Roll out of the Northern Australia White Paper

The Australian Government's 2015 Northern Australia White Paper committed $1.2 billion to a range of activities to support northern development. Recent spending includes:

- **Road Upgrades**
  The Australian Government has allocated $162 million and the Northern Territory Government is providing $47 million to upgrade roads in the Northern Territory including the Keep River Plains Road, the Arnhem, Buntine and Plenty Highways and the Docker River Road. The Keep River Road upgrade is a great example of government spending to enable private investment - in this case to support the $1.45 billion Project Sea Dragon prawn aquaculture project and the proposed Ord Stage 3 development. Under the Beef Roads Programme the Australian and Northern Territory Governments will fund $37.5 million in improvements to the Tablelands Highway and the Barkly Stock Route. Work on the majority of these roads starts this Dry season.

- **Tropical health research**
  The Australian Government has announced almost $8 million in funding to the Northern Territory’s Menzies School of Health Research to support the Northern Australia Tropical Disease Collaborative Research Program and to support research into the prevention and treatment of malaria. This funding will help drive innovative, high quality research into the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of tropical disease.

- **Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) on Developing Northern Australia**
  The CRC will provide $75 million over the next 10 years to industry-led projects where the north has particular strengths like agriculture and tropical health. Successful applicants to the $3 million first funding round will be announced in July.

- **Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility**
  The Australian Government’s Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility will provide concessional loans totaling $5 billion for infrastructure projects across the north. These loans will encourage private sector investment in economic infrastructure. A number of applications are now being considered.

Regional Economic Development Committees (REDCs)

The Northern Territory has four REDCs. These voluntary committees, facilitated by the Northern Territory Government, focus on attracting new investment to regional areas. Projects the REDCs are involved in include:

- **East Arnhem REDC:** Increasing industry use of the Gove Port facilities
Governments working together
Recognising that governments have to work together to develop the north two groups have been formed.

The Northern Australian Strategic Partnership comprises the Prime Minster, Chief Minister and Queensland and Western Australia premiers. This is the peak governmental group concerned with northern development.

The Chief Minister will host the first meeting of the Joint Ministerial Forum in Darwin later this year. This group is made up of federal, state and Northern Territory ministers.

A concept the Northern Territory Government will be pushing hard at both forums is that the sum of the Northern Territory and Australian Government policy directions like White Papers can be much greater than the parts.

City Deal for Darwin
The Australian Government’s City Deals policy provides the opportunity to bring together all levels of government, the private sector and the community in a coordinated approach to build a unique and vibrant city centre. The Northern Territory Government has allocated $100 million to this initiative and has a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Government to begin negotiation on establishing a Darwin City Deal.

This vision follows the Developing the North White Paper to create an enabling environment, allowing businesses to grow and prosper. The Darwin City Deal will be focused on improving the lives of Darwin residents through transforming it into an internationally renowned tropical capital city with a renewed and thriving urban centre.

All efforts will aim to deliver an integrated package of initiatives to make Darwin more attractive to investors, residents and business that will result in a revitalised city centre, increased jobs and economic growth and improvements to Darwin’s liveability. The regions of the Northern Territory will benefit from improved links nationally and internationally and opportunities that comes from a vibrant Darwin City.