indigenous Studies in Australia, and his ongoing research projects include longitudinal studies to improve a) the academic performance of Indigenous school students in Math and Science, b) the academic success of Indigenous students in university studies, and c) the capabilities and capacities of Indigenous people to drive their own futures. He is widely published on Indigenous matters and has provided over seventy keynote and plenary addresses to professional conferences in over twenty countries.

Northern Horizons: The Proving Ground for the Country's Future Capability

Wednesday 5 August • 10:35am – 11:05am



Marianna O'Gorman
Deputy Chair, Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA)

Marianna works on investments and tech in energy, transport, mining and manufacturing that will prosper in the 2050 Australian economy. Marianna is a company director with governance roles across the public and not-for-profit sector including with the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (clean-tech enabler) and the McKell Institute (think tank). With a passion for gender equality, she is also a Chief Executive Women

(CEW) committee member and a founding committee member of an organisation to promote gender equality in politics. In 2018, Marianna co-founded the McKell Institute in Queensland which promotes public dialogue around key policy challenges in areas such as housing, early childhood education, superannuation, productivity, and energy. Earlier in her career she worked at the World Bank in Washington, then as an adviser to the Prime Minister in Canberra and with green investment bank, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

Keynote Panel: Environment, Climate & Natural Resource Transition

Thursday 6 August • 9:40am – 10:25am

Clean Technology Developments in Northern Australia

Thursday 6 August • 9:20am – 9:35am



Kylie Porter
Outgoing CEO, Greater Whitsunday Alliance, Incoming CEO, Queensland Farmers' Federation

Kylie Porter is the Chief Executive Officer of Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3), an economic development organisation based in a mining dominant region in North Queensland. GW3's role is to secure long term prosperity for the region's 180,000+ residents, by securing new and emerging industry investment whilst still supporting high value legacy sectors. Kylie is an ecosystem development specialist, a self described 'super connector' and a champion for communities and their place at the table of new industry development and planning.

Keynote Panel: Economic Development & Growing Northern Talent

Friday 7 August • 10:50am – 11:35am



NORTHERN AUSTRALIA UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE

The Northern Australia Universities Alliance brings together universities embedded in the north to educate local talent, partner with industry and government, and deliver solutions shaped by place.

Through education, research and collaboration, NAUA universities are strengthening capability and opportunity across northern Australia, for the benefit of the nation.



KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



**The Hon. Marion Scrymgour
MP**
*Special Envoy for Remote
Communities, Chair of the
Joint Standing Committee on
Northern Australia, Member
for Lingiari*

Marion Scrymgour is the Labor Member for the Federal Electorate of Lingiari. The seat of Lingiari covers all of the NT outside of Darwin and Palmerston and includes the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas and Cocos/Keeling Islands. Lingiari covers a vast swathe of Northern Australia (almost 1.3 million square kilometres) and comprises remote communities, and the urban centres along the Stuart Highway. It is a true reflection of the diversity of Northern Australia. Marion was elected in May 2022, and in 2025 was appointed by the Prime Minister as the Special Envoy for Remote Communities. She also serves as the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia which is currently leading an inquiry into emerging industries in Northern Australia. She has cultural links to the Tiwi Islands through her mother, and Anmatjere Central Australia through her father. Throughout her career, Marion has often been the first Aboriginal woman in many rooms. She was the first Aboriginal woman elected to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, the first Aboriginal woman to lead a land council, and the first Aboriginal person to preside over the Federal Parliament. From 2001-2012 Marion was a Member of the Northern Territory Parliament, including serving as Deputy Chief Minister.

**Developing the North Is Not Just a Catchphrase;
It is About Our People, Communities and Our
Future**

Wednesday 5 August • 11:10am – 11:40am



Jeff Stewart-Harris
*Chair RDA Greater
Whitsundays & Northern RDA
Alliance*

Jeff is currently Chief Executive Officer of Mackay Isaac Tourism and chair of

Nth Qld Primary Health Network, and Regional Development Australia - Greater Whitsundays and was recently elected as Chairperson for the Nth Australia RDA Alliance. Jeff is also a director on other Not for Profits organisations and supports local governments in various committee roles and functions. Jeff's professional executive and leadership career spans over 35 years and has seen him operate within executive roles across local government, marine and airport corporations and other private businesses. He brings a deep expertise in the infrastructure, planning, regional and economic development, community, port, airport, and transport sectors. Jeff is a strategic and expansive thinker and a courageous leader of people. He is driven by the abiding beliefs that the regions are the powerhouse of our nation; and that all success is achieved through people.

**Keynote Panel: Economic Development &
Growing Northern Talent**

Friday 7 August • 10:50am – 11:35am



The Hon. Bill Yan
*Treasurer | Minister for
Logistics and Infrastructure;
Housing Construction,
representing the Chief Minister
of the Northern Territory, the
Honourable Lia Finocchiaro*

The Hon. Bill Yan MLA is the Treasurer of the Northern Territory, Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure and the Minister for Housing Construction. He was sworn in on 10 September 2024 and represents the Central Australian seat of Namatjira in the 15th Assembly of the Northern Territory. As Treasurer and through his Ministerial portfolios, Bill is focused on making responsible investment decisions that support the NT's long-term economic growth and improving opportunities and outcomes for the community. Bill moved to Alice Springs in 1991 and has lived there ever since.

A Strong North, A Secure Australia

Wednesday 5 August • 1:35pm – 1:45pm



Research for **sustainable**
and **inclusive** development
of **northern Australia**

CRCNA.COM.AU

@CRC_NORTHERNAUSTRALIA



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Science and Resources

**Cooperative Research
Centres Program**



CoolCore
SAFETY

CoolCore Safety provides specialised safety solutions, helping workplaces manage the harmful environmental conditions of extreme heat and UV exposure.



Protect workers from heat & UV exposure, and be WHS compliant.

CoolCore Safety Zinc

Mineral-based, SPF 50+ broad-spectrum protection for harsh conditions.

Key Features

- SPF 50+ broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB/Blue Light)
- 25% non-nano zinc oxide formulation
- 80-minute water resistant
- Vegan & organic - suitable for sensitive skin
- Available in 100g, 1kg & 2kg
- Supports WHS duty of care for UV exposure

Compliance & Standards

- ✓ Meets AS/NZS 2604 (SPF 50+ broad-spectrum)
- ✓ AUST L 515728 (TGA listed)
- ✓ Audited to NSF/ANSI 305



CoolCore Safety Fan Jackets

Active airflow cooling to reduce heat stress, improve worker comfort, safety & performance.

Key Features

- Dual fan system for consistent airflow
- UV-resistant, light-blocking inner coating
- Fixed collar airflow channel
- Lightweight, breathable 100% polyester
- 3M reflective tape for enhanced visibility
- Separate inner battery pocket

Compliance & Standards

- ✓ AS/NZS 4602.1 (Australia & New Zealand)
- ✓ EN ISO 20471 (EU)
- ✓ ANSI/ISEA 107 (USA)
- ✓ CSA Z96 (Canada)



Why CoolCore Safety?

- Proactive control of environmental exposure
- Integrates with existing PPE systems
- Demonstrates WHS due diligence
- Supports the Hierarchy of Control
- Practical & accepted in the field
- Reduces secondary safety & health risks

Industries

- Building & civil construction
- Utilities, maintenance & infrastructure
- Agriculture, land management & outdoor services
- Defence, emergency & frontline services
- Local government & regional operations
- Rural & remote operations



**Veteran
owned and
operated
Northern
Territory family
business**

Professional safety for demanding environments

www.coolcoresafety.com

PROGRAM

Wednesday 5 August 2026

5:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Hot Air Ballooning
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Cultural Tour at Desert Park
	Explore the Desert Knowledge Precinct
	Tour the Arid Zone Research Institute (AZRI)
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Registration Open - Ghan Foyer Welcome! Come and say hello to the Conference Team and collect your Name Badge!
	Keynote Session 1 - MacDonnell Room B & C Chair: Craig Doyle
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Welcome to Country Kumalie Riley Kngwarraye, Tingkabee
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Conference Introduction & Housekeeping Craig Doyle, Conference Chair
10:35 AM - 11:05 AM	Northern Horizons: The Proving Ground for the Country's Future Capability Prof Martin Nakata AM Chair Indigenous Reference Group
11:10 AM - 11:40 AM	Developing the North Is Not Just a Catchphrase; It is About Our People, Communities and Our Future Hon. Marion Scrymgour MP, Federal Member for Lingiari
11:40 AM - 11:50 AM	A Decade of Impact with the CRCNA Sheriden Morris, Chair, CRCNA
11:50 AM - 12:15 PM	Engineering the Northern Advantage: Innovation, Technology and the Systems Transformation of Northern Australia John Coyne, Director, National Security Programs, Australian Strategic Policy Institute
12:15 PM - 1:15 PM	Poster Session & Exhibition Networking Lunch - Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A For Poster Presenter Details Refer to Page 22 
	Keynote Session 2 - MacDonnell Room B & C Chair: Craig Doyle
1:15 PM - 1:30 PM	A Strong North Means A Strong Australia Hon. Madeleine King MP Minister for Northern Australia Minister for Resources
1:35 PM - 1:45 PM	A Strong North, A Secure Australia Hon. Bill Yan Treasurer Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure; Housing Construction, representing the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Honourable Lia Finocchiaro
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	Delivering for Queensland: A Better Lifestyle through a Stronger Economy for Our Regions Hon. Dale Last MP QLD Minister for Natural Resources & Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional & Rural Development
2:05 PM - 2:15 PM	Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC WA Minister for Regional Development, Ports, Science and Innovation, Medical Research Minister for the Kimberley
2:20 PM - 2:45 PM	Straight Talk, the Questions that Matter – Ministerial Panel Facilitated by Elizabeth Brennan The Hon. Bill Yan The Hon. Dale Last The Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC
2:50 PM - 3:15 PM	Beyond the Ridge: Charting a Way Forward for Housing Supply and Community Value Michael Camerlengo Executive Leader Clients and Capital and Deputy Chief Investment Officer, Housing Australia

3:15 PM - 3:45 PM	Afternoon Tea - Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A			
4:30 PM – 4:45 PM	MacDonnell Room B & C	Ellery A	Ellery B	Ellery C
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
	Investing in Northern Australia: A Conversation with the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, Clean Energy Finance Corporation and National Reconstruction Fund Corporation	Growing Northern Talent: Building the North's Capability - In Conversation with the Regional Education Commissioner, NT Chief Justice and NAUA Leaders	CRCNA's Living Wake: 10 Years of Impact Belinda Carlson & Anthony Curro, CRC for Northern Australia	Engoori in Action: Strengths Based Pathways Linking First Nations Knowledge and Leadership Scott Gorringer, Murrumatters
4:45 PM - 5:10 PM	Free time to get fancy for Conference Dinner			
5:10 PM - 5:20 PM	Transfers to Conference Dinner, departing from Convention Centre & Hotels			



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BBQ Dinner Experience – Outback Under the Stars

A truly unique and authentic experience not to be missed. Become immersed in the spirit and grandeur that is the Australian Outback. This fun-filled evening of entertainment and outback cuisine is set in the remote and isolated East MacDonnell Ranges. The evening features a mouth-watering meal of prime Australian beef, cold beer or wine from the Aussie Bush bar, and tales from local people who share their stories of life in this harsh land. Underneath a chandelier of stars an authentic bush balladeer sings timeless Australian songs.

Menu: Sensational scotch fillet steak, prime beef sausages, a steaming hot potato, an array of fresh salads followed by a delicious dessert of baked hot rum and raisin damper with outback cream. Wash it all down with a delicious cup of billy tea.

Date: Wednesday, 5 August 2026

Time: 5:30pm – 9:30pm

Coach Transfers

Departure: 5:10pm from Alice Springs Convention Centre, Crowne Plaza and Double Tree by Hilton

Return: 9:30pm from Old Quarry

Venue: Old Quarry, Alice Springs

INCLUSIONS

Two-course Bush BBQ dinner

Beverages

Live entertainment

Return coach transfers

Cost: \$282 per person (inc. GST)

Please visit the registration desk if you have not booked your ticket yet.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday 5 August 2026

- 1 From Backyards and BBQs: Developing and Securing the Delivery of Specialist Neurological Care on Country**
Melanie Clark, North Metropolitan Health Service Mental Health
- 2 Seaweed Extraction Techniques for Biomass Utilisation**
Alison Duguid, North Australian Sea Culture
- 3 Developing an Agrochemical Decision Support Tool for Northern Agriculture**
Dylan Irvine, Charles Darwin University
- 4 Technology Upskilling of the Aboriginal Workforce for Successful Telehealth Implementation in Very Remote Central Australia**
Vishnu Khanal, Menzies School of Health Research
- 5 Developing with Us: Participatory SMS Health Promotion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities**
Vishnu Khanal, Menzies School of Health Research
- 6 Innovating on a Warming Reef: Social License for Environmental Management in Northern Australia**
Stewart Lockie, The Cairns Institute, JCU
- 7 Indigenous Led Aquaculture for Regional Economic Development, Community Resilience and Intergenerational Job Creation**
Tony Matchett, Hope Vale Foundation
- 8 Binimal Aambooriny: A Holistic, Culturally-Led Model for Strong Community Wellbeing; Beyond the Silos**
Nathan McIvor, Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation
- 9 Growing Central Australia**
Ruth Palmer, Property Council of Australia
- 10 Collaborative Approaches to Community Connection and Belonging in Palmerston**
Athina Pascoe-Bell, City of Palmerston
- Coordinated Infrastructure and Water Resource Planning in the Adelaide River Catchment**
Michelle Rodrigo, Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
- 11 Why Do Linear Methods Miss Spatial Patterns? Uncovering Hidden Geographic Complexity in Water Pricing**
Jaba Sarker, Central Queensland University
- 12 Economic Viability of Eight Crops in Tropical Northern Australia: Four Decades of Field Research**
Jaba Sarker, Central Queensland University
- 13 Optimising Local Development in a Fast Evolving World**
Tony Sorensen, University of New England
- 14 "You Can't Wear That Hat" – The Challenges of Cultural Compliance and Community-Controlled Regional Development**
Alison Spiker, Spiker Consulting Pty Ltd
Owen Turner, Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation
- 15 Mullul Warril: First Nations Aspirations and Opportunities in Agriculture, Employment and Economic Outcomes**
Raylene Ward, University of Southern Queensland
- 16 Water Planning in the Red Centre: The Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan**
Kiara Ware, DLPE – Water Resources
- 17 Unlocking Aboriginal Water Reserves in the Northern Territory**
Kiara Ware, Northern Territory Government



Please refer to the website and mobile app for the most up to date version of the program and to read the abstracts for each session.

PROGRAM

Thursday 6 August 2026

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Day 2 Registration Open - Ghan Foyer			
	Keynote Session 3 - MacDonnell Room B & C Chair: Craig Doyle			
8:30 AM - 8:35 AM	Welcome to Day 2			
8:35 AM - 8:50 AM	Northern Australia – Securing the Nation Senator Susan McDonald Shadow Minister for Resources and Shadow Minister for Northern Australia			
8:55 AM - 9:15 AM	Health, Community and Cultural Resilience: Locally Led Research Development and Translation Driving Change Across Northern Australia Dr Scott Davis Executive Director, Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre Limited (TAAHC)			
9:20 AM - 9:35 AM	Marianna O’Gorman Deputy Chair at Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA)			
9:40 AM - 10:25 AM	Environment, Climate & Natural Resource Transition Panel Facilitator: Marianna O’Gorman, Deputy Chair, Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) Panellists: Andrew Johnson, PSM, Independent NT Controller of Water Resources Dr Dylan Irvine, Charles Darwin University Jimmy Cocking, CEO Desert Knowledge Australia Kirsty Howey, CEO NT Environment Centre			
10:25 AM - 10:30 AM	2027 Conference Destination Announcement			
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Morning Tea - Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A 			
	MacDonnell Room B & C	Ellery A	Ellery B	Ellery C
	Session 5: Economic Development Chair: Katrina Kawaljenko	Session 6: First Nations Leadership Chair: Jade Ritchie	Session 7: Environment & Climate Chair: Nerida Beard	Session 8: Innovation & Technology Chair: Steve Rogers
11:00 AM – 11:20 AM	Alice Springs Town Council - Economic Development Projects in Central Australia Mayor Asta Hill, Alice Springs Town Council	Improving Food Security for Residents of Remote Aboriginal Communities Vicki Schultz, NT Health	New and Improved Food and Energy Crops for Northern Australia Robert Henry, The University of Queensland	AI Skills for the Future - Northern Australia to Contribute to the National AI Capability Tim Burt, Future Skills Organisation
11:25 AM - 11:45 AM	Playing the Long Game: How Strategic Partnerships Have Driven Regional Investment Mayor Greg Williamson, Mackay Regional Council	Empowering Community Prosperity: Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation's Leadership Pathway in First Nations Economic Development Nathan McIvor, Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation	ARIDGRAZE - \$5M Research and Adoption Support for Sustainable Development of Central Australian Grazing Industry Robyn Cowley & Alison Kain, NT Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Stronger Homes, Stronger Communities: Empowering the North to Build Their Future Peter Woods, Modpacs
11:50 AM - 12:10 PM	One Future: What NT, Northern WA and North Queensland Can Learn from Each Other Kate Haycock, AEC Group	Igniting Indigenous-Led Investments: From ILUAs to Equity David Knights, Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)	Indigenous Led Carbon Projects Delivering Significant Benefits for Climate, Country and Community Anna Boustead, Indigenous Carbon Industry Network	Invisible Infrastructure - Right Sized for Northern Australia Mitchell Hunt, Rapid Platform

12:15 PM - 12:35 PM	Who Backs the Risk? Philanthropy as Innovation Capital in Remote NT and Northern Australia Donna Digby, Alexie Seller & Natalie Egleton, Territory Connect	Owning the Evidence – Indigenous Data Sovereignty as Strategic Economic Infrastructure Lindsay Bridge, First Nations Economics	Waterholes as Natural Infrastructure: Climate Variability and Dry-Season Water Security in the Gilbert River Catchment Paula Cartwright, James Cook University	Digital Technology Use and eHealth Literacy in a Remote Aboriginal Community of the Northern Territory Vishnu Khanal & Kureisha Wilson, Menzies School of Health Research
12:35 PM - 1:35 PM	Exhibition Networking Lunch - Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A 			
	MacDonnell Room B & C	Ellery A	Ellery B	Ellery C
	Session 9: First Nations Leadership Chair: Kylie Porter	Session 10: Health & Community Chair: Scott Davis	Session 11: Growing Northern Talent Chair: Jodie Summers	Session 12: Infrastructure & Connectivity Chair: Naomi Evans
1:35 PM - 1:55 PM	Indigenous Engagement, Education and Empowerment - Practical Action, Meaningful Impact: ADG's Indigenous Training Academy Sandra De Kock, Airport Development Group Pty Ltd	Robust Health Systems for the Future: What Are the Priorities for Northern Australia? Associate Professor Alexandra Edelman, Menzies School of Health Research	Unlocking Northern Australia's Agricultural Future Amelia Vellar, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Resilient Northern Australian Communities: Navigating Disaster Recovery in the East Pilbara Steven Harding, Shire of East Pilbara
2:00 PM - 2:20 PM	Backing First Nations Entrepreneurs: What Works When Support Is Designed with Place, People and Partners Alexie Seller, Impact North	Could Rotary-Wing Retrieval Improve Timeliness of Prehospital Critical-Care in Central Australia? Professor Richard Johnson, Alice Springs Hospital	The Workforce Conversation Ecosystem: Retention by Design Barbara Clifford, The Hinwood Institute	Where Seaweed Grows, Communities Thrive - Enabling Seaweed Economies in North Australia Alison Duguid, North Australian Seaculture
2:25 PM - 2:45 PM	Why So Few Commonwealth Government Contracts Awarded to First Nations Companies in Northern Australia? Rod Reeve & Samantha Turk, Ninti One Limited	From Regional Voices to Statewide Strength: Queensland's Transformational Regional Governance Journey Suzi Woodrow-Read, Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines, Manufacturing, Regional and Rural Development	Working Hard and It's Hardly Working: Novel Solutions to Navigate Under-Resourcing in Regional Mental Healthcare Kacie Austin, Department of Veterans	Developing Connectivity Across the North Gavin Williams, Nbnco
2:50 PM - 3:10 PM	Aboriginal Community-Led Project Design and Delivery in the NT - Collective Impact Initiative Elouise Calma, Aboriginal Investment NT	Coordinated Pathways Out of Homelessness: The Central Intake Service in the Northern Territory Farron Studt & Susan Richards, Lutheran Care	People, Place and Work: Rethinking Workforce Capability in Remote Contexts Fionn Griffin, Remote Contexts Centred Solutions	Virtual Support and Real Impact: Telementoring for Mental Health and Telehealth Skills in Northern Australia Professor Anthony Smith, University Of Queensland

3:10 PM - 3:40 PM	Afternoon Tea - Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A			
	MacDonnell Room B & C	Ellery A	Ellery B	Ellery C
	Session 13: Economic Development Chair: Jason Kidd	Session 14: Future Landscapes Chair: Anthony Curro	Session 15: Health & Community Chair: Alexie Seller	Session 16: Growing Northern Talent Chair: Brook Orr
3:40 PM - 4:00 PM	Unlocking Scarce Regional Industrial Land to Attract Priority-Sector Investment at Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct Sean O'Meara, Andrew Leith & Scott Muller, Eco-Industrial BDO	Applying Circular Economy Principles Through Cross-Sector Collaboration in Remote Communities Jennifer McHugh, Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council	Strong Futures Start Here: First Nations Health and Wellbeing Carissa McAllister & Vicky Meyer, CheckUP	Building Capability in the Next Generation Workforce for Northern Australia Margie Atkinson, Atkinson Consulting
4:05 PM - 4:25 PM	From Potential to Prosperity: Securing Territory Participation in Major Projects Hayley Richards, Northern Territory Government's Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations	Evaluating Ecosystem Service Trade-Offs Under Irrigated Agricultural Development in the Gilbert River Catchment Jack Koci, James Cook University	Working with Social Workers in General Practice Settings: The Views of GPs Ines Zuchowski, James Cook University	What retains the remote health workforce? Quantifying retention priorities in remote Australia using Best-Worst Scaling Deb Russell, Menzies School Of Health
4:30 PM - 4:50 PM	Community Resilience in the Northern Territory - A Dashboard for Early Detection of Change Jacki Schirmer & David Gallacher, Northern Hub	Regulating for Economic Development in the NT Energy Sector Michael Allen, Rimfire Energy	Building Better Water Plans: Cultural Water Values Assessment for the Adelaide River catchment, Northern Territory Michelle Rodrigo, DLPE - Water Resources	Finding Assistance for Attraction and Retention of Skilled Workforce Geoff Barbaro, Skills Insight



Proudly Supported by NAUA



Networking Function & DNA Awards Ceremony

Time: 4:50 PM - 6:20 PM

Location: The Courtyard

Join us for an evening of connection, celebration and recognition at the DNAC26 Networking Function and Awards Ceremony.

This special event brings delegates together to network with industry leaders, government representatives, First Nations organisations, researchers and community stakeholders while celebrating outstanding contributions to Northern Australia through the inaugural DNAC Awards.

Enjoy canapés, beverages and live entertainment in the beautiful Alice Springs Convention Centre Courtyard as we recognise individuals and organisations making a meaningful impact across the north.

2026 DNAC Awards

The Developing Northern Australia Conference is proud to launch three new awards recognising excellence, innovation and leadership across Northern Australia.

Emerging Leaders Award

Recognising an individual under the age of 30 who demonstrates exceptional leadership, initiative and practical contribution to Northern Australia's development.

Allan Dale Trailblazer Award

Recognising practical, place-based innovation shaped by Northern Australia's unique conditions and delivering tangible outcomes for people, industry and/or the environment.

First Nations Leadership Award

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders creating lasting outcomes for people, Country and communities across Northern Australia.

PROGRAM

Friday 7 August 2026

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM	Day 3 Registration Open - Ghan Foyer			
	MacDonnell Room B & C	Ellery A	Ellery B	Ellery C
	Session 17: Infrastructure & Connectivity Chair: Kate Hislop	Session 18: Economic Development Chair: Katrina Kawaljenko	Session 19: Innovation & Technology Chair: Scott Davis	Session 20: People & Place Chair: Geoff Barbaro
8:30 AM - 8:50 AM	The Outback Way - Infrastructure That Connects: Unlocking Northern Australia Through Strategic Corridor Development Mel Forbes, Outback Highway Development Council	From Resource Province to Investment Corridor: Activating the Mount Isa-Townsville Economic Zone Maria James, Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone Inc (MITEZ)	Autonomous Systems at Scale: Transforming Livestock Operations in Northern Australia Edward Barraclough, Drone-hand Inc	Country at the Centre: How GeoRegions Can Support Indigenous Leadership, Story, and Sustainable Futures Angus M Robinson, Australian Geoscience Council
8:55 AM - 9:15 AM	Enabling Infrastructure to Build, Connect and Grow the Northern Territory Evan Tyrrell, Northern Territory Government	Private Sector Investment and Commitment to the NT Warren Ebert, Sentinel Property Group	Northern Australia: A Frontier Platform for Critical Care, Innovation, and Global Health Leadership Professor Eamon Raith, James Cook University	Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme: Insights and Opportunities for Northern Australia and the Pacific Region Dany Turner, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations & Fleur Calcutt, Pacific Labour Mobility Branch
9:20 AM - 9:40 AM	Port of Karumba: Diversification of Regional Supply Chains in North West Queensland Neil O'Brien, Gulf Savannah Development	Structural Barriers to Growth in Northern Australia's Cities George Wilkinson, University of Western Australia	From Data to Decisions: Planning for the Cumulative Impacts of Major Projects Ben Rada, Projects Remplan	Building Health Workforce Through Education and Training: Role of the WA Centre for Rural Health Professor Rohan Rasiah, University of Western Australia
9:45 AM - 10:05 AM	Gateway to the Pacific: Building the Central Queensland Defence Industry Ecosystem Luke Smeaton, Forge Advisory	Why Northern Australia Needs Place-Based Solutions: City of Karratha Virginia Milttrup, City of Karratha	Justin's Journey: Transitioning Leadership Styles to Benefit Indigenous Economic Development and Innovation Justin Jones, V&I Homes	Northern Climate Resilient People, Places and Programs Karen George, James Cook University, Tropical North Queensland Drought Hub
10:05 AM - 10:30 AM	Morning Tea - Ghan Foyer & MacDonnell Room A			
	Keynote Session 4 - MacDonnell Room B & C Chair: Craig Doyle			
10:30 AM - 10:45 AM	A Place to Call Home Senator the Hon Nita Green Assistant Minister for Northern Australia, Assistant Minister for Tourism, Assistant Minister for Pacific Island Affairs			
10:50 AM - 11:35 AM	Economic Development & Growing Northern Talent Panel Facilitator: Kylie Porter, Outgoing CEO, Greater Whitsunday Alliance Incoming CEO, Queensland Farmers' Federation Panellists: Lisa Hewitt Jeff Stewart-Harris, Chair, Northern RDA Alliance Romy Carey, CEO NT Cattlemen's Association Elizabeth Brennan, AgDots			
11:40 AM - 11:55 AM	Healing Communities to Build the North: Cultural Strength as the Foundation for Development Kynan Barnes Ampetyane Kings Narrative			
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Aboriginal Business: A Major Force Driving the Northern Economy Naomi Anstess Big Boss (CEO) NT Indigenous Business Network			
12:30 PM - 12:45 PM	Conference Closing & Prize Draw			
12:45 PM - 1:15 PM	Departing Lunch - Safe Travels Home!			



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts



Our North, Our Future

The Office of Northern Australia (ONA) oversees the Australian Government's Northern Australia policy agenda to achieve sustainable and resilient northern economic and social development.

The ONA:

- oversees the implementation of the Northern Australia Action Plan 2024–29
- supports the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
- works across the Australian Government to provide policy advice on enablers for sustainable economic and social development in the north
- works with the Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory governments on progressing the northern agenda, including through the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum
- supports First Nations economic participation, including through the Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group
- works collaboratively with community, research and industry groups to support development in Northern Australia, including building a robust evidence base.

Talk to us about:

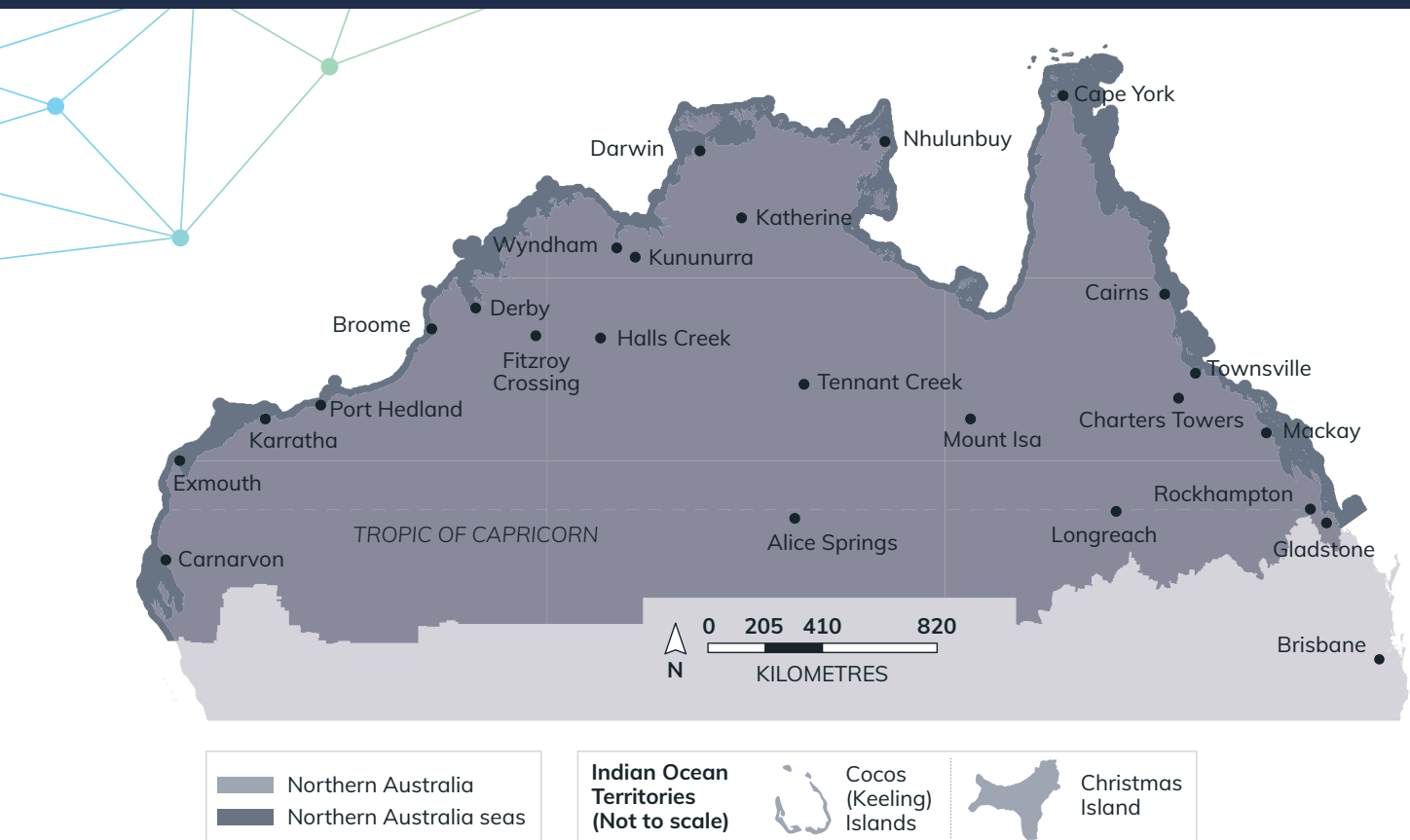
- your priorities in developing Northern Australia
- the Australian Government's focus in delivering the Northern Australia Action Plan 2024–29
- how the ONA supports the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
- working with the Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group
- signing up for the ONA e-newsletter and LinkedIn.

Scan the QR code

To find out more about the Office of Northern Australia or to subscribe to our e-Newsletter or LinkedIn.

Email us:

NorthernAustralia@infrastructure.gov.au



Delivering for Northern Queensland

Ensuring regional and rural communities have the opportunity to:

- » influence decision making and shape policy and program development
- » better access government services
- » strengthen their community's economic, social and environmental outcomes.

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government



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Across Northern Australia, housing demand continues to outpace supply. No single solution can close the gap.

Modpacs CHAS™ enables regional, remote and Indigenous communities to participate directly in housing delivery through:

- ✓ Local Manufacturing
- ✓ Local Training
- ✓ Local Employment
- ✓ Local Housing Solutions



Discover how Modpacs CHAS™ (Component Housing Assembly System) is helping regional, remote and Indigenous communities deliver housing through local manufacturing, workforce training, employment and community participation.

WE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

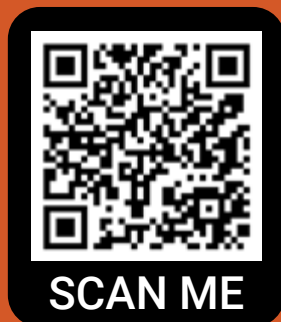
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Rimfire Group is a Northern Territory based, family owned and operated group of companies servicing the electricity industry in the Northern Territory.

Rimfire Energy is the group's licenced retail electricity sales business and is the largest private electricity retailer in the Northern Territory. With more than 50 years of relevant electricity industry experience, Rimfire Energy's team provides a competitive and commercial alternative for the supply of electricity through offering competitively priced products and services. By providing meaningful competition since commencing operations, Rimfire Energy has cut tens of million of dollars from the cost of doing business in the Territory.

Rimfire Group's aim is to reduce Territorian's and Territorian Businesses' energy costs by providing high quality, innovative, and renewable energy solutions which are delivered through high quality customer service.

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GOLD SPONSOR



Office of Northern Australia – Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts

The Office of Northern Australia (ONA) plays a central role in supporting the Australian Government's vision for a strong, sustainable and resilient north. Sitting within the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, the ONA oversees the government's Northern Australia policy agenda and works to improve long-term economic and social development across Northern Australia.

Northern Australia includes all of the Northern Territory and the parts of Queensland and Western Australia that lie north of the Tropic of Capricorn, as well as the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Through collaboration with partners such as the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) and the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA), the ONA continues to support a connected, resilient and prosperous future for Northern Australia.

 northernaustralia.gov.au

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**Queensland
Government**

Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development

Delivering for regional communities is a critical role for Queensland Government agencies. For the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development, that's enabling industries, stakeholders and customers to build resilient and thriving regional communities by supporting regional and rural landholders, businesses and communities to capitalise on our abundant natural resources, minerals and ingenuity to deliver long-term, sustainable economic development. We help communities make the best use of renewable and non-renewable land, mineral and energy resources, provide support for manufacturers to grow their businesses and explore new markets, and engage with regional and rural communities to advocate for their interests and improve access to government services.

 nrmmrdd.qld.gov.au

BRONZE SPONSOR



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Drawing on more than 50 years of construction industry experience, Modpacs is an IP licensing and support company delivering a new paradigm for Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) across Australia. Through its patented Component Housing Assembly System (CHAS), Modpacs enables builders, Indigenous enterprises, and regional businesses to participate in MMC adoption without reliance on proprietary factory-built models. The low-capital "Pop-Up Factory" model empowers low-skilled local workforces to manufacture and assemble resilient, energy-efficient homes locally, creating jobs, building regional skills, increasing housing delivery capacity, and ensuring economic benefits remain within the communities that need housing most.

 modpacs.com.au

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BARISTA CART SPONSOR



Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)

The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) is the Commonwealth Government's \$7 billion financing agency to support infrastructure development that generates public benefit for northern Australia. NAIF's mandate focuses on projects that deliver public benefit, Indigenous outcomes and contribute to the sustainable growth of the region.

NAIF has committed \$4.3 billion in loans across 32 projects across the north. Projects range from large-scale resource and energy developments to social infrastructure, including universities, to airport upgrades, agriculture and aquaculture developments. In total, NAIF supported projects are forecast to deliver \$33 billion in public benefit and Indigenous Outcomes for the region. * Figures as at 31/01/2026

 naif.gov.au

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AllCap Securities

AllCap IPG is a privately backed infrastructure and logistics platform focused on unlocking Northern and Central Australia's trade potential through integrated port, rail, energy, shipping and industrial developments. Anchored by Project Velocity, the group is advancing a rail-first logistics network centred on Gladstone, including formally bidding for a new container terminal, a 2,700-hectare inland port and 7,000-hectare renewable zone, advanced manufacturing, shipping services from Gladstone and Darwin into and out of SE Asia and supporting industrial infrastructure. Backed by AllCap Securities' capital, advisory and delivery capabilities, IPG's mission is to strengthen Australia's supply chain resilience, expand export capacity and drive long-term regional economic development for Northern Australia through private sector investment.

 allcapsecurities.com.au

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NETWORKING FUNCTION & DNA AWARDS SPONSOR



Northern Australia Universities Alliance (NAUA)

As strong regional universities that are deeply embedded within the northern landscape, Charles Darwin University, James Cook University and CQUniversity are the logical knowledge and capacity building partners and connectors required for future development of the North. CDU, JCU and CQU seek to work together with the Australian Government to contribute to the sustainable social, environmental and economic development of Northern Australia. To achieve this, we have formed the Northern Australian Universities Alliance (NAUA). Through the Alliance, we aim to work together to develop and retain the skills, education and research capabilities that are critical to the North's key industries and communities.

 naua.edu.au

SUPPORTER



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CoolCore Safety

CoolCore Safety is a proudly Australian veteran and family-owned provider of specialised safety solutions, helping workplaces manage harmful environmental conditions such as extreme heat and UV exposure.

 coolcoresafety.com

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DAY 1: LUNCH BREAK SPONSOR



Mackay Regional Council

Mackay Regional Council's footprint is more than 7600km² – five times the size of Brisbane City Council, double Townsville and larger than Cairns and the Sunshine Coast combined.

With a population of more than 125,000, it has a gross regional product of \$11.4 billion across a diverse economic base, ranging from agriculture and tourism to manufacturing and mining services.

 mackay.qld.gov.au

DAY 2: MORNING TEA & LUNCH BREAK SPONSOR



Skills Insight

Skills Insight works with stakeholders who share a passion for improving skills and training across the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries. We are a national body with a special interest in supporting and promoting Northern Australia, given its importance for the growth, diversification and ecosystem management for the industries we cover. We are a not-for-profit, government funded, industry-led organisation and one of ten Jobs and Skills Councils.

 skillsinsight.com.au

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LANYARD SPONSOR



Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA)

The Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) is a flagship initiative of the Australian Government's Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia and is investing \$75 million over ten years (2017 to 2027) to deliver industry-led research and development collaborations which de-risk the development landscape and enable the sustainable economic growth of Northern Australia. CRCNA funding is developing new technologies, products and services which address industry issues in northern Australia within initial focus areas of: Agriculture (incl. cropping, horticulture, forestry and aquaculture); Health service delivery; First Nations-led business development; and Water security.

 crcna.com.au

CONFERENCE TOTE & CHARGING STATION SPONSOR



Telstra InfraCo

Telstra InfraCo is Telstra's specialist infrastructure business. We are committed to partnering with our customers to accelerate business opportunities by accessing our diverse national telecommunications infrastructure. Telstra InfraCo's growing asset portfolio includes 250,000 kilometres of fibre optic cable, 370,000 kilometres of duct, 160,000 poles, and thousands of fixed network facilities including data centres, cable landing stations and satellite ground stations. Telstra InfraCo supports Australia's fixed and mobile networks, and has access to 400,000 kilometres of sub-sea cables enabling greater connectivity and reach for our customers globally.

Our unrivalled expertise and proven infrastructure experience tells us what works today, and shapes how we are building for tomorrow.

 infraco.telstra.com.au

EXHIBITORS PLAN

Exhibition Hours

Wednesday 5 August	9.00am – 5.00pm
Thursday 6 August	8.00am – 5.00pm
Friday 7 August	8.00am – 10.30am

The Ghan Foyer

- 1 Office of Northern Australia
- 2 NAUA
- 3 AllCap Securities
- 4 ModPacs
- 5 CRCNA
- 6 NAIF
- 7 Developing Northern Australia Conference

MacDonnell Room A

- 8 Gladstone Regional Council
- 9 PALM Scheme
- 10 Impact North
- 11 TBC
- 12 Indigenous Business Group
- 13 Telstra Infraco
- 14 TBC
- 15 Indigenous Carbon Industry Network
- 16 NBN Co
- 17 AEC Group
- 18 Northern RDA Alliance
- 19 Remplan



Northern Australia plays a vital role in the growth, diversification and environmental stewardship of Australia's agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries. To support these industries, we are working with employers, unions and governments to improve opportunities for formal training and safe, secure employment.

We want to hear from you about the opportunities and challenges affecting jobs, skills and vocational education and training in Northern Australia. Your insights will help identify priorities and inform future workforce and training solutions.

Skills Insight is the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for these industries. If your industry falls outside our coverage, we are happy to connect you with the relevant JSC.



Skills Insight is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

03 9321 3526 | skillsinsight.com.au | contact@skillsinsight.com.au



Kimberley Regional Group

Enhancing the rich diversity & liveability of the Kimberley



Contact: **Paul Rosair, Executive Officer, 0419 930 467**

kimberleyrg.com.au



EXHIBITORS



AEC Group Pty Ltd

AEC Group is an outcome-driven consulting firm dedicated to delivering practical, high-quality solutions. With over three decades of experience, AEC has grown from a single regional office to a nationally recognised organisation. Our technical disciplines encompass economics, finance, market research, and graphic design. Our team is composed of talented individuals who thrive in a collaborative and supportive environment, fostering personal and organisational growth. We are committed to understanding our clients' unique needs and delivering innovative, timely solutions that drive their immediate success and long-term ambitions.

 aecgroupltd.com

IMPACT NORTH

Impact North

Impact North supports remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs to build strong businesses on Country. Shaped by Indigenous expertise and grounded in community, we provide practical, culturally safe support through training, mentoring, and connections. We support entrepreneurs to strengthen their confidence and capability from idea to income, helping them navigate the realities of remote business while staying true to place and purpose. By backing remote entrepreneurs, we support the creation of local jobs, resilient regional economies, and long-term, community-led impact. This strengthens self-determined futures and keeps value, opportunity, and decision-making within communities across Northern Australia.

 impactnorth.org.au



Indigenous Carbon Industry Network

The Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN) is a not-for-profit Aboriginal-owned charitable organisation that supports the Indigenous carbon industry in Australia. It is an industry peak body including 23 Indigenous land and sea management organisations which are creating economic, social, and environmental benefits through their own carbon projects that value the climate benefits of savanna fire management and land restoration.

The network provides a point of contact for policies impacting the Indigenous carbon industry, supports knowledge sharing through events, working groups and updates, and is committed to ensuring Indigenous groups right across Australia are well-positioned to understand and maximise the benefits from carbon projects for their country and community.

 icin.org.au



NBN Co

nbn is committed to responding to the digital connectivity needs of people across Australia, working with industry, governments, regulators and community partners to help lift the digital capability of Australia.

One of the company's key objectives is to support Australia's digital economy and enhance social connection by creating opportunities for communities, governments and industry to drive digital adoption and innovation.

 nbnco.com.au

EXHIBITORS



North Australia RDA Alliance - hosted by RDA Greater Whitsundays

The RDA network is a vital link between regional stakeholders and all 3 levels of government – acting as an effective conduit across government, industry and with the community to support the development of Australia's regions. The NRDA consists of over 60 diverse and passionate civic, community and industry leaders across the eight RDA Committees across Northern Australia. We provide a valuable forum for collaboration on common issues, identify opportunities for local innovation and capacity building, as well as providing leadership on regional development opportunities.

 rdagw.org.au



GLADSTONE
ENTERTAINMENT
CONVENTION CENTRE



Gladstone Regional Council

The Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre (GECC) is Central Queensland's leading conference and events venue, delivering exceptional business events with professional service and outstanding facilities. Our flexible spaces, state-of-the-art audiovisual technology and experienced events team ensure every conference is delivered seamlessly from planning through to execution. Conveniently located in Gladstone's CBD with more than 800 accommodation rooms, restaurants and cafés within walking distance, the GECC is easily accessible by air, rail and road. As the gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef, Gladstone offers delegates the opportunity to combine business with unforgettable destination experiences, creating conferences that leave a lasting impression.

 gladstoneentertainment.com

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM)

Visit the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme booth to learn how the PALM scheme helps eligible employers to fill labour shortages by providing access to a reliable workforce when local labour is not available. Eligible businesses can recruit workers from nine Pacific islands and Timor-Leste for short-term roles (up to 9 months) or long-term roles for between (one to 4 years) in unskilled, low-skilled, and semi-skilled positions when there are not enough local workers available. The PALM scheme supports key regional industries including agriculture and food processing, aged care, hospitality, and tourism. It also helps workers build skills in Australia and send income home.

 palmscheme.gov.au



REMPPLAN

REMPPLAN supports governments, regional organisations and industry across Australia with area-specific economic and demographic analysis, forecasting and evidence-based planning tools. Our platforms help communities understand regional change, identify opportunities and guide planning around investment, housing, workforce development, tourism and economic resilience. Working extensively with local government and regional stakeholders, we translate complex data into practical insights that support sustainable growth and stronger communities. REMPLAN is committed to helping organisations plan for the future with confidence through accessible data, localised intelligence and strategic advisory services that respect the unique characteristics, aspirations and challenges of place.

 remplan.com.au

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Day 2 Morning Tea & Lunch Break



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