

Darwin's journey

The Smith Street East Walkway celebrates the many stories that lend Darwin its unique sense of place. A corridor of dappled shade that connects the CBD with the new Waterfront Precinct, and links Civic Park with State Square, the Walkway 'zips' together many elements to create a new walking experience.

While offering shade, the Walkway's design also reflects Darwin's unique character – its tropical landscape and rich cultural heritage, its multicultural community and spirit of resilience. This inviting avenue evokes the city's evolutionary personality and highlights its role as the 'doorway to Asia'. To travel the Walkway is to pass through a fascinating landscape, to experience the heritage of journeys that have made Darwin what it is today.



Taking its cue from nature, the cyclone-resistant structure includes a series of graceful upright blades, a shade canopy, respite areas and a decorative ground pattern. The green and mauve colour palette echoes Darwin's savannah and rainforest landscapes, and the shade structures' elegant rise and fall reflects the Top End's variable climate and informal way of life. Existing trees have been preserved and new ones planted, and there are three sites for major public artworks, including Indigenous art.

The blades take their shape from the Pandanus palm, a plant found in Darwin and across South-East Asia. Pandanus leaves were used as a writing surface, a place where stories are told. Darwin's own stories are celebrated on a series of plaques that present the region's mosaic of multicultural communities. Different languages and calligraphic scripts spell out 'Darwin' and 'You are here', paying homage to the many people from all over the globe who have made this place their home.

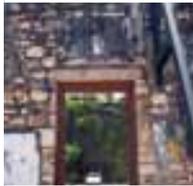


DARWINWATERFRONT

 Northern Territory
Government



"It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive".



Some blades are finished in locally significant materials: Western Red Cedar (reflecting Darwin's Chinese heritage), riveted steel (Port of Darwin's marine heritage), pearl shell (the Greek community and multicultural pearling industry) and porcellanite stone (reflecting Darwin's colonial heritage).

The Walkway frames important heritage sites along Smith Street East, including the ruins of the old Town Hall, damaged by Cyclone Tracy and preserved as a monument to Darwin's spirit of resilience. At night each end of the Walkway is lit by LED columns that carry visual artworks and event information, and there is a ramp and lift for disabled access to the Waterfront.

Four ground patterns, or 'rents', celebrate the many journeys, the generations of travellers and passages that have helped shape Darwin's identity. A playful stepping-stone inlay, using the style of old sea charts, evokes the ancient trade routes that historically link Darwin to South-East Asia. The shape of the rents is based on the burn marks in an Australian flag recovered from the 1942 bombings, and now preserved in the Darwin City Council offices.

Granite bleachers set into the pavement spell out the word RESILIENCE in Morse code, commemorating the linkage of Australia and England by telegraph in 1871, while glass panels celebrate Darwin's other great journey – the theory of evolution, linked to the city's namesake, Charles Darwin. Designs etched into the glass reflect the four vital elements: Fire, Water, Earth and Air. Poetic texts evoke the stories behind these images.

A richly layered walking experience that celebrates Darwin's special sense of place, the Walkway calls to mind poet Robert Louis Stevenson's quote about the importance of journeys: "It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive".

