

**Client:**

Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Centre

**Design & Construction By:**

Tension Span Structures Pty Ltd

**Project Status:**

Completed July 1996

**Project Size:**

945 sq.m (10,168 sq.ft)

## Tjapukai Cultural Centre Cairns

Aboriginal culture is displayed in a \$10 Million Centre and park presenting a theatrical interpretation of Aboriginal culture from 50,000 years ago to the present.

The main centre contains three purpose built indoor theatres containing high tech multi-visual effects. The main entrance represents the joining of Earth and culture.

A Tension Membrane supported by a central "three spear" column provided the visual impact against the red ochre rock colours and Aboriginal murals of the walls of the building.

The structure combines fixed edge detailing on the rear walls, conical shape with radial patterning smoothly shaped to a hyper porte cochere with cable edges. The spears project through the central dome, in a typical fishing spear top detail.

The spear shaped central column (three leaning spears) 18m high is symbolic of Aboriginal culture with the white translucent Membrane throwing natural light onto the ancient wall art of the Tjapukai people.

Tjapukai Dance Theatre has been performing since 1988. A Tension Membrane Structure was chosen to cover traditional Aboriginal dance performances of the Tjapukai people.

Natural light and high visibility were the main criteria plus the creation of



Winner of 1996  
I.F.A.I. International  
Outstanding  
Achievement Award  
for the Tjapukai  
Aboriginal Cultural Centre tension  
membrane canopies awarded by  
the Industrial Fabrics Association  
International.

1. Entrance Canopy
2. Underside View of Entrance Canopy
3. Dance Theatre

an Aboriginal war shield shape for the roof selected a Tension Membrane Structure.

The structure is shield shaped and flows from a high to low level to suit the natural ground levels. Curved trusses and cable edge Membrane were used to achieve the 'shield' shape. Tjapukai dancers perform in traditional paint and costume which is enhanced by the natural light. ■

