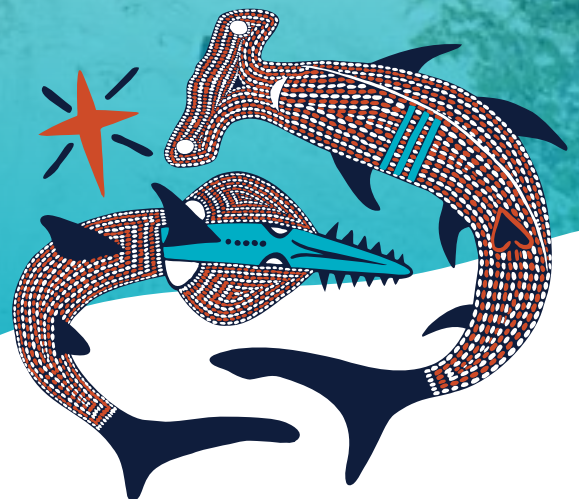


Anindilyakwa  
Land Council

# Stories from Groote

Edition 20  
23 February 2026



# Message from the Chair

To begin this issue, we are excited to announce Kupa Teao has officially commenced in his role as ALC's Chief Executive Officer! Kupa will be engaging with communities and organisations over the coming weeks as he introduces himself to Anindilyakwa communities. We wish Kupa a warm Groote Eylandt welcome.

In this issue, we shine a light on some of the excellent work happening around the Eylandt.

Looking to the past can teach us so much about who we are today. The Songlines project is bringing archaeology and local stories together to retrace our ancestors' footsteps and uncover their stories. Our local Anindilyakwa people are essential to this work, helping archaeologists explore and understand ancient rock art paintings and other artefacts. I look forward to hearing what the team discover!

From the past to the present – I was also excited to hear about the work of the ALC Data Unit, which has completed its first Groote Eylandt Community Census. This important information will help the ALC understand the community's needs and plan for better housing, services and future community priorities.

As always, the ALC Rangers have been hard at work protecting our unique biodiversity. We catch up on their weed management program.

We also have news on the latest Aboriginal Investment NT funding round, which is supporting big ideas to build better communities.

We hope you enjoy this issue. If you have any ideas for stories you'd like to share, get in touch with our team at [corporate.media@alcnt.com.au](mailto:corporate.media@alcnt.com.au)

**Cherelle Wurrawilya, Chair**



# Groote Songlines project brings archaeology to life through local stories

## Protect, maintain and promote Anindilyakwa culture

Over the past two years, archaeology student Stevie Skitmore has been working closely with Anindilyakwa locals to bring Groote Eylandt's songline stories to life.

The Australian National University PhD candidate has been researching the Yinuma songline – a Dreaming story that tells of the creation of the Angurugu River and its cultural connection to the Anindilyakwa land and people.

Together, the research team has been visiting old living places, mostly on the central sandstone plateau, to look for signs of how people used to live and travel across the area. They have also been recording community members' memories of how Elders followed this route and how the songlines became established.

The team investigates sites of cultural significance using a combination of oral histories and archaeological methods, including rock art surveys and targeted excavations. The density of art sites on Groote Eylandt means they can get a direct insight into the stories people used to tell when they lived in the central part of the island.

When a new place is identified, the team carefully examines the paintings and any other artefacts found there. Radiocarbon and luminescence analyses are carried out to help determine the age of the artefacts, providing evidence of when people lived in, or travelled through, these places. So far, the team has recorded around 150 new sites and thousands of rock art paintings.



*Photo courtesy Britten Syd Andrews*

"It's been an honour to hear and record stories about Old People and the ancestors," said Stevie. "Groote is an amazing place with an incredible history, and I hope this project can help families answer some of the questions that they have about *arabwiyi* (a long time ago)."

The Groote Archipelago Songlines Archaeology Project is a joint initiative between the ALC's Preserving Culture department and Australian National University.



*Photo courtesy Tenna Saulo*

# Historic community census to guide Groote's future

## Create pathways for youth to stand in both worlds

This month, the ALC Data Unit was proud to present the results of its first annual Groote Eylandt Community Census to the ALC Board.

Developed in partnership with the Australian National University and supported by the Australian Research Council, this historically significant census will inform future planning by providing a clear picture of Anindilyakwa peoples' needs and aspirations today.

Data Unit Project Lead Sheikh Shahriyar said collecting this baseline data will have long-term benefits for future generations.

"We can now build a database that will provide a longitudinal understanding of the Anindilyakwa community," he said. "This is a significant step toward ensuring the ALC Board has the data for informed decision-making."

The 2025 Community Census provides a reliable evidence base of the current social, demographic and economic landscape of the Groote Archipelago. This information will provide a critical foundation for measuring the effectiveness of ALC programs and informing strategic planning.

ALC Chair Cherelle Wurrawilya said the Community Census also provided opportunities for young Anindilyakwa people to take part in their community.

"The young people who worked on this project are gaining important skills for their future careers, and their knowledge will help benefit the whole community," she said.



### ALC Data Unit on the road

These photos show the Data Unit working across Anindilyakwa communities to gather data for the 2025 Census. The team included 27 local workers, who visited households and spent more than 338 hours gathering information, building valuable data-collection skills along the way.

Information about the Community Census was spread by hosting community barbecues, sharing educational materials, posting a short local-language video on Facebook, and speaking with local radio personality Percy Bishop on Groote Broadcasting.



Photos courtesy ALC Data Unit

# ALC Rangers put biodiversity protection into action!

## Protect, maintain and promote Anindilyakwa culture

Quarantine and biosecurity play a vital role in protecting the Groote Archipelago. But while the islands remain a stronghold for endangered wildlife, invasive weeds pose an increasing threat.

Ecosystem-transforming weed (ETW) grasses are of particular concern. They can intensify fires and alter the structure of native vegetation, placing additional pressure on threatened fauna such as the Northern Hopping Mouse, Brush-tailed Rabbit-rat, Northern Quoll and Masked Owl.

To address this emerging threat, the ALC's Land and Sea Rangers have been taking practical steps to eradicate, control and prevent ETW species.

"Where feasible, the goal is complete eradication," explained Plant Biosecurity Officer Anthony Randall. "In areas where eradication is not possible, we need to reduce infestations to a level that can be managed long-term. We also have monitoring and rapid response measures in place to stop additional transforming weeds from reaching the Groote Archipelago."

Support for this work has been strengthened through the GEMCO Biodiversity Offset Management Plan (BOMP) which funds conservation programs that benefit threatened species impacted by the Eastern Leases Mining Project.



### BOMP team in action

Helping to safeguard the Groote Archipelago's unique biodiversity, these photos show our ALC Rangers and Territory Weed Management contractors out and about in the Groote Archipelago in recent weeks, putting the BOMP plan into action!



*Photos courtesy ALC Land and Sea Rangers*

# Impact and Innovation: Community grants call for big ideas

Invest in the present to build a self-sufficient future

Do you have a project that can benefit the Anindilyakwa community and need financial support to make it happen? Aboriginal Investment NT's Community Impact and Innovation Grants are now open!

The Grant offers between \$300,000 to \$1 million for medium-scale Aboriginal community-led projects that support cultural, social or economic outcomes.

Aboriginal Investment says it is looking for big ideas that deliver impact or innovation.

**Impact:** Does your idea bring about positive and lasting change for Aboriginal people? Does it strengthen community wellbeing, support culture, or address a local need?

**Innovation:** Are you trying things in a new way, listening to your community to design new solutions? Does your idea harness cultural knowledge and practices? Or are you creating new ideas using technology-based solutions?

Nigel Browne, Aboriginal Investment Chief Executive Officer, says that the Community Impact and Innovation Grants are aimed at reaching communities where they can make a big difference.

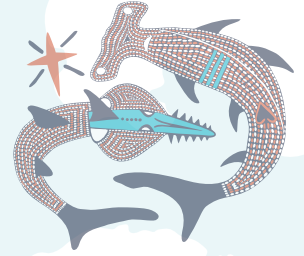
"By listening to our communities, simplifying our processes and extending the application window to three months, we're ensuring we can better support Aboriginal community organisations so they can put forward strong, well-considered proposals and access funding sooner," he said.

**Applications close 30 April 2026.**

To learn more or apply, visit: [www.aboriginalinvestment.org.au/community-impact-and-innovation-grants](http://www.aboriginalinvestment.org.au/community-impact-and-innovation-grants)



ABORIGINAL  
INVESTMENT



# Our values



**One People One Family**  
Ngarrurakawuruma ngarnumamalya



**Pride**  
Ngarriwerrikiyangmakwajinama



**Honesty/Truth**  
Akuwerrikiyangmandukunadinama



**Listen**  
Akeningmidini-yada



**Respect**  
Akumaringkirradinama

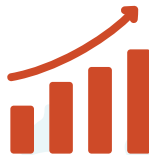


**Our Future**  
Ambakumurra-yada

# The Strategic Plan 2023-33



Protect, maintain  
and promote  
Anindilyakwa culture



Invest in the present  
to build a self-  
sufficient future



Create pathways  
for youth to stand  
in both worlds



**Anindilyakwa**  
Land Council

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