



# **WEST DALY**

## *Regional Council*

### **AGENDA**

**Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa) Local Authority**  
**Tuesday 19 August 2025**

11:00 am

Lot 108 Palumpa NT

Contact [governance@westdaly.nt.gov.au](mailto:governance@westdaly.nt.gov.au)  
or phone: 08 7922 6403 for more information.

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**WEST DALY REGIONAL COUNCIL – “Working Together to Make a Difference”**



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## **1      ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

West Daly Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work, paying our respect to Elders past, present and in the future.

## **2      PRESENT APOLOGY AND ABSENT**

## **3      CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Are there any members present who wish to declare a conflict or interest or raise any concerns regarding potential conflict that have arisen or may arise in the agenda at this meeting?

## 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES



**ITEM NUMBER** 4.1

**REPORT TITLE** Palumpa Local Authority Meeting held on 7 August 2024

**PREPARED BY** Shoshana Hill (Governance Officer)

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#### PURPOSE

This report's purpose is for the Local Authority to confirm the previous meeting's minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### BACKGROUND

The minutes of the previous Local Authority Meeting are provided in the attachment for confirmation. The minutes are the record of decisions made by the Local Authority members through discussion and debate to authorise business of the Local Authority.

If the minutes require amendments or updates, this is the time to propose amendments.

#### STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

*Local Government Act 2019 sections 101 and 102.*

#### IMPACT FOR COUNCIL

In ensuring accountability, transparency and compliance.

#### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This report is aligned to the West Daly Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

#### FOCUS AREA 1: A Strong Council

**Governance** 1. *Strengthen governance by meeting or exceeding compliance mandates and requirements for Elected Members and Council*

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa) Local Authority confirm the minutes of the Palumpa Local Authority Meeting held on 7 August 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. Unconfirmed Minutes of Palumpa Local Authority Meeting held on 7 August 2024  
[4.1.1 - 5 pages]



MINUTES OF THE PROVISIONAL  
NGANMARRIYANGA (PALUMPA) LOCAL AUTHORITY  
HELD AT PALUMPA  
ON Wednesday 7 August 2024  
AT 10:00 am

*The meeting opened at 11:08am.*

*Jack Wodidj was nominated as Chairperson for the meeting.*

## 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The West Daly Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work, paying our respect to Elders past, present and in the future.

## 2 PRESENT APOLOGY AND ABSENT

### Local Authority Members

Note, The Mayors name has been removed out of respect.

Name	Title	Present	Apology	Absent
Mayor	Mayor		Apology	
Wilfred Harris	Deputy Mayor		Apology	
Terry Sams	Councillor		Apology	
Amy Narburup	Member		Apology	
Alec Jacky	Member	x		
Sandra Jacky	Member	x		
Lorraine Kerringbo	Member	x		
Jimmy John Murielle	Member			x
Moses Wodidj	Member	x		
Jack Wodidj	Member	x		
Jeff Wodidj	Member			x

John Paul Wodidj	Member			x
Mary Wodidj	Member	x		
Roger Wodidj	Member			x
Warren Wodidj	Member			x

**Note: provisional meeting**

**Staff**

- John Thomas
- Ben Campion
- David Glover Executive
- Tinos Rushwaya
- Michelle Griffin

**Position**

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operations Officer
- Executive Director, Corporate Services (Teams)
- Finance Manager (Teams)
- Executive Officer to the CEO (minutes secretary)

**Visitors:**

- Northern Territory Electoral Commission
- Charlotte Amor, Thamurrurr Development Corporation
- Jeremy Amor
- Danielle Cairns, School Principal
- Paul Bithelli

### 3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

### 4 VISITOR PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Northern Territory Electoral Commission - 2024 Territory Election	
Resolution: <b>NLA-2024/7</b>	
<p><b>1. That the Local Authority receive and note the presentation by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission regarding the 2024 Territory Election.</b></p>	
Moved: <i>LA Member - Moses Wodidj</i>	
Seconded: <i>LA Member - Mary Wodidj</i>	Carried 6 / 0

## 5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### 5.1 Palumpa Local Authority Meeting held on 16 May 2024

Resolution: **NLA-2024/8**

1. That the Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa) Local Authority confirm the minutes of the Palumpa Local Authority Meeting held on 16 May 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: *LA Member - Sandra Jacky*

Seconded: *LA Member - Lorraine Kerringbo* Carried 6 / 0

## 6 REPORTS

### 6.1 Council Services Manager Report

Resolution: **NLA-2024/9**

1. That the Palumpa Local Authority receives and notes the Community Services Manager's Report.

Moved: *LA Member - Moses Wodidj*

Seconded: *LA Member - Lorraine Kerringbo* Carried 6 / 0

### 6.2 Chief Operations Officer Report

Resolution: **NLA-2024/10**

1. That the Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa) Local Authority receives and notes the report.
2. That the Local Authority will commit additional funding towards the splash-pad and the amount will be determined at a meeting where quorum is achieved.

Moved: *LA Member - Lorraine Kerringbo*

Seconded: *LA Member - Moses Wodidj* Carried 6 / 0

### 6.3 Finance and Project Report

Resolution: **NLA-2024/11**

1. That the Local Authority receives and notes the financial information provided for Palumpa for the period ending 30 June 2024.

Moved: *LA Member - Jack Wodidj*

Seconded: *LA Member - Alex Jacky* Carried 6 / 0



6.4 Final 2024-27 Strategic Plan and 2024-25 Regional Plan	
Resolution: <b>NLA-2024/12</b>	
<p><b>1. That the Wadeye Local Authority receive and note the final Council approved copies of the 2024-27 Strategic Plan and 2024-25 Regional Plan.</b></p>	
Moved: <i>LA Member - Mary Wodidj</i>	
Seconded: <i>LA Member - Sandra Jacky</i>	Carried 6 / 0

## 7 GENERAL BUSINESS

### CAR REMOVAL

There are several burnt out cars around the community. Members expressed concern about community safety. The Council is prioritising the removal of cars as a matter of urgency.

**ACTION:** Operations to proceed with car removal program and report back to the local authority at the next meeting.

### SPLASH PAD

Thamurrurr Development Corporation (TDC) is applying for a grant for splash pad. The council has already been accepted for a splash pad funding, however the funds are insufficient to cover the costs of recycling water options. There is an opportunity for Council and TDC to combine funds for a more substantial project outcome.

### MEMBER REQUEST TO CLOSE BACK ROAD

Member Moses Wodidj has requested that the back road be closed, and a fence be erected near the grave site. Moses will show Ben Campion after the meeting.

### SERVICE DELIVERY MEETING

Throughout the meeting several questions were raised by non-members. Meeting protocols will be in place from the next meeting to ensure clear and transparent guidelines and expectations from all in attendance. This will include a specific meeting item where questions from the floor can be asked.

**ACTION:** Liaise with stakeholders in Palumpa to plan ongoing service delivery meetings.

## 8 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be announced soon.

West Daly Regional Council

-4-

Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa)  
Local Authority  
7 August 2024

**9 MEETING CLOSE**

*The meeting closed at 12:55pm.*

This page and the preceding four (4) pages are the unconfirmed minutes of the Nganmarriyanga Local Authority meeting held on Wednesday, 7 August 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson**

Unconfirmed

## 5 REPORTS

### LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

ITEM NUMBER 5.1

REPORT TITLE CEO Report

PREPARED BY Karen Parry (Director of Corporate Services)



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#### PURPOSE

This report provides an update on key developments and upcoming initiatives relevant to the Local Authority.

#### BACKGROUND

##### Update on Regional Plan 2025-26

The 2025-26 Regional Plan has now been approved by Council at their meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The Regional Plan has been published and is available on WDRC Website. Unfortunately, consultation meetings did not proceed as planned in May/June. At this meeting, we are seeking input from the Local Authority on key project priorities to ensure the Plan's alignment with local needs. A specific report to obtain feedback will be presented later in the meeting.

##### Delivery of Sport and Recreation Program

In June 2025, Council entered into an Agreement with Northern Territory Government to deliver the Active Regional and Remote Communities Program (Sport and Recreation) for period 2025 - 2029. Council is engaging an external provider to deliver programs initially, while we work towards developing our own internal West Daly sports program. The provider will deliver an after school hours sports and recreation program on the last week of each month for the remainder of the year, beginning on 25 August 2025.

##### Local Government Election – August 2025

Nominations are closed for the upcoming Local Government Election taking place on **23 August 2025**.

Nganmarriyanga Ward: Gabriel Martin was the only nominee for the position and will be declared Councillor for Nganmarriyanga on 8 September 2025.

Tyemirri Ward and Thamarrurr / Pindi Pindi Ward will proceed to election, with voting open now through to 23 August 2025.

##### Consultation on Local Government Amendment Bill

The council is involved in consultations regarding the Local Government Amendment Bill, the first Tranche of amendments is effective as of 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025. There is a second Tranche of Amendments anticipated for October 2025. These discussions are crucial in shaping the legislative framework that governs local government operations and responsibilities. If Local Authority members would like to know more about the proposed Tranche 2 Amendments, please let Council staff know, and the governance team can provide more information.

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This report is aligned to the West Daly Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

### FOCUS AREA 1: A Strong Council

**Governance** 1. *Strengthen governance by meeting or exceeding compliance mandates and requirements for Elected Members and Council*

**Leadership** 4. *Support, strengthen and grow the capabilities of the Local Authorities through training and development*

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Palumpa Local Authority receive and note the CEO report.

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil

## CSM REPORT

ITEM NUMBER 5.2

REPORT TITLE Community Services Manager Report



PREPARED BY Chris Kassman (Community Services Manager - Peppimenarti)







### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Authority on matters relating to service delivery.

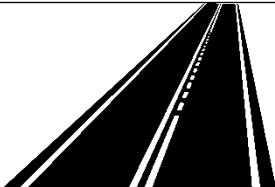

### Background


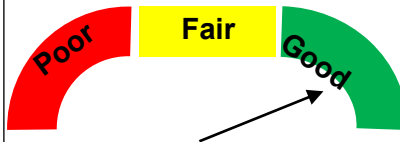
<b>Animal Management</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The AMMRIC team visit has been rescheduled for a later date.</li><li>➤ Will need the AMMRIC team back.</li></ul>	

<b>Cemetery Management</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Cemetery has been regularly maintained, the Civil Team have brush cut, mowed, weed sprayed and cleaned in around the cemeteries.</li><li>➤ The Civil Team also filled in potholes and cleared the road for the cemetery.</li><li>➤ The team fixed the broken fence and are working on the road.</li></ul>	

<b>Sports Grounds</b> (include swimming pool if applicable)		
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<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The children's playground has been closed and will be taken down, due to the damages. It has been deemed unsafe for the public use.</li> <li>➤ The footy oval will be mowed.</li> <li>➤ There is a need for the Footy Oval to be raised, during the wet season the oval becomes waterlogged, which causing maintenance to be challenging.</li> <li>➤ CSM to obtain quotes/discuss options for raising the Footy Oval.</li> </ul>
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<b>Internal Roads &amp; Homelands Access Roads</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Palumpa team have been working on the internal roads.</li> <li>➤ Filling potholes and leveling all wet weather season damage.</li> <li>➤ Cleaning out drains weed spraying the drains.</li> <li>➤ The civil team have plans to work on road edges.</li> </ul>	


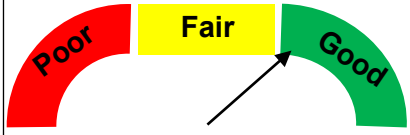
<b>Waste Management</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The team have been collecting rubbish twice a week.</li> <li>➤ The team have created a general dumping bay and clearing a space for recycling bays.</li> <li>➤ The council team do every second week clean (picking rubbish) around community.</li> <li>➤ The civil team do a hard rubbish (metal or heavy objects) collection around the community.</li> </ul>	


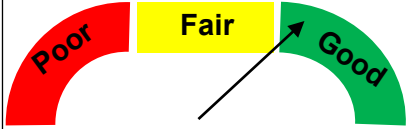
<b>Parks and Open Spaces Management</b>		
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<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Palumpa civil team have been working hard on completing and keeping on top of mowing all parks and open spaces.</li> <li>➤ Civil Team have been working on brush cutting and keeping the community clean.</li> <li>➤ There has been Pick rubbish work carried out in the open spaces.</li> <li>➤ Keeping all grass along fence lines cut and in good order.</li> </ul>
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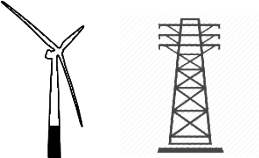

<b>Weed Control and Fire Management</b>	 
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The team monitoring noxious weeds and sprays the weeds weekly and keeps on top of the weeds during the wet season</li> <li>➤ The team have a good knowledge of all forms of noxious weeds here in the community which they want to keep in control.</li> </ul>

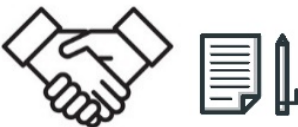

<b>Council Office</b>	 
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Council Office has been operating in accordance with normal opening hours 8am to 4.30pm all days, except public holidays and when there are sorry days' approval from CEO.</li> <li>➤ Post Office and Centerlink also follow the same operating hours.</li> </ul>

<b>Civil Yard</b>	 
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Civil team keep the Civil Yard clean and keep up with the tidying of the yard.</li> <li>➤ The civil team are working well and making sure that the Civil Yard is Clean and Tidy.</li> </ul>

<b>Staff</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Currently have nine (9) staff members here in Palumpa.</li> <li>➤ The civil team have completed training in machinery operation.</li> <li>➤ Three (3) have completed 4-wheel driving training.</li> <li>➤ There are more training opportunities coming for the staff.</li> </ul>	

<b>Fleet</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All fleet vehicles are being maintained.</li> <li>➤ Have machinery in use for work.</li> <li>➤ Have a tractor in process to be fixed</li> </ul>	


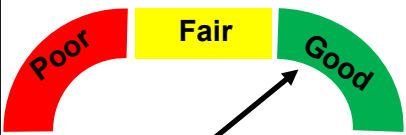
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There will be painting of the main Office and Conference room in 2025.</li> <li>➤ Fence for lot 43 to be replaced.</li> <li>➤ Visitor's accommodation has two rooms with single beds. Shared showers and toilet. And an equipped kitchen.</li> </ul>	

<b>Contracts</b>		
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<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Had the Federal election in community and the homelands.</li> <li>➤ Council provided the Venue for the Election and assisted with the homelands Election</li> <li>➤ Two (2) visits during the wet seasons from Services Australia. Council assisted with the office space</li> <li>➤ Bachelor Training team on Heavy machinery. Council team training</li> <li>➤ Territory Families visit with young children x 54 visits and council assisted the visits</li> <li>➤ Having a community cleanup day (participation from the whole community)</li> </ul>
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<b>AusPost</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ AusPost Service is running well.</li> <li>➤ Palumpa mail is delivered once a week every Monday.</li> <li>➤ Mail is recorded and processed, then put out for the community to collect individual mails.</li> </ul>	

<b>Aerodrome</b>		
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Aerodrome has been operated safely.</li> <li>➤ During the wet season. Most areas in the aerodrome were muddy, the team spent extensive time cutting and mowing around the Aerodrome to ensure safe operations.</li> <li>➤ Aerodrome was kept within requirements.</li> <li>➤ All Medi Vac requirements were met.</li> </ul>	

<b>Remote Tenancy</b>		
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<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Housing issues are being sent to Wadeye and Territory housing services.</li> <li>➤ Housing Officer visit regularly. Every second week for a day.</li> </ul>
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<b>Local Authority Project Status</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fixed the cemetery fence (Completed)</li> <li>➤ Fix the footy oval fence and footy goal post (Pending)</li> </ul>	

<b>Challenges</b>		<b>Opportunities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wet season waiting on goods and services.</li> <li>➤ Staff employment process</li> <li>➤ Antisocial Behavior in Community (fighting and stolen cars)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet community stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Assist with community events. Such as women day lunch, Australia day BBQ/ community cleaning. NAIDOC.</li> <li>➤ Community members making an input in what the needs of community with small meetings</li> </ul>	

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Palumpa Local Authority receives and notes the CSM report.**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. CSM report Photos Palumpa [5.2.1 - 3 pages]

Click here to enter text.

Civil team fixing the internal roads from the wet season



Team work on the civil yard

Community events and the womens day meeting in the Council Office





The Election week



The Palumpa team, BBQ and works around the community







## LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

**ITEM NUMBER** 5.3

**REPORT TITLE** Finance Report

**PREPARED BY** Muhammad Waqas (A/Finance Manager),  
Sewwandi Abeyratne (Grants Manager)



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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to the Palumpa Local Authority a financial report including the actual results of the latest approved budget and Local Authority project funding for the Palumpa local authority area in accordance with 14.1 of the Local Government Guideline.

### BACKGROUND

The attached report details the operating expenditure for the Palumpa Local Authority, which is part of the full Council's approved budget. The attached Finance Report details the budget, variance, and actual expenditure on Council services in the community. The attached report also details critical projects funded by the Local Authority.

### LA Authority Project Funding

The Local Authority's operating income reflects the total funds received to support the delivery of community projects and services.

As of 30th June 2025:

- The total operating income recorded was \$178,923, which includes the NTG Operational Grant to support community initiatives available to the Local Authority.
- Overall, a total of \$31,723.88 in operating expenses was incurred by 30th June 2025. These costs represent spending on approved Local Authority projects and related operational activities.

The attached Grants Report details approved Local Authority projects, carried forward balances from prior years, expenditure to date, and remaining available funds.

### STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act 2019

Local Government (General) Regulations 2021

Local Government Guideline No 1

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Palumpa Local Authority notes and accepts the Finance Report for the period July 2024 to June 2025.
2. That the Palumpa Local Authority acknowledges the following overspends:
  - LAP-5 LED Streetlights – \$11,876.27
  - Cemetery Shed Structure – \$5,822.00 (carried forward from prior years)
  - Removal of Abandoned Cars – \$500.00

and approves that these overspends, totaling \$18,198.27, be adjusted or recovered from unallocated funds.

3. That the Palumpa Local Authority approves the LAP-Kubota Zero Turn Mower Project underspend of \$841 be redirected to projects which encountered overspends.
4. That the Palumpa Local Authority approves the allocation of the remaining unallocated funds of \$62,743, to the following new project allocations:
  - \$20,000 – Street Shade Cloth in Bottom Camp
  - \$30,000 – AMRRIC Veterinary Program
  - \$12,743 – Repair existing Shade in Park.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Palumpa Region Report - June'25 [**5.3.1** - 1 page]
2. Palumpa - P& L June'25 [**5.3.2** - 1 page]
3. Palumpa Grants Report - June'25 [**5.3.3** - 1 page]

End of Month Report - June'25				
Palumpa Region				
OPERATING INCOME	YTD Actuals\$	YTD Budget\$	YTD Variance	Annual Budget\$
Rates	154,029.00	150,587.00	3,442.00	150,587.00
Charges	119,498.00	126,432.00	- 6,934.00	126,432.00
Fees and Charges	32,361.00	178,704.00	- 146,343.00	178,704.00
Operating Grants and Subsidies	1,337,655.00	801,847.00	535,808.00	801,847.00
Interest / Investment Income	-	-	-	-
Commercial and Other Income	180,509.00	46,450.00	134,059.00	46,450.00
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	1,824,053.00	1,304,020.00	520,033.00	1,304,020.00
OPERATING EXPENDITURE	YTD Actuals\$	YTD Budget\$	YTD Variance	Annual Budget\$
Employee Expenses	657,615.00	575,774.00	- 81,841.00	575,774.00
Operational & Other Expenses	607,617.00	197,837.00	- 409,780.00	197,837.00
Elected Member Allowances	3,648.00	22,100.00	18,452.00	22,100.00
Elected Member Expenses	4,597.00	3,600.00	- 997.00	3,600.00
Council Committee & LA Allowances	488.00	4,000.00	3,512.00	4,000.00
Council Committee & LA Expenses	-	-	-	-
Interest Expenses	-	8,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
Repair and Maintenance	161,728.00	82,000.00	- 79,728.00	82,000.00
Materials and Contracts	76,952.00	40,000.00	- 36,952.00	40,000.00
Depreciation	120,256.00	162,000.00	41,744.00	162,000.00
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	1,632,899.00	1,095,311.00	537,588.00	1,095,311.00
OPERATING SURPLUS / DEFICIT	191,153.00	208,709.00	- 17,556.00	208,709.00



Profit and Loss				
West Daly Regional Council				
For the 12 months ended 30th Jun'25				
PALUMPA, 722 - NTG - LA - Local Authority Project Funding				
LA-722 Authority Project Fundings	Actual - FY24/25	Budget - FY24/25	Variance	Remarks
Revenue - NTG - Operational Grant	178,923.00	186,174.00	(7,251.00)	
<b>Surplus Before Overheads</b>	<b>178,923.00</b>	186,174.00	(7,251.00)	
<b>Expenses</b>				
Contractors	19,847.61	16,098.88	(3,748.73)	
Repairs and Maintenance Structures and Site Improvements	11,876.27	10,500.00	(1,376.27)	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>31,723.88</b>	26,598.88	(5,125.00)	
<b>Net Grant</b>	<b>147,199.12</b>	<b>159,575.12</b>	<b>(12,376.00)</b>	

Palumpa											
Local Authority Projects - Allocated Funding - July 2024 to June 2025											
Grant Funding - Local Authority Projects	Approved Budget	Year of Budget Approval	Resolution	Expenditure Prior Years	Carried Forward Current Projects 01/07/2023	FY2024/25 Funding to be received	Expenditure to date 2024-25	Funding 2024-25 to be received	Cash Balance as at 30/06/2025	Comments	status
LAP-5 LED Street lights	38,474	FY20/21	02/6/2021	38,474.00	0.00		11,876.27		(11,876.27)	2020-21	Completed
LAP-Backhoe-Caterpillar (part of funds)	10,584	FY21/22	06/7/2021	10,584.00	0.00				0.00	2021-22	Completed
Cemetery Shed Structure (outback 150)	7,116	FY21/22	15/4/2021	12,938.00	(5,822.00)				(5,822.00)	2021-22	Completed
LAP-AMRRIC Veterinary Program	30,000	FY22/23	02/2/2022	12,043.00	17,957.00		9,348.00		8,609.00	2021-22	
LAP-Kubota Zero Turn Mower	20,000	FY22/23	06/4/2022	19,159.00	841.00				841.00	2022-23	Completed
Removal of Abandoned Cars in Palumpa Community	10,000	FY23/24	OCM 27.09.23	0.00	10,000.00		10,500.00		(500.00)	2022-23	Completed
Fence at the oval	10,000	FY23/24	NLA-2024/4	0.00	10,000.00				10,000.00	2022-23	
safety measures around speed humps (rocks)	10,000	FY23/24	NLA-2024/4	0.00	10,000.00				10,000.00	2022-23	
playground installation	10,000	FY23/24	NLA-2024/4	0.00	10,000.00				10,000.00	2022-23	
playground installation	20,000	FY23/24	NLA-2024/4	0.00	20,000.00				20,000.00	2023-24	
seating at the cemetery	20,000	FY23/24	NLA-2024/4	0.00	20,000.00				20,000.00	2023-24	
Unallocated 2023-24/2024-2025 Funds				0.00	0.00			80,100.00	80,100.00	2023-24	
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY PROJECTS</b>	<b>186,174</b>			<b>93,198.00</b>	<b>92,976.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>31,724.27</b>	<b>80,100.00</b>	<b>141,351.73</b>		

## LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

**ITEM NUMBER** 5.4

**REPORT TITLE** Regional Plan 2025-26 consultation

**PREPARED BY** Ashlee Fuller (Acting Executive Manager)



### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Authority of the adoption of the 2025–26 Regional Plan and to invite ongoing input from Local Authority members, with a particular focus on project priorities for the area.

### WHAT IS A REGIONAL PLAN?

A Regional Plan is a guiding document developed annually by regional councils that outlines budget, annual rates and charges, key goals, priorities, and projects for a specific financial year.

*Due to the large file size, the Regional Plan will be printed and distributed separately.*

### BACKGROUND

As per requirements of the *Local Government Act 2019*, Council intended to hold a public consultation meeting to gather input on the Regional Plan before finalising and adopting it. However, due to safety concerns at the time, these meetings did not proceed.

Council remains committed to ensuring that community voices are heard and considered in the rollout of the Plan. Council recognises the importance of local knowledge in shaping project priorities and ensuring equitable outcomes across the region.

The Local Authority members are invited to present their ideas for key project priorities for the 2025-26 FY.

For reference, below are the 2024-25 identified project priorities.

2024-25 Project Priorities
<b>Community safety</b>
Improved solar lighting
Footpaths
Fencing
<b>Community enhancements</b>
Community seating and shade
Shade Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cemetery</li><li>- Basketball court</li></ul>
Drainage
Animal management
Water tank at the cemetery

<b>Strategic projects</b>
Sporting hub
Community Activity Centre (Youth, Mens Shed, Cultural Centre)

## Statutory Environment

*Local Government Act 2019 Part 3.3*

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This report is aligned to the West Daly Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

### **FOCUS AREA 1: A Strong Council**

*Planning 6. Develop and implement robust and community driven regional plans*

### **FOCUS AREA 3: Developing Council for community**

*Infrastructure 18. Complete allocated Local Authority projects each year*

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That Palumpa Local Authority receives and notes the report; and
2. Proposes the following project priorities be included in the 2025-26 Regional Plan:
  - a. *[priority]*
  - b. *[priority]*
  - c. *[priority]*
  - d. *[priority]*
  - e. *[priority]*
  - f. *[priority]*
  - g. *[priority]*

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil

## LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

ITEM NUMBER 5.5

REPORT TITLE Companion Animal Health Program Report & Ehrlichiosis Study

PREPARED BY Ashlee Fuller (Acting Executive Manager)



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### PURPOSE

To provide a report on the Companion Animal Health Program conducted by Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) in August 2024 aimed to improve the health and welfare of companion animals within the community.

### SERVICES PROVIDED

The program provided essential veterinary services and promoted responsible pet care practices including:

- Anti-parasitic treatments
- Reproductive control
- Medical and surgical procedures
- Vaccinations
- Consensual euthanasia
- Disease surveillance

### IMPACT

The initiative contributed to improved animal welfare, a reduction in disease prevalence, and increased community awareness regarding responsible pet ownership. Council acknowledges the importance of ongoing support for companion animal health programs to sustain these positive outcomes.

Council welcomes feedback from the Local Authority regarding future priorities and areas for improvement.

### Seeking approval for Ehrlichiosis Research Study

AMRRIC and Murdoch University are seeking approval from the Local Authority to conduct a research study on Ehrlichiosis in the region, as outlined in the attached background paper.

This study aims to identify risk factors that help to predict increased bleeding in healthy dogs with ehrlichiosis before, during and after surgery. This will be done by looking at blood clotting patterns, changes in gene activity, and bleeding scores in dogs with Ehrlichia canis undergoing desexing surgery.

### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This report is aligned to the West Daly Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

#### **FOCUS AREA 1: A Strong Council**

**Governance 2.** *Continually review and where possible improve delivery of Council services to be proactive, efficient and meet community needs*

#### **FOCUS AREA 4: Delivering on our promises**

**Working with others** 30. *Maximise the benefits, results and efficiency of Council partnerships*

##### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Palumpa Local Authority receive and note the Companion Animal Health Program Report for the program conducted in *August 2024* by Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC); and
2. Endorse the request from Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) and Murdoch University to conduct Ehrlichiosis Research Study within the region with approval from companion pet owners.

##### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 202408 WDRCVP Report [5.5.1 - 17 pages]
2. Simple Summary Ehrlichiosis Research Study [5.5.2 - 2 pages]

AMRRIC

## Companion Animal Health Program Report

West Daly Regional Council

**Nganmarriyanga, Peppimenarti, Merrepen, Namarluk, Emu Point, Nama,  
Wudapuli and Wadeye**

*August 2024*

p: 08 8948 1768 • G.P.O. Box 4829, Darwin NT 0801 • [www.amrric.org](http://www.amrric.org)



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Program overview:

AMRRIC (Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities) in collaboration with West Daly Regional Council (WDRC) and Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) serviced Peppimenarti, Emu Point, Nganmarriyanga, Merrepen, Namarluk, Wadeye, Nama and Wudapuli over a two-week period (5/8/24-17/8/24) with a surgical and medical veterinary program.

<b>Program Funder(s)</b>	West Daly Regional Council (WDRC)
<b>Program Client</b>	Nganmarriyanga, Peppimenarti, Merrepen, Namarluk, Emu Point, Nama, Wudapuli and Wadeye communities
<b>Program Partner(s)</b>	Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) West Daly Regional Council (WDRC)
<b>Program Focus</b>	Population control, disease management, animal welfare.
<b>Program Services Dates</b>	5/8/24 - 17/8/24

### Summary of Outcomes

Companion animal management and targeted education programs have improved animal, community, and environmental health and wellbeing.

#### *Veterinary programs:*

- **Number of companion animals observed during the visit:** 257 dogs and 61 cats.
- **Parasite treatments:** Administered to 309 animals.
- **Surgical and medical population control:** 143 animals were surgically desexed and 10 animals were provided with temporary sterilization with injectable contraceptive.
- **Humane euthanasia:** Performed for 6 animals.
- **Vaccination:** Administered to 44 animals against infectious canine and feline diseases.
- **Animal welfare medical or surgical procedures:** Provided 44 consultations and 5 surgeries for animal welfare purposes.

#### *Education, training and community engagement:*

- **Schools visited:** Three Schools visited; Nganmarriyanga School, Peppimenarti School, Our Lady Of The Sacred Heart Thamarrurr School
- **Students and teachers engaged:** 75 students, 14 teachers, primary & high school
- **Community engagement:** Three local liaisons engaged on program supporting strengthened relationships with community residents and the animal health team.

### Summary of Recommendations

- **Veterinary**
  - Continued investments in consistent veterinary services focused on population control and anti-parasitic delivery in dogs and cats, particularly in the homelands.
  - A frequency of bi-annual programs at a minimum until a desexing rate of at least 70% of dogs and 80% of cats is achieved. For 2024, we recommend a repeat

program to service surrounding homelands and cover more of Wadeye in October.

- Continued collaboration with WDRC and TDC to ensure availability of local liaisons to support communication between the veterinary team and community.

- **Parasite Management**

- Regular ongoing antiparasitic treatments for cats and dogs is essential to mitigating the risks of zoonotic parasite transmission to people, reducing parasite burdens and reducing the potential spread of the life-threatening tick-borne disease in dogs, *Ehrlichia canis*. This can be achieved by identifying local community members to liaise with and promote the animal health program, strengthening the community engagement and decision making to create a sustainable, community led program. Making broad-spectrum anti-parasitic treatments available for purchase by community members is another method to deploy treatment.

- **School Education and Training**

- School programs run concurrently with veterinary programs. Education sessions should include a focus on optimal animal handling, compassion to animals and convey the importance of individual animal lives.
- Where there is capacity, enroll in AMRRIC animal management training programs, such as the accredited short courses which are designed for animal management workers, environmental health workers and council staff, to support communities to manage companion animals within community.

- **Community Engagement**





- Identifying/maintaining engagement of local Indigenous community members to champion the animal health program, strengthening the community engagement and decision making to ultimately create a sustainable, community led program.

- **Census**

- A census would be valuable for the outstations within the year to monitor progress of the program and support ongoing strategic delivery of companion animal health programs.

- **Other**

- Collaboration with all stakeholders to raise awareness of the veterinary program prior to and during the program.
- Continued partnership between AMRRIC, WDRC & TDC to deliver strategic animal management. Follow links to services below.

-  Vet Services
-  Animal – related education
-  Advocacy and research
-  Strategic animal management program assessment, planning and subsidised anti-parasitic product supply.

## INTRODUCTION

### AMRRIC

[AMRRIC](#) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Darwin, Northern Territory. AMRRIC coordinates culturally sensitive veterinary and education, and capacity building training programs in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationally. AMRRIC collaborates with communities and stakeholders at all levels to design and implement animal management programs that meet identified needs and that recognise the inextricable 'One Health' links between human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing.

### Rationale for animal management programs

The immediate objective of our One Health approach is to ensure pets are healthy and desexed. In the long term, through education and training, the focus of the One Health model is sustainability and capacity building, so that communities, in partnership with veterinary service providers, can confidently and effectively manage their own companion animal populations. By working with remote Indigenous communities to improve the health of their pets, we are helping to create healthy animals, healthy proud communities.

### Background:

Veterinary services have been delivered by AMRRIC at least once per year in Wadeye since 2017. We have infrequently serviced Peppimenarti, Nganmarriyanga and nearby homelands previously as until 2021 these communities were predominantly serviced by Melbourne University. In more recent times, AMRRIC has been involved in annual censuses in Wadeye as part of a larger [Biosecurity Pilot Project](#), running across 6 remote community areas across northern Australia.

### In-kind contributions:

AMRRIC is committed to improving human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing in rural and remote communities. The value of the AMRRIC's in-kind contributions to the veterinary program is estimated at:

- \$3,646.52 for staff time
- \$18, 500 for veterinary surgeon volunteers

AMRRIC's in-kind program services are proudly supported by the Australian Government.

We also gratefully acknowledge considerable in-kind support from partner organisations:

- TDC for supplying our team with air transfers, and accommodation in Wadeye
- WDRC for accommodation in Nganmarriyanga
- And to extensive staff time to assist the team, particularly Caitlin Toose (TDC), Michelle Griffin (WDRC), Charlotte Gamble (TDC), Mick Toomby (WDRC), and Josh & Mark (WDRC).

### Project team

- Dr. Simone Armstrong, Principal Veterinarian
- Dr. Victoria Lindholm, Program Veterinarian
- Aimee Long, Principle Veterinary Nurse
- Megan McCann, Program Veterinary Nurse (Wadeye only)
- Dr. Peter McCourt, Volunteer Veterinarian
- Dr. Abby Masters, Volunteer Veterinarian (Wadeye only)

## SERVICES OFFERED

### VETERINARY

In collaboration with community members, the veterinary team offered the following services. In all cases, the consent of the animals' owner was sought and provided for any services performed.

- **Anti-parasitic treatments** - offered to all dogs and cats during door-to-door visits and administered to all animals receiving surgery.
  - Anti-parasitics alleviate the parasitic burden of ticks, fleas, mites, and worms amongst the companion animal population, thereby improving the health outcomes of pets in communities.
  - Anti-parasitics are integral to the mitigation of some zoonotic diseases (i.e. diseases that pass between humans and animals).
  - Anti-parasitic medications provided:
    - Ivermectin – Dogs and cats, off label use - intestinal worms and some action against mites.
    - Paragard – Dogs – intestinal worms
    - Nexgard – Dogs - Fleas, Ticks, Mites
    - Advantix – Dogs - Fleas and Ticks
    - Interceptor – Dogs – fleas, heartworm and intestinal worms
    - Wagg and Purr – Cats - fleas, heartworm and intestinal worms
- **Reproductive control:**
  - Surgical desexing is the primary tool used to achieve humane population management for companion animals, resulting in reduced threats from uncontrolled dog and cat populations, and increased community health and safety. Further information on the many benefits of desexing can be found [here](#).
  - Temporary injectable contraceptive which lasts for 3-6 months, used as an alternative to surgical desexing in certain situations. Find information types of breeding control [here](#).
  - To maintain a stable populations AMRRIC recommends that 80% of dogs and 90% of cats are desexed. Once 70% of the dogs and 80% of the cats are desexed, it may be possible to maintain the frequency but reduce the duration of veterinary visits. Despite this, it should be recognised that as the desexing rate increases (and especially beyond 60% for most populations), it typically becomes more difficult to recruit desexing candidates as the remaining animals are difficult to capture/handle, or the owners are unwilling to have their animals desexed. Even if the desexing targets of 80% for dogs and 90% for cats are achieved, continued recruitment of new animals to the community, as well as breeding of those that remain entire will require ongoing veterinary services.
- **Animal welfare focused medical and surgical procedures**, to alleviate injury and illness.
- **Vaccinations** for young animals under one year of age (which are more susceptible to succumbing to infectious diseases), administered at time of desexing. Vaccinations were also available to animals greater one year of age.
- **Consensual euthanasia** when deemed necessary for sick, injured or unwanted animals not suitable for rehoming.

- **Disease surveillance**, including sampling from animal suspected of having a notifiable disease where relevant.

## EDUCATION

Education can be delivered in many ways and AMRRIC run education in a format that is most suitable, accessible, relevant, and effective for community needs at the time of each individual program.

Education and Training Services provided:

- **School:** School education programs take place from Families as First Teachers – grade 12, depending on class scheduling and availability. These programs promote responsible pet ownership and focus on companion animal empathy, care, needs, health and hygiene, and safety. Lessons are engaging and interactive, focusing on topics and delivery methods that are relevant to students and members of the community. Transfer of knowledge is evaluated for each program.
- **Informal education:** Conversations door-to-door and at the surgery site provide the AMRRIC team the opportunity to disseminate animal health information, while discussing the veterinary service options with community members. This type of community education ensures residents can ask questions related to general and specific animal health, zoonotic diseases, and animal management in a comfortable and face-to-face setting.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

In collaboration with community members, and facilitated by WDRC civil workers, AMRRIC provided community engagement via:

- **Community Events** – AMRRIC attended a sausage sizzle with locals at the Peppimenarti Club and attended the AFL carnival event in Wadeye.
- **Poster distribution** – posters promoting the program were shared amongst the stakeholders and distributed in the community prior to the visit.
- **Social media posts** – AMRRIC supplied infographics for WDRC and TDC to share on their respective Facebook pages prior to and after the visit, aiming to generate awareness of the program and to promote and share the positive outcomes of the program with community members.
- **Informal animal health education was provided through door-to-door engagement** of residents, as well as consultations provided at the surgery site. Such conversations provide the AMRRIC team the opportunity to disseminate animal health information, while discussing the veterinary service options with community members. This type of community education ensures residents can ask questions related to general and specific animal health, zoonotic diseases, and animal management in a comfortable and face-to-face setting.
- **Other media** – visit was promoted via [BushTel](#) by WDRC

## CONSTRAINTS

The program was a success, and AMRRIC appreciates the ongoing support of WDRC and TDC in its delivery, however the team experienced minor constraints which may guide future decision making.

- Multiple funerals occurred while the program was being undertaken. Due to this, ownership and consent could not be established for multiple animals, preventing surgery/treatments from being provided, particularly regarding the animals at Emu Point and Nama (however these were additional trips beyond the original scope of the original program).
- The trip was scheduled during a favourable time of year for bush/camping trips, meaning some households (of known pet owners) were travelling and therefore unable to be serviced.
- There was no community liaison available in Nganmarriyanga. Despite this, Charlotte Gamble (TDC) was extremely helpful when possible. While no known communication issues occurred as a result of the limited availability of liaisons, AMRRIC always recommends that the vet team work alongside local liaisons to assist in communicating complex health topics and ensuring appropriate informed consent has been gained for procedures.
- Regarding the surgical location and accommodation sites in Peppimenarti, maintenance of security for equipment and belongings meant that additional time was required for pack up/pack down where equipment not secure to remain set up overnight. This also meant for additional travel hours to/from Nganmarriyanga

## OUTCOMES

### VETERINARY

The program met and exceeded the original scope, enabling the inclusion of five additional communities within the trip. The summary of veterinary intervention outcomes is listed in **Table 1** below.

#### Animal Health Observations:

Overall, the health of the animals was satisfactory.

- General body condition score
  - o The general body condition scores were within acceptable limits, with a few outliers presenting with emaciated body condition scores, often coinciding with suspect underlying diseases such as mange, tick burden or suspect ehrlichiosis.
  - o In the desexed population of dogs, body condition scores were closer to ideal and occasionally extending into the overweight category.
- General skin disease observation
  - o Mange was moderately prevalent across the region with particular incidence noticed in Nganmarriyanga and Wudapuli. The case distribution was often concentrated to certain households.
  - o The animals affected by mange ranged in severity with a few cases extending to 80% hair loss.
- General tick burden observation
  - o Ticks were highly prevalent across every outstation community serviced, with a moderate number of severe cases.
  - o The tick burden in Wadeye was relatively low, likely attributed to the widespread dissemination of anti-parasitic medication during the recent census trip.

- Wounds
  - o Dog fight wounds are moderately prevalent.
  - o Wounds from pig hunting were also moderately prevalent.
  - o A small number of animals with burns from boiling water were evident.
- Animal welfare issues
  - o A number of animals presented with healing fractures from violent acts, pig hunting and motor vehicle accidents.
- Within multiple West Daly communities, Sharpei cross breeds have been introduced. Given the climate and environment, this breed encounters multiple (particularly ocular and skin related) complications in a community setting.
- Population management:
  - o Within the surgical candidates at Peppimenarti and Nganmarriyanga, approximately 50% of them remain un-desexed.
  - o At Wudapuli and Nama, the community is seeking population management and initial engagement revealed very low <20% desexing rates but high incidence of uptake.
  - o Merrepen and Namarluk have low population levels with <10% desexing rates.
  - o At Emu Point, historical Melbourne University trips mean that there is moderate desexing levels ~25%.
  - o In Wadeye, community desire for entire animals currently prohibits ideal desexing rates, it is estimated that within the eligible candidates, desexing rates are approximately 25%.
- Infectious diseases
  - o There was a low level of suspected kennel cough in Wadeye, with one dog receiving treatment.
  - o High puppy mortality rates incite suspicions of canine parvovirus.
- Canine Transmissible Venereal Tumor (CTVT)
  - o The team observed an over-representation of CTVT lesions in clusters in Nganmarriyanga and Wadeye. CTVT is a sexually transmitted cancer, which can be prevalent in communities with low desexing rates. Owners of pets displaying CTVT were given information about the disease, and chemotherapy treatment in a veterinary hospital in Katherine or Darwin recommended. These animals were desexed and have been flagged to be revisited during the next program. Euthanasia for advanced CTVT patients was provided in five animals on welfare grounds. For more information on CTVT, please see [here](#).
- Ehrlichiosis
  - o There were multiple cases of suspected Ehrlichiosis noted during the program. While the Northern Territory no longer requires official biosecurity reporting around the disease, Ehrlichiosis continues to present challenges to remote community veterinary service delivery due to increased risk of surgical complications. Although ehrlichiosis was not formally diagnosed during the visit (as there is no longer funding to facilitate laboratory testing), increased bleeding consistent with *E. canis* infection was observed and managed by the team during a number of surgeries. In suspected cases, owners were warned and in one case medical management was dispensed. For more information on Ehrlichiosis, please see [here](#).

**Table 1:** Summary of Companion Animal Health Program – West Daly, August 2024

	Dogs		Cats	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Surgically desexed</b>	45	43	19	23
<b>Chemically sterilised</b>	0	10	0	0
<b>Euthanised</b>	3	3		
<b>Animals treated for parasites</b>	271		38	
<b>Vaccinations at time of surgery and &lt;12mths</b>	34		7	
<b>Vaccinations (paid for)</b>	C3:	C5: 7	0	
<b>General Consultations or welfare treatments</b>	44		1	
<b>Other surgeries performed.</b>	5		N/A	

**Additional surgeries** - entropion surgery (wedge resection from upper and lower eyelids to reposition the lid to prevent corneal irritation and scarring and improve visibility), wound debridement procedures (one of which was surgically closed), and one scrotal ablation.

**General consultations and welfare treatments** – amongst community animals, we provided the following additional services;

- Medical management via hospitalisation, fluid therapy, antibiotic and anti-emetic treatment was provided for a dog with haemorrhagic gastroenteritis in Nganmarriyanga.
- Medical treatment for multiple fight wounds was provided across the region.
- Antibiotic treatment of a dog with history of chronic disease was treated for suspected *E. canis* in Nganmarriyanga.
- Treatment with fluid therapy, anti-emetic medication and antibiotics for two puppies with severe gastrointestinal disease in Wadeye.
- Anti-inflammatory treatment was provided for a dog with suspected kennel cough.



**Image 1:** The veterinary team operating out of the Resource Centre in Wadeye.



Upon request, service providers received veterinary consultation for their pets for services out of scope (consults, vaccinations, surgery) with the request of a cost-recovery donation.

## ZOONOTIC DISEASE RISKS

In Australia there are at least 89 zoonotic. Some diseases spread directly between animals and people, while others spread indirectly by an inanimate object, food, water, soil, or an insect.

Dogs, cats, pigs and cattle, which were present in community during the program, all have the potential to spread diseases to humans. Zoonoses continue to pose a threat regarding intestinal parasitism, [ringworm](#) and [scabies](#) due to the proximity of the human-animal relationships in the community. Specifically, across West Daly, the prevalence of pigs and pig hunting raises concerns regarding for [Brucellosis](#) and [Japanese encephalitis virus](#). Brucellosis infection occurs via direct contact with infected pigs or dogs, and the ingestion of poorly preserved meat by pets and humans. During our program, no cases of clinical brucellosis were noted in the dog population. Further information and precautionary suggestions regarding Brucellosis are available via this [link](#). For more information or updates on zoonotic diseases visit AMRRIC's zoonoses [factsheet page](#) and [zoonoses update page](#).

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Informal Education

During this program all residents in every community that were physically present were engaged with door-to-door visits, with discussions focused around general animal health (including diseases- CTVT, parvovirus, ehrlichiosis; and parasite control), and welfare. In addition to this, dog and cat owners were engaged in conversations around post operative care and preventative health when animals were discharged, and when presented for consultation.

### School program

The school programs in Nganmarriyanga and Wadeye communities were a great success, with two primary sessions (Nganmarriyanga) and a primary and high school session (Wadeye) engaging and showing a high level of interest in topics discussed.

The main lesson topics were:

- General animal health and welfare, including the basic needs of pets
- Parasitic diseases and zoonoses, including signs to look out for and treatment
- Cat management, with particular attention to population size affecting native wildlife

The engagement and success of the session was evaluated through a group quiz at the end of the session, with a high level of understanding of the content evidenced.

**Table 2:** Summary of Education Program – West Daly, August 2024

Year Level	Number of students	Teacher Numbers	Lesson topics
Primary	20	4	Empathy, animal health & welfare
Primary	45	8	Empathy, animal health & welfare
High school	10	2	Zoonotic disease, cat management, general health/welfare



**Image 2:** Dr Simone at Nganmarriyanga school delivering the education program.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

Overall, our team experienced multiple positive outcomes through informal community engagement throughout the program, including:

- 3 community liaisons which participated in the program in Wadeye, translating Murrinh-patha language for our team.
- Door-to-door consultation across communities, which gave AMRRIC team members the opportunity to engage more closely with community members and explain our work, as well as have discussions about dog health and particular cases and concerns with owners.
- In Wadeye and Nganmarriyanga, the surgery site was visited by multiple interested community members and dog owners. We were impressed with the level of engagement and the interest from community members regarding our work, and how we could help their animals.
- Several community members in each community told us they remember the “AMRRIC mob” visiting previously and were happy to see us working in their community



**Image 3:** Bernice and Lisa from Nganmarriyanga helping monitor post-surgery.

## EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### VETERINARY

#### EVALUATION

Regular animal health programs will continue to greatly benefit the health and welfare of the animals and subsequently, the communities across West Daly. The benefit of consistent veterinary intervention is evident across Wadeye, in which the team noticed a great improvement in the health status of residing animals between the two most recent trips, in particular regarding parasitic burdens and subsequent skin scores.

Community members in Merrepen, Namarluk, Nama, Wudapuli and Emu Point were very receptive to the presence of the vet team, remarking it had been a long time since they had received veterinary services. There was a positive response when conveying plans for our team to return in October to service the region. In Nganmarriyanga and Peppimenarti the community were exceptionally grateful for our time and efforts. The vet team was sought out by multiple individuals in Wadeye, treatment was provided, and the involved parties were satisfied. Wadeye service providers were greatly appreciative of the team's efforts.

The perceived high prevalence of CTVT, particularly in Wadeye and Nganmarriyanga communities is a concern and necessitates increased emphasis on reproductive control (and, where requested, euthanasia) to help control spread, while safe and locally administered treatment remains unachievable.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Consistent services* - AMRRIC strongly recommends continuing with a minimum of bi-annual veterinary visits to Wadeye and the outstations as appropriate. In Wadeye, the rate of desexing still is too high to achieve a stable population. We recommend one visit per year consist of a high-volume 'Blitz' program<sup>1</sup>. Regarding the outstations, accessibility is a large consideration, thus programs should be planned accordingly around April/May and August/September/early October if possible. With desexing rates being low across the region, a surgical trip is recommended for each visit, requiring a team of two vets and two nurses at a minimum.
2. *Cat management* - Strengthening management as part of veterinary programs is an emerging and crucial consideration for remote community LGAs. Due to cats' prolific reproduction and hunting skills, their increasing populations across the Northern Territory pose a significant threat to the biodiversity in the region. They additionally can transmit a range of zoonotic diseases. Their evasive nature means they are often difficult to handle and catch. Collaboration with local partners such as the Rangers is recommended, to facilitate efficient and humane cat trapping and enable more cats to be surgically desexed.
3. *Zoonotic disease mitigation* - Regular ongoing veterinary visits are important to identify and reduce the presence of zoonotic parasites and infections within the animal

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<sup>1</sup> High-volume 'blitz' programs have anticipated outcomes of >100 desexing procedures over the Week. They require larger teams and more coordination but by achieving higher reproductive control rates sooner, result in greater cost-benefit in the long term. With WDRC's support, AMRRIC would be happy to explore corporate sponsorship to facilitate the delivery of high-volume programs for Wadeye.

population, mitigating public health risks. To achieve optimal health outcomes for animals and community members AMRRIC encourages collaboration with local health workers and clinics, and establishment of a One Health zoonosis referral process when potentially zoonotic disease cases are identified in either animals or people.

4. *Disease control and enhanced awareness*

- a. Ehrlichiosis cases were suspected across the West Daly region, causing both acute infections, which can be fatal, and chronic infections leading to increased morbidity and potential vectors amongst community animals. The disease is treatable, however current protocols require consistent dosing with Doxycycline antibiotic for one month at a minimum, which is likely inappropriate in most community settings. Regular anti-parasitic treatment for the Brown dog tick is crucial in preventing infection. Resources including our [Tick Sickness animation](#) are and educational posters are freely accessible, and we encourage organisations to share this resource. If you have active involvement via social media, the AMRRIC also Facebook page has a post [here](#) which can be simply shared.
- b. CTVT lesions were identified in Wadeye and Nganmarriyanga. Spread occurs via sexual transmission, and while the disease is treatable via complete surgical excision, radiotherapy and chemotherapy, these methods are largely inaccessible in community. Currently AMRRIC aims to combat dissemination of the disease across the region by targeted euthanasia, increasing the desexing rates and education. Hence, we strongly suggest CTVT community education to enable dog owners to identify lesions and manage their pet accordingly. For more information, please visit this [link](#). For community resources, please visit this [link](#).

## **PARASITE MANAGEMENT**

### EVALUATION

In Wadeye, community-wide anti-parasitic treatments were administered during AMRRIC's biosecurity census in May. On this program, parasite burdens were reduced but still present, reflecting a high environmental burden. Across the outstation communities, long intervals between vet visits has enabled parasitic burdens to proliferate. In particular, tick burdens in animals of all ages, and significant intestinal worm burdens in puppies were observed. Additionally, mange cases were evident in certain locales. Like those administered in May, the treatments provided during this program will have immediate impact but do only offer short term prevention. Regular community-wide distribution of broad-spectrum anti-parasitic treatments is recommended to treat clinical cases and also reduce the environmental burden to ensure animal health and welfare and reduce risks of zoonotic transmission.

### RECOMMENDATIONS and STRATEGY

1. *Anti-parasitic administration* - It is recommended that anti-parasitic medications are administered to companion animals in the community on an at least quarterly basis. Parasite burdens tend to be greater during the wet season so during this period, more regular dosing may be required. AMRRIC can supply discounted antiparasitic products to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community stakeholders to ensure that the community residents

have access to effective and affordable products year-round while the communities are inaccessible during the wet season.

2. *Tailored anti-parasitic approach and training*- AMRRIC's veterinarians are happy to provide community-specific pro bono guidance on anti-parasitic selection for West Daly. Local organisations can choose to distribute these treatments as part of healthy homes, animal management and/or environmental health activities, or could elect to offer them for purchase by local residents, in doing so, creating access to effective and affordable treatments where it otherwise doesn't exist. The success of stocking and purchase of these products by community members requires significant promotion by local stakeholders. AMRRIC is happy to provide free educational resources to assist in promoting such products. Additionally, AMRRIC can provide training to local organisations wishing to distribute anti-parasite treatments as part of health homes, animal management and/or environmental health programs.

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

AMRRIC education programs aim to share knowledge and help people make informed decisions regarding the health of their animals, themselves, and their community.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Animal education programs through schools and community groups about animal health, welfare, and breeding capability should be delivered concurrently with veterinary programs to support greater veterinary outcomes and overall animal, community, and environmental health. Continued education contributes to community capacity to manage animal health within communities and meaningfully contribute to positive health outcomes for both the community and its animals.

1. *Safety* - Animal education programs should be continued to contribute to greater animal wellbeing, animal and human safety (e.g. dog bite avoidance), and human health outcomes (zoonotic disease awareness and mitigation) in community.
2. *Community education* - education sessions with ranger groups/individuals who are interested in animal health or companion animal health management in communities.
3. *Cat focus education* - Specific focus on collaborative engagement and education to cat owners regarding the risk cats present to local wildlife, their prolific breeding capacity, and overall impacts of cat ownership- include if identified cats as an issue.
4. *Training* - AMRRIC are developing accredited training courses which are designed for animal management workers, environmental health workers and council staff as well as coordinators. The skills set ACMSS00031 & ACMSS00034 are still in development, and we will inform WDRC when ready to deliver and whom would benefit from these courses.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement across all communities was excellent. In each community, our services were mostly well received from door-to-door interactions as well as being sought out. Community members were engaged and receptive to recommendations regarding their animals' health. There remains apprehension regarding desexing in some households.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Community liaisons are invaluable to our programs. We encourage WDRC and any other community-based organisations involved to work collaboratively to identify and engage suitable candidates within their organisations or the wider community, interested in animal health and in undertaking team liaison roles during these visits. These roles allow the team to explain the veterinary services to be offered in local language where preferred, facilitating clear and appropriate communication, allowing for further informal community education, and ensuring genuine informed consent from owners regarding the health outcomes of their animals.

## CENSUS

Companion animal population census data assists communities to objectively assess the population size, reproductive status and condition of animals of the entire community and decision makers to implement evidence-based, strategic animal management program planning.

AMRRIC is eager to work with communities to ensure that companion animal population data is known, accessible and available to all relevant stakeholders.

AMRRIC is currently working with the Northern Territory Government Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities to plan the upcoming West Daly Homelands census, scheduled for October 2024.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AMRRIC would like to thank:

- West Daly Regional Council (WDRC) for their funding support and commitment in engaging AMRRICs services. Our team acknowledges the significant support in planning and facilitating the program, and gives particular thanks to Michelle Griffin for this.
- Thamarrurr Development Corporation, particularly Caitlin Toose and Charlotte Gamble, for their extensive support year-round, as well as transportation and accommodation.
- WDRC Civil Workers Mick, Josh and Mark for extensive on ground support in Peppimenarti and Wadeye.
- Our hard working and highly skilled AMRRIC volunteers Dr. Peter McCourt and Dr. Abby Masters.
- School staff and students, from Nganmarriyanga and Wadeye for facilitating the education program.
- The community members in Nganmarriyanga, Peppimenarti, Merrepen, Namarluk, Emu Point, Wudapuli and Wadeye communities for welcoming the AMRRIC Team and ensuring the program was a success.
- AMRRIC's in-kind program services are proudly supported by the Australian Government.

AMRRIC look forward to continuing our successful collaboration with West Daly Regional Council (WDRC) and Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) to ensure healthy, well-managed populations of companion animals in the West Daly Region, which in turn supports the betterment of animal, environment, and human health outcomes across the region.



**Images 4 and 5:** (Left) Dr Peter, Dr Simone and Caitlin from TDC preparing a patient for surgery at Nganmarriyanga. (Right) Mick from WDRC attending to a patient in Peppimenarti.



**Image 6:** Josh and Mark from WDRC helping restrain puppies in Wadeye.

Report prepared by:

Dr Simone Armstrong (AMRRIC Principal Veterinarian) and Dr Victoria Lindholm (AMRRIC Regional Program Manager).

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**Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities**

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## Research Study

# Understanding Why Some Dogs with Ehrlichiosis Experience Bleeding Problems During Desexing Surgery

## Background

Ehrlichiosis, or “tick sickness”, is a serious and life-threatening disease of dogs caused by the bacteria *Ehrlichia canis*. The bacteria are spread by bites from the Brown Dog Tick (*Rhipicephalus linnaei*), which is found in many parts of Australia but is most common in warmer regions across the top end. Ehrlichiosis was first detected in the town of Kununurra, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, in May 2020 and has had a devastating impact on dogs living in rural and remote communities across the top end. In these areas, with limited access to veterinary services and high tick burdens due to lack of access to antiparasitic treatment has caused severe outbreaks, with up to 70% of the dogs in the community being infected, with losses of up to 30%. Ehrlichiosis has been responsible for significant declines in dog populations in many communities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where veterinary services were restricted.

Dogs with ehrlichiosis may show symptoms like fever, low energy and weight loss. They may also have bruising or nose bleeds. In some dogs, the bacteria also cause inflammation in the eyes, making them appear blue and cloudy. Some dogs will recover and may seem healthy, but the bacteria are still hiding inside the body. Even though these dogs may not show any signs that they are sick, the bacteria can still cause problems, and some of these dogs may have a greater risk of complications, such as bleeding during common surgeries like desexing. Bleeding complications are a major concern, as some infected dogs have shown severe, unexpected bleeding despite appearing to be healthy. Currently, no test can predict which dogs may have bleeding problems and which ones will not, making the surgery less safe for dogs with ehrlichiosis.

## Rationale

Desexing is an integral part of community animal health and management programs in rural and remote areas and, ensuring the safety of dogs undergoing this procedure is essential. Dogs are often cherished family members and hold deep cultural significance in some communities, with the representation of dogs in totems, kinship systems and Dreamtime stories. Adverse surgical outcomes can harm the spiritual, cultural and emotional well-being of communities and erode trust and support for animal health and management programs. Therefore, identifying and effectively treating dogs at high risk of bleeding is essential in reducing these risks and maintaining community support.

## Aims

This study aims to identify risk factors that help to predict increased bleeding in healthy dogs with ehrlichiosis before, during and after surgery. This will be done by looking at blood clotting patterns, changes in gene activity, and bleeding scores in dogs with *Ehrlichia canis* undergoing desexing surgery.



### Objectives

1. To understand the link between ehrlichiosis and bleeding risk during surgery
2. To study blood clotting patterns and gene activity in *E. canis* positive dogs before, during and after surgery
3. To study changes in gene activity in *E. canis*-positive dogs in response to surgery.
4. To explore why some *E. canis*-positive dogs bleed more than others during surgery.

### Methods

The study will take place over one to two weeks in a rural or remote community in the Northern Territory, focusing on communities where ehrlichiosis has been detected and aligning the research with existing veterinary desexing programs. The research team will record basic details about all participating dogs, including their age, gender, desexing status, body condition, skin condition, flea and tick scores, any symptoms of ehrlichiosis noted by the vets and any other health problems the dog may have. While the dog is asleep under anaesthesia for surgery, blood samples will be collected from the neck vein and ear tip to see how well the blood is clotting and look for changes in blood cells and genes that may be related to bleeding during surgery. The research team will also give each dog a “bleeding score” to monitor how much each dog bleeds during the surgery. These results will help the research team explore relationships between clotting, bleeding scores, and infection status. This study has been approved by Murdoch University’s Animal Ethics Committee (Permit Number **R3591/24**)

### What are the Benefits for Dog Owners?

All dogs participating in the study will receive a dose of tick prevention. Owners of dogs participating in the survey will be offered a course of antibiotics (doxycycline) to help treat the problem. If the veterinarian and research team have any concerns that the dog may be at higher risk of bleeding, the veterinary team will give the dog a medicine called tranexamic acid (TXA) that may help to stop any abnormal bleeding.

### Are there any Risks Associated with the Study?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and personal information will remain confidential. The research team does not expect that there will be any risk for dogs participating in the study. Sometimes, dogs will get a small bruise at the site where blood was collected; this should improve within a few days. Information collected about the dog and the owner will be kept confidential.

## LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

**ITEM NUMBER** 5.6

**REPORT TITLE** Community Safety Report

**PREPARED BY** Jasmine Murray (Community Safety Patrol Coordinator)



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### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Local Authority on matters relating to service delivery.

### Background

Council is currently settling on a memorandum of understanding with the Northern Territory Police. This will ensure consistency and cooperation between Council's Community Safety Patrol ("CSP") and NT Police operations in Wadeye. The Community Safety Patrol program also works closely with Community Development Programs to recruit community-based staff.

Operational Hours: -

- 5pm – 12am Tuesday – Saturday.
- CSP is running 5 nights per week as per funding agreement.

### Recruitment Update

- New Community Safety Patrol Coordinator (Jasmine Murray).
- We are attempting to recruit a female team to operate during the day – no interest for the positions yet.
- Two males have been interviewed and will be onboarded soon.
- In the process of identifying a full-time Team Leader for Palumpa team.

### Staff Training

Ongoing staff training (in-house) to ensure both community safety and program reporting are completed. New iPads will be introduced across the 3 communities to ensure daily stats are recorded and incident reports submitted. Ongoing training and support will be given to Officers.

Palumpa CSP Officers participated in Conflict Resolution training including:

- Tools to talk down aggressive behaviour and avoid physical harm.
- Each Officer received a certificate on completion.

### Challenges

Front passenger window of the CSP vehicle was damaged and will be repaired.

### Community Safety Patrol Support and Events

Community Safety Officers have been proactively engaging in community events and activities. They will provide support at the new sport and recreation program for youth.

## STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act 2019

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Palumpa Local Authority receives and notes the Community Safety Report.

## **Attachments**

Nil

**6      GENERAL BUSINESS**

**6.1    General Business**

**7      NEXT MEETING**

**7.1    Next Meeting**

**8      MEETING CLOSE**