

Welcome to a summary of news in February (NN#10) on topics relevant to Kimberley to Cape's goal of keeping the world's greatest tropical savanna¹ great via sustainable development, land and water management and conservation. **These clips aim to facilitate cross-sector and cross-region knowledge sharing, and more informed conversations about the future of Northern Australia.** They're a 'round up' rather than hot off the press, and what comes across my desk rather than a systematic collection, so apologies for any major omissions - *pls do send these in, and any other relevant items!* Please let me know what you think and what you'd like more/less of. Please also let me know if you don't wish to receive this email. Cheers and thanks, Clare, Coordinator, [Kimberley to Cape](#)



Northern Australian News Roundup for Feb 2016

Pan Northern

- Qld Nationals Senator and former Productivity Commission economist [Matt Canavan appointed as new Minister for Northern Australia](#) ([statement](#), [interview](#)) to work closely with Frydenberg, the senior minister in the [Industry, Innovation and Science portfolio](#) where Nth Aust white paper is based. ([Canavan on native title and broadscale agriculture](#)) ([on jobs and red and green tape](#)) ([on parochialism and water](#)) ([on onground](#)) ([compares develop the North agenda to Burke and Wills expedition](#)) ([on insurance risks more](#))
- [Shadow Minister for Nth Aust Gary Gray](#), and [former chair of Nth Aust Land & Water taskforce Bill Heffernan](#), to retire
- [Turnbull visits N Qld](#) ([more](#)) highlighting innovation, Asian markets and water, and considering [\\$100M renewal plan](#)
- [Canavan, Harding, Christensen on developing the North](#)
- [Qld gov vies for NAIF investment](#) ([asking for 70% of \\$5B funds](#)) ([more](#)) and to host it [Cairns location Darwin location](#) ([Brisbane vs FNQ](#))
- [Interim commercial board being established for NAIF with 'devil in the detail'](#), and [Cairns Airport, Townsville Port and water infrastructure](#) touted worthy
- [Defence White Paper invests in Nth Aust](#) including facilities in [Townsville](#), [Cairns](#), [Weipa](#), [Nth WA](#) especially [Darwin](#) ([more & more](#)) and on [protecting nthn oil& gas](#)
- [New Senate Inquiry report into aquaculture in Nth Aust](#) has 11 recs inc [pearling industry recovery taskforce](#), more work on GBR aq, [crocodile egg survey in Nth Qld](#), [Nth Qld pest and disease diagnosis facility](#), funding to [Kimberley Aq Dev Zone](#) and [Seadragon](#) if good benefit-cost, FRDC northern 'node'. Comments inc [country of origin labelling](#), [impacts of seismic on pearling industry](#)
- [Report on tree clearing and climate change](#) shows signif clearing & emissions in Qld, recent relaxation of regs & poor data quality in WA & NT, and v limited reporting. Also highlights proposed clearing for agric of 33,000ha for NT/WA Ord; 53,500ha for WA Fitzroy & 70,000ha in Qld, and questions ERF effectiveness given emissions from clearing. Coverage [here & here](#). Also, article discussing [record rates and costs of Qd landclearing](#), [regs recently upheld](#), [gov criticised for few prosecutions](#) and thoughts for the [North from NSW young farmers](#)
- [Dwindling national cattle herd](#) creating tension between live export and processed meat, with [future of Townsville abattoir uncertain](#), [Call for cap on livex](#) and [N qld abattoir investment depends on supply](#).
- [MLA Cattle outlook](#) and Grassfed [Beef Industry 5 yr plan](#)
- New online [tool to better assess grazing land condition and manage changes in cover](#)
- [Study finds family and friends most important](#) contributor to Nthn land managers' quality of life, and productivity and conservation can go hand in hand
- [NT Farmers](#) and [Kimberley farmers](#) continue to lobby against backpacker tax
- [Test case for compensation for loss of Native Title underway in Timber Creek](#) [more](#)
- [Indigenous Leader Pat Dodson in line to enter senate](#) [more](#)
- [Altman essay on remote employment scheme](#) (p22)

- COAG agrees to implement recs of COAG investigation into Indigenous land administration and use inc framework to put Indigenous economic participation at the heart of the national agenda, drive genuine cooperation, and increase focus on place-based solutions. See comment p 3-5 [here](#)
- Country Needs People website highlights multiple benefits of Indigenous rangers and IPAs, and need to secure and expand programs
- Gulf Country Song Book showcases 100yrs of Yanyuwa, Marra, Garrwa and Gudanji songs (p18)
- New Australian Infrastructure Plan highlights infrastructure needs of remote & Indigenous communities (eg bettering understand local characteristics & needs, greater use of local expertise, Indigenous economic independence, and transitioning from diesel to renewables) and sustainability and resilience. Its N Aust priorities are: enabling infrastructure and essential services to remote NT communities, improved road access to remote WA communities, upgrade Tanami Road, Townsville-Mt Isa rail, Lower Fitzroy (Qld) water infrastructure to develop industry and agriculture, gas connections to E coast, and Darwin region water supply infrastructure upgrades.
- NEGI pipeline construction planned for early 2017
- Austs largest barra farm expands
- Vogue mag lists Kakadu plum (gubinge) as 1 of 9 top superfoods (more)
- New Aust Gov Northern Australian Tourism initiative offers experts to work with companies turning over >\$750k, with scheme extending to smaller businesses later
- More direct flights from Darwin and Cairns to Singapore, and Mel to Broome, but loss for Derby
- Austrade website on land tenure in Nth Australia inc native title and Indigenous engagement
- CRC for Developing the North consults in Katherine, KNX & Darwin consult urges re-look at GrowNorth proposal
- CSIRO have new Northern Aust webpage
- Fears new fighter jets wont work in Nth Aust due to heat more
- Hottest month on record for TopEnd, hot & dry in Kimberley and Qld (whole nth and global comp) Worst wet in 25 yrs for top end and gulf, and driest wet season on record for Kakadu cancels cruises. Ord levels low. Dry Mar-May forecast for Nth
- Austs big cyclones from 1899 to present

State/Territory/Regional General News

- Redefining Townsville 2050 forum heard from Frydenberg (highlighted NAIF opportunities and high quality agric, education, health services and tourism), Canavan, business leader and Bernard Salt (resource sector overtaken by health, education, wellness, creative arts and start-ups [more](#))
- Qld inquiry into how to reach target of 50% renewable energy by 2030
- Cane growers innovate for profit and water quality (more)
- Etheridge shire development forum incs renewables, grazing industry
- Revised disaster planning for FNQ
- Breeding property bought by Sydney investor and niche beef supply chain success
- Wet Tropics World Heritage area worth \$5.2B
- Mission beach chocolate and Mareeba coffee win awards, and shift from mines to minds
- NLC Full Council seeks political commitments in push to develop the North p15 and NLC response to NT gov review of Aboriginal Scared Sites Acts recs greater deterrence and offence provisions, less Ministerial power, rejects site clearance for broader areas and highlights praise for Act from House of Reps committee & RioTinto (p1, 10-13)
- NT Opposition to put moratorium on new fracking if elected with mixed reaction [eg1](#), [eg2](#)
- Territory NRM draft 2016-2020 Strategic Plan out for comment to 2 Mar
- Six operating mines in the NT, NT gov wont lay charges over radioactive spill (comment) and report on issues surrounding McArthur River mine

- [ECNT has new director and launches court challenge on Tiwi port \(more\)](#)
- [Land Rights News Nth Edn finalist in Aust Human Rights Commission awards \(p17\)](#)
- [First 2016 buffalo shipment leaves Darwin with moderate prices and more exports expected](#)
- [More NT pineapples](#)
- [NT tourism targeting wealthy Chinese thro unique experiences](#)
- WA moving forward with [controversial changes to Aboriginal heritage legislation](#). Article with [4 suggestions here](#)
- [Indigenous cattle company looking to boost live exports and opps for Nth WA beef in Thailand](#)
- [Kimberley & Pilbara Cattlemens on BJD management, Nth Beef Futures business improvement grants, and FutureBeef nutrition workshops report](#)
- [Kununurra grower keen to learn from Brazil](#)
- Progress report from Kimberley [project assessing risk of spread of introduced pastures](#) highlights: Lablab and cowpea fast to establish with other legumes preferentially grazed by wallabies; Lucerne and desmodium difficult to establish due to insect damage; Aztec siratro and the stylos bulking-up well; termites damaged leucaena seedlings trial; all sorghums and millets had excellent early vigour; perennial grasses, except Buffel grass, slower to establish; rhodes grass looking impressive

Water

- [Barnaby keen on Nthrn dams and Qld water infrastructure](#)
- [Canavan keen for central Qld water infrastructure, and Lw Fitzroy listed as national Infrastructure priority](#)
- Article on [lessons for dams in the North](#)
- CSIROs White Paper [Nth Aust water resource assessment project \(NAWRA\)](#) for WA Fitzroy, Qld Mitchell and NTs Adelaide, Mary, Wildman, and Finniss Rvs will include assessing potential environmental, social and economic impacts and risks of water resource and irrigation development ([Mins media release](#)) ([farmersweekly](#))
- [Low water levels for Ord may allow works](#)
- [More water allocation concerns in NTs Daly catchment more re plans for 15000ha of Sandalwood \(more background\)](#)
- [Works to cut Bay pollution & TOs suspect new bores caused fish deaths nr Broome](#)
- WA Watercorp's [Water in Aboriginal Culture](#) educational resource
- [Opinion piece by Cripps on Qld water reform](#) suggests ecologically sustainable development is 'notoriously restrictive' and key initiatives are in jeopardy
- [Evaluation of Burdekin water quality auction](#) shows popular process and high level of engagement with the Tender, as well as water quality awareness and practice change by landholders outside the Tender, but need to continue engagement after tenders selected
- [Burdekin added to national water accounts](#) to provide easy to access info on water stores, flows, rights and use, and volumes of water traded, extracted and managed
- [National Water Infrastructure Development Fund](#) feasibility study EOIs extended to 1 Mar 16.
- 3 short videos ([1](#) [2](#) [3](#)) explaining how Nth Aust floodplains (based on Kakadu) support productive fisheries inc the importance of algae as food and where it grows best, deep water holes, and connections between rivers and floodplains including back billabongs

Ferals, weeds & pests

- False [panama diagnosis due to testing method more](#) and Qld [scientists tackle 'bunchy top' banana virus](#)
- Progress report from [Kimberley project assessing risk of spread of introduced pastures](#) (see WA section above for summary)
- [Promising bush trials for weed eliminating robot](#)
- NT [quarantine controls on Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus lifted](#) but growers cautious
- [Zika virus to be tackled by dengue experts](#)
- [Landline show on feral buffalos in the Topend](#)

- [Genetic 'backburning' theory may help stop cane toads, and Fitzroy ranger toad project](#)
- [Draft NT Grader Grass Management Plan](#) open for comment until Mar 25
- [Locusts hit N Qld properties](#)
- [Nth Aust weed also medicinal herb in asia](#)
- [NT bee industry and NT gov banana freckle program win in Aust Biosecurity Awards](#)

Biodiversity and Protected Areas

- 8 more threatened [bird](#) (inc sthn cassowary, golden-shouldered parrot (CYP), eastern curlew, white-throated grasswren NT) and [mammal](#) species (inc black-footed rock-wallaby (NT, Kim), northern hopping mouse NT, mahogany glider qld) prioritised in Threatened Spp Strategy
- Public comment sought on Australia's second largest marine park, the 1.8Mha [North Kimberley Marine Park](#) by May 20 [more](#), and record submissions for WAs [Horizontal Falls Marine Park](#) ([map](#))
- 4 yr [Kimberley study of 3 inshore dolphin species](#) finds each species favoured certain habitats over others, and dominant species change over relatively short distances eg snubfin most abundant at Roebuck Bay, and bottlenose at Beagle Bay, and all likely vulnerable to coastal development. Snubfin and humpback dolphins = unique to Nth Aust waters and sthn New Guinea
- [Report and mapping of Indigenous forest estate](#) (3/4s of the 41M ha estate is in Qld and NT)
- [EDO says WAs new biodiversity laws should be dropped](#) and [NT Balanced Environment Strategy](#) open for comment until Mar 18
- New [herpes research for croc industry](#) and [herpes affects corals](#)
- TOs work to protect Dampier Peninsular [Monsoon Vine thickets](#)
- Study investigating Nth Aust [turtle eggs at risk from incd temps](#) and study shows [recording of Nth Aust turtle bycatch needs improving](#)
- [Flying fox and cat research for Christmas island](#)
- [Giant duck fossils found in NW Qld](#), [Scorpions looking for mates in Broome](#) , [NT python feeds on ferals](#), and [Second biggest croc caught in Aust measures 5.58m](#)

Fire and carbon

- Article [promoting Aboriginal fire management practices](#) and SBS insight program on fire incs [Cape York fire](#)
- [Project on how severe fires in Nth Aust affect tree health](#)
- N Aust & other [Raptors spreading fire to flush prey more and more](#)
- Aust [emissions from land clearing \(esp Qld clearing\)](#) rose 11 times faster than from any other sector bw 2012-15

Events

1 Mar [Sustainable Economic Development in the WA Rangelands](#), Perth
 Mar 2, 4 [Consultation for the Northern Development CRC](#) Townsville, Cairns
 10 Mar [Northern Beef Futures industry forum](#), Karratha
 9 -11 Mar [Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference](#), Bunbury WA
 30, 31 Mar Aust Gov [Biosecurity Legislation Info sessions](#), Cairns, Darwin
 11-13 Apr [Northern Australian Food Futures Conference](#), Darwin
 22-24 Apr [Savannah Guides School](#), Broome
 3-6 May [Australian Mangrove and Saltmarsh Network conference](#), Darwin
 24-25 May [Katherine regional mining & ex forum](#), Katherine
 1-3 Jun [National Native Title Conference](#), Darwin
 6-8 Jun [National NRM Knowledge Conference - "People, Planet and Profits"](#), Coffs Harbour
 8-9 [Strengthening Indigenous Economic Development](#), Cairns
 21-22 Jun [Develop the North Conference](#) ,Darwin
 15-18 Aug [Northern Beef Research Update](#) conference, Rockhampton
 30 Aug [Conservation through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife](#) Conference, Brisbane
 14-15 Sept [Northern Territory Resources Week](#), Darwin

Please note

- subscribing to this email list adds you to the Kimberley to Cape network which simply means you engage, or are willing to engage, with others to discuss how to achieve a sustainable and prosperous future for Northern Australia, and that you're generally supportive of Kimberley to Cape's guiding principles and goals (it doesn't commit you to anything more or mean loads of extra emails!). We'll assume this is okay unless you say otherwise.
- previous news roundups are available here
- the views expressed above dont necessarily represent those of the Kimberley to Cape initiative
- thank you to the BK Dahl Trust, Earth Welfare Foundn, Aust Communities Foundn, CDU and ECNT
- any support for Kimberley to Cape is appreciated (current funding ceases Jun 16), you can donate here

¹ Northern Australia hosts the world's largest intact tropical savanna (Woinarski et al 2007)