



# CHRISTMAS ISLAND ECONOMIC FUTURE WORKING GROUP

## COMMUNIQUE

### Inaugural meeting of the Economic Future Working Group

**14 October 2024**

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The Christmas Island Economic Future Working Group met for the first time on 14 October 2024, chaired by Administrator of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Farzian Zainal.

The group came together following the outcomes of the recent expression of interest process for community representatives. Along with Ms Zainal, attending members included Patricia Power representing the Christmas Island Tourism Association, IOT Administration director Ian McKendrick, Derek Ball from Parks Australia, PRL's Nick Gan, Zoey McMillan from the CI Business Association and community representatives Alex Jansen, Azli Albashri and Peter Griggs. The IOT Regional Development Organisation representative was unable to attend.

The Chair welcomed members to the inaugural meeting and provided an overview of the group and its objectives, noting that the groups around the table all have an impact on the future of the CI economy and that the community's interests were reflected through the three community representatives.

The Chair outlined that the Minister for Territories and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts is keen for the group to inform and identify practical solutions to the economic challenges facing CI and, where there are synergies, CKI as well. It is a channel to clearly articulate ideas and solutions which the local community want to push to support economic sustainability.

Areas of focus will include:

- The economic transition and development of Christmas Island
- The use, allocation, and development of land on Christmas Island and future investment
- Infrastructure and community assets and amenities
- Investment opportunities and sectoral issues (eg tourism, small businesses & enterprise)
- Workforce development.

Members received a presentation on a proposed multinational telecommunications initiative which would use CI as a digital hub to improve connectivity in the region, making the island nationally significant as a node for communication. Such infrastructure investment can underpin economic diversification and opportunities for health, business and entertainment – along with the economic

boost through construction and employment opportunities and potential to accelerate energy transition.

The group and community will be briefed further on this proposal in coming months as it is progressed.

The group reviewed the *Our CI 2030 Strategic Plan* with a focus on its identified actions. Members agreed to further review and prioritise those actions in the context of the Terms of Reference, as well as undertaking an environmental scan to update opportunities and issues.

The next meeting of the group will take place on 10 December 2024.