



In 1985, station owner Terry Baldwin gave 36 acres of his land to the NT Police for the development of the Junior Police Rangers (JPR) programme, aimed at a facility for children between the ages of 13 and 16. The Australian Army also became involved by providing mobile toilets, tents, and showers (which were loaned when required), and initially the camp was set up with tarpaulins slung over a frame for shelter.

A shed with no walls and an area designated as a kitchen were erected in 1995 with the help of the local community and Terry. This was to be the JPR's new shelter, where they trained, ate meals and slept. In 1999 a toilet and shower block was built by Variety, the children's charity NT (Variety NT), providing the park with a facility which saw the start of overnight camps for outside groups.

Variety NT investigated the facility and discovered the 'welcomed use' of the area by schools and charitable organisations working with children, including children with special needs. Discussions ensued with the Police and centred on the mutual benefits for both the groups, and the JPR programme. This culminated in the development of the Goanna Park Youth Camp, as the only such facility available anywhere in the NT.



Plans were drawn up to build walls around the open shed and upgrade the kitchen; build a medical centre; and provision was made to build demountable air-conditioned accommodation. A grant of \$180,000 was approved by the Variety NT Board of Management in 1996, and the Camp further developed over the following three years.

The facility has since been used by many organisations such as Camp Quality, the Down Syndrome Association, Riding for the Disabled, the YWCA Youth Group, the Girl Guides, schools, and various youth groups.

The facility now has: a well-equipped medical centre – fitted with flashing warning lights (for the hearing impaired); a large modern kitchen capable of catering for 200 people; a dining room seating up to 100 people (which also doubles as a training and entertainment room); an ablution block and laundry room; an outdoor seating and dining area under a sun-shade structure; and a large camping area.

Variety NT holds the annual Goanna Park National Adventure Camp at the facility, which is supported by volunteer workers and carers. This enables children with special needs between 13 and 17 from across Australia to enjoy a week long adventure, and learn new skills through a positive experience they will never forget.

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