

The Local's Guide to Darwin

14–18 September 2026 • Darwin, Northern Territory • Larrakia Country



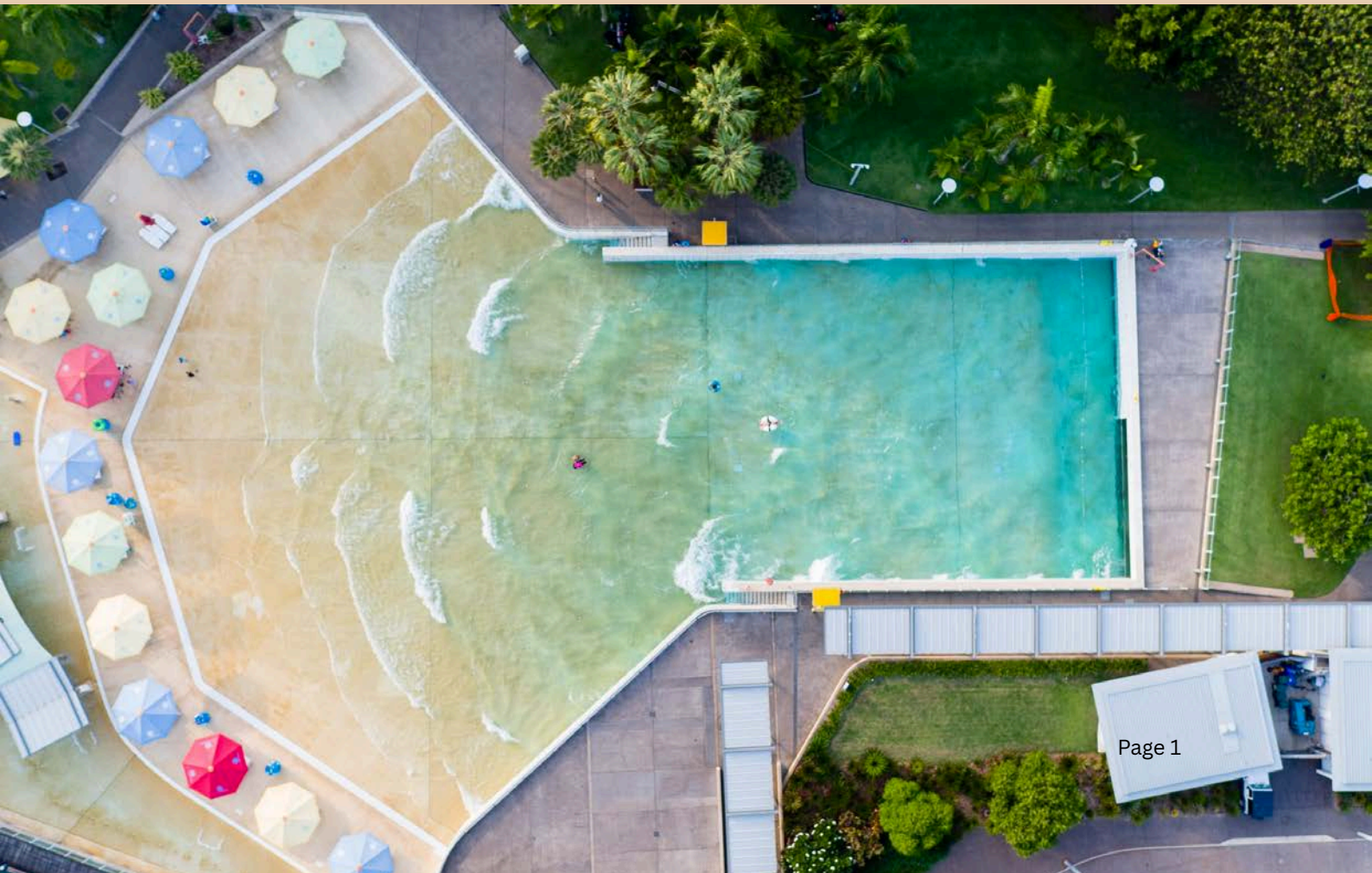
Welcome to Darwin, Australia's tropical northern capital and gateway to the Top End. Below you'll find local tips on what to see, eat and do before, during and after the conference.

aes26 is being held on the lands of the Larrakia people, the Traditional Owners of the Darwin region. Darwin is a vibrant, multicultural city known for its relaxed atmosphere, rich Aboriginal and World War II history, tropical landscapes and spectacular sunsets. Compact and easy to explore, the city centre is surrounded by the Timor Sea and is within walking distance of the Waterfront Precinct, Esplanade and major attractions.

The conference will take place at the Darwin Convention Centre (10 Stokes Hill Road) on the Darwin Waterfront, just a short walk from the city centre and close to hotels, restaurants, the Wave Lagoon and Recreation Lagoon.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Larrakia people as the Traditional Custodians of the Darwin region, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community, and the rich First Nations cultures of the Top End that visitors are warmly invited to learn about and respect during their stay.



WEATHER & WHAT TO WEAR

September falls at the end of Darwin's dry season, as it transitions into the warmer 'build-up'. Expect warm, sunny days, very little rain and abundant sunshine - ideal conditions for exploring. Days are hot and humidity begins to rise, while mornings and evenings are pleasant.

Daytime maximum	34 - 36°C (93 - 97°F)
Overnight minimum	24 - 26°C (75 - 79°F)
Rainfall	Low - typically under ~16 mm across only 2–3 days
Humidity / sun	60 - 65% humidity, with long, sunny days and a high UV index

Note: Temperatures in Darwin Airport, September 2025 (daytime and overnight mean to maximum range), [Bureau of Meteorology \(BOM\)](#).

Swimming in the NT: there's really only one rule - read the signs and follow them. Find out where and when it's [safe to swim](#). Before making the trip, [check whether your swimming spot is open](#). Always remember: stay [crocwise](#)!

What to Wear

Conference sessions: Business casual attire is recommended. Given Darwin's tropical climate, lightweight and breathable fabrics such as cotton and linen are ideal. Air-conditioned venues can be cool, so you may wish to bring a light jacket, cardigan or wrap.

Social functions: Smart casual ("Territory informal") is appropriate for networking events, welcome functions and informal dinners. Think tailored trousers, skirts, dresses, collared shirts or smart tops, with comfortable footwear.

Gala Awards Dinner: Dress to impress for our Conference Dinner. Held outdoors on the waterfront lawn, the evening combines a festive atmosphere with Darwin's relaxed tropical style. Cocktail attire, elegant dresses, suits, jackets and tailored separates are all welcome. We recommend choosing footwear suitable for grass areas and avoiding stiletto heels.

A Darwin fashion fact: The NT Government recognises everything from *Territory Informal* to *Territory Formal*. Whether you're packing linen shirts or dinner jackets, you're in good company. [Explore the local dress code guide here](#).

Other essentials:

- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses and SPF 50+ sunscreen
- Comfortable walking shoes for exploring the Waterfront and city
- Refillable water bottle to stay hydrated
- Insect repellent if you're planning to visit parks or outdoor attractions



ARRIVING & GETTING AROUND

[Darwin International Airport](#) is about 15 minutes (8 km) from the city centre and Waterfront. Taxis, rideshare and airport shuttle services are readily available, and many hotels are within a short ride of the Darwin Convention Centre.

The city centre and Waterfront are very walkable and connected by a lift and covered walkway. Public buses run from the Darwin Bus Interchange on Harry Chan Avenue, and rideshare is widely available. For day trips and national parks beyond the city, hiring a car is the most flexible option.

MARKETS

Darwin's markets are a highlight of the dry season — a relaxed way to enjoy street food, local art and live music, especially at sunset.

[Mindil Beach Sunset Markets](#) Iconic sunset market with global street food, crafts and live music. Thursdays and Sunday.

[Nightcliff Markets](#) Sunday community market by the coast.

[Parap Village Markets](#) Saturday market famed for South-East Asian food and fresh produce

[Rapid Creek Markets](#) Darwin's oldest market a vibrant tropical produce and Asian food hub. Saturday and Sunday.



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

There's plenty happening around the conference dates - here are a few local favourites:

- [Darwin International Film Festival \(DIFF\)](#) At the open-air Deckchair Cinema, 10–20 September
- [Walks around the city](#) Best in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid the heat and humidity
- [Darwin Street Art](#) Self-guided tour of murals throughout the city
- [Sunset cruise](#) Many operators offer Darwin Harbour sunset cruises
- [Catch the sunset](#) Mindil Beach, Nightcliff Jetty, East Point or Cullen Bay

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Darwin's unique location at Australia's northern gateway has shaped a dining scene unlike anywhere else in the country. Influenced by Southeast Asian, Indigenous, European and multicultural traditions, the city offers an exciting fusion of flavours alongside fresh local seafood, waterfront dining, rooftop bars and spectacular sunset views. Many venues come alive in the evenings with live music and a relaxed tropical atmosphere.

Waterview dining

[Darwin Trailer Boat Club](#)
Casual dinner with water views in Fannie Bay

[Darwin Sailing Club](#)
Relaxed meals by the sea in Fannie Bay

[Darwin Ski Club](#) Famous sunset spot on the water in Fannie Bay

[Pee Wee's at the Point](#)
fine dining with waterfront views across Fannie Bay and towards Darwin Harbour

[Wharf One Food & Wine](#)
On the wharf corner overlooking the lagoon; tapas menu

[Yots Greek Taverna](#)
modern and traditional Greek food on the Waterfront Boardwalk in Cullen Bay

Waterfront dining (Convention Centre Precinct)

[Hot Tamale](#) Waterfront Mexican

[Snapper Rocks Bar & Kitchen](#) Australian beach culture-inspired dining featuring grilled seafood and shared dishes

[CHOW!](#) award-winning South East Asian dining and bar

[Oyster Bar Darwin](#)
indoor and alfresco dining; oyster, seafood, wine

Cocktail bars, restaurants & tapas

[Hanuman](#) Acclaimed fine dining - Thai, Nonya & Indian

[Moorish Cafe](#) Spanish / Middle-Eastern tapas

[The Last Supper](#) Pizza, tapas & cocktails

[Loose Goose](#) Modern share tapas & cocktail bar

[Charlie's of Darwin](#)
Restaurant, bar & distillery

[Zen Rooftop Bar](#)
Rooftop drinks

[Ella by Minoli](#) Darwin's first Masterchef restaurant; Sri Lankan

Cafes & casual eats

[Bustard Town](#) Relaxed social venue

[Meow Waffee](#) Waffles & coffee

[Kopi Stop](#) City eatery

[Makan](#) Malaysian / Asian

[The Rabbit Hole](#) Popular casual spot

[Laneway Specialty Coffee](#) all day breakfast in the heart of Parap Village

[Eva's Cafe](#) vintage style cafe in the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens

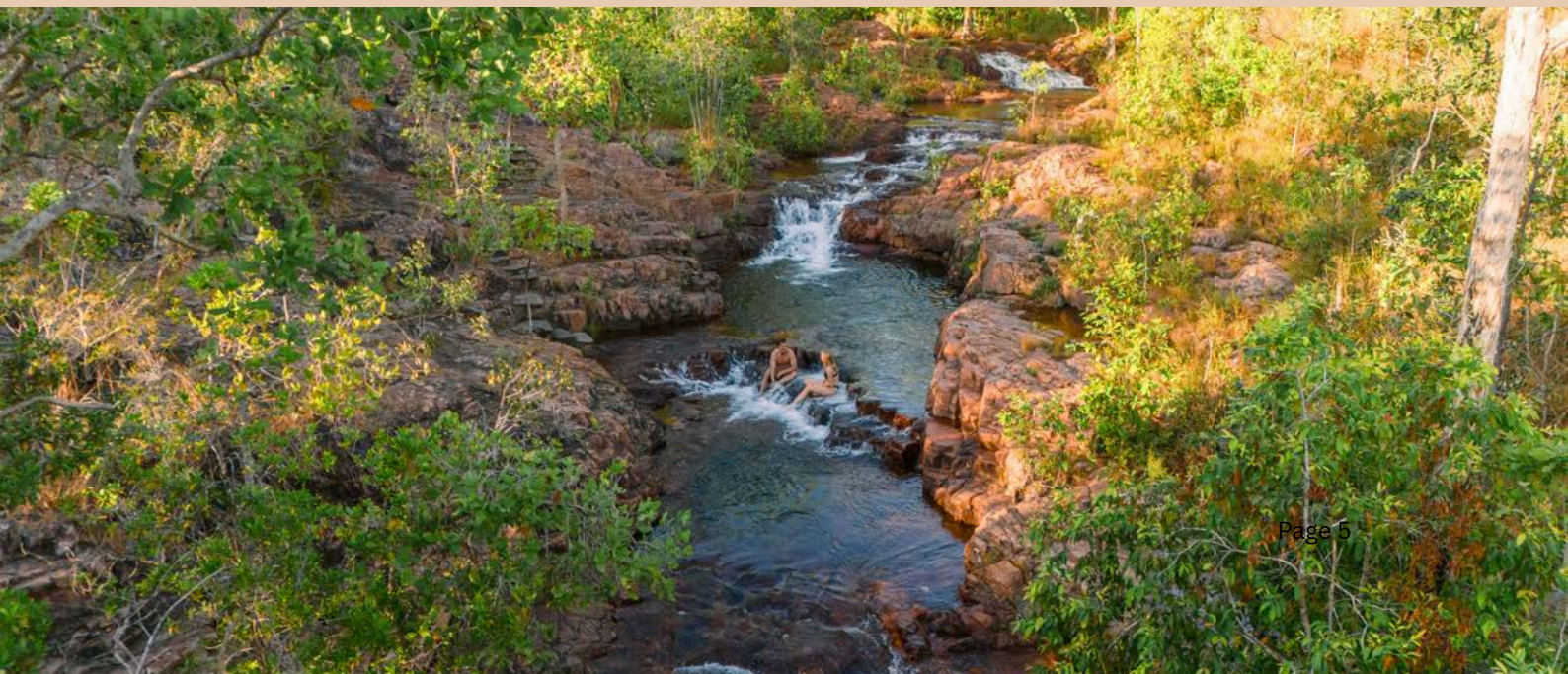
ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

From world-class Aboriginal art to Darwin's wartime history, the city's galleries and museums are well worth a visit.

- [Museum and Art Gallery of the NT \(MAGNT\)](#) *The Territory's flagship museum - art, culture and the famous 'Sweetheart' crocodile*
- [Mbantua Gallery](#) *Authentic Aboriginal art*
- [Aboriginal Bush Traders](#) *Non-for-profit social enterprise offering Aboriginal art, gifts and homewares*
- [Northern Centre for Contemporary Art](#) *Contemporary art in Darwin*
- [Outstation Gallery](#) *Aboriginal art from remote art centres*
- [Mason Gallery](#) *Aboriginal art gallery*
- [Readback Books & Aboriginal Art Gallery](#) *Books and Aboriginal art*
- [Laundry Gallery](#) *'Old stories, new spin' — local art space*
- [Darwin Aviation Museum](#) *Top-rated museum with a B-52 bomber on display*
- [WWII Underground Oil Storage Tunnels](#) *Walk through Darwin's top-secret wartime tunnels*
- [RFDS Darwin Tourist Facility](#) *Royal Flying Doctor Service & Bombing of Darwin experience at the Waterfront*
- [Darwin Military Museum](#) *Defence of Darwin Experience at East Point*
- [Fannie Bay Gaol](#) *Historic gaol museum (MAGNT)*
- [NT Chinese Museum \(Chung Wah\)](#) *The story of the Territory's Chinese community*

PARKS & WILDLIFE WITHIN THE CITY

- [Crococaurus Cove](#) *Meet saltwater crocodiles in the heart of the city — 'Cage of Death' optional!*
- [Crocodylus Park](#) *Crocodile and wildlife park with research centre*
- [George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens](#) *Historic tropical gardens near the city*
- [Darwin Waterfront Precinct](#) *Wave Lagoon, safe swimming, dining and events — next Darwin Convention Centre*



Delegates are encouraged to make the most of their time in Darwin through pre - and post -conference touring. To make the most of the Top End, explore the many touring options from Kakadu to Litchfield, Dundee Beach and Katherine.

A dedicated [booking link for aes26 delegates](#) is available on the conference website, making it easy to browse and book tours, attractions and experiences before or after the conference.

- [Territory Wildlife Park](#) —Native wildlife and walk-through aviary in Berry Springs
- [Berry Springs Nature Park](#) Spring-fed swimming holes close to the city
- [Litchfield National Park](#) Waterfalls, swimming holes and magnetic termite mounds (easy day trip)
- [Adelaide River Jumping Crocodile Cruises](#) See wild saltwater crocodiles leap from the water
- [Kakadu National Park](#) Cahills Crossing, Ubirr rock art and the Yellow Water cruise (morning recommended)
- [Nitmiluk \(Katherine\) Gorge](#) Cruise or paddle the dramatic gorge system
- [Mataranka Thermal Pool](#) Crystal-clear thermal springs in palm forest



To find out what else is on in Darwin in September, check out your free [What's on Guide-Off The Leash](#). Find it [online](#) or get your hard copy at the airport and cafes around town.

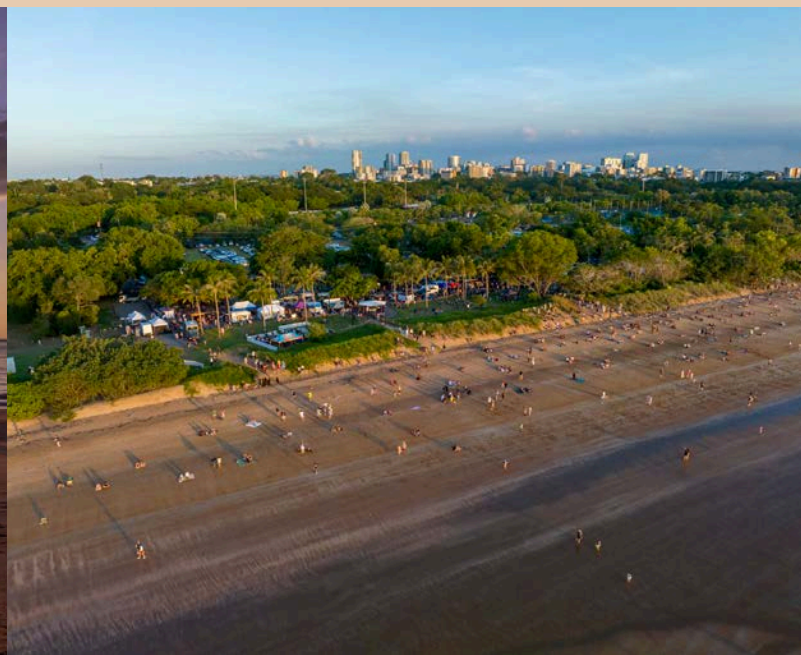


Photo acknowledgement

Page 1: Wave lagoon at Darwin Waterfront, Tourism & Events NT/Summersite

Page 2: Darwin Sailing Club, Tourism & Events NT/Helen Orr Darwin Sailing Club

Page 3: Mindil Beach Sunset Markets, Tourism Top End / Mindil Beach Sunset Markets

Page 5: Buley Rockhole, Litchfield, Tourism NT/Joshua Griffen Litchfield National Park

Page 6: Darwin Camel Rides, Tourism NT/@her_journeys and Mindil Beach Sunset Markets, Tourism & Events NT/Tourism Australia