

Project Information WAL

Project Dates:

Summer Holidays: 12 December – 30 January (7 weeks)

The project dates are set in consultation with our partners and are aligned with the Northern Territory School terms. Your Program Manager will advise you of the exact dates closer to your departure. You will also be required to attend a pre-departure training in Sydney on Friday 11 December 2009. The pre-departure and orientation prior to project is an essential component of your placement. Attending this phase of the program is compulsory. The pre departure is followed by a further orientation session upon arrival in West Arnhem Land.

Orientation:

Phase 1: Pre-departure meeting in Sydney.

Your orientation will start with this one day session, which will consist of:

- Meeting with other volunteers
- Discussing your hopes and fears as a group
- Talking with Returned Volunteers from Indigenous Australian projects
- Discussing group living, potential conflicts and volunteer roles
- Final medical processes
- Last minute administration

Phase 2: Arrival in West Arnhem Land.

Volunteers fly to Darwin and participate in a half-day cultural orientation program with West Arnhem Shire staff. An additional orientation session will be held in the communities by partner organisations.

Accommodation:

Accommodation is arranged for volunteers by West Arnhem Shire and will either be a guest house or staff quarters. The volunteers will have bathroom, kitchen and bedroom. The set up of accommodation will vary depending on the project community.

Food:

You will be able to buy food when you arrive in Darwin. Through your time on project food will be bought locally within your communities.

Cultural Sensitivities:

Family life:

The concept of family varies greatly between Indigenous and European cultures. You will likely find that a community family unit is generally much larger than the average 'whitefella' family. For instance, as many as ten people may live in one house with several of the children belonging to parents who reside elsewhere. In many cases aunts, uncles, cousins and care takers are designated as additional mothers and fathers.

Physical contact and treatment of women:

In general you should avoid physical contact with any member of the opposite sex above the age of 10-11 years at school, and at your discretion outside of school. Domestic violence towards women is still a problem in many Indigenous communities across Australia and you

should look at your role as an opportunity to set an example as to how women should be treated.

Petrol and Alcohol:

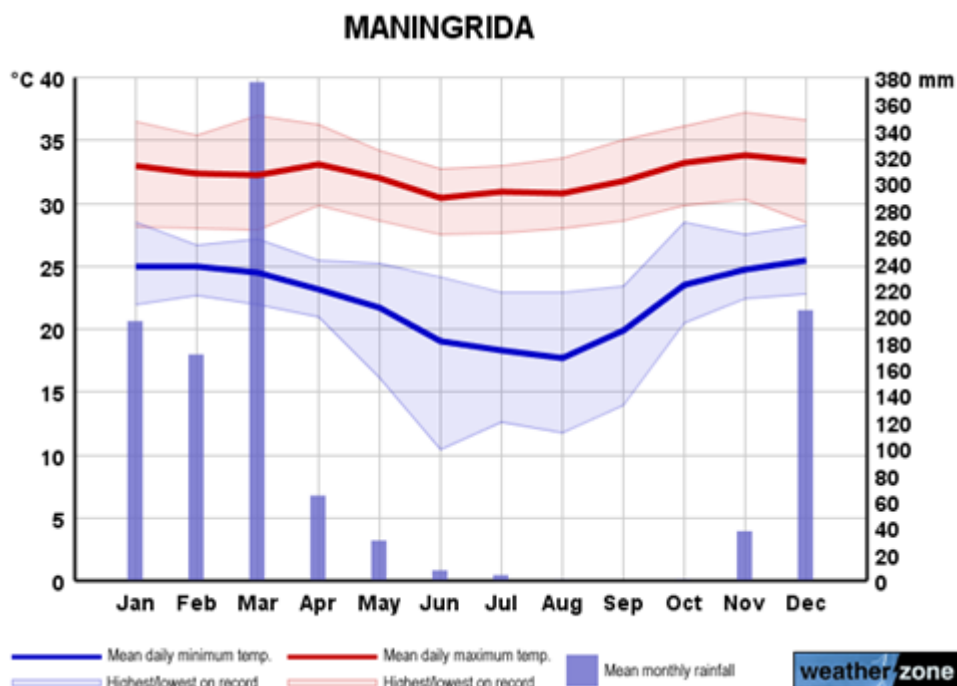
Maningrida, Minjilang and Warruwi are dry communities meaning no alcohol or unleaded petrol is allowed and those in possession of either substance can be prosecuted. These strict regulations apply to any person without a permit bringing any banned substance into the community.

Climate:

As you would expect of a tropical environment, West Arnhem Land has very hot summer temperatures and warm winter temperatures. Rainfall usually occurs in the hottest months from October to March and brings welcome relief to the landscape and its people. The tropical summer is considered by many to be the northern region's most beautiful time of year. Waterfalls flow freely, floodplains rejuvenate, flowers bloom and cracking thunderstorms light up the sky like a pyrotechnic display.

Extreme conditions do occur however so sunscreen, a hat and a plentiful supply of water are essential companions.

CHART: Annual Temperatures and Rainfall in Maningrida*



*Temperatures and rainfall in Minjilang and Warruwi will be very similar to Maningrida.