



# National Trust

## Northern Territory

### NATIONAL TRUST NT NEWSLETTER

### JULY/AUGUST 2022

#### **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

The last few months have been rather time consuming. We are however steadily and collectively making inroads in the backlog of outstanding issues and projects.

Recruitment of the Administration Officer has been completed and Suraksha Tripathi has been working in the position for several weeks. Suraksha has fitted well within the National Trust, we welcome her and look forward to a long term mutually beneficial working relationship. Joanna Bailey, while no longer employed by the Trust, continues to volunteer and provide expertise and advice well above what could be reasonably expected of any volunteer.

Ilka Schacht resigned from the position of general councillor leaving a vacancy on the Council. We acknowledge the work undertaken by Ilka during her time at the National Trust.

The remaining \$63,000 from the 2020-2021 operational grant has been paid to the Trust by the NTG. While this does reduce the financial strain a little, we still have a considerable amount of belt tightening to endure.

It has been necessary to travel to Pine Creek on several occasions to touch base and address some long term issues including;

- Transport a contractor to Pine Creek railway station to assess and quote on the considerable damage caused during a recent spate of vandalism and possible future security measures.
- Working bee to cut down and remove dead trees from the stationmaster's house in readiness for the Gold Rush festival in July.
- Meet with Vic Daly Shire Council reps on availability of keys, access to locomotive shed, ground maintenance etc.

Discussions have also been ongoing on the construction of a geo trail in Pine Creek and upgrade of facilities and signs in the Miner's Park.

Discussions continue on the compilation of the Asbestos register and once we have determined all of the variables we should be able to obtain an overall complete cost and approach Community Benefits for funding.

The Rental agreement for Mines House has been extended for a further twelve months with an increase in rental. The increase will go a long way in covering the major cost of ground maintenance and watering.

The Katherine Railway project is nearing completion after five long years. There have been a considerable number of reasons why this has taken so long and the resilience and the determination of the Katherine Branch President and members is to be commended.

The celebration of the joining of the OTL at Frew Ponds looms closer with the enactment on the 22nd August. This will be followed by the Trust meeting in Tennant Creek on the 23rd.

*Eddie Webber*

## OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE SESQUICENTENARY 22 August 2022

On 22 August 1872 the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line between Adelaide and Darwin was completed. It has been described as 'the greatest engineering feat carried out in nineteenth century Australia'.

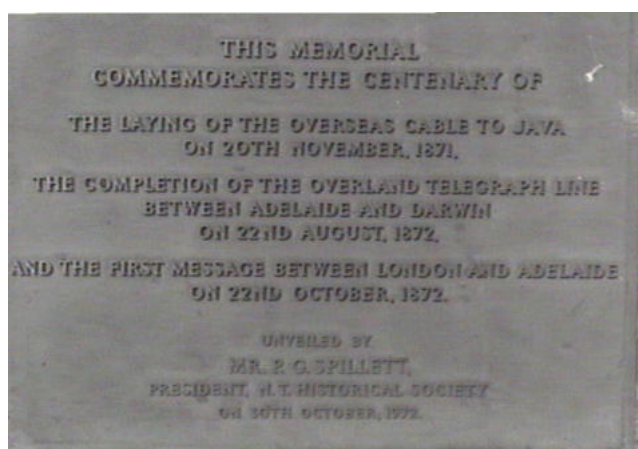
Within months it was linked to the Java-to-Darwin submarine telegraph cable, and Australia's communication time with Europe was reduced from months to hours.

[Overland telegraph | National Museum of Australia \(nma.gov.au\)](https://nma.gov.au/overland-telegraph)

The official commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the completion by NT Heritage will be held on the 22nd August, commencing at 10am at the Sir Charles Todd Memorial on the Stuart Highway followed by a walk or transport to the 'joining pole', where the north and south wires were joined.

Visit the [OT-150 Network](https://ot-150.network) website for further information as well as links and images and the schedule of events in both NT and SA.

*Image credit:*  
Library & Archives NT. Cheater, Graeme, 1955-  
(1984). Plaque, Overland Telegraph Line. Graeme  
Cheater Collection, PH0113/0100.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/10070/309117>



## DARWIN BRANCH

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/burnett-house>

### Burnett House Activities

Burnett House volunteers have been working hard to take advantage of the high visitor numbers during the dry season by holding afternoon teas on both the first and the third Sundays during June, July and August, whereas formerly it was only on the first Sunday. This has proved quite successful with most sessions being fully booked.



We have also been holding a raffle at each afternoon tea which has also been well supported. A gift basket with items from the gift store as well as a donated meal voucher have been raffled with the proceeds being equally shared between Darwin Branch and the Secretariat.

In addition to the scheduled Sunday afternoon teas, we have had requests from various groups to hold a morning tea or morning tea with tour for their group. We conducted a morning tea and tour for a South Australian tour group of 23 people. A special morning tea for parents of children that have a heart condition was also arranged to allow them to have some social time together. Another event titled 'Memory Lane Café' was arranged for the clients and carers of the Dementia Australia group. These additional events were all very well received.

We are open to consider other similar requests – just ask us what we can do.

Since the reduction in staff in Audit House, the Darwin Branch has taken on extra responsibilities. The Branch now coordinates the house attendants at Burnett House, which is open Monday to Saturday from 10.00am to 1.00pm. We also coordinate the guided tours, currently on Wednesdays, but need more volunteers to become tour guides to offer this service on a more regular basis. Full training will be provided. We also need extra people as backup for both house attendants and tour guides. Even if you can only help out occasionally, we'd still love to hear from you.



The Branch now has access to the booking system for afternoon teas and other events so are also gradually taking on that responsibility. Devonshire tea bookings can be made at <https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/devonshire-teas>



## Committee and AGM

Our very small but committed committee of only six has done an amazing job in not only staging events and raising significant income from fundraising but has also managed to increase the number of events and activities held. However this all comes at a cost and the committee is feeling the strain and in need of an injection of new ideas and enthusiasm. And, not to be ageist, but with an average age of around 70 there's a limit to how much we can all do....

There will be an AGM late September so please give consideration to joining the Committee. Injections of energy, ideas, enthusiasm and expertise are most welcome and sorely needed. In the meantime if you may be interested in joining the committee or in helping out in general, we'd love to hear from you. Please pass on your details to [nattrustbranchdarwin@gmail.com](mailto:nattrustbranchdarwin@gmail.com) or contact the Audit House office on (08) 8981 2848, [admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au](mailto:admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au).

## Crisis narrowly averted

Burnett House is falling down, falling down... well, at least a small part of it was...

Before commencement of afternoon teas on Sundays we always open the house windows to demonstrate the flow-through 'air conditioning' for those wanting to check out the house. Prior to the 5 June afternoon tea, when opening one of the upstairs casement windows in the front of the house, it was like time stopped.

Suddenly feet were frozen to the floor, heart stopped, and we watched in stunned disbelief as the entire window passed by - seemingly in slow motion, floating all the way to the ground below. A race downstairs and there it was, peacefully lying on the lawn. Miraculously neither the frame nor the glass was damaged in any way! And after a quick trip to the closest IGA for masking tape, a temporary patch up job with clear plastic, we were ready for business again.

Peter Shepherd Carpentry responded to our plea for help and was there promptly to reinstate the window. Thank you Peter Shepherd for your timely response to our moment of crisis.

Clearly they knew how to make windows in 1938! We just need the screws and hinges to have the same longevity!



## KATHERINE BRANCH

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/okeeffe-house>

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/old-katherine-railway-station>

O'Keeffe House and Gardens has been a hive of activity both in the garden and with visitation. We have seen the biggest tourist season we have had to date with hundreds of scones (both pumpkin and plain) being served up each Wednesday and Saturday. With the improvements of our historical display and gardens the feedback has been tremendous. Not only have we increased our tourist visitation, we are being discovered by our locals and have created quite a following.

Our greatest achievement happened in July. O'Keeffe House and Gardens won Best Business/ Government Garden at the annual Katherine Show (first time entry). To top this, we also won the Jean Sallis Memorial Trophy for Best overall Garden 2022. We are beyond excited at this achievement.



We have to thank the amazing volunteers who have contributed their time whether it was for a day or weekly, especially Stacy Kerr, Caroline Demarco and Jacque Christie. Stephen Murphy with his amazing Plumbing skills who came to our rescue many times (even on a public holiday), Peter Wasley (Katherine Tree Maintenance) for his amazing soil, Andy Symes for his Mulch Hay, Harry Renfree and his crew for his endless irrigation/garden support, Tom Davidson from Branched Out Contracting for his Arborist skills, Anne Shields for her greenhouse and shelving, Patow for helping us move it, Dale Hillen from across the road for mowing our lawn whenever the gate is open, Pamela and Chris Dixon for an amazing wheelbarrow, Stephanie and Brian Hill, our Families - Gary Lucas, Charlie and Olivia Lucas, Peter Festing, Blondie, Judy Holt and Patty Buntine for their endless support. Our valued community customers and visitors for their support and taking the time to visit what we think is a little garden oasis. Last but not least thank you to Merriel Lawrie, Bess Hart and Nicky Anlezark for cooking and serving up the best scones each week and for ensuring our history is preserved.



In July we also embarked on running a school holiday program sponsored by the NT Government through a Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC) grant . 'Pot with Colour' was a wonderful experience with a great bunch of children and their parents. The program featured painting a terracotta pot, planting a seedling (flower, herb or vegetable) into it and learning how to take care of it at home. It was so successful and fun to run that we will be doing it again in the future.



August is also shaping up to be a busy month for the Branch with multiple Seniors Month events, a school group and private functions being held at O'Keeffe House. We have been successful in obtaining a NT Government TFHC grant to hold a Katherine Heritage and High Tea event as part of Seniors Month.

The 1926 Katherine Railway Station is getting a facelift. The fence is currently being extended around the 1892 Steam Train making the space one Railway Precinct. The Steam Train roof has been restored and a set of stairs built to access the train. A new historical display has been installed in the museum along with new front entry signage. Landscaping is underway to make the space user friendly and inviting. Once completed we will be organising a celebration for the 1892 steam train which turns 130 this year.

On a sad note, we have to mention the passing of Les Cox and send our deepest sympathy to his family. Les Cox has been the historical brains trust of Katherine. His historical knowledge was impeccable and detailed. We were fortunate enough to have Les as our historical speaker on the Heritage Drive in early June this year. We will sorely miss him and will always remember how much he gave to the community and particularly the time he gave to the National Trust in Katherine. The Heritage Drive will not be the same without him.

Keep up to date with Katherine branch activities <https://www.facebook.com/okeeffehouse/>

## GULF BRANCH

<https://www.nationaltrusttstore.com/old-borroloola-police-station>

Local member Virginia and family members did a spring clean in early July, cleaning up around the grounds, the inside of the Old Police Station and gallery in preparation for the influx of visitors. It is a constant battle with the strong dry season winds dumping dust through every hole and crack in the walls of the Old Police Station building, while drying out the lawns and new trees which caretaker Ted tries to keep alive. We acknowledge the work that Virginia has been doing around the Old Police station as also our Branch Treasurer and Ted as our caretaker, making sure all is secure and ship shape around the precinct.

There has been a steady stream of visitors with Outback Spirit Tours also visiting the Old Police Station five times in June, with another five tours for July, and possibly six tours for August as we head into the busiest time of year. We are extremely grateful for the Outback Spirit Tours as they are our bread and butter and pay for the utilities to keep the property functioning.

Local members due to other commitments were unable to proceed with a planned film night playing David Attenborough's *Hermits of Borroloola*, a local favourite, and so this has been deferred till August.

A number of Gulf members are planning to attend the anniversary celebrations of the joining of the Overland Telegraph Line at Frew Pond on August the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Members also recently joined the archaeological dig at Limmen National Park 17<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> May, looking at pre European habitation of the area.

### Tattersall's Hotel

Frequently asked question; where was "the *Tattersall's Hotel* "?





Under the Tamarind Trees near the current Borroloola airstrip. The hotel had been owned and managed by the O'Shea family until compulsory acquired by the Government to extend the airstrip to meet Department of Civil Aviation regulations. The above photograph shows the Old Safe from the Hotel, a picture that hung behind the Bar. All donated by the O'Shea family and a rum cask donated by the late Mick Baker along with numerous bottles unearthed around the precinct.

Another question that a number of people ask about Borroloola is: did the Carnegie Library foundation actually send a Library collection to Borroloola? "No". It was the Mundie's select library in London.



Governor of Victoria John Hope, after being approached by Mounted Constable Powers of the SA NT Police, started the library with private donations of 1000 books then fund-raised to purchase a further 2000 select volumes for the library.

The McArthur Institute (originally formed as a Jockey Club), with the assistance of Mounted Constable Powers had acquired over 3000 volumes by 1898, originally held in the Court House and after its demise moved to the Police Station.

The library became scattered across the Gulf and Barkly regions by visitors over the years. The remnants of the library survived until the 1960s until what was not eaten by white ants was eventually destroyed by mould and or in some instances used as cigarette papers. The only book now left in the Old Police Station is the one in the cube, "*Webster's New International Dictionary*". This was returned, by Ruth Murphy packaged in a VB carton, it had been borrowed back in the 1940's and never returned. Following the Katherine Floods in 1998, the Murphy family members felt it should be returned to Borroloola.



## ROADMASTERS HOUSE

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/roadmasters-house>

Pictured below is Tony Cook who has recently joined the team at Roadmasters House Museum. Tony comes with a very interesting background. He was born in the English port city of Hull and trained as a marine engineer. He served with the merchant navy for 24 years during which time he circumnavigated the globe many times.



In 1981 Tony emigrated to Australia and moved to Jabiru which was then just being established. He lived in Jabiru for 20 years working at the Power Station initially as Site Engineer and later as the Superintendent.

As a world traveller and Jabiru pioneer Tony has many tales to tell. He has taken on the Tuesday shift from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm and is a welcome addition to our team of enthusiastic attendants.

The museum is open 10.00am to 1.00pm Tuesday to Friday and Sunday.

## ALICE SPRINGS

The Alice Springs branch of the National Trust NT manages two properties - Hartley Street School and Stuart Town Gaol. Both well-worth a visit if you are travelling through central Australia this dry season.

Hartley Street School was the first official school building in Alice Springs, constructed in 1929 and operating through to 1965. Stuart Town Gaol construction was completed in 1909 and served as the town gaol until 1938. Click on below links for more information, opening hours and contact details.

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/hartley-street-school>

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/stuart-town-gaol>



## TENNANT CREEK

We are on the hunt for new members. For \$30 you can become an individual member or for \$70 you can sign up as a family. Remember to nominate Tennant Creek as your home branch when signing up at <https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/membership>

Membership is for a 12 month period and benefits include free entry to all National Trust NT sites, National Trust Properties across Australia and overseas and 20% off at the National Trust NT gift store, including online.

Keep in touch with Tennant Creek branch at:

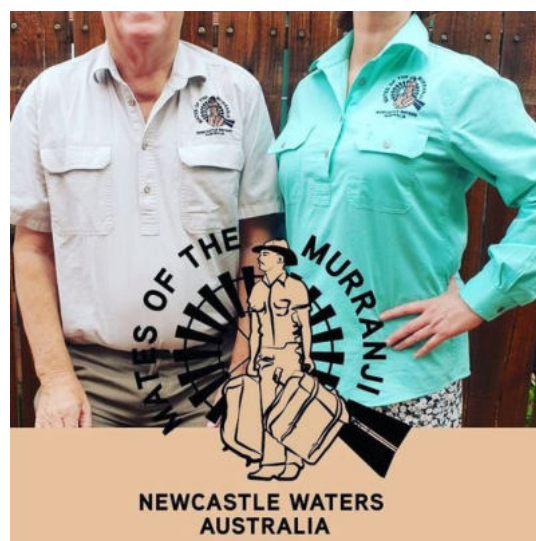
<https://www.facebook.com/TennantCreekBranchNationalTrustNT>

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/former-tennant-creek-outpatients-building>

## GIFT STORE

Feeling a bit chilly these dry season mornings? Need a new work shirt for the garden or property? Consider purchasing one of these cool shirts and support the 'Mates of the Murrnaji' Project. Available online: <https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/s/shop> or pop into our gift store in Audit House.

Established in 2020, a group of 'Mates' decided that it was time to form a voice to Government to drive the resurrection of the historic Newcastle Waters Township. The ultimate goal is for the remaining township buildings to be preserved and a sustainable vision for the future developed. For more information about the historical Newcastle Waters township and the Mates of the Murrnaji, please go to their website: <https://www.matesofthemurrnaji.com.au/>



Jones Store, Newcastle Waters <https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/jones-store>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

The location and ambience of Myilly Point Heritage Precinct is drawing many events this dry season including art and photography exhibitions and seminars, music and theatre events, weddings and Darwin Festival events. At Audit House, the exhibition Cornucopia by Tisha Tejaya wrapped up last Friday and we look forward to Aly de Groot opening this week.

### **Tales of a Whale and Other Stories, a solo exhibition by Aly de Groot**

Opening Night: 4pm Thursday, 4th August  
Exhibition hours: Monday - Friday 9am to 2pm, 4th - 26th August  
Audit House | 2 Burnett Place, Larrakeyah

*When I first came to Darwin in 1995, I had the incredible experience of spending time with a Dwarf Sperm Whale in the water at Bundilla Beach. It was injured and I held it in my arms and sang to it. This moment, which featured on the front page of the NT News, has instilled in me a deep fascination with the sea and its creatures, which I express through my art-making. Many years later, I discovered that The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) held the remains of this whale, and as an artist in residence at MAGNT from Mid-February, 2022 I had the rare opportunity to access and creatively respond to their rich natural sciences collection, including my beloved whale.*

*Please join me at the beautiful Audit House to celebrate the beautiful creatures of the Arafura Sea.*



## VENUE HIRE

Some National Trust NT properties can be hired for functions and other activities such as workshops and meetings. If you would like to know more, please contact [admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au](mailto:admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au) and we will put you in contact with the appropriate branch.

If you are looking for a beautiful location in Darwin to hold a function or other event, the current venue hire brochure for Myilly Point Heritage Precinct is found at:

<https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/venue-hire>

## HERITAGE LINKS

[NT Heritage Register](#)  
[Library & Archives NT](#)  
[Darwin City Geotrail](#)  
[NT Modern](#)

*If you have articles you'd like to contribute to the newsletter, or National Trust events you would like to publicise, please send them to [newsletter@ntnationaltrust.org.au](mailto:newsletter@ntnationaltrust.org.au)*