THE NATURE OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA
Natural values, ecological processes and future prospects
1. Lotus Flowers, Blue Lagoon, Lakefield National Park, Cape York Peninsula. Photo by Kerry Pappell
2. Northern Quoll. Photo by Lochman Transparencies
3. Sammy Walker, elder of Tirralinji, Kimberley. Photo by Sarah Legge
4. Recreational fisherman with barramundi, Gulf Country. Photo by Larissa Cordner
5. Tourists in Zebidee Springs, Kimberley. Photo by Barry Traill
6. Dr Tommy George, Laura, Cape York Peninsula. Photo by Kerry Pappell
7. Cattle mustering, Mornington Station, Kimberley. Photo by Alex Dudley
THE NATURE OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA
Natural values, ecological processes and future prospects

AUTHORS John Woinarski, Brendan Mackey, Henry Nix & Barry Traill

PROJECT COORDINATED BY Larelle McMillan & Barry Traill
THE DOTS

We’ve used as the basis for the book two of the central findings of the book itself, namely that the ecosystems across the whole of the North are inextricably intertwined and that their conditions vary greatly from season to season and from year to year.

To convey this we’ve chosen six representative centres – Broome, Kununurra, Darwin, Katherine, Normanton and Weipa – which cover all of Northern Australia west to east and which vary north to south and between the coast and inland. The dots at the bottom of each page represent these six centres. The dots change colour and number according to the land and weather conditions at each centre across the course of a chosen year, giving a subtle indication of the inter-related weather patterns across the whole of the North and the variability of the conditions. The colours of headings, captions and pull-out boxes change per chapter as the weather patterns cycle through, corresponding with the dots at the bottom of the page.
# CONTENTS

## PREFACE

## INTRODUCTION

1. Objectives of this study
2. The region
3. Indigenous knowledge and values
4. The structure of this study
5. The authors

## THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

1. The past: an Arafura inheritance
2. The Northern landscape
3. Climate
4. Soils
5. Landforms
6. Environments
7. Biodiversity
8. People of Northern Australia
9. Regions of the North
10. Current land use and economies
11. Conclusion

## HOW THE LANDSCAPE WORKS

1. Ecological functioning and linkages
2. Hydro-ecology: the interdependence of water and landscape function
3. Ecological disturbance
4. Interconnections of ecological movements
5. Other critical ecological processes and linkages
6. Conclusion

## THE NATURAL VALUES OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

1. Local values
2. National and international values
3. The state of Australia’s woodlands
4. The state of Australia’s waterways
5. The North and Australia’s biodiversity
6. Conclusion

## PROBLEMS IN THE LANDSCAPE

1. Why worry?
2. Species decline
3. Landscape change
4. The causes of current decline
5. Depopulation and lack of resources
6. Climate change
7. Solace

## A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

1. Protecting the natural legacy
2. Conservation planning
3. Living in the land
4. Stories from the land
5. Economic activities
6. Where to from here?
7. Summary
8. Conclusion
9. Diagram: Alternative approaches to land use in Northern Australia

## APPENDIX 1

## METHODS OF ANALYSES

## REFERENCES

## INDEX