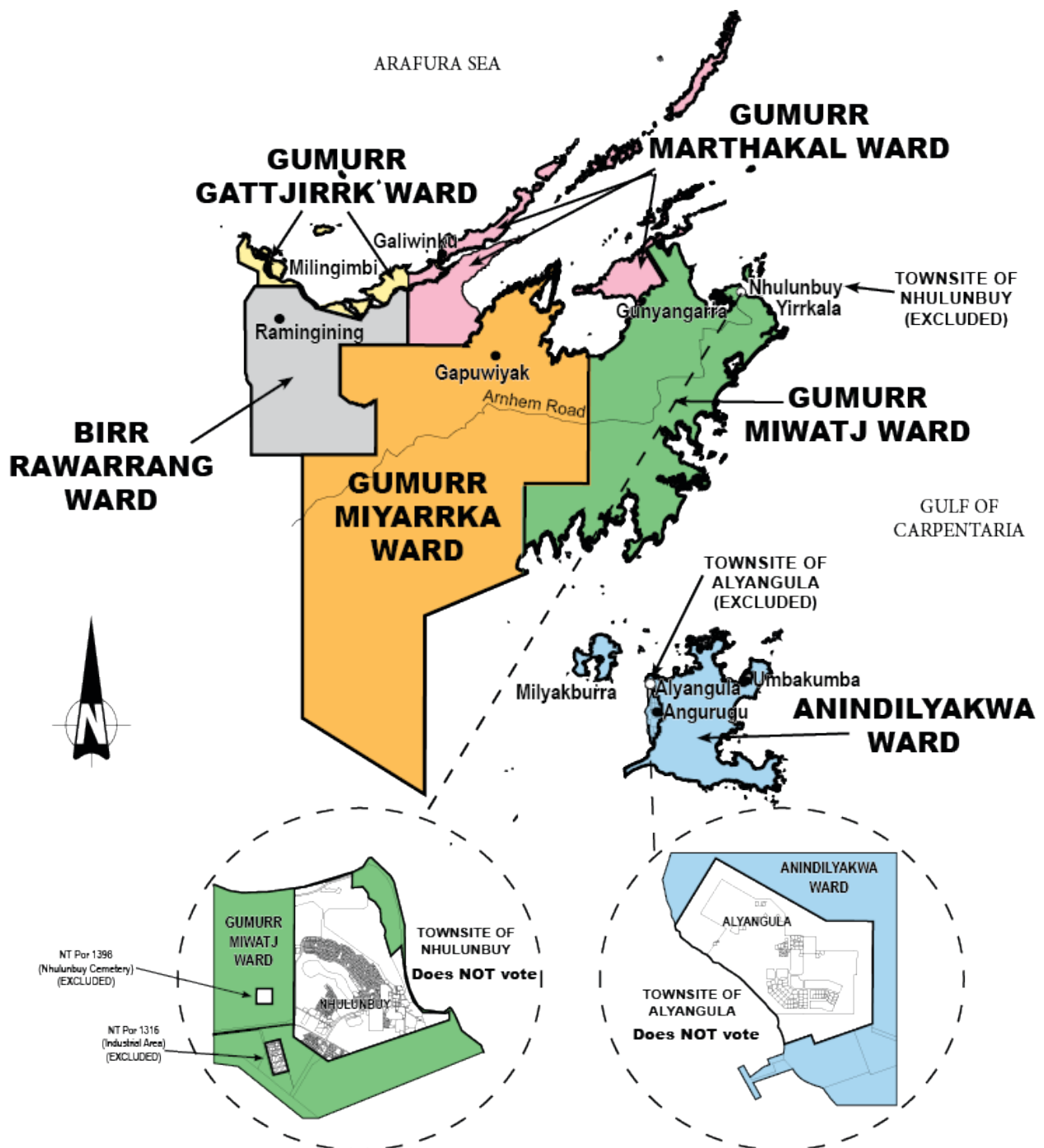




2017 NT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

EAST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTION REPORT





TIMETABLE

2017 NT Council elections

Saturday, 26 August 2017

Date	Time	
Friday 14 July		Nominations open
Tuesday 25 July	5:00 pm	Close of electoral roll
Thursday 3 August	12:00 noon	Close of nominations
Friday 4 August	12:00 noon	Declaration of nominations, draw for position on ballot papers
Monday 7 August		Postal vote mail-out commences
Monday 14 August	8:00 am	Early voting commences
	9:00 am	Mobile voting commences
Tuesday 22 August	6:00 pm	Overseas postal voting despatches cease
Thursday 24 August	6:00 pm	All postal voting despatches cease
Friday 25 August	6:00 pm	Early voting ceases
Saturday 26 August		Election day
	8:00 am	Election day voting commences
	6:00 pm	Election day voting ceases
		Mobile voting ceases
		Primary counts of ordinary, postal and early votes commence
		Primary counts of postal, mobile and early votes commence
Monday 28 August	9:00 am	Declaration vote verification checks, commence recheck of all counts
Thursday 31 August	9:00 am	Primary counts of accepted declaration votes, further postal counts
Friday 1 September	12:00 noon	Deadline for receipt of postal votes
		Final counts of postal votes commence
		Distribution of preferences
Monday 4 September	10:00 am	Declaration of the election result

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BACKGROUND

Election

- This is the second Local Government (LG) general election under section 85 of the *Local Government Act* (LGA). Amendments to the LGA deferred the election from March 2016 to August 2017. LG general elections are held 12 months after the Legislative Assembly (LA) elections.
- This is the first LG general election that all electors had the option to vote by post or vote early. This was due to legislative change that removed the criteria to lodge an early or postal vote.
- The Commissioner of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) is the returning officer for local government general elections.
- Greg Hibble was appointed Deputy Returning Officer for the East Arnhem Regional Council, 2017 NT Council elections.
- Electronic mark-off system (eLAPPS) was used at all voting centres.
- **An election charter, detailing the NTEC's service commitments, was finalised on 4 May 2017 and sent to the council.** The document was also available on the NTEC website.
- A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the East Arnhem Regional Council and the NTEC was entered into on 30 **May 2017. This outlined both organisations' roles, responsibilities, election services and costs.**

Council

East Arnhem Regional Council consists of six wards: Anindilyakwa, Birr Rawarrang, Gumurr Garrjirrk, Gumurr Marthakal, Gumurr Miwatj and Gumurr Miyarrka.

The council comprises 14 elected council members. This includes two councillors from Anindilyakwa Ward, two councillors from Birr Rawarrang Ward, two councillors from Gumurr Garrjirrk Ward, three councillors from Gumurr Marthakal Ward, three councillors from Gumurr Miwatj Ward and two councillors from Gumurr Miyarrka Ward.

As per the SLA, East Arnhem Regional Council provided/undertook the following for the 2017 NT council elections:

- The use of council owned accommodation in Ramingining, Gapuwiyak and Alyangula.
- The use of council owned premises in Gapuwiyak, Gunyangara, Yirrkala, Ramingining, Milyakburra, Umbakumba, and Angurugu for voting.
- **Promotion of the election via council's social media outlets** and mobile billboards.
- Council staff as community assistants during remote mobile voting.
- Transport within larger communities including airstrip pick-ups and drop-offs.
- An electoral roll cleansing exercise.

Boundary changes

There were no gazetted changes to the boundaries or the council ward structure from the 2015 review of electoral representation.

ENROLMENT

An electoral roll cleanse project was conducted from March until June in the following communities: Yirrkala, Galiwinku, Ramingining, Gunyangara, Milyakburra, Umbakumba, Angurugu, and Gapuwiyak. The project identified a number of deceased and duplicated electors that were removed from the electoral roll.

At the close of the electoral roll on Tuesday 25 July at 5:0 pm, there were a total of 5,876 electors enrolled for the East Arnhem Regional Council. This was an increase of 6.7 per cent from the 2012 General elections.

COUNCIL	WARD	ENROLMENT
East Arnhem Regional Council	Anindilyakwa	892
	Birr Rawarrang	697
	Gumurr Gattjirrk	782
	Gumurr Marthakal	1,419
	Gumurr Miwatj	1,352
	Gumurr Miyarrka	734
	TOTAL	5,876

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Campaign

The public awareness campaign for the 2017 NT Council elections included enrolment and voting information (early, postal, remote and election day) disseminated across social media, television, radio, councils, LGANT, the Department of Housing and Community Development, as well as print and digital platforms. The public awareness campaign began in May and intensified from 30 June until election day on Saturday 26 August.

Website

The 2017 NT Council elections website was launched in early June and this provided comprehensive information for candidates and voters. It also hosted dedicated election results pages, included details on vote counting, and showed all remote, early and election day voting centre information. The website remains live for a number of months following the election.

Newsletter

An election newsletter was emailed regularly to stakeholders including councils and candidates, from 5 May with the final newsletter emailed on 27 August. A total of 12 newsletters and five supplementary emails were sent during this period. The newsletters were also available on the NTEC website with links shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Advertising – print, radio, television

Three advertisements were developed for airing on television, radio, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter: enrol and close of roll (15 secs); early, election day and formal voting (15 secs and 30 secs). The audio versions of these advertisements were interpreted into nine Aboriginal languages and aired across the Northern Territory through the radio stations appropriate to the language group. These advertisements were also available on the **NTEC website**, **NTEC's** YouTube channel and were heavily promoted through social media.

Print advertising promoting enrolment and providing election information appeared in the Rural Weekly, NT News and Off the Leash magazine.

Online promotion of these ads also took place with the Rural Weekly, Alice Springs News and Off the Leash. There was also an extensive digital marketing campaign about enrolment, postal and early voting, election day and formal voting that ran from 7 June through to election day, 26 August.

Posters promoting enrolment, nominations and voting were made available to East Arnhem Regional Council to assist in informing electors about the 2017 NT Council elections. Statutory print advertising providing specific voting information was published in the Tennant and District Times and the NT News.

The Electoral Commissioner also promoted enrolment and voting through 39 interviews with Northern Territory media including ABC Darwin and Alice Springs, Channel Nine, Territory FM, MIX104.9, Aboriginal Broadcasting Network, CAAMA radio and the NT News.

Call centre

A call centre was established on Wednesday 2 August and ran until Monday 28 August. Staff assisted electors with a variety of election enquiries during this period.

Call centre enquiries

ENQUIRY TYPE	ENQUIRY NUMBERS
Total phone calls	3,254
Emails to ntec@nt.gov.au	1,379
Non-voter excuses lodged	615
Enrolment	694
Postal voting	462

Candidate information sessions

Candidate information sessions were held in the following locations:

LOCATION	DATE
Gapuwiyak, Ramingining, and Milingimbi	Monday, 19 June 2017
Angurugu, Umbakumba, and Milyakburra	Tuesday, 20 June 2017
Yirrkala, Gunyangara, and Galiwinku	Wednesday, 21 June 2017

The East Arnhem Regional Council funded these information sessions as a separate arrangement outside the SLA.

Email and SMS

Email was used to contact 220 East Arnhem Regional Council electors, whom had provided these details on their enrolment form. Across the Northern Territory, 30,000 emails were sent advising electors of early and election-day voting centres. There were also 307 SMSs, which provided mobile voting information, sent to East Arnhem electors.

VOTING SERVICES

Nominations

Nominations opened Friday 14 July and closed on Thursday 3 August at 12:00 noon. There were a total of 24 accepted nominations for councillor across the six wards.

The declaration of nominations took place at the NTEC Darwin office at 12:00 noon on Friday 4 August. This event was attended by the general public, nominees, council representatives and the media. A random number generator selected the ballot paper position for each candidate.

Summary of accepted nominations/candidates for East Arnhem Regional Council

POSITION	CANDIDATES IN BALLOT PAPER ORDER
Anindilyakwa Ward Councillor (2 positions)	Fabian LALARA
	Elliott BARA
	Gordon WALSH
Birr Rawarrang Ward Councillor (2 positions)	Barry MALIBIRR
	Jason MIRRITJAWUY
	Rose WURRGUWURRGU
	Linda WULAMANA
Gumurr Gattjirrk Ward Councillor (2 positions)	John RYAN
	Lily ROY
Gumurr Marthakal Ward Councillor (3 positions)	Kate THURLOW
	David DJALANGI
	Evelyna DHAMARRANDJI
Gumurr Miwatj Ward Councillor (3 positions)	Tony GINTZ
	Banambi WUNUNGMURRA
	Barayuwa MUNUNGGURR
	Yananymul MUNUNGGURR
Gumurr Miyarrka Ward Councillor (2 positions)	Edmond Bowden GUYULA
	Wesley Bandi WUNUNGMURRA
	Freddie LEWIS
	Aaron Dhalwirrwuy MARRKULA
	Bobby WUNNUNG MURRA
	Joanne WANAMBI
	Jason MARRKULA
Jeffrey Djiniptidi WUNUNGMURRA	

Electronic voter mark-off

An electronic voter mark-off system is now used in all voting centres across the Northern Territory. The system records when someone has voted anywhere in the NT in real time. The voter mark-off system also alleviates the necessity to have paper certified lists therefore improving efficiencies in voting centres when finding voters on the electoral roll.

Early voting

Legislative changes in 2015 allows all electors the option to vote early without the need to meet any eligibility criteria. Overall there is a trend towards voting early across the Northern Territory. Voting for East Arnhem Regional Council was facilitated by remote voting teams.

Postal voting

Legislative changes in 2015 allow all electors the option to apply for a postal vote without meeting any eligibility criteria.

There were 44 postal votes issued to electors within the East Arnhem Regional Council area, and 21 (48 per cent) admitted to the count.

Election day voting centre

Election day was Saturday 26 August. There were no election day voting centres for East Arnhem Regional Council as voting was conducted by remote voting teams.

Remote voting

Remote voting teams visited the following locations in the lead-up to election day. The teams issued votes for East Arnhem Regional Council only.

Number of votes issued by remote voting teams

LOCATION	VOTES ISSUED
Angurugu	49
Balma	10
Baniyala Community	24
Birany Birany Community	3
Dhalinybuy Community	11
Donydji	20
Gan Gan Community	25
Gapuwiyak	130
Garrthalala Community	14
Gunyangara	11
Gurururu Community	5
Malkala Community	6
Milyakburra	24
Mirrnatja	10
Ngangalala Community	6
Ramingining	142
Umbakumba	45
Wallaby Beach	31
Wandawuy	13
Yathalarra	17
Yirrkala	69

ELECTION

Voting

The voting system for local government elections is Proportional Representation (PR):

- Electors must number all the boxes on their ballot paper sequentially starting with the number one for their first choice.
- First preference votes for each candidate on formal ballot papers are counted, then a quota is calculated.
- The quota is the total number of formal ballot papers plus one, divided by the number of vacancies.
- The candidates with votes equal to or greater than the quota are elected. If all vacancies are filled, the election is complete.
- If not, preferences are distributed to the other candidates until all vacancies have been filled.

To learn more about the PR system, go to the [vote counting](#) page on the NTEC website.

Vote counting – election night

Immediately after the close of voting at 6:00pm on election day, there was a count of first preference votes for early/mobile and postal votes. These counts were conducted at the Darwin scrutiny centre.

Post-election night scrutinies

A recheck of votes was undertaken during the week after election day, followed by a count of declaration, absent and further postal votes.

All votes received for the East Arnhem Regional Councillor positions were entered into an electronic count system (Easy count) and then re-entered for verification purposes.

Voters that applied for a postal vote were expected to complete their ballot papers by 6:00 pm on election day, Saturday 26 August 2017. Postal ballot papers then had to be received by 12:00 noon, Friday 1 September to be included in the count.

Determination of the quota and the distribution of preferences took place after the cut-off for the return of postal vote ballot papers. Election results were made available on the results pages of the website on Friday, 1 September 2017.

Election outcomes for East Arnhem Regional Council

There were 24 candidates contesting 14 councillor positions across six wards. The successful candidates and first preference votes received are detailed in tables below.

Voter participation by ward

There were 5,976 people on the electoral roll in the East Arnhem Regional Council area in the 2017 NT Council elections, excluding the two wards that did not require an election a total of 3,675 people in the remaining four wards were required to vote. Of this, 706 (19 per cent) voted.

WARD	ENROLMENT AT 25 JULY 2017	FORMAL VOTES	INFORMAL VOTES	TOTAL
Anindilyakwa	892	121	18	139
Birr Rawarrang	697	158	15	173
Gummurr Gattjirrk	782	<i>Voting not required</i>		
Gumurr Marthakal	1,419	<i>Voting not required</i>		
Gumurr Miwatj	1,352	181	20	201
Gumurr Miyarrka	734	149	44	193

Election of two Councillors – Anindilyakwa Ward

At the close of nomination there were three candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Fabian LALARA	32
Elliott BARA	44
Gordon WALSH	45
TOTAL	121

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 40.

In accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations the results were as follows:

- Gordon Walsh and Elliott Bara received the quota at count number 1

Gordon Walsh and Elliott Bara were duly elected.

Election of two Councillors – Birr Rawarrang Ward

At the close of nomination there were four candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Barry MALIBIRR	94
Jason MIRRIJAWUY	34
Rose WURRGUWURRGU	22
Linda WULAMANA	8
TOTAL	158

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 53.

Following the distribution of preferences and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations the results were as follows:

- Barry Malibirr received the quota at count number 1
- Jason Mirritjawuy received the quota at count number 2

Barry Malibirr and Jason Mirritjawuy were duly elected.

Election of two Councillors – Gumurr Gattjirrk Ward

At the close of nominations on Thursday 3 August 2017 the number of candidates was not more than the number of vacancies and John Ryan and Lily Roy were elected.

Election of three Councillors – Gumurr Marthakal Ward

At the close of nominations on Thursday 3 August 2017 the number of candidates was not more than the number of vacancies and Kaye Thurlow, David Djalangi and Evelynna Dhamarrandji were elected.

Election of three Councillors – Gumurr Miwatj Ward

At the close of nomination there were four candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Tony GINTZ	14
Banambi WUNUNGMURRA	23
Barayuwa MUNUNGGURR	30
Yananymul MUNUNGGURR	114
TOTAL	181

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 46.

Following the distribution of preferences and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations the results were as follows:

- Yananymul Mununggurr received the quota at count number 1
- Barayuwa Mununggurr received the quota at count number 2
- Banambi Wunungmurra received the quota at count number 3

Yananymul Mununggurr, Barayuwa Mununggurr and Banambi Wunungmurra were duly elected.

Election of two Councillors – Gumurr Miyarrka Ward

At the close of nomination there were eight candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Edmond Bowden GUYULA	13
Wesley Bandi WUNUNGMURRA	57
Freddie LEWIS	8
Aaron Dhalwirrwuy MARRKULA	15
Bobby WUNUNGMURRA	44
Joanne WANAMBI	2
Jason MARRKULA	6
Jeffrey Djinipidi WUNUNMURRA	4
TOTAL	149

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system the quota of votes required for this election was 50.

Following the distribution of preferences and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations the results were as follows:

- Wesley Bandi Wunungmurra received the quota at count number 1
- Bobby Wunungmurra received the quota at count number 5

Wesley Bandi Wunungmurra and Bobby Wunungmurra were duly elected.

Declaration of the results

The election results were declared at the NTEC office in Darwin at 10:00 am on Monday 4 September 2017.

Declared election results for East Arnhem Regional Council

ANINDILYAKWA WARD (2 VACANCIES)	BI RIR RAWARRANG WARD (2 VACANCIES)	GUMURR GATTJIRRK WARD (2 VACANCIES)	GUMURR MARTHAKAL WARD (3 VACANCIES)	GUMURR MIWATJ WARD (3 VACANCIES)	GUMURR MIYARRKA WARD (2 VACANCIES)
Gordon Walsh Elliott Bara	Barry Malibirr Jason Mirritjawuy	John RYAN Lily ROY	Kaye Thurlow David Djalangi Evelyna Dhamarrandji	Yananymul Mununggurr Barayuwa Mununggurr Banambi Wunungmurra	Wesley Bandi Wunungmurra Bobby Wunungmurra

A copy of the full distribution of preferences is available on the 2017 NT Council elections [results page](#) of the website.

Election costs

The SLA estimated the cost of the election for East Arnhem Regional Council to be \$105,922. Following the election, the costs are \$104,357 with a difference of \$1,565.

Summary of election costs

ELECTION AREA	COSTS
Public awareness	\$24,162
Staffing	\$17,984
Air Charters	\$33,250
Operational costs	\$28,960
TOTAL	\$104,357

ISSUES OF NOTE

Voting

- The result of various funerals and sorry business within the East Arnhem Regional Council area, affected the participation of voters in the wards that went to an election. There were amendments made to the voting schedule; however, it proved difficult to adjust and accommodate schedules in the time allowed within the election period. Unfortunately, this resulted in only 19 per cent of eligible electors voting.

Candidate information sessions

- **If it wasn't for the generosity of the council** there would not have been candidate information sessions conducted.

Receipt of nomination forms

- In an attempt to reduce election costs, council facilitated the receipt of nomination forms. In the 2012 General elections, NTEC staff were located in Nhulunbuy to undertake this task and came at a substantial cost to the council. In 2017, in addition to East Arnhem Regional Council, staff of the Department of Housing and Community Development also played a vital role in promoting the election and assisting candidates with their nominations.

Informality

In the post-election phase, once the 21-day period for objections had expired, a survey of informal ballot papers for East Arnhem Regional Council was conducted.

- A total of 97 informal votes were received across all wards. During the informality survey it was identified that 94 per cent were deemed unintentionally informal, of which most had duplicated numbers or were incomplete.
- The high number of unintentional informal ballot papers could be attributed to the large number of candidates. The NTEC attempted to assist voters in casting a formal vote by advising electors that all boxes must be numbered sequentially.

Eligibility

Post-election, the Council queried whether an elected candidate met the eligibility criteria. Council were advised that the CEO had standing to refer any such queries to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT).

We would like to extend our thanks for the support received from John Japp and staff.