



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2022



Rug with Awarrapun -
Crocodile Design
by Aaron McTaggart

Airport Development Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Traditional Custodians of the Larrakia, Arrernte and Warumungu lands on which it operates, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Front cover: Alviston Wunungmurra, a Yolgnu - Dhalwangu man from Gapuwiyak East Arnhem Land, at East Point, NT. Photo shoot in collaboration with The Youth Mill, NT.



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Terms Used

According to Northern Territory Government convention, please note that the use of the term Aboriginal in this report is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.

According to Elder guidance, Airport Development Group uses the term Aboriginal when referencing people and for Government programs as so named.

Indigenous is used when referencing programs or groups such as Indigenous Training Academy, Indigenous Engagement Report, Indigenous Advisory Committee, Indigenous businesses etc.

For the purposes of this document, 'new initiatives' will be those implemented from January 2021.

- ADG – Airport Development Group
- ASA – Alice Springs Airport
- DIA – Darwin International Airport
- TCA – Tennant Creek Airport

CEO'S MESSAGE

With this Indigenous Engagement Report, Airport Development Group (ADG) is acknowledging its renewed commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion and involvement in our future.

Since the lease acquisition of Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek airports in 1998, ADG has had a strong history of Aboriginal respect and of showcasing and supporting Aboriginal art, talent, and industry. Despite this, at the beginning of 2021, we resolved to do more.

ADG has redefined its purpose into three core elements, one of which is to 'enable the education and employment of Indigenous Australians in the NT and Kimberley'. It is with this renewed focus that ADG presents its first Indigenous Engagement Report.

We are purposefully moving from statements like 'where possible' and 'where available', which sound inclusive but can be just as exclusive, and are committing to affirmative actions.

One year along from the start of this journey, in collaboration with our Indigenous stakeholders, we have engaged in Aboriginal cultural learning, created an Indigenous Advisory Committee, established a new Indigenous training academy, established new procurement and employment initiatives, and invested in projects to celebrate Aboriginal achievements and acknowledge cultural ownership. While we still have a long way to go, we are committed to collaboration and building a better future.

If we all work together, we can help Close the Gap by learning, creating and investing in intergenerational solutions that will see a fairer Australia for all. ADG is proud to be a part of this now and into the future.

We hope you'll join us on the journey.

Tony Edmondstone
Chief Executive Officer
Airport Development Group

OVERVIEW

ADG's defined territory comprises the Northern Territory (NT), Kimberley region of Western Australia and the Carpentaria region of Queensland. Within this region, 30 per cent of the population is Aboriginal and more than 50 per cent of the land and 84 per cent of the coastline is Aboriginal owned.¹

Since acquisition in June 1998, ADG has been a continuous supporter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. For more than 20 years this has included significant investment in the Arts for programs, festivals and for individual artists, as well as employment of Indigenous businesses and funding of community health and environmental programs.

This support has laid a solid foundation, establishing respectful relationships with a variety of Indigenous groups, organisations, businesses and individuals, but it has remained, up until 2021, organic in its approach. This is now changing.

In one way, ADG is returning to grassroots to listen and learn. It's taking a step back to forge better understandings and provide more insightful support to celebrate and acknowledge culture. It's growing its understanding of Aboriginal people and how cultural perspectives influence doing business, making decisions, viewing time and competing for opportunities.

While ADG is stepping back, paradoxically, it's also moving forward, well into the future. Its new strategies are not short-term but focus on education, engagement, employment, mentoring and retention to achieve intergenerational change. A long-term vision toward creating and refining Aboriginal education and employment pathways that are accessible, appropriate and fulfilling.

ADG's first Indigenous Engagement Strategy (IES) was developed in 2018. This was the initiatory step toward capturing what ADG Indigenous engagement could entail. Although broad, these goals were a significant move toward increasing Indigenous engagement and participation in the workforce, providing targeted Indigenous employment

programs, engaging with environmental programs through existing partnerships, improving messaging about Indigenous art and culture including where to acquire ethically-sourced Indigenous art, working with retailers and the Indigenous Art Code, and increasing Aboriginal content throughout the digital platforms in the terminals.

ADG's 2021 IES builds on these goals in tangible, measured and practical ways by beginning to outline the plan. This Indigenous Engagement Report goes further. Not only does it outline *how* it's collaborating with Indigenous stakeholders – for instance, in the creation of educational opportunities and employment pathways for Aboriginal youth – it also provides a comprehensive snapshot of where ADG has come from and where it's going.

Now is the time. ADG is building on its solid foundation. It is learning, developing, and collaborating to build new Aboriginal policies and programs in areas that will have long-lasting benefits for intergenerational change – in education, in employment, in environmental initiatives and, in tourism.

ADG is proud to begin this new journey with a genuine, committed, and passionate team invested in developing considered, nuanced, and aligned programs to affect real solutions and real change.

CULTURE



Tutini Pukamani-Burial Poles by Melville Island and Bathurst Island artists

As the oldest living culture in the world at more than 65,000 years old², Aboriginal people have a long and continuous connection to land and tradition that is unmatched anywhere in the world.

In sociological terms, culture is described as 'the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another'.³

Imagine then, this 'sum total of ways of living' built and passed on through generations spanning 65,000 years. It's nothing short of awe-inspiring.

The five key interconnected elements of Indigenous culture have been described as: land, family, law, ceremony, and language.⁴ For the purposes of this document, this section will include practices or protocols that seek guidance for improving, acknowledging, and learning about Aboriginal culture within these interconnected elements.

These are the grassroot steps ADG is taking to listen and learn and to work toward Closing the Gap.⁵

NEW CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Employment of an Indigenous and Community Projects Manager

In January 2021, ADG appointed its first Indigenous and Community Projects Manager to develop and implement ADG’s Indigenous Engagement Strategy.

The key initiatives for the Indigenous and Community Projects Manager are in education (see page 10), employment (see page 7), world class experiences and joint ventures (page 13), development of an Indigenous Advisory Committee (page 6), and facilitation of Indigenous community engagement.

Engagement is across the board, from the Arts to Education. For example, the planned Indigenous Training Academy (page 11) has seen the Indigenous and Community Projects Manager and other ADG staff meet with numerous educational institutions, organisations, companies and agencies. The Indigenous and Community Projects Manager has also engaged with schools to help facilitate the Indigenous Cricket Engagement Program (page 11). As part of ADG’s Employment Pathways (page 12) in 2021, more than 130 NT students from Years 10 to 12 took part in airport hotel employment tours.

Other initiatives include assisting in establishing, monitoring and reviewing Indigenous procurement (page 8), and providing advice, support and coaching to managers and employees on Aboriginal employment matters and respect of Aboriginal culture (see next initiative).

Cross-cultural education

Cultural education of ADG staff is seen as key to the organisation’s commitment to Indigenous engagement and to this end Cross Cultural Consultants (CCC), an Aboriginal owned and managed business, has been engaged to provide this service.⁶

CCC describes cross-cultural awareness training as ‘a specialist field of training that examines cultural difference and its implications for cross-cultural interaction.’⁷

It teaches how to recognise and appreciate the unique cultural perspective of Aboriginal people and discusses how different cultural perspectives can influence doing business, competing for opportunity, making decisions, and viewing time.

Importantly, the training discusses Aboriginal Kinship and its fundamental importance within Aboriginal society.

CCC training states:

‘Many Anglo-Australians still fail to grasp the central importance of the Kinship system for doing business with traditionally orientated Aboriginal societies.

Networking effectively with Aboriginal people involves the building of social relations that usually revolve around Kinship. The importance of social relationships to Aboriginal people cannot be stressed strongly enough. It is more than just important; it is central to their whole way of life.’⁸

Over three separate training sessions, 49 per cent of ADG (non-hotel) staff undertook a three-hour training session with CCC who tailored their training specifically for ADG. Feedback surveys showed ADG staff were overwhelmingly in favour of the training and found the content to be highly engaging, useful and informative.⁹

Further training sessions are currently being organised.



Cross-cultural awareness training by Cross Cultural Consultants



Welcome to Country on Larrakia land at DIA

Acknowledgement of Country

All three airport terminals have strong visual representations of Acknowledgement of Country in signage as well as in other significant locations including airport gardens and walking trails.

Acknowledgement of Country statements have also been added to all ADG staff email signatures and on the new corporate website.

An Acknowledgement of Country can be undertaken by anyone respectful of the acknowledgement, but a Welcome to Country and Traditional Ceremony, like a dance or smoking welcome, can only be performed by a recognised person from that Indigenous region.

While these welcomes are undertaken for various ADG events by the Larrakia, Arrernte and Warumungu people for the respective airports of Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, this approach has not been formalised into a uniform or imperative protocol but is implemented on an ad hoc basis and is reliant on individual staff. This is now changing by formalising protocols about when to use these, as well as acknowledgement of individual senior Aboriginal elders who are present at ADG functions or gatherings.

After completion of consultation with each relevant and respective Indigenous group, and with ADG executive approval, it's expected that clear parameters and guidelines can be applied to events as to what acknowledgement or ceremony should be used, as well as how to organise it and whom to contact.

NAIDOC Week

In July, a staff event was held to hear personal stories from two Hotel Villa Honourees (page 14) and to learn about ADG's IES.



Staff were also presented with desk cards outlining Larrakia Cultural Protocols.

INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

According to ADG's Terms of Reference, the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) is best viewed as a subset of ADG's purpose as part of its 2021/22 Strategic Overview which is to:

- enhance the lives of all Territorians through the provision of infrastructure in the NT and Kimberley
- enable education and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the NT and Kimberley.

This will be achieved through Indigenous-focused employment and training programs, potential joint ventures with Traditional Owners, supporting engagement across all community investments, tourism partnerships and sponsorships, and ensuring a culturally engaged work environment.

The IAC will be an advisory group to the management of ADG with the aim of educating and advising management on the views of Traditional Owners, community leaders and stakeholders, in order to support ADG's purpose and IES.

The committee will consist of Aboriginal stakeholders and representatives from IFM Investors (ADG part-owner) and ADG, and will provide advice to assist ADG improve cultural connections and employment outcomes for Indigenous people. It is not intended as a decision-making or event-review body.

ADG aim to have three to five Aboriginal community Members and representation from a number of NT Indigenous groups. External Members of the IAC will be paid. Roles and responsibilities of Members and of the Independent Chair have been outlined in ADG's IAC Terms of Reference document which will be reviewed annually by the ADG Board.

The inaugural IAC meeting was held in January 2022.

EMPLOYMENT



Troy Tilmouth has been an ASA groundsperson for 10 years

ADG's undertaking to improve Indigenous employment is based on a three-pronged approach. This commitment not only initiates employment targets within the Closing the Gap agreement,¹⁰ but also, more importantly, provides platforms of opportunities that empower individuals toward self-determination.

ADG is implementing these improvements by providing a range of pathways to employment, through either procurement or direct employment, or through education and educational pathways. Each approach has mechanisms of support and/or targets, including, for example, mandatory Indigenous plans as part of the tender process, or in the case of Indigenous traineeships, the provision of mentoring, a proven tool in the retention of employees.¹¹

Procurement (pre-2021)

ADG has always focused on local procurement – engaging with and contracting local NT companies in order to support the local economy. ADG has been successful with this approach, with all major and minor building contracts being awarded to local contractors where required expertise was available.

Although more documented moves began in 2018 in line with ADG’s first IES to engage more Indigenous companies or those companies with Indigenous employees, and to utilise resources like Supply Nation (a non-profit organisation providing a database of verified Indigenous businesses¹²), ADG had been engaging Indigenous companies long before.

Ekistica, for instance, a professional advisory and technical consultancy and a Supply Nation Registered company, has been working on design and project management services for solar at DIA since 2009. Work with Ekistica on ground-mounted solar systems located airside at DIA, known as the Solar 1 and Solar 2 projects, were ongoing from 2009 to 2018. Ekistica also were engaged at ASA for an air conditioning upgrade and servicing from 2015 to 2018. In 2019, DIA developed a design partnership with Ekistica for the Defence Solar bids and engaged them for this in 2019.

In Alice Springs, the Peter Kittle Motor Company, a Supply Nation registered company, has been supplying cars for purchase and on-going servicing for more than two decades.

Notwithstanding COVID and its impact on the airline industry with all spending kept to a minimum, particularly major capital works, contracts were still awarded to Supply Nation Registered businesses – DIA engaged Winya Indigenous Office Furniture for security upgrades and ASA engaged them for furniture supply for the Qantas lounge upgrade.

ADG has made a conscious effort to continue local engagement but increase local Indigenous engagement, actively seeking companies with an Indigenous Engagement Plan (IEP).

New Procurement Initiatives

Now ADG has taken it further, mandating an IEP as part of the tender process for major ADG projects.

As from June 2021, all companies wishing to tender for major projects must include an IEP as part of their assessment.

ADG Project Management has also created an Indigenous participation reporting tool to make Indigenous engagement transparent and easy to assess.

To foster further engagement and connectivity with an array of Indigenous organisations, ADG has become an Associate Member of the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN). In addition, as an investment in ADG’s commitment toward higher Indigenous procurement, ADG has recently joined Industry Capability Network (ICN), a procurement and supply chain network with a database that includes a separate Aboriginal Content Locator (NTACL).

This effort is consolidating into an unprecedented year for Indigenous engagement.

A 2021 project, for instance, through a solar contract with BT Energy, a company with an IEP, achieved 15 per cent Indigenous employment.¹³

In addition, ADG projects further developed IEP working relationships for rooftop solar projects with BT Energy and key contractors, including DICE, a Supply Nation Certified and longstanding, local Indigenous business. This will also assist DICE upskilling for larger scale commercial solar installations.

Another example is the Wyuna Cold Stores construction at DIA with contractors Sunbuild, who subcontracted 5.4 per cent of their work to Indigenous employees including Indigenous apprentices.¹⁴

Also in 2021, ADG contracted Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation to provide labour hire services for hotel refurbishments. Impressed with their work, ADG encouraged its subcontractors to use Ironbark for similar services. As a result, NT Walls and Ceilings appointed Ironbark to provide labour hire services for the continued work on this project.

Other procurement has included the Larrakia Rangers for ongoing environmental management of the Rapid Creek Reserve (see page 17), and Indigenous-designed and made COVID face masks for all ADG staff from Paperbark Woman Leonie Dembski, a sole trader and Kungarakan woman (NT).

ADG is also providing pro bono support to Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation to assist in reviewing their property portfolio and developing a strategy to cater for their current and future needs.

Direct Employment

As the airports of ADG operate in a high risk, compliant environment, opportunities for employment, although diverse, can be limited to specific skills, qualifications and/or legal/compliance requirements. Therefore, in order to increase direct employment, ADG is committed to facilitating education (see page 10) in a range of skills and qualifications in order to increase employment.

ADG employment opportunities currently exist through full-time, part-time or casual employment.

In December 2020, ADG’s Indigenous employment was at 2.4 per cent full-time equivalent (FTE), however after acquisition of two hotels in the airport precinct in February 2021, this number dropped to 1.9 per cent. As of November 2021, that figure is now 5.7 per cent FTE.

ADG’s Indigenous employment covers a range of employment types as seen in the following table.

	Employment type			TOTAL
	Full Time	Part Time	Casual	
ADG Dec 2020	2			2
ADG +Hotels Feb 2021	2		1	3
ADG + Hotels Nov 2021	5	2	3	10

New Direct Employment Initiatives

Part of strategies to increase ADG’s Indigenous staff are initiatives which target increasing employment through a range of educational and outreach programs, including traineeships, open days, and student engagement (see page 12).

Other initiatives include attendance and networking at targeted events. For example, as well as ADG being a community sponsor of the 10th Aboriginal Economic Development Forum (AEDF) held in October 2021 in Alice Springs, ADG staff also attended.¹⁵



Labour hire from Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation

DIA’s solar project achieved 15% Indigenous employment

EDUCATION



ADG Indigenous Cricket Program

As education improves employment opportunities, ADG is developing several strategic educational pathways in different fields that encourage, support and mentor Indigenous youth toward positive employment.

ADG understands that intergenerational change comes through a range of programs and partnerships and, especially for Aboriginal youth, through opportunities that concentrate on education and training with support and mentoring. While these initiatives directly target the educational outcomes of the National Agreements on Closing the Gap, they also work toward economic participation by providing pathways through to employment.¹⁶

In collaboration with Indigenous stakeholders, these new and exciting initiatives from ADG take the long-term vision of education, engagement, mentoring and retention. While not anticipated to provide quick solutions, they are a genuine, committed and considered approach toward enduring Aboriginal employment.

ADG INDIGENOUS TRAINING ACADEMY

Plans for an Indigenous Training Academy are well underway.

Based at the Airport Resort Complex, the ADG Indigenous Training Academy will deliver nationally-recognised qualifications in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

The ADG Training Academy will offer:

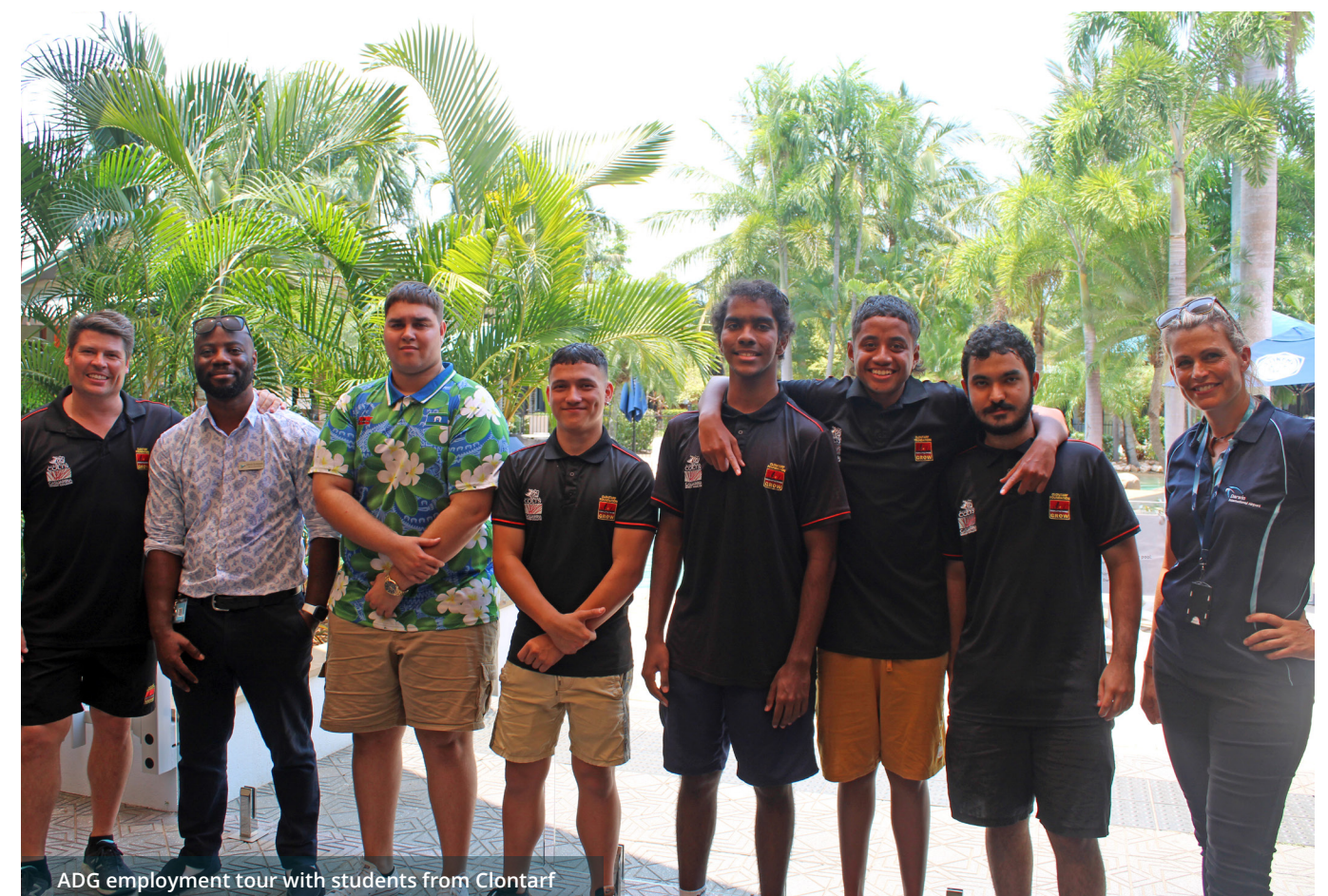
- traineeship and apprenticeship qualifications
- VET (Vocational Education and Training) in school programs
- a mentor program to support students.

Beginning in 2022, the Academy will launch by offering five Certificate III Hospitality Traineeships to Indigenous youth who will be trained via a local registered training organisation. The positions will be full-time. Upon completion of traineeships, pathways will be available for graduates to gain full-time employment with ADG and its partners, including contractors, tenants, and organisations within the airport's precinct.

Since February 2021, more than 30 interactions with external parties including government agencies, tertiary institutions, employment service providers and registered training organisations have been held to help establish the Academy.

Mentoring is widely recognised as a significant factor in retaining Aboriginal employees with both the NT and Federal Governments having Aboriginal mentorship programs available to their public sector employees. The NT Government acknowledges mentoring as a 'vital tool in retaining employees' and cites its Mentor Program as a key action in its employment strategy.¹⁷

ADG is exploring opportunities for mentoring as an internal resource. This role will support trainees and other Indigenous staff to create a supportive environment to ensure maximum engagement and retention. Mentoring will also be available for trainees or staff who qualify through government employment initiatives.



ADG employment tour with students from Clontarf

INDIGENOUS CRICKET PROGRAM

In June 2021, ADG partnered with Northern Territory Cricket (NT Cricket) to deliver an innovative new program for Australia’s best emerging players to head north in winter and develop their game.

Called the Cricket 365 Program, 30 of Australia’s best young cricketers and 30 of the Territory’s best cricketers lived and played in Darwin and Palmerston for three months over the dry.

Aiming to raise the standard of cricket in the NT and provide pathways to elite cricket for Territorians, the Cricket 365 Program also provides a bona fide opportunity to establish a major event program that enhances the development of Australia’s next generation of cricket superstars.

As part of the Program, in June, July and August, Cricket 365 players held gala days and skills clinics at schools in Darwin and Katherine. The program engaged more than 500 students from eight primary and secondary schools and the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre.

Indigenous participation in cricket is not at the same level as for AFL or rugby, so the potential for Indigenous growth in the sport is high.

While the focus was on Indigenous participation, the gala days and skills clinics were open to all students interested in learning cricket skills. The response from students and educators was overwhelmingly positive.

EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

In 2022, scholarships, work experience and pre-employment opportunities will form part of ADG’s Employment Pathway strategy. As mentioned, upon completion of traineeships, pathways will be available for graduates to gain full-time employment with ADG and its partners.

More than 130 NT students from Years 10 to 12 took part in airport hotel employment tours in the 2021 year. The tours showcased ADG employment and career opportunities, information on Indigenous traineeships, and encouraged questions and feedback from students.



ADG Indigenous Cricket Program - Katherine Gala Day

TOURISM



The Gurumbai Cultural Experience will include information on bush tucker

As the owner of three Northern Territory airports, including Darwin International Airport, the main gateway to the NT, ADG has been a major tourism contributor for more than 20 years.

In addition to its long contribution to NT identity (see page 19) and showcasing extraordinary Aboriginal art and culture, ADG is using its unique position to invest in delivering world-class Aboriginal experiences and culture to new audiences.

In partnership with Aboriginal groups, ADG’s new tourism portfolio is part of an initiative to not only showcase this unique and ancient culture, but to provide Indigenous Australians with training and employment.



In February 2021, the acquisition of the Novotel Darwin Airport and Mercure Airport Resort by ADG was seen by the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission as a ‘fabulous multiplier for the Darwin economy’ and exactly the type of investment needed in the NT.¹⁸

A new Master Plan will integrate both hotels into one world-class tropical resort with accommodation ranging from bespoke to family luxury.

The new integrated hotel will pay homage to Aboriginal individuals and to regions of the Territory and Kimberley in a variety of ways as listed below.

Hotel Villa Honourees

As part of the hotel renovation, each of the existing 42 villas will be named in honour of an incredible Aboriginal who has significantly contributed to the fabric of the NT and/or the Kimberley. Each villa will feature the name of the Honouree, displayed with their story and a photo inside the room.

The first six of the villas have been completed, including three historic and three current-day Honourees. These are:

- Larrakia man, Billiamook, who in 1869 was instrumental in fostering strong relationships between settlers and Indigenous people (the antithesis of what was happening in the rest of the country).
- From the Tiwi Islands, Matthias Ulungura, who captured a Japanese pilot when he crash-landed his Zero fighter on Melville Island in February 1942. A life-sized bronze statue of Matthias is installed on adjacent Bathurst Island.
- Larrakia man, Robert Shepherd, one of 23 local men who voluntarily enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force during the First World War.



- Woman of firsts, Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik, a Jaru woman of the Kimberley region. Among her many achievements, MaryAnn was the first Aboriginal person to be employed full-time in Australian higher education and the first Aboriginal to receive a Doctorate from Harvard University.
- Humanitarian Linda Jackson (nee: Vale) and NAIDOC’s 2020 NT Senior Female Elder of the Year, a Western Arrernte woman. Linda’s childhood included a journey of more than 5,000 kilometres as part of a mass mission evacuation from Crocker Island to Sydney during Second World War.
- Wadeye (then Port Keats) man, Tjeyenga Mathias Namarluk (pictured above in the villa of his name with his wife, Anne Marie, and his son, Sean) who played a leading part in pioneering new surgical techniques to restore hand and foot function in leprosy sufferers.

To celebrate NAIDOC week in 2021, MaryAnn Bin-Sallik and Linda Jackson came to view the villas named in their honour and speak to ADG staff about their life stories.

ADG’s honouree selection process is heavily researched and compiled from a list of NT stories of significance. Diligent thought, discussion and debate from an informal ADG selection panel and NT historians go into the selection of individuals and the wording of their story. Once a decision has been reached, ADG work with the individual and/or family descendants for final signoff.

Water Tower Welcome to Country Project

As part of the hotel redevelopment Master Plan, the 41-metre water tower at the Mercure Darwin Airport Resort is set to become a tourism landmark through an Indigenous mural and a Welcome to Country sound and light show.

DIA is the key gateway to the Territory, providing the first and last impressions most visitors have of the region. As part of this gateway, the sheer size and prominence of the landmark water tower has the capacity to cause people to stop, reflect and acknowledge where they are. For most visitors to the Northern Territory, it will provide their first connection to Larrakia people and culture, the traditional custodians of the greater Darwin area.

The Water Tower Welcome to Country Project includes collaboration with Aboriginal artists to determine the most culturally appropriate artwork for the mural and a cultural consultant to oversee the design and production of the mural, telling the story of the Larrakia people.

Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, known as Larrakia Nation, is an Aboriginal organisation with a dual purpose: it’s the representative organisation for the Larrakia people and a major service provider for Aboriginal people in the region.

In an open letter, Larrakia Nation has praised the water tower project which it agrees is in alignment with its Strategic Plan 2020-2024, welcoming people to Larrakia country and educating others to understand and show respect to their country. Its Chief Executive Officer writes:

‘It is pleasing to see a major company like the Airport Development Group showing respect to the Larrakia people by the inclusion of Larrakia art and culture in the facelift and refit of the airport water tower.’¹⁹

While the project will be managed by ADG, who’ll use contractors for painting, audio and light implementation, it’s proposed that Larrakia Nation provide the words and audio for the Welcome to Country and have approval over the light animation. Although there are many logistics to work through, it’s hoped the final product will be of the calibre of the celebrated and authentic Aboriginal lightshow, Parrtjima.²⁰

The Northern Land Council and the Aboriginal Tourism sector within Tourism NT have also provided letters of support for the project.

Application to Art Trails

At the completion of the Water Tower Welcome to Country Project, ADG will apply to have the project join the Darwin Street Art Festival Trail which includes more than 60 murals across Darwin from international, national, and local artists.²¹ The Darwin Street Art Festival is an initiative funded by the NT Government through the Department of the Chief Minister and Activate Darwin.

In addition, it’s hoped the water tower will also feature as part of the Territory Art Trails guide.²² The Territory Art Trails are promoted through NT Tourism on websites and through video where the NT celebrates Aboriginal culture and art as fundamental to its identity and is described as ‘the world’s biggest art gallery, where the art doesn’t just hang on walls, it is the walls’.²³

This is an apt representation of what the Water Tower Welcome to Country Project aims to become – a celebration of culture, art, and identity.

Indigenous hotel theming, landscaping, and art

As part of ADG’s vision to provide visitors with an experience of the Northern Territory’s unique lifestyle, ancient cultures and stunning landscapes, a key element of the hotel design will be Indigenous art and culture.

As part of this, ADG aims to dedicate each part of the hotel to a different NT region and reflect those regions through colour palates, artwork, and landscaping. Information boards will enhance the visitor’s experience and understanding of Aboriginal culture and the history of the Territory. With 423 rooms, this is a significant undertaking.

The concept of how this may be achieved has been developed in line with NT regions outlined by Tourism NT. A working example can be seen in Appendix A: Hotel Theming Concept Map on page 21.

ADG will establish a plan that will clearly outline a cohesive narrative for the hotel to showcase Indigenous culture while also portraying the modern history of the Territory in an engaging and impactful way. These include appropriate cultural stories and historical events, including concepts that weave stories across the resort from both an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspective.

Gurumbai Cultural Experience

Gurumbai is the Larrakia name for the area known as the Rapid Creek Conservation Reserve which features Darwin’s only natural freshwater creek. Gurumbai comes from the name of the shape of Rapid Creek near its mouth, said to be the elbow of Dariba Nungalinya, or Old Man Rock, that is the embodiment of a powerful ancestor who protects Larrakia land and people. Working in partnership with Larrakia Nation, ADG is creating the Gurumbai Cultural Experience.

Located just 500 metres from the airport terminal and adjacent to the airport hotels, the Gurumbai Cultural Experience will enhance the already existing 3.5-kilometre return walking trail and will provide shade, ambiance and space to host 50 or more guests at any one time. The experience will consist of an Indigenous-led, one-hour guided walking tour that will include information about the cultural and historical significance of the area to the Larrakia People, their connection to the land and freshwater, information about some of the Reserve’s seasonal bush tucker.

This project complements ADG’s Larrakia Ranger program which has engaged more than 30 local Indigenous people since commencing in 2019 (see page 18). ADG has secured a grant through the IFM Investors Community Grants Program 2021, and will work with Larrakia Nation to develop educational resources and cultural knowledge of the Reserve. Larrakia Rangers will also provide information on flora, fauna, and land management. Information for self-guided tours will also be created.

The Experience will provide a unique opportunity for visitors to Darwin to understand the significance of the connection to country held by Aboriginal people. According to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030 Summary, 80 per cent of visitors to the NT would like an Aboriginal tourism experience but only 40 per cent of visitors have one.²⁴ The Gurumbai Cultural Experience can change this, by providing a quality product that is easily accessible.

Work began on the Gurumbai Cultural Experience at the start of December 2021, with a planned completion date for the end of April 2022.



Gurumbai is the Larrakia name for the Rapid Creek Conservation Reserve

ENVIRONMENT



Students at Yirara College assist with ASA’s wildlife survey

ADG is an environmental leader, with a strong record in environmental management, policy, and implementation, and on-track net zero carbon emissions (Scope 1 and 2) by 2030.²⁵

An early adopter of solar, ADG continually invests in sustainability. Already generating an impressive seven megawatts (MW), ADG will finish its \$5 million expansion by the end of 2021 to extend its solar PV (photovoltaic) arrays to approximately 11 MW.

ADG’s environmental excellence also extends to projects – several years in the planning – to protect and support ecosystems, reduce carbon emissions, restore diversity of wildlife, and build and maintain community and cultural links, including an historic Indigenous fuel-reducing burn.

At the heart of these projects is the Larrakia Ranger Engagement Program.

The Larrakia Ranger Engagement Program

DIA has taken the lead in engaging stakeholders for the management of the significant Rapid Creek Reserve, part of which is on airport land. This catchment is an important Darwin ecosystem for freshwater, as well as a community asset for recreation and cultural significance. As part of this, work began with the Traditional Owners in 2019.

The Larrakia Rangers support existing management activities at the reserve, including track and trail maintenance, revegetation, weed management, erosion control, tree planting, maintenance of signs, collection and removal of litter, and environmental monitoring.

Over time, a strong working relationship between ADG and the Larrakia Rangers has built a platform for cultural knowledge transfer and increased the Rangers' capacity to undertake further projects on airport land. An ADG Program to further engage the Rangers came through training with a fire management consultant. In October 2020, the training paid off and a new contract for fire management at Rapid Creek Reserve was awarded to the Larrakia Rangers.

On 11 May 2021, the Rangers undertook an historic fuel-reducing burn. Culturally, this was a hugely significant day, the first 'on country' burn for Larrakia Rangers in eight years. This project has encouraged the Rangers to increase their work in fuel-load burning across Darwin.

The fuel-reduction burns known as 'cool' burns, not only protect and encourage biodiversity, but in comparison to wildfires or bushfires, substantially reduce carbon emissions and are the best-practice way to manage fuel-loads in terms of burning. Therefore, these 'on country' cool burns are not only environmentally beneficial but culturally significant as well.

Fauna and Flora Conservation

Since acquisition, ADG has undertaken wildlife surveys at DIA and ASA every five years.

Located on approximately 3,500 hectares, ASA is Australia's largest airport by land size. Due to its size and the value of its biodiversity, ADG understands the importance of being good custodians. In 2019, as part of ASA's Master Planning process, EcoZ Environmental Consultants completed the flora and fauna monitoring and invited Contarf Foundation students from Yirara College of the Finke River

Mission to assist. A video of the monitoring was also completed by the College's media students as part of 'Yirara TV'.²⁶

In order to assess ASA's biodiversity status and plan future environmental management approaches, the students helped with a range of monitoring techniques including fauna tracking, camera traps, non-invasive live trapping techniques and acoustic recordings for microbats. Fifty-five native fauna species were recorded during the monitoring and six new species were added to the ASA survey list.

Airport Gardens

Sharing their gardening knowledge, cultural information and suggestion for a name, Larrakia people have been key contributors to the success of Matboerrma Garden at DIA, nestled between the terminal carpark and the airport hotels.

The lush tropical garden gives visitors a glimpse into the Top End's plant variety and includes plant species signs and information across seven different Aboriginal Top End languages. At the official opening, Larrakia women performed a Welcome to Country.

Similarly, ASA has the Anetyeke Garden. In the local Arrernte language, the garden has been described as mwerre anetyeke – a good place to sit. Again, Aboriginal language, plant names and stories are featured in the 42 signs which include plant identification, welcome and interpretive signs.



Larrakia Rangers nurturing new seedlings

THE ARTS



Artwork by Gordon Landsen Milyindirri

ADG has a long history of involvement, support and sponsorship of the Arts, and in particular Aboriginal art. In the Territory, this relationship is unique. The NT Government describes celebrating Aboriginal culture and art as fundamental to the Territory's identity.²⁷

ADG has long been aware of this. Not just the impact of art itself, but the importance of art at airports.

In 1994, the then Arts Program Manager of the Federal Airports Corporation (who owned 22 major Australian airports including Darwin and Alice Springs), Dr Jean Battersby, wrote:

'Airports are the real thresholds of the global village. For the modern international traveller, the first impression of a new country begins when an aircraft door opens somewhere into a terminal. For a country wanting to attract tourist and business travellers, the opportunity to project its distinctive national identity begins at this point.'²⁸



Yingarna – The Rainbow Serpent, 1991, by Bardayal 'Lofty' Nadjamerrek, at DIA

Showcasing Aboriginal art at ADG airports, is not only celebrating Aboriginal culture, but also providing for many a first impression of the significance and importance of Aboriginal art and culture to a national and Territory identity.

Dr Battersby chose wisely. The art pieces commissioned then are still at the airports of Darwin and Alice Springs, still with impact, and still valuable reflections of Australia's national identity.

The original collection of works by Aboriginal artists include the significant pieces Fire Dreaming, 1991, by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri; and Yuparli Dreaming, 1991, by Eunice Napangardi. It also has Haasts Bluff by Albert Namatjira and Yingarna – The Rainbow Serpent, 1991, by Bardayal 'Lofty' Nadjamerrek.

Also included are seven significant works from ANKA (Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists – the peak advocacy and support body for Aboriginal artists and art centres across Northern Australia) which feature along the top wall at the check-in counter at DIA.

Like other works in the airports, these include identification plaques detailing the artwork name, the artists and their culture and stories.

Since then, numerous Indigenous artworks have been added to the airports. These include artworks from Gordon Landsen Milyindirri (Gudanji), Isaiah Nagurrurrba (Kunwindjku) and Denise Quall (Larrakia) recreated on 12 massive canopies, each measuring 14 metres by 4.7 metres. Located at the entrance to DIA, the canopies are a grand statement to the NT's vibrant and diverse arts.

Other artworks include Tutini Pukamani Burial Poles from Tiwi Islands featuring multiple artists from Melville and Bathurst Islands from 1991 to 2018, and the Minih Forest from multiple Maningrida artists in 2008.

From 2016 to 2018, additional artworks include: from Aaron McTaggart Awarrapun – Crocodile Design replicated by Signature Floorcoverings in a hand-tufted rug; from Gurumuru and art centre Buki-Larrnggay Mulka in Nhulunbuy, the work Wanupini of natural earth pigments on Stringybark hollow poles from artist Nawurapu Wunumurra; and from artist Malaluba Gumana, Waterlillies, whose artwork has been printed to dramatic effect on wallpaper and vinyl.

As custodians of these artworks, ADG ensures regular condition assessments and repairs. In March 2021, under supervision by ANKA, DIA temporarily removed the artworks for cleaning, assessment, and restoration. New signage providing information on each artist and artwork was erected in October 2021.

ARTS SPONSORSHIP

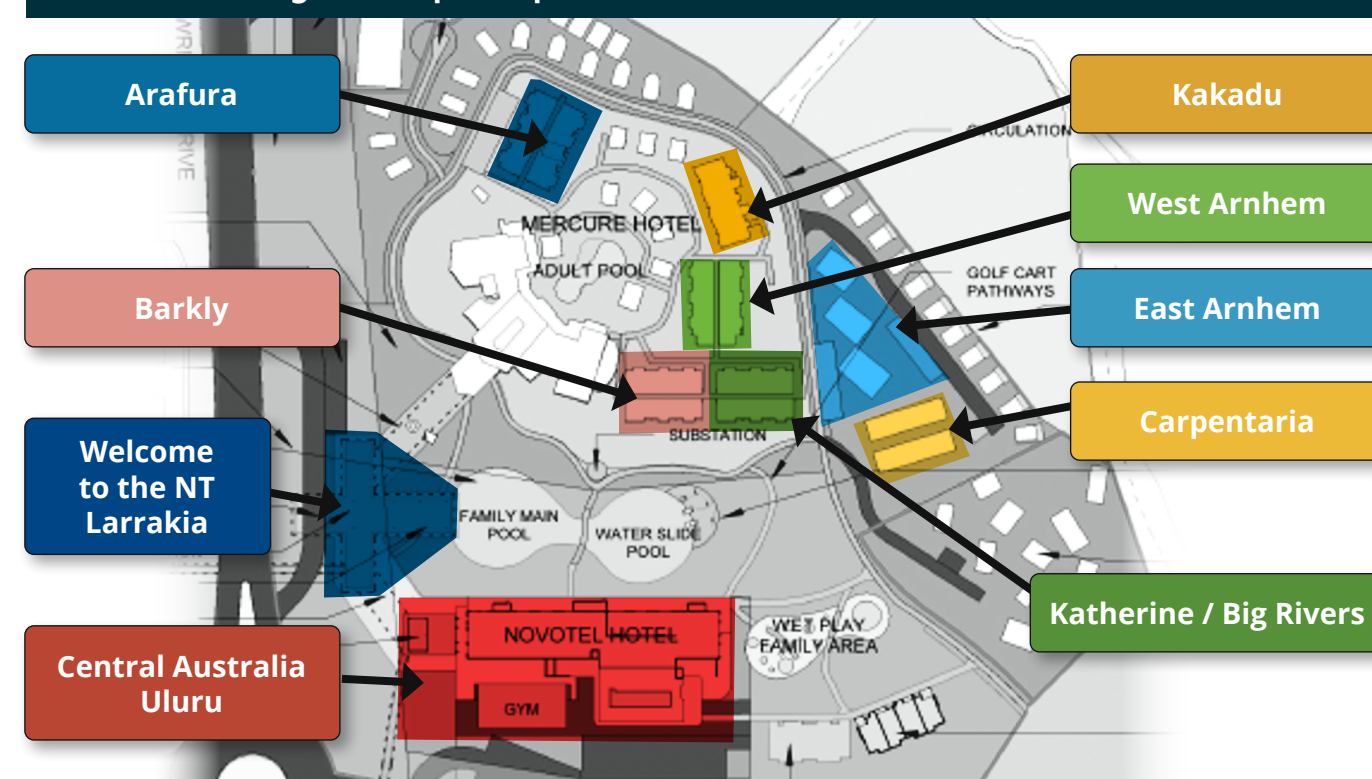
For more than 15 years, ADG has been a proud sponsor of festivals and events that showcase and celebrate diverse Indigenous cultures across the NT. ADG's current sponsorship includes:

- Darwin Festival, a vibrant arts and cultural event featuring Indigenous and multicultural artists through outdoor concerts, workshops, theatre, dance music, comedy and cabaret, film and visual arts.²⁹
- Parrtjima, the Aboriginal light festival in Central Australia, 'showcasing the oldest continuous culture on earth through the newest technology'.³⁰
- FabAlice, a weekend-long community event featuring drag queens and cabaret in Alice Springs. FabAlice celebrates diversity and inclusion especially by its Indigenous drag queens.³¹

ADG has committed to continue supporting these events.

APPENDIX 1

Hotel Theming Concept Map



ENDNOTES

- 1 Document PDF: Tourism NT, Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030 Summary, p.4 <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/aboriginal-tourism-strategy-summary.pdf>
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 Edited by Delbridge A., Bernard JRL., Blair D., Peters P., Butler S., The Macquarie Dictionary Second Edition, 1995, p.434
- 4 <https://australiantogether.org.au/discover/indigenous-culture/culture-identity/>
- 5 <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>
- 6 For 31 years CCC has worked throughout the NT, Australia and internationally to deliver cross-cultural consultancy, training services, and community and stakeholder engagement services.
- 7 Document PDF: CCC, Working With Cultural Difference Training Workbook, p. 8
- 8 *ibid.*, p.19
- 9 Documents PDF: CCC Training 1 surveys & CCC Training 2 surveys
- 10 Specifically, Targets 7 & 8 of the Closing the Gap Agreement <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>
- 11 Document PDF: NT Government, Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy, https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1018636/aboriginal-employment-and-career-development-strategy-2021-25.pdf
- 12 Companies listed with Supply Nation are either Supply Nation 'Registered' (50 per cent or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ownership), or Supply Nation 'Certified' (51 per cent or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned, managed and controlled). <https://supplynation.org.au/>
- 13 Document PDF: Attachment C – Espec & Kolden IES activities June 2021
- 14 Document PDF: Cold Stores – Employment Stats (Sunbuild IDP Employment Statistics)
- 15 Document PDF: 10AEDF 2021 Sponsorship Prospectus
- 16 <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>
- 17 Document PDF: NT Government, Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy, p.12 https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1018636/aboriginal-employment-and-career-development-strategy-2021-25.pdf
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- 19 Document PDF: Larrakia Nation Letter of Support ADG Water Tower project
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- 21 <https://www.darwinstreetartfestival.com.au/>
- 22 https://northernterritory.com/-/media/files/documents/arts-trail/territory_art_trails_guides.pdf
- 23 <https://northernterritory.com/things-to-do/art-and-culture/territory-arts-trail>
- 24 Tourism NT, Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030 Summary, p.5 <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/aboriginal-tourism-strategy-summary.pdf>
- 25 ADG is using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to report on its sustainability achievements and progress. GRI is the most widely adopted sustainability reporting framework, using metrics that are universally standardised. In the NT, this is unique. Complying with this framework gives more robust reporting; it's comparable against other organisations and comparable over time.
- 26 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK6ZqLDdluQ>
- 27 Tourism NT, Territory Art Trails, p. 2 https://northernterritory.com/-/media/files/documents/arts-trail/territory_art_trails_guides.pdf
- 28 Dr J. Battersby, 'Art and Airports', Craft Arts International, No. 30, 1994, pp. 47-66, p.49
- 29 <https://www.darwinfestival.org.au/>
- 30 <https://parrtjimaaustralia.com.au/>
- 31 <https://www.fabalice.com/>

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 Back cover: EcoZ Environmental Consultants assisted by Yirara College during ASA's Wildlife Survey



ADG is a Darwin-based private company that own diverse assets across the Northern Territory, including airports in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, the Novotel and Mercure Hotels at Darwin Airport, along with utilities and a significant property portfolio.

ADG is 100 per cent Australian investor owned by IFM Investors (77.4%) and Palisade Investment Partners Limited (22.6%), which contribute to the retirement funds of approximately 75,000 Territorians.