

October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

Background

On Monday 23 October 2023, Gove Peninsula business owners participated in an interactive workshop facilitated by the Gove Peninsula Futures Reference Group (Reference Group) to discuss the question:

“What information does businesses and industry need to make decisions for a post-mining future on the Gove Peninsula?”

The key outcomes sought by the Reference Group in undertaking this workshop was to:

- Understand the questions that business owners would like answered in order to keep operating their business in the lead up to and post-transition and;
- Help inform the Reference Group on how to best conduct updates with the business community into the future.

To achieve these outcomes, the Reference Group split the workshop into three components:

- The first component of the workshop consisted of participants writing down and sticking to butchers paper any questions concerning the transition work underway on the Gove Peninsula. Once collated, participants were asked to review and indicate via a dot survey which questions were of most interest or importance to their business.
- The second component consisted of a business specific community update presentation by Reference Group members, detailing projects and initiatives currently underway across the relevant workstreams set up to support the positive transition to a post-mining future in accordance with the [‘A New Journey Together – Traditional Owners Vision for the Future of Nhulunbuy and the Gove Peninsula’](#) (TO Vision).
- The final component of the workshop involved participants revisiting the exercise undertaken at the beginning of the workshop, providing businesses owners with the opportunity to write, submit and prioritise important questions based on the information provided in the Reference Group presentation.

Due to the breadth of questions submitted at the workshop, the Reference Group has developed this information document to answer a list of consolidated questions from the workshop designated as a priority for business owners. The Reference Group will seek to address any questions not answered in this document at future Gove Futures Community Update events.

Please note that the Questions and Responses below are true and correct at the date of publishing. Endeavours will be made to update these through a Frequently Asked Questions page over time.

Please refer to **Appendix A** for the full list of questions submitted.



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

Workshop Questions:

Land Tenure Workstream

Objectives: Putting in place suitable land tenure arrangements that support investment and developing a master plan for the Nhulunbuy township and related areas which aligns with the TO Vision.

Private Leases:

- **What will happen to private leases held by residents/business owners in the Nhulunbuy Township and Industrial Estate?**

Once the Special Purposes Leases (SPL) covering the Nhulunbuy Township and associated Industrial Estate expire or are handed back, the associated sub-lease agreements will also cease. While the SPLs are due to expire in 2053, with mining and remediation planned to finish in the early 2030s, it is anticipated that the leases will be, agreement, handed back early.

All the land underlying the SPLs currently held by Rio Tinto is considered Aboriginal Freehold Land under the Commonwealth *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. This means that when the SPLs and mineral titles cease all remaining buildings and fixtures will become property of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust who hold and manage land on behalf of Traditional Owners (TOs) unless other land tenure arrangements are made prior to the SPLs being terminated early or expiring.

To address this, the Reference Group recognise that it is very important that suitable future land tenure arrangements are confirmed as a priority well ahead of the SPLs expiring or be handed back.

The Reference Group has engaged KPMG consultants to work with TO Groups to identify potential future land tenure options and select a preferred model which aligns with aspirations outlined in the TO Vision.

- **When will residents and business owners be informed about Land Tenure options available to them in the future?**

The Reference Group will share information with residents and business owners regarding future land tenure arrangements at Community and Business Updates throughout 2024 and 2025.

KPMG has been engaged by the NT Government on behalf of the Reference Group and is conducting a series of workshops and engagements with TO Groups to unpack the potential land tenure options available. KPMG will provide a full report to the process undertaken and options considered in 2024 to the Reference Group.

The Northern Land Council will subsequently need to conduct formal consent processes with TO Groups in accordance with its statutory role to formalise consent to the future land tenure arrangements. It is anticipated that this occur in 2025.

- **Will residents and business owners have a chance to provide their input into the Land Tenure options development process?**

As part of the Land Tenure Consultancy process, KPMG will engage with locals businesses and residents on the Gove Peninsula in early 2024 to understand their needs and interests to continue living in Nhulunbuy and operating their businesses post-mining.

While the decisions about the future land tenure rests with TOs, there is an important role for local residents and businesses to provide information which can assist and inform TO land tenure direction-setting for the future.



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

The current survey being conducted by KPMG is available at <https://forms.microsoft.com/e/dnyWz5UBLG> and the survey is open to 5pm on the 15 March 2024.

Housing:

- ***What is currently being done to address the acute housing shortage?***

The Reference Group is working on short and longer term actions for housing on the Gove Peninsula. We know that demand is high, with 200-300 dwellings required to meet current and longer-term government, service provider and non-mining related business/industry needs. Affordable housing for unskilled or lower paid workers also needs to be addressed.

Rio Tinto, the NT Government and TOs are working together to increase the supply of housing from mid to late 2024. This includes transitioning to FIFO for the mining related workforce to free up housing and serviced land, and a market approach to TO organisations to supply housing to government and the private market.

- ***What is being done to ensure that housing and land can be purchased at affordable rates?***

Like all markets, the price of housing and land increases when demand exceeds supply. Reduction in Rio Tinto residential roles and construction of new dwellings will progressively increase supply to market, which is anticipated over time to reduce the cost of private rentals and purchased properties for individuals.

Current work underway to confirm post-mining land tenure arrangements will provide certainty for buyers and lenders making the purchase and development of land by the private market increasingly viable. The future cost of houses will also be heavily influenced by other market forces, including construction and labour costs. The Reference Group cannot control nor influence whether banks choose to lend, however can ensure the baseline settings a more favourable to boost competition in the lending markets.

- ***How many houses have Rio Tinto slated for demolition and why?***

Rio Tinto has approved funding to commence the demolition of a number of houses which are beyond economical repair or, due to a high asbestos content, are not suitable or desired for eventual transition to other parties. This demolition will be undertaken on a gradual basis to ensure that removal does not add to housing constraints, while providing opportunity for TOs to construct new and diverse housing on vacated, serviced lots.

Prior to the transition of the SPL covering the Nhulunbuy Township to future owners, Rio Tinto intends to demolish approximately 150-200 houses. Benefits include:

- a. providing serviced lots for the construction of new, diverse and modern dwellings;
- b. removing houses which have poor thermal insulation properties and typically are large consumers of energy for cooling;
- c. demolition of houses with a high asbestos content present in internal or external cladding and wet areas.

Rio Tinto's local contracted maintenance partners maintain these assets to a high standard on Rio Tinto's behalf, ensuring that occupants are protected from asbestos exposure. However, due to the age of the assets, in the long term it is better to demolish these assets than continue to maintain them as costs escalate over time.

Land Development:



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

- ***Will parcels of land be made available in the short-term for private development?***

Within the town and industrial lease areas, access to land will be available if current lease holders either sell or seek to “hand back” any lease that they may have under the current arrangements.

Land outside of the SPL and mining leased areas is available for interested parties to express interest in for development purposes. The land underlying the Mine, Refinery and Conveyor is currently covered by a Minerals Title held by Rio Tinto, which only allows for mining related economic activity/development to occur. The Reference Group is working to identify a viable pathway and process to excise parcels of land from the Minerals Title early, to create an opportunity for non-mining activity development purposes.

Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation is developing a 58 lot sub-division of land on the Nhulunbuy leased area and has advised it intends to offer a number of blocks for private sale once completed.

Financial Lenders:

- ***How will the expiry or hand back of the Nhulunbuy Township lease currently held by Rio Tinto impact financial institutions ability to lend?***

The future cost of houses will be determined by future land tenure arrangements and market forces. Current work underway to confirm post-mining land tenure arrangements is expected to be finalised in 2025 and will increase certainty for buyers and financial institutions. The Reference Group cannot control nor influence interest rates or how banks choose to lend however, does anticipate that security of land tenure will improve lending market conditions for borrowers.

The Reference Group is prioritising the development of a land tenure transition process which will allow TOs to offer existing SPL sub-lease holders the opportunity to: a) maintain their leasehold interest beyond mining consistent with their current term; or b) acquire a much longer interest in those lands, if and when Rio Tinto relinquishes the SPL.

The finalisation of these initiatives should ensure financial institutions will be able to continue to lend and provide mortgages without interruption.

- ***What is being done to secure the confidence of financial institutions currently operating in Nhulunbuy?***

Financial institutions make lending decisions based on a variety of market conditions, outside the control of the Reference Group. The Reference Group cannot control how banks choose to lend.

The identification of appropriate future land tenure arrangements should provide both lenders and borrowers with more certainty. This work is being progressed as a priority in 2024 and 2025.

Section 19 Leases:

- ***How will the NLC expedite S19 leases across the East Arnhem Region to promote economic growth?***

The NLC is currently undertaking a program of “regionalisation”. This means that the NLC are seeking to have a workforce including anthropologists, lawyers and Section 19 coordinators and officers living and working in the regions, in recognition that these functions are critical in working through the Section 19 process under ALRA. Work is progressing for Nhulunbuy and East Arnhem under this regionalisation program.

The NLC is continuing to address the backlog of S19 lease applications and improve the efficiency of the Traditional Owner consent and approval processes required under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.



October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

Master Planning:

- **What approach is being undertaken to develop a new Master Plan for the Nhulunbuy Township?**

The Reference Group has drafted and endorsed a Master Planning scope, identified funding and will soon tender for the development of a Town Master Plan. It is anticipated that appropriately qualified town planners (consultants) will be appointed in the third quarter of 2024..

The consultants will assist TOs and broader business and community stakeholders to envisage how the future physical environment of Nhulunbuy could reflect aspirations outlined in the TO Vision, identify factors in Nhulunbuy's built environment that are necessary for maintaining sufficient population levels, and design and develop a Master Plan that reflects the diversity of its residents and celebrates the Gove Peninsula's strong cultural heritage.

- **Will residents and business owners have the opportunity to provide their input into the Master Plan development process?**

Yes, while consultation engagements and workshops will initially occur with TO Groups, the Reference Group will ensure engagement with local residents, service providers and businesses as the primary users of existing and potential future infrastructure. It is anticipated that the Master Plan consultant will seek public and stakeholder input in mid-late 2024.

Economic Transition and Development Workstream

Objectives: Maximising the benefits to the region from mine closure work, supporting existing businesses to grow and diversify, and facilitating investment in new industries.

Industry Development:

- **What industries are currently being explored to replace mining as the core driver historically of economic growth on the Gove Peninsula?**

Reference Group members are working individually and collaboratively to explore a range of potential industries which support a more diverse economy on the Gove Peninsula and provide a range of employment opportunities for both Yolŋu and Ḍäpaki.

The East Arnhem Regional Economic Growth Committee (REGC), which shares membership with some Reference Group members, have developed and released the *East Arnhem Regional Economic Growth Plan* (REGP). The REGP lists a variety of different priority industries and identified prospective opportunities for growth across East Arnhem Land in the coming decade. More information on the REGC and REGP can be found here: [East Arnhem | Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet](#).

As part of Rio Tinto's studies to prepare for the end of mining, it has collated information that is assisting prospective commercial sectors and proponents to progress planning and approvals for projects which will support a successful transition. These opportunities leverage off existing regional strengths including Traditional Owner leadership, underutilised labour, location (existing services and infrastructure) and connectivity - valuable assets in supporting ongoing regional growth.

The confidential investment pipeline of projects for the Gove Peninsula is well over \$1 billion in value with projects at varying stages of development from inception or preliminary planning through to detailed regulatory approval processes. The 20+ projects in pipeline span a range of commercial sectors including aerospace, aquaculture, renewables and green manufacturing, tourism, human services, education, arts and culture.



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

- **What will be done to support and expand the tourism sector leading up to and post-transition?**

Reference Group members are working with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (DITT) and Developing East Arnhem Limited (DEAL) to develop and strengthen the tourism sector.

The [East Arnhem Destination Management Plan](#) (DMP) outlines a range of actions which are being implemented to support the growth of the tourism sector. The DMP is being implemented through a Project Implementation Team consisting of TourismNT, NT and Australian Government agencies, industry representatives and DEAL.

The [Business Growth Program](#) and [Aboriginal Business Development Program](#) are also available to provide funding and support for tourism or related businesses in East Arnhem.

The \$9.3M Gove Port Tourism precinct upgrade is well underway with construction works completed and marine and land side civil works to be undertake in the dry season of 2024. This infrastructure will enable recreational and high-end vessels to better access the Gove Peninsula – the only natural port between Darwin and Cairns – and will offer opportunities for new and existing tourism operators, especially in the expeditionary cruise industry, which is a particular focus for the DMP PIT.

- **What are the potential future economic scenarios once Rio Tinto ceases to operate on the Gove Peninsula?**

The Gove Mine Closure Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) describes potential future economic scenarios and is now available at [Gove Futures \(nt.gov.au\)](#). The scenarios are based on the current investment pipeline of projects.

- **Will data from the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment survey be circulated with businesses who participated?**

A comprehensive summary of Gove Mine Closure Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) is now available to the public at [Gove Futures \(nt.gov.au\)](#), including those people and businesses who participated in interviews and surveys. The full SEIA includes a range of commercial in confidence information and will not be published.

The Reference Group will continue to engage with community members and businesses on how best to manage some of the changes we know are coming and work together on actions to address needs or leverage opportunities.

- **Are previous cases of mine closures and subsequent impacts in other regions being reviewed to inform the Gove Peninsula transition work?**

Yes, the Reference Group is looking to previous cases of mine closures and their subsequent impacts on the supporting town and broader region to inform its transition planning. For example, as part of the SEIA study on changes associated with mine closure, the consultant appointed by Rio Tinto looked to examples across Australia and internationally. The key learnings from these examples have been included in the SEIA report, and will be considered in future Reference Group planning and implementation.

- **What are Developing East Arnhem Limited currently doing to promote investment attraction and enable industry development in the East Arnhem Region?**

DEAL is currently working as a member of the Economic Development and Transition Workstream. The Economic Development and Transition Workstream (chaired by DEAL) has developed the [Gove Peninsula Investment Gateway Tool](#) (IGT). The IGT is intended to be used by organisations who may want to invest



October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

in the Gove Peninsula to provide relevant information about land use proposals such that TO corporations of the Gove Peninsula are able to make informed decisions on future investment.

DEAL also continues to promote opportunities through [Invest East Arnhem](#) and other partnerships across the region. DEAL supports existing and emerging East Arnhem businesses to access information, networks, services and capital. DEAL also manages and maintains its housing portfolio in Nhulunbuy to attract and encourage new and expanded economic activity and support the operation of the region's existing business and service providers.

Employment Opportunities:

- ***What is being done to ensure viable employment opportunities will be available for local residents?***

Reference Group members are continuing to work with prospective new industries (both individually and collaboratively) to help create a diverse and growing economy on the Gove Peninsula with a choice of jobs for local residents and to support growth of the population to sustain services.

The Reference Group will also work with relevant NT Government and Commonwealth agencies such as DITT to promote tourism, indigenous workforce development, and human services sectors, and help existing businesses seize expansion opportunities as a vehicle for future employment.

As we draw closer to mine closure, and the future industries are firmed up, consideration will be given to what opportunities there are to support upskilling and reskilling of the regional workforce.

- ***What is being planned to make the region attractive for people outside of the region to come and work in Nhulunbuy?***

By planning and addressing current uncertainties such as land tenure, industry development and housing early, the Reference Group is working to ensure the region remains attractive for a skilled workforce, new and existing business and new investment.

The NT Government recently launched a new website which aims to support attraction of skilled workers to the Northern Territory - [Join the Territory](#). The site includes a range of specific information relating to East Arnhem and Nhulunbuy and businesses and employers are encourage to use this.

- ***What support will be provided to businesses to retain or employ staff once families connected to the Rio Tinto operation have left the region?***

The first step in the process is to understand the expected impacts on other employers (including government, small business and service providers) of Rio Tinto families leaving town over time. This work is being conducted in 2024.

Following this, the Reference Group will work with relevant stakeholder groups and NT Government and Commonwealth agencies to consider the most appropriate support mechanisms for businesses and employers.

Community and Government Services Workstream

Objectives: Ensuring core government and community services are sustained and strengthened to ensure Nhulunbuy remains a regional services hub for East Arnhem.

Populations Levels:



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

- **What is currently being done to understand the impact of Rio Tinto's departure on Nhulunbuy's current and future population levels?**

In 2023 Rio Tinto commissioned a Social Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) study that includes estimated population changes post-mining under different scenarios.

A comprehensive summary of Gove Mine Closure Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) is now available to the public, including those people and businesses who participated in interviews and surveys - [Gove Futures \(nt.gov.au\)](https://nt.gov.au/gove-futures).

- **What is being done to incentivise residents and business owners to stay in Nhulunbuy?**

Many businesses in Nhulunbuy are currently experiencing strong levels of demand for services. Business owners and community members have consistently shared that accommodation is the largest barrier to diversification and growth. As a result of this feedback, Reference Group members are focused on increasing accommodation supply in the near term.

With Rio Tinto mining ceasing toward the end of the decade, the Reference Group also recognise that the best way to support local businesses is to attract and establish new industry, ideally prior to Rio Tinto mining ceasing. Reference Group member are actively engaging with alternative industries seeking to establish projects in the region. There is over \$1B of projects current under development in the investment pipeline.

In 2023 members of the Reference Group undertook a number of activities to help understand what settings and priorities may encourage residents and business owners to stay on the Gove Peninsula. These include the SEIA; a Yolngu Social Impact Assessment conducted in communities led by Jawun; and a Choice Modelling survey conducted by Regional Australia Institute (RAI). Public summaries of SEIA and Choice Modelling Survey are now available at [Gove Futures \(nt.gov.au\)](https://nt.gov.au/gove-futures). This information is assisting the Reference Group to plan actions and initiatives that encourage residents and businesses to stay post-mining.

Government Services:

- **Will residents still have access to the level of government and community services currently provided?**

In line with the Traditional Owner vision, the NT Government has committed to Nhulunbuy as a regional services hub. There are no plans to diminish services on the Gove Peninsula, and work has started to consider whether there are other services which could be regionalised.

The NT Government on behalf the Reference Group engaged the Regional Australia Institute (RAI), in collaboration with Instinct and Reason Consultants and Charles Darwin University to conduct the Gove Futures Choice Modelling project. This project is identifying community members' preferences for services which are needed in the future for Nhulunbuy to remain as a regional services hub.

Phase One of this project included residents, businesses and service providers in the Nhulunbuy Township taking part in a choice modelling survey. Through this survey, participants were provided with a range of potential future government and community service scenarios and asked what factors would influence their decision to stay, increase their investment, or leave the Nhulunbuy Township. The results of this study are now available at [Gove Futures \(nt.gov.au\)](https://nt.gov.au/gove-futures).



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

Phase Two of this project is being planned to occur in mid to late 2024 and will engage with service users across the broader East Arnhem region.

The Community and Government Services workstream will take the inputs for the Choice Model survey and actively plan for the regionalisation of services, particularly where there is opportunities to strengthen service outcomes. Further advice on these regionalisation plans will be provided at future community updates.

- **What are the plans for the regionalisation of government services in Nhulunbuy?**

There is ongoing work currently occurring across NT Government agencies considering opportunities for regionalisation of services. More details will be provided at subsequent Community Updates.

Schools and Higher Education Opportunities:

- **What level of students do primary and secondary schools need to remain open?**

Schools on the Gove Peninsula will remain open. With the SEIA completed, planning will soon commence to ensure a strong education system remains in place into the future and beyond mining.

- **What support and incentives are being considered for higher education services to remain and grow in Nhulunbuy?**

As a dual sector tertiary institution, Charles Darwin University (CDU) offers a large array of vocational training (TAFE) and Higher Education (HE) courses to Territorians. CDU is currently fitting out a building in Nhulunbuy to operate from (small administration building, 2 classrooms and a workshop), which will allow the region to have a local satellite campus to support students with face-to-face study options.

The Reference Group will continue to engage with CDU to determine the options to increase the offer for high learning to support the region into the future.

Community preferences for government services, including education options, were explored in the recent Gove Futures Choice Modelling Project. This project will provide important insights on community members' preference for education delivery into the future and inform further planning.

Essential Services & Infrastructure Workstream

Objectives: Successful transition of essential services to new authorities and securing and improving enabling infrastructure such as roads, telecommunication, ports and airports.

Town accessibility:

- **How will the transition impact the Gove Airport operations and its daily flight schedule?**

The Gove Airport is currently experiencing its highest levels of activity since 2014. The drivers of demand are varied and are not all related to mining or closure activities. Holiday travel, provision of medical specialist services, NT Government service delivery, and passenger travel between Cairns and Darwin are all drivers of demand and are anticipated to remain in future.

The Reference Group cannot control nor influence how airlines (as private business) decide the scheduling of air services as they are determined by market forces. Commercial airline operators such as AirNorth will need to assess the viability of their flight schedules based on their analysis of demand



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

now and in the future. The airport will remain capable of accepting the same aircraft and passenger numbers in future as it currently does.

Should the need arise, the Reference Group will consider opportunities for further engagement with AirNorth and other air services operators to ensure the region continues to receive appropriate air services.

- **What options are currently being considered to ensure airfares and freight remain affordable for residents and business owners in the region?**

In most regions, the cost of freight and transport services are not regulated and are market driven. There are no current plans to regulate pricing of transport services to the region or subsidise costs.

- **What improvements are being made to the Central Arnhem Highway in order to make it more accessible for industry, tourists and residents?**

The NT Government is planning and delivering long term upgrades along the Central Arnhem Road over the next 10 years. With \$355 million committed by both the NT Government (\$75m) and Commonwealth Government (\$280m), the upgrades include sealing, reconstruction, and improving flood immunity. These upgrades aim to improve region connectivity, reduce travel time and increase accessibility, providing further opportunity for economic development, aboriginal employment and business supplier use.

100km of road works between the Gove Peninsula and just beyond the cattle farm are currently in detailed planning for commencement in 2025. Further work is underway to consider opportunities for re-aligning and sealing the Dhupuma Road to the Gulkula turnoff.

- **What is being considered to support charter services currently operating in the region through the mining transition?**

The Reference Group understand the importance of the East Arnhem Region continuing to have access to regular and reliable passenger charter presence. Whether there is a demonstrated need for priority support, the Reference Group will consider opportunities for various support initiatives as part of the transition planning.

Service Provision:

- **How will freight services in the region be impacted by the closure Rio Tinto's mine operations?**

The expected direct impact of mine closure on freight services is not yet known. A number of Reference Group members continue to have regular engagement with transport and freight operators to the region.

- **What is being planned to make sure commodity prices remain stable and affordable for residents and business owners remaining in Nhulunbuy?**

The Reference Group cannot control nor influence commodity prices as they are determined by market forces. The Reference Group will work with new industries and established businesses ahead of transition to support viable supply chains and the freight of goods to Nhulunbuy and the wider region.

- **How will the mining transition impact food security and provision in Nhulunbuy and the wider region?**

Barge services currently deliver dry goods, chilled and frozen freight to Nhulunbuy and each of the main regional communities of East Arnhem. Appropriate Reference Group members will continue to work with



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

Woolworths and Community Stores to ensure ongoing food security in Nhulunbuy and across the East Arnhem region in the lead up to and post-transition.

Power & Water Services:

- ***What planning is currently underway to ensure there is a viable power generation, distribution and storage option on the Gove Peninsula post-mining?***

In 2024, Rio Tinto is partnering with Aggreko to install 2 solar farms which will reduce current carbon emissions by 17%, and assist with the provision of power to the region once mining ceases.

The NT Government is leading a study to consider what power generation needs will look like post-mining and how these needs will be met through the transition of power supply, distribution and retailing to new authorities. This study will be informed by the SEIA, future industry needs, and asset investigations led by Rio Tinto. The new arrangements will be regulated by the Utilities Commission and subject to Territory regulated rates for residential and commercial customers.

- ***Who will be responsible for managing and maintaining essential services in Nhulunbuy after Rio Tinto's departure?***

Significant work is underway through the Essential Services and Infrastructure Workstream to determine the current state of assets and to determine conditionality for handover to new regulated service providers or authorities. It is likely that aspects of this work will be market tested.

- ***How will the mining transition affect the rates of power and water in Nhulunbuy and surrounding communities?***

In 2023, Rio Tinto announced that tariffs for power and water would increase to the regulated rate set by the NT Utilities Commission. It is expected that in future, tariffs will continue to be consistent the regulated rates for power and water in the NT.

- ***Will businesses, community service providers and non-for-profit clubs be supported with the change in rates during the transition period?***

Following community feedback, Rio Tinto implemented a cost of living allowance to offset the effects of the scheduled increases to the price of power and water. This allowance was applied throughout 2023. The regulated rate will apply from Q2 2024 and it is expected that the regulated rates for power and waters services will apply into the future.

There are a range of NT Government support programs available to service providers and not-for-profits clubs and associations.

Town Infrastructure:

- ***What work is currently being undertaken to prepare town assets and infrastructure for the transition to new authorities in the future?***

In 2023 Rio Tinto commenced an asset investigation study, focused on the assets and infrastructure which will be required to support a sustainable community post-mining. The work is based on established industry practices and in recognition of relevant NT and Australian regulations and expectations.



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

The information gathered will be shared with parties who are identified as future asset owners. In the near term, Rio Tinto, together with the Nhulunbuy Corporation, will develop asset management and asset replacement programs and continue maintaining assets to ensure that when transferred, these assets are suitable for transition.

Town Governance Workstream

Objectives: Putting in place new arrangements for town governance and municipal services.

Local Government:

- **What new arrangements are currently being considered for town governance and municipal services in Nhulunbuy post-mining?**

In 2024, the Reference Group will establish a Town Governance Working Group to support Nhulunbuy's transition to a gazetted Local Government Area and put in place new arrangements for town governance and municipal services over the coming years.

Planning for this Workstream will be progressed in 2024 and more details will be provided at subsequent Community Updates.

General Questions

Resources:

- **What resources have been committed by the members of the GPFRG to the process of ensuring a positive transition on the Gove Peninsula?**

The NT Government has initially committed \$2.1 million over three years to advance key transition workstreams initiatives including land tenure and master planning, economic development, essential services and infrastructure, town governance, and community and government services. Further funding requirements are currently being assessed.

The NIAA is currently providing co-funding support for key Reference Group projects, including land tenure and town planning. More broadly, the NIAA has committed staffing resources to the Reference Group process and engages with other Commonwealth agencies to broker support for the transition and post-mining future of First Nations communities across East Arnhem.

The NLC Nhulunbuy / East Arnhem team has grown from 4 staff in 2021 to 10 staff based in Nhulunbuy currently. This will continue to increase as housing becomes available and appropriate staff are transitioned into positions.

A Rio Tinto Town Transition team has been established to ensure that resources are identified and secured to deliver any necessary works within Nhulunbuy.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- **What is currently being done to make sure Yolŋu on the Gove Peninsula and across East Arnhem are informed about the transition away from mining and its impact on the region?**

Both Gumatj Corporation Limited and Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation are committed to holding community update events in both Yirkkala and Gunyaŋara in early 2024 and over the course of the coming years.



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October Business Month

Gove Futures Business Engagement Workshop

The Reference Group are making updates to the [Gove Futures website](https://GoveFutures.nt.gov.au) ([Govefutures.nt.gov.au](https://GoveFutures.nt.gov.au)) to include in-language materials which will make sure information is accessible to both Yolŋu and Däpaki across the East Arnhem Region. Briefings will also be considered on request to gove.future@nt.gov.au.

- **Will local businesses have the opportunity to engage with the GPFRG more regularly?**

Yes, the Reference Group will continue to hold Gove Futures Community Updates every six months with two sessions at alternative times to ensure a comprehensive cross section of the community (including residents and businesses) have the opportunity to attend. Residents and business owners are also invited to submit any questions they may have surrounding the work of the Reference Group via Gove.futures@nt.gov.au.

There are a range of specific engagements on particular topics that have, or will be undertaken. Examples include the SEIA, RAI Choice Modelling, current Land Tenure survey and future town Master Plan engagement.

- **Where can information be accessed by residents and businesses currently based on the Gove Peninsula?**

Residents and business can find further information on the [Gove Futures website](https://GoveFutures.nt.gov.au). Residents and business owners are also invited to submit any questions via Gove.futures@nt.gov.au.



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