

Monday 21st April 2008

Public Art Project Takes Flight at Darwin International Airport

Northern Territory Airports' CEO Ian Kew today welcomed the installation of the first corrugated iron canopy that has been transformed into a unique piece of Aboriginal artwork as part of its \$450,000 Public Art Project at Darwin International Airport (DIA). This project is an integral part of DIA's public art precinct that runs parallel to the façade of the terminal, with the theme of "Spirit of Travel in the Top End". At completion, it will feature works of both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous artists and includes the already prominent collection of Tiwi Pukumani poles.

Managed on behalf of DIA by the Jumbana Group's Balarinji Studio in Sydney, the project is due for completion in mid-2008 after more than 18 months in the planning stages. The twelve canopies that provide cover for the two main thoroughfare roads in front of the terminal at DIA will be transformed over the next few months into these unique pieces. Three Top End Aboriginal artists have been commissioned for this project – Darwin Larrakia artist Ms Denise Quall, Borroloola Gudanji artist the late Mr Gordon Landsen Milyindirri* and Oenpelli Jawoyn artist Mr Isaiah Nagurrurrba. The first piece installed is by Denise Quall.

The artworks are transposed on to the corrugated iron in the warehouse of Express Signs, a proud Territory based business located in Berrimah and operated by local Peter Dienhoff. After removal, the original image is projected onto the corrugated iron, then four signwriters reproduce the image by hand to exact specifications of each artist. "In the age of computerised production of signage, the opportunity to complete a project by hand is something that's been appreciated by all involved" says Peter.

As a "gateway" to the Top End, DIA embarked on this exciting project to introduce travellers and tourists to the Northern Territory's vibrant and diverse visual culture.

Funding support for this project has been provided by the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government.

Project Statistics:

- Twelve canopies measuring 14m by 4.7m to be removed, painted and re-fitted;
- Removal of each canopy takes approximately 4 hours – equal time to re-fit;
- Each canopy involves approximately 200 hours of hand painting by 4 sign-writers by work session;
- Art re-produced with silver paints which produce 99% accuracy to the original art piece. Work completed under the instruction of Peter Dienhoff, Express Signs in Darwin.

Ian Kew
Chief Executive, Northern Territory Airports

For media enquiries and photo opportunities of the art and artist please contact Sharon Collier 08 8920 1808. Images also available at www.ntairports.com.au (media centre)

* permission to publish the name of the late Gordon Landsen Milyindirri, was given on 18th April 2008 by Borroloola ceremonial leader Roy Hammer.

