

## Joint Communiqué: Northern Australia Ministerial Forum #2 8 June 2023, Kununurra, Western Australia

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The Australian Government and the Western Australian, Queensland and Northern Territory governments met in Kununurra on Miriuwung and Gajerrong Country in a meeting of the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum. The Forum mapped out joint opportunities to strengthen Northern Australia and noted the importance of cross-jurisdictional leadership to drive progress with the northern development policy agenda.

This second meeting of the revitalised Ministerial Forum was an opportunity for the Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia, the Hon Madeleine King MP, to discuss the Australian Government's commitment to refresh *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* with her State and Territory colleagues. Governments welcomed the opportunity to collaborate on renewing the Northern Australia agenda in the context of changed economic conditions in the north. Governments also agreed to continue efforts to support sustainable economic development in Northern Australia.

Following recent natural disasters which have impacted communities across the north, the Forum highlighted the importance of investment in risk reduction and preparation to save lives, reduce financial impact and maintain community and business resilience.

The Forum discussed the critical importance of Northern Australia's agriculture and biosecurity sectors. They agreed the importance of pan-northern collaboration to plan for and manage the high risks for pest and disease incursions which have the potential to impact local economies, human and animal health, and the environment.

The Forum welcomed updates and discussed key priority areas and policy issues of significance to Northern Australia, including:

- Progress on the Australian Government's implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart including the referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples in the Australian Constitution through establishing the Voice.
- Improving digital access and affordability and increasing capacity of existing infrastructure given the critical role connectivity plays in enabling businesses productivity, health, education and community services.
- The increasing momentum of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) in enabling a diverse range of infrastructure projects across northern jurisdictions. NAIF highlighted the positive results which are building from the implementation of Indigenous Engagement Strategies as financed projects move to construction and operation.

The Forum was chaired by the Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia, the Hon Madeleine King MP, and was attended by:

- Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for Emergency Management (Australian Government).
- The Hon Glenn Butcher MP, Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing; Water (Queensland).
- Mr Brent Potter MLA (Northern Territory), on behalf of the Hon Nicole Manison MLA, Deputy Chief Minister; Minister for Northern Australia and Trade; Advanced Manufacturing; and Water.
- Ms Jody Broun, Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (Australian Government) on behalf of Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians.
- Ms Heather Brayford, Director General, Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development (Western Australia) on behalf of the Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister for Regional Development; Disability Services; Fisheries; Seniors and Ageing; and Volunteering.

Ministers welcomed the invitation for the next Forum meeting to be hosted in Queensland, in late 2023.