

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Gary Gray AO MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia



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NORTHERN AUSTRALIA TASKFORCE DELIVERS MIDTERM REPORT

The Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce has presented its Midterm Report to the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia, Gary Gray.

Mr Gray said the Taskforce had begun to explore and understand the opportunities for new sustainable economic development across northern Australia.

"It will have a particular emphasis on developing available water resources, acknowledging the importance of protecting the unique quality of life and world class environmental assets in northern Australia," Mr Gray said. "This is crucial if the widespread problems that have arisen from land and water resource development in other regions are to be avoided."

The Midterm Report summarises results from the 2007 Taskforce inquiries, provides brief statements against the Terms of Reference and outlines the actions the Taskforce will implement during 2009.

In 2009, the Taskforce will focus on:

- development options and impacts;
- economic drivers and limitations;
- contribution of hard, soft and natural infrastructure to economic development;
- Indigenous employment opportunities, and
- institutional, policy and governance arrangements for effective management of water resources.

Mr Gray said the Midterm Report was the first time a Taskforce report had been released publicly. All documents released by the former Taskforce are available on the Taskforce's website.

The Taskforce is due to deliver its final report at the end of the year.

More information on the Taskforce, including a copy of the Midterm Report and its Terms of Reference, can be found at www.nalwt.gov.au