Welcome to this month’s summary of recent news on topics relevant to the Northern Hub’s goal of supporting sustainable development in northern Australia. These clips aim to facilitate cross-sector & cross-region knowledge sharing, & more informed conversations about the future of northern Australia. They’re an informal ‘round up’ of what comes across our desks rather than a systematic collection, so please send any relevant news in & let us know what you think. Cheers & best regards, Clare Taylor, Jane Thomas & Patch Clapp.

Pan-northern news

- Canavan retains Nth Aust (& Resources) portfolio in Scott Morrison’s Ministry, other keepers Michael McCormack = Infrastructure, Transport & Regional Development, Nigel Scullion = Indigenous Affairs, David Littleproud = Ag & Water; new are Angus Taylor = Energy, Melissa Price = Environment, Simon Birmingham = Trade, more
- $15m Nth Aust Water Resources Assessment (NAWRA) examines ag potential, more, in the Mitchell, WA Fitzroy & Darwin region. Key findings Mitchell – large instream dams =? 140kha of year-round irrigation or water harvesting =? 200kha w 1 dry-season crop/yr; Fitzroy – pumping river water into ringtanks =? 160kha w 1 dry-season crop/yr in 85% of years, groundwater =? up to 30kha of hay prod’n in all years; Darwin catchments – combo of major dams, farm-scale offstream storage & groundwater =? up to 90kha of dry-season horticulture & mango trees; also ecological impacts & diverse views on development warrant attention
- Also new NAWRA-Explorer data tool & NAWRA-River app to explore dam water reliability & river flow impacts
- NAWRA commentary by Canavan, McCormack, Scullion, Labor perspective/Clare, ABC, more
- CRC for Nth Aust announces $2.7m Kakadu Plum value chains project, also $1m project to evaluate options & issues for development of Indigenous lands & inform gov policy. Other CRC projects announced inc building Traditional Owner-led bush products, building hort knowledge & capacity within Indigenous enterprise, & evaluation of the potential to expand hort industries in nth Aust
- New CRC for Nth Aust funding round open with EOIs due 7 Sep
- Office of Nth Aust news now found here
- 31 of 37 nth Aust roads program projects now approved
- NT Minister suggests live export observers would cripple industry
- Regionally based ‘climate mates’ to help graziers across the nth & 10-yr $36m CSIRO project to develop decadal weather forecasting
- BOM Sep–Nov outlook shows 80% chance of exceeding median max temps across nth

Northern Australia Hub news

- New project on using eDNA to detect rare animals in remote areas
- Researchers help inform Ranger Uranium Mine closure e.g. How might contaminated water affect riverbank vegetation & local fish? & Mine site rehabilitation needs animals & reveg for ecosystem restoration
- NESP Indigenous Science Conversations in National Science Week event
- New scientific paper on how feral cat exclosures boost reptile populations

State & Territory news

- WA gov invites tenders for Perth–Derby air service
- Kimberley explorer in line to operate mothballed Ellendale diamond mine, more
- Cockatoo Is Traditional Owners call for protection of marine areas from sediment from mine wa
- NAIF investment upgrades road to Pilbara lithium mine
- Minerals co. wins in Native Title dispute
- Int’l article investigates Kimberley Indigenous tourism values
- New mango varieties developed for Ord region after 20 yrs & first Ord cotton harvest since 1970
- Project Sea Dragon expands Exmouth breeding facility & still working on final investment decision
- Interview with Environ Kimberley director on Kimberley futures
- Kimberley community to re-vegetate sites on Fitzroy floodplain [related Hub research]
- Rangers move remains at risk from Fitzroy Rv erosion
- WA Mud Crab Mgt Plan likely to allow 6 Kimberley licences
- 97 crocs surveyed in WA’s Drysdale provide baseline for monitoring
- WA teen develops water filter for Kimberley communities
- Broome’s unusual Aug rain
Northern Australia News Roundup
August 2018

- Rangelands NRM Aug news
- NT pop’n growth strategy released inc econ devt, infrastructure & tourism plans. New Territory branding aims to attract domestic & international migrants & former Territorians explain why they leave. Gas industry says onshore gas could add 500 NT jobs = 1240 people
- NT Chief Min seeking to deepen links w China
- NT News’ business editor takes NT Cattlemen’s Assoc’n CEO role
- NT parliament debating proposed subleasing amendments to Pastoral Land Legislation
- NT cattle country battling big dry alongside sthn farmers
- NLC concerned about ILC considering de-stocking some stations
- NTG revokes major project status for Quintis sandalwood
- EPA recommends McArthur Rv mine expansion & NLC condemns overburden mgt approval for McArthur, more
- Environment Centre NT response to Ranger Uranium Mine closure plan, more [related Hub research, more, more]
- Jawoyn Aboriginal Corp to manage Mangarrayi rangers in Katherine region
- INPEX offset conservation project ‘years behind schedule’
- NT rec fishing survey on industry’s size & value to inform $50m investment
- Report on NT’s marine science needs
- $80k boost for Katherine tourist attractions
- NTG Land Rights News Aug inc Barunga 2018, recognition, Blue Mud Bay anniversary, McArthur Rv Mine & reconnecting women w Country

- Qld food & fibre jobs increased by 10,500 from Jun 2017
- African mahogany forestry in FNQ & full Landline ep
- Sugar industry highlights advances from 10 yrs of research
- KAP suggest sugar oversupply could be turned into molasses-based food alternative
- Mackay 2015 package to look beyond mining inc’d tourism by 7–10%, inc’d jobs & dec’d vacancy rates
- Shorten commits $500m in road funds inc Barkly Capricorn Mitchell & Kennedy hwys, more
- $1.1m for Kowanyama road & construction unit
- Assistance agreement signed for TSV battery storage project
- Adani documents on post-cyclone pollution
- Wet Tropics Aug Newsletter inc new soil health hub
- Southern Gulf NRM June/July newsletter

Water
- Mitchell & Gulf water plans extended until 2027 [related Hub research here & here]
- Flinders Rv grape & citrus project nr Hughenden gets Coordinated Status to assist progress
- 10mx10m fabric print engaging west Qld communities in flood risk & planning
- Nth Aust research features in Aust Gov wetlands publication & Kakadu wetlands research [related Hub research]

Energy
- $59m solar project w 25 remote NT communities heads towards completion
- Drought-hit town welcomes Kennedy renewable energy park w/ solar & wind & Mt Emerald project substation powered up to supply 75k homes
- $5m study confirms east–west (Pilbara) gas pipeline remains pipedream but Nthn Gas Pipeline b/w Tennant Ck & Mt Isa set to flow

Weeds, ferals, diseases, etc
- WA DPIRD acts to further prevent damage to state’s citrus from canker
- Int’l NGO calls for action on gamba grass highlighting massive fire risks [related Hub research]
- FNQ cane fields burned to prevent spread of electric ants
NZ suspends import of Aus melons, pumpkins, squash & cucumber after plant virus discovery

TSV wipes out possible dengue-carrying mosquitos with modified mosquitos

Biodiversity & protected areas

- Submissions to date inc from NT & WA govs to Senate Committee inquiry into Aust’s Faunal Extinction Crisis highlight species losses across nth Aust [related Hub research]
- Mossy discovery on Cape York will reshape plant evolution understanding in nth Aust
- Dingo to be listed as 'non-fauna' in changes to WA legislation
- Scientists debate how boabs came to Aust
- Rare scaly-tailed possum sighted in E Kimberley & 10-pearl oyster found in W Kimberley
- Snorkelling to count turtles nr Kalumburu, Kimberley
- Debris from Vietnamese fishing vessel covers FNQ beaches
- Labor plan to bring back extensive marine park network
- ABC investigates sediment runoff into GBR
- Threatened Spp Recovery Hub Aug news inc eastern curlew, myrtle rust & feral cats & NQ Nats latest issues inc karst, finches, fire

Fire & carbon

- Map of fires on 18 Aug shows Top End hot spot & 1000 fires after 20 days into Qld bushfire season & bushfire threat is now year-round in Aust
- Indigenous rangers in Qld Gulf run fire training program
- 2018 nth Aust savanna burning projects summarised by sector in graphic

Events

- 5 Sep, Cape York Weeds & Ferals AGM, Cooktown
- 5–6 Sep, Mining the Territory, Darwin
- 8–9 Sep, BirdLife Aust Congress, Broome
- 17–21 Sep, KLC 40th anniversary celebration, central Kimberley
- 18–21 Sep, Natural Resources & Indigenous Livelihoods course, Darwin
- 10–11 Oct, Kimberley Economic Forum, Broome
- 24–26 Oct, KPCA Annual Innovation Conference, Field Day & AGM, Port Hedland
- 26 Oct, Cape York NRM AGM, Cooktown
- 31 Oct, Beef Up, Julia Creek
- 13–15 Nov, Territory NRM conference, Darwin

Please note

- This is an informal compilation & views don’t necessarily reflect those of the Northern Hub or affiliates
- We welcome your input & feedback to help us improve the Roundup
- We focus on the semiarid & tropical parts of northern Australia (i.e. don’t include Central Australia, Pilbara or Lake Eyre Basin, etc)
- Increasingly, online media outlets are subscriber-only (e.g. Cairns Post, The NT News, Townsville Bulletin, The Australian) so this limits the outlets we are able to link to
- Previous news roundups are available here

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