



WEST DALY

Regional Council

AGENDA

Wadeye Local Authority
Wednesday 16 July 2025

10:00 am

Wadeye Council Chambers

Contact 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 Wadeye Local Authority Meeting held on 23 October 2024

PREPARED BY Shoshana Hill (Governance Officer)



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 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.

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 Wadeye Local Authority confirm the minutes of the Wadeye Local Authority Meeting held on 23 October 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Unconfirmed Minutes of Wadeye Local Authority Meeting held on 23 October 2024
[4.1.1 - 5 pages]



MINUTES OF THE WADEYE LOCAL AUTHORITY
HELD AT WADEYE
ON Wednesday 23 October 2024
AT 10:00 am

The meeting commenced at 10:18am.

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 LEAVE

Name	Present	Apology	Absent
Deputy Mayor Wilfred Harris		Apology	
Cr. Mark Tunmuck-Smith	X		
Cr. Peter Cumaiyi	x		
Steven Pultchen (Chairperson)	x		
Damien Tunmuck	x		
Ken James		Apology	
Mark Ninnal	X		
Timothy Dumoo		Apology	
Cyril Ninnal	x		
Basil Parmbuk	x		
Margaret Perdjert	x		

Ann Marie Nudjulu		Apology	
Gregory Munar	x		

Note: Quorum achieved

Staff

- John Thomas
- Tinos Rushwaya
- Michelle Griffin
- Dale Robertson
- Brett Martin
- Ashlee Fuller
- Sewwandi Abeyratne

Position

Chief Executive Officer
Finance Manager (Teams)
Executive Officer to the CEO (minute taker)
Community Services Manager
Wadeye Operations Manager
Governance & Communications Officer
Strategic Grants Coordinator

GUESTS:

Heimo Shober, Chief Executive Officer, Keep Australia Beautiful Council NT

2.1 Present Apology and Leave of Absence

Resolution: **WLA-2024/15**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority accepts the Apology of Deputy Mayor Wilfred Harris, Ken James, Timothy Dumoo and Anne Marie Nudjulu.

Moved: *LA Member - Mark Ninnal*

Seconded: *Councillor Peter*

Carried 9 / 0

Cumaiyi

3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 Wadeye Local Authority Meeting held on 19 March 2024

Resolution: **WLA-2024/16**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority confirms the minutes of the Wadeye Local Authority meeting held on 19 March 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: *LA Member - Mark Ninnal*

Seconded: *Councillor Mark*

Carried 9 / 0

Tunmuck-Smith

4.2 Wadeye Local Authority Meeting held on 6 August 2024

Resolution: **WLA-2024/17**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority confirms the minutes of the provisional Wadeye Local Authority Meeting held on 6 August 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: *LA Member - Margaret Perdjert*

Seconded: *LA Member - Basil Parmbuk* Carried 9 / 0

5 REPORTS

5.1 CEO Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/18**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority receive and note the CEO report.
2. That the Wadeye Local Authority supports the Council to pursue the opportunity to participate in Changemaker Workshops in 2025.

Moved: *Councillor Mark Tunmuck-Smith*

Seconded: *LA Member - Margaret Perdjert* Carried 9 / 0

Heimo Schober from Keep Australia Beautiful Council NT introduced himself to the Wadeye Local Authority and provided members with a further overview of upcoming Waste Management Consultation Strategy.

5.2 Finance and Project Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/19**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority receives and notes the financial information provided for the Wadeye Local Authority Projects for the period ending 30 September 2024.

Moved: *Councillor Mark Tunmuck-Smith*

Seconded: *Councillor Peter Cumaiyi* Carried 9 / 0

5.3 Community Services Manager Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/21**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority receives and notes the Community Services Manager report.

Moved: *Councillor Mark Tunmuck-Smith*

Seconded: *LA Member - Cyril Ninnal* Carried 9 / 0

5.3 Community Services Manager Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/20**

1. **That the Wadeye Local Authority will have oversight on location of speed bumps to be determined.**

Moved: *Councillor Mark Tunmuck-Smith*
Seconded: *LA Member - Cyril Ninnal* Carried 8 / 0

COMMENTS

- LA member asked for an update on the playground shade structure.
- Wadeye Operations Manager, Brett Martin, advised we are in the process of fixing the shades however, the shade structures will remain down following the recent issues with children climbing. We have a inspector coming to review the playgrounds.

5.4 Community Safety Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/22**

1. **That the Wadeye Local Authority receives and notes the Community Safety Patrol report.**

Moved: *LA Member - Cyril Ninnal*
Seconded: *Councillor Peter Cumaiyi* Carried 9 / 0

5.4 Community Safety Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/23**

1. **That the Wadeye Local Authority be involved in settling the Memorandum of Understanding consultation with Northern Territory Police.**

Moved: *Councillor Mark Tunmuck-Smith*
Seconded: *{seconded}* Carried 8 / 0

5.5 Action Items Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/24**

1. **That the Wadeye Local Authority notes the progress reports on outstanding actions from the previous minutes.**

Moved: *LA Member - Cyril Ninnal*
Seconded: *LA Member - Damien Tunmuck* Carried 9 / 0

5.5 Action Items Report

Resolution: **WLA-2024/25**

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority would like bin stands to be installed at all houses in community.

Moved: *LA Member - Cyril Ninnal*

Seconded: *LA Member - Damien Tunmuck* Carried 8 / 0

6 GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 General Business

CREEK CAMP

The Wadeye Local Authority are concerned with the disadvantages in Creek Camp including lack of playgrounds for youth and healthy homes.
The Wadeye Local Authority discussed allocating resources to develop this area of community.

7 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Wadeye Local Authority will be announced soon.

8 MEETING CLOSE

The meeting closed at 11:31am.

This page and the preceding 4 pages are the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023.

5 REPORTS

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

ITEM NUMBER	5.1
REPORT TITLE	CEO Report
PREPARED BY	John Thomas (Chief Executive Officer)



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 26th June 2025. 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.

Local Government Election – August 2025

The upcoming Local Government Election will take place in August. A comprehensive report on elections and the nomination process will be presented later in the agenda. Council employees can assist nominees in submitting their forms to the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC). Please keep an eye out for updates.

Council's Pool Operations Contract Renewal

The contract for pool operations is due for renewal, and we are seeking feedback from the Local Authority as funding contributors. Input regarding service delivery, community engagement, and operational improvements will be valuable in determining the future of this essential facility. We appreciate your perspectives to ensure its ongoing success.

Consultation on Local Government Amendment Bill

The council is involved in consultations regarding the Local Government Amendment Bill. 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 changes, 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*

FOCUS AREA 2: Strong safe and healthy people

Wellbeing 17. *Prioritise and secure operational funding for Wadeye Pool to ensure it*

remains open for community wellbeing

FOCUS AREA 4: Delivering on our promises

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

CSM REPORT

ITEM NUMBER 5.2

REPORT TITLE Community Services Manager Report

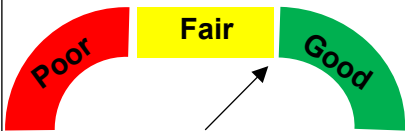
PREPARED BY Carla Nicholas (Acting Community Services Manager)



PURPOSE

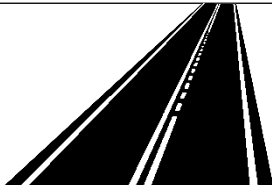
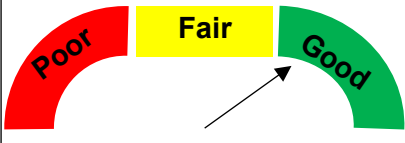
The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Authority on matters relating to service delivery.

Background

1. Animal Management		
Summary	Deceased animals have been removed when required and disposed in the appropriate manner.	
2. Cemetery Management		
Summary	Cemetery has been regularly maintained, however due to machinery issues and weather, work has been slowed on some occasions. 	

3. Sports Grounds (include swimming pool if applicable)		
Summary	Maintenance: The sports ground and swimming pool are maintained on a weekly basis. The team is having to manage issues related to damage as a result of vandalism. YMCA Contract: We are nearing completion of the corrective actions from the Pool Audit conducted February 2025. The Swimming Pool Contract for YMCA to Manage the Pool has been renewed for a further 12 Months, and a Pool Manager has been employed. Further feedback from the Local Authority is invited.  	

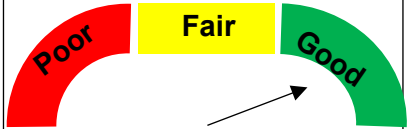
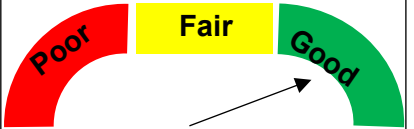


4. Internal Roads & Homelands Access Roads		
Summary	Old Mission Road: Upgrades have been completed, and the road is now passable for community use. Speedbumps: 15 new speedbumps have been installed within Wadeye Community to improve Road Safety. Road Maintenance Grading Schedule: The Capital Works and Roads Manager has developed a Road Maintenance Grading Schedule. This schedule identifies Wadeye Access and Internal Roads, which are required to be maintained throughout the year, the schedule identifies the frequency for grading the roads annually. Feedback on the Road Maintenance Grading Schedule from the Local Authority is invited. Potholes: Pothole repairs are undertaken by the Civil Crew on a needs basis. Routine Inspection/Future Works: Project Officer carrying out regular road inspection to identify future works.	

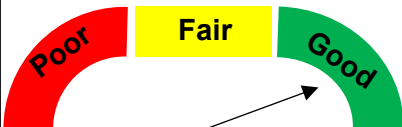


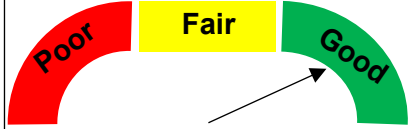
5. Waste Management		
Summary	General: The tip face and other designated zones are pushed up regularly throughout the week. Improvements: Further improvements with organizing waste to come once waste staff have been employed.	

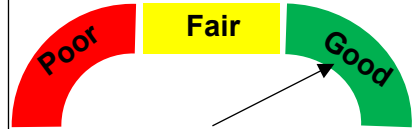
	A Waste and Resource Management (WaRM) Grant has been allocated to WDRC Waste Management. This will be to cover the following improvements: - Removal of Steel and Concrete - Improve drop of zones and waste separation - Improve staff facilities at the landfill  
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6. Parks and Open Spaces Management	 
Summary	Parks and open spaces are maintained weekly and kept to a high standard.
7. Weed Control and Fire Management	 
Summary	Weed control and fire management is ongoing but completed weekly. Fire breaks being created:

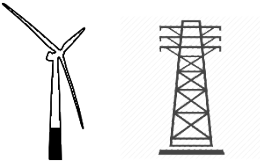
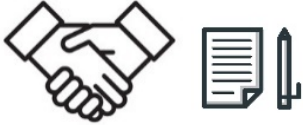


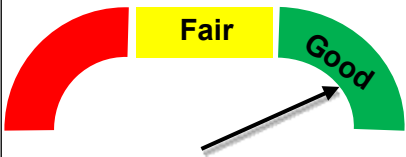
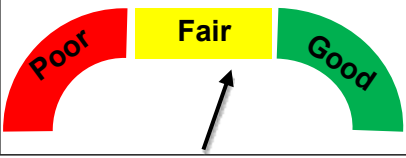
8. Council Office		
Summary	Groundskeeping and maintenance of the council office is performed weekly and to a high standard. 	

9. Civil Yard		
Summary	The civil yard is maintained to a high standard, pre-starts and checks are completed for all equipment and machinery daily. Toolbox meetings with staff are performed daily. 	

10. Staff		
Summary	The civil services staff have performed works diligently, completing assigned tasks with efficiency.	

11. Fleet		
Summary	Fleet managements has been an ongoing battle due to weather, high workload and staff shortages.	

12. Infrastructure		
Summary	Council is working on improvements for staff housing including security and roof upgrades. Currently in the process of renovating Lot 459/2. Once done will move to the next house that needs work.	
13. Contracts		
Summary	Fossil Head Road upgrade -TOA constructions completed works. Perdjert Street upgrade - TOA construction scheduled to complete upgrade from Gravel to Bitumen in late July, subject to weather conditions.	
14. AusPost		
Summary	WDRC took over the Post Office Service Provision on Monday 19/06/25. Receiving positive feedback from the community. The new location for the Post Office is in progress and is due to be ready at the end of July or sooner.  	

15. Aerodrome		
Summary	Training: Staff from both Darwin and Wadeye have completed the ARO Training. Safety Improvements: A contractor has been engaged, funded by DLI to upgrade the fence around the airfield to improve security. Aerodrome Maintenance: Civil Crew have been conducting routine slashing/mowing and applying chemicals for weed management to keep the Aerodrome in serviceable condition, as per the Inspection and Maintenance Contract.	
16. Remote Tenancy		
Summary	Working to increase tenancy by renovating/adding facilities where needed to increase accommodation for incoming staff. An extension has been confirmed for the NT remote housing contract	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Wadeye Local Authority receives and notes the CSM report.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

ITEM NUMBER 5.3

REPORT TITLE Regional Plan 2025-26 consultation

PREPARED BY Michelle Griffin (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
Community safety
Operation of Wadeye swimming pool
Speed humps
Road safety signage
Community enhancements
Wheelchair access for the footpath on the side of the courthouse and shop
Water bubblers at the church
Irrigation at the church
Trees at the church
Community events
Lighting at the barge

Strategic projects
Wadeye emergency shelter and sports hall

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 Wadeye Local Authority receives and notes the report; and
2. Proposes the following project priorities for 2025-26 be documented for the Wadeye Local Authority area:
 - a. *[priority]*
 - b. *[priority]*
 - c. *[priority]*
 - d. *[priority]*
 - e. *[priority]*
 - f. *[priority]*
 - g. *[priority]*

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

ITEM NUMBER 5.4
REPORT TITLE Companion Animal Health Program Report
PREPARED BY Michelle Griffin (Executive Manager)



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.

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 Wadeye 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).

ATTACHMENTS

1. 202408 WDRCVP Report [5.4.1 - 17 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



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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.

Program Funder(s)	West Daly Regional Council (WDRC)
Program Client	Nganmarriyanga, Peppimenarti, Merrepen, Namarluk, Emu Point, Nama, Wudapuli and Wadeye communities
Program Partner(s)	Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) West Daly Regional Council (WDRC)
Program Focus	Population control, disease management, animal welfare.
Program Services Dates	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
Surgically desexed	45	43	19	23
Chemically sterilised	0	10	0	0
Euthanised	3	3		
Animals treated for parasites	271		38	
Vaccinations at time of surgery and <12mths	34		7	
Vaccinations (paid for)	C3:	C5: 7	0	
General Consultations or welfare treatments	44		1	
Other surgeries performed.	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' program¹. 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

¹ 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.

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REPORT FOR INFORMATION

ITEM NUMBER 5.5

REPORT TITLE Local Government Elections - Nominations update

PREPARED BY Ashlee Fuller (Communication and Engagement Officer)



PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Authority members on key dates and information relevant to the upcoming Local Government Election.

BACKGROUND

Key Dates

- Nominations open 11th July 2025 and close 31st July 2025.
- Postal vote and early voting opportunities open from 11th August 2025.
- Election Day will be held on 23rd August 2025.
- Initial votes are counted from 6pm on 23rd August 2025.
- Extended counting period is between 25th August 2025 and 4th September 2025.
- Declaration of the Election Result delivered 8th September 2025.

Council is hosting Question and Answer Q&A sessions for community members to attend, engage or seek clarification on nomination and voting process. Sessions will be facilitated by Council staff with support of representatives from the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

- Wadeye Q&A held on 22nd July 2025.
- Palumpa Q&A held on 23rd July 2025.
- Peppimenarti Q&A held on 24th July 2025.

Nominations

Candidates must be nominated by at least one other person enrolled to vote in the local government area you are nominating for.

All nominations must be submitted via the Electoral Commission's website, or in person at Darwin. However, Q&A sessions will be held during nomination period, and candidates are able to submit their forms directly to the Commission.

Council staff at Wadeye, Peppimenarti and Palumpa can provide assistance for submissions where candidates have limited access to technology.

Candidate Information Booklets are available at community offices.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act 2019 (NT)

Local Government Electoral Regulations 2021 (NT)

Electoral Act 2004 (NT)

IMPACT FOR COUNCIL

Ensure Council and Community receive factual and informative communications throughout the Local Government Election.

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 Wadeye Local Authority receive and note the report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Candidate Handbook [5.5.1 - 33 pages]

2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE **HANDBOOK**

Information for candidates about their responsibilities and requirements throughout the 2025 Local Government Elections.

ntec.nt.gov.au



Northern Territory
Electoral Commission

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Please note

- The handbook has been developed as a guide only and is intended to assist candidates standing in the 2025 Local Government Elections.
- The handbook should not be used as a substitute for legal advice, please review the *Local Government Act 2019* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021 and seek independent legal advice as necessary.
- Information can change from time to time, the Northern Territory Electoral Commission website is the best source of up-to-date information.
- The terms 'voters' and 'electors' are used interchangeably throughout the handbook.
- The terms 'candidate' and 'nominee' are used interchangeably throughout the handbook.



This icon is used throughout the handbook to signify legislation relevant to the provided content.

INTRODUCTION

Candidates and their supporters play a vital role in the democratic process. It is important for potential candidates to understand the nomination process and their responsibilities under electoral laws in the Northern Territory.

The candidate handbook provides information about the electoral process that candidates need to know for the 2025 Local Government Elections.

The handbook aims to assist candidates in understanding key election information relating to:

- nomination processes
- financial disclosure requirements
- campaigning and campaign material
- scrutineers
- voting
- counting
- election results.

Whether you have prior experience as a candidate, are a first-time candidate or assisting someone to stand as candidate, the handbook provides important information regarding election processes and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

Principal member: The principal member of council is called the Mayor or President. The principal member may be popularly elected (by voters in the council area) or otherwise a council member may be appointed to the office by vote of the council.



Section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2019*

Ordinary member: An ordinary member of council is a council member who is popularly elected (by voters in the council area) and is also called a councillor.



Candidate checklist

Review the below checklist to ensure you are ready to participate as a candidate in the 2025 Local Government Elections.

I am aware of the key dates for the 2025 Local Government Elections	Page 8
I have lodged my completed nomination form via the NTEC website or in person at an NTEC office before the close of nominations	Page 9
I have confirmed with the NTEC that my nomination was received (if not delivered in person) before the close of nominations	Page 9
I am aware of my responsibilities regarding campaign material and authorisations	Pages 15-18
I have appointed scrutineers (optional) by completing and signing the required forms	Page 19
I am aware of the campaign donation disclosure dates for the 2025 Local Government Elections	Page 22
I am aware of the stages involved in the voting, counting and results process	Pages 26-30
I am aware of the relevant electoral offences	Pages 31-32
I am aware that up to date information about the election relating to candidates will be provided on the NTEC website during the election	

More information

The following resources can be found on the NT Electoral Commission website:

- Service Plan - 2025 Local Government Elections
- Donation Disclosure Handbook
- Scrutineer Handbook
- Factsheets

ABOUT

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) is an independent government agency responsible for the conduct of Legislative Assembly and local government elections in the Northern Territory.

Local government elections are conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

The NTEC has responsibilities across an election event including (but not limited to):

- the nomination process
- the declaration of nominations process
- election communications
- delivery of voting services
- counting votes
- declaration of results
- financial disclosure.

Contact us

- **Phone:** 1800 698 683
- **Email:** ntec@nt.gov.au
- **Website:** www.ntec.nt.gov.au
- **Office:** Level 3, TCG Centre, 80 Mitchell Street, Darwin
- **Post:** GPO Box 2419, Darwin, Northern Territory 0801

8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday

Please note the office is closed on public holidays.

KEY DATES

FOR CANDIDATES

The timetable for the 2025 Local Government Elections is available on the NTEC website

- **Friday 11 July:** Nominations open
- **Tuesday 22 July 5:00 pm:** Electoral roll closes
- **Thursday 31 July 12:00 noon:** Nominations close
- **Friday 1 August 12:00 noon:** Declaration of nominations, draw for positions on ballot papers
- **Monday 4 August:** Postal vote mail-out commences
- **Monday 11 August 8:00 am:** Early voting commences
- **Monday 11 August 9:00 am:** Mobile voting commences
- **Tuesday 19 August 6:00 pm:** Overseas postal voting applications close
- **Thursday 21 August 6:00 pm:** Domestic postal voting applications close
- **Friday 22 August 6:00 pm:** Early voting ceases
- **Saturday 23 August 8:00 am to 6:00 pm:** Election day
- **Saturday 23 August 6:00 pm:** Initial counts commence
- **Monday 25 August – Thursday 4 September:** Count period which includes manual counts (single vacancy elections) and entering ballot papers into count software (multi-vacancy elections)
- **Friday 5 September 12:00 noon:** Deadline for receipt of postal votes, final counts of postal votes commence
- **Friday 5 September:** Distribution of preferences
- **Monday 8 September 10:00 am:** Declaration of the election result
- **Saturday 1 November:** Campaign donation return due

PART 1

NOMINATING

This section explains the nomination process, including:

- information about who is qualified to nominate
- important information about the timing of nominations.

HOW TO NOMINATE TO BE A CANDIDATE

Nominations open on Friday 11 July.

Nominations close at 12 noon on Thursday 31 July.

You are encouraged to lodge your nomination as early as possible. Late nominations will not be accepted.

To nominate as a candidate, you must complete the following steps:

1. Check you are eligible to nominate

To be eligible to be a candidate in the 2025 Local Government Elections, at the date of nomination you must be:

- an Australian citizen
- 18 years of age or older
- enrolled to vote in the local government area you are nominating for
- a resident within the local government area
- nominated by at least one other person who is enrolled to vote in the local government area you are nominating for.

2. Complete the relevant nomination form

Nomination forms are on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au.

3. Lodge your completed nomination form and pay the deposit

Each nomination must be accompanied by a recent photograph of the candidate.

You can lodge your nomination in 2 ways:

Via the NTEC website: you can lodge your completed nomination form and submit your photo through the nominations portal on the NTEC website at www.ntec.nt.gov.au.

In person: by attending the NTEC office in Darwin or Alice Springs

****Nominations cannot be accepted by email.**

If you need help contact the NTEC by calling 1800 698 683 or by emailing nominations.ntec@nt.gov.au

Regional council offices can provide assistance by accessing the NTEC website and the nominations portal where prospective candidates may have connection issues in remote areas.

Nominations must be lodged by 12 noon Thursday 31 July.

4. Confirm your nomination has been received by the NTEC

It is strongly recommended that you contact the NTEC to ensure your nomination has been received and is complete, if you did not lodge it in person.

A nomination will only be accepted if it is completed and submitted correctly within the required timeframe.

Nominee photograph

Candidate nominations must include a photo of the nominee, meeting the standards listed below. The photograph should be:

- recent
- vertical portrait style
- full faced showing the nominee's head and shoulders.

Nominating for more than one vacancy – principal member and ordinary member

If you nominate for both a principal member (mayor) and an ordinary member (councillor) position and are elected as the principal member, you are no longer considered for the ordinary member position. Any votes you received for the ordinary member role will be passed on to the next candidate based on voter preferences.

DISQUALIFICATION OF A NOMINATION

The grounds for disqualification include:

- bankruptcy
- holding a judicial office
- employed as a council staff member (note s181 of the *Local Government Act 2019* regarding resignation to contest an election – staff members)
- having a debt owing to council
- disqualified from managing a corporation
- not having a principal place of residence within the local government area.

The complete list of grounds for disqualification are shown on the nomination form



Section 47 of the *Local Government Act 2019*.

The validity of an election may be disputed on application to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) regarding eligibility of a person to be nominated as a candidate.



Section 143 of the *Local Government Act 2019*.

It is an offence if a person makes a statement on their nomination form that is false or misleading.



Regulation 74(2) of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

REJECTION OF A NOMINATION

The NTEC may reject a nomination for the following reasons:

- the nomination does not meet the requirements detailed in the nomination form
- the nominee is not enrolled at an address within the local government area at the time the electoral roll closes
- the name of the nominee is not the same name the nominee is enrolled as, or is entitled to be enrolled as
- the name of the nominee is obscene, frivolous or has been assumed for a political purpose.

The NTEC will give the nominee written notice of the rejection, the reason/s and the nominee's right to dispute the validity of the election.



Regulation 9 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

WITHDRAWING YOUR NOMINATION

You can withdraw your nomination for the 2025 Local Government Elections by completing the withdrawal form provided on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

The completed form must be received before 12 noon on Thursday 31 July. After that date a nomination cannot be withdrawn.

You can lodge your withdrawal form at the NTEC office in Darwin, Alice Springs or by email: nominations.ntec@nt.gov.au

Please contact the NTEC to confirm that the nomination withdrawal has been received.



Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

DEATH OF A CANDIDATE

Principal member

If a candidate running for the position of principal member dies before the end of election day, the entire election for that position fails. As soon as practicable a new election must be called.



Regulation 73 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

Ordinary member

If a candidate running for the position of ordinary member dies before the end of election day, any votes for that candidate are given to the next preference listed on the voter's ballot paper.

The order of the remaining preferences is adjusted accordingly.

If a candidate dies after election day but before the results are officially declared, the result is determined as if the candidate were still alive. However, if the deceased candidate would have been elected, the votes are recounted as if the candidate had died before election day.



Regulation 69 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

DECLARATION OF NOMINATIONS

On Friday 1 August 2025 the NTEC will declare all candidates for the 2025 Local Government Elections by announcing their names.

The declaration will occur at the NTEC office, or a place chosen by the NTEC. Anyone can attend this event, candidates, council executives and the media will be invited to attend. The event will also be live streamed on the NTEC website. Further details for the

declaration of nominations event will be provided closer to the date.

In any instances where the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies, the candidates will be declared elected, and no election is required.

If less nominations are received than the number of vacancies, any candidates will be declared elected, and a supplementary election will be held to fill the remaining vacancies. Supplementary elections occur after the general election.

ORDER OF CANDIDATE NAMES ON BALLOT PAPERS

After candidates have been declared for each election, the NTEC will determine the order that candidates will appear on the ballot paper for each election.

The draw will be by random selection in public and occur at the same location as the declaration.

BALLOT PAPER DETAILS

Ballot papers used in an election must include:

- the name of the candidates for the election (in the order determined during the public draw for ballot paper position mentioned above)
- a photograph of each candidate adjacent to the candidate's name
- a printed square adjacent to the candidate's photograph where the elector marks their preference.

The name on the ballot paper must be the enrolled name of the candidate. However:

- a first name can be an initial standing for the name
- commonly accepted variations of the name are permitted including abbreviation, truncation or alternative forms



Regulation 12 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

RELEASE OF CANDIDATE INFORMATION

After candidates have been declared, the NTEC will publish all candidate information that has been approved for public release on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

Candidate information that may be published on the NTEC website includes:

- first and last name (as per the ballot paper)
- candidate photo
- phone number
- email address
- website address
- social media pages

Candidates must provide this information on the nomination form. Phone numbers, email address, website and social media pages will only be published on the NTEC website with a candidate's consent.

Voting centres will have posters showing QR codes that will link to the webpage showing candidate information so voters can access this information before voting.

The NTEC does not publish candidate statements.

PART 2

CAMPAIGNING AND ADVERTISING

This section explains the rules around campaigning and advertising during an election.

WHAT IS ELECTION CAMPAIGNING AND ADVERTISING

To protect the integrity of elections, there are laws that regulate campaign material and activities.

Campaign material is defined as an advertisement, document or any other thing that is intended to promote the electoral prospect of a particular candidate or group of candidates for an election, including (but not limited to):

- an electoral advertisement
- a printed document containing an electoral matter (for example, a handout, pamphlet or how-to-vote card)
- a message containing an electoral matter sent by telephone or broadcast by electronic means
- published materials containing electoral matter (for example, car stickers, decals, a campaign sticker).

Campaigning activity involves actions such as:

- canvassing for votes: actively seeking the support of potential voter. This includes handing out campaign material.
- soliciting votes: asking individuals to vote in favour of a particular candidate
- persuading individuals: encouraging people not to vote for a specific candidate.
- displaying election-related notices or signs: putting up signs or notices about the election
- broadcasting content that can be heard by the public using sound amplification tools such as loudspeakers, public address systems, or similar devices.



Section 158 of the Local Government Act 2019 defines campaign material.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR CAMPAIGNING AND ADVERTISING

Campaign material must:

1. be authorised
2. not be misleading or deceptive about the administration or delivery of the electoral process
3. be placed in compliance with the relevant rules.

Authorisation of campaign material

All campaign material, both printed and in electronic format, must have an authorisation statement in a sufficient font size to be read by the intended audience containing:

1. the name and address of the person authorising the publication or distribution (a post office box is not permitted), and
2. if printed, the name and address of the printing company, and
3. if the material is double sided, the above authorisations must appear on both sides, and
4. the source of the funding for that material, if it is not self-funded.

Even if the candidate includes their name in the campaign material, it must still have an authorisation statement.

If the authorises is a person the street name and locality is sufficient as an address, for organisations the full street address must be provided.

Examples:

- *Authorised by J Day, Smith Street Darwin, NT. Printed by Armadillo Printing, 25 Winnellie Road, Winnellie, NT.*
- *Authorised by A Smith, Friends of Alice Springs, 10 Gregory Terrace Alice Springs, NT. Printed by Anteater Publishing, 25 Stott Terrace, Alice Springs, NT.*

Additional rules and considerations include:

- The authorisation statement must be announced and shown at the end for television advertisements and other video communications (such as social media videos).
- The authorisation must be announced at the end of radio and podcast advertising.
- There are several ways to authorise social media content including:
 - an authorisation statement in the social media account's bio or profile information; or

- o pinning a post with the authorisation statement to the top of the profile; or
 - o a link in the post to a website containing the authorisation statement.
- If an image can be separated from its original authorisation and still remain a clear election advertisement for the electoral participant, then the complete authorisation must be embedded in the image.
- The same rules apply whether the material is paid or unpaid.
- Websites, newsletters and campaign letters/emails must be authorised

The following materials do not require authorisation: t-shirts, buttons, badges, pens, pencils, balloons and fridge magnets.

MISLEADING OR DECEPTIVE

A person must not publish or distribute any campaign material that is untrue or is likely to mislead a voter, deceive a voter or improperly interfere with a voter casting a vote.

PLACEMENT OF CAMPAIGN MATERIAL

Campaign materials cannot be placed in voting centres or within 10 meters of the entrance to a voting centre.

Outside of voting hours, local councils and the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure have rules regarding the placement of campaign material. If you wish to place signs on private property, check with the local council, as there may be rules you must abide by. Before placing campaign material on private property, permission must be sought from the building and/or property owners.

Consult the local council and relevant government departments for the most up-to-date information.



Section 164 of the *Local Government Act 2019* details the penalty for offences relating to campaign material.

CAMPAIGNING NEAR VOTING CENTRES

During voting hours, campaigning activities are not allowed within 10 meters of the entrance to an early, mobile or election day voting centre.



Regulation 77 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021 details the campaigning activities near voting centres.

HOW-TO-VOTE CARDS

How-to-vote (HTV) cards and other campaign material can be distributed outside of the 10 metre zone.

HTV card pamphlet holders will not be available at any voting centres. Candidates and their supporters must hand out any HTV cards.

The NTEC does not need to approve HTV cards. However, the NTEC can check a candidates HTV card against requirements. Candidates can send draft HTV cards to: ntec@nt.gov.au

The NT Electoral Commission cannot print HTV cards for candidates.

ESAFETY

The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) is Australia's independent regulator for online safety.

eSafety can help people experiencing online bullying or abuse to take action or make a complaint. eSafety also help by offering online safety training, presentations and workshops, research insights and a wealth of information.

Adult cyber abuse is when someone sends seriously harmful content to a person who is 18 or older, or posts or shares harmful content about them, using an online or electronic service or platform. It can include posts, comments, emails, messages, chats, livestreams, memes, images and videos.

If someone is just being rude, annoying or upsetting or you do not like their opinions, you can use simple strategies such as changing the settings on your device or online account to limit contact with them.

However, if the content is seriously harmful you should send a complaint to the service or platform that was used to send, post or share it.

You can find reporting links for common services and platforms in the eSafety Guide. Also, you can follow eSafety's tips about how to manage the impacts of adult cyber abuse.

For more information go to the eSafety website: www.esafety.gov.au

PART 3

SCRUTINEERS

This section explains the role and significance of appointing scrutineers, the process of appointing them, and the rights and responsibilities that scrutineers hold.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SCRUTINEER

Scrutineers for candidates play an important role in maintaining the integrity of the election process. As a scrutineer you can observe the conduct of the election, including the counting of votes, and provide assurance that everyone has followed the electoral rules and procedures.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SCRUTINEER

Scrutineers can observe the following activities during the voting and counting period:

- sealing of ballot boxes at the start or end of voting
- voting at early voting centres, mobile voting centres and election day voting centres (this does not include viewing how voters cast their vote)
- issuing officers asking voters their name, enrolled address and whether they have voted before in the election
- the voting centre manager providing voter assistance
- election night counts at voting centres and scrutiny centres
- entering of voter preferences on ballot papers into the Easy Count system
- admittance and rejection of declaration votes at a scrutiny centre
- admittance and rejection of postal votes at a scrutiny centre

HOW IS A SCRUTINEER APPOINTED

Candidates can appoint scrutineers to represent them during the voting and counting period.

Each candidate may appoint the following at any time:

- Voting centre during the voting period: one scrutineer per voting centre
- Security centre during the count period: one scrutineer per candidate for each count table that is counting ballot papers that include that candidate.

Scrutineer appointment forms are available at the NTEC office and on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

Scrutineers must present their completed appointment forms, signed by the candidate before entering a voting or counting centre to scrutineer. The form includes a commitment which the scrutineer must sign that they will not attempt to influence voters or reveal confidential information about a voter's choice.

Additional approval processes are required for scrutineers to attend urban mobile voting locations including correctional facilities and hospitals. These requirements are determined by the facility.

SCRUTINEERS RAISING OBJECTIONS OR QUESTIONS

If a scrutineer wishes to raise objections or question procedures during the voting period, they should approach the voting centre manager. All objections will be officially recorded.

If a scrutineer objects to the formality of a ballot paper during a count, it will be set aside for the count supervisor to examine. Following the determination, the ballot paper will be marked as either 'admitted' or 'rejected' and sorted accordingly.

Scrutineers can also observe the entering of voter preferences on ballot papers into the Easy Count system. During this stage of the count, scrutineers can also object to the formality of a ballot paper using the above process.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCRUTINEERS

Scrutineers have specific rights and responsibilities:

- scrutineers must be present for the scrutineer briefing provided before counting commences
- scrutineers must wear the vest and identification tag they are given while they are inside a voting centre or scrutiny centre. If they leave the centre, both items must be returned
- scrutineers are permitted to leave and re-enter a voting or scrutiny centre
- scrutineers can be replaced by another duly appointed scrutineer.

Scrutineers must not:

- touch ballot papers
- interact with voters
- attempt to influence or interfere with any voter
- disclose any information about an individual's vote
- wear attire or items promoting a candidate in a voting centre
- display or leave campaign materials in a voting centre
- engage in communication with anyone in a voting centre, except when performing their duties as scrutineer
- assist in the clearing of voting screens or the removal of materials from the voting centre
- interfere in any way with the counting process.

SCRUTINEER HANDBOOK

For more information about the role and responsibilities of scrutineers please review the scrutineer handbook available on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

PART 4

DONATION DISCLOSURE

This section explains the donation disclosure obligations for candidates.

CAMPAIGN DONATION RETURNS

Candidates in the 2025 Local Government Elections must follow rules for reporting donations and loans.

If you receive donations totalling \$200 or more from the same donor during the disclosure period, you must submit a campaign donation return with details of the donation and donor.

If you receive a loan of \$1,500 or more (not from a bank or financial institution) during the disclosure period, you must also submit a campaign donation return with details of the loan and lender.

You must not accept any anonymous donations or loans during the disclosure period.

If you do not receive any donations or loans, or the amounts are below \$200 for donations or \$1,500 for loans, you do not need to submit a return. You also do not need to submit a 'nil' return.

Donors and lenders do not have to submit returns for local government elections.



Part 8.6 of the *Local Government Act 2019*

DISCLOSURE PERIODS

The disclosure period for the 2025 Local Government Elections starts on Tuesday 1 July 2025 and ends Monday 22 September 2025.

Campaign donation returns are due on 1 November 2025.

Candidates only need to submit one campaign donation return for the entire disclosure period (unlike Legislative Assembly elections, which require multiple returns).

RETENTION OF RECORDS

Candidates must keep all records related to donations or loans reported in a campaign donation return for at least 4 years.

PART 5

VOTING

This section explains the voting options and assistance available to voters.

WHAT VOTING SYSTEM IS USED

Local government elections use 2 types of voting systems:

- Where there is a single vacancy such as Mayor/President or a ward with only one councillor, the preferential system is used.
- Where there are multiple vacancies, the proportional representation system is used.

Both systems require voters to mark their ballot paper in a similar manner > voters must number every candidate box in order of their choice or preference.

HOW DO I MAKE MY VOTE COUNT

Voting is compulsory in Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and local government elections.

To make your vote count, always follow the instructions on the ballot paper.

To number the boxes in order of preference:

- voters should put a number 1 against their first choice or preference
- voters should put a number 2 against their next choice (or second preference)
- voters should continue with sequential numbers until all boxes are complete.

Voters should then fold their ballot paper and put it into the ballot box.

In local government elections, some voters will receive 2 ballot papers, one for the principal member and one for ordinary members (depending on their council area). Voters must treat each ballot paper separately and start with a number 1 against their first choice for each ballot paper.

WHAT VOTING SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE

The following voting options will be available at the 2025 Local Government Elections:

Early voting: anyone can vote before election day at designated early voting centres.

Postal voting: key dates for postal voting are listed on page 8. There are 2 ways to receive a postal vote:

- registering as a general postal voter (GPV). If an elector is registered as a GPV, when any election is announced that the elector is eligible to vote in, they will automatically receive a postal vote once ballot papers are printed.
- completing a postal vote application via the NTEC website, visiting the NTEC office or by contacting the NTEC.

Mobile voting: available for remote areas, hospitals and correctional centres, commences on Monday 11 August until 6:00 pm on election day. Postal voting services may be provided to some organisations instead of mobile voting on request of the organisation.

Election day voting centres: open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Saturday 23 August in locations in major centres.

Absent voting: if an elector votes outside their local government area, it is considered an absent vote and is counted after election day. Absent voting will only be available at early voting centres, urban mobile voting centres, and at designated election day voting centres.

Declaration voting: if a person cannot be found on the electoral roll, they can complete a declaration vote. Declaration votes are reviewed after election day to ensure the person is eligible to enrol to vote.

Once confirmed all voting information will be available on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

WHAT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO VOTERS

Voting staff can help if a person needs assistance when voting at a voting centre.

Voting staff may read and explain the ballot paper instructions and can place the ballot paper in the ballot box. Electors may nominate anyone to help them cast their vote e.g. a family member, friend, scrutineer, or voting centre staff.

An assisting person can complete a ballot paper according to a voter's instructions.

Electors with mobility issues who are unable to access a voting centre, are able to vote from their car. The voting centre manager can facilitate this process upon request. Scrutineers, if available will be invited to witness any assistance provided to a voter by a voting centre manager. In the absence of a scrutineer, 2 authorised officers will assist the voter.

WHO NEEDS TO VOTE

Most NT local government councils will have a general election as part of the 2025 Local Government Elections.

Barkly Regional Council and the newly established Groote Archipelago Regional Council will not participate in the August 2025 elections as they have recently held general elections, in addition to Coomalie Community Government Council which is currently under official management.

There are also a number of areas in the Northern Territory that are not included within the boundaries of a local government council and are therefore unincorporated. People living in unincorporated areas DO NOT have to vote at the 2025 Local Government Elections.

Some of the unincorporated areas in the NT include the towns of Alyangula, Nhulunbuy and Yulara, as well as the Darwin Waterfront, Northcrest, and areas in the Cox-Daly and Marrakai-Douglas Daly regions.

Maps showing unincorporated areas are available on the NTEC website:
www.ntec.nt.gov.au

PART 6

COUNTING AND RESULTS

This section explains formal and informal ballot papers and how votes are counted.

WHAT MAKES A BALLOT PAPER FORMAL

For a ballot paper to be formal:

- the voter's first choice (or preference) must be clear
- a first choice can be indicated by a number one (1), a tick (✓) or a cross (✗)
- the first choice is followed by the voter's (sequential) order of choice of each remaining candidate.

Additionally:

- if the voter's last choice is a blank square, it does not make the ballot paper informal
- changes to numbers, numbers written outside the squares or drawings and messages, do not make the ballot paper informal – provided it is otherwise marked correctly
- if the voter's intention is clear, the ballot paper should be counted.

A ballot paper is informal if:

- it is totally blank
- there is no number one (1), a tick (✓) or a cross (✗)
- it has a number one (1), a tick (✓) or a cross (✗) against 2 or more names
- 2 or more squares have been left blank
- a number has been repeated
- writing on the ballot paper identifies the voter.

WHAT IS THE VOTE COUNTING PROCESS

Count systems

Local government elections in the NT involve single vacancy elections (electing one person to a position) and multi vacancy elections (electing multiple people to a position).

Single vacancy positions are counted using the preferential system and will be conducted manually. There are 5 mayor elections and 9 councillor elections for wards with only one position, that are single vacancies.

The remaining councillor elections are multi vacancy elections and are counted using the proportional representation system. The first preference counts for these elections will be conducted manually, after which ballot papers are entered into count software (called Easy Count) which is used for proportional representation counts.

Election night - initial count of first preferences

Counts will be conducted at scrutiny centres. There will be a main scrutiny centre in Darwin and Alice Springs. On election day, all election day voting centres will become scrutiny centres from 6:00 pm.

After voting closes at 6:00 pm at a scrutiny centre:

- authorised officers open ballot boxes
- ballot papers are removed and unfolded
- ballot papers are then sorted by the candidate who received the voter's first preference
- informal ballot papers are placed in a separate pile and counted separately.

As soon as practicable after the completion of the initial count of first preferences, the results will be posted on the results page of the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

Fresh scrutiny – single vacancy elections

After election day, a fresh scrutiny or check count of ballot papers for the single vacancy elections will take place at the Darwin and Alice Springs scrutiny centres. This will check the initial count and is a full review of the counts conducted on election night.

At a fresh scrutiny:

- all ballot papers for single vacancy elections that were counted on election night are reviewed and counted again
- some ballot papers that were initially considered informal on election night may be deemed formal and placed against a candidate

- some ballot papers that were previously considered formal may be deemed informal and excluded from the count
- any mis-sorted ballot papers will be placed to the correct candidate.

Updated results from the fresh scrutiny will be published on the NTEC website.

Fresh scrutiny – multi vacancy elections

After election day, all ballot papers for the multi vacancy elections will be batched ready to commence entry into electronic count software called Easy Count.

These ballot papers are entered into Easy Count initially and are then re-entered by a second person for verification purposes. This verification acts as a fresh scrutiny or check count of all ballot papers.

With a manual initial count and 2 entries into Easy Count, this means the ballot papers for multi vacancy elections are counted 3 times.

Counting postal, absent and declaration votes

Voters must complete their postal votes by 6:00 pm on election day. The deadline for the return of postal votes is 12 noon on the second Friday after election day which is Friday 5 September 2025. For general elections there are often 2 or 3 counts or 'intakes' of postal votes during the count period, including the final count after the return deadline.

Absent votes are exchanged so they can be counted at the relevant scrutiny centre. This exchange occurs early in the first week of counting, and once exchanged absent votes have arrived at the relevant scrutiny centre, they will be counted.

Declaration votes are issued where a voter cannot be found on the electoral roll and where the voter believes they have an entitlement to vote. Declaration votes are processed first to determine if they can be admitted to the count. Admitted declaration votes will be counted as soon as practicable after their processing is complete.

A full distribution of preferences cannot be conducted until all postal, absent and declaration votes have been admitted and undergone an initial count and fresh scrutiny.

A count schedule will be published prior to election day to give details about when counts of postal, absent and declaration votes can be expected.

Distribution of preferences – single vacancy elections

To be elected to a single vacancy, a candidate must receive more than 50 per cent of the total formal votes for their election (i.e. 50% + 1).

The total number of formal votes cannot be determined until after the final deadline for postal votes has passed, and the last intake of postal votes has been admitted to the count.

After this, the total number of formal ballot papers can be determined. If a candidate receives more than 50 per cent of the total first preference votes, they can be declared elected and no further counting is required.

If no candidate initially achieves more than 50 per cent of the first preference votes, a distribution of preferences is conducted. The candidate with the least formal votes is 'excluded.' Each ballot paper from the excluded candidate is then redistributed to the candidate next in line according to the voter's preferences.

This process continues until one candidate achieves more than 50 per cent of the formal votes, making them the elected candidate.

Distribution of preferences – multi vacancy elections

Where there are multiple vacancies and therefore a proportional representation count, candidates must receive a quota of votes to be elected. The quota is calculated using the following formula:

$(\text{Total number of formal ballot papers} / \text{number of vacancies} + 1) + 1$

For example, if there are 2,000 formal ballot papers to elect 3 councillors for a ward, the quota would be: $(2,000 / 4) + 1 = 501$.

This means the ballot papers would be counted until 3 candidates achieved the quota.

After the total number of formal ballot papers has been determined, some candidates may achieve the quota on first preferences and can be declared elected. If some vacancies remain unfilled after the final first preference count, a distribution of preferences is required.

A distribution of preferences for a proportional representation count is similar to a preferential count as candidates with the lowest number of votes are excluded and their votes are distributed according to the voters' preferences. However, before the exclusion process can occur there is additional counting where any votes received by a candidate declared as elected that are in excess to the required quota (called 'surplus votes') are then proportionally distributed at reduced transfer value to the remaining candidates.

This adds significant complexity to the count which is why proportional representation counts are typically conducted using counting software. The NTEC uses Easy Count software.

All preferences on ballot papers with multiple vacancies are manually entered into Easy Count, and then re-entered by a second person for verification purposes. After the final intake of returned postal votes has been entered into Easy Count, the software will conduct the distribution of preferences for all required elections and produce the final results.

Recounts

A candidate can request a recount before the election results are officially declared, but must do so in writing clearly stating the reasons for the recount.

A recount request must identify specific ballot papers and significant counting errors or irregularities that could potentially change the result for an election.

At any time before the declaration of the result of an election, the Electoral Commissioner may direct a recount. This directive can be based on a written request from a candidate or on the initiative of the Electoral Commissioner.

It is important to note that a recount is distinct from a fresh scrutiny which is a 'check count' of votes counted on election night.



Regulation 70 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021 describes the recount process.

WHEN WILL RESULTS BE AVAILABLE

As soon as practicable after the results are available, they will be made public. Results are updated (and time/date stamped) throughout the various stages of the count process on the NTEC website: www.ntec.nt.gov.au

The NTEC makes a public declaration of election results on the Monday following the distribution of preferences.

DISPUTED ELECTIONS

A person may dispute the result of an election only by submitting an application with the Registrar of the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT). An application must be made no later than 21 days after the conclusion of the election. For the 2025 Local Government Elections, the last day for disputing the validity of the election is Monday 29 September 2025.

The following persons are entitled to dispute the validity of an election:

- a candidate in the election
- a prospective candidate in the election whose nomination was rejected
- an elector entitled to vote at the election
- the NT Electoral Commissioner.

An application disputing the results of an election must state:

- the grounds on which the applicant seeks relief from NTCAT
- the nature of the remedy sought by the applicant.



Part 8.5 of the *Local Government Act 2019* provides details regarding disputed elections.

PART 7 OFFENCES

The table below provides an overview of electoral offences. The table does not cover all electoral offences and only provides a summary of the offence.

Candidates should review the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 2019 and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021 and seek independent legal advice where necessary.

**Note penalty unit value is current from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. The value of a penalty unit will increase before the 2025 Local Government Elections. For further information see <https://agd.nt.gov.au/attorney-general-and-justice/units-and-amounts/penalty-units>*

INTERFERING WITH THE ELECTION

Act	Offence	Applies to	Maximum penalty
Section 162(1)	Interfering with election right or duty	Person Body corporate	Individual: 400 penalty units (\$70,400) or 2 years imprisonment Body corporate: 2000 penalty units (\$352,000)
Section 162(2)	Violence or intimidation of voters	Person	Individual: 400 penalty units (\$74,000) or imprisonment for 2 years
Section 163	Interference with the secret ballot	Person	Individual: 200 penalty units (\$37,000) or imprisonment for 12 months Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 74(1)	Dishonesty with regard to an electoral right	Person	Individual: 20 penalty units (\$3,700) Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 74(2)	Making a misleading statement to an authorised officer	Person	Individual: 20 penalty units (\$3,700) Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 75	Interference with electoral materials	Person	Individual: 50 penalty units (\$9,250) Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 76(1)	Failing to follow instructions when assisting a voter	Person	Individual: 50 penalty units (\$9,250) Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 76(2)	Failing to post or deliver a postal voting paper immediately (when assisting a postal voter)	Person	Individual: 50 penalty units (\$9,250) Infringement notice: \$100

CAMPAIGNING MATERIAL

Act	Offence	Applies to	Maximum penalty
Section 164(1)	Publication or distribution of unauthorised campaign material	Person	Individual: 100 penalty units (\$18,500) Infringement notice: \$100
Section 164(3)	Publication or distribution of campaign material that is misleading or deceptive about the electoral process	Person	Individual: 100 penalty units (\$18,500) Infringement notice: \$100

VOTING CENTRE

Act	Offence	Applies to	Maximum penalty
Regulation 77(1)	Canvassing for votes in, or within 10 metres of the entrance to, a voting centre	Person	Individual: 20 penalty units (\$3,700) Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 77(2)	Wearing or displaying campaign material in a voting centre	Person	Individual: 5 penalty units (\$925) Infringement notice: \$100
Regulation 77(3)	Failing to comply with the direction of an authorised officer at a voting centre	Person	Individual: 50 penalty units (\$9,250) Infringement notice: \$100

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Act	Offence	Applies to	Maximum penalty
Section 154(1)	Failing to lodge a campaign donation return	Person	Individual: 100 penalty units (\$18,500) Infringement notice: \$100
Section 154(2)	Lodging an incomplete campaign donation return in contravention of regulations	Person	Individual: 100 penalty units (\$18,500) Infringement notice: \$100



Northern Territory
Electoral Commission

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- 6 GENERAL BUSINESS**
- 7 MEETING CLOSE**
- 8 NEXT MEETING**