

LONGITUDE 131°

Business with purpose

Creating connections with the cultural and natural landscape of the Red Centre

Set among red sand dunes and overlooking Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia's spiritual and geographic heart, every aspect of Longitude 131° reflects and pays respect to the sensitive cultural and environmental values of the dual World Heritage-listed landscape.

The lodge's construction - approved under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act - involved extensive consultations with the traditional Anangu owners, the Central Land Council and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. Cultural maps were consulted to confirm no sacred sites were compromised, and 12 square kilometres of land were designated a conservation reserve for the local population of mulgara, a small carnivorous marsupial, as well as other native animals.

A broad-ranging Environmental Management Plan governs all strategies relating to the conservation of the desert ecosystem, including protection for both native flora and fauna.



Connecting guests with the oldest living culture in the world

"The focus of the guest experience at Longitude 131° is on deepening understanding and connecting with the rugged yet fragile natural environment and the rich cultural heritage of the Indigenous Anangu people, whose history in the region extends back 60,000 years," said Longitude 131° General Manager, Ben Lanyon.

The Longitude 131° guides undertake a formal accreditation program offered by Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in conjunction with Charles Darwin University, with content that has been developed by the local First Nations Anangu community.

Signature guided experiences and excursions delve into the Anangu culture, sharing ancient creation stories of the traditional custodians alongside the raw beauty of World Heritage-listed icons Uluru and nearby Kata Tjuta and interpreting the verdant yet delicate ecosystem of native vegetation and wildlife.

Culture, community and art

"We place a strong emphasis on the First Australians' significance to our national culture. We strive to showcase Central Australia's Indigenous heritage - particularly from an artistic perspective," explained Longitude 131° Co-General Manager, Louise Lanyon, who now leads the relations with the Indigenous art centres.

Throughout the lodge, commissioned artworks from local Indigenous artists (including a communal work of 500 hand-painted ceramic tiles which line the bar) stand alongside a collection of artefacts of the first western pioneers.





A legacy of Baillie Lodges founder and creative director Hayley Baillie's leadership and personal passion, the lodge has established a multi-faceted partnership with a number of Indigenous arts centres, in particular, Ernabella Arts, the oldest continuously running Indigenous arts centre in Australia. The culturally strong, multi-generational contemporary art studio produces works in a variety of mediums that draw worldwide acclaim.

In the spirit of 'Tjungu warkarintja' – which translates to 'working together' in the local Pitjantjatjara language – the lodge hosts 'artist in residence' programs. Lodge guests are able to visit the closed community by special and exclusive arrangement. The full-day private tour allows the artists to share their heritage and artworks, while guests gain an understanding of the techniques and symbols used by the artists to tell their Tjukurpa (sacred stories) through their art.

"Engaging one-on-one with the Indigenous artists at Ernabella is a way for our guests to gain a personal connection and understanding of the living cultural landscape of Central Australia," explained Hayley Baillie, who spearheaded the partnership.

The team at Longitude 131° has also built mutually beneficial relationships with other First Nations arts centres in the Central Desert, including Maruku Arts, Tjala Arts and the Tjanpi Desert Weavers – part of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands Women's Council social enterprise.

Longitude 131° has purchased, on average, around \$300,000 in artworks each year from regional First Nations art centres for display on the property and with some also for sale to guests including paintings, woven birds and baskets, wooden carvings, large-scale pots and traditional spears, with all proceeds going to the artists and their communities.

"The financial contribution from these commissioned artworks is significant, and often the main source of revenue for these communities. It helps secure the arts centres' important legacy, conserving the communities' art and culture and sharing the skills and stories with their families and the wider world," said Louise Lanyon.

And onsite at the lodge...

Longitude 131°'s contemporary Australian menu is designed to align with the Aboriginal seasons of the outback and to provide refreshment in the desert environment. The kitchen team combines the best produce from around the country with Indigenous cooking techniques and native flavours such as desert-foraged herbs and succulents, finger limes, muntrie berries, quandongs and Davidson plums.

Spa treatments at the Spa Kinara showcase Central Australia's surprising resource of natural beauty products and traditional Indigenous herbal remedies, including Kakadu plum, desert lime, Australian yellow clay and nutrient-rich desert salts.

Irmangka-irmangka (pronounced air-a-monger-air-a-monger) or scented emu bush is a powerful bush medicine used by Indigenous Anangu ngangkari (Traditional Healers). Its beneficial healing powers enhance many of Spa Kinara's treatments, while all proceeds from the sale of the balm go to the NPY Women's Council, ngangkari and their work in the region.





Building, design and environmental sensitivity

The lodge itself was constructed using techniques developed to minimise impact on the site and surrounds so that, if required, the infrastructure could be entirely disassembled, and the site restored to its pre-development state with minimal remediation.

To minimise the need for heat and power, the 16 guest tents have triple-layer construction to maximise thermal and acoustic insulation. A combination of natural stone and under-floor insulation enhances cooling in summer and heat retention in winter. The tents are oriented to minimise heat loading on window glazing.

The site is solar-powered as part of the Yulara Solar Project, which is lauded as a showcase for sustainable eco-tourism and remote tourism operations. Power generated by Longitude 131° is integrated into the wider community system, which helps power the Yulara precinct and neighbouring businesses.

Other sustainability initiatives (Our mandatories):

- Longitude 131° is part of the Yulara Solar Project, commissioned by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia in 2016. The system integrates 1.8 MW of solar photovoltaics (PV) into the existing power system at the Yulara Resort and neighbouring businesses. Solar panels on the Dune House provide hot water for all the guest tents.
- Extensive recycling is undertaken, with staff separating compostable materials, cardboard and paper, glass, plastic, aluminium and rubbish.
- Biodegradable chemicals are used for cleaning.
- Longitude 131° uses refillable water bottles for guest use on outdoor adventures. There are no single-use (plastic) drinking straws on offer for guests in the bar or restaurant.
- Guest amenities (shampoo, conditioner, liquid soap and hand cream) in guest suites are presented in refillable vessels.
- As part of the lodge's longstanding relationship with the Ernabella Arts Centre, Longitude 131° sponsors a ceramist teacher and professional education for the community, with a contribution of \$50,000 per year.
- Baillie Lodges recognises its people are its greatest asset and is committed to the long-term development and wellbeing of staff, including participation in the National Indigenous Training Academy (NITA) trainee apprenticeship program.