

Garth Harrigan

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24/06/2014

The Manager,

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet,

PO Box 6500,

Canberra 2600,

ACT

Dear Sir,

REPORT ON GREEN PAPER DEVELOPING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Please find attached my effort to report on developing Northern Australia.

Garth Harrigan

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DEVELOPING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

PREAMBLE

After reading the Green Paper on the proposed development of Northern Australia it became obvious we will need to employ hard working, industrious people who are comfortable working in that environment and the input will require lawyers, engineers, surveyors, trades people along with people working in the field. Not people as southerners claim would need to be weird. I am sure people living in the region are capable and happy to live there. These people would be people use to working in the tropics such as people from the tropical areas of the Mediterranean Sea area who managed to work in the cane fields of North Queensland and still do. However should we not develop it, I believe it will be taken from us and Australia will become divided into two or more countries. Also as both Queensland and West Australia are far too big they should be divided along perhaps the 22nd latitude with new capital Cities. It will be necessary to sort land tenure and perhaps to start development immediately choose an area where a lot of work has been done such as the Pentland area in Queensland.

SECTION A

The 6 characteristics mentioned in the report cover the area. But there are immense differences to the landscape between the east coast and the west coast as parts are desert, parts mangrove swamps, parts are mountains, and many rivers which flood during the wet season. The most important features missing are high class highways, electric power, water storage i.e. dams, railways, suitable ports for shipping and communications it will be essential to upgrade the rail line between Townsville and Mt Isa and continue it to join the rail line between Adelaide and Darwin. We need to plan for a city in West Australia such as Broome, and develop Normanton to city status and allow for better planning for arterial roads in all cities and towns to allow for populations of many thousands. Public transport is essential to operate financially to reduce the use of cars. A high voltage electric power grid across the whole of North Australia is essential connected to the existing grid at Townsville with Power Stations located designed to suit what resources are available to provide input to the line,

As I mentioned earlier Northern Australia needs to have access to Federal funds and that which is generated in the north should be spent in the north. For too long northern finances produced are being spent in the capital cities that manage the area. This is because the majority of political representation is located in the capital cities. An example is the finance is divided equally between the South east corner of Queensland and the remainder of Queensland consequently Brisbane area enjoy high class roads whereas the northern part of Queensland have substandard roads and in many cases they are not even bitumen coated. *Reference* statements by Queensland politicians to keep North Queenslanders quiet

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SECTION B

It is obvious that there has been a major movement of peoples throughout the world where people from the poorer countries are moving into the richer countries to gain for themselves a better life. Unfortunately some of these people have extreme views and are dangerous as they try to push their view on the existing inhabitants. It is for this reason that we need to develop Northern Australia and this has become urgent if we want to hold ourselves as Australians in a continent with the same name and retain a unique model in the world today. It is for this reason that we must continue to control our sea borders and control our immigration intake. *Reference* Statements by overseas terrorists that they would attack Australia in the future as spoken by them on TV.

All the opportunities mentioned under section B are essential for that development and must be implemented immediately. I have lived in North Queensland for 82 years and though there has been development but it is obvious we have been treated badly because we live in the tropics where our weather patterns are different to the south. Unfortunately many of refugees over the last 40 years have settled in the capital cities causing them to expand and finance is needed to expand housing infrastructure to keep the southerners comfortable.

Australians have always been industrious people, though this has changed amongst the younger people lately, and researchers, farmers and people from all walks of life invent new ideas and then pass them on to other nations to help them grow and prosper. Unfortunately Africa in particular the Governments squander the money and ideas and the countries never develop and people continue to live in poverty. *Reference* Current Affairs programs often shown on TV where women slave in the fields to grow corn for their family.

Indigenous people in North Australia live in small isolated lands they claim is their ancestral lands *Reference* Mabo decision and other than employing them to keep the area clean they have no means of developing. As we develop each district for mining, agriculture or towns we must train people who live in their vicinity to become active employed people in that district. The policy of mining companies using fly in and fly out staff throughout the north has been a disaster for the development of those areas It means all we are left with is a big hole in the ground, all the wealth gone and still no development.

Tourism has always been underutilised because of distance and poor roads where 4 wheel drive vehicles are necessary and suitable accommodation is not available. In a lot of cases people live near them but are not employed to manage the sites because of lack of accommodation and experience. Palm Island is an example where this could be expanded and developed. *Reference* The Mayor has often spoken about how this would help his constituents.

SECTION C

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Our method of Governance must change as the present system is unwieldy, wasteful and hatred has taken over sane Government where many ideas have been lost or badly designed or managed. I remember a past Prime Minister of New Zealand David Lange on radio saying we in New Zealand can make a decision in one day whereas in Australia that is impossible because you have too many Governments to appease. This is because we have 6 State Governments and 2 Territory Governments which can have different political agendas. What we must endeavour to achieve is for the Australian Government to set policies for the whole of Australia and the States to carry out the work that is required similar to any company of similar size. What I suggest is the Australian Government would approve say a rail line is urgently required between Mt Isa and the Ghan Railway because as it may become impossible to continue to ship coal from North Queensland ports because of damaging the Great Barrier Reef. Either Northern Territory or North Queensland State would be tasked build it... Local Government would continue as responsible for town and city requirements. Governments and Opposition parties with different political agendas instead of destroying the policy should sit around a table and come up with an answer and approve the final decision. As parliament is an expensive institution to maintain it is important to reduce waste. Governments must also reduce red tape and make policies and laws simple for the people to understand not like our tax laws.

Lack of Infrastructure in the north is an impediment to development. We have hospitals in our cities but they are restricted in what they can perform because of policies set by Government. Unwell or injured people often have to travel to Brisbane some hundreds of kilometres away as the city hospital have not the capability to care for them. This means they are taken away from their family support or a member of the family has to stay in Brisbane separated from the rest of the family. We also have problems where capital cities believe they should control sections in north Australia when they could do it more satisfactory with a telephone connection to head office by video phone.

SECTION D

I have dealt with most items under sections A, B and C but an important item under D is who should be allowed to do all this work. Will they be Governments departments or Private Companies? Where do these companies come from and who controls them? I doubt any Australian company would have the resources to do the work otherwise it would not be done this century. If we engage Overseas Companies we would need to ensure they have some allegiance with Australia we would not want them to say this in now part of another country.

One item I have not dealt with and that is education. In Townsville we have James Cook University with the ability to solve tropical conditions such as disease, cyclones, evaporation in our dams or pondage, proper design of houses and company buildings. There was some concern from a southern politician that the Government gave James Cook University certain money for tropical research because there was others much further south who should have

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been asked. This was an example of southern bias against Northern Australia doing this type of research or any development.

I trust I have been able to help in solving the problems of Northern Australia which I had been doing for 42.6 years of work on building and maintaining power supplies as well as 36 years of voluntary work in helping to develop bikeways in Queensland and community transport for seniors in Townsville.

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