



**MICHELS WARREN
MUNDAY**



Community Consultation Report

Draft Darwin Regional Land
Use Plan 2014

Prepared by Michels Warren Munday



NORTHERN TERRITORY
**PLANNING
COMMISSION**

Contents

Executive Summary	3
General summary	6
Overview.....	9
Consultation process	13
Approach	14
Stakeholder briefings.....	15
Information displays	16
Survey	21
Feedback.....	22
Study Area	22
Land Use Plan	22
Land Use Structure	23
Additional stakeholder suggestions	33
Comments on the consultation process.....	35

Executive Summary

The Planning Commission engaged Michels Warren Munday to coordinate feedback on the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan that was released on 23 July 2014.

This was the third document released for public feedback, the first being a briefing note in July 2013 and the second being a high level concept plan released in December 2013.

While there was broad support for this strategic approach to providing for Darwin's long-term growth, consultation revealed:

- substantial confusion about the difference between a land use plan and more detailed area plan
- a lack of understanding of the hierarchy of plans
- cynicism about the planning process, poor consultation processes by government and a perception that developers can find a way around planning regulations
- negativity about the extent to which earlier submissions had informed the draft plan and a perception by some stakeholders that they had wasted their time providing feedback
- recognition of the need to plan for rapid growth but fears of its impact on rural living
- polarised views on issues such as Glyde Point, the timing of the Weddell sub-division and the potential for damming the Elizabeth River
- general support for infill development
- the need to better explain planning concepts such as 'peri-urban'

This report outlines the consultation and communication methodology adopted to get feedback, summarises the issues raised and makes some recommendations for improving the practice of consultation in future.

While some issues raised are beyond the scope of a land use plan, they should be heeded in future land use planning and development proposals.

There was widespread support for the creation of a regional land use plan for the Greater Darwin region, but some confusion over the high level of planning in a regional context.

The Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 is a detailed document that sets out the land uses to cater for growth in the Greater Darwin region for the next 50 years and a potential population growth to 500 000 people. The land use plan covers the areas of Darwin, Palmerston, Litchfield, Coomalie, Cox Peninsula and Finnis.

The draft plan was based on a previous regional land use plan by the former Labor Government which did not receive final approval, and a plan prepared by the CLP while in opposition.

This consultation was the third stage after the NT Planning Commission released a Briefing Note in July 2013 and then put a draft concept map with land use descriptions out for public comment in December 2013, which attracted 100 submissions.

The draft plan maps out the land uses required to satisfy regional growth in population and industry while identifying the infrastructure needed to cater for that growth. The draft plan clearly outlines the regional context and objectives for growth in residential land use, industry, essential services including water, power and sewerage, transport needs, as well as natural and open spaces.

Consultation

As part of the consultative process, the Planning Commission and consultants:

- placed all material on the Planning Commission website
- emailed all previous respondents

- provided 25 briefings for stakeholders
- set up displays at six venues to talk to the public
- received 54 submissions.

A total of about 530 stakeholders, including groups and individuals, were directly involved in the consultation through stakeholder briefings and attending information displays, while 54 submissions were received with feedback on the concept plan provided via email, phone and face to face meetings.

About 450 people visited the information displays at four shopping centres and one rural market and an information display was also manned at the Royal Darwin Show. A further 51 people from the Northern Territory Government attended two separate briefings for staff of several departments and the Australian Government Department of Defence.

There were a lot of detailed suggestions on how the draft plan could better reflect and recognise some of the objectives believed important by the stakeholders. Many stakeholders made suggestions that were not relevant for a regional land use document, but that could be considered in the next planning stage at the Area Plan level.

Concerns

Many concerns were raised during the consultation including:

- frustration at the lack of a regional land use plan and failed attempts by previous governments
- cynicism about government consultation processes and whether the consultation was genuine
- a distrust of the planning process, with a recent history of many spot rezonings, exceptional use permits and special use zones land banking by developers
- planning being driven by individual applications from developers and a perception that public objections were rarely taken account of
- confusion about planning terms and processes
- fears that rural lifestyle is being eroded by ad hoc growth.

Feedback

There was positive feedback on the need for a regional land use plan to guide the inevitable and rapid growth of the greater Darwin area but confusion about the distinction between land use planning, area plans and development approvals. The main opposition was to:

- the proposed damming of the Elizabeth River to allow for denser development due to fears of impacts on the ecosystem of the Darwin Harbour and a perceived increased risk of flooding
- a second port at Glyde Point which could impact on surrounding sensitive coastal areas
- urban and peri-urban development at Holtze without a substantial buffer between smaller blocks and existing rural lots
- urban and peri-urban development at Hughes, Noonamah and Noonamah Ridge
- any blocks smaller than one hectare in the rural area, outside of Rural Activity Centres.

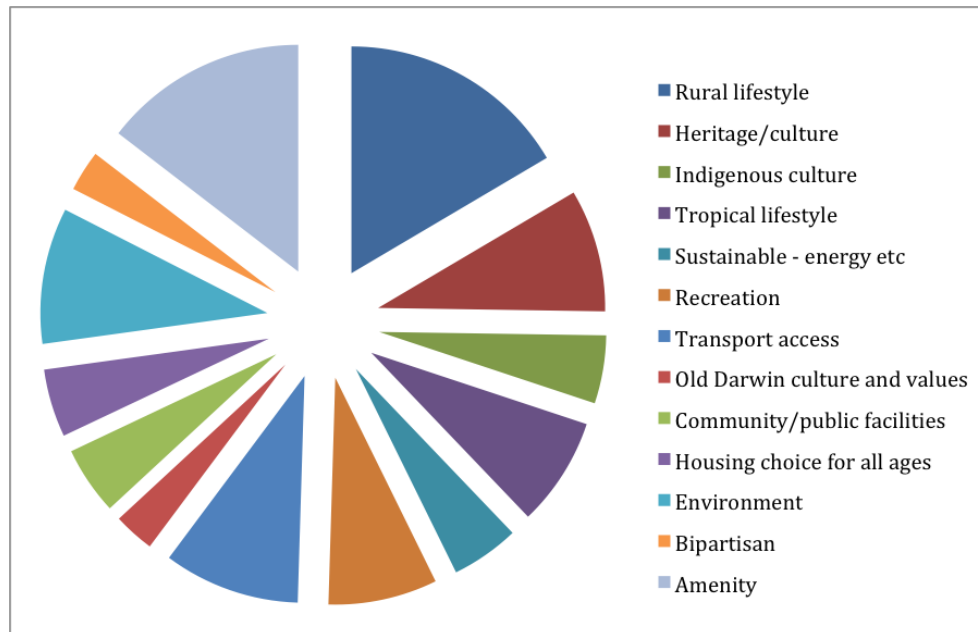
The main support was for:

- identifying and protecting future water supply options
- protecting the rural lifestyle, while catering for growth
- identifying and protecting transport corridors, including light rail and ferry terminals
- urban and peri-urban development at Cox Peninsula
- urban and peri-urban development at Murrumujuk, provided Glyde Point did go ahead

- expansion of the Rural Activity Centres at Howard Springs, Coolalinga, Humpty Doo and Berry Springs
- identifying infill development opportunities
- an urban growth strategy for urban activity centres
- identifying and protecting a site for a potential second airport
- consultation for area plans for the urban and rural activity centres.

Values

Values of stakeholders that were mapped as part of this consultation, showed that rural lifestyle, the environment, transport access, heritage and culture and amenity were the key values people wanted to protect.



Next steps

The report covers only feedback on the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014, although the consultants did take account of earlier submissions.

The Planning Commission will consider the stakeholder feedback, make amendments to the Draft Plan and make recommendations to the Minister for inclusion in the Northern Territory Planning Scheme.

It is recommended that:

- this consultation report be made public so stakeholders can see that their issues have been captured
- the NT Planning Commission prepare a summary report showing how stakeholder feedback has informed the final draft.

General summary

There was widespread support for the creation of a regional land use plan for the Greater Darwin region, but some confusion over the role of high level of planning in a regional context.

Many stakeholders made suggestions that were outside the scope of a regional land use plan. However these can be considered by more detailed area plans and inform the development approval process for specific developments.

While some stakeholders strongly opposed elements of the draft plan, there was widespread support for the attempts to plan for growth of the Greater Darwin region. As a result of the consultation a number of stakeholders wanted to see certain values and key objectives strengthened within the document, in particular recognition of the fragile environment, significant conservation areas and the heritage and cultural values of the area, including Aboriginal culture and history.

There was also some confusion over the significance of the map that identified the different land use areas, which was the first version released for public consultation, and the significance of the draft plan itself. Many people did not understand that the key objectives and detail outlined in the 78-page document would also be incorporated in the NT Planning Scheme not just the map. This led to some misconceptions, including that previous feedback hadn't been incorporated into the draft plan.

There was little concern with the area identified as Greater Darwin, with the main feedback being to include the new local government boundary in the Coomalie region and some concern about including the catchments of the water supply dam options.

Residential

The residential component of the draft plan attracted the strongest feedback. While there was limited concern from the urban suburbs of Darwin, it is clear that many rural residents are alarmed at the perceived erosion of their rural lifestyle and advent of smaller blocks. The terms 'peri-urban and urban' were confusing for many, however, briefings were useful in clarifying these concepts, highlighting the need to better communicate such concepts. Several people suggested that communication to the public should not rely on people understanding planning terms or at least give more clear examples of what they meant.

The response to the draft plan's vision for residential land use was influenced by some misinformation being made public about what was proposed. Added to this was what was seen as a mixed message about smaller blocks being confined to Rural Activity Centres to protect rural lifestyle, while the map showed large areas of the rural area as urban and peri-urban, in particular Hughes, Noonamah and Noonamah Ridge.

The majority of stakeholders recognised the constraints on the development, although many still believed that there was plenty of land to develop in the Greater Darwin region. A key concept supported by stakeholders was the emphasis on protecting the rural lifestyle in the face of regional expansion.

Strong feedback from stakeholders indicated that the role of community facilities and services deserved more emphasis in the draft plan.

Other key feedback included:

- concern that Weddell was no longer a high priority area for residential development

- a need to expand urban and peri-urban areas in the rural area, such as between Weddell and the Stuart Highway and south of Cox Peninsula Road
- expand Rural Activity Centres such as Berry Springs
- support for the Activity Centres and the Activity Centre Hierarchy
- better recognition of the roles of the smaller Local and Neighbourhood Centres
- review prioritisation of some Activity Centres, such as Northlakes
- Rural Activity Centre to be created at Noonamah
- recognise Batchelor and Adelaide River as Rural Activity Centres
- no peri-urban or urban development at Noonamah, Hughes and Noonamah Ridge
- a large buffer between smaller blocks and existing rural living blocks in Holtze.

Once the cost of developing infrastructure for a greenfield site such as Weddell was explained, many were more accepting of the idea of starting with sites near existing infrastructure, such as Holtze, Lee Point and south of Palmerston.

Lake Elizabeth

Feedback was mixed on the idea of creating Lake Elizabeth by damming the Elizabeth River, however, marginally more stakeholders indicated they were opposed to the concept than supported it. Local government and industry groups were more likely to support Lake Elizabeth, while community and environmental groups, along with residents, were more against the idea remaining in the draft plan. One resident sent in an alternative plan to damming the Elizabeth River and suggested two lakes could be created at Mitchells and Brookings Creek and a second tributary of the river.

Glyde Point

One of the more controversial suggestions in the draft plan was the development of a new port at Glyde Point. Views were polarised on the eventual need for a second port versus the environmental and social impacts at what is seen by many as an ecologically sensitive site. However, some preferred this option to another port inside Darwin Harbour. While it was explained that a land use plan is simply setting aside land to allow for longer-term options, there were calls to expand and improve the efficiency of East Arm Port before considering Glyde Point. A key stakeholder indicated that Glyde Point might be more acceptable with a smaller footprint.

Industrial

The key feedback on areas earmarked for industrial land use included:

- alternative locations for port facilities including Elrundie Peninsula inside Darwin Harbour and an extension of East Arm
- Yarrowonga should change from industrial to peri-urban and urban to reflect a potential change to mixed used with the development of the Gateway Shopping Centre and the Palmerston Regional Hospital
- recognising the airstrip at Batchelor and surrounding land as industrial land on the map
- recognising the role of extractive industries as well as the importance of horticulture and agriculture, including small local food production on rural blocks.

Environment and Heritage and culture

Many of the submissions raised the issue of strengthening references to protecting the unique environmental, heritage and cultural assets of the Greater Darwin region. Key feedback on this included:

- request for more detail and emphasis on protecting the special habitats and biodiversity by conserving open and natural areas in the Greater Darwin region by better recognised natural and conservation areas that are special and important to the community on the map
- protecting the significant cultural and heritage areas of the Greater Darwin region by identifying them in the plan, such as Aboriginal historical and cultural sites
- stronger emphasis on the potential impact of climate change.

Essential services

Key feedback on essential services included:

- appreciation of the work to identify new potential dam sites due to the risk of water shortages and pressure on existing aquifers
- support for Manton Dam coming back on line and the off-storage concept to divert flood water from Adelaide River
- opposition to the Marrakai dam as being too shallow, Mount Bennett dam as too many issues with landowners and the Upper Adelaide River dam as too environmentally significant
- include light rail and ferry services and terminals in the regional land use plan
- improve and extend arterial transport corridors to better cater for heavy industry and the regional area
- recognition of stormwater management as a land use for essential service.

Tourism and Defence were two land uses that were raised as not being very well recognised in the draft plan, with recommendations to emphasise the important economic role Defence has in the region as well as identifying its investment infrastructure. While tourism is a land use that could come under the urban and peri-urban areas, there was a call for it to be recognised more clearly in the objectives of the land use plan.

Many stakeholders supported the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 being incorporated in the NT Planning Scheme once finalised. Below is a matrix of what was broadly accepted or not accepted in the draft plan.

Acceptable	Acceptable with amendments	Divided opinion	Not acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weddell • Urban Activity Centres • Cox Peninsula - denser residential development • infill development • Batchelor and Adelaide River become Rural Activity Centres • agriculture and horticultural land • Transport corridors including light rail and ferry terminals • second airport site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murrumujuk urban and peri-urban development (if Glyde Point went ahead) • Holtze – denser residential development (if block sizes and significant buffers considered at area plan level) • water supply options (subject to more details and investigations) • expanded Rural Activity Centres to a confined area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glyde Point • Lake Elizabeth • Hughes, Noonamah and Noonamah Ridge – denser residential development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Activity Centre at Howard Springs 'pine forest'

Overview

The purpose of a Regional Land Use Plan is to take a big picture view of the region and guide orderly and efficient growth.

It is a strategic long-term and high-level plan that will guide detailed local plans.

The Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan identifies the land needed to house a rapidly growing population as well as the potential location of strategic infrastructure such as ports, airports and water catchments.

It is designed to anticipate rather than react to growth. This in turn helps Government and the private sector plan for a sequenced roll-out of costly infrastructure and services. It also gives residents greater certainty about future land use.

The Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan covers Darwin, Palmerston, Litchfield, Coomalie, Cox Peninsula and Finnis and the study area includes the catchments of the main water supply options identified by Power and Water.

The plan looks at catering for a short-term population increase from 130 000 up to 150 000 and a medium to long-term population of up to 250 000, with the area easily catering for a population of up to 500 000.

The draft plan outlines the extensive constraints to development including protected species, significant conservation areas, the 1.6 km buffer zones around biting insects as well as waterlogged soils.

Some of the objectives of the plan are for a region that:

- offers a range of well-planned and sustainable communities with convenient and accessible housing, jobs, transport and other services
- manages the natural attributes of the Darwin region
- maintains a high standard of community services
- protects limited opportunities to appropriately locate strategic industrial development
- provides open space reserves to conserve the natural environment and heritage.

The key elements of the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 are:

- identification of industrial areas such as Archer, near Palmerston
- use of Glyde Point for a future port, together with a railway and services corridor to link Glyde Point with East Arm Port
- the likely development of the Cox Peninsula as part of the Kenbi land claim
- the site of a potential second airport on Blackmore Peninsula
- recognition of the role of Darwin's city centre as the dominant commercial, cultural, administrative, tourist and civic centre (the recent Darwin City Centre Masterplan that covers planning for this area)
- an argument for the damming of Elizabeth River to remove some of the constraints to a future significant development area, including the impacts of biting insects and risk of storm surges from cyclonic weather
- areas for horticultural and agricultural development
- the importance of development along transport routes such as the Stuart Highway to link residents with jobs and services
- conceiving Darwin as a harbour city, with future development around the harbour
- the importance of preserving Darwin's special environment, culture and heritage

- strategic planning for essential services needed to support industrial and housing growth, including options for future water supplies
- transport and public transport routes, including potential future light rail links
- the need to manage conflicts between the essential extraction of soils, gravels and rock materials needed for construction without compromising the environment and amenity of nearby residential areas
- the importance of space, natural areas, active recreation and community facilities.

Areas for housing development

The plan acknowledges the importance of releasing land to support new housing in the Darwin Region. Palmerston, which was established 30-years ago to accommodate growth, is now nearly fully developed.

The draft plan notes that areas identified as urban and peri-urban also include other non-residential land uses, including community facilities, conservation areas, recreation areas, some commercial areas and schools.

Growth will be provided by a combination of:

- **in fill development**, for example on former industrial land such as:
 - The Avenue in Parap
 - Berrimah Farm
 - former fuel storage sites near the city
- Sports House and the old Kurringal site in Fannie Bay, the Motor Vehicle Registry site in Parap, bus depot in Stuart Park and strategically located undeveloped sites such as the old Darwin Post Office and Woolworths sites in the city
- identified **greenfield development sites** such as
 - Lee Point and Zuccoli, in Palmerston East
 - Holtze, near the proposed site of a new Palmerston Hospital
 - Noonamah and Hughes on the Stuart Highway.

After this, development is likely to move to areas that will require expensive new infrastructure such as reticulated water. These include:

- the Cox Peninsula (subject of the Kenbi Land Claim and proposed development by the Larrakia Development Corporation);
- Murrumujuk (which would be developed to support any future development at Glyde Point)
- Weddell.

The plan suggests the cost of developing Weddell as a greenfields residential site, without any commercial or industry contributions to headworks and essential services, makes it more sensible to first develop sites near existing infrastructure. This includes most of the land around Holtze, which is the site of the Palmerston regional hospital and Commonwealth land known as Kawandie North, with some rural living around the existing rural blocks along Wallaby Holtze Road.

Areas for industrial land

The plan refers to the importance of well-located, high-quality light industrial areas to meet the growing demand for light industrial precincts in rural areas and the growing interest in business parks. These areas generally need convenient access to major transport networks and key infrastructure.

Land identified for longer-term industrial development includes:

- Archer, to the west of Palmerston
- Middle Arm Peninsula to the west of Weddell
- land to the north-west of East Arm Peninsula.

Strategic industrial development includes the LNG Plants at Wickham Point and the East Arm Logistics Precinct. The plan recognises that deep-water ports at East Arm, the city, Wickham and Bladin Points are unlikely to meet Darwin's longer-term needs. Glyde Point is suggested as the preferred site for further major gas-based industrial development outside Darwin Harbour, together with the nearby Murrumujuk residential area. It is acknowledged that a port at Glyde Point would not go ahead without a significant foundation project similar to the INPEX LNG plant.

Rural lifestyle areas

The plan acknowledges the growing population of Darwin's rural areas, pressures to sub-divide and concerns by residents at the number of 'spot' development approvals and Special Development Permits.

It suggests a mix of land uses that would accommodate larger rural blocks, intermediate 'peri-urban' areas and rural activity centres. The peri-urban area describes the area of transition between smaller blocks to the larger rural living blocks. The rural activity centres would include smaller blocks that provide greater housing choice for retirees wanting to downsize from large blocks and young people wanting to get into the housing market.

The plan suggests smaller serviced rural activity centres would reduce the pressure of rural population growth on natural resources, particularly groundwater, and expand local facilities and jobs.

Elizabeth River Lake and biting insects

A major constraint to growth around Darwin is the large expanse of mangrove mudflats and midge breeding areas.

The concept of damming the Elizabeth River was suggested in previous regional land use plans as a means of controlling biting insects, controlling storm surges due to cyclones and creating a more attractive living environment. The concept was retained in this version of the draft plan, not to suggest its immediate adoption but as a good planning process to outline all possible future land use options.

The Planning Commission acknowledges the level of concern at this proposal and clearly there would need to be more technical studies and detailed consultation before it could proceed.

The Planning Commission believes a significant part of Palmerston south and north of Weddell would be developed inefficiently if the biting insect problem was not solved. The lake would increase the potential population of those areas by 30 000, provide a recreational use and protection from cyclonic weather and sea level rise. It is estimated that only about two per cent of the mangroves in the harbour would be lost if the lake went ahead.

Area Plans

The Draft Regional Land Use Plan is a high level strategic plan. More detailed area plans, such as the Darwin CBD Masterplan and Berrimah Farm Area Plan, are the next stage of planning which have been done parallel to the

regional land use plan. Area Plans for the priority urban and rural activity centres will be guided by the regional land use plan once it is incorporated in the NT Planning Scheme. This will give the community more opportunities to provide feedback.

Water supply

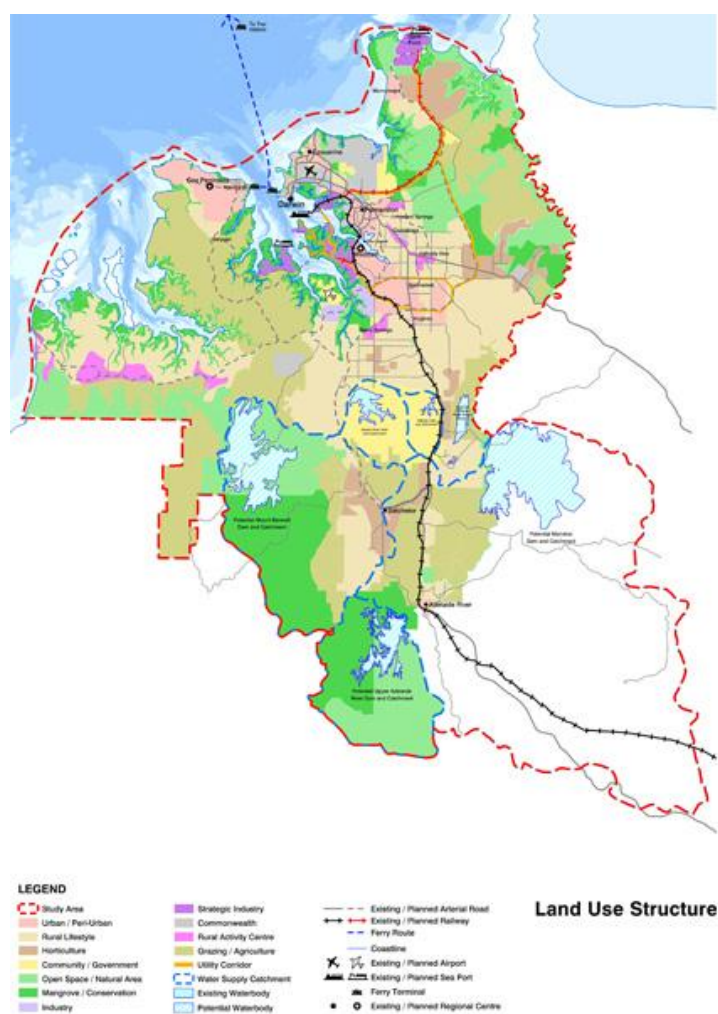
The draft plan identifies five water supply options based on research by Power and Water, including a new off-stream water catchment that would redirect and store flood waters from the Adelaide River.

The other four options include bringing Manton Dam back into production and raising the dam wall, Mount Bennett Dam, Marrakai Dam and the Upper Adelaide River Dam.

Implementation

The Northern Territory Planning Commission will consider a report on the consultation for the draft plan, which will be amended according to feedback provided. The Minister will review the final plan which will go out for public exhibition again for 28 days.

Once the Draft Regional Land Use Plan 2014 is finalised it will be incorporated into the NT Planning Scheme to guide future development of the Greater Darwin region.



Consultation process

Consultation for the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 had drawn on ideas from earlier regional land use plans, feedback to a briefing paper released in mid-2013 and a draft concept map released in December 2013.

The draft concept plan *Towards a Darwin Regional Land Use Plan* received 100 submissions and a summary of submission was written up to respond to the feedback provided by stakeholders.

The intent of consultation for the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 was not to start the process again but to 'close the loop' on earlier consultation, get feedback on the draft and take on board any suggestions for improvement.

A focus of consultation was to ensure widespread awareness of the draft plan and encourage feedback.

However, it also recognised that key groups had a greater interest in the plan's contents which warranted greater effort to ensure their views are heard and accurately recorded. The following stakeholder analysis guided the process:

1. **People most impacted by the plan** will be those who perceive that their lives and lifestyles may be impacted. Consultation planning assumed rural residents will have a much higher level of interest due to the pressures of growth in the rural areas, concerns about spot rezoning, exceptional development permit applications and fears of the impacts of changed land use. Many of these people moved to the rural area in the 1970s to large blocks and a rural lifestyle. There has been a growing backlash against the 'pink signs' that signify development.
2. **People with the greatest interest** include government staff who set policy and provide services, including infrastructure, industry associations with an interest in the economic growth of the Darwin Region and special interest groups concerned about the impact of development, such as the Environment Centre of the NT and Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT.
3. **People who may be hard to reach** includes Aboriginal groups whose views about use and impacts on their land are important but who may not contribute to traditional methods of consultation. Groups such as the Northern Land Council, Larrakia Nation and Larrakia Development Corporation were approached directly.

The objectives of consultation were to:

- build strong awareness of the plan and encourage the broadest range of people to provide feedback
- make it easy to find accurate and relevant information that is relevant to stakeholders' needs
- make it easy to provide simple or more detailed feedback in a range of ways
- accurately capture the range of opinions, ideas and feedback
- provide a report on stakeholder and community feedback that guides good decision-making by government
- make it clear that feedback has been carefully considered and show how it contributed to any changes or refinements to the plan
- demonstrate a process that has community confidence.

Key communication tools

- face to face meetings and briefings
- Darwin show display

- displays at shopping centres and markets in the rural area
- public notices in the *Northern Territory News, Sun* and *Territory Regional Weekly*
- media release
- fact sheet with a summary of the key elements of the plan
- website with provision for feedback
- survey
- email to people who have made submissions and other key stakeholders advising that the draft plan has been released

IAP2 Core Values

Michels Warren Munday is guided by the principles of good community engagement as outlined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), which outlines a continuum of engagement based on people's level of interest and concern:

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC
Inform	We will keep you informed
Consult	We will keep you informed, listen to your concerns and provide feedback on how the public's input influenced the decision
Involve	We will work with you to ensure your concerns are reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how the public's input influenced the decision
Collaborate	We will look to you for advice, ideas and solutions and incorporate those into the decisions as much as possible
Empower	We will implement what you decide
©International Association of Public Participation www.iap2.org	

IAP2 Core Values for the practice of public participation:

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Community engagement for the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 was largely at the level of inform and consult, due to previous consultation and the short timeframe.

Approach

The Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 was launched for public comment on 23 July 2014 with a media conference to explain the key elements of the draft plan.

The six week consultation was announced and a new section of the NT Planning Commission website went live with a copy of the draft plan, map, fact sheet and contact details for people to make a submission. People were able to make electronic submissions, email or telephone the consultant Michels Warren Munday. A short survey was linked to the site.

People and stakeholders who had sent in previous submissions or indicated an interest in the progress of the regional land use plan were sent an email with a copy of the draft plan and a link to the NT Planning Commission website.



(Left) NT Planning Commission Chairman Gary Nairn and Secretariat Manager James Teh launch the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 at a media conference in July 2014.

Regular public notices were placed in the local newspapers including the *Northern Territory News*, *Darwin/Palmerston/Litchfield Sun*, *Wagaitear* (local newspaper for Cox Peninsula residents) and the *Territory Regional Weekly*. The notices advertised how people could access copies of the plan online and gave a phone number and email address for the consultants. Once the dates were set for the information displays, an additional public notice was placed in the local media to advertise the dates and times of each display.

The public notices were also sent to schools in the rural area to be included on parent information websites and school newsletters (see *Bees Creek School newsletter right*).



Stakeholder briefings

Briefings were offered to 27 stakeholder groups, with 25 taking up the opportunity to meet and discuss the draft plan with NT Planning Commission Chairman Gary Nairn. Department of Lands, Planning and Environment Senior Planner Rick Burgess and Project Manager Del Batton helped with the presentation for the briefings, which were recorded by Michels Warren Munday consultant Penny Baxter.

The team travelled to Palmerston, Batchelor, Wagait Beach and Bees Creek to provide the briefings to the local government councils, as well as briefing City of Darwin Councillors.

The briefings featured a fly through presentation of the regional land use plan with explanations of the key areas and messages. Before each briefing the consultant provided a summary of the previous submissions and feedback received by each relevant stakeholder during the previous consultation.

Briefings were held with the following stakeholders:

Local government

City of Darwin
 City of Palmerston
 Litchfield Council
 Coomalie Community Government Council
 Wagait Shire Council
 Local Government Association of the NT

Government

Kezia Purick, MLA (Member for Goyder)
 Gary Higgins MLA (Member for Daly)
 Gerry Wood MLA (Member for Nelson)
 NT Government Architect Lawrence Nield
 Government departments
 Defence

Community Groups

Amateur Fishermen's Association of NT
 PPlan - Margaret Clinch
 Rapid Creek Landcare Group

Industry Bodies

Property Council of Australia NT
 Real Estate Institute of the NT
 Australian Institute of Architects
 Planning Institute
 Urban Development Institute of Australia
 Chamber of Commerce NT

Resident

Plaxy Purich

Business

Strangways Developments

Environmental groups

Environment Centre NT
 Greening Australia

Indigenous groups

Larrakia Nation
 Larrakia Development Corporation

A briefing was also offered to all main media outlets, however, only journalist Alyssa Betts from ABC Darwin's 7.30 NT accepted the offer.

The briefings were well received as people appreciated the time and effort, and they let stakeholders give more informed feedback on the draft plan.

"We are finding this is really productive because when you talk to some people who might not like aspects of the plan, when you talk them through it, there is not the same level of antagonism." NTPC Chairman Gary Nairn

Information displays

Six information displays were set up in local shopping centres, a rural market and at the Royal Darwin Show. An estimated 450 people visited the information displays to talk to consultation staff. The displays provided opportunities for more one-on-one contact with NT Planning Commission and NT Government planning staff. This provided invaluable insights into the views and values of rural residents in particular and allowed people to ask questions and clarify issues.

Staff at the displays included NT Planning Commission Chairman Gary Nairn and Commission members Dr Brian Reid and Dr Bill Freeland, Commission secretariat staff member Louise Taylor, Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) Senior Planner Rick Burgess and Project Manager Del Batton and Michels Warren Munday consultants Jane Munday and Penny Baxter. Commission member Denys Stedman and Secretariat staff James Teh and Louise Taylor manned the display at the Darwin Show.

The display included three panels featuring the draft map and other significant maps from the draft plan that explained the regional context, constraints on development, an example of an area plan and explanations of urban and peri-urban and rural activity centres. A video presentation of the draft map was played on loop on a television screen at the Casuarina and Palmerston displays, which helped catch people's attention.



(left) NT Planning Commission member Dr Brian Reid and DLPE Senior Planner Rick Burgess at an information display for the draft plan at Casuarina Shopping Centre.

Copies of the draft plan were available on USB as well as hard copies, along with copies of the summary of submissions, fact sheets, an explanation of the Lake Elizabeth concept and registration forms directing people to the website and enabling them to indicate if they wanted to be kept informed.

Below is a short summary on the feedback at each display organised by Michels Warren Munday. The summary report of each of the display is provided as Attachment C.

Casuarina Shopping Centre

A total of 115 people visited the information display at Casuarina Shopping Centre between 9 am and 5 pm on Saturday 9 August as part of the Northern Territory Planning Commission's consultation for the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014.

Of the people who visited the information display and gave identifying information:

- about 15 said they were long-time Territorians
- a number of people said they lived in the rural area including Howard Springs, Humpty Doo and Virginia, or had family living in the rural area, including Holtze
- others identified themselves as living in the northern suburbs, in particular Muirhead
- several people were visitors and Darwin residents who were interested in Darwin's growth and potential for investment.

People appreciated the chance to find out more and there was a range of views on different parts of the plan, with support for most of the ideas.

The main issues included:

- Lake Elizabeth
- smaller lots in the rural area outside of Rural Activity Centres, such as Noonamah, Hughes and Noonamah Ridge
- infill development at sites such as Sports House
- lack of areas set aside for recreation, including hunting
- lack of areas for caravan parks
- water resources for Hughes and Cox Peninsula
- urban activity centre for Lee Point.

"We would like to see the rest of Muirhead developed at Lee Point and to see shops and a school."
Muirhead resident

Ideas that were supported included:

- urban activity centres
- expansion of Rural Activity Centres
- a new port at Glyde Point.

Palmerston Shopping Centre

An estimated 50 people visited the information display at the Palmerston Shopping Centre on Friday 15 August 2014. The display was in front of Coles between 3 pm and 6 pm, although people came up to the display from 2.30 pm.

Out of the 50 people, a large number (about 21) identified as being from the rural area, of whom three were residents of Wallaby Holtze Road in Holtze. Other areas included Darwin River, McMinns Lagoon, Virginia, Berry Springs and Lambells Lagoon. Nine people identified as being residents of Palmerston.

There was general interest in the plan but also some cynicism about the government and consultation.

The main issues included:

- smaller blocks at Holtze without a large buffer to existing lots
- water infrastructure issues for Holtze residents
- not large enough buffers between homes and arterial roads
- more community facilities for seniors.

Ideas that were supported included:

- Lake Elizabeth
- new airport at Blackmore Peninsula
- new port at Glyde Point.



Coolalinga Markets

A steady stream of people attended the display at the Coolalinga Markets during the five hours it was set up at the Freds Pass Reserve from 8 am to 1 pm on Saturday 16 August.

About 129 people talked to staff at the display. Of those recorded, about 55 were from the rural area, 10 were tourists (most staying with relatives in the rural area), one person from Palmerston, one person lived in Casuarina (but with a block in Acacia she is planning to build on) and two lived in Larrakeyah (also with investment blocks in the area). Another 20-30 people engaged in conversations and another 30 or so looked at the display without engaging.

The main issues were:

- smaller blocks in the rural area outside the Rural Activity Centres, in particular a proposed sub-division at Lowther Road

- urban size blocks at Noonamah, Hughes and Noonamah Ridge
- the need for more community infrastructure
- developers land banking and restricting the market
- port is inefficient
- lack of consultation, particularly about the regional hospital
- lack of opportunities for tourism development



There was support for:

- Lake Elizabeth
- smaller blocks for older people in the rural area, confined to Rural Activity Centres.

Howard Springs Shopping Centre

An estimated 52 people visited the information display on the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 at the Howard Springs Shopping Centre on Friday 22 August 2014. The display was inside the centre between 10 am and 1 pm, although people came up to the display from 9 am.

Of the 52 people who engaged with staff at the display, most were from the Howard Springs area, including two people who lived on Gunn Point Road. People also identified as residents of Palmerston, Girraween, Bees Creek, Berry Springs, Humpty Doo, Darwin and Virginia. Several tourists also showed interest and asked about the draft plan. Most people spoken to at the display were older people who had lived in Darwin for a long time.

The main issues were:

- whether Holtze could impact on existing rates
- need for reticulated sewerage
- buffer between smaller blocks and existing rural living blocks in Holtze
- impact of Glyde Point on residents of Gunn Point Road
- water supply in Howard Springs
- general lack of consultation from Government
- cynicism about Government processes and politics
- development at Berrimah North



"We have to see a good buffer between the higher density lots and existing rural area in Holtze."

Howard Springs resident

Ideas supported in the plan including:

- more area for light industrial uses
- bigger arterial roads

- smaller blocks in the rural area in Rural Activity Centres.

"I live in Howards Springs on a five acre lot and it would be good if we were on a reticulated sewerage network." Howard Springs resident

"I agree we need to have some smaller blocks for older people in the rural area." Palmerston resident

Humpty Doo Shopping Centre

An estimated 110 people visited the information display on the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 at the Humpty Doo Shopping Centre on Saturday 23 August 2014. The display was inside the courtyard, out the front of Woolworths between 10 am and 1 pm, although people came up to the display from 9 am during set up.

Of the 103 people who engaged with staff at the display, most were from the Humpty Doo area. People also identified as residents of Noonamah, Marrakai, Bees Creek, Berry Springs, Livingstone, Palmerston, Lambells Lagoon, Elizabeth River, Acacia, Herbert and Virginia.

The main issues included:

- don't support a new port at Glyde Point
- concerned there is only one exit from Darwin down the Stuart Highway
- arterial road going through Coolalinga as a Rural Activity Centre and whether the speed limit on the highway will be affected
- Marrakai not included in the plan for development
- oppose Lake Elizabeth (5 people)
- oppose peri-urban and urban area at Noonamah, Noonamah Ridge and Hughes
- query about whether there was industrial land or an airport near Southport
- need to protect the Howards Springs Sand plains



"Having 20 acre lots up against smaller lots at Hughes or Noonamah is not good. We got a brochure about it and I am concerned about small blocks at Hughes." Noonamah resident

"I don't support Glyde Point because we are never going to need it." Humpty Doo resident

"I don't want to see Lake Elizabeth happen and that at the end of the road a dam at Elizabeth River is not supported." Bees Creek resident

Ideas supported in the plan included:

- smaller blocks if they are confined to the Rural Activity Centres
- expanded Rural Activity Centres as it will attract in more services and infrastructure
- new regional hospital because it is too far to travel to Royal Darwin Hospital
- support for the information display and consulting with the community
- Lake Elizabeth.

“There is no more area on the Darwin peninsula, so it has to move out. I agree to having some smaller blocks and this [plan] programs it to happen. Infrastructure needs to keep up and we need to have a say in it. We should be planning for the future, I am glad they are talking about it now because we need to have the discussion.” Herbert resident

Survey

A survey was set up on Survey Monkey and linked to the NT Planning Commission website to give people the opportunity to provide quick feedback if they did not have time to put in a submission or did not want to fill out the online feedback form.

The aim was to get general feedback on the survey and give people in the rural area more of a chance to provide additional information, with several specific rural questions.

Unfortunately, despite promoting the online survey at the information displays, public notices and via media releases only 11 people filled in the survey. While the survey results will not provide the desired quantitative data on the response to elements of the draft plan, the comments and feedback is still valuable and was added to the consultation report. The survey results are provided as Attachment B.

Reasons people did not fill out the survey could have been that they preferred to detail concerns in their own words and put in a submission, or that the survey was not available directly, such as giving people the ability to fill in the survey online at the information displays.

Feedback

A total of about 530 stakeholder groups and residents were directly involved in the consultation through stakeholder briefings and information displays.

The consultants:

- engaged with 450 people at information displays
- briefed 51 people government staff
- provided 25 briefings for stakeholders
- received 54 submissions.

The 54 submissions received with feedback on the concept plan were provided by email, online forms, phone and face to face meetings. About 450 people visited the information displays at four shopping centres and one rural market. An information display was also manned at the Royal Darwin Show.

The 51 government employees briefed as part of the consultation were from the Northern Territory Government who attended two separate briefings from several departments and the Australian Government Department of Defence.

There was widespread support for the need for a regional land use plan for the Greater Darwin region, but some confusion over the high level of planning in a regional context. Many stakeholders made suggestions that were not relevant for a regional land use document, but that could be considered in the next planning stage at the Area Plan level. These suggestions are documented in the full report of stakeholder feedback at Attachment A.

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan. It is well written, easy to understand and informative document particularly in outlining where services such as ports, industrial land, hospitals and airports are to be sited and future suburbs planned.” Darwin resident

Study Area

The selected study area was mostly supported by the people who provided feedback during the consultation.

Main issues

- the boundary of the Coomalie Community Government Council’s local government area has changed and needed to be amended on the map
- there was some concern that the study area included the catchment of the water supply options – Upper Adelaide River, Mount Bennett and Marrakai – as it could create uncertainty on land uses for existing landowners.

Stakeholder suggestions:

1. Recognise the recent changes to the boundary of the Coomalie Community Government Council within the study area of the greater Darwin region.

Land Use Plan

Stakeholders generally supported the need for a regional land use plan but wanted to see certain values and key objectives strengthened within the document.

There was also some confusion over the significance of the concept map that identified the different land use areas, with comments from stakeholders that they had wanted more detailed information on what the concepts

meant. Combining this with the discussion paper may have helped. Generally, people want objective information to help them make informed decisions.

Many people did not understand that the key objectives and detail outlined in the 78-page draft plan, which led to some misconceptions.

We suggest that in future a consultation plan should incorporate all phases of a project and ensure there is a continued feedback loop to ensure feedback is incorporated and stakeholders can see how their input informs iterations of the plan.

"I have read the proposed regional land use plan and am concerned that it does not take account of previous feedback from the community. It is a plan for developers and not for the long term benefit of the residents of Darwin and surrounding areas." Palmerston resident

General

Some of the feedback was about the written document and how land use areas were identified on the map, as well as the overall vision of the regional land use plan.

Stakeholder suggestions:

1. Change the vision to read: "A region with a diverse economy and strong society **that promotes innovation and tropical concepts** and holds an enduring connection to the natural environment."
2. Produce a key for the map that shows examples of zonings commonly used by other plans with the land uses in the map, i.e. strategic industry, conservation, so it is consistent.
3. Acknowledge in the draft plan that Darwin has a central airport and good university.
4. Use icons rather than a legend.
5. Balance reference to environmental considerations only as constraints by emphasising them as important values and assets that can be built on in the 'Purpose' section of the document.

Land Use Structure

Residential

Main issues:

- Weddell not being a priority for the regional expansion
- peri-urban and urban area at Noonamah, Noonamah Ridge and Hughes for greenfield developments
- peri-urban and urban area at Holtze for a greenfield development
- Rural Activity Centre at Howard Springs pine forest

Elements supported:

- infill development in existing urban structures
- expansion of the Rural Activity Centres to a confined area
- peri-urban and urban area at Murrumujuk for greenfield development to support Glyde Point
- urban and peri-urban area on Cox Peninsula

The residential component of the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 attracted the most feedback from people involved in the consultation. The terms 'peri-urban and urban' were confusing for many stakeholders as it was not clear on the map that they include a mix of uses such as community facilities, conservation, commercial and schools. Briefings were invaluable in clarifying the concepts and achieving more acceptance.

General

Several people suggested the need to address housing options for seniors.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Strengthen the Key Residential Objectives to cater for senior citizens.
2. Investigate how the concept of reverse sensitivity could be included in the Key Residential Objectives, or strengthen objectives about amenity.
3. Include a more detailed timeline for the short, medium and long term residential development.

Regional expansion in the rural area

People's response to the draft plan's vision for residential land use was influenced by some misinformation about what was proposed as well as the mixed message of smaller blocks being confined to Rural Activity Centres to protect rural lifestyle, while the map showed large areas of the rural area as urban and peri-urban, in particular Hughes, Noonamah and Noonamah Ridge. Several stakeholders called for a Rural Activity Centre to be created at Noonamah, as well as Batchelor and Adelaide River.

Stakeholders were concerned with the timeframe and priority of residential development, and many questioned why Weddell was not being considered as a priority. Once the cost of infrastructure was highlighted most people understood why alternative sites near existing infrastructure, such as Holtze, Lee Point and south of Palmerston were being considered first.

Several stakeholders, in particular those who owned land in the relevant rural areas, asked for urban and peri-urban areas to be expanded, such as between Weddell and the Stuart Highway and south of Cox Peninsula Road. Several stakeholders asked if Rural Activity Centres, such as Berry Springs, could be extended to include their own land.

There were several requests to change Yarrowonga from industrial land to urban and peri-urban due to the nearby development of the Gateway Shopping Centre and the Palmerston Regional Hospital.

"I think it is good to see the government has got some forward thinking plan and is being proactive. We need to be proactive over here [Cox Peninsula] as well." Wagait Shire Councillor

"I would like to voice my opinion in trying to keep this area a rural style area and NOT high density housing spilling over from Palmerston." Holtze resident

Stakeholder suggestions

Urban and Peri-Urban

1. Clarify the term peri-urban and urban to reassure people about buffers and mix of uses – potentially as part of the map, i.e. a peri-urban buffer.

2. The cut-off of Weddell appears arbitrary and should be extended to the Stuart Highway along Gulnare Road so more suitable land in Bees Creek can be used for denser development, in particular a 120 hectare property on) Bees Creek Road.
3. Remove all references to peri-urban and urban area from the rural areas.
4. Include change of use reference for Frances Park from maritime industries to peri-urban and urban in the potential infill development sites.
5. Change Yarrawonga from industrial area to peri-urban and urban area to reflect the change to mixed used with nearby developments at the Gateway Shopping Centre and the Palmerston Regional Hospital.
6. Use different terminology: residential instead and rural instead of urban and peri-urban.
7. Identify land generally south of Cox Peninsula Road as urban and peri-urban to allow for future development.
8. Continue the correct reference to Yarrawonga as a service commercial suburb throughout the document, change the area from industrial to peri-urban and urban on the map and remove Yarrawonga from the listed industrial areas on page 25 of the draft plan.
9. Do not allow any blocks small urban blocks next to rural living blocks in Holtze development.
10. Remove peri-urban and urban area at Noonamah, Noonamah Ridge and Hughes.

Infill development

1. Recognise and indicate under-used areas in commercial and industrial areas in the draft plan document as potential infill sites, for example McMinn Street, Bishop Street and Motor Vehicle Registry site.

Rural Activity Centres

1. Include a Rural Activity Centre at Noonamah to support any future expansion in that area.
2. Remove the reference to the Howards Springs 'pine forest' as a Rural Activity Centre.
3. Identify Batchelor and Adelaide River as Rural Activity Centres on the map.
4. Change the terminology of 'Rural Activity Centre' back to Rural District Centre or Rural Village to avoid confusion.

Weddell

1. Recognise Weddell as a priority for residential development over regional expansion in the rural area.

Lake Elizabeth

There were mixed reactions to the idea of creating Lake Elizabeth by damming the Elizabeth River, however, marginally more stakeholders indicated they were opposed than supportive. Local government and industry groups were more likely to support Lake Elizabeth, while community and environmental groups, along with residents, were more against the idea remaining in the draft plan. One resident sent in an alternative plan to damming the Elizabeth River and



suggested two lakes could be created at Mitchells and Brookings Creek and a second tributary of the River.

Stakeholder suggestions

2. Remove reference to damming Elizabeth River to create Lake Elizabeth.
3. Explore a dam at Mitchells and Brookings Creeks to create a lake and a tributary opposite the creek mouth to protect Elizabeth River (see map above).

Activity Centres

The description of the Activity Centres and the Active Centre Hierarchy were well-received by stakeholders. The main feedback was about emphasising the smaller Local and Neighbourhood Centres to recognise their supporting roles and provide more detail to strengthen the descriptions.

There were also comments about the prioritisation of Activity Centres, i.e. Northlakes over Parap on the commercial and office space Activity Centre map and how some of the Activity Centres were recognised.

Main issues

- Darwin International Airport not included as an activity centre on the draft plan
- identifying the Gateway Shopping Centre as a Principal Activity Centre
- no Activity Centres identified near Lee Point to support residential expansion

Elements supported

- identification and the hierarchy of Urban Activity Centres
- recognising the central role given to the Darwin city centre in the draft plan
- an urban growth strategy around the urban activity centres

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Include other traditional, neighbourhood service centres into the plan as Secondary Activity Centres, such as Parap (*more appropriate than the inclusion of Northlakes*).
2. Identify Palmerston as an Urban Activity Centre on the map, inside the urban and peri-urban area, in the same way that Rural Activity Centres are marked on the map.
3. Include a reference in the document's overview to "the role of Darwin's city centre as the dominant commercial, cultural, administrative, tourist and civic centre".
4. Include Darwin International Airport as an activity centre on the draft plan.
5. Include more detail in the draft plan on the additional role of activity centres in the medium to long term, under the hierarchy, such as the intended level of services, anticipated population catchment, extent of overlap with other activity centres to ensure maximum viability of centres and clarity on expansion of the centres.
6. Include future urban activity centres in the Lee Point area to reflect growing population and development.
7. Emphasise the important role of Neighbourhood and Local centres in the draft plan as they provide convenience shopping, health needs and a community hub and are vital in supporting principal and secondary activity centres.

8. Provide a more detailed centre hierarchy with more information on neighbourhood and local centres and bulky good centres.
9. Remove the reference to the 'Gateway' site as being a Principal Activity Centre on the draft plan

Industrial

The most controversial issue in this section was future development of a new port at Glyde Point. Reactions were mixed as to whether it was an appropriate site for a strategic industry port due to the environmental and conservation values of the area. However, a number of stakeholders expressed support for this port, rather than another port inside Darwin Harbour. While most stakeholders understood it was a long-term option, several called for the expansion and improved efficiency of East Arm Port to be looked at before a port was considered at Glyde Point.

AFANT suggested they might be more open to discussion about a smaller footprint at Glyde Point. There was support for alternative locations for port facilities including Eldrundie Peninsula inside Darwin Harbour and an extension of East Arm.

There was feedback on two other industrial areas, including for Yarrowonga to change from industrial to peri-urban and urban to reflect a potential change to mixed use with the development of the Gateway Shopping Centre and the Palmerston Regional Hospital. The other suggestion was to relocate the industrial area from Winnellie so it can be redeveloped as mixed use.

Several stakeholders suggested the airstrip at Batchelor and surrounding land be recognised as industrial land.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Remove reference to Glyde Point as strategic industry.
2. Make the colours for Strategic Industry and Rural Activity Centres more distinct – the dark purple and pink are too similar and hard to differentiate on the map at page 24.
3. Identify and acknowledge the Batchelor airstrip and surrounding land in the draft plan and map as light industrial for aviation purposes, instead of peri-urban and urban.
4. Investigate expansion of East Arm towards Darwin city near Bleasers Creek and Reichardt Creek ahead of Glyde Point.
5. Suggested if the area around Glyde Point set aside for a potential port was made smaller and had less impact, further discussions could be had with AFANT's Committee.
6. Consult with Indigenous people about the potential impact of a port at Glyde Point on nearby rainforest and significant Aboriginal sites.
7. Recognise the importance of Darwin Harbour in supporting Defence capability be included in the draft plan by including the location of Defence facilities and investment in infrastructure at the East Arm and Stokes Hill Wharves. Suggested inclusion: *"Darwin Port plays a key role in mounting operations and supports a number of joint training exercises each year, while Australian and international naval vessels regularly visit the city for resupply and crew rest."* (see Department of Defence submission for more detail).
8. Indicate Elrundie Peninsula in Darwin Harbour as a future, low cost, intermediate port (Wishart Port), ahead of Glyde Point.
9. Prioritise East Arm port improvement and expansion over a new port at Glyde Point.

10. Change Yarrowonga from industrial area to peri-urban and urban area to reflect the change to mixed use with nearby developments at the Gateway Shopping Centre and the Palmerston Regional Hospital.
11. Relocate industrial area of Winnellie and change it to mixed use to create a strategically located knowledge-based industry and relocated existing industry to Hughes.

Primary Industry

The main issue that came up under Primary Industry was references to the role of extractive industries as well as emphasising the importance of horticulture and agriculture, including small local food production.

Horticulture/Agriculture

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Emphasise the value of horticultural and agricultural industry to the economy of the NT in the draft plan.
2. Insert references to horticulture and agriculture into any generalised discussion around land use.
3. Revise the Primary Industry Objectives so they recognise the importance of small local food production areas and market gardens in urban and rural areas and recycling.

Construction materials

Stakeholder suggestions

4. Recognise in the plan when identifying locations suitable for extractive industries, that there are opportunities for selective mining and rehabilitation with the end land use in mind, for example a future residential area or a dam, rather than a blanket ban.
5. Recognise in the plan that extractive industry needs to be located in areas that contain high volumes of the target material as close to the end customer as possible.
6. Work with the Department of Mines and Department of Land Resource Management to determine how extractive industries can be included in the draft plan.

Open Space and Natural Areas

There was a strong message from stakeholders that more detail and emphasis needed to be placed on protecting the special habitats and biodiversity by conserving open and natural areas in the Greater Darwin region. While it was acknowledged the term urban and peri-urban covered a range of land uses, such as conservation, community facilities and schools, the general opinion was that better recognition was needed at the regional land use level for natural and conservation areas that were special and important to the community.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Emphasise links between 'special environment landmarks' such as the harbour, beaches, forest and mangroves, and places that have had community input such as the George Brown Botanical Gardens, Rapid Creek, Ludmilla Creek, East Point, the Esplanade, Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Holtze, Durack Heights and Lee Point.
2. Include an area (portion of Section 3373) of the expanded Coolalinga Rural Activity Centre as a conservation area.

3. Include a green line of conservation area to mark the Rapid Creek conservation corridor on the draft land use plan rather than peri-urban and urban, in the same way that small green lines are used in other creek catchments such as Ludmilla Creek and Buffalo Creek.
4. Revise the Open Space and Natural Areas Objectives to provide for conservation objectives in these areas, such as conserving and improving habitat for threatened species living in the Darwin region and for migratory species.
5. Revise the Open Space and Natural Areas Objectives to provide for mixed use objectives, such as hunting, 4WD, fishing and conservation in some areas.
6. Formally protect vegetation corridors under the Planning Act on the map, such as Rapid Creek.

Community Facilities and Services

A strong focus of many of the stakeholders was that the role of community facilities and services needed to be better emphasised in the draft plan and a mechanism mentioned to ensure these objectives were achieved.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Strengthen the Key Community Facilities Objectives to focus on providing facilities for senior citizens.
2. Stronger focus needs to be included in the detail and wording in the regional land use plan in relation to providing community and public facilities, including a mechanism for this to occur.
3. Strengthen the provision of community facilities closer to denser population areas, such as CBD and infill sites, in the draft plan by revising the Key Community Facilities Objectives and the Key Urban and Peri-Urban Residential Objectives.

Infrastructure

There was strong support for planning essential services and transport infrastructure for the future growth of the Greater Darwin region.

Water supply and transport were the key issues for people, with many stakeholders appreciating the work to identify new potential dam sites. While there was support for Manton Dam coming back online and the off-storage concept to divert flood water from Adelaide River, there was opposition to the Marrakai dam as being too shallow, Mount Bennett dam as too many issues with landowners and the Upper Adelaide River dam as too environmentally significant.

There was strong support for the inclusion of light rail and ferry services and terminals in the regional land use plan. There was also some suggestions on how arterial transport corridors could be improved on and extended.

Recognition of stormwater management as a land use was also raised as an issue for essential services.

Main issues

- absence of a reference to light rail on the map
- absence of a reference to managing stormwater as a land use under essential services
- identification for at least one regional waste facility
- removal of additional ferry terminals from previous draft map
- no utility corridor marked across Darwin Harbour from Darwin to Cox Peninsula
- mention of arterial road corridors rather than arterial transport corridors

- not enough recognition of the role of public transport and active transport such as cycling and walking
- Mount Bennett, Upper Adelaide River and Marrakai dams not suitable

Elements supported

- including light rail in the arterial transport corridors
- identifying ferry services and terminals as a future transport option

Essential services

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Include a reference to stormwater runoff as an Essential Service in the Key Infrastructure Objectives.
2. Identify at least one or two locations for a regional waste facility, in the same way for water supply options have been included in the draft plan.
3. Include the submarine utility corridor that exists across Darwin Harbour from Darwin to Cox Peninsula, currently providing electricity, on the map and in the document.
4. Recognise in the draft plan that Darwin has a high water use and recommend water restrictions to reduce consumption before dams are considered.

Transport

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Change the reference from arterial road corridors to transport corridors that can include alternative modes of transport including light rail and rapid buses.
2. Include the ferries and the existing and future ferry terminals in the regional land use plan.
3. Extend the arterial road transport corridor along the historic Northern Australian railway corridor as a second North-South distributor road to Adelaide River.
4. Suggest that a loop road at East Arm port could be included as a future road.
5. Suggest the plan include a railway line corridor to the second airport site.
6. Suggest a reference to a second railway line for heavy duty haulage be included in the railway corridors.
7. Remove reference to Temple Terrace as the location for the Glyde Point/Stuart Highway arterial road link on page 33 of the draft plan as this location is under investigation.
8. Indicate in the draft plan document that the harbour crossing from Middle Arm to West Arm is a long term investment.
9. Update the plan to include all existing arterial roads, including Cox Peninsula Road on page 34 of the plan.
10. Identify the planned Middle Arm Connector arterial from Cox Peninsula Road to Channel Island Road on the map.
11. Acknowledge the limited role of additional harbour based ferry services in the short to medium term in the draft plan.
12. Acknowledge in draft plan document that higher densities at greenfield sites such as Hughes and Noonamah are unlikely to support all day public transport and acknowledge Rural Park and Ride facilities will provide more efficient public transport on spine routes.
13. Change all references to arterial 'road' routes to arterial 'transport' routes.

14. Note the ongoing cost of school transport services to identified greenfield sites in the draft plan document.
15. Highlight the potential contribution of active transport, such as cycling, walking and public transport, to fostering liveable and sustainable communities. Potentially in the Key Infrastructure Objectives or include a new section for Key Transport Objectives.
16. Include a stronger emphasis on a future light rail corridor for arterial transport routes in the main map on page 13 and future regional transport map on page 33.

Regional Landscape and Natural Resources

One of the main issues raised about this section was that more information and recognition needed to be given to conservation areas as well as local history as well as Indigenous history and culture through the Key Environment and Heritage Objectives.

In particular, Indigenous groups, community groups and residents wanted to place emphasise on recognising the most significant historical and cultural sites in the Greater Darwin region.

Environment

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Differentiate high conservation areas on the map for significant sites, such as Melaaca Swamp, as added protection against other land uses such as mining activities.
2. Differentiate high conservation areas from conservation areas on the map for significant sites as added protection against other land uses – similar to the differentiation used between industry and strategic industry
3. Revise the Regional Landscape and Natural Resources section to strengthen the language around conservation planning and includes proposed conservation areas, including proactive expansion of the protected areas estate and conservation corridors in the region and better recognised the value of conservation areas.
4. Proactively identify areas of enhanced conservation, including creation of new protected areas and maintenance of landscape conservation corridors, Indigenous Protected Areas, private wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. Do this by differentiating high conservation areas from conservation areas on the map for significant sites as added protection against other land uses – similar to the differentiation used between industry and strategic industry. Propose either a new section under Land Use Structure that

Proposed regions suggested for investigation for new protected areas & connectivity conservation corridors, subject to gaining the consent of Indigenous traditional owners and widespread consultation

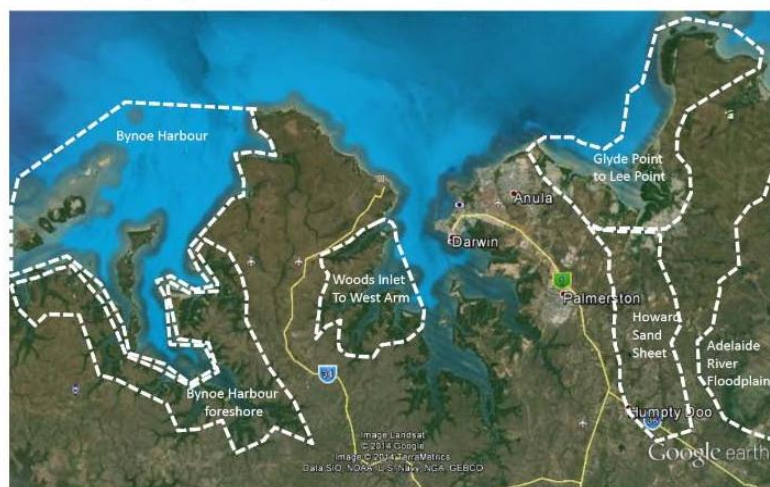


Figure 1. Location of areas in the Darwin Region proposed for further investigation for creation of new protected areas and connectivity conservation corridors, subject to the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous traditional owners, plus widespread consultation. Map produced by Stuart Blanch, Environment Centre NT, 1 September 2014.

addresses 'Nature Conservation' or a new subsection in Infrastructure titled Natural Infrastructure. These areas to include (see map on the right):

- a. Glyde Point to Shoal Bay
 - b. Woods Inlet to West Arm
 - c. Bynoe Harbour
 - d. Bynoe Harbour Foreshore
 - e. Adelaide River Floodplain
 - f. Howards Sand Sheet
5. Identify future nature conservation corridors and areas for potential new protected areas in a similar way that future regional transport corridors (page 34) are included in the map and draft plan.

Heritage/Culture

Stakeholder suggestions

6. Recognise sites of political, historical, cultural and social significance for the local Indigenous people including the Larrakeyah Military Barracks, old Kahlin/Hospital/Myilly Point site, Railway Dam, Bagot/Ludmilla/Coconut Grove, Dripstone/Casuarina beaches, 13 Mile, Berry Springs, Batchelor, Cox Peninsula and Nungalyina (Old Man Rock).
7. Include a reference to the important historical links to WWII under the characteristics of Litchfield under the subregional narratives (page 40) – similar to Coomalie.
8. Identify important heritage sites on the map as icons as it is important to recognise historical sites at a regional level, in particular historical Aboriginal names for places.
9. Revise the Regional Landscape and Natural Resources section so development is done in accordance with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development and Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous peoples.
10. Revise the Regional Landscape and Natural Resources section so it recognises Native Title rights and the close connection between Aboriginal culture and land management.

Natural Hazard Risks

One of the main issues stakeholders raised in regard to natural risk was climate change and how that was recognised in the report. While it was recognised that it had been considered, several stakeholders asked that the risk of climate change be emphasised.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Include a full section on climate change impacts and potential mitigation measures in the draft plan under the Natural Hazard Risks section.
2. Make stronger references to the issues of climate change in the report, including the findings of the State of the Climate 2014 report (see Environment Centre NT submission for details pages 9 and 10).

Development Related Constraints and Opportunities

The majority of stakeholders supported the Key Development Structure objectives as well as the emphasis on protecting the rural lifestyle in the face of regional expansion.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Include a more detailed timeline for the short, medium and long term residential development.

Implementation

Most stakeholders were reassured after the briefings that once the Draft Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2014 was finalised it would be incorporated in the NT Planning Scheme.

Stakeholder suggestions

1. Ensure the guidelines and principals identified in the draft plan to be included, where appropriate, in the NT Planning Scheme.
2. The final Darwin Regional Land Use Plan is formally recognised in the NT Planning Scheme rather than just being a guideline
3. Include a review mechanism in the plan, such as population threshold or periodic timeframe such as a review every five to 10 years.
4. As the Darwin City Centre Master Plan is still a draft, provide greater focus on strategic direction of CBD as a 'fully fledged state capital city' by incorporating the objectives of the Master Plan into the NT Planning Scheme.
5. Integrate a regional transport plan into the final land use plan.
6. Create a public, detailed delivery or action plan to identify responsibility for specific actions within the final document.
7. Include the Darwin International Airport Master Plan as a reference document in the Northern Territory Planning Scheme.

Additional stakeholder suggestions

Tourism and Defence were two land uses that were raised as not being very well recognised in the draft plan, with recommendations to emphasise the important economic role Defence has in the region as well as identifying its investment infrastructure. While tourism is a land use that could come under the urban and peri-urban areas, there was a call for it to be recognised more clearly in the objectives of the land use plan.

Tourism

1. Reference the requirement for short-stay accommodation as a land use to support tourism in the urban and rural activity centres, potentially in the Regional Context and Policies Section on pages 45-52, in the Future section and Land for Residential Development section on page 48.

Defence

Include sections, where relevant, in the draft plan about the role of Defence, which covers the following points:

1. Refer to any Defence facilities as Commonwealth/Defence in all relevant maps in the draft plan instead of just Commonwealth.
2. Give greater recognition to the significant contribution Defence makes to the Darwin regional economy and the need to protect it from urban encroachment. (see Department of Defence submission for more detail)
3. Carefully consider future development around Defence bases and training areas.

4. Consider RAAF Base Darwin External Land Use Study when considering future land use options as part of the draft plan.

Some additional issues were outside the scope of the plan but have been listed in the full report at Attachment A.

Please note: Attachment A has not been included in the documents made available for viewing, as the attachment contains details of individuals and organisations who have made submissions.

Comments on the consultation process

It was clear during consultation that development can be an emotive topic, particularly when it threatens people's values, lifestyle and amenity.

This was particularly the case in the rural area, where many people are feeling threatened by rapid growth and what is perceived as the ad hoc nature of many planning approvals.

Many people saw this exercise as their last chance to have a say. It should be emphasised that a land use plan is a high level conceptual attempt to provide greater certainty about future land use, as well as identifying land that should be preserved for potential future community and essential service infrastructure.

Another strong theme in the feedback was that many stakeholders felt their earlier comments hadn't been listened to, incorporated in the draft plan or responded to. They are cynical about government consultation and the planning process. In fact, we are assured, that all submissions were read and heeded.

An important element of consultation is ensuring a comprehensive feedback loop, so people don't feel their valuable input has been dismissed. This should demonstrate how consultation changed outcomes, what could not be incorporated and address concerns raised.

There was confusion about the draft concept plan, with several stakeholders commenting that it didn't contain sufficient detail to comment on. It may have been better to release the briefing note and concept plan together, with fact sheets explaining the key elements of the concept.

Consultation for this project was done sequentially, as three separate processes. We would recommend in future that a consultation or engagement strategy is prepared at the start of a major project such as this, with more time allowed to plan methodology and support communication materials.

Many people were confused by the planning terminology used in the report. This should be better explained in future.

Above all, people want a genuine voice, which requires the time to build understanding, respect and face to face communication with those most impacted by proposals. Attention should be given to meeting community expectations of respectful, open-minded consultation in future local area planning and developments.

We recommend that the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAP2) methodology and Spectrum of Participation provide valuable guidance on these issues. We also recommend this report be made public, to keep faith with the many people who devoted their valuable time to provide what is, essentially, 'free advice' to the Planning Commission.

"I have read the proposed regional land use plan and am concerned that it does not take account of previous feedback from the community. It is a plan for developers and not for the long term benefit of the residents of Darwin and surrounding areas." Palmerston resident

"Genuine community consultation requires genuine mediation processes - as with Lands, Planning and Mining Tribunal appeals that record changed development proposals due to inclusive public input. With initial community consultation that takes account of local wisdom and expertise, development is perceived as shared and owned by the community. Simply listening to local people without including their informed aspirations for the future sustainability of local social, environmental and economic needs, makes a mockery of public consultation and participatory democracy." Rural resident

