

Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making

Newsletter June 2022

Welcome to our newsletter with updates on the progress of the LDM priorities and commitments.

The Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement was signed by the Chairperson of the ALC and the Chief Minister of the NT Government in 2018.

The Agreement identifies short, medium and long-term priorities for transition to regional and local control. The Agreement requires the development of detailed, specific Implementation Plans across the respective priority areas to establish the necessary steps to achieve the agreed outcomes.



The following Implementation Plans have been signed:

- » [Law, Justice and Rehabilitation](#)
- » [Education](#)
- » [Economic Development](#)
- » [Housing](#)

A number of Implementation Plans are still under development.



Short term priorities

Law, Justice and Rehabilitation

The agreed LDM outcome is to increase the involvement and leadership of the Anindilyakwa people in the justice system, including access to rehabilitative services.

Key actions to achieve this include:

Commitment

Building a cultural rehabilitation centre (CRC): an alternative to custody facility, on Groote Eylandt that will be owned and operated by agreed non-government entities.

Establish a Community Justice Group (CJG) for the Archipelago.

Progress update

- A Steering committee has been established to provide oversight on the effective implementation of the CRC facility and CJG.
- The CRC project is in early stages of planning and development. Design work is well advanced for a standalone CRC facility at Marble Point.
- NAAJA have been contracted to establish the Community Justice Group to advise on the Alternative to Custody facility, participate in Community Courts and support safety initiatives.
- There have been a number of community members from Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra involved in consultation and development of the CJG in 2020 and early 2021. NAAJA are working on confirming continued expressions of interest for community members to continue involvement with the CJG as members.



Short term priorities

Education

The agreed LDM outcome is a new community-controlled bi-lingual education system in the Groote Archipelago that allows for Anindilyakwa people to control and take responsibility for their own schools, has a curriculum to enable Anindilyakwa people to live in both worlds, and facilitates a single governance model for education.

Some key actions to achieve this include:

Commitment

Building an Independent Boarding School for students located in the Groote Archipelago that is to be owned and operated by Groote Eylandt Bickerton Island Primary College Aboriginal Corporation (GEBIPCAC).

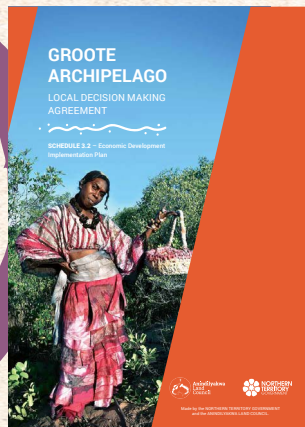
Implementing a bi-lingual curriculum across the Independent Boarding School and the Anindilyakwa Community Schools.

Establishing an ongoing program to develop and grow Anindilyakwa education workers to engage preschool-aged and school-aged children who are not in school, with the support of the NT Government and considering interactions with Commonwealth programs such as the Remote School Attendance Strategy.

Prioritising Early Childhood development and education as well as bi-lingual education for children aged 0-8 years.

Progress update

- The college will be located in Bickerton Island. GEBIPCAC aims to have the school open with small cohort of students in Semester 2, 2023.
- Design and construction planning is well advanced and GEBIPCAC is in the process of obtaining the necessary independent school registration.
- Consultations completed around models for Bilingual curriculum in community schools.
- Bilingual curriculum for Early Years is being developed for implementation in community schools.
- The Department of Education has recruited to the role which will focus on a Bilingual education program implementation.
- Work is being undertaken to establish an ongoing program of Anindilyakwa education workers to travel 'on country' and engage pre-school-aged and school-aged children who are not in school, with the support of the Commonwealth Govt.
- 6 Teacher training students continue to progress through formal training.
- Further work is being undertaken to engage more teachers in teacher training.
- Early Childhood Governance Reference group established on Groote.
- Quality Improvement Plan for Early Childhood Education and Care services across the three communities being developed with a focus on National Quality Framework standards and audits.
- Data analysis of current attendance and engagement of children 0-8 years underway.



Short term priorities

Economic Development

The agreed LDM outcome is a viable, culturally rich and sustainable two-stream (diversified) economy in the Groote Archipelago, not dependent upon mining royalty income, which is controlled by Anindilyakwa people.

Some key actions to achieve this include:

Commitment

Implement a trial project for oyster aquaculture.

Improve transport and telecommunications services.

Support economic development of the Sea Country of the Anindilyakwa people.

Facilitated project support for Winchelsea Exploration and Mining Project and other projects.

Progress update

- The Black lip tropical rock oyster trial has commenced.

- Telecommunications backhaul upgrades completed by Telstra.
- Work continues to be undertaken with a focus on supporting improvements in transport, logistics and telecommunications.

- The Groote Aqua Aboriginal Corporation (GAAC) was recently established.
- Aquaculture research and development is being undertaken with the aim of moving toward a commercial venture.
- A lobster trial commenced early May and will advise on the size of the naturally occurring lobster puerulus population and its potential for future commercialisation.
- GAAC is also investigating a range of other and novel species including seaweed and tropical fish.

- Relevant NT Agencies are working with proponent to support Winchelsea Exploration and Mining Project and other Projects.
- 30-year Mining Lease granted for Winchelsea Mining Project in March 2022.
- Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation (GHAC) has been established to manage and oversee major projects for the benefit of all traditional owners.
- GHAC has been granted a suite of s19 leases for the Little Paradise development for a total term of 50 years each, with approval from the Federal Minister. This exciting and unprecedented development will include a biosecurity area, logistics base, timber mill, workers' accommodation, solar farm, residential housing, vehicle servicing, hospitality complex and tourist resort.



Short term priorities

Housing

The agreed LDM outcome is a single, sustainable, diverse and culturally appropriate community housing system across all towns and satellite communities in the Groote Archipelago that the Anindilyakwa people control and take responsibility for.

Some key actions to achieve this include:

Commitment

Operationalising AHAC, building its capacity and achieving its registration under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

Joint housing investment to reduce overcrowding and achieve agreed standard for transition.

Progress update

- AHAC Offices established in Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra.
 - AHAC commenced provision of Homelands Services in July 2020 for seven Satellite Communities.
 - New Housing Reference Groups facilitated by AHAC established for each community.
 - Housing for Health program completed in Milyakburra and Satellite communities.
 - AHAC achieved registration in January 2021 under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) as a Tier 2 provider.
 - Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (DTFHC) awarded contracts to AHAC in Oct 2021 for the provision of Tenancy Support Services and Remote Housing Maintenance for Public housing on Groote Eylandt.
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- Construction of 10 new Groote Archipelago Housing Program (GAHP) houses funded by the ALC, completed in Angurugu and Umbakumba.
 - 2 new GAHP houses currently under construction at Little Paradise.
 - GEBIE and Aminjarrinja have been engaged by DIPL on a period contract to deliver new housing under the NTG Homebuild program.
 - Additional houses are scheduled to be built across all 3 communities. This includes 7 houses in Milyakburra, 30 houses in Angurugu, and 19 houses in Umbakumba.
 - Upgrades through the Room to Breathe program:
 - Angurugu to receive 82 additional bedrooms over program duration. 22 bedrooms already scoped across 16 homes.
 - Umbakumba to receive 18 additional bedrooms, 17 already scoped across 13 homes.

Progressive Transfer of Housing Assets to AHAC.

- 28 Houses have been transferred to AHAC from Anindilyakwa Royalties Aboriginal Corporation.
- 29 Houses are currently in the process of being transferred to AHAC from other Aboriginal corporations.

Short term priorities

Health and Wellbeing

The agreed LDM outcome is 'the transition of control and responsibility for healthclinics in the Groote Archipelago from NT Health to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation'.

While Aboriginal community controlled primary health services remains a long term goal, Anindilyakwa leaders have expressed a desire for NT Health to continue providing health services within Groote Archipelago for the foreseeable future.

The outcome is to increase involvement, capacity and leadership of Anindilyakwa people in the health and wellbeing sector, and support their long term aspirations of transitioning to community control and responsibility.

This includes working constructively with all stakeholders to strengthen the current provision of health and wellbeing services delivered within Groote Archipelago, in line with priorities identified by the Anindilyakwa people.

Warnumamalya Health Services Aboriginal Corporation (WHSAC) was recently established, consisting of Directors and members from Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra.

WHSAC ALC, CMC and NT Health have been working together to draft the Health Implementation Plan. The Health Implementation Plan is due to be signed by 30 September 2022.

Medium term priorities

Local Government

The agreed LDM outcome for Local Government is for Anindilyakwa people to take responsibility for local government in the Groote Archipelago, by the establishment of an Anindilyakwa Regional Local Government Council.

A Transition Committee was established to commence discussions around the local government initiative. Members of the committee include Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC), East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC), Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (CMC), National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT).

Community meetings were held throughout November 2021 to brief Yolngu and Anindilyakwa communities on the progress of seeking to establish a new local government in the Groote Archipelago region. A combined presentation was delivered at each meeting by EARC, ALC and CM&C.

Community members were asked to provide their feedback and ask questions. Attendees were encouraged to keep talking about a new Anindilyakwa led local government council and a smaller EARC amongst family and friends. Contact details for EARC, ALC and CM&C were provided if more information was required.

A Financial Assessment Report (FAR) was developed to provide an indicative estimate of the costs involved in establishing a new council.

A decision is yet to be made on the establishment of a new regional council. Further information is expected to be available in the coming months.



Long term priorities

Future of Alyangula Implementation Plan

GEMCO operates the manganese mine on Groote Eylandt. The GEMCO operation is approaching the end of mine life. By around 2030, the mine will close and land will be returned to Warnumamalya.

GEMCO currently operates and maintains the Alyangula Township, including municipal and essential services and community infrastructure. Alyangula is located on a Special Purposes Lease (SPL) held by GEMCO and is Aboriginal Land held in escrow under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth).

On expiry or termination of the SPL, title of the land will vest in the Anindilyakwa Land Trust. Between now and the closure of the mine, the composition of the mining workforce in Alyangula may change. This transition needs to be carefully managed to ensure the impact on business, government services and broader Groote Archipelago community is minimised and the transition supports the agreed transition plan for the community.

The agreed LDM outcome for Future of Alyangula is controlled management of GEMCO transition impacts on Alyangula and the Groote Archipelago, and support for Anindilyakwa people through the transition to utilise Alyangula in establishing a successful, local, diversified economy that provides jobs and opportunity for the Groote Archipelago. GEMCO have engaged SVA consultancy to understand the aspirations of Traditional Owners that will underpin the mine closure plan.



Special Update

Aquaculture

Hi all,

This is just a quick update regarding our aquaculture project. You might have seen our yimuwarnaka (turtle) around town now that our Groote Aqua Aboriginal Corporation ute, truck and boat are on Eylandt.

No, we won't be farming turtles. The turtle for us represents 'Respect, one of the six ALC values'. The turtle reminds us of the respect we much have for each other, for the land and sea country, and the animals we work with and work around in our day-to-day aquaculture duties.

This week we took out our new work-boat, Aqua 1, to the four pontoons in Northwest Bay that we'll use to survey the naturally occurring Tropical Rock Lobster population over the next year or so. A small step in the grand scheme of things maybe, but an important first step nonetheless for aquaculture on Groote Eylandt.

During this trip we tested the boat in both beautiful calm weather (in the morning) and slightly less calm weather, albeit still beautiful, in the afternoon!

We looked at the water quality (dissolved oxygen, salinity, pH, temperature and a few more) which we'll keep on monitoring along the project to better understand this pristine and dynamic environment. Scott Wurramarrba was a natural, he mastered the water quality meter in no time.

What's next?

The lobster puerulus survey is now well underway with our aquaculture team: two Tropical Rock Lobster specialists from Indonesia (Junaidi and Adi) and one aquaculture technician (Tremaine) from Brisbane will help with the lobster project and other exciting aquaculture related work.

Scott Wurramarrba checking the water quality, "pristine"



One of the four lobster pontoons in North West Bay