URBAN NORTH:
Dreams and Realities Symposium
9 October 2013
Charles Darwin University
Settlement in remote regions has posed challenges for policy makers, the companies that operate in these areas and the people who make their homes there. Remoteness from services taken for granted in larger urban areas, high living costs, harsh environments, limited employment and education opportunities and difficulties in attracting private sector investment create barriers for urban development in remote regions. These barriers create a difficult environment for the long term sustainability of viable urban settlements. One response has been the rapid growth in FIFO employment in mining and other sectors.

In the longer term factors such as climate change, the end of the mining boom and other potential disruptions such as the slowing of growth in Asia will pose a new group of challenges. The response of the public sector to these issues will have an enormous influence on the attractiveness or otherwise of life in remote areas and how urban settlement patterns evolve to meet these challenges.

The symposium will consider these issues and explore how remote settlements in other countries have met these challenges. Case studies from Russia, Canada and Australia will examine issues such as making remote settlement economies work, entrepreneurship, FIFO vs residential populations, developing sustainable services in small towns and the challenge of climate change. Issues related to indigenous settlements and long run sustainability will also be examined.
## URBAN NORTH: Dreams and Realities Symposium

### PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION 1</th>
<th>ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9.00-10.30 | **Introduction and welcome**  
Bruce Prideaux, James Cook University, Australia |
|           | **What makes a remote settlement economy work?**  
Lee Huskey, University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska |
|           | **Working together with Indigenous communities to adapt to climate change**  
Deanne Bird, Risk Frontiers, Australia |
|           | **Statutory land use plans and economic development opportunities: Cape York Indigenous communities**  
Sharon Harwood, James Cook University |
|           | **Morning Tea**  
10.30-11.00 |
| SESSION 2 | BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL TOWNS |
| 11.00-12.30 | **Entrepreneurship in Canada’s north**  
Prescott Ensign, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada |
|           | **Sustaining big town services in a small town- a case study from northern Sweden**  
Peter Berggren, Glesbygdmedicinsk Centrum, Sweden |
|           | **Social and demographic change in remote Indigenous towns**  
Dean Carson, Flinders University, Australia |
Lunch
12.30-13.30

SESSION 3 | BIG IDEAS FOR BIG TOWNS
--- | ---
13.30-15.00 | Big ideas for a big town: Conflicts between vision and experience, and responsibility and control in Fort McMurray
Keith Storey, Memorial University, Canada

“Should we stay or should we go?” - An overview of the (re)-settlement policies and practices in Northern Russia
Elena Nuikina, University of Vienna, Austria

Tourism and urban development in the north: Experience from Darwin’s ‘boontown’ approach
Doris Carson, University of South Australia, Australia

Afternoon Tea
15.00-15.30

15.30-16.15 | Panel Discussion

This event is facilitated by The Northern Institute for the Collaborative Research Network Program: Northern Research Futures.

Charles Darwin University in collaboration with the Australian National University, James Cook University and the Australian Institute of Marine Science have been awarded $5 million under the Australian Government’s Collaborative Research Network to form a partnership that creates a national program of collaborative social, coastal/marine and environmental research and innovation in the northern Australian region.

The Northern Research Futures (NRF) alliance will create a program of national collaborative social and coastal/marine and environment research and innovation in the northern Australian region.
Professor Lee Huskey

Lee Huskey is Professor of Economics at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He has been with the University since 1978. He has served as chair of the University’s Economics Department, Director of the Experimental Economics Program, and acting Director of the Center for Economic Education. He is a past President of the Western Regional Science Association.

Lee’s main area of research is the economics of remote regions, in particular the regions of Alaska. His current research focus is migration in the regions of the circumpolar north. He has published a number of papers on the special economics of remote economies, migration in Alaska, Alaska’s economic development, and the teaching of economics. He has also co-authored two comic books designed to teach economics principles to middle school students. He earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in Economics from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and he holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Missouri.

What Makes a Remote Settlement Economy Work?

Permanent settlements in the remote regions of developed countries are a relatively recent phenomenon. Mobility was an important characteristic of most societies built on traditional hunting and gathering activities. Permanent settlements accompanied production for external markets and the economies of public service provision. This talk will examine the economic characteristics of Alaska communities to answer two questions: 1) What economic factors influence the founding and growth of settlements? and 2) What affects the community response when these factors change? Alaska’s experience provides insight into the variety of settlement types, factors responsible for their growth, and responses to change. This history is used to develop a model of remote settlement economies. The model is used to examine settlement patterns in other areas of the circumpolar north.

Deanne Bird

Deanne Bird is a human geographer focusing on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. She has extensive experience in conducting surveys using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods including open, semi-structured and structured interviews, focus groups and workshops. Deanne’s research interests include evaluations of risk perception and community-appropriate methods of risk communication, and assessments of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies among urban, rural and indigenous populations. Recently Deanne has managed and undertaken a number of successful research projects for NCCARF, SES, Sydney Water and the Attorney-General’s Department. Deanne was awarded a PhD in 2010 from the University of Iceland and Macquarie University and she continues to work closely with community groups, local, state and federal governments and emergency
management personnel. Currently, Deanne works for Risk Frontiers, based at Macquarie University and is an associate of The Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University and the University of Iceland.

**Working together with Indigenous communities to adapt to climate change**

Recent droughts, floods, fires and heatwaves demonstrate that all of Australia is vulnerable to climatic extremes. In northern Australia, however, there has been little research on how Indigenous communities employ adaptive strategies to deal with these slow onset environmental changes and extreme weather events. This presentation will provide an overview of how climate change is affecting northern Australia and what the predictions for the future are. How these impacts are/will be felt in remote Indigenous communities will also be discussed. The presentation draws information from an NCCARF project that utilised ethnographic participatory research to provide a multifaceted understanding of why Indigenous people may be vulnerable or resilient to weather events and climate change. The voices of research participants from Maningrida and Ngukurr, Northern Territory; Broome, Western Australia; and Wujal Wujal, Queensland will provide insight into the underlying vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities within Indigenous communities across northern Australia.

**Sharon Harwood**

Sharon is a Certified Practicing Planner and a Corporate Member of the Planning Institute of Australia and continues to practice as a social and urban planner. Sharon currently lectures in Environmental and Regional Planning, Planning for Sustainable Communities and is the course co-ordinator for the Graduate Certificate in Planning for Indigenous Communities. Sharon’s planning experience in remote areas coupled with her research projects in remote communities has led her to believe that urban planning theory and practice is unsuitable for application in non-urban settings. Sharon’s primary research interest is now centred on how remote communities plan for change and how this in turn may inform planning theory and improve planning practices undertaken in remote locales.

**Statutory land use plans and economic development opportunities: Cape York Indigenous communities**

This presentation provides an overview of how land use planning influences the range of economic development opportunities that can be pursued by a community. Despite the plethora of reports and research that warns against a ‘one size fits all’ model for development in remote places, the Queensland planning system has adopted a standardised template for all planning schemes in the state including those in remote Indigenous communities in Cape York. The presentation highlights the implications of applying a standardised approach that is based on urban planning concepts and land use definitions upon economic development in remote locales. Examples from several planning schemes that have been recently placed on public display are used to further highlight the relationship between statutory land use plans and economic development in remote locales. The presentation concludes that planning approaches that reflect the available resources, culture and aspirations of a community is essential for the ongoing economic sustainability of remote communities.
## SESSION 2  BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL TOWNS

### Prescott Ensign

Prescott C. Ensign, Ph.D., is the Dobson Professor of Innovation & Entrepreneurship in the School of Business and Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He has a background in industrial engineering and management and received a Fulbright Scholarship for his doctoral studies of knowledge sharing among scientists. His research has focussed on innovation and technology development. His research has been funded by the Carnegie Bosch Institute, Carnegie Mellon University; CFI, Export Development Canada, and SSHRC. His research has been published in: Journal of Entrepreneurship, International Trade Journal, Journal of High Technology Management Research, and MIT Sloan Management Review.

**Entrepreneurship in Canada’s north**

If challenging conditions produce economic opportunities (necessity leads to invention), then cold, inhospitable places should produce some ‘hot’ ideas. For a number of years, scholars and policy makers have been searching for some generalizable truths, some universal advice to help young and old, male and female, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, poor and non-poor, etc. to participate in the market economy, make a productive contribution, and generate wealth. Small, isolated towns in Canada, can produce vibrant enterprises. But many ideas and inspirations are squelched by the same surrounding conditions. Is it the person or place that matters? Nature, nurture, and serendipity all might play a role in entrepreneurs launching and growing a business. If universal rules/theories from elsewhere often do not fit, what have we learned and what can we say and do? From successes (and failures) in commerce can we draw inferences and build for the future? In this presentation I will explore a constellation of anecdotal evidence of what is happening on the ground in Northern Canada and with audience help, perhaps draw some conclusions.

### Peter Berggren

My name is Peter Berggren. I live in Storuman, a small settlement in the most northern and rural part of Sweden. I have a wife and four daughters. I really like fishing. I educated myself in medicine at the university in Umea followed by Doctor examination 1991. After that internship and specialist education in primary care. Since 1999 working as a general practitioner at the Cottage hospital in Storuman. In 2009 the county decided to start a research and development department called Centre of Rural Medicine in Storuman, which I am in charge of. Our main areas for research and development are studies concerning the cottage hospital way of delivering care in rural areas, health issues related to our indigenous people, the Sami and distance bridging technology. We are also involved in a couple of international projects, for example Recruit and Retain where we collaborate with Canada, Greenland, Scotland, Ireland, Norway and Island in order to find new ideas in how to recruit and retain medical staff.
Sustaining big town services in a small town- a case study from northern Sweden

A couple of the world’s best downhill skiers have been brought up in the mountain area of my community. In fact we have more than 1 Olympic or world champion in every 1000 inhabitants. All of that because we have a lot of snow, steep hills, a tradition of skiing and not so much else to do. In my presentation I will focus on the same thing. How can we use our local environment in the best way in order to build a sustainable and high quality system of delivering care in a remote area? Is it possible for us to be best in the world in care and if so, what could be our local key factors?

Dean Carson

Dean Carson is Professor for Rural and Remote Research at Flinders University in South Australia. Dean is a human geographer interested in rural and remote human activity systems - who lives, works, and visits rural and remote places, when, why, and for how long. He has spent the past 20 years living and working in rural and remote Australia, including time with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics Unit with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the National Rural General Practice Study run out of Monash University in the mid-1990s, as Head of the Centre for Regional Tourism Research at Southern Cross University, and Head of Population and Tourism Studies at Charles Darwin University. Dean has published widely in the fields of regional tourism and population mobilities in remote areas. His current research interests focus on understanding social, economic and demographic change at the local level, and developing new pathways for local people to engage in socio-economic innovation processes.

Social and demographic change in remote and indigenous towns

Government departments and politicians tend to use ‘outside’ sources of information, like the Census, when making decisions that impact on remote Indigenous communities. At the same time, people living in communities, academics, and some of the policy makers themselves are sceptical about how well such data reflect what is really going on. This presentation examines some of the things the 2011 Census suggests have been going on, and describes a new way to bring together this ‘outside’ information and the knowledge of the people who live and work in our remote communities.
Keith Storey
Keith is an economic and social geographer. He trained in Britain and Canada and is currently an Honorary Research Professor in Geography at Memorial University and the Principal of Keith Storey Consulting. Most of his working life has been spent based in Newfoundland, but he has also worked in Western Canada, the Canadian North, the United States Gulf Coast, Australia and South America. He has a wide experience in the assessment of the social and economic impacts of large-scale resource developments in peripheral and remote areas, particularly those involving petroleum, mining and hydro resources. More specifically, since 1985, he has been involved in various aspects of research into the social and economic effects of fly-in/fly-out work arrangements and has published a number of book chapters, monographs, journal articles and given numerous seminars and presentations on this topic. His current research in Canada looks at the impacts of FIFO on host and source communities and planning attempts to address FIFO-related issues.

Big ideas for a big town: Conflicts between vision and experience, and responsibility and control in Fort McMurray
The population of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and specifically the town of Fort McMurray, has grown from 50,000 in 2000 to 116,000 in 2012. It is projected to reach 231,000 by 2030. This growth is associated with development of oil sands resources in the region. Future growth assumes that this resource boom will continue; a vision of the future that the municipal planning authority appears to accept without question. Approval of new projects by the provincial government without a concomitant provision of land and financial resources to help meet housing, infrastructure and service needs has meant that local and regional systems are currently unable to meet the demands placed upon them. There is no indication that this situation is likely to change in the near future. The municipality finds itself required to manage growth, but without the resources to do so. This paper explores the municipality’s vision for Fort McMurray and the proposed strategies to achieve it. Particular attention is given to the role that FIFO/DIDO does and is expected to play in the future.

Elena Nuikina
Elena Nuykina is a social scientist interested in the development of mining towns, city planning, extractive industries, human-environment relations and economic diversification in resource dependent communities globally and in the Arctic region in particular. Between 2008 and 2011 she was involved in the scientific project “Moved by the state” carried out by the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland (Finland) and analyzed populating, de-populating and social engineering of northern towns in Russia. Her current research at the University of Vienna (Austria) is focused on the city viability of mono-industrial communities located in Far North with the prime attention to the Russian context. Elena Nuykina is also a scientific collaborator of the FWF project “Lives on the Move – Vakhtoviki in North-Western Siberia” where she particularly...
studies the impacts of long-distance commuting on the towns and regional development. In her work Elena Nuykina adopts qualitative methodology and ethnography in human geographic research.

“Should we stay or should we go?” - An overview of the (re-)settlement policies and practices in Northern Russia

North-east territories were one of the main priorities of Soviet state economic development policy. The strategy of northern development was built upon centralized redistribution of both human and financial resources to the northern territories aiming at fast-speed industrial development of the “vast and empty” North to make it useful for the national economy. These objectives were achieved by planned settlement of the area, both voluntary and forced. As a result, during the period of 1926 – 1989 there were 1 500 newly established towns and 4 000 urban settlements diffused across the soviet space.

However, in the post-soviet years perspective on the North has changed significantly. The introduction of market-based principles and neo-liberal logic of economic functioning revealed that economic, urban and demographic organisation of the Russian North designed under the state-planning system did not suit market conditions. In order to rationalize its northern frontier, federal authorities attempted to implement new schemes of mobility and settlement aimed at making the region more viable. This paper particularly focuses on the post-soviet (re-)settlement policies and practices in the Russian North and brings the voices of people into the discussion on who and how they shall live in the Russian northern towns.

Doris Carson

Doris Carson is a post-doc research fellow at the Centre for Regional Engagement at the University of South Australia. Doris has a PhD in economic geography from James Cook University in Cairns (Australia) and a Master’s degree in tourism and leisure management from the IMC University of Applied Sciences in Krems (Austria). Her main research interests focus on innovation dynamics in rural and remote economic development, in particular tourism development. She has recently published in the fields of remote tourism, remote area planning, Indigenous short-term mobility, Indigenous tourism, and the role of consumer generated content in market research.

Tourism and urban development in the north: Experiences from Darwin’s ‘boomtown’ approach

New tourism development in Darwin has been dominated by large-scale “showy” infrastructure projects over the past decade (most notably the multi-billion dollar waterfront re-development). These projects have been largely driven and supported by successive Northern Territory governments in an attempt to use tourism as a vehicle to boost immediate – albeit short-term – economic growth in the city. Large-scale tourism projects have been a major contributor to the latest “boomtown” phenomenon in Darwin by attracting external investors, employing large numbers of temporary (and external) construction workers, and driving up prices for short-term accommodation. Yet at the same time, Darwin’s tourism investment and construction boom has brought only modest benefits to the local leisure tourism industry, particularly in the surrounding Top End region where tourist numbers have continuously declined since the early 2000s. This presentation emphasizes that tourism in remote areas can adapt characteristics similar to other ‘resource boom industries’, which – if not planned and managed carefully – can lead
to issues around economic boom & bust cycles, limited long-term local benefits, and an ongoing dependence on new showy projects driven by government and external investors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Our International and national guest speakers
- The Northern Institute Research Support Service for facilitating the symposium
- Professor Dean Carson, Professor Bruce Prideaux, Dr Andrew Taylor and Michelle Thompson

This activity is supported through the Australian Government’s Collaborative Research Network Program: Northern Research Futures with partners:
“Urban North” was facilitated by The Northern Institute’s, Research Support Service.

The Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University undertakes quality interdisciplinary research in social and public policy. The Institute’s research teams collaborate with Australian and overseas universities, not-for-profit agencies, industry partners and visiting academics to produce research which focuses attention on and provides solutions for the complex social and public policy issues of the region.

As a site of excellence in social and public policy research, the Institute generates sophisticated and innovative thinking to stimulate and lead debate on matters of crucial importance to Northern Australia and the wider region. Its research programs provide evidence for policy development, build the capacity of social researchers in Northern Australia, and respond to the needs of regional agencies and the communities they serve.

The Northern Institute - leading the Region in Social and Public Policy Research.

Professor Ruth Wallace
Director
The Northern Institute

Talk to us 08 8946 7468
Visit us Yellow 1, Level 2, Charles Darwin University, Darwin NT
Send an email thenortherninstitute@cdu.edu.au
Go to our webpage www.cdu.edu.au/the-northern-institute
Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/TheNorthernInstitute