



2017 NT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

TIWI ISLANDS 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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council and the NTEC was entered into on 31 May 2017. This outlined both organisations' roles, responsibilities, election services and costs.

Council

Tiwi Islands Regional Council consists of three wards: Bathurst Island, Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi.

The council comprises 12 elected council members. This includes six councillors from Bathurst Island Ward, three councillors from Milikapiti Ward and three councillors from Pirlangimpi Ward.

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

- The use of council owned accommodation in Wurrumiyanga
- The use of council owned premises in Pirlangimpi, Pickataramoor, Wurankuwu, and Wurrumiyanga for voting.
- Promotion of the election via council's social media outlets.
- Council staff as community assistants during remote mobile voting.
- Transport within communities including airstrip pick-ups and drop-offs.
- An electoral roll cleansing exercise.

Boundary Changes

For this election, a change was implemented to combine the Nguiu and Wurankuwu wards into a new ward called Bathurst Island Ward, decreasing the number of wards from four to three.

ENROLMENT

An electoral roll cleanse project was conducted from March until June in the following communities: Wurrumiyanga, Pirlangimpi, and Milikapiti. 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 1,636 electors enrolled for the Tiwi Islands Regional Council. This was an increase of 5 per cent from the 2012 General elections.

| COUNCIL | WARD | ENROLMENT |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Tiwi Islands Regional Council | Bathurst Island | 1,057 |
| | Milikapiti | 302 |
| | Pirlangimpi | 277 |

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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council to assist in informing electors about the 2017 NT Council elections. Statutory print advertising providing specific voting information was published in 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

A candidate information session was held in Wurrumiyanga on 24 May 2017. The NTEC is appreciative for the Tiwi Islands Regional Council for making funds available to allow an NTEC officer to attend and deliver the information session in conjunction with members from LGANT and the Dept. Housing and Community Development.

Email and SMS

Email was used to contact 103 electors in the Tiwi Islands Regional Council area who provided these details on their enrolment form. Across the Northern Territory, 30,000 emails were sent advising electors about early and election-day voting centres. A further 147 SMS' were sent to Tiwi Islands Regional Council electors reminding them to vote on election day.

VOTING SERVICES

Nominations

Nominations opened Friday 14 July and closed on Thursday 3 August at 12:00 noon. There were a total of 23 accepted nominations for councillor.

The declaration of nominations took place at the NTEC Darwin office 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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council

| POSITION | CANDIDATES IN BALLOT PAPER ORDER |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Bathurst Island Ward Councillor (6 positions) | Francisco BABUI |
| | Gawin TIPILOURA |
| | J R PILAKUI |
| | Wesley KERINAUIA |
| | Richard Hyacinth TUNGATALUM |
| | Stanley TIPILOURA |
| | Tristan MUNGATOPI |
| | John NADEN |
| | Venard PILAKUI |
| | Kevin DOOLAN |
| | Mavis Lear KERINAUIA |
| | Walter Junior KERINAUIA |
| | Leslie TUNGATULUM |
| Brian Dixon TIPUNGWUTI | |
| Milikapiti Ward Councillor (3 positions) | Pius TIPUNGWUTI |
| | Connell TIPILOURA |
| | Lynette Jane DE SANTIS |
| Pirlangimpi Ward Councillor (3 positions) | Regis PANGIRAMINNI |
| | Jennifer ULLUNGURA CLANCY |
| | Catherin STASSI |
| | Therese Marie PURUNTATAMERI |
| | Therese Rose BOURKE |
| Marius Matthew PURUNTATAMERI | |

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 centres (EVCs)

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 Darwin and five other locations. Voting in Tiwi Islands Regional Council was facilitated by mobile/remote voting teams. There was no election for Milikapiti Ward.

Postal voting

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

There were 14 postal votes applied for within the Tiwi Island Regional Council area, and 11 (79 per cent) admitted to the count.

Remote voting

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

Number of votes issued by remote voting teams

| LOCATION | VOTES ISSUED |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Pickataramoor | 14 |
| Pirlangimpi | 126 |
| Wurankuwu | 9 |
| Wurrumiyanga | 451 |

Election day voting centre

Election day for the 2017 NT Council elections was Saturday 26 August. There were no election day voting centres for Tiwi Islands Regional Council as voting was conducted by remote voting teams.

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.

These counts were conducted at the Darwin scrutiny centre.

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.

All votes received for the Tiwi Islands 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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council

There were 23 candidates contesting 12 councillor positions across three wards. The successful candidates and first preference votes received are detailed in tables below.

Voter participation by ward

There were 1,636 people on the electoral roll in the Tiwi Islands Regional Council area in the 2017 NT Council elections. Excluding the ward that did not require an election a total of 1,334 people in the remaining two wards were required to vote. Of this, 640 (48 per cent) voted.

| WARD | ENROLMENT AT 25 JULY 2017 | FORMAL VOTES | INFORMAL VOTES | TOTAL |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Bathurst Island Ward | 1,057 | 418 | 61 | 479 |
| Milikapiti Ward | 302 | <i>Voting not required</i> | | |
| Pirlangimpi Ward | 277 | 155 | 6 | 161 |

Election of six councillors – Bathurst Island Ward

At the close of nominations there were 14 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

| CANDIDATE | FIRST PREFERENCES |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Francisco BABUI | 34 |
| Gawin TIPILOURA | 36 |
| J R PILAKUI | 14 |
| Wesley KERINAIUA | 37 |
| Richard Hyacinth TUNGATALUM | 29 |
| Stanley TIPILOURA | 44 |
| Tristan MUNGATOPI | 6 |
| John NADEN | 29 |
| Venard PILAKUI | 11 |
| Kevin DOOLAN | 58 |
| Mavis Lear KERINAIUA | 30 |
| Walter Junior KERINAIUA | 18 |
| Leslie TUNGATULUM | 41 |
| Brian Dixon TIPUNGWUTI | 31 |
| TOTAL | 418 |

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 60.

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

- Kevin Doolan received the quota at count number 2
- Stanley Tipiloura received the quota at count number 12

- Gawin Tipiloura received the quota at count number 13
- Leslie Tungatulum received the quota at count number 16
- Wesley Kerinauia received the quota at count number 21
- Francisco Babui received the quota at count number 23

Kevin Doolan, Stanley Tipiloura, Gawin Tipiloura, Leslie Tungatulum, Wesley Kerinauia and Francisco Babui were duly elected.

Election of three councillors – Milikapiti Ward

At the close of nominations on Thursday 3 August 2017 the number of candidates was not more than the number of vacancies and Pius Tipungwuti, Connell Tipiloura and Lynette Jane De Santis were elected.

Election of three councillors – Pirlangimpi ward

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

| CANDIDATE | FIRST PREFERENCES |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Regis Pangiraminni | 48 |
| Jennifer Ullungura Clancy | 22 |
| Catherine Stassi | 6 |
| Therese Marie Puruntatameri | 10 |
| Therese Rose Bourke | 44 |
| Marius Matthew Puruntatameri | 25 |
| TOTAL | 155 |

As a consequence, under the proportional representation voting system, the quota of votes required for this election was 39.

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

- Regis Pangiraminni and Therese Rose Bourke received the quota at count number 1
- Marius Matthew Puruntatameri received the quota at count number 10

Regis Pangiraminni, Therese Rose Bourke and Marius Matthew Puruntatameri 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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council

| Bathurst Island Ward (6 vacancies) | Milikapiti Ward (3 vacancies) | Pirlangimpi Ward (3 vacancies) |
|--|--|---|
| Kevin Doolan Stanley Tipiloura Gawin Tipiloura Leslie Tungatulum Wesley Kerinauia Francisco Babui | Pius Tipungwuti Connell Tipiloura Lynette Jane De Santis | Regis Pangiraminni Therese Rose Bourke Marius Matthew Puruntatameri |

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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council to be \$34,878. Following the election, the costs are \$29,480 with a difference of \$5,397.

Summary of election costs

| ELECTION AREA | COSTS |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Public awareness | \$7,298 |
| Staffing | \$6,760 |
| Air charters | \$6,000 |
| Other operational costs | \$9,422 |
| TOTAL | \$29,480 |

ISSUES OF NOTE

Receipt of nomination forms

- If it wasn't for the generosity of the council, there would not have been a face-to-face information session held for potential candidates.
- In an attempt to reduce election costs the council facilitated the receipt of nomination forms. In the 2012 General elections staff in regional centres undertook this task. In 2017, 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 Tiwi Islands Regional Council was conducted.

- A total of 67 informal votes were received across the two 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 in the Bathurst Island Ward election. The NTEC attempted to assist voters in casting a formal vote by advising electors that all boxes must be numbered sequentially.