



NORTHERN TERRITORY

BUDGET 2023-24

BUDGET AND REGIONAL
OVERVIEW



BUDGET AND REGIONAL OVERVIEW

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Fiscal outlook

For the first time since the 2016 Budget, the Territory is projecting a fiscal balance surplus within the forward estimates period (from 2026-27) as well as earlier and sustained net operating balance surpluses from 2024-25. The projected fiscal balance surplus in 2026-27, if achieved, will meet government's key objective of returning the budget to balance, two years ahead of the Fiscal Strategy Panel's 2028-29 target.

Upward revisions to GST revenue, totalling \$923 million over the budget cycle to 2025-26 compared with the 2022 Budget, have contributed to the projected return to surplus.

The 2023 Budget includes new policy commitments for core government services as well as reducing cost of living pressures by limiting growth in retail electricity tariffs to below inflation.

The 2023 Budget also incorporates new initiatives aimed at investing for the future including justice reform, and domestic, family and sexual violence (DFS) prevention, and record investment in capital works projects. Updated projections include:

- general government net operating balance deficit of \$200 million in 2023-24, and forecast surpluses in every year over the forward estimates
- estimated non financial public sector fiscal balance deficit of \$1.13 billion in 2023-24, then forecast to

halve each subsequent year before returning to a surplus of \$67 million in 2026-27

- infrastructure investment of \$2.11 billion in 2023-24 with major projects including remote housing and upgrades to the Territory's road network
- estimated net debt in the non financial public sector of \$9.23 billion in 2023-24, expected to peak at \$9.98 billion in 2025-26, and then forecast to decline to \$9.86 billion in 2026-27
- an estimated net debt to revenue ratio of 113% in 2023-24, expected to peak at 122% in 2025-26, and then forecast to decline to 118% in 2026-27.

Key fiscal indicators

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Revised	Budget	Forward estimate		
	\$M	\$M	\$M	\$M	\$M
General government sector					
Net operating balance	205	- 200	121	209	282
Non financial public sector					
Fiscal balance	- 498	- 1 134	- 574	- 181	67
Net debt	8 291	9 231	9 849	9 984	9 861
Net debt to revenue (%)	100	113	118	122	118

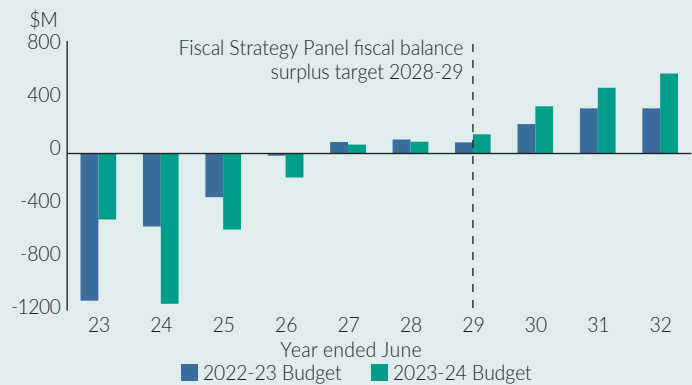
Medium-term fiscal outlook

The Territory's medium-term fiscal outlook is for a projected fiscal balance surplus from 2026-27, two years ahead of the Fiscal Strategy Panel's 2028-29 target.

The chart compares the 2023 Budget projections for the non financial public sector fiscal balance with those reported in the 2022 Budget.

The chart shows estimated fiscal balance deficits are higher over 2023-24 to 2025-26, as a result of new recurrent and capital policy commitments, and revised timing of expenditure from 2022-23. Over the three years to 2028-29, fiscal balance projections remain broadly consistent, before significantly improving from 2029-30.

The projected improvement to the fiscal balance in the medium term is largely attributable to improved Territory GST revenue forecasts as a result of stronger anticipated growth in the national GST pool and a higher GST relativity for the Territory.



Note: There is a high degree of uncertainty associated with 10-year projections.

Revenue

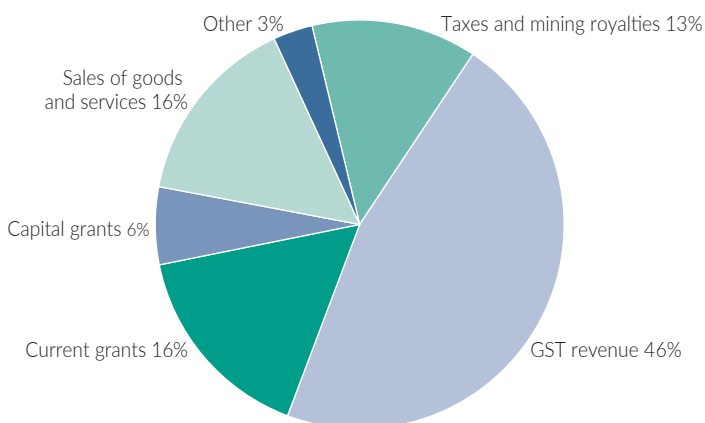
Territory revenue is expected to be \$8.2 billion for the non financial public sector in 2023-24. This is around \$130 million less than estimated for 2022-23, mostly due to an anticipated balancing adjustment for overpaid GST revenue in 2022-23 that will be recovered by the Commonwealth in 2023-24. Over the forward estimates, total revenue is projected to remain largely stable, averaging \$8.29 billion per annum.

GST remains the key source of revenue for the Territory and represents around 46% of total revenue in 2023-24, and about 49% of total revenue over the budget cycle. GST revenue is expected to grow strongly over the budget cycle, with the Territory forecasting growth of 9.6% in the GST pool in 2022-23, and an average of 3.9% per annum thereafter. Also contributing to the anticipated growth in the Territory's share of GST revenue is an increase in the Territory's GST relativity from 4.86988 in 2022-23 to 4.98725 in 2023-24.

Taxes and mining royalties are the Territory's primary sources of income that government can directly influence, and represent 13% of total revenue in 2023-24 and about 12% of total revenue over the budget cycle. Taxes comprise payroll tax, stamp duty on conveyances, taxes on gambling, taxes on insurance, and motor vehicle fees and taxes.

Tax and mining collections are expected to remain strong over the budget cycle, averaging \$1.02 billion per annum.

Components of Territory revenue 2023-24



Expenses

In 2023-24, recurrent expenses for the non financial public sector are estimated to peak at \$8.31 billion, before reducing over the forward estimates in line with a number of Commonwealth funding agreements concluding and finalisation of a number of time-limited Territory-funded initiatives.

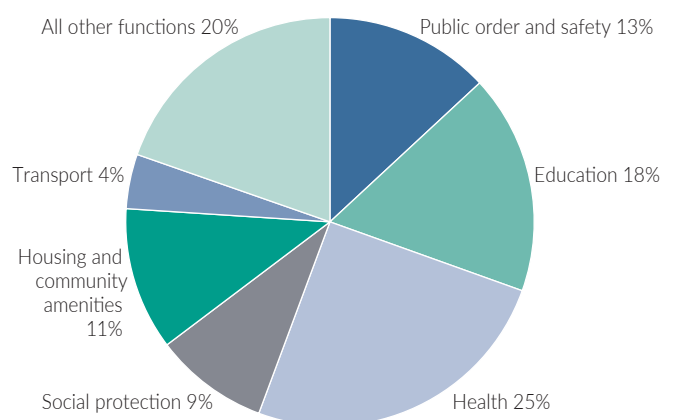
Recurrent expenses in 2023-24 are expected to be about \$200 million higher than in 2022-23, largely reflecting new government policy decisions, changes in government owned corporation expense assumptions and expenditure associated with delivering new tied Commonwealth funding agreements.

The key functions of health, education, and public order and safety comprise around 56% of the total recurrent expenditure budget in the general government sector in 2023-24.

The 2023 Budget includes record expenditure in environmental protection, education, social protection and transport as well as economic affairs and general public services.

In 2023-24, total infrastructure payments are forecast to be \$2.11 billion, an increase of around \$318 million compared with 2022-23, mainly due to accelerated delivery of Commonwealth-funded housing programs and additional Commonwealth investment in homelands.

Total expenses by function 2023-24



Economic outlook

The Territory economy has performed strongly over the past three years and is expected to be supported by public investment over the forward estimates, with further growth expected from higher liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports once the Barossa gas field commences production.

Economic growth

In 2021-22, Territory gross state product (GSP) increased by 4.7% and state final demand (SFD) increased by 7.7%. Growth was driven by a 26% increase in private investment, primarily associated with the Barossa gas project.

GSP is estimated to decrease by 5.1% in 2022-23, mostly as a result of lower export volumes due to maintenance activity at the Ichthys LNG plant in the second half of 2022 and declining production at Darwin LNG as the Bayu-Undan gas field nears depletion.

Exports are expected to increase gradually in 2023-24, before ramping up in 2025-26 once the Barossa gas field moves into production.

SFD is expected to increase by 2.5% in 2022-23, reflecting strong growth in public investment. Forecasts for the level of public investment have been revised up across the forward estimates as a result of increased expenditure on housing projects, road infrastructure and defence facility upgrades.

SFD is expected to moderate in 2024-25 and 2025-26 as private investment declines once the construction phase of the Barossa project concludes.

Over the five years to 2026-27, annual GSP and SFD growth are expected to average 0.9% and 1%, respectively. The growth outlook is heavily influenced by the timing of activity associated with the Barossa project. As of March 2023, 56% of construction work on the project had been completed.

Territory key economic indicators (%)

	2021-22a	2022-23e	2023-24f	2024-25f	2025-26f	2026-27f
Gross state product ¹	4.7	- 5.1	2.7	2.1	4.5	0.6
State final demand ¹	7.7	2.5	2.3	- 0.5	- 0.7	1.4
Population ²	0.6	0.4	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Employment ¹	1.8	4.1	2.2	0.0	0.3	1.1
Unemployment rate ³	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.1
Consumer price index ¹	6.0	6.4	3.5	2.5	2.3	2.4
Wage price index ¹	2.1	3.0	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.1

a: actual; e: estimate; f: forecast

¹ Year-on-year percentage change.

² June quarter compared with June quarter the previous year.

³ Year average.

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance; ABS

Employment

In March 2023, employment in the Territory reached a record high of 142,100. There are now more people working in the Territory than at the height of the Ichthys LNG project construction. In 2022-23, year-on-year employment growth is expected to reach 4.1% and the unemployment rate to average 3.9% over the year.

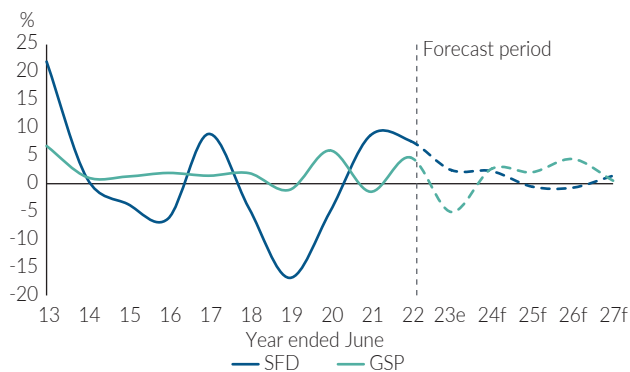
Growth in employment has been broad-based across industries, with recent strength coming from industries benefiting from the removal of public

health restrictions, such as accommodation and food services, and education and training.

While more Territorians are in work than ever, there is still strong demand for additional labour with job vacancies remaining around twice their pre-COVID-19 level. The Territory Government is pursuing a number of initiatives to attract workers to the Territory including the Flexible Workforce Solutions Fund, the Global Workforce Attraction campaign, and the Work, Stay Play 2.0 program.

There is a significant portfolio of private sector projects not included in the current economic forecasts, for example, the Australia-Asia Power Link project, Beetaloo Basin onshore gas projects, and various mineral projects. There are also potential public sector and defence projects, such as projects arising from the Commonwealth’s recently released Strategic Defence Review, which are not yet factored into the forecasts. These projects and investment opportunities represent potential upside for the Territory’s economic development and would contribute to stronger economic growth and employment outcomes and further support the Territory Government’s target of a \$40 billion economy by 2030.

Territory gross state product and state final demand¹



e: estimate; f: forecast; GSP: gross state product; SFD: state final demand
 1 Year-on-year percentage change.
 Source: ABS, *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts*, Cat. No. 5220.0; Department of Treasury and Finance

Prices

Inflation in Darwin peaked at a 32-year high of 7.1% in the December quarter 2022, but is expected to fall to 3.8% by the end of 2023 and 2.6% by mid 2024.

Price increases in 2022 were largely due to a combination of national and global events, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict causing the price of oil to increase, and several periods of flooding along the east coast that disrupted supply chains nationally. However these pressures have been easing.

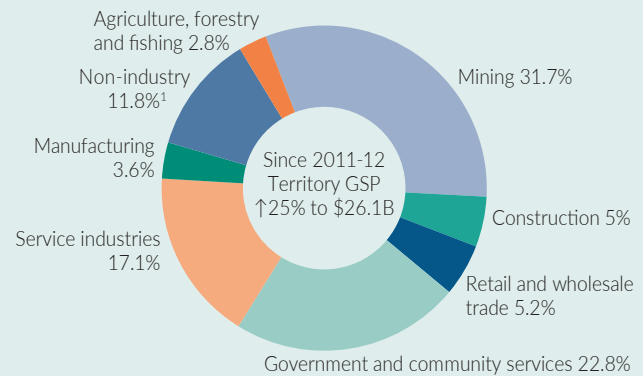
Inflation in Darwin is expected to fall faster than nationally as:

- residential property rents are not expected to increase as much in Darwin as elsewhere
- the Territory Government has capped utility price increases at 2.7% for 2023-24.

Size of the Territory economy

Since 2011-12, GSP has grown by 25% to \$26.1 billion. Over the same period, population has increased by 3.7% to 250,702.

Industry contributions to GSP, 2021-22



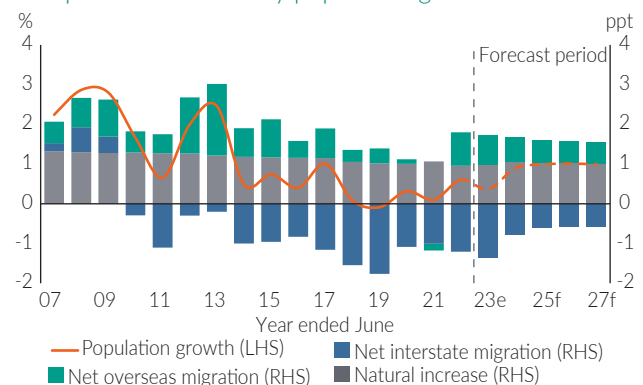
1 Non-industry components of GSP are ownership of dwellings, taxes less subsidies and statistical discrepancy.
 Note: Components may not add due to rounding.
 Source: ABS, *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts*, Cat. No. 5220.0; Department of Treasury and Finance

Population

Population is estimated to increase by 0.4% in 2022-23. Contributions from net overseas migration following the re-opening of international borders are expected to be offset by higher interstate migration outflows. Population growth is expected to return to its long-run average of around 1% over the outlook period as interstate migration outflows stabilise.

This is a significant improvement over the previous five years, when annual growth averaged only 0.2% as workers and their dependants left the Territory following the conclusion of the Ichthys LNG project construction phase.

Components of Territory population growth



e: estimate; f: forecast; LHS: left-hand side; ppt: percentage point; RHS: right-hand side
 Source: ABS, *National, state and territory population*, Cat. No. 3101.0; Department of Treasury and Finance

Infrastructure investment

The 2023-24 infrastructure program, at \$4.07 billion, represents a record level of planned government investment in the Territory, with a focus on improving core government service delivery and realising the Territory's economic potential.

Transport investment continues to comprise more than half the total infrastructure program, reflecting significant funding from both the Territory and Commonwealth governments, followed by housing and community amenities investment at over 20%. Of the total infrastructure program, around 60% continues to be allocated to new and upgraded infrastructure in remote and regional communities.

Capital works by COFOG-A category 2023-24¹

Category	Capital works	
	\$M	%
Transport	2 237.4	55.0
Housing and community amenities	842.6	20.7
Economic affairs	229.7	5.6
Health	228.9	5.6
Recreation, culture and religion	227.8	5.6
Public order and safety	150.9	3.7
Environmental protection	64.5	1.6
Education	45.7	1.1
Social protection	37.3	0.9
General public services	8.3	0.2
Total general government	4 073.1	100.0

¹ COFOG-A: Classification of the Functions of Government – Australia
Note: Totals are rounded.

New projects commencing in 2023-24 include investment in transport infrastructure to support tourism and industry and improve access to remote and regional communities, headworks and subdivision works to support land release, and construction and upgrade of community infrastructure.

Transport infrastructure

The 2023-24 program commits over \$2.2 billion for roads, aerodromes, jetties and barge landings. Investment is mostly being progressed through the National Partnership Agreement on Land Transport Infrastructure Projects, which is funded through co-contributions from the Territory and Commonwealth governments, including:

- gas industry roads to support economic development (\$214.8 million)
- Tanami Road (\$178.1 million)
- Central Arnhem Road (\$165.6 million)
- Buntine Highway (\$114 million)
- Carpentaria Highway (\$90.4 million)
- Tiwi Islands roads (\$69.3 million)
- Kakadu National Park roads (\$67.3 million)
- Port Keats Road (\$60.2 million)
- Outback Way (\$42 million)
- Arnhem Highway (\$10.7 million).

Infrastructure payments (cash)

In 2022-23, total infrastructure payments are forecast to be \$1.79 billion, an increase of around \$100 million compared to the 2022 Budget. This is mainly due to accelerated delivery of Commonwealth-funded housing programs and additional Commonwealth investment in homelands.

In 2023-24, total infrastructure payments are expected to be \$2.11 billion, a record level of infrastructure expenditure, comprising \$1.62 billion in general government and \$495 million in public non financial corporations investment.

	2023-24 Budget	
	Program	Cash
	\$M	\$M
General government		
Capital works	4 073	1 250
Capital grants ¹		126
Repairs and maintenance ¹		227
Infrastructure-related expenses		14
Total general government		1 617
Government owned corporations		495
Total infrastructure payments		2 111

¹ Excludes payments between Territory-controlled entities.
Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Works continue on the new overpass at the Tiger Brennan Drive and Berrimah Road intersection (\$108.2 million), and the 2023 Budget also includes upgrades at Phelp River Crossing and new waterway structures along Numbulwar Road (\$20 million).

Economic infrastructure

The 2023-24 infrastructure program includes around \$230 million for economic infrastructure, including:

- upgrades to infrastructure in Kakadu National Park to support Jabiru to transition from a mining town to a tourism and regional services hub (\$67.9 million)
- new and continuing mixed-use headworks and subdivision works in Alice Springs, Berrimah North, Kalkaringi and Tennant Creek (\$48.8 million)
- detailed design and preliminary works for the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct (\$13 million)
- headworks to support the development of renewable energy hubs in Weddell (\$11 million)
- capital grants, including the Business Security Assistance grant program and grants provided for tourism industry development (\$6.3 million).

Social infrastructure

Other key infrastructure investments in the 2023 Budget include:

- constructing the Northern Territory Art Gallery in the Darwin central business district (CBD) including galleries, community spaces and landscaped gardens (\$88.3 million)
- finalising construction and redevelopment of contemporary youth justice centres in Darwin and Alice Springs (\$61.6 million)
- continuing expansion and upgrade of the mental health inpatient unit at Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH), including a stabilisation assessment and referral area (\$46.1 million)
- upgrades to central sterilisation service departments at Territory hospitals (\$37.3 million)
- constructing a new modular multipurpose facility at RDH (\$25 million)
- continuing to construct the new ambulatory care centre at Alice Springs Hospital (\$24.7 million)

- upgrades to the forensic mortuary, pathology and bereavement facility at RDH (\$23.7 million)
- constructing a new health centre and morgue at Gunbalanya (\$20 million)
- constructing a new multipurpose police complex in Peppimenarti (\$19 million)
- major refurbishment of remote service delivery hubs (\$11.3 million)
- creating a new science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) centre at Katherine High School (\$9.7 million).

Housing

The 2023 Budget provides \$842.6 million to construct new and refurbish existing housing in remote and urban areas, and progress the CBD redevelopment works and residential land release across the Territory. This includes \$601 million for remote Aboriginal housing, including:

- Remote Housing Investment Package works through HomeBuild NT, Room to Breathe and government employee housing (\$296.1 million)
- land servicing to support the Remote Housing Investment Package (\$291.4 million)
- ongoing works to build new and improve existing housing through national partnership agreements for remote housing, funded by the Commonwealth (\$8.5 million).

A further \$19.7 million is provided for flexible accommodation infrastructure in Tennant Creek and Darwin, and \$14 million is provided to redevelop the Shiers Street complex in Darwin.

The 2023 Budget includes \$8.6 million to construct and upgrade housing for teachers in regional and remote communities and \$8 million to construct new and upgrade existing urban public housing across the Territory.

The 2023 Budget also continues investment in residential headworks and land release across the Territory, including development in Holtze, Katherine East Neighbourhood Centre, Kilgariff and Tennant Creek (\$104.6 million).

Tourism

Tourism is an important economic driver for the Territory and a significant industry in regional areas. The sector is worth \$655 million per annum to the Territory economy and directly employs 6,800 people.

The 2023 Budget supports the Territory's tourism industry through investment in marketing, festivals and events, arts and culture, and our world-class parks and reserves, promoting the Territory as a desirable travel destination, inspiring more people to visit, stay longer and spend more.

Promoting tourism in the Territory

The 2023 Budget delivers an additional \$35.5 million over 2023-24 and 2024-25 to continue to build tourism and promote the Territory as an exciting place to live, work and visit, including:

- \$28.6 million for domestic and international tourism marketing, including continuing international marketing by Study NT and NT Business Events, with a focus on converting intent into bookings, and promoting Territory experiences and events. This includes a \$3 million boost to international marketing in 2023-24 to maximise opportunities from Tourism Australia's new global campaigns and support airline and trade partners to bring international visitors to the Territory
- \$3.8 million to grow the capability of the Aboriginal tourism sector, including skills development and mentoring and business support
- \$2.1 million for enhanced industry development activities, business support with digital marketing and sales, and continuing support for the business events sector with the NT Business Events Support Fund



Sports and events

The 2023 Budget allocates \$24 million in 2023-24 to continue to support events and festivals across the Territory, including:

- BASSINTHEGRASS
- Parrtjima – A Festival in Light
- National Rugby League and Australian Football League matches and marketing
- Million Dollar Fish competition
- Supercars, Finke Desert Race, Red CentreNATS and Darwin Festival.

- \$1 million for regional tourism association grants for visitor services across the Territory.

The 2023 Budget also includes \$2.2 million to continue tailored tourism business support programs.

Strengthening the tourism workforce

Budget 2023 includes \$1.05 million in 2023-24 to continue support for businesses to alleviate workforce shortages in our tourism and hospitality sectors, and strengthen the workforce through:

- the Global Worker Attraction campaign to encourage skilled workers from interstate and overseas to live and work in the Territory
- boosting the Territory's skilled migration capacity
- continuing the Worker Connect Platform, a multipurpose online platform to support overseas skilled workers to connect with private and public sector employers across the Territory.

Arts and culture

The 2023 Budget includes additional support to showcase the Territory's rich culture and history and generate tourism, including:

- \$7 million over two years to develop content and exhibitions at the Northern Territory Art Gallery, expected to open in 2025
- \$3.5 million over two years to continue preparations for the National Aboriginal Art Gallery, expected to open in 2027.

Growing the economy

The Territory Government is committed to growing the Territory's economy to \$40 billion by 2030. The 2023 Budget includes a range of initiatives to drive investment, create jobs and enhance productivity to support the Territory's economic goals.

Growth infrastructure

The 2023 Budget invests in critical infrastructure to support economic growth, including:

- \$515 million for the Darwin ship lift facility that will help diversify the economy and provide growth opportunities at the adjacent Marine Industry Park
- \$215 million for gas industry road upgrades to encourage investment and industry development
- \$3.95 million, in addition to the \$324.1 million already committed by the Territory and Commonwealth governments, for the Adelaide River off-stream water storage project (AROWS) to secure water supply and enable significant economic growth.

In addition, there is significant defence infrastructure spending across the Territory, with potential for further investment following the recently released Defence Strategic Review, which identified improving capability to operate from Australia's northern bases, ports and barracks as a priority.

Attracting and assisting investment

The Territory Government continues to ensure investment conditions in the Territory are attractive. The 2023 Budget is facilitating future economic growth by providing:

- \$24.1 million to support Investment Territory to facilitate major projects and private sector investment
- \$13 million over four years for land acquisition to enable strategic infrastructure for major projects
- \$4.6 million over three years to accelerate development of the hydrogen industry
- \$2 million ongoing to ensure adequate and timely regulation and growth of the onshore petroleum industry
- \$1.9 million ongoing to enable timely delivery of robust and efficient environmental approvals
- \$1.2 million to support private sector project development through the facilitated investment projects pipeline.

In addition, the Local Jobs Fund continues to provide Territory businesses with access to capital to help them expand and create opportunities to generate local jobs. The Territory Government also continues to work with the Commonwealth to secure funding for economic enabling infrastructure.

Mineral development

The Territory Government is committed to being an attractive and competitive destination for new investment in mining and downstream value-add projects. The 2023 Budget demonstrates this commitment through:

- \$9.5 million ongoing for the Resourcing the Territory exploration program, which will help drive exploration activity and underpin private sector exploration success
- \$7.3 million over three years to modernise the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority business systems, to facilitate expedient release of land for mineral leases, as recommended in the Mineral Development Taskforce final report

- \$6 million to implement the Mineral Development Taskforce recommendations, making the Territory more attractive and competitive as a reliable destination for mining investment:
 - the recommendations relate to land access, regulatory reform, mineral royalties, downstream value-add opportunities and other areas intended to drive sustainable development of the resources sector
 - funding will also support the development of a detailed design paper for a potential new ad valorem royalty scheme, including an analysis of any benefits, costs, associated risks and key design features.

Cost of living

The 2023 Budget provides more than \$200 million to support Territorians, families and Territory businesses to manage cost of living pressures through a range of concessions, subsidies and incentives.

Utilities

The Territory Government continues to provide substantial cost of living relief to households and small businesses by subsidising the cost of electricity, water and sewerage services for households and small businesses across the Territory.

The Territory increased residential, small and medium business electricity, water and sewerage tariffs by 2.7% in 2022-23 and will increase them by the same level in 2023-24, in both years far below the level of inflation and the increased costs of supply. Residential electricity tariffs in other jurisdictions have increased on average by 15.9% in the year to April 2023 and further increases of between 20% to 30% in 2023-24 are forecast for Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, and southeast Queensland.

Over 2022-23 and 2023-24, the Territory Government's decision to adopt below-CPI tariff increases is expected to save households between \$184 and \$350 on electricity bills and a typical small business customer about \$864. Households will also save about \$168 on an average water and sewerage bill.

Sustainability incentives

The Territory Government continues to provide cost of living support for sustainability incentives including:

- up to \$1,500 in electric vehicle (EV) stamp duty concessions on the registration of new and secondhand battery EVs and plug-in hybrid EVs. The concession effectively removes stamp duty on purchase costs of up to \$50,000. The same vehicles are also exempt from the registration component of Territory vehicle registration fees
- the Home and Business Battery Scheme, which allows homeowners and businesses to save up to \$5,000 on the purchase and installation of rooftop solar batteries and inverters to reduce electricity costs.

The 2023 Budget provides an additional \$71.7 million across 2022-23 and 2023-24 in community service obligation funding to Power and Water Corporation and electricity retailers to subsidise utility costs.

In 2023-24, a total of \$161.3 million in community service obligation payments is allocated to Power and Water Corporation and electricity retailers to subsidise utility costs, including:

- \$138.5 million to maintain electricity supply to households and small business customers at uniform prices across the Territory below cost of supply
- \$7.6 million to subsidise water and sewerage services to customers at uniform tariffs
- \$15.2 million to Power and Water Corporation and electricity retailers for various pensioner and carer concessions under the Northern Territory Concession Scheme.

The 2023 Budget also provides \$3.5 million for small businesses and \$7.2 million for eligible households to support the National Energy Bill Relief Program, which will provide targeted and temporary relief on power bills for households receiving income support, pensioners, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders, and Family Tax Benefit A and B recipients.

Supporting seniors, carers and concession holders

In 2023-24, the Territory Government will provide \$40.6 million to recognise the important contribution of Territory seniors, and to support carers and concession holders through the Northern Territory Concession and Northern Territory Seniors Recognition schemes, which deliver concessions on a range of essential goods and services to help reduce the cost of living. This also includes the National Energy Bill Relief Program for eligible Territory households.

The \$7.5 million Seniors Recognition Scheme provides an annual \$500 prepaid card for Territory residents aged over 65 and recognises the valuable contribution that senior Territorians make to our community. The card can be used on a variety of items and is valid at almost any business.

Reducing the cost of living for families

The 2023 Budget continues to provide cost of living support to Territory families through:

- \$6.1 million for the Sport Voucher Scheme, available to children enrolled in school from transition to year 12 for sports, recreation, cultural and music programs, and the Learn to Swim program for children aged 0-5 to participate in water safety programs. The scheme provides two \$100 vouchers each year to assist Territory families to reduce participation costs for their children
- \$6.9 million for the Back to School payment scheme, which provides a \$150 annual entitlement for all enrolled Territory students from preschool to year 12, including those enrolled in government and non-government schools, and registered home-educated students, to help offset the cost of educational items. Payments can be used for school uniforms, including hats and book bags, textbooks,

stationery, school camps and excursions, student ID cards, and elective activities

- \$5.5 million for the Early Childhood Services subsidy paid directly to operators of child care providers to reduce the cost of child care for families and encourage parents and carers to participate in the workforce or study. The subsidy has two rates: \$30 per equivalent full-time place per week for children aged under two years of age, or \$22 per equivalent full-time place per week for children two to five years of age. The subsidy applies to long day care, family day care and three-year old kindergarten.

The 2023 Budget also provides \$0.15 million to support long day care providers and three-year old kindergarten services through the toy and equipment grant program to assist in the purchase of appropriate toys and play-based equipment.

The Concession Scheme assists more than 15,000 eligible Territorians by providing access to up to \$3,492 in concessions to subsidise utility costs, council rates and garbage, vehicle registration and spectacles costs.

Other assistance and incentives

The Territory Government continues to provide targeted home owner assistance to support new homeowners to enter the housing market through:

- the House and Land Package Exemption, providing a stamp duty exemption for eligible home buyers who acquire a house and land package on newly developed land
- the \$10,000 first home owner grant to buy or build a new home
- HomeBuild access loans to support home ownership through access to low deposit home loan options.

The Territory Government also continues to provide up to \$1,000 for the workwear and gear bonus to support first-year apprentices and trainees buying workwear and equipment.



Health, education and social investment

The 2023 Budget invests in the wellbeing of all Territorians through investment in health, education, housing and support for the most vulnerable.

Investing in health services

The 2023 Budget commits \$2 billion to health services across the Territory to ensure Territorians are able to access care and treatment if and when they need it, including:

- \$100 million additional over three years to support hospitals and health services
- \$37.3 million to upgrade the central sterilisation service departments at the Alice Springs, Katherine, Gove and Royal Darwin hospitals
- \$30 million for works at Alice Springs Hospital including constructing the new ambulatory care centre and a hybrid operating theatre
- \$26.5 million for regional and remote hospitals and health clinics including fire remediation works at Gove District Hospital, a new mobile oral health dental unit for Central Australia and construction of staff accommodation at Tennant Creek Hospital
- \$25 million for a 32-bed modular multipurpose ward at RDH to enable rapid deployment of additional beds
- \$23.7 million to upgrade the forensic mortuary, pathology and bereavement facility at RDH

- \$20 million for a new health centre and morgue facility in Gunbalanya
- \$9 million to replace ageing medical equipment over three years to improve patient outcomes, including CT scanners, single-photo emission computer tomography (SPECT) scanners, diagnostic ultrasound equipment, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) equipment, and theatre lights and acute patient monitors
- \$1 million to undertake planning for future health service capacity and develop a plan for future use of Territory hospitals and other major health facilities to deliver contemporary health care for Territorians.



Supporting vulnerable Territorians

The 2023 Budget invests in social infrastructure across the Territory to ensure vulnerable Territorians are supported, including:

- \$31 million additional support for out of home care including for young people with high needs
- \$14 million as part of the redevelopment of the old Shiers Street public housing complex
- \$11.3 million for upgraded and new remote service delivery hubs to improve the coordination and delivery of government services in remote areas across the Territory
- \$10.5 million to construct a new purpose-built youth hub facility at the former Casuarina fire station site and a new men's shed in Darwin. Funding includes remediation work at the site prior to constructing the new youth hub
- \$9.7 million to progress delivery of the Tennant Creek Visitor Park project as part of the Barkly Regional Deal to provide safe, secure and alcohol-free accommodation for visitors to Tennant Creek from remote communities and outstations.

Education and training

The Territory government is continuing to support the future of Territorians through a record \$1.37 billion investment in education across the Territory, including:

- \$557 million to resource government schools
- \$35 million to continue to improve Aboriginal student outcomes through the delivery of programs under the Indigenous Education Strategy, such as Families as First Teachers, student engagement programs, secondary years and post-school pathways, and remote Aboriginal teacher education
- \$4.8 million to implement preschool reform to facilitate children's early learning and development, and transition to school by maintaining universal access to affordable, quality preschool programs for all children and improving participation in preschool programs
- \$4 million to introduce new and improved digital connectivity technologies for Territory schools, with a strong focus on remote and regional schools
- \$1.2 million to deliver Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) to grow the Territory workforce. The program will support 350 more secondary school students to enrol in 23 additional courses.

The 2023 Budget also invests in new and upgraded education facilities across the Territory, including:

- \$9.7 million to create a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) centre and general learning areas at Katherine High School. The STEAM centre will provide an innovative and engaging learning environment to prepare students for jobs of the future
- \$9.6 million for new preschool facilities at Parap Primary School
- \$4.4 million for upgrades at Yuendumu school including new play equipment, outdoor eating area and amphitheatre
- \$2.8 million to upgrade homeland learning centres.

Regional and remote development

The 2023 Budget invests in priority initiatives to support Aboriginal people across the Territory to improve liveability and have their voices heard, including:

- \$9 million over three years for the Community Places for People grant program for regional and shire councils
- \$4.1 million over four years to support the continued delivery of the Treaty process including establishing First Nations Forums and truth-telling, and working in conjunction with stakeholders to develop local, regional and Territory voices to parliament
- \$3 million over three years to progress priorities within the Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement
- \$1.5 million over three years to support key projects in the Blue Mud Bay homelands through the Djalkiripuyngu Local Decision Making Agreement
- \$3 million over three years to support implementation of the *Burial and Cremation Act 2022*, including a grant program for regional and remote burial areas.



A safer Territory

The 2023 Budget invests \$1.1 billion in public order and safety, and a record \$721 million in social protection to deliver a range of initiatives to build safer, fairer and more resilient communities.

Preventing domestic, family and sexual violence

The Territory Government continues its commitment to generational change and safer communities for women and children by investing an additional \$20 million over two years from 2023-24 to reduce DFSV across the Territory.

Additional funding, for the second phase of the DFSV Reduction Framework Action Plan 2, supports initiatives aimed at preventing DFSV, including reforms in health, justice and policing, and behavioural change support for people who use violence, as well as initiatives to reduce the impacts of violence on victim survivors, including children.

The reforms build on government's existing investment of around \$71 million since 2017-18 for various strategies and initiatives, including the DFSV Action Plan 1 and Action Plan 2 (phase 1).



Investing in frontline public safety resources and infrastructure

The Territory Government supports frontline staff by providing more resources and better facilities. The 2023 Budget provides a record \$526 million for Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES). Additional funding includes:

- \$19 million in 2023-24 to construct a police complex in Peppimenarti
- \$8.1 million, in addition to \$3.4 million already committed under the Barkly Regional Deal, to construct a new police watch house in Tennant Creek
- \$5 million in 2023-24, in addition to \$8.7 million already committed, for repairs and maintenance to improve NTPFES facilities across the Territory
- \$5 million ongoing from 2023-24 to recruit additional firefighters and implement a relief roster
- \$4.6 million over two years from 2023-24 and \$4.7 million ongoing from 2025-26 to support a modern Police Air Wing service with four aircraft
- \$3 million ongoing from 2023-24 to support the wellbeing of NTPFES workers and their families
- \$2.3 million to convert the old Palmerston Fire Station into a training centre.

The Territory Government has also committed to purchase two new 35-metre firefighting appliances for the Darwin and Alice Springs emergency response areas, at an estimated cost of \$4.2 million.

The 2023 Budget also includes significant investment to address antisocial behaviour including:

- \$7.7 million to coordinate and deliver services around Darwin and Palmerston, including private security patrols, additional transit safety officers and security personnel on selected bus routes
- \$4.8 million over three years to support the Office of the Central Australian Regional Controller (OCARC) as part of a Commonwealth and Territory effort to address crime and antisocial behaviour in Alice Springs. OCARC will play a key role in the management of the Commonwealth's \$298 million commitment to Central Australia to improve community safety, tackle alcohol-related harm, and provide more opportunities for young people.

Resourcing correctional services

The 2023 Budget continues to ensure the Territory's correctional facilities are equipped to deliver safe, secure and humane custodial services, including:

- \$95 million over four years to strengthen the corrections budget
- \$17 million in 2022-23 for rapid modular cell accommodation at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre and to design new modular accommodation expansion options for Darwin Correctional Centre
- \$4 million in 2023-24 to install new separation fencing at the Darwin Correctional Centre to improve the security and safety of prisoners and staff, while further work is being undertaken to expand corrections capacity.

Reducing prisoner remand numbers

The 2023 Budget continues to support measures to reduce the remand prisoner population, including funding of \$13.9 million over four years from 2022-23 to continue supported bail accommodation trials in Darwin and Alice Springs. The trials provide safe and secure accommodation services for people who experience issues with housing or homelessness, as an alternative to being remanded in custody. The funding also includes additional probation and parole officers in courts to improve bail assessment processing times.

The Territory Government is also providing an additional \$12.3 million over four years to meet increased demand for justice services and place downward pressure on remand prisoner numbers, including:

- \$5 million for the Director of Public Prosecutions
- \$3.8 million for the NT Legal Aid Commission
- \$2 million for an additional local court judge and support staff
- \$1.5 million to support the Parole Board.

Youth detention

The Territory Government is funding a new model of care for youth detention, supporting young people to receive the specialised care they need to build confidence and capability to make safe, responsible decisions that reduce the likelihood of reoffending and lead to successful adult lives.

Implementing the Aboriginal Justice Agreement

The Territory Government is committed to improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians through the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. The agreement is founded on research, evidence, and the views and experiences of Aboriginal Territorians. Over seven years, it aims to:

- reduce offending and imprisonment of Aboriginal Territorians
- engage and support Aboriginal leadership
- improve justice responses and services to Aboriginal Territorians.

The 2023 Budget continues the existing funding commitment of \$13 million over four years to support the implementation of the agreement, and provides an additional \$38.8 million over three years from 2023-24 including:

- \$23.7 million to support mandatory sentencing reforms, including the design and delivery of new programs to break the cycle of offending. This includes additional funding for community corrections and the design, development and rollout of a new general offender program to be informed by Aboriginal cultural knowledge
- \$15.1 million to expand alternative to custody facilities in Alice Springs and Groote Eylandt, and establish community courts and law and justice groups in six communities over two years.

The 2023 Budget provides additional funding of \$24.2 million over three years from 2022-23 and \$10 million ongoing from 2025-26 to implement the new model and support reform, including funding for:

- youth justice officers
- trauma-informed, rehabilitative care for young people in detention
- additional clinical staff and enhanced youth detention programs
- interim arrangements while refurbishments to the Alice Springs Youth Justice Centre are finalised.

Women in the Territory

The Territory government is supporting better outcomes for women and girls through a range of programs funded in the 2023 Budget.

Health and wellbeing

The 2023 Budget supports the health and wellbeing of Territory women through:

- \$45 million for maternity services in Territory hospitals, including 28 beds at Royal Darwin Hospital and 16 in Alice Springs, and 11 same-day beds
- \$5 million for the Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting program to engage and support mothers and their families to get the best possible care and to raise their babies and small children
- \$4 million for the Ramingining and Lake Evella health centres, outreach services and Strong Women Workers Program, to promote good health in women and babies during pregnancy and early parenting
- \$3.1 million for free mammograms with BreastScreenNT for women aged 50 to 74, with services available in urban centres. A mobile service also provides screening to over 1,000 women every year in up to 20 communities across the Territory
- \$1.5 million for travel support and other women's residential rehabilitation treatment services and programs to address drug and alcohol misuse

Domestic, family and sexual violence

The Territory government is committed to ensuring women are safe, respected and free from violence through its 10-year plan to reduce the impact of DFSV in our community. Since 2017, \$71 million has been invested in implementing the plan.

The 2023 Budget includes an additional \$20 million over two years to support implementation of the DFSV Prevention and Response: Action Plan 2, the second phase of the 10-year plan.

- \$1.3 million to support young mothers to obtain ongoing long-term employment or take up flexible learning pathway opportunities and support the Strong Young Dads program
- \$0.9 million for sexual health programs for women, including pregnancy services and contraception support for priority groups and clients in crisis
- \$0.2 million for the cervical cancer screening program.

Education and training

The 2023 Budget invests in education and training for women, including:

- \$24 million for apprenticeships and traineeships to offer Territorians the opportunity to study and earn an income while undertaking a qualification. Of the 3,462 current apprentices, 1,106 are females (32%) across the Territory. Women also receive additional incentives, such as pastoral care, and are targeted for traditional trades such as carpentry, electrical and plumbing
- \$2.4 million for Stars Foundation programs for girls to provide school-based mentoring and wellbeing support across 16 schools to increase attendance and assist female students to complete year 12
- \$2.4 million for the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education program enabling remote residents, particularly women, to pursue a teaching career in schools and early childhood care
- up to 20 NT Higher Education scholarships of \$5,000 to help year 12 graduates to study their first degree. In 2023, 60% of the scholarships went to women
- \$47,400 to fund five Minister for Women's Scholarships for tertiary and vocational education and training through Charles Darwin University.

Working women

The 2023 Budget supports working women through:

- \$5.5 million to subsidise child care operators to reduce the cost of child care for parents, enabling women and carers to get back into the workforce or pursue study



- \$1.5 million for Screen Territory provides grants to support local screen practitioners, attract productions to the Territory, and provide upskilling opportunities for locals. Grants can be up to \$100,000 each. In 2022-23, 51 grants were awarded, including 35 to women and five to female-run companies
- \$220,000 to support women in the fields of construction and engineering with funding for:
 - two women to undertake a Certificate IV in Civil Construction Supervision
 - an engineering scholarship, supporting two female students over four years to study a Bachelor of Engineering at Charles Darwin University
 - sponsoring the National Association of Women in Construction to grow careers in construction.
- \$194,000 for the NT Working Women's Centre to provide free and confidential advice to Territory women on industrial relations and workplace issues.

Leadership and diversity

The 2023 Budget supports leadership and diversity through:

- \$1.2 million to implement the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025
- \$90,000 in grants to support a range of organisations for various events and activities to mark International Women's Day
- the Women's Leadership Network, including monthly inspirational speakers, formal mentoring program and training events to grow leadership capabilities for women in the public sector.

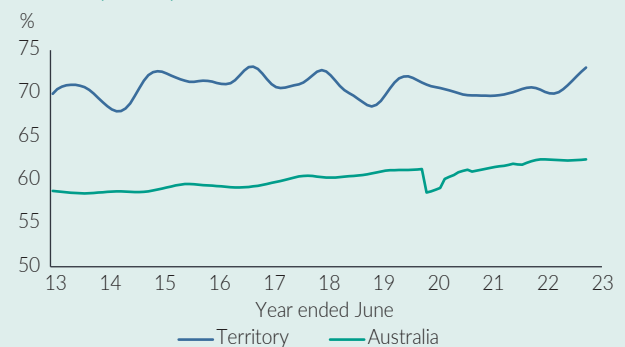
Statistical snapshot

Compared with the national female population, Territory women are younger (33.7 years old vs 39.4), proportionately more are Aboriginal (31.6% vs 3.6%), and have a higher fertility rate (1.76 births vs 1.69).

In most other jurisdictions, there are more females than males but the opposite is true for the Territory (96.8 females for every 100 males). This is partly due to the prevalence of male-dominated industries in the Territory economy. However, women participate in the labour force at a higher rate and with a higher employment to population ratio than nationally.

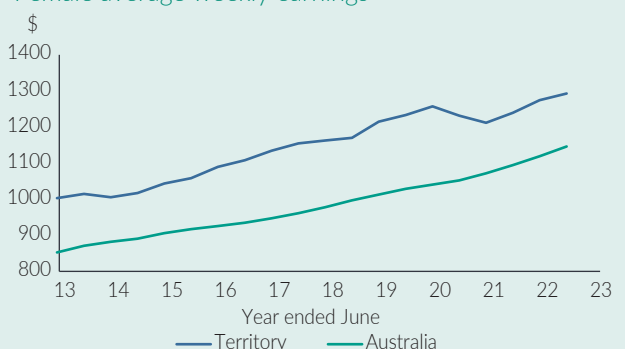
In March 2023, the Territory female participation rate was 73%, compared with 62.4% nationally, while the employment to population ratio was 71.2%, versus 60.3% nationally.

Female participation rate



Territory women are more likely to work full-time and earn \$145.60 more in average weekly earnings than nationally (November 2022).

Female average weekly earnings



The Northern Territory Public Sector workforce is 64% female, with women comprising 54% of those in senior management. Government services, such as teaching and health care, tend to be female-dominated sectors.

Environmental management

The 2023 Budget delivers a record \$180 million in environmental protection funding to ensure the Territory's environmental resources are well-managed, protected and productive – now and into the future.

Investing in renewable energy and responding to climate change

The Territory Government continues to prioritise clean energy, with the 2023 Budget providing:

- \$10.7 million over three years from 2022-23 and \$3.8 million ongoing for the Office of Climate Change to coordinate the Territory's response to climate change
- \$7.3 million over two years from 2022-23 for the Renewable Remote Power Program (including renewable hydrogen trials) to continue to advance the delivery of clean and reliable electricity to remote communities across the Territory
- \$5.4 million over two years from 2023-24 to progress electricity market reforms and achieve the target of 50% renewable energy by 2030
- \$1.7 million over four years from 2023-24 to collect wind resource data to support renewable energy project feasibility assessments.

Protecting our water

The Territory Government is providing additional funding to effectively manage and ensure water security for all Territorians, including:

- \$13.5 million over three years from 2023-24 to implement the Territory Water Plan to deliver water security for all Territorians and facilitate government's sustainable economic development agenda
- \$2.4 million over three years from 2022-23 to enhance preparedness for marine oil spills and other marine environmental emergencies in Territory waters, and develop the Darwin Harbour Wastewater Management Framework and Darwin Harbour Integrated Report Card to protect and inform sustainable development of Darwin Harbour.

Strengthening biosecurity

The 2023 Budget invests in measures to reduce the risks that weeds, pests and diseases pose to our economy, our environment and our communities, through:

- \$2.9 million in 2022-23 and \$2 million per annum ongoing from 2023-24 to enhance biosecurity protections by strengthening frontline biosecurity resourcing and implementing new technology to better detect and prevent biosecurity threats
- \$0.6 million over two years from 2023-24 to resource the Gamba Army to continue efforts to eliminate gamba grass at Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Charles Darwin National Park and Knuckey Lagoon Conservation Reserve.

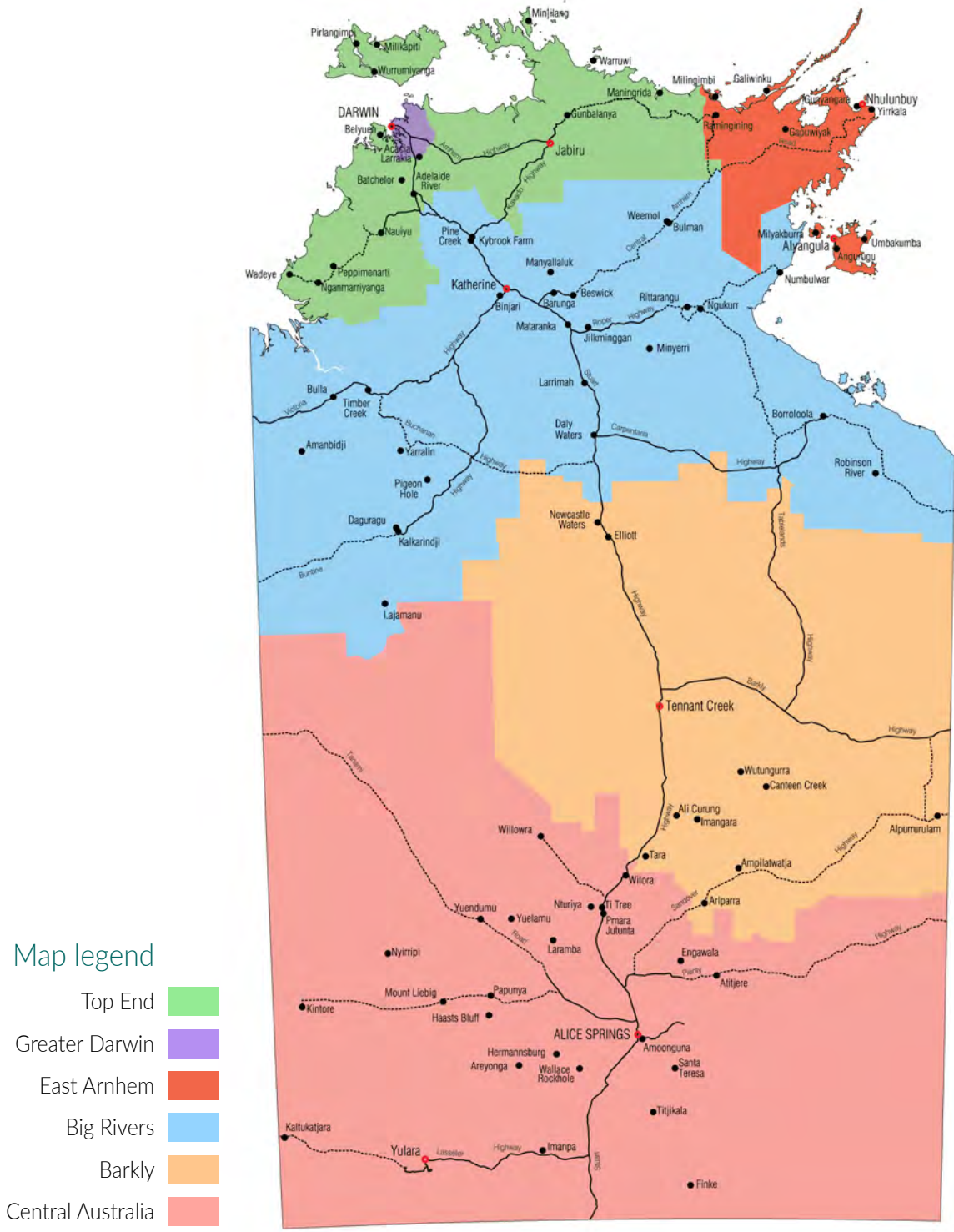
Sustainable development

The Territory Government continues to implement measures to maximise economic opportunities for Territorians while protecting and promoting sustainable use of the Territory's natural assets. New funding in the Budget 2023 includes:

- \$2.5 million over two years to encourage businesses to participate in the circular economy, through two grant programs:
 - the Territory Recycling Grant, providing grants up to \$20,000 towards the purchase of small-scale recycling equipment
 - the Transformational Circular Economy Infrastructure Grant, providing grants of up to \$500,000 for infrastructure projects with a focus on repurposing construction, demolition, food, garden and organic waste
- \$2 million ongoing from 2023-24 to ensure the adequate and timely regulation of the growing onshore petroleum industry
- \$1.9 million ongoing from 2023-24 to enhance the environmental regulator's technical and advisory capabilities and its capacity to undertake assessment, compliance and enforcement activities
- \$1.7 million over two years to accelerate and expand remediation of legacy mines.

Regional overview

The following is an overview of key regional initiatives and programs in the 2023 Budget. It complements the extensive information contained in the other budget papers by presenting budget details of particular relevance to the communities in each of the Territory's six regions.



- Map legend**
- Top End
 - Greater Darwin
 - East Arnhem
 - Big Rivers
 - Barkly
 - Central Australia

Central Australia

Central Australia is the Territory's largest region, covering 42% of the total land area. The region is made up of small communities separated by long distances and is home to about 41,000 people, of whom 43.2% are Aboriginal.

Alice Springs is the main centre in the region, with a population of about 28,900. Around 34% of the region's population are aged 24 years or under and about 8% are aged 65 years or older.

Major industries in the region include tourism, mining, oil and gas exploration, pastoralism and construction. Tourism is an important contributor to economic activity with many natural attractions in the region including Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, Uluru and the West MacDonnell Ranges attracting a significant number of domestic and international visitors.

Infrastructure

The 2023 Budget invests \$62.5 million for upgrades to the Alice Springs to Halls Creek corridor, funded as part of the Commonwealth's Roads of Strategic Importance initiative. This adds to the \$115.6 million in works underway.

Construction on the corridor commenced in mid-2019 and continues on a rolling basis to deliver improvements to connectivity, road safety, travel times and economic productivity for the region.

Work on the Outback Way continues with \$42 million to upgrade various sections of the Plenty Highway and the Tjukururu Road.

Major works overview

	Capital works \$000
Transport	229 448
Recreation, culture and religion	81 663
Housing and community amenities	38 965
Economic affairs	31 350
Health	30 703
Public order and safety	17 809
Environmental protection	10 000
Education	4 753
Total Central Australia	444 692

The 2023 Budget also includes \$17 million for a range of minor works for education, health, housing, justice, and other facilities and assets across the region.

National Aboriginal Art Gallery

The National Aboriginal Art Gallery continues to progress, with the Territory Government acquiring Anzac Oval and design well advanced.

The gallery is part of the Anzac Hill precinct, which includes a new Tourism Central Australia visitor information centre, realigning Schwarz Crescent and landscaping, featuring the Kwatye waterplay initiative.

The Territory Government has committed around \$100 million to deliver the gallery and wider precinct, and the Commonwealth has committed a further \$80 million to support the gallery.

The gallery is a project of national significance and will position Central Australia as a key destination for cultural tourism. Construction is expected to commence in 2024 and be completed in 2027.

Land release

The Territory Government continues to support the growth and economic development of the Alice Springs region through:

- \$26 million to support industrial land release on the Brewer Estate, with works expected to commence during the first quarter of 2024
- \$20.6 million to progress headworks for stage 2 of the Kilgariff Estate, consisting of 87 residential lots (including social and affordable housing) and community sports facilities
- \$11 million to fast-track release of an additional 362 residential lots to support future population growth in the region, with works expected to start in the second quarter of 2024.

Housing

Since 2016, the Territory Government has delivered over \$1 billion in housing works across a range of programs, funded by the Territory and Commonwealth governments.

A record 3,642 homes have so far been built and upgraded, both completed and underway.

A better, safer future for Central Australia

The Territory and Commonwealth governments continue to work with the Central Australian community to improve community safety, tackle alcohol-related harm, and provide more opportunities for young people. The Commonwealth has committed to investing:

- \$250 million to:
 - improve community safety through youth engagement and diversion programs
 - create jobs, particularly in the communities that surround Alice Springs, including changes to the Community Development Program
 - enhance health services in surrounding communities to reduce pressure on Alice Springs
 - prevent and address issues caused by foetal alcohol spectrum disorders, including better health and justice responses
 - invest in families, including better supporting elders and parents and boosting domestic violence services
 - increase on-country learning to improve school attendance and completion.
- \$48 million for community safety, including:
 - \$25 million to extend safety and community services

- \$14.2 million for high visibility police and law enforcement operations
- \$5.6 million for emergency accommodation and safe spaces to give young people a place to go to at night and boost the effectiveness of the night patrol program
- \$2 million to improve CCTV, lighting and safety measures throughout Alice Springs
- \$2 million for the Tangentyere Women's Council to boost domestic violence services.

Further detail on these Commonwealth-funded programs is expected to be published in the 2023 Commonwealth Budget.

The 2023 Budget also provides funding of \$4.8 million over three years from 2022-23 to resource OCARC, to address crime and antisocial behaviour in Alice Springs.

OCARC coordinates a culturally responsive partnership approach to service delivery by all levels of governments and the community, coordinates funding from governments.

OCARC will also develop and implement a medium to long-term plan for Central Australia, addressing economic development and liveability for the region.

Major housing works expected in Central Australia in 2023-24 include HomeBuild/Room to Breathe works in Yuendumu, and seven new government employee houses in the region.

Tourism

The 2023 Budget includes \$5.6 million for the Watarrka Track, a new outback hiking experience, with construction anticipated later in 2023.

The Territory Government is also bolstering tourism in Central Australia through \$1 million for a brand and trade campaign dedicated to the Red Centre, to drive interstate visitation in 2023.



Barkly

The Barkly is the Territory's third largest region and extends along the Stuart Highway from Tara to Elliott and east across the Barkly Tablelands to Queensland. The region is made up of small communities separated by long distances and is home to about 6,000 people, of whom about 71% are Aboriginal. Tennant Creek is the main centre with a population of about 3,500 people. A high proportion of people living in the region are young, with about 39% aged 24 years and under, and about 7% aged 65 or older.

Major industries in the region include government services, agriculture, construction, and mining. The Barkly and Tennant Creek pastoral district accounts for a substantial proportion of the Territory's total cattle industry. The Territory Government is also investing to develop Tennant Creek as a mining and mineral services centre.

Critical minerals

The Territory is emerging as a key player in the global supply chains for critical minerals. Two mineral leases have been granted to Perth-based Avenir Ltd, giving exclusive rights to the Wonarah phosphate deposit in the Barkly region.

The project is scheduled to start with trial mining at test pits in the second quarter of 2023, creating up to 50 jobs. Test pit operations will establish supply chains enabling direct-shipped ore production. The mine has a projected life of more than 30 years and potential to create 1,000 jobs.



Roads of Strategic Importance

The 2023 Budget includes \$78.9 million for upgrades to the Tennant Creek to Townsville road corridor, including sealing, strengthening, widening and road safety improvements.

The Tennant Creek to Townsville corridor is a key economic freight route that supports major industries including mining, agriculture and tourism. The upgrades are expected to be completed by 2026 and are aimed at:

- ensuring key freight roads efficiently connect agricultural and mining regions to ports, airports and other transport hubs
- providing a more reliable and safe road network, especially during the wet season
- improving access for higher capacity vehicles
- facilitating other economic opportunities, especially tourism.

Tourism

The 2023 Budget is investing \$10.5 million in tourism opportunities in Barkly to generate jobs and economic opportunities, including:

- \$7 million for the Tennant Creek Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre extension to provide a new artist studio, upgraded gallery, performance and storage spaces and immersive audio visual displays and experiences that share history, stories, arts and culture
- \$3.5 million for the creation of a new visitor experience in Tennant Creek, which will include gold rush and ore mining interpretive displays.

Barkly Regional Arts, through Activate Territory, has also been granted \$32,000 to undertake a street art project, including community consultation on design of the artwork, development of senior and emerging youth artists, and installation, to improve Tennant Creek's streetscape.

Ali Curung aerodrome

The 2023 Budget continues the commitment of \$2.4 million for Ali Curung airstrip to be sealed and line marked, making access to the community safer.

Land release

The Territory Government is investing \$9.7 million in the Parnttali Road industrial subdivision to continue subdivision works and support the release of new industrial land in Tennant Creek.

The 2023 Budget also includes \$5 million for headworks infrastructure to support the release of Chittock Crescent stage 3, providing new residential land for subdivision to support residential housing growth in Tennant Creek.

Tennant Creek visitor park

The 2023 Budget invests a further \$5.8 million for the Tennant Creek Visitor Park, taking the total amount allocated to the Barkly Regional Deal project to \$10.8 million.

The visitor park will provide safe, secure and alcohol-free accommodation for visitors to Tennant Creek from remote communities and outstations.

Social infrastructure

The 2023 Budget commits \$5.6 million in social infrastructure for the Barkly region. Key social infrastructure includes:

- \$3.2 million for staff accommodation at Tennant Creek Hospital
- \$1.3 million for new fencing at Murray Downs School and Tennant Creek High School.

Tennant Creek watch house

In 2019, the Territory committed \$3.4 million to renovate the Tennant Creek watch house as part of the Barkly Regional Deal.

The scope of the project has been revised to construct a new, larger watch house with contemporary facilities at a total cost of \$11.5 million.

The facility will be built on vacant land within the same lot as the existing police station and watch house, and funding includes demolition of the current watch house once construction is complete.

Economic growth

Endorsed in December 2022, the Barkly Economic Growth Strategy identifies six priority targets:

- attracting people into local jobs in human services
- growing and expanding service industries to meet increasing demand and improve liveability
- supporting employers to create high performing, culturally safe and responsive work environments
- attracting and creating opportunities through renewable energy and environmental management
- increasing the productivity of food production and managing supply chains to drive economic outcomes
- making the most of every opportunity arising from the minerals and mining sector.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	81 287
Housing and community amenities	14 674
Public order and safety	11 498
Recreation, culture and religion	10 472
Economic affairs	9 748
Health	3 175
Social protection	2 673
Education	427
Total Barkly	133 955



Big Rivers

Big Rivers is the Territory's second largest region, covering almost 25% of the Territory's land mass from the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and Lajamanu in the west to Numbulwar and Borroloola in the east. The region is made up of small communities separated by long distances and is home to about 21,300 people, of whom about 57% are Aboriginal. The town of Katherine is the main centre with a population of about 10,800 people. Around 39% of the region's population are aged 24 years and under, and about 7% are aged 65 years and over.

Major industries in the Big Rivers region include tourism, horticulture, pastoral, mining and defence. The region has a significant defence presence, including the Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF) Base Tindal, Bradshaw field training area and Delamere air weapons range. Key tourist attractions include Nitmiluk Gorge, Leliyn (Edith Falls), Mataranka and recreational fishing in the region's big rivers.

STEAM at Katherine High School

The 2023 Budget invests \$9.7 million to create the Katherine High School science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) centre.

The new centre will provide an innovative learning environment that will prepare students for the jobs of the future and will provide a STEAM hub for the Big Rivers region.

Improving access across the region

The 2023 Budget continues to enhance accessibility across the Big Rivers region to improve freight efficiency, connectivity, road safety and economic productivity by investing \$400 million in roads:

- \$175.4 million for Roads of Strategic Importance, such as:
 - \$134.6 million for continuing works to upgrade key roads to support the development of gas resources in and around the Beetaloo Sub-basin
 - \$38.8 million for new and continuing works to upgrade the Newman to Katherine road corridor, including sealing, strengthening and widening, and road safety improvements
 - \$1.9 million for continuing works to seal between the Roper and Wilton River bridges.
- \$224.4 million for upgrades to other major roads, including:
 - \$114 million for new and continuing works under the Buntine Highway upgrade program to improve access for remote communities and support economic growth
 - \$90.4 million for continuing works to upgrade the Carpentaria Highway, a key route for supplies and transport for Glencore's McArthur River Mine, major access road to the Beetaloo Sub-Basin and Borroloola and an important service route for the pastoral, tourism, agricultural and mining sectors
 - \$20 million for works at the Phelp River crossing.





Land release

The Territory Government continues to ensure Territorians in regional and remote areas can access affordable land.

The 2023 Budget commits \$26 million to expedite works on the Katherine East Neighbourhood Centre, a retail and services zone to support commercial development to cater for Katherine East residents and to complement the existing town centre.

Development on the first of six lots to be released began late March 2023 and is due for completion by the end of the year.

The 2023 Budget also includes \$18 million to develop new subdivisions in Beswick, Ngukurr and Numbulwar to ease overcrowding, improve health and living standards, and enable further community development.

Investing in parks

The 2023 Budget includes a series of projects that will enhance parks in the region, investing more than \$3.2 million in improvements and upgrades, including:

- \$1.2 million to continue upgrades at Rainbow Springs in Elsey National Park
- \$0.5 million for the lookout and Matt Wilson campground entrance in Judbarra/Gregory National Park
- \$0.4 million for enhancements to the Jatbula Trail in Nitmiluk National Park
- \$0.2 million for better disability access at Elsey and Nitmiluk national parks
- \$0.1 million for ablution facilities at Bitter Springs
- \$0.1 million for viewing platforms at Djarrung and Kathleen Falls.

Phelp River crossing

The 2023 Budget invests \$20 million to upgrade the Phelp River crossing on Numbulwar Road, which will result in safer access for locals and visitors.

Works will include construction of concrete floodways, culverts and bridges around the Phelp River crossing. The project will improve flood immunity and support the delivery of essential services to regional and remote communities in the Big Rivers and East Arnhem regions. Improved road access will reduce the costs of transporting goods and services in and out of communities, and this will benefit locals in Numbulwar and Ngukurr.

Continued upgrades to Numbulwar Road will also help enable potential future plans for a tourist link from Numbulwar to the Central Arnhem Road via the South East Arnhem Land track.

The project will also provide an increase in economic opportunities, such as tourism opportunities and Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal business enterprise outcomes through the construction and maintenance of the road.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	399 832
Economic affairs	35 243
Housing and community amenities	27 498
Environmental protection	14 992
Education	9 700
Recreation, culture and religion	6 650
Total Big Rivers	493 915

East Arnhem

The East Arnhem region is situated in the far north-eastern corner of the Territory and covers East Arnhem Land, Groote Eylandt and Elcho Island.

The region is home to about 14,600 people, of whom about 73% are Aboriginal, with major population centres in Nhulunbuy and Alyangula. The population in East Arnhem is relatively young and dispersed, with about 42% aged 24 years and under and only about 4% aged 65 years and over.

Due to current seasonal road accessibility constraints, transport for travellers and freight to East Arnhem is mainly by air or sea. Major industries in the region include mining, buffalo farming, tourism, aquaculture and fishing.

Mining is the main contributor to economic activity in the region, with the production of manganese at the GEMCO mine at Groote Eylandt and bauxite at the Rio Tinto and Gulkula mines on the Gove Peninsula. Traditional Aboriginal cultural experiences, Aboriginal art, and the remote and natural wilderness attract tourists to the region, providing economic and employment opportunities.

Arts Trail investment

The 2023 Budget includes \$5.5 million to commence works on the upgrade and expansion of the world renowned Baku-Larrnggay Mulka centre at Yirrkala, and the construction of a new building for Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts, through a partnership with the Commonwealth. The investment is part of the Territory Government’s \$30 million Arts Trail Regional Gallery extension program.

Central Arnhem Road upgrades

The 685 kilometre Central Arnhem Road corridor connects the regional centre of Nhulunbuy to the Stuart Highway. The road services a number of Aboriginal communities and, when accessible, is a key tourism drive and freight route for regional industries.

The Commonwealth and Territory governments have committed \$230 million for upgrades along the corridor, to be delivered over 5 to 10 years from 2019 to increase accessibility and enable economic investment. The upgrades include sealing, widening and flood-immunity improvements to priority sections of the route. Works packages recently completed include upgrades near Beswick and the Goyder River.

The 2023 Budget invests \$165.6 million in 2023-24 for new and continuing works along the corridor. Projects in 2023-24 include planning and works on the southern and northern priority sections, which will be key enablers for industry growth.

Telecommunications upgrades

The Territory and Commonwealth governments, Telstra and Developing East Arnhem Limited have jointly committed \$8 million to upgrade the Arnhem optic fibre backbone, which services all the communities from Jabiru to Nhulunbuy.

These upgrades will be completed in mid 2023 and will significantly alleviate network congestion for regional communities and provide the improved broadband needed for the Arnhem Space Centre on the Gove Peninsula. Telecommunications upgrades to 10 homelands through co-investment agreements will also commence in 2023-24.

Local decision making

The Territory Government is committed to returning local decision making (LDM) to Aboriginal communities by empowering Aboriginal people to determine service delivery models that work best for their community and region.

The LDM policy is underpinned by the principle of self-determination for Aboriginal communities and seeks to transition services and programs to community control where appropriate and desired.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	174 095
Health	20 089
Recreation, culture and religion	5 500
Housing and community amenities	3 019
Education	814
Total East Arnhem	203 517

The Territory Government has signed a nine-year Groote Archipelago LDM agreement with the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) to progress LDM in priority transition areas as identified by the ALC.

The landmark Groote Archipelago LDM agreement aims to deliver increased control and local job growth to the Anindilyakwa people and organisations in housing, education, justice and rehabilitation, health and local government.

A major priority in 2023-24 is establishing the Groote Archipelago Regional Council. The 2023 Budget provides \$3 million to support the establishment of the new regional council, which will enhance local control of services and facilitate self-determination for Anindilyakwa traditional owners and their communities.

Other priorities include establishment of the Groote Archipelago Community Justice Group, increasing Anindilyakwa participation in the justice system.

As part of their LDM agreement, Gapuwiyak community leaders have identified the value and importance in establishing a child and family centre in their community. An operating model for the centre has been finalised and funding of \$4.3 million is allocated over five years for its operations including an annual \$260,000 flexible Child and Family Fund.

The 2023 Budget also continues the \$1.5 million co-investment fund for key projects in the Blue Mud Bay homelands identified through the Djalkiripuyunu LDM agreement, including homeland infrastructure and services to support sustainable living and development, and job creation on country. Negotiations for agreements in other parts of the region will also continue throughout 2023 and 2024.

Gove District hospital

The 2023 Budget continues to invest in health infrastructure across the Territory, including \$20.1 million for fire remediation works at Gove District Hospital.

The Territory Government has also committed \$37.3 million to upgrade central sterilisation services across the Territory's regional hospitals, including Gove District Hospital.

Gove Port investment

Construction has started on the joint Territory Government, Developing East Arnhem Limited and Commonwealth-funded \$8 million upgrade to the marine and landside facilities at the Gove Port tourism precinct.

Aboriginal organisation Gumatj Corporation Limited will play a key role in the project, with completion expected in the first half of 2024. Works include a breakwater with vehicle and pedestrian access and floating jetty to provide access for larger vessels. There will also be new land infrastructure developed including parking, an ablution block and shade structures.

The 2023 Budget also continues the \$10 million commitment towards public-private investment to improve the commercial wharf and landside facilities at the Gove deep water port to support and attract new and diversified industry, including fisheries and aquaculture, marine services and larger tourism vessels.



Top End

The Top End region encompasses most of the Daly-Tiwi-West Arnhem region extending from Wadeye in the west to Maningrida in the east.

About 18,100 people live in the region with major population centres in Wadeye and Jabiru. The region's population is relatively young, with about 39% aged 24 years and under, and around 8% aged 65 years or older.

Major industries in the region include tourism, horticulture and forestry. Tourism is a significant contributor to economic activity in the Top End, with world-renowned attractions such as Litchfield and Kakadu national parks, as well as the Daly River for recreational fishing and camping.

Peppimenarti Police Complex

The community of Peppimenarti is physically cut off by road for a large portion of the wet season, restricting the ability of the neighbouring police stations at Daly River and Wadeye to attend the location and provide a police response.

The 2023 Budget invests \$19 million to construct a new contemporary police complex in Peppimenarti to replace the existing temporary structure erected as part of the Commonwealth's Northern Territory Emergency Response.

The new complex will include a police station, detention facilities, government employee housing and visiting officers' quarters to support a permanent police presence in Peppimenarti.

Tiwi Island road upgrades

The 2023 Budget includes \$69.3 million for works to upgrade and seal sections of the access roads on the Tiwi Islands, including Paru Road. This project aims to:

- support economic growth opportunities, particularly those associated with the potential export of plantation timber
- create local employment opportunities
- provide all-weather access to Tiwi College on Melville Island.

Stage 1 of the road upgrades project was awarded to Tiwi Partners to commence works in May 2023 and includes construction of a bridge over a notoriously muddy section of road.

Gunbalanya Health Centre

The 2023 Budget invests \$20 million for the construction of a new health centre with morgue facilities at Gunbalanya to meet the health care needs for the community and surrounding areas.

The new centre has been designed to include culturally appropriate internal and external areas, including fit-for-purpose consulting rooms, emergency bays, dental facilities, x-ray facilities, hearing booth, renal facilities and morgue.

Once constructed, the new health centre will be transferred to Red Lily Health to support the transition of Gunbalanya to community control. Following transfer to Red Lily, all West Arnhem health centres will be managed by Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations.



Jabiru Health Centre

The Commonwealth and Territory governments have committed \$411.5 million to deliver a strong and sustainable future for Jabiru and Kakadu, including supporting transition of Jabiru from a mining town to a sustainable tourism hub and service centre for Kakadu National Park and the West Arnhem region.

Key works include \$67.3 million for road upgrades in Kakadu National Park to support tourism growth, as well as the \$20 million Jabiru Health Centre to service Jabiru, surrounding communities and visiting tourists. Construction commenced in 2022 and is expected to be completed in late 2023.

The health centre will include eight consulting suites with dedicated male, female and paediatric rooms, four multipurpose allied health examination rooms, a four-chair renal room and a dental surgery (including sterilisation and work rooms).

It will also include specialised facilities such as an audiology consulting room with a hearing booth, an X-ray room, a medication store and private pharmacy, a four-berth morgue with a viewing area and an external, culturally appropriate ceremony area adjacent to the morgue.



Renewable power in Wurrumiyanga

The Territory Government continues to advance the delivery of clean and reliable electricity to remote communities across the Territory under the Renewable Remote Power Program. The program aims to transition remote power systems in 72 remote communities to renewable-based systems by 2030.

The 2023 Budget invests \$6.1 million towards the Wurrumiyanga solar infill and energy storage pilot project as part of the Renewable Remote Power Program. Wurrumiyanga is already operating some solar technology, with this investment expected to increase the percentage of renewable energy delivered to the community to almost 50%.

The project will replace some of Wurrumiyanga's current diesel generated power supply with renewable technology through the installation of additional solar panels and a new battery energy storage system, with works expected to be completed by April 2024.

Adelaide River to Wadeye corridor

The 2023 Budget includes \$60.2 million to continue upgrades on the Adelaide River to Wadeye corridor, including sealing Port Keats Road between Wadeye and Palumpa.

Upgrades around the Saddle Rail Creek crossing have been completed, with works on the Wadeye to Palumpa section expected to commence in 2023.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	252 761
Economic affairs	67 929
Public order and safety	35 110
Health	21 390
General public services	1 000
Recreation, culture and religion	456
Total Top End	378 645

Greater Darwin

The Greater Darwin region includes the cities of Darwin and Palmerston, the Litchfield Shire, East Arm and Robertson Barracks. The region is home to about 149,600 people, representing about 60% of the Territory's population. Greater Darwin has the lowest proportion of young people among the regions, with about 32% aged 24 years and under, and the highest proportion of population aged 65 years and over, at about 10%.

Darwin is the Territory's capital city and the main administrative centre. Major industries include construction, defence, retail, tourism, education and training, public administration, community safety and health care. Darwin is a key gateway to the Territory's regional centres and tourist attractions, and an important strategic hub for trade and defence.

Major industries in Palmerston and the Litchfield Shire include construction, aquaculture, horticulture, cattle and crocodile farming, defence, and LNG and helium production. The Robertson Barracks army base, located near Palmerston, hosts the ongoing rotations of United States marines in the Territory.

The development of East Arm, including the Marine Industry Park and the Darwin ship lift facility, will support the defence, logistics and freight sectors, and facilitate future oil and gas activity in the Territory.

Northern suburbs youth hub

The 2023 Budget commits \$10.5 million for construction of a new purpose-built youth hub facility at the former Casuarina fire station site to support young Territorians.

The fit-for-purpose facility will provide a youth-friendly and accessible space, locating a range of services and activities to support young people and their families, and providing a safe location for young people to gather, engage in interesting and fun activities and give them access to the support they need.

The works include site remediation as well as relocation and construction of a new Darwin men's shed, which is currently located at the former Casuarina fire station.

Civic and State Square revitalisation

The Civic and State Square revitalisation project aims to create a vibrant and liveable city centre that will attract new residents, students and businesses to Darwin, and encourage them to put down roots and stay for the long term.

The 2023 Budget includes \$132.3 million for the next stages of the project, which include:

- Northern Territory Art Gallery – featuring four large galleries with high ceilings, spacious foyer and dedicated space for community activities, shop and café, and landscaped gardens
- a shaded, flexible and active centrally located space suitable for special community events
- tropical tree walk – a pedestrian-friendly Smith Street with tall shelters for shade and rain protection
- expansive lawns – fully serviced for an array of festivals and events
- pedestrian-friendly forecourts to Parliament House and the Supreme Court with cooling water features.

Bundilla Park

The 2023 Budget includes \$3 million for the Bundilla Park Activation project to enhance liveability and attract local residents and tourists to explore the tourist trail from the Darwin Waterfront, through the Darwin CBD to East Point.

The upgrades include installation of lighting along walkways, irrigation of grassed areas, powered sites for food vans and a half basketball court to activate the area and deter antisocial behaviour, while protecting the unique green space.

Strengthening cyber security and protecting critical infrastructure

The Territory Government is investing \$7.5 million ongoing to expand cyber security capabilities and cybercrime awareness in the Territory, and ensure the Territory Government complies with new Commonwealth legislative requirements regarding the protection of critical infrastructure.

Education and community precinct

The 2023 Budget provides \$7 million to relocate the Northern Territory Library to the new Charles Darwin University (CDU) city campus.

The \$250 million CDU campus, funded under the Darwin City Deal, is the largest construction project underway in Darwin's CBD. The new campus, located on the corner of Cavenagh Street and Garramilla Boulevard, will bring new staff and students into the Darwin CBD and is supporting a substantial number of jobs during construction.

Construction of the nine-level structure, including installation of the external façade, fitout and landscaping, is expected to be completed in early 2024.

Royal Darwin Hospital

The 2023 Budget includes significant investment for new and continuing upgrades to the RDH to increase capacity and service delivery, including:

- \$39.4 million to continue expanding the mental health in-patient unit
- \$25 million for a 32-bed modular multipurpose ward
- \$23.7 million to upgrade the forensic mortuary, pathology and bereavement facility
- \$7.1 million to continue expanding clinical spaces
- \$6.8 million to progress the mental health stabilisation assessment and referral area unit.

Economic infrastructure

The 2023 Budget invests in infrastructure to support the growth of the Greater Darwin region including:

- \$515 million to progress the Darwin ship lift facility
- \$108.2 million to continue works on the new overpass at the Tiger Brennan Drive and Berrimah Road intersection
- \$44 million for headworks infrastructure and subdivision works to support the development of Holtze and Kowandi
- \$19.8 million to support the development of Berrimah North and industrial and renewable energy hubs in Weddell
- \$13 million for design and preliminary works for the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct.



Greening and cooling

The 2023 Budget includes \$3 million for the next stage of the Smith Street Greening and Cooling project in the Darwin CBD. The project will use a combination of strategically located and connected shading and landscape initiatives to reduce the heat in the city centre, with the aim of increasing pedestrian traffic, lowering energy usage and encouraging people to stay longer in well-vegetated commercial, retail and recreational areas.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	547 694
Housing and community amenities	117 386
Economic affairs	56 586
Recreation, culture and religion	98 172
Health	105 502
Public order and safety	14 970
Environmental protection	19 669
Social protection	6 000
Education	9 600
General public services	1 274
Total Greater Darwin	976 851

Acknowledgements

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