

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



The region is home to around 14,700 people, of whom around 70% are Aboriginal, with major population centres in Nhulunbuy and Alyangula, and several other large communities. The population in East Arnhem is relatively young and dispersed, with around 40% aged 24 years and under and only around 4% aged 65 years and over.

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

Garrthalala Bush University

Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation and Charles Darwin University have partnered to strengthen training delivery on Laynhapuy homelands and at the Garrthalala Bush University.

The memorandum of understanding will allow CDU Aboriginal pathway programs in health, arts, education, engineering, science, law, business or accounting to be offered at the university, and other identified sites across 30 homelands, for the first time.

The new agreement will also explore co-creation of micro-credentials for Yolngu and balanda models of leadership and governance and practical training for employment. CDU educators will run most of the training, education and research at the Garrthalala Bush University, located on Laynhapuy homelands.

This partnership will help increase access to tertiary education across the region and provide another avenue for the people of the region to have a say in the training that is accessible to them.

Central Arnhem Road upgrades

The Territory Government is planning for and delivering long-term upgrades along the 685 kilometre Central Arnhem Road corridor that connects the services centre of Nhulunbuy to the Stuart Highway. The road services a number of communities and homelands, and through the dry season is a key tourism drive and freight route.

More than 85% of the road is unsealed and road users experience frequent restrictions or closures throughout the wet season. The Commonwealth and Territory governments have committed \$355 million to upgrade the corridor over coming years. The upgrades include sealing, widening and flood immunity improvements to priority sections of the route.

The 2025 Budget includes \$205 million for new and continuing works along the corridor. Upgrading and sealing Central Arnhem Road will unlock further economic potential in the region, and open a range of new long-term economic and social opportunities.

New ward structure for Groote Archipelago Regional Council

The Territory Government is delivering on its commitment to restore local control of communities to Aboriginal people, strengthen service delivery and foster self-determination through important reform.

Previously comprised of one ward, the new ward structure for the Groote Archipelago Regional Council will now have three wards representing distinct areas of the archipelago – West Ward, Central Ward and East Ward, to offer fairer and more localised representation to residents.

Introduction of additional wards ensures all communities in the Groote Archipelago region are represented in local governance, including residents in smaller communities such as Milyakburra.

Remote housing

The 2025 Budget is reducing overcrowding and improving housing quality by delivering up to 2,700 houses over 10-years, and a comprehensive repairs and maintenance program, under the \$4 billion remote housing agreement, co-funded by the Territory and Commonwealth governments.

In 2024-25, around 75 dwellings are expected to be delivered across communities in East Arnhem, including 33 in Galiwinku and 22 in Ramingining. New subdivisions are also planned in 2025-26 for Galiwinku.

Employment pathway trainee pilot program

The Territory Government continues to grow a skilled and sustainable Aboriginal health workforce in the Territory by delivering training locally.

For the first time, an employment pathway trainee pilot program for Aboriginal health workers and practitioners is being delivered on Groote Eylandt to provide a closer-to-home learning pathway for Aboriginal people in the region to pursue a career in health.

The program is designed to build foundational knowledge and skills over time, offering a flexible and supportive training environment, and will assist in growing our own local workforce and ensuring Aboriginal Territorians can access culturally appropriate healthcare delivered by people they know and trust.

Trainees can progress at their own pace, with pathways available right through to Certificate IV in Aboriginal Primary Health Care Practice – the qualification required to become a registered Aboriginal health practitioner.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	206 620
Health	19 906
Housing and community amenities	15 903
Recreation, culture and religion	4 000
Total East Arnhem	246 429

Photograph courtesy of Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet