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THE 2016 PILBARA ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

THE  
NEW  
PILBARA

## MEDIA RELEASE

December 2016

For immediate release

### OPPORTUNITIES APLENTY AT THE NEW PILBARA

MORE than 400 delegates attended *The New Pilbara Economic Development Conference* on Tuesday 29 November and heard four key project announcements which will drive innovation and job opportunities in the region.

Norwegian-based company *Sahara Forest Project* launched a detailed feasibility study which will investigate the potential of using saltwater, sunlight and CO2 to produce food, freshwater and clean energy.

The initiative is the result of Yara, a major downstream processor and employer in Karratha, identifying an opportunity to develop and diversify the region further.

“Yara Pilbara are committed to making a positive contribution to the Pilbara, not just through our downstream processing operations but our ongoing community investment and support for forward thinking environmental initiatives such as the Sahara Forest Project,” said Pierre Herben, Chief Technology Officer in Yara International.

The Karratha Enterprise Hub in the West Pilbara also launched and will support the development and growth of small business in the region. Delivered by Business Centre Pilbara, the Hub will be a vibrant and flexible space incorporating co-working areas, incubation suites, meeting rooms and space for business and community events.

The project is funded by Pilbara Development Commission and is part of the Pilbara Cities Initiative.

Pilbara Development Commission Chief Executive Officer Terry Hill said the Pilbara Cities initiative is part of a long term commitment from the State Government, to build the Pilbara into a vibrant region with a strong economy that is a desirable place to live, work, and invest.

“Looking at the Pilbara today, I can confidently say we are well on the way to achieving this, and so much more. Underpinned by the State Government’s Royalties for Regions program, the \$1.7 billion Pilbara Cities initiative took on the challenges presented by the resource sector’s growth and revitalised the region through investments in infrastructure, land development, community projects and economic diversification.

“Pilbara Cities has underpinned the ‘new Pilbara’ – a region with the same offerings and opportunities that the metropolitan areas in Western Australia have, and because of this more and more families are choosing to call the Pilbara home,” said Mr Hill.

“Pilbara Cities has transformed Pilbara mining communities into modern cities and towns where people want to build a life, where they want to live, raise a family, work, and invest long into the future.”

Tuesday,  
29 November 2016  
Hyatt Regency  
Perth, Western Australia

[thenewpilbara.com.au](http://thenewpilbara.com.au)

To discuss, please contact event managers:

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# THE NEW PILBARA

Minister for Regional Development Hon. Terry Redman MLA launched Pilbara Development Commission's 'The New Pilbara' publication which showcases the significant transformation the Pilbara has been through over the last six years.

Tourism and new energy were also announced as emerging industries with WA Premier Colin Barnett stating the Pilbara's glory days were yet to come.

Session two focussed on 'Tourism and Connectivity' and included Tourism WA Commissioner Nathan Harding, Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation General Manager Nisha Keetels, Mackerel Islands Director Marnie Shields and Port Hedland International Airport CEO Mitchell Cameron.

Master of Ceremonies for the morning, Hon Brendon Grylls MLA kept delegates engaged and shared his love for the region.

Hon Sean K L'Estrange MLA Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Finance; Small Business, Town of Port Hedland Economic Development Officer Brie Holland, REFAP CEO Triscilla Holborow and Agility Project Logistics General Manager-Projects Steve O'Donnell presented on all-things 'SMEs and Start Ups' in session three.

The action-packed program broke at lunchtime and allowed delegates to network and reflect on the morning's announcements.

Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry CEO and afternoon Master of Ceremonies Kitty Prodonovich kicked the afternoon session off with 'Agribusiness'.

Lead researcher and global expert Tim Morris of Coriolis said with the mining industry slowing down, agrifood has the opportunity to position itself as a key export sector for the state.

"Asia wants four broad classes of product – raw materials, distinctive products, counter-seasonal and status/provenance – they can't easily access certain products and that's where we believe the Pilbara's focus should be," said Mr Morris.

'New Energy' was the topic of the final session and included Horizon Power General Manager Business Development Darren Hill, Pilbara Minerals CEO Ken Brinsden, Renewable Hydrogen Energy Executive Director Andrew Want and the closing address from Karratha & Districts Chamber of Commerce & Industry CEO John Lally.

"On behalf of the four Pilbara Regional Chambers we would like to thank our sponsors for today – Pilbara Development Commission, Woodside, Horizon Power, Chevron, Landcorp, Pilbara Ports Authority, City of Karratha and Pilbara Regional Council - without their support we couldn't have brought *The New Pilbara Economic Development Conference* together.

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“There’s a whole lot to be excited about in the Pilbara, and today’s discussions proved they’re on our doorstep. The region is alive with opportunities and its time we get excited about the future and start collaborating!

“Plans are in place for next year’s event and we are putting together an action list from today’s projects and announcements. We will review them next year and see how much we have achieved,” said Mr Lally.

In lieu of speaker gifts, the four Pilbara Regional Chambers donated \$1,000 to The Smith Family – a children’s charity helping disadvantaged children get the most out of their education, so they can create better futures for themselves.

The event was followed by a cocktail sundowner and Nelson Woss Producer of Australia’s favourite film ‘Red Dog’ shared his excitement for Saturday’s exclusive screening of ‘Red Dog: True Blue’ in Karratha and Roebourne.

For more information on the event visit [www.thenewpilbara.com.au](http://www.thenewpilbara.com.au)

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