



# Pilbara Kimberley Forum 2018

## POSITION STATEMENT

### KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ The Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia contribute disproportionately to the national accounts through a narrow set of key industries and resources.
- ✓ Both the Pilbara Development Commission's Investment Blueprint and the Commonwealth Government's Northern Australia White Paper indicate that future growth will come from innovation, diversification and rising to new opportunities.
- ✓ Pilbara and Kimberley stakeholders, as well as key State and Commonwealth leaders, need to meet regularly to discuss this bright future for the region, and to develop innovative solutions to current impediments to such necessary reform.
- ✓ Big opportunities, and big challenges standing in their way, will require big thinking, and this necessitates frank discussions on controversial issues and new approaches that by definition will not fit the current accepted mould or business of government.
- ✓ The Pilbara and Kimberley need to ensure that the reforms and support advocated are in line with what will need to happen to take advantage of the opportunities of a growing Asian middle class, so that the region continues to disproportionately contribute to the national accounts.

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### COMMITMENTS SOUGHT

- ✓ That State and Commonwealth Government's commit to implementing the findings of the Forum's final report of recommendations;
- ✓ That State and Commonwealth Government's consider provisioning specific, dedicated funding programs for the implementation of innovative initiatives that by their definition may not fit current funding programs; and
- ✓ That the State and Commonwealth Government's support a reform of policy settings and funding distribution models that are less south-east focused based on population, and more northern focused based on untapped potential economic return.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2014 the PRC hosted the Pilbara Kimberley Forum in Jakarta, Indonesia, matching a number of Australian leaders with Indonesian investors and banking capital.

The 2016 Forum was considerably larger, however both events were held back by a lack of key government reforms and leadership. In short, there is no sense in encouraging investors to consider the Pilbara if the region is characterised by underdeveloped project concepts or known to be a difficult investment environment.

In 2018, the event will be refocused to encompass the broader strategic development of the north. Across Western Australia and Queensland, there is a disproportionately strong representation of senior Commonwealth ministers. The Foreign Minister, Attorney General, and Ministers for Finance, Employment, Justice, Aged Care and Indigenous Health all come from Western Australia. The Ministers for Trade, Investment and Tourism, Regional Development, Regional Communications, Local Government and Territories, Immigration and Border Protection, Resources and Northern Australia all come from Queensland, and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs comes from the Northern Territory.

Out of 30 ministry positions, 11 represent the North. For the first time in decades, there is a commitment to developing the north and regional economies, aligned to matching commitments from the State Governments. An opportunity exists to more effectively leverage this strategic weight and to truly speak with one voice for northern Australia.

