

**PRESS RELEASE – ADC FORUM – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

17 June 2014

**NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT PERFECTLY TIMED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON FEDERAL WHITE PAPER**

**The Federal Government has invited public comment on six key themes for its White Paper for Australia's north, all six of which will be open for public discussion at the Northern Development Summit opening its doors in Townsville on 26-28 June.**

Vice Chancellor of James Cook University, Prof Sandra Harding, who is serving on the Federal Government's Northern Australia Advisory Group, says the Summit represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for full public discussion on all six themes - infrastructure, land, water, trade, education and governance – as well as the complex trade-offs and complementarities that arise for goals such as:

- Becoming the foodbowl of Asia
- Escalation of energy exports
- Massive development for tourism

“Northern Australia lies at the intersection of the two great axes of global growth – the Asian axis which everyone is seeing and the tropical axis which fewer are seeing,” says Professor Harding.

“We must not apply deficit thinking in the North because that is where we will grow and develop - to focus ever more sharply on the tropics – to be the education and research engine to help drive the next phase of Australia's development through world class education, research and innovation. “

The Summit will cover how multiple forces are now pushing the concept of northern development into an imminent reality – forces like Australia's projected population growth, the future of the mining boom, a growing middle-class Asia, climate change and food security, market-driven development initiatives pushing governments to act and plan for rapidly accelerating change.

Professor Harding says James Cook University will be integral, not just as a major employer but as a major innovator and a central hub of regional educational excellence.

Anton Roux, CEO of ADC Forum, the think-tank charged with organizing the event along with the Queensland Government, James Cook University, Townsville Enterprise and the City of Townsville, says Northern development is no longer conditional.

“The development of the North is central to the whole of Australia's prosperity and now is the time to have this discussion,” said Mr Roux.

“Population growth in Australia, globalization of both labour and industry, massive geopolitical shifts in South East Asia, and the fact that industry is already moving on their own agendas in the North are creating significant momentum. Therefore the Summit is particularly timely as an opportunity to explore the impact of these factors. This will be greatly enhanced by the diversity of experts and participants from many different sectors.”

Mr Roux said the Summit provides an important forum for anyone who is interested and concerned about the future of Australia and its northern reaches. Further details are at [www.adcforum.org](http://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.



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.

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**Professor Sandra Harding** is Vice-Chancellor and President of James Cook University. In this position, she is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the University across all operating sites, including campuses in Townsville, Cairns and Singapore. Her scholarly interests reside around the sociology of work, industry and organisation and she has a keen professional interest in education policy and management. Professor Harding has undertaken a wide variety of external roles within the higher education sector and the business community. She has also served on a number of review panels and accreditation committees within the higher education sector. Her current board commitments include: the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the Queensland Premier's Smart State Council, Skills Queensland, North Queensland Toyota Cowboys, Townsville Enterprise Limited and Advance Cairns. She is a Deputy Chair of Australian universities' peak body, Universities Australia, a member of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Regional Australia and Australia's representative on the University Grants Commission for the University of the South Pacific.

**Anton Roux** is CEO of ADC Forum, an independent, not-for-profit leadership group that has worked since 1996 to incite debate and change for the future prosperity of Australia. A lawyer by training, Anton has led development of ADC leadership programs and reports for a number of years, assembling diverse people and perspectives in to a vibrant learning community. Anton previously worked in corporate advisory, investment, property development and in commercial and intellectual property law, with Minter Ellison. He was also involved in programming the special Federation series of the Alfred Deakin Lectures and worked in Davos with the World Economic Forum.



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