

Environment Information Sheet

DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Rapid Creek Reserve



Rapid Creek flows through Darwin International Airport land. The Airport has established the Rapid Creek Reserve to preserve and rehabilitate this special place, Darwin's only significant freshwater system.

Rapid Creek forms part of the traditional lands of the Larrakia people who continue to maintain links with the area. Despite development around the site Rapid Creek has remained a 'natural' meandering watercourse. The remnant native bushland in the Rapid Creek Reserve remains largely in its natural state, it is part of what was once a much larger area of bushland. The reserve has woodland, wetland and monsoon forest environments.

The reserve encompasses a 75 metre wide buffer zone along the creek, it helps to protect the creek, its wetlands and the surrounding vegetation. The creek itself is a fragile corridor which has been affected by weeds, changes to fire regimes, clearing of vegetation, illegal dumping and inappropriate recreational use. The Airport has initiated a range of programs to help protect and maintain the water quality and biodiversity of the Rapid Creek area. Through targeted weed management and revegetation projects the health of the natural vegetation has improved over the years. The Airport also carries out water monitoring programs to assess the health of the creek and to detect any pollution incidents.

Closely situated to the northern suburbs, the reserve is easily accessible and offers a unique opportunity for locals and visitors to appreciate the area. The Airport developed the Gurumbai Trail for the public to enjoy the wonders of Rapid Creek and its wetland areas. The trail runs along the Rapid Creek Reserve, a return journey is about three and a half kilometres. Gurumbai is the Larrakia name for Rapid Creek and means elbow, referring to the shape of the creek at the saltwater end, towards the mouth of the creek. The Gurumbai Trail runs from Henry Wrigley Drive, alongside Rapid Creek behind the Darwin Airport Resort and then upstream past wetland areas before forming a loop through woodland.

In 2004 a Green Corps team worked on the trail, installed boardwalk sections and a picnic area, and revegetated a large degraded section. A viewing platform was built in 2005 for people to appreciate the beauty of historic Yankee Pools. During World War II the pools were popular with visiting soldiers and locals as a recreational spot. Also in 2005, sections of the trail were sealed and a carpark installed. Interpretative signage was installed along the path in 2006 and updated in 2011. These signs educate people about the local flora and fauna, as well as Aboriginal culture and European history of the area.

Since 2000 about 9,000 seedlings have been planted into the reserve through community and commercial work. Many



community groups including the Rapid Creek Landcare Group, Larrakia Nation, Greening Australia, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Green Corps and the City of Darwin have been involved with environmental activities in the reserve. Community tree planting days always attract a great turn out. The Airport also regularly hosts popular Clean Up Australia Days, these help to further raise awareness about Rapid Creek. The Airport is an active participant on the Rapid Creek Catchment Advisory Committee which implements the Rapid Creek Management Plan and coordinates management efforts within the catchment.

Airports and natural bush are two very different worlds yet with careful management, responsible use, and some compromises, modern developments and natural environments can coexist. Responsible use of remnant bushland like the Rapid Creek Reserve will ensure it is here for a long time to come, allowing future generations to enjoy small but special patches of bush too.

CONTACTS

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GURAMBAI TRAIL MAP

