

AUSTRALIA'S AEROSPACE GATEWAY TO THE INDO-PACIFIC

LAUNCH.
TEST.
SCALE.

Equatorial. Uncongested. Investment-ready.



AUSTRALIA'S
**NORTHERN
TERRITORY**

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HOW WE CAN HELP

The Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations is the Northern Territory Government's lead agency for investment attraction, trade, workforce development and business growth, working in close partnership with other agencies to support investment facilitation.

We work with industry, investors and government partners to identify opportunities that support economic development across the Northern Territory.

Our team serves as a key point of contact for investors and businesses, helping them connect with the right government agencies, understand Northern Territory opportunities, navigate relevant processes and access information relating to workforce, migration and enabling infrastructure.

Through collaboration across the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, we support investment facilitation, encourage private sector growth and help projects progress toward successful delivery.



WHY CHOOSE THE NORTHERN TERRITORY?

A COMPLETE CIVILIAN AEROSPACE VALUE CHAIN: FROM LAUNCH AND TEST TO SUSTAINMENT

The Northern Territory brings together a rare combination of geography, airspace and infrastructure. Few jurisdictions in the Indo-Pacific can offer equatorial launch, world-class stratospheric conditions, uncongested test corridors and growing aerospace infrastructure within a single, stable and well-regulated environment, with established government and allied activity providing an anchoring base of demand.



EQUATORIAL LAUNCH HERITAGE

Proximity to the equator reduces fuel burn and widens orbital access, in a region with proven sub-orbital launch heritage from past NASA campaigns.



CLOSEST AUSTRALIAN HUB TO ASIA

Darwin is geographically closer to Southeast Asia than any other Australian capital, shortening transit for crews, payloads, partners and markets.



STRATEGIC LAND & CORRIDORS

Serviced industrial estates, greenfield sites and planned infrastructure corridors near airports, the port and energy.



WORLD-CLASS HAPS CONDITIONS

Alice Springs is internationally recognised as one of the best locations on Earth for high altitude pseudo-satellites and stratospheric ballooning.



GROUND STATIONS & EARTH OBSERVATION

A growing cluster of ground stations and remote-sensing capability, with strengths in environmental, agricultural and disaster monitoring.



STABLE, TRUSTED JURISDICTION

A secure, well-regulated Australian environment with strong data and IP protection, underpinned by alliance relationships valued by international partners.



UNCONGESTED TEST AIRSPACE

Vast, sparsely populated land and low-density airspace allow the large safety buffers that commercial flight test, drones and advanced air mobility demand.



CONNECTIVITY & DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

New subsea cables into Darwin and expanding terrestrial fibre support the high-bandwidth telemetry and data handling aerospace activity requires.



ANCHORING GOVERNMENT DEMAND

Existing government and allied aviation activity has already funded airfields, ranges and connectivity that civilian investors can leverage.



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Northern Territory is emerging as a critical commercial node in Australia's aerospace and space ambitions, offering a resilient, future-ready environment for next generation deployments at scale.

With proximity to Asia, access to land and uncongested airspace, and stable regulatory environment make it a logical home for launch, high altitude operations, flight test, earth observation and aerospace manufacturing and sustainment.

A COMMERCIAL SPACE SECTOR WITH MOMENTUM

The global space economy is forecast to approach US\$1 trillion in value, with private capital now comprising the majority of activity. The Northern Territory's natural advantages have already drawn domestic and international companies in launch, high altitude pseudo-satellites, ground stations and advanced manufacturing, with most of the investment landing in regional areas and unlocking new supply-chain opportunities.

GROWING DEMAND FOR ACCESSIBLE FLIGHT TEST

Commercial drones and advanced air mobility, autonomous systems, satellites and payloads, and high altitude platforms increasingly require responsive, commercially accessible environments to test and qualify. Today, many firms rely on fragmented facilities or go overseas, where access is uncertain, costly and subject to export controls. The Northern Territory's uncongested airspace and existing instrumented ranges position it to help close this gap for industry.

GLOBAL MARKETS AND APPLICATIONS

Beyond upstream opportunities, launch and test, earth-observation and space-enabled services create downstream value across the Northern Territory's key civilian sectors (agriculture, mining, maritime, environmental management and disaster response). Darwin's position as Australia's closest capital to Asia shortens the path to these markets for products, services and partnerships.



SPACE ACCESS

The Northern Territory aims to be the home of high-altitude pseudo-satellites (HAPS) in the Indo-Pacific, Australia's premier space launch location, and a leading regional centre for ground station facilities. That vision provides a ready framework for commercial investors entering the Northern Territory market.

EQUATORIAL LAUNCH

The East Arnhem region near Nhulunbuy possesses proven equatorial launch heritage. It successfully hosted NASA sub-orbital campaigns in 2022, the first commercial space launches from Australian soil demonstrating the Northern Territory's capacity to support exacting international launch requirements. The low latitude reduces the fuel required to reach orbit and broadens the range of accessible orbital inclinations, a structural advantage for launch providers. The region remains a geographically compelling site for proponents seeking to establish or re-establish equatorial launch capability.

HIGH ALTITUDE PSEUDO-SATELLITES AND STRATOSPHERIC OPERATIONS

Alice Springs is internationally recognised as one of the world's best locations for HAPS and stratospheric ballooning, with clear skies, stable conditions and a strong heritage of international campaigns.

In operating between drones below and satellites above, HAPS support telecommunications, high-resolution earth observation, environmental monitoring and weather modelling, and represent a fast-growing global market. The Northern Territory's ambition is to position Alice Springs as a headquarters for HAPS launch, research and development.

GROUND STATIONS AND EARTH OBSERVATION

The Northern Territory hosts a growing cluster of ground stations and remote-sensing capability and has established expertise in hosting and maintaining ground infrastructure. Strengths in earth observation, particularly bushfire, disaster and environmental monitoring, create downstream opportunities to add value to raw data and to integrate space services into the Territory's agriculture, mining and maritime sectors.



TEST AND EVALUATION

NATIONAL-SCALE TEST BED

We are Australia's foremost test-bed for aerospace and autonomous systems.

Our value proposition is structural: heat, humidity, remoteness and equatorial geography are not obstacles but the exact conditions found across the tropical, off-grid Indo-Pacific. so technology proven here is, by definition, export-ready for markets that, by the end of the decade, will hold around half the world's population.

The opportunity spans an operating test-bed estate that investors can use today and the prospective development of a dedicated, commercially accessible aerospace test range — the latter presented as a concept to inform investor engagement, not a committed or fully scoped government project.



COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- **Uncongested airspace:** over 1.3 million km² of accessible beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) airspace provides the large safety buffers that high-risk flight test of drones, advanced air mobility (AAM) and autonomous systems demands.
- **A purpose-built test range:** the North Australia Centre for Autonomous Systems (NACAS) at Charles Darwin University operates AIR-F near Katherine. This is a purpose-built BVLOS drone-testing facility with dedicated flight corridors, an aerospace workshop and on-site operations support — forming the basis of Australia's first dedicated UAV flight-test range.
- **Calibrated risk profiles:** ultra-low population density lets regulators apply flexible, risk-proportionate frameworks for complex BVLOS and autonomous flight testing that are commercially restrictive in congested southern states.
- **Proven, export-ready conditions:** companies prove technology here and scale globally. Territory firm SPEE3D hardened its metal additive manufacturing in the Northern Territory before scaling into international markets, while Singapore's Transcelestial and Atomionics validate laser communications and quantum sensing.
- **Connectivity and soft landing:** improving fibre, resilient satellite links and advanced telemetry underpin real-time data capture, while Australia's Landing Pads in Singapore and Bengaluru offer a soft landing into Asia's largest deep-tech markets.



STRATEGIC LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SERVICED SITES AND CORRIDORS

The Northern Territory offers a spread of aerospace-relevant locations. From the Top End around Darwin to the regional hubs of Katherine, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy, there are large, development-ready land parcels, low competing land uses and streamlined planning pathways. The vast majority of recent space and aerospace investment has landed in the regions, unlocking new growth and supply-chain opportunities.

KEY LOCATION CLUSTERS

- **Darwin and Top End:** Darwin International Airport, serviced industrial estates and the East Arm port precinct are well suited to aircraft maintenance, manufacturing, logistics and aviation support.
- **Katherine corridor:** established airfields and ranges with the airspace depth suited to flight test and high-tempo air operations.
- **Alice Springs:** internationally recognised HAPS and stratospheric conditions, with ambition for a dedicated space-industry precinct.
- **Nhulunbuy / East Arnhem:** a region with proven sub-orbital launch heritage and surrounding supply-chain potential, geographically well suited to establishing equatorial launch activity.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving digital connectivity including new subsea cable capacity into Darwin and terrestrial fibre across the Northern Territory supports the high-bandwidth telemetry and data handling that modern aerospace and test activities require.

Planned energy, water and infrastructure corridors create the backbone for staged, campus-style development adjacent to power and transport. Site readiness is subject to structured assessment, and the Government works closely with investors to identify viable sites and streamline access.





INVESTMENT SCENARIOS

MATCHING AEROSPACE SEGMENTS TO CAPABILITIES

The indicative table below maps common aerospace investment segments to the Northern Territory's current and emerging offerings. The Department works with each proponent to tailor sites, approvals and support to the specifics of their project.

AEROSPACE SEGMENT	TYPICAL REQUIREMENTS	NORTHERN TERRITORY OFFERING
Orbital & sub-orbital launch	Low-latitude site, range safety, exclusion zones, payload integration, telemetry	East Arnhem region — equatorial latitude and proven NASA sub-orbital launch heritage; supply-chain build-out potential
HAPS & stratospheric	Stable, clear airspace; long-duration flight corridors; recovery areas	Alice Springs — world-class conditions and campaign heritage; ambition for a HAPS R&D headquarters
Test & evaluation	Large safety buffers; instrumentation; real-time data capture; secure IP handling	Uncongested airspace; instrumented ranges; potential national test-range opportunity
Ground stations & EO	Clear skies, low RF interference, reliable power and fibre	Established ground-station cluster; earth-observation strengths in environmental and bushfire monitoring
Advanced manufacturing & downstream	Industrial land, power, skilled workforce, R&D linkages	Serviced estates; Charles Darwin University linkages; emerging sovereign-manufacturing capability
Sustainment & MRO	Hangarage, hardstand, skilled trades, proximity to operating airfields	Darwin and Katherine airfields; recurring civil and government activity; in-location sustainment demand

WORKFORCE

A GROWING TALENT PIPELINE

The Northern Territory is building a skilled workforce through coordinated investment in training, migration pathways and industry partnerships, ensuring a pipeline of talent for aerospace, space, advanced manufacturing, test and evaluation, and sustainment roles.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING ALIGNED TO INDUSTRY

Charles Darwin University is recognised among Australia's leading universities for postgraduate employment outcomes and is advancing applied research in science and technology. It collaborates with industry to deliver tailored training, innovation projects and applied research, making it a key anchor institution in the Territory's workforce and innovation ecosystem.

Skills NT delivers apprenticeships, traineeships, school-based apprenticeships and targeted vocational training, with industry placement frameworks giving students real-world experience in priority sectors.

SKILLED MIGRATION PATHWAYS

Attracting and retaining skilled workers is a Government priority. Through the General Skilled Migration program, individuals may be nominated by the Territory Government for the Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491). The Northern Territory Designated Area Migration Agreement (NT DAMA) enables employers to sponsor overseas workers in occupations not covered by standard national programs – a practical lever for aerospace specialists in short national supply.

These are complemented by the Global Worker Attraction Campaign and WorkerConnect. Applicants should refer to the Department of Home Affairs for current visa information.







AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY

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