



MEDIA RELEASE

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Study supports new economic framework for Indigenous and remote communities in Northern Australia

Indigenous and remote communities in Northern Australia would benefit from stronger support for a 'cultural and conservation economy', a new collaborative study has found. This emerging economy is being driven by strong community leadership.

The study's final report, *A Cultural and Conservation Economy for Northern Australia*, launched today by the Australian Conservation Foundation and Land & Water Australia, recognises this emerging approach can support long-term, sustainable solutions for maintaining country and culture in Indigenous communities.

The report supports the expansion of Indigenous Protected Areas, joint management of national parks and the return of lands of high conservation value to Aboriginal ownership.

"The study examined a range of development models and analysed which of these models might be appropriate for northern Australia," said Land & Water Australia's Executive Director, Dr Michael Robinson.

"Drawing on a Canadian conservation economy model, Ecotrust, the approach has been adapted for the Australian context through collaboration with Indigenous people who are driving the development of a cultural and conservation economy here in Australia."

"Northern Australia has all the essential ingredients for a sustainable future: tourism, arts and culture, bush tucker, fishing and local people, but more support is needed to strengthen these industries," said ACF executive director Don Henry.

"With the right sort of government and business support, the area's natural and cultural assets can form the basis of the regional economy, not industries that damage the environment and impact negatively on Indigenous communities."

The report recommends the establishment of a new tax incentive scheme and a loan guarantee fund for remote, rural and underdeveloped communities. Another recommendation supports the development of a new category of Deductible Gift Recipient Status for Community Development Organisations.

The report is the result of collaboration between Indigenous, environmental, business and philanthropic partners, and is available from www.acfonline.org.au/cce and www.lwa.gov.au/sirp

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