



ARLTUNGA HISTORICAL RESERVE (ARNERRE-NTYENGE)

DRAFT JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN

2021



WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CULTURE AND COUNTRY

The Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government (NTG) present the Draft Joint Management Plan for Arltunga Historical Reserve. As Joint Management Partners, we have developed this Plan with support and advice from the Central Land Council and other community members including tourism industry representatives. The Plan defines our shared vision, objectives and strategies to deliver effective joint management, care for culture and country and support exciting, memorable and safe visitor experiences.

The assistance of the Central Land Council in facilitating consultations with Traditional Owners is gratefully acknowledged.

This Plan has been prepared consistent with section 25AD of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation (TPWC) Act 1976.

We welcome your thoughts

The Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government invite you to provide advice, suggestions and feedback on this Plan. This Plan will be available for public comment for one month. All submissions will be considered by the Joint Management Partners. Your contributions will support the development of the final Plan before it is presented to the Minister for Parks and Rangers to table in the Legislative Assembly. The Plan will come into effect after seven sitting days, unless disallowed.

Written submissions may be emailed to parkplanning@nt.gov.au or can be sent to:

Arltunga Historical Reserve Draft Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Commission
of the Northern Territory

PO Box 1120,
ALICE SPRINGS, NT, 0871

The Plan is available at: depws.nt.gov.au/consultation

Cover image painted by Traditional Owner Benita Cavanagh.



OUR VISION

Vision for the Historical Reserve

*“Ahirre-areme. Apurte Akaltye-irreme
- Looking ahead. Learning together”*

Traditional Owners and Park staff work together to share knowledge and learn from each other to keep Arltunga Spirit and history strong for all families, visitors and country.

RESERVE SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUES

Situated 110km east of Alice Springs, the Arltunga Historical Reserve (Arnerre-ntyenge) lies among the hilly terrain of the East MacDonnell Ranges.

The Reserve's core value is as a shared cultural landscape that incorporates Eastern Arrernte sacred and archaeological sites, fascinating historic features and a shared Eastern Arrernte and European mining history.

For many years, Arltunga was the largest European settlement in Central Australia. At least 580 individual historic structures have been recorded in the Reserve and the abundance, diversity and richness of these directly contribute to its integrity and authenticity as a late 19th – early 20th century goldmining landscape.

The Reserve is set within the internationally significant MacDonnell Ranges Bioregion. It contains several plant species of conservation significance and populations of the Black-footed Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis*), which is listed as nationally vulnerable under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

The Reserve provides quieter recreational alternatives to the highly visited West MacDonnell Ranges. Day use facilities (visitor centre, walking tracks, and picnic and barbeque areas) and seasonal Territory Parks Alive activities help visitors enjoy the Reserve and learn about its historical and cultural values.

Our Story - The Traditional Owners of Arnerre-ntyenge (Arltunga Historical Reserve)

"All families belong together"

Arnerre-ntyenge lies in country of the Eastern Arrernte, the dialect called Ikngerre-iperre, which translates to "from the east" and falls within the estate known as Ulpmerre. Traditional Owners of Inerentye identify themselves as Ulpmerre arenye, and belong to the land through a system of laws and customs that have been inherited from the Altyerre (the Dreaming), and handed down through the generations.

Ulpmerre arenye follow and maintain the laws and customs of Altyerre stories and songs. The details in these stories guide Ulpmerre arenye in their behaviours and relationships with each other, the environment and the spirit realm.

Ulpmerre arenye believe the travels, actions and encounters of their ancestors created the landscape, as told in the stories and songs of Altyerre.

These ancestors created everything in the landscape. They created the features of the land, the sacred sites, animals and plants, and they created the boundaries and areas between 'countries' or 'estates'. These areas are often associated with a group of landowners or Traditional Owners. These groups are linked to each other and the landscape through kinship affinity, spiritual connection and acquisition of knowledge of the Altyerre.

Today, Traditional Owners of Arnerre-ntyenge reside in Alice Springs, the community of Santa Teresa, Harts Range (Atitjerre) and other locations. Members of the Traditional Owner group have maintained a connection to their traditional land throughout their lifetimes and have maintained a friendly relationship with neighbouring stations.

The forebears of the Traditional Owners were responsible for the maintenance and performance of ceremonies associated with the kwatye (rain/hail) dreaming and the current Traditional Owners continue to uphold these responsibilities.

This is a altyerre (dreaming) painting about ulpmerre (our country) and arlpatye (ringneck parrot) which is the nickname of our father. Painted by Traditional Owner Mia Mulladad.

Shared History

Traditional Owners and Europeans have a unique shared history at Arltunga, stemming from the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Eastern Arrernte / Ulpmerre arenye assisted European miners, initially on the ruby fields further to the east, and later at Arltunga and Winnecke Goldfields. They played an important role in the development of Central Australia's early mining industry.

Hundreds of miners rushed to the Centre in the late 19th century, travelling 600km from the railhead at Oodnadatta by camel, horse, bicycle and on foot, eager to make their fortune. The discovery of gold at Arltunga links to the earlier mining activity which occurred on the so-called Ruby Fields along the Hale River east of Arltunga.

Miners at Arltunga quickly learnt the value of Eastern Arrernte / Ulpmerre arenye knowledge regarding country, particularly with respect to water and bush food sources. They saw the Eastern Arrernte / Ulpmerre arenye as guides and as a possible source of mining labour and domestic help. Many Indigenous people believed that assisting the miners would help them retain a greater degree of independence in the face of the expanding pastoral industry.

In addition to working with the miners processing the ore, during the early mining days local Indigenous people also instructed many of the miners on safe travelling routes and how to read the country to find water sources. Local police often relied on Indigenous trackers when investigating claims of cattle theft or to find Europeans who had lost their way in the harsh arid landscape.

Some Indigenous women lived with miners, performing a wide variety of domestic tasks including cooking, cleaning and acting as messengers. The local Indigenous men were often supplied with guns, which gave them a greater chance of hunting their preferred food source - Red Kangaroos and Euros. In return for the guns the men would provide mining families with skins from which rugs and mats could be made.

At the turn of the century, the goldfields remained active despite on-going problems relating to drought and water shortages, and mechanical problems with the battery. The European population on the field was about 350-400, making it the largest settlement in Central Australia.

Discoveries of gold at the Granites and Tennant

Creek in the late 1920s and early 1930s drew most remaining miners north and Arltunga was largely abandoned. Drought also struck the Centre in the mid to late 1920s, affecting the pastoral industry and making conditions even more difficult for mining at Arltunga.

By the 1940s Arltunga Goldfields were largely abandoned. The Arltunga Goldfields represent the establishment of a mining industry in Central Australia and for many years, it was the largest European settlement in the region. It was not until the 1930s that the population of Stuart (now Alice Springs) overtook that of Arltunga.

After the bombing of Darwin (1942), the Indigenous people living at the Catholic Church's Little Flower Mission in Charles Creek near Alice Springs, were moved to Arltunga by army trucks - a population of about 150 people. Some walked back to Alice Springs while others already living in the area came to the new Little Flower Mission for medical treatment.

Relationships developed between the Mission and the pastoralists and many Indigenous people were trained for work on nearby stations Atnarpa, Loves Creek, Ambalindum and The Gardens. By 1952, a shortage of water at Paddy's Rockhole forced people from Little Flower Mission to walk from Arltunga with camels, nanny goats, donkeys, horses and wagons through the Gap to Ross River Homestead, across Todd River to Snow Bore, then south past Marion Spring to a place now known as Santa Teresa.

Today little remains at Little Flower Mission neighbouring the Arltunga Historical Reserve, this includes a cemetery containing 40 unmarked graves.



GOVERNMENT WORKS

The Government Battery and Cyanide Works were established in 1898 as a facility for crushing and processing ore worked from local mines. Until mining activity faded in 1913, this was the heart of the Arltunga Goldfield. There were more people and closely grouped buildings here than anywhere else at Arltunga. The buildings were the offices or houses of government workers and the machinery was part of the gold extraction process.

1. The Assayer's Residence

The Assayer's job was to account for the gold at every stage of the extraction process.

2. The Manager's Residence

The Manager was the most senior official on the field, responsible for seeing that the battery operations ran smoothly.

3. The Post Office

The mail run went every two weeks between Arltunga and Adelaide. If this seems slow, consider that supplies came in from the south by camel about every three months.

4. The Battery Site

The battery reduced the ore to fine silt.

5. Gold Room and Offices

Here gold was tested for impurities before the Assayer weighed it and paid the miner for their efforts. In relative terms, gold was worth about three times more than it is today.

6. Star of the North Well

The Star of the North was sunk in 1892 and could deliver over 8000 litres of water per day. It is 24 metres deep and has horizontal drives at the bottom to increase the yield.

7. Assay Building

Miners complained that in the first assay office the ground shook when the battery was working, making it impossible for the Assayer to weigh the gold and hence pay them correctly. This second assay office was built in 1905, a few years after the first.

8. Worker's Hut

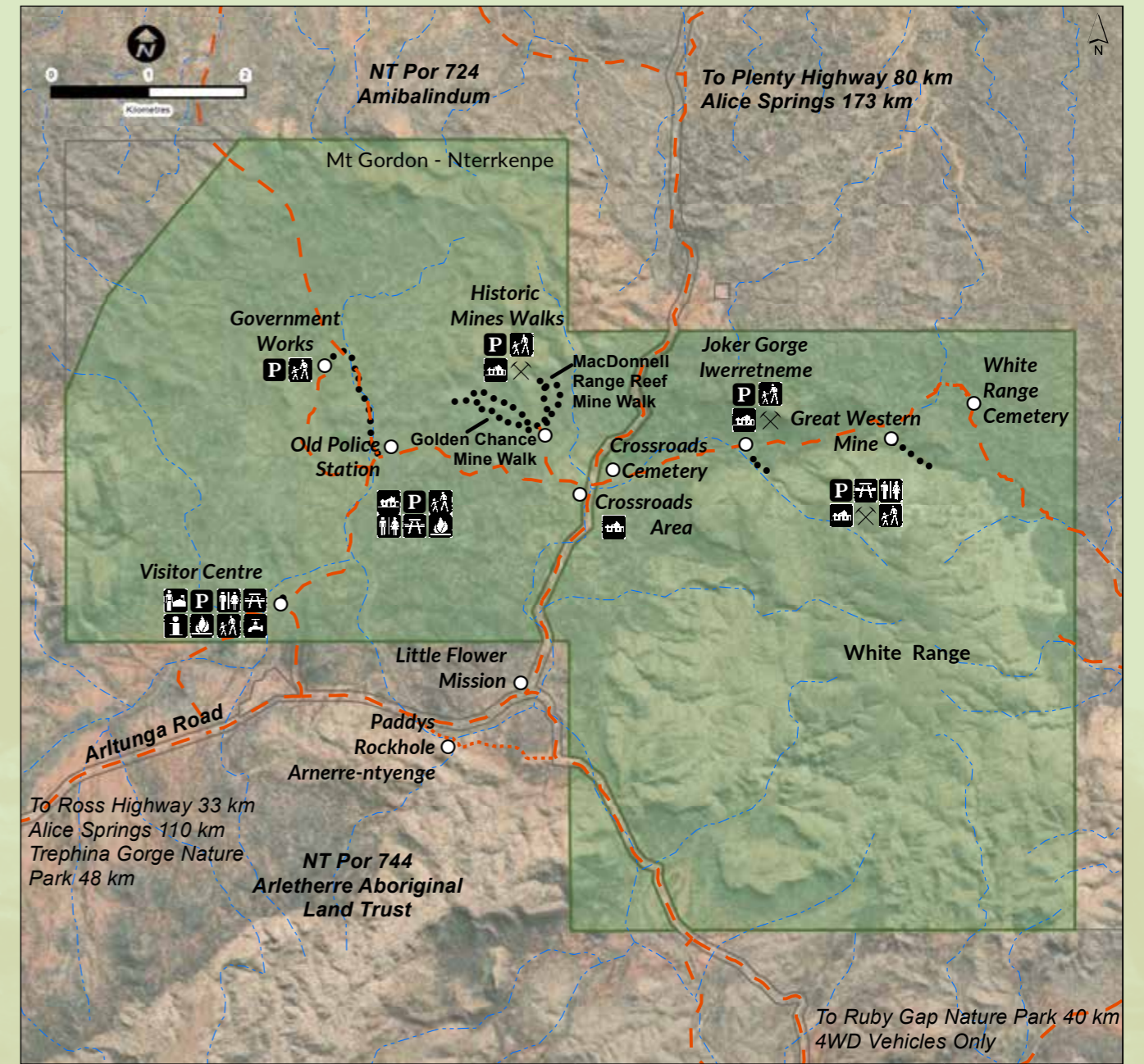
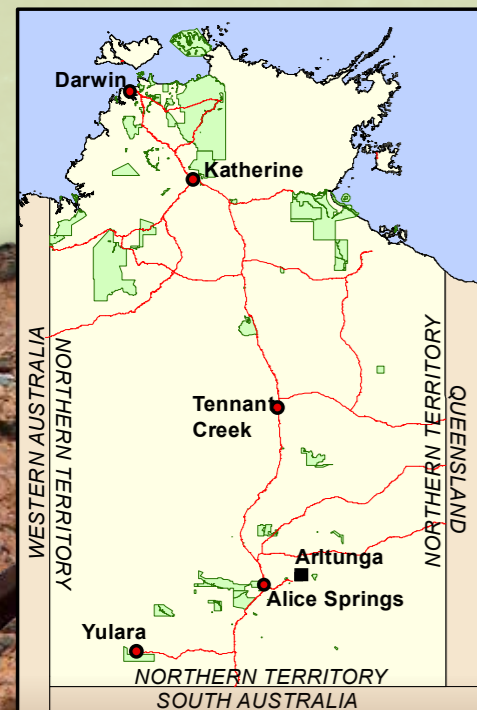
Battery workers who were locally employed built their own huts as the opportunity arose.

9. Blacksmith's Shop

As a government employee the 'Smithy' was more the battery engineer. The battery was prone to regular breakdown and if this happened for extended periods the whole field 'went down' with it.

10. Mystery Mudhouse

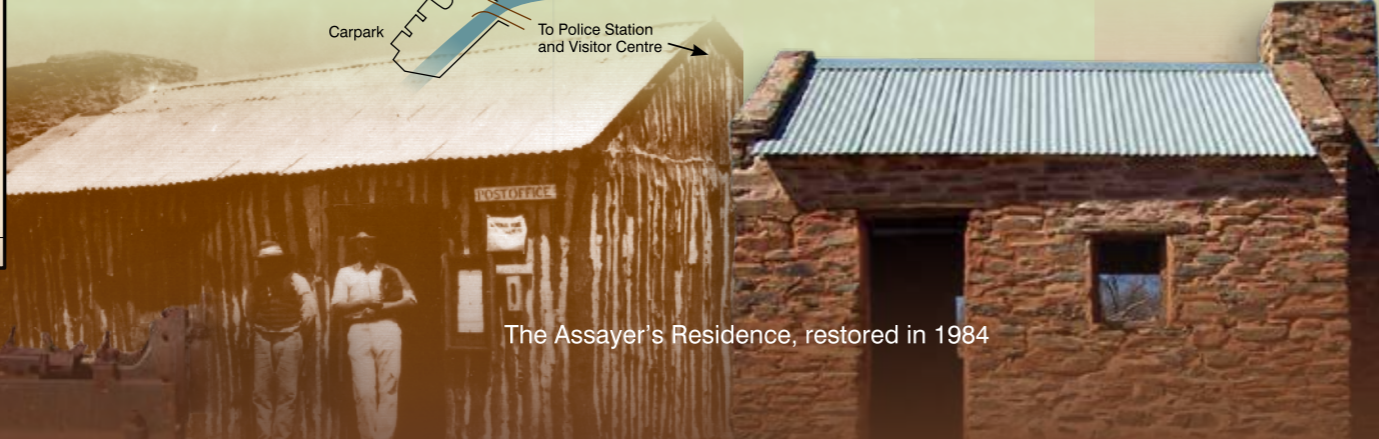
The history of this building is unknown. It is possible that the building was one of the first on this site, and existed before the area was declared a Government Reserve.



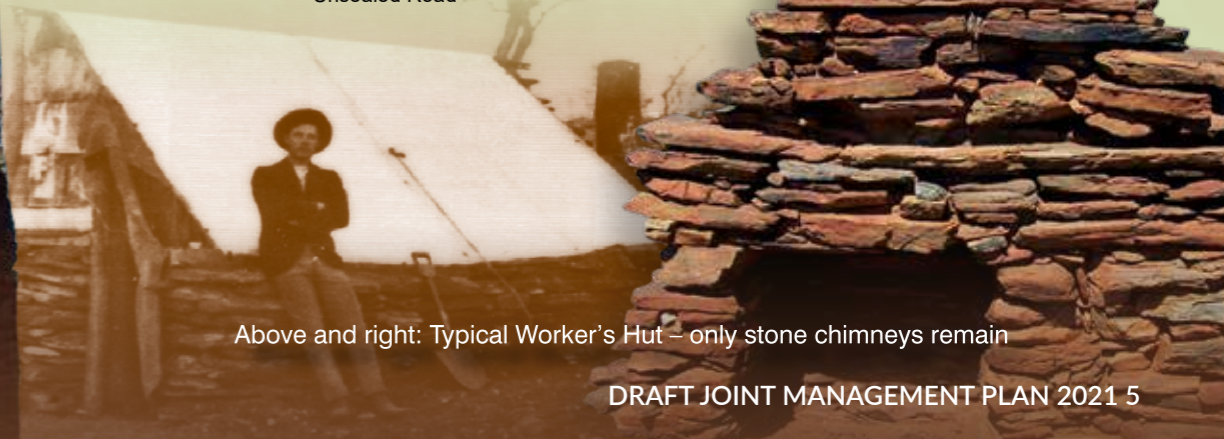
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 Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Legend

Picnic Facilities	Ranger Station	Old Mine	Cadastral
Toilets	Short Walks	Walking Track	Arltunga Historical Reserve
Information	Ruins	4WD Track	
Drinking Water	Parking Area	Unsealed Road	
Wood BBQ			



The Assayer's Residence, restored in 1984



Above and right: Typical Worker's Hut – only stone chimneys remain

THEME 1: MAKING JOINT MANAGEMENT WORK

“Together we are responsible to the land, law and culture”

Principles for making Joint Management work:

- Respecting Traditional Owner rights to continue caring for country keeps culture strong.
- Engagement of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to successful joint management.
- Decision-making and accountability is equally shared and Indigenous decision-making processes are respected.
- Good decisions are made when both partners have a clear process and guidelines, good information and enough time to consider decisions properly.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the Joint Management Partners and of each other's roles.
- Resources are efficiently used with management priorities guided by the Joint Management Partners.
- Risks to successful joint management are identified and actions are put in place to minimise them.
- Joint management is checked to see that it is working well and continuing to improve.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife looking after Arltunga Historical Reserve together.

If the partnership is working well, outcomes will include equitable, efficient decision-making leading to healthy culture and country, visitors continuing to have safe and enjoyable experiences and the broader community being well informed and involved. Joint management contributes towards economic, social and wellbeing benefits for Traditional Owners and their families, through direct and indirect employment, training and tourism enterprise opportunities.

The Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 (TPWC Act) defines the Joint Management Partners as the traditional Indigenous Owners of the Reserve (Traditional Owners) and the Territory.

The Territory is represented by the Northern Territory Government, which carries out the Territory's joint management obligations. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Northern Territory Government as a Joint Management Partner should be read as a reference to the Territory. The Act further defines the objective to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the Reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory for the following purposes:

- (a) Benefiting both the Traditional Owners and the wider community.
- (b) Protecting biological diversity.
- (c) Serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.

The TPWC Act also establishes the requirements of joint management plans and the role of the Central Land Council (CLC) in assisting joint management by representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners.

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management. The Joint Management Partners are together accountable for the management of the Reserve, including monitoring and reviewing the objectives and directions in this Plan.

Parks and Wildlife resource and implement the Reserve's ongoing day-to-day management, interpretation, planning and infrastructure programs. Parks and Wildlife officers contribute to setting management direction.

Traditional Owners are responsible to the land, law and culture and provide a vital role in the direction and management of the Reserve. They retain special responsibilities for decision making and oversee cultural protocols for sacred sites. They are responsible for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after country and its resources and maintaining sacred sites.

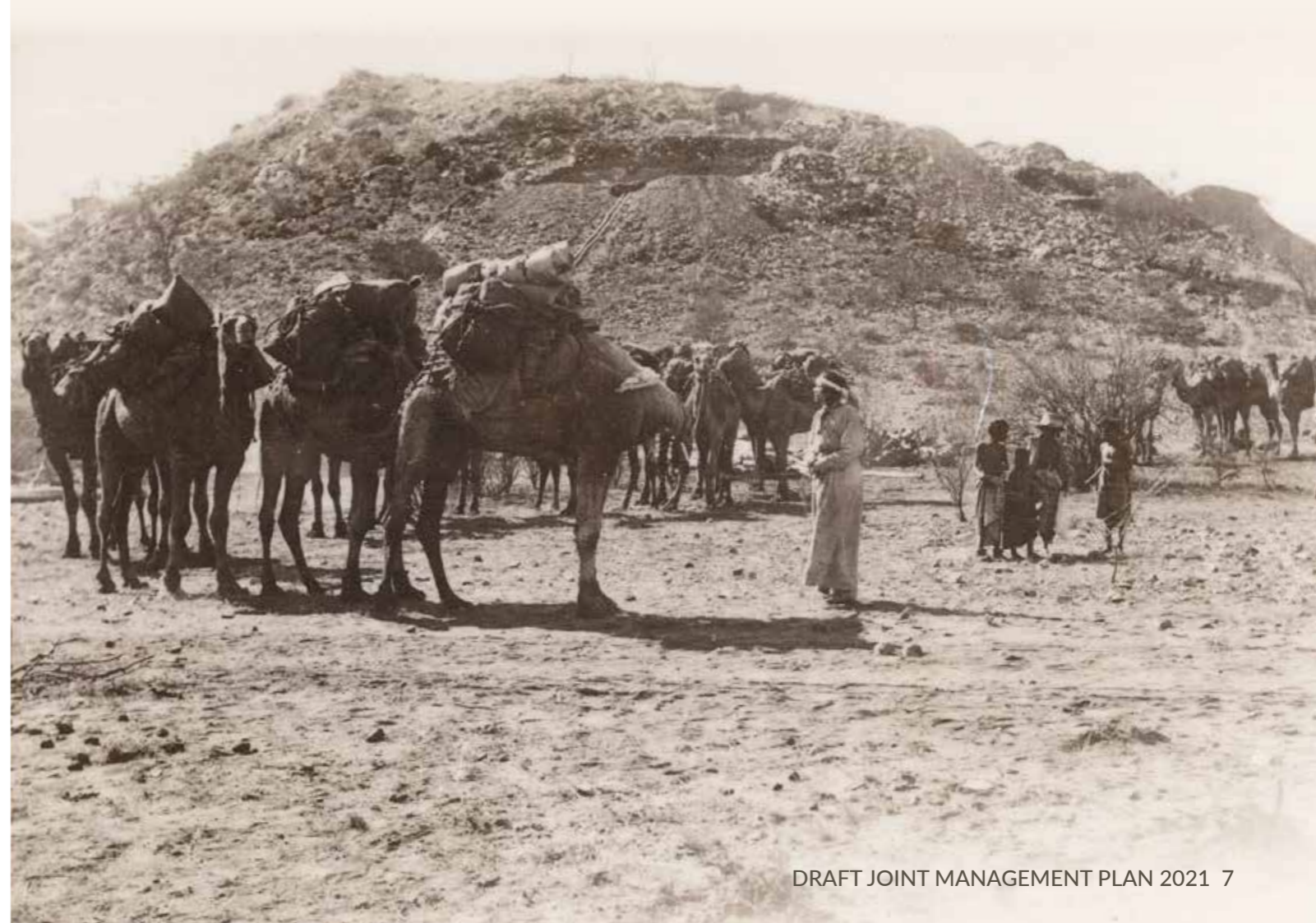
Across the East MacDonnell District, different groups of Traditional Owners maintain responsibility for different areas of country, which includes the Reserve. The joint management plans for Arltunga and Ruby Gap will operate under one joint management committee.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A strong and equitable partnership protects Arltunga Historical Reserve's historical, cultural and natural values, ensures visitors have safe and enjoyable experiences, and works to create social, economic and employment benefits for Traditional Owners and the wider community.

- The Joint Management Committee for Arltunga and Ruby Gap oversees the strategic direction for the Reserve.
- Meetings on country and dedicated country camps are held to provide the opportunity for Traditional Owners to visit and discuss country issues, aspirations and management.

- Governance training is provided to the partners, providing tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership, with attention given to needs identified by the monitoring and evaluation program.
- The Partners will be proactive in developing local solutions for Indigenous employment.
- Indigenous employment will remain a standing item at Committee meetings.
- Traditional Owners aspirations for employment associated with the Reserve will be supported.
- Consideration will be given to renaming the Park in consultation with Traditional Owners, subject to Commonwealth and Northern Territory legislation.
- Any proposal not addressed in this Plan will be openly considered by the partners.



THEME 2: LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY AND CULTURE

“Now many of us live in Alice Springs Santa Teresa and Harts Range”

Principles for looking after country and culture:

- Managing country means working together on country and managing natural and cultural values together. The Burra Charter provides sound guidance for conserving cultural heritage values.
- Protection of the Reserve’s cultural heritage and ecological values is achieved by minimising the impacts of wildfire, feral animals, weeds and erosion.
- Management of Indigenous cultural knowledge and sites is the responsibility of Traditional Owners.

Looking after cultural heritage

The cultural heritage values of the Reserve derive from its layers of human occupation, evident in the landscape today in the form of archaeological sites and objects.

Eastern Arrernte sites and objects

Eastern Arrernte / *Ulpmerre arenye* traditionally occupied the Reserve which formed part of a larger area known as *Ulpmerre (oolp-mair-eh)*, which refers to the dry and dusty conditions associated with the East MacDonnell Ranges.

Traditional Owners retain knowledge of the Dreamings and their sacred sites. Rock engravings, groups of paintings within rock shelters, millstones and stone artefact scatters are present throughout the Reserve. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has recorded at least three sacred sites associated with the Reserve.

Architecture and artefacts

The variety of historic remains spread across the Reserve is significant. To date at least 580 structures have been documented. The evidence of nearly every aspect of goldfields life is apparent, including alluvial and reef mine workings, to the Government Battery and Cyanide Works, Police Station, machinery, remains of a bakery, various residences and cemeteries.

Within the Reserve the historic structures cluster together at several localities, referred to as historic precincts: the Government Battery and Cyanide Works, Kangaroo Well Police Station, MacDonnell Range Reef Precinct, Crossroads, Joker Mine, Great Western Mine, White Range Cemetery and White Range Precinct. Additionally, isolated historic features are scattered elsewhere across the Reserve. With time, additional structures may be revealed in areas which have been subject to wildfires, particularly those that are small, not immediately obvious, and likely reflect ephemeral occupation.

The historic structures at Arltunga are also of architectural value, particularly the design features and aesthetics of the local stonework in the natural bush setting. The different building techniques reflect the availability of construction materials and the cultural background of the individual miners and their differing economic circumstances.

In addition to the built environment, the Reserve also contains historic artefacts directly associated with its mining history. Surface collections and excavated material from three Precincts have been analysed and are stored at Arltunga. The accompanying field notes are currently held at the Museum of Central Australia with additional documentation located at the Arid Zone Research Library in Alice Springs.

Looking after country

Natural character

With its subtle beauty, the Reserve’s natural character provides the backdrop for an extraordinary cultural landscape. Several ranges, including the Cavenagh and White Ranges, dominate the landscape, rising about 200 metres above the surrounding plains. In the northern part of the Reserve, Mt Gordon / *Ntwerrkenpe* forms a prominent peak. A number of large creeks drain into the ranges creating shallow strike valleys and steep sided gullies. The gorges provide a source of shelter and water for a range of animal and plant species.

Water resources

All drainage channels flow into a single system, Paddy’s Rockhole Creek, just south of the Reserve boundary. There are no natural permanent water sources within the Reserve and in order to facilitate development of the goldfields, several wells were sunk. These include Kangaroo Creek, Star of the North, the Crossroads and two White Range wells.

Native vegetation

The Reserve protects a variety of vegetation communities typical of the Eastern MacDonnell Ranges including open woodlands, shrublands and tussock grassland. Of the 340 plants recorded, six are rare nationally or within the Territory.

Plants of interest include:

- MacDonnell Ranges Cycad (*Macrozamia macdonnellii*). The population is one of the eastern-most occurrences and is listed as vulnerable nationally under the EPBC Act.
- Thozet’s Box (*Eucalyptus thozetiana*). This species has its main centre of distribution in south-eastern Queensland with the East MacDonnell Ranges representing a disjunct population.

Other species of conservation value include Sturt’s Hibiscus (*Hibiscus sturtii*), Pink Rock-wort (*Sedopsis filsonii*), Water pimpernel (*Samolus eremaeus*), *Hakea grammatophylla*, and Red-berried Stick-plant (*Spartothamnella puberula*). Additionally, two other species (*Crotalaria dissitiflora vari.dissitiflora* and *Sida A43017 Ambalindum*) are poorly known nationally or within the Territory.

Throughout the woodlands and tussock grassland, scattered tree stumps are a reminder that trees were extensively harvested by the miners during the life

of the goldfields. Photographs of the Reserve up to the 1970s show a bare landscape and contrast greatly with the wooded appearance of the valleys and plains today. The results of such past land use practices now form part of the current cultural landscape.

Native animals

Animal species in the Reserve are typical of those found in similar habitats in other sections of the East MacDonnell Ranges.

One of the 25 mammal species recorded in the Reserve is of conservation significance. The Black-footed Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis*) is listed as nationally vulnerable under the EPBC Act. Populations of these wallabies are present in the White Range area and in Joker Gorge.

Signs of the Lesser Stick-Nest Rat, now presumed extinct in Central Australia, have also been observed in the Reserve in the past.

Birds recorded in the Reserve include numerous species of raptors, honeyeaters and flycatchers.

The historic mines are sources of water and shelter for native birds and animals within the Reserve, particularly for bats and wallabies.



Protecting against threats

Careful ongoing management is essential to ensure buildings, sites and artefacts do not deteriorate in condition. Many factors including general wear and tear, weeds, fire, climate, frost, and weathering of mortars and renders by rain can threaten the integrity of the sites. The Burra Charter sets out a standard of practice and will help guide the management of these cultural heritage resources.

Fire

Although part of the natural environment, wildfire has the potential to damage and destroy the historic buildings, sacred sites and rock art. It is important that fire management strategies in the Reserve include fuel reduction and strategic fire breaks around such sites. It is also important that senior Traditional Owners be involved in fire planning and burning activities.

Maintaining fire breaks around historic buildings and wooden structures (as well as Reserve infrastructure) is a high-priority, on-going task, that will be incorporated into the review of existing fire management strategies and operational plans.

Unmanaged vegetation and weeds

Unmanaged vegetation can damage the structural integrity of historic buildings by opening up cracks in mortar and floors, or by increasing fuel loads and contributing to damage from wildfire. It may also increase visitor safety hazards by obscuring old mine shafts.

A total of 28 weed species have been recorded in the Reserve, including two weeds of National Significance: Athel Pine and Prickly Pear. Mexican Poppy has also been found just outside the Reserve. Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is the highest priority introduced weed for control as it increases the frequency and intensity of wildfire. At Arltunga, Buffel Grass is concentrated mainly along the creeks.

Introduction and spread of weeds in the Reserve is primarily from past mining and pastoral activities. Some of these introduced species are cultivated exotics and directly relate to the historic values of the Reserve, such as a date palm growing at the Police Station Precinct.

Feral animals

Feral animals recorded in the Reserve include cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, cats and rabbits. The larger herbivores such as camels, cattle, horses and donkeys threaten the Reserve's natural values by disturbing the vegetation cover and encouraging weed infestation.

Feral animals also impact upon the cultural heritage values of the Reserve. Rabbits have damaged some historic sites in the past, particularly the White Range Cemetery, structures at the Government Works Precinct and areas just south of the Reserve around Paddy's Rockhole and the Little Flower Mission. The presence of feral animals also detracts from the visitor experience and large animals such as cattle, horses, and camels may pose a risk to visitor safety.

Erosion

Soil erosion is widespread in the Reserve with extensive severe scalding in the western foot slopes and associated creeks. Other areas of severe erosion occur along the creek adjacent to the Claraville track. Mining and vehicle tracks have led to localised but intensive erosion, however these tracks are important for fire management. Additionally, some of these tracks date to the early mining era or to the period associated with the Little Flower Mission, such as the track between the Mission site and the Police Station, and therefore contribute to the cultural heritage values of the Reserve.

Mineral exploration and other extractive activities

Mineral exploration and extraction activities can adversely affect the integrity and authenticity of Arltunga as a shared cultural landscape, severely compromise its natural bush setting and potentially affect historic resources.

All new mining applications will be dealt with under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (ALRA). Currently, Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the values of the Reserve.

OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIES

The Reserve's cultural, historical and natural values are protected and Indigenous knowledge and interests are incorporated into management programs.

- The Partners learn and share knowledge to continue looking after country together.
- Protection of the Reserve's natural character and aesthetic values will be given high priority.
- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) and program for the Reserve will be developed with advice and support from the Heritage Branch and CLC in line with the Burra Charter.
- Shared cultural knowledge belongs to the Traditional Owners and will only be used as directed by them, consistent with the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Policy.
- Specialised management will be given to historical buildings, sites and artefacts according to the Burra Charter.
- Senior Traditional Owners will be involved with the fire management program.
- Fire management in the Reserve will focus on strategic fuel reduction and fire breaks around historical and significant sites.
- Senior male Traditional Owners will be consulted before commencement of management works in restricted areas.
- The Partners will seek collaboration with local Indigenous ranger groups, communities and other stakeholders to expand resources, capabilities and expertise to improve land management.
- Traditional Owners would like at least one Ranger to live at Arltunga on a permanent basis.
- The Joint Management Committee will develop a process for reviewing permit applications. The full Traditional Owner group will be consulted for large, complex and culturally sensitive permits.
- Soil and gravel extraction for soil conservation or other purposes will be subject to the approval of the partners.
- The Partners will seek a Reservation from Occupation under the Mineral Titles Act 2010 over the Reserve.
- Fossicking is not permitted on the Reserve.

THEME 3: VISITOR EXPERIENCES

“Big history, place for everybody”

Principles for managing visitor experiences

- The remote character and unique culture and history of the Reserve is the key attraction for visitors.
- Positive experiences produce satisfied visitors, who may build a sense of connection and responsibility for the Reserve.
- The tourism industry assists in developing high quality experiences that are responsive to changing visitor interests and expectations.
- Tourism fosters cultural awareness, sharing of traditional practices, joint ventures, income generation and employment, and supports the delivery of the Reserve’s objectives.
- Visitors’ appreciation and respect for the Reserve is enhanced by sharing information about the Reserve’s unique cultural, historical and natural values.

Why do people come to Arltunga Historical Reserve?

The opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in a shared cultural landscape in a remote, natural bush setting is a key attraction of the reserve. Much of the Reserve’s heritage significance results from its authenticity and integrity as a historic goldmining landscape and its capacity to reflect aspects of life on a remote goldfield. Arltunga has retained much of its historic fabric and represents the most intact example of a late 19th and early 20th Century goldfield in the Territory. The retention of the natural bush setting largely undisturbed by modern developments is a major contributor to this.

Most of the Reserve’s 11,000 annual visitors spend several hours at the Reserve before returning to Alice Springs or travelling onto Ruby Gap Nature Park or Ambalindum Homestead.

A small but increasing number of people visit the Reserve to explore family connections and trace family history. The Partners are keen to maintain the present character of the Reserve and provide visitors with an enhanced experience of the shared mining history, and heritage of the district.

An authentic shared history and goldmining visitor experience

At Arltunga Historical Reserve, visitors can experience a shared cultural landscape, incorporating Eastern Arrernte / *Ulpmerre arenye* sites, archaeological sites, and historic sites from Central Australia’s early goldmining industry. Sacred sites emphasize connection to country and importance of maintaining traditional law and culture.

Rock art in Joker Gorge attests to Aboriginal occupation of the area prior to the arrival of miners. Indigenous knowledge of the natural landscape reinforces the invaluable role Eastern Arrernte / *Ulpmerre arenye* played in assisting the miners to survive in such harsh conditions.

Visitors can explore the building ruins and historic mines, visit cemeteries and the lonely gravesites. At the Visitor Centre, there are opportunities to engage in ‘hands on’ activities such as panning for gold and watching the stamp battery in action, and at the MacDonnell Range Reef mines, venture down mining shafts and explore an underground tunnel.

Nature based activities

Visitors to Arltunga are rewarded with a diversity of experiences including sightseeing, picnicking, and photography, bird watching and natural history appreciation. Spectacular vistas are evident from the top of the Joker Mine walk, as well as during the drive to White Range Cemetery.

Self-guided walking tracks to and around the Precincts are also an important part of the visitor experience as they foster a sense of exploration and adventure. Driving from one Precinct to another through the arid landscape also provides the visitor with insights into the conditions experienced by the early miners.

Understanding visitor needs

Joint Management Partners must stay abreast of and responsive to trends and opportunities in nature-based tourism and recreation. The tourism market seeks a mix of active, adventurous, exciting and unique holidays.

There is a demand for immersive, life-changing experiences including interactive, authentic cultural experiences with Traditional Owners on country.

Visitor safety

At Arltunga, a public risk assessment for all engineered structures, including mine and well covers, and ladders, is carried out on a periodic basis.

Visitors can access pre-visit information regarding the dangers of remote travel, heat related injury, and the dangers of old mine shafts through web-based materials, by contacting the Parks and Wildlife regional office in Alice Springs and through interpretative literature developed for the Reserve.

The Reserve is closed when flooding (and/or bushfires) presents a danger to visitors.

OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIES

Manage and develop safe, sustainable and outstanding experiences that connect visitors to the Reserve and its people.

- Traditional Owners and the tourism industry work together to explore opportunities to enhance existing experiences consistent with market trends and the expectations of contemporary visitors.
- Maintain visitor experiences by providing an authentic shared history and goldmining landscape experience.
- Explore opportunities for growth of Indigenous tourism enterprises, including joint ventures supported by the tourism industry.
- Work with the tourism marketing arm of the Northern Territory Government and the tourism industry to ensure accurate and appropriate messaging that reflects the Reserve’s values and Traditional Owners’ wishes.
- Maintain the highest standards of visitor safety with ongoing monitoring, maintenance and risk assessment for Reserve facilities and visitor management practices.
- Improve interpretation to reflect the strong cultural ties of Eastern Arrernte / *Ulpmerre arenye* people to the Reserve.
- Traditional Owners allow capture of images in the park for non-commercial purposes, however commercial activities, public or private events and scientific research are not allowed until approval is provided by Traditional Owners following a consultation process.



