The region’s biggest weekend of the year is here. This year’s much-anticipated Mahbilil Festival will kick off this Saturday, September 3 and will once again run in conjunction with West Arnhem Regional Council’s Gurrung Sports Carnival.

Mahbilil Festival producer Scott Large is anticipating that this year’s event is going to be an extravaganza at Lake Jabiru.

“Mahbilil is such an exciting time in Jabiru. All the locals are pumped for it and we have people coming from across the region to play at Gurrung Sports Carnival and to enjoy the festival,” he said.

Scott added that this year’s music line up is huge with handpicked acts from Darwin and around the country.

“With our headliners B2M, Kingfisha from Brisbane and Shellel Morris we have some world-class performances happening, supported by locals Black Rock Band and Bininj Band,” he said.

“The circus crew working with students from JAS will be a hit as always. Add into the mix a well-stocked marketplace, heaps of rides and kids activities and a display of amazing sculptures. “The bush foods area is a personal favourite of mine - with the Gungerre ground oven and Magpie Goose cooking competition where people can try local delicacies.”

Scott said Mahbilil Festival offers something for everyone and is a great family-event which showcases local talents.

“There’s plenty of amazing cultural workshops, heaps of great kids activities and a full market of yummy treats and interesting products. The weather is looking good and we’re ready for a huge day!”

“And there is plenty more on offer to make this a Mahbilious day out!”

Mahbilil Festival kicks off from 2pm at Jabiru Lake.

Continued Page 7 >>
**WHAT’S ON**

If you have an upcoming event you would like to see listed in this space please phone the Wire on 8979 9465 or email wire@westarnhem.nt.gov.au.

**Jabiru Lake.** Mahbilil Festival on Saturday, September 3 at Kingfisha is just one of many bands playing at 9465 or email wire@westarnhem.nt.gov.au. If you have an upcoming event you would like to see listed in this space please phone the Wire on 8979 9465 or email wire@westarnhem.nt.gov.au.

**WEEKLY**

**Tuesdays**
- Cricket training Anhern Oval Jabiru 5.30pm
- Jabiru Art & Craft, Youth Centre 7.30pm
- Playgroup, Jabiru Courthouse 9.30-11am
- Aqua Fitness, Alberto Luglietti Memorial Pool 6.15pm
- Mixed Touch Football, Majela Oval 6.30pm
- Jabiru Bombers pre-season training, Brockman Oval 5.30pm

**Wednesdays**
- Junior Soccer, Magela Oval 6pm
- Primal Fitness & Bootcamp $15 Magela Oval 6.30pm

**Thursdays**
- Cricket training Anhern Oval Jabiru 5.30pm
- Aqua Fitness, Alberto Luglietti Memorial Pool 6.15pm
- Pick the Joker Jabiru Golf Club 6.30pm
- Pool comp $100 Jabiru Golf Club 6.30pm
- Membership Draw, Jabiru Sports & Social Club 7.30pm
- Jabiru Bombers pre-season training, Brockman Oval 5.30pm

**Fridays**
- Badge draw, raffles, meat trays Jabiru Golf Club Pool comp $10 entry winner takes all JSSC
- Meat tray raffle, JSSC
- **2nd & 4th Sunday of the month** Lunch and Membership Wheel, win meat trays JSSC

**SEPTEMBER**

**Fri 2** Gurrung Sports Carnival, Jabiru
**Sat 3** Mahbilil Festival, Lake Jabiru
**Sat 3** Gurrung Sports Carnival continues and Trophy Presentations
**Wed 7** National Threatened Species Day
**Wed 7** Free Community Fire Extinguisher Training, Jabiru
**Fri 9-11** Mayali Mulil, Jim Jim Creek
**Sat 17** Feast on the Fairway, Jabiru Golf Club

**OCTOBER**

**Sat 1-9** Kakadu Bird Week
**Thu 6** Toy Run and Fun Bus
**Tue 9-15** Mental Health Comedy Week
**Mon 10** Mental Health Week Safe Talk, Jabiru Plaza
**Tue 11** WARC Cyclone Clean up Day, Jabiru
**Fri 28 & 29** Alligator Fishing Club Challenge

**REMINDER TO BE SAFE WITH FIRE**

Kakadu National Park Rangers are reminding community members to be mindful of fire safety. With all scheduled dry season burning by park rangers completed for 2016, strategic breaks across Kakadu National Park are already proving to be successful in containing deliberately lit, unwanted hot fires. This reminder comes about following the temporary closure of Anbangbang Billabong after fires were deliberately lit in two spots on either side of the billabong with rangers still monitoring the area. With the landscape drying out, strong gusty winds of the late dry season have the potential to carry embers for several kilometres. One spark is enough to cause a devastating hot fire that may put people’s lives at risk and threaten Kakadu’s outstanding natural and cultural World Heritage values. Gurrung Season is known as the hot, dry weather season which runs from August to October. How you can help:
- **Bin your butts! Don’t throw out burning cigarettes.**
- **Keep an eye on your campfire and refrain from lighting large ‘bonfires’.**
- **Extinguish your fire and dowse the coals before crawling into your swag or breaking camp.**
- If you witness any suspicious activity or fires being lit in the park please report it to Jabiru Police on (08) 8979 2122 or the Bowali Visitor Centre on (08) 8938 1120.

**MINJILANG STREET LIGHTING TRIAL PROGRESS**

New LED street lighting may be rolled out across West Arnhem communities following the trial of a new light system which took place in Minjilang.

West Arnhem Regional Councillors approved the new street lighting trial in Minjilang in July 2015, with 42 new-tech LED street lights installed on power poles around ‘high traffic’ areas in December.

From the trial, council intends to deliver quality street lights with increased longevity, low maintenance costs and reduced power bills, not just in Minjilang but across all West Arnhem communities. With the project now complete it can be confirmed that the new quarterly expense for public lighting in Minjilang has greatly reduced, with the lighting also able to withstand high wind conditions and are vandal-proof and rust-proof.

The initial feasibility study predicted a saving on power costs of approximately $3000 per annum, meaning that council can expect to see a return on investment in early 2019.

Minjilang Council Services Manager Candice Siedler-Twine said the street lighting has been greatly received by the community.

The fourth-generation LED streetlights are twice as efficient as first generation technology, and are nestled behind a tough lens in a framework of double-powder coated aluminium.

Additional solar lighting was also provided by the Department of Infrastructure for the Minjilang Barge Landing, “Minjilang residents enjoying the added safety when bringing in their boats or being able to see around during their night time fishing off the landing,” Candice said.

“I would like to thank Abel Margondili and Dennis Twine for their hard work constructing the light footing and standing the light pole up at the Barge Landing which was not an easy feat with 30km winds blowing constantly,” Candice said.
The 2016 Mayali Mulil Kakadu On Country Gathering is set to offer a real cultural experience with nature and traditional song and dance, from Friday, September 9 to Sunday, September 11.

The new Kakadu festival will take place on Murumburr Umbukarla country, and is hosted by Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp - a local Aboriginal family owned/run cultural tourism business offering safari-style eco accommodation and Aboriginal cultural experiences beside Jim Jim Creek system in Kakadu National Park.

The idea of Mayali Mulil started some 10 years ago with the Murdudjurl Community family, who hoped to bring people together on Murumburr country to share and connect with the diversity of Aboriginal cultures both near and far. They also hope to share, support and promote local and regional Indigenous enterprises.

Mayali is part of Bininj Kunwok (Western Arnhem Aboriginal languages similar to Kundjejhmi and Kunwinjku). Mulil means many - in this case a large gathering of people. In particular, people gathering and connecting together under the umbrella of Mayali language and culture.

The festival is a gathering of people, country, culture and enterprise with an aim of achieving a sustainable balance between two worlds.

The event is a gold coin entry and begins on Friday with free camping available over the weekend.

The festivities will kick off on Saturday with stalls, food and drinks, over 10 cultural workshops including weaving, string games, painting, didgeridoo playing, bushwalks, kids activities and more.

The festival will also feature traditional Aboriginal song and dance followed by music by Indigenous singers including Nabarlek Band, Djakapurra, Djapanbal Yunupingu, and Shellie Morris.

Shellie said Mayali Mulil is an incredibly unique festival which works part and parcel with the Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp.

“It gives families a chance to come and sit around to enjoy the wonderful activities on offer (and) it’s a chance for the community to come together,” she said.

“It is incredibly unique and we hope the festival can grow and be sustainable.”

Festival-goers can catch the free shuttle bus from the Cooinda Lodge or self drive (4WD and 2WD high-clearance recommended), drive along the Kakadu Highway turning off at Jim Jim Billabong Road.

With the access dirt road to the festival beginning at Murdudjurl Community, visitors are reminded to be respectful as they pass through Aboriginal community.

Stallholders can email their interest to mayalimulil@gmail.com or reserve a free camp site and to buy tickets for any of the cultural activities visit https://www.outix.net/website/mayalimulil.

Jabiru took to the polling booths on Saturday, August 27 to have their say in this year’s Territory election.

Many communities across West Arnhem, including Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Minjilang and Warruwi voting days were held earlier.

As of Thursday, September 1, Lawrence COSTA (ALP) had taken the Division of Arafura and Selena UIBO (ALP) had won primary votes in Arnhem.

Since the 2015 redivision, Arafura now includes the communities of Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Milikapiti, Minjilang, Nguiu, Pirlangimpi and Warruwi and Arnhem includes Barunga, Beswick, Mataranka, Jabiru and Kakadu.
GUNBALANYA IN THE NEWS

Photographs taken by Gunbalanya resident Donna Drexler have made front page news recently after she managed to capture a large crocodile eating a wallaby at the Gunbalanya billabong. Donna commented, “We came home from work and were sitting on the balcony which overlooks the billabong at Gunbalanya, and saw something floating in the billabong thinking it was a buffalo, (as) lots of crocs were circling it. “We went for a closer look in the ute, and after a few minutes the floating one was a huge croc, he flew out of the water with the wallaby in his mouth, thrashed it around a few times then swallowed it whole. Lots of other crocs were hanging around. “We were very lucky to have been there at the right time to be able to capture this amazing event. I was extremely excited to see nature doing what it does. Crocs are fascinating animals as we see them feeding on fish at times or just fighting each other.” Meanwhile, videos showing a large crocodile walking over Cahill’s Crossing attracted a lot of attention last week with the videos shared across social media, as well as online news.

KAKADU NATIONAL PARK MANGROVES THRIVING DESPITE REPORTED DIEBACK

Satellite imagery has revealed mangrove communities in Kakadu National Park appear to have avoided the ‘dieback’ reported in the Gulf of Carpentaria. While there’s been reporting of mangrove communities suffering in the Gulf, satellite imagery of the area between the South and East Alligator Rivers along Kakadu National Park’s coastal fringe suggest no impact to mangroves. Thirty-nine of the 47 mangrove species in the Northern Territory are found in Kakadu, an area teeming with wildlife. These mangrove communities provide habitat for at least 75 species of birds and 16 species of reptiles and amphibians.

One of the reasons monitoring the health of these areas is important is that they may be early indicators of a changing climate by acting as markers to sea level rise and decreasing rainfall. Having an early warning system helps plan for future management activities to protect biodiversity.

Parks Australia is currently supporting the University of New South Wales and the University of Wollongong to build on research in this area that first began in the 1970s. Mangroves in Kakadu are relatively isolated and free from human disturbance.
REGION’S TOP SPORTS TEAMS FLOCK TO JABIRU

Some 20 teams from the top end and West Arnhem will participate in the 7th annual Gurrung Sports Carnival on September 2 and 3, with some fierce competition in the line up.

Teams from Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Jabiru, St Johns College in Darwin, Minjilang, Warruwi, West Arnhem Girls Academy and Daly River will go head to head to contest the prestigious Gurrung Sports Carnival trophies over the two days.

This year’s event will once again run in conjunction with the Mahbilil Festival which will kick off at 2pm on Saturday at Lake Jabiru with plenty of music and entertainment on offer.

Gurrung Sports Carnival is the top end’s largest regional sports event, held right here in Kakadu National Park...

West Arnhem Regional Council Sport and Recreation Coordinator Seide Ramadani said there will be some hot competition throughout Gurrung on both the basketball courts and AFL field.

In the competition line up, the Minjilang team have returned to contest their defending champion’s title which they have retained over the years in the men’s AFL.

With the assistance of Sport and Recreation Officers Matthew Nagarlin and Justin Cooper, the team is looking strong but will have to once again contend with seven regional teams, including the 2015 runners-up the Gunbalanya Buffaloes.

Meanwhile, the women’s basketball competition is looking close with the return of champions the Minjilang Tigers and 2015 runners-up the Warruwi Mardbalk Cats. A total of seven strong teams are in the competition, including two teams from West Arnhem Girls Academy.

Jabiru Heat is also back and ready to defend their three-year reign as defending champions in the hotly-contested men’s basketball. However it may not be easy with strong competition from 2015 runners-up St Johns, as well as teams from Minjilang, Maningrida and Gunbalanya.

Seide said there will also be action on the sideline, with radio hosts Jason Tambling and Bernard Namok from Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) running a live broadcast which will reach listeners across the top end.

“From the Mahbilil Festival, families across the top end who can’t be there have the chance to listen in and be part of the action all weekend!” Seide said.

Gurrung Sports Carnival will kick off with the women’s basketball competition on Friday at 4.30pm and the men’s basketball starting from 6pm at Jabiru Sports and Social Club courts. The men’s grand final and presentations will follow at around 8.30pm.

Saturday will see the start of the AFL competition from 8am at the Brockman Oval, and the women’s basketball continuing from 8.30am at Jabiru School. Official presentations will be held at approximately 6.00pm at the oval.

Gurrung Sports Carnival is proudly hosted by West Arnhem Regional Council and gives young sportspeople the chance to participate in the top end’s largest regional sports event, right here in Kakadu National Park.
Nourlangie Safari Camp, here is 9SLK
Is anybody listening? (My radio code)
From the Diaries of Flemming Jensen 1968-1969
In the previous episode, Flemming anticipated news on the horizon as he continued to wait for Pat and Allan to return.

Sunday, February 16th
The pensioners got their rations without baking powder. If Pat or Allan do not come before Thursday they will receive no rice too!
After almost having given up just seeing a buffalo, I suddenly got sight of one after two hours of searching. It was grazing in the high shrubbery and if it had not moved I would not spot it. We were not far from the car. It could not escape. I let it get out in a little open ground and then I shot.
It stood silent for a moment and looked around confused. I hit it but it was only wounded. Now it began to run but something seemed not quite as it should and that gave me time to give it another shot and then it went down.
When I reached the suffering roaring animal, I gave it the decisive bullet before I let the blood run. It was the sixth and the third in a row which had gone down in three shots. Quite well, I thought.
I had blood all over my body and hair from the meat on the neck. In the evening I was ready for a shower.

Monday, February 17th
Since two weeks ago when Pat on short notice went off, everything has gone well I should say. The camp is looked after and I am still alive and in good health.
On the other hand I would like either Allan or Pat to come so we can get the economy to fall into place. Otherwise not much has happened out of the ordinary.
However I have yet to see a crocodile, so this morning I went into the boat and sailed a little up and down the small canals that lead to the billabong but I unfortunately I did not see any. I had as a precaution taken Allan´s Carbine with me. Just in case!

Tuesday, February 18th
Just another day I think they have forgotten me. They have at least confidence in me and do I dare also having confidence with them.
Sunday’s hunt was going on barefoot. I’ve now got the consequences to feel a deep gash and several cuts are beginning to pain me in the foot. I rub them with iodine several times a day and I believed that I was callous enough to walk without sandals.

I have realized you have to be an Aboriginal to do so. They always walk barefoot. In the afternoon I spend some time cooking and it is the first time I try it but the bread is all right and tastes OK.
When I finally had translated the recipe and baked the bread I spend just as long to get cleaned up. But I enjoyed myself and time was running away.

Wednesday, February 19th
Today for the one hundred seventeenth time it was the laundry day and most of my clothes were washed. After washing I went into the woods with the 22.
It would be good if I met a wallaby. There was no catch but I had a good time. There was bread on the table again tonight. It was baked in the other day.
I have realized you have to be an Aboriginal to do so. They always walk barefoot. In the afternoon I spend some time cooking and it is the first time I try it but the bread is all right and tastes OK.
When I finally had translated the recipe and baked the bread I spend just as long to get cleaned up. But I enjoyed myself and time was running away.

Thursday, February 20th
The pensioners got their rations, rice included. I found several kilos hidden in a flour barrel but they got no baking powder, however I gave them a decent piece of meat. That is something they like.
They can’t even catch a buffalo as it’s too big a head for them. In contrast, wallabies, wild boar, goannas and bandicoot are some of the animals they can catch. In fact, it is with help from their dogs. Of course they also fish in billabongs. I think in a way that they are omnivorous.
It is not peanuts that they pick up and eat, but they’ve had to do with what they can find for centuries. When I went down to move the boats once again, this time the water had receded and there was a swamp tiger under one boat. In my confusion I did not see where it disappeared.
Now that it was gone I shuffled cautiously the boat around. Oh, how I missed some decent boots or shoes! When the second boat had to be moved I was more cautious.
I had a stick ready.
Another had sought refuge under the boat and as it appeared when I moved the boat but I got it with the stick! Because it sprawls in two parts, my fear was not the same.
For dinner I had no desire for steak but it was hardly surprising after one and a half months with steak. I decided to cook the rice pudding but something was not as it should be. Either I had cooked too much rice or else too little milk for it was something. I was sated, however.

In the next episode, Flemming receives an important telegram, but the radio batteries run out before he can hear the message.

Reproduced with permission: Kakadu National Park Cultural Heritage & Biodiversity Management Unit.
In the music line up, there is B2M (Bathurst to Melville) which is a seven-piece band from the Tiwi Islands. B2M are strong Tiwi men who write, sing and perform music about the issues we all face. B2M have already accomplished what takes some bands a lifetime to achieve – role model status in their community. They are ambassadors to a broader Australian and international community, as they carry a positive image of their people and culture through their RnB music with a unique Tiwi twist.

Also in the line up is Shellie Morris who is the 2014 NT Australian of the Year and NAIDOC Artist of the Year. Shellie is one of Australia’s finest singer songwriters and has featured with award-winning Black Arm Band, collaborated with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and was a composer of Prison Songs – a musical film with Casey Bennetto (Paul Keating the Musical) which is doing the international film festival rounds. She has also worked with more than 40 remote communities throughout her career, performing singer-songwriter workshops.

The line up also features internationally-renowned Queensland roots-reggae aficionados Kingfisha, who have built a rock-solid following delivering world-class dub reggae. Sultry, expert, and undeniably infectious, the Kingfisha sound highlights heavy and deep all-encompassing rhythms with the feather-light touch and perfect soul vocal.

Local group Bininj Gunborrk will also present a high energy show of traditional dance to light up the dance ground at the festival.

Meanwhile, the Psycus Circus is returning to Mahbilil yet again for the sixth year running, showcasing Jabiru’s budding young performers. On an ongoing quest to explore the wonderful world of theatre, the Psycus Circus, in collaboration with Jabiru Area School, are sure to deliver a powerful hour of entertainment.

There is also an art exhibition at The Croc on Friday night in the newly-refurbished gallery space where there will be works from local painters and photographer Peter Keepence from 6pm.

One of the most popular aspects of Mahbilil is the preparation and cooking of local bush foods. Get hands on with prepping magpie goose and learn from the locals as to best handle and cook it. Watch the building of the traditional Gungarre ground oven and sample local buffalo and vegies after many hours of slow cooking.

Cook barramundi and magpie goose on the coals and try the results.

Then there is also the hotly-contested magpie goose cooking competition. Locals try their hand and flex their MasterChef muscles in using the food in many different ways to wow the judges. You get to try the dishes and vote on the People Choice awards.

Mahbilil, with support from Children’s Ground, presents a sequence of engaging and informative workshops throughout the afternoon. These include weaving of natural fibres, spear-making and throwing, local storytelling, traditional painting, as well as all the bushfoods program.

One of the highlights of the festival for many is the local dance program with the Jabiru Bininj Gunborrk dancers set to light up the dance ground once again! This all sits alongside a full program of bush food preparation and cooking both on the coals and in a traditional ground-oven.
MAHBIILIL FESTIVAL
2016
SAT 3RD SEP

CELEBRATING KAKADU CULTURE

MUSIC - TRADITIONAL DANCE - ARTS
BUSHFOODS - WORKSHOPS - CULTURE

JABIRU - ARnhem LAND - NT

www.mahbililfestival.com
WEST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL PRESENTS

2016 GURRUNG SPORTS CARNIVAL

2 - 3 SEPTEMBER 2016

WEST ARNHEM’S PREMIER REGIONAL SPORTING EVENT

VENUES

BROCKMAN OVAL
JABIRU SCHOOL
JABIRU SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

MEN’S AFL
MEN’S BASKETBALL
WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

With a focus on young people aged 16-25, the Gurrung Sports Carnival, is held in Jabiru and features teams from across our region, Darwin boarding schools and other Top End communities. Proudly supported by the Australian Government.

FROM 5PM, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The West Arnhem Wire | 20 August - 2 September 2016
A new species of giant stingray has been found in Kakadu tidal rivers.

A new species of giant stingray, one of the largest in the world, has been named the Mumburarr Whipray after being encountered by scientists in northern Australian rivers, coastal Papua New Guinea and the Arafura Sea.

Three young specimens of the ray have also been found in the tidal rivers of Kakadu National Park and two in the Kimberley region of Western Australia by Dr Peter Kyne of CDU.

They were found during shark and ray research for the National Environmental Science Program Marine Biodiversity Hub. Mumburarr is a local Limilngan language name for stingray, used by the Minitja people. Traditional owners in Kakadu chose the name to recognise the importance of stingrays in traditional culture.

Kakadu Groove 2016 was again a wonderful night! Held on August 20, Groovers brought their families and picnic rugs down to the Lake Jabiru Park for an evening of music and relaxation.

The gorgeous girls from Mettaphor played their sultry tunes throughout the night, Perlin sold her famous curries while others enjoyed some chicken kebabs which were well worth the wait. As the night drew near kids danced in front of the band and glow sticks could be seen from one end of the park to the other.

Thank you to everyone who supported this event and to those who helped organise it. Special thanks to ERA for their continued support of this wonderful event; Kakadu Groove could not be held without this.
KIDS SHOW OFF FISHING SKILLS AT FUN DAY

Barramundi and saratoga were among the fish species caught at the Alligator Fishing Club Kids Fun Day held on Saturday, August 5.

Held at Yellow Waters in Cooinda, 25 children hit the water throughout the day. Though attendance numbers were slightly down this year, those who took part in the day had a wonderful time.

Alligator Fishing Club President Tanya McKay said everyone had a great time.

In the end result, Lauren Krollig won, with Grace Krollig in second.

“The kids did it tough this year as the fish weren’t biting but one lucky boat were the lucky ones with 2 catfish, 1 saratoga and a nice 58cm barra,” Tanya said.

“All the kids received a goodie bag and a participation certificate. Once off the water the kids and adults had a chance to show off their casting abilities followed by a presentation of award prizes.

“Then it was back to the camp, freshen up cook a barbecue dinner followed by a movie for the kids while the adults sat back and enjoyed a few quiet beverages.”

Winners for the casting competition were Parker Watkinson in first, equal second were James Slater and Kowen, Ollie came in third with Paige Jaques and Kylara Morris in equal fourth place.

The adult casting competition winner was Ben Liebelt and the mystery catch winner went to Hayden Boisvert.

“We would like to thank everyone who attended and especially this year’s sponsors, Cooinda Lodge, Jabiru Foodland, Jabiru BP and Kakadu Croc Hotel.”

Alligator Fishing Club will hold the Alligator Fishing Club Challenge on October 28 and 29.
The Essendon Football Club and staff from the AFL and AFLNT have made some students from West Arnhem very happy with a special visit to Maningrida school kids recently.

The AFL in conjunction with the Essendon Football Club sent Rob Kerr and Michelle Murray to Maningrida and the Tiwi Islands as a final stage of establishing Next Generation AFL Club Academies across the Territory in 2017.

As well as meeting the students and handing out Essendon Football Club jumpers and footballs, the star guests played an impromptu round of footy. They also met with local community leaders and stakeholders to discuss the next step for the program in West Arnhem and scope local talents.

AFLNT Remote Development Manager in Maningrida Bernie Price said the visit will lead to exciting opportunities ahead for kids and community football. The kids were extremely excited about the visit and the new jumpers and football.

Five Victorian AFL clubs have been allocated regions in the Northern Territory, including East Arnhem, with the aim of attracting boys and girls who are not currently playing football or are underrepresented in the AFL.

Collingwood, Essendon, Geelong, Hawthorn, and Melbourne have been provided with seed funding to begin establishing club-based academies in their specific regions in 2016, with the objective of expanding the program in 2017 and beyond.

AFLNT CEO Michael Solomon said the academies were part of the AFL’s broader commitment to invest in the community foundations of the game.

“The academies will look to build strong links between local communities, grassroots football and the elite level, to ensure our game is representative, inclusive and embraces gender and cultural diversity,” Solomon said.

“It is important we provide clubs with an incentive to develop a presence in these communities, and help attract talented indigenous players who would not otherwise play AFL or are underrepresented.”

Solomon said the details of the talent concessions were yet to be finalised, but it was envisaged the model would operate similar to the system in place for the Northern State Academies.

AFLNT High Performance Manager Wally Gallio said it was great to host the clubs who met in Darwin before flying out to their designated regions.

“For football to grow and prosper in the Territory, we must reinforce the pathways for Indigenous Australians,” Gallio said.

The clubs will now work with AFLNT to utilise staff based in their specific region to take advantage of AFL programs and resources already in place.

The Academies will enable AFL clubs to be actively involved in introducing kids to the game and provide aspirational pathways for coaches, umpires and administrators.

The allocation of regions is designed to align AFL clubs with underage talent programs, and where possible ensure clubs who have existing relationships with certain communities can build on those relationships.