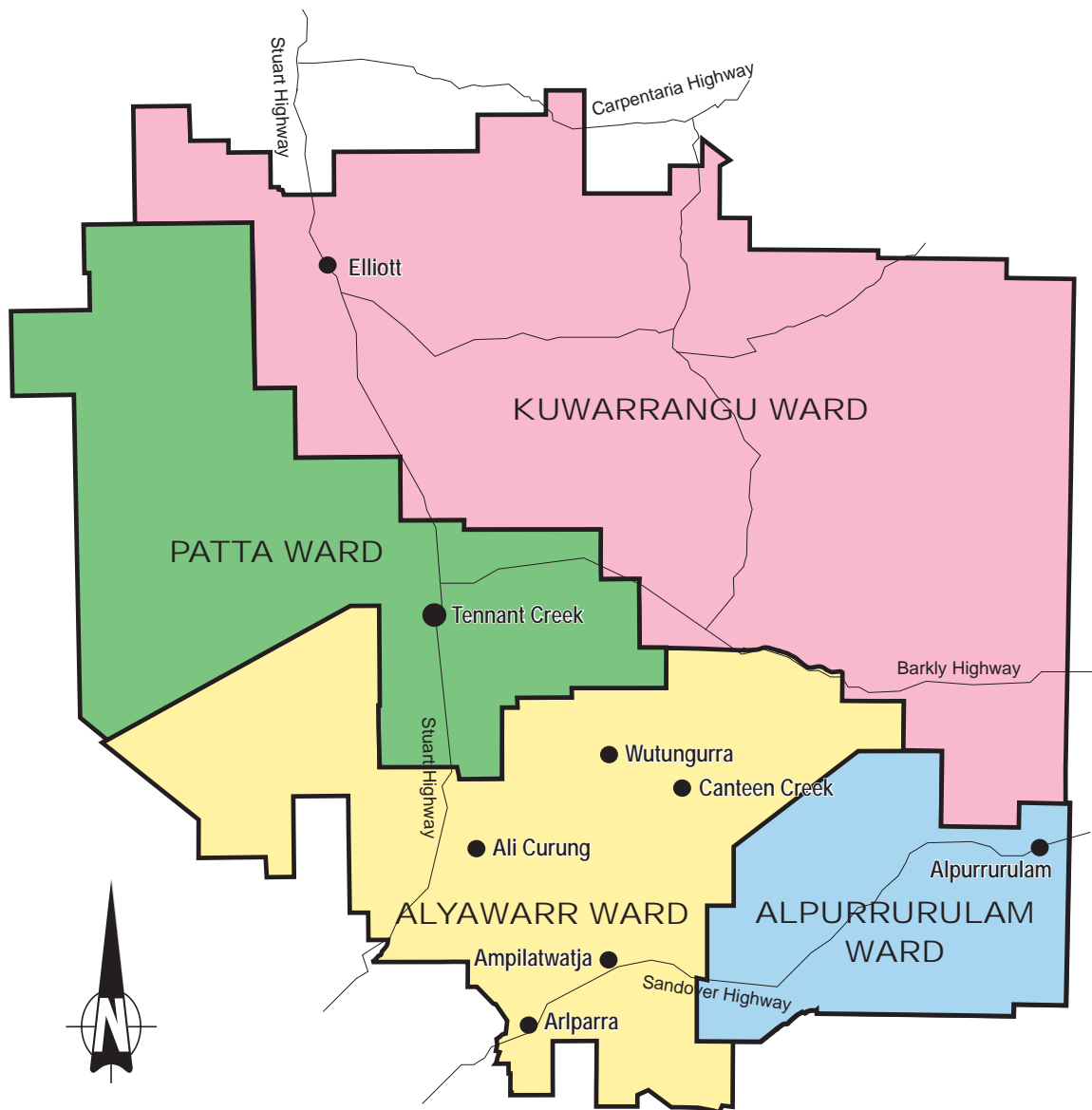




2017 NT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

BARKLY 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 now held 12 months after the Legislative Assembly (LA) election.
- 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.
- Electronic mark-off system (eLAPPS) was used at all voting centres.
- An election charter **detailing the NTEC's service commitments was finalised** on 16 May 2017 and sent to the council. The document was also available on the NTEC website.
- A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Barkly Regional Council and the NTEC was entered into on 18 April 2017. This outlined both organisations' roles, responsibilities, election services and costs.

Council

Barkly Regional Council consists of four wards: Alpururulam, Alyawarr, Kuwarrangu and Patta. The council comprises one elected President and 12 elected council members. This includes one elected council member from Alpururulam Ward, four elected council members from Alyawarr Ward, two elected council members from Kuwarrangu Ward and five elected council members from Patta Ward.

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

- A council building and staff to undertake early voting services in Tennant Creek
- Council owned accommodation and premises in Ampilatwatja and Elliott
- **Promotion of the election via Barkly Regional Council's** social media outlets
- Council staff as community assistants during remote mobile voting
- Three council staff as remote team members
- One council 4WD for use on a remote mobile voting team
- An electoral roll cleansing exercise.

Boundary changes

In accordance with section 9 (1) (f) of the Act a submission was received to change the name of the Yapakurlangu Ward to Kuwarrangu Ward. This was completed in May 2017. No further boundary changes were implemented from the previous election.

ENROLMENT

An electoral roll cleanse project was conducted from March until June in the wards of Alpururulam, Alyawarr and Kuwarrangu. The project identified a number of deceased and duplicated electors that were removed from the electoral roll. This contributed to the decline in enrolment numbers from the 2012 General elections.

At the close of the electoral roll on Tuesday 25 July at 5:00 pm, there were a total of 4,264 electors enrolled for the Barkly Regional Council. This was a decrease of 1.4 per cent on the enrolment of 4,324 at the 2012 General elections.

Barkly Regional Council enrolment numbers by ward

COUNCIL	WARD	ENROLMENT
Barkly Regional Council	Alpururulam	214
	Alyawarr	1,602
	Kuwarrangu	487
	Patta	1,961
	TOTAL	4,264

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 Barkly 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

One candidate information session was conducted by Tyrone Daniels on 26 June 2017 with approximately 10 participants attending.

Email and SMS

Email and SMS was used to contact Barkly 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 SMSs with mobile voting information sent to 20 communities.

VOTING SERVICES

Nominations

Nominations opened Friday 14 July and closed on Thursday 3 August at 12:00 noon. There were a total of 21 accepted nominations for councillor across the four wards and six accepted nominations for President.

The declaration of nominations took place at the NTEC Alice Springs 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 Barkly Regional Council

POSITION	CANDIDATES IN BALLOT PAPER ORDER
President (1 position)	Pat BRAHIM
	Narelle BREMNER
	Jeffrey MCLAUGHLIN
	Chris REVELL
	Steve EDGINGTON
	Brain COLEMAN
Alpurrurulam Ward Councillor (1 position)	Jennifer MAHONEY
	Garry John KOPPES
Alyawarr Ward Councillor (2 positions)	Lucy JACKSON
	Jack CLUBB
	Noel HAYES
	Ricky HOLMES
Kuwarrangu Ward Councillor (2 positions)	Ray AYLETT
	Alan REVELL
	Jane EVANS
Patta Ward Councillor (5 positions)	Kris CIVITARESE
	Darrin WHATLEY
	Brian COLEMAN
	Joyce TAYLOR
	Hal RUGER
	Sid VASHIST
	Christine REVELL
	Narelle BREMNER
	Jeffrey MCLAUGHLIN
	Pat BRAHIM
	Tristan DUGGIE
	Ronald PLUMMER

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 centre

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.

Early voting services were provided in the Civic Hall at Barkly Regional Council from 14 August to 25 August 2017 (including Saturday 19 August). Votes for Barkly Regional Council were also taken at other early voting centres across the Territory.

Votes issued at NT early voting centres for Barkly Regional Council

LOCATION	VOTES ISSUED
Alice Springs Town Council	35
Tennant Creek Civic Hall	919
Katherine Central Shopping Centre	8
Coolalinga Shopping Centre	0
Casuarina Library	1
Darwin CBD	3

Over 57 per cent of electors in the Barkly Regional Council voted before election day.

Postal voting

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

A total of 207 electors enrolled in the Barkly Regional Council area applied for a postal vote, with 83 (41 per cent) admitted to the count.

Remote voting team

A remote voting team visited the following locations in the lead-up to election day. The voting team issued votes for Barkly Regional Council only.

Number of votes issued by remote voting team

LOCATION	VOTES ISSUED
Ali Curung	130
Alpurrurulam	75
Ampilatwatja	77
Arawerr	25
Arlparra	80
Atheley	17
Atneltyey	0
Atnwengerrpe	8
Barkly Homestead	2
Camel Camp	14
Canteen Creek	50
Corella Creek	12
Elliott	132
Imangara	13
Indaringinya	7
Inkawenyerre	3
Inkwelaye	7
Irrultja	0
Iylentye	5
Kalinjarri	3
Marlinja	15
Mungalawurru	9
Mungkarta	8
Pungalindum	7
Soakage Bore	3
Tara	23
Wauchope	3
Wutunugurra	56

Election day voting centre

Election day was Saturday 26 August with the Tennant Creek voting centre open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. On election day, voters could only vote within their council boundary. A total of 252 votes were issued at the Tennant Creek Civic Centre.

Summary of votes issued at all voting centres

VOTING CENTRE TYPE	LOCATION	VOTES ISSUED
Election day	Tennant Creek Civic Hall	252
Early voting	Tennant Creek Civic Hall	919
Remote and urban institution	Remote and urban institution	827
Postal voting		83

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 the first preference votes at each voting centre
- a count of the first preference votes for early/mobile and postal votes.

Post-election night scrutinies

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

Vote counting for the President position was completed manually and votes received for the Barkly Regional Council Ward 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 the NTEC 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 Barkly Regional Council

There were six candidates contesting the President vacancy and 21 candidates contesting 12 councillor vacancies across four wards. The successful candidates and first preference votes received are detailed in tables below.

Of the 4,264 people on the electoral roll in the Barkly Regional Council area a total of 2,128 (50 per cent) voted.

Election of President

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

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Pat BRAHIM	221
Narelle BREMNER	289
Jeffrey MCLAUGHLIN	332
Chris REVELL	70
Steve EDGINGTON	1,016
Brain COLEMAN	62
TOTAL	1,990

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 996.

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

- Steven Edgington received the quota at count number 1

Steven Edgington was duly elected.

Election of one Councillor – Alpururulam Ward

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

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Jennifer MAHONEY	50
Garry John KOPPES	31
TOTAL	81

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 42.

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

- Jennifer Mahoney received the quota at count number 1

Jennifer Mahoney was duly elected.

Election of four Councillors – Alyawarr Ward

At the close of nominations on Thursday 3 August 2017 the number of candidates was not more than the number of vacancies and Lucy JACKSON, Jack CLUBB, Noel HAYES and Ricky Holmes were elected.

Election of two Councillors – Kuwarrangu 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
Ray AYLETT	64
Alan REVELL	13
Jane EVANS	124
TOTAL	201

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 68.

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

- Jane Evans received the quota at count number 1
- Ray Aylett received the quota at count number 2

Jane Evans and Ray Aylett were duly elected.

Election of five Councillors – Patta Ward

At the close of nomination there were 12 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

CANDIDATE	FIRST PREFERENCES
Kris CIVITARESE	296
Darrin WHATLEY	21
Brian COLEMAN	14
Joyce TAYLOR	26
Hal RUGER	88
Sid VASHIST	254
Christine REVELL	10
Narelle BREMNER	70
Jeffrey MCLAUGHLIN	85
Pat BRAHIM	41
Tristan DUGGIE	75
Ronald PLUMMER	95
TOTAL	1,075

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 180.

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

- Kris Civitarese received the quota at count number 1
- Sid Vashist received the quota at count number 2
- Jeffrey McLaughlin received the quota at count number 44
- Hal Ruger received the quota at count number 47
- Ronald Plummer received the quota at count number 47

Kris Civitarese, Sid Vashist, Jeffrey McLaughlin, Hal Ruger and Ronald Plummer were duly elected.

Declaration of election results

The results were declared at MyVote Central in Alice Springs at 10:00 am on Monday 4 September 2017.

Declared election results for Barkly Regional Council

President (1 vacancy)	Alpurrurulam Ward (1 vacancy)	Alyawarr Ward (4 vacancies)	Kuwarrangu Ward (2 vacancies)	Patta Ward (5 vacancies)
Steve Edgington	Jennifer Mahoney	Lucy Jackson Jack Club Noel Hayes Ricky Holmes	Jane Evans Ray Aylett	Kris Civitarese Sid Vashist Jeffrey McLaughlin Hal Ruger Ronald Plummer

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 Barkly Regional Council to be \$96,705. Following the election, the costs were \$77,257 with a difference of \$19,448. This was due to the council off-setting various costs along with Alyawarr Ward not going to election.

Summary of election costs

ELECTION AREA	COSTS
Public awareness	\$20,199
Staffing	\$30,938
Premises	\$0.00
Operational costs	\$26,120
TOTAL	\$77,257

ISSUES OF NOTE

Remote voting

- There is a need to improve the communications with council during the planning phase of remote voting.
- **There's a requirement** to improve the awareness of potential events in remote communities that may occur during the election period as this can affect turnout in communities where electors are away attending these events.

Returning officer located in Tennant Creek

- There is a requirement for a Returning Officer (RO) to be permanently based in Tennant Creek during the election period. Having a RO based in Tennant Creek would be highly beneficial in dealing with technical problems, act as support for the Officer-in-Charge of the voting centre as well as deal with complaints and oversee counts.

Informality

In the post-election phase, once the 21 day period for objections had expired, a survey of informal ballot papers for Barkly Regional Council Mayor, Alpururulam Ward, Kuwarrangu Ward and Patta Ward was conducted.

- A total of 126 informal votes were received for the councillor positions and 138 for the President position. During the informality survey it was identified that 46 per cent of votes for councillor were considered intentionally informal. The remaining 54 per cent were considered unintentionally informal, of which most had duplicated numbers or were incomplete.
- The survey identified that 41 per cent of votes for President were considered intentionally informal. The remaining 59 per cent were considered unintentionally informal, of which most had duplicated numbers on the ballot paper.
- The high number of unintentional informal ballot papers could be attributed to the large number of candidates (12) where voters either duplicated numbers or missed the sequence. The NTEC attempted to assist voters in casting a formal vote by advising electors that all boxes must be numbered sequentially.

We would like to extend our thanks for the support received from Stephen Dawkins from Barkly Regional Council.