



Strategic Plan

2027-2031



Acknowledgement of Country

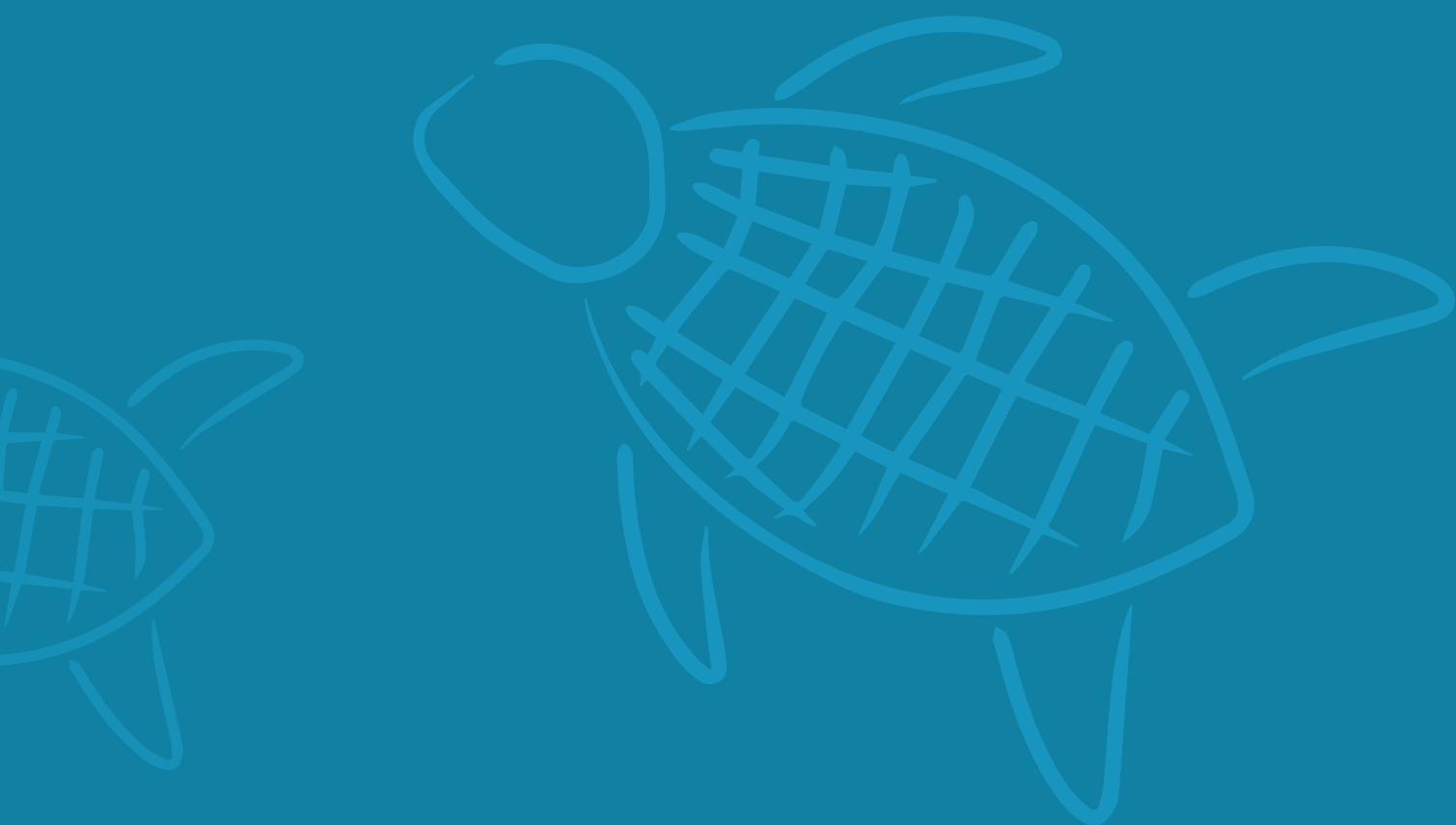
East Arnhem Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Aboriginal people of East Arnhem Land.

We pay our sincere respect to the Elders, past, present, and rising.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images and names of people who have since passed away.

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Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan provides long-term goals, outcomes and strategies that will guide East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC) over the next five years (2027-2031).

The consultation and development of this Strategic Plan involved sessions with Community Members, Local Authorities, Councillors and the Senior Leadership Team. The four goals and associated outcomes and strategies form the basis for the development of the Council's Regional Plans with associated actions. Reporting of these actions will be presented within the Council's Annual Reports.

This Strategic Plan has been developed for the next five years starting on 1 July 2026 through to 30 June 2031. This follows a financial calendar year and therefore is referred to as the Strategic Plan 2027-2031.

Consultation & Development Process



Community consultations
across six communities



Workshops with new **elected Councillors**



Workshops with **Senior Leadership Team**



Local Authority Consultations
across six communities



Engagement and review with
elected Councillors

East Arnhem Snapshot

Source: CENSUS 2021. This data includes the Groote Archipelago Region.



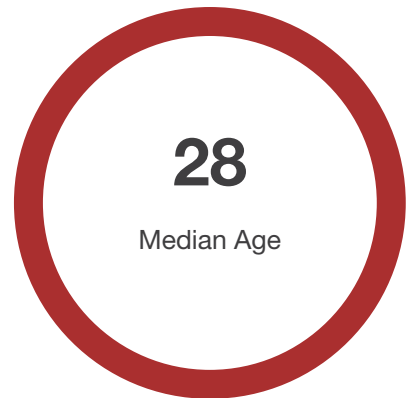
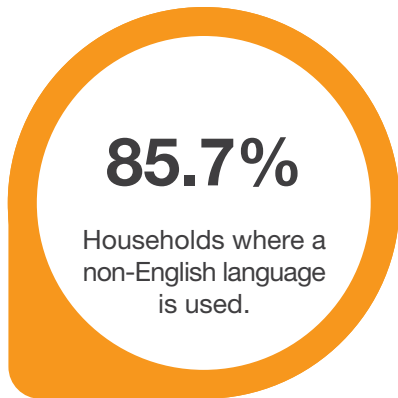
8,778

Population



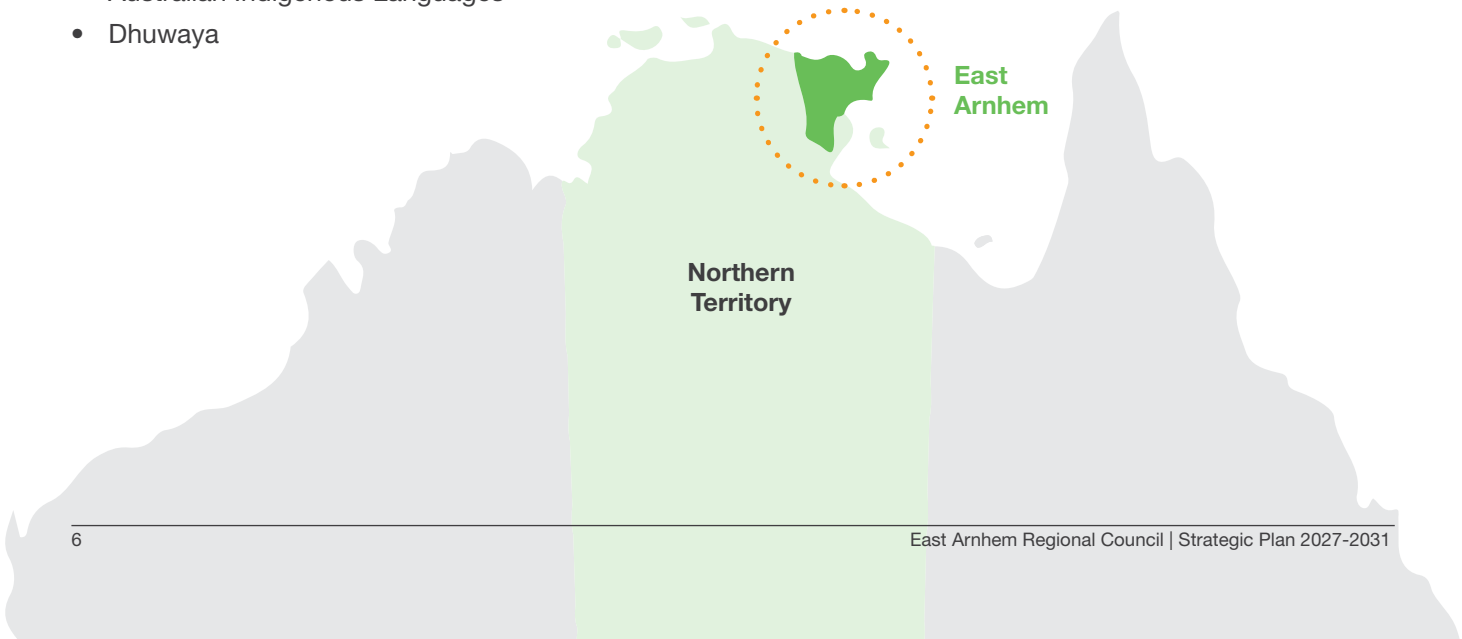
~33,000km²

Total Land Area



Top languages spoken:

- Djambarrpuyngu
- Yolngu Matha
- Anindilyakwa
- Australian Indigenous Languages
- Dhuwaya



Services Snapshot

East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC) delivers vital services that extend into community and commercial services. These services support the ongoing sustainability of our communities and address unmet needs where essential services are not provided by other organisations. EARC provides the following services directly to people living within the Council region.

- Active Communities and Youth Services
- Aged Care Services
- Australia Post
- Building and Public Infrastructure
- Cemetery Management
- Child Care Services
- Community Media
- Community Night Patrol
- Disability Services
- Fuel distribution – Gapuwiyak
- Library & Cultural Heritage
- Lighting for Public Safety
- Local Authorities and Committees
- Local Laws and Administration of Local Laws
- Local Road Maintenance & Traffic Management
- Local Road Upgrade and Construction
- Municipal Services
- Sobering Up Shelter
- Veterinary and Animal Management
- Visitor Accommodation
- Waste & Environment



6
Local Authorities



4
Public Libraries



4
Australia Post Offices



6
Outdoor Sport Ovals



~753kms
Local Roads



4
Recreation Halls



4
Landfill & Resource Recovery Facilities



5
Aged Care & Disability Centres

Top to bottom: EARC Local Authority Meeting, Galiwin'ku, NT, 2026. | EARC Library, Galiwin'ku, NT, 2025. | EARC Australia Post Office, Galiwin'ku, NT, 2025. | Community Oval, Ramingining, NT, 2025. | EARC Waste Truck, Galiwin'ku, NT, 2025. | EARC Aged Care & Disability Centre, Milingimbi, NT, 2026. | Road maintenance, NT. | EARC Recreation Hall, Galiwin'ku, NT, 2025.



Vision

A recognised and respected leader in Local Government providing high quality services, sustainable employment and development for the people of East Arnhem Regional Council.



Mission

East Arnhem Regional Council is dedicated to promoting the power of people, protection of community and respect for cultural diversity in the East Arnhem Regional Council. It does this by forming partnerships, building community capacity, advocating for regional and local issues, maximising service effectiveness and linking people with information.

Values

Human Rights // Work Confidence
Equality // Equity // Independence
Respect // Community



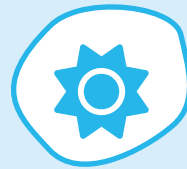
Environmental Analysis

During consultation, Elected Members identified the Council's and the region's strengths and weaknesses, and analysed the opportunities and growth that could positively or negatively impact Council and the region's residents.



Strength

- Culture and language
- History
- Respect
- Strong leaders
- Communication with elders
- Connection to land and families



Opportunity

- Being responsible for family and community
- Training that achieves results
- Career pathways
- Council protocols for external parties in communities
- Businesses – self-sustaining, self-reliance
- Council to advocate on non-Local Government opportunities



Weakness

- Housing
- Transport to homelands
- Welfare state
- Levels of Government interaction
- Violence (safe house)
- Funding needs



Growth

- Law and Order
- Government interaction and understanding
- Collaboration with external parties
- Opportunities through higher education outcomes
- Empowered communities
- Recognition of Aboriginal control of Council
- Western and traditional Law management

Goals

Our four key goals remain relevant as identified by Councillors during the consultation process. These four goals will be used to guide East Arnhem Regional Council over the next five years.



Goal 1

Leadership Through Excellence



Goal 2

Strong and Safe Communities



Goal 3

Building Capacity and Sustainability



Goal 4

Built and Natural Environments

Strategic Plan

2027-2031



Vision

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East Arnhem Regional Council is dedicated to promoting the power of people, protection of community and respect for cultural diversity in the East Arnhem Regional Council. It does this by forming partnerships, building community capacity, advocating for regional and local issues, maximising service effectiveness and linking people with information.

Goal 1

Leadership Through Excellence

Champion the advancement of the Region through professionalism and good governance.

Outcomes

- 1.1 Embed respect for local Indigenous culture through all Council practices.
- 1.2 Continual strengthening of the governance capability of elected members.
- 1.3 Build and maintain a strong, professional, empowered workforce.

Goal 3

Building Capacity and Sustainability

Deliver innovative and practical development opportunities for EARC's people and communities.

Outcomes

- 3.1 Establish formal partnerships within industry to create structured and supported pathways into employment.
- 3.2 Strong and viable Indigenous business.
- 3.3 Create opportunities for youth to build community capacity and empowerment.



Values

Human Rights // Work Confidence
Equality // Equity // Independence
Respect // Community

Goal 2

Strong and Safe Communities

Further the wellbeing of people and culture through consultation and coordination of community based programs.

Outcomes

- 2.1 Work with community and stakeholders to identify and deliver services that are accessible and support the wellbeing of community.
- 2.2 Acknowledge and respect culture through support of community events and activities.
- 2.3 Advocate on behalf of community for improved services and infrastructure that support the wellbeing and safety of all community members.

Goal 4

Built & Natural Environments

Encourage pride and respect in community through care for country and identified infrastructure.

Outcomes

- 4.1 Maintain and enhance a clean, tidy, welcoming community.
- 4.2 Maintain Council controlled roads and traffic management to a safe and usable standard.
- 4.3 Ensure buildings, plant, equipment and fleet vehicles are fit for purpose and sufficient to provide service deliverables through maintenance and security practices.
- 4.4 Secure and maintain long term tenure over Council controlled infrastructure.

Implementation

Strategic Plan



Regional Plan



Annual Report

Our Council

The East Arnhem Regional Council is the democratically elected governing body of the Aboriginal communities and homelands of the East Arnhem Land region. Its primary role is to act as a responsible decision maker that exercises the powers and functions of local government assigned to the Council under the Local Government Act (NT). This includes a legislative role for Local Authorities and Council, as formalised in the act, “to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their local communities.”

The Council has 12 Elected Council Members that represent the interests of all residents of the Council area. Elected Members formally endorse up to 14 Local Authority Members in each major community, within each cultural based ward across the region.

The Council and Local Authority Members provide leadership and guidance, facilitate communication between the Council and its constituents, and participate in the deliberations of the Council and its community activities. In addition, they ensure that the Council acts honestly, efficiently and appropriately in carrying out its statutory obligations.

East Arnhem Regional Council is dedicated to serving its constituents and ensuring that the local communities and homelands are well-served and well-represented.



Northern Territory

Our Council

» Gumurr Gattjirrk Ward

The Gumurr Gattjirrk Ward includes the community of Milingimbi and its homelands. The ward spreads across the northern tip of Cape Stewart to the southern point of Milingimbi Island, extending up through Crocodile Islands and the southern half of Howard Island.



President
Lapulung Dhamarrandji



Councillor
Ganygulpa Dhurrkay

» Birr Rawarrang Ward

The Birr Rawarrang Ward is home to the community of Ramingining and its homelands, spanning across the western border of East and West Arnhem. The ward follows the course of the scenic Goyder River through the heart of the region.



Councillor
Jason Mirritjawuy



Councillor
David Warraya

» Gumurr Miyarrka Ward

The Gumurr Miyarrka Ward includes the community of Gapuwiyak and its homelands, and spans the largest land mass of all East Arnhem Regional Council wards.



Councillor
Bandi Bandi Wunungmurra



Councillor
Bobby Wunungmurra

» Gumurr Marthakal Ward

The Gumurr Marthakal Ward includes the community of Galiwin'ku and its homelands. The ward extends up through Elcho Island, through the Wessel Islands, across to the English Company Islands and the northern most point of Point Napier.



Deputy President
**Stephen Malwarriwuy
Dhamarrandji**



Councillor
Evelyna Dhamarrandji



Councillor
Cyril Bukulatjpi

» Gumurr Miwatj Ward

The Gumurr Miwatj Ward includes the communities of Yirrkala and Gunyangara, with many homelands. The ward extends through Melville Bay to the eastern most part of Arnhem Bay, and down through parts of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited provides local government services to the Nhulunbuy township under Registered Mining or Special Purpose Leases.



Councillor
Marrpalawuy Marika



Councillor
Priscilla Yunupingu

*As of February 2026, East Arnhem Regional Council has one casual vacancy within the Gumurr Miwatj Ward. A By Election for the Gumurr Miwatj Ward casual vacancy will be held before July 2026.

Our Team



Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Dale Keehne

Areas of responsibility:

- Advocacy
- Communications
- Executive Leadership
- Governance
- Relationship Management



Director – Council Services

Signe Balodis

Areas of responsibility:

- Municipal Services
- Waste & Environment
- Community Night Patrol
- Australia Post
- Cemetery Management
- Animal Management
- Sobering Up Shelter
- Community Events
- Community Media
- Visitor Accommodation
- Local Laws
- Fuel Distribution Service (Gapuwiyak)



Director – Community Services

Divyan Ahimaz

Areas of responsibility:

- Active Communities
- Aged Care Services
- Child Care Services
- Disability Services
- Library & Cultural Heritage
- Youth Services



General Manager –
Technical and Infrastructure Services
Sonia Campbell

Areas of responsibility:

- Asset Management
- Capital Built Infrastructure
- Fleet & Plant Management
- Local Road Maintenance & Traffic Management
- Local Road Upgrade and Construction
- Public Works Infrastructure
- Tenancy & Leasing



General Manager –
People and Corporate Services
Merianne Bretag

Areas of responsibility:

- Information & Communications Technology
- Workplace Health & Safety
- Finance
- Human Resources & Industrial Relations
- Training & Development
- Procurement
- Records Management
- Payroll

Goal 1

Leadership Through Excellence

Champion the advancement of the Region through professionalism and good governance.

Outcomes

1.1 Embed respect for local Indigenous culture through all Council practices.

1.3 Build and maintain a strong, professional, empowered workforce.

1.2 Continual strengthening of the governance capability of elected members.

Leadership Through Excellence

| Outcome | Strategy |
|---|---|
| 1.1 Embed respect for local Indigenous culture through all Council practices. | 1.1.1 Embed cultural considerations in employment and operational practices. |
| | 1.1.2 Consider local Indigenous cultural context in Council decision-making, planning and service delivery. |
| | 1.1.3 Ensure Council staff have the cultural knowledge required to perform their roles respectfully and appropriately. |
| 1.2 Continual strengthening of the governance capability of elected members. | 1.2.1 Implement and refine internal systems and procedures that support high quality governance and decision making, with ongoing improvements in communication between elected members and Council management. |
| 1.3 Build and maintain a strong, professional, empowered workforce. | 1.3.1 Build a professional and sustainable workforce through effective human resource practices, local recruitment and retention, and ongoing learning and development. |

Goal 2

Strong and Safe Communities

Further the wellbeing of people and culture through consultation and coordination of community based programs.

Outcomes

2.1 Work with community and stakeholders to identify and deliver services that are accessible and support the wellbeing of community.

2.2 Acknowledge and respect culture through support of community events and activities.

2.3 Advocate on behalf of community for improved services and infrastructure that support the wellbeing and safety of all community members.

Strong and Safe Communities

| Outcome | Strategy |
|--|---|
| 2.1 Work with community and stakeholders to identify and deliver services that are accessible and support the wellbeing of community. | 2.1.1 Use Local Authority meetings and structured stakeholder engagement to identify community priorities, inform service planning, and guide service delivery. |
| | 2.1.2 Deliver Community Service Programs that align with community feedback and consultations. |
| 2.2 Acknowledge and respect culture through support of community events and activities. | 2.2.1 Promote, support and conduct cultural, civic, sporting and environmental events. |
| 2.3 Advocate on behalf of community for improved services and infrastructure that support the wellbeing and safety of all community members. | 2.3.1 Advocate on social, economic, cultural and environmental issues of importance to communities and homelands. |

Goal 3

Building Capacity and Sustainability

Deliver innovative and practical development opportunities for EARC's people and communities.

Outcomes

3.1 Establish formal partnerships within industry to create structured and supported pathways into employment.

3.2 Strong and viable Indigenous business.

3.3 Create opportunities for youth to build community capacity and empowerment.



Building Capacity and Sustainability

| Outcome | Strategy |
|--|---|
| 3.1 Establish formal partnerships within industry to create structured and supported pathways into employment. | 3.1.1 Increase opportunities for school based employment as well as exploring traineeships and apprenticeships. |
| 3.2 Strong and viable Indigenous business. | 3.2.1 Support local businesses and organisations with an emphasis on Indigenous employment. |
| 3.3 Create opportunities for youth to build community capacity and empowerment. | 3.3.1 Encourage youth as future leaders through Local Authorities and Council. |

Goal 4

Built and Natural Environments

Encourage pride and respect in community through care for country and identified infrastructure.

Outcomes

4.1 Maintain and enhance a clean, tidy, welcoming community.

4.2 Maintain Council controlled roads and traffic management to a safe and usable standard.

4.3 Ensure buildings, plant, equipment and fleet vehicles are fit for purpose and sufficient to provide service deliverables through maintenance and security practices.

4.4 Secure and maintain long term tenure over Council controlled infrastructure.



Built and Natural Environments

| Outcome | Strategy |
|--|---|
| 4.1 Maintain and enhance a clean, tidy, welcoming community. | 4.1.1 Deliver waste services and manage waste facilities in line with regulatory and licence requirements. |
| | 4.1.2 Plan and manage waste, recycling and disposal services to meet current and future community needs, including community education. |
| 4.2 Maintain Council controlled roads and traffic management to a safe and usable standard. | 4.2.1 Maintain transport infrastructure standards appropriate for the East Arnhem region aligned to the Australian standard. |
| | 4.2.2 Develop, maintain, monitor and regularly review scheduled maintenance plans for all Council controlled transport infrastructure. |
| | 4.2.3 Upgrade street signs and traffic management infrastructure as required, to meet road safety standards. |
| | 4.2.4 Implement cost effective practices to minimise operational expenditure and maximise income and revenue for the roads infrastructure area. |
| 4.3 Ensure buildings, plant, equipment and fleet vehicles are fit for purpose and sufficient to provide service deliverables through maintenance and security practices. | 4.3.1 Implement targeted modern information and communications technologies (e.g. cloud-based systems, customer service automation, artificial intelligence and mobile platforms) to improve service delivery efficiency. |
| | 4.3.2 Undertake measures aiming to reduce future reactive maintenance to Council controlled Building Infrastructure assets. |
| | 4.3.3 Maintain accurate motor plant and vehicle data to ensure all Assets are in a safe and operational condition. |
| 4.4 Secure and maintain long term tenure over Council controlled infrastructure. | 4.4.1 Establish and maintain long term Section 19 leases for Council controlled building infrastructure on Aboriginal land. |
| | 4.4.2 Maintain Council's capital holdings in line with Council needs and future requirements. |



Dedicated to promoting the
**power of people, protection
of community and respect
for cultural diversity.**

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