

# ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ON AIRPORT LAND



Darwin International Airport wants to be a good neighbour and minimise the impact of its operations on the surrounding community. So as well as improving airport infrastructure, Darwin International Airport has worked with its neighbours to create an airport precinct that will become an environmental management showcase.

## BACKGROUND

Environmental issues at DIA are administered under the *Federal Airports Act 1996* and the *Airport (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997* which demand a high standard of environmental management.

Under the Act, Darwin International Airport must have an approved Airport Environment Strategy which sets the strategic direction for environmental management. The strategy outlines the airport's management of potential impacts resulting from the operation and expansion of the airport.

The current strategy was endorsed in December 2004 by the then Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services and is due for renewal in 2009. The 2004 strategy can be downloaded at [www.darwinairport.com.au](http://www.darwinairport.com.au).

## CONSERVING OUR NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA

Darwin International Airport is committed to protecting the local environment. The airport's land falls primarily within the Rapid Creek catchment, the only significant freshwater system in Darwin. There are two conservation areas on airport land that protect and enhance this important ecosystem – the Rapid Creek Reserve and a 15-hectare Conservation Reserve in the upper catchment to the west of Charles Eaton Drive.

## RAPID CREEK RESERVE

The airport preserves and manages a corridor 75 metres from the creek's centre line which acts as an environmental buffer

zone along Rapid Creek. Development is excluded from this area. Over the past 10 years the airport has implemented weed control, vegetation rehabilitation and a water quality monitoring program to improve the creek habitat. The public can visit and enjoy 2.5 kilometres of walking trails, funded by the airport, that meander along the creek at the back of the Airport Resort, as well as interpretive signs and viewing platforms.

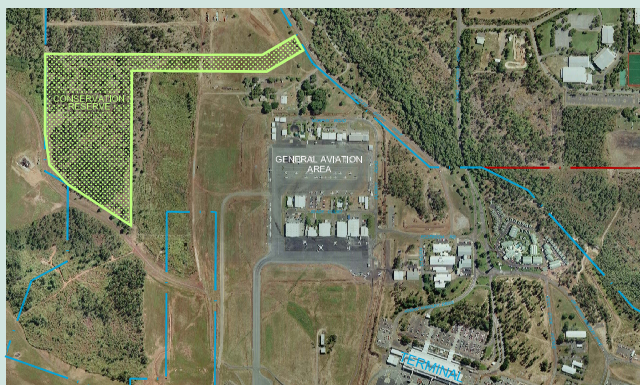
The airport has been a member of the Rapid Creek Catchment Advisory Committee since its inception. In 2006, the airport received a Power and Water Environmental Excellence Award for its work on the conservation and rehabilitation of Rapid Creek and its close working relationship with the community.

Rapid Creek Reserve



## CONSERVATION RESERVE

A long-standing partnership between Darwin International Airport and Greening Australia Northern Territory led to the creation of a Conservation Reserve on the upper catchment area of the airport and a corridor that links the Reserve to Rapid Creek. A Community Planting Day in March 2008 saw thousands of trees planted in the Reserve corridor. Revegetation, weed control and fire management will continue in the upcoming years.



Conservation Reserve

Darwin International Airport and Greening Australia NT won the Commercial/Industry Category of the 2008 Power and Water Melaleuca Environment Awards for this work. The awards were established to recognise outstanding achievement in environmental excellence in the Northern Territory.

### LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

The airport has produced a Landscape Master Plan to protect and enhance native flora and fauna. The Airport showcases outstanding landscape design through the "Matboerrma Garden" north of the airport carpark as well as around the Bunnings site and office precinct. This landscaping featured on the ABC's 'Gardening Australia' in June 2008.

A 20-metre native landscape buffer zone will also feature along Bagot and McMillans Roads from Osgood Drive to Charles Eaton Drive, providing a 2.1 kilometre corridor linking the Ludmilla and Rapid Creek catchments. The first stage of this project was completed with the construction of Bunnings.

### LUDMILLA CREEK CATCHMENT

The western extent of the airport's land forms part of the Ludmilla Creek Catchment. As part of the Airport Business Park, a storm water retention basin was installed to reduce peak stormwater discharges to match the capacity of the existing downstream stormwater infrastructure. Future airport developments will continue to match the high standards of stormwater management already implemented in the first stages of the Business Park.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Darwin International Airport has been a Greenhouse Challenge member since 2000 and engaged Connell Wagner to review its sustainability performance. This led to a Sustainability Policy, a staff action group, and collaboration with the Power and Water Corporation to reduce power and water consumption at the airport.

The airport is one out of four nominated as a case study for the Australian Airports Association to report to the Department of Climate Change against the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*.

### AIRPORT DEVELOPMENTS

All airport development is subject to strict environmental controls in order to minimise disturbance and observe high environmental management standards, in line with both the airport's corporate philosophy and the provisions of the Airports (Environmental Protection) Regulations 1997.

Impacts from the construction of buildings and other facilities and services may require management of a range of issues including flora and fauna, water quality, erosion and sediment control, along with cultural heritage, natural resource use and waste issues. In order to manage these issues and ensure that the impact of construction is minimised, a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) is implemented by the airport once a comprehensive risk assessment has been completed.



Eucalypt woodland in the Conservation Reserve with mixed understorey and featuring Cycad *cycas armstrongii*, an NT "vulnerable" species.

### WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Darwin International Airport believes in working closely with the community on environmental initiatives. The airport has hosted community planting days, and supported Clean Up Australia Day campaigns as well as the Clean Green Airport competition. The airport works closely with the Rapid Creek Landcare Group and helped fund the rehabilitation of areas of Rapid Creek on non-airport land.

We will continue to work in partnership with the community on environmental initiatives and strive for excellence in environmental management.

