

Defence, education and tourism key to region's future

A joint initiative led by the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) is working with the Townsville and North Queensland region to realise its growth potential to \$20.6 billion by 2031.

At a time where the region is facing uncertainty due to the downturn of the resources sector, the Townsville and North Queensland Region Pathfinder Project is calling on local knowledge and experience to develop a future plan which capitalises on the regions strengths.

The Regional Australia Institute CEO, Mr Jack Archer, said early findings of the project indicated public administration, health, education and tourism sectors will play a vital role in assisting the region to reach its 2031 growth potential.

“The RAI’s Pathfinder Initiative is testing the options we have to maximise the region’s economic growth potential. Times are tough right now, but if we focus on developing these high priority areas of the economy the long term outlook is good,” said Mr Archer.

“By partnering with state and local government, and organisations focused on economic development, we can develop a robust plan which governments, business and the community can use to guide the region’s economic prosperity.”

To deliver the project, the RAI research team will meet with local leaders who will be invited to contribute to the project and discuss opportunities, capacity and challenges facing the region.

At the completion of the project, local leaders will be informed and able to make decisions about the future of their region based on the best available data, knowledge, local ideas and have a clear understanding of the current job environment.

“Townsville and the North Queensland region are undergoing a significant transformation, the RAI looks forward to working with the region to reach its growth potential and uncover the future factors that will drive change,” said Mr Archer.

Local businesses are encouraged to have their say in the project via the [Townsville and North Queensland Business Survey](#) which can be completed online until Friday 29 July.

Findings from the survey and meetings with local leaders will contribute to a progress report which will be released in September, the Pathfinder Project is expected to be finalised by end-2016.

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The Townsville and North Queensland Region Pathfinder Project is a partnership between the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) and Queensland Government, Regional Development Australia, Townsville City Council, Townsville Enterprise Ltd, Charters Towers Regional Council, Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Burdekin Shire Council and Hinchinbrook Shire Council.



For further information visit:

<http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/2016/06/townsville-north-queensland-region-pathfinder/>

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About the Regional Australia Institute

Independent and informed by both research and ongoing dialogue with the community, the Regional Australia Institute develops policy and advocates for change to build a stronger economy and a better quality of life in regional Australia – for the benefit of all Australians.

For more information on the RAI: www.regionalaustralia.org.au