

Media release

Cyclone Tracy commemoration grants awarded to local community groups

28 June 2024

City of Darwin is pleased to announce the recipients of funding as part of the Cyclone Tracy 50th Anniversary Commemoration Grants Program, which is aimed at supporting events and activities that honour one of the most significant occasions in Darwin's history.

The grants program provides funding for activities that will support the community in commemorating this historic event through different events and projects.

Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis said there was a variety of community-led events available during the year that will honour the memory of Cyclone Tracy.

"The grants program was developed to assist the community in acknowledging the profound impact Cyclone Tracy had on the city, the survivors and the broader community," Mr Vatskalis said.

"I am pleased to see a range of events on offer via the grant funding, with activities starting from July and running all the way through until December.

"The first event supported by City of Darwin will take place in the Brown's Mart Theatre on Tuesday 16 July, when Kevin McCarthy hosts a special theatrical performance combining the music, vision, audio and activities of pre-cyclone Darwin," he said.

The following events will also take place through the grants program:

- Big Dog Salad will develop a TRACY feature film to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Cyclone Tracy. It will be a grass-roots, independent production by Darwin locals which will be available in December this year.
- The Chung Wah Society will construct and present an exhibit commemorating the impact of Cyclone Tracy on the Darwin Chinese community at the NT Chinese Museum. The exhibit will depict the resilience of the community and its contribution to the reconstruction of the city, incorporating photographs, audio extracts, written accounts and memorabilia.
- Darwin Symphony Orchestra will perform a new work by Larrakia senior elder Dr Aunty Bilawara Lee and NT Composer Netanela Mizrahi which will premiere at the Darwin Festival in August. This piece will bring a new perspective on Larrakia culture and history, in a uniquely moving performance accompanied by a full symphony orchestra.

- St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc will create interpretive signage, including photos and stories of the first responders involved in Cyclone Tracy, to mark the significance of this event for the Ambulance Service in the Northern Territory.
- Arafura Wind Ensemble will host a special event that will be a musical dialogue of the music of the time of Cyclone Tracy, and how community music has grown to what is today. The MC for the show, as well as some of the musicians involved, were in Darwin during Cyclone Tracy and will add personal accounts to the show, accompanied by the 35-piece Arafura Wind Ensemble.

There were two grant options available, up to \$1,000 for minor commemorative grants and up to \$5,000 per activity for major commemorative grants.

Applicants responded to one of three themes to create cohesion across the program, including 'Commemorative' which provides opportunities for remembrance; 'Educational' which sees programs inform and create learning opportunities; and 'Recognition' which creates awareness, appreciation, and acknowledgment of survivors, their families and all those who were affected.

The grant program events will underpin an additional suite of activities, events and interactive projects underway by numerous organisations planned to take place during July and December 2024.

For more information, visit darwin.nt.gov.au/community/things-to-do/community-celebrations/cyclone-tracy-50th-anniversary.

Quotes attributable to grant recipient, Kevin McCarthy:

"We are thrilled to be a grant recipient for our Cyclone Tracy's Golden Jubilee event, which will be a multimedia showcase celebrating life in Darwin before Cyclone Tracy."

"The show will be presented as part of the Darwin Fringe Festival and is set on Christmas Eve 1974. It will be a spectacular roller-coaster ride through pre-cyclone Darwin, featuring music, vision and sounds from that time as well as personal recollections from cyclone survivors."

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