

To provide Gladstone Regional Council's management sector with information in the area of Conferences and their Organisational benefit.



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Gladstone Regional Council Conferences Attended

a) Northern Australia Conference 2018 Alice Springs

1.0 Conference Attended and the Synopsis

Northern Australia Conference 2018, June 2018, Alice Springs

Key Objective – Northern Australia Agenda

The Australian Government is growing a stronger northern Australian economy through a long-term agenda of investment and support. The agenda is unlocking the region's full economic potential as a gateway to global markets, a source of rich resources and a home to pristine environments. Ensuring the north is an even more attractive place to live and do business.

The Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia released in 2015, sets out the priorities to drive growth in Australia's north. It's a 20-year plan for investment and support to grow the north through six key pillars:

- a trade and investment gateway
- a more diversified northern economy
- Indigenous entrepreneurship and businesses
- world-class infrastructure
- water infrastructure investment
- research and innovation

2.0 Key Learnings from each session attended or speaker session

The conference got underway with Rosalie Riley, of the Arrernte people native title holders, delivering a heart warming and thoughtful welcome to Country.

Following that, Dr Cully, chief economist, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science gave a background into past efforts in developing northern Australia. He was optimistic in the direction headed to currently and noted that the White Paper on developing northern Australia is progressing well. He highlighted the North's striking attributes of being:

- Proximity to the rapidly growing Asia
- Sparsely populated
- Rich in resources

Some good statistics presented were:

- The North has a population share of about 5% but economic delivery of about 6 to 9%.
- The North is under-represented in high value industries of professional services and information technology. Also lower represented in management positions in the resources sector.

Dr Fahey, from Austrade, made reference to the importance of NAIF in developing the North. Examples given were: Humpty Doo Barramundi facility, \$7 million investment enabling growth and supplying the Australian and International markets;

\$100 million in northern beef roads and \$200 million in funds towards water.

Dr Fahey also stressed importance of making native title transparent as well as proactive engagement as opposed to something performed at the end of a project.

Also highlighted at the conference, was the importance of being patient with less experienced investors and working collaboratively for long term benefits. This is consistent with our culture of wanting win-win outcomes. It is therefore that we are trusted and involved in the global supply chains. We have a good reputation however must fight to have our place in the supply chains, because no one will be handing those opportunities.

Learnings

Location, Location, Location

The sweet spot of investment: access to resources, customers, partners and talent. From a SE Asia perspective: Darwin is only a 3 to 5 hour flight. Therefore, very close. The world economy has its sights fixed on Asia. Australia's FTAs are very attractive to European investment. Number one foreign direct investment in Australia is the US, number two is Japan. Recently we are seeing investment from less experienced investors from China, India and ASEAN. Important to have Australia open for the development of the nation and northern Australia.

Health

Healthcare access difficulties, and competing family life demands, leads to access inequality and disparity. Innovation and broadband access and digital health can help mitigate against some of these inequalities.

Health services are one of the critical decision points for families choosing location, along with water, housing and employment.

Hospitals without walls - An emerging world of healthcare

More healthcare into the home and GP practices as well as specialist appointments integrated into communities using Telehealth and biometrics. It is growing in some places by 30-50% per year, improving access and reducing cost of travel. Evidence based treatment options using technology are enablers to the tyranny of distance challenges.

What it means tangibly: less travel, less costs, more care, earlier care (for example cancer care), greater care, local delivery of care, local jobs, better physical and mental health outcomes for people, people staying in their communities, children not missing out on sport, more comfort for the patient and keeping families and support networks together.

Now and in the future needs include a focus on:

- Collaboration between health providers. For example a northern Australian workforce as opposed to QLD vs NT vs WA
- Early childhood : first 180 days can significantly impact the trajectory of that child's future adult life
- Aboriginal and indigenous health care focus
- Reliable internet and digital technologies leading to a connected northern digital community: healthcare benefits delivered without the possession of the economy of scale.

Progressing agriculture

Agriculture and food research development and extension 10 year road map and action plan:

- Details how Queensland will capitalise on its competitive advantages
- Realise growth opportunities through collaboration, innovation and export capacity

Export markets are in the north while distribution centres are in the south.

Queensland government initiatives:

- Regional export distribution centre pilot
- One stop service: web information portal
- Rural economic development grants
- Rural economies centre of excellence working with universities to develop integrated research on the dynamics of modern, rural communities
- Ministerial trade missions

Agriculture risks and opportunities

Bio security Risks

Risk to the North from overseas in the north, but also the southern regions.

Strategy being prepared do draft a strategy that develops the framework and ethos for how stakeholders (government, residents, traditional owners) manage biosecurity risks.

IT Opportunities

Technology is redefining agriculture, a new normal is being established in our lifetime. It can help optimise and target resource allocation. For example capsicum growing, drones use and mechanical collection.

Block chain technology can secure our quality advantages to competing markets.

3D Metal Printing by SPEE3D (Charles Darwin University) - A Darwin, Global Tech company

Technologised cold spray technique, combines heat and pressure with digital printing.

Traditional metal baking requires large volumes to make it cost effective.

Typical metal 3D printing is slow. This technology is scalable delivering low cost, high speed production. Also allows for rapid production of changed design. For example 14 week casting lead time vs 2 days with printing. The technology promotes innovation in advanced manufacturing. Allows for removal of inventory and for mouldless foundries.

Applications include manufacturing, health and defence.

NAIF

Independent, flexible, proponent-led, five billion dollar, Commonwealth Government lending (concessional, subject to public benefit) facility through the States.

Purpose is to fill gaps in infrastructure in the North.

Mandatory criteria:

- involve construction or enhancement of infrastructure
- be of public benefit (multi user would be ideal)
- be located in, or have significant benefit for, northern Australia
- be able to repay or refinance NAIF's debt (not a grant facility)
- have an indigenous engagement strategy (IES)

The IES must be sustainable and make a valuable contribution to the local population.

NAIF can support many infrastructures such as processing plants, seaports, marinas and transshipment vessels. New April, 2018 amendments enable 100% funding of debt as well as a broader definition of infrastructure. There is also no minimum project size, it is about public interest. NAIF can provide long term loans and patient terms on interest and repayments, flexibility that the private sector is unable to provide.

The Power of Social Media in developing the North

Useful tools for engaging the youth of communities. Applications such as Snapchat and Facebook can facilitate youth to engage with services and ask questions they need information about. Can be used to make education programs fun and therefore engaging. Twitter can engage more professional and academic participants.

Pastoral opportunities

More food needed next 40 years than last 8 000 years.

There will one billion more people by 2030 and 2 billion more by 2050

Urbanisation: 60% by 2030, 70% by 2050

By 2030 there will be a global 40% water deficit.

Northern beef productivity of 1.4% versus 0.6% in Southern beef, because the beef production requires less inputs, has more scale and more reliable seasons (with increasing rainfall across northern Australia).

Average rainfall in Australia is 542mm. Majority of above average rainfall is in the north. Northern Australia is also clean and green compared to other parts of the mainland.

Technology opportunities : DNA testing, use of big data, automatic walkover looking at weight and condition of cattle, as well as drones. This enables smarter spending of resources.

Threats: vulnerability to a disease outbreak because of limited infrastructure. Inputs and infrastructure are expensive.

Opportunities: innovation, automation, the Australian brand, growing global population, growing global affluence, resulting in growing demand.

Conducting agri business in northern Australia and developing our national export markets

Important factors: taste and brand Australia.

Necessities: scale, volume, quality and consistency. Recognise customers' need and base strategic growth on that. Limited resources in northern Australia can slow down business development.

Other matters of consideration:

Isolation

With isolation come longer times and terms for resources and necessary products and equipment. For example 20 months for a machine to arrive. Relationships are important because there is not a lot of choice. These issues are of significant risk because with farming, for example mango farming, there is a four to six week window of harvest for a year's effort. Therefore isolation is a risk that must be catered for.

Climate

Fire is a serious risk as when fire burns trees, recovery is very hard. Heat is also a factor which can play havoc with equipment. Northern Australia temperatures are quite high (33 to 43 degrees) adversely impacting machinery and also people. Fruit pickers can need up to 10 litres of water and also electrolytes. This requires its own management process.

People and Resources

Need a mix of long term local and seasonal workers due to the nature of agriculture. Important to have multi skilled staff who are willing to come to remote locations and be motivated to visit multiple sites, but recruiting such personnel is not easy.

Key components of value change management:

- Consumer insights
- Relationships
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Information flow across supply chains within companies

The future:

- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Strategic focused growth
- New products (very important)
- Brand development

Indigenous Culture and Involvement

Opportunity to showcase aboriginal art. Promoting indigenous led, indigenous involved and indigenous themed tourism. Engaging indigenous people in delivering economic outcomes is important and also creates new tourism products and opportunities. Reform must occur and lead to genuine change. Reform must be empowering.

Defence

Allows for building of local capacity with local businesses. The geophysical characteristics of the North makes it appropriate for defence purposes and opportunities. Defence industries and organisations must show how local industries engage local business and jobs.

Geo political and Geo physical characteristics

Asia is the growth region of the globe. The North is in very close vicinity to Asia by air and sea. Freight travel from the North to Asia is several days closer. Importantly there are also family ties and cultural ties with Asia. We must work better across national borders but also across state borders.

More certainty is needed on long term infrastructure investment and funding. This enables the private sector to invest in advance of public decisions not in reaction to, allowing greater productivity and efficiency.

There is also opportunity for space technology. Proponents such as NASA have an opportunity to perform operations and missions from the North.

Meeting 2030 renewable energy targets

Case study: Intyalheme

Established in 2017 with \$5 million seed funding. Role is collaboration.

The goal is 50% renewables. There is a push towards solar and battery storage.

In Alice Springs there are 200 cloud free days and 9.6 hours of daily sunshine.

Alice springs grid is isolated and not connected to the NEM. However the grid characteristics are similar to the NEM. Lessons learnt will be transferable to a national context.

Ageing in Australia's north

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Between 2011 and 2031 the Australian population, over 65, will grow from 13 to 18%. An interesting trend is also increasing indigenous life expectancy. As population demographics change there is more necessary to balance between acute hospital funding and community care funding.

However northern Australia is sparsely populated, which can be a challenge to sustainability and cost efficiency. Councils, in rural and regional areas, sometimes step in for delivery of community aged care to be able to house their ageing population locally, putting extra costs to Councils. Issues that can arise however are confusion over roles, responsibility, ownership and oversight, inherently creating risks.

Opportunity lies in partnerships enabling greater outcomes than acting individually. Recognition of hidden assets (physical and IP) that can be brought to partnerships where local people can bring in knowledge that external stakeholders don't have. This allows a relationship with shared ownership, risk and knowledge. Will require clear communication on minimal service levels being spelled out, KPIs and clear contingency plan if a party fails delivery. A dynamic system of relationship based on mutual reliance and benefit.

When achieving success, must keep innovating. Start small, think outside usual models, and build on the project.

Health

Challenges and risks

Drug resistant Malaria, Plasmodium falciparum, to the north of us. Drug resistant tuberculosis emergence to our north. Antibiotics resistance is increasingly becoming a global issues and also here in Northern Australia and indigenous communities.

Mitigation:

- surveillance
- case management and prevention
- policy and practice

Regional teaching workshops can help improve education of health and care workers. Cover topics from diabetes to rheumatoid heart disease and anti microbial resistance. Good engagement with indigenous populations is very important.

3.0 One thing you will use as a result of your learnings

Technology is an enabler in mitigating against the tyranny of distance.

E health can improve quality of life and affordability for our communities, but will need good, reliable, accessible internet.

Technology can optimise our agriculture opportunities, at a time when prospects for agriculture are very promising.

The importance of engaging with and being patient with investors, particularly those inexperienced with us. Our location gives us great opportunities.

Migration drives growth of population, prosperity and in turn availability of increasing community services.

Partnerships provide opportunities for aged care, building opportunities for mutual exploration, problem solving and exploration.

A thought-generating quote: "People don't buy what you do - they buy why you do it" , Simon Sinek

4.0 One thing that the organisation could use to improve its operations

Please see report

5.0 Other comments

Nil

6.0 Conference attendance costs

Conference Registration Fee:	\$ 840.00
Travel Costs:	\$ 1, 781.77
Accommodation:	\$ 735.00
Sundries:	\$ 152.00
Additional Costs:	\$ 00.00
TOTAL COST:	\$ 3,508.77