

2022–2032 East Arnhem Regional Economic Growth Plan

Plain English summary and FAQs

This is a plain English summary of the Regional Economic Growth Plan for the East Arnhem region, including the Yolŋu communities, homelands and country and the Anindilyakwa communities, satellite communities and country.

Who wrote the plan?

The Regional Economic Growth Committee wrote the plan. The committee includes the Northern Territory Government, the Australian Government, Developing East Arnhem Limited, the East Arnhem Regional Council, the Northern and Anindilyakwa Land Councils and organisations including Laynhapuy Homelands, Gumatj, Rirratjinju, Dhimurru, North East Arnhem Land Aboriginal Corporation, Goŋ-däl, Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation, and Charles Darwin University. We wrote the plan based on what we know about the region from Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa leaders.

People from the Northern Territory Government and people from Developing East Arnhem Limited helped us write it.

Why did the Regional Economic Growth Committee write the plan?

We wrote the plan because we were thinking about the future of jobs and business in the East Arnhem region. In the next 10 years, mining will finish on Groote Eylandt and in Gove. That means, lots of jobs will finish.

So we were thinking about the future, about creating more jobs for Yolŋu, Anindilyakwa and Balanda.

What is in the plan?

In the plan, we talk about:

- How can we work together to make sure there are new jobs for people?

- What sort of jobs and businesses would be good for East Arnhem?
- How many more jobs can we make in the next 10 years?
- How can we all work together to make this happen?

The plan does not decide what will happen on Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa country, these decisions are made by Traditional Owners. The plan talks about what is possible if we all work together really well to grow new jobs and business.

Who is the plan for?

The plan is a very long Balanda document. It is written for government, and for businesses, to help them think about the right way to build business and make jobs, and how to work with and support Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa people here in East Arnhem.

This is a short, Plain English summary of what is in the plan, to help Yolŋu, Anindilyakwa and Balanda talk about it and understand it together.

Lots of Balanda who don't know East Arnhem might read the plan. So, the plan tells them important things about this place: it belongs to Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa people who have lived here for thousands of years, and traded with Macassans and with Aboriginal people in other places in Australia and also with people from other countries overseas.

What does the plan talk about?

About 15,000 people live in East Arnhem: 12,000 are Yolŋu or Anindilyakwa.

East Arnhem is a long way from Darwin, and there are not very many good roads here. Lots of the food and other things come by barge, because the roads are not good all year round.

So, sometimes it takes a long time to travel around East Arnhem from community to community.

So, this is what we talk about in the plan.











In the plan, we talk about how to make more businesses and companies in East Arnhem that can last for a long time and make lots of different jobs.

But Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa people say it isn't just about making money and getting rich. The plan is to help young people grow up strong on country, to live and work and stay on country. The plan tells government and business they need to think about that, not just think about money.

The plan talks about how to help businesses and companies that are in East Arnhem today. And it talks about how the Traditional Owners can join together with people and businesses from other places who want to come to East Arnhem with their money to start new businesses and companies.

In the next 10 years, about 2000 jobs will finish in East Arnhem, when the Rio Tinto and GEMCO mines finish. But, the plan shows ideas to make lots of new jobs for Yolŋu, Anindilyakwa and Balanda people. So, when the jobs at the mines finish, there will be other jobs created. If the plan is true, then there will be 2000 new jobs for all of East Arnhem.

What are some ideas for new businesses and jobs in East Arnhem?

- a. **Tourism** – bringing lots more people to East Arnhem for them to look around at all the beautiful things, learn about Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa culture and art and have fun. 
- b. **Aerospace** – the company that is helping to launch those rockets but also other things like ground stations for tracking satellites. 
- c. **Human Services** – like better disability services and aged care. 
- d. **Green energy and manufacturing** – like using the sun and wind to make electricity and using that electricity to make things like fertiliser to grow food. 
- e. **Defence and border protection** – things like working together with the Army, including Norforce, to keep Australia safe. 
- f. **New resource projects** – things like mining that Traditional Owners have agreed to. 
- g. **Agribusiness** – growing food and gathering plants and animals that already grow in East Arnhem. 
- h. **Land management** – taking care of country. 
- i. **Forestry** – looking after all the trees and cutting some of them down to sell, and making them into things like furniture. 
- j. **Fisheries and aquaculture** – catching fish and making more places where fish can grow. 
- k. **Creative industries** – things like people dancing and singing and painting.

Many of these jobs could be for Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa, but also Balanda people with different skills from outside East Arnhem will also be excited to come here to start and work in new businesses.

Why is the plan important?

When the Regional Economic Growth Committee wrote the plan, we were thinking about how many people will live in East Arnhem in 10 years – in 2032.

It is important to make plans for how many people will live here: if there are lots of people, the government will keep services like the hospitals, and the aeroplanes will keep flying from Cairns and Darwin.

So we were thinking: when the mines close down, lots of people – maybe 2000 or 3000 – might leave the region. Then, if there aren't enough people, East Arnhem might lose some important services.

So, the plan thinks about this two ways:



It's important lots of Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa have jobs.



It's also important Balanda keep coming here to work, so the population stays the same or gets bigger.

But the plan says, if Balanda come, and bring new businesses, they have to partner with Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa people and businesses. They have to learn how to do things the right way on Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa country.

What things do we need the government to do for the economy to grow bigger?

The plan talks about infrastructure – things like roads and bridges, telecommunications (mobile towers and wifi), sea ports, wharfs/jetties, barge landings and buildings.

Without good infrastructure, it is very hard for new businesses to grow and make real jobs for Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa people.

The plan writes down for governments all the important infrastructure that East Arnhem needs so business can grow.

This includes:

- a. Building more houses for workers and their families.
- b. Putting bitumen on all of the Central Arnhem Road and roads to Gapuwiyak and Ramingining and making better roads to homelands.
- c. Making sure the Gove deep water port has better wharfs and jetties and places for fisheries and aquaculture businesses.
- d. Better 'digital connectivity' – things like faster internet and more mobile phone towers and for homelands to be connected to the internet too.

All of these things will help make more and more jobs and industries in East Arnhem and help non-government businesses to come here and work with Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa people and Traditional Owners.

How does the plan help our young people?

The plan also asks governments to make pathways for young people from school to jobs or to university on country. The plan says young people shouldn't have to go away to places like Cairns or Darwin to study.

The plan says it is important Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa grow up strong in two worlds.

When will we see changes?

The plan has lots of ideas, and asks government to do lots of things. But, the government can't do everything straight away. So in the plan, we tell government what they should do first (in the next 2 years), then the things they should do before 5 years, and then the things they should do before 10 years. The plan goes up to 2032.

Lots of people and organisations will have to work together to make these things happen: Traditional Owners, governments, Land Councils, and lots of other organisations and businesses.

The plan says local regions – like Marthakal, Laynhapuy, Gattjirrk and all the local regions in East Arnhem – can make their own local plans for jobs and businesses in their area.

In 2023, people from the government and from the Regional Economic Growth Committee will visit all these local regions. We will talk about the plan, we will ask Traditional Owners and clans about their ideas for jobs and businesses. Together we will make a local plan, for all the local regions in East Arnhem.

The Regional Economic Growth Committee knows this is a big story, and some of the plans will be hard.

We heard from Yolŋu and Anindilyakwa leaders that they are really worried there are no real jobs for young people.

Everyone wants to make sure there are real jobs for everybody who wants to work. We think real jobs are important, and it is a worry that people have been getting sit-down money for too long.

Even though some things in the plan will be hard to do, let's all work together really well and try to make it happen.

If we all work together, there will be good work for everyone who wants to work, and East Arnhem communities and people will stay strong and healthy, on country. People in East Arnhem can have the same things and the same opportunities as people everywhere in the Northern Territory.

So, the plan says: please join together on this journey and ask yourself,

“What can we do to make East Arnhem better for everyone?”

Find out more

If you want to learn more about this document, you can visit this link to read the whole plan:

<https://cmc.nt.gov.au/strengthening-regions/regional-economic-growth-plans/east-arnhem>

If you have any questions about this document, you can come into the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet's office in Nhulunbuy to talk about it, or you can call the East Arnhem team on 08 8987 0536.