

## GROOTE EYLANDT SOCIO-ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

### Regional Profile

Groote Eylandt is situated in the Gulf of Carpentaria, 630km from Darwin by air. The island belongs to the Anindilyakwa people, and is part of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve. It is the largest island in the Gulf, with an area of 2 687 square kilometres. The island is approximately 50 km from east to west and 60 km from north to south. It is low-lying with an average height above sea level of only 15 metres. The island has a pleasant tropical climate, with an average maximum temperature of 31.5C and average rainfall of 1177mm. The vegetation is typical of the tropical savannah woodland of Northern Australia. There are four major communities on Groote Eylandt

### Society

#### Population

At the time of the 2001 census, 2 426 people lived on Groote Eylandt, 1.1% of the total Northern Territory population. This represents a decrease of 5.1% since 1996 but an increase of 2.8% since 1991. In contrast to the population of the island as a whole, the Indigenous population is rapidly growing: by 9.1% since the 1996 Census and 23.9% since 1991.

In 2001 48% of population lived in Angurugu and 23% lived in Umbakumba, other major communities are Alyangula and Milyakburra (Bickerton Island).

The median age on the island has been increasing, from 24 in 1991 to 27 in 2001.



### Groote Eylandt Key Facts

Area	2687 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	2426
Labour force	926
Unemployment rate	15.1%
No of businesses	117
Companies	29
Sole traders	88
Mining production value 2004-05:	\$362m

Median population growth predictions for the island show numbers reaching 3 100 by 2021.

### Local Government

There are 3 local councils on the Island: Angurugu Community Government Council, Umbakumba Community Council Incorporated and Milyakburra Community Council.

### Economy

#### Labour Force

In March 2006 the labour force on Groote Eylandt numbered 926 persons. 786 of those were employed (including CDEP participants) while 140 were unemployed. The unemployment rate was 15.1% compared with the Northern Territory unemployment rate of 7.4% (DEWR). The labour force participation rate in 2001 was 48% compared with the Northern Territory average of 60%. Labour force statistics on Groote Eylandt are largely unaffected by fly-in fly-out workers. The lifting of the remote area exemption for Centrelink benefits will likely increase the number of employed and CDEP workers, while reducing the number of unemployed on the island.

Mining and government are the major industries on the island. In 2001, 30% of those employed worked in the mining industry, 19% in government administration, 10% in education and 5% in health and community services. The remaining 36% work in a range of other industries including personal and other services, construction, property and business services, retail trade, and transport and storage.

In 2001 the average wage and salary income of the island was 45% higher than the Northern Territory average.

#### Number of Businesses

There are 117 registered businesses on the island, of which 29 are companies and 88 are individuals/sole

traders. It is likely that over half of the individuals/sole traders are sub-contractors to the Groote Eylandt Mining Company (GEMCO). There is a range of businesses that supply the local community such as cafes, a travel agency, a hairdresser, car hire, hardware, homewares, electrical retail, cleaning services, IT consultants, etc.

## Tourism

A \$16 million eco-resort will be built by the Anindilyakwa Land Council on Groote Eylandt over the next year. Housing up to 150 guests, the four-star 'Dugong Beach Resort' will include 60 rooms, ranging from motel style business suites and family rooms to VIP executive bungalows. It will feature a safari tent fishing village, art and culture centre, restaurant and bar.

John Berryman of Group 1 Consultants has been contracted to design the resort with planning aided by Darwin developer, John Robinson. The project is set to open in August 2007.

Guests won't have to apply for permits as the cost will be built into the room rate. However, restrictions will be placed on access to some parts of the island.

The resort is expected to employ about 30 staff.

## Mining

In 1907 the South Australian Government Geologist noted manganese outcrops on Groote Eylandt, but it was not until 1964 that the BHP subsidiary, GEMCO was granted leases on the island and in 1966 the first shipment of manganese ore left the island. The discovery of manganese near Angurugu has dramatically changed the economy of Groote Eylandt. GEMCO is the largest employer on Groote Eylandt with a permanent workforce of roughly 250 people, of whom just under 40 are Indigenous. GEMCO supplies about 10 per cent of the world's manganese ore and is jointly owned by BHP Billiton (60%) and the Anglo American Corporation (40%).

Manganese production in 2004/05 was 3.0 million tonnes at \$120 per tonne, a total value of \$362 million. This is an increase from the previous year's production of 2.5 million tonnes for a total value of \$200 million.

## Roads

There are 20km of bitumen road on Groote Eylandt outside of the townships. The 48km Umbakumba to Angurugu road is maintained by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, while the other roads on the island are maintained by local government authorities.

A full maintenance grade of the Umbakumba to Angurugu road is scheduled for August 2006, while further grading will be conducted in November and March 2007, weather depending. Other maintenance work to be carried out in the near future includes: new

road signs and guideposts on culverts, minor culvert works, installation of two cells of culverts to improve the width of the road near Umbakumba and minor drainage works at various locations. The total expenditure of these works will be roughly \$65,000.

## Aquaculture

GEMCO and Anindilyakwa Land Council have both expressed interest in developing an aquaculture enterprise, such as mud crab farming on the island, possibly using ponds from the GEMCO mine. Staff from the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines will provide technical assistance.

## Wellbeing

### Health, Education and Police

Schools on Groote Eylandt include the Alyangula Area School, a pre-school and education centre in Angurugu and schools in Umbakumba and Milyakburra which are under the oversight of the Alyangula Area School.

There are health clinics in each of Alyangula, Angurugu and Umbakumba. The island is policed from a station in Alyangula.

### Fishing

Recreational fishing in the waters around Groote Eylandt is a population pastime for island residents, as well as attracting fishing charters from Nhulunbuy.

### Indigenous Housing

The Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport maintains a number of houses in Umbakumba Community (63 houses), Milyakburra (33 houses) and Angurugu (130 houses).

Umbakumba outstations usually have a high occupancy rate compared to other outstations in the Miwatj region. Milyakburra has had an exodus of people over the past two to three years and as a result does not have a housing shortage problem as do other communities in the region. Angurugu has a problem with poor housing stock and overcrowding; major capital works have been carried out over the past couple of years to try to alleviate this problem.

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