



tiwi
DESIGN

Tiwi Design Aboriginal Corporation

Candidate recruitment FAQs April 2025

Housing

The current staff housing is located in forestry adjacent to the Ngaruwanajirri Art Centre. The property is securely fenced and includes a furnished 3-bedroom Art and Culture Centre Manager's house, as well as 2 private 2-bedroom demountable accommodation units, which are separate from the main residence.

Set well back from the road, the property has a tropical parks-and-gardens atmosphere. A newly constructed woodcarving shed is located at the rear of the site, along with ample undercover vehicle parking. The property feels secluded – on some days, it's hard to believe you're on Tiwi.

There are plans to refurbish the manager's house and fully replace the demountable units. This project is currently at the feasibility and costings stage. The incoming manager will be responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of this project in consultation with board directors.

Transport

There are 2 main options for travelling to and from the Tiwi Islands.

- SeaLink ferry: operates 3 times per week except from June to August (peak dry season), when services increase to 4 per week. The journey takes approximately 2.5 hours and currently costs \$60 each way
- Fly Tiwi: operates 3 scheduled flights per day, with fares currently around \$205 each way. Private charters are also available, with pricing subject to operator rates

While the Tiwi Islands are remote, they are only a 20-minute flight from Darwin International Airport, offering convenient access to destinations across Australia, Asia and beyond.

On the island, the manager is provided with a 4-wheel drive vehicle for local transport. Tiwi Design also maintains a 4-wheel drive utility vehicle and 2 HiAce vans for organisational use.

Local facilities

Wurrumiyanga has a range of essential services and facilities, including:

- 2 supermarkets, a butcher shop, a café and a takeaway restaurant
- an Australia Post outlet and ATMs located in both supermarkets
- the Nguui Club, which operates a bistro 5 nights a week and serves alcohol on 4 of those nights
- a primary and secondary school operated by Catholic Education and a childcare centre run by CatholicCare
- a well-resourced medical clinic and a police station with permanent officers
- a church offering regular services.

Although Wurrumiyanga has a public swimming pool, it has not been operational for several years. There are plans underway to restore it to working condition.

Freight services to the island are reliable, with 2 sea freight companies delivering 3 times per week. Freight can also be sent via Fly Tiwi. Woolworths and Coles deliver groceries to the island through Sea Swift or Auriga Logistics on Thursdays.

Community environment

The housing compound is located in a quiet part of Wurrumiyanga, with only 2 immediate neighbours – Ngaruwanajirri Art Centre and a local council employee. The property backs onto bushland, offering privacy and a sense of seclusion.

During the wet season, the area can feel isolated due to occasional disruptions to ferry and flight services. In contrast, the dry season brings increased activity and greater access to the rest of the island.

This setting offers a peaceful lifestyle with ample opportunity for solitude, while still being only a 20-minute flight from Darwin.

Personal wellbeing

Taking regular breaks from the island – whether in Darwin or, when appropriate and with local permission, out bush – is one of the best ways to maintain balance and recharge. Even short trips of a day or 2 can be beneficial.

A strong sense of self and clearly defined personal boundaries are essential for staff roles. It's important to be able to say no in a respectful and compassionate manner. The ability to maintain these boundaries supports both your wellbeing and your capacity to do the job effectively.

Tiwi Design staff and artists are highly respectful of the Art and Culture Centre Manager's and Studio Coordinator's personal space and home, which are regarded as private sanctuaries. Visitors to the house are rare and this privacy is valued by the community. Having that space is vital, as roles can become complex and demanding without it – as we've observed in the past.

Tourism

From April to November, Tiwi Design runs twice-weekly cultural tours. Over the years, visitor numbers have grown significantly – from 400 people in 2014 to more than 2,000 in 2023. Due to the intensity and impact on staff, Tiwi Design board directors have made the decision to reduce tour numbers in 2025.

While tours generate considerable income for Tiwi Design, they also demand substantial time and energy from staff. During the peak period from June to September, tours increase to 3 times a week. This, alongside other commitments such as art fairs and public programs, makes it extremely challenging to take breaks during the dry season.

In addition to Tiwi Design's own cultural tours, the centre hosts external tour groups such as Tiwi Tours and receives numerous unplanned visits from independent travellers. It is conservatively estimated that the art and culture centre welcomes between 5,000 and 6,000 visitors each year.

The Tiwi Islands Football Grand Final and the newly re-established Tiwi Culture Festival also bring large numbers of visitors. Until recently held in March, these events are now scheduled for July, drawing up to 5,000 people to the island in a single day – a very busy and high-pressure time for the centre.

Energy, enthusiasm and the ability to thrive during these intense periods – especially over the 4-month dry season stretch – are essential qualities for success in staff roles.

Tiwi Design's financial position

Tiwi Design is in a stable financial position, typically securing 5-year agreements for its core government funding and consistently generating significant external income.

In the last financial year, the organisation reported income of more than \$1.5 million and expenses of more than \$1 million – resulting in a surplus of nearly \$500,000. This performance is forecast to remain steady in the coming year.

Tiwi Design is currently developing a new strategic plan, with an updated forward budget to be finalised by the end of April. Relevant documentation can be provided on request.

Potential for growth at Tiwi Design

Tiwi Design has significant potential for growth, particularly for candidates with the vision and energy to work closely with board directors to fulfil its mission.

Several key facilities are currently underutilised, including a fully functional pottery studio and the newly constructed museum and archive centre, which is in the early stages of development. The recently completed carving shed – more than twice the size of the museum – offers exciting opportunities not only for woodcarving but also for a broad range of creative projects and community programs.

Additionally, the guest house, which primarily serves visiting professional service workers, operates at approximately 60 per cent capacity, 4 to 5 nights a week. With strategic focus, this facility has the potential to expand and cater to the tourism sector as well.