

Project overview

Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct

About the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct

The Northern Territory Government is working to transform Middle Arm into a sustainable 'development ready' industrial precinct.

The precinct aims to capitalise on the Territory's access to natural gas and renewable energies to grow manufacturing and value-adding jobs while supporting economic growth. The precinct will be a master planned area with a focus on low emission hydrocarbons, green hydrogen, advanced manufacturing, carbon capture and storage and minerals processing.

Sustainable outcomes and environmental protection of Darwin Harbour and surrounds are at the core of planning for the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct.



The Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct supports the delivery of a \$40 billion economy by 2030, while meeting commitments to net zero emissions by 2050. The essential elements and opportunities of a sustainable development precinct as it relates to Middle Arm include:

- maximising renewable energy use
- maximising economic outcomes while minimising environmental and social impacts
- efficient water use including reuse where possible
- circular economy principles including reusing waste streams (such as using waste as a feedstock) and carbon capture
- efficient use of infrastructure.

Preserving Darwin's environmental values, including the Darwin Harbour, is a critical goal to meeting the sustainable objectives of the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct.

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) is leading the planning, design and approvals process. If the precinct is approved, it may require and include:

- land clearing
- land development including:
 - roads
 - power network
 - water network
 - telecommunications network
 - pipeline corridors
- marine infrastructure including:
 - common user jetties
 - shipping channel
 - module offloading facility.

Middle Arm Peninsula

The Middle Arm Peninsula is in Darwin Harbour across the Elizabeth River from Palmerston and opposite East Arm Port. It is 13 kilometres south of Darwin's CBD as the crow flies, or about 40 kilometres by road.

The proposed precinct covers about 1200 hectares, off the Channel Island Road past the Elizabeth River Bridge. It is already home to the Channel Island power station (that supplies power to Darwin and Katherine regions) and the Weddell power station. INPEX's Bladin Point LNG plant and Santos' Darwin LNG plant both currently process natural gas into Liquefied Natural Gas at Middle Arm.

Why is the precinct being developed and what are the benefits?

The precinct will drive industry diversification, exports, jobs and population growth over the next 50 years.

The benefits of a master planned precinct include:



co-locating similar industries in one place rather than spread around the harbour



an overarching environmental performance framework



shared infrastructure rather than each project duplicating



better certainty for the community about potential development over the next 50 years



assessing and managing cumulative impacts on the environment, culture, economy and society rather than incremental consideration project by project



greater certainty for investors and proponents about what is appropriate and acceptable at Middle Arm



strategic planning for the pipeline of jobs, procurement, social infrastructure and land release.



What approvals are being sought?

DIPL has commissioned a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) that takes account of all likely activities in the precinct for the next 50 years.

The SEA will seek approval for a program of development under the:

1. [NT Environment Protection Act 2019](#) (which considers environmental, social, cultural, economic and health impacts and management regimes)
2. [Australian Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (which considers impacts on matters of national environmental and heritage significance).

The SEA considers the direct footprint of the precinct as well as all areas likely to be affected by project activities such as:

- land clearing
- air emissions, noise and waste
- water and energy use

- any impact on plants and animals, particularly threatened species
- disturbance from infrastructure such as roads, jetties and pipelines
- dredging and shipping in Darwin Harbour
- workforce planning, land use plans, access routes and impacts on the amenity, values and wellbeing of people living in the Greater Darwin Area
- cultural, economic, tourism and recreational uses of the land and seas.

The assessment will suggest conditions that should apply to any activity in the precinct and ongoing monitoring and management of all potential impacts.

DIPL is delivering this project in line with the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia's framework and will receive a sustainability rating. This rigorous assurance process takes account of environmental, cultural, economic, social and governance sustainability factors.

What is the timeline?

Mid 2022

- precinct planning and concept design
- environmental studies

Late 2022

- preparing Strategic Environmental Assessment

Mid 2023

- detailed design starts

Late 2023

- draft Strategic Environmental Assessment goes on public exhibition for 30-60 business days

Late 2024

- supplementary information to address submissions from the public and NT EPA goes on public exhibition for a minimum of 15 business days

2025

- environmental approval granted or refused

Subject to approvals

Mid 2025

- proponents (including DIPL) can start preparing approval notice applications to construct and operate in the precinct
- DIPL to lodge approval notice applications with NT EPA for enabling infrastructure

Early 2026

- construction of enabling infrastructure starts if approved

How will the precinct be regulated?

DIPL is seeking regulatory approval for an overarching precinct plan of likely types of projects and shared infrastructure for the precinct. The overarching plan approvals will clearly define the acceptable limits of development.

Individual projects will need to demonstrate they comply with the approved precinct plan. For example, that they fall into the approved categories of industrial activity, or that individual project emissions or waste discharges do not exceed a threshold set for the precinct.

Individual projects will still need to apply for approvals, consult with the community and address all other nominated regulatory and administrative requirements required by the Environment Protection Authority.

How can I be involved and have a say?

Communication and stakeholder engagement is an important part of precinct planning and environmental assessment. DIPL will provide regular updates on the project to keep people informed.

Formal feedback points include:

- engagement to inform the draft Environmental Impact Statement
- public exhibition of the draft Environmental Impact Statement
- development of supplementary information
- public exhibition of supplementary information (NT EPA only).

To keep up to date on the latest information and for opportunities to provide feedback, scan the QR code or visit middlearmprecinct.nt.gov.au

Alternatively, you can email contact.MASDP@nt.gov.au

