

PRESS RELEASE – ADC FORUM – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 June 2014

**TROPICAL MEGA CITIES COULD HOUSE 23 MILLION NEW AUSTRALIANS -
SUMMIT EXPLORES BOLD CONCEPT**

In Townsville on 26-28 June, the Northern Development Summit will open public debate on regional security, agriculture, energy, conservation and tourism, through to the biggest question of all – how to house twice as many Aussies by the year 2050.

The Hon Paul Henderson, former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, is head of a select working group looking at how much northern development will be impacted by our existing policy and governance.

“We can talk big and bold but it needs to be discussed in terms of the national interest and the existing capacity in the North,” says Paul.

Paul’s group will be identifying the government architecture needed to support development, and will be calling for a framework that binds all levels of government, the private sector and community in the national interest.

“I do see Darwin as the natural capital of the North – it’s our closest gateway to Asia, it’s got the infrastructure, the seat of government, the deep-water port, the longest runway in the Southern Hemisphere and a distributed rail network, but that’s just my bias and I’m sure Townsville, Cairns and Broome might have different ideas. Either way, I’m a supporter of Big Australia – we need that population to support growth. The Commonwealth government needs to support policy levers to encourage migration to the North from both within and outside of Australia.”

Some of the practical obstacles his group have been examining cover population, land tenure, infrastructure costs and sociodemographic measurement. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has no existing statistical category for Northern Australia – it all needs to be imputed from state and Commonwealth datasets.

“As usual, if we can’t measure it then we can’t manage it. So this needs to be addressed as a first step. Also, the North has a very complicated land tenure regime – Crown versus council versus pastoral leases, mineral licenses, conservation, Indigenous ownership all needs to be simplified.”

Because the population base is so small and the distances so large, the costs of infrastructure become proportionately greater. Everything needs a cyclone code, which increases building, purchasing and rental costs by a about 30% across the board. Paul argues that we need to rethink Public-Private Partnerships and the Productivity Commission could also look into, for example, an accelerated depreciation schedule. This could be looked at for infrastructure – it’s not a government handout but recognizes that some support is needed to encourage investment and help build capacity compared to the Eastern seaboard.

Due to be held in Queensland at the end of this month, the Northern Development Summit is mobilizing some of the country’s largest political, industrial and public organisations to discuss the future of the whole of Australia’s North. The public have been officially invited to participate and the results will inform the Commonwealth Government’s Northern Development White Paper.

“What’s most important is that the Summit will not be a one-off talk-fest – it’s got to, and it will, put in place an ongoing structure for the national interest. To do this we need a national discussion.”

Hosted by ADC Forum, The Northern Development Summit is encouraging all sectors of the public, government and business communities to attend and have their say on the future of Australia’s North.



ADC Forum (Founded as the Australian Davos Connection) is a not-for-profit leadership organisation founded in 1996 by the Australian members and participants of the World Economic Forum.

ACN 085 852 848
ABN 65 085 852 848

PO Box 18058
Collins Street East VIC 8003
Australia

Tel: +61 3 8689 2300
Fax: +61 3 9650 4641
Email:
adcforum@adcforum.org
Web: www.adcforum.org

Founder

Michael Roux

Board of Directors

Prof. John Stanley - Chair
Greg Martin
Russell Miller AM
James Roche

Advisory Council

Terrence Campbell AO –
Chair
The Hon Richard Alston
Adm. Chris Barrie AC RAN
(Retd)
Revd. Tim Costello AO
Prof. Edward Byrne AC
Prof. Allan Fels AO
Greig Gailey
Charles Goode AC
Brian Jamieson
Maj Gen The Hon Michael
Jeffery AC AO (Mil) CVO MC
(Retd)
Graham Kraehe AO
Dr Simon Longstaff AO
Hugh Morgan AC
Jeanne Pratt AC
Catherine Walter AM
Richard Warburton AO

For more information on registration, the public is encouraged to visit www.adcforum.org



Ends -----

ADC Forum is an independent not-for-profit organisation delivering high-level strategic leadership forums including the annual Australian Leadership Retreat on Hayman Island and the annual Future Summit.

The Hon. Paul Henderson, former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, was the lead economic minister for the North over three terms of Government. As Chief Minister from 2007-12 and a Senior Minister from 2001, he dealt with a range of issues and challenges and helped put the Territory on the path to sustainable economic growth. As Chief Minister, he delivered the \$34-billion Ichthys LNG project for Darwin. This is the second largest investment in Australia's history and the largest investment by any Japanese company outside of Japan. Darwin is now Australia's second LNG hub and will develop as a regional leader for service and supply to the offshore oil and gas sector. Recognising economic prosperity must be translated into social benefits, Paul has a passionate commitment to the development of Northern Australia. He is equally focused on forging closer economic, social and cultural ties to our Asian region and retains close relations with many leaders across South-East Asia.

ADC Forum (Founded as the Australian Davos Connection) is a not-for-profit leadership organisation founded in 1996 by the Australian members and participants of the World Economic Forum.

ACN 085 852 848
ABN 65 085 852 848

PO Box 18058
Collins Street East VIC 8003
Australia

Tel: +61 3 8689 2300
Fax: +61 3 9650 4641
Email:
adcforum@adcforum.org
Web: www.adcforum.org

Founder

Michael Roux

Board of Directors

Prof. John Stanley - Chair
Greg Martin
Russell Miller AM
James Roche

Advisory Council

Terrence Campbell AO –
Chair
The Hon Richard Alston
Adm. Chris Barrie AC RAN
(Retd)
Revd. Tim Costello AO
Prof. Edward Byrne AC
Prof. Allan Fels AO
Greig Gailey
Charles Goode AC
Brian Jamieson
Maj Gen The Hon Michael
Jeffery AC AO (Mil) CVO MC
(Retd)
Graham Kraehe AO
Dr Simon Longstaff AO
Hugh Morgan AC
Jeanne Pratt AC
Catherine Walter AM
Richard Warburton AO