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Tropical Agricultural Development: Managing Expectations For Food, Incomes and Natural Environment

Allan Dale

Contributed presentation at the 60th AARES Annual Conference,
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The Cairns Institute



Tropical Agricultural Development: Managing Expectations For Food, Incomes and Natural Environment:

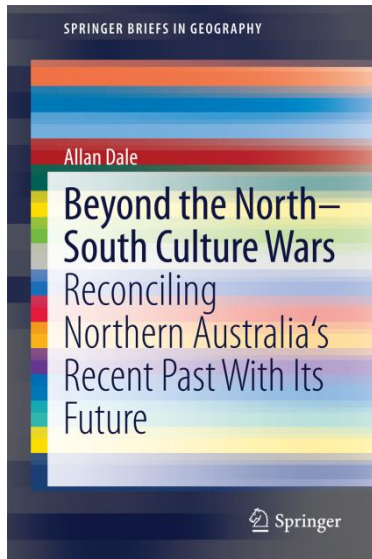
**Allan Dale – Professor of Tropical
Regional Development**

Beyond the North South Culture Wars



The north Australian landscape is highly contested, but political, financial and population influences drive development expectations via a strong a south to north dynamic.

- Resource-exploitation themes.
- Resource preservation themes.
- Indigenous development themes.

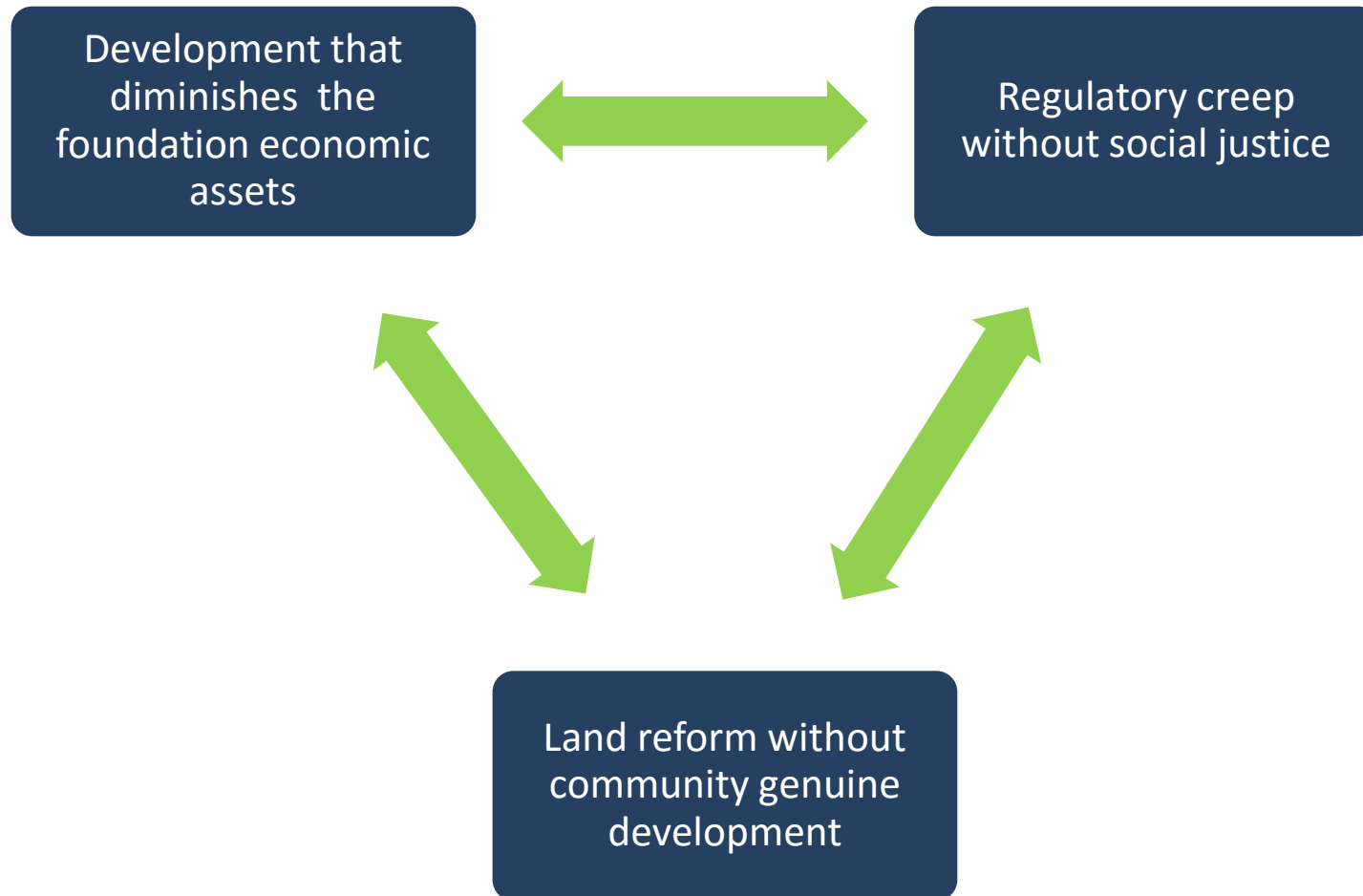


These cultural conflicts need to be reconciled to secure the future and to guide Infrastructure investment.

Past conflicts, their impact and key directions for agriculture are explored.



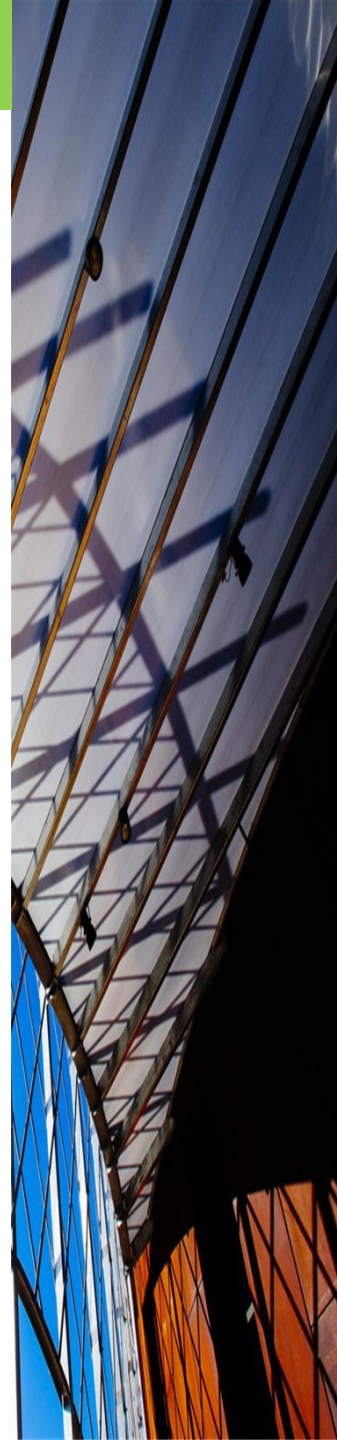
Where To Without Reconciling South and North



Stories – Across the Conflict Themes



Sources: Craig Hodges, ABC, Allan Dale.



Where To Without/With a Forward Agenda

The failed-state scenario:

- Economic colonialism and a fragile boom and bust economy.
- Damage to crown-jewel ecosystem services.
- An insurance red-line across the north.
- Growing Indigenous and regional disadvantage across multiple generations.
- Low livability and very high costs.

A federation of dynamic regional economies:

- Multiple and nimble northern region's.
- Highly connected governance systems.
- Genuine engagement with both the south and our near northern neighbours.
- Tropical expertise/services export economy.



Important New Directions for Agriculture

- Building endemic regionalism, effective regional land use planning and assessment.
- Towards co-regulation, genuine structural adjustment and ecosystem markets.
- Cohesive community development, Indigenous led-land reform and major reforms in integrated services delivery.
- Building tropical expertise to lift productivity and to export services internationally.
- Cohesive reform in northern governance.



Some Big White Paper Implications

- Focus on visionary land use/infrastructure plans.
- Must be based on strong endemic regionalism.
- Effective leadership/facilitation of major projects.
- Improved capacity of local government, industry, civil society and traditional owner institutions.
- A focus on building local versus imported labour.
- Key role of the Office of Northern Australia and the emerging Collaborative Research Centre.
- Key role of the Northern Strategic Partnership.





Thank you

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