

Welcome to a summary of news in December and January (NN#9) 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 sincere 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 Dec 2015 and Jan 2016

Pan Northern

- Frydenberg provides [update on White Paper progress](#) and discusses with PM and Northern leaders at first meeting of N Aust Strategic Partnership since Paper's release (see [Dec 11 post here](#)).
- [Exposure draft of the NAIF \\$5B concessional loan Bill released \(more\)](#) – Frydenberg, who has [project veto, wants bill up by July](#). Economist compares loan scheme to [opening US mid west](#) in 'making people believe that others believe' (incs interesting reader discussion). More commentary [here](#), [here](#) (on potential for red tape) and [here](#)
- [Office of Northern Australia opened in Darwin](#) with Mark Coffey (ex Dept of PMC Regional Manager) as head and has new [website](#). Also Commonwealth [Major Projects Approvals Agency](#) has [opened in Darwin](#) to provide one stop advice on approvals for cross-border & NT projects
- [Robb highlights Nth Aust potential](#) in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, tropical medicine and tourism at Davos forum
- [Asian nations eye Norths 'breadbasket'](#) quoting Robb referring to 'a developing country within a developed one', [BBC article on developing the North](#) & op piece from [Indonesian consul in Darwin](#)
- [US identifies Nth Aust as refuge in Asian conflict](#)
- Discussion on [N to E gas pipeline interconnector](#) and [NEGI pipeline a foundation for larger plans](#)
- [MOU signed on Darwin to Townsville rail corridor](#) to facilitate co-ordinated development and investment in cross-border infrastructure projects. [More](#)
- Call to [build more resilience in northern infrastructure](#) and call for [infrastructure upgrades in wake of major acid spill](#)
- [Northern Australian Roads Programme - Discussion Paper](#) released and [EOIs and workable models for private investment and the delivery of road projects invited](#)
- [Gov might rethink back packer tax hike](#) after northern [horticulture industry protests](#), and [call for more working holiday visa holders for Northern Australia](#)
- [1M trays of mangos to US by 2020](#) and [NT mango grower named in top 30 by food mag](#)
- [Sandalwood co. seeks cattle and horticulture partners in NT and WA](#), and will be given freehold on their Ord WestBank site if they meet targets and approvals ([more](#)).
- [Ord sugar and Native title, Ord land goes cheap](#) and [local perspectives on irrigation and aquaculture developments](#)
- [Elders International cattle outlook](#) says prices will remain high and demand strong with: more intensive breeding operations, genetics to improve feed crops, genomics to target specific traits, more water points, robotics, redistrib of suppliers, and internatn supply chains. Aust advantages inc close geog+time zones to growth markets and reputation as trusted food source.
- Story on [live export future](#), generally positive [2016 outlook from northern cattle producers](#) and [Indonesia issues 200000 permits for first trimester 2016](#) tho adds [new import tax](#)

- [China wants clean green Nth Aust beef](#), [Indonesia needs Braham breeders](#) and [2016 World Brahman Congress for Rockhampton](#)
- Dec edition of [Northern Muster](#) incs results from: Soils4Grazing project (wet season spelling most cost effective and practical treatment; Wambiana grazing trial (flexible stocking rates are key to profit & sustainability); Parkinsonia projects; project on legume to boost soil nitrogen responsible for decline in Buffel; and Stocktake plus app for estimating feed.
- [Linfox group looking at Kidman properties](#) and [Blundy purchase](#)
- Assistance for [Indigenous groups to get investment ready](#) article featuring prawn farm and voluntary governance and investment principles
- Thoughts for Nth Aust as [Canada embraces new approach to Indigenous affairs](#)
- [Noel Pearson](#) calls for bridges b/w left and right in Press Club speech
- [Consultation for the Northern Development CRC](#) to be held in WA, Qld and NT from 9 Feb to 4 Mar and Dec, and [GrowNorth bid Dec newsletter](#)
- Over 10yrs of research findings collated in the [Northern Australia Environmental Research Portal](#), which is also home of new \$24M NESP Nth Aust research program
- Nth Aust biosec and NR researcher Catherine Robinson named as a [2015 Innovator of Influence](#)
- [Bergman and syndicate acquire National Indigenous times](#)
- Matt Cunningham (ex NT News) joins [Sky News as NAust correspondent](#)
- [Excellent season for Gulf tiger prawns](#) [More](#) and [more](#)
- Northern Prawn Fishery banana prawns rate as 1 of 6 types of “good prawn” in [global assessment](#), see [online guide](#) or [report](#).
- [Bumper cruise season forecast](#) for northern Aust
- Consumer poll by major travel provider votes [Kimberley 1](#), [Whitsundays 2](#) and [Cairns 3](#) for Australia's top 10 spots to visit for 2015 and Savannah Way is Austs [longest geocached route](#) .
- Significant [Decem rains in some areas of QLD and NT](#) ([more](#) and [more](#)), [Jan rains for Kimberley](#), but [Gulf rains low](#) so [general mixed bag](#). [Forecast for reduced jan-march wet season for Nthern Aust](#) ([more](#))
- Slow recovery from cyclones [NT](#) [Qld](#)

State/Territory/Regional General News

- [WA considering replacing Pastoral Lands Board with Rangelands Advisory Group](#) and creating a new 'Rangelands Lease' option to allow more tenure security and diverse businesses ([more here](#) and [here](#))
- Kimberley Cattlemen’s Association grows to become [Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemens Association](#)
- [Bunuba](#) and [Kurungal](#) granted native title in Fitzroy Valley bringing total area recognised to >80% of the Kimberley
- [TOs unite for aquaculture project](#) near Broome ([more](#))
- [Low water levels, artificial barriers and fishing threaten the endangered Sawfish](#)
- [Methane gas leak from fracking well leads to arrest](#)
- More on [commercial harvesting of Kakadu plum super fruit](#)
- [Resources downturn affects Broome jobs](#), [low nickel prices impact Wyndham port](#) but [Yeeda abattoir to open in April](#), [Indigenous cattle station attracts investors](#) and [pastoral lease sales high](#)
- [Ord Valley Muster wins Best Regional Event](#) in the 2015 Australian Event Awards
- 132 cabin lux [French cruise co. will operate its first Kimberley voyages](#) in 17 and [fat bikes take off](#)
- [ABC Back Roads show explores Derby highlighting art and cattle](#)

- [Qld graziers turn to irrigated hay more](#) ,[Burdekin rice crop doubles](#) and [sugar future bright](#)
 - [32kL of acid destined for fertiliser factory contaminate dam](#) in NW Qld. Fears for cattle contamination, [downstream fisheries](#) and [north's clean green advantage](#). [more](#) and [more](#).
 - [Nickel mine clean up could cost taxpayers up to \\$40M](#)
 - Noeline Ikin, [north Qld community leader & politician resigns](#) due to illness
 - NQ [beef industry wins sustainability awards](#) at both ends of supply chain, and prizes for NQ banana waste recycling, sugarcane farm diversification and [more](#)
 - Gulf Cattleman's Association has new [website](#)
 - Taskforce calls for [gov bank for drought struck graziers](#)
 - [FNQ mayors meet to id infrastructure](#) and [patrol boat contract vital for FNQ jobs](#)
 - Qld [rec fishing survey](#) shows ~15% of population fish with highest participation rates in the north, and of 5-14 year olds, tho the majority of fishers (~ 350,000) live in SEQ.
 - Cairns hosted [Aust Tourism Innovation Conference](#) ([tips](#) etc from key speakers) with Dr Karl suggesting the region positions itself as a leader in renewable energy/zero carbon, and Bernard Salt promoting the "Dubai" effect. [Cairns hosting 2016 UCI Mountain Bike World Cup R2](#)
 - New [citizen science Climate Watch trail](#) in FNQ and Hughenden [craft enterprise](#)
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- NT gov releases [Asian Engagement and Trade Strategic Plan](#) to increase investment & ec returns
 - NT gov releases [strategy for achieving a 'Balanced Environment'](#) for comment until Mar 18
 - [Mineral exploration spend for jul-sep15 up 22% to \\$33.4M](#) (greenfields ex up 53%) making it strongest in Aust. [Interview discussing NTs \\$1billion legacy mine clean up cost](#), [call for more transparency in bonds](#) and [ERA reviewing Ranger's future more](#)
 - Opposition would impose [moratorium on fracking \(more\)](#), [Imperials \\$75M deal to farm oil&gas tenements to AEP](#) and Doman (ex Santos) replaces Gerhardy as [NT director of oil and gas peak body APPEA](#)
 - [Pioneering NT environmentalist Strider passes away](#)
 - [Wayne Wauchope Deputy Chairman of NLC Executive Council](#)
 - [Kunwinjku seasons calendar launched](#)
 - [NT News review of business in 2015](#) incs cattle, resources, major projects and highlights need for stability in government
 - [NT aims to double number of Chinese visitors to 30,000/yr by 2020](#) citing TA research showing main factor Chinese consider when deciding to holiday is world class beauty and natural enviros
 - Saltwater Crocodile Wildlife Trade Mgmt Plan increases [harvest ceiling to 90,000 eggs and 1,200 animals pa](#) and [~300 crocs removed from NT waters in 2015](#)
 - New [factsheets and maps on NT fisheries](#) and more [clams for internatn aquarium trade](#)
 - [NT station moves to solar](#)
 - [Sea level has risen 16cm over past 20 years in Darwin](#) which will be a metre underwater by 2100
 - New [campaign to market NT as "real outback"](#) to backpackers and [NT nature stars in TA promo](#)
 - [Wall St Journal article on sale of Darwin Port](#). More articles [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) . 2015 port's [second biggest ito live exports](#)

Water

- [National Water Infrastructure Development Fund](#) helping detailed planning to build /augment dams, pipelines or managed aquifer recharge to help drive regional economies. EOs for feasibility studies closed 29 Jan 16.
- New report on WAs [Fitzroy Rv \(Mardoowarra\)](#) highlights concerns over water extraction
- [CSIRO completing water resource assessments](#) in the Mitchell catchment (Qld), West Kimberley and Darwin region (inc Adelaide, Finnis, Wildman and Mary rvs)
- Discussion on [water planning and fish diversity](#) in the North
- [Aust's first biological water treatment facility for NT town](#)
- [Sugar cane farmers embrace wetlands](#)

- [Burdekin Dam to add to Townsville water supply](#) though only 22% full
- [Land Suitability and Groundwater Assessments](#) in the Daly Basin identify 22,000ha and up to 40GL/y of water for irrigated crops eg Asian veg, melons, nuts, root crops and forestry. Similar assessments underway in Wildman Rv, Barkly Tableland, Ali Curung, Ti Tree and Tennant Creek.
- [Concern over water speculating in NT](#)

Ferals, weeds & pests

- [NQ on look out for Zika virus](#)
- [Damage from agile wallabies estimated to cost stations \\$4M pa](#)
- [New NT 1080 Wild Dog Management Program](#) incs 5yr baiting permits, simplified training and accreditation processes, more flexibility to coordinate programs, and industry to develop a Code of Practice within 12 months
- National [agreement signed on Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus](#) allows NT melon and Asian vegetable growers to return unrestricted to Aust market
- [Update on NTs banana freckle eradication](#)
- [Asian honey bee restrictions removed in Qld since eradication failed](#)
- Results of [research on rabbits in Nth Qld](#) (see p12)
- Research shows [cats came to Aust from European settlers rather than shipwrecks](#)
- [Male mozzies trapped by siren song of females](#)
- Consultation on [West Indian drywood termite management](#) closes 29 Feb
- [Rubber vine eradication in E Kimberley to protect bird habitat](#)
- [New bacterium on pawpaw in Wyndham](#) being surveyed to determine if an Emergency Plant Pest

Biodiversity and Protected Areas

- [20 new fish species discovered in the Kimberley](#) just the tip of the iceberg [Discussion here](#)
- Added to EPBC Act listing as endangered: [Nabarlek \(top end\)](#), [Nabarlek \(Kimberley\)](#); [Arnhem leaf-nosed bat](#), [Cape York rock-wallaby](#) and as vulnerable: [Fawn antechinus \(top end NT\)](#)
- [Large fruit rainforest trees rare and vulnerable because few dispersers](#)
- More on [training quolls to avoid cane toads](#) [ABC](#)
- [TOs and WWF sign MOU to start an Indigenous conservation program to help monitor marine wildlife and water quality around Mackay](#)
- [Extended range for rare northern sea snakes](#) and [rare look at remote Kimberley reef](#)
- [Interactions with pygmy devil, manta rays and narrow sawfish must be recorded](#) in the TEPS section of NT fisheries logbooks
- NAILSMA and partners update the Warlpiri Bird Dictionary recording new names and knowledge
- [Gulf dinosaur reclassified as new form and living fossils found off Qld coast](#)
- [Wanderlust article on NT fauna, Wrens and weeds poem, ghostnets etc become skateboards](#)
- [Littoral rainforest mapping and Cassowary trackers](#)
- [GBR prospectus hopes to attract corporate sponsorships](#), and, [drink beer for the reef](#)
- [Kimberley Island reveals threatened species](#)
- New [Aust Heritage Strategy](#) incs Objectives to Focus protection efforts on Indigenous heritage and to Foster greater collaboration between the heritage and tourism sectors, and will explore funding via a UK-style national lottery. A study of 15 World Heritage sites found a direct economic benefit of \$15.4 B pa and >79,000 direct+indirect jobs. The Nth Aust savanna has 10 sites inc the West Kimberley. New natural, cultural etc heritage [nominations](#) close 18 Feb.

Fire and carbon

- [Cattle methane emissions downsized by 24%](#)
- CDU researchers win [ARC grant to better understand NT savanna carbon cycle](#) and impacts of land use change
- Article on [fire fighting in remote areas](#)

- Indigenous fire regimes highlighted at Paris [Climate Change Conference](#)

Events

Feb 8 - Mar 4 [Consultation for the Northern Development CRC](#) NT, WA, Qld

17 Feb [RDA NT & Darwin Mining Club Panel Session](#), Darwin Convention Centre

11-12 Feb [Indigenous peoples and Salt water/freshwater governance](#) , Hobart

9 -11 Mar [Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference](#), Bunbury WA

11-13 Apr [Northern Australian Food Futures Conference](#), Darwin

22-24 Apr [Savannah Guides School](#), Broome

1-3 Jun [National Native Title Conference](#), Darwin

6-8 Jun [National NRM Knowledge Conference - "People, Planet and Profits"](#) ,Coffs Harbour

21-22 Jun [Develop the North Conference](#) ,Darwin

30 Aug [Conservation through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference](#), Brisbane

Please note

- 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)

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