



**COVER STORY:
DESERT TREKKING
WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

SUPPLYING
offshore gas and oil



Exporting
TERRITORY MANGOES



TALL POPPY Timmy
'Djawa'
Burarrwanga
— Indigenous
Tourism
Entrepreneur



Acknowledgements

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Cover> Photo Tom Keating.

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An opening night guest reflects upon Yukultji Napangati's elaborate painting at Singapore's Red Dot Gallery.

DARWIN to supply FIRST floating LNG

Territory



Darwin businesses are likely to be some of the beneficiaries of Shell Development (Australia) Pty Ltd's decision to develop the Prelude field off the Kimberley coast using its new Floating LNG Technology (FLNG). The Territory capital will act as the project's supply base and the Darwin Business Park will be the site of a permanent maintenance facility. Having already received Commonwealth approval, the company is more than halfway through its FEED (Front End Engineering and Design) studies and expects to take the Final Investment Decision (FID) in 2011. If that occurs the company should be seeing the first LNG cargo in 2016.

Shell pioneered FLNG technology, developing it for more than 10 years. The purpose of Floating LNG is to access small gas reserves in remote locations that would otherwise not be economically viable to be developed. The company can do that because with FLNG the developer avoids building a long pipeline to shore, it avoids all the costs of an onshore development, and it is able to place the extraction facilities directly over the top of the field.

Prelude fits that formula: it is in a very remote area and would not be viable without FLNG. The site is about 475km north-northeast of Broome and at least 900km away from Darwin in the Browse Basin. It's more than 200km away from the coastline and the Kimberley coast, an area that is environmentally sensitive.



The deposit lies in 250m of water depth, and the gas reserve itself is around 3Tcf, which is not a huge gas reserve. The neighbouring Ichthys reserve to be exploited by INPEX and piped to Darwin is 12.8Tcf. Ordinarily to justify the cost of a conventional plant a developer would need a reserve of at least 5Tcf. But with FLNG the company can develop a smaller reserve.

The Prelude FLNG plant could be the largest floating facility in the world. It will be 480m long, 75m wide and when it's fully ballasted it will weigh 600,000 tonnes. It will be home to 110 to 120 people flying in and out. "It's getting built in Korea because it's one of the few countries that's got dry-dock facilities that are big enough," explains Ian Grose, Shell's commercial manager East Browse. "The hull's designed for 50 years but after 25 years we'll take it off station and tow it back to a dry-dock for refitting to put it onto the next project. It'll be reused. It's designed for a one in 10,000 year weather event which is more than a category five cyclone, so it's perfect for the Browse location. It doesn't need to disconnect, it'll just stay there. But we don't expect to operate through a cyclone but apart from that, there's no need to evacuate people because this facility will ride it out quite easily."



The onshore support for this facility is centred around three different locations: Shell's head office in Perth providing technical support; in Broome Shell is doing development drilling from there and will access aviation support to get workers to and from the facility; and then Shell will be using Darwin as its supply base with a supply boat going back and forth once a week bringing food and supplies, and, equally importantly, bringing equipment back onshore for maintenance and sending repaired equipment back out there for changeover.

"The Prelude FLNG plant could be the largest floating facility in the world."

Far Left> An artist's conception of a Floating LNG operation.

This Page> Ian Grose, Shell's commercial manager for the East Browse.

All the routine maintenance will happen through Darwin. The company intends to contract a significant amount of the work to the light industrial area in Darwin so all businesses will get a lot of work in terms of maintaining pieces of kit, rewinding motors, testing pumps and doing the things that keep an LNG plant running.

Shell will also be taking space at the Darwin Business Park with some permanent infrastructure. "It won't be terribly complicated—about 20 people working there, some offices, a warehouse facility, visitors' reception, and a satellite communication back and forth to the offshore facility," says Grose. "The warehouse will be a little more sophisticated than most because it will likely have storage for the main compressor, spare rotors and they're in a nitrogen environment. There'll be some air-conditioned warehousing for instrumentation type spares, but it's not going to be a major workshop because our intention is to utilise the Darwin community and their industry capability. They already support the ConocoPhillips plant, they've got the INPEX project coming as well, so you already have a capability to maintain and assist and that can only improve."





SUPPLYING the PRODUCERS

"Nearly 600 highly skilled people from around the world were enlisted to perform the shutdown earlier this year and a floating accommodation vessel was brought in from Singapore to house 450 of them."

It's business as usual at Darwin's East Arm Wharf and in 2010 that means trying to find space along the wharf frontage to load a rig tender. Tenders queue up in the stifling heat, their increased presence a tangible indication of the buoyant offshore gas and oil industry in the Timor Sea. But only one of these rig tenders is servicing a production facility—an offshore platform that is extracting sub-sea natural gas and liquids for export. That is the *Lady Melinda*, a 71m long tender contracted by ConocoPhillips to service its Bayu-Undan facility some 500km out to sea.

Left: The Bayu-Undan production facility in the Timor Sea.

Today the *Lady Melinda* is being loaded with essential supplies for the operators of the Bayu-Undan facility by ConocoPhillips' contracted logistic service provider Toll Energy. Huge tanks of chemicals fundamental to the production of natural gas are loaded by crane, along with spare parts, fuel as well as containers of food and supplies for between 140 and 150 people on Bayu-Undan's two facilities. The supplies have been transported to the wharf by truck from Toll Energy's spacious warehouse facility in the nearby Darwin Business Park.

ConocoPhillips' Bayu-Undan operation is the only LNG production facility operating in the seas off the Territory's northern coast, making its supply contract with Toll Energy unique in the Top End. American-based ConocoPhillips orders all of its supplies and contracts its rig tenders and air travel for crew changes, while Toll Energy supplies the 3000 pallet-space warehouse facility, the people to operate it, and truck transport to and from the wharf.

ConocoPhillips has contracted Toll Energy since offshore operations began in 2004. The two parties have since signed another five year contract plus five more as an option.

Toll Energy is an arm of Toll Holdings, the Asian region's largest provider of logistics services. In 1986 Energy Trucking was established to service the growing oil and gas market in northern Western Australia before being acquired by Toll Holdings and renamed Toll Energy. Today, Toll Energy's Australian network of supply bases services the Cooper Basin and all Australian offshore petroleum fields. The company operates supply bases in Perth, Dampier, Melbourne, Adelaide, Moomba, Jackson, Portland, Sale and Geelong, as well as Darwin.

Servicing a production platform is a full-time exercise. Once rig tenders are loaded, it is a 22 hour bluewater trip to the platform—almost two days there and back. "With ConocoPhillips we have to be on the ball 24/7," explains Toll Energy's operations manager Scott Van Loon. "ConocoPhillips has



Left: Toll Energy's operations manager Scott Van Loon in Toll's warehouse facility.

This Page: The *Lady Melinda* loads before making the 22 hour journey to the Bayu-Undan facility.

very high standards—especially with safety. We've just achieved five years of LTI-free operations—that means no Lost Time Injuries in this or any other facility for five and a half years."

Every three years ConocoPhillips shuts down the Bayu-Undan and the Darwin LNG plant for scheduled maintenance. It closes off production to replace equipment and maintain the facilities that cannot be replaced or maintained while the facilities are in operation. Nearly 600 highly skilled people from around the world were enlisted to perform the shutdown earlier this year and a floating accommodation vessel was brought in from Singapore to house 450 of them.

The shutdown was also a challenge for Toll Energy due to the massive influx of people offshore and resulted in more than double its supply efforts. While the warehouse normally operates with a crew of ten staff, 32 people worked long hours towards a successful outcome. Two rig tenders a week doubled to four, with staff sorting out what was needed offshore, packing the containers, and loading them at the wharf.

Toll Energy believes that, as the area's only LNG production supply base, it will be in the running to tender for the supply contracts soon to be offered by INPEX for its upcoming multi-billion dollar Darwin-based LNG project. The ConocoPhillips contract has given Toll valuable experience in its ability to support offshore oil and gas exploration, as well as development and production activities throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

"Tenders queue up in the stifling heat, their increased presence a tangible indication of the buoyant offshore gas and oil industry in the Timor Sea."



regular feature:

TALL POPPY

The Yolngu Entrepreneur

It was a glittering evening with some of Australia's A-list celebrities and high profile businesspeople in attendance to celebrate an education initiative aimed at Indigenous children.

Sponsoring thousand dollar plus tables at the One Lap Top per Child gala event at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art were members of the ASX Top 50 executives, sporting identities Ian Thorpe and Nova Peris, as well as then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. While the evening's speakers voiced their support for the project, one speaker nailed it.

Timmy 'Djawa' Burarrwanga, 40, a Yolngu man, coming all the way from Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory, made the corporate audience take notice. Speaking in English, his 14th language (because no one in the room spoke any of the 13 Aboriginal dialects he speaks), Burarrwanga urged them to work with Aboriginal people to form a 'common unity' and reconciliation with the goal of closing the gap between the health and education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The One Lap Top per Child project was a significant first step for major sponsors like the Commonwealth Bank, News Limited and Telstra to make. More corporate cooperation is needed.

Timmy Burarrwanga knows about corporate Australia. For the past five years he has operated a tourism venture on his ancestral land at Bawaka in East Arnhem Land. The pristine coastal retreat has become a favoured destination for corporate Australia to send their executives in an effort to increase their cultural awareness. "Sometimes people say they have been all over the world and never saw a place as beautiful as this," recalls Burarrwanga. "To me, the place is beautiful because it has significant stories connected with it. The story makes the land beautiful and natural. Full of joy and tears. From the songlines sung by old people and the old ladies cry over the land."

One of those inspired by the deep cultural presence at Bawaka was Commonwealth Bank Chief Information Officer Michael Harte. A strong supporter of One Lap Top project, Harte also leads an Indigenous banking team that works directly with Aboriginal leaders to build skills in financial literacy and enterprise development. Harte was so taken with his visit to Bawaka that he asked celebrity chef Tony Bilson ('the Godfather of Australian Cuisine') to design the menu for the Sydney event modelled on the bush food he'd tasted at Bawaka—with dishes featuring magpie goose and stingray. Bilson called it Dinner at Djawa's Place, named in honour of Burarrwanga and the work he has done to close the gap of Indigenous disadvantage.

While Burarrwanga is today the operator of a flourishing tourist venture and a board member on a range of community organisations, it was not an easy road to success. As a young Gumatj man growing up on his homeland, he became interested in business, strongly influenced by his father-in-law the Reverend Doctor Djinyini Gondarra (OAM), the CEO for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Churches and his mother-in-law, Carol Gelung Gondarra, a prolific writer of poetry. "They were important role models for me," remembers Burarrwanga. "I wanted to have a business too, but my English was bad and I thought, 'how can I be in business if my English is so bad?'"

He recognised that if he wanted to live his dream, he would need to improve his education. He told his family of his plans to start a business and went about "overcoming hurdles" by improving his English and completing certificates in resource management, tourism and business. A Tourism Australia Workshop was held in Darwin in 2005. He went and listened and it helped him to understand what he had to do.

Burarrwanga began to see tourism as a culturally appropriate way of Aboriginal people earning a living on their traditional lands. "With tourism, people can make money from their land while they are protecting the land. There is a story and significance to our land. We can make opportunities by managing the land," he says.

In 2006 Burarrwanga and his family were ready for their first day tour. A Swiss group was booked and Burarrwanga was beyond nervous. "We stayed up all night waiting for the first tour," he recalls. "We couldn't sleep. So I went out in the dark and cut the trees along the road so they wouldn't scrape the cars and I filled in the holes in the road. When they come at 9 o'clock, I was really tired."

Since then the business has grown and so has the businessman. His confidence rising with his continuing interaction with outsiders, Burarrwanga has become an important leader among the Yolngu. He is chairman of the Yirrkala Dhanbul Aboriginal Corporation, a community development organisation that has developed projects and businesses aimed at assisting Indigenous employment and alleviating Indigenous disadvantage. The organisation initiated the Buku Larrngay Mulka Yirrkala Art Centre, an internationally renowned fine art operation that has delivered significant earnings to artists in remote homelands where few other economic opportunities exist.

Burarrwanga remains the director of the Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation, an organisation dedicated to alleviating Indigenous health problems. He is director of the Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation, which provides natural resource management employment to Indigenous people as Dhimurru Rangers.

He is currently working to develop the Lirriwi Yolngu Tourism Aboriginal Corporation, which aims to open doors for Indigenous people to participate in the tourism industry. "My vision and dream is to create businesses in the remote homelands," says Burarrwanga. "They want me to tell them how to do it, and I reckon that's a real good economy for our people."

Timmy 'Djawa' Burarrwanga



BONANZA in THE Roper

From a helicopter hundreds of metres above the sweltering savanna, you can see the Roper River slicing its way through the lonely landscape on its way to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The sparsely forested flatland gives way to hills with striking bluish-red rock jutting out along the length of the landform. "That's iron ore," says a geologist over the chopper's intercom, "or, more correctly, a Sherwin iron formation, unique to Australia featuring crystalline hematite." Spoken just like a true 'geo,' offering more information than you need.



There are kilometres of iron ore exposed to the relentless tropical sun. Though geologists knew about the existence of the mineral in the remote Roper region since 1955 when it was discovered by BHP explorers, it is only recently that developers have taken serious notice. Back in '55 BHP decided to move on to more lucrative sites in Western Australia's Pilbara region, but today, with a commodity price of US\$130 to \$140 a tonne landed in China (where manufacturing is rocking), the Territory deposits are enjoying renewed industry interest.

Two companies in particular have secured sprawling tenements in the Roper precinct (which has been a proposed national park since 1990), and both plan on mining within two years: Western Desert Resources, with 3300 sq km in which to explore, and Sherwin Iron (formerly Batavia) with its 3500 sq km. of 100 per cent owned tenements. At the time of writing, both are drilling as many exploration holes as possible before the onset of the monsoon because only a tiny percentage of their holdings have been explored. "Everything that we promote around the project now is based around the stuff we know is in outcrop, but we also know that there will be substantial amounts under cover," explains Western Desert's managing director Norm Gardner. "It's possible that we'll have well over a billion tonnes when you take into account the material that's under cover as well."



DOWNHILL

"The potential from our large project is likely to open opportunities through the Gulf."

ore through crushing, gravity separation with refinements and further processing before trucking it to the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line where it will be loaded onto rolling

stock and transported to Darwin's East Arm Wharf. "There is already room at the port and, with passing lane upgrades to the railway, there is capacity," says Sherwin Iron CEO Greg Bittar. "This will get us to market for our initial production. Longer term, the potential from our large project is likely to open opportunities through the Gulf."

On the east side, the sites of interest to Western Desert Resources (WDR) are only 50km from the Gulf of Carpentaria, making sea transport a viable option. Western Desert Resources expects to significantly upgrade their current 116 million tonne resource this year and release a strong scoping study supporting the project. Prospective Australian and international investors to the project are also interested in building a port facility in the Gulf that may well be of use to other regional projects. But to get to the Gulf, WDR must cross Aboriginal freehold land and the company must negotiate for access by obtaining an Indigenous Land Use Agreement

with the traditional owners' representatives, the Northern Land Council (NLC).

The traditional owners and the NLC are supporting both projects. WDR's sites are near the community of Ngukurr, which has a population of 1400, a number of whom are already working on the company's exploration crews. There will also be commercial opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs at both WDR and Sherwin Iron. "We have an exploration licence with the Northern Land Council which gives us access to that area and gives us the ability to explore, create access roads and mobilise the drill teams," states Bittar. "As well as employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people, the local community has asked us to keep them in mind for contracting services."

Both companies are working at a breakneck pace, not only to prove up their resources but to get the appropriate mining approvals from government and traditional owners. They are already in touch with companies representing some of the 600 steel mills in China who are interested in continuity of supply.

Both companies say a 2012 start date is feasible if their approvals and their transport infrastructures are in place. "We want to get our infrastructure on the way, but that's not to say at some stage in the future there won't be an opportunity to combine the projects or both utilise similar infrastructure," says Gardner. "But at this point we're both working to enhance our own prospects. Sherwin's is a slightly different mineralogy but they have a huge area like ours. So as they explore further they'll uncover more areas of opportunity."



Previous Page> Western Desert Resources drilling produces strong results with high grade iron ore evident.

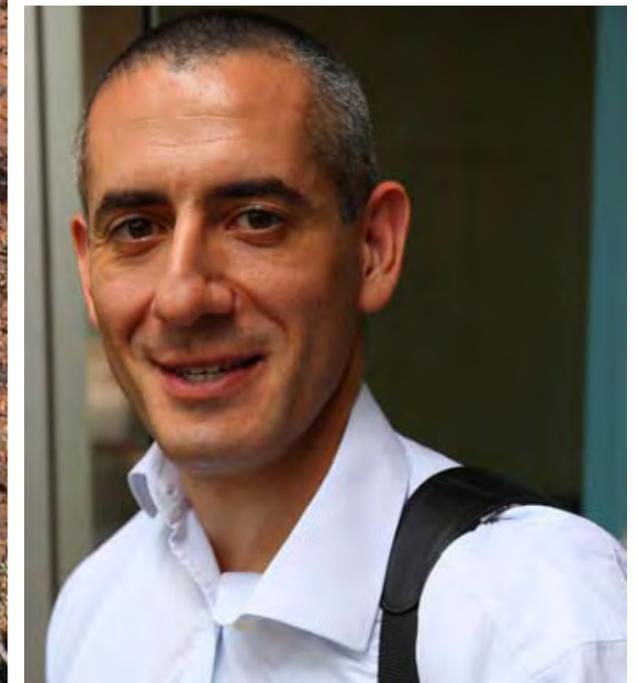
Bottom Left> A Western Desert drilling worker on site in the Roper.

Centre Top> A Sherwin Iron rig working on the company's western tenements.

Centre Bottom> Iron ore is exposed above a creek bed.

Right> Sherwin Iron CEO, Gregg Bittar.

Bottom Right> Iron ore samples from drilling.



COMMON USER area -GATEWAY TO OFFSHORE SUPPLY

Territory

You can best see how strategically positioned the Territory Government's new Common User Area (CUA) is from the air.

Stage One of the new facilities is located midway between Darwin's East Arm Port and the adjacent Darwin Business Park and the Adelaide to Darwin railway. It is a facility that offers secure hardstand space for short to medium term leasing options at market rates. It is also a facility that will provide major project developers and local contractors alike with a spacious area to lay down massive quantities of materials or to produce very large modules for a wide range of projects.

Inset Centre > An aerial view of the Common User Area next to the Darwin Business Park and the East Arm Port.

Inset Right > John Coleman, general manager of the Land Development Corporation.

Already open for business, the 2 hectare CUA Stage One will eventually be expanded to a subdivided area of 30 hectares. The initial stage opens just ahead of the Final Investment Decisions of both INPEX and Total's Ichthys project and Shell's Prelude project in the Browse Basin (see Page 5). If they go ahead as expected, both will require lay-down areas for pipe storage and onshore fabrication and maintenance. Large permanent workshops or warehouse structures may be added to the CUA at a later date.

The CUA was an initiative of a local industry and today enjoys the capacity to provide the engineering, fabrication and maintenance that developers once were forced to access from southern companies. The Manufacturers Council of the NT, Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Territory Industry Capability Network (NTICN) came to government with the idea of an area for fabrication and service for the marine, mining, oil and gas and defence sectors.

They requested something similar to the Western Australian 'modularised' construction area in Kwinana, the Australian Maritime Centre, which features a huge shed on rollers. "We did not have the capacity to build giant sheds on rollers to deliver things to the waters edge," recalls Land Development Corporation (LDC) general manager John Coleman, "but we can come up with a staged facility, with government assisting industry to capture opportunities. That's where the [Land Development] Corporation stepped in."

The government provided the land on the edge of the Business Park and the initial development. The LDC had to design an intersection and pavement area that would take multi-trailer roadtrains. It had to provide a secure fencing system, a large roller gate and the pavement had to be strong enough to be able to take heavy loads, and large enough to do large scale work. The LDC spent \$2 million on the CUA development.

Industry groups believe the CUA will enable Darwin industry to respond to the requirements of important industrial contracts, particularly in offshore oil and gas. "It's going to be a very important asset for the SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) in the NT," explains Stuart Kenny, Chairman of the NT Manufacturers Council. "Businesses now have the facility and the area they would normally not be able to afford. They'll be able to look at the bigger projects and cluster together and to utilise this facility and perhaps tender on the bigger projects together."

The sectors seen as those that will utilise the CUA are companies involved in offshore oil and gas service and support, as well as servicing the mining industry. Defence support projects as well as marine and transport services and logistics will benefit. "We want to be able to position Territory industry and then grow it with the projects coming over the horizon," says Coleman.

The LDC has been advertising nationally to announce the CUA's completion and to create an awareness campaign to say



that there is strong service and supply capacity in Darwin. The CUA adds to the Territory's capacity of East Arm as a precinct: a designated coastal area that includes the East Arm Port, the upcoming Marine Supply Base, the Darwin Business Park with all its varied businesses, and the CUA.

Advertising that precinct will be the next stage of promoting industry in Darwin. "I think the Business Park, more and more, is seen to be positioned in the right place," says Coleman, "and that's why we're now taking it to the next level—promoting East Arm as a precinct with land and business capacity for emerging industries."



"Businesses now have the facility and the area they would normally not be able to afford. They'll be able to look at the bigger projects and cluster together and to utilise this facility and perhaps tender on the bigger projects together."



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ABORIGINAL art's

home in ASIA

From the outside it looks more like a concrete, multi-storey, Singapore dockside warehouse than an art gallery of international repute.

But once you step inside and find the Red Dot Fine Art Gallery, you recognise it as the home of Australian Indigenous art in Asia.

Set among five other boutique galleries displaying their works, Red Dot opens up into a purpose-built exhibition space, perfect for showcasing Indigenous fine art.

The gallery's gregarious owner-manager Giorgio Pilla calls it a 'destination type gallery' rather than a mainstream shopfront.

You are invited to it rather than stumbling on it by accident.



Right> Giorgio Pilla directs a first nighter to a painting.

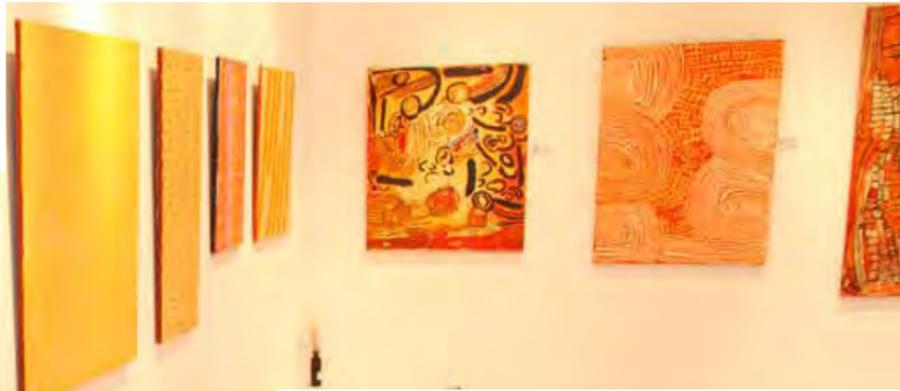
And tonight Red Dot is opening its show of shows—a collection of Aboriginal paintings from the Papunya Tula Artists of the Northern Territory, a movement generally recognised as the premier exponents of Australian Indigenous art. Singaporean art lovers have come out in force for the event. Invited by Pilla, over 100 people have made their way into the viewing room to see the latest works from the masters of central Australian desert painting.

Some of Australia's greatest Indigenous painters are represented here at the show *Ngurra Kutju Ngurrara—Belonging to One Country*, including some of the elder artists whose work celebrates their strong attachment to their traditional western desert lands. Naata Nungurrayi, Makinti Napanungka and George Tjungurrayi are exhibited tonight in Singapore, their work also hanging in every state gallery in Australia and galleries internationally. One of Tjungurrayi's finest paintings is here, the work of a former entrant in the prestigious Telstra Art Award—accompanied by an AU\$80,000 price tag.

The Red Dot gallery is the only space in Asia strictly devoted to Aboriginal art. "I've positioned myself to be that international Asian arm of the Indigenous art movement," explains Pilla. "There's a couple galleries in Australia that have started doing things in Asia as well, but there's nobody in Asia that's got a permanent gallery. With all of the [Australian community] art centres, I'd be their largest overseas client. Maybe even globally."

“The reality is that most buyers will take the time to understand the history of the art movement and Australian Indigenous culture. Then the paintings all become part of a bigger story.”

Territory



“The guy is committed,” states Paul Sweeney, manager of Papunya Tula, here tonight to open the Singapore show. “He’s researched the work. He’s familiar with the artists and their styles. He can recognise good work and has opened up his chequebook in the past. That’s a relationship.”

Sweeney says they would be happy to have a show this good in their Alice Springs base or anywhere in Australia. They brought over 40 works. “We’ve put our best foot forward here and it’s important to do that,” he says. “It’s like being a performer—you’re only as good as your last show.”

Pilla believes Australian Indigenous art has a real future in Asia and beyond. In his former incarnation as a merchant banker he lived in Hong Kong and Japan, and he believes both of those cities could support a resident gallery like Red Dot, expanding the Indigenous art market deeper into Asia. Educating the market is the key to success.

His show in Tokyo earlier this year saw sales of 70 per cent during the exhibition, but sales have subsequently slowed down. “To get started anywhere in the world you need a permanence of space because it’s an art form that takes a while for people to understand,” explains Pilla. “You could have someone walk in here buy a piece without any knowledge, but the reality is that most buyers will take the time to understand the history of the art movement and Australian Indigenous culture. Then the paintings all become part of a bigger story.”

Above > Papunya Tula manager Paul Sweeney (seated) and Pilla plan a marketing strategy.
 Left > A snapshot of a work by artist Johnny Yungut Tipurru.
 Centre > Collector Peter Cooke and wife Agnes with two of his purchases.
 Top Centre > Paul Sweeney opens the show.
 Far Right > The opening night crowd builds.

The mix of faces at the opening mirrors Red Dot’s Singapore market. Singaporeans comprise only about 10 per cent of Pilla’s market, while 80 per cent—plus—are foreigners from all over the world, or friends of foreigners, given the transient expat market. “They have relatively high powered jobs; they have a high disposable income and need to decorate their homes. But some are trying to collect rather beyond just having a decorative piece on the wall,” says Pilla in his rich English accent.

One of those who has become a significant collector of Aboriginal art is Singapore based businessman Peter Cooke. His interest started in Australia while travelling in the central desert region. He bought some art in Alice Springs and it was recommended he speak to Pilla when he returned to Singapore. Cooke now refers to himself as a ‘passionate collector’. “The link with Giorgio has been great because he taught me the ethics of buying art and connected me with Papunya Tula,” says Cooke. “They are, to me, the pure

heart of Aboriginal art. That crystallised my understanding of the art movement.”

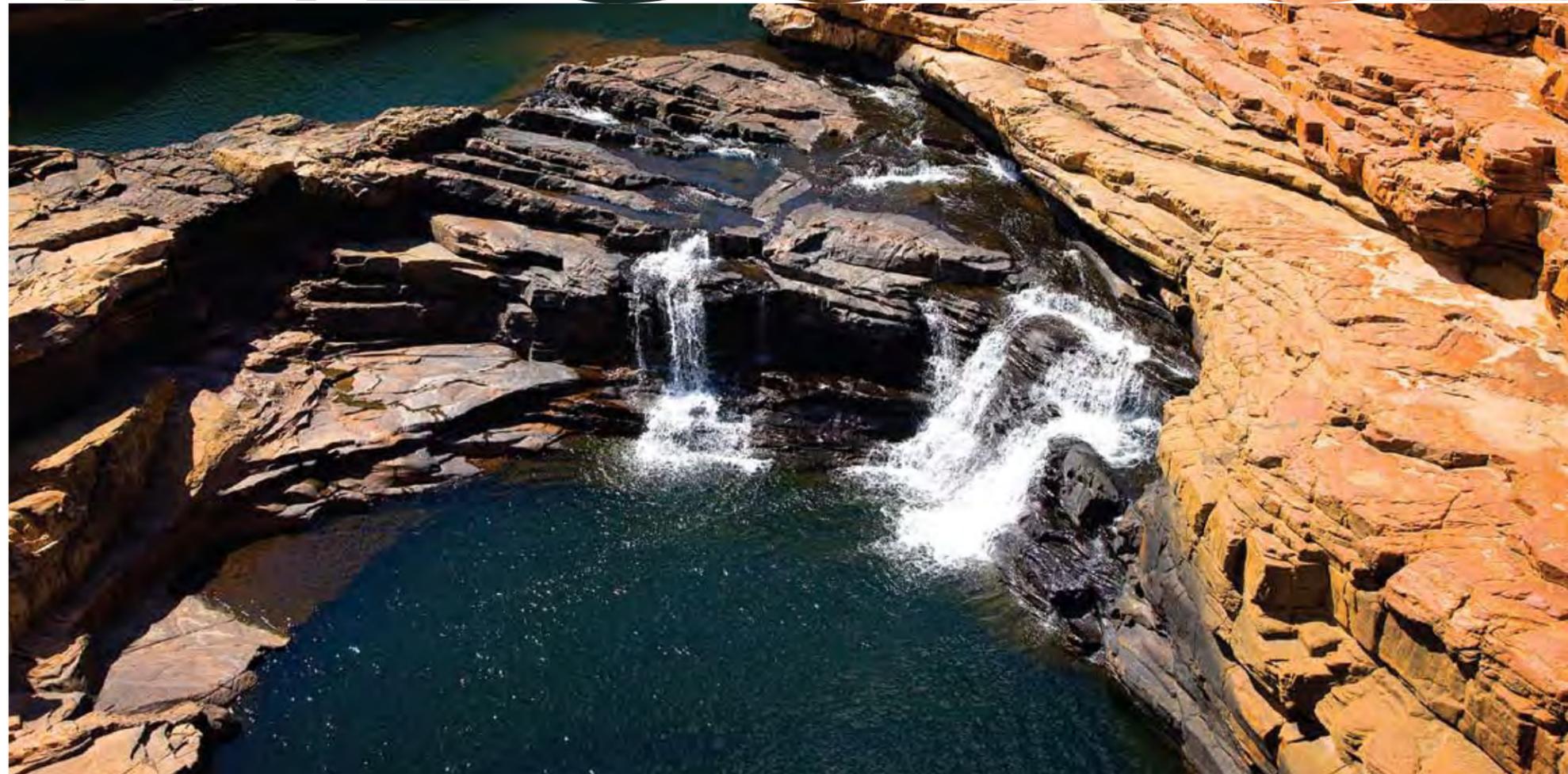
The Singapore exhibition is exceptional even by Papunya Tula’s standards. Rarely does the organisation take such a large show, featuring so many top selling artists overseas. Recently it took exhibitions to New York and London to test the markets there but this show with Red Dot is a testament to Papunya Tula’s long standing relationship with Pilla. It is their seventh collaboration.



Beyond THE GORGE

Territory

Tourism in the Northern Territory is not what it once was. It was not that long ago that the Territory market consisted of large numbers of people arriving at selected sites in tour buses and getting back on the bus according to what the schedule dictated. While people do still make their way to sites in the Top End by bus, tastes and market demand have changed. People are now looking for a unique tourism experience.



Far Left: Nitmiluk Tour's fixed wing flights over Kakadu's Jim Jim Falls.

Top: 'Centipede Dreaming' from the air in Jawoyn Country.

Above: A tour boat winds its way through the gorge in the Katherine River.



Above: Walkers take in Nitmiluk surrounds along the 'Dreaming Place Trail'.

Top Right: Swimmers enjoy a waterfall during a gorge walk.

Far Right: Apprentice award winner Cameron Kossack at work.



Few companies are more aware of those market changes than Nitmiluk Tours, which operates boat tours through the magnificent Katherine Gorge, 300km south of Darwin. When Nitmiluk Tours took over the operation five years ago, more than 2100 people could be seen cruising up and down the Katherine River at any one time. Today that figure is notably less, but visitors are offered more authentic experiences and, consequently, they are spending more money.

The Indigenous-owned company today offers a wide variety of tourism packages that go far beyond the boat tours that remain its core business. A visitor can now take guided walks, enjoy a dinner cruise, fly in a helicopter over the gorge or take a fixed wing ride to nearby Kakadu National Park. They can visit the Aboriginal community of Manyallaluk for the day or choose to stay overnight in chalets at the gorge site or at nearby Maud Creek Lodge. It was this product diversity that won Nitmiluk Tours this year's Brolga Award for Best Major Tourist Attraction.

Plans are now underway to expand operations even further with the news that Nitmiluk Tours will be building Cicada Lodge, a premium level of accommodation within Nitmiluk National Park.

The Territory Government spent over \$2 million upgrading the park infrastructure, making construction of the Cicada Lodge possible. The 18 room facility will be aimed at the high end of the tourism market, with construction kicking off in March next year, to be completed in March 2012. Those who stay at the lodge will have the opportunity to fly by helicopter to traditional Jawoyn Aboriginal country in southern Arnhem Land where they will be able to view Indigenous rock art that dates back thousands of years. They will also have exclusive access to the Nipbamjen bush camp, a stunning wilderness waterhole with sandstone galleries layered in ancient paintings.

Nitmiluk Tours is wholly owned by the Jawoyn Association, the Aboriginal traditional owners of a sprawling area that encompasses southern Arnhem Land, the southern section of Arnhem Land, and the whole of Nitmiluk (formerly Katherine Gorge) National Park. Previously, the Jawoyn were partners in the Katherine Gorge cruise operation with Travel North, but in 2005 they bought out their long time partner. Since that purchase, the Jawoyn Board shifted the operation's focus to stimulating Indigenous employment and cultural awareness.

Initially, every dollar Nitmiluk Tours made in the first years went back into the business. Diversification was the company strategy. It expanded its range of packages on offer, making alliances with other Katherine region



"We have formed partnerships with other operators who are now our clients. We packaged things with them and that has insulated us from the financial impact of the global downturn."

operators. Airborne Solutions won the right to offer helicopter rides above the gorge and has partnered with Great Southern Railways to provide passengers on the Ghan with a whistlestop tour of the gorge during the train's Katherine stop.

The Ghan service has worked so well that Great Southern has asked Nitmiluk Tours to operate the Katherine railway station.

Nitmiluk Tours continues to strengthen its relationships with agents to increase international business. "We've approached wholesalers and asked what can we provide them in terms of a package that they will be able to sell well," explains Nitmiluk Tours marketing manager Kelly Vrolyks. "How can we value-add the product so that you have a competitive edge? We've established some very good relationships with the inbound tour operators and agents."

Nitmiluk Tours general manager Clive Pollack believes that it was the company's product diversification and its newfound partnerships that pulled it through the recent financial crisis

that so adversely affected others in the tourism sector. "We now have a product that suits the international market better than the older restricted

product. We have formed partnerships with other operators who are now our clients. We packaged things with them and that has insulated us from the financial impact of the global downturn," says Pollack.

While tourism professionals like Pollack and Vrolyks are focused on the bottom line, the Nitmiluk board is concerned with putting Indigenous people to work in its enterprises. When Nitmiluk took over the business five years ago there was one Indigenous employee. Currently, of the 55 people employed, 12 are Indigenous including 19-year-old apprentice cook Cameron Kossack, who took out second prize in the regional AUS-TAFE cook-off. Kossack finishes his apprenticeship this year and plans to work his way around Australia using his newly acquired vocation. "We are an Indigenous company, not just in name," states Pollack. "We actively take on a cultural component. We want to have depth in our cultural presentation and we have sincerity in our cultural employment."



treasure

BENEATH THE SURFACE

At first glance they don't look like much. Darting in between the underwater plants like shadows beneath the surface of the swirling freshwater creek, the tiny fingerlings make hardly an impression to the casual observer.

But captured by the photographer's skill in a controlled environment, the 2cm long rainbow fish is a revelation; its fins are speckled in luminous green and red, its body adorned in golden stripes and electric blue. It is a species any collector would be proud to add to his freshwater aquarium.



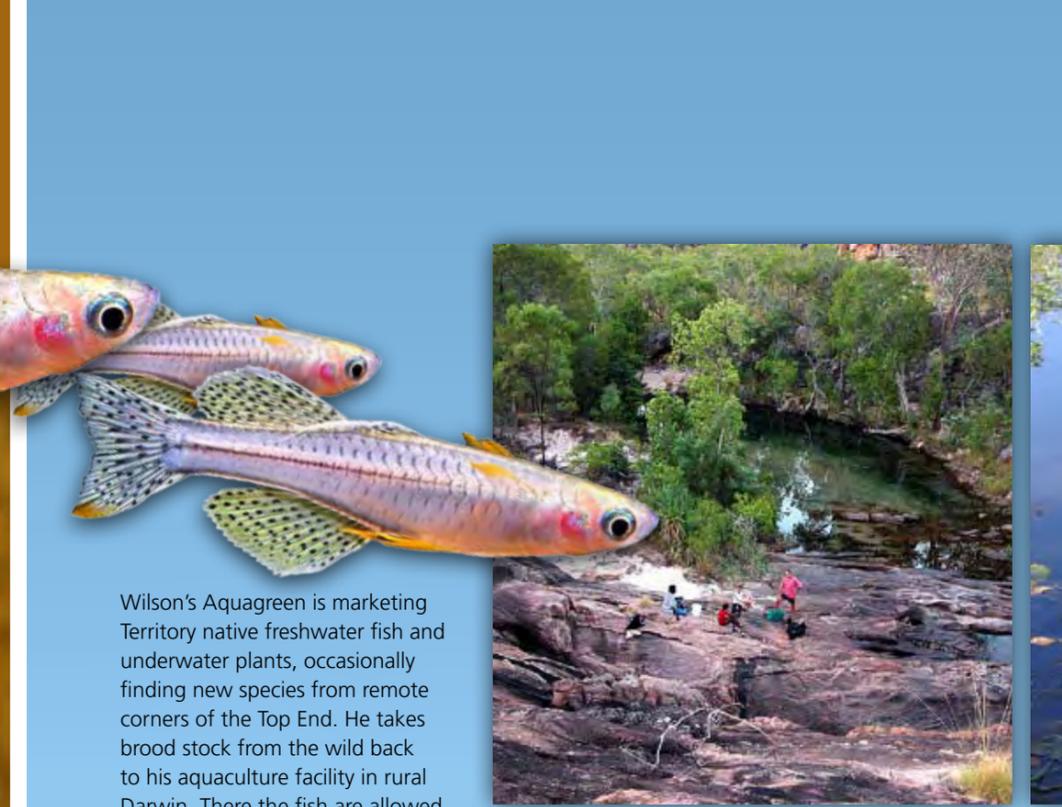
It's called the chequered rainbow fish and it was captured at the Moline Rock Hole just down the road from Goymarr, the Mary River Roadhouse (see *Territory Quarterly* Third Quarter 2010), an enterprise owned and operated by the area's Aboriginal traditional owners. Those same traditional owners invited freshwater fish and aquarium fish expert Dave Wilson to take some brood stock.

Wilson's Aquagreen company wholesales freshwater aquarium fish within the Top End, and retails nationally on the internet. Wilson pays the locals to help him net the fish, and each year pays 10 per cent of his earnings from the fish to their Werenbun Association as a royalty. "It's not a great deal of money but it recognises that we get the fish from their country and those sales are ongoing," explains Wilson.



Top> The chequered rainbow fish from the Mary River.
Left> Spotted blue-eye from the Cadell River.

"...you can have a little piece of Arnhem Land in your lounge room in Melbourne."



Wilson's Aquagreen is marketing Territory native freshwater fish and underwater plants, occasionally finding new species from remote corners of the Top End. He takes brood stock from the wild back to his aquaculture facility in rural Darwin. There the fish are allowed to breed and their eggs collected from the strings of mop heads dropped from the surface. The eggs are hatched and between four and six months later the fish reach a commercial size. They are transported by air freight along with a host of underwater plants and fertilisers across Australia.

From the Aquagreen internet site buyers can get helpful hints on growing tropical aquarium plants. They can purchase a wide array of native plants like the Daly River *Ammannia* or *Monochordia virginalis*, or Australian native invertebrates like the Darwin red-nosed shrimp or the Essington snail, and stock it with native fish species like the neon blue-eye or threadfin rainbowfish. "You can buy plants and fish species from a particular area like around the Mary River Roadhouse," says Wilson, "so you can have a little piece of Arnhem Land in your lounge room in Melbourne."

Wilson came to the Territory as a member of the Australian Federal Police in 1988, but his fascination with aquatic habitats prompted him to persuade the Territory Wildlife Park to take him on as aquarium manager, a post he held for nine years. He recalls: "I just loved fishing, but I got more interested in the bait."

While managing the Wildlife Park aquarium, Wilson joined Parks officials on surveys in Aboriginal land, attempting to set up a business for traditional owners in the sustainable use of wildlife. Those efforts eventually failed to take off, but Wilson had a different model



that he believed would work. Visitors to the park were always coming through asking where they could buy freshwater species for their aquariums but there was no outlet. Then in 2001 he wrote to the director of the department for approval for him and his wife Robyn to begin a small business. There was plenty of interest.

Using their rural property, the pair built a production facility with rectangular ponds to grow plants and round ponds to grow fish. They were to use the expertise acquired at the Wildlife Park to produce quality products, unlike any other in the Territory. "The aquarium trade is fickle", states Wilson. "It's like the fashion industry. Something that's very popular this week no one will want next month, so sometimes you end up with a lot of fish you can't sell. So you've either got to try and set the trends yourself or produce the type of fish that will sell."

Setting a trend is the fun part. That means discovering a colourful new aquarium subject that no one has seen previously, before writing an article about it in a popular aquarium magazine to stimulate interest. One way to come up with new aquarium subjects is to go to the most remote areas of the Territory, such as Arnhem Land, and involve the people living on isolated homelands. That is what Wilson has been doing for a decade, travelling to places like the Arafura Swamp and the Cadell and Blyth rivers in search of trendsetting species. It is a passion

that allows traditional owners to make an income off their homelands. "There are places that are difficult to get to but they may have new species of snails or colourful shrimps," says Wilson. "There's a big trend at the moment in colourful shrimps in the aquarium world, and if we can go across the top I'm sure we'll find species that science has never described."



Above> A threadfin rainbowfish from Arnhem Land.
 Right> Wilson nets fish in the Arafura Swamp in Arnhem Land.
 Top Left> Netting fish in Gunlom Creek.
 Top Centre> Local kids help catch brood stock in the Arafura Swamp.
 Top Right> Wilson and Brendan Schembri in the Aquagreen production facility.
 Bottom Centre> Native plants are grown in the production facility.
 Bottom Right> Lots of help catching brood stock in the Arafura Swamp.

A reason to walk

"... a moment that goes beyond tourism and connects two different groups of people—
profoundly and for a lifetime."



Main Image> Sunset on the Ilpurla Trail.

Inset> Raymond Hawkins with hiker Candyss.



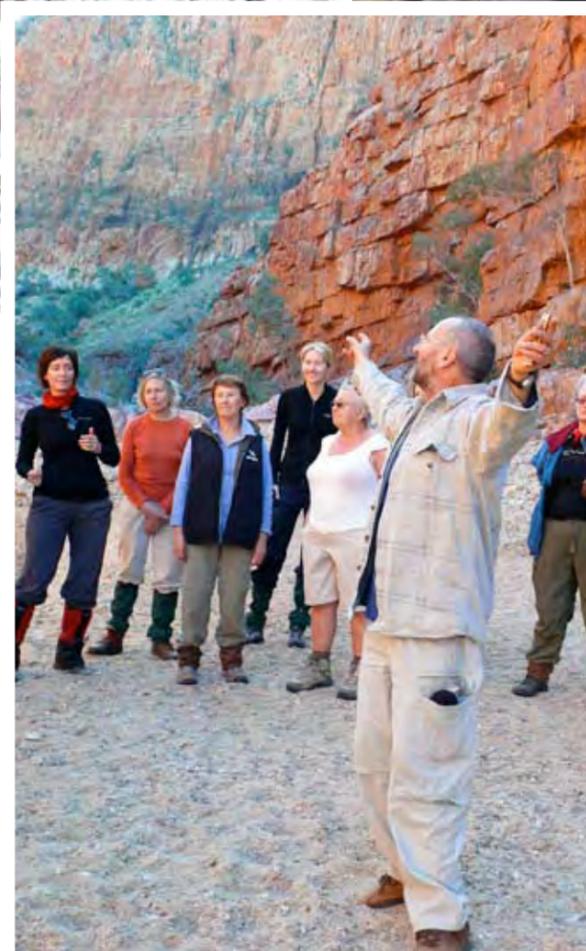
From around the world and from southern Australian capitals visitors come in greater numbers every year to walk the Territory landscape. Walking tours that tackle the rugged tracks of the Top End and the desert are a growth sector in Territory tourism. Joining a walking tour can mean days or even weeks trekking across some of the most spectacular country on the planet, whether it be in the sandstone country of the Top End's Kakadu National Park or the testing Larapinta Trail in dry central Australia.

One area of the Northern Territory, however, has remained unexplored by walking tours. Over 50 per cent of the Territory landmass is Aboriginal land, featuring some of its most isolated and spectacular countryside. The Indigenous traditional owners who live in those regions have, until now, remained uninvolved in trek tourism on their land. But now a walking tour entrepreneur has designed a trail and a trek that will see active Aboriginal involvement and will allow them to earn an income from welcoming walkers to their country.





"It's serious regional development with big potential benefits in the long term."



Above and Right > Special focus walks involve artists and choirs facilitated by Tony Backhouse, and meditation (as seen above right).

Above Centre > Many trips are joined by Arrernte guides.

Far Right > Walking towards a spectacular desert view.

Walking tour operator Raymond Hawkins of Into the Blue Creative Walks is currently in discussions with the Central Land Council, the representatives of the Aboriginal traditional owners of the Hermannsburg area of central Australian desert, 150km west of Alice Springs. In the trial year just completed, a track was walked from the community of Ipolera that overlooks Gosse Bluff (or *Tnorala*) through to the stunning wilderness country behind the oasis of Palm Valley. The local Aboriginal people will be centrally involved as a workforce as well as cultural participants, offering walkers an opportunity to meet and interact with Indigenous Australians on their own turf.

Into the Blue has been leading walkers through that country for the past two seasons as a lead-up to establishing the Ilpurla Trail, which will feature permanent campsites, each a day's walk apart. His guides are young Aboriginal men from the local community. "There's always been a reason for Aboriginal people to walk," states Hawkins. "Traditionally it was about food and ceremony. Leisure walking isn't their thing. But this trek is also about a reason to walk. It's a job."

Hawkins is a human walking-talking machine from faraway Sydney who left the world of rock 'n' roll road production, having worked with Midnight Oil and Cold Chisel no less, to create a business based upon his passion for walking. Having set up Into the Blue Creative Walks, he came to the Territory and took walkers on the 200km long Larapinta Trail that dances along the picturesque West MacDonnell range. Although the walk was unsurpassed for its scenic values, it lacked the involvement of its Aboriginal traditional owners. "In the years that the Larapinta Trail's been open there's not been, to my knowledge, one cent gone to Aboriginal people nor has there been one job created. So I decided to establish a trail through Aboriginal country where they can benefit," explains Hawkins.

Into the Blue Creative Walks has carved out a national reputation as an innovator among walking tours. In 2006 Hawkins started taking out special focus trips, featuring the idea of weaving a workshop into the narrative of a walking journey. The first was called the Desert Writers in the Larapinta Trail aimed at writers inspired by the desert sensations and scenery. Joining the walk is a facilitator, a recognised expert in the field being explored.

The special focus trips were so immediately successful that he wonders why he hadn't done it earlier. "Tell me: when did we decide that when we walk the desert we can't meditate, we can't write, or we can't sing or can't paint," asks Hawkins.

One such walk includes singers who walk the desert as a choir. They are facilitated by Tony Backhouse, an internationally renowned gospel singer and choir leader turning the group into a performing unit while walking on Aboriginal country. Hawkins says: "As we walk we sing. At night we sing. As we stand in a gorge we sing. And we work towards a final performance in the Hermannsburg church. So when we have our final night everyone at Hermannsburg is invited to a concert in the church. This season [country singer] Warren Williams came along and the choir sang backing vocals to his classic *Learn My Song*. That is a moment that goes beyond tourism and connects two different groups of people—profoundly and for a lifetime."

Into the Blue's Ilpurla Trail walks will not be theme-driven. They will be jointly guided by Into the Blue and Arrernte guides and

supported by visits to campsites from community members. Hawkins believes that these walks provide a different kind of tourism that has not been encountered before. The power of the Aboriginal cultural interaction supersedes the impact of the workshop.

Hawkins has developed a long range plan that will see the Ilpurla Trail in operation by 2012 after a season of camp and track building. While still seeking funding and approvals, his projections show that considerable benefits to participating Aboriginal people will flow in the way of camp and guide fees, Indigenous cultural fees, jobs for drivers and money spent at the walkers' Hermannsburg terminus.

It is hoped that the entire Ilpurla Trail will be turned over to the traditional owners after a negotiated period of time. "By then we'll have another Milford Track or Appalachian Trail for the next ten generations, owned and operated by the traditional owners," he says. "It's serious regional development with big potential benefits in the long term."



PHOENIX rises in GOVE

There was a time that the Walkabout Lodge in Nhulunbuy was one of those places that got you angry. It got you angry if you stayed in one of their rooms where the tropical damp had seeped through the walls and it combined with years of cigarette smoke to create a smell that tended to keep you up at night—and make you angry that you were paying top prices to stay there, because it was only one of two places to stay in town.

But thankfully, those days are gone. The Walkabout's been renovated to the tune of \$4 million, with each of the 43 rooms looking (and smelling) brand new. Also upgraded is the outdoor entertainment and swimming pool area, and soon to be finished the revamped industrial kitchen, a modern dining room and bar. An ongoing major facelift continues to be taking place at the tavern, with serviced campsites added outdoors—all of which has seen the Walkabout take out Australian Hotel Association Awards for the best mid-range accommodation in the Territory for the past two years running.

Who, you may ask, is responsible for this astonishing turnaround? His name is John Tourish, 56, a Sydney engineer and businessman who left his two McDonald's franchises in Penrith and his stately hotel in Rockhampton to take over the ailing Walkabout. By 2005, running big city restaurants and hotels had lost their lustre and Tourish looked around for something fresh.

Then came a seminal moment. While camping in the Tanami Desert, some mates told Tourish (as only best mates will do) that he had become rather boring and had, in effect, lost his mojo: his zest for life. "It hurt a bit to be honest but I realised that they were probably right," recalls Tourish. "Then about six weeks later one of those guys rang me and said there was a place called the Walkabout in Gove owned by a bloke that was struggling, and I should get up and have a look. It could be a good project to fire me up."

He and his wife Leah flew up to Darwin and were in Gove (700km to the east) the next day. They signed to buy the place the next week. At the time the town was hopping with the Alcan G3 upgrade happening and the new Walkabout owners couldn't begin renovations while the hotel was so busy. But that activity cooled and they began their three year project. "We've probably bought one of the most rundown hotels with one of the worst reputations in the whole Territory," says Tourish. "But we're seeing positive change. We really take a lot of pride when people come, who knew it before, and they return and say, 'wow, I can see where you're going with the place now'. It's like a Phoenix rising."

In order to facilitate the renovations and cut costs in the delivery of general supplies, he has also kicked off Nhulunbuy Freight Services, a small transport operation running between Gove and their Darwin supply base

during the dry season. Big trucks haul double trailers carrying Walkabout materials, food for Woolworths, equipment for contractors to Rio Tinto Alcan, and goods drops at communities along the central Arnhem road.

The longer Tourish resides in Nhulunbuy, the more his services are required by the community. Today, after only five years as a Territorian, he chairs the Regional Economic Development Association, he heads the regional wing of the Australian Hotels Association, and has resurrected the East Arnhem Land Tourist Association.

He believes that he has a major role igniting tourism in Gove, with his renovated hotel providing the anchor for other operators in the area. "We can't have people come from around the world and not have somewhere comfortable to eat, drink, sleep and get transport," explains Tourish. "If we can make that happen, that will support all the other tourism operators."

Gove's fishing operators can now boast quality accommodation for clients to use while in Nhulunbuy, as can the growing number of Indigenous tour groups opening locally. Flight access to Gove is good from Cairns and Darwin; the essentials of tourism are in place. "We need to be an integral part of Tourism NT and Tourism Top End and fit with the government's picture of the Northern Territory and we can leverage off that," states Tourish. "It'll be good for me as an operator, but good for the Indigenous operators as well."

Enthused and re-motivated, Tourish has breathed new life into the notion that a unique tourism experience is waiting for those who travel to Gove. During the upcoming wet season he plans to join Tourism NT and represent East Arnhem Land at every 4WD and camping show in Australia—in Adelaide, Ballarat, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, promoting the Territory and, of course, his restored Walkabout Lodge.



Main image> John Tourish, Gove hotelier.

Top right> The Walkabout Lodge's rooms have all been refurbished.

Bottom right> The Walkabout overlooks the sea.

ALL Aboard!

busCONNECTS communities

It's a steamy August morning, but the few dozen people gathered next to Yirrkala's supermarket are all smiles. They're here to celebrate a milestone: the day affordable public transport came to town.

Yirrkala's residents can now travel to Nhulunbuy for a fiver instead of a much larger note—cab fares had been costing \$40, sometimes even more. The Gove Peninsula Public Bus Service, which was launched on 6 September and officially started on 13 September, travels between the communities of Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy, Wallaby Beach and Ski Beach five days a week. Tickets are sold at IGA Nhulunbuy, IGA Yirrkala and East Arnhem Quality Meats and children aged under two travel free.

Suddenly, it's cheap and easy to get to work, the shops or the doctor.

Begun as a two-year trial, the service is a joint venture between the Territory Government, which is contributing \$180,000; Yolngu self-management organisation YBE(2) Pty Ltd; the Australian Government; and Rio Tinto Alcan Gove.

YBE(2)'s business manager Sal Costanzo said word of the bus service is slowly spreading, with an average of 50 passengers per day on two public runs and three "workers' runs"—taking mostly Yolngu people to their workplaces at YBE(2), Dhimirru Aboriginal Corporation and Rio Tinto. That means the 21-seater bus is usually about half full, although there has been the occasional day when there's barely an empty seat.

Main Image> Local people board the new bus with their shopping.

Right> YBE Chair Danatanga Gondarra addresses the opening of the Public Bus Service.



"The community is really taking ownership of it—we've had lots of people calling to congratulate us on the bus service and say positive things about it."



"What's emerging is that we're getting repeat passengers who are starting to use the bus almost exclusively," he says. "The driver is picking up that it's the same faces. We're very pleased about that, but we'd like to see even more people using it. So we're looking at the question of how we raise awareness.

"We're currently shopping around for a sound system so we can do something like the Mr Whippy icecream truck with music to associate with the bus for the public runs.

"I think the community is really taking ownership of it—we've had lots of people calling to congratulate us on the bus service and say positive things about it."

Community members are being encouraged to provide feedback on the trial, which will help YBE(2) to make decisions about issues like the timing of the runs. The trial will also give the Territory Government

valuable information as it seeks to introduce sustainable public transport in other remote and regional areas of the Territory.

Gerry McCue, of the Territory's Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services, says the arrival of the Gove service will have wide-reaching benefits. "This new service is expected to have a significant impact from an economic development perspective because it means people can get to and from work or training, earning money and contributing to the local economy—not to mention the considerable social benefits that flow on from that," he says.

"There have been calls for a service like this for a couple of years, but it wasn't until all the parties came together in a partnership approach that it became possible."

Bringing the service to fruition involved consultation between YBE(2), East Arnhem Shire, Rio Tinto Alcan Gove, the Nhulunbuy Corporation, the Australian Government's Indigenous Coordination Centre, Miwatj Health, IGA Stores, community members and the NT departments of Business and Employment, Lands and Planning, and Housing, Local Government and Regional Services.

As well as helping its passengers get to work, the service has also created direct employment: jobs for a bus driver, Aleki Tuipulotu, as well as six bus conductors, who are drawn from the ranks of the local First Response Patrol. The role of the conductors includes encouraging compliance with bus rules relating to ticketing and behaviour.

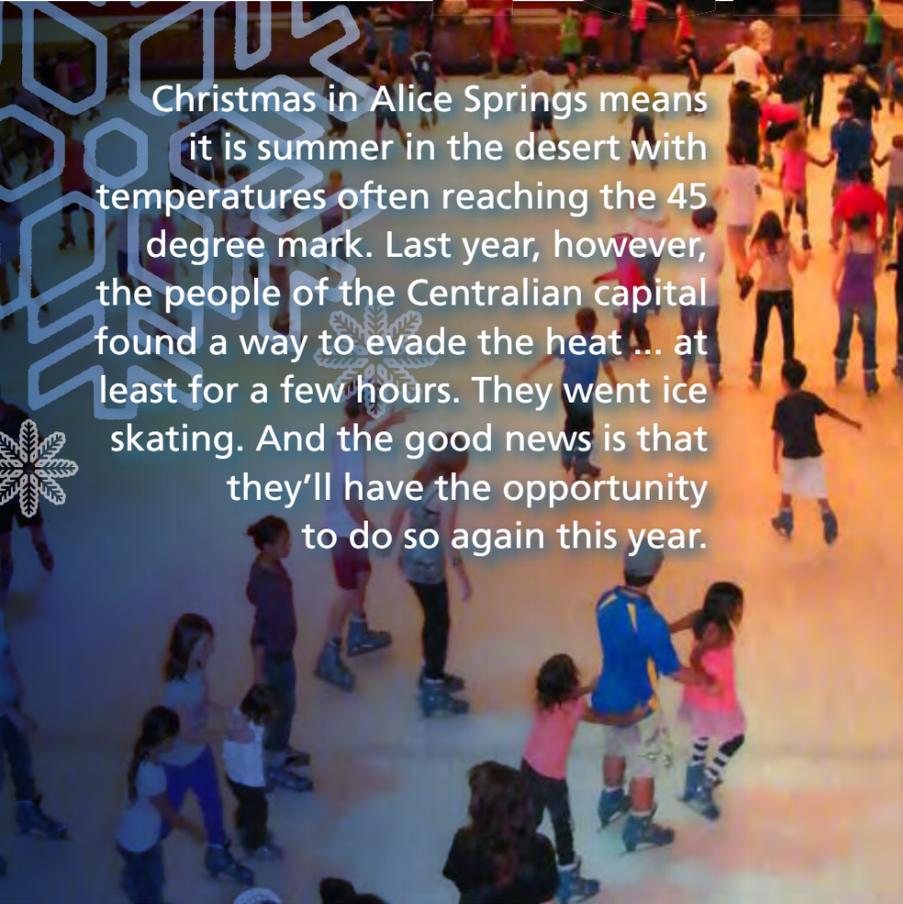
Speaking at the launch, which included didgeridoo playing as part of a Yolngu ceremony, traditional owner Djuwalpi Marika told the crowd, "This service will be very valuable for Yolngu people and redress the hardships caused by not having transport in the region."

YBE chair Danatanga Gondarra told the guests: "We're planning for the young people. Young people need better training so they become a worker."



desert ICE PALACE

Christmas in Alice Springs means it is summer in the desert with temperatures often reaching the 45 degree mark. Last year, however, the people of the Centralian capital found a way to evade the heat ... at least for a few hours. They went ice skating. And the good news is that they'll have the opportunity to do so again this year.



Top> Alice skaters take to the ice in droves.
Bottom> Local hockey teams have a go.

"It got international news coverage. Then somebody started a Facebook page to bring it back. It was huge."

The six-week Ice Rink was an initiative of the Alice Springs Convention Centre, whose halls are generally quiet over the summer holidays. Rather than close the doors, management decided to produce an event that was geared to the Alice Springs community rather than their usual national and international convention market. They approached the NT Government and the Alice Springs Town Council for funding support and got \$60,000 from the government and \$10,000 from the council to help pay for the initial infrastructure.

The rink itself was sent up to Alice Springs and installed by Logistics Events Australia, the ice rink specialists, with four rinks operating around the country at any one time. As the Convention Centre witnessed the emergence of an ice skating venue, the first time organisers went to work putting together a community program. "Logistically we had to decide how to best use the rink to benefit the community," explains Convention Centre manager Ian Solomon. "We had to come up with ideas for the kind of events we could run."

Events came thick and fast. General admission was charged at \$15 for every two-hour session. Besides general public admission a wide array of events was planned: the Alice Springs inline ice hockey team took on all comers; a Tiny Tots session was run for kids six years old and under, avoiding collisions with the big kids; they organised an Australia Day competition; and Tourism Central Australia had a skating night.

"It was the sort of event that could either go really well or no one would show up," observed Solomon. "But in the end it got international news coverage. Then somebody started a Facebook page to bring it back. It was huge."

One of the most popular events was organised by Superintendent Michael White of the NT Police, then the youth services coordinator implementing the Youth Action Plan. It was White who organised the Blue Light Discos. "We probably had 450 kids to the Blue Light Disco on Ice, split between the younger kids and the older ones," recalls Superintendent White. "It was fantastic. We had a dance floor set up outside the rink and they were shakin' all over." Many of the community's underprivileged kids got their first taste of skating for free.

Last year's Ice Rink was an official success with more than 10,600 taking to the skates. This year the event will open again at holiday time, but it will be up to the people of Alice Springs as to whether it becomes an annual event. "This year will decide whether we keep it going for the next few years," says Solomon. "We don't have it to make money. We'll do what we can to bring it back but its future will depend on whether the people of Alice Springs vote for it by coming in."

Most Top End mango growers have seen better years than 2010. While late rains sparked a flowering rush, soaring temperatures caused fruit to set poorly and, coupled with the propensity for Kensington Pride (KP) to produce an off year of fruit bearing, an ordinary season was the general result. Similar conditions applied in Katherine, but with less dramatic results. One Katherine producer was not only shielded from the weather excesses because of early flowering, but also from the fluctuations in the Australian domestic market prices. They earmarked fruit for export destinations.



MANGO EXPORTS —the long term strategy

Manbulloo Ltd is actually a Queensland based company, but its early season mangoes (harvested in September, October and early November) are produced at its mango plantation west of Katherine. The 600 hectare plantation is isolated from other horticultural activity as a freehold property surrounded by a cattle station buffer. Most seasons this means there is low pest pressure and rarely do plants need protection from damaging pest populations. It is the largest of the company's three farms; the other two near Townsville are together comparable with Katherine's size.

Manbulloo Katherine is the Territory's longest established large-scale commercial mango plantation boasting over 400 000 trees. Like most Darwin growers, they had a disappointing fruit set this year, they managed to produce a successful 2010 crop. "We're in our own little cul-de-sac with hills right around us, so it traps the heat in and makes us come on earlier than the rest of Katherine," explains plantation operations manager Will Lloyd. "We usually come on about three weeks after Darwin, and the rest of Katherine comes on about three weeks after us."

This year Manbulloo harvested medium volumes of KP and R2E2 varieties in a year where industry volumes would be described as light overall. This year the domestic market prices were buoyant due to the light production across the industry growing regions. Manbulloo provided consignments to all Australian markets and also continued to export to customers around the globe. "We could make more money by keeping it here in the domestic market," says Manbulloo export manager Anthony Dobson, "but we choose to support our export markets because next year, when it's a big crop and prices are falling in the market, we still want our export customers there. We're thinking of the years ahead. It's a long term strategy."



Previous Page> Top grade mangoes boxed for export at the Manbulloo packing shed near Katherine.

This Image> In the cooler room awaiting export, mangoes bound for Singapore are boxed, while a net protecting exports from fruit fly surrounds mangoes earmarked for New Zealand.

Manbulloo has put in the hard yards in creating export markets in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Spain, the United Arab Republic, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, China and New Zealand. In Singapore it exports to Hupco, a family fruit distribution business that has been importing Australian mangoes for 30 years. Like all importing countries, Singapore has its own market eccentricities. "In Singapore, what we look for is the size and the blush," explains Hupco's director Daniel Tay. "R2E2 is the favourite variety. Blush is the thing that is very important. It attracts the customer to buy. If we can sell them for under S\$3 each, they will sell very well."

This year, however, they will not be able to sell them for under S\$3. The march of the Australian dollar at the time of writing is over \$1.30 against the Singapore dollar, taking the price per fruit over S\$4. While sales are less, they remain within everyone's reach. "The market for mangoes is everybody in Singapore," says Tay. "It's not only the rich people that buy mangoes. Everybody can afford to buy mangoes from Australia. And they love it."

From Manbulloo's point of view, commitment to exports has been the key feature of its recent business. Manbulloo decided that it could not rely on the volatile prices that characterise the domestic market. The company sees mangoes as a bi-annual crop, producing a heavy crop one season, followed by a light crop the next. In the light crop year the domestic market returns are generally quite good. But in the year when the crop is heavy, returns can be below the cost of production. "For an organisation like ourselves that boasts 8 to 12 per cent of the mango production in Australia, we can't supply on returns below the cost of production," states Dobson.

Each export market has its own quality and quarantine requirements, and Manbulloo is more than happy to meet those regulations as part of its competitive edge. At Manbulloo Katherine, chemical controls for pest management are rare so residues on fruit are few—a stringent requirement for mangoes bound for the European Union and UK markets. New Zealand fruit are packed and a screen is wrapped around the boxes so they are not affected by pests.

At Manbulloo's VHT plant, many orders of top grade fruit sent to Japan are dressed in a soft jacket to meet market requirements.

Right> Pickers at work in the Manbulloo orchard.
Below> Mangoes are graded in the packing shed.
Bottom> Hupco's Daniel Tay with Manbulloo mangoes in Singapore.

"In terms of pricing and returns, some buyers in Japan are the clear winners because they buy the best of the best. So if mangoes were cars, we'd be sending Ferraris to Japan," says Dobson.

Manbulloo's business strategy is to increase its exports and still supply good consistent quality into the domestic market. "We try to have a balance of 50 per cent going offshore and 50 per cent staying onshore," explains Dobson. "They all get consistency of supply, consistency of quality, and good pricing. We're trying to improve the quality that actually gets onto the shelf because at the end of the day it's the consumer that drives this business."



"The market for mangoes is everybody in Singapore. It's not only the rich people that buy mangoes. Everybody can afford to buy mangoes from Australia. And they love it."



NEW mangoes

The results surprised even the scientists at the Territory's Department of Resources who pursued the experiment. It may be very early days, with testing having been completed in just one season and in only one relatively low yielding orchard, but the results were nonetheless startling. Data produced by Dr Peter Stephens, the Department of Resources' director of plant research and development, demonstrated that trees that can produce 13 trays in a good year produced only three in 2010. "This year when the temperatures were very high in July, we got a low yield," recalls Stephens. "Taking data from 2002 to 2010, the percentage of days that were over 32C in July explained 88 per cent of the variation in mango yield from one year to the next. We used this simple model then to predict that if you do get a one degree temperature increase due to climate change, it looks like that for years with potentially high production, you may get a reduction of over 20 per cent in yield."

"We think that this temperature increase may be critical to mango production in outer Darwin."

insurance AGAINST climate CHANGE

Left> New mango variety NMBP 4069 awaits a new name.

Below> Scientists discuss the new varieties. From left – Bob Williams, Mark Hoult and Peter Stephens.

Right> New variety NMBP 1243.



indicate we might be on the right track but we have to do more work to confirm it," says Dr Stephens.

With a great deal more work ahead of them, the scientists have a 'gut feel' that they are on the right track and eventually may resolve the question of the impact of climate change on mango productivity. And what of other tropical crops like rambutan? More research needs to be done but, as far as mangoes are concerned, Bob Williams, the government's director of plant industries, believes they must come up with new varieties that provide insurance against climate change. The new varieties could fare better in the warmer conditions.

"It's very important to get new varieties into this system. You have a greater range of opportunities," he says.

The idea is not new. Primary industry leaders from the tropical fruit-growing states of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory agreed in 1993 that they would develop new varieties of mangoes. They initiated the National Mango Breeding Program in three sites: the Ord valley in WA, the Territory's Top End, and in Queensland near Mareeba. "Our plan is to get these varieties across a wide range of geographic areas and see how they perform," explains Williams. "We want to challenge these varieties under various geographical conditions and, if climate change is a reality, what ones are going to suit this production system?"

The development of new varieties started in 1994. The program involved the production of hybrids through controlled pollination, and took four years to complete. During this period approximately 1800 hybrid lines were

generated, employing 35 parental combinations. After the 16 years of research, three elite hybrids have been selected: they are called by the colourless names of NMBP (National Mango Breeding Program) 1243, NMBP 1201 and NMBP 4069.

Resources Minister Kon Vatskalis wants to name one of the new varieties after Aussie pop singer Kylie Minogue. "I am even going to send Ms Minogue a batch of these mangoes to get her to be one of the first in Australia to try this new variety," said the Minister.

The new varieties have the potential to lengthen the Territory season on both ends. The NMBP1243 is a variety that comes in three or four weeks earlier than the Kensington Pride variety in Darwin. That is the one drawing the most interest because, not only does it extend the season, but it's also retained the best traits of its parents: the aroma of the KP and the color of the Irwin.

The NMBP1201 comes into mid to late season maturity, and NMBP4069 is another late maturing variety, with better productivity than the resident KP. The commercialisation phase is next, with the three growing partners soon to hand the plants over to the Australian mango industry.

In the Territory, the departmental scientists aim to get the new mangoes evaluated and planted out as far south as Ti Tree, so they hope to increase our production window by at least four weeks. But, as to their tolerance of higher temperatures—only time will tell.



QUEST



“Palmerston is one of the fastest growing cities in the Northern Territory, especially in the areas of defence, retail and exports, which has resulted in increased demand for business accommodation.”

Quest Serviced Apartments cater for the corporate traveller, and their newest 84 room \$14 million property has

just opened in Palmerston, 20km outside Darwin. Quest Palmerston, which also houses the new Hogs Breath Café, is the second Quest property to open in the Top End, the first operating in Darwin and a third currently being built in Parap. Quest, which originated in Melbourne, is now a national franchise with 120 properties across Australia and is banking on the Territory's economic future. “Quest chooses locations for new serviced apartment properties based on where people do business and where rapid or sustained growth is expected,” explains Quest chairman Paul Constantinou. “Palmerston is one of the fastest growing cities in the Northern Territory, especially in the areas of defence, retail and exports, which has resulted in increased demand for business accommodation.”

Quest's Palmerston site is strategically located near the defence facility at Robertson Barracks, the Darwin Business Park, the East Arm Port, Darwin LNG, and the site of the proposed INPEX LNG project. “We have the different markets here,” says Jodie Milne who owns and operates the franchise with partner James Watson. “But it's not purely just the corporate traveller. We're looking after the family and friends market, as well as the corporate traveller, and the leisure market because we are situated in the gateway to the Top End's most popular national parks.”

As owner-operators Milne and Watson are financial investors in the property. The Victorian couple have strong ties to the Territory with Milne having previously lived in Palmerston and worked in the Quest organisation. Watson had a successful building development, design and planning company. When Quest decided to undertake a five-year location analysis of Palmerston as a prospective franchise, Milne found out about it and the couple did their own analysis to see if the property was viable over time. They found that a wide assortment of businesses were opening in and around Palmerston, yet there was no local accommodation

available for the corporate travellers. They also recognised the high percentage of young Territory families living in Palmerston who have friends and family visiting but nowhere close by to accommodate them.

The couple decided to sell up in Victoria and come to Palmerston. “The advantage of being a franchisee is that we live and breathe the business,” says Watson. “We don't rely on someone in the Gold Coast to make a decision for our staff or our guests. It's us. We report to the head office and look after our brand and our network, but it's our business to operate.”

Quest offers a unique product, targeting long-term occupants who work away from home but want to live in a comfortable homestyle environment where they have the option of doing their own cooking. Quest Palmerston offers studio apartments, and spacious one, two and three bedroom units. With the exception of the studios, each includes a fully outfitted kitchen and laundry. All online facilities are provided including an all-mobile phone battery charger for those who forgot to pack theirs. Food orders like those previously described can be made before arriving.

The large local defence population means personnel and their families come and go on a variety of long-term postings, so Quest specialises in relocations where families often wait for defence homes to open up. “We look after a lot of their relocations because we understand their requirements,” explains Milne. “We want them to be comfortable coming into an area—not just the defence people but the mums and their kids. We let them know that they have story-telling at the library [next door] and what schools are recommended.”

Unlike hotels, where prices fluctuate with seasonal volumes, Quest does not do dynamic pricing. They negotiate corporate and government rates that are fixed 365 days a year. With no peak periods, corporate bodies can budget accordingly. “We've had a great initial response, with lots of forward bookings,” states Watson. “People are recognising it as a place they need to be while they visit the Top End attractions or do their business in the Territory.”



IN THE TERRITORY

It's four-thirty in the morning and businessman Jason Weeks climbs down from a red-eye interstate flight into the sultry Darwin heat, hungry and tired. He's had a few hours sleep in the plane but there's a full day of meetings ahead. By the time he reaches his accommodation in Palmerston, the sun is up. He goes to his room at Quest Palmerston and there waiting for him is a fridge full of food he's ordered in advance including Vegemite and fresh bread. He soon turns the bread to toast, the orange juice is fresh and the ground coffee provides the heart starter. The business day begins, and Weeks reminds himself that is why, whenever he travels for extended periods, he stays at a Quest.

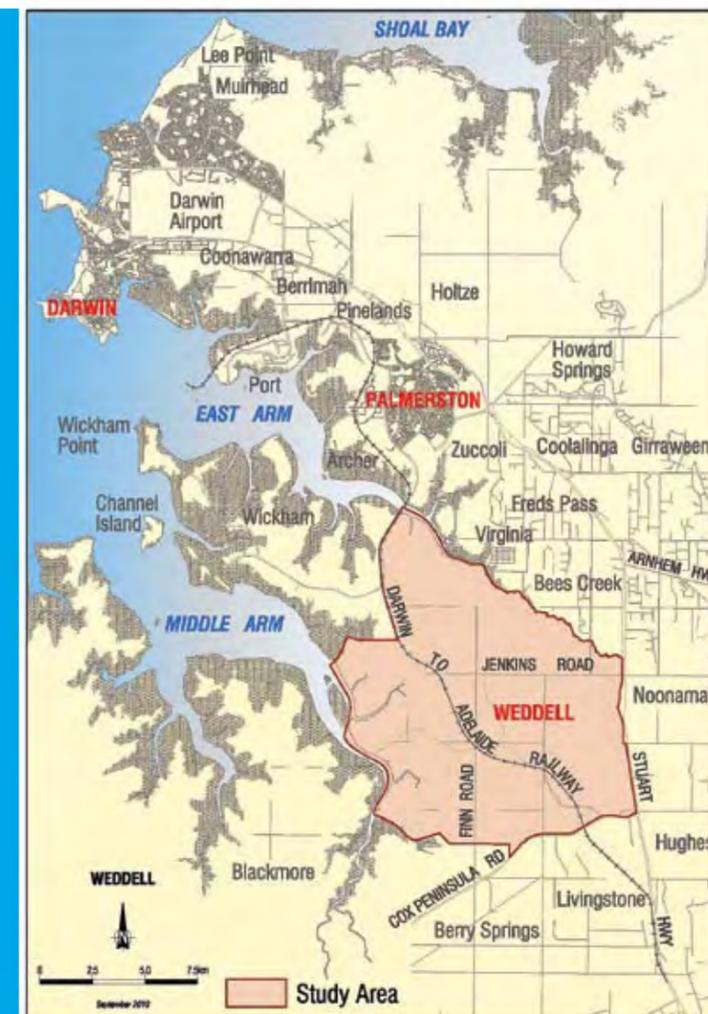


Top> Quest Palmerston franchisees James Watson and Jodie Milne. Lower> Various views of Quest Palmerston.



CITY MAKING

Darwin's outer suburbs are rapidly growing around the harbour and just 10km from the satellite city of Palmerston lies an undeveloped expanse of bushland that is designated as the Territory's next city of Weddell. Chief Minister Paul Henderson wants to develop the new city of Weddell into a "world class, liveable, sustainable tropical city". While today it may be the site of a virtually vacant harbour-side mangrove forest giving way to sloping woodland, according to city planners, Weddell will one day be home to 50,000 people.



The new city will need services and infrastructure like schools, shops, power, parks and roads. Planners will be starting with a blank page asking the basic questions about the development of a new city: In an area where 20,000 dwellings will be built, much of which is currently infested with midges, where will the town centre be? How will people travel from Weddell to Darwin? What kind of public transport is required? Can we use renewable energy sources to produce power?

In order to answer those fundamental questions and produce a plan for development, the week-long Weddell Conference and Design Forum was kicked off by the Northern Territory Government. More than 370 people registered for the conference that was held at the Darwin Convention Centre, but the major brainstorming was done by 64 technical experts who broke up into eight teams —each with a research scenario. Each group of local volunteers was headed by an outside leader with one team led by experienced local planner Chris Humphries and another by internationally recognised British urban designer Paul Murrain, who joined the conference from London, and Wendy Morris, director of Ecologically Sustainable Design.

Left: Teams of planners work on maps to come up with answers to their research scenarios.



Right: The Hitachi team was invited by the Chief Minister.

Bottom: Planners work off a giant aerial map of Weddell.

Below: A team works out how to deal with Weddells midge problem.



Territory

The eight teams were each handed a research scenario to take the project forward. They pondered questions like, where should the city's infrastructure go in the short term before the final planning is initiated? What are the implications of a new green city on the surrounding communities of Noonamah, Coolalinga and Palmerston? How should urban growth progress around Darwin Harbour?

Responding to an invitation made by the Chief Minister in Japan earlier this year, a research team from technology giant Hitachi flew to Darwin to contribute to the forum. Known for its renewable energy expertise in the Smart Grid and Smart Cities programs, the Hitachi group says using its systems does not involve creating an entire new system. It will involve the integration of technologies like the existing natural gas with renewable energies like solar, wind and wave power.

The Smart Cities program would provide a grid that would not only power Weddell, but could cover the entire Territory. "The main purpose is for many types of renewable energy to enter the grid," explains Hitachi's deputy general manager Hideyuki Ariyasu. "There are many problems with this so we developed ways to reduce instability in the quality of energy produced. It is intelligent information and control systems that bring all of those systems together to maximise the efficiency of those technologies."

Meanwhile the eight teams wrestled with the challenges Weddell presented. A major aspect of the new harbourside city is the mangrove-fringed Elizabeth River that forms the township's northern boundary. One group discussed what could they do to make this a river-edge city and how they could deal with the tricky midge problem. It was decided that an industrial zone be introduced to act as a buffer between the high density housing areas and the greatest midge habitat.



Where should urban development start? What are the criteria? Does development start near infrastructure? The research group found that support was required from the 'movement economy'. A town does not start at a certain point for no reason. They decided to link development to where growth is already happening. Noonamah and Coolalinga were identified as places closest to Weddell where strong growth was already occurring. The city's first infrastructure would perhaps connect with one of those communities.

Public transport sparked enthusiastic debate. A cross-harbour ferry service presented challenges. The group found it could not progress far enough up the Elizabeth River to properly service the dense population area. A light rail system was also discussed at length but much work needs to be done to make such a system viable. "Anywhere in the world, we have to earn our public transport,"

explained design forum facilitator Wendy Morris. "It does not drop like manna from heaven. In order to earn it we need lots of people in the public transport corridor. Successful public transport systems are based on a walkable world—lots of people and lots of destinations."

A wide range of options were detailed across the spectrum of discussion on social issues, local government, housing and environmental issues. Once government has determined the focus for the development some key aspects of the new city of Weddell will be put to a national design competition based on the wealth of ideas expressed at the week long forum at the Darwin Convention Centre.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

- In its September quarter 2010 Business Outlook publication, Access Economics estimates that growth in the Territory economy moderated to 1.4% in 2009–10, from 2.6% in 2008–09. This primarily reflects the completion of a number of major projects such as the Eni Blacktip project in the Timor Sea and the Gemco refinery expansion on Groote Eylandt.
- In 2010–11, strengthening private consumption expenditure and private construction investment are forecast to underpin economic growth of 4.8%.

GSP	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10e	2010–11f
% Change	6.7%	3.9%	2.6%	1.4%	4.8%

the territory economy:

In 2009–10, Territory state final demand, a measure of demand for goods and services, decreased by 3.5% compared to an increase of 3.3% nationally. The decline was mainly due to declining engineering construction activity reflecting the completion of the major projects highlighted above.

Consumption expenditure increased by 3.1% to \$12.5 billion, while total investment expenditure decreased by 16.4% to \$5.3 billion.

In 2009–10, inflation-adjusted construction work done in the Territory decreased by 40.3% to \$2.0 billion. This reflects the completion of several major projects such as the development of the Montara oilfield, Eni's Blacktip project, and the expansion of the Gemco manganese refinery.

In the year to August 2010, the number of residential building approvals in the Territory increased by 38.1% to 1505. Growth was primarily driven by increased approvals for public and private unit developments. Public unit approvals were driven by projects related to the Australian Government's Nation Building and Jobs Plan, while private sector growth reflects unit approvals recovering from decade-low levels recorded in 2008–09.

EMPLOYMENT

- In the year to September 2010, resident employment in the Territory increased by 2.9% to 125,866. This was the second highest year-on-year employment growth rate of the jurisdictions.
- In September 2010, the trend unemployment rate in the Territory increased by 0.1 percentage point to 3.1%. Nevertheless, the Territory's unemployment rate remains the second lowest of the jurisdictions behind the ACT (3.0%).
- In August 2010, the trend labour force participation rate in the Territory increased to 74.4%, the highest rate of the jurisdictions and substantially higher than the national rate of 65.5%.
- The ANZ bank Job Advertisement Series reports that the number of job vacancies in the Territory, in seasonally adjusted terms, increased by 19.1% between September 2009 and September 2010, while nationally they increased by 6.2% over this period.

POPULATION

- At 31 March 2010, the Territory's population was estimated to be 228,527.
- The annual rate of population growth as at March quarter 2010 was estimated to be 1.9%, the fourth highest growth rate of the jurisdictions and slightly above the national growth rate of 1.8%.

INFLATION

- In annual terms, growth in Darwin's consumer price index (CPI) moderated to 2.3% in the September quarter 2010. Nationally, the annual inflation rate moderated to 2.8% over the same period.
- The housing category was the main contributor to annual growth in the Darwin CPI reflecting strong growth in housing purchase and rental prices. Darwin had the second lowest annual inflation rate of the jurisdictions behind Canberra, while Perth recorded the highest rate.

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

- In 2009–10, average weekly earnings for full time adult employees in the Territory increased by 4.9% to \$1244.40, the fourth lowest level of the jurisdictions. Nationally, average weekly earnings increased by 5.2% to \$1279.50.
- Over the same period, the Territory's wage price index increased by 3.4%, compared to 3.1% nationally.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- In the year to August 2010, Territory goods exports decreased by 16.8% to \$5.1 billion, reflecting lower liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports following a scheduled maintenance shutdown at the ConocoPhillips LNG plant in the June quarter 2010.
- In the year to August 2010, goods imports decreased by 24.3%. This reflects a decrease in imports of feedstock gas used to produce LNG at the ConocoPhillips LNG plant.
- In the year to August 2010, the Territory recorded a goods trade surplus of \$1.9 billion.

RETAIL TRADE AND MOTOR VEHICLE SALES

- In the year to August 2010, growth in retail trade turnover in the Territory moderated to 4.0%. Nevertheless, the Territory had the third highest growth rate of the jurisdictions.
- In the year to September 2010, sales of new motor vehicles in the Territory increased by 13.0% to 10,226. Growth was primarily driven by tariff cuts on new motor vehicle imports from 1 January 2010, the appreciation of the Australian dollar and strong growth in purchases by rental companies in the second half of the financial year. Businesses taking advantage of the Small Business and General Business Tax Break to purchase new motor vehicles also contributed to growth.



“We are meeting our objectives of increased service to stores, reducing our carbon footprint and have made other changes which have increased safety,”



fresh FOOD initiatives

This Page> Store displays feature locally grown produce.
Opposite Page> Woolworth's Dave Plunkett with a new high tech container.

For years Territory fresh food customers have heard tales about home-grown produce and seafood being sold to major supermarket chains and transported to southern centres where it is processed before being sent back up to the Territory. In order to dispel that rumour and to provide Territory customers an opportunity to buy locally, Woolworths has initiated 'NT Grown' and 'NT Product' labelling in displays of locally grown fruit, vegetables and seafood products.



The company says the labelling will be on about 20 per cent of the fresh produce on offer during the Territory growing season, including cucumbers, capsicum, cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant, mangoes, pumpkin, pawpaw and watermelon.

It's an initiative welcomed by consumers and growers alike. Saroun Phou of S&H Best Fresh has been growing herbs and Asian vegetables for the past decade and told the *NT News* how pleased he was that Woolies will label NT grown produce. "It's good that Woolworths is supporting us and that now we can support each other," he said.

Darwin City Store Manager Angela Sims said the move is part of Woolworths' longstanding commitment to agriculture in the Territory and to providing customers with the highest quality possible fresh foods. She said the new labelling had been driven by strong feedback from shoppers. "Our customers have made it clear they want more information about locally grown fresh food so they can choose to support the local agricultural industry when they shop," Sims said.

The Woolworths initiative complements the Territory Government's move in 2008 to become the first state or territory in Australia to introduce requirements for fish retailers to label all imported seafood sold for public consumption. The initiative includes fish and chip shops, restaurants, cafes, bistros, hotels, motels and delicatessens in supermarkets.

Any seafood not harvested from Australian waters is to be clearly labelled as "imported". This label is to be used on menus, menu boards, brochures, flyers and any other advertising. Woolworths is quick to point out that the NT Grown initiative is not a promotion or marketing gimmick. It is a long-term commitment to Territory producers. Woolworths is also employing a new transport strategy to provide a better delivery service to their Top End supermarkets. The company's rail development manager Dave Plunkett states that interstate deliveries are delivered to supermarkets first thing every morning so shoppers need not go anywhere else to buy their food. Previously, the company had operated through third party freight forwarders, with goods often arriving later in the day.

Now Woolworths deals directly with rail operator FreightLink and freight is moved from Adelaide to the NT in state-of-the-art rail containers equipped with satellite tracking technology. The change, made mid-year, has increased Woolworths' operational control and has led to faster and more reliable deliveries for stores.

In each temperature controlled container, two temperature zones may be set. Freezer pads are used to separate and maintain

temperatures in each compartment, meaning fewer deliveries at stores and greater efficiency. Each container is taken from the rail terminal directly to store and unloaded.

Freight temperatures are monitored in transit between Adelaide and Darwin using the satellite technology. As well, the technology allows Woolworths to track fuel levels, receive and monitor fridge and temperature alarms and report on the precise location of each container. "We are meeting our objectives of increased service to stores, reducing our carbon footprint and have made other changes which have increased safety," says Plunkett. "Product is monitored from the distribution centre through to arrival at store and is delivered in pristine condition."

Coinciding with the change in transport model, Woolworths is working with local fruit growers to transport NT fruit into Adelaide depots. Initially, growers were uncertain about the change and Woolworths' transport capacity, but those worries were soon dispelled. "It's been an amazing transition," says WePack's Tim Elliott, who has moved south over 3000 pallets with Woolworths and is now halfway through the season. "They've done a fantastic job with their state of the art equipment. We've had a problem-free transport season."



The atmosphere at BASSINTEGRASS is electric. The crowd grows, and everyone is pumped for a good time. Revellers in the mosh pit dance themselves into a sweaty frenzy, just metres away from world famous recording artists. Big names, big sound, big lights, and the big crowd is safely separated from the stage behind a sturdy control barrier.

Major events companies and venues around Australia are using the Territory-designed Framelock Crowd Control Barrier. Colin West's Framelock system has won numerous awards, including the recent NT Research and Innovation Awards and the Small Business Ventures and Projects Award at the Northern Division 2010 Engineering Excellence Awards.

Innovation is nothing new for West, who epitomises the adage that 'necessity is the mother of invention'. When the Territory throws him a unique challenge, he finds a solution—and West is keeping patent lawyers busy with a range of products that have emerged from challenges in his events management business.

When the government wanted to run a large railway conference with an outdoor catering tent, West came up with an air-conditioning system and dehumidifiers. When the Darwin Turf Club wanted more catering space, he came up with a custom-designed temporary shade structure that is air-conditioned, able to resist high winds and close to a permanent building.

West designed the Framelock system for the Missy Higgins Darwin concert in 2006. Her promoters had stipulated that industry standard barriers were to be used. None were available locally, and the costs to bring them in were excessive.

Colin West went on to develop and manufacture the Framelock system and it is now widely used throughout Australia. He is also receiving enquiries from Asia and the United States.

Crowd barriers have a background steeped in tragedy and misadventure. The public's safety is a top priority in West's design.

"Back in 2001, a girl got crushed and died against the barrier at the Big Day Out in Sydney," West recounts. "The promoter couldn't stop the band, the band couldn't stop to say to everyone 'move back'. They couldn't get the ambulance in, they didn't have multi-tier levels—layers of barriers—so you couldn't stop the crowd pushing forward."

Earlier this year at the Vancouver Winter Olympics, a barrier collapsed at a concert, resulting in a crowd surge. Nineteen young people required hospitalisation, including Darwin woman Jessie Adams. "Because of the nature of this country, in America, Europe, and the UK, you want to make sure the barrier is being made

to the highest standards," explains West. "We have a product that is superior in the technical range, and cost effective. That's how we won the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, Luna Park and all the others. It's actually proven to be pretty good."

The Framelock barrier is the cheapest in the world compared with the industry leaders. It meets or exceeds industry standards. It is strong and lightweight, and packs flat for easy transportation. "When we won the Australian Sports Commission tender, we won on technical

performance, which is the highest best rating in the tender, and we were up against eight others—the world's best. We found out we were the second lowest price anyway," West said.

With distributors now based around Australia, Framelock Barriers is about to go international. "We approached Jones Beach in New York. They've come back to us and said yes, but it's on hold for now," West said. "If we hire it in America we still have to provide certification."

West continues to look ahead. "It's pretty exciting. What we're really working on is getting a national act. If we can get a national act that goes on a world tour, that'd be something."

www.framelockbarriers.com



Next time you or your family are at a concert or sporting event, or anywhere with big crowds, it may just be a Northern Territory invention that keeps you safe.

Lock it in



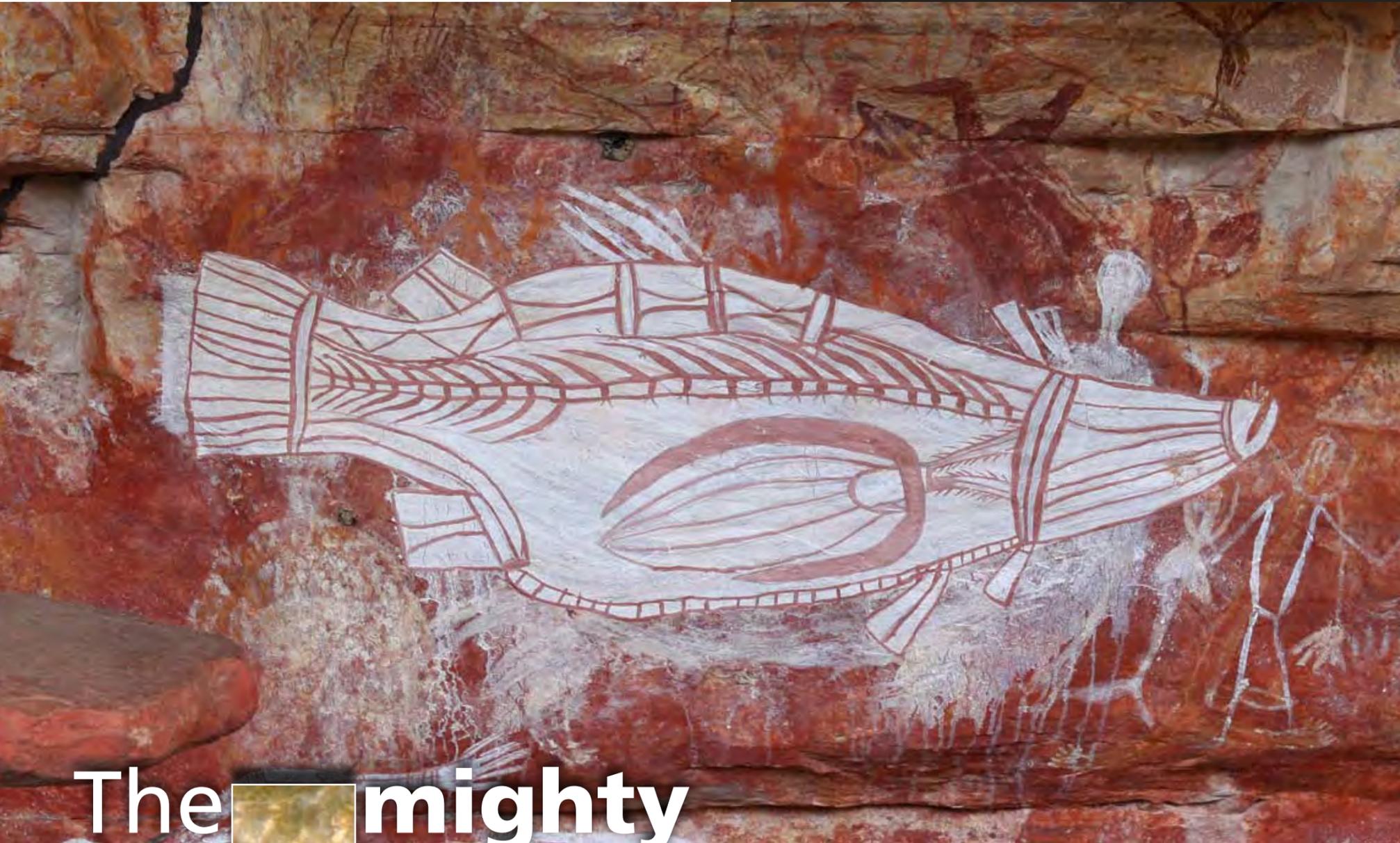
Main Image> The Framelock Crowd Control Barrier in use at Darwin's BASSINTEGRASS 2010.

Inset> Innovator Colin West.

Main Image> The barramundi as depicted by ancient Jawoyn artists in southern Arnhem Land.

Top Right> Hooked by an angler's lure.

Bottom Right> A barra captured during a Mary River fish count.



The mighty

barra

If the world of fishes has a celebrity, it must be the barramundi. It's a true-blue Territory tourist attraction, it's culturally significant to Aboriginal people and it's the nation's most important freshwater commercial fish. And it has a backstory that involves sex, fighting and more than a hint of scandal. First, the sex:



Above> Marc Wagnon, chef at Moorish with his Smoked NT Barra dish.

Right> Commercial barra fisherman Dominic Fazio.



Male barramundi stay that way until they're about five years old, when most of them turn into females. Sometimes they're even caught halfway through the transformation, explains Dominic Fazio, who's been fishing for barra for over 43 years: "You can cut it down the middle and one half will be male and the other female," he says.

And it's a fighter too. Recreational fisherman love the barra's feisty nature. It puts on quite a show at the end of a line, leaping spectacularly and dramatically—a quality that underpins a lucrative recreational fishing industry in the Northern Territory, worth an estimated \$35 million-plus in the year 2000.

The commercial barramundi fishery is driven by consumer demand and the barra's reputation as an excellent table fish. Because it is so sought after, there has been the odd unscrupulous supplier or restaurateur who has substituted a cheaper species such as Nile perch, an African freshwater species that it closely resembles. But the real thing offers delicious firm white flesh—unless it's spent too much time in muddy water, in which case it tastes just like, well, muddy water.

English writer Anthony Trollope, who visited Australia in 1873, wrote: "There is a fish too at Rockhampton called the Burra Mundi—I hope I spell the name rightly—which is very commendable".



The barramundi is found in estuarine waters around Australia's north from the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia to the Mary and Maroochy River systems in southern Queensland. It can grow to 60 kilograms.

As the NT Government's latest fisheries status report points out, the barramundi has significant economic, health, cultural and totemic values for Aboriginal people. Most fishing for barramundi by Indigenous people occurs in inland rivers that drain into the sea or in inshore coastal waters and over 90 per cent of all fishing by Indigenous people is shore-based, using baited lines and spears.

Fazio, who owns DCF Fisheries with wife Carmen, has been working the barramundi fishery "just about my whole life. I haven't caught a million of them, but just about!

"It's a good fish, he breeds so fast. The funny thing is, that fish is so smart. If you leave the nets there more than one day, you'll catch

maybe 100 fish the first day and then the next day you'll get 10. It's incredible how smart that fish is."

He averages three tonne a week of barramundi and salmon, supplying about one tonne per week to Ziko Ilic's Darwin Fish Markets. The rest go through wholesaler NT Fish to markets interstate, mostly Melbourne.

Fazio has little time for farmed barramundi: "Wild barramundi, he eats prawns and mullet and tastes good. The farmed barramundi, he eats chicken pellets, he tastes like chicken pellets."



Smoked NT Barra

With Sweet Paprika Aioli and Capers

Recipe by Moorish Café

Ingredients:

- 600g fillet of NT wild barramundi
- Wood chips
- Lemon myrtle
- 1 large free range egg
- 1 large free range egg yolk
- 200ml vegetable oil
- 200ml olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tablespoon Spanish sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 50gm capers
- salt and pepper

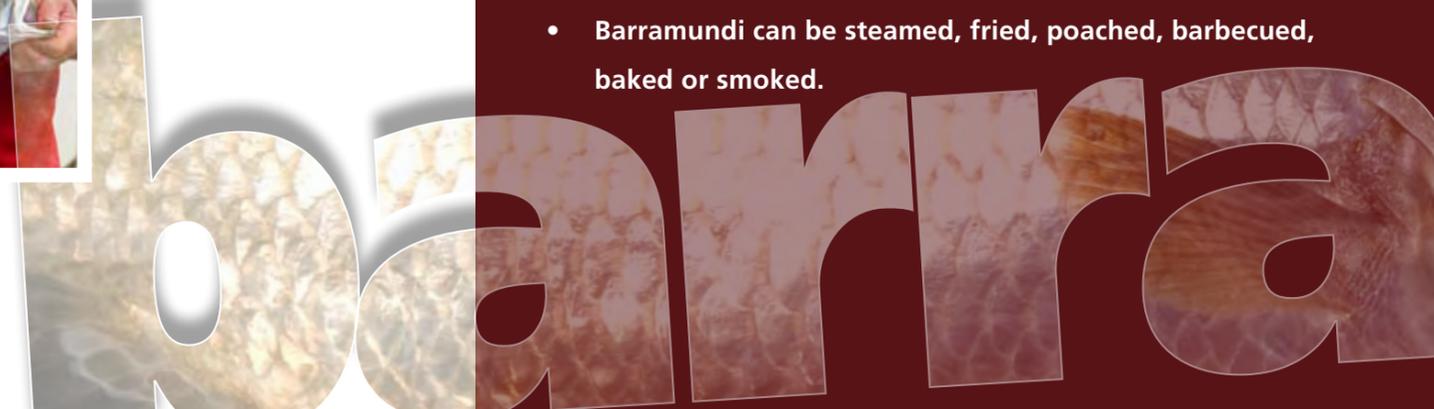
Method:

Slice barramundi into 50g portions, lightly baste with oil, salt and pepper. Prepare wood smoker. Add wood chips and lemon myrtle to the smoker. Arrange barramundi pieces on the smoker grill. Put smoker onto a hot flame. Once smoking, reduce the flame and cook for 5 to 7 minutes. Check that the barramundi is cooked before removing from heat - don't over smoke.

For the aioli, add egg, egg yolk, vinegar, mustard and garlic into a food processor and blitz for 3 minutes. Combine the oils and slowly add to the mixture in the food processor. Once all the oil has been added, add paprika and salt and pepper. Serve the barramundi while it is still warm with a sprinkling of capers and dollop of paprika aioli.

A fascinating fish

- Although it hasn't been confirmed, it's thought that the name is Aboriginal and means "fish with big scales". The early spelling varied, including *Burra Mundi* and *burramundi* and *Barramunda*.
- In the wild, barramundi are mainly nocturnal feeders. In aquariums, however, they will feed in daylight.
- Bright metallic gold or bronze lures are particularly attractive to barramundi.
- According to the Australian Barramundi Farmers Association's website, Barramundi are farmed in every Australian state except Tasmania.
- Barramundi can be steamed, fried, poached, barbecued, baked or smoked.



regular feature: **partingshots!**

Territory



**PASSIONFRUIT VARIETY
COULD BE OUR NEXT
EXPORT CROP**

Though passionfruit remains a taste favourite in the Territory, the fruit's short single season vine life has always stood in the way of commercialisation. But now NT Government scientists have produced a variety with a vigorous vine life that could last for four years and make commercialisation viable.

The scientists focused their attention on trialling the Panama Red variety, a species that is more adaptable to hot, monsoonal conditions than others. "We've identified seed lines that we can graft Panama Red onto that should give us three to four year vine life," says Department of Resources' senior horticulturalist Mark Hough.

**SOLAR POWER STATION
OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

The largest solar tracking system in Alice Springs was launched when the Chief Executive of Northern Territory Airports Ian Kew and Director of Solar Cities Michael Ward cut the ribbon on the Alice Springs Airport's solar power station. "This installation is the first of its kind in the southern hemisphere and comprises 28 impressive SolFocus arrays, each 8m wide and 7m high," Ward said.

The airport's solar power station project uses new Concentrator Photovoltaic (CPV) technology that will supply about 28 per cent of the airport's energy needs.

Alice Springs will be the first Australian airport to have a large scale (over 100kW) photovoltaic system providing a direct source of renewable energy to its internal grid. The project, valued at \$2.3 million, resulted from a grant of \$1.132 million from the Australian Government, as part of the Alice Solar City Project.

**Captovate
takes out National Web Award**

Territory digital communications company Captovate took out an Australian Web Award at a national event held in Perth. The site that got them the gong was local radio station website 104.1 Territory FM, fully designed and developed by Captovate, picking up the outstanding website in the Media category. The Australian Web Awards are held annually in association with the Australian Web Industry Association, with the 2010 awards attracting over 300 entries from all states across Australia. Captovate is the first Territory company to take home an award in the competition.

**ICHTHYS LNG PROJECT RELEASES
INVITATION TO TENDER**

The Ichthys Project (INPEX Browse Ltd 76 per cent, operator, and Total E&P Australia 24 per cent) released the invitation to tender for the semi-submersible central processing facility to be located at the Ichthys gasfield in the Timor Sea, about 200km off the north-west coast of Australia.

INPEX Australia President Director Seiya Ito said the release of the invitation to tender for the central processing facility's engineering, procurement and construction contract was a significant step toward the delivery of the world-class Ichthys LNG project. "The issue of the invitations to tender is the culmination of many months of hard work by the project team for what is an exciting, complex and challenging endeavour," he said.

next



The Territory's media fishes

...March 11



Tapping into opportunity

Darwin's New Marine Supply Base

Darwin is ideally positioned to benefit from the growth of offshore oil and gas developments and has proven capacity to support major projects in the Timor Sea and wider South-East Asian region.

Expressions of interest from the private sector to build and operate a new world class Marine Supply Base next to Darwin's existing East Arm Wharf by mid-2014 are currently being evaluated. Contracts are expected to be awarded by late 2011.

The base will:

- provide dedicated rig tender berths to service the offshore oil and gas industry.
- complement Darwin's growing service and supply industry.
- continue to drive the Territory's economy by attracting ongoing investment.

This means more opportunities for local industry and jobs for Territorians.



Artist's impression of the initial stages of development

