

Information for Prospective Investors in Agricultural Enterprises in the Northern Territory

(July 2009)

The information in this guide is relevant to all agricultural crops, including forestry and improved pastures, on all land tenures. We emphasise that it is only a guide, designed to aid prospective investors in seeking the required approvals for their development proposals.



INTRODUCTION

Businesses and proponents looking to initiate or expand agricultural enterprises in the Northern Territory often comment that it is challenging to identify the right people in NT Government agencies to access for advice.

Similarly, officers within individual agencies have indicated that they are not sure of the procedures or regulations pertaining to other parts of the agriculture enterprise development process.

This document is designed to lay out a pathway for proponents wishing to develop enterprises by identifying the legislation and regulations relevant to agriculture, outlining the 'rules' within those frameworks, summarising the role of various agencies and providing further contacts and information sources.

Whilst the Northern Territory does not have a 'one stop shop' for prospective agribusiness developers, it is our expectation that this document will assist proponents in their endeavours.

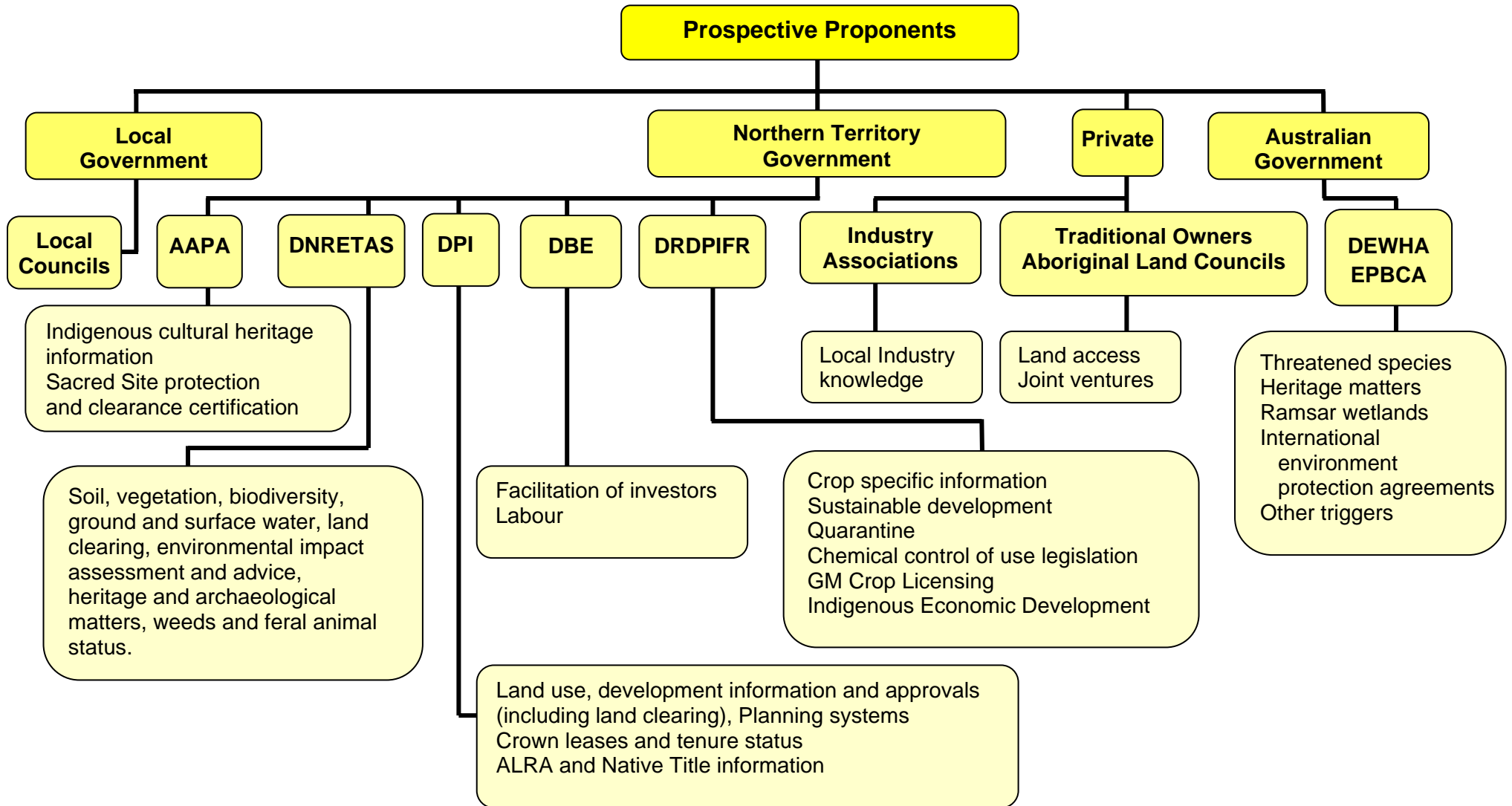
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Acronyms

AAPA	Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
ALRA	<i>Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act</i>
BLIS	Business Licensing Information System
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
C'th	Commonwealth Government of Australia
DBE	Department of Business and Employment
DEWHA	Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (C'th)
DNRETAS	Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport
DOJ	Department of Justice
DPI	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
DRDPIFR	Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources
EPBCA	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (C'th)</i>
PWC	Power and Water Corporation
TBC	Territory Business Centres

Outline of Authorities



Information Needed

The following list provides an outline of the basic information you need to have before proceeding to seek any level of approval from Northern Territory Government departments or other consent authorities.

If you do not have the answers to all of these questions, the list on the following page has suggestions of where to obtain that information.

- What crop do I want to grow?
- Is it a crop currently grown in the Northern Territory?
- What are the requirements for growing this crop – land area, soil types, topography, climate, water quality and quantity?
- What type of livestock operation do I wish to undertake (number, species and grazing density) - feedlot, intensive or extensive?
- Are suitable land and water resources available in the NT, in the right amounts and in the right region?
- Is native vegetation clearing required?
- What is the land tenure and ownership for the above land, and does that tenure allow for my purpose - Freehold/Crown land/Crown lease/Pastoral lease/Aboriginal Land Trust – ALRA or NT Freehold? Is the land subject to Native Title?
- Are there existing mining or exploration tenements on the land that will affect my proposal?
- Does adequate infrastructure, including transport and markets, currently exist for my products?
- What is the availability of labour?

Complete the above checklist then refer to the matrix on page 5 for the approval and licensing requirements for agricultural developments.

NOTE: Proponents are encouraged to seek information on sustainable farming initiatives, Best Practice Environmental Management on Farms and Environmental Management Systems for agricultural and horticultural operations and apply these principles to their NT proposal.

(<http://www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources>)

Information Sources

NOTE: The word “crops” is used in the first column to also refer to forestry and improved pastures.

()	Crops currently grown in the NT	DRDPIFR – Plant Industries
()	Potential for new crops.....	DRDPIFR – Plant Industries DNRETAS - Weed Management Branch (For any potential “weediness” characteristics)
()	Soil types required for most crops	DRDPIFR - Plant Industries,
()	Topography required for most crops.....	DRDPIFR - Plant Industries
()	Water quality required	DRDPIFR - Plant Industries,
()	Water quantity required.....	DRDPIFR - Plant Industries,
()	Water availability	DNRETAS
()	Land, soil type, topography and availability	DNRETAS, DPI
()	Land tenure	Pastoral Land – DNRETAS Land Resource Branch Crown Land – DPI Land Administration Branch Aboriginal Land Trust (ALRA land and NT Freehold) - Land Councils and Traditional owners Other Freehold – land owner
()	Land Clearing (Native vegetation)	Freehold unzoned land – DNRETAS Land Resource Branch Freehold zoned land – DPI Development Assessment Services Pastoral Land (unzoned) – DNRETAS Land resource Branch
()	Livestock operations	DRDPIFR, Industry associations DNRETAS (For any feral animal status)
()	Quarantine status of property.....	DRDPIFR – Biosecurity and Product Integrity
()	Heritage Conservation	DNRETAS - Environment, Heritage and the Arts
()	Aboriginal Sacred Sites and Cultural Heritage....	AAPA
()	Climate	BOM, DRDPIFR, DNRETAS
()	Markets.....	DBE, DRDPIFR, Industry Associations
()	Labour availability	DBE, Industry Associations
()	Infrastructure	DRDPIFR, DPI
()	Land prices and availability	Private Real Estate Agents / Property valuers

Guide to Authorisations and Approvals Required

Land Tenure										
Tenure/Owner Type	Freehold		Crown Land/Crown Lease		Pastoral Lease		Aboriginal Land Trust			
							ALRA		NT Freehold	
Primary Administration and Management Legislation for that tenure type	<i>Land Title Act</i>		<i>Crown Lands Act</i>		<i>Pastoral Land Act</i>		<i>Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act (C'th)</i>		<i>Land Title Act</i>	
Legislation Relevant to Development Proposals on that tenure type	<i>NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act</i>		<i>NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act</i>		<i>NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act Crown Lands Act Land Title Act</i>					
Clearing Required?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
New Crop, Non-Irrigated, Small scale and/or small impact	1 + 3 4	4	1 + 3 4 6 or 7 or 8	4 6 or 7 or 8	1 + 3 4 9 &/or 10	4 9 &/or 10	1 + 3 4 11 &/or 12	4 11 &/or 12	1 + 3 4 11 &/or 12	4 11 &/or 12
New Crop, Irrigated, Small scale and/or small impact	1 + 2 + 3 4	2 4	1 + 2 + 3 4 6 or 7 or 8	2 4 6 or 7 or 8	1 + 2 + 3 4 9 &/or 10	2 4 9 &/or 10	1 + 2 + 3 4 11 &/or 12	2 4 11 &/or 12	1 + 2 + 3 4 11 &/or 12	2 4 11 &/or 12
Existing Crop, Non-Irrigated, Small scale and/or small impact	1 + 3		1 + 3 6 or 7 or 8	6 or 7 or 8	1 + 3 9 &/or 10	9 &/or 10	1 + 3 11 &/or 12	11 &/or 12	1 + 3 11 &/or 12	11 &/or 12
Existing Crop, Irrigated, Small scale and/or small impact	1 + 2 + 3	2	1 + 2 + 3 6 or 7 or 8	2 6 or 7 or 8	1 + 2 + 3 9 &/or 10	2 9 &/or 10	1 + 2 + 3 11 &/or 12	2 11 &/or 12	1 + 2 + 3 11 &/or 12	2 11 &/or 12
Existing or New Crop, Non-Irrigated, Large scale and/or large impact	1 + 3 4 &/or 5	4 &/or 5	1 + 3 4 &/or 5 6 or 7 or 8	4 &/or 5 6 or 7 or 8	1 + 3 4 &/or 5 9 &/or 10	4 &/or 5 9 &/or 10	1 + 3 4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12	4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12	1 + 3 4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12	4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12
Existing or New Crop, Irrigated, Large scale and/or large impact	1 + 2 + 3 4 &/or 5	2 4 &/or 5	1 + 2 + 3 4 &/or 5 6 or 7 or 8	2 4 &/or 5 6 or 7 or 8	1 + 2 + 3 4 &/or 5 9 &/or 10	2 4 &/or 5 9 &/or 10	1 + 2 + 3 4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12	2 4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12	1 + 2 + 3 4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12	2 4 &/or 5 11 &/or 12
Legislation Generally Relevant to Development Proposals (any tenure type)	<i>Water Act Planning Act Weeds Management Act Heritage Conservation Act Environmental Assessment Act Parks and Wildlife Commission Act Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Native Title Act (C'th) – if a change in tenure is proposed as a result of a surrender of land title</i>									

Legend: Approvals Required

1	Clearing Permit (DNRETAS or DPI)
2	Water Licences and Permits (DNRETAS)
3	Authority Certificate (AAPA)
4	Permit to grow a declared weed as a crop (DNRETAS) (may be relevant to some proposals)
5	Public Environmental Report (DNRETAS) and/or Environmental Impact Statement (DNRETAS)
6	Use Consistent with purpose of existing Crown Lease (DPI)
7	New Lease on Crown Land (DPI)
8	Variation to provisions in Crown Lease (DPI)
9	Excision of Pastoral Land for new Crown Lease or Freehold (DNRETAS) (also requires native title clearance)
10	Non-Pastoral Use of Pastoral Land (DNRETAS)
11	Land Councils
12	Traditional Owners
&/or	Means at least one of the two approvals is required, in most cases both may be required

Activities described in the matrix may trigger a requirement to obtain approvals under the Acts listed. Therefore it is highly recommended that prospective investors thoroughly investigate the specific Acts and their implications in regard to the prospective development. The remainder of this document indicates sources of advice.

Explanatory Notes:

1. With some exceptions applying to Commonwealth land, all developments must comply with the Northern Territory *Planning Act*. This includes a requirement for leases with a term greater than 12 years to be approved (these are considered to be a subdivision).
2. In the above table, 'crop' also refers to forestry and improved pasture. 'Existing crop' refers to crops currently grown in the Northern Territory. 'New crop' refers to a crop that has not previously been grown in the Northern Territory on a commercial scale. The "weediness" characteristics of such crops need to be considered. If a proponent wishes to grow a plant declared under the Northern Territory *Weeds Management Act* as a crop, then a '*Permit to Use a Declared Weed*' is required, this is referred to in approval 4 (see Weeds Management Branch, DNRETAS – refer page 17).
3. Grazing of livestock (by itself – not as part of another development such as improved pasture) does not require approvals additional to the existing land tenure and planning controls described on these two pages.
4. In relation to approval 5, the scale and complexity of a proposed development and the significance of the potential impacts will determine if assessment is at the level of Public Environmental Report and/or Environmental Impact Statement.

Information and Agency Contacts

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)

About Us

The AAPA is a 12-member board established under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

The purpose of the Act is to ensure a practical balance between the recognised need to preserve and enhance aboriginal cultural tradition in relation to certain land in the Territory and the aspirations of the Aboriginal and all other people of the Territory for their economic, cultural and social advancement.

Under the Act this accommodation between sacred site protection and land use is achieved by sacred site avoidance under *Authority Certificates*. The Authority will respond to applications within 60 days to ascertain whether a Certificate can be issued and any conditions needed to protect any sacred sites that might be affected by the proposed works.

Responsibilities and What We Do

AAPA is an independent statutory authority with responsibility for protection of sacred sites under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

It aims to ensure a balance between sacred site protection and development, and use of land.

It provides:

- Information on sacred sites
- Authority certificates, which give indemnity for works that, are carried out according to Certificate conditions, on or near sacred sites.

AAPA also has the responsibilities under the *Heritage Conservation Act* – all discovered burial sites and human skeletal remains are protected and must be reported to AAPA or the NT Police (General Enquiries 131 444).

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8981 4700 Fax: 08 8981 4169
Email: enquiries.aapa@nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/aapa

Department of Business and Employment (DBE)

About Us

DBE's role is to support business investment and capacity building in the Northern Territory to produce job and employment opportunities.

Responsibilities and What We Do

The Business and Employment Group provides the opportunity for the development of strong partnerships with business and industry to address key inhibitors to growth. The key focus of the group is the development of workforce development plans and employment strategies to improve access to skilled labour, as well as increasing the purchasing power of the government to assist territory business growth.

Industry Support and Development

Industry Growth: DBE is committed to expanding the Northern Territory's economic base by working with targeted industry sectors to identify new and additional opportunities for Territory businesses. One of those industries is agribusiness. Agribusiness Industry Growth identifies and facilitates agribusiness project development opportunities with potential investors and the agribusiness community. The role of DBE is to foster alliances between industry and investors, assist developers through government processes and identify potential opportunities in biofibre and biotech crops.

Industry Participation Plans: DBE is responsible for instigating Industry Participation Plans. The aim is to increase local industry participation in projects through giving competitive Territory businesses the opportunity to contribute to the future. Industry Participation Plans enable major project proponents and developers to maximise opportunities to utilise local suppliers, services and labour.

Land Development Corporation: is a commercially-oriented land developer and can position the Territory and its industries to take advantage of major industrial projects.

Business Services

DBE offers a free and confidential business information service to new and existing businesses. This is provided through:

Territory Business Centres (TBCs): TBCs operate in Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek. TBCs are the first point of contact and referral point for all business services and products provided by Northern Territory Government agencies. At a TBC you can register a business name, obtain information on business assistance products, lodge licence and permit applications, conduct a business name search and access accurate information to help your business.

Starting Business workshops: DBE offers free workshops for anyone thinking of going into business or who has recently started a business.

Territory Business Upskills workshops: Free, practical hands-on workshops are held across the Territory throughout the year for business on marketing, human resources, finance and business management.

Procurement Liaison: This service was established to assist business which would like to be involved in and improve their capability to win Northern Territory Government tenders.

Territory Business Growth program: Territory Business Growth is a program that offers grants to eligible business of up to \$10 000, providing a consultant to increase business performance, profitability, employment levels and market penetration; through business diagnostics and planning. Eligible businesses are able to choose their own consultant.

Business and Skilled Migration: The Northern Territory Government is committed to attracting skilled business migrants who can make a positive contribution to the sustainable development of the Northern Territory. To enable potential migration to the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Government, through DBE, takes part in Business Skills Entry and Skilled Migration schemes administered by the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

Business Agenda NT (BANT): BANT is a key forum for discussion between government, business and industry to continue to foster strong business and economic development across the Territory.

Grants, Funding and Rebates: DBE provides a range of grant and sponsorship programs to eligible businesses and industry organisations across the Territory. The programs support industry growth in major centres and the regions.

Client Managers: DBE's Client Managers provide a direct link between the business community and Northern Territory and Australian Government agencies. They provide free, confidential business information services for existing services. Information and referrals can be provided in many areas including business planning, insurance, licenses and permits, marketing, business structures, intellectual property, taxation and sourcing finance.

Phone: 08 8999 5511

www.nt.gov.au/

Department of Justice (DOJ)

About Us

The Department of Justice encompasses three portfolios - Justice and the Attorney-General, Racing, Gaming and Licensing, and Alcohol Policy. It incorporates all elements of the public justice system with the exception of policing and also has a strong regulatory role.

Responsibilities and What We Do

The Department delivers a range of services to the public including those provided by the Land Titles Office, which is a section within the Registrar-General's Office. The main function of the Office is to keep a register, which contains titles to all land under the Land Title Act, and to provide the public with access to the register.

The Land Titles Office is responsible for maintaining a secure system of Torrens Title including search facilities, land information and general registry services. The Office also meets statutory requirements with respect to unit title, condominium and estate developments.

Registered dealings are part of the title which is guaranteed by the Crown and open to public search. Some examples of dealings are mortgages, transfers, leases, discharge of mortgages, title searches and issue of certificates of title, and applications to replace lost certificates. A fee applies for accessing these services.

Access to the NT Land Information System (refer page 29) is arranged through the Land Titles Office.

Phone: 08 8999 6520

Fax: 08 8999 6239

Email: RegistrarGeneral.Doj@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/justice/

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (DNRETAS)

About Us

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport covers a range of functions including - Biodiversity Conservation, Natural Resources and Environment, Heritage, the Arts and Sport. It undertakes a number of science, research and development activities to improve understanding of the Territory's native vegetation resources and to ensure that its use and management is ecologically sustainable. It also administers land clearing controls for native vegetation clearing on pastoral leases and unzoned land outside of the existing control plan areas, and monitors land clearing across the Northern Territory.

Responsibilities and What We Do

Bushfires NT (Natural Resources Division)

Implements the *Bushfires Act* and supports landholders in fire mitigation activities.

A number of roles are carried out by staff at Bushfires NT including policy, research, equipment subsidy and maintenance programs, education and extension, training, and administrative and volunteer brigade support. The Northern Territory *Bushfires Act* establishes the legal framework and responsibilities for bushfire management. The fundamental principle established by the Act is that the responsibility for bushfire management rests with the landholder.

Firebreak Enforcement Program (section 47 of the *Bushfires Act*) - the aim of the Bushfires NT annual Firebreak Enforcement Program is to ensure that a minimum standard of fire cover exists. Under section 47 of the *Bushfires Act* the Director has the authority to order the establishment of firebreaks on any land which represents a wildfire threat. Rural landholders must establish a firebreak around their property and reduce fuel loads.

Landholders who do not establish a firebreak around their property commit an offence and may be prosecuted. Fines of up to \$25 000 can be applied for non-compliance. Where a firebreak has not been established, the Chief Fire Control Officer has the authority to issue an order empowering Bushfires NT staff to enter the property and undertake required works.

Contact details – For information about Bushfires NT, your responsibilities, bushfire prevention, volunteers, brigades, training, Aboriginal burning practices and bushfire research.

Phone: 08 8922 0844

Fax: 08 8922 0833
www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Land Resource Branch (Natural Resources Division)

Land Science Unit

The Unit collects, describes and maps land resource information to assist in sustainable planning through improved understanding of landscape properties and processes.

Land Management Soil - The management of soil is an important consideration, particularly in urban areas and on rural properties where the risk of significant off-site impacts must be managed. Erosion is a major contributor of soil loss/degradation in the Northern Territory. The loss of topsoil caused by water erosion can lead to vegetation loss, soil fertility loss and the silting up of waterways. Preventing soil loss before it happens is a more effective method than trying to rectify a problem once it has started.

Land resource information is the collection and documentation of landform, soil and vegetation information to determine the capability of land for current and future land uses. Its primary aim is to provide an inventory of land resources to reduce the risks in decision-making. Land resource information today is utilised daily as a decision support tool. The information has a wide range of uses, from assessing subdivision proposals, agricultural developments, pastoral land management to monitoring programs and conservation projects.

The Department collects, describes and maps land resource information to assist in sustainable planning through improved understanding of landscape process and properties (landform, soil and vegetation). The information is collected according to Australian standards and applicable for Territory-wide, regional and local land use planning demands.

A wide range of landscape properties is described from field investigations and as a result a diverse range of reporting and mapping products can be delivered. Clients include:

Land use planners and extension officers
Agricultural and environmental consultants
Research institutions
Local government and land councils
Pastoral companies and property managers
Parks and Wildlife
Catchment and Landcare groups
General public

Contact details – For Information and advice on land use mapping, data requests, FAQ's, maps, reports and soil management.

Phone: 08 8999 4579 or 8999 4678

Email: landveg.nretas@nt.gov.au

Fax: 08 8999 3667 or 8999 4445

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

The Unit also:

- Provides integrated pastoral lease administration.
- Provides monitoring and support services to government, pastoralists and the Pastoral Land Board to promote the sustainable management of pastoral land
- Supports the continued viability of the industry.

Pastoralism has played an important part in the development of the Northern Territory with pastoral lands occupying approximately 50% of the land area.

The Soils of the Northern Territory are generally low in nutrient value resulting in low nutrient pasture; consequently for pastoralism to be of economic value, herds and properties are necessarily large with some paddocks being hundreds of square kilometres in size. The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, and the Arts and Sport is actively involved in the monitoring of the rangelands throughout the NT as part of its obligations under the Pastoral Land Act.

The key objectives include:

Provision of support to the Northern Territory Pastoral Land Board and the Minister in the implementation of the Pastoral Land Act:

Executive support to the Pastoral Land Board

Reporting on condition of pastoral land

Co-ordination of Pastoral Land Board Advisory Committees

Technical advice on remedial measures, applications for subdivisions clearing and non-pastoral use

Administration of the pastoral estate through:

Collection of pastoral lease rents

Processing of lease transfers – refer to the fact sheet 'Pre-requisites to consent to transfer of sub-lease' (pdf 53kb)

Assessing applications for changes of tenure, non pastoral use and sub-leasing, etc.

Provision of Native Title advice

Coordination and provision of technical advice on rangelands management through extension services and products:

Maintenance of pastoral land monitoring files

Provision and updating pastoral lease infrastructure maps

Technical assessment of Pastoral Water Enhancement Scheme

Pastoral land monitoring program

Contact details – For Fact Sheets, publications and the Pastoral Land Act, as well as links to land clearing, land subdivision and other useful information.

Phone: 08 8999 4474

Fax: 08 8999 4403

Email: rangelands.nretas@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Land Management Unit

- Administers land clearing controls for native vegetation clearing on freehold land outside of the existing control plan areas and monitors land clearing across the Northern Territory.
- Approves Land Clearing applications and maintains an Approved Land Clearing Register.
- Administers the Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act and relevant native vegetation clearing functions of the *Planning Act*.

Notes on Native Vegetation

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport undertakes a number of scientific and research activities to improve its understanding of the Territory's native vegetation resources and to ensure that its use and management is ecologically sustainable. The department also administers land clearing controls for native vegetation clearing on pastoral leases and freehold land outside of the existing control plan areas and monitors land clearing across the Northern Territory.

The current policy for native vegetation management in the Northern Territory is: "*The Northern Territory is committed to sustainable land use, through minimising the impacts of land clearing on the Territory's natural resources. Therefore, clearing of native vegetation in the Northern Territory requires approval for all land tenures.*"

When assessing the suitability of an area for development it is important to know whether the soil types will be suitable for the proposed use, whether adequate water resources are available and whether there are any threatened or endangered wildlife present.

The Northern Territory Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines and NT Land Clearing Guidelines are designed to assist landholders and the consent authorities decide which areas are suited to development and those that should be left in their natural state to help protect the environment and maintain biodiversity. The Land Clearing Guidelines apply to all native vegetation clearing in the Northern Territory. Information brochures are also available which explain the management of regrowth, stream orders, threatened species and selective clearing.

Clearing Native Vegetation

Clearing Guidelines web site – includes NT Land Clearing Guidelines, Native Vegetation Clearing Regulation in the Northern Territory 2005 (report), Land Clearing in the Northern Territory (report) and the Native Vegetation Clearing Map . Also, refer to the Northern Territory Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines and any Development Control orders or gazettal notices relating to clearing and native vegetation.

When assessing the suitability of an area for development it is important to know whether the soil types will be suitable for the proposed use, whether adequate water resources are available and whether there are any threatened or endangered wildlife present.

The Land Clearing Guidelines assist landholders and the relevant consent authority in deciding which areas are suited to development and those that should be left in their natural state to help protect the environment and maintain biodiversity. The NT Land Clearing Guidelines apply to all native vegetation clearing in the Northern Territory. Information brochures are also available which explain the management of regrowth, stream orders, threatened species and selective clearing.

For more information on the clearing of native vegetation, contact the following branches of DNRETAS and DPI:

Pastoral land – DNRETAS Lands Resource Branch (08) 8999 4474
Zoned land – DPI Development Assessment Services (08) 8999 8959
Unzoned land – DNRETAS Lands Resource Branch (08) 8999 4474

The [on-line virtual herbarium](#) and the [NT threatened species lists](#) are useful links to help determine what types of plants are on a property. Clearing Controls and Guidelines, detailed [soil and water advice](#), information brochures, fact sheets, application forms, the [Approved Land Clearing Register](#) and applications under consideration are all available from DNRETAS.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 3631

Fax: 08 8999 4403
www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Pastoral Land Board

The Pastoral Land Board is supported by the Land Resource Branch of DNRETAS and holds responsibilities in three areas:

Land Clearing

- Authorises and provides written approval for land clearing on pastoral leases and maintains an [Approved Land Clearing Register](#).
- Reviews and publishes the NT Guidelines for Clearing Pastoral Land that are consistent with the native vegetation clearing controls introduced under the [Planning Act](#).

Note: These guidelines outline the procedures for assessing and approving native vegetation clearing applications on pastoral land. This includes a requirement for preparation of a property management plan for land clearing development, public notification processes inviting submissions on pastoral land clearing applications and a register of determinations to be available for public viewing. Clearing of native vegetation on pastoral leases is to be in accordance with these guidelines which reflect the requirements of section 38(1)(h) of the [Pastoral Land Act](#).

Copies of the clearing guidelines and application forms are available from the Executive Officer of the Pastoral Land Board. (See below)

Land Subdivision - whilst the Northern Territory Government is committed to diversification of activities on pastoral land to assist economic viability, it has a duty to prevent inappropriate subdivision of pastoral leases. The NT Pastoral Land Board has approved policy guidelines for the lodgement of applications under the [Pastoral Land Act](#) to subdivide pastoral leases for pastoral purposes. This includes the minimum level of information for submission by the applicant as part of the subdivision application and the criteria to be used by the Board to assess applications.

These guidelines do not apply to the subdivision of pastoral leases for non-pastoral uses such as closer development for horticultural or agricultural uses. Such subdivisions require a change of tenure, for example a Crown Lease issued under the Crown Lands Act and subdivision approval under the Planning Act. Consideration also needs to be given to possible native title implications arising from both the change in land tenure and use of the land. Further information in respect of subdivision of pastoral leases for non-pastoral uses can be obtained from Land Resource Branch.

Monitoring – under the Pastoral Land Act, the Pastoral Land Board has the responsibility for:

- Developing and implementing monitoring programs on 219 pastoral properties (refer to pastoral properties on NRETAS Maps).
- Ensuring that land held as pastoral lease is utilised in accordance with sustainable land use practices.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 4667

Fax: 08 8999 4462

Email: rangelands.nreta@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Executive Officer Pastoral Land Board

Water Resources Branch (Natural Resources Division)

- Water licensing and permits
- Water bore drilling
- Monitoring assessment of the NT's surface and ground water resources and maintains databases of surface and ground water behaviour. Includes collection, processing and interpretation of information and provision of flood forecasting services. Information is available from www.nt.gov.au/nretamaps.
- Provides advice on a wide range of water conservation and development issues related to rural water supplies. Information is available on ground water, surface water, water control districts, NT climatic rainfall zones and drainage divisions as well as:

Drilling information – Bore site selection and bore construction permits plus drilling licences

Ground and surface water potential – quantity and quality

Ground and surface water availability within areas under Water Allocation Plans

Ground and surface water extraction licences

Waste water permits and licences

Drilling or pumping problems

Legislation both State and National

Water Resource Protection

National Water Initiative

The Branch is responsible for the implementation of the Water Act which regulates water resource activity and develops and implements Water Allocation Plans in partnership with the community. The Water Act allows the enforceable allocation of water to various declared beneficial uses including: agriculture, aquaculture, public water supply, riparian and industry, while ensuring that adequate provisions are made to maintain cultural and environmental requirements. This is done through the declaration of water allocation plans within Water Control Districts, ensuring water is equitably managed to preserve quality of life and integrity of water dependent ecosystems in the region. Water Control Districts are geographical areas declared under the Water Act by the relevant Northern Territory Government Minister to allow for more intensive management of water resources.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 4455

Fax: 08 8999 4403

Email: water.nretas@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Weed Management Branch (Natural Resources Division)

Protects the Northern Territory economy, community, industries and environment from the adverse impacts of weeds.

There are currently 121 declared weeds in the Territory, including the 20 Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) species.

Weeds can be both a symptom and a cause of land degradation, and their establishment and spread can be symptomatic of overgrazing, feral animal damage and land disturbance.

The Territory covers about one sixth of the area of Australia, land use is of relatively low intensity and the population represents less than 1% of the country's total. The fact that there are relatively few people to control weeds means that weeds can be potentially become a problem on a large scale.

The proximity of the Territory to Asia poses a risk for new weeds to enter Australia. Weeds such as Siam weed (*Chromolaena odorata*), require constant surveillance of the Territory's coastline to prevent its introduction and spread. The Territory's border to other states must also be constantly monitored for the introduction of invasive weeds such as Rubbervine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*), an invasive weed in Queensland.

Types of information available includes weeds in the NT, potential weed threats, integrated control methods and weed management, legislation, NT weed risk assessment, what to do upon finding a strange plant and other useful resources.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 4567

Fax: 08 8999 4445

Email: weedinfo.nretas@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Environmental Assessment and Licensing (Environment, Heritage and the Arts Division)

This program is responsible for the assessment of and advice on the environmental impacts of development proposals, as well as policy advice and regulatory services to provide for effective waste management and pollution control.

Implement the *Environmental Assessment Act* to ensure that development decisions in the Northern Territory take environmental impact into consideration.

Undertake environmental assessment of development proposals.

Undertake compliance assessment of the environmental performance of developments.

Provide technical advice to government and the community on waste and pollution management issues.

Issue licences to regulate activities subject to the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* and waste discharge licenses subject to the *Water Act*.

Develop guidance material to promote good environmental practices.

Advise Government and the community on environmental matters.

Develop and implement environmental policies including greenhouse, air quality, stormwater etc.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8924 4139

Fax: 08 8924 4053

Email: environment.nreta@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Heritage Assessment (Environment, Heritage and the Arts Division)

Ensures that the *Heritage Conservation Act* is administered effectively, and that the principal object of the Act is achieved - that is to provide a system for the identification, assessment, recording, conservation and protection of heritage places and objects.

The Northern Territory contains a rich and diverse range of cultural heritage places, many of which are highly significant to contemporary Aboriginal culture. The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport is responsible for managing the Territory's unique cultural and natural heritage.

The *Heritage Conservation Act* seeks to conserve these places by providing a system for the identification, assessment, recording, conservation and protection of places and objects of prehistoric, protohistoric, historic, social, aesthetic or scientific value, including geological structures, fossils, archaeological sites, ruins, buildings, gardens, landscapes, coastlines and plant and animal communities or ecosystems of the Northern Territory.

The Heritage Branch administers the NT Archaeological Resources Database and undertakes activities to achieve the above objective, including:

Provision of advice to various stakeholders, including owners of heritage places, mining and construction companies, legal firms, landowners, other NTG Departments, and the general public.

Assisting the owners of heritage places through the Heritage Incentives Program, including the NT Heritage Grant Program

Promoting heritage and encouraging good conservation practice

Overseeing the Repairs and Maintenance Program for NT Government-owned heritage assets

A list of all declared heritage places can be found in the [NT Heritage Register](#). There is also special information about Indigenous Heritage and Maritime Heritage, Publications, the [Heritage Conservation Act](#), the [NT Heritage Register](#) and other information.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 5039

Fax: 08 8999 8949

Email: heritage.nretas@nt.gov.au

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/heritage/index.html>

Wildlife Management (Parks and Wildlife Division)

Assesses three aspects of development proposals:

If a development intends to utilise plants, animals or something else harvested from the wild.

If a development intends to bring in and utilise wildlife not native to the Northern Territory.

If the development has an impact on the environment and threatened species.

Contact details:

Senior Wildlife Scientist, Wildlife Management

Phone: 08 8995 5008

Fax: 08 899 55099

www.nt.gov.au/nreta/

Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI)

Northern Territory Lands Services

About Us

The Northern Territory Lands Services is a division of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and consists of four service groups – Land Administration, Land Information, Building Advisory Services and Development Assessment Services.

Responsibilities and What We Do

Building Advisory Services Branch

Develops legislation to ensure that regulatory framework meets requirements, including the development and implementation of regulations and policies.

Administers the *Building Act* and associated *Building Regulations*.

Monitors, audits and enforces compliance with legislative requirements.

Provides technical advisory service to industry, government and the public.

Provides administrative and technical support to statutory bodies.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 6435

Fax: 08 8999 9867

Email: bas.lpe@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/dpi

Land Administration

The Division is responsible for coordinating and managing Crown land and facilitating land use for economic development. It also helps meet the social needs of the community through land grants and facilitates outcomes in relation to Aboriginal land issues, including:

Maintenance of Crown land

Sale of Crown land

Managing leasehold tenures related to Building, Special Purpose, Crown Leases and some Pastoral

Administering Crown Leases and licences

Acquiring land and other interests

Providing advice and resources pursuant to land claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act (Cth)*

Processing applications for excisions of Aboriginal Community Living Areas from pastoral leases

The Crown Land Management Section is responsible for administration of unregistered leases and licences under the Crown Lands Act, temporary use of Crown land, maintenance of Crown land, illegal dumping on Crown land and the issue of permits to shoot on Crown land (two areas of Crown land).

Sale of Crown land and real property owned by the government (sole agency having this responsibility).

Indigenous Land Issue Team provides assistance to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, facilitates the resolution of Aboriginal Land Claims, processes applications for Aboriginal Community Living Areas on pastoral properties and provides information to a range of clients in relation to *ad hoc* Indigenous land issues.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 6886 Fax: 08 8999 5404
Email: landadmindpi@nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/dpi

Land Information

Provides knowledge and expertise, spatial data, online applications and information that supports land development in the Northern Territory - Aerial Photography Archive, IRMS, NT ATLAS, NT Land Information System (NTLIS), STRIKE and Titles Information System:

Survey provides the statutory functions of the Surveyor-General, geodetic and cadastral infrastructure maintains and interprets current and historic land records and supports the Surveyors Board and Place Names Committee of the NT.

Land Information Services provides whole of government aerial photography, satellite imagery and topographic information programs, generates products and services by integrating spatial data and delivers services through *Land Information Centres*.

Valuation Services provides the statutory functions of the Valuer-General and statutory and commercial land and property valuations for the NT and local governments.

NT Land Information System Services provides integrated spatial information systems and services to the department and other government agencies and coordinates land information initiatives across NT, local and Australian governments.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8995 5353 Fax: 08 8995 5365
Email: landinfo.dpi@nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/dpi

Development Assessment Services

- provides for the development assessment and control processes within the provisions of the *Planning Act* (this provides for appropriate and orderly planning and control of the use and development of land).
- manages the planning and development framework incorporating the *Planning Act*, the NT Planning Scheme.
- provides professional and technical support to the Development Consent Authority.
- provides advice and administrative support to government, the Development Consent Authority, industry and the community, on use of land.

Land Clearing (For additional information refer to page 14)

For more information on the clearing of native vegetation, contact the following branches of DNRETAS and DPI:

Pastoral land – DNRETAS Lands Resource Branch (08) 8999 4474

Zoned land – DPI Development Assessment Services (08) 8999 8959

Unzoned land – DNRETAS Lands Resource Branch (08) 8999 4474

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 8959

Email: das.dpi@nt.gov.au

Fax: 08 8999 6055

www.nt.gov.au/dpi

Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources (DRDPIFR)

About Us

The Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources comprises four groups – Regional Development; Primary Industries; Fisheries; and Minerals and Energy.

Responsibilities and What We Do

The Resources Group

The Minerals and Energy Group through the administration of the *Mining Act*, *Petroleum Act* and other associated legislation provides access to land in the Northern Territory for the purpose of exploration and mining.

The *Titles Division* of the Minerals and Energy Group administer all forms of titles associated with exploration and mining in the Territory. It maintains title ownership and mining/exploration activities in its Titles Management System. Public access to the Titles Management System is available through the [Titles Information System](#). This online query system provides information on all current exploration and mining titles by way of an interactive map of the Territory. While general access is limited, comprehensive title details are available to registered users. Registration for TIS is free and available to anyone by faxing the completed [Registration Form](#) to the Division on (08) 8981 7106.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 5322

Fax: 08 8981 7106

Email: titles.info@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/d/

The Regional Development Group

The Regional Development Group is responsible for the development of comprehensive investment frameworks to guide regional development initiatives, industry support plans and Indigenous economic development. They work in partnership with business, industry and communities to achieve sustainable economic outcomes for Indigenous Territorians and provide economic and advice to Government, industry and the community on economic performance, outlook and opportunities for business and industry.

Economic information includes:

Industry Sector Snapshots: factual overviews of 14 key industry sectors that provide some insights into the outlooks and opportunities for each sector. These Snapshots are produced on an “as needed” basis to ensure that information is timely and up to date.

Investment Profiles: provide investors with information to use when researching the potential of new ventures throughout regional Northern Territory. Profiles are currently available for the Darwin region, Katherine and Alice Springs, with the Tiwi Islands and Tennant Creek in the development stages.

Regional Economic Snapshots: Northern Territory Regional Socio-economic Snapshots which are for regional areas.

Indigenous Development Program: If you are Indigenous and require information on enterprise development DRDPiFR is able to provide information and advice. If you are a company needing information on land access, DRDPiFR has resources to assist you.

Northern Territory Indigenous Database: The Northern Territory Industry Capability Network (NTICN) with support from DRDPiFR is working together to expand the Northern Territory Indigenous business database. The NTICN is a non-Government, industry-based organisation that identifies, develops and matches business opportunities to Northern Territory companies at no cost to companies.

Contact details:

Email: info.drdpifr@nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/d/

The Primary Industries Group

The Primary Industries Group is responsible for developing the Northern Territory's agricultural, horticultural and pastoral industries. It works in partnership with producers, industry bodies, community groups and related agencies to promote sustainable industry growth and ensure access to markets for animals, plants and animal and plant products. There are four divisions – Biosecurity and Product Integrity; Pastoral Production; Plant Industries and Policy and Services.

Services to industry include:

- Supporting profitable and sustainable primary production.

- Providing advice on agricultural, horticultural and pastoral product viability in the NT.

- Providing research and extension to help producers lift crop and stock yields and capacity.

- Directing science-based biosecurity efforts at animal and plant health to protect market access and gain new markets.

- Working with landholders to achieve best practice farming methods for specific NT environments.

- Legislation regulating livestock services.

- Plant health and use of AgVet chemicals.

- Supporting Indigenous pastoral and horticultural development.

- Pest and disease status.

- Providing specialised laboratory services focused on plant and animal health.

- Monitoring for, and responding to emergency and endemic animal and plant pests and diseases.

- Researching broad plant and animal scientific and market access issues for the purpose of developing domestic and overseas trade.

- Research and development into the sustainable use of NT resources for plant-based food production.

Biosecurity and Product Integrity

Biosecurity and Product Integrity comprise four service areas – Plant Biosecurity, Animal Biosecurity, Chemical Services and Quarantine. It is responsible for maintaining the NT's freedom from pests and diseases, which could have negative impacts on trade, public health and food safety, market access, rural economy and the environment.

Services include:

Animal and plant quarantine and Market Access legislation.
Plant health – advice on compliance and market access, information dissemination to growers on plant health pest and disease status, incursion response information, and publications.
Animal health – provision of on-property training and field days and workshops, publications, information dissemination to growers on animal health pest and disease status, industry liaison and advice on compliance and market access.
Chemical control of use legislation – advice on compliance, use and permits.
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides animal disease diagnostics and targeted research and extension services to the agriculture sector.
Bee legislation.
Agricultural Chemistry provides testing to primary industries clients and other government departments to determine residue levels in produce against agreed national limits, and that quarantine and industry certification requirements are met.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 2287 Fax: 08 8999 2089
Email: info.drdpifr@nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/d/

Plant Industries

Plant Industries provides applied research, development and extension services to facilitate sustainable plant-based industry development in the Northern Territory. Research ranges from sustainable resource use, to new product development and productivity improvement. Areas of focus include environmental impact of plant production, sustainable agricultural practices, forestry genetic improvement, supply chain management, tropical horticulture and plant health. It provides comprehensive and contemporary information and extension services for Territory producers and the broader community including Indigenous groups. Types of information available include propagation, nutrition, irrigation, and general crop management, management of pests and diseases and post-harvest systems and recommendations.

The Plant Industries Division provides a 'point of entry' to prospective investors seeking to start agricultural/horticultural and forestry enterprises in the Territory. This includes arranging cross-agency briefings and assistance with identification of key contacts.

Services include:

Plant pest and disease diagnostic and advisory service for the Northern Territory.

Research and development of improved pest and disease management practices.

Agricultural chemistry, including plant nutrient and pesticide analysis.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 2357

Fax: 08 8999 2049

Email: horticulture@nt.gov.au

www.horticulture.nt.gov.au

Pastoral Production

Areas covered by this division include rangeland management, sustainable grazing strategies, improved pastures, breeder herd efficiency profitability and management (in cattle and buffalo), market development for the export trade to South East Asia through the provision of technical services to our trading partners, and is also responsible for Indigenous economic development through the Indigenous Pastoral Program.

Provides advice on:

Development and management of native and improved pastures.

Animal management and production.

Pastoral business management processes and training packages.

Indigenous Pastoral Development.

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8973 9739 (Katherine) 08 8999 2011 (Darwin)

Fax: 08 8999 2043

Email: info.drdpifr@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/d/

Policy and Services

Management of Ord Stage 2 Project – liaison with Western Australian Government

Delivery of Pastoral Water Enhancement Scheme and drought assistance programs for pastoral properties

Production of technical publications such as AgNotes, FishNotes and various Technical Bulletins

Water quality, including microbiological and chemical analysis - Water Chemistry Laboratory (WCL) provides water testing in the areas of potable, fresh, marine and waste waters. Work is carried out on a fee-for-service basis and is available to government and non-government customers. Water Microbiology laboratories in Darwin and Alice Springs provide bacteriological analysis of water for the private sector, government departments and the public.

Production of this booklet

Contact details:

Phone: 08 8999 2384

Fax: 08 8999 2010

Email: info.drdpifr@nt.gov.au

www.nt.gov.au/d/

Power and Water Corporation (PWC)

Provision of electricity, water and sewerage services - type and availability of service depends on the location of the property. You will need to contact the Power and Water Corporation directly regarding servicing requirements.

Contact details:

Phone: 1800 245 092

Email: customerservice@powerwater.com.au www.powerwater.com.au

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBCA)

The EPBC Act is a Commonwealth Act that provides protection for matters of national environmental significance.

These are:

World heritage properties

Ramsar wetlands of national importance

Nationally threatened animal and plant species and ecological communities

Internationally protected migratory species

Commonwealth marine areas

Nuclear actions

The proponent must ensure their actions will not impact on matters of national environmental significance.

Contact details:

Phone: 1800 803 772

Email: ciu@ea.gov.au www.environment.gov.au/epbc

On-Line Systems

Northern Territory Land Information System (NTLIS)

NTLIS is a dynamic system of inter-related knowledge and expertise, spatial data and information, policies, procedures and standards, information technology and communications. To access NTLIS, an agreement must be signed with the Registrar-General and Surveyor-General. This is arranged through the Land Titles Office of the Department of Justice.

NTLIS is a cooperative arrangement between NT Government agencies designed to deliver better outcomes for government, the community and industry from the use of spatial data resources. NTLIS can do this through delivery of sustainable spatial or land information management. This coordinated approach to management and use of spatial data and information has been adopted in the Northern Territory since 1980 when the first corporate Land Information System was developed to provide a wide range of integrated information services.

On-line applications include an Aerial Photography Index, Bush Telegraph, Historic Maps Index and NT Atlas (an NT atlas and spatial data directory).

DNRETAS Maps

DNRETAS Maps enables selection of themes of data, displays their geographical extent on a map and views the information or data available (features or attributes) for each individual data point or polygon.

Reference and context is provided by base layers, including land administration, infrastructure, geology and topography.

Functions include zooming, panning and spatial selecting and identifying of features, and basic map creating.

Simple search functions for each theme of data exist to enable text based searching or filtering of feature attributes and display of the result of the search on the map.

Themes of Data currently available are:

Water	Groundwater and Surface Water
Land	Soils, Land Units, Land Use and Clearing
Vegetation	Vegetation Survey Boundaries
Parks and Wildlife	Parks and Reserves
Biodiversity	Biogeographic Regions
Maps and Reports	Map Products and Technical Reports
Projects	Current Land and Water Division Projects

Business Information Kits

Business Information Kits are available from Territory Business Centres. They provide current and comprehensive information across all levels of government relating to specific business activities in the Northern Territory. Types of businesses currently included are:

Home-based (eg. Businesses operating from or at home)

Tourism (eg. Tour operators, travel agents, boarding houses)

Food (eg. Café/Restaurant/Takeaway Restaurant, market stall, Caterer, food manufacturer, food transport or Tour operator)

Manufacturing

Other Northern Territory business (develop your own kit using web resources)

Useful Links

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority	www.nt.gov.au/aapa
Business Information Kits	http://www.nt.gov.au/business/index.cfm
Business Licensing Information System	nt.bli.net.au/
Bureau of Meteorology	www.bom.gov.au/
Darwin Port Corporation	www.darwinport.nt.gov.au
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth)	www.daff.gov.au/
Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport	www.nt.gov.au/nreta
Department of Justice	www.nt.gov.au/justice/
Department of Planning and Infrastructure	www.nt.gov.au/dpi
Department of Regional Development, Primary Industries, Fisheries and Resources	www.nt.gov.au/d/
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (C'th)	www.environment.gov.au/index.html
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (C'th)	www.environment.gov.au/epbc/
Northern Territory Agricultural Association (NTAgA)	www.ntaga.org.au/index.html
Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA)	www.ntca.org.au/
Northern Territory Horticultural Association (NTHA)	/www.ntha.com.au/
NREAS Maps	www.nt.gov.au/nreta/nretamaps/
NT Atlas and Spatial Data Directory	www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/imf.jsp?site=nt_atlas
NT Land Information System	www.nt.gov.au/ntlis/
Power and Water Corporation	www.powerwater.com.au
Territory Business Centres	www.nt.gov.au/business/services.cfm?cat5id=29
*Northern Territory Government Switchboard – General Enquiries	08 8999 5511

This booklet is coordinated and produced by the Policy and Services Division of the Primary Industries Group in the Northern Territory Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources.

We consider it belongs to its many contributors and thank them for their input and advice.

It is subject to ongoing review (at least annually) to maintain currency and accuracy of information.

You can check you have the current version by phoning the Policy and Services Division on 08 8999 2384.

Your Feedback is Important to Us

To keep this booklet up-to-date, relevant and user-friendly, your feedback is important. Feel free to complete this form and fax it to us on 08 8999 2010. Alternatively you can contact Annie Black via email at annie.black@nt.gov.au or phone on 08 8999 2336.

How/where did you find out about this booklet?

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Did you find it a useful resource for your purpose? Yes / No Why/Why not?

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How can it be improved?

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On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate this booklet? 1 2 3 4 5

Any other comments about how we can improve this booklet?

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