

Minjilang

Top End Region

Community Profile

Pronunciation: Min-jil-lang

Alternate names: Mindjalang

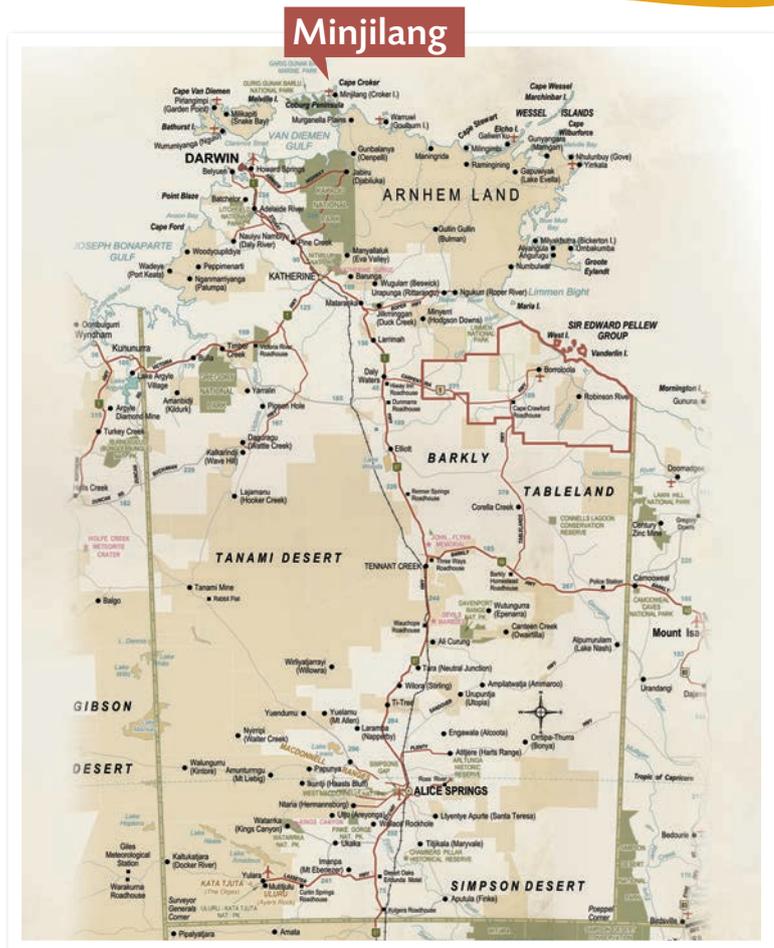
Location: On Croker Island, 230km north-east of Darwin in West Arnhem land.

NT region: West Arnhem

Population: 220 - 300

Access: Fly Tiwi provide a daily flight from Darwin. There is also a weekly freight barge from Darwin. No road access.

Language groups: Iwaidja, Gunwinkgu, Maung



Climate (Top End)

Season	Description	Temp. Range
Winter dry season (May to September)	Cooler and dry	15°C to 33°C
Humidity Range 20% – 50%.	Fine weather with no rain and much lower humidity than wet season and a possibility of becoming cold by Territory standards during June/July.	
Summer wet season (October to April)	Hot and humid	22°C to 35°C
Humidity Range 30% – 95%.	The build-up occurs from September with building humidity, intermittent lightning storms and downpours. Rains typically arrive December/January with regular heavy downpours and the possibility of cyclones.	



History

Minjilang, formerly Mission Bay, is the Aboriginal community located on Croker Island, some 235km northeast of Darwin. It is the only settlement on Croker Island apart from some small family outstations (only 2 of which are in use, 2013). The island is just a few kilometres from Cobourg Peninsula on the mainland and Minjilang is on the opposite, eastern side of the island.

The Macassan people had seasonal camps on the west coast of Croker Island. In 1845 Capt. John McArthur, commander of the Port Essington settlement on Cobourg Peninsula, suggested Croker Island as a superior, Singapore style alternative to Port Essington.

McArthur sent soldiers to Croker to recuperate from the illness and fever that plagued Port Essington. Later there were attempts to grow tobacco and Alf Brown, a trepang (sea cucumber) gatherer and Customs Officer for Bowen Strait, attempted goat farming on Croker.

In 1941 a Methodist mission was established on Croker Island to cater for part-Aboriginal children removed by the Welfare Department from their Aboriginal mothers (aka Stolen Generation).

Croker Island was a mission with up to 200 part-Aboriginal children with around twenty non-indigenous staff. There were five houses with girls and five houses with boys with a "sister" caring for the children. One of these sisters was Miss Margaret Somerville

who volunteered for work with the Methodist Mission and was sent to teach and care for these children. Margaret spent six months on Croker Island in 1941/2 until the Government and the Methodist Church ordered her to leave before the approaching Japanese captured her. She was told she had to take the children with her.

On April 7th 1942, she helped evacuate 95 children from Croker Island, to the mainland coast of Arnhem Land, where they were left to fend for themselves. They carried flour and made damper for their group. They built a raft to cross a crocodile infested river. With the children she started to march towards Darwin. The heat, flies and lack of all facilities made it difficult for the children to continue. A cattle station killed a bullock for meat. They drank rainwater. She wanted to go 2000 miles to Sydney and the journey would take six weeks to complete. Margaret and the 95 children journeyed by cattle truck to Alice Springs, then caught "The Ghan" going to Adelaide, Melbourne, Albury, Sydney.

After the war, Margaret returned to Croker Island with the children and continued as a 'Cottage Mother' for 24 years. The mission ran the cottage home system at Croker until 1967. Relatives of the mission children form part of the Minjilang population.

Community Life

Description of community:

Minjilang is located on Croker Island, 230km north east of Darwin in West Arnhem Land. The island has an area of 120km² and is the most northerly inhabited part of the Northern Territory. It is situated in the Arafura

Sea, and is home to abundant wildlife and flora that inhabit the beaches, wetlands and swamps and expansive native bushlands. Approximately 300 people live on Croker Island, of which 150 are the only speakers of the Iwaidja language. The island is close to the mainland, being only 2km off the Cobourg Peninsula. Cyclone Ingrid devastated Croker in 2005. Most of the community's building infrastructure is new since then.

Changes in population: There is some movement between the community and family outstations. As of 2013, only 2 outstations are in use – Daisy's and Mary's. It is a changeable situation. Residents from the outstations come into Minjilang for health care.

How is it affected by seasons: In wet season, the rain makes the low-grade dirt roads quite muddy and difficult to travel on.

Major landmarks or cultural factors: Croker is acknowledged by many as the birthplace of the Rainbow Serpent – one of the most important spiritual beings in tales of the Dreamtime.

Local industry/mine: None.

Tourism: Fishing camp.

Arts/crafts: No art culture on the island at present, however there are plans for an Indigenous-managed Arts/Cultural Centre.

****Please check with the Health Centre on arrival for sacred sites to avoid and health or social issues to be aware of.**

Governance

Local Government West Arnhem Shire **Telephone** (08) 8979 9444
Web www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au/minjilang

Community or other governance structures Minjilang Community Council **Telephone** (08) 8979 0299

Outstations Daisy's and Mary's

Permit System¹ All visitors must obtain a permit from the appropriate authority for the duration of their stay. Permits may be required for any person visiting the community including activities such as fishing, camping and visiting certain beaches.

Permit application for Minjilang is through Northern Land Council (NLC).

Web www.nlc.org.au

Infrastructure, facilities and services

Community

Church: Part of the community hall.

Community Halls and Sheds: Used for discos.

Post Office: None, but mail comes to the clinic Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

School: Mamaruni School (Pre-school to Upper School).

Library: None

Council Office: Centrelink

Women's Centre: None

Childcare Centre: Creche from 8:30am-12:30pm, brand new centre.

Aged Care Centre: None, but HACC program sends food around to the elderly.

Banking: ATM in the store

Community store **Minjilang Store** **Telephone** (08) 8979 0266

Store is owned and managed by the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA). Reasonable selection of general groceries and fresh produce. Supplies come in each week by barge. It is advisable to bring in as much fresh produce as possible and any specialty products/items required.

Web www.alpa.asn.au/pages/minjilang

- Opening hours** Monday to Friday 9am – 4.30pm
Saturday 9am - 11am

Other food outlets There is a small takeaway available at the store

Food orders Can be made through Toll Shipping and Coles Darwin. Also, a delivery can be made to Hardy Aviation by 7am Wednesdays for District Medical Office (DMO) plane

Toll: **Telephone** 1 800 220 436

Coles: **Telephone** (08) 8941 8055

Hardy: **Telephone** (08) 8928 9230

Recreational facilities Fishing, community sports facilities and ovals, walking, birdlife, wild horses, wetlands.

Commercial accommodation Shire accommodation **Telephone** (08) 8979 0299

¹ RAHC HPs are not required to obtain permits for their placement as they are exempt under legislation related to the Emergency Response.

Fuel	Available at the store.	
Mechanic	None	
Police station	Two person station. Bags will be searched on landing.	Telephone (08) 8979 0632
Alt. police contact	Gunbalanya	Telephone (08) 8979 0180
Other	Community Night Patrol	Telephone (08) 8979 9444

Telephone/internet/mail

Mobile phone²	No mobile phone service on the island.	
Internet	Internet access is available at the Health Centre for reasonable personal use.	
Other	Each house has a landline.	

Alcohol

Alcohol – not allowed³ Minjilang is a dry community. This applies to everyone, including visitors.

Access

Road	Darwin: No road access. Access for vehicles is via Barge from Darwin. Roads on the island are unsealed.
Air	<p>Facilities: Registered airstrip with pilot-activated solar lighting. 11kms from community. All-year access.</p> <p>Darwin (1 hour⁴): Fly Tiwi provide a daily flight Monday to Saturday. This flight is the only regular passenger transport.</p> <p>Other: Doctor's plane weekly (Wednesday).</p>

Health Centre

Health service	Department of Health (DoH)	Telephone (08) 8979 0229 Web www.health.nt.gov.au Email minjilang.clinicmgr@nt.gov.au
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager 1 (and RAN) • Remote Area Nurse 1 • Medical Practitioner Visiting District Medical Officer (DMO) • Aboriginal Health Worker 1 • Aboriginal Community Worker 1 • Administration Officer 0.5 • Driver/Gardener/Cleaner 0.5 • Other: - 	

² Telstra 3G/Next G are typically the only mobile services that work in more remote parts of the Northern Territory. See link - <http://telstra.com.au/mobile-phones/coverage-networks/our-coverage/>

³ It is an offence to consume or bring alcohol into a dry community in the Northern Territory

⁴ Approximate travel time one-way

Facilities	Health Centre opened in 2006. Two treatment rooms, dedicated dental area, paediatric room, separate women's and men's consulting areas and an emergency room.
Operating hours	Monday to Friday 8am – 5pm
On call	After hours, weekends and public holidays, an Aboriginal Health Worker or nurse is on call for emergencies. A Remote Medical Practitioner is on call 24 hours for telephone consultations and evacuations. On call is shared week about.
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary health care • Antenatal and post natal care • Child Health program • Immunisation • Healthy school aged kids program • Preventable chronic disease program • Well women's and well men's screening • Infectious and communicable disease prevention and control.
Medical Records System⁵	PCIS
Vehicles	The Health Centre maintains a Toyota Troop Carrier that has been converted for use as an ambulance **Note: All Troop Carriers are 4WD, manual and take diesel fuel
GP	District Medical Officer (DMO) visits one day per week
Visiting services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventable chronic disease public health nurse • Occupational Therapist • Physiotherapist • Nutritionist • Preventable Chronic Disease (PCD) Public Health Nurse • Women's Health Educator • Audiologist • Podiatrist • Maternal, Child and Youth Health team • Dentist • Dental Therapist • Optician • Optometrist • Mental Health team • Aged & Disability team • Family and Children's Services.
Acute care	A DMO is on call 24 hours for telephone consultations and evacuations. Emergency evacuations can be made to Darwin via Care Flight. Visits from Obstetrician/ Gynaecologist, Paediatrician, Surgeon, Physician, Ophthalmologist.
Other	Pregnant women birth in Darwin.

⁵ Training should be arranged before your arrival in the community

Accommodation

Accommodation Three bedroom house, fenced, walking distance to clinic
****Note: Sharing of facilities may be required**
Dental Teams – 20 minutes away at the fishing camp, shared bathroom facilities and cabin as accommodation (breakfast & dinner provided)

Facilities Usual domestic amenities including microwave, fridge, oven/stove, washing machine, TV and split system air-conditioning.

Linen Provided by NT DoH

Vehicles

Vehicle No vehicle is provided for personal use.

Policy NT DoH has a strict policy on vehicle use. Any non-clinical use is not acceptable.

What to pack for placement

Clothes Possibility of cool nights in middle of year, so light warm clothing is useful. In wet season (October – March), clothing for very hot, humid days – loose cotton clothing.
Please refer to this website for information on appropriate clothing to wear whilst out in a community.
http://ntgpe.org/wp_site/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Appropriate-Clothing-2.pdf

Supplies Bring any specialty foods and a small quantity of fresh food.
****Note: Please be mindful of weight restrictions on plane travel.**

Personal effects Bring a hat, sturdy shoes, insect repellent, sunscreen and toiletries.

Other tips or relevant information

Other tips/relevant information Be prepared for variable standard of accommodation in communities. A sleeping bag sheet insert is a good idea for protection against biting insects.

Disclaimer

This information is prepared in good faith and to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. However, Aboriginal communities, like any community, can change as the population shifts and people move on. Please contact the RAHC Regional Coordinator or the Health Centre Manager to confirm any key issues or concerns you may have ahead of your RAHC placement. RAHC also values any input and up to date information or photos you can provide to improve our Community Profiles.