



Budget Supplementary Estimates 2022-23

Opening Statement – Anindilyakwa Land Council

17th February 2023

The Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) was established in 1991 and carries out the functions specified by the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976*.

The ALC's primary functions are to advocate for the interests of the Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TOs) of the Groote Archipelago, the Anindilyakwa people, and to assist them to manage their traditional lands and seas and carry out commercial activities.

The ALC Board comprises representatives from each of the 14 traditional clan groups within the ALC region and one community representative from each of Angurugu, Umbakumba, and Milyakburra. Currently, the ALC Board comprises 25 members, 12 of whom are women.

The ALC's operations span a broad range of activities, including finance, legal and executive, mining and sustainability, royalty development, land and sea rangers, infrastructure & development, preserving culture, community support, HR and performance, and risk, innovation and technology. The ALC currently employs a total of 154 staff, including 66 Traditional Owners and 8 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

The ALC Board's overarching vision is to protect, maintain and promote Anindilyakwa culture, invest in the present to build a self-sufficient future, and create pathways for youth to stand in both worlds.

The ALC is fulfilling this vision primarily through the delivery of its 15-year Strategic Plan 2012-2027 and the Groote Archipelago Local Decision-Making Agreement, signed between the ALC and the Northern Territory Government in November 2018. This 9-year Agreement identifies short, medium and long term priorities for transition to local control and sets out the timeframes and processes to settle detailed implementation plans for each service transition. These priority areas include housing, economic development, law, justice & rehabilitation, local government, health & wellbeing, and education.

In just 4 short years, the impact of Local Decision Making has been significant in creating real intergenerational change for the Anindilyakwa Traditional Owners.

Some highlights include:

1. **Anindilyakwa Housing Aboriginal Corporation**, a nationally accredited community housing provider which employs 12+ Traditional Owners and manages 350-400 community houses on the Groote Archipelago.





2. **Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island Primary College Aboriginal Corporation**, a highly motivated group of TOs who are overseeing the construction of a new Boarding College on Bickerton Island for primary school aged children and creating a bi-lingual curriculum for all Anindilyakwa children.
3. **Winchelsea Mine**, majority owned by the Traditional Owners and expected to commence mining in 2024 to add additional revenue to the Anindilyakwa Mining Trust (i.e., the 'future fund').
4. **Little Paradise Development**, an unprecedented economic development in terms of its overall scale (over 300ha in size) and impact (a major economic project being pursued by the Traditional Owners on their own lands to secure their economic future) being led by the Anindilyakwa-controlled Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation. This development will underpin the future Groote economy and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the development of new industries and TOs businesses.
5. **Groote Eylandt Township Lease**, which was returned to community control on 1st October 2022 after 14 years with the Commonwealth Office of Township Leasing and now expanded to include four satellite communities.
6. **Groote Archipelago Community Justice Group**, which is increasing Anindilyakwa participation in the justice system and overseeing the construction of an Alternative to Custody facility being built on Groote Eylandt this year to reduce the disproportionately high rates of incarceration amongst Anindilyakwa men.
7. **Warnumamalya Health Services Aboriginal Corporation**, a passionate group of TOs who will advise NT Health and lead key priorities in health and wellbeing, including aged care and disability support, mental health, and substance abuse.

These activities are further supported by an extensive pipeline of local infrastructure projects, which over the next 18 – 24 months is expected to see the delivery of approximately \$100 million in economic infrastructure and \$40 million in community infrastructure on the Groote Archipelago.

The central part of the ALC's mission is to empower Traditional Owners to take control of their lives and lay their own foundations for a future economy beyond the current Groote Eylandt Mining Company (GEMCO) mining operation.

GEMCO has operated a large manganese mining operation on Groote Eylandt since the 1960s, which has returned royalty monies to the Traditional Owners. The ALC Board (in its statutory capacity) receives and allocates these royalty monies for the benefit of all Traditional Owners.

The GEMCO mine is expected to cease operations in 8-10 years' time and this provides a unique opportunity for fundamental change on the Groote Archipelago. Significant work is already underway to prepare the Traditional Owners for life beyond the GEMCO mine. This includes detailed mine closure planning, significant royalty investment in new economic opportunities and TO-led industries (including aquaculture, tourism, renewable power, and timber), and careful and





deliberate planning to grow the Anindilyakwa Mining Trust to a sufficient size in order to generate the necessary income capable of sustaining the current level of community and social programs (including art, ceremony, music, and language) in perpetuity.

The ALC is very fortunate to follow the vision and foresight of a highly capable and motivated Board, who act collectively to serve and improve the lives of all 14 traditional clan groups.

