

## Darwin: A creative hub in the tropics

Darwin has the potential to become a national leader and hub for creative innovation and inspiration, according to a recent project led by CDU's School for Social and Policy Research.

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Associate Professor Tess Lea leads an examination of the NT capital's creative life.



Researchers from CDU, the University of South Australia and the University of Wollongong have mapped Darwin's creative industries including businesses based in marketing, advertising, music, film and television.

Ninety-eight practitioners were interviewed to help construct a local "map" of where they live, work and seek their inspiration. The map revealed several hotspots including the Darwin CBD, Parap and Winnellie.

Chief investigator of the "Creative Tropical City: Mapping Darwin's Creative Industries Project", Associate Professor Tess Lea said that Darwin's vibrant grass roots community also had a strong creative network, particularly with the NT's Asian neighbours.

"Identifying iconic creative spaces is important because these spots help generate and inspire the productivity that builds our reputation and presence," Dr Lea said.

"It highlights places that need to be recognised, protected and treasured."

Australian Bureau of Statistics information revealed that almost 2000 people were employed in Darwin's creative industries in 2006.

The CDU research report showed that this field employed significantly more people than mining (463), finance/insurance (1160) and various primary industries.

Dr Lea said Darwin could develop a more resilient economy and become less dependent on the Australian Government and resource sector by prioritising CDU's place in the community.

She said the University played a vital role in nurturing and developing creative minds.

"CDU feeds into the NT economy with graduates in key areas of design, new media, music technology and engineering."

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## Territory pioneer receives PhD at 84

**At age 84, Judy Opitz has completed the highest academic honour. After 18 consecutive years of university study, the Territory pioneer has received a PhD from CDU.**

Dr Opitz took her first steps into higher education in 1990 with an Arts degree majoring in archaeology and anthropology, followed by Honours which she completed in 1998. But her appetite for learning was far from satisfied, leading her to enrol in a PhD.

Her thesis compared the archaeological significance of two Australian Heritage sites – Tasmania's Port Arthur Penal Colony and the Territory's Kakadu National Park – and examined the ways the sites' archaeological histories were presented for visitors.

She said Kakadu visitors sought more in-depth knowledge of Indigenous culture, and wanted to know about the use and significance of the site to prehistoric peoples, not just about its present-day significance.

At the same time as working on her thesis, Dr Opitz wrote her autobiography entitled "An English Rose in Kakadu", which has been accepted by a local publisher. The book recounts her childhood in England where she was raised by nannies and governesses, to her search for adventure and subsequent voyage to Australia as a "10-pound POM" in 1959, and eventually to meeting her future husband and crocodile hunter hero, Tom Opitz, in the famous Darwin Hotel.

Tom worked at the Nourlangie Safari Camp as a guide, leading hunting parties for American tourists. In 1964 the couple built a store in Kakadu,

which later became the Gagudju Lodge Cooida, renowned for its Yellow Water boat cruises.

Now that she has finished her PhD, Dr Opitz has set her mind on studying philosophy.

She said education would always be important to her, and helping people access education was her current passion.

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Dr Judy Opitz, 84, still hungry for learning.