

NT COMPANY IS DEVELOPING IKEA-INSPIRED HOUSES TO ADDRESS SUPPLY AND COST ISSUES

- *Northern Territory business Warle Construction is using an innovative approach to modular housing, creating housing "shells" out of light-gauge steel to deliver speed and cost benefits*
- *The collaborative project between indigenous company Warle, Annge Consulting, Troppo Architects, Rapid Engineering, Stantec, and Howick Group will deliver a new building system and new manufacturing and training facility*
- *The \$1.55 million project is being backed by a \$392,470.00 co-investment from the Northern Territory Government's AMEF, administered by the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC)*

Indigenous construction company Warle Construction is addressing housing affordability and availability, as well as creating local employment, through a project commercialising its innovative house framing system. The project will establish new manufacturing capabilities and jobs in the Northern Territory while delivering affordable housing designed to withstand the harsh climate conditions, such as cyclones.

Warle's process makes use of roll forming technology for light gauge steel in a manufacturing process inspired by IKEA kits. Employing detailed drawings, a kit of parts, and clear labelling, Warle's housing kits are easily and efficiently assembled onsite and installed within days.

The collaborative project is being supported through a \$392,470 co-investment from the Northern Territory Advanced Manufacturing Ecosystem Fund (AMEF), administered by the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC) which is part of a five-year, \$8.75 million partnership between the Northern Territory (NT) Government and AMGC to grow the NT's manufacturing capabilities.

Lewis Knibbs, Managing Director of Warle Constructions and Annge Consulting, said, "The unique approach is set to change the field of modular construction, providing scalability, cost-effectiveness, and adaptability to different environments and client requirements."

"Warle Construction and its partner organisations have identified a significant opportunity to address a multifaceted problem within the construction industry in remote and rural areas of Australia, including issues of labour and material costs, durability and environmental considerations, and logistics."

The 12-month project will lead to an estimated 20 jobs and \$16.4 million in revenue within five years and consists of three phases. These cover R&D on Warle's manufacturing system and community engagement; design and build of a local manufacturing and training facility, and construction and implementation of the facility.

The system being employed offers a unique way to create the shell of a dwelling out of light-gauge steel components, including wall frames, trusses, and a cassette flooring system. It delivers significant benefits over solutions such as structural insulated panels.

Warle estimates that it can produce structural frames for a standard four-bedroom house in three to four days with a team of four – a significant competitive advantage over traditional construction methods.

Warle, which takes its name from the Eastern Arrernte word for house, building, or wall, is initially targeting demand from the rural and remote regions of Northern Australia, where thousands of potential modular housing projects are anticipated over the next decade.

Northern Territory Chief Minister, Eva Lawler said: “The Territory Labor Government established the AMEF in 2021 in partnership with the AMGC, to improve our manufacturing capabilities – since then our investment has helped create nearly 120 jobs and generated over \$50 million for the Territory economy, “We will always back local businesses and Territory ingenuity to grow our economy and create jobs, our support of Warle Construction is no exception.”

Northern Territory Minister for Remote Housing and Homelands, Selena Uibo said: “We are actively addressing the availability and affordability of housing in rural and remote areas of the Territory, because all Territorians deserve a roof over their head,

“Designed for the Territory by Territorians, these housing shells offer an innovative and competitive advantage over traditional methods, ensuring more Territorians have a place to call home.”

Director of Warle Construction, Tilman Lowe said: “Warle was founded to address a growing need to provide sustainable and cost-effective housing solutions for remote areas of the Northern Territory. Our housing solution will also address the key issues of overcrowding, usability and durability for remote and regional communities,

“Through co-investment from the Northern Territory Government, the assistance of AMGC and the support of our project partners, we will be able to commercialise a more practical and affordable home that can be quickly constructed and deployed to improve living standards while also generating jobs and new capabilities for the Top End.”

AMGC’s Northern Territory Director, Charmaine Phillips said: “Warle’s project brings together local skills and knowledge to solve a growing issue – housing affordability and durability. Seeing innovative manufacturing in the NT deliver affordable, high-quality housing and create jobs is a win-win-win.”

The project involves Warle, which is 51 per cent Indigenous-owned, as well as Annge Consulting, Troppo Architects, engineering business Stantec, and software specialists Vertex Australia.

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About Warle Construction

Warle Construction is a 2/3rds indigenous-owned construction company offering advanced construction capabilities and has the capacity to deliver various projects from feasibility through to post construction maintenance. Warle is committed to providing superior customer service and meeting and exceeding 'best practice standards of quality and construction standards. Warle has a strong understanding of the local climate and community needs of Northern Australia. Because of this understanding, Warle can offer bespoke solutions that are both technically sound and culturally sensitive.

About Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC)

The Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC) is an industry-led, not-for-profit organisation established through the Australian Government’s Industry Growth Centres Initiative. AMGC’s vision is to transform Australian manufacturing to become an internationally competitive, dynamic, and thriving industry with advanced capabilities and skills at its core.

Through the delivery of its world-leading research, Manufacturing Academy, workshops, and ground-breaking projects, AMGC aims to develop a highly skilled and resilient local manufacturing industry that delivers high-value products – via the integration of innovative technology – to domestic and international markets. <http://www.amgc.org.au>

About the Advanced Manufacturing Ecosystem Fund

The Advanced Manufacturing Ecosystem (AME) Fund of \$7.5 million seeks to build the advanced manufacturing ecosystem in the Northern Territory. The fund aims to grow advanced manufacturing capabilities and increase investment in and output of advanced manufacturing activity in the Northern Territory and grow the number of advanced manufacturing jobs located in the Northern Territory.

The AME fund will provide grants to industry led advanced manufacturing projects located in the Northern Territory across the Territory's priority sectors where those projects:

- Commercialise new products and processes, including transitioning a new product or process from prototype stage to full commercial operations
- Support early stage, fast fail, grants to support small scale and pilot research projects in advanced manufacturing

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