

# Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making

## Community updates March 2024

**Welcome to our newsletter with updates from Anindilyakwa people and the community organisations leading Groote Archipelago's LDM work.**

The Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement was signed by the Chairperson of the ALC and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory 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 \(2019\)](#)
- » [Economic Development \(2019\)](#)
- » [Housing \(2019\)](#)
- » [Education \(2020\)](#)
- » [Health and Wellbeing \(2022\)](#)
- » [Local Government \(2023\)](#)

## Stay connected

Updates, Agreements and the 4 Year Progress Report 2018-22 are all published and available on the [LDM webpage](#).





# 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.

The Economic Development Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

## Trepang pioneering sustainable aquaculture in Groote's post-mining economy

As part of the Economic Development LDM agreement the Groote Aqua Aboriginal Cooperation (GAAC) is charting a new course for Groote Eylandt's economic future through aquaculture.

Currently operating a 25,000-litre recirculating system, Groote Aqua is successfully cultivating oysters and sea cucumber, alongside varieties of tasty nutrient-rich seaweed, such as sea grapes (*Caulerpa lentillifera*) and sea lettuce (*Ulva intestinalis*).



Sea Grapes - *Caulerpa lentillifera* (left) and a species of *Gracilaria* sp. (right)



In line with its growth agenda, Groote Aqua is poised to expand its operations in 2024 with the installation of a larger 50,000-litre system at their Little Paradise site. With this additional capacity the team expects to expand into cultivating local fish species such as Black Jewfish and Rabbitfish.

However the product central to Groote Aqua's vision is sea cucumber, which once processed into a dry product is called trepang. Trepang is considered a delicacy in a number of East Asian cultures and is mainly used in soups within Chinese cuisine. It is a species hailed by Aquaculture Manager Valentin Thepot as a resource embodying the corporation's ethos to provide economic, environmental and social sustainability for Anindilyakwa people.



With global trepang production largely reliant on wild harvesting in regions such as South East Asia and the Pacific islands, Groote Aqua's plan to cultivate sea cucumber marks a shift towards the sustainable management of this product.

Trepang has a rich social and economic legacy in the Groote Archipelago, being central to generations of trade between visiting Macassan traders and Anindilyakwa people. These stories are an integral part of the living history that Groote Aqua aims to preserve for future generations.

Looking ahead, a major focus for GAAC in 2024 will be to have complete control over the breeding and lifecycle of their sea cucumbers, in order to create breeding stock and expand the program. Groote Aqua has aspirations to eventually scale up production of sea cucumbers into on-land ponds on its six hectare site.

Sea cucumber within Groote Aqua's reticulation system



Delwyn Bara assessing the health and feeding oyster larvae on day 3 after hatch



# Successful oyster spawn a milestone for Aboriginal aquaculture in the Top End

Groote Aqua is celebrating a successful spawn of approximately 34 million larvae of blacktip oysters this year. This abundant spawn is a milestone in GAAC's plan to establish themselves as a hatchery provider of blacktip oyster spats in northern Australia. Currently in the proof-of-concept stage, GAAC has 25,000 oysters happily growing on long lines in the pristine waters of Groote Eylandt.

**Fun Fact:** Most people know about the sedentary life of oysters but few are aware that for their first 20-30 days of life, they actually swim.

Groote Aqua has plans for expansion, aiming to increase their capacity to sustain an additional 100,000 oysters in 2024.

GAAC are also honing their skills to be able to offer tailored training to support the growth of an Aboriginal aquaculture industry in northern Australia.

*"We have a multi species aquaculture facility and next to it a brand new 16 room camp with kitchens and laundries. This will be the perfect place to welcome people from different communities interested in learning more about aquaculture."*

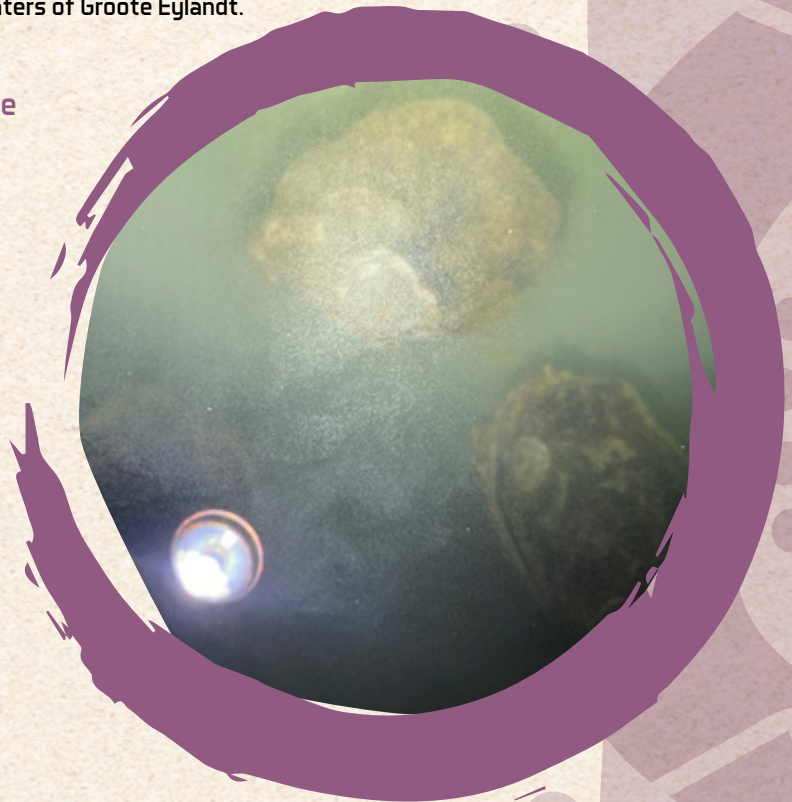
Valentin Thepot, Aquaculture Manager, Groote Aqua

Groote Aqua's larger vision is to one day work in partnership with other Aboriginal organisations to expand the cultivation of blacktip oysters and other marine species (sea cucumber, seaweed etc...) across other communities in the Top End.

Currently, despite having the rights to fertile sea country, high entry costs, lack of sufficient juveniles or spats and limited skills prohibit many Aboriginal organisations from entering into the aquaculture sector. By providing affordable aquaculture seedlings, Groote Aqua hopes to reduce the barrier to entry and partner with Aboriginal organisations in spearheading the uptake of aquaculture in sea country across the Top End.

*"71% of our planet is covered by water, and we're operating on an island! We'd be silly to not look at the ocean and the blue economy to facilitate a transition from mining towards a sustainable economic, social and environmental future for Groote Eylandt and the greater Top End."*

Valentin Thepot, Aquaculture Manager, Groote Aqua



Oyster larvae visible under torch light

In addition to this bumper oyster spawn, Groote Aqua is also seeing success in their blacktip oysters maturing to market size in under 18 months - much faster than that of other oysters grown across Australia such as the traditional Sydney Rock Oyster. The warm plankton rich waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria are believed to have contributed to the growth.

## Stay connected

Groote Aqua post regular updates on LinkedIn:

[www.linkedin.com/company/groote-aqua-aboriginal-corporation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/groote-aqua-aboriginal-corporation)



**Groote Aqua**  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

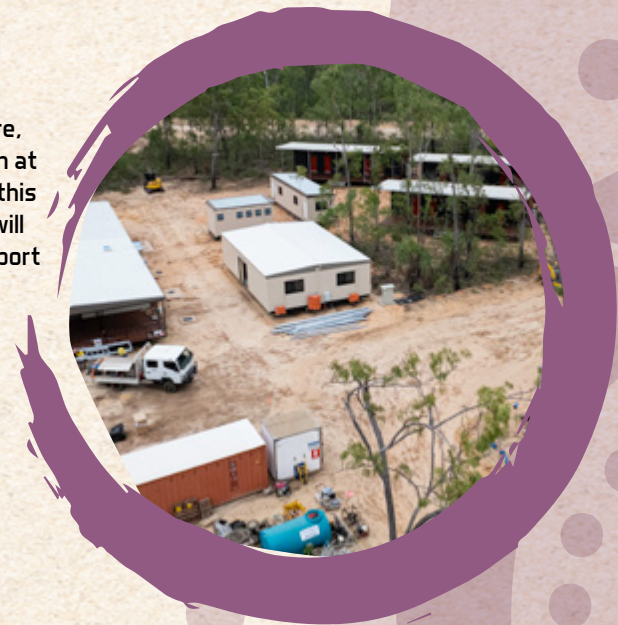


## GHAC Office and Community Kitchen nearing completion

Construction of Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation's (GHAC) new centre, consisting of head office, workers accommodation and community kitchen at Pole 7A commenced late last year and is due for completion at the end of this month. GHAC's centre is situated adjacent to Alyangula, near Pole 7, and will provide meals to the community (up to 1000 meals per day) as well as support the larger developments occurring at Little Paradise. The site will be commissioned in April.

*"The completion of Pole 7A is a very important milestone for us, as it will provide GHAC with a proper corporate office as well as more high-quality accommodation for the increasing number of local and visiting workers who will be required to build the Little Paradise developments. The new kitchen will also provide nutritious meals to our local communities to help improve health outcomes."*

Bradley Bara, GHAC Director



GHAC centre at Pole 7A nearing completion

## Little Paradise developments a hive of activity

GHAC's Base Camp and Aquaculture projects are now fully operational at Little Paradise Leases 1 and 2. The Base Camp is being utilised by GHAC and the accommodation is being rented out on a nightly basis.

The Aquaculture site is currently functioning as a research and development facility, with plans for the design and construction of the first full scale pond later in 2024, pending NTEPA approval for the stage 2 developments (semi commercial scale with 9 ponds).

GHAC has a busy 2024, with planned activities at Little Paradise including:

- Timber mulching facility up and running
- Tendering for the large-scale solar farm and battery
- Design of the community vehicle service centre
- Tendering and construction of the new residential housing estate
- Completion of the services corridor along Bartalumba Bay/Little Paradise Road



Little Paradise situated along Groote Eylandt's scenic coast

## Stay connected

GHAC post regular updates on their:

- Instagram: [instagram.com/groote\\_holdings/](https://www.instagram.com/groote_holdings/)
- Website: [ghac.com.au](https://ghac.com.au)







# 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.

The Housing Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

## AHAC's new office building is nearing completion!

Anindilyakwa Housing Aboriginal Corporation (AHAC) is putting the finishing touches on its future Anindilyakwa housing hub. The new building which is centrally located in Angurugu will provide AHAC members with a greater footprint to accommodate their growing team and establish a long term home base within the community. Designed and built over the last two years, the building is due to open later this month.

The building has been uniquely designed through strong consultation with Traditional Owners to integrate culturally appropriate indoor and outdoor meeting spaces and bathrooms. The board room in particular is unique in featuring built-in privacy screens that will ensure a culturally safer and more comfortable environment for Anindilyakwa people, who will be able to participate in meetings while also abiding by cultural obligations. Believed to be the first of its kind on Groote Eylandt, AHAC hopes to extend the use of their new board room to others in the broader community.

The building will increase the capacity of AHAC staff and members to work efficiently in community for the long term.

*"AHAC has grown considerably over the past five years and the construction of our new office will provide much needed facilities including culturally appropriate meeting spaces, video conferencing facilities and additional office areas. This will ensure that AHAC is well positioned to continue to deliver on the commitments from the Local Decision Making Agreement and improve housing standards and service delivery for the Groote Archipelago."*

Cherelle Wurrawilya, Chairperson AHAC



AHAC's new office space on left sits adjacent to current space behind on right



## More houses under AHAC's control and more renovations

Throughout 2023, AHAC saw the transition of 30 residential properties in Umbakumba and Angurugu to AHAC's control and management! In addition AHAC managed to secure \$1.7 million through royalty funding to bring these recently transitioned houses up to standard. Seven upgrades have been completed or are well underway including four major renovations.

## AHAC's Annual General Meeting a success with momentum for the year ahead

AHAC is celebrating the success of its AGM held in early November. Chaired by AHAC Chairperson Cherelle Wurrawilya, the meeting was mostly conducted in language and was well attended by twenty-two AHAC members and eight community observers.

There was considerable interest from community members around AHAC's future direction, the Angurugu sub-division, and outlook for future housing in community. The meeting also saw an uptake in AHAC membership, with a number of observers and community members joining the corporation as members.

## Stay connected

AHAC post regular updates on:

- Facebook Page: [facebook.com/ahacnt/](https://facebook.com/ahacnt/)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/ahac\\_housing/](https://instagram.com/ahac_housing/)
- Website: [ahacnt.com.au](https://ahacnt.com.au)

## Room to Breathe program making an impact

Through the Room to Breathe program the NTG and AHAC are reducing overcrowding and enhancing the living conditions for Warnumamalya in Angurugu and Umbakumba.

In Angurugu, the program delivered extensions of 11 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, providing families with improved living spaces that suits their needs. This is just the beginning with AHAC currently supporting the NTG in coordinating the extensions of a further 29 rooms in Angurugu that are either in the planning or construction stages.

The Room to Breathe program is also supporting families in Umbakumba, with 4 new bedrooms scheduled for completion by mid-March 2024, and a further 14 extensions on the horizon.

AHAC is working with the NTG in listening to each family's needs and by tailoring house extensions accordingly, is delivering culturally appropriate and family-centric accommodation, empowering individuals and supporting the well-being of Anindilyakwa people.



Serena Bara handing homes back to tenants from Angurugu and Umbakumba after their house extension under the Room to Breathe program







# Health and Wellbeing

The agreed 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.

The Health and Wellbeing Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

## WHSAC represented at Global Indigenous Health Conference in Canada

In September 2023, a delegation of Warnumamalya Health Services Aboriginal Corporation (WHSAC) directors and young Anindilyakwa leaders made the long journey to Canada to attend the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide conference in Vancouver. Supported by the Anindilyakwa Land Council and WHSAC, the delegation spent three weeks in Canada and for most of the group, it was their first experience travelling overseas.

Nearly 4,000 Indigenous people from all over the world convened to share stories, wisdom and visions for the future of Indigenous health in their respective nations. While Indigenous Australians were well represented at the conference, Anindilyakwa delegates were some of the only representatives from very remote communities.

Hosted on the lands of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh nations, the Anindilyakwa delegation built relationships with indigenous peoples from across the world, connecting over shared histories and values.

At the conference the WHSAC delegates had the opportunity to attend an extensive array of workshops and hear directly from indigenous-run health initiatives. Some of the topics available included mental health, connection to country, professional development opportunities, community-led health strategies, interaction with government systems, and the empowering role of being an Indigenous health practitioner.

The WHSAC delegates also listened to Elders from across the world who spoke on cultural healing through the repatriation of artefacts, stewardship of the land, collection and use of bush medicine, and the continuation of traditional art forms.

Overall, the conference was a unique and transformative experience, encouraging WHSAC delegates to lead positive change in the health story of Warnumamalya on Groote Eylandt.

*"[At the conference] there was a strong focus on traditional and cultural health as a way of being mentally healthy."*

Louise Amagula

*"Going to Canada to represent my Umbakumba family but also my Warnumamalya family here in Groote was something special to me. Seeing so many first nations people sitting together to talk about our health and our self-determination was great. We need to understand our health is very important to keep our culture and our way of life. I learned a lot about what we need to do about our health from this trip and I thank WHSAC for choosing me and my partner to attend this conference."*

Josh Mamarika



WHSAC delegation at the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide conference



After the conference, the Haida people invited the delegates to visit Haida Gwaii, an archipelago 60km off the coast of British Columbia. Upon arriving they were welcomed by the Haida peoples through the sharing of traditional songs and blessings and exchanging stories. Josh Mamarika shared a song in Anindilyakwa on behalf of the delegation.

On Haida Gwaii, the group also visited Old Massett Village, a cultural centre where Haida people's shared how they are reviving their language and lost traditional weaving techniques.

The group also had the opportunity to visit the Haida people's own Indigenous-run hospital in Haida Gwaii, where they were encouraged by how interconnected and respected Indigenous health practitioners were within the broader Canadian healthcare system. WHSAC members are hoping to build on this visit and strengthen the relationship with the Haida nation in 2024.

The trip has inspired WHSAC Director Louisa Amagula, and encouraged her to commit to studying nursing in Darwin in 2024. Hoping to "encourage the young ones" Louisa says having the support of her family was also central to pursuing a career in health.

## WHSAC celebrates the appointment of first General Manager

In late 2023 WHSAC Directors appointed Simone Grimmond as the corporations first General Manager. Simone recently moved to Groote Eylandt to start the position and comes into the role with enthusiasm and previous experience working in primary health clinics and for health organisations in urban, regional and remote contexts.

Simone is committed to making Groote her long term home and is looking forward to building strong and collaborative partnerships with Anindilyakwa people and stakeholders across the Groote Archipelago. Simone will work with the WHSAC Directors to progress projects and priorities outlined in the LDM Health and Wellbeing Implementation Plan. This will include the WHSAC Directors and NT Health working together to strengthen and improve health outcomes for Anindilyakwa people.

*"We interviewed a number of candidates but wanted someone who was going to commit to living in our community. We're excited to work with Simone over the long-term - sharing knowledge and serving all communities for better health outcomes for Warnumamalya in the Groote Archipelago."*

Jennifer Yantarrnga, Chairperson WHSAC

*"Seeing [the Indigenous peoples of Canada] speaking from their heart, speaking for their land... it was powerful."*

*"Now coming back to Australia I'm always thinking, I'm dreaming about Groote Eylandt and our people"*

Louise Amagula

*"This was a great experience for me to travel to Canada to attend the First Nations Health Conference with people all over the world to talk about health and wellbeing of Indigenous people. It was great to meet with the Haida Gwaii Nation and see so many Indigenous people working together in partnership. As a Director for WHSAC it has helped me to better understand the importance of health and how it will shape the future for my people."*

Marissa Wurramara



WHSAC delegation visiting Old Massett Village





WHSAC delegation at the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide conference



WHSAC delegation meeting with Haida peoples at the Skidegate Health Centre, Haida Gwaii

*"My experience in Canada gave me the opportunity and the idea to go there and study. Seeing so many young people of First Nations going to university inspired me to attend university in Canada. This was my second trip to Canada, my first trip to Canada was when I was in high school and went to Calgary. That trip was great but going to Vancouver for the First Nation Healing our Spirit Worldwide conference was special. Seeing young people talking about the future of the First Nations relies on our health and education. I would love one day to attend an exchange program in Canada."*

**Kaylisha Mamarika**

*"Our Canada trip was a dream of mine. The future of our health relies on the health and education of our people. We need to promote education in health for our kids so young people can get jobs in health so we can have both our traditional medicines and western medicine to help us. The future of our children depends on us and the steps we take now to give them a better future. All children matter, we need to look after them."*

**Jennifer Yantarrnga, Chairperson WHSAC**





# 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.

The Education Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

## Education partnership

In October 2023, representatives from the Kings School in Sydney travelled to Groote Eylandt to meet with Anindilyakwa education leaders and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island Primary College Aboriginal Corporation (GEBIPCAC). From opposite ends of the country, the partnership will see the Kings School and GEBIPCAC work together to support GEBIPCAC in development of Wurriyukwayuwa-Langwa College on Bickerton Island.

The partnership will also raise the profile and awareness of GEBIPCAC developing a bilingual education program, and opens opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges, access to funding pathways, development opportunities for staff, and access to experienced career counsellors for Anindilyakwa students.

*"It's important for us to have support of an experienced school in Sydney that can give us advice as we set up our college. It will be fantastic for our kids to travel to meet with students at the Kings School, and for them to come to visit us. This will help us to develop closer relationships and cross-cultural understanding."*

Ida Mamarika, GEBIPCAC Chair



Tony George, Scotty Wurramarrba and Serena Bara signing the partnership agreement.



## CDU developing curriculum to strengthen Anindilyakwa two-way numeracy

GEBIPCAC's formal agreement with Charles Darwin University (CDU) is continuing as they work together to develop a primary school level maths curriculum in Anindilyakwa. Mathematics education expert Dr Cris Edmonds-Wathen and linguist Dr James Bednall from CDU are currently working with Warnumamalya language and education specialists to design the Anindilyakwa Maths program. Dr Bednall has worked with Warnumamalya communities for many years, on projects about translation, cross-cultural communication and how meaning is expressed in and across languages. Dr Edmonds-Wathen specialises in how mathematical ideas can be expressed in different languages.

Both academics regularly visited Groote Eylandt over the past year to develop the program. The dual aim of the maths program is to use Anindilyakwa to improve student numeracy as well as strengthening their language and cultural competencies.

*"It's so important that children have access to education in their first languages – research clearly shows that children learn mathematics best in languages that they can understand and use well, and that this can also help keep languages strong. It has been wonderful working on the design of the Anindilyakwa Maths program with Warnumamalya language specialists who are very passionate about education. We're excited to continue this work with Assistant Teachers and Classroom Teachers at the schools across the Groote Archipelago this year, to further develop and implement the program!"*

Dr Cris Edmonds-Wathen and Dr James Bednall



GEBIPCAC members designing bi-lingual maths program alongside CDU researchers

GEBIPCAC anticipates the program will begin implementation later this year, with the view for all schools to incorporate the Anindilyakwa Maths program into their teaching.

In addition to the maths program, GEBIPCAC is also focussing on developing literacy resources and working to equip Warnumamalya teaching staff across Groote Eylandt.



## Anindilyakwa language assessment in the works

Last year GEBIPCAC took strides towards establishing its own language assessment through signing an agreement with academic Dr Roslyn Neilson to design the Groote Early Literacy Assessment (GELA) for children in their early years.

This test is being specifically designed for Anindilyakwa speakers, to make sure that young ones are understanding the sounds of the alphabet and are on track to meet early learning milestones. Early in 2024 GEBIPCAC will be trialling the new test on Groote Eylandt and further refining it throughout the year.

## Primary College on Bickerton Island taking shape

2023 also saw the GEBIPCAC board approve what the final plans for Wurriyukwayuwa-Langwa College will look like. Designed by Clarke and Prince Architects in Cairns, the school will feature spaces dedicated to enhancing learning for Anindilyakwa students.

When it first opens the college will have capacity to host 54 Anindilyakwa students, and will be the only school in the Archipelago that offers boarding. Boarding houses will be divided by moiety, so that students will live in homes that align with their family and kinship identity.

GEBIPCAC has ensured that cultural elements will be included in the structure of the college. The college colours, blue and green representing land and sea, will be featured throughout the interior design. In addition, the external walls will display various depictions of totems on the facade of the buildings.

The tender for its construction is to be announced over the coming months with GEBIPCAC aiming to start construction in mid-2024.

## Stay connected

GEBIPCAC post regular updates on:

- Facebook Page: [facebook.com/gebipcac](https://facebook.com/gebipcac)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/gebipcac](https://instagram.com/gebipcac)
- Website: [gebipcac.com.au](https://gebipcac.com.au)

*"As a parent, it is really important for me to know that my son will be in a culturally appropriate place and that he will feel safe and supported in his education."*

Natalie Yantarrnga, Parent



Final 3D plans for  
Wurriyukwayuwa-Langwa  
boarding college on  
Bickerton Island







# 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.

The Law, Justice and Rehabilitation Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

## Milestone for positive justice outcomes on Groote Eylandt

It was a day of celebration on Friday 2 February, as Anindilyakwa leaders and community members came together to launch three significant justice initiatives; the Groote Archipelago Community Justice Group, Community Courts and the Anindilyakwa Healing Centre.

The launch of these three initiatives marks a significant milestone for Anindilyakwa people in the journey towards creating a more culturally appropriate and restorative approach to justice in the Groote Archipelago, which aims to:

- reduce offending and imprisonment rates
- increase the involvement and leadership of Anindilyakwa people in the justice system
- improve local justice responses and services, including access to rehabilitative services.



Matthew McKenzie speaking at the launch with members of the Community Justice Group





Atnas Maeko, ALC Chairman Tony Wurramarrba, the Hon Chansey Paech Minister for Justice and Matthew McKenzie. Image NT News, Zizi Averill

*"I hope... other communities can come and visit and learn from what Anindilyakwa people have been able to establish here; [things] that they can take back to their own communities."*

Colin Philip, Community Justice Group Coordinator



Colin Philip Community Justice Group Coordinator speaking at the launch  
Image NT News, Zizi Averill





Anindilyakwa Healing Centre nearing completion

## Launch of the Anindilyakwa Healing Centre

Anindilyakwa Leaders are committed to ensuring a successful long term future for their people, particularly for their young people, to successfully stand in both worlds. The Anindilyakwa Healing Centre (AHC) has been identified by Anindilyakwa leaders as playing a critical role in achieving this vision.

The AHC will provide an avenue for Anindilyakwa men to receive culturally appropriate, community-based residential rehabilitation services and support while remaining on Anindilyakwa country. This facility will provide the courts and community with an alternative option to a term of imprisonment for eligible Anindilyakwa males, or those identified at risk of offending or reoffending, and is expected to reduce incarceration rates of Anindilyakwa males.

The AHC is set to open its doors by mid-2024. The Groote Archipelago Community Justice Group has played an important role in guiding the establishment of the AHC, and will continue to work closely with Drug and Alcohol Services Australia (DASA) who will set up and initially run the facility. The long term goal is to transition the AHC to full community control.

*"This is the first time we will put this healing centre here in Groote Eylandt, and I am proud of the three communities [on the Groote Archipelago] to share [this together]."*

*It's a good thing to [have] here, because when they are in prison they forget their culture. In prison they're only learning about their life in prison."*

Naomi Warramurra, Community Justice Group member





Community Justice Group members undertaking legal training run by the Aboriginal Justice Unit

## First Anindilyakwa Community Justice Group members appointed to Community Court process

The Groote Archipelago Community Justice Group will be the first Justice Group in the Northern Territory to commence Community Court under recent changes to Northern Territory laws. The first referrals to Community Courts were made in February, with Community Court set to commence on Groote Eylandt in March.

The establishment of a Community Court for the Groote Archipelago means the stories of the victims, communities and offenders can be better heard. That sentencing can consider all the right information and that those who plead guilty can ask the judge for the Community Justice Group to support them, to make sure their story is told in an Aboriginal Experience Report.

Appointed Anindilyakwa leaders will sit alongside the judge to present Aboriginal Experience Reports, and can ask the Judge to consider making decisions that recognise the importance of culture and family, and where possible, to support rehabilitation on country. Community Courts will also give Anindilyakwa leaders much greater autonomy on the location of the court proceedings.

In preparation for the Community Courts, Community Justice Group Members undertook training led by members of the Aboriginal Justice Unit (AJU) in December 2023. The training focussed on how the Community Court will operate and the role of Community Justice Group members appointed to the process.

Community members are looking forward to March, where they will see leaders from their own communities taking an active role in shaping the future of justice on Groote Eylandt.

*"Back in the eighties there was a lot of miscommunication... People were being locked up because no one would listen to them... now people are starting to listen."*

*"[It's been great because] it's something new to learn... and it's good for Anindilyakwa people to oversee the process of what happens to our people."*

*"This has given us another opportunity to build more positive relationships with people across the justice system on Groote Eylandt, with Police, Corrections, with lawyers, and with the Judge... I'm looking forward to getting to know the judge and him really getting to know our people and sharing our culture."*

Matthew McKenzie, Community Justice Group Chair





# 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.

The Local Government Implementation Plan can be accessed [here](#).

## Work is underway to establish the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council

Establishment of the Groote Archipelago Regional Council represents a return to local community control of local government services for Anindilyakwa and other community residents residing in the Groote Archipelago. This includes local service delivery, community representation, local jobs and the ability for Anindilyakwa communities to make decisions about matters affecting their lives.

Mr Michael Malouf has been appointed Constituting Member for the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council on 13 December 2023, following the retirement of Mr Iain Summers. Michael is continuing to work with the Advisory Group comprising Anindilyakwa leaders from Angurugu, Umbakumba, Milyakburra and satellite communities.

The Groote Archipelago Council elections are proposed to be held later this year. Anindilyakwa people will get to decide who represents the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council as a Councillor and this election will occur before the new council is formally established.

Councillors play an important role and can:

- directly influence decisions that affect your community
- represent the interests of residents and ratepayers
- provide leadership and guidance
- attend council meetings
- help communicate between local people and the council
- ensure the council acts honest, efficiently and appropriately.

Soon more information will be shared with Anindilyakwa communities about how to nominate to be a Councillor, what it means to be a Councillor, and how you can vote in the Council elections.

## Stay connected

Groote Archipelago Regional Council now has a website! Visit [groote.nt.gov.au](https://groote.nt.gov.au) for the latest news and more information about the new council.

*"The Anindilyakwa people are pleased to join the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory in their own right, with an independent directly elected local government council. The feeling is that local people should be making the decisions that affect their lives."*

Mr Tony Wurramarrba

Importantly, it will take time for the Groote Archipelago Regional Council to be established and in a position to deliver programs and services for Anindilyakwa communities.

Groote Archipelago Regional Council, East Arnhem Regional Council and NT Government are continuing to work together to ensure continuity of Local Government programs and services to Anindilyakwa communities while the Groote Archipelago Regional Council continues to establish itself.

Groote Archipelago Regional Council is aiming to be fully established and ready to deliver programs and services in 2025.

Community  
consultation

