

The East Arnhem region is situated in the far north-eastern corner of the Territory and covers East Arnhem Land, Groote Eylandt and Elcho Island.

The region is home to about 14,600 people, of whom about 73% are Aboriginal, with major population centres in Nhulunbuy and Alyangula.

The population in East Arnhem is relatively young and dispersed, with about 42% aged 24 years and under and only about 4% aged 65 years and over.

Major industries in the East Arnhem region include mining, buffalo farming, tourism, aquaculture and fishing.

Mining is the main contributor to economic activity in the region, with the production of manganese at the GEMCO mine at Groote Eylandt and bauxite at the Rio Tinto and Gulkula mines on the Gove Peninsula. Traditional Aboriginal cultural experiences, Aboriginal art, and the remote and natural wilderness attract tourists to the region, providing economic and employment opportunities.

Due to current seasonal road accessibility constraints, transport for travellers and freight to East Arnhem is mainly by air or sea.

### Arts Trail investment

Budget 2023 includes \$5.5 million to commence works on the upgrade and expansion of the world renowned Baku-Larrngay Mulka centre at Yirrkala and the construction of a new building for Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts, through a partnership with the Commonwealth. The investment is part of the Territory Government's \$30 million Arts Trail Regional Gallery extension program.



### Central Arnhem Road upgrades

The 685 kilometre Central Arnhem Road corridor connects the regional centre of Nhulunbuy to the Stuart Highway.

The road services a number of Aboriginal communities and, when accessible, is a key tourism drive and freight route for regional industries.

The Commonwealth and Territory governments have committed \$230 million for upgrades along the corridor, to be delivered over five to ten years from 2019 to increase accessibility and enable economic investment.

The upgrades include sealing, widening and flood-immunity improvements to priority sections of the route. Works packages recently completed include upgrades near Beswick and the Goyder River.

Budget 2023 invests \$165.6 million in 2023-24 for new and continuing works along the corridor. Projects in 2023-24 include planning and works on the southern and northern priority sections, which will be key enablers for industry growth.

## Telecommunications upgrades

The Territory and Commonwealth governments, Telstra and Developing East Arnhem Limited have jointly committed \$8 million to upgrade the Arnhem optic fibre backbone, which services all the communities from Jabiru to Nhulunbuy.

These upgrades will be completed in mid 2023 and will significantly alleviate network congestion for regional communities and provide the improved broadband needed for the Arnhem Space Centre on the Gove Peninsula.

Telecommunications upgrades to 10 homelands through co-investment agreements will also commence in 2023-24.

## Local decision making

The Territory Government is committed to returning local decision making (LDM) to Aboriginal communities by empowering Aboriginal people to determine service delivery models that work best for their community.

The Territory Government has signed a nine-year Groote Archipelago LDM agreement with the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) to progress LDM in priority transition areas as identified by the ALC.

The landmark Groote Archipelago LDM agreement aims to deliver increased control and local job growth to the Anindilyakwa people and organisations in housing, education, justice and rehabilitation, health and local government.

A major priority in 2023-24 is establishing the Groote Archipelago Regional Council. Budget 2023 provides \$3 million to support the establishment of the new regional council, which will enhance local control of services and facilitate self-determination for Anindilyakwa traditional owners and their communities. Other priorities include establishment of the Groote Archipelago Community Justice Group, increasing Anindilyakwa participation in the justice system.

As part of their LDM agreement, Gapuwiyak community leaders have identified the value and importance in establishing a child and family centre in their community. An operating model for the Centre has been finalised and funding of \$4.3 million has been allocated over five years for its operations, including an annual \$260,000 flexible Child and Family Fund.

Budget 2023 also continues the \$1.5 million co-investment fund for key projects in the Blue Mud Bay homelands identified through the Djalkiripuyunu LDM agreement, including homeland infrastructure and services to support sustainable living and development, and job creation on country. Negotiations for agreements in other parts of the region will also continue throughout 2023 and 2024.

## Gove District hospital

Budget 2023 continues to invest in health infrastructure across the Territory, including \$20.1 million for fire remediation works at Gove District Hospital. The Territory Government has also committed \$37.3 million to upgrade central sterilisation services across the Territory's regional hospitals, including Gove District Hospital.

## Gove Port investment

Construction has started on the joint Territory Government, Developing East Arnhem Limited and Commonwealth-funded \$8 million upgrade to the marine and landside facilities at the Gove Port tourism precinct.

Aboriginal organisation Gumatj Corporation Limited will play a key role in the project, with completion expected in the first half of 2024.

Works include a breakwater with vehicle and pedestrian access and floating jetting to provide access for larger vessels. There will also be new land infrastructure developed including parking, an ablution block and shade structures.

Budget 2023 also continues the \$10 million commitment to support public-private investment to improve the commercial wharf and landside facilities at the Gove deep water port to support and attract new and diversified industry, including fisheries and aquaculture, marine services and larger tourism vessels.

## Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	174 095
Health	20 089
Recreation, culture and religion	5 500
Housing and community amenities	3 019
Education	814
<b>Total East Arnhem</b>	<b>203 517</b>

Photograph courtesy of the Gumatj Corporation