

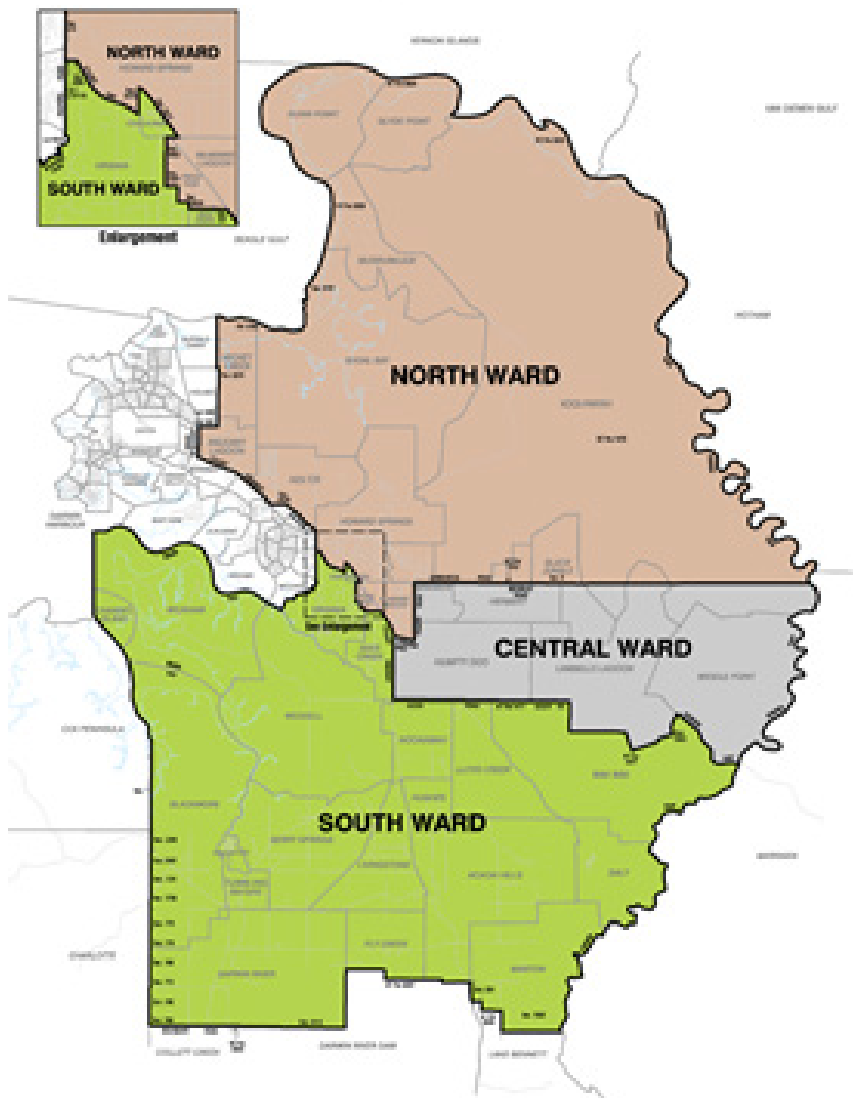
2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

LITCHFIELD COUNCIL

Community effort is essential



Litchfield Council Election Report



Document version control

Version	Description	Date
1.0	Draft	23/12/2025
1.1	Final version: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- added information to election outcomes section- added Appendix A- minor edits and formatting changes	25/02/2026

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2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Litchfield 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 **LITCHFIELD COUNCIL** included the following elections:

- **Election of mayor – 1 position**
- **Election of Central Ward councillors – 2 positions**
- **Election of North Ward councillors – 2 positions**
- **Election of South Ward councillors – 2 positions**

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	Friday 5 September
Distribution of preferences (final count)	
Declaration of election results	Monday 8 September
Campaign donation returns due	Saturday 1 November

ENROLMENT

There were 14,169 Litchfield Council electors eligible to vote in the 2025 Local Government Elections.

This is an increase of 1,795 electors (or 14.5%) from the previous general elections held in 2021.

Elector numbers by ward:

- Central Ward: 4,858 (up 14.2% from 2021)
- North Ward: 4,520 (up 14.7% from 2021)
- South Ward: 4,791 (up 14.6% 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.

Large banners

Large-format banners promoted enrolment, early voting and election day across major council sites, with placements rotated to match key messages.

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.

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

A candidate information session was held at 5:00pm on Thursday 17 July 2025 at the council chambers.

Nominations for Litchfield Council elections included:

- 18 accepted nominations across all elections
- 4 dual candidates (who nominated for both mayor and councillor elections)
- one withdrawn nomination
- no rejected nominations.

Election	Accepted nominations (candidates)
MAYOR (one vacancy)	Sue STANTON
	Darren NUGENT
	Rachael WRIGHT
	Mark SIDEY
	Doug BARDEN
	Tony PRITCHARD
CENTRAL WARD COUNCILLOR (2 vacancies)	Darren NUGENT
	Tony PRITCHARD
	Kev HARLAN
	Sherry NAMATOVU
	Pauline CASS
NORTH WARD COUNCILLOR (2 vacancies)	Cecilia COLEMAN
	Rachael WRIGHT
SOUTH WARD COUNCILLOR (2 vacancies)	Daisy CRAWFORD
	Emma SHARP
	Sue STANTON
	Kris CIVITARESE
	Beckie KERNICH

Age and gender of candidates:

GENDER	Male	Female
Mayor	4	2
Councillor	4	8

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

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

VOTING SERVICES

Postal voting

- Postal vote applications received 708
- Postal votes issued 664
- Postal vote applications rejected 44
- Postal votes returned 567
- Postal votes admitted to the count 441
- Postal votes rejected 126

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:

- Multiple applications received from same elector (21)
- Insufficient/undeliverable postal address (10)
- Cancelled by elector (10)
- Ordinary vote issued (2)
- Application received too late (1)

The reasons for rejecting (returned) postal votes were:

- Ordinary vote issued (58)
- Postal vote certificate dated after election day (24)
- Returned to sender (18)
- Postal vote received after deadline (16)
- Postal vote certificate not signed (10)

Early voting

Early voting centre	Votes issued			TOTAL
	Central Ward	North Ward	South Ward	
Alice Springs	2	1	2	5
Casuarina	26	57	22	105
Coolalinga	2,096	1,345	1,879	5,320
Darwin	55	58	61	174
Katherine	4	9	11	24
Palmerston	77	213	94	384
TOTAL	2,260	1,683	2,069	6,012

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 82
- Number of votes issued by the Katherine urban mobile team 1

Election day voting

Election day voting centre	Votes issued			TOTAL
	Central Ward	North Ward	South Ward	
Alice Springs	1	3	3	7
Berry Springs	10	5	359	374
Casuarina	9	38	10	57
Coolalinga	394	351	507	1,252
Darwin	10	26	10	46
Howard Springs	34	428	25	487
Humpty Doo	434	29	87	550
Katherine	2	-	2	4
Palmerston	22	142	24	188
TOTAL	916	1022	1,027	2,965

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

Declaration voting

- Total number of declaration votes issued 24
- Declaration votes admitted to the count 22
- Declaration votes rejected from the count 2

The reasons for rejecting declaration votes were:

- Enrolled in a different council area (2)

ELECTION OUTCOMES

Results: Election of mayor

Candidate	First preference votes
Sue STANTON	679
Darren NUGENT	835
Rachael WRIGHT	3,394
Mark SIDEY	844
Doug BARDEN	2,545
Tony PRITCHARD	430
TOTAL	8,727

- Quota required to be elected: 4,364
- Rachael WRIGHT elected as mayor at count 5 (5,049 votes)
- A full distribution of preferences table is provided at Appendix A

Results: Election of councillors – Central Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
Darren NUGENT	450
Tony PRITCHARD	149
Kev HARLAN	831
Sherry NAMATOVU	392
Pauline CASS	548
Cecilia COLEMAN	696
TOTAL	3,066

- Quota required to be elected: 1,023
- Elected councillors:
Kev HARLAN elected at count 5
Pauline CASS elected at count 9
- The full distribution of preferences for the Central Ward election is available on the NTEC website.

Results: Election of councillors – North Ward

- As there were only 2 nominations for 2 vacancies, this election was uncontested.
- Daisy CRAWFORD was declared duly elected at the declaration of nominations.
- As Rachael WRIGHT also nominated for the mayor position, she was not announced as duly elected until the outcome of the mayor election.
- As Rachael WRIGHT was elected mayor, there was one councillor vacancy remaining in North Ward.
- 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 – South Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
Emma SHARP	823
Sue STANTON	182
Kris CIVITARESE	1,408
Beckie KERNICH	687
TOTAL	3,100

- Quota required to be elected: 1,034
- Elected councillors:
Kris CIVITARESE elected at count 1
Emma SHARP elected at count 3
- The full distribution of preferences for the South Ward election is available on the NTEC website.

Voter turnout

Based on the number of votes counted, the voter turnout for each election was:

- Mayor: 67.0% (compared to 75.6% at previous general elections in 2021)
- Central Ward: 69.3% (compared to 77.5% in 2021)
- North Ward: based on figures for North Ward electors voting in the mayor election, turnout was 62.7% (compared to 72.7% in 2021)
- South Ward: 68.6% (compared to 76.7% in 2021)

Informality

Election	No. of candidates	Total votes	Informal votes	%
Mayor	6	9,489	762	8.0%
Central Ward	6	3,368	302	9.0%

South Ward	4	3,286	186	5.7%
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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.

One Litchfield Council candidate submitted a campaign donation return for the 2025 Local Government Elections and no North Ward candidates submitted returns for the 2025 Local Government Supplementary Elections.

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

ELECTION COSTS

Expense category	Estimate \$	Actual \$
Advertising	34,119.63	21,429.02
Corporate	700.05	336.04
Destruction/rubbish removal	611.71	102.31
Information technology	11,067.71	8,967.53
Materials	12,017.15	9,176.77
Postage	7,444.64	6,538.53
Premises	9,641.66	7,345.07
Staff travel/accommodation/reimbursements	11,523.94	7,765.66
Staff wages	131,273.39	127,307.04
Vehicle hire/charter	3,083.64	1,811.45
Sub-total	221,483.52	190,779.43
GST (10%)	22,148.35	19,077.94
TOTAL	\$ 243,631.87	\$ 209,857.37

ELECTION DEBRIEF

A post-election review meeting was held Tuesday 9 December 2025 via Teams.

2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPLEMENTARY ELECTIONS

North Ward

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.

Following the final results of the 2025 Local Government Elections for Litchfield Council, only one of the 2 vacancies in North Ward was filled, therefore, a supplementary election was required for the remaining vacancy in this ward.

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	Friday 12 December
Distribution of preferences (final count)	
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 nominees and electors of the North Ward supplementary election.

Promotional activities seeking nominations included:

- updates to the NTEC and BushTel websites
- media releases
- publication of statutory notices
- social media posts tagging participating councils and promoting key election dates.

Direct communications were issued to electors outlining key dates and voting requirements. These activities supported informed participation and ensured electors were aware of the election timeline and processes. Activities included:

- publication of statutory notices
- media releases
- radio interviews
- updates to the NTEC website
- tailored social media messaging
- 4 direct SMS messages sent to residents within the affected North Ward.

Banner signage was installed at the Litchfield Waste Transfer Facility and Whitewood Hall during the early voting period. Additional signage was also displayed at Coolalinga Central Shopping Centre and the Litchfield Community Library located within the centre.

Coolalinga Central management also published voting information on its public noticeboard in the centre and through its social media account.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the North Ward supplementary election included:

- 5 accepted nominations
- no rejected or withdrawn nominations.

Election	Accepted nominations (candidates)
NORTH WARD (one vacancy)	Plaxy QF PURICH
	Suzanne PILKIE
	Doug BARDEN
	Beckie KERNICH
	Brigid McCULLOUGH

VOTING SERVICES

Postal voting

- Postal vote applications received 280
- Postal votes issued 276
- Postal vote applications rejected 4
- Postal votes returned 216

- Postal votes admitted to the count 171
- Postal votes rejected 45

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:

- Multiple applications received from same elector (3)
- Cancelled by elector (1)

The reasons for rejecting (returned) postal votes were:

- Postal vote received after deadline (14)
- Returned to sender (13)
- Postal vote certificate dated after election day (10)
- Ordinary vote issued (7)
- Not correctly enrolled (1)

Early voting

Early voting centre	TOTAL
Darwin	32
Howard Springs	556
TOTAL	588

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

Election day voting

Election day voting	TOTAL
Howard Springs	566

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

ELECTION OUTCOMES

Results: Election of councillor – North Ward

Candidate	First preference votes
Plaxy QF PURICH	390
Suzanne PILKIE	306
Doug BARDEN	360
Beckie KERNICH	111
Brigid McCULLOUGH	74
TOTAL	1,241

- Quota required to be elected: 621
- Plaxy QF PURICH elected at count 4
- A full distribution of preferences is provided at Appendix A

Voter turnout

Based on the number of votes counted, voter turnout was 29.3%.

Informality

Election	No. of candidates	Total votes	Informal votes	%
North Ward	5	1,325	84	6.3%

ELECTION COSTS

Expense category	Estimate \$	Actual \$
Advertising	3,229.65	3,637.69
Corporate	289.04	96.35
Destruction/rubbish removal	289.04	100.49
Information technology	7,225.88	4,748.24
Materials	2,574.14	2,512.43
Postage	747.55	1,218.98
Premises	120.43	66.99
Staff wages	17,537.77	12,495.60
Vehicle hire/charter	181.82	181.82
Sub-total	32,195.29	25,058.58
GST (10%)	3,219.53	2,505.86
TOTAL	\$35,414.82	\$27,564.44

Appendix A

Distribution of preferences - Election of mayor

Count	Comments	Sue STANTON	Darren NUGENT	Rachael WRIGHT	Mark SIDEY	Doug BARDEN	Tony PRITCHARD	Total
1	First preferences	679	835	3,394	844	2,545	430	8,727
2	Tony PRITCHARD excluded	65	50	91	75	149	-430	0
	Progressive	744	885	3,485	919	2,694	0	8,727
3	Sue STANTON excluded	-744	246	283	85	130	0	0
	Progressive	0	1,131	3768	1004	2824	0	8,727
4	Mark SIDEY excluded	0	193	489	-1,004	322	0	0
	Progressive	0	1,324	4,257	0	3,146	0	8,727
5	Darren NUGENT excluded	0	-1,324	792	0	532	0	0
	Progressive	0	0	5,049	0	3,678	0	8,727

Quota to be elected: 4,364

Rachael WRIGHT elected at count 5

Distribution of preferences - Election of North Ward councillor

Count	Comments	Plaxy QF PURICH	Suzanne PILKIE	Doug BARDEN	Beckie KERNICH	Brigid McCULLOUGH	Total
1	First preferences	390	306	360	111	74	1,241
2	Brigid McCULLOUGH excluded	23	17	14	20	-74	0
	Progressive	413	323	374	131	0	1,241
3	Beckie KERNICH excluded	42	41	48	-131	0	0
	Progressive	455	364	422	0	0	1,241
4	Suzanne PILKIE excluded	244	-364	120	0	0	0
	Progressive	699	0	542	0	0	1,241

Quota to be elected: 621

Plaxy QF PURICH elected at count 4



Northern Territory Electoral Commission

EVERY vote counts

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