GISERA | Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance

Project Order

Short Project Title

Pathways for Indigenous socio-economic development in the Beetaloo region of the
Northern Territory

Long Project Title	Pathways for Indigenous socio-economic development in the Beetaloo region of the NT, with a focus on the potential of shale gas and broader extractive sector
GISERA Project Number	To be allocated by GISERA Executive Officer
Start Date	02/05/2025
End Date	31/07/2026
Project Leaders	Dr Cameron Huddlestone-Holmes (UQ lead researchers: Assoc. Prof Sarah Holcombe and Assoc. Prof Kathy Witt)

GISERA State/Territory

- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ New South Wales
- ☒ **Northern Territory**
- ☐ South Australia
- ☐ Western Australia
- ☐ Victoria
- ☐ National scale project

Basin(s)

- ☐ Adavale
- ☐ Amadeus
- ☒ **Beetaloo**
- ☐ Canning
- ☐ Carnarvon
- ☐ Clarence-Morton
- ☐ Cooper
- ☐ Eromanga
- ☐ Galilee
- ☐ Gippsland
- ☐ Gloucester
- ☐ Gunnedah
- ☐ Maryborough
- ☐ McArthur
- ☐ North Bowen
- ☐ Otway
- ☐ Perth
- ☐ South Nicholson
- ☐ Surat
- ☐ Other (please specify)

GISERA Research Program

- ☐ Water Research
- ☐ Health Research
- ☐ Biodiversity Research
- ☒ **Social & Economic Research**
- ☐ Greenhouse Gas Research
- ☐ Agriculture Research
- ☐ Land and Infrastructure Management Research
- ☐ Other (please specify)

1. Project Summary

The development of a shale gas industry in the Beetaloo Sub-basin of the Northern Territory brings potential social and economic opportunities to the region. However, for Aboriginal communities, who make up the majority of the region's population, the pathway to realising these opportunities is uncertain and complex. Historically, Aboriginal people in the region have faced numerous barriers to economic development, including limited access to employment, education and commercial knowledge. These challenges are further compounded by linguistic and cultural differences that do not align with mainstream economic practices, as well as the region's overall limited economic development. Imposition of top-down development initiatives have often failed to address community disadvantage and have not led to community empowerment and sustainable outcomes.

This project will work with rights holders and stakeholders in the Beetaloo region to look at how economic opportunities from shale gas and other projects (agriculture, renewables, etc) can support the aspirations, values, and priorities of Aboriginal communities. This project will consider existing governance instruments (including local decision-making frameworks, community strategic plans and Indigenous land use agreements) to understand what mechanisms for economic engagement currently exist, their implementation status, and alignment with self-determination objectives.

Comparisons will be made to similar Indigenous-controlled development strategies in resource regions in Australia and internationally. The outcome of the project will be to identify the types of opportunities and benefits that can be pursued in the region, and what mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives are needed to enable these communities to take greater control of their development pathways.

2. Project Description

Introduction

Background

One of the drivers for the development of onshore gas in the Beetaloo region is to strengthen the economy of the NT. This applies to the overall economy of the Territory and to the region where the resources will be developed. The region has a high proportion of Aboriginal people living in remote communities in a mobile and dispersed population. According to the 2021 ABS census 67% of the Barkly local government region and 75.2% of the Roper Gulf local government region identify as Indigenous, compared to 26% across the rest of the NT (ABS Barkly 2021), and less than 4% of Australia. These people have articulated a desire to increase their economic opportunities so that they can improve their living standards and long-term viability for their communities. However, this is counterbalanced by a desire to preserve social, cultural and environmental values in the region.

Experience in other regions has shown that the development of resources can bring significant economic and social benefits to local communities (De Valck, Williams and Kuik 2021; Everingham *et al* 2022); However, there are also many examples showing that this transition is not always smooth and that local communities can be disenfranchised in the process (Altman and Martin 2009; Everingham, Trigger and Keenan, 2021; Fleming, Measham and Paredes, 2015). Remote Aboriginal communities may not be well positioned to engage in the mainstream economic opportunities that come with resource development. Identifying how community self-determination can be supported in such a transition may be an important way to maximise the benefits and strengthen communities over the long-term. The risks of inequities in access to potential wealth across the region also requires attention. For instance, the polarisation of a regional population through varying access to the financial benefits of gas and mining royalties is a significant issue in resource-rich regions (such as the Pilbara) and has led to divisions within families and communities. Addressing these disparities requires a proactive approach that includes targeted capacity-building, culturally appropriate engagement, and inclusive decision-making processes.

Prior Research

This project will apply an Indigenous-led socio-economic development approach to the Beetaloo Sub-basin region. It builds on the 'Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for the Beetaloo' work conducted by the Northern Institute, CDU in 2020, and recommendations and calls from Indigenous participants in the Social, Cultural and Economic (SCE) SREBA studies (2023), led by Associate Professor Kathy Witt at the Gas and Energy Transition Research Centre (formerly the Centre for Natural Gas), at The University of Queensland (UQ).

Social, Cultural and Economic (SCE) SREBA studies

The Social, Cultural and Economic (SCE) SREBA studies, sought "to understand the wellbeing of people and communities to provide a point-in-time snapshot, as a baseline of the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the Beetaloo Sub-basin and as a starting point for ongoing monitoring".

This baseline study recommended "initiating deliberative mechanisms that enable community-led economic development and that identify new types of economic opportunities for Aboriginal people and culture could boost Aboriginal participation". The study emphasised the interconnection of economic, social, environmental and cultural values.

The SCE studies also noted that "inequity in people's abilities to capture or leverage economic opportunities that might be created by development should be considered in planning".

The data that the SREBA identified will provide the foundational socio-economic and cultural baselines and indicators from which this project will draw.

Indigenous-led development and the extractive sector

Indigenous-led (or community-led) development is an emerging area of practice in Australia and globally. This approach shifts the focus from externally driven, top-down development models to one where Indigenous communities lead and shape their own socio-economic futures. In the context of the Beetaloo region there are multiple extractive projects driving many of these potential opportunities. Yet, the forms of development these externally driven economic interventions foster need not be in constant tension with regional Aboriginal communities. By prioritising self-determination, culturally-grounded governance and local decision-making, Indigenous-led development empowers communities to capture economic opportunities in ways that align with their values, traditions, and long-term aspirations. Globally, this practice is gaining recognition as a more sustainable and equitable model, offering not only economic benefits but also fostering social cohesion, cultural revitalisation, and resilience (Evans *et al* 2024; Gertz *et al* 2025). In Australia, growing efforts to support Indigenous-led development are part of a broader push towards addressing historical inequities and ensuring that communities are at the centre of decision-making processes that impact their lands, livelihoods, and futures.

A significant gap remains in understanding how Indigenous-led development models can be effectively applied in the Beetaloo Sub-basin. Addressing this gap is essential to ensuring that development in the region delivers benefits that genuinely support Indigenous self-determination and sustainable outcomes. This research will explore the specific mechanisms, governance structures, and capacity-building initiatives that can empower Indigenous communities in the Beetaloo to actively shape development in ways that align with their cultural values, aspirations, and long-term goals.

Prior research informing our approach:

Our approach to Indigenous-led development builds on decades of research by the UQ researchers (Holcombe and Keenan) and other organisations and scholars in Australia and internationally. This section outlines some of the major touchstones for our research approach, where we will consider the intersection of research on the community dimensions of resource extraction, transformational development and Indigenous self-determination, local livelihoods and community economies, remote and regional development, and capacity building for planning. To provide an essential baseline of local issues, we will be drawing on key submissions to the Pepper Inquiry, including the NLC's. Broader issues related to indigenous economic opportunities will be informed by the final reports of two Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee inquiries: the inquiry into *The engagement of traditional owners in the economic development of northern Australia* (2022) and the *Inquiry into economic self-determination and opportunities for First Nations Australians* (2024). Our report will also build on the 'Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for the Beetaloo' report (CDU 2020) and avoid repetition

- **Community dimensions of resource extraction:** Researchers Holcombe and Keenan are based at The University of Queensland's Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM), the world's largest university-based, industry-engaged group of social researchers dedicated to examining social and community issues related to resource extraction. CSRM is committed to improving the social performance of the global extractive industries, and has an extensive

research track record on issues relating to the intersection of local communities, Indigenous Peoples and resource development. CSRM's work has included, for example: guidance to resource companies on Indigenous rights and agreements, Indigenous participation, social impacts and benefit sharing, community-led development and multistakeholder governance, and human rights and development.

- **Transformational development:** We would learn from the work of the Central Land Council (CLC) and their Community Development Unit established in 2005, which focuses on "transformational development". They have since produced a raft of materials, including success factors to sustainable community development initiatives and also evaluations of specific programs, such as the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), which is funded through royalty monies from the Tanami mine.

  CSRM has collaborated with the Community Development Unit in relation to the Tanami Mine 10-Year Plan and undertaken long-term Social Impact Assessment work with Newmont and the CLC. The Community Development Unit works with Aboriginal people who choose to invest their collective royalty, rent, compensation and leasing income in projects that strengthen their communities, identities, languages, cultures and connections to country as well as their capacity to participate in mainstream Australia (see CLC https://www.clc.org.au/strengthening-our-communities/).

  Drawing from the CLC model, the Northern Land Council (NLC) also more recently developed a Community Planning and Development Unit, which has established two projects in the Borroloola-Barkly region.

- **Local livelihoods and community economies in remote regions:** A core body of research that will be drawn on is that developed by the Desert Knowledge CRC, which ran from 2002 to 2010. Lead researcher Holcombe was social science coordinator for this CRC for 3 years and also led a program of research on Indigenous community governance in central Australia (see Holcombe and Sanders 2010, Davis and Holcombe 2009, below). This 10-year program of work had several research streams focusing on local livelihoods and community economies. This stream includes research on "The Transformation of Assets for Sustainable Livelihoods in a Remote Aboriginal Settlement" (Moran *et al* 2007 DKCRC Research Report 28), and also "Growing businesses in the desert: Case studies of Australian desert micro, small and medium enterprises" (Rola-Rubzens *et al* 2011 DKCRC Report 74).

  Research from the ANU Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) over decades has focused on Aboriginal socio-economic policy and development in remote and regional areas, introducing concepts such as hybrid economies (Altman 2001), and focusing on engagement with the resources sector (Altman and Martin 2009). This significant research repository provides evidence of the impacts of policies, programs and development interventions in remote communities, much of it in northern Australia. Holcombe's research at CAEPR while at ANU also focused on these themes of Indigenous community governance

(2010) and the intersections between Indigenous interests and the mining industry (2009, 2010).

- **Capacity building for planning:** We will also be drawing on the research and the applied approach of the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) in Alice Springs. CAT was established in 1980 to research, design, develop and teach appropriate technologies and deliver technical training to Indigenous people living in remote communities. They have developed a range of "planning, livelihoods and engagement resources".

It is well recognised that landscapes are especially important to Aboriginal people, who retain a deep cultural and spiritual connection to country that has endured for millennia (for example, Pepper et al. 2018). There is significant prior anthropological research in the region, including for land claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1976)* and under the *Native Title Act (1993),* and some more widely available ethnographic research (Merlan 1998, Bradley 1988, 2010, Christian 2004), which will also be drawn on.

Selected relevant prior research:

Holcombe:

- Holcombe, SE. 2022. 'Cumulative impact assessment, Indigenous Peoples and the extractive sector: literature review and potential methods', in AB Fourie, M Tibbett & G Boggs (eds), *Mine Closure 2022: 15th International Conference on Mine Closure*, Australian Centre for Geomechanics, Perth, pp. 157-172.

- Holcombe, S., Elliott, V., Keeling, A., Berryman, M., Hall, R., Ngaamo, R., Beckett, C., Moon, W., Hudson, M., Kusabs, N. and Ross River Lands Office. 2022. *Indigenous Exchange Forum: Transitions in Mine Closure.* St Lucia: Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, University of Queensland. https://www.csrm.uq.edu.au/publications/the-indigenous-exchange-forum-transitions-in-mine-closure

- Holcombe, S. 2021. "The State's Selective Absence: Extractive Capitalism, Mining Juniors and Indigenous Interests in the Northern Territory". In [Eds] Nicholas Bainton and Emilia E. Skrzypek. *Absent Presence: Resource Extraction and the State in Papua New Guinea and Australia.* ANU press, Canberra.
- Holcombe, S and Kemp, D. 2020. "From Payout to participation: Indigenous mining employment as local development?" In the *Journal of Sustainable Development*. 28: 1122-1135.
- Holcombe, S. 2015. "The Ontologies and Ecologies of hardship: Past and Future Governance in the central Australian Arid zone" Chapter 9. In J.P Marshall and L.H Connor [eds] *Environmental Change and The World's Futures: Ecologies, Ontologies, Mythologies.* Routledge. Pp145-160.
- R.R.J. McAllister, S. Holcombe, J. Davies, J. Cleary , A. Boyle P. Tremblay, D.M. Stafford Smith, D. Rockstroh, M. Laflamme, M.F. Rola-Rubzen 2010. "Desert networks: a conceptual model for the impact of scarce, variable and patchy resources". In the *Journal of Ecology and Society.* Pp 164-173.

- Holcombe, S, Yates, P and Walsh, J. 2011 "Reinforcing Alternative Economies: Self motivated work by Central Anmatyerr people to sell Katyerr (Desert Raisin, Bush Tomato) in central Australia". *Rangeland Journal*, *33.* CSIRO. Pp. 255-265.
- Holcombe, S and Sullivan, P. 2012. "Indigenous Australian Organisations". Chapter 245. In [eds] D. Caulkins and A. Jordan. *A Companion to Organisational Anthropology*, Wiley Blackwell. Pp 493-518.
- Holcombe, S. 2010. "Sustainable Aboriginal Livelihoods and the Pilbara Mining Boom" in I. Keen [ed] *Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. ANU E-press monograph, Canberra. Pp 141-164.
- Holcombe, S. "Indigenous Entrepreneurialism in the Context of Mining Land Use Agreements". 2009. In [ed] J.C. Altman and D. Martin. *Culture, Power and Economy: Indigenous Australians and mining.* CAEPR Research Monograph 30. ANU E. press. Pp. 149-170. http://epress.anu.edu.au/caepr_series/no_30/pdf/ch07.pdf
- Ingamells, A. Holcombe, S. and Buultjens, J. 2010. "Economic Development and Remote Desert Settlements". *Community Development Journal*, Oxford University Press, UK. 2.
- Sanders, W. and Holcombe, S. 2010. "The Role of Local Government in Desert Settlement Sustainability: A View from Anmatjere". In [eds] K. Seemann and J. Buultjens *Sustainable Desert Settlements* special edition of the *Journal of Economic and Social Policy* (JESP). Pp 81-108.
- Davies, J. and Holcombe, S. 2009 "Desert Knowledge: Integrating knowledge and development in arid and semi-arid drylands". Chapter 1. *Desert Knowledge Special Edition of Geojournal*, Vol 74(5), 363-375.
- Holcombe, S. 2006. "'Community Benefit Packages': Development's Encounter with pluralism in the case of the mining industry", Chapter 5. In [eds] T. Lea, E. Kowal and G. Cowlishaw, *Moving Anthropology: Critical Indigenous Studies*, Charles Darwin University Press. Pp 79-94.

Keenan:
- Keenan, J. (2024) Dynamics of Consultation and Consent: A guided exploration of consultation and consent in natural resource management in principle and practice. *Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, The University of Queensland.* https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/2dce090e538447b798419a8e255aadef
- Franks, D., Keenan, J., Kariuki, A. & Tonda, E. (2022). Mineral resource governance and the global goals: an agenda for international collaboration - report of activities to implement United Nations environment assembly resolution on mineral resource governance (UNEP/EA.4/Res.19). Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme.
- Everingham, J.-A., & Keenan, J. (2017). Hindsight for Foresight: Lessons about Agreement Governance from Implementing the Gulf Communities Agreement. *Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, The University of Queensland.*
- Keenan, J., & Kemp, D. (2014). Mining and local-level development: Examining the gender dimensions of agreements between companies and communities. *Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, The University of Queensland.* https://www.csrm.uq.edu.au/media/docs/684/Mining-and-Local-Level-Development-FULL.pdf

- Trigger, D., Keenan, J., Rijke, K. de, & Rifkin, W. (2014). Aboriginal engagement and agreement-making with a rapidly developing resource industry: Coal seam gas development in Australia. *Extractive Industries and Society, 1*(2), 176–188. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2014.08.001

Need & Scope

Call for applied and participatory research:

The 2022 Social, Cultural and Economic (SCE) studies of the Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment (SREBA) for the Beetaloo Basin (led by Kathy Witt) found, as one of the summary findings, that:

> "Almost everyone supported development opportunities that can help facilitate the aspirations of local Aboriginal people to build greater economic self-sufficiency, and that designing the pathways for doing so should be community-specific and Aboriginal controlled. There was no further detail in the interviews about what processes might best facilitate a transition to Aboriginal-controlled economic development, except the need for government and industry to 'come and talk to us'" (SREBA executive summary 2022: 2).

This project answers this call and recognises that there are also other significant developments in the region, including a green energy hydrogen project, the Sun Cable Solar Farm (16,000 hectares), extensive areas of EPs for gas and mining, including BHPs Elliot copper project and large scale agricultural projects. These projects are all proposed to be supported by a Tennant Creek to Darwin infrastructure, planning and logistics (DIPL). The DIPL corridor is expected to provide high-pressure pipelines and other infrastructure to carry oil, hydrogen, water, digital communications and electricity to domestic and overseas markets.

Regional drivers – opportunities to be realised:

The development of shale gas (and other projects) in the Beetaloo Sub-basin presents a variety of potential economic benefits for the region. These economic benefits, however, must be balanced with strategies to ensure that local communities, particularly Aboriginal communities, are empowered to engage and benefit equitably from the development.

Commonly, economic opportunities relating to resource development include:

- **Employment**: The construction, operation, and maintenance of shale gas infrastructure could generate both short-term and long-term jobs in areas such as drilling, engineering, transport, and environmental management. This can also lead to indirect job creation in supporting industries like services, hospitality, and retail.

- **Business and contracting**: Indigenous businesses may benefit from providing goods and services to the industry, such as equipment supply, logistics, and consultancy. Indigenous

enterprises could also secure contracts for land management and environmental or cultural heritage monitoring, for example.

- **Services and infrastructure**: The establishment of a shale gas industry, other extractive projects and the renewables sector could bring improvements in regional infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and telecommunications, which could serve both industry and local communities, improving access to services and connectivity. Revenue from resource development could be reinvested into local infrastructure, health, education, and community services.

- **Indigenous land use agreements, corporate community investment and social programs:** Resource activities often require negotiation of Indigenous land use agreements. Although mining and gas land use agreements can potentially be positive for the beneficiaries, any benefits hinge on their successful implementation and the range of activities and benefits the agreements encompass.

This research will identify a range of emerging and potential economic development opportunities in the Beetaloo region, considering the categories above (and others as they emerge). The research will engage with existing companies/organisations to understand their policies and strategies for local and Indigenous participation and how these could be strengthened. Our role is not as community development practitioners – but rather as pragmatic applied researchers who can provide:

1) A platform for people's socio-economic ideas and visions
2) A conduit or bridge to those (industry/government/ NGO) who may support realistic pathways to get there
3) The ability to understand and analyse the challenges and potential barriers to realising the visions, and
4) Options for government policies, programs and industry reform.

Challenges to realisation:

Prior research on regional and community economic development in resource regions has identified several barriers that will also need to be addressed in the Beetaloo region.

- **Indigenous business and contracting:** With the diverse range of large-scale extractive and renewable projects in the region, there may be significant opportunities for procurement of civil works and related services from regional Indigenous businesses. Though there may be educational and other barriers in this region, Indigenous enterprise development in the resources sector has become an increasingly viable and impactful area, with many communities successfully leveraging contracts in construction, environmental management, logistics, and other service areas.

  Looking to the Pilbara mining region may have lessons to share, as some of the ILUAs there are decades old and the native title holding beneficiaries have had many years to establish wide-ranging community benefit programs and business enterprises to work with industry.

Holcombe's current research with the IBN (Yinhawangka, Banyjima and Nyiyiparli) Group, one of the largest Indigenous Trusts in Australia over the Mining Area C agreement with BHP, in the Pilbara will provide an important reference point.

The Aboriginal not for profit company AEMEE – Aboriginal Enterprises in Mining, Energy and Exploration – is an organisation that this project will reach out to – as their core values include "Promoting Aboriginal economic development", "Building the capacity of Indigenous enterprises" and "Creating meaningful relationships with Communities, Industry and Government". There may be opportunities to support groups in the region to connect with this organisation, which CSRM/UQ has established a close association with over many years.

- **Indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) implementation:** ILUAs, due to the extent of Aboriginal land and native title land, are numerous in the region. There are agreements for each major activity on these lands. The question of how Aboriginal beneficiaries of land use agreements can best lever their potential will be an important part of this project.

These agreements can be understood as a means for Indigenous people to exercise their agency (Slowey 2008; Feit 2010), notably in relation to resource development (Langton et al. 2003; O'Faircheallaigh 2011). The state is rarely a party to these agreements, and they usually contain a complex mix of training, employment and community development initiatives.

Australia does not have a public policy framework that guides [agreements] negotiation, terms of reference or implementation. Although mining and gas land use agreements can potentially be positive for the beneficiaries, any benefits hinge on their successful implementation. This includes the capacity of the company, the Aboriginal communities and the Indigenous representative body to uphold the conditions of the agreements. Previous research, and preliminary discussions with stakeholders, indicates that this is an area that needs focus. However, the research would not be concerned with the negotiation process or the content of specific agreements, but rather the potential that Agreements hold to promote community development.

- **Disengagement from top-down development initiatives**: Many government initiatives continue to be delivered from the top down, often by under-resourced agencies to which they have been outsourced, leaving governments disengaged from remote communities and lacking implementation capacity (Roche and Ensor 2014; Maddison 2019). As the CLC found in their community development work:

> "Over the past 45 years community development approaches have been applied in Aboriginal communities in Australia with varied success … Often initiatives are established using rhetoric of empowering disadvantaged communities to address their issues, but decision-making remains centralised. As a result, communities are not empowered and outcomes are not sustained" (CLC Community Development Framework 2021-2026).

This project proposes an alternative approach, focussing of Indigenous-led development as this is levering off extractive projects. By prioritising Indigenous leadership, decision-making,

and governance, this approach seeks to empower Aboriginal communities to take control of their own development pathways.

- **Absence of collective voice/mechanism for dialogue:** The SREBA SCE (2022) also provides signposts and flags for future research – such as the need for representative governance structures. The SCE found that there are pockets of strong voices, but no collective voice or representation of all the interests in the Beetaloo region – such that would provide a governance mechanism to facilitate meaningful dialogue about development opportunities and concerns. This project will investigate possible mechanisms with a focus on leveraging such interests into multi-stakeholder networks. We also engage with the NTG's Local Decision Making Framework (see https://ldm.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/791358/ldm-policy.pdf).

The Indigenous organisation 'Original Power' have developed a *Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who want to change the world.* This Guide offers important insights into how, at a grassroots level, change is mobilised.

Objectives

- To explore what Indigenous-led development would look like for Aboriginal communities in the Beetaloo region.

- To provide opportunities for rights holders and stakeholders (including the broader community in the region) to share their socio-economic development visions and support shared discussions and dialogue.

- To identify the types of social and economic opportunities that align with the visions of local communities in the Beetaloo region.

- To explore mechanisms that enable these opportunities to be captured, including governance mechanisms and the negotiated agreements (ILUAs).

- To provide evidence-based options for policies, programs and industry reform.

Methodology

The project is multi-method, cross-disciplinary and iterative. It has several stages, each building on the previous stage, they include:

Preparatory work, ethics and study design considerations

As we are working with human subjects, and notably Aboriginal people as a vulnerable population, applying for ethics approval is a first step. The detailed and robust application process at UQ will support us to ensure that the project focuses on accountability, transparency and benefit sharing in the research process. We will be preparing project information sheets, and consent forms that we will be providing to all of the stakeholders and the rights holders we engage with. CSIRO will also be named in the ethics application to ensure that it addresses CSIRO's reciprocal human research ethics

processes. We will also be applying for a research permit from the Northern Land Council and will engage with the NLC and their anthropologists through the development of this permit application.

Participatory and collaborative approaches to community-based research is now standard practice and our approach will be to ensure that we are open and inclusive. We propose an initial introductory field trip to co-design the research and begin to establish a locally based co-research team. We are mindful that a key finding from the Social, Cultural and Economic SREBA was that the "onshore gas development was taking place in a very low trust environment". As a result, ensuring that all of those who may have felt disenfranchised are included in this project will be important. There is always a risk that community members and other stakeholders are fatigued by the flow of researchers through the town/community. We are mindful of this and will ensure that we take any other engagement activities into account as appropriate and relevant when arranging our visits.

Proposed research tasks:

The following research tasks will be concurrent, iterative and mutually informative:

- **International Literature Review on Indigenous-Led Development**: Conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature on Indigenous-led development practices globally, identifying successful models, frameworks, and lessons learned that can inform approaches in the Beetaloo region.

- **Beetaloo Regional Scan**: Undertake an assessment to identify existing capacities, plans, organisations, and networks related to economic development. This scan will adopt a strengths-based approach, recognising and building upon the existing work and initiatives undertaken by local Indigenous communities and organisations. By highlighting existing community assets and relationships, we aim to understand the current landscape and identify gaps and opportunities for further Indigenous-led initiatives. We will incorporate findings of the CDU Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for the Beetaloo and the SCE studies. We will develop an organisational map for the region, both to ensure that we engage with all of the appropriate groups and so that we understand the potential overlap and duplication of service delivery within the system.

- **Engagement with Rights holders and Stakeholders**: Facilitate ongoing engagement with rights holders and key stakeholders (including the broader community in the region) to collaboratively design the research process. This will include co-designing research methodologies, gathering data, and conducting collaborative analysis to ensure that the perspectives and needs of Aboriginal communities are central to the research outcomes. This on the ground participatory methodology and collaborative fieldwork is a key distinction between this project and the CDU Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for the Beetaloo project, undertaken from Darwin.

Mid-point milestones will be used to track development and inform next steps.

Literature review

The literature review will commence in early 2025 and continue throughout the project until the final write-up stage in early 2026.

There is a raft of literature on Indigenous-led development, self-determination and engagement with resource development. There are fewer examples of strategic, regional approaches. This research task will incorporate analyses of approaches in other regions of Australia and internationally.

The review will incorporate, as needed, research on agreement making, the content of agreements and their implementation, similar examples of economic engagement for remote local communities, Indigenous economic development strategy, sustainable livelihoods, community economies and hybrid economies both in Australia and internationally with a focus on comparable settler states, such as Aotearoa/New Zealand, the USA and Canada.

Regional scan

The objective of the regional scan will be to focusing on understanding existing capacities, plans, organisations, and networks related to economic development in the Beetaloo region. The scan will aim to cover different sectors (e.g., mining, renewable energy, community services); types of organisations (e.g., Indigenous corporations, government agencies, non-profits); relevant policies, strategic plans, and governance frameworks; and strengths, assets, and resources available in the region, such as skilled workforce, local knowledge, cultural heritage, and existing infrastructure.

Developing the scope of the scan and mapping out regional assets will require a combination of desktop and field research.

Field research

Social science studies with the local community including interviews, surveys, and conversations in public spaces with a strong focus on a participatory approach and co-design of research outcomes.

This will build on the work and relationships developed through UQ's SCE studies for SREBA. To be successful – this project has to be highly participatory and collaborative. We propose focus groups, and informal meetings in the communities and towns in the region.

We anticipate two periods of field work - each for two weeks: encompassing the towns and communities of Katherine / Mataranka / Elliot / Marlinja / Tennant Creek and Borooloola. As appropriate we may also visit outstations. We would also spend time in Darwin meeting with the NLC, AAPA, government agencies (such as the NT Chamber of Commerce and the NT Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, who have been actively mapping capabilities in the Barkley region), government relevant service providers, gas industry groups, and business groups (such as the NT Chamber of Commerce, Industry Capability Network Northern Territory and Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network for their knowledge and insights).

Though the focus will be on working with and partnering with Aboriginal rights holders, it is also essential that we talk with other stakeholders in the region – including Aboriginal people who are not

rights holders, pastoralists, small business owners and the multiple layers of government that are implementing the Barkly Regional Deal (BRD).

We will be actively seeking to partner with the new Barkly Aboriginal Alliance established under the BRDeal, via the Barkly Backbone initiative. As at June 2023 this Alliance "is an emerging, standalone independent Aboriginal representative body, with membership of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal peoples living on community homelands throughout the Barkley region. The Alliance [was] formed to provide a voice of the Aboriginal communities, outstations and homelands in the Barkly region… ". They have established a contact list of community leaders from the 12 identified regional communities and outstations. The Alliance has also identified 11 regional language groups.

However, we recognise that this initiative may not be fully established, and we also have the benefit of being able to draw on the stakeholder database that was developed for the SREBA and the researchers existing contacts throughout the region.

We will budget for Aboriginal co-researchers, including researchers from this group. We will also be paying for Aboriginal participation in the interviews and focus groups and will also budget for this. We will provide lunch / afternoon / morning teas as appropriate. We will establish a comprehensive communications strategy to ensure that we are engaging participants at times and in places that is convenient to them. We will also establish a project reference committee which will include – as appropriate – local and regional Aboriginal leaders and other interested stakeholders.

Our fieldwork approach recognises that as a patchwork of Aboriginal land tenures and pastoral tenures there is also considerable diversity socially, culturally and economically.

Reporting

The results will be synthesised using an iterative approach, with each stage building on the last. Prior to undertaking the core body of fieldwork (trip 2) we will have undertaken the bulk of the literature review. This background data will provide us with a strong foundation upon which to focus our attentions on the ground. We will seek to record the interviews during the field research and these will be transcribed using an automated (if appropriate) transcription service. We will upload the transcribed interviews to the Nvivo qualitative data management program, which will enable us to draw out the key themes, patterns and correlations in the interview data. At this stage – we are unsure whether we will have a standalone literature review (i.e. at the front of the report) or whether it will be integrated into the findings from the field research. We suspect that it may be a combination of both. To ensure that the report findings align with the understandings and expectations of local and regional stakeholders and rights holders, we will return to the region for a final check-in and confirmation of the findings in a ground truthing exercise. We will then finalise the report accordingly.

As the applied research will result in options for tangible outcomes, we anticipate that this will include options for evidence-based government policies and institutional frameworks that could increase the likelihood of development. This will be an important element of the project and we will ensure that we can meet with appropriate government, NGO and industry representatives to share the research findings.

3. Project Inputs

Resources and collaborations

Researcher	Time Commitment (project as a whole)	Principle area of expertise	Years of experience	Organisation
Cameron Huddlestone-Holmes	10 days (.05 FTE)	Geologist with project management, gas development and impact assessment expertise.	+25	CSIRO

Subcontractors (clause 9.5(a)(i))	Time Commitment (project as a whole)	Principle area of expertise	Years of experience	Organisation
Assoc. Prof Sarah Holcombe	95 days (.3FTE)	Social anthropology, collaborative methods, Indigenous community governance, Indigenous land use agreements.	+25	CSRM / UQ
Assoc. Prof Kathy Witt	32 days (.1 FTE)	Social and cumulative impacts of large projects, coexistence and multiple land use values, participatory and deliberative methods.	+25	GETUQ
Julia Keenan	61 days (.25 FTE)	Mineral resource governance, community consultation and consent	15	CSRM/ UQ
Regional Aboriginal researchers	37 days (.1 FTE)	Local knowledge and networks	N/A	Local to the region
Research assistant	11 days (.05 FTE)	Shared with UQ GET	TBD	UQ

Technical Reference Group

The project will establish a **Technical Reference Group (TRG)** aimed at seeking technical advice on contextual matters and to discuss research outputs as the project progresses. The TRG will include the project leader and a group of stakeholders as appropriate which may include:

- NT Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Northern Land Council representative
- Central Land Council – Community Development Unit representative
- Company representatives (Santos, Tamboran, Empire)
- Industry Capability Network Northern Territory
- Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network
- Technical expertise (from CSIRO, other research institutions, industry, consultants)

This project will also establish a **Research Reference Group (RRG**). This group is distinct from the TRG and will act in an advisory capacity, providing local and regional guidance on socio-political factors we need to be aware of. Importantly, as the group will comprise a majority of Indigenous rights and interest holders (from the region) they will provide the non-Indigenous researchers cultural safety. We will develop a terms of reference for the group, which we anticipate will include 1) an interest in the project and 2) the ability to understand and represent the interests of the regional rights and interest holders and 3) cultural authority. The establishment of a local RRG is essential for the UQ ethics process – as it also ensures that the research is locally grounded and supports self-determination in research. The group will ensure that the research is aligned with local and regional interests and priorities and importantly be able to provide feedback on key findings to ensure this alignment. Membership may include:

- Barkly Backbone team member/s
- Barkly Aboriginal Alliance representative
- Representatives from major Aboriginal towns and communities in the region – including Tennant Creek, Elliot and Marlinja.
- Barkly Regional Deal representative
- Papulu Apparr-kari Aboriginal Corporation representative.
- We will also invite the NLC and CLC representatives to join this group as well.

Budget Summary

Source of Cash Contributions	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	% of Contribution	Total
GISERA	$1,694	$359,742	$31,828	80%	$361,435
- NT Government	$635	$122,967	$11,936	30%	$135,538
- Santos	$635	$122,967	$11,936	30%	$135,538
- Tamboran	$318	$61,484	$5,968	15%	$67,769
- Empire	$106	$20,495	$1,989	5%	$22,590
Total Cash Contributions	$1,694	$327,913	$31,828	80%	$361,435

Source of In-Kind Contribution	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	% of Contribution	Total
CSIRO	$423	$81,978	$7,957	20%	$90,359
Total In-Kind Contribution	$423	$81,978	$7,957	20%	$90,359

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	-	TOTAL
All contributions	$2,117	$409,892	$39,785	-	$451,794
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	$2,117	$409,892	$39,785	-	$451,794

4. Communications Plan

Stakeholder	Objective	Channel (e.g. meetings/media/factsheets)	Timeframe (Before, during at completion)
Regional community stakeholders including landholders, Traditional Owners and wider public	To communicate project objectives, and key messages and findings from the research	A fact sheet at commencement of the project that explains, in plain English, the objectives of the project.	At project commencement
		Project progress reported on the GISERA website to ensure transparency for all stakeholders including regional communities.	Ongoing
		Public release of final reports. Plain English fact sheet summarising the outcomes of the research.	At project completion
		Preparation of an article for the GISERA newsletter and other media outlets as advised by GISERA's communication team.	At project completion
		Introductory field trip I: Informal and introductory meetings to co-design the project and include Aboriginal co-researchers encompassing towns and communities of Katherine, Mataranka, Elliot, Marlinja, Tennant Creek and Borooloola (delivered as part of task 3)	2-3 months after project commencement (field trip 1)
		Collaborative field research (trip II): Focus groups, and informal meetings encompassing towns and communities of Katherine / Mataranka / Elliot / Marlinja / Tennant Creek and Borooloola (delivered as part of task 4)	Mid-project (field trip 2)
		The final field trip III: Present the draft findings to the participants rights holders and stakeholders engaged to ground-truth the data and ensure it aligns with the perspectives and understandings recorded (delivered as part of task 6)	Towards project end (field trip 3)
Gas Industry & Government	To communicate the objectives and outcomes of the project.	Fact sheet that explains the objectives of the project.	At project commencement
		Project progress reporting (on GISERA website).	Ongoing
		Final project report. Plain-English fact sheet summarizing the outcomes of the research.	At project completion
		Presentation of findings at joint gas industry/government Knowledge Transfer Session.	At project completion

Stakeholder	Objective	Channel (e.g. meetings/media/factsheets)	Timeframe (Before, during at completion)
Scientific Community	Provide scientific insight into what Indigenous-led development would look like for Aboriginal communities and other impacted stakeholders in the Beetaloo region. To identify the types of social and economic opportunities that align with the visions of local communities in the Beetaloo region.	Peer-reviewed scientific publication.	After completion of project

In addition to project specific communications activities, CSIRO's GISERA has a broader communications strategy. This strategy incorporates activities such as webinars, presentations, attendance at regional shows, newsletters and development of other communication products where relevant.

5. Project Impact Pathway

Activities	Outputs	Short term Outcomes	Long term outcomes	Impact
Preparatory work and study design	- Plain English fact sheet at commencement of the project explaining the project objectives (also required for ethics and other ethics materials, i.e. consent forms. - Project ethics submitted. - NLC research permit obtained. - Compilation of SREBA Individual reports on socio economic status for each town.	- First Technical Reference Group Meeting - Project research team – including Aboriginal co-researchers - confirmed - Key rights holder and stakeholder maps for the region, key communities and organisations	- The project will provide a platform for regional rights holders and stakeholders to share their vision for local development aspirations in a methodical and systematic way, enabling government and policy makers to act on the project recommendations. - The project will improve Community's awareness about the economic, social & environmental impacts of onshore gas development. - Uptake of the research findings will improve Industry's knowledge and practices related to social, economic & environmental opportunities of developments including unconventional gas projects	- Mechanisms that enable the economic and social development opportunities to be captured, including governance mechanisms and the negotiated agreements, are developed and implemented - The onshore gas industry operates in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner, supported by good industry and government governance - The vision for local and regional community development is on track to being realised and all major proponents and stakeholders in the region are sensitive to the types of social and economic opportunities that align with the visions of local communities.
Literature Review	- A synthesis of published and grey literature the Indigenous-led development, self-determination and engagement with resource development. - Desktop scan of the region to understand existing capacities, plans, organisations, & networks related to economic development covering different sectors	- A detailed understanding of previous research on Indigenous and locally led development and current regional activities and initiatives to inform the qualitative research.		
Intro fieldtrip, Communicate project objectives and establish local Aboriginal co-researchers	- Finalise ethics proposal - Secure interest and commitment in the project from Aboriginal co-researchers	- Empowering local Aboriginal researchers by engaging their expertise as co-researchers. - Project research team – including Aboriginal co-researchers - confirmed		
Follow-up Collaborative Field Research: fieldtrip 2		- Establishing trust and a reciprocal approach to sharing and co-creating research. - Understanding and listening to community aspirations and ensuring an adequate cross section of Aboriginal and community views.		
Final report Communications and ground-truth findings: field trip 3 near project end)	- Final project report and fact sheets to highlight findings - Knowledge transfer session to present key findings	Improved industry and government knowledge of what is important to communities in relation to developments including onshore gas development		

6. Project Plan

Project Schedule

ID	Activities / Task Title	Task Leader	Scheduled Start	Scheduled Finish	Predecessor
Task 1	Preparatory work and study design	Sarah Holcombe/UQ	2 May 2025	31 August 2025	
Task 2	Literature Review	Sarah Holcombe/UQ	2 May 2025	30 April 2026	
Task 3	Introductory fieldtrip, Communicate project objectives and establish local Aboriginal co-researchers	Sarah Holcombe/UQ	1 July 2025	30 September 2025	
Task 4	Collaborative Field Research: fieldtrip 2	Sarah Holcombe/UQ	1 August 2025	31 January 2026	Task 1 & 3
Task 5	Final report	Sarah Holcombe/UQ	1 January 2026	30 June 2026	Tasks 1-4
Task 6	Communicate project objectives, progress to stakeholders communicate and ground-truth findings: field trip 3 near project completion)	Sarah Holcombe/UQ	2 May 2025	31 July 2026	

Task description

Task 1: Preparatory work and study design

: 4 months (2 May 2025 – 31 August 2025)

BACKGROUND:

- Prepare contract between CSIRO and UQ

- Gather previous GISERA surveys and workshop processes to inform ethics application.

- Desktop research to identity key rights holders and stakeholders (drawing on the SREBA) in communities of study.

- Undertake an initial assessment to identify existing capacities, plans, organisations, and networks related to economic development

- Identify and contact Technical Reference Group members, ensure Terms of Reference are drafted.

- Draft ethics application.

- Draft and submit NLC research permit, engagement with NLC anthropologists.

- Engage with potential Aboriginal co-researchers on the phone and in-person.

OBJECTIVES:

- To have NLC research permit and the draft ethics application

- Undertake an introductory trip to the region to co-design the project scope with Aboriginal co-researchers, also required for the ethics application

- Establish key networks within the regional communities and organisations.

- Refine project plan (including identifying research participants, determining options for field research, data elicitation/collection/analysis plans).

TASK OUTPUTS AND SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES:

- Contract between CSIRO and UQ executed

- Project ethics submitted

- NLC research permit obtained.

- Project research team – including Aboriginal co-researchers - confirmed

- Compilation of SREBA individual reports on socio economic status for each of the towns being studied.

- Key rights holder and stakeholder maps for the region, key communities and organisations

- First Technical Reference Group Meeting

- Research Reference Group established.

TASK 2: Literature Review

1 year (2 May 2025 – 30 April 2026)

BACKGROUND:

- Desktop literature review on Indigenous-led economic development, incorporating Australian and some international examples (Canada, and Aotearoa)

- Focus on central Australia / semi-arid / remote regions with extractive industries

- The review will continue throughout the project as new relevant topics and materials come to light in an iterative way.

TASKS OBJECTIVES:

- Collate and synthesise relevant published and grey literature on Indigenous community led development, the role of Indigenous land use agreements, community economies

- To ensure that we are fully informed on previous case study materials from this region and comparable regions.

TASK OUTPUTS AND SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES:

- Synthesis of relevant prior research

- This collation and synthesis will inform subsequent field research and feed into the final report.

Task 3: Introductory fieldtrip, communicate project objectives and establish local Aboriginal co-researchers

OVERALL TIMEFRAME: 3 months (1 July 2025 – 30 September 2025)

BACKGROUND:

- Social science research with local communities, including field-based qualitative methods, requires relationship and trust building through spending time in regional communities and towns.

- This project includes a large regional population of Indigenous rights and interest holders, who are also a vulnerable group, as such a culturally sensitive approach to inclusion will be established.

TASK OBJECTIVES

- Introduce the project and some members of the project team to regional rights and interest holders.

- Develop a collaborative and inclusive method that actively ensures a mutually beneficial research approach is developed with Aboriginal rights holders.
- Co-designing research methodologies, gathering data, and conducting collaborative analysis to ensure that the perspectives and needs of Aboriginal communities are central to the research outcomes.

TASK OUTPUTS AND SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES

- Establish networks with regional groups.
- Support and enable local Aboriginal community-based researchers to actively participate and contribute to the research method and outputs, thereby developing local capability and opportunity.
- Project ethics approved.

Task 4: Collaborative Field research (trip 2)

OVERALL TIMEFRAME: 7 months (1 August 2025 – 31 January 2026)

BACKGROUND:

- Social science research with local communities, including field-based qualitative methods, to explore:
  - What Indigenous-led development means to communities in the Beetaloo Basin
  - Understand existing capacities, plans, organisations, and networks and their success/challenges to date
  - Identify opportunities that can be supported in the future, particularly to maximise opportunities related to the development of the shale gas industry and other emerging sectors.

TASK OBJECTIVES

- The major period of field research in the Beetaloo Basin region meeting with as many interest groups as possible, building networks and connections.
- With Aboriginal co-researchers, undertake semi-structured face-to-face interviews, informal conversations in public places, focus groups, attending community meetings and forms of participant observation.
- Identify the types of social and economic opportunities that align with the visions of local communities in the Beetaloo region.
- Explore mechanisms that enable these opportunities to be captured, including governance mechanisms and the negotiated agreements (ILUAs).

- Establish networks with regional groups.

- Support and enable local Aboriginal community-based researchers to actively participate and contribute to the research method and outputs, thereby developing local capability and opportunity.

- Provide opportunities for rights holders and stakeholders to share their socio-economic development visions and support shared discussions and dialogue.

- Consolidate field research data to ensure that we have captured the diverse cross-section of relevant rights holder and stakeholder views in a way that have been inclusive and empowering.

Task 5: Final report

OVERALL TIMEFRAME: 6 months (1 January 2026 - 30 June 2026)

BACKGROUND

- Current research practice seeks to ensure that research involving Indigenous people leads to forms of self-determination and empowerment.

- In areas of high need and vulnerability – such as the Beetaloo Basin – Aboriginal rights holders have a major stake in the outcomes of any research in the region and as such have to play key roles in determining the findings and recommendations of the report.

- Making all efforts to include diverse Aboriginal voices and regional stakeholder perspectives is central to the report.

- As a collaborative project, ensuring that Aboriginal co-researchers have sufficient time to respond to and engage with drafts of the report will take time.

TASK OBJECTIVES

- Active collaboration with Aboriginal researchers leading to co-authorship of the final report.

- Develop options s for a Beetaloo-specific approach to Indigenous-led development, including policy and program initiatives.

TASK OUTPUTS AND SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES

- Preparation of a final report outlining the scope, methodology, scenarios, assumptions, findings and any suggestions/options for future research

- Preparation of a plain English summary report for community groups.

- Following CSRM peer review, the report will be submitted to the GISERA Director for approval

- Draft peer-reviewed scientific manuscript ready for submission to relevant journal – draft at end of 2026

Task 6: Communicate project objectives, progress and findings to stakeholders (including trip 3)

OVERALL TIMEFRAME: Full duration of project

BACKGROUND: Communication of GISERA's research is an important component of all research projects. The dissemination of project objectives, key findings and deliverables to relevant and diverse audiences allows discourse and decision making within and across multiple stakeholder groups.

TASK OBJECTIVES: Communicate project objectives, progress and findings to stakeholders and rights holders through meetings, Knowledge Transfer Session, fact sheets (ethics), project reports and journal article/s, in collaboration with the GISERA Communication Team.

The final field trip will present the draft findings to the participant rights holders and stakeholders engaged to ground-truth the data and ensure it aligns with the perspectives and understandings recorded.

TASK OUTPUTS AND SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES: Communication of project objectives, progress and results to GISERA stakeholders according to standard GISERA project procedures which may include, but not limited to:

1) Knowledge Transfer Session with relevant government/gas industry representatives.

2) Field trip to the region for a final check-in and confirmation of the findings in a ground truthing exercise (trip 3).

3) Preparation of an article for the GISERA newsletter and other media outlets as advised by GISERA's communication team.

4) Two project fact sheets: one developed at the commencement of the project (ethics), and another that at completion of the project summarising the findings and recommendations. Both will be hosted on the GISERA website and the CSRM website.

Project Gantt Chart

Task	Task description	2024-25			2025-26											
		May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26	Jun 26	Jui 26
1.	Preparatory work and study design	■	■	■	■											
2.	Literature Review	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
3.	Introductory fieldtrip, communicate project objectives and establish local Aboriginal co-researchers			■	■	■										
4.	Collaborative Field Research: fieldtrip 2				■	■	■	■	■	■						
5.	Final report									■	■	■	■	■	■	
6.	Communicate project objectives, progress to stakeholders communicate and ground-truth findings: field trip 3 near project completion	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

7. Budget Summary

Expenditure	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Labour	$2,117	$19,677	$0	$21,794
Operating	$0	$0	$0	$0
Subcontractors	$0	$390,215	$39,785	$430,000
Total Expenditure	**$2,117**	**$409,892**	**$39,785**	**$451,794**

Expenditure per task	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Task 1	$0	$39,200	$0	$39,200
Task 2	$0	$61,600	$0	$61,600
Task 3	$0	$150,395	$0	$150,395
Task 4	$0	$104,160	$0	$104,160
Task 5	$0	$34,860	$0	$34,860
Task 6	$2,117	$19,676	$39,785	$61,579
Total Expenditure	**$2,117**	**$409,891**	**$39,785**	**$451,794**

Source of Cash Contributions	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
NT Govt (30%)	$635	$122,967	$11,936	$135,538
Santos (30%)	$635	$122,967	$11,936	$135,538
Tamboran (15%)	$318	$61,484	$5,968	$67,769
Empire (5%)	$106	$20,495	$1,989	$22,590
Total Cash Contributions	**$1,694**	**$327,913**	**$31,828**	**$361,435**

In-Kind Contributions	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
CSIRO (20%)	$423	$81,978	$7,957	$90,359
Total In-Kind Contributions	**$423**	**$81,978**	**$7,957**	**$90,359**

	Total funding over all years	Percentage of Total Budget
NT Government investment	$135,538	30%
Santos investment	$135,538	30%
Tamboran investment	$67,769	15%
Empire investment	$22,590	5%
CSIRO investment	$90,359	20%
Total Expenditure	**$451,794**	**100%**

Task	Milestone Number	Milestone Description	Funded by	Start Date	Delivery Date	Fiscal Year Completed	Payment $ (excluding CSIRO contribution)
Task 1	1.1	Preparatory work and study design	GISERA	May-25	Aug-25	2025/26	$31,360
Task 2	2.1	Literature Review	GISERA	May-25	Apr-26	2025/26	$49,280
Task 3	3.1	Introductory fieldtrip, communicate project objectives and establish local Aboriginal co-researchers	GISERA	Jul-25	Sep-25	2025/26	$120,316
Task 4	4.1	Collaborative Field Research: fieldtrip 2	GISERA	Aug-25	Jan-26	2025/26	$83,328
Task 5	5.1	Final report	GISERA	Jan-26	Jun-26	2025/26	$27,888
Task 6	5.1	Communicate project objectives, progress to stakeholders communicate and ground-truth findings: field trip 3 near project completion)	GISERA	May-25	Jul-26	2026/27	$49,263

8. Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

Background IP (clause 11.1, 11.2)	Party	Description of Background IP	Restrictions on use (if any)	Value
				$
				$

Ownership of Non-Derivative IP (clause 12.3)	CSIRO

Confidentiality of Project Results (clause 15.6)	Project Results are not confidential.

Additional Commercialisation requirements (clause 13.1)	Not Applicable

Distribution of Commercialisation Income (clause 13.4)	Not applicable

Commercialisation Interest (clause 13.1)	Party	Commercialisation Interest
	CSIRO	N/A
	Santos	N/A
	Tamboran	N/A
	Empire Energy	N/A

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