1. Background

On 6 February 2018, the Northern Territory Government announced the re-creation of Team NT. Team NT is a three-tier approach to strengthening and aligning efforts to promote and pursue the NT’s economic interests nationally and internationally, incorporating:

- the Team NT Executive – comprising former Chief Minister, Clare Martin; former NT Public Sector Chief Executive Officer, Paul Tyrrell; and leading NT businessman, Dick Guit
- joint (co-led) engagement and investment missions with industry and business, and
- engaging the broader business and community sectors as advocates for the NT.

Drawing on their skills and experience, and with strong ties to NT, the Team NT Executive undertake strategic targeted projects and provide advice on specific aspects of the Government’s strategic agenda as it relates to economic development; international engagement, trade and investment; Northern Australia development; and the development of priority industry sectors, including Defence and gas manufacturing.

The NT Government has tasked the Team NT Executive with three immediate priority focus areas, being:

- use existing gas reserves to bring more manufacturing to Darwin
- bring more corporate offices to Darwin, and
- improve airline connectivity and sea links with Asia and our region, including Eastern Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

As part of its role, the Team NT Executive is also responsible for:

- promoting long term engagement and mutual beneficial relationships with key local, national and international partners
- participating and reporting on international and interstate engagement, trade and investment mission as appropriate, and
- acting as advocates within the broader NT and international communities to promote the NT as a place to invest, live, work and study.

Immediately following their appointment, the Team NT Executive embarked on an extensive information gathering exercise to inform its agenda. This involved briefings from NT Government agencies, industry, community organisations and individual business representatives, across the total spectrum of industries.

The briefings identified various matters relevant to the Team NT Executive mandate, including the priority tasks identified above, along with a number of other key issues relating to tourism, Aboriginal economic development, defence, population growth, and increasing business and consumer confidence.

Section 2 of this report identifies activities to date and planned future actions in respect of the priority focus areas, while section 3 outlines activities to date relating to the broader the Team NT Executive mandate.
2. Activities relating to priority focus areas

Use existing gas reserves to bring more manufacturing to Darwin

The Economic Development Framework highlights the significant local economic growth opportunities available to the NT from our globally significant onshore and offshore energy reserves, including the potential manufacture of a wide range of industrial products, including methanol, plastics, fertilisers and petrochemicals.

Mr Paul Tyrrell, as part of his Team NT Executive function, assisted in the development and finalisation of the Gas Action Plan, which sets out a plan and actions to develop the NT as a world class hub for gas production, manufacturing and services.

On 28 March 2018, the Hon Michael Gunner MLA, Chief Minister and the Hon Ken Vowles MLA, Minister for Primary Industry and Resources approved the establishment of a Gas Taskforce (the Taskforce), Chaired by Mr Tyrrell, to promote a whole-of-government focus and enhance coordination between agencies and to drive development and implementation of the NT Government's Gas Action Plan.

Industry experts have also been appointed to advise the Taskforce as required. A reference group of relevant business and industry organisations is being established, and will hold its first meeting in late July or early August.

As part of his broader role on the Taskforce, Mr Tyrrell has undertaken a number of activities dedicated to the Team NT Executive priority focus area of bringing more manufacturing to Darwin.

Meetings have been held with Chief Executive Officers and senior representatives of the key companies involved in gas manufacturing, National Industry Groups such as Chemistry Australia and Manufacturing Australia, and the key gas producers, with the aim of matching potential gas supply with potential manufacturing use in new world class plants.

A number of research and analysis pieces of work have been initiated in uses of potential gas manufacturing relevant to potential gas supply; the extent of work with supply, maintenance and support for the gas industry that can be attracted to the NT; and potential Government policy initiatives that may be needed to assist with the growth of the gas industry in the NT.

Over the coming months, Mr Tyrrell will continue to engage with the major gas producers and targeted downstream entities for the purposes of progressing this priority focus area. He will also promote the NT Government's Gas Action Plan at major industry forums including the upcoming South East Asia Australia Offshore and Onshore Conference (SEAAOC), where he has been invited to present as a guest speaker.

Bring more corporate offices to Darwin

The NT Economic Development Framework has a strong focus on increasing private sector investment to grow jobs. A key deliverable under the NT’s Infrastructure Strategy is an investment attraction policy aimed at securing NT competitiveness in leveraging corporate relocation and private investment.

Since their appointment, the Team NT Executive have been involved in a number of activities to facilitate the bringing of more corporate offices to Darwin. These include:

- input into “Make Your Move”, a specific purpose promotional document developed by the Department of Trade Business and Innovation’s (DTBI) Strategic Infrastructure and Projects (SIP) division, and published in April 2018, which includes content for
entities looking to do business in the NT, along with content on living and working in the NT

• input into the consultancy commissioned by SIP into corporate and investment attraction policy and strategy, drawing on national and international corporate and investment attraction success stories, to help inform development of the final report. The resultant report has recently been finalised and the Team NT Executive are currently reviewing the report to help inform its future activities

• development of a list of target entities to approach to discuss potential corporate relocation, based on existing investments/relationships with the NT, priority industry sectors, strong existing capability and competitiveness, and other natural or geographical advantage, and

• initial engagement with some target entities in respect of potential interest or opportunities for relocation.

Over the coming months, the Team NT Executive will continue to make approaches to target entities, to advocate the benefits of these businesses establishing corporate offices in Darwin. The Team NT Executive recommends that in addition to private sector approaches, the NT Government target Commonwealth agencies (including Defence), given the Commonwealth’s Developing the North agenda and objectives.

The Team NT Executive intends to draw on the expert report to identify specific tactics for implementation, as part of its targeted strategy, to foster enhanced outcomes in the priority focus area of corporate attraction (in association with its activities surrounding investment attraction more broadly).

**Improve airline connectivity and sea links with Asia and our region including Eastern Indonesia and Timor-Leste**

**Improving connectivity with Asia and our region generally**

Based on the information obtained during its information gathering phase, the Team NT Executive is currently developing its strategy to progress this focus area. Following a number of preliminary briefings from relevant NT Government agency representatives, the Team NT Executive facilitated a workshop involving a small group of key stakeholders in late July, including Genesee and Wyoming, and Landbridge, as the rail and port owners/operators, to further explore key themes in more detail and with discussion points including:

• the current state of play in terms of trade between Darwin and Asia, including Eastern Indonesia and Timor-Leste

• potential growth and development in the region

• perceived opportunities and challenges in respect of sea links in the region

• shipping/rail/air supply chain and logistics which have the potential to impact on economic development outcomes, and

• further stakeholders that might be useful to engage with in progressing this focus area.

The intention is to draw on workshop discussions to help work with relevant government and private sector stakeholders to pursue opportunities around growing trade to and from southern Australia, and our region more broadly, which is expected to include a scoping study to assess what economic and other pre-conditions are required to support additional, feasible, air and sea links with our region.
Improving connectivity with Eastern Indonesia and Timor-Leste

In relation to improved connectivity with Eastern Indonesia and Timor-Leste specifically:

- on 27 April 2018, Ms Martin attended the Australia Indonesia Business Council NT Event “Developing a New Tourism Growth Region” as a guest speaker. The event identified regional tourism development synergies between Northern Australia, Timor-Leste and East Nusa Tenggara, with the aim of building a commercial case to support new flights from Darwin to Kupang, and

- on 29 June 2018, Ms Martin met with Mr Peter Roberts OAM, Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste, with discussion focused on the NT Government’s commitment to strengthening ties and building new opportunities between the NT and Timor-Leste.

Research and analysis is currently on foot in relation to an Indonesian engagement strategy which, among other things, will consider targeted activities and industries to support growth in trade and connectivity with East Indonesia. Upon finalisation, the Team NT Executive will review the report to help inform its future activities in this area. Subject to the report findings, at this stage, it is expected that the Team NT Executive’s focus will likely be on identifying possible tourism packages from Darwin, to Timor-Leste and East Nusa Tenggara, and establishing the potential feasibility of new flight connections to facilitate increased tourism opportunities in this region.

It is also intended that Ms Martin visit Timor-Leste and East Nusa Tenggara once the recently elected regional Governments are established, to explore a potential tripartite agreement between the NT, Timor-Leste and East Nusa Tenggara, designed to strengthen and build on existing relationships, and to support the ultimate future goal of increased trade and tourism opportunities.

3. Activities relating to the broader Team NT Executive mandate

In addition to the above work surrounding the priority focus areas assigned by the NT Government, the Team NT Executive have identified additional matters requiring consideration and advice in the short-term, in order to assist in achieving the NT Government’s strategic priorities surrounding economic development.

Defence-related activities

High among these is the manner in which Defence has recently managed its construction procurement processes, under which multiple similar projects across various geographic locations are combined to form mega works packages, which necessarily discourage local industry participation and disadvantage small, local businesses.

On 1 May 2018, Mr Guit was appointed to the NT Strategic Defence Advisory Board (the Board). This appointment provides a direct link between Board and the Team NT Executive, and brings to the Board Mr Guit’s experience in Defence construction projects. Mr Guit attended his first Board meeting on 27 June 2018. The Board also met for the first time with the Australian Capital Territory Defence Industry Advisory Board to discuss areas for collaboration. In addition to the Board meeting, Mr Guit participated in a range of pre-meetings in Canberra, including meetings with eight members of parliament or their officers and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

On 22 June 2018, Defence Team NT, comprising the Chief Executive Officers of Master Builders Australian NT; Chamber of Commerce NT; and the Australian Industry and Defence Network, met with Mr Guit and officers from DTBI’s DefenceNT division, and agreed a new coordination and engagement framework. It was agreed that Mr Guit will Chair the
reconstituted Defence Team NT with an emphasis on strategic planning and coordination of engagement with Defence to promote greater local content and industry participation.

Positive outcomes in relation to local industry participation in Defence contracts are already being realised, with Defence recently announcing that the construction management contract for its new $110 million project for new hangars, administration and operations facilities to accommodate the Triton UAV at the Tindal RAAF Base, will be separated from the single mega-project that was initially contemplated. This outcome will ensure that NT businesses are best placed to succeed in delivering these facilities.

**Domestic Investment Attraction Missions**

The Team NT Executive are working with DTBI’s Office of International Engagement, Trade and Investment division to develop a program of domestic investment attraction missions and specific purpose collateral, to be taken to other parts of Australia and targeted to key industry associations and their members, and businesses important to attracting investment to the NT. It is intended that these missions will commence during the second half of 2018.

- **Other**

Other recent Team NT Executive activities, to date, relating to its broader mandate include that will continue to be pursued over the coming months include:

- collaborating with business and industry to develop a short-term construction forecast brochure, showcasing the significant number of major NT Government, Defence and private sector construction projects currently underway or shortly to commence, which will contribute to growing the economy and creating jobs for Territorians
- working with the Department of Tourism and Culture to explore potential opportunities to grow tourism by extending the historical approach of “destination” based marketing, to “experience” based marketing, including through development of a calendar of events to increase shoulder season visitation, with a focus on options for new business conferences and wet season events
- engaging with the Northern Land Council and Aboriginal Corporations in relation to potential tourism/Aboriginal economic development opportunities. Specifically, Ms Martin has been involved in activities surrounding the post mining life of Jabiru and associated infrastructure investment in Kakadu National Park, and recently attended meetings in Canberra with Mr Justin O’Brien, Chief Executive Officer of the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, to advocate at the Australian Government level in respect of the same, and
- fostering enhanced two-way communication flows through ongoing collaboration with broad existing and new networks, with the Team NT Executive advocating the NT Government’s key strategies and priorities to the business and industry community, and providing feedback from business and industry on potential challenges and opportunities, along with recommendations to the NT Government on how these might be addressed.