


Desert Knowledge Precinct

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23

Desert Knowledge Australia
Connecting people, knowledge, and opportunities.





Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) acknowledges and pays respect to the Arrernte people, as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the Desert Knowledge Precinct stands.

We recognise the rich and diverse cultures, languages, and histories of the First People, who have cared for this land for countless generations.

We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first knowledge holders of this land.

We honour the Elders, the Apmereke-artweye (traditional owners) and the Kwertengerle (custodians)

past, present, and emerging, and we acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. We stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities, committed to reconciliation, justice, and the ongoing journey of healing and respect for all.

DKA is committed to working with Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation (LAAC), as the representative body of the Native Title Holders of Alice Springs. Through our Indigenous Land Use Agreement DKA and LAAC are committed to delivering economic and social development opportunities for Arrernte people.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

SERA BRAY



Werte

(Hello – in Arrernte)

I am pleased and proud to be presenting this report on behalf of the Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) Board of Directors. It has been a busy year for the Board as we engaged in the strategic refocus and refresh as recommended by the Northern Territory Government's Review. Our CEO, Jimmy Cocking and the team have been doing an exceptional job in lifting the profile of DKA and the Precinct and developing new partnerships to activate and increase the utilisation of our important community assets.

DKA has been undergoing a transformation with a new strategic plan developed this year. Our new vision was shaped by the Board through workshops held in November with Boston Consulting Group. 'Sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert and arid communities.' reflects the Board's focus on developing the Precinct and building partnerships to support economic and social priorities in the region.

The Board established a Review Implementation Committee to support the CEO and our team in progressing the multiple and concurrent projects including the Strategic Plan, Precinct Masterplan,

Tenure, Zoning and Tenancies assessment, Desert Knowledge Research Institute Strategy, Cultural Centre planning and how DKA can support better outcomes in remote communities.

The Board also established a Cultural Centre Committee to support the development of a cultural facility and deeper engagement with Arrernte people as part of our Indigenous Land Use Agreement. This Committee will provide a platform for working collaboratively to increase opportunities for Arrernte and other First Nations on the Precinct.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Rede Ogden for his 8 years of service as a Board Director. His contribution to the Board both as a strong local voice and exceptional knowledge of solar power was much appreciated and we wish him well. I also want to thank local businessman, Brad Bellette, who joined us for the first half of this year before moving on due to changing priorities and availability.

DKA is on an upward trajectory. The Board welcomes the strengthened relationship between DKA and Native Title Holders, Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation. We look forward to deepening this relationship as we seek to grow engagement with Arrernte and First Nations people on the Precinct. The relationship with Desert Knowledge Research Institute (an associated entity of DKA, with a separate Board and Research Committee) is growing as we work together to grow research partnerships that benefit communities and create impact.

Lastly, I want to thank my Board Director colleagues Chris Croker, Chris Fry, Vanessa Elliott, Patricia Miller OAM, Dawn Ross, Mandy Taylor, Gary Powell and Graeme Smith who have made themselves available to support me and the CEO as we embark on this next chapter in DKA's 20th year. In 2023-24, the Board will be prioritising succession as the terms of some Directors conclude. We look forward to a deeper relationship with the NT and Federal Governments as we navigate the challenges and opportunities for the region.

Thanks for reading.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

JIMMY COCKING



2022-23 has been a transformative year for Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA). As CEO, I am proud of our achievements to date. The comprehensive strategic repositioning and refresh driven by the Board and supported by the Northern Territory Government's Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade has brought focus and momentum to the team. The co-designed vision of *'sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert and arid communities'* reflects the objects of the *Desert Knowledge Australia Act 2003 (NT)* (DKA Act) and resonates locally, nationally, and internationally.

The Strategic Plan, developed in partnership with Boston Consulting Group, considers two focus areas, 1) Precinct Development and 2) Regional Initiatives. The development of accommodation, activating the Precinct and strengthening cultural engagement with the site. On the regional side, developing a research centre to support community resilience, accelerating the roll-out of renewable energy and supporting sustainable service systems have been prioritised.

The co-designed Master Plan by Jensen Plus has prioritised accommodation, childcare and the development of an events and cultural centre. These enabling projects will leverage the opportunities at the Precinct and increase the value for the campus and the wider community. The focus for the DKA team from here will be building the business case for each of these opportunities and preparing the Precinct for development.

The strategic repositioning of DKA included the development of a strategy to aggregate research outcomes in central Australia. The Desert Knowledge Research Institute (DKRI) is an associated entity of DKA. Its independent Board and Research Committee resolved that the research areas of focus will be climate adaptation, water, renewable energy, housing and workforce development. The development of a Strategic Plan for DKRI by Research Strategies Australia has provided a platform for scaling up DKRI and establishing a Research Centre or Living Lab on the Precinct.

CEO ACTIVITIES



(L-R) Minister Kristy McBain,
Jimmy Cocking, Marion Scrymgour MP



CEO, Jimmy Cocking with
Minister for DKA, Hon Chanston Paech



Supporting better outcomes in remote Australia was identified as a key priority in the 2021-22 NTG Review. The Outcomes in Remote Communities work identified DKA's role as an intermediary playing several key roles including collaborator, facilitator, researcher, advocate, monitoring and evaluation – dependent on the need and the issue or place. The report provides a strong basis for DKA to be around the table to support collaboration and maximising the impact of larger complex social and community development projects and initiatives.

Renewable energy continues to be a key focus of DKA's activities with the Alice Springs Future Grid and Intyalheme Projects are both set to wrap up in November 2023. The learnings and the trusted collaborative partnerships will shape what the future holds in this space, not just for DKA but for the energy transformation goals towards 50% renewable energy and beyond.

Codes 4 Life continues to grow with funding for workshops in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek offered until 2025. The recruitment of more Aboriginal men into the team has been a highlight with evaluation of the program and its scalability is being invested in by the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

The activity in the Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) and across the Precinct has increased substantially. This has been a direct result of taking a strategic approach to grow the depth and breadth of venue users. The team are always exploring ways to improve the offering and balance profitability with accessibility. DKA's support to enable the establishment of the NT Indigenous Business

Network, Central Australia Hub is an example of our approach and willingness to make things work.

Being a year of change, the DKA team turned over as people moved on and projects were completed. I want to thank all who have contributed to DKA over the course of the year and acknowledge our team who has worked hard and smart to ensure DKA is stepping up to the opportunities for growth and development.

As CEO, I am excited by the opportunities for DKA and the Precinct over the next few years. It is an ambitious agenda, but it needs to be. We are not alone in this, and we need to work effectively with partners to effect change. We will be engaging with Arrernte people more deeply as we develop the Precinct to support cultural leadership and expression. We will engage with a broad range of government and non-government agencies to support work to improve economic and social outcomes for desert communities.

I want to extend my thanks to Chairperson, Sera Bray and the Board who have been incredibly supportive through this period of strategic transformation, and I look forward to working with them to deliver on the plans.

Kele mwerre





DKA OVERVIEW

Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) is a statutory corporation of the Northern Territory, established in 2003 to encourage learning, socioeconomic development, research, and environmental sustainability for deserts and arid lands.

The *Desert Knowledge Australia Act 2003 (NT)* outlines the objectives of the organisation:

- to encourage and facilitate education and training, research, commerce and technology that is relevant to the health, well-being, sustainable economic and social development and improved livelihoods of all communities in deserts and arid lands;
- to develop wealth creation activities in deserts and arid lands in a manner that promotes harmony in and between communities in deserts and arid lands while maintaining the economy and environment of deserts and arid lands in an ecologically sustainable manner and the culture and identity of those communities;
- to encourage and facilitate the formation of partnerships, joint ventures, alliances, networks and other cooperative arrangements for the purpose of achieving the objects specified in paragraphs (a) and (b);

DKA is committed to developing opportunities to build a stronger and more connected desert and remote Australia.

21st century approach

Over the almost 20-year history of DKA much has been achieved:

- Signing the Indigenous Land Use Agreement with Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation.
- Developing the Desert Knowledge Precinct and Business Innovation Centre through partnerships with the Desert People's Centre, Batchelor Institute, Centre for Appropriate Technology, CSIRO, and the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre.
- From 2002-2014 the Outback Business Network connected businesses from Broken Hill to Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta to Mt Isa.
- The Desert Leadership Program alumni of more 50 leaders continue to lead in government, community organisations, and business across the region.

FY22/23

BIC Visitors


 **Approx**
4,200 pax

Number of events in the BIC

****Some events booked multiple days****

 **205 events**

Number of Days Booked

 **230 days**

out of 250 bookable business days

- Partnerships to support the uptake and development of renewable energy through the DKA Solar Centre, Intyalheme Future Energy Centre and Alice Springs Future Grid.
- The Codes 4 Life - Angka Arretye: Telling it Straight Men's Cultural Identity and Leadership Program has grown from an idea to a successful and expanding program.
- Annual International Women's Day events and domestic violence prevention programs.
- The DKAccelerator Pilot supported the growth of at least 6 Indigenous businesses in central Australia and developed a replicable program.
- Hosted thousands of delegates, students, politicians, and researchers from across Australia and the world.
- First Nations, Aboriginal countrymen and women from across the desert country feel safe and enjoy meeting at the Desert Knowledge Precinct.



DKA has waxed and waned over the years as governments, budgets and policy priorities have changed. DKA is subject to Ministerial Direction, administered under the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, has its financial statements audited by the NT Auditor-General and requires the approval of the Treasurer to enter business partnerships and joint ventures. DKA holds the Crown Land Lease for the 73 hectare, Desert Knowledge Precinct.

Renewed purpose

DKA has been reviewed by the NT Government twice, one independent review in 2013-14 and an internal departmental review by the NT Government in 2020-21. The most recent review focused on the strategic direction and operations of DKA. In 2022, for the very first time, the Northern Territory Chief Minister and Cabinet appointed a Minister for Desert Knowledge Australia. This was alongside the appointment of new board members, Chair, and the recruitment of the new CEO. These leadership changes allowed DKA to undertake an extensive strategic and master planning work, with the support of the Northern Territory Government, to shape its direction towards 2025. The renewed DKA Strategic Plan was completed in December 2022.

This Annual Report will outline the initial steps taken to implement the strategic initiatives as detailed in the strategic plan. Guided by the DKA Act and the new strategic plan, and under the leadership of the Board, Chief Executive, and the team, a clear path forward was established, defining DKA's renewed Vision:

“Sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert and arid communities”.

Towards this vision, DKA implemented the increase in outreach activities, increased engagement with stakeholders and importantly worked on reviving precinct partnerships to enable progress from existing capability and networks. The ‘short-term pillar’ speaks to a strengthened local and regional environment, education, and economic ecosystems by expanding the use base and increasing on-site engagement.

Moving forwards

In late 2022, DKA supported the establishment of the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network's Central Australia Hub at the Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) at DKA. Following this, several other organisations that aligns with DKA's renewed Vision, have also based themselves at the BIC including, NPY Empowered Communities, Crest NT and Response Training, Northern Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation, and Rattlepod Landscaping. Indigenous Business Australia and CASSE Australia (Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment) continued their tenancy at DKA through 22-23 while both Kings Narrative and StickMob Studio found alternative arrangements.

While these activities have focused on the BIC, a complete Desert Knowledge Precinct Masterplan was developed to drive larger precinct development with a primary focus on on-site accommodation to support Batchelor Institute students and regional needs. Precinct tours have also been revived, promoting the Precinct as a place for business and community events supporting cultural and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) engagement activities.

With respect to wellbeing, Codes 4 Life is focused on growing the program and evaluating its impact. The Respected Women's Program has conducted two consultation workshops in 2023.

Finally, on DKA's internal operations, we are undergoing an update of compliance requirements, policies and procedures, and activation of existing MOU's and agreements like the Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

While the ‘long-term pillar’ focuses more on operations as facilitator, promoter and auspicing agency. The Alice Springs Future Grid and Intyalheme programs are moving through their operational phase into a project completion phase. DKA is taking stock of the learnings and developing a format to successfully run backbone operations for consortia between government, business, and community.

VISION AND PURPOSE



DKA's Vision

"Sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert & arid communities".

DKA's Purpose

To facilitate education, research, and activities relevant to the wellbeing of desert communities.

From *Desert Knowledge Australia Act 2003 (NT)*

- a. to encourage and facilitate education and training, research, commerce and technology that is relevant to the health, well-being, sustainable economic and social development and improved livelihoods of all communities in deserts and arid lands;
- b. to develop wealth creation activities in deserts and arid lands in a manner that promotes harmony in and between communities in deserts and arid lands while maintaining the economy and environment of deserts and arid lands in an ecologically sustainable manner and the culture and identity of those communities;
- c. to encourage and facilitate the formation of partnerships, joint ventures, alliances, networks, and other cooperative arrangements



OUR COMMITTEES

Finance and Risk Management Committee (FARMC) - current

Chris Croker (Director, DKA) (Committee Chair)	Jimmy Cocking (CEO, DKA)
Chris Fry (Director, DKA)	Jeanette Elliot (Finance, DKA)
Position Vacant – Independent Member	Kate Wiles (EA, DKA) (Committee Secretary)

Nominations Committee - current

Sera Bray (Chairperson, DKA) (Committee Chair)	Mandy Taylor (Director, DKA)
Chris Fry (Director, DKA)	Jimmy Cocking (CEO, DKA)
Elissa Hansen (Company Secretary) (Committee Secretary)	

Precinct Development Committee (PDC) – current

The Precinct Development Committee is comprised of the 3 major Desert Knowledge Precinct partners: Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA), Centre for Appropriate Technologies (CfAT), and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)

Jimmy Cocking (CEO, DKA) (Committee Chair)	Vicki Young (BIITE)	Peter Renehan (CEO, CfAT)
Jeanette Elliot (DKA)	Evelyn Schaber (BIITE)	Adrian Mitchell (CfAT)
Kate Wiles (DKA) (Committee Secretary)	Kathryn Gilbey (BIITE)	David Stuart (CfAT)

NTG Review Implementation Sub – Committee – *finalised, task completed*

This Committee met fortnightly for almost 12 months to oversee and support the implementation of the NTG review recommendations. It provided great value to the staff and a similar committee to support the implementation of the strategic plan and the delivery of the strategic initiatives.

Sera Bray (Chairperson, DKA)	Chris Croker (Director, DKA)
Gary Powell (Director, DKA)	Chris Fry (Director, DKA)
Karan Bhuta (Strategy, DKA)	Jimmy Cocking (CEO, DKA)

First Nations Cultural Centre Sub – Committee – *met once in 2022-23*

Vanessa Elliott (Director, DKA) (Committee Chair)	Chris Croker (Director, DKA)
Dawn Ross (Director, DKA)	Chris Fry (Director, DKA)
Pat Miller (Director, DKA)	Graeme Smith (Director, DKA)
Mandy Taylor (Director, DKA)	Jimmy Cocking (CEO, DKA)
Gary Powell (Director, DKA)	Kate Wiles (EA, DKA) (Committee Secretary)



OUR ORGANISATION

DKA Board 2022-23

CHAIRPERSON



Sera Bray

DIRECTORS



Chris Fry



56% women 44% men



67% Aboriginal People



Dr. Patricia Miller AO



Gary Powell

DEPUTY CHAIR



Chris Crocker



Dawn Ross



Vanessa Elliott



Graeme Smith



Rede Ogden
End of Term in 2022



Brad Bellette
Appointed by Minister
July 2022 - Resigned, Jan 2023



Mandy Taylor



DKA Team 2022-23



60% women 40% men



20% Aboriginal People



Jimmy Cocking
Chief Executive Officer



Jeanette Elliot
Corporate Services
Manager



Kate Wiles
Executive Assistant



Karan Bhuta
Strategic Projects Manager



Micha Bartlett
Codes 4 Life Project
Support Officer



Sivan Debeljakovic
Comms Officer



Emma Lake
Respected Women



Cedrick Pacis
Corporate Services



Hannah Farrow
Future Grid Project Officer



Nina Kolder
Business Manager and
Programs, until May 2023



OUR PARTNERSHIPS

One of Desert Knowledge Australia's key objectives is 'to encourage and facilitate the formation of partnerships, joint ventures, alliances, networks and other cooperative arrangements for the purpose' of achieving better outcomes for people living in deserts and arid lands.



Prof Scott Bowman AO, CDU, Vice-Chancellor with Mr Jimmy Cocking, DKA CEO at the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding

In line with this spirit of collaboration, DKA has cultivated similar mutually beneficial relationships. In 2018, DKA supported the establishment of the Desert Knowledge Research Institute (DKRI), an Approved Research Institute and Deductible Gift Recipient charity. DKRI has an independent Board and Research Committee. The DKA CEO is the Executive Director of the DKRI and as such, the DKA Board and DKRI have drafted a governance

framework agreement to guide the respective and collaborative work between the two organisations. This document will be finalised in late 2023 and will enable DKA and DKRI to scale-up together to address key issues like renewable energy, climate adaptation and water.

In line with this spirit of collaboration, DKA has cultivated similar mutually beneficial relationships with the Central Desert Regional Council and Charles Darwin University. These Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are centered around the common goal of enhancing outcomes for remote and regional areas of Central Australia. A noteworthy example of future collaborative efforts includes the establishment of an Arid Zone Living Lab.

Within the precinct, DKA is dedicated to revitalising working relationships among Precinct Partners, comprising both existing and new collaborators. The Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network, for instance, is poised to inaugurate its Central Australian Hub in early 2023-24. Numerous events have already taken place on-site including workshops, Blak Markets and preparation for NAIDOC week. Concurrently, DKA is actively engaged with the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Batchelor Institute to shape the future of the Precinct. This encompasses the development of the Precinct Master Plan, accommodation, increased utilisation of the Precinct, shared events, and workshops.



Ekistica, an Aboriginal owned (by Centre for Appropriate Technology) engineering firm has collaborated with DKA on multiple renewable energy projects for over 15 years. The DKA Solar Centre, Intyalheme Future Energy Centre (Collaboration with NTG, DKA, Power Water, CDU, Ekistica) and the Alice Springs Future Grid (Project partners: CSIRO, Power Water, DKA, Ekistica, Territory Generation, Jacana Energy and Arid Lands Environment Centre) have been key regional renewable energy projects. These innovative and collaborative initiatives rely on everybody working on each other's strengths and building trust and inter-operational capability. DKA looks forward to working with our partners in 2023-24 on version 3.0 for the DKA Solar Centre and the next steps for renewables in the region.

DKA is working to build a thriving co-working space at the Business Innovation Centre. Although strictly tenants, DKA looks to work collaboratively with NT Indigenous Business Network, CASSE, Empowered Communities, Rattlepod, Kings Narrative and other precinct partners to establish an impactful and engaging workplace.

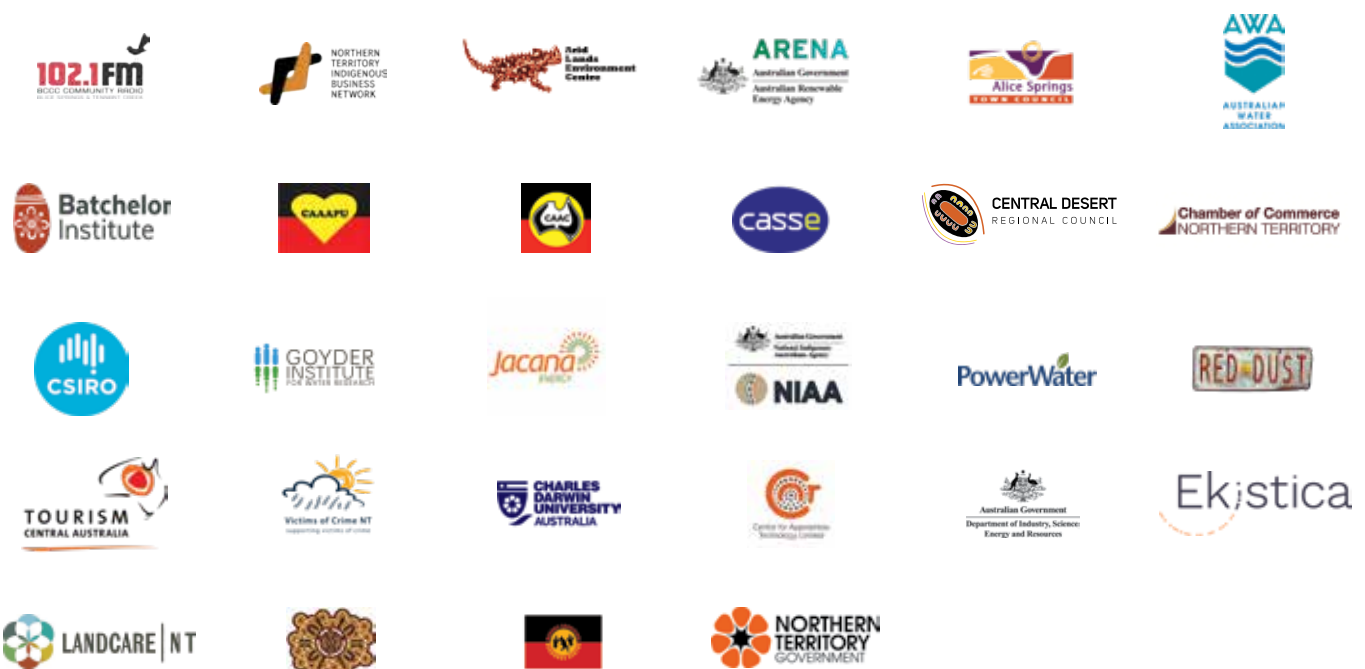
As our new strategic plan and Masterplan were developed, DKA has presented at executive meetings of the Central Land Council (CLC), Department of Industry Tourism and Trade (DITT), Central Desert Regional Council (CDRC), Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation (LAAC) and presented to a wide range of visitors to the Precinct including parliamentarians both at the Territory and Federal level. The DKA CEO is booked to

present and attend a range of events in the second half of 2023 including the Darwin Living Lab Symposium and Facing North in Canberra.

DKA has established a new partnership with the Goyder Institute for Water Research. DKA worked with Goyder Institute and the National Water Grid to organise the Working Together for Better Water in the Bush workshop and forum which brought together representative utilities from WA, SA, Qld and NT along with water health regulators from the same jurisdictions, water industry professionals and community residents to determine the priorities for delivery of safe drinking water for remote First Nations communities. This workshop was held at the Desert Knowledge Precinct and was hailed a success at the time. What comes next will determine its impact on the wellbeing of community members.

DKA continues to cultivate partnerships with organisations committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for people living in desert and arid communities. DKA is increasingly looking to host students, events and group bookings to support knowledge exchange, skill development, and educational advancement. DKA is always looking for opportunities to contribute to our mission of promoting desert knowledge and fostering sustainable development in the region.

Partnerships and Memberships





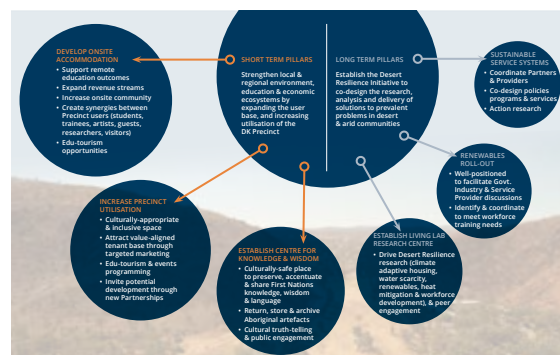
STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) has undergone a significant transformation, guided by its commitment to promote learning, socioeconomic development, research, and environmental sustainability in desert and arid Australia. Established in 2003, DKA's mission is determined by the *Desert Knowledge Australia Act 2003 (NT)*, focusing on community well-being and sustainable economic development.

Following a 2021 review by the Northern Territory Government, DKA embarked on a strategic plan aimed at implementing eight core strategic recommendations and four operational recommendations, backed by NT Government funding. This comprehensive review encompasses various aspects, including DKA's role as an auspicing agency, the Desert Knowledge Research Institute (DKRI) strategy, outcomes in remote communities, land tenure review, and the development of the Cultural Centre on the Desert Knowledge Precinct (DKP).

DKA's renewed vision is

“sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert and arid communities.”



DESERT KNOWLEDGE AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

Sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert & arid communities



Our strategic focus centres on strengthening local and regional ecosystems through tenant attraction, accommodation development, and the establishment of a First Nations Knowledge & Wisdom centre on-site. Additionally, DKA is launching a Desert Resilience Initiative to address critical issues, including water security, renewable energy, climate adaptation and supporting sustainable service systems.

To support these initiatives, DKA is evolving its operating model, building key partnerships, enhancing capabilities, diversifying funding sources, and establishing key metrics for measuring impact. The organisation aims to accelerate the development of the Precinct ecosystem for immediate gains while concurrently building long-term relationships and securing funding for sustainable solutions. The DKA





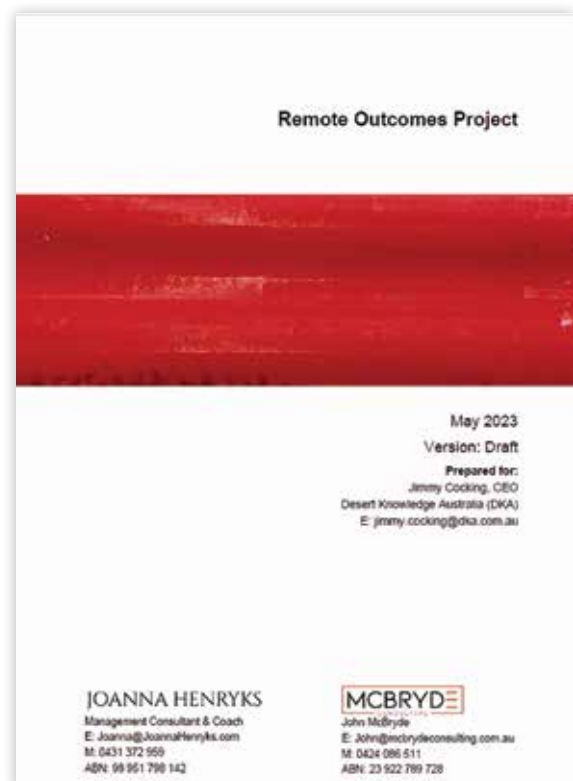
Masterplan envisions the Precinct as a hub for innovation, bridging Aboriginal culture, science, technology, and sustainability. It emphasises collaboration with stakeholders to create a vibrant, sustainable, and culturally rich environment. The plan outlines various sub-precincts, including cultural camps, an innovation demonstration facility, and accommodation.

Accommodation on the Precinct will serve students, researchers, and staff, offering comfort, security, and cultural connections. Sustainability and research opportunities are integral to the accommodation development, aligning with the broader mission.



The DKRI Strategic Plan underscores the institute's commitment to improving the lives of desert communities through research, focusing on water security, renewable energy, housing, and economic development in remote areas. DKRI aims to actively involve desert communities in the research process to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

The Outcomes in Remote Communities report positions DKA as a key solutions broker for central Australia. This role will see DKA facilitating improvements in social, environmental, and economic outcomes. The report advocates for collaborative multi-organizational partnerships and innovative solutions tailored to remote communities' unique needs.



Lastly, the Land Tenure Review recognizes the complexities of leasing arrangements on the Precinct and highlights the need for an updated Aboriginal Area Protection Authority (AAPA) Certificate and zoning changes to facilitate further development.

These strategic initiatives represent DKA's commitment to creating a sustainable, vibrant, and culturally rich hub for innovation and research, benefiting desert and arid communities and the broader region.



PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT



1. On-site Accommodation

The Desert Knowledge Precinct Masterplan was collaboratively developed with input from Antulye Arrernte Elders, Precinct Partners, and other key stakeholders, envisioning an inclusive gathering place on country.

The Masterplan includes:

- Accommodation for students and visitors,
- A technology demonstration facility,
- Cultural camps,
- Increased office space developments,
- A childcare centre,
- Bushfoods centre; and
- A Cultural events space.

These will be serviced with an upgraded café, shop, laundry, bus route, and camping sites.

As part of this initiative, DKA has contracted consulting architects Susan Dugdale and Associates (SDA) to draw up a Masterplan for accommodation within the Precinct. SDA's Accommodation Masterplan aligns with the guiding principles and activation principles set forth in the DKA Precinct Masterplan, offering a cohesive framework for evaluating the accommodation proposal. This report provides an overview of stakeholder aspirations, details the

consultation process, explores the guiding and activation principles, addresses materiality and construction methods, highlights research opportunities, outlines necessary infrastructure, and concludes with recommendations for the design, development, and construction of the accommodation. The proposed residential accommodations are intended to serve students, researchers, and staff from outside Mparntwe – Alice Springs, providing contemporary facilities that prioritise physical comfort, security, cultural connections to the land, and a visual connection to the surrounding landscape, particularly the striking MacDonnell Ranges to the north of the DKA Precinct. The materiality and construction systems section emphasises sustainable building practices, while the innovation and research section explore opportunities for research collaborations integrated into the on-site accommodation development.

DKA continues to advocate for the development of on-site precinct accommodation, through increased conversations, it is becoming clear that there are two distinct accommodation requirements: for students and another for business travellers, cultural activities and other potential customers. Through support from the NTG, DKA will develop a business case for accommodation development in 2023-24.



Sorry Day Event at the Garden of Reflection



Master-Apprentice Indigenous Language Revival Conference at the Desert People's Centre in the Desert Knowledge Precinct



Live music at the DKP's inaugural Buffel Festival



Outdoor function at the Business and Innovation Centre (BIC)

2. Precinct Utilisation

DKA is actively cultivating a tenant base aligned with its values and increasing community engagement at the Precinct through several strategic initiatives. These efforts are aimed at maintaining the Precinct's status as an inclusive and culturally welcoming space on Arrernte country, emphasizing its historical role as a neutral gathering place for knowledge exchange. This involves targeted marketing to boost corporate occupancy and conference bookings, expanding education offerings, creating an annual calendar of Precinct events, fostering regular engagement and knowledge-sharing among Precinct Partners, and solidifying DKA's reputation as a facilitator, collaborator, and advocate for remote and desert communities. Furthermore, DKA seeks to establish the Precinct as a comprehensive resource that elevates First Nations knowledge, language, and culture, serving as a neutral space for local decision-making, capacity building, and resilience support for desert communities. It aims to strengthen connections between Precinct Partners, neighbouring organisations, and the local community by providing comfortable and culturally embedded spaces that promote healing and respect for culture, the landscape, and the natural environment.

3. Cultural Heart

DKA is actively supporting the establishment of a living Cultural Centre dedicated to preserving, elevating, and sharing First Nations knowledge, wisdom, and language. The Precinct, serving as a traditional meeting place, offers a culturally appropriate and inclusive setting for cultural expression. It also serves as a safe and respectful space for truth-telling.

Situated on Arrernte country, the Precinct fulfils an educational role by facilitating the demonstration and continuation of local cultural practices, language, and knowledge systems. Importantly, ongoing consultation with a First Nations focused advisory body comprising local community leaders ensures its cultural integrity. Furthermore, it presents promising opportunities for partnerships with tourism providers.

Within DKA's Precinct Masterplan, a Central Heart sub-precinct is envisioned as the primary ceremonial, cultural, event and meeting space for all Precinct users and visitors, potentially featuring a Visitor Welcome Centre, amphitheatre seating, covered walkways, family gathering spaces, educational facilities, interpretive signage, a childcare centre, and a bushfoods garden for learning and produce cultivation.



Water Forum @ DKP

4. Research Centre

Remote areas face unique challenges due to the distance to service centres, access to employment and education, access to resources and essential services including water, energy, housing and telecommunications. Rapid climate changes are compounding existing issues for communities with extreme heat and extreme weather events increasingly likely. There is an urgent need for a Desert Resilience Initiative to focus research and knowledge sharing for the benefit of desert people.

Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) excels in coordinating experts from government, academia, and industry to collaborate with traditional knowledge holders and community members, engaging in applied research to explore practical solutions and provide capacity building for remote desert communities. The benefits for these communities encompass co-designed solutions based on existing knowledge systems, disaster resilience, climate-adaptive housing, integrated water management, renewable energy systems, education, training, workforce development, and affirmation of Indigenous knowledge.

DKA's Impact-Driven Applied Research Agenda adopts a phased, inter-cultural approach to foster collaboration among partners, establish an Arid Zone Living Lab framework, implement effective project management and governance, assess potential risks and broader

impacts of innovations, and raise awareness of the Arid Zone Living Lab through targeted engagement and communications activities. The Arid Zone Living Lab is poised to serve as a national and international hub for applied research on sustainable desert living.

5. Renewables Roll-out

DKA aims to harness the transformative impacts of renewable energy to support community development, capacity building, and water treatment. This goal is to be realized by strategically connecting DKA's Solar Centre, the Intyalheme Future Energy Centre, and the Alice Springs Future Grid initiative with other renewable energy collaborations.



Testbed facility at the DK Precinct



By capitalising on existing partnerships and infrastructure, DKA seeks to create momentum for the deployment of renewable energy solutions in priority communities. The finalisation of Intyalheme and Alice Springs Future Grid in November 2023 will provide some direction as to how DKA will support the rapid renewables deployment required to reach the 70% renewable energy target for communities.

This collaborative effort, in conjunction with the Desert Resilience Initiative involving leading research



CfAT's Trainee Programs



© Emma Lake. DKA's Social Wellbeing Initiative

institutions and government partners, establishes the Precinct as the future home of the Arid Zone Living Lab, which informs strategic research priorities and offers on-site accommodation for researchers.

6. Sustainable Service Systems

Service systems in remote communities often encounter challenges stemming from cultural differences, logistical complexities, and accessibility barriers. These barriers encompass factors like the availability of services, the presence of multiple providers, extended wait times, and distance to services.



CfAT's Bushlight Program

There is a need and an opportunity to enhance outcomes in remote regions through the careful design and delivery of policies, programs, and services. Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) plays a pivotal role as a collaborator and coordinator in supporting sustainable service systems, uniquely positioned as the only organisation legislatively mandated to cultivate partnerships that drive improved results for desert and remote communities.

DKA's distinctive position allows it to facilitate the coordination of all stakeholders, thereby enhancing services for desert communities with a focus on culturally appropriate and accessible delivery, and with community involvement integral to the co-design

process. Working closely with government agencies and service providers, DKA identifies barriers and identifies common interests across various service domains, such as education, health, housing, employment, and enterprise. In this process, DKA incorporates aspects of social wellbeing, cultural connection, feedback mechanisms, and robust evaluation into the co-design framework.



Furthermore, DKA leverages its suite of assets and initiatives to enable on-site testing and adaptation of innovations, drawing upon its extensive experience in renewable energy through projects like the Future Grid initiative. The overarching project objectives include enhancing community safety and cohesion with a focus on justice reinvestment, investing in social wellbeing by supporting elders and parents, fostering on-country learning and skills development, creating pathways for workforce development and employment in priority communities, and facilitating socio-economic progress by improving access to essential services like renewables and clean water. For the FY's 2023 - 25 DKA has been contracted by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade to develop workforce development plans for up to 10 communities in Central Australia, further expanding its reach and impact in the region in line with developing sustainable service systems.



F23 GRANT FUNDING

Date received	Grant Agency	Grant Received	Grant Purpose	Amount Received	Amount Pending Milestones
June 2022	NTG/DITT	Operational Funding	Operational Funding	\$560,000	
June 2022	NTG/DITT	Review recommendations implementation	DKA response to NTG Review	\$400,000	
August 2022	NIAA	Codes 4 Life	Program funding – 8 workshops per year in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs	\$408,375	
May 2023	Victims of Crime	Respected Women	Program funding – workshops in Utju and Kintore	\$37,500	
May 2023	NTG	Territory Families	Starting the Fire – Support to improve the facilities and area around the Iltye or shelter being developed into a men's place.	\$10,000	
May 2023	NTG	NTG/Dept Industry Tourism and Trade	DKA Continuation of work for Business Case development of the Cultural Centre and Accommodation	\$160,000	
June 2023	NTG	Community Workforce Development Plans 2023-25	Pilot approach to developing community workforce development plans	\$360,000	\$40,000
June 2023	NIAA	Codes 4 Life	Program funding – 8 workshops per year in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs	\$408,375	\$408, 375
June 2023	Inspired NT	Place Activation	P2: Precinct Activation / STEM event / etc.	\$2,000	

*not inclusive of Alice Springs Future Grid



Social wellbeing is at the heart of DKA's purpose. Supporting innovation and collaboration is key to our approach.

SOCIAL WELLBEING

Codes 4 Life

The Codes 4 Life Leadership Through Identity project funded by National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to deliver workshops to reconnect Aboriginal men with their cultural identity, community, and responsibilities. The workshop is to lead positive changes in men's behaviour and to increase leadership capabilities. The program is delivered through 1.5 day workshops in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

The recent recruitment of Codes 4 Life Project Officer, Micha Bartlett, is a great success for the team. Micha commenced in December 2022, and is responsible for arranging workshop logistics and supporting workshop participants to complete surveys.

Since Michael Liddle's new position at Central Australia Aboriginal Congress; DKA and Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) signed a service agreement to continue to deliver Codes 4 Life through DKA.

NIAA has offered funding for an additional 2 years. Funding Agreement offered in June 2023.

The 'Evaluation of Codes 4 Life program: Final Report was completed August 2022 and sent to NIAA. The Codes 4 Life team discussed outcomes, observations, recommendations, and future needs for the program to be effective. Findings from the report and ongoing discussions led to a decision that the program focused its energies by consolidating venues for workshop delivery to Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. Four other areas were identified for the program to focus on to strengthen the program and is being incorporated. Variation to the Service Agreement approved by NIAA.

During the year, 7 workshops were delivered with 4 in Alice Springs and 3 in Tennant Creek and attendance by 119 men from remote Central Australian communities. The workshops engaged 39 Elders, employed to assist and support the workshop participants. Stakeholders attended as guest speakers in each region such as NT Police, Territory Families, Women's Safety Services of Central Australia, Tennant Creek Women's Refuge, St John Ambulance Service, Purple House (renal service) and Judges from local courts. Female guest speakers were introduced to the program, to share information about the drivers and consequences of domestic violence.



Lenny Corbet, an Alyawerre man (Elder) who has been mentoring the participants since the first workshop of 2023 Lenny has been to every workshop, Lenny is not only a support to Codes 4 Life but a member to staff.



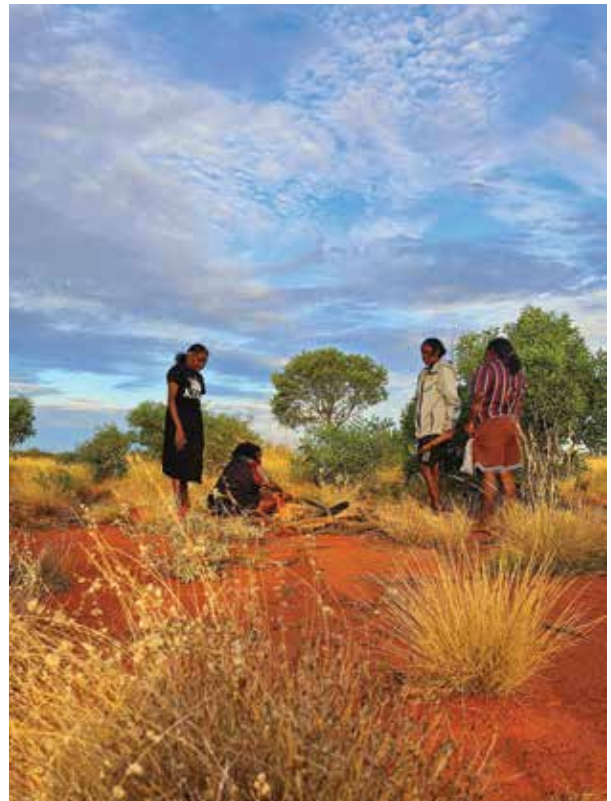
Michael Liddle

“In these workshops the Elders are as important to hearing and listening to the different guest speakers that come in and talk, as they get to hear the types and levels of mess that most of the men are in the workshop hear. The talk involves each and every one of them. Most of these men are products of the Aboriginal cultural procedure where they have been sung from boy to man”.



Respected Women

During the reporting period DKA received one off funding to deliver the Respected Women Program, under the Northern Territory Government's Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Grant. The Project was designed to deliver workshops to Indigenous women to raise awareness of domestic, family, and sexual violence, to reduce stigma and encourage help seeking, and demonstrate more positive, equal and respectful relationships between women, men and children.





DKA's Project Manager delivered 2 workshops in Kintore and Tennant Creek, with more than 20 women aged 15-75 years in attendance. 2 Elders were employed to provide workshop support.

Victims of Crime NT have provided funds to support the roll out of workshops in Utju and Kintore.



Justice Reinvestment

Justice reinvestment is a long-term, whole-of-community collaborative process to reduce incarceration through preventative investment in social programs. The Federal Government committed \$10M to support justice reinvestment in Alice Springs, town camps and surrounds. DKA has partnered with Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation (lead organisation) and Anglicare NT – Partnership Support Services to establish the backbone support and long-term plan.

DKA will be working to support community and sector engagement, data analysis and research as required. This project will start and finish in 2023 and 2024.

Men's Place on the DKP

DKA was successful in a grant application to NT Families, Communities and Housing to establish a recognised and utilised cultural men's place on the Precinct. The Men's Place will be developed at the site of an existing wiljtja (shade) built by CASSE. It will be set up with engagement of senior Arrernte men, Codes 4 Life, Kings Narrative and other groups working to support cultural engagement between men and boys. This project will be delivered in 2023-24.

Supporting the community

DKA provided in-kind sponsoring of the MHACA Suicide Prevention Forum.

Presentation of Codes 4 Life at conferences/events

Codes 4 Life facilitator Michael Liddle was invited to speak at the 2023 Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Forum in Cairns June 20-22. This Forum has been running in Queensland for 6 years. Michael was a panelist who joined a discussion addressing "Exploring Effective Approaches to Reducing Family Violence Rates in Alice Springs: A Study on the Efficacy of Alcohol Restriction and Alternative Techniques for Indigenous Communities."

The 2023 Forum had 171 people in attendance and 16 guest presenters from organisations Australia wide.

Feedback was positive:

"It was really valuable to have stories from on Country, and that in future we would like more presentations like Michael's that featured stories from on Country".

"The involvement of men and male healing really made the Forum a rich and powerful experience".

.....
DKA November 2022 Knowledge Intersections Symposium: Michael Liddle and John Guenther (researcher) presented the Codes 4 Life evaluation findings.

.....
DKA May 2023 Mental Health Association of Central Australia: Suicide Prevention Forum. Program facilitator presented at the Suicide Prevention Forum 10 and 11 May and spoke to an audience of 70 stakeholders about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities being significantly impacted by suicide and suicide ideation, and the success of activities/workshops to address healing for those impacted.



Other activities

The Codes 4 Life Program Facilitator is working to strengthen DKA's relationship with the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre to discuss strategies to deliver services to incarcerated youth and out of prison transition services. There has been an onsite meeting at Darwin Youth Detention Centre to discuss delivery of a workshop which facilitates discussions and provides mentorship for young inmates, with potential to starting that work in 2024.

Social and Wellbeing team members

- **Social Wellbeing Programs Manager:** Farewelled Nina Kolder in April and welcomed Helen Lambert in June 2023.
- **Respected Women Project Manager:** Emma Lake, joined the team at DKA in March 2023.
- **Codes 4 Life Manager:** Michael Liddle, former DKA employee, employed as a consultant through Central Australian Aboriginal Congress since February 2022.
- **Codes 4 Life Project Support Officer:** Micha Bartlett, joined the team at DKA in December 2022.
- **Codes 4 Life Project Support Officer (casual):** Martin Hagan continues to support the workshops and co-facilitates.

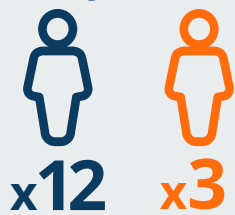
Stakeholder engagement

- Service Agreement with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to allow for Program Facilitator to deliver workshops as a CAAC employee.
- MOU with Charles Darwin University, indicative support for associated research and evaluation of well-being programs.
- Successful NT Grant agreement to establish Men's Place on the DK Precinct with CASSE and King's Narrative.
- MOU with Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation and Anglicare NT for Justice Reinvestment backbone consortium – mutually supportive activities.
- Draft MOU with Anglicare NT – support for development of policies and procedures.

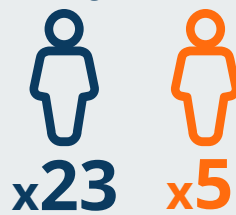


Codes 4 Life Workshops by the numbers

Tennant Creek
August 2022



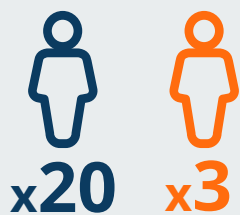
Alice Springs
August 2022



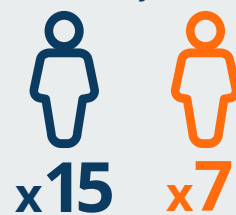
Tennant Creek
October 2022



Alice Springs
December 2022



Alice Springs
February 2023



Tennant Creek
April 2023



Alice Springs
May 2023





BUSINESS AND INNOVATION CENTRE (BIC)

The Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) is central to DKA's vision of sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for desert and arid communities. The BIC is a culturally safe hub for meetings, workshops, and other events.

The Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) serves as an exceptional facility for meetings, workshops, conferences, and other events. It provides a platform for connecting organisations and groups focused on social wellbeing and economic development in the region. The BIC offers a variety of function rooms and outdoor spaces suitable for a wide range of events. It is a culturally safe environment, harmonised with the natural environment, facilitating connections with people, knowledge, and the land on which it is situated.

In 2022-23, DKA took a proactive approach to promoting the Business Innovation Centre as a unique venue, offering a culturally safe, welcoming, and productive space. Promotion of the Precinct and the well-priced Irrarnte (red-tailed black cockatoo) Café has seen an uptick in Precinct utilisation. The increase in bookings has led to DKA working with Precinct partners to book rooms in the Desert People's Centre for clients. This arrangement has worked well for all parties, and we will continue to offer this service in 2023-24.

The BIC had a total of around 4200 visitors during the FY 22-23 – this includes organisations from around the Territory and Australia, such as: Power Water

Corporation, NPY Women's Council, Central Land Council, NT Indigenous Business Network, CASA Services, Red Dust Role Models, and many others.

The BIC also provides office rental and hot-desking opportunities for both short-term and long-term occupancy. In 2022-2023, notable organisations including Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN), CASSE Australia, Rattlepod Landscapes, Kings Narrative, Equality Institute, and StickMob, were based at the BIC. The BIC offered these organisations a collaborative working environment to facilitate their endeavours.





EVENTS AND OFFICE HIRE FACILITIES

FY 21/22

FY 22/23

BIC Visitors

Approx
3,500pax

Approx
4,200pax

Number of events in the BIC

Some events booked multiple days

170 events

205 events

Number of Days Booked

215 days
out of 251 bookable business days

230 days
out of 250 bookable business days

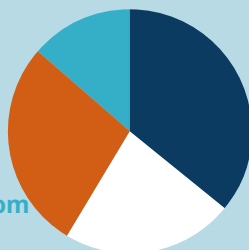
Number of Organisations that used the venue

over
70 different organisations
used the BIC for meetings,
workshops, and other events

over
80 different organisations
used the BIC for meetings,
workshops, and other events

Room popularity for FY 22-23

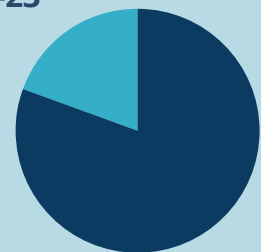
- **Corkwood room**
83 bookings (36.09%)
- **Cassia room**
52 bookings (22.60%)
- **Akaltye room**
64 bookings (27.83%)
- **Bush Passionfruit room**
31 bookings (13.48%)



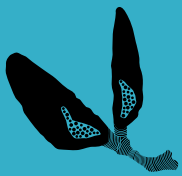
Types of organisations that used the BIC in FY22-23

- **NGO:** 92 (80%)
- **Govt:** 22 (20%)

55 are Not-for-Profit



Revenue for FY22-23 is up by ↑ **58%** compared to the previous financial year



Desert Knowledge Precinct

‘Sharing our place on country to innovate, progress social wellbeing and sustainability for arid and desert communities.’

Desert Knowledge Australia proudly acknowledges the Arrernte people as the custodians and first knowledge holders of the land on which the Desert Knowledge Precinct stands.

Located on the outskirts of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), the Precinct’s location is a traditional meeting place, where travelling groups and individuals would camp and light a fire to send smoke signals visible from Heavitree Gap (Ntaripe). It was here that Mparntwe people would meet the travellers and share stories, songs and ceremony. The Precinct embodies the essence of the land on which it stands, promoting knowledge sharing in a place where everyone is welcome.

We work to connect people, knowledge, and opportunities for the benefit of desert people.

The Desert Knowledge Precinct (DKP – the Precinct) is a 73-hectare innovation precinct located 9-km south of Alice Springs. Established in 2006 through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) to ensure Arrernte people are consulted in the development of the Precinct and represented on the Board and Precinct Development Committee. Desert Knowledge Australia, as the Precinct manager, oversees its management and development.

This unique Precinct was founded by three key partners who share common goals and values and actively operate within it:

1. Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA)
2. Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)
3. Centre for Appropriate Technology (CfAT)

The Precinct is also home to the DKA Solar Centre, the Desert Peoples Centre (a collaborative initiative of BIITE and CfAT focusing on Indigenous education and training), and various tenant organisations.

In FY 2022/23, Indigenous Business Australia, and CASSE (Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment) Australia, remain as long-term tenants at DKA’s Business & Innovation Centre. The building was also the office base for Stick Mob Studio, an Aboriginal-owned graphic novel company. In late 2022, the Precinct opened its doors to Kings Narrative, Rattlepod Landscapes and the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (Central Australia Hub), to also call the Precinct their home. As precinct manager, DKA works to support these organisations to make the most of being at the Precinct.

The venue hire and meeting facilities business has seen a 50% uptick (year on year) in events and activities taking place in 2022-23. We’ve also seen a marked increase in new organisations using the space as well as increase in the number of people visiting the site. Across our partners’ and tenant organisations’ operations, the Precinct provides a space for many local groups to carry out important work, collectively contributing to the advancement of central Australia.

Throughout the year, numerous visitors frequent the Precinct to collaborate with organisations based on the land; attend the various events, conferences and workshops held on-site; enjoy the Irrarnte Cafe; or to explore the famed DKA Solar Centre.



Precinct Highlights

National Water Workshop

DKA worked in collaboration with the National Water Grid and the Goyder Institute to deliver a 2.5 day workshop for up to 80 people from WA, SA, NT, Qld and Canberra. Representatives from utilities, health regulators, service providers and countrymen and women from communities with poor water. The workshops identify key priorities and barriers to delivery of safe and secure water to people living in remote areas. The success of the workshop bodes well for future engagement in this critically important area.



Busting the Grass Festival

DKA staff organised the inaugural 'Busting the grass' Festival. With an expert forum, native plant sale, bluegrass band, local stalls and a buffel busting competition, 80 people participated in the event. The event was organised in recognition of the ecological impacts of buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris* spp) and seeking to identify and amplify practical, physical and policy pathways to reduce the threat. DKA Landcare was launched at the event and working bees will be organised as capacity allows.

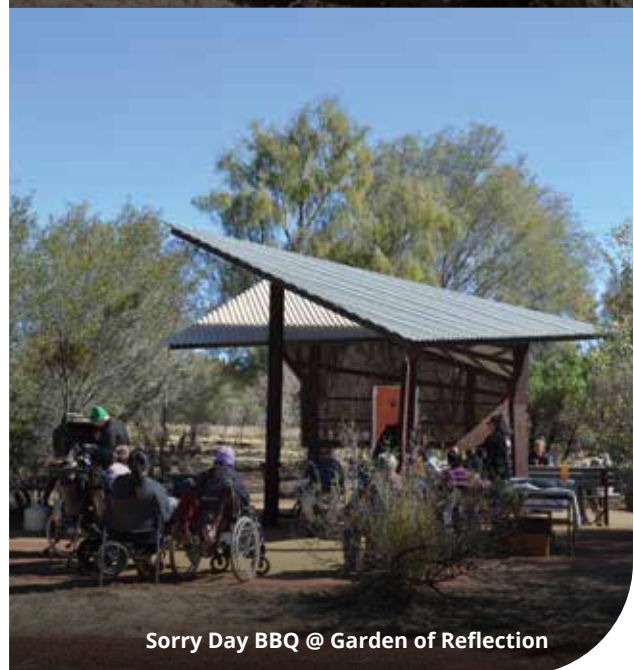


Garden of Reflection

The Garden of Reflection was established as a memorial garden to honour and respect the Stolen Generations. DKA staff supported the Desert People's Centre to submit a Community Benefit Grant to enable the installation of memorial plaques, landscaping, interpretative signage, entry statement and opening event. Unfortunately, it was unsuccessful. DKA has supported the establishment of Caretakers Day (first Friday in December) to acknowledge the life of the late Mr Furber, Elder In Residence of the DKP. DKA staff attended both Sorry Day and NAIDOC events at the Garden.



NAIDOC Week: Campfire Yarns " @ Garden of Reflection



Sorry Day BBQ @ Garden of Reflection



Parliamentarian meetings and visits at the Desert Knowledge Precinct

Federal

- Minister Linda Burney, Minister for Indigenous Australians
- Minister Kirsty McBain, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Minister Jenny McAllister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy
- Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, Labor Senator for the Northern Territory
- Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour MP
- Senator Kerryne Liddle, Liberal Senator for South Australia
- Prime Ministerial press conference – January 2023

Territory

- Minister Chanston Paech, Minister for Desert Knowledge Australia, Attorney-General
- Minister Selena Uibo, Minister for Housing and Homelands, Renewables and Energy, Essential Services, Aboriginal Affairs, Treaty and Local Decision Making
- Minister Lauren Moss, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Security
- Minister Eva Lawler, Treasurer, Minister for Education, Minister for Territory Development
- Minister Paul Kirby, Minister for Business, Jobs and Training, Agribusiness and Fisheries
- Hon Bill Yan, Member for Namitjira, Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Desert Knowledge Australia
- Hon Joshua Burgoyne, Member for Braitling, Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Essential Services, Renewable Energy



University, school groups and familiarity tours – tours organised by the Desert Knowledge Precinct Partners, showcasing the DKA Solar Centre, CfATSE, Batchelor Institute Campus and venue hire facilities.

- Melbourne University Engineering Faculty – Cultural Immersion and First Nations Engineering trip
- Deakin University – Environment and Sustainability group
- Arizona State University – part of Australian tour
- Australian National University – preparation for cultural immersive
- Study NT – Familiarity Tour
- NT Business Events – Familiarity Tour



Masterplan co-design

A new Masterplan for the Precinct will shape the direction and scale of development on the Precinct. Working with Precinct partners and Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation will see a steady stream of development with a focus on accommodation including campgrounds, the Central Heart events and cultural space, childcare and bushfoods centre among others. Watch this space.





The Desert Knowledge Australia Solar Centre (DKASC) is the largest multi-technology solar demonstration facility in the world. Established in 2008, the site provides a space for different solar photovoltaic (PV) technologies to be installed, operated, and monitored under the same conditions.

It currently houses more than 40 installations from different manufacturers and showcases live demonstrations of PV technology spanning many different types, ages, makes, models, and configurations. It also hosts two weather stations to benchmark the performance of the arrays, and to provide high quality solar resource data to potential developers.



DKA CEO Jimmy Cocking, Future Grid Project Director Lyndon Frearson and Project Officer Chaitanya Meshram, SwitchDin Project Manager Yannick Zapf, sub-project 5 lead Thomas Wearne from Power and Water Corporation and SwitchDin Project Manager Joseph Kassouf

Powering the Precinct

The DKA Solar Centre's solar energy production accounted for 39% of the energy consumption within the Desert Knowledge Precinct in 2022-23. Any surplus solar energy generated but not utilised within the Precinct is exported to the grid.

In 2022-23, as part of the Alice Springs Future Grid project, a 300kW/358kWh lithium-ion battery produced by Penske Australia was installed in the Precinct. The battery has enabled the DK Precinct to become a microgrid, capable of running independently from the Alice Springs electricity grid for up to an hour. It will increase the utilisation of the electricity produced by the Solar Centre and provide the opportunity for an increase in solar generation on the Precinct.

Generating knowledge

During 2022-23, the DKASC website was visited by 15,265 individuals who derived value from the real-time, publicly accessible data produced by the solar installations and weather stations on the site. This website serves as a valuable resource for a diverse range of users, including researchers, university students, industry experts, and curious individuals worldwide. It plays a pivotal role in supporting industry research, building a knowledge repository, and driving technological progress and modelling.

www.dkasolarcentre.com.au

Workshops and visits

The DKASC is a destination for visitors to the Desert Knowledge Precinct. In 2022-23 regular tours and many 'solar selfies' were taken during the year. Federal and Territory Ministers, Parliamentarians, project partners and collaborators, local, interstate and international students all came to visit the Solar Centre.

Pictured above: Staff from energy technology management vendor, SwitchDin, who travelled from Newcastle to meet with the Future Grid delivery team.

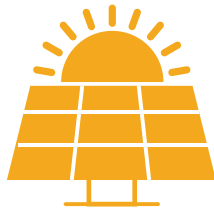


DKA Solar Centre in numbers



449,068 kWh

2022-23 Total solar energy generated



39%

DKA electricity from PV



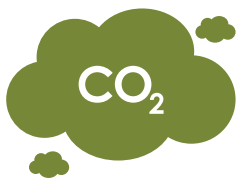
31%

exported



15,265

Solar Centre Website visitors



242.50 Tonnes

2022-23 avoided emissions



61%

DKA electricity sourced from the grid



69%

consumed on-site

Other visits to the Solar Centre



Ministerial Visit of Minister for Desert Knowledge Australia, Minister Chanston Paech and Minister for Renewables and Energy, Minister Selena Uibo – at the launch of the Virtual Power Plan in August 2022.



Arizona State University were on their tour of Australia and had a stopover in Alice Springs to explore the DKA Solar Centre and the satellite displays over at the Centre for Appropriate Technology Satellite Enterprise (CfATSE).



Minister McAllister visits Desert Knowledge Precinct.



Country & Climate Yarning Circle: University of Melbourne visited the Desert Knowledge Precinct.



INTYALHEME AND FUTURE GRID

Pioneering Sustainable Energy Solutions



The Intyalheme story

Intyalheme (pronounced in-CHAR-lum) is an Arrernte word that means 'a fire flaring up again'. The name represents the need to "stoke the fire" by way of leveraging local expertise generated during previous initiatives, to overcome challenges presented by the transition to a renewable energy future.

Established with \$5 million seed funding from the Northern Territory Government, Intyalheme's role is to enhance renewable energy capability by bridging gaps in relationships, knowledge, and technologies. The NT Government aims to power the Territory with 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. Intyalheme

contributes to this goal by leading collaborative projects, sharing existing knowledge and generating new knowledge.

Based in Alice Springs, Intyalheme is a flagship project of Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA). It is governed by a consortium of representatives from DKA, the NT Government, Power and Water Corporation, Charles Darwin University and Ekistica.

intyalheme.dka.com.au



Alice Springs Future Grid

The Alice Springs Future Grid Project continued strongly throughout the past 12 months, completing a number of key project milestones and firsts for Alice Springs. Through collaboration with project partners and whole-of-systems approach, it is evident that Alice Springs Future Grid represents a critical milestone in the Territory's target of 50% renewable energy by 2030.

Alice Springs Future Grid is overseen by a consortium that includes DKA, Power and Water, Territory Generation and Ekistica. Delivery of the project activities is through five sub-projects, each with a lead partner organisation including Ekistica, Power and Water, Jacana Energy and the Arid Lands Environment Centre.

alicespringsfuturegrid.com.au



ALICE SPRINGS
FUTURE GRID

Alice Springs Future Grid Project is developing a Roadmap to 50% renewable energy by 2030. Three main objectives for the roadmap are:

Enhance Reliability To maintain a robust and reliable power supply that meets the community's growing energy demands, especially during extreme weather conditions.

Sustainability To transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact.

Cost Efficiency To reduce energy costs for consumers while ensuring the long-term economic viability of energy transmission.



Solar Connect Virtual Power Plant

The Solar Connect Virtual Power Plant (VPP) started operation in October 2022. It was launched by NT Minister for Renewables and Energy, Hon. Selena Uiibo and Minister for Desert Knowledge Australia, Hon. Chanston Paech. 48 participants are included in the 12-month trial.

The VPP trial is managed by Jacana Energy, lead for sub-project 4. The VPP was launched following significant work by project partners to procure the VPP software platform, and significant input from the community seen through over 130 Expressions of Interest. SwitchDin is the VPP platform operator. This is the first VPP for the Northern Territory and includes a number of innovative features, such as allowing both solar-only and solar battery customers to join. Solar battery customers who chose to participate on a unique tariff structure, were sent monthly statements about their savings and VPP performance, created an online public dashboard, and conducted testing for demand response and solar inverter control.



Commercial Microgrid Trial

A 300kW/356kWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) has been in operation at the Desert Knowledge Precinct since April 2023. As part of sub-project 2, the BESS was able to create an islandable microgrid for the precinct. That is, if there is an outage on the grid the precinct will be able to use the BESS to maintain the network. In normal operation, this advanced battery system uses excess daytime solar energy for charging and discharges power during nighttime and low solar availability periods, reducing reliance on the external power grid. Data collection on its performance is ongoing.



Community Engagement

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) continued to lead sub-project 3 Community Solutions. ALEC's community engagement efforts primarily focused on enhancing the participant experience in the VPP trial and increasing awareness of the Future Grid Project. Activities over the past year have included surveys, events including stalls at local markets and an online VPP information sessions, and community reference group meetings. Print and online materials were made available.



The Public Housing Solar Battery Trial (PHSBT)

During the past year Future Grid was able to incorporate 15 public housing homes in Alice Springs as part of the VPP, replacing the initial Solar Hub locations. Rooftop solar and batteries were installed at the 15 houses. To commence the PHSBT, a legal Deed of Agreement between DKA and Territory Housing was established, and the contract for the work was awarded to The Community Solar Group



(TCSG). Initially, 25 houses were considered based on meter types, with a focus on prepayment meters. This was narrowed down to 15 houses based on technical suitability, household demographics, roof conditions, and past tenancy. Detailed designs were created for these 15 sites, including identification of necessary switchboard upgrades. Participants signed consent forms for the trial, which took five weeks to install. The project team provided educational materials such as factsheets and reference guides to help participants understand and maintain their new systems, including training on the inverter app.

Modelling and the Roadmap to 2030 report

Modelling the energy system is a key step in developing the Roadmap to 2030. Work on a number of models continued through sub-project 1, including ongoing work on a Technical-Economic Report and a Wind Study. This work will be used as input in the Roadmap to 2030 report, which is looking at four scenarios that will achieve 50% renewable energy in the Alice Springs grid.

The API Manager

Understanding the options for renewable energy dispatch by System Control, at Power and Water, is a key part of sub-project 5. A key to dispatch is the ability for technology to communicate and respond to central signals, as part of this dispatch a need for an API Manager was identified. The API Manager contract was awarded to GreenSync and executed in June

2023. GreenSync is responsible for integrating with agents involved in the Future Grid trials and providing them with data, control setpoints or what is known as Dynamic Operating Envelopes (DOE). The PHSBT sites and the DKP BESS are priority sites for integrating with the Currently, GreenSync platform, known as deX.

Advanced Forecasting

Power Water Corporation (PWC), with partners Proa Analytics, completed a successful forecasting trial. By integrating data from ground-based systems, including the VPP sites, Proa Analytics was able to improve on solar and load forecasting. A Lunch and Learn session in June 2023 to share key insights from the trial project.

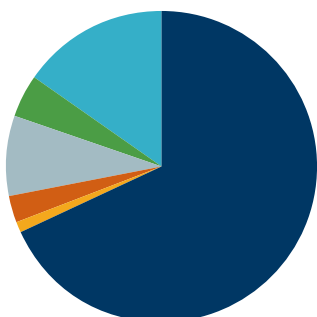
Next steps

Alice Springs Future Grid continues to make remarkable progress, made possible through collaboration between project partners. However, it is not without its challenges and a number of lessons learnt. The project continues to share the lessons learnt as it is important to share the discoveries made along the way.

It remains a feature of these projects that energy initiatives must stay adaptable and incorporate the latest innovations to remain effective.

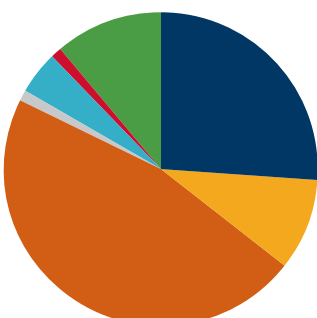


INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



INCOME

Grants	1,518,375
Interest	24,032
Rent	61,232
Venue Hire	185,116
Solar Centre	100,523
Other Income	335,314

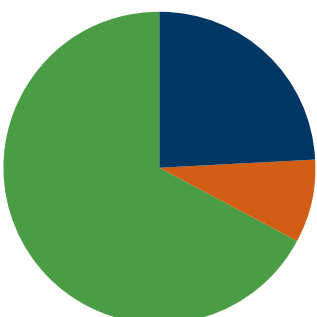


EXPENDITURE

Employees	1,306,036
Depreciation and amortisation	478,457
Consultants*	2,337,159
Media and marketing	49,967
Desert Knowledge Precinct	216,887
Travel and accommodation	59,076
Other Expenses	548,673

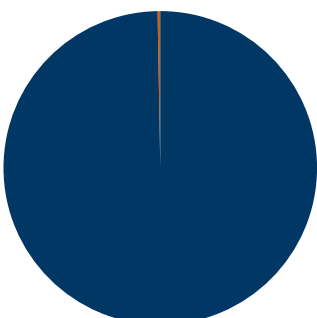
*Consultants include project delivery of Alice Springs Future Grid and the NTG Review Implementation.

CASH FLOW



CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Receipts from government grants	1,663,958
Other operating receipts	593,183
Payments to suppliers and employees	(4,585,061)

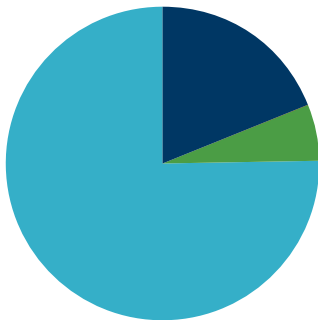


CASH FLOW FROM INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

Interest Received	24,032
Proceeds from Financial Assets	(64)
Sale/(Purchase) of property, plant and equipment	0

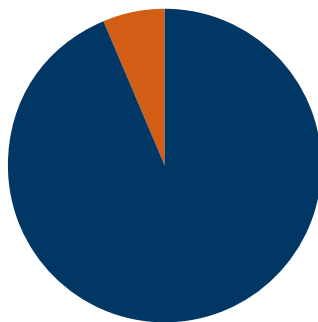


STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION



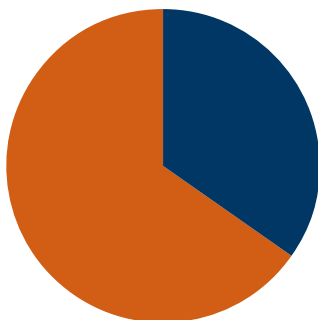
ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,542,190
Term deposit	21,394
Trade and other receivables	777,441
Property, plant, equipment, and intangibles	10,105,624



LIABILITIES

Trade and Other Payables	1,375,320
Employee benefits	90,539



EQUITY

Retained earnings	4,171,855
Issued capital	7,808,935



CONNECT



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