

Litchfield National Park and Rum Jungle mine



High-level summary

Essentials for mine site visit: long pants, long-sleeved shirts, sturdy closed-toed shoes, broad-brimmed hat, sunscreen, drinking water – optional (but recommended): mosquito repellent

Participants on this field trip will have the opportunity to visit the stunning Litchfield National Park situated about a 1.5-hour drive south of Darwin, home to spectacular waterfalls and iconic termite mounds. They will also visit the former Rum Jungle Mine site near Litchfield and learn from NT government personnel and Aboriginal rangers about their efforts to rehabilitate this mine.

Detailed description

The trip begins at 6 am on September 26. We depart from the conference venue and head to the former Rum Jungle mine site, an important mine during the early years of the Cold War. The exploration of Rum Jungle began in 1949 with mining and mineral processing taking place between 1953 and 1971, producing 3,530 tonnes of uranium oxide and 20,000 tonnes of copper concentrate. Mining activities at the site led to significant environmental impacts, primarily caused by acid and metalliferous drainage, resulting in pollution of the East Branch of the Finnis River. The NT Government is working in partnership with the Australian Government and Traditional Owners to rehabilitate the former Rum Jungle Mine. At Rum Jungle, we will meet with NT government personnel and Indigenous rangers and hear about their ongoing mine closure and ecological rehabilitation efforts at this site and the challenges involved.

After the visit to Rum Jungle (expected to be done by 8:45 am), we head to Litchfield National Park for sightseeing and recreational activities. We will either stop at the historic town of Batchelor, gateway to the Litchfield National Park for a quick morning tea before heading to Litchfield National Park, or we will have a picnic morning tea at the National Park itself. Spread over an area of approximately 1,500 km², Litchfield National Park is home to stunning waterfalls that cascade into crystal clear pools surrounded by monsoonal vine forests, iconic magnetic termite mounds and clusters of weathered sandstone pillars. Sightseeing and recreational activities within Litchfield National Park are expected to include visits to the Florence Falls Lookout, Tabletop Swamp, Wangi Falls, and the giant termite mounds, among others. The visit to Litchfield is nature-sightseeing oriented as opposed to restoration oriented. A picnic lunch will also be provided while at Litchfield National Park. After spending about five hours at Litchfield National Park, we depart around 3 pm and expect to arrive back in Darwin by 4:45 pm at the latest.