



## Favourite outdoor spaces in Darwin

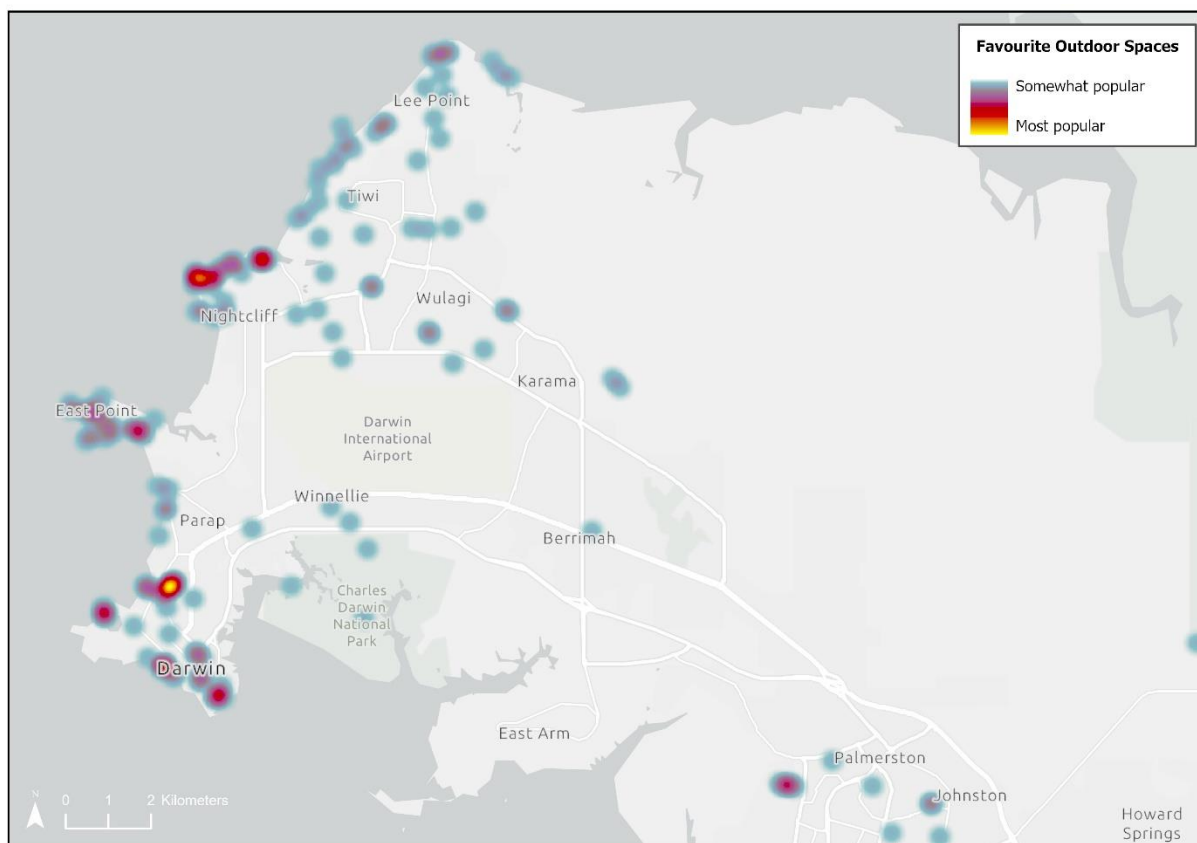
A survey was undertaken as part of the Darwin Living Lab stall at the Royal Darwin Show. The survey asked participants about their favourite outdoor space in Darwin and if they had any ideas to make it cooler.

### Background

The survey, which was approved by CSIRO's Human Research Ethics Committee, was available for people 18 years of age or older. Participants provided some background (age, gender and home postcode) and then were asked to 'drop a pin' on their favourite outdoor space in Darwin and how frequently they visit and if they find it how hot or cool compared to other areas of Darwin.

### Favourite outdoor spaces

The map below shows the popularity of favourite outdoor spaces nominated by participants. The George Brown Botanic Gardens was the most popular outdoor space, followed by Nightcliff and Rapid Creek foreshore and East Point. Other popular outdoor spaces were along the Casuarina Coastal Reserve, including Lee Point, and in the city - Bicentennial Park, Cullen Bay and the Waterfront. In Palmerston, Marlow's Lagoon was most popular outdoor space, while outside of Darwin – Berry Springs and Litchfield National Park were popular.



Popular outdoor spaces in Greater Darwin as nominated by survey participants.

## Using the outdoor space

Around 50% of participants indicated they visit their favourite outdoor space at least once per week, with another 20% indicating they visit at least once per month. Participants that visited infrequently (yearly or less) were more likely to be visitors with home postcodes outside of the NT. Parks throughout the suburbs, which were close to residential areas were more likely to be visited daily, while outdoor spaces such as the Botanic Gardens and East Point were more likely to be visited weekly or monthly. There was no clear relationship in perceived coolness or heat of participants' favourite outdoor spaces, with the most common response being neither hotter nor cooler than other areas of Darwin.

## Ideas to make it cooler

People were able to select one or more ideas to make it cooler and/or add their own. The most common response (60% of respondents) to make their favourite outdoor space cooler was more trees for shade. The addition of chilled water bubblers was also popular with 37% of respondents, while around a third of respondents indicated that water features and water play areas would help make the area cooler. The addition of built shade structure was also seen as an important cooling intervention by 32% of respondents. Several respondents indicated that no changes were needed to their favourite area. Other suggestions highlighted the importance of shade along paths and improving the condition of paths to enable access.

### Summary

The survey highlights the following:

- Darwin has several exceptional outdoor spaces that are highly valued by the community. The George Brown Botanic Gardens and Nightcliff/Rapid Creek foreshore were particularly popular with respondents.
- Popularity of local suburban parks was more distributed with proximity likely to influence their visitation. These local parks were more likely to be visited on a daily or weekly basis. This regular use highlights their importance to support health and well-being, with research demonstrating proximity to green spaces as important to provide these health benefits.
- People are drawn to natural spaces along the coast also outdoor spaces around the city centre (Bicentennial Park, Waterfront and Cullen Bay).
- Outdoor spaces, such as East Point and Botanic Gardens, are more likely to be visited weekly or monthly which highlights they are considered a destination that draws both visitors and locals from a broader catchment.
- There was no clear relationship with popular outdoor spaces and if they were perceived to be relatively cool or hot, which might highlight that while the green spaces are likely to moderate urban heat that people are attracted to these spaces by other values such as natural, recreational or cultural.
- More trees that provide shade was the most common response to cool these outdoor spaces.

## Who completed the survey?

204 people completed the survey (57% females, 40% males, 3% non-binary/third gender). The age of respondents was mostly commonly in the 35–44-year age cohort with slight under-representation of younger people (aged 18–24 years) and older (65 years and older). Most participants indicated their home postcodes were in Darwin (65% of respondents from 0800, 0810, 0812, 0820) and Palmerston (15% from 0830, 0832). A small minority (5%) were from outside the NT. Respondents had the opportunity to enter a draw at the conclusion of the Show, with one respondent receiving a \$300 gift card.

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### For further information

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