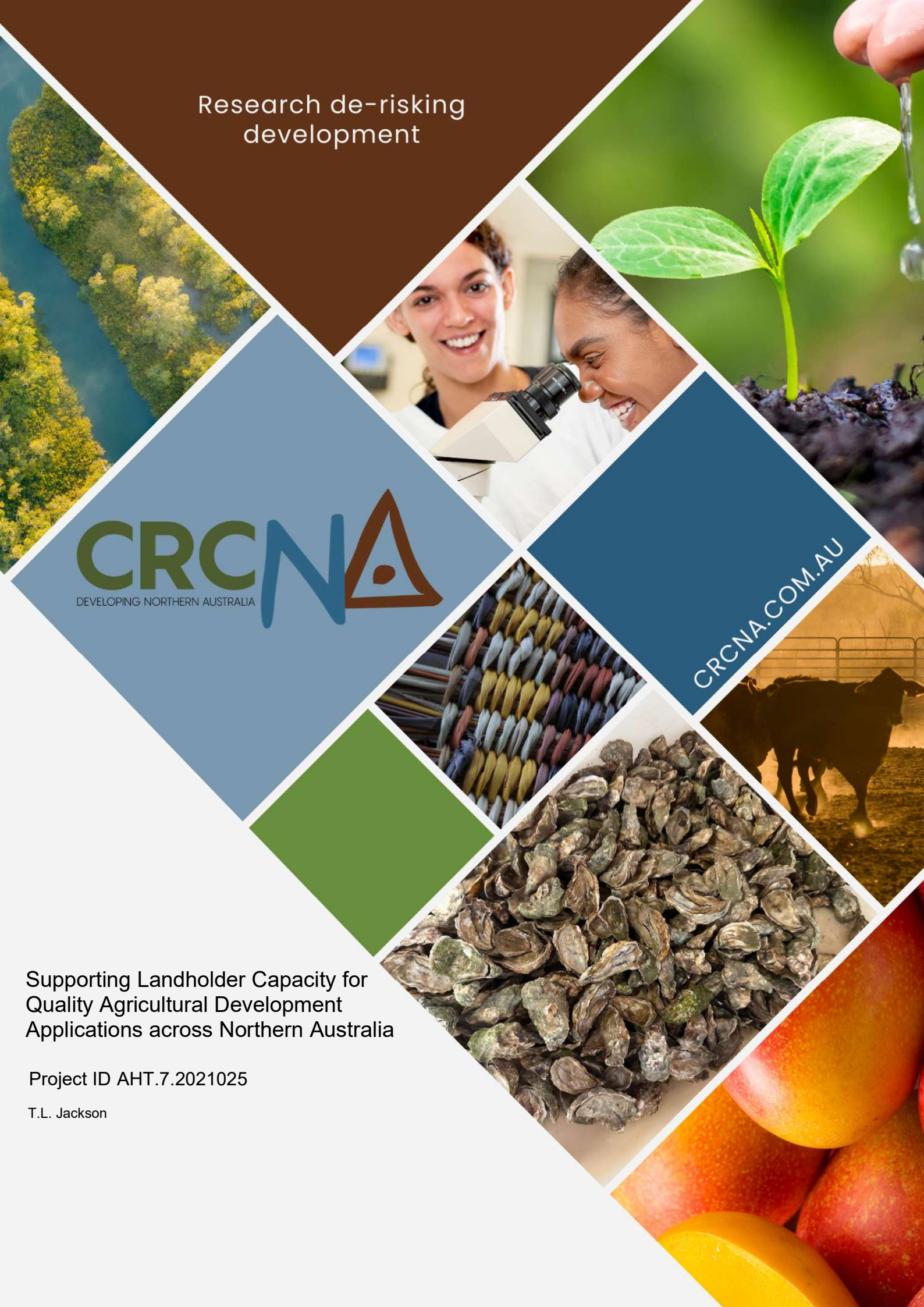


Supporting Landholder Capacity for Quality Agricultural Development Applications across Northern Australia

Project ID AHT.7.2021025

T.L. Jackson

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The author confirm(s) that this document has been provided to CRCNA and project representatives for review.

Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Cooperative Research Centres Program

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Acronyms

NTFA	Northern Territory Farmers Association
ORDCO	Ord River District Co-operative
KPCA	Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association
NTCA	Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
QFF	Queensland Farmers Federation
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Educational
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
EPBC	Act - Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
DITT	Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NAWRA	Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

Project Participants

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- Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
- Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Gulf Savannah NRM
- Cotton Australia
- Plus, the many anonymous departmental staff, industry body staff, consultants and landholders

Executive Summary

This project, Supporting Landholder Capacity for Quality Agricultural Development Applications Across Northern Australia, posed the research question: 'What are the capacity development needs and products needed to lift the ability of landholders, industry bodies and development advisory services to be development/investment-ready across Northern Australia?' The project focused on agricultural development across the diverse regions of Northern Australia, including Western Australia (WA), the Northern Territory (NT), and Queensland (Qld), where significant variation in land tenure systems, regulatory frameworks, and approval processes can affect development readiness. In the NT and parts of Northern WA, large portions of land are under pastoral leasehold or Aboriginal land tenure, often requiring complex negotiations and inter-agency coordination. In contrast, Qld includes a broader mix of freehold, leasehold, and Indigenous land, regulated under state and local government planning schemes. These jurisdictional and tenure differences present unique challenges for landholders seeking to undertake agricultural development. The project addressed these challenges through a structured, multi-phase approach spanning the identification, development, trial delivery, and implementation of strategies to enhance the capacity of landholders and other stakeholders to prepare quality agricultural development applications. In doing so, the project engaged landholders, industry bodies, agricultural advisory services, and government stakeholders in the co-design and delivery of these strategies.

Key achievements include:

- Phase 1: Conducted a needs assessment, identifying critical challenges such as regulatory complexity, limited access to data, and the high cost of compliance. Insights from surveys and interviews shaped the foundation for capacity-building solutions. Established a dedicated reference group.
- Phase 2: Designed tailored capacity-building options, including training programs, practical tools, and collaborative frameworks. These solutions targeted gaps in regulatory knowledge, planning skills, and resource accessibility.
- Phase 3: Trialled tools and training programs such as the online "learn series" and directories, gathering valuable feedback to refine these resources further. Stakeholders reported improved understanding and confidence in navigating regulatory processes.
- Phase 4: Focused on sustaining and implementing these initiatives by establishing mechanisms like MOUs with government partners for ongoing "learn series" sessions and uploading resources to accessible platforms for long-term use.

This comprehensive effort has now institutionalised knowledge, improved stakeholder participation, and fostered collaboration between industry groups and government. By equipping stakeholders with the tools and knowledge to navigate regulatory frameworks, the project has created a sustainable pathway for agricultural development in Northern Australia. To ensure the project's legacy continues beyond its formal conclusion, key resources—including training materials, guidance documents, and tools—will remain publicly accessible through the NT Farmers Association (NTFA) website. In addition, partnerships and frameworks established during the project, such as Memorandums of Understanding with government agencies, provide a foundation for ongoing delivery of capacity-building initiatives, including future iterations of the "learn series" and regional engagement activities.

Introduction

Phase 1: Needs Assessment

Agricultural development across Northern Australia presents unique opportunities for regional growth, yet it also faces significant challenges due to the region's complex regulatory landscape and diverse land tenure arrangements. Unlike more densely settled regions of southern Australia, much of Northern Australia is governed by a patchwork of tenure types—including pastoral leases, Aboriginal freehold and native title land, and various forms of Crown land—each with its own regulatory implications. These land tenure differences are compounded by multi-layered environmental, planning, and land-use regulations that vary significantly across jurisdictions such as Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia.

Northern Australia is also characterised by remote geographies, limited access to technical expertise, and relatively small-scale agribusiness operations—many of which are operated by family-run or SME landholders. These producers often face higher transactional costs and reduced institutional support when navigating development processes. For agricultural development to be viable and sustainable in this context, landholders, peak industry bodies, and development advisors must be well-equipped to manage regulatory requirements, assemble high-quality proposals, and engage effectively with government approval processes.

This project sought to address those needs through a staged and collaborative approach—beginning with this foundational phase to understand the barriers, knowledge gaps, and system inefficiencies that currently hinder effective development planning and investment readiness across the north.

1.1 Objective

To identify the capacity development needs of landholders, industry bodies, and government stakeholders for quality agricultural development applications.

1.2 Overview

In order to assess the needs of landholders, industry bodies and development advisory services, an essential first step was to evaluate the level of awareness of the current status of the impact of regulation on the agriculture industry across Northern Australia.

Depending on the specific location, it was determined that there are at least six overlapping layers of regulation impacting landholders, depending on land tenure and which aspect of biodiversity scrutiny is applicable. For example, in a 2017 report the Productivity Commission noted the AgForce observation that in Queensland, the agriculture industry was impacted by over 17,500 pages of regulations covering more than 75 separate legislative Acts (Productivity Commission, 2016). A similar mosaic of overlapping legislation and regulation is present across Northern Australia.

Studies have concluded that the increased levels of poorly integrated red tape led to a corresponding decrease in benefit to society. Indeed, the cost to the Australian economy of red tape has been calculated as high as 11 per cent of GDP or $176 billion per year (Wild and Allen, 2018). With regard to the agricultural industry specifically, a 2014 study estimated that mixed farms spent almost 30 full days and $45,000 per year performing tasks related to regulatory compliance activities (Holmes and Sackett, 2014).

The need for increased efficiency and quality in development proposals is particularly important for small and medium agriculture producers. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are one of the primary engines for economic growth all over the world (Singh et al, 2008). This is particularly true

in the Northern Territory, where 99.8 per cent of businesses are small and medium-sized (DITT, 2021). Research has shown that SMEs with access to adequate resources can lead to superior performance within the agriculture industry (Bretherton and Chaston, 2005). Accordingly, lifting the capacity of SMEs to produce quality development proposals, including increasing the capacity of consultants, peak industry bodies and governments to assist in the process—will have a tangible benefit to the agricultural industry in the Top End. Analysis of the experiences of corporate producers will also be important to draw any parallels between the experiences of SMEs and corporates in navigating the regulatory processes.

There have been a number of recent attempts by government to ameliorate the impact of overly burdensome regulation and streamline processes. For example, the Commonwealth Government recently announced an intention to streamline agriculture levy laws to make doing business easier for those in the agriculture sector (Minister Littleproud, 2021). Similarly, the Northern Territory Government recently introduced legislation to allow for a simplified application process for land clearing approvals; however, anecdotal evidence has indicated that this change may have had the opposite effect.

Understanding the specific aspects of regulation that are of particular concern, or particularly burdensome to landholders and agriculture industry stakeholders, is essential to addressing capacity building solutions to facilitate increased investment across Northern Australia.

Given the broad impact of regulatory burden on the agricultural industry, it will be important to both understand the current capacity of farmers and identify the most burdensome aspects of the development process.

In Phase 1, a dedicated Reference Group was established, It was comprised of representatives from Project Participants, key stakeholder groups, and government agencies, and played an important advisory role throughout the life of the project. Its purpose was to provide oversight, strategic guidance, and policy input to ensure the project remained aligned with stakeholder needs and regional priorities. The group also enhanced communication between landholders, industry, and government, and supported collaboration on innovative solutions. The Reference Group operated under a structured and collaborative framework. Eight formal meetings were held over the course of the project, with agendas and materials circulated in advance to ensure informed discussion. Members were encouraged to contribute agenda items, and discussions were facilitated by a Chairperson to ensure inclusive participation and clear outcomes. In addition to scheduled meetings, the Project Officer maintained regular one-on-one catch-ups with the Chair to ensure timely input on emerging matters. While the Reference Group held no formal decision-making authority, its contributions and recommendations were instrumental in guiding project delivery and supporting continuous improvement.

1.3 Survey

Survey research was determined to be the best method for directly assessing the needs of landholders due primarily to the flexibility of methods to identify and target participants, take advantage of various methods of data collection and instrumentation (e.g. paper and online if desirable). Also, the use of a survey allows for the use of both quantitative and qualitative questions to be evaluated, which is particularly useful when exploring preferences and behaviour (Singleton and Straits, 2009).

The primary method of transmitting and gathering survey responses was online, which allowed results to be collected and posted to a database immediately. This will include a pilot survey, which will then be expanded to a larger group, potentially including the utilisation of snowball sampling techniques, depending on responses to preliminary survey respondents (Hancock and Gile, 2011).

In turn this will allow for preliminary analysis to be conducted, while waiting for additional responses to accumulate (Wright 2006; Llieva et al., 2002).

1.4 Survey Participants

Surveys were distributed to stakeholders with an interest in capacity-building solutions for agricultural development across Northern Australia. The target audience broadly included:

- Landholders (including farmers, pastoralists, corporates, and Traditional Owners) in the NT, WA, and QLD;
- Commonwealth and State/Territory government agencies responsible for agricultural regulation;
- Consultants and agricultural service providers; and
- Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), universities, and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers.

A preliminary list of stakeholders is provided in **Appendix 1**, which was expanded through input from the Project Reference Group and other Project Participants. The aim was to capture a sample reflective of the broader population relevant to the research question (Pronto, 2015). A snowball sampling approach (Noy, 2009) was also employed where appropriate, allowing survey respondents to suggest additional relevant participants to broaden the reach.

The primary method of survey distribution was via SurveyMonkey—an established, user-friendly online platform for data collection (Waclawski, 2012). Online surveys are effective in terms of accessibility, convenience, and optional anonymity (Regmi et al., 2016; Lieberman, 2008). As a secondary method, targeted interviews were conducted on an as-needed basis to capture more in-depth responses (Harris & Brown, 2010). The survey questions can be found in **Appendix 2**.

1.5 Survey Analysis

A mixed-method approach was used to analyse the survey and interview data, combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques. This methodology—often referred to as triangulation—enables the cross-validation of findings and strengthens the reliability of the results (Jick, 1979). Quantitative analysis was used to identify recurring trends across stakeholder groups, while qualitative analysis provided deeper insight into specific challenges and needs (Brannen, 2007). Together, these methods informed the development of practical capacity-building options for the sector.

1.6 Application of Survey Results

The findings from the survey, literature review, and interviews were used to inform the development of draft capacity-building options. These were then presented to the Reference Group for review and input regarding their relevance, feasibility, and impact. The outcomes of this process directly informed Phases II and III of the project, which focused on refining and trialling the tools and resources most likely to support landholders, government agencies, and industry stakeholders in preparing high-quality agricultural development applications.

1.7 Survey Results

A total of 56 stakeholders responded to the survey, comprising 37 industry representatives and 19 government employees. The responses reflected a diverse range of experience levels and roles across the sector.

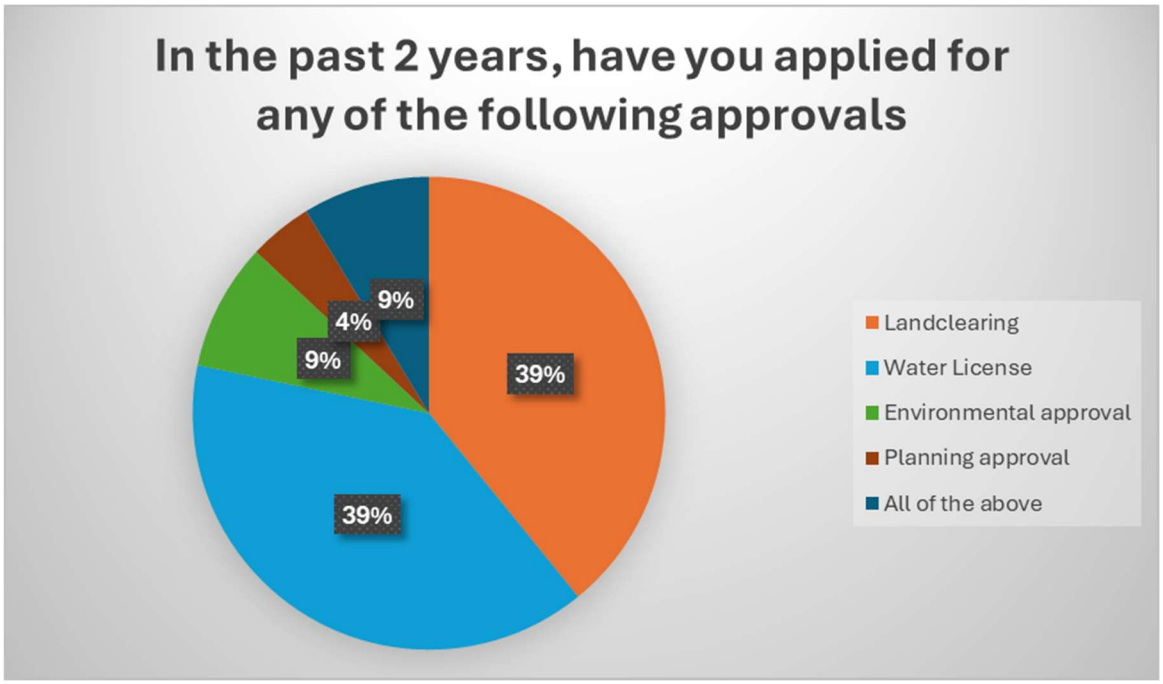
Appendix 3 Survey Results

1.8 Survey Analysis

Of the 56 respondents, 16 had submitted regulatory applications within the past two years. Among these:

- 9 had applied for land clearing approvals or water licences;
- Several others had sought environmental and planning approvals;
- 2 respondents had applied for all four categories: land clearing, water licences, environmental, and planning approvals.

These results provide insight into the types of regulatory processes that are most commonly navigated by stakeholders and highlight key areas where support and guidance are most needed.

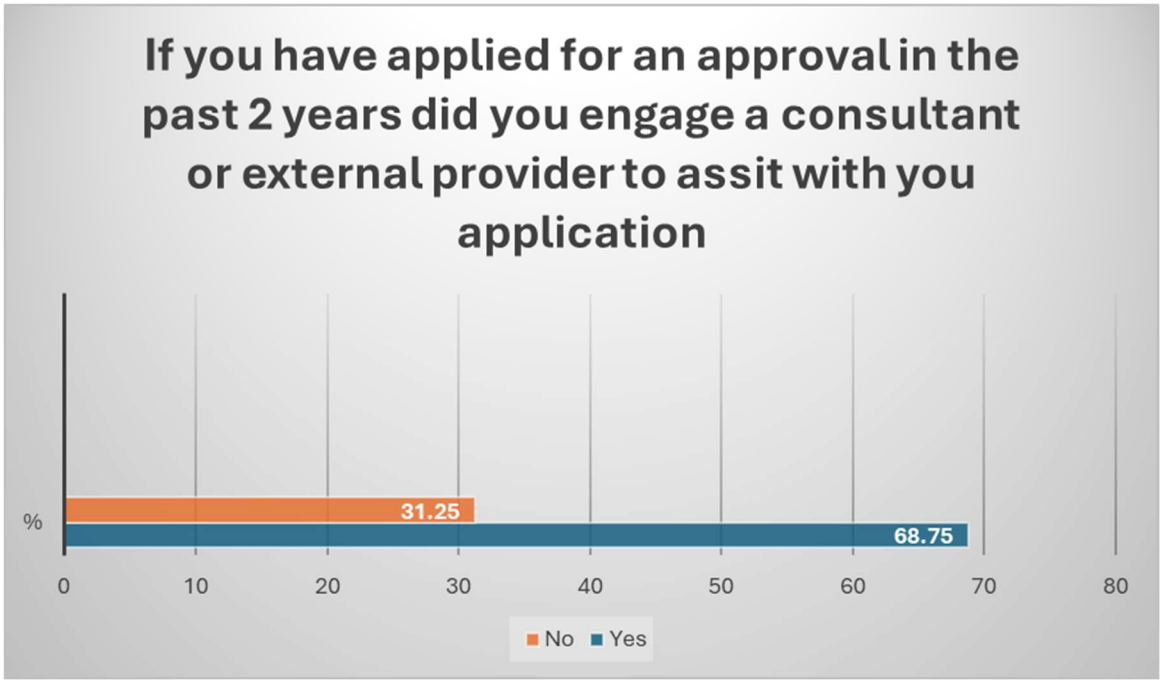


Of the 16 that made formal application, 7 received approval and achieved their desired outcome, whilst the remaining 9 were either denied, required to provide further information or a decision was pending.

69% of applications were made by engaging the services of a consultant or external service provider. Of the 31% of submissions who did not engage a consultant, the majority did not feel that they had the information, time, and ability to prepare the best application by themselves. Of the 16 respondents, 10 reported preferences for professional assistance or additional information to assist with the approval process. The additional assistance which the respondents determined to be useful is summarised:

- Consultants who understand conditions of Northern Australia
- Access to government staff for assistance, clarification and to answer questions
- Access to government data on land systems and land resource information
- Access to accurate and consistent data
- Improved land resource mapping available to the public including better resolution

- Access to professional consultants
- Access to templates to assist with applications



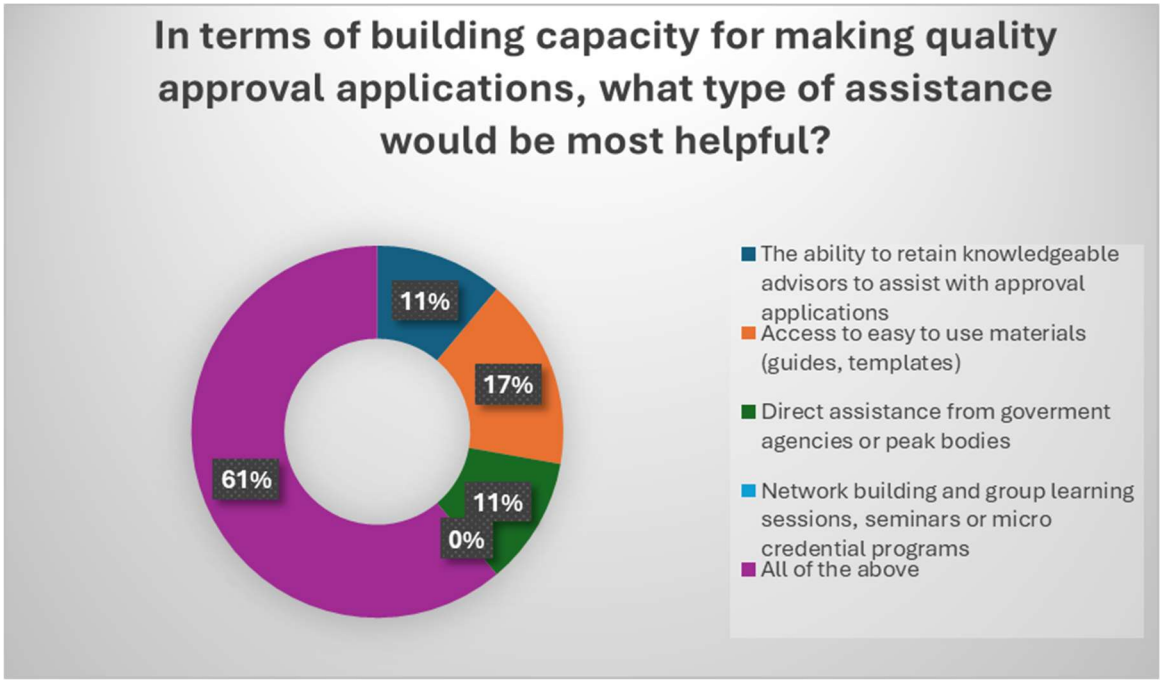
Of those who engaged a consultant, the satisfaction rating of their assistance from twelve respondents was 7.6 on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest rating of satisfaction.

Value for money of their engaged consultant averaged a score was 6.5 on a scale of 1 to 10. Despite relatively low scores of satisfaction and value for money, 71% of respondents felt that the consultant or external service provider did hold the local technical knowledge necessary to put forward the best possible application. With a view to inform change, twelve respondents provided feedback on the skills, data and information determined as useful for either themselves or the consultant:

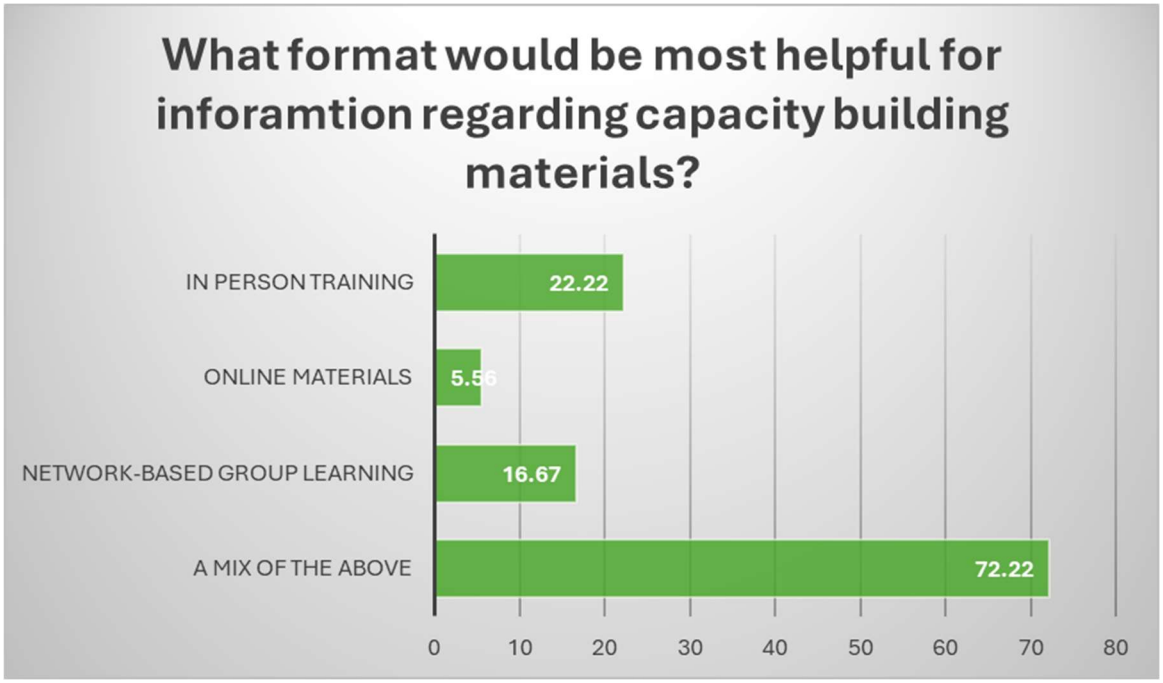
- Knowledge of Northern Australia including the Northern Territory
- Lack of available consultants with NT knowledge which are not former NT Government staff
- Cost of engaging the consultant is prohibitive when landholders should be able to undertake application without consultant assistance
- Lack of/accessibility of groundwater data
- Limitations in access to government technical data and reports relevant to applications including water, soils, land and resources
- Greater co-operation from government departmental staff to assist
- More Government staff with on-ground experience

Over the past 2 years, respondents estimated the cost of engaging consultants and meeting government compliance across of all levels of government was between less than $1,000 to greater than $1 million. Nine respondents advising their costs were greater than $10,000, one respondent advised their costs were greater than $60,000 and another advised costs in excess of $1million. Overall, 89% of respondents identified an increase in the cost of compliance with government regulation over the past 2 years. 58% of respondents were willing to consider paying a nominal fee to assist with meeting compliance obligations.

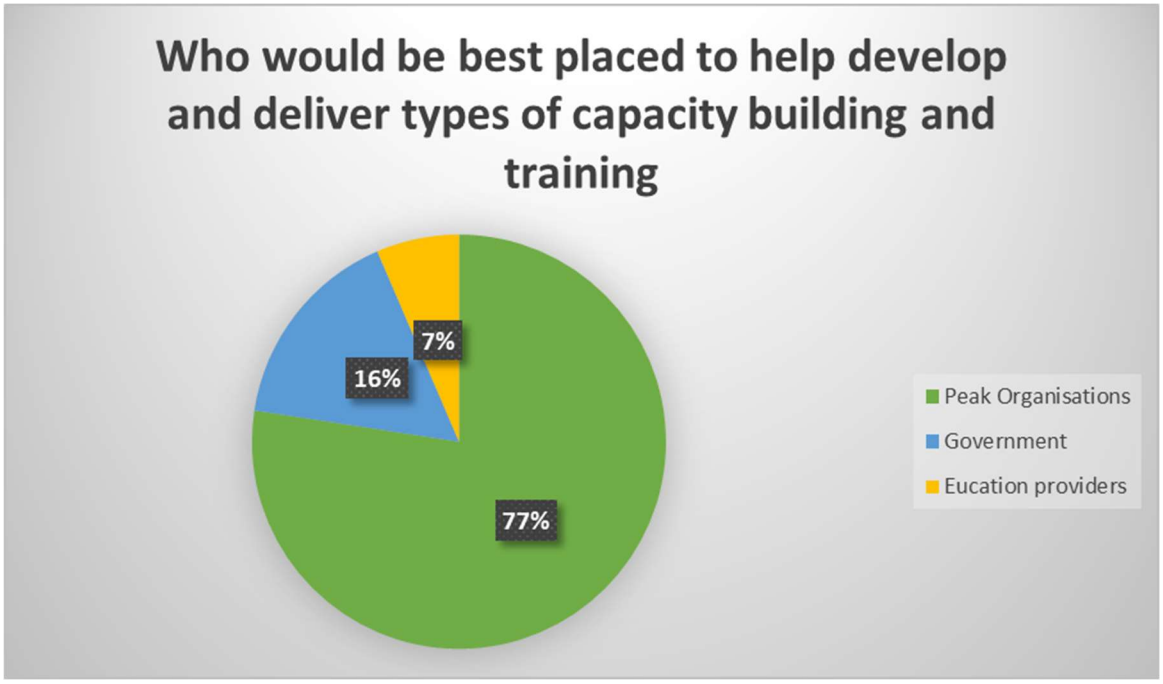
When considering their future needs, twelve respondents indicated that they are planning to lodge an application for approval in the next 2 years with none of those respondents intending to engage a consultant to assist with the process. Four respondents will self-preparing applications.



Mixed learning was the preference for those that would like to access capacity building materials with a preference towards in-person training over network and online based materials, however the majority preferred a mix of training methods

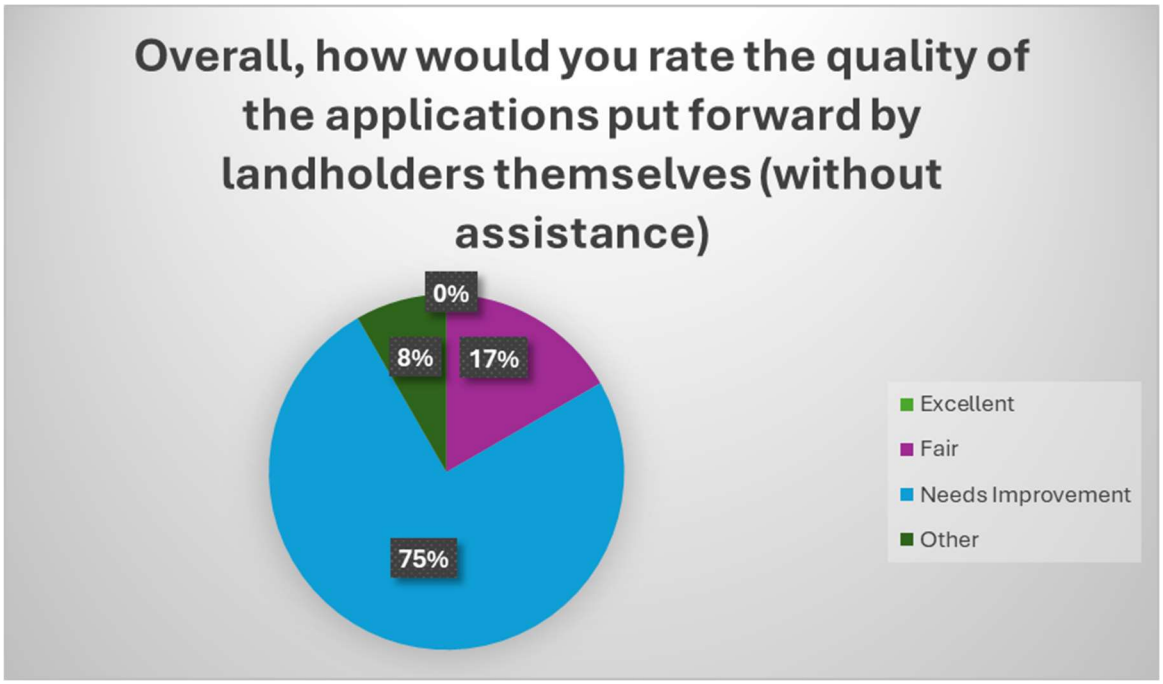


When considering who would deliver such training, 79% of respondents nominated peak organisations as being best placed to deliver such training with only three respondents choosing government and one respondent preferring an education provider.



APPLICATIONS MADE TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Government employees who receive applications, were asked to rate the average quality of the applications which their department receives. Of the twelve responses, just 42% were rated as "Fair" and 58% were rated as "Needs Improvement".



When broken down further to consider only the applications that were made by the landholder, 17% were "Fair", 75% were "Needs Improvement" and 8% were "Abysmal". Government

employees felt that only 58% of landholders had a fair understanding of the approvals process and 42% needed improvement in their understanding.

When considering the applications made only by a consultant or external service provider, 58% of applications were “Fair” and 42% were needing improvement.

To assist landholders and consultants to prepare better applications, government employee respondents supported all the following as tools or guidance:

- In-person training
- Learning materials (guides, templates etc.)
- Professional assistance



When considering why applications may be approved, government employee respondents advised that the inclusion of quality data evidence, adherence to baseline requirements for application or approval and an understanding of legislative, regulatory or policy framework.

One respondent provided the following commentary to explain the impact that a quality application has on the process:

‘Having professional assistance generally improves the quality, but if the proposal meets the assessment criteria, then the proposal can still be approved. The difference in quality tends to have a greater impact on the timeframe for assessment rather than the likelihood of approval. If an application has insufficient information (e.g. some landholder submitted applications) we may not be able to accept the application for assessment.’

Applications which are not approved, generally had the following characteristics:

- Failure to comply with baseline requirements for the application or approval
- Missing data, evidence or incomplete information

Three respondents advised that a characteristic of approval not granted is that it was self-prepared.

When considering if additional external training would assist landholders or consultants to prepare better applications, all government employee respondents either responded with “Yes” or “Maybe” and 75% of respondents agreed that access to easy to use, easy to understand assistive materials would be most helpful to landholder attempting to lift their application capacity. The ability to retain knowledgeable advisers to assist with applications coupled with direct assistance from government agencies and peak representative bodies were also ranked highly by respondents.

Specific comments relating to this were:

- ‘Acknowledgement and understanding that not everywhere can be developed. There should be limitations/no go areas. Some projects / proposals/areas are inappropriate for development. Recognition of that seems to be low.’
- ‘Expert reports to support proposal (e.g. land type assessments, etc). Sometimes applications are submitted without any information to support claims (e.g. the applicant states the land is fine to be cleared, but has no data or evidence to support this, such as details on slope, soil types, how the clearing will be conducted to prevent erosion, etc).’
- ‘Agencies, particularly environmental regulators have always been reluctant to provide advice upfront as they don’t want to be responsible if that advice is not accurate. In general, it is the experience of managing the process that is the cause of frustration, rather than the lack of guidance. In our agency we don’t manage the approvals but try to case manage the application, this is also frustrating as often the process doesn’t go to plan and agencies refuse to provide clear guidance at times.’

In considering a proposed partnership between government and external organisations to provide the identified additional training for landholders, all government employee respondents were either outright supportive or “maybe” in support of this concept. 75% supported peak organisations as being best placed to deliver these types of capacity building and training.

1.9 Conclusion

Key Findings

The needs assessment highlighted several recurring challenges and areas for improvement in the agricultural development application process across Northern Australia.

Regulatory Barriers

A central concern identified by both landholders and government stakeholders was the complexity and lack of clarity in the regulatory environment. The process of navigating overlapping legislation, jurisdictional requirements, and unclear approval pathways often results in confusion and delays. This complexity is compounded by limited access to essential government-held datasets, particularly those relating to land systems, soil classification, and groundwater availability. Stakeholders noted that the absence of accessible, up-to-date geospatial and environmental data significantly impedes the preparation of robust development applications. Additionally, the high cost of compliance, particularly where consultant services are required, presents a significant barrier—especially for small to medium enterprises (SMEs) operating on tight margins.

Training and Resource Needs

Stakeholders expressed a strong preference for in-person workshops, practical tools, and user-friendly templates to support application preparation. Survey respondents consistently indicated that existing guidance materials are either too generic or too technical, highlighting a need for clear, concise regulatory information that is tailored to their specific regional and operational contexts.

Application Quality and Frustration Points

The quality of development applications submitted to government departments was generally reported as poor. Government employees cited frustration with incomplete, inconsistent, or poorly justified applications. Landholders, in turn, expressed dissatisfaction with limited feedback and lack of transparency in the assessment process. A key issue was the stalemate created by restricted access to government data, which is often necessary for applications but difficult to incorporate due to availability or formatting constraints.

While it was generally reported that the use of a consultant improved application quality to some degree, survey data showed only a marginal increase in the proportion of applications assessed as "fair" compared to those prepared solely by landholders. Notably, no government respondents classified any consultant-prepared applications as "excellent", suggesting that even professional services are constrained by limited data, unclear regulatory processes, or lack of region-specific knowledge.

Capacity Gaps and Opportunities

There is a clear and widespread lack of capacity among both landholders and consultants, with time constraints, regulatory uncertainty, and inconsistent access to relevant training all contributing factors. The absence of strong local knowledge—particularly in remote or less-serviced regions—was also cited as a frustration that contributes to strained relationships between compliance regulators and landholders. However, strong support emerged for targeted training and capacity-building efforts, with respondents endorsing structured programs to upskill both landholders and advisors as a priority for future investment.

Phase 2: Capacity-Building Options

Building on the findings of Phase 1, it became evident that landholders, consultants, and even government employees across Northern Australia faced persistent challenges in navigating the regulatory landscape for agricultural development. The low quality of development applications, coupled with inconsistent access to data and limited understanding of relevant policy frameworks, highlighted a critical need for targeted capacity building. Furthermore, survey results and stakeholder feedback indicated that success in development approvals was more likely when projects were staged, backed by sound business planning, and guided by a clear understanding of regulatory requirements. These insights informed the direction of Phase 2, which focused on identifying, designing, and prioritising capacity-building options tailored to the needs of key stakeholder groups and aimed at improving application quality, reducing compliance delays, and fostering more effective regional networks.

2.1 Objective

To design and prioritise capacity-building tools and training programs tailored to stakeholder needs. Another objective of this project has been to lift the long-term capacity of peak industry groups, to support their members in planning decisions within development assessment applications. Via policy advocacy and capacity building within their respective teams. When considering capacity building for staff, organisations need to use a multi-level approach. There was also an objective to build stronger regionalised networks between applicants, consultants, and regulators.

2.2 Overview

There was no specific training needs identified in the survey analysis, however what was identified was that projects that were well planned and staged were more successful. It was also identified

that there is a lack of understanding of policy frameworks in the applications, from not only in landholders, but consultants and government staff from within and across different departments.

When considering why applications may be approved, government employee respondents advised that the inclusion of quality data evidence, adherence to baseline requirements for application or approval and an understanding of legislative, regulatory or policy framework.

When the survey analysis was shared with a long-term employee of a peak industry body, who has delivered many workshops and training to landholders who has grappled with the constant amendments to framework requirements for more than fifteen years, his view was:

> *'Maybe there needs to be a pre-checklist, so producers can determine if there are grounds to continue with a development application'.*
>
> *'Certainly a sound property map, that all should be using as part of their business management, will assist with most applications'.*
>
> *'If the pre-check outcome determines there is scope to apply then a comprehensive checklist should be available, that must also be completed and supplied with the application'.*

To further mature our results, the survey analysis was discussed with a rural financial counsellor from, Rural Financial Counselling Service North Queensland (RFCSNQ). With over six years' experience as a counsellor and fifteen years' experience in the banking and finance industry along with operating a family farming business, her observations are:

> 'Family farming operations who have a well thought out business plan in place including a detailed map. Noting, this map doesn't have to be a digital map, just one that can show current and future ambitions. These businesses can make better decisions along the way about future development and tend to have better financial outcomes over a ten-year period. If businesses have a plan and have thought about the risk and opportunities, they have a better chance of achieving their goals'.

One consultant felt that:

"Presentations on changes within frameworks would be very helpful, currently changes are not available to landholders or consultants. They are only available to regulators".

Of note, from a government employee:

"*Ag development proposal's, which have a modest scale and are owner/operator have had more success. Projects that are staged with good business planning, staged up over the years have been more successful".*

2.3 Procedure

As there was no specific training needs identified in the survey analysis, the project officer approached the 'project reference group' for guidance to determine the most beneficial capacity building options for the groups of stakeholders.

We established three groups of stakeholders to consider for 'capacity building options':

- Landholders
- Consultants
- Government employees

Reference group recommendations included:

1. The formation of smaller working groups, with nominated members or staff contributing to the development and trial of practical options for both landholders and government stakeholders. Where additional involvement was required, expressions of interest were circulated
2. Project partners, NTFA, NTCA, ORDCO, KPCA, QFF and AgForce, will also need to play a vital role in helping to decide and evaluate products and or capacity building options. Each partner will be asked to nominate one-two members to help determine products they feel will help small to medium enterprises (SME's) to lift the ability of landholders, to be development/investment ready across northern Australia
3. An expression of interest will be circulated to call for nominations for consultants to participate in helping determine and establish the options suitable to the needs of this stakeholder group. This will be achieved by the extensive networks and communication reach amongst the project partners and the reference group.
4. Extension staff who work on ground with landholders within their jobs, for example Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS), local Natural Resource Management groups and departmental staff based in regional locations will also be asked to nominate products or training they feel will help small to medium enterprises (SME's) to lift the ability of landholders and peak industry groups.
5. From the recommendations one-on-one anonymous interviews/conversations (30 interviews were conducted), across the 3 regions Including private consultants, landholders and government employees. Locations and events included the Gulf Savannah, Drought Resilience Forum, Dimbulah June 16th, the Katherine Regional Show July 15th/16th, Broome July 19th, the FNQ Sustainable Cropping meeting, Mareeba 28th and the FNQ Growers Group Field Day July 29th. Along with several Microsoft Teams meetings or phone conversations with private consultants or government employees working across WA and NT.

2.4 Option Outcomes from the Interviews Included:

Feedback gathered from over 30 interviews with landholders, consultants, and government employees across WA, NT, and QLD highlighted a range of practical capacity-building tools that stakeholders believe would improve application quality and readiness for agricultural development. These suggestions reflect the diversity of needs across the sector, from basic skills training to higher-level planning support.

Mapping

Improved mapping capability was consistently identified as critical for development proposals. Participants stressed:

- The importance of visually showing future aspirations for their property to assist with both internal planning and external approvals.
- Maps that can be ground-truthed were considered essential for illustrating current land use and justifying proposed development.
- A need for better resolution mapping data was highlighted, particularly in remote areas where satellite imagery is often inadequate for property-scale planning.

Business Planning

Effective business planning was widely recognised as a foundation for successful development applications. Key requests included:

- Access to a simple business plan template that landholders could use without needing to hire a consultant.
- A live document format that could evolve with the enterprise, rather than being a one-off, static submission.
- Plain-language resources that make the process less intimidating and more achievable for time-poor operators.

Templates, Information Sheets, and Guides

Participants requested clear, user-friendly resources tailored to their region and regulatory environment. These included:

- Step-by-step guides for using mapping platforms such as:
  - Queensland Globe (QLD)
  - NR Maps (NT)
- In Western Australia, concern was raised over the fragmentation of data platforms managed by different agencies. A recommendation was made to the WA Government to explore integrating systems to simplify navigation and reduce duplication:
  - Landgate's Map Viewer – for cadastral and land tenure information
  - DWER Water Register – to view water entitlements and availability
  - DBCA's Dandjoo Map Portal – for biodiversity and environmental data
  - DPIRD internal platform – noted as difficult to access and use by non-departmental stakeholders
- A centralised directory of existing templates, flowcharts, checklists, and relevant resources was also recommended to reduce duplication of effort.
- A list of available consultants and their credentials was seen as a valuable tool for landholders seeking support with applications.

Short Courses

Many interviewees supported the development of short, modular training courses focused on core skills, including:

- **Business planning 101** – what's required for loan applications or development assessments.
- **Practical mapping tutorials**, including how to use tools like Queensland Globe or Google Maps for measuring and identifying boundaries.
- **Basic computer skills** to help landholders confidently access online forms, maps, and regulatory documents.
- **Biosecurity planning**, particularly for WA where this was identified as a gap.

- **Financial literacy training**, including:
  - Basic accounting and tax compliance
  - Understanding Profit & Loss (P&L) and cash flow statements
  - Time pressures and low perceived priority were noted as barriers—suggestions included podcasts or videos that break down financial tools in a relatable way.
- **A consultant accreditation pathway** was also proposed to improve trust in service providers and ensure a standardised level of knowledge and competency.

Access to the Relevant Departments

A recurring frustration was the lack of clarity about which department or officer to contact regarding a development proposal. Suggested improvements included:

- Clear guidance on the responsible agency or contact person for specific aspects of an application.
- A single point of contact or project lead within government to streamline communications and follow-up.

Other Suggestions

Several ideas were raised that relate to broader capacity-building needs:

- Market awareness training, helping landholders understand where their product fits within supply chains or export markets.
- Storytelling formats such as podcasts or videos showcasing successful developments, including how peers overcame regulatory or technical hurdles (e.g. Corbett Tritton from Richmond, QLD Beef Central article link https://www.beefcentral.com/property/weekly-property-review-water-opening-the-potential-in-northern-australia/).
- A 'business tool kit' suite comprising all the above elements—templates, short courses, contact directories, planning checklists—bundled as a resource package for landholders and consultants alike.

<u>The below feedback was specific to peak industry staff and departmental staff:</u>

• Detailed briefs from departments.

• Short webinar series of current frameworks, including work through examples. Noting these examples being actual examples of on ground activities.

  - with the idea of potentially recording them and using as an induction tool for new staff, or staff from different departments

• Current checklist of processes.

  - Most of the conversations was that some checklists are hard to find, and respondents would like an easy way to access them

• Ability for two-way conversation, thus allowing meaningful relationships which in turn will build better rapport between peak groups and departmental staff

  - This could be achieved with the start of a webinar series, noting some staff have better relationships between the two groups, than others

- Wanting better relationships with departments, NOTE it was discussed with two interviewers that other staff have strong inter-departmental relationships, however they are long term staff and because of this, staff from departments tend to seek them out for advice. This often means they never build new inter-departmental relationships. Noting workforce transience is common in the North, the fear of long-term staff leaving and there being a gap of knowledge is problematic
- Better interpersonal skills i.e., people skills/social skills
- Knowing who to contact within departments would be most helpful

• The development of a directory list within the departments and industry bodies to be shared for ease of productive communications. Instead of an 1800 call centre number to ring when trying to obtain informed helpful assistance.

- Overwhelming support (from all stakeholders) for this
- Will also have the ability to add in links to check list, templates for ease
- Want to be able to copy/paste items out to send in emails.

Recommendations

Considering all the feedback provided, the below are the suggestions most supported for consideration:

- The development of a Directory List/Guide (with links to websites, templates, peoples contact details)
- The conduct of Webinar's (learn Series, developed with government for Industry Staff, consultants and other government staff)
- The development of detailed Briefs (from Government departments, note this may be addressed with the webinar series)
- List of consultants and credentials (this was wanted from most stakeholder groups)

Short courses:

- Business plan 'how to' or what is needed. For example, what would you need to take to the bank if wanting to expand your current operation
- Mapping
- How to use the platform guides to i.e., Globe or google maps to use the measuring tools as an example.
- Biosecurity planning, refresher courses or new courses (WA)
- Financial literacy
    - basic accounting
    - basic tax compliance
    - Cashflow, Profit & Loss (P & L)

The above options were presented to the reference group to consider.

2.5 The Capacity Building Options Decided Upon

After considering the options presented the reference group agreed to the following options.

Trail a 'learn series' with NTCA and NTFA. Starting with Department of Environment, Parks and Water, NTG.

NOTE this should in the future to include Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) (Commonwealth) & Native Title Act (Commonwealth), including building an understanding the self-referral process
Create a directory list/guide, with links to websites, templates, peoples contact details, one for each state. -include links to land tenure definitions, biosecurity templates, business plans
Create a draft table of a list of consultants, including credentials.
Look into if there are feasibility plan templates for agricultural businesses.
Look into calculators/templates/products/models regarding viable and or profitability of crops suitable for Northern Australia
Look into creating a simple guide for QLD GLOBE.

Phase 3: Trial Delivery of the Capacity Building Program

Phase 3 focused on translating insights from earlier phases into practical, scalable capacity-building tools tailored to landholders and stakeholders across Northern Australia. This stage of the project trialled a range of prototype resources and training approaches, informed by needs identified through extensive consultation and supported by the Reference Group.

These activities responded directly to the demand for accessible, fit-for-purpose tools to improve application quality and confidence in navigating the development approval process. Trialling these resources also provided an opportunity to assess their usefulness and relevance across jurisdictions and refine them through stakeholder feedback.

While this phase explored the potential for longer-term use and sharing of these tools, the focus was not on commercialisation in the traditional sense. Rather, the emphasis was on ensuring that the tools could be freely accessed, easily updated, and embedded into the ongoing practices of industry bodies, departments, and landholders.

3.1 Objective

To develop and trial practical tools and training programs—such as the online “learn series,” cross-jurisdictional directories, and consultant registers—while gathering feedback to refine their design and usefulness. This phase also considered how these resources could be sustainably used into the future.

3.2 Overview

Phase 3 involved the development, testing, and feedback collection for the following capacity-building tools:

- Identifying and developing training and support options in line with earlier stakeholder-identified needs
- Trialling delivery options including online formats, templates, and resource guides
- Exploring partnerships with industry, government, and educational institutions
- Assessing models of resource sharing and sustainability for future use

- Creating a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives

Although the capacity building products were not designed for commercial sale, they are valuable, enduring resources. It is expected that these tools will support long-term improvements in knowledge-sharing, institutional communication, landholder confidence, and decision-making. Key partners such as the NT Farmers Association (NTFA) will continue to host and share the resources developed through this project.

3.3 Procedure

Over the course of the project, several products and initiatives were developed and trialled in response to persistent challenges faced by landholders, consultants, and government staff involved in agricultural development across Northern Australia. These were designed to improve access to information, demystify complex regulatory processes, and ultimately increase the quality and success rate of agricultural development proposals.

Each product below was designed with the feedback of stakeholders and refined through direct trials, engagement sessions, and evaluation.

1. Online 'Learn Series' – Capacity Building in Action

Problem Being Solved:
Stakeholders reported a lack of accessible, practical training on navigating regulatory processes and understanding land development requirements. Confusion around land clearing regulations was a common barrier to preparing compliant proposals.

What Was Done:
An online 'learn series' was co-designed and piloted with the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA), NT Farmers Association (NTFA), and the NT Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS). The first session focused on "Clearing on Pastoral Land" — a frequent area of confusion.

The pilot was tested with two NTFA staff unfamiliar with the clearing process to ensure it catered to all knowledge levels. The content included a walkthrough of the application process, what documents are required, and the regulatory framework.

Evaluation and Impact:
A post-session survey (via SurveyMonkey) was distributed to all 15 participants, assessing:

- Overall session satisfaction
- Improved understanding of regulations
- Value of cross-organisational delivery
- Feedback on content delivery and pacing

Results showed strong support for the model, and government representatives reported high satisfaction with the process. Feedback has since informed improvements to future sessions.

2. Cross-Jurisdictional Directory and Guide

Problem Being Solved:
Landholders and consultants repeatedly noted the lack of a centralised, easy-to-navigate guide on

regulatory requirements and land tenure systems, especially when working across Northern Australia's three jurisdictions.

What Was Done:
A comprehensive guide was developed for Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. These included:

- Land tenure definitions
- Key legislation (e.g., *Planning Act 1999*, *Crown Lands Act 1992*)
- Relevant departments and key contacts
- Industry and support organisations
- Templates for business planning and development applications
- Planning and mapping tools

Evaluation and Impact:
Drafts were reviewed by reference group members before being finalised. The directories now serve as go-to tools for new applicants. They provide quick-reference links to resources.

. **3. Consultant Register**

Problem Being Solved:
Landholders often lacked visibility on available consultants — particularly their credentials and areas of expertise — leading to uncertainty in selecting the right support for their application.

What Was Done:
A register of consultants was compiled, listing:

- Consultant and business names
- Geographic area of service
- Areas of expertise and credentials
- Contact information

Evaluation and Impact:
Drafts were shared with consultants for validation and permission. This transparency supports better matching between landholders and consultants and increases confidence in engaging professional support.

4. Feasibility Plan Templates

Problem Being Solved:
There was no consistent, fit-for-purpose feasibility plan template tailored to agricultural development in Northern Australia — particularly for new market entrants, Indigenous landholders, or those seeking private or government investment. This gap created challenges for proponents to demonstrate project viability in a clear, standardised format, limiting their ability to attract funding and navigate regulatory assessment processes.

What Was Done:
The Project Officer undertook a review of existing feasibility planning templates used by government departments, R&D institutions, and industry service providers across jurisdictions.

These were assessed for their applicability to Northern Australian contexts and for their suitability in assisting small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), landholders, and investors.

It became evident early in the process that the scope and complexity of feasibility requirements vary widely depending on commodity type, scale of investment, location, and proponent experience. For example, a horticulture development on Indigenous land in the NT requires vastly different detail than a broadacre cropping project in Queensland. As a result, the development of a single, standardised feasibility plan template was deemed impractical within the project's timeframe and scope.

5. Profitability Tools

Problem Being Solved:
Stakeholders wanted better tools to assess the profitability of proposed agricultural activities, yet most existing tools were either inaccessible or irrelevant to Northern conditions.

What Was Done:
The project identified a range of tools and models already in use across jurisdictions and sectors (e.g., horticulture, irrigated cropping). These were reviewed for potential inclusion in the capacity-building toolkit.

Evaluation and Impact:
Recommendations were presented to the reference group.

6. Queensland Globe User Guide

Problem Being Solved:
Many landholders in Queensland struggled to navigate Queensland Globe, particularly in extracting the layers and maps needed for development applications.

What Was Done:
A simple illustrated guide was developed, covering:

- Navigating the platform
- Using layers such as land parcels, vegetation, and water
- Exporting and saving maps for inclusion in applications

Evaluation and Impact:
The guide was reviewed by Queensland-based project partners and received positive feedback for its clarity and accessibility. It is now available as part of the broader capacity-building suite.

7. Featuring the Northern Australia Food Futures Conference 2025

Problem Being Addressed:
While a suite of practical tools was being developed to support better agricultural development applications, a broader challenge remained: how to maintain momentum, visibility, and shared commitment across jurisdictions, especially after the project's conclusion. There was also a clear need to continue engaging policymakers and industry leaders to sustain reforms and capacity-building into the future.

What Was Done:
As a strategic legacy-building activity, the project partnered with the **Northern Australia Food Futures Conference 2025**, held in Darwin. Food Futures is the largest and most influential agricultural development event in Northern Australia and brings together policymakers, regulators, landholders, investors, and industry organisations.

A **project-led panel session and closed-door industry roundtable** were held as part of the official program. These were designed to:

- Elevate cross-jurisdictional challenges and opportunities (e.g., tenure, access to consultants, quality of proposals)
- Strengthen networks between government departments, industry, and stakeholders
- Create bipartisan, solutions-oriented environment for addressing pressing issues such as biosecurity resilience, infrastructure limitations, development assessment challenges, and regulatory reform.

3.4 Outcomes

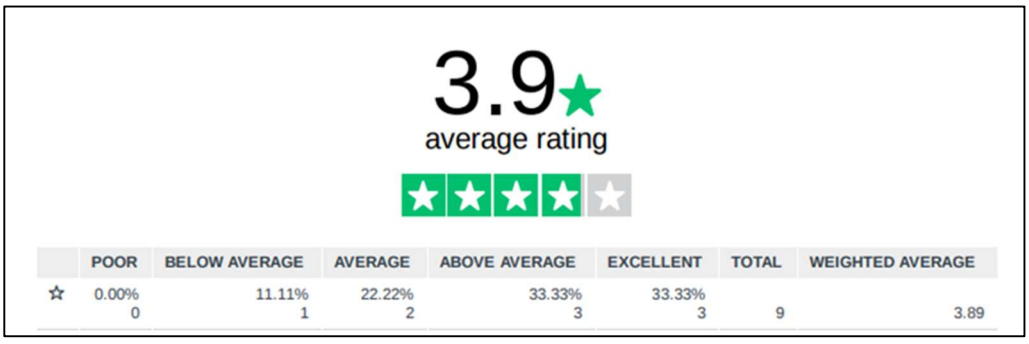
1. Trial of an Online 'Learn Series'

The first session with Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security was hugely successful and the department was extremely happy to participate in this trial. There was a total of 15 participants from NTFA and NTCA and the series was conducted through a teams meeting.

To help with evaluating the 'learn series' a survey was sent out via the survey monkey platform

Survey feedback included:

1.1 On a scale of 1 to 5 (five being excellent one being poor) how would you rate the session overall, with consideration to duration, content and delivery?



	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	33.33% 3	33.33% 3	9	3.89

Comments included:

- Well facilitated, great to have direct access to gov department.
- Good presenter. I think more detail around the requirements of pre work is important and would suggest hyperlinks throughout the document if this was to be shared to learn series participants after the video. The timeline was great - I just wonder how realistic it is - perhaps a disclaimer rather than creating unrealistic expectations and/or frustrations.
- Very clearly outlined the processes for a pastoral land clearing application.
- Easy to follow, I liked the breakdown, timing worked well.

1.2 As a result of the first learn series, do you believe you have a better understanding of the clearing regulations process for pastoral land?

77.78%, 7 responses agreed that they came away with a better understanding of the clearing regulations. 22.22%, 2 responses disagreed.

1.3 Do you believe cross organisational involvement in trialling the learn series is important? If yes, please make suggestions of other organisations who would bring value to the trials, if any.

100% of the respondents agreed that having a cross organisation is important.

Comments included:

- Important to have clarity and consistency in messaging so that support services to pastoralists can be strengthened.
- Territory NRM, Landcare, Environmental Consultants (stakeholders) and the Environment Centre.
- AFANT Northern Hub Territory NRM DITT plant and livestock industry divisions
- I think NTCA and NT farmers both benefitted from the trials

1.4 Please provide suggestions for improvement for this session, including content.

Comments included:

- It would be great to have factsheets prepared based on general land clearing guidelines so that we can prepare questions.
- Specific deidentified examples of outcomes from previous submissions to help with explanation and learning.
- A hyperlink to the clearing regulations. A list of consultants nationally who could provide assistance, with a disclaimer that it is a list only not a recommendation.
- I think this is an awesome idea. Content could provide some real-life examples from certain regions. Maybe interaction with the native title organization or have some points about how that part of the process could be smoother.

1.5 General comments/suggestions for improvement of the learn series concept.

Comments included:

- Great session
- probably short duration and make it more interactive. A good idea but have plenty space to be improved.
- Recorded sessions that can be referred back to. Sessions covering individual sections of the submission. Need to include of freehold as part of this learning series, same but different.
- I was pretty concerned to hear that the Department was only providing guidelines as opposed to clear rules - it makes the process arbitrary and subject to inconsistencies which would likely impact the landholder, delay approvals and potentially inflate costs. Such a fantastic initiative - and great timing for the Territory

- Provide more information about the pre - application process first.
- Worthwhile
- The online meeting went smoothly and demonstrated the effectiveness of this communication style for reaching out to those who can't travel just to be in an info session. I think it would be good to have the speaker in the room with those who can attend.
- It was great that Tom provided examples during the presentation. Work on the list of suggested consultants. What skills are required by a landholder or consultant for the government to be deem suitable for this process.

This valuable feedback was used to improve the next trail in the 'learn series' with the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security. The feedback was shared with reference group and project partners for guidance.

The second session with the department focused on Land Clearing – Freehold, taking what we

had learned in the first session the second session proved valuable to all participants from NTFA and NTCA. The third session was held with the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. Were we focused on the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and self-assessment processes.

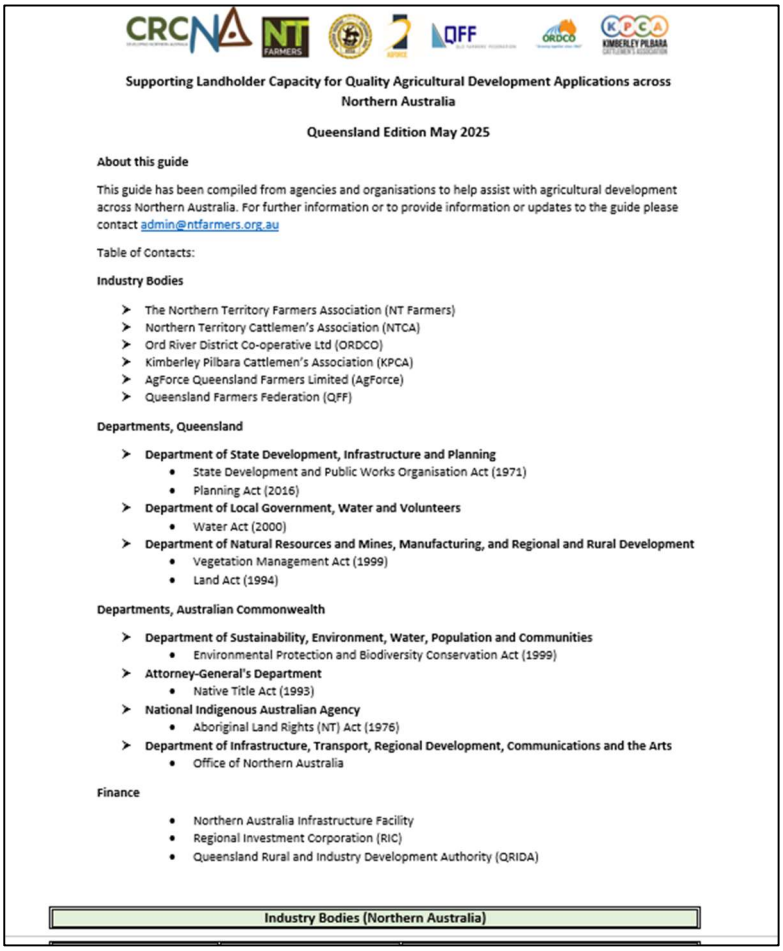
In conclusion the 'learn series' proved to be a highly effective initiative, delivering valuable regulatory knowledge in an accessible and practical format. Participant feedback highlighted strong appreciation for the clarity, structure, and relevance of the content, as well as the opportunity to engage directly with government representatives. The overwhelmingly positive responses—particularly regarding improved understanding of complex regulatory processes—demonstrate the series' success in bridging information gaps and supporting cross-sector collaboration. Its adaptability, including the incorporation of participant feedback into subsequent sessions, further strengthened its impact. Overall, the 'learn series' stands out as a practical and scalable model for stakeholder education, with strong potential for broader application across Northern Australia.

2. Development of a Cross-Jurisdictional Directory/Guide

The development of cross-jurisdictional guides and directories has proven to be significantly more complex and time-consuming than initially anticipated. While initial drafts were completed in 2024, the pace of political change across Northern Australia necessitated substantial revisions. Notably, elections were held in Queensland (26 October 2024), the Northern Territory (28 August 2024), and Western Australia (8 March 2025). These elections brought about changes in government structures, department names, and key personnel, which in turn led to outdated links, documents, and contact details in the original drafts.

As of mid-2025, many government websites across these jurisdictions remain under construction or in transition, further delaying the process of verifying and updating the content of each guide. These ongoing changes created practical challenges in finalising accurate and up-to-date directories for stakeholders operating across state and territory lines.

Despite these setbacks, there is a clear long-term benefit: the updated directories should remain current for a longer period given the recent completion of election cycles. As a result, once finalised, the guides will offer a more stable and reliable resource for landholders, consultants, and project partners navigating regulatory environments across Northern Australia.



Supporting Landholder Capacity for Quality Agricultural Development Applications across Northern Australia

Queensland Edition May 2025

About this guide

This guide has been compiled from agencies and organisations to help assist with agricultural development across Northern Australia. For further information or to provide information or updates to the guide please contact admin@ntfarmers.org.au

Table of Contacts:

Industry Bodies

- The Northern Territory Farmers Association (NT Farmers)
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA)
- Ord River District Co-operative Ltd (ORDCO)
- Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association (KPCA)
- AgForce Queensland Farmers Limited (AgForce)
- Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF)

Departments, Queensland

- **Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning**
  - State Development and Public Works Organisation Act (1971)
  - Planning Act (2016)
- **Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers**
  - Water Act (2000)
- **Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing, and Regional and Rural Development**
  - Vegetation Management Act (1999)
  - Land Act (1994)

Departments, Australian Commonwealth

- **Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**
  - Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)
- **Attorney-General's Department**
  - Native Title Act (1993)
- **National Indigenous Australian Agency**
  - Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act (1976)
- **Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**
  - Office of Northern Australia

Finance

- Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
- Regional Investment Corporation (RIC)
- Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA)

Industry Bodies (Northern Australia)

Diagram 3 showing an abstract of one of the Directory List.

See Appendix 4 for the link to all three directories

3. Consultant Register

At the outset of this project, it became evident that no centralised or publicly accessible register of consultants existed to support development applications across Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. This gap posed a significant challenge for landholders and industry stakeholders seeking professional guidance, particularly in navigating complex regulatory frameworks and preparing development submissions.

Government department staff, while often approached for recommendations, are unable to provide direct contact information for consultants due to a range of constraints. These include privacy obligations, the need to maintain impartiality, and the importance of consistent and equitable service delivery across all client interactions. Consequently, the absence of an accessible consultant register often resulted in inefficiencies, delays, and inconsistent access to professional support.

To address this gap, a draft Consultant Register was developed as part of this project. This resource aims to provide a publicly available, regularly updated directory of consultants with relevant expertise in land development and regulatory compliance. It is designed for use by government staff, industry groups, and landholders alike, and is structured to include key details

such as company names, individual consultant credentials, areas of specialisation, and contact information.

It is anticipated that the register will expand over time as more consultants are identified and agree to be included. By offering a transparent and user-friendly reference tool, the Consultant Register is expected to enhance service delivery, improve communication pathways, and support better-informed decision-making across Northern Australia's land development sector.

The CRCNA papers entitled De-risking, brokering and prioritising agricultural development in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and the Northern Queensland, Facilitating Quality Agricultural development. All three papers identified and explored barriers to agricultural development across Northern Australia.
This project evaluated the following question: "What are the capacity development needs and products needed to lift the ability of landholders, industry bodies and development services to be development/investment-ready across northern Australia?".
Out of the evaluation, one of the requests from industry was to create a 'Consultant Register'. If you would like to be included or have updates to the below information, please send an email to admin@ntfarmers.org.au

Company Name	Name	State/ Territory (based)	Qualifications ? (i.e. education, worked at DPI 20 yrs Vegatation Management section, QLD etc)	Specialising In?	Specialising Where?	Mobile	Email	Address	Web Address	Other
Ward Keller	Bradly Torgan	NT	BA, MRP, JD, MEL. Have practiced environemntal and land use law in the US and Australia for over 25 years	Environmental law and regulation, pastoral and agriculture/agribusiness law, native title	NT	08 8946 2939 0403741999	bradlytorgan@wardkeller.com.au	Level 7, Northern Territory House, 22 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT Australia, 0800	www.wardkeller.com.au	Ward Keller assists numerous NT pastoralists and agricultural interests in development permitting including Environmental Approvals, water extraction licences, non-pastoral use permits, and land clearing permits
VPS Land Assessment and Planni	Graeme Owen	NT			NT	+61 (0)408 794 368	vpsland@iinet.net.au	PO Box 78, Palmerston NT 0831 Australia	www.landassessplan.com.au	rural development; Land Capability assessment for rural and remote onsite wastewater management; Soil and land survey; Land assessments for clearing and land development;
KSI Land and Water Planning	Ian Lancaster	NT			NT	0478 623 640	ian@landwaterplanning.com.au			
	Helen Groves	NT			NT	0439 937 802	hgroves@magnatagriservices.com.au			
3kr	Tom Ryan				NT		tom.ryan@3krconsulting.com.au			
	Allison Dakin	NT			NT/QLD/WA	0488 500 482	acdakin1@gmail.com Allison@agrc.com.au		www.agrc.com.au	
PhilipAgri	Andrew Philip	NT			NT	428 798 090	andrew@philipagri.com.au	16 Fanning Drive, Bayview 0820, Darwin, NT	www.philipagri.com.au	horticultural consulting firm, specialising in domestic and international market linkages, market and business development and full supply chain solutions.
			Minister & Aboringal							

Diagram 4 showing an abstract of the Consultant Register.

See Appendix 5 for the link and full Consultant Register List.

4. Feasibility Plan Templates

Given the wide range of potential feasibility planning requirements, it became evident early in the project that a standardised feasibility plan—one that incorporates detailed market analysis, financial projections, and operational feasibility assessments—would be highly complex and difficult to generalise. The scope of information required varies significantly depending on the specific commodity, geographical context, and the needs of the applicant or small-to-medium enterprise (SME). Each feasibility plan would necessarily be highly tailored, making it impractical to develop a single, universally applicable template within the scope of this project.

As a result, and following consultation with the project chair, it was recommended that the focus shift toward the development of a practical business plan template. This decision was also informed by concurrent policy developments within the Northern Territory Government (NTG), which had initiated a process to recover allocations of unused water. In this context, landholders were required to demonstrate valid reasons for underutilisation, supported by documented plans for future development. A comprehensive and well-prepared business plan was identified as a suitable and strategic tool to meet this requirement.

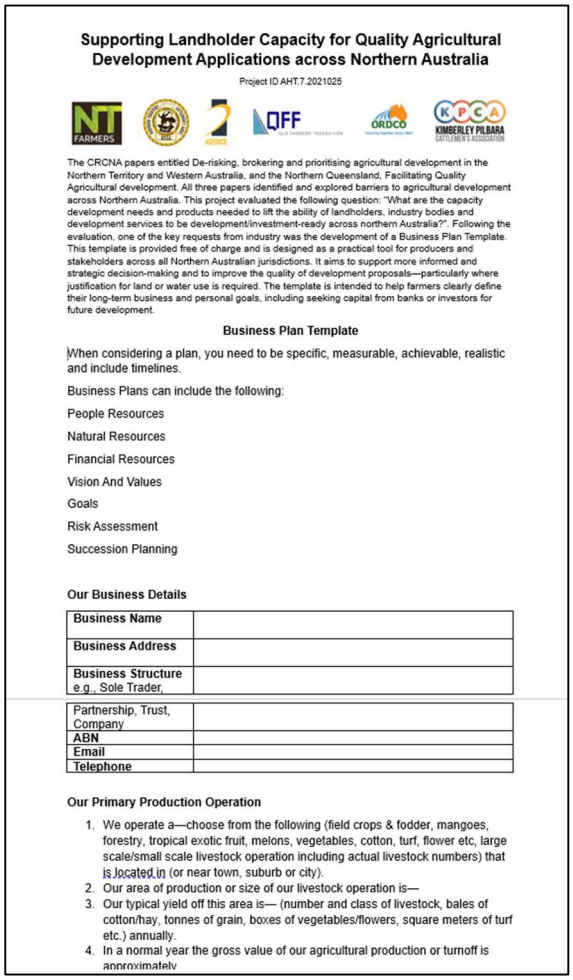
The project officer conducted a review of existing business plan templates and collaborated closely with the NT-based Rural Financial Counsellor to adapt and refine a version that would be fit-for-purpose for Northern Australia. The resulting business plan template is intended to support landholders in articulating their long-term business and personal objectives, identifying required resources, and demonstrating readiness for investment and development. It is particularly useful in situations where producers are seeking access to capital—whether through banks, private investors, or government grant programs.

The business plan template encourages a structured approach to planning, using the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound goals George T. Doran 1981). In addition to financial and operational planning, the template includes guidance on identifying and assessing risks, planning for succession, and aligning business activities with long-term vision and values.

Key sections of the business plan include:

- People Resources – outlining the skills, roles, and responsibilities within the enterprise
- Natural Resources – detailing land, water, and other environmental assets
- Financial Resources – including capital, loans, and cash flow considerations
- Vision and Values – establishing long-term direction and guiding principles
- Business and Personal Goals – clearly defined targets and objectives
- Risk Assessment – identifying potential risks and mitigation strategies
- Succession Planning – preparing for future transitions in ownership or management

This template is provided free of charge and is intended to be used as a practical guide by producers and stakeholders across all Northern Australian jurisdictions. It aims to support more informed, strategic decision-making and improve the quality of development proposals, especially in contexts where justification for land or water use is required.



Supporting Landholder Capacity for Quality Agricultural Development Applications across Northern Australia

Project ID AHT.7.2021025

The CRCNA papers entitled De-risking, brokering and prioritising agricultural development in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and the Northern Queensland, Facilitating Quality Agricultural development. All three papers identified and explored barriers to agricultural development across Northern Australia. This project evaluated the following question: "What are the capacity development needs and products needed to lift the ability of landholders, industry bodies and development services to be development/investment-ready across northern Australia?". Following the evaluation, one of the key requests from industry was the development of a Business Plan Template. This template is provided free of charge and is designed as a practical tool for producers and stakeholders across all Northern Australian jurisdictions. It aims to support more informed and strategic decision-making and to improve the quality of development proposals—particularly where justification for land or water use is required. The template is intended to help farmers clearly define their long-term business and personal goals, including seeking capital from banks or investors for future development.

Business Plan Template

When considering a plan, you need to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and include timelines.

Business Plans can include the following:

People Resources

Natural Resources

Financial Resources

Vision And Values

Goals

Risk Assessment

Succession Planning

Our Business Details

Business Name	
Business Address	
Business Structure e.g., Sole Trader,	
Partnership, Trust, Company	
ABN	
Email	
Telephone	

Our Primary Production Operation

1. We operate a—choose from the following (field crops & fodder, mangoes, forestry, tropical exotic fruit, melons, vegetables, cotton, turf, flower etc, large scale/small scale livestock operation including actual livestock numbers) that is located in (or near town, suburb or city).
2. Our area of production or size of our livestock operation is—
3. Our typical yield off this area is— (number and class of livestock, bales of cotton/hay, tonnes of grain, boxes of vegetables/flowers, square meters of turf etc.) annually.
4. In a normal year the gross value of our agricultural production or turnoff is approximately

Diagram 5 showing an abstract of the Business Plan Template

See Appendix 6: Business Plan Template.

5. Profitability Tools

A common barrier for landholders and agricultural proponents across Northern Australia is the lack of accessible tools to evaluate the financial viability of potential agricultural development projects. Without tailored profitability models, it becomes difficult for proponents to justify investment, attract finance, or assess the risk of expansion — particularly in remote, infrastructure-limited regions with unique land tenure and climatic challenges.

During Phase 3 of the project, the Project Officer investigated potential tools and models that could support this type of economic evaluation. A key part of this exploration was the presentation and discussion of the **CSIRO Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment (NAWRA)** with the project's Reference Group.

The NAWRA project, delivered under the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, undertook extensive modelling across three northern catchments — the Fitzroy (WA), Darwin (NT), and Mitchell (QLD). These assessments combined hydrology, soils, land suitability, and infrastructure overlays to identify areas with the highest potential for irrigated

agriculture, while also modelling the profitability of a range of crop types under different market and climate conditions.

The Reference Group was briefed on the methodology, outputs, and decision-support capabilities of the NAWRA suite. Key insights included:

- The modelling highlighted the variability in potential returns depending on location, crop type, infrastructure access, and water reliability.
- The profitability of certain crops (e.g., cotton, mangoes, or high-value horticulture) was highly sensitive to distance from markets and logistical costs — factors often underestimated by proponents.
- NAWRA's scenario-based analysis was seen as particularly helpful for regional-scale strategic planning, but less so for on-farm feasibility by individual landholders.

Reflections and Informal Feedback:
Although no formal evaluation was conducted, reference group members — particularly those with experience in economics or regional investment — offered reflections:

- There was broad consensus that NAWRA was a strong regional planning resource, but that it remained too complex for direct landholder use without expert interpretation.
- Members noted a gap between the sophistication of government or CSIRO-generated modelling and what landholders can realistically engage with on their own.
- Several stakeholders raised concerns that the lack of simple, usable tools at the farm level continues to be a barrier to informed decision-making and investment-readiness, especially for Indigenous landholders or first-time proponents.

Outcomes and Recommendations:
While it was outside the scope of this project to develop new profitability calculators, the work identified the need for an intermediary layer of tools — those that simplify or translate high-level modelling outputs into practical insights for use in business planning and funding applications.

The project recommends that:

- Future CRCNA or jurisdictional projects consider co-designing simplified profitability templates or calculators with producers, agronomists, and financial advisors.
- Existing NAWRA outputs be more actively promoted to regional planners and industry groups, with support to interpret and apply findings locally.
- NAWRA be used as a foundation to inform investment prospectuses or regional development plans, where technical support is available to interpret the modelling for specific contexts.

Legacy and Access:
The NAWRA work remains publicly accessible through the CSIRO NAWRA portal and will be included in the resource library hosted on the NT Farmers Association website as part of the project's digital legacy.

6. Queensland Globe User Guide

During stakeholder engagement and the evaluation of project activities, a key request from industry partners and potential landholders was for a simplified, user-friendly resource to support navigation of spatial data relevant to agricultural development within QLD. In response, a **Queensland Globe User Guide** was developed to assist users in accessing and interpreting critical geographic information available through the Queensland Globe platform.

Queensland Globe is a publicly accessible spatial data tool developed by the Queensland Government that provides hundreds of interactive map layers. These layers cover a wide range of data types including vegetation management status, cultural heritage overlays, watercourse identification, land parcel details, property valuations, infrastructure, and mining and exploration tenures. Such information is essential for landholders, consultants, and developers when preparing or assessing land for potential agricultural expansion, particularly when seeking to comply with planning and environmental regulations.

To meet the needs of users with varying levels of technical experience, a 12-page illustrated guide was produced. This document walks users through the core features of Queensland Globe, including:

- How to locate and toggle relevant map layers
- How to use the search function to identify specific parcels of land
- Instructions on exporting and saving maps for use in development or regulatory applications
- Tips for customising the view to focus on specific features such as vegetation or cadastral boundaries

The guide was field-tested with two young farmers exploring the viability of expanding agricultural operations across three separate land parcels. In addition, it was trialled by staff members from the NTFA who did not have prior mapping or spatial data experience. This dual approach to user testing ensured the guide was accessible to both experienced land managers and those new to digital mapping tools.

The Queensland Globe platform can be accessed via its homepage at www.qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au, and further support is available through video tutorials hosted at Queensland Globe Help & Info. Users can also request free vegetation management maps or reports through the Queensland Government at Vegetation Map Request Portal. For technical inquiries or feedback, users may contact the Open Data team at **opendata@resources.qld.gov.au**.

By equipping stakeholders with a clear, easy-to-use mapping tool, this guide contributes to greater transparency and accessibility in the land development process. It empowers users to make informed decisions, better understand their land's regulatory constraints, and streamline their preparation of development applications.



Diagram 6 showing an abstract of the Globe User Guide.

See Appendix 7: Queensland Globe User Guide.

Phase 4: Implementation Plan

4.1 Objective

To implement enduring, accessible, and regionally relevant mechanisms that ensure the long-term availability and utility of the resources developed throughout this project. These mechanisms are intended not only to preserve the outputs of earlier phases but to institutionalise them within the operational frameworks of key industry and government stakeholders. This will enable continued knowledge transfer, policy engagement, and informed decision-making long after the formal conclusion of the project.

A critical component of this phase is maintaining and strengthening the momentum of cross-jurisdictional partnerships fostered during the project's earlier stages. The collaborative relationships established between industry groups, government agencies, and regional stakeholders have proven central to advancing a shared understanding of land use planning challenges and opportunities across Northern Australia. Sustaining these partnerships is essential for enabling collective responses to future agricultural development needs, especially in the context of complex and evolving regulatory environments.

This ambition is well captured by Senator Susan McDonald's remarks at a recent industry roundtable held during the Northern Australia Food Futures Conference (April 2025). Reflecting on the need for coordinated regional action, she stated:

"If you want to have any sort of impact, you need to hunt as a pack."

This sentiment underscores the importance of regional solidarity and inter-agency cooperation as foundational to lasting impact. By embedding collaboration into implementation frameworks, the project aims to foster a culture of shared responsibility and collective advocacy that can endure beyond the project's lifespan.

Ultimately, this phase seeks to consolidate the knowledge, tools, and relationships developed over the course of the project into a sustainable and self-sufficient ecosystem of support for agricultural proponents, peak industry bodies, and policy makers throughout Northern Australia.

4.2 Overview

Ensuring the long-term sustainability, accessibility, and relevance of the resources and partnerships developed throughout the program. This final stage shifts the focus from development to strategic implementation, embedding the tools, networks, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms into platforms and organisations that are well-positioned to maintain and deliver them beyond the life of the project.

A key strategy involves formalising delivery mechanisms through a In principal agreement with government partners, particularly for the continuation of the "Learn Series" sessions. These agreements will help institutionalise the initiative and ensure it remains responsive to regional policy changes and user needs. Additionally, an important component of this phase is the digital preservation and public availability of all developed resources. Ensuring long-term access to tools, guides, and templates is critical to maintaining support for landholders and stakeholders involved in agricultural development planning.

Survey data collected as part of the project's analysis **(Survey results Appendix 3)** provides further guidance on the most suitable delivery model. When respondents were asked who would be best placed to provide ongoing capacity building and training, 79% identified peak industry organisations as the most appropriate entities. Given that this project is hosted within the Northern Territory Farmers Association (NTFA), the NTFA website has been identified as the most logical platform for hosting these materials. It is an established and trusted source of industry information, already featuring dedicated sections under the 'Our Projects' and 'Growers' tabs where these resources could be integrated. This would enable seamless access for users and allow for easy promotion and content sharing with project partners and stakeholders across Northern Australia.

To ensure relevance and currency for at least five years post-project, a sustainability plan has been developed to guide future updates and administrative oversight. This includes a projected requirement to revise at least one framework annually, based on anticipated legislative and policy changes. Accordingly, a modest administrative commitment—estimated at 36 hours every six months at $110/hour—has been allocated to support this process, allowing for updates to resources, link maintenance, and stakeholder communication. This forward planning supports the goal of keeping the resources and associated training current and valuable for a longer-term audience. This will be provided as 'in-kind' from NTFA as part of their commitment to responsible development in Northern Australia.

Beyond the digital tools and online training sessions, another major goal of this phase is to strengthen the institutional capacity of peak industry groups. This is essential to empower organisations to effectively support their members in navigating complex development assessment processes. A multi-level approach to internal capacity building is recommended—encompassing technical expertise, policy engagement, and organisational leadership. In parallel, the project also aims to build more cohesive and regionalised networks between applicants, consultants, and regulators. These improved connections are critical to fostering shared understanding, reducing planning friction, and enabling better-aligned development outcomes across Northern Australia's diverse jurisdictions.

Table 1 Implementation Framework Overview

Sustainable Delivery	• In principal agreements with government to institutionalise 'Learn Series' sessions
Resource Accessibility	• Upload resources to NTFA website under 'Projects and Grower' Tabs
Ongoing Relevance	• Plan for annual framework updates
Stronger Networks/Organisational Capacity	• Enhance regional collaboration between peak bodies, regulators and applicants

4.3 Procedure/Outcomes

Sustainable Delivery

Looking ahead, the long-term viability of the 'Learn Series' rests on strengthened institutional partnerships and a shared commitment to regulatory transparency. An in-principle commitment was secured with the former Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS) to support ongoing delivery of the series—laying a solid foundation for future collaboration. While departmental restructuring in September 2024 saw DEPWS absorbed into the newly formed Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE), the continuity of these efforts remains a strategic priority. Parallel to this, the evolving relationship with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (formerly the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade) offers an opportunity to deepen interagency cooperation, particularly through the continuation of regular stakeholder engagement meetings initiated in 2022. These quarterly sessions have already fostered mutual understanding and enhanced communication between regulators and industry groups. Building on these early successes, the project seeks to embed the 'Learn Series' as a recurring mechanism for cross-sector learning, with the flexibility to evolve alongside administrative and policy shifts across Northern Australia.

Resource Accessibility

To ensure long-term usability and visibility, the project's suite of tools, guides, and learning materials will be made publicly available through the Northern Territory Farmers Association (NTFA) website. As a well-established hub for agricultural stakeholders, the NTFA platform offers a logical and reliable location to consolidate and showcase these resources. Once finalised, the materials will be embedded within relevant sections of the site, providing straightforward access for growers, consultants, and industry representatives. This centralised approach will also facilitate consistent updates and wider distribution through project partner networks, enhancing reach and relevance across Northern Australia. Once uploaded this will be advertised within the eNews letters within project partners.

Ongoing Relevance: Planning for Long-Term Framework Updates

Ensuring the longevity and relevance of project outputs is central to the success of this project. To support the continued utility of the developed resources, a sustainability and maintenance plan has been established to guide future updates over the next five years. This forward-thinking approach includes the anticipated need for annual updates to at least one framework, in response to

evolving legislative and policy environments across Northern Australia. To facilitate this, NTFA has committed to an ongoing in-kind administrative contribution—estimated at 36 hours every six months, costed at $110/hour—which will support critical tasks such as resource updates, verification of hyperlinks and contact information, and communication with stakeholders.

This proactive administrative structure is designed to ensure that tools such as directories, templates, and guides remain current and accessible. The resources will continue to be hosted on the NTFA website, which is strategically positioned to reach a broad user base and to allow project partners to promote and link to the materials through their own platforms. This ongoing maintenance supports the broader goal of sustained capacity building across jurisdictions and reinforces NTFA's role in promoting responsible agricultural development.

The importance of long-term oversight became particularly clear during the development of the cross-jurisdictional guides, which faced several unanticipated challenges. While initial drafts were completed in 2024, the rapid pace of political and administrative change across the Northern jurisdictions created a moving target for content accuracy. Elections in Queensland (October 2024), the Northern Territory (August 2024), and Western Australia (March 2025) triggered shifts in government structures, departmental responsibilities, and key personnel. These transitions rendered many contact details and website links outdated almost immediately, requiring extensive revisions to the original documents.

However, these challenges have yielded a silver lining: with election cycles now recently concluded, and governmental structures beginning to stabilise, the revised directories are expected to remain valid and reliable for a longer period. Once finalised, these resources will provide stakeholders—particularly landholders, consultants, and peak industry bodies—with a durable and trusted reference for navigating complex regulatory environments across Northern Australia.

Through careful planning, resource commitment, and responsiveness to changing political conditions, the project is well-positioned to deliver not just short-term outcomes but lasting value to Northern Australia's agricultural sector.

Stronger Networks and Organisational Capacity

A central pillar is the strengthening of organisational capacity and regional networks between industry groups, regulatory agencies, and government stakeholders across Northern Australia. This focus aligns with the overarching project objective of equipping stakeholders with the tools, partnerships, and knowledge necessary to navigate the complex landscape of agricultural development and planning regulation in the region.

To formalise collaborative intent and promote shared responsibility, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established between the Northern Territory Farmers Association (NTFA), Ord River District Co-operative Ltd (ORDCO), Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association (KPCA), and AgForce Queensland. This agreement underscores the long-term commitment of these peak bodies to advancing the Northern Australia Food Futures Conference on agricultural development, capacity building, resource dissemination, and policy engagement across the north.

In practice, the value of coordinated stakeholder engagement was demonstrated through a series of strategic initiatives, most notably the Industry Roundtable Breakfast hosted as part of the Northern Australia Food Futures Conference. Organised by NTFA, this invitation-only forum convened peak industry organisations and key government representatives—including elected members of parliament from Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia, along with national and global advocacy bodies such as the National Farmers' Federation and the World Farmers' Organisation.

The Roundtable provided a bipartisan, solutions-oriented environment for addressing pressing issues such as biosecurity resilience, infrastructure limitations, development assessment challenges, and regulatory reform. Independently chaired by Professor Allan Dale, the session encouraged open discussion on how to overcome fragmentation and foster stronger collaboration. The event emphasised the importance of coordinated action to unlock the economic potential of Northern Australia, while balancing environmental sustainability with the need for streamlined regulatory processes.

A media statement released after the Roundtable captured the momentum of the event. Simon Smith, President of NTFA, highlighted the gathering as a “rare and valuable platform to bring state, federal and advocacy leaders together, cutting through politics to focus on real solutions.” Discussions tackled shared concerns such as excessive regulatory burden, infrastructure shortfalls, biosecurity threats, and political underrepresentation. These insights were further echoed by leaders including Shane McCarthy (AgForce) and Fritz Bolten (ORDCO), who stressed the urgency of action-oriented reform, especially in freight, policy consistency, and risk preparedness.

The event’s timing—just ahead of a dedicated morning session on “Responsible Agricultural Development in Northern Australia,” facilitated by Professor Allan Dale—reinforced its strategic intent. The subsequent panel, “Where to Next? Development in Northern Australia,” encouraged ongoing dialogue on land use, regulation, and regional development strategies.

Outside of major events, regional interagency coordination is also improving at the operational level. One promising example is the interagency ‘catch-up’ meetings between NT Farmers and the NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (now known as Department of Agriculture and Fisheries). Initiated in 2022, these quarterly meetings—now in their fourth cycle—have already contributed to enhanced rapport and a mutual understanding of policy and planning issues from both regulatory and industry perspectives.

Together, these actions reflect a multi-layered approach to network building and organisational development. By fostering mutual trust, formalising collaboration through MOUs, and creating opportunities for regular cross-sector dialogue, the project is laying the foundation for a more unified and capable agricultural sector. This structural strengthening of relationships across jurisdictions is essential to supporting the long-term goals of agricultural development in Northern Australia.

5. Conclusion

The project Supporting Landholder Capacity for Quality Agricultural Development Applications Across Northern Australia has directly responded to the research question: What are the capacity development needs and products required to lift the ability of landholders, industry bodies, and development services to be development/investment-ready across Northern Australia? Through a methodical, multi-phase process—ranging from needs identification to long-term implementation—the project successfully developed and delivered targeted tools, learning modules, and collaborative engagement models tailored to the northern Australian agricultural context.

Key achievements include the co-design and delivery of the 'Learn Series,' which received overwhelmingly positive feedback for demystifying regulatory processes, and the development of jurisdiction-specific guides, templates, and directories to streamline application preparation. The project not only improved stakeholder understanding of regulatory frameworks but also strengthened interagency and industry relationships through initiatives such as roundtable forums, interagency catch-ups, and formal partnerships. These platforms have laid the groundwork for ongoing cross-sector collaboration and policy advocacy.

Phase 4 has been critical in embedding sustainability measures to ensure continued value delivery. A forward-looking implementation plan includes a modest in-kind commitment for annual updates, housed on the NTFA website, ensuring accessibility and relevance into the future. Additionally, the formalisation of relationships through MOUs and ongoing engagement with government departments demonstrates the project's capacity to drive systems-level change. The clear interest and involvement from peak bodies, consultants, regulators, and elected representatives reflect a strong collective will to translate learnings into action.

Ultimately, the project has equipped landholders and supporting organisations with the knowledge, tools, and partnerships required to more confidently and competently engage in agricultural development. It has fostered a shared understanding across jurisdictions and sectors, while proposing a scalable model for building capacity and resilience within Northern Australia's agricultural sector—answering the research question with both practical solutions and strategic foresight.

6. Acknowledgements

In conclusion, this project would not have achieved its impact without the unwavering support and insight of the Project Reference Group and CRCNA project management group. Their collective guidance, feedback, and commitment were instrumental in shaping practical, meaningful outcomes for agricultural development across Northern Australia.

We also pause to acknowledge and remember Luke Bowen, whose passing was felt deeply by all involved. Luke was a passionate advocate for Northern Australia, known for his strategic thinking, deep regional knowledge, and willingness to challenge ideas to drive better outcomes. His contributions to this project—and to the broader vision of sustainable northern development—were significant and enduring. Though he did not have the chance to see the final outcomes, his influence is embedded in the work we delivered.

In memory of Luke Bowen.

Strategic recommendations

Key priority actions for sector development	Action owner and key partners	Pathways to implementation and timeline	Intended industry impacts
Co-designed capacity-building tools and regulatory guides with strong support from landholders, consultants, and government. Focused on jurisdictionally relevant, cross-northern regulatory pathways for agricultural development. Tools and resources were practical, scalable, and regularly refined through feedback and trials (e.g., the Learn Series). Clear focus on no more than four to five high-impact outputs, including templates, cross-border directories, and a training series—ensuring manageable implementation.	NT Farmers Association (NTFA) – lead owner, committed to long-term sustainability and resource hosting. NTFA agreed to ongoing oversight, including annual framework updates as in-kind contribution. Key government partners: NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) – formerly DEPWS Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAFF) – formerly DITT Additional partners include: consultants, peak bodies, and elected representatives who contributed to co-design, delivery, and feedback loops.	Implementation followed a four-phase model: identify needs → co-design products → trial delivery → sustainable rollout. Administrative structure in place for resource updates (36 hours/6 months at $110/hr, in-kind from NTFA). Resources to be housed on NTFA website under Projects and Growers tabs, ensuring ease of access and long-term use. Annual framework reviews incorporated to maintain relevance amidst political and regulatory shifts (e.g., post-election updates across QLD, NT, and WA). Ongoing agency engagement through quarterly forums and MoU-backed relationships ensures stability and shared ownership.	Improved confidence and capacity among landholders and industry to prepare quality development applications. Supports faster, higher-quality investment decisions across Northern Australia. Anticipated growth in: Investment-readiness of projects Job creation through streamlined regulatory navigation Productivity via reduced application delays and improved compliance Wellbeing of regional communities through better interagency cooperation and development transparency.

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Appendices

1. List of stakeholders
2. Survey Questions
3. Survey Results add link
4. Directory List add link
5. Consultant Register List add link
6. NTFA Business Plan Template add link
7. Queensland Globe User Guide add link

Appendix 1

List of Stakeholders

Government Stakeholders

Name	Contact	Jurisdiction
Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au/	C'wealth
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	http://www.agriculture.gov.au/	C'wealth
Indigenous Land and Sea Corp	https://www.ilsc.gov.au/	C'wealth
Land conservation district Committees WA	https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/land-use-planning/land-conservation-district-committees-western-australia	WA
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Ed Hauck (https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-primary-industries-and-regional-development)	WA
Landgate	https://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/	WA
Rural Development Business Corporation	https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/rural-business-development-corporation-rbdc	WA
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation	Joe Morrison (https://www.ilsc.gov.au/)	WA, NT, QLD
NT Dept of Industry, Tourism and Trade	Phil Huesler, Warren Hunt (https://industry.nt.gov.au/)	NT
Austrade	Chris Rees, Anne Marie Western (https://www.austrade.gov.au/)	C'wealth
QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/	QLD

National Representative Stakeholders

Name	Contact

AgriFutures Australia	https://www.agrifutures.com.au/
AUS-MEAT and AUS-QUAL	https://www.ausmeat.com.au/
Future Farmers Network	https://www.futurefarmers.com.au/
Ordco	http://ordco.com.au/
Northern Australia Crop Research Alliance	https://www.nacropresearch.com/
Australian Women in Agriculture	https://awia.org.au/
National Farmers' Federation	https://www.nff.org.au/
Overseas Counsellors Network	https://www.agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/overseas-network
Australian Dairy Farmers	https://australiandairyfarmers.com.au/
Australian Dairy Industry Council	https://australiandairyfarmers.com.au/australian-dairy-industry-council/
Australian Egg Corporation Ltd	https://www.australianeggs.org.au/
Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association	http://www.alpa.net.au/
Australian Lot Feeders' Association	https://www.feedlots.com.au/
Australian Pork Ltd	https://australianpork.com.au/
Australian Wool Innovation	https://www.wool.com/
Boer Goat Breeders' Association of Australia	https://www.australianboergoat.com.au/
Cattle Council of Australia	https://www.cattlecouncil.com.au/
Dairy Australia	https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/
Goat Industry Council of Australia	https://www.goatindustrycouncil.com.au/
Meat & Livestock Australia	https://www.mla.com.au/
Red Meat Advisory Council	http://www.rmac.com.au/
Sheep Producers Australia	https://sheepproducers.com.au/
AUSVEG	https://ausveg.com.au/
Citrus Australia	https://citrusaustralia.com.au/
Young Dairy Network Australia	https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/about/who-we-are/dairy-australia-young-dairy-network#.YOU-C54zaUk
Cotton Australia	https://cottonaustralia.com.au/

Cotton Innovation Network	https://www.crdc.com.au/about-us/cotton-innovation-network
Pulse Australia	http://www.pulseaus.com.au/
Apple and Pear Australia Limited	https://apal.org.au/
Australian Asparagus Council	http://www.asparagus.com.au/
Australian Banana Growers' Council	https://abgc.org.au/
Australian Lychee Growers Association	https://www.australianlychee.com.au/
Australian Macadamia Society	https://australianmacadamias.org/industry
Australian Mango Industry Association	https://www.industry.mangoes.net.au/
Australian Melon Association	https://www.melonsaustralia.org.au/
Australian Nut Industry Council	https://nutindustry.org.au/
Australian Olive Association	https://australianolives.com.au/
Australian Table Grape Association	https://www.australiangrapes.com.au/

WA Stakeholder list:

Name	**Contact**
Kimberly Pilbara Cattlemen's Association	https://www.kpca.net.au/
Agriculture Produce Commission	http://www.apcwa.org.au/
Animal Health Australia	http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/
Apple and Pear Australia Limited	http://apal.org.au/
Austrade	http://www.austrade.gov.au/
Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants WA	http://www.aaacwa.com.au/
Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre	http://www.aegic.org.au/
Australian Wool Innovation	http://www.wool.com/
Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au/
Cooperative Bulk Handling	https://www.cbh.com.au/
Grain Industry Association of Western Australia	http://www.giwa.org.au/
Grower Group Alliance	http://gga.org.au/

Horticulture Innovation Australia	http://www.horticulture.com.au/
InterGrain	http://www.intergrain.com/
Meat and Livestock Australia	https://www.mla.com.au/Home
Pastoralists and Graziers Association	http://www.pgaofwa.org.au/
Plant Health Australia	https://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/
Pulse Australia	https://www.pulseaus.com.au/
vegatablesWA	https://vegetableswa.com.au/
WA Farmers Federation	https://wafarmers.org.au/

NT Stakeholder List

Name	**Contact**
NT Farmers	https://ntfarmers.org.au/
NT Cattleman's Association	https://www.ntca.org.au/
ISACNT	https://www.isacnt.org.au/nt-industries/agriculture
North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance	https://nailsma.org.au/
Ward Keller	https://www.wardkeller.com.au/
EcOz Environmental Consulting	https://www.ecoz.com.au/
Northern Land Corporation	https://www.nlc.org.au/
VPS Land Assessment and Planning	http://www.landassessplan.com.au/
Central Land Corporation	https://www.clc.org.au/
Chamber of Commerce NT	https://www.chambernt.com.au/
Austrex	https://www.austrex.com/
AAM Investment Group	https://www.aamig.com.au/our-vision
Tipperary Group	https://www.tipperarygroup.com.au/
Central Station	https://www.centralstation.net.au/meet-the-crew/legune-station/
Aileron Pastoral Holdings	https://aileronpastoral.com.au/our-station/

Lakefield Station	https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Local-Business/Lakefield-Station-532956453440666/
Seven Emu Station	https://sevenemustation.com.au/
Conways Station	https://conwaystation.com.au/
Ruby Downs	Ruby.downs@bigpond.com (email)
Vermelha Station	md@vermelha.net (email)

QLD Stakeholder List

Name	Contact
AgForce	https://www.agforceqld.org.au/
Queensland Farmers' Federation	https://www.qff.org.au/
Australian Chicken Growers Council Ltd	https://acgc.org.au/
Leading Sheep Queensland	http://www.leadingsheep.com.au/
Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation	http://www.dairypage.com.au/home
Bowen Gumlu Growers Association	https://www.bowengumlugrowers.com.au/home/
Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers	https://www.bfvg.com.au/
Lockyer Valley Growers	lockyervalleygrowers@gmail.com (email)
Mareeba District Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association	mdfvga@bigpond.com (email)
Queensland Sugar Limited	https://www.qsl.com.au/
Australian Cane Farmers Association	http://www.acfa.com.au/
CANEGROWERS	http://www.canegrowers.com.au/
Growcom	https://www.growcom.com.au/
Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland	https://www.ngiq.asn.au/

Appendix 2

Sample Survey Questions (for Landholders)

1. In the past 2 years, have you applied for any of the following approvals: (land clearing, water license, environmental approval, planning approval, all of the above, please specify)

2. (If YES) Was that application approved and was the desired result achieved?

3. If you have applied for an approval in the past 2 years did you engage a consultant or external service provider to assist with your application?

4. (*If consultant or external provider not engaged*) Did you feel that you had the information, time and ability to prepare the best possible application for approval or would you have preferred to have assistance/additional information and skills?

5. What additional skills/information would be useful to you in preparing approval applications?

6. How much would you be willing to pay a consultant to prepare an application, for example, a land clearing application?

7. (*If consultant or external provider engaged*) On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied were you with the assistance provided by that consultant or external service provider?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied were you with the cost for value of the consultant or external service provider's services?

9. What additional assistance or skills do you feel would be useful for a consultant to be able to provide in assisting with development activities?

10. Do you feel that the consultant or external service provider had the local technical knowledge necessary to put forward the best possible application?

11. Do you plan to lodge an application for approval (eg, land clearing, water license, environmental approval, planning approval, all of the above) in the next 2 years?

12. (If YES) Do you plan to hire a consultant or external service provider to assist with that/those application(s)?

13. Over the past 2 years, how much, in times of time and money, would you estimate your organisation has spent on compliance with government regulations (either local, state/territory or Commonwealth)?

14. Do you feel that there has been an increase in the cost of compliance with government regulation over the past 2 years?

15. What type of information or services would be most helpful in assisting you with future planned development activities?

16. If a program were offered by a service provider to assist with the preparation of development applications, would you be interested in either yourself or your staff attending such a program?

Sample Survey Questions (for Government)

1. How would you rate the average quality of development applications that are made to your department? (*Excellent, good, fair*)

2. How would you rate the quality of applications put forward by landholders themselves (without assistance from a consultant or external service provider)?

3. How well do you feel landholders understand the approvals process?

4. How would you rate the quality of applications for approvals put forward with the assistance of a consultant or external service provider?

5. What tools or guidance do you feel would assist landholders or consultants to prepare better applications for approvals?

6. What are the general characteristics of applications for approvals that are ultimately approved?

7. What are the general characteristics of applications for approvals that are NOT approved?

8. What training activities does your department provide for landholders that are interested in lodging an approval application?

9. Do you feel that additional external training would assist either landholders or consultants to prepare better applications?

10. Would you consider recommending that government partner with external organisations to provide additional training activities for landholders that intend to undertake development activities?