



West Arnhem Regional Council Election Report



Document version control

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1.0	Draft	16/01/2025
1.1	Final version: - added information to election outcomes section - minor edits and formatting changes	25/02/2026

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2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

West Arnhem Regional Council

ELECTION SUMMARY

The 2025 Local Government Elections were the periodic general elections for the Northern Territory's local government councils, held every 4 years. The general elections included:

- 51 elections
- 138 elected positions
- 15 local government councils

The general elections for **WEST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL** included the following elections:

- Election of Gunbalanya Ward councillors – 3 positions
- Election of Kakadu Ward councillors – 3 positions
- Election of Maningrida Ward councillors – 4 positions
- Election of Minjilang Ward councillor – 1 position
- Election of Waruwi Ward councillor – 1 position

KEY DATES

Event	Date
Nominations open	Friday 11 July
Close of electoral roll	Tuesday 22 July
Nominations close	Thursday 31 July, 12 noon
Declaration of nominations	Friday 1 August
Postal mail out commences	Monday 4 August
Early and mobile voting commences	Monday 11 August
Election day	Saturday 23 August
Deadline for receipt of postal votes Distribution of preferences (final count)	Friday 5 September
Declaration of election results	Monday 8 September
Campaign donation returns due	Saturday 1 November

ENROLMENT

There were 4,422 West Arnhem Regional Council electors eligible to vote in the 2025 Local Government Elections.

This is an increase of 844 electors (or 23.6%) from the previous general elections held in 2021.

Elector numbers by ward:

- Gunbalanya Ward: 1,035 (up 22.5% from 2021)
- Kakadu Ward: 587 (up 11.4% from 2021)
- Maningrida Ward: 2,241 (up 27.8% from 2021)
- Minjilang Ward: 202 (up 25.5% from 2021)
- Waruwi Ward: 357 (up 22.3% from 2021)

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Campaign overview

The 2025 Local Government Elections public awareness campaign unfolded in 3 phases: encouraging enrolment, promoting voter education and empowerment, and issuing a final call to action for Territorians to vote.

Running from 1 July until the declaration of results on 8 September, the campaign used TV, radio, digital and social media, signage, letterbox drops and print to raise election awareness.

The campaign aimed to equip all eligible voters with the knowledge and confidence to participate, while placing special emphasis on disengaged groups and those facing barriers including:

- seniors
- electors with English as an additional language
- electors living in remote communities.

Website

The NTEC launched the election event webpage in June as the central hub for election information. During the campaign, the site recorded 883,018 views (71.3% from mobile devices and over 10,000 referrals from Meta platforms).

Radio

The local radio campaign reached a total of 216,900 listeners across all phases, on a high rotation during peak listening times and delivered excellent cost efficiency.

Print

Newspaper advertising for the 2025 Local Government Elections was largely restricted to statutory advertising requirements as prescribed under the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021 due to the current prominence of digital news media production and consumption. These advertisements ran in the NT News and the Centralian Today.

Further publications with a digital presence such were also engaged for location targeted aspects of the campaign.

Council engagement pack

Acknowledging the key role councils play in supporting elections, the NTEC developed a council resource pack to support voter, candidate and council staff information sharing and engagement. Councils were consulted on the draft resource pack and encouraged to provide images unique to each council area to be incorporated in the final version of the engagement pack. The council engagement pack included electronic resources such as social media content, videos, posters, flyers, email templates, forms and handbooks.

Digital

The digital campaign reached 1.21million people with 288,000 views and 8,073 clicks. "Vote" advertisements had the biggest reach and lowest cost, while "Educate" and "Enrol" advertisements got the highest click rates.

Facebook in-stream videos generated the most clicks, while YouTube engagement was also strong with a 55% view-through rate.

Social media

From 1 July to 23 August, the NTEC drove a Territory-wide social media campaign.

Paid ads delivered key messages with over 2 million impressions, while organic posts on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook tackled misinformation and built community engagement.

Councils were also encouraged to share ready-made content on nominations, enrolment and voting, ensuring consistent local messaging. All activity lead back to the NTEC website as the single source of trusted election information.

Emails/SMS

Direct messaging was a key communication tool during the elections, targeting electors who had provided email or mobile details through enrolment.

Messages were delivered via email and SMS on enrolment, early voting, remote mobile voting, and election day reminders.

A total of 179,146 SMS and 104,254 emails were sent to electors across the Territory.

Corflute signs

NTEC branded corflute signs were distributed to councils to install to raise community awareness.

Posters

Electronic posters tailored and culturally appropriate were distributed to councils and community organisations to distribute aiming to engage diverse groups, including people with

disabilities, older voters and English as an additional language speakers, ensuring consistent communication across all audiences.

Call centre

The NTEC call centre operated from 7 July to 23 August 2025, staffed by 3 officers who assisted electors with a wide range of enquiries. Most calls related to voting, enrolment, or lodging excuses for not voting.

In addition, the NTEC received significant volumes of enquiries via email, Facebook, and in person at its Darwin and Alice Springs offices.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for West Arnhem Regional Council elections included:

- 12 accepted nominations across all wards
- no rejected or withdrawn nominations.

Election	Accepted nominations (candidates)
GUNBALANYA WARD (3 vacancies)	Henry YATES Ralph McCOY
KAKADU WARD (3 vacancies)	Ralph Francis BLYTH Mickitja ONUS
MANINGRIDA WARD (4 vacancies)	Jacqueline PHILLIPS James WOODS Jermaine NAMANURKI Joseph DIDDO Monica WILTON
MINJILANG WARD (1 vacancy)	Steven NABALMARDA
WARRUWI WARD (1 vacancy)	James MARRAWAL Jamie MILPURR

Age and gender of candidates:

GENDER	Male	Female
All wards	10	2

AGE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
All wards	-	1	2	3	5	1

Note: Other demographic questions are not asked for on nomination forms

VOTING SERVICES

Postal voting

- Postal vote applications received 27
- Postal votes issued 11
- Postal vote applications rejected 16
- Postal votes returned 9
- Postal votes admitted to the count 5
- Postal votes rejected 4

Note: the number of votes admitted does not always equate to the number of votes recorded as postal votes in results webpage, as returned envelopes may be missing ballot paper or may include missorted ballot papers.

The reasons for rejecting postal vote applications were:

- Uncontested election/no election (15)
- Undeliverable address (1)

The reasons for rejecting (returned) postal votes were:

- Ordinary vote issued (3)
- Postal vote certificate not signed (1)

Remote mobile voting

Mobile Team West Arnhem 1 – Week 1:

Date	Time	Community	Location	Votes issued
Tuesday 12 August	11:30am – 12:30am	Ji-Malawa	Community	26
	1:30pm – 2:30pm	Ji-Marda	Community	
Wednesday 13 August	9:00am – 10:00am	Mumeka	Community	11
	11:00am – 12:00pm	Yikarrakkal	Community	
	1:15pm – 2:15pm	Kolorbidahdah	Community	
Thursday 14 August	9:00am – 10:00am	Buluhkaduru	Community	42
	11:00am – 12:00pm	Bolkdjam	Community	
	1:15pm – 2:15pm	Gochan Jiny-Jirra	Community	
	3:15pm – 4:15pm	Ji-Bena	Community	
Friday 15 August	9:00am – 10:00am	Maningrida	Mala'la Aged Care	34

	12:00pm – 1:00pm	Gamardi	Community	
TOTAL				113

Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted

Mobile Team West Arnhem 1 – Week 2:

Date	Time	Community	Location	Votes issued
Monday 18 August	10:00am – 5:00pm	Maningrida	New Sub	50
Tuesday 19 August	8:30am – 4:30pm	Maningrida	MPA Motel	35
Wednesday 20 August	8:30am – 4:30pm	Maningrida	MPA Motel	66
Thursday 21 August	8:30am – 4:30pm	Maningrida	MPA Motel	27
TOTAL				178

Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted

Mobile Team West Arnhem 2:

Date	Time	Community	Location	Votes issued
Friday 15 August	9:30am – 2:30pm	Warruwi	Council office	43
TOTAL				43

Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted

Early voting

Early voting centre	Votes issued
Alice Springs	-
Casuarina	13
Coolalinga	2
Darwin	4
Katherine	-
Palmerston	-
TOTAL	19

*Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted

Urban mobile voting

- Number of votes issued by the Darwin urban mobile team 17

Election day voting

Election day voting centre	Votes issued
Alice Springs	-
Casuarina	4
Coolalinga	3
Darwin	1
Katherine	-
Palmerston	1
TOTAL	9

Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted

Declaration voting

- Total number of declaration votes issued 3
- Declaration votes admitted to the count 2
- Declaration votes rejected from the count 1

The reasons for rejecting declaration votes were:

- Enrolled in a different council/ward area (1)

ELECTION OUTCOMES

Results: Election of councillors – Gunbalanya Ward

- There were 2 nominations for 3 councillor vacancies
- Elected councillors: Henry YATES, Ralph McCOY
- The remaining vacancy was filled at the 2025 Local Government Supplementary Elections held 29 November 2025 (see that section of this report)

Results: Election of councillors – Kakadu Ward

- There were 2 nominations for 3 councillor vacancies
- Elected councillors: Ralph Francis BLYTH, Mickitja ONUS
- The remaining vacancy was filled at the 2025 Local Government Supplementary Elections held 29 November 2025 (see that section of this report)

Results: Election of councillors – Maningrida Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
Jacqueline PHILLIPS	130
James WOODS	94
Jermaine NAMANURKI	15
Joseph DIDDO	47
Monica WILTON	22
TOTAL	308

- Quota required to be elected: 62
- Elected councillors:
Jacqueline PHILLIPS elected at count 1
James WOODS elected at count 1
Joseph DIDDO elected at count 2
Jermaine NAMANURKI elected at count 3
- The full distribution of preferences for the councillor election is available on the NTEC website

Results: Election of councillors – Minjilang Ward

- There was one nomination for 1 councillor vacancy
- Elected councillor: Steven NABALMARDA

Results: Election of councillors – Warruwi Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
James MARRAWAL	51
Jamie MILPURR	16
TOTAL	67

- Quota required to be elected: 34
- Elected councillor: James MARRAWAL

Voter turnout

Based on the number of votes counted in the 2 contested elections, voter turnout was 15.3%. This compares to 27.6% overall turnout in the previous general elections in 2021 when all 5 wards were contested.

Voter turnout by ward:

- Maningrida Ward: 14.7% (19.7% in 2021)
- Warruwi Ward: 18.8% (45.9% in 2021)

Informality

Election	No. of candidates	Total votes	Informal votes	%
Maningrida Ward	5	330	22	6.7%
Warruwi Ward	2	67	0	0%

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

All candidates in local government elections are required to submit a campaign donation return if they receive:

- donations of \$200 or more
- loans of \$1,500 or more
- during the disclosure period of 1 July 2024 to 22 September 2025
- with no nil return required if these thresholds are not met.

No West Arnhem Regional Council candidates submitted a campaign donation return for the 2025 Local Government Elections or the 2025 Local Government Supplementary Elections.

All returns received have been published on the NT Electoral Commission website.

ELECTION DEBRIEF

A post-election review meeting was held Friday 19 December 2025 at the NTEC office.

ELECTION COSTS

Expense category	Estimate \$	Actual \$
Advertising	12,108.32	9,947.41
Corporate	219.56	63.03
Destruction/rubbish removal	192.78	19.12
Information technology	4,641.20	1,676.17
Materials	3,804.97	1,745.99
Postage	2,353.57	1,227.05
Premises	2,098.77	2,126.95
Staff travel/accommodation/reimbursements	17,273.55	4,054.07
Staff wages	62,892.13	38,334.38

2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Vehicle hire/charter	52,930.17	30,230.35
Sub-total	158,515.02	89,414.52
GST (10%)	15,851.50	8,941.45
TOTAL	\$ 174,366.52	\$ 98,355.97



2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPLEMENTARY ELECTIONS

Gunbalanya and Kakadu wards

ELECTION SUMMARY

In accordance with Local Government (Electoral) Regulation 73, where there are failed or partially failed elections due to insufficient nominations, a new supplementary election is required to fill any remaining vacancies in the membership of the council.

At the close of nominations for the 2025 Local Government Elections, only 2 nominations were received for the 3 vacancies in both Gunbalanya and Kakadu wards. Therefore, a supplementary election was required for the remaining vacancy in each of these wards.

KEY DATES

Event	Date
Nominations open	Friday 17 October
Close of electoral roll	Tuesday 22 July
Nominations close	Thursday 6 November, 12 noon
Declaration of nominations	Friday 7 November
Postal mail out commences	Monday 10 November
Early and mobile voting commences	Monday 17 November
Election day	Saturday 29 November
Deadline for receipt of postal votes Distribution of preferences (final count)	Friday 12 December
Declaration of election results	Monday 15 December
Campaign donation returns due	Saturday 7 February 2026

ENROLMENT

Supplementary elections require that the electoral roll for the original election be used.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

A targeted public awareness campaign was delivered to inform electors of the supplementary elections for Gunbalanya and Kakadu wards.

Promotional activities seeking nominations included:

- updates to the NTEC and BushTel websites

- media releases
- publication of statutory notices
- social media posts tagging West Arnhem Regional Council and promoting key election dates.

Election messaging was tailored for remote communities eligible to vote, supported by the production of custom election posters and direct communications outlining key dates and voting requirements. Activities included:

- publication of statutory notices
- media releases
- updates to the NTEC and BushTel websites
- tailored social media messaging
- 8 direct SMS messages issued to residents within Gunbalanya and Kakadu wards.

Due to the impact of Cyclone Fina, scheduled remote mobile voting services were first postponed, then cancelled to ensure the safety of voters and NTEC staff, and were subsequently rescheduled. Updated information was communicated promptly with the assistance of West Arnhem Regional Council via:

- NTEC and BushTel website update
- 2 direct SMS messages to electors
- social media posts tagging West Arnhem Regional Council
- a media release.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the Gunbalanya Ward and Kakadu Ward supplementary elections included:

- 4 accepted nominations (2 for each ward)
- one rejected nomination (not enrolled in council area – Kakadu Ward nomination)
- no withdrawn nominations.

Election	Accepted nominations (candidates)
GUNBALANYA WARD (one vacancy)	Daniel SIEBERT Tamar NAWIRRIDJ
KAKADU WARD (one vacancy)	Calvin MURAKAMI Kylie LINDNER

VOTING SERVICES

Postal voting

- Postal vote applications received 66
- Postal votes issued 66

- Postal vote applications rejected 0
- Postal votes returned 52
- Postal votes admitted to the count 38
- Postal votes rejected 14

Note: the number of votes admitted does not always equate to the number of votes recorded as postal votes in results webpage, as returned envelopes may be missing ballot paper or may include missorted ballot papers.

The reasons for rejecting (returned) postal votes were:

- Ordinary vote issued (7)
- Postal vote certificate dated after election day (3)
- Postal vote received after deadline (2)
- Returned to sender (2)

Early voting

Early voting centre (Darwin)	TOTAL
Gunbalanya Ward	1
Kakadu Ward	3
TOTAL	4

Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted

Remote mobile voting

Remote mobile voting services for Gunbalanya and Kakadu wards were originally scheduled to occur from 17 – 22 November 2025 according to the timetable below.

Date	Time	Community	Location
Monday 17 November	10:15am – 11:15am	Mamadawerri	Community
	1:00pm – 2:00pm	Manmoyi	Community
Tuesday 18 November	8:30am – 3:30pm	Gunbalanya	Conference Room
Wednesday 19 November	8:30am – 3:00pm	Gunbalanya	Conference Room
Friday 21 November	11:30am – 12:30pm	Kakadu National Park	Headquarters
	3:00pm – 4:00pm	Mudginberri	Community
Saturday 22 November	8:00am – 3:00pm	Jabiru	Council office

The remote voting schedule was amended several times due to weather conditions including heavy rain and Tropical Cyclone Fina. Subsequent access issues resulted in the cancellation of voting services in 3 communities. All amendment decisions were made collaboratively with West Arnhem Regional Council.

Therefore, remote mobile voting services were only provided in the 2 major communities of Gunbalanya and Jabiru, according to the schedule below.

Mobile Team West Arnhem 2:

Date	Time	Community	Location	Votes issued
Wednesday 26 November	9:00am – 3:30pm	Gunbalanya	Conference Room	54
Friday 28 November	11:00am – 5:00pm	Jabiru	Council office	58
Saturday 29 November	8:30am – 1:00pm	Jabiru	Council office	19
TOTAL				149

Note the number of votes issued does not always equate to the number of votes counted
Note ballot papers for both ward elections were issued in each location

ELECTION OUTCOMES

Results: Election of councillor – Gunbalanya Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
Daniel SIEBERT	46
Tamar NAWIRRIDJ	42
TOTAL	88

- Quota required to be elected: 45
- Elected councillor: Daniel SIEBERT

Results: Election of councillor – Kakadu Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
Calvin MURAKAMI	46
Kylie LINDNER	49
TOTAL	95

- Quota required to be elected: 48
- Elected councillor: Kylie LINDNER

Voter turnout

Based on the number of votes counted, the voter turnout over all was 11.8%.

Voter turnout by ward:

- Gunbalanya Ward: 8.6% (23.8% in 2021)
- Kakadu Ward: 17.4% (46.9% in 2021)

Informality

Election	No. of candidates	Total votes	Informal votes	%
Gunbalanya Ward	2	89	1	1.1%
Kakadu Ward	2	102	7	6.9%

ELECTION COSTS

Expense category	Estimate \$	Actual \$
Advertising	2,229.65	842.51
Corporate	103.18	34.39
Destruction/rubbish removal	103.18	35.87
Information technology	2,579.42	1,694.98
Materials	756.63	609.04
Postage	87.13	117.97
Premises	42.99	23.91
Staff travel/accommodation/reimbursements	2,544.68	1,592.98
Staff wages	14,112.87	13,939.00
Vehicle hire/charter	8,661.82	10,778.94
Sub-total	31,221.55	29,669.60
GST (10%)	3,122.16	2,966.96
TOTAL	\$34,343.71	\$32,636.56



Northern Territory Electoral Commission

EVERY vote counts

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