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"The Northern
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POPULATION OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA NOW APPROACHING 6% OF AUSTRALIAN TOTAL

Population of Northern Australia as a percent of the Australian total is no longer 4% as is often quoted.

As the latest figures from Australian Bureau of Statistics show, in estimated residential population, Northern Australia is now 5.7% or in round figures, approaching 6%, of the Australian total (see **Table #1**).

Northern Australia is defined as generally north of the Tropic of Capricorn but including those sections of the Queensland Fitzroy and Central West Statistical Divisions and of the Northern Territory south of the tropic.

The 4% is an old figures that goes back to the 1950s (see **Table #2**). Using the 4% figure fails to recognise that population growth rates in the north have been outpacing those of southern Australia.

Population of Northern Australia now stands at 1.3 million and on long term trends, without any acceleration, can be expected to reach 2.3 million by 2050.

On trend growth, the Cairns / Far North Queensland region, (now largest of North Australia's six major regions with the fastest trend growth rate), can be expected to reach a population of the order of 550,000 by 2050, ie. above the current population of Tasmania (see **Table #3**).

The northern cities have been growing especially strongly and outpacing the growth rates of their southern counterparts as outlined in the attached, "*A Note on Urban Growth in Northern Australia*"

Table #1: Estimated Residential Population Northern Australia, 2013

		<u>Est Res Pop'n</u>
Queensland	Cairns / Far North	278,064
	Townsville / Mt Isa / Northern Highlands	263,845
	Mackay	180,200
	Fitzroy / Central West	241,943
Northern Territory		240,759
Western Australia	Kimberley / Pilbara	106,188
Total Northern Australia		1,310,999
Southern Australia		21,825,282
Australia		23,136,281
Northern Australia as Percent Australia		5.7%

Source: Cummings Economics from Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**POPULATION OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA NOW
APPROACHING 6% OF AUSTRALIAN TOTAL**

Table #2: Population Distribution, Australia, 1954 Census

Tropical Queensland	301,725
Northern Territory	16,469
Pilbara, Kimberley & North West Western Australia	10,413
Total Northern/Tropical	328,607
Remainder Queensland	1,016,534
Remainder Western Australia	629,358
New South Wales	3,423,529
Victoria	2,452,341
South Australia	797,094
Tasmania	308,752
Australian Capital Territory	30,315
Total Non-Tropical Australia	8,657,923
Total Australia	8,986,530
Percent Tropical Australia	3.7%

Note: The figures for the North would be understated due to undercount of the indigenous population. Actual percentage would be more like 4%.

Source: Queensland Year Book 1959, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Qld Office & ABS Cat 2108 Part V Vol 1.

**Table #3: Projections of Population of North's Cities and Regions to 2050
(at 1991 to 2011 av. annual growth rates)**

<u>City</u>	<u>Region</u> ⁽¹⁾	<u>Av annual growth 1991 - 2011 percent per annum</u>	<u>2011 residential population</u>	<u>Projected residential population 2050</u>
Cairns		+2.66% ⁽²⁾	145,986	406,400
	Far North	+1.90%	264,405	550,887
Townsville		+1.94%	167,371	354,096
	North	+1.43% ⁽²⁾	224,678	390,886
Mackay		+2.17%	83,600	193,116
	Mackay	+1.64% ⁽²⁾	171,564	323,555
Rockhampton/Gladstone		+1.32%	126,083	210,266
	Fitzroy	+1.30%	217,123	359,314
	QLD Central, West & NW	(-0.46%)	46,914	39,193
Darwin		+2.50%	129,106	338,203
	Northern Territory	+1.69%	231,292	444,644
	Pilbara, Kimberley	+1.74%	98,568	193,158
Total North Australia			1,254,544	2,301,637

⁽¹⁾ *Note: Statistical Divisions.*

⁽²⁾ *Note: Adjusted for boundary changes.*

Source: Cummings Economics from Australian Bureau Statistics Cat 3218.0.



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A Note on URBAN GROWTH IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

There have been suggestions recently that population growth in Northern Australia would be best promoted by concentrating on building up one city as a 'metropolitan' centre with Darwin, Townsville (or Cairns) being canvassed. The following gives background information on urban development and why such a policy is not likely to be successful in maximizing economic growth in northern Australia.

Geographic realities

The suggestion fails to recognise that Northern Australia covers an area almost equivalent to that of southern Australia. Realities of areas and distances in southern Australia leads to six states and five metropolitan centres.

Although populations in Northern Australia are much smaller, realities of areas and distances leads to six clearly defined regions served by five substantial regional cities of Darwin, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton.

The regions these cities service are state sized in dimension. The Cairns / Far North region is as deep from north to south as the State of New South Wales. The regions based on Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton, each cover an area as large or larger than Victoria (see **Map 1**). The Mackay region covers an area the size of Tasmania.

Ratios of population in the regional cities compared with hinterland and total regional populations are fairly typical of capital city relationships, ie. accounting for about half or more of total regional population. Typical of worldwide trends, the cities have been accounting for an increasing proportion of population in each of the regions.

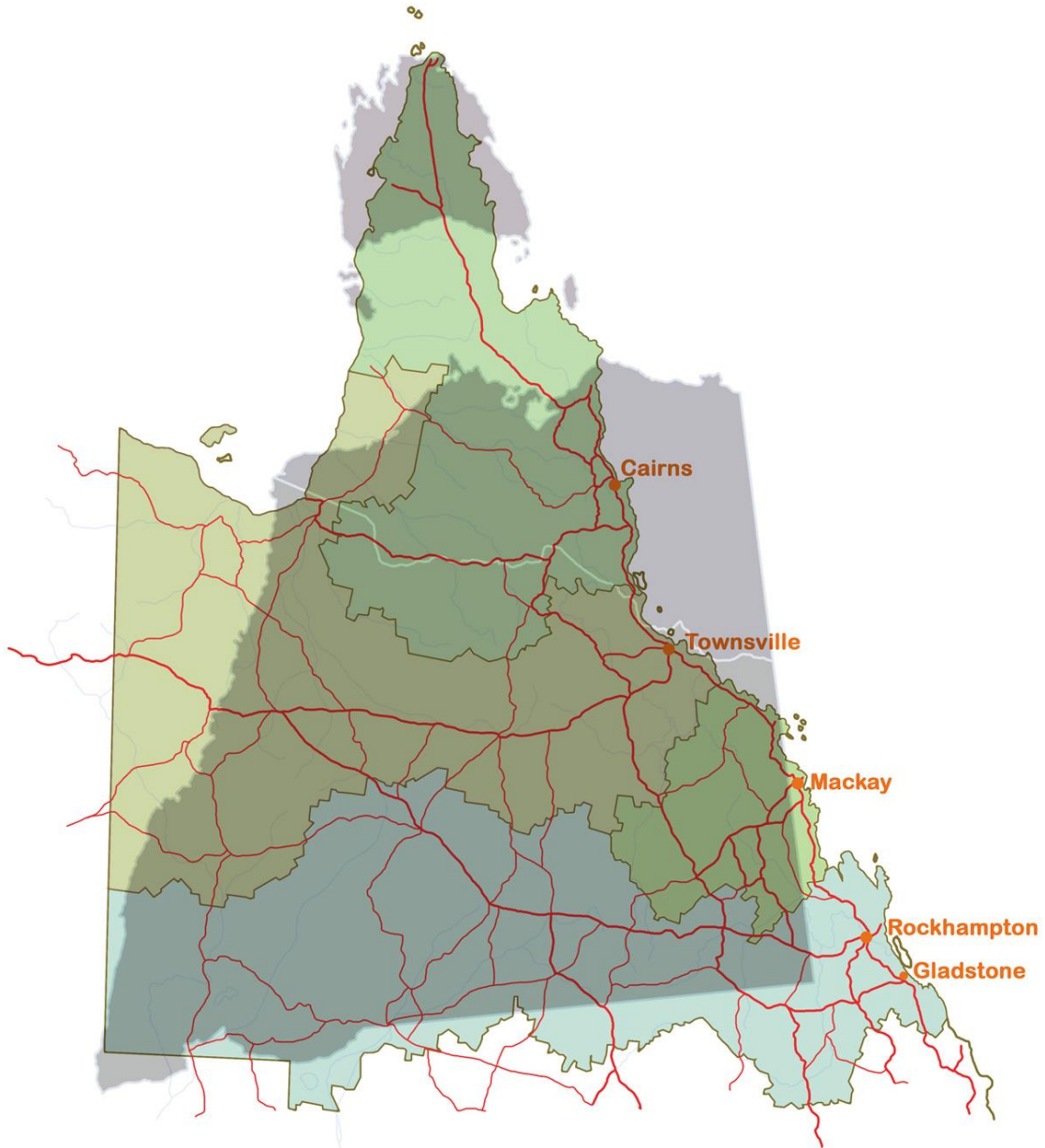
Table #1: Historical Population Relationship between the North's Regional Capitals and their Service Areas (estimated residential population)

	<u>1976</u>		<u>2011</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Capital of region</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Capital of region</u>
Darwin	46,655	46%	129,062	56%
Northern Territory	101,400		231,331	
Cairns SSD	48,753	39%	146,477	55%
Far North Queensland SD	125,210		265,945	
Townsville SSD	88,400	47%	167,636	64%
North & North West SDs	180,560		260,048	
Mackay SSD	39,500	44%	83,350	49%
Mackay SD	89,300		171,297	
Rockhampton/Gladstone SSDs ⁽¹⁾	72,900	51%	126,155	55%
Fitzroy & Central West SDs	144,050		229,552	

⁽¹⁾ *Note: Rockhampton's port is about 100km away at Gladstone. The other cities are co-located with their port.*

Source: Cummings Economics from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Cat 3218.0 and previous.

Map 1 – Area of Northern Queensland Compared with
New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania



The northern cities already outpacing the southern metropolitan centres

The suggestion ignores that the North's regional capitals have been growing strongly as part of an increasingly successful North.

Table #2: Long Term Growth, Northern Australia's Major Regional Capitals, 1976 to 2011 (Est Res Pop'n)

Northern Australia	1976	2011	Growth	
			No.	%
Darwin	46,655	129,062	82,407	+177%
Cairns	48,753	146,477	97,724	+200%
Townsville	88,401	167,626	79,225	+90%
Mackay	39,500	83,350	43,850	+111%
Rockhampton / Gladstone	72,900	126,155	53,255	+73%
Total	296,209	652,670	356,461	+120%

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat 3218.0 and previous.

Percentage growth rates of the combined northern cities at 120% has outstripped that of all the southern metropolitan centres.

Table #3: Percentage Growth Combined Northern Cities Compared with Southern Metropolitan Centres, 1976-2011

Sydney	+47%
Melbourne	+49%
Brisbane	+103%
Adelaide	+34%
Perth	+117%
Average	+60%
cf Northern Regional Capitals	+120%

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat 3218.0 and previous.

As following **Table #4** illustrates, the combined population growth 1976-2011 in the northern regional cities exceeded in absolute terms that of Adelaide (the smallest of the southern metropolitan centres). On a continuation of 1976-2011 trajectories, their combined total will be close to Adelaide in size by 2046.

Table #4: Growth in Population, Northern Regional Capitals and Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area Compared, 1976-2011

Population	Regional Cities Northern Australia	Greater Adelaide
1976	296,209	940,100
2011	652,670	1,262,940
Growth	356,461	322,840
	+120%	+34%
Projected 2046	1,435,874	1,692,340

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat 3218.0 and previous.

Economic realities

Like the metropolitan centres in southern Australia, the comparative growth of the regional cities of the North is very much governed by a combination of the inherent natural resource endowment in their service regions, strategic location, market, and economic forces.

An examination of **Table #2** indicates that the two largest cities in 1976, Townsville and Rockhampton / Gladstone (the old pastoral port capitals of Northern and Central Queensland), have been the slowest growing.

Fastest growing have been the two Far Northern cities of Cairns and Darwin servicing regions deeper into the tropics and previously less developed. These cities are also closest to Asia.

Mackay, located like Cairns in a higher rainfall coastal belt, has already passed Rockhampton (without Gladstone) in population.

Cairns has been drawing up on Townsville and its regional population is now larger than the Townsville region.

Townsville, despite a great deal of 'pump' priming as a 'growth centre' in the past, including major defence bases, university, research and government offices, has failed to respond commensurately.

Townsville has been successful as a capital of its immediate north and north west regions and increased its percentage of population in this area. However its percentage of population in a wider northern Queensland region from Sarina north has hardly increased, ie. from 22% in 1976 to 24% in 2011. This is hardly a capital city relationship to this wider area.

The right policies for urban development in the North

The North has five well established urban growth centres (including Rockhampton / Gladstone as one growth centre), that by and large, have been outgrowing in percentage terms the metropolitan centres of the south and by a long way most regional cities in the south. They each service state sized regions and there is need for Government services to be delivered through each; not just one of two.

As **Table #5** illustrates, on a repeat of the growth trajectories of the 35 years, 1976 to 2011, population in the Northern capitals could be expected to be up to 1.4 million by 2046.

Table #5: Forward Projection of Population at Same Rate as 35 Years, 1976-2011

	<u>Growth 1976-2011</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2046</u>
Darwin	+177%	129,062	357,000
Cairns	+200%	146,477	439,000
Townsville	+90%	167,626	318,000
Mackay	+111%	83,350	176,000
Rockhampton / Gladstone	+73%	126,155	218,000
Total	+120%	652,670	1,435,874

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat 3218.0 and previous.

It is important to recognize in the North however, that much growth will come from dispersed resource based development and that there will be a need for growth of urban service centres outside of the northern capitals where needed to support development in fields like agriculture, fisheries, mining and tourism.