



An Australian Government Initiative



Australian Government  
Via Online Submission

**8 October 2024**

To the Independent Panel

## **2024 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE NORTHERN AUSTRALIA INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITY ACT 2016**

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Kimberley thanks the Australian Government for the opportunity to submit feedback to the 2024 Independent Review of the *Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) Act 2016*.

RDA Kimberley is a not-for-profit organisation part of the Australian Government's RDA Network. We have an active and facilitative role in the Kimberley to improve regional development outcomes, achieved through collaboration across all levels of government, private sector, and community. Our vision is to grow a strong and confident regional economy that harnesses the Kimberley's competitive advantages, seizes economic opportunities, and attracts investment (see **Attachment 1** Map of the Kimberley).

**The Kimberley has received only 4% of the \$4.4 billion committed by NAIF since its establishment.**

Only two projects in the Kimberley have had loans approved through NAIF. This includes:

- Kimberley Mineral Sands' Thunderbird Mineral Sands Project in the West Kimberley (up to \$160 million).
- Kimberley Cotton Company's Cotton Gin Project in the East Kimberley (up to \$34 million).

This clearly indicates that NAIF needs a different operating model to meet its mandate in the Kimberley.

Proponents have provided feedback to RDA Kimberley that the NAIF application and due diligence process is lengthy, cost prohibitive, and requires a scale or 'shovel readiness' that sits at odds with the greenfield nature of many development opportunities in the region, which continue to remain unrealised. In the Kimberley, there is a major funding gap for businesses between the Kimberley Development Commission's Regional Economic Development grants (maximum grant value \$250,000) and NAIF (often minimum \$10 million project value).

RDA Kimberley understands that the Australian Government and the WA State Government are exploring a small loans partnership, similar to the Northern Territory Local Jobs Fund's Territory Infrastructure Loans Program. The concept of a small loan facility would suit and benefit the Kimberley and its scale of emerging projects and investment (see **Attachment 2** Kimberley Projects Under Investigation (Non-Government)). These projects range from medical biotechnology manufacturing to bespoke education models for remote Aboriginal communities. RDA Kimberley has provided this feedback to the WA State Government Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development for consideration as part of the initiative investigations.

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Announcing a government supported small loans scheme for Northern WA is also likely to be a catalyst for new project development in the Kimberley. It will play a critical role given that the lack of access to institutional lending continues to be a major inhibitor to private investment and business growth in the region.

RDA Kimberley strongly advocates for a government supported small loans scheme for our region as part of the 2024 Review and offers assistance as a NAIF delivery partner. There is no NAIF representative based in the region. RDA Kimberley is well placed to support NAIF with this initiative with strong on-the-ground stakeholder connectivity and strategic regional development capability.

Please note, that RDA Kimberley supports the submission from the Northern RDA Alliance which highlights that proponents in Northern Australia would also strongly benefit from the availability of funding for business case development and feasibility studies. This is another recognised funding gap which is inhibiting project development and attraction of funding.

We look forward to working with the Australian Government to strengthen NAIF's impact and outcomes in the Kimberley following this Review. Please contact Janine Hatch – Director, RDA Kimberley to discuss this feedback further on 0428 130 485 or [j.hatch@rdakimberley.com.au](mailto:j.hatch@rdakimberley.com.au).

Yours sincerely



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Attachment 1: Map of the Kimberley.

Attachment 2: Kimberley Projects Under Investigation (Non-Government) 2024.

Attachment 1: Map of the Kimberley



Kimberley Projects Under Investigation (Non-Government) 2024

RDA Kimberley has not undertaken any due diligence on the projects that are included in the attached spreadsheet and make no definitive comment on project costs or timeframes.  
Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

Project name	Project description	Industry	Likelihood of project going ahead	Project proponent	Proponent email address
PearlBone Biotech Manufacturing facility	Marine Biomedical is submitting their application for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval in late 2024. If successful, product manufacturing will increase to commercial scale and will trigger the need for facility expansion in Broome.	Medical biotech Manufacturing	Planned	Marine Biomedical	<a href="https://marinebiomedical.com.au/">https://marinebiomedical.com.au/</a>
Fresh Produce Group Processing and Cold Storage	Increased processing and cold storage equipment will be required when the asparagus and grape growing operations expand in Broome to avoid sending produce to southern WA facilities.	Agriculture	Planned	Fresh Produce Group	<a href="https://fpg.com.au/">https://fpg.com.au/</a>
Fresh Produce Group Worker Accommodation	Worker accommodation will be required for permanent and seasonal staff associated with the asparagus and grape growing operations in Broome.	Agriculture Housing	Planned	Fresh Produce Group	<a href="https://fpg.com.au/">https://fpg.com.au/</a>
Kimberley Marine Support Base Containerisation Facility	Kimberley Marine Support Base will commence construction of the floating wharf at the Port of Broome in early 2025 to be operational in 2026. Once first port of entry status is awarded to the Port of Broome, the Kimberley Ports Authority and Kimberley Marine Support Base will work towards a fully serviced containerisation facility for Broome.	Supply chain	Planned	Kimberley Marine Support Base	<a href="https://www.kmsb.com.au/">https://www.kmsb.com.au/</a>

Gumaranganyjal, Roebuck Plains Station - irrigation, export depot, and net zero	Aboriginal owned pastoral station and export depot east of Broome where diversification activities are concentrating on irrigated agriculture, aboriginal workforce development, and carbon targets.	Agriculture	Planned	Nyamba Buru Yawuru	<a href="https://www.yawuru.org.au">https://www.yawuru.org.au</a>
Yinajalan Ngarrungunil Health and Wellbeing Campus	The finished campus in Broome will have a unique, holistic approach to health and wellbeing by combining existing facilities with proposed facilities and additional sites with long-term lease arrangements for complementary care providers.	Health	Planned	Nyamba Buru Yawuru	<a href="https://www.yawuru.org.au">https://www.yawuru.org.au</a>
Broome International Airport Common User Cold Storage facility	Broome International Airport commenced direct Singapore-Broome flights with Jetstar in June 2024. Being able to develop international air freight capabilities will be investigated in the future.	Supply chain	Possible	Broome International Airport	<a href="https://www.broomeair.com.au/">https://www.broomeair.com.au/</a>
Kooljaman Cape Leveque	Aboriginal tourism business on the Dampier Peninsula currently negotiating State Government funding to upgrade facilities to reopen.	Tourism	Planned	Djarandji Aboriginal Corporation Ardyaloon Inc	
Wunan Housing and Childcare Project	Wunan will deliver a significant housing component; integrated employment services and training hub; childcare facility; café and office space in Kununurra. The project aims to provide housing for community service workers in Kununurra who are supporting the local Aboriginal community and to provide a more streamlined and accessible employment and training service to Aboriginal people being supported from welfare to work.	Housing Childcare Workforce	Planned	Wunan Foundation	<a href="https://www.wunan.org.au/">https://www.wunan.org.au/</a>
Manjali Studio School	Manjali Studio School is the second Studio School developed through the partnership between Bunuba and Studio Schools of Australia. It is located on Bunuba country, approximately 10km from Yiramalay Studio School.	Education	Planned	Studio Schools of Australia	<a href="https://www.studioschools.edu.au/">https://www.studioschools.edu.au/</a>

Tassal Cone Bay Barramuni Farm	Tassal acquired the Cone Bay Farm in 2023 and has considerable investment planned.	Aquaculture	Planned	Tassal	<a href="https://tassalgroup.com.au/tassal-acquires-australias-only-ocean-grown-barramundi-farm/">https://tassalgroup.com.au/tassal-acquires-australias-only-ocean-grown-barramundi-farm/</a>
Cotton Seed Processing facility	Red Range Stock Supplements and other partners are undertaking the feasibility for this facility given the cotton gin is under construction in Kununurra as part of the Ord River Irrigation Area (NAIF supported project).	Agriculture	Under consideration	Red Range Stock Supplements	<a href="https://redrangestocksupplements.com.au/">https://redrangestocksupplements.com.au/</a>
Northern Minerals Browns Range HRE	Northern Minerals continuing to progress the company's Definitive Feasibility Study for a commercial scale mining operation and beneficiation plant in the East Kimberley.	Mining	Under consideration	Northern Minerals	<a href="https://northernminerals.com.au/">https://northernminerals.com.au/</a>
Tivan Speewah Fluorite	Tivan is seeking a joint venture to progress to commercial scale mining operation for the critical minerals deposit in the East Kimberley.	Mining	Under consideration	Tivan	<a href="https://tivan.com.au/">https://tivan.com.au/</a>
Boab Metals Sorby Hills	This is a lead-silver-zinc project in the East Kimberley. Boab Metals released the Definitive Feasibility Study in 2023 and released the Front End Engineering and Design report in 2024.	Mining	Under consideration	Boab Metals	<a href="https://boabmetals.com/sorby-hills/">https://boabmetals.com/sorby-hills/</a>
Aboriginal Clean Energy East Kimberley Project	Renewable energy, green hydrogen and ammonia project in the East Kimberley. Includes a solar farm, integration with the existing Ord Hydro power plant, a greenfield hydrogen gas pipeline from Kununurra to Wyndham, and ammonia production for export.	Renewable Energy	Under consideration	Pollination Capital Partners MG Corporation Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation Kimberley Land Council	<a href="https://aboriginalcleanenergy.com/">https://aboriginalcleanenergy.com/</a>
RareX Cummins Range	Exploration continues for this potential rare earth site in the Shire of Halls Creek.	Mining	Under consideration	RareX	<a href="https://investors.rarex.com.au/">https://investors.rarex.com.au/</a>

Agrimin Lake Mckay Potash	The potash project comprises the four key elements of a bulk commodity project being the mine, processing plant, integrated logistics chain and port facility.	Mining	Under consideration	Agrimin	<a href="https://agrimin.com.au/">https://agrimin.com.au/</a>
Buru Energy Raphael	Focused on exploration and production of hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon energy resources in the West Kimberley.	Mining	Under consideration	Buru Energy	<a href="https://www.buruenergy.com/site/content/">https://www.buruenergy.com/site/content/</a>
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation economic development opportunities	This is a general theme to cover opportunities that are discussed in the region. Projects range in tourism, agriculture, retail (including roadhouse/petrol station), and aquaculture).	Aboriginal Economic Development			
Affordable housing program	This is a general theme to cover opportunities that are discussed in the region. Projects partners include local government, ACCOs, and industry.	Housing			