



# JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY – WESTERN CAMPUS

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JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY  
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James Cook University (JCU) operates a large tertiary facility in Townsville. In 2024, demolition works were scheduled for 16 multi storey buildings on the university's Western Campus in preparation for the site's redevelopment. Buildings earmarked for demolition were in varying degrees of deterioration, with the majority contaminated by asbestos, extensive structural damage, and flora and fauna, including mosquitoes, snakes, bats, and dingos.

Engaged as principal contractor and mobilising from headquarters to Townsville, DEMEX completed demolition of all structures, slabs, footings, carpark, and underground services. As required with regional works, equipment and team were transported (by road) to undertake the works.

## CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

- **Live site** – Operating all year round and catering to over 13,000 students and 4,000 staff, JCU is a busy campus. Demolition was conducted in and around stakeholders required careful demolition planning and traffic management. Notably, the structures to be demolished were aggregated in two zones divided by a children's daycare facility operating three days over the working week. The centre was only accessible through a single road, making traffic management a priority. Careful planning around stormwater and sediment control was also critical given the site remained live throughout the project.

- **Environmental requirements** – Stringent environmental conditions were in place to manage impacts to neighbouring properties and ensure onsite environmental obligations were met. For example, most buildings were impacted by bat communities, which meant daily pre-dawn bat inspections were needed before demolition works could proceed. This aspect of the works was managed by working closely with an environmental consultant who attended site daily during the demolition.
- **Wet weather & heat** – Due to the project's Townsville location and works being conducted over the hottest months of the year, the team was required to work in challenging humid and wet conditions. Cyclones and severe tropical storms delayed the program, while humidity meant vigilance for fatigue management to assure worker health and safety.
- **Asbestos removal** - At tender, a client supplied asbestos report provided guidance on the extent of contamination in buildings. As works progressed, however, it was evident estimates fell short in some areas or were overestimated in others. DEMEX worked closely with the JCU project team and hygienist to manage the sequence of works in line with demolition planning.

Understanding sensitivities around elements of demolition, DEMEX was pleased to assist the JCU team to achieve its objective of removing a culturally significant mural from one of the buildings to facilitate its relocation to a new site on campus.