



Katherine East Region

**RAHC**  
REMOTE AREA HEALTH CORPS



*Community Profile*

**Ngukurr / Urapunga**

1st edition  
August 2009

This Community Profile provides you with information specific to the Katherine East Region of the Northern Territory.

The information has been compiled through a number of text and internet resources, and consultations with members of the local communities.

The first version of this Community Profile was prepared for RAHC by The Echidna Group and we acknowledge and thank Dr Terri Farrelly and Ms Bronwyn Lumby for their contribution.

Other sources include:

[http://www.gpnnt.org.au/client\\_images/209957.pdf](http://www.gpnnt.org.au/client_images/209957.pdf)

<http://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=page&p=58&m=22&sm=48&crumb=33>

<http://www.sunrise.org.au/sunrise/bottomroad.htm#Ngukurr>

[www.yugulmangi.nt.gov.au/community.htm](http://www.yugulmangi.nt.gov.au/community.htm)

RAHC would also like to acknowledge and express gratitude to the Aboriginal people of the Katherine East Region who have so generously shared aspects of their culture and communities for use in this Profile.

\*Please note: The information provided in this community profile is correct, to the best of RAHC's knowledge, at the time of printing. This community profile will be regularly updated as new information comes to hand.

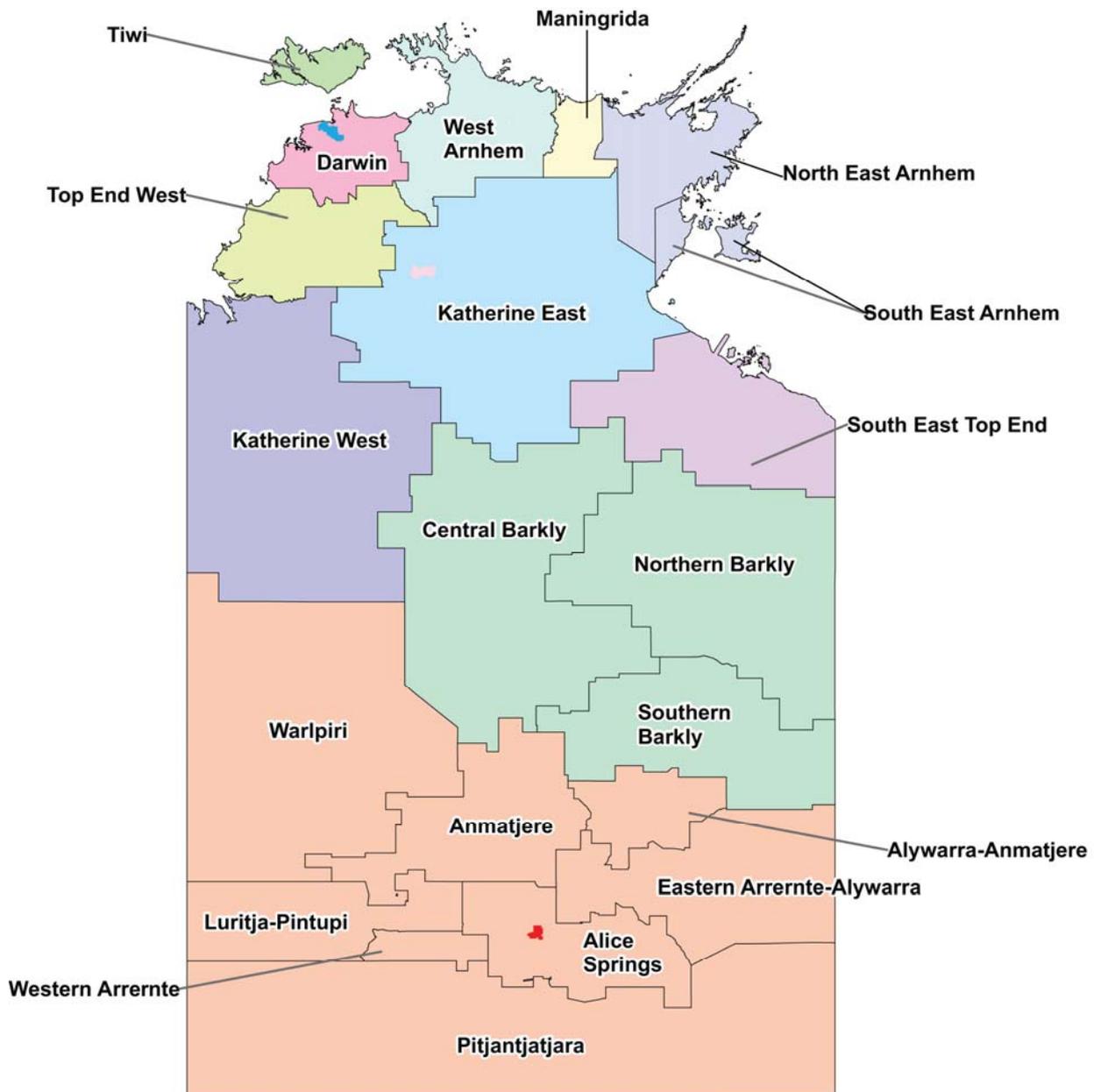
If you have any further information about this community that would be useful to add to this profile please contact RAHC via: [enquiries@rahc.com.au](mailto:enquiries@rahc.com.au) or call 1300 MYRAHC.

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# The Northern Territory



## Legend

	Alice Springs Urban		Katherine East
	Barkly		Katherine Urban
	Borroloola Area		Katherine West
	Central Australia		Maningrida
	Darwin Rural		Tiwi
	Darwin Urban		Top End West
	East Arnhem		West Arnhem

This map of the Northern Territory, divided into regions, has been adapted from the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) Program Management & Implementation Section (2008) Map of the Northern Territory.

The depicted areas are for the purpose of the Remote Area Health Corps Community Profiles alone, and do not represent any Aboriginal language group, land or cultural group boundaries.



# Ngukurr Area Profile

This map of the Katherine East Area has been taken from the map of the Northern Territory, adapted from the OATSIH Program Management & Implementation Section (2008) Map of the Northern Territory.



\*The population figures refer to the number of Aboriginal peoples living in the community, and are estimates only.

It should be noted that in many Aboriginal communities, population figures can fluctuate dramatically, due to a number of factors including seasonal changes (wet and dry seasons), and ceremonial activity.

Communities can also known by several names – this may include the European name given to it after colonisation, and several Aboriginal names.

Major Communities		
Name	Population	Resource Centre
Katherine	3000	Katherine Town Council
Larrimah		Roper Gulf Shire Council
Daly Waters		
Bulman (Gulin Gulin)	450	
Barunga	350	
Beswick	550	
Minyerri	400	
Ngukurr	1000	

Minor Communities	
Name	Resource Centre
Binjari	Katherine Town Council
Rockhole	Kalano Community Association
Eva Valley	Roper Gulf Shire Council
Weemol	
Urapunga (Rittarangu)	
Hodgson River Station	
Jilkminggan	
Mataranka Town Camp	

## Languages in the Region

The below languages are present in the Katherine East region. However it should be noted that as a result of colonisation, the growth of towns, and the transient nature of some Aboriginal peoples, there may be many different Aboriginal languages evident in a given area.

Gurrindji  
 Jawoyn  
 Kriol  
 Mayali  
 Ngaringman  
 Nunggubuyu  
 Warlpiri  
 Marra

Kriol is the contact language now spoken as a first language by most Aboriginal people across the region. Kriol is spoken in the Barkly and further north, but not generally far south of Tennant Creek.

### Aboriginal Interpreter Service

[www.dlghs.nt.gov.au/ais](http://www.dlghs.nt.gov.au/ais)  
 NT Dept of Local Govt & Housing  
 Central booking service 08 8999 8353

The AIS Provides 24 hours 7 days a week central booking service.



# Ngukurr / Urapunga

Ngukurr is an Aboriginal Community built on hilly ground alongside the Roper River in south east Arnhem Land. It is three hours by road from Katherine and approximately seven hours by road from Darwin. There are seven language groups represented in the Ngukurr community, and 21 clans but the universal language is Kriol, a recognised Aboriginal language, which includes variations on many English words.

The community government council runs the community and the nearby homeland communities of Urapunga and Hodgson Downs. The river country is spectacular, featuring rich growth, billabongs and wetlands, weathered sandstone formations and alluvial valleys. The area is rich in significant Aboriginal and European cultural sites.

The principal Aboriginal groups prior to contact with Europeans included the Alawa, the Binbingka, the Marra, the Ngarnji, the Wilangarra and the Yanyuwa. Ngukurr people are culturally strong with deep connections to their country. The Ngukurr Landcare Group works to improve the local environment, producing a thriving bush tucker garden in the community and are past winners of the National Landcare Award. During the wet season, access is often restricted to air or boat travel.

Temperatures range from dry season overnight lows of 10°C through to daytime highs of 40°C in the wet season.

The annual rainfall is 800-1000 mm.

## History

The traditional occupants of the area around Ngukurr are the Ngalakan speakers, giving their name to the hill on which the town is centred. Explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt named the Roper River in 1845, after one of the members of his expedition. In 1872 a depot was established on the river to unload materials for the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line. For a time the depot was home for some 300 people making it the largest European settlement in the Territory.

Paddle steamers brought supplies to the men working on the Telegraph and later to newly established cattle stations. The depot was the destination of the first overland cattle drive from Queensland and the Coast Track stock route was vital to pastoral development across northern Australia. Among the best-known local cattle stations were Hodgson Downs, Roper Valley and St Vidgeon. In the 1880s and 1890s the area gained a reputation as a wild outpost and police first set up a permanent presence in 1885.

There was extensive Aboriginal-European conflict, and in 1908 the Church of England established the Roper River Mission, site of the present town, as a refuge for the many different language groups. There was transitory military settlement at Roper Bar during World War II with the store established after the war. The Welfare Branch of the Commonwealth Government took responsibility for the mission in 1968 and the Yugal Mangi Community Government Council was formed in 1988, the same year the Ngukurr Community Education Centre was built.

## Outstations:

There are around 7 homeland centres (outstations) which are serviced by the Yugal Mangi Community Council.

## Name or number of clan/groups:

The main traditional owners are members of the Ponto clan, with Manbilila clan members also having a role.

## Governance

Governance is the responsibility of:

- (i) Yugal Mangi Community Council, for municipal service matters (under the NT's Local Government Act); and
- (ii) The Northern Land Council, for land related matters (under the Commonwealth's Aboriginal Land Rights(NT) Act 1976)

## Access to Community:

By road or sea or air. Road access is often not possible during the wet season when the Roper River rises. The airstrip is all weather bitumen. There are no regular commercial flights to Ngukurr, but the community owns a small airline. There is a barge service from Roper Bar to Ngukurr operated by the Ngukurr store.



## Ngukurr Community Services

- \* School – pre-school, primary and secondary classes;
- \* Women’s Centre;
- \* Centrelink Agent;
- \* Youth, Sport and Recreation program;
- \* Community swimming pool;
- \* Store – is also a bank agent and has EFTPOS facilities;
- \* Police – situated at Ngukurr;
- \* Airstrip – sealed, all weather with lights, and available all year round;
- \* Television and Radio coverage – Television: 7 Central, Imparja, ABC and SBS. Radio: ABC

## Ngukurr Health Centre

The Ngukurr Health Centre is managed by the Sunrise Health Service. RAHC has placed a number of health professionals in the Ngukurr Health Centre since the beginning of 2009.

### Opening Hours

8am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday (plus on-call for weekends and out of hours emergencies)

### Staffing

3 RANs, 2 Senior AHWs, 4 AHWs, 1 Trainee AHW, 1 Administrative Officer, 1 Administrative Assistant, 1 Driver, 1 Cleaner

### Doctor Days

A doctor visits the community up to four days per week

### Staff housing available in community

1 Doctor’s House and granny flat, 3 x 3 bedroom houses, 2 x 2 bedroom duplexes.



## Urapunga Health Centre

The Urapunga Health Centre is managed by the Sunrise Health Service. Urapunga has a population of around 60 people.

Health Professions visit from Ngukurr Health Centre.

### Opening Hours

8am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday (plus on-call for weekends and out of hours emergencies)

### Staffing

1 RAN and 1 AHW visit the community approximately one day per week, 1 Cleaner/Driver/Gardener based at community

### Doctor Days

A doctor visits the community one day every fortnight

### Staff housing available in community

No staff housing is currently available.



## Getting Advice

The following organisations and contact numbers may be useful in locating sources of advice about Ngukurr and Urapunga. Care has been taken to ensure these details are correct, however unfortunately some may change or be unattended.

Katherine West Health Board Aboriginal Corporation  
Unit 10 38 Riverbank Office Village Cnr Shea & First St Katherine NT 0851  
Ph: 08 8971 9300  
[webqueries@kwhb.com.au](mailto:webqueries@kwhb.com.au)  
[www.kwhb.com.au](http://www.kwhb.com.au)

*Provides health services to 7 communities outside of Katherine.  
Services include preventive health, maternal health, child health, chronic disease, mobile health team.*

Manyallaluk Aboriginal Corporation  
Eva Valley Tourist Park Roper River NT 0852  
Ph: 08 8975 4727

Northern Land Council  
Balamurra St Ngukurr NT 0852  
PMB 85 Ngukurr NT 0852  
Ph: 08 8975 4755  
5 Katherine Terrace Katherine NT 0850  
Ph: 08 8972 2799

Sunrise Health  
Po Box 371 Katherine NT 0851  
Ph: 08 8971 1120

*Provides services to 9 health centres located east of Katherine along the Arnhem Highway and the Roper Highway.  
Services include primary clinical care services, emergency care, health promotion, social support services, chronic disease management, nutrition programs, aged care programs, women's & maternal health, child health, aural health, men's health.*

*Barunga 08 8975 4501  
Binjari 08 8971 0970  
Bullman (Gullin Gullin – Weemol) 08 8975 4712  
Jilkminggan (Duck Creek) 08 8975 4741  
Manyallaluk (Eva Valley) 08 8975 4864  
Mataranka 08 8975 4547  
Miniyeri (Hodgson Downs) 08 8975 9959  
Ngukurr 08 8975 4688  
Wulgularr (Beswick) 08 8975 4527*

Yugul Mangi Community Government Council  
CMB 6 Ngukurr via Katherine NT 0852  
Ph: 08 8999 5511  
Ph: 08 8975 4656  
[ceo@yugulmangi.nt.gov.au](mailto:ceo@yugulmangi.nt.gov.au)  
[www.yugulmangi.nt.gov.au](http://www.yugulmangi.nt.gov.au)



