Arnhem Land arts centre celebrates 25th anniversary

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An arts centre in West Arnhem Land that started out as a Duke of Edinburgh Awards project, will today celebrate its 25th anniversary since opening its doors in 1989.

The Indigenous-owned and governed Injalak Arts and Crafts Association in Gunbalanya showcases works from over 300 local artists and weavers and has been an important employer and source of externally generated income for the community over many years.

The milestone is an extra special one for the organisation with it coinciding with the construction of a new Visitor Interpretive Centre at the facility, supported by the Giles Government.

The Arts Centre has received $100,000 as part of the Government’s tourism infrastructure development program to refurbish its old screen-print workshop and create a range of new facilities including audio-visual screens, interpretive boards, signage, pathways, external shade areas and areas for lectures and workshops. The centre is contributing $58,000 towards the project.

“The new Visitor Interpretive Centre will provide a fantastic new state-of-the-art home for Injalak Art Centre’s extensive collection of Indigenous printing, weaving and bark painting and create a unique and interactive experience for visitors to enjoy,” said Minister for Tourism Matt Conlan.

“Located on the doorstep of Kakadu National Park and an easy day-trip from Darwin, Injalak Arts is an ideal stop-over for tourists looking for an authentic art and cultural experience in close proximity to the spectacular landscapes and abundant wildlife of Kakadu.

“The centre has strong appeal to international tourists who are looking for an Indigenous experience as well as the domestic self-drive market, particularly grey nomads.

“The new Visitor Centre will encourage tourists to stay in the region longer which will have flow-on benefits for the local economy. It will help the business to grow and create even more jobs for local artists, which is why the Government is supporting this project. It is part of our plan to drive economic growth in our regions and ensure people in the bush have access to meaningful work.

“I would like to congratulate the art centre on their 25th anniversary and look forward to seeing its new Visitor Centre up and running in time for next year’s Dry Season.”
Injalak also run rock art tours up nearby Injalak Hill offering tourists an opportunity to view spectacular rock art in some of the Territory’s most stunning country.

The art centre started out as a Duke of Edinburgh Awards project in 1987 where a group of young men were assisted by local adult educator, Wendy Kennedy, to develop their art skills. They chose screen printing and built a small shed, which has grown into the art centre it is today.

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