Future options for north Australia
Future Options for North Australia


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**Author**
Garnett, Stephen T.
Woinarski, John C. Z.
Gerritsen, Rolf
Duff, Gordon A.

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**Abstract**
Anticipating the future is uniquely human. We strive constantly to anticipate trends and great events to seek opportunity and avoid disaster. So what will drive the future of tropical Australia? The four authors of this book, all of whom have a close association with the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savanna Management, identify ten major drivers that will shape the north: population, social function, property rights, Commonwealth policy, the global economy, resource use, oil futures, climate change, invasive organisms and technological innovation. For each they identify the risks, uncertainties and the extent to which they can be controlled by the people of the north. Then they describe seven possible futures: chronic underdevelopment, degeneration, a northern ricebowl, an industrial powerhouse, environment first, an Indigenous community Utopia and dynamic urbanization. These are not predictions. They are scenarios to make readers think and realize that the decisions being made today will have a profound influence in the future. Whereas for the rest of the world, the future has largely been set by unplanned development and the irrevocable contingencies of history, northern Australia can be moulded by deliberate and considered choices. Our generation has the opportunity and frightening responsibility to make those choices. Stephen Garnett has had experience in many different sectors - Indigenous, pastoral, government and academic - in his 30 years in tropical Australia. John Woinarski is the doyen of environmental scientists in the north with a deep understanding of the evolutionary processes that have shaped and will shape our region. Rolf Gerritsen is an economist with an independent view of trends in tropical economies and Gordon Duff, who once headed the Tropical Savannas CRC, has had decades of experience bringing diverse groups together in a common purpose to take the north forward towards more harmonious future.

**Keyword**
Environment & NRM
Northern Australia

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