

Gove Peninsula Futures Reference Group

Response to the WSP 2024 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Gove Peninsula Futures Reference Group (the **Reference Group**) is committed to driving and achieving a successful socio-economic transition for the Gove Peninsula in line with the [Traditional Owner Vision](#). Findings from the WSP Social Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) provide important insights into the challenges and opportunities we face. They tell us we must act swiftly and decisively over the coming years to achieve a successful transition.

The SEIA outlines estimated figures for employment and population impacts of mine closure and defines possible future scenarios for the Gove Peninsula based on real initiatives which are in differing stages of development. It sets out a number of key recommendations for the Reference Group to consider to help support a positive post-mining transition.

The Reference Group acknowledges the substantial work that has gone into the development of the SEIA and thanks all residents and business owners who engaged with WSP during the survey process.

In response to the SEIA, the Reference Group:

- Reconfirms our [2019 commitment](#) to work collaboratively to achieve a positive social and economic transition for the Gove Peninsula.
- Reconfirms our [2021 commitment](#) to progress the transition in line with the [Traditional Owner Vision](#) and Guiding Principles.
- Commits to continue to move with purpose to reach critical milestones, reduce uncertainty and promote confidence for residents, businesses and investors.

The SEIA outlines a number of considerations for the region's future transition. Significant work is already being progressed by the Reference Group to counter the expected impacts of mine closure and support the region's future. The GPFRG's response to the SEIA's considerations, and a high-level summary of current work, is detailed at **Attachment A**.

Whilst this provides a point-in-time snapshot of the Reference Group's work remit, we know that there is more to do. We strongly encourage community members to attend upcoming Gove Futures Community Updates and visit the [Gove Futures website](http://www.govefutures.nt.gov.au) (www.govefutures.nt.gov.au) regularly for the most up-to-date information on transition planning.



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Attachment A –

GPFRG Response to the WSP 2024 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

WSP SEIA Considerations	GPFRG Response
<p>Stakeholder management (engagement) and planning through transition</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase Yolŋu engagement and communication activities 2. Provide clarity about the social transition plan 3. Implement a communication and engagement strategy targeted at local businesses 4. Develop an integrated plan for mine closure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The GPFRG will build on the current communications approach to provide information and updates to residents and businesses on all aspects of transition. Regular updates to the Gove Futures website (www.govefutures.nt.gov.au), twice yearly community updates in Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Gunyangara and facilitated engagement in homelands will continue. Yolŋu Matha recordings and translated materials are also being produced. Specific briefings for organisations or interested groups can be arranged on request by contacting gove.futures@nt.gov.au. 2. The 'Social Transition Plan' is being progressed under two workstreams - the <i>Community and Government Services</i> workstream and <i>Yolŋu and Däpaki Together</i> workstream (see further notes in relevant sections below regarding actions on foot). 3. The first of a series of business specific GPFRG engagements was held in October 2023 with Q&As developed following and now uploaded on the Gove Futures website. Further engagements will be scheduled for regular intervals and on specific initiatives – such as the current Land Tenure business survey and recent Choice Modelling survey. 4. The GPFRG will continue to refine and develop its integrated plan for closure and town transition.
<p>Transitioning the economy to support a sustainable population</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a blueprint for retention, development, management and use of residential housing in Nhulunbuy 2. Work with Yolŋu and local businesses to strengthen local tourism 3. Drive innovation to diversify Nhulunbuy's economy 4. Advance the town operating cost model 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The GPFRG is commissioning the development of a Housing Strategy which will address all aspects of this WSP consideration and go further to assess options for affordable housing and opportunities to transition to a more conventional housing ecosystem and market (akin to other regional towns around Australia). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rio Tinto, Traditional Owners and the NT Government are working to handback serviced land and construct up to 80 new houses in Nhulunbuy to support regionalisation and business growth. 2. The East Arnhem Tourism Destination Management Plan includes actions to support growth of the tourism sector including supporting local and Yolŋu businesses to take advantage of future opportunities. 3. Significant work is currently underway to support a sustainable economic transition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A range of commercial projects in aquaculture, tourism, accommodation, aerospace, arts and culture and humans services are being facilitated through investment pathways. Projects are at different stages of development, and have informed SEIA Scenarios 1 & 2. - An Investment Gateway Tool has been developed to support new investors to provide quality project information for Traditional Owner consideration and decision making. 4. Securing land tenure and a town master plan for the future:



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional Owner engagement has commenced to confirm preferred post-mining land tenure arrangements, giving certainty to residents, businesses, banks and investors. - Procurement will shortly commence to develop a township masterplan in 2024 to identify how Nhulunbuy's future physical environment can reflect community aspirations and facilitate growth. - Legal and regulatory pathways are being defined to allow diversified land use on the minerals title areas, so as to support new industry development in line with Traditional Owner aspirations. - Work will commence later in 2024 to plan for the transition of municipal and community services over the next 3-5 years.
<p>Upskilling the population to sustain services and supply of future investments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted Yolŋu worker transition plan with focus on redeployment 2. Upskill Yolŋu to maximise uptake of future employment opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The GPFRG acknowledges that supporting a strong local workforce, as well as retaining key skilled workers, is central to the region's economic and industry transition. Workforce reskilling and upskilling initiatives are part of the GPFRG's current planning and over the coming years, and as new and significant industries emerge, targeted worker upskilling and reskilling opportunities will be offered. These initiatives will be developed in partnership with expanding and future industry sectors. 2. The GPRFG will actively explore opportunities to improve pathways from school to training and higher education and on to work, including through the impending changes to the Community Development Program and work with new industry operators to ensure local employment is maximised.
<p>Sustaining and strengthening community and government services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detailed strategy for regionalisation of government services 2. Development of Nhulunbuy as services hub 3. Develop strategy targeted at community members to improve health and wellbeing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active planning is being undertaken to plan for short and longer term regionalisation and transition of community and government services in line with community priorities. Since 2014, the region has seen significant growth in regional services and more opportunities are being assessed. Plans to construct over 80 new houses once service land becomes available will see opportunities for up to 80 new NT Government positions to be located in Nhulunbuy. Beyond that, regional service providers have indicated that between 50-100 jobs could be regionalised if housing is made available. 2. The Reference Group consulted on Nhulunbuy residents' and businesses' service preferences in 2023 and, in 2024, will consult with broader regional service users. These consultations are important to inform government decision-making on future service delivery and to assess options for increasing Nhulunbuy's role as a regional services hub. A plan for further regionalisation will be developed in the coming years.
<p>Providing essential services and infrastructure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning is underway for the transition of essential services to new authorities, including via detailed assessment of asset condition and identification of necessary upgrades for handover.



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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider outcomes of Town Transition PFS to maximise effective transition of essential town infrastructure 2. Negotiate to maintain regional access to aviation services 3. Collaborate with Groote Eylandt Steering Committee to understand potential cumulative impacts of GEMCO closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major infrastructure investments are being progressed to support the region’s future development. This includes \$9m of improvements at the Boat Club tourism precinct; master-planning for a \$10M+ co-investment to the commercial areas of the port to support new industry; over \$20M investment in further upgrades to the Gove District Hospital, \$4.5M investment in regional arts centres and \$350M is now secured for upgrades to the Central Arnhem Road. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The GPFRG appreciates inter and intra-regional air services are critical for residents and businesses in the region. The GRPFG will be engaging with all major regional transport services to ensure service continuity beyond mining, particularly closer to the cessation of mining. Planning approaches will include the potential to strengthen regional interconnectivity to support Nhulunbuy’s service hub role. 3. Two GPFRG members are already actively working to support the Groote Eylandt transition process and will ensure learnings are shared the Gove Peninsula and Groote Eylandt mining transitions.
<p>Promoting community wellbeing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted counselling and mental health services for Rio Tinto employees 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The GPFRG recognises that employers supporting community wellbeing, including through targeted support services, will be a vital component of the transition process as it was in 2014.
<p>Improving the level of cross-cultural respect, partnership and collaboration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore ways to heal Country with Traditional Owners 2. Promote Yolŋu culture and arts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-cultural respect and partnership must form the basis of the Gove Peninsula’s sustainable future transition in line with the principles of the Traditional Owner vision. The GPFRG committed to this way of working in our 2021 commitment. 2. In supporting this community led change, the NT Government and Commonwealth have invested in a five-year <i>Stronger Places, Stronger People</i> initiative on the Gove Peninsula, to identify opportunities for community-led collective impact approaches which strengthen the Peninsula into the future.

The above points are only a snapshot in time of some of the work on foot. For the latest updates, community members are encouraged to attend a Community Update or visit the [Gove Futures website](#).



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