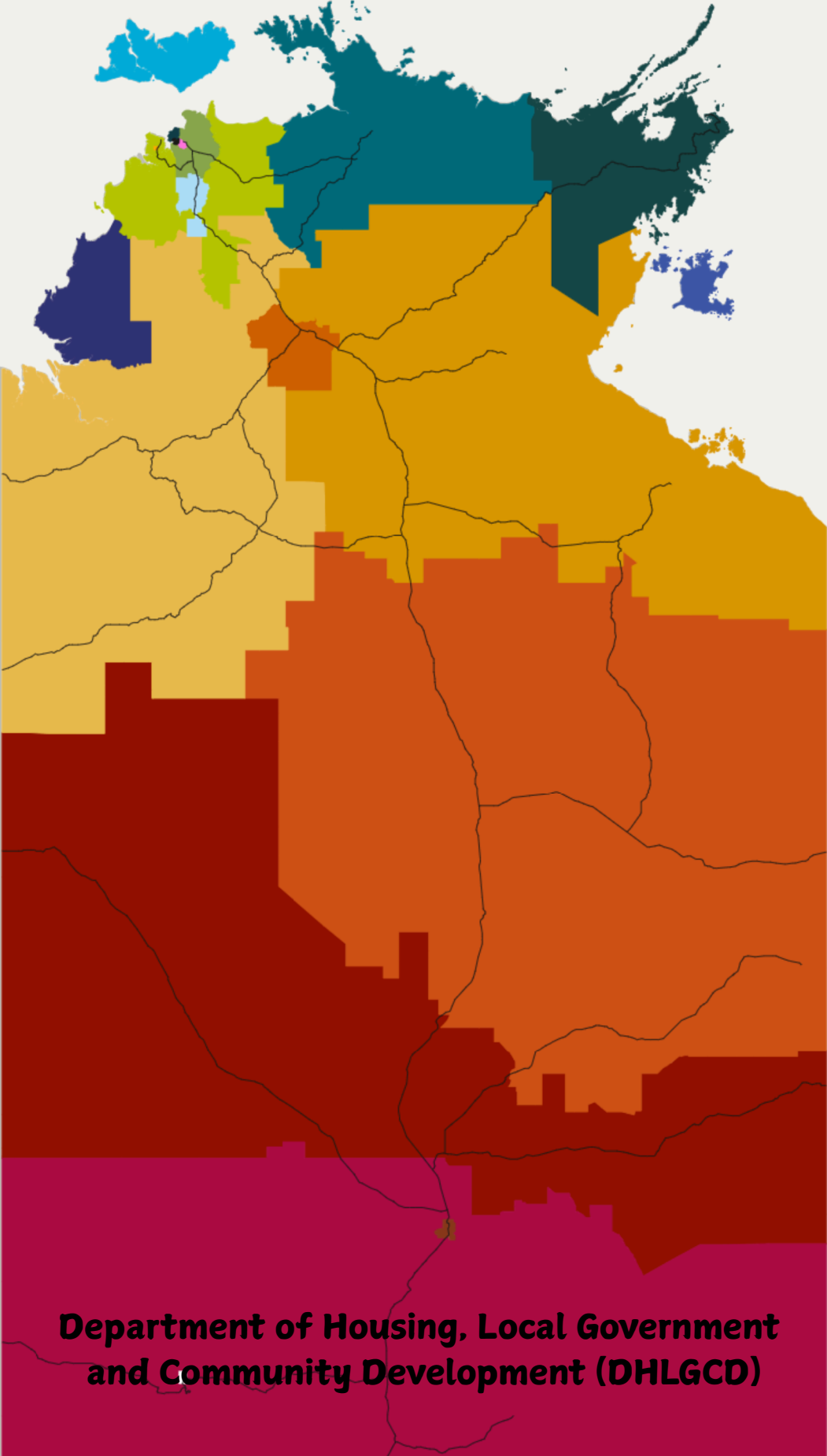


Local Government and Community Development Newsletter April 2025



**Department of Housing, Local Government
and Community Development (DHLGCD)**

Governance Officers' Forum

The fifth Governance Officers' Forum is scheduled for 17 April 2025, with regional council staff from across the Northern Territory expected to participate to share their experience, ask questions, and learn from each other. The Forum is facilitated by the DHLGCD and provides an opportunity to network and interact with colleagues from other local governments. This forum will include a Harbour Software representative speaking about DocAssembler, sharing tips and tricks, and answering any questions that you may have.



To join the Forum, suggest items for inclusion, or if you have any queries, please contact Jacob Leonard, Senior Project Officer, by email jacob.leonard@nt.gov.au or by phone 8999 8524.

NT Grants Commission (NTGC) Annual Roads Return 2024-25

A friendly reminder to councils that the deadline for submitting your annual road returns to the NTGC was 31 March 2025. If you haven't already submitted, please do so as soon as possible to ensure compliance and avoid any delays in processing. The NTGC requires this data for the 2025-26 Financial Assistance grant allocations. If you have any queries, please contact Zena Borg, Executive Officer, NT Grants Commission at email: ntgrants.commission@nt.gov.au



Groote Archipelago Regional Council: A new Era for Local Governance in the Groote Archipelago



The establishment of the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council (GARC) marks a significant milestone in the governance and management of the Groote Archipelago region. Following last month's general election, the Electoral Commission declared seven new council members - three from the Central Ward and two each from the East and West Wards.

Gordon Walsh, Fabian Lalara and Gregson Lalara have been elected to represent the Central Ward, which includes the communities of Angurugu, Bardalumba, Malkala, Ngadumiyerrka, Wurrumenbumanja, Yanbakwa and Yedikba.

Mildred Mamarika and Constantine Mamarika were elected to represent the East Ward, which includes the communities of Umbakumba, Akwalirrumanja, Alyingberrma, Amanburnunga, Amirraba, Angwura, Darrangmurmanja, Mawulyumanja and Scott Point.

Violet Huddlestone and Kieranson Wurramara were elected to represent the West Ward and the community of Milyakburra.

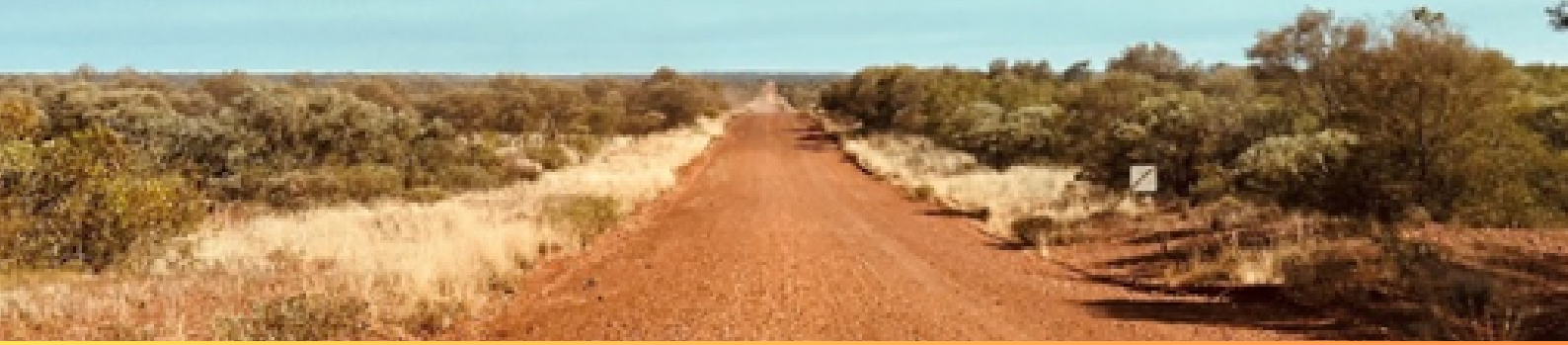
Congratulations to all newly elected council members!

Representatives from the prospective council, East Arnhem Regional Council and the DHLGCD team have worked collaboratively over the past 12 months to ensure a smooth transition and will continue to work together to support its establishment.

GARC will hold its inaugural council meeting on 17 April 2025.



Barkly Bound



During the week of 24 March 2025, the elected members from Barkly Regional Council (BRC) completed the foundation courses for the elected member professional development.

Karen Hocking, Manager Strategic Projects and Development, travelled to Tennant Creek to deliver the courses face-to-face. She said: “My thanks to the councillors for their enthusiasm and engagement. The councillors showed a clear desire to build their skills and knowledge to best represent the residents of the Barkly.”

There are six foundation courses that cover a range of topics, including an introduction to finances, understanding local government, roles and responsibilities, conflicts of interest, the code of conduct, and council decision making and meeting procedures.

The [Elected Member Handbook](#) also provides information about these topics, as well as information about CEO recruitment and CEO development and review.

Ms Hocking said: “I was also pleased to attend the ordinary council meeting on 27 March and see the councillors in action, hear about the projects and activities being undertaken, and learn about the topics of importance for BRC and the region.

A current focus for BRC is development of its regional plan.”

“Thanks again to BRC, and I look forward to my next visit to the Barkly.”



Opening Remote Engagement Essentials (REE) Workshop of 2025



The Remote Engagement Essentials (REE) Workshops are back for 2025 - kicking off in Darwin on 18-19 March 2025. The 2-day workshop was attended by a mix of Northern Territory Government, Commonwealth Government and not-for-profits.

The REE Workshops introduce participants to community engagement and are specifically designed for the Northern Territory context to promote best practice engagement and coordination with our remote communities.

They key focus of the REE Workshops is the NT Government's Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy (RECS) and its related resources such as BushTel, the Bush-Ready website and the Aboriginal Interpreters Service (AIS).

The next session will be held in Nhulunbuy on 29-30 April 2025 and has available seats for governments and other organisations delivering services to, engaging with or developing public policy for our remote communities.

Find out more about who should sign up and how.

https://bushready.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/282292/remote-engagement-and-coordination-strategy.pdf

<https://bushready.nt.gov.au/tools/remote-engagement-essential-workshop>

<https://bushready.nt.gov.au/>

<https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/>



Recruiting a Council's CEO

Recruiting and managing a CEO is one of the council's most important duties. The CEO is responsible for delivering on council's decisions and ensuring council members have all relevant information to make informed decisions.

In choosing the right CEO, councils should follow these steps:

- Council must pass a resolution to approve the recruitment process and remuneration package.
- Check the CEO job description and selection criteria - will they attract the right person?
- Set up a council committee or panel to act as the recruitment panel, review applications, undertake interviews and recommend a candidate; it is useful to have an independent member. Committee members may include council staff and an independent member.
- If setting up a committee, the committee must have a terms of reference that outlines its membership composition, purpose, scope and responsibilities.
- Consider hiring a human resources consultant who ideally understands the local government sector and can help with the process and documents.
- Advertise widely across Australia.
- Consider applications, talk to relevant referees of suitable applicants and follow up with interviews.
- A report must be provided to the council with recommendations.
- Finalise the contract terms and agree on a start date - the council must pass a resolution agreeing to appoint their chosen candidate.

For an in depth step by step process, refer to pages 81 to 90 in the [Elected Member Handbook](#) on the [Local Government website](#).

For an easier version check out the step by step handout - [CEO Recruitment Process](#) and the information sheet - [CEO Recruit and Review](#) found within the [Local Government Resource Hub](#).

The DHLGCD also runs training sessions to help councils with CEO recruitment and review.



Development of a Council's CEO

Once recruited, the council is responsible for monitoring, managing, and supporting the CEO. The council and the CEO should agree on key performance indicators (KPIs) and measures so everybody knows what is expected from the CEO.

Here are some helpful steps for the council to follow in managing their CEO:

- Identify the support and development needs required of the CEO.
- The Mayor or President of the council should meet regularly with the CEO to provide performance feedback from council.
- Feedback should be provided against KPIs - it is essential that clear performance expectations are agreed upon with the CEO so there are no surprises.
- Feedback should be constructive, and aimed at performance improvement, if needed.
- The council should hold a probation review of the CEO, usually prior to the expiry of six months from appointment, and tell the CEO if their appointment has been confirmed or if probation was unsuccessful.
- A council committee should be established to review the CEO's performance. The committee must have a terms of reference that outlines its membership composition, purpose, scope, and responsibilities.
- Ongoing feedback should be provided to the CEO to ensure their performance meets the council's expectations.
- There should be no surprises at the formal review.
- Record and report on each step of the process.
- The council committee will need to report back to the council.
- If disputes occur, try and resolve these quickly and informally.
- If issues are relationship based, consider using a mediator.

For an in depth step by step process, refer to pages 91 to 102 in the **Elected Member Handbook** on the **Local Government website**.

Update to Local Government Reform

In the March Legislative Assembly Sitting, the Minister for Local Government, Hon Steve Edgington, introduced the Local Government Amendment Bill 2025 (the Bill). This Bill is a part of a staged approach to amending the Local Government Act 2019 (the Act) and the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021.

The DHLGCD received feedback from the local government sector about its frustrations with some of the processes and requirements outlined in the Act, including the need to issue public notices in certain circumstances, and about the need to update and clarify sections of the Act.

The first tranche of legislative reforms responded to this feedback, aiming to modernise the Act and clarify terminology.

For further information about these amendments and to access the Bill, please visit the Northern Territory Legislation Portal. The Bill was referred to the Scrutiny Committee for a report by 30 April 2025. We look forward to receiving feedback from this process.

The government remains committed to engaging with stakeholders, including local councils and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT), to ensure that local government legislation reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities, helping to restore the Territory lifestyle and improve the lives of all Territorians.

To this end, we would also like to announce that the DHLGCD is drafting further amendments as part of the second tranche of legislative reforms, and we will be undertaking sector consultations on these amendments in the second quarter of 2025. Your insights are invaluable in helping to shape local government legislation to best serve the interest of all Territorians, and we encourage you to provide feedback during the consultation process, either by completing a survey or making a formal submission.

Consultation about the second tranche of legislative reform commences on Friday 4 April 2025 and will continue through Monday 20 June 2025. Three discussion papers addressing different areas of reform will be circulated amongst key stakeholders, with the first of these distributed on 31 March 2025. If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please email LGQuestions@nt.gov.au

Targeted community consultation is planned to commence in May 2025. Written submissions about the proposed tranche 2 legislative reforms can be sent to LGLaw.CMC@nt.gov.au by 30 June 2025.



Northern Territory Local Government Elections 2025

The 2025 Northern Territory Local Government Elections will take place on Saturday, 23 August 2025. To facilitate a smooth transition from current councils to newly elected ones, and in line with the *Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021*, all councils must commence the caretaker period on Thursday, 31 July 2025.

The caretaker period will conclude once the election results are declared on Monday, 8 September 2025.

Additionally, all councils are required to adopt a Caretaker Policy in accordance with section 161(1) of the *Local Government Act 2019*. Councils are encouraged to review their existing policy to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

For any inquiries regarding caretaker period or other local government matters, please contact the DHLGCD by email: LGQuestions@nt.gov.au



Contact us

For inquiries on local government legislation, compliance issues, governance, grants policy and Territory-wide local government policy and programs, email LGQuestions@nt.gov.au or contact:

DHLGCD's Local Government and Community Development:

Executive Director: Leslie Manda - 8999 8571

Sustainability and Compliance: Hugh King - 8999 8868

Legislation, Policy and Governance: Ruth Brebner - 8999 8861

Strategic Projects and Development: Linda Weatherhead - 0417 110 127

Remote Information and Engagement: Brett Beaton - 8999 6149

For further information and support, please visit:

<https://dhlgcd.nt.gov.au/local-government>