



**OPEN AGENDA for the Gunyangara
Local Authority
28 May 2026**

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

Dhuwandja dhäwu dhipuŋur EARC-ŋur bukmakku yolŋuw mala nhämunha limurr ga nhina wäŋakurr malaŋuwurr buku-ŋiwŋaram:

- limurr dhu rä-l-manapanmirr ganydjarrwu limurrŋgalaŋaw rur'maranharaw,
- ga dharray walŋaw,
- ga ŋayaŋu-ŋapmaranhamirr bukmak bala-räli'yunmirr.

Dhaŋu

Dhaŋum dhäwu EARC-ŋur bukmakku yolŋuwu warrawu nhämunha ŋalma yaka nyena ŋayambalmurru buku-ŋiw'yuman:

- ŋalma ŋarru räal-manapanmi ganydjarrwu ŋakanhaminyarawu ŋalmaliŋuwaywuru,
- ga dharray walŋawu,
- ga ŋayaŋu-ŋapthumanmi bukmak bala-räli'yunmi.

Gumatj

Dhuwalanydja dhäwu EARC-ŋuru bukmakku yolŋuwu mala nhämunha ŋilimurru yukurra nhina wäŋakurru buku-ŋiw'yunmarama:

- ŋilimurru yuru rä-l-manapanmirri ganydjarrwu gaŋga'thinyarawu ŋilimurrŋgalaŋawu,
- ga dharray walŋawu,
- ga ŋayaŋu-ŋapthunmaranhamirr bukmak bala-lili'yunmirri.

Marraŋu

Dhuwanydji dhäwu barranŋa'yun EARC-ŋur bukmakku yolŋuw yukurr buku-ŋiw'maram wäŋa mittji malanyha:

- Dalimurr wurruku rä-l-manapanmirr djäk ganydjarrwu ŋalimurrŋgalaŋaw
- Gaŋgathinyamaranharaw woŋdanŋarrgunharaw,
- Ga djäga walŋaw,
- Ga ŋayaŋu-ŋapmaranhamirr ŋalimurr wurruku bukmak bala-räli'yunmirr.

Under closing the gap priority reforms, socio economic outcome 16 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are strong, supported and flourishing and it is standard practice for reports to be considered, discussed and debated in the traditional dialects of the East Arnhem region, Yolngu Matha.

EAST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of the Gunyangara Local Authority will be held at the Gunyangara Council Office offices on Thursday 28 May 2026 at 11:30 am.

Agendas and minutes are available on the Council website www.eastarnhem.nt.gov.au and can be viewed at the Councils public office.

Dale Keehne
Chief Executive Officer

Members:

Antoine Gintz
Doug Yunupingu
Elizika Puertollano
Syd Yunupingu
Malakhi Puertollano
Kingsley Dhamarrandji
Murphy Yunupingu
Cr Priscilla Yunupingu

Dial-in Details:**Microsoft Teams**

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 448 931 642 337 79

Passcode: oi9Ax3Ps

Dial in by phone

[+61 2 8318 0005,739277030#](#) Australia, Sydney

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 739 277 030#

Schedule 1 Code of conduct**1 Honesty and integrity**

A member must act honestly and with integrity in performing official functions.

2 Care and diligence

A member must act with reasonable care and diligence in performing official functions.

3 Courtesy

A member must act with courtesy towards other members, council staff, electors and members of the public.

4 Prohibition on bullying

A member must not bully another person in the course of performing official functions.

5 Conduct towards council staff

A member must not direct, reprimand, or interfere in the management of council staff.

6 Respect for cultural diversity and culture

6.1 A member must respect cultural diversity and must not therefore discriminate against others, or the opinions of others, on the ground of their cultural background.

6.2 A member must act with respect for cultural beliefs and practices in relation to other members, council staff, electors and members of the public.

7 Conflict of interest

7.1 A member must avoid any conflict of interest, whether actual or perceived, when undertaking official functions and responsibilities.

7.2 If a conflict of interest exists, the member must comply with any statutory obligations of disclosure.

8 Respect for confidences

8.1 A member must respect the confidentiality of information obtained in confidence in the member's official capacity.

8.2 A member must not make improper use of confidential information obtained in an official capacity to gain a private benefit or to cause harm to another.

9 Gifts

9.1 A member must not solicit, encourage or accept gifts or private benefits from any person who might have an interest in obtaining a benefit from the council.

9.2 A member must not accept a gift from a person that is given in relation to the person's interest in obtaining a benefit from the council.

10 Accountability

A member must be prepared at all times to account for the member's performance as a member and the member's use of council resources.

11 Interests of municipality, region or shire to be paramount

11.1 A member must act in what the member genuinely believes to be the best interests of the municipality, region or shire.

11.2 In particular, a member must seek to ensure that the member's decisions and actions are based on an honest, reasonable and properly informed judgment about what best advances the best interests of the municipality, region or shire.

12 Training

A member must undertake relevant training in good faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITEM	SUBJECT	PAGE NO
1	MEETING ESTABLISHMENT	6
1.2	Opening of Meeting	6
1.3	Attendance	6
1.4	Conflict of Interest	6
1.5	Previous Local Authority Minutes	7
2	NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT	13
2.1	Local Authority Action Items	13
2.2	CEO Report	19
2.3	Council Services Report	25
2.4	Technical and Infrastructure Services Report	35
2.5	Human Resources and Finance Report	38
3	PRESENTATIONS AND GENERAL BUSINESS	43
3.1	Discussion with the Local Police Department	43
3.2	Presentation from the Australian Border Force	43
3.3	Presentation from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development	43
4	MEETING CLOSE	43

1 Meeting Establishment

YOW NGILIMURR BUKU'LUNGTHUN DHIYAK MEETINGU GA MALA DJARRYUN ROM

The Chair may wish to open the meeting with a prayer.

MEETING ESTABLISHMENT

1.3 Attendance

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Local Authority:

- (a) Notes the absence of <>**
- (b) Notes the apology received from <>**
- (c) Notes <> are absent with permission of the Local Authority.**
- (d) Determines <> are absent without permission of the Local Authority under Section 47(1) (0) of the Act.**

SUMMARY:

This report is also to table, for the Councils record, any absences, apologies and requests for leave of absence received from the Council members and what absences that the Council given permission for.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

MEETING ESTABLISHMENT

1.4 Conflict of Interest

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Local Authority notes no conflicts of interest declared at today's meeting.

OR

That the Local Authority notes any conflicts of interest declared at today's meeting.

SUMMARY:

This report is tabled for members to declare any conflicts they have within the agenda.

BACKGROUND:

The Local Government Act (Chapter 7, Part 7.2, Section 114 – Conflict of Interest) details that “A member has a conflict of interest in a question arising for decision by the audit committee, council, council committee or Local Authority if the member or an associate of the member has any of the following interests in how the question is decided:

- (a) A direct interest
- (b) An indirect financial interest
- (c) An indirect interest by close association
- (d) An indirect interest due to conflicting duties”.

GENERAL:

A conflict of interest is a situation that has the potential to undermine a person’s ability to be impartial because of the possibility of a clash between the person’s self-interest and professional interest or public interest.

When this occurs, the Local Authority Member should declare the interest and remove themselves from the decision-making process.

The report author does not have a conflict of interest in this matter (Section 179 of the Act).

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

MEETING ESTABLISHMENT

- 1.5 Previous Local Authority Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Authority approves the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 March 2026.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Gunyangara Local Authority- Minutes 26 March 2026 [1.5.1 - 5 pages]



**OPEN MINUTES for the Gunyangara
Provisional Local Authority
26 March 2026**

GUNYANGARA LOCAL AUTHORITY MINUTES

26 MARCH 2026

1 Meeting Establishment

YOW NGILIMURR BUKU'LUNGTHUN DHIYAK MEETINGU GA MALA DJARRYUN ROM

Antoine Gintz opened the meeting at 11:35 am.

Members in Attendance:

Antoine Gintz (Chair)
Kingsley Dhamarrandji
Doug Yunupingu
Murphy Yunupingu

East Arnhem Regional Council Staff:

Dale Keehne (Chief Executive Officer)
Signe Balodis (Director – Council Services)
Sonia Campbell (GM – Technical and Infrastructure Services) – Attended online
Labhjeet Bhullar (Council Services Manager)
Paul Hyde Kaduru (Governance and Compliance Manager) – Attended online

MEETING ESTABLISHMENT

1.3 Attendance

SUMMARY:

This report is also to table, for the Councils record, any absences, apologies and requests for leave of absence received from the Council members and what absences that the Council given permission for.

GUN 2025/34 **RESOLVED (Antoine Gintz/Kingsley Dhamarrandji)****That the Local Authority:**

- (a) **Notes the absence of Cr. Priscilla Yunupingu, Elizika Puertollano, Syd Yunupingu and Malakhi Puertollano.**
- (b) **Notes the apology received from Cr. Priscilla Yunupingu.**
- (c) **Notes Cr. Priscilla Yunupingu, Elizika Puertollano, Syd Yunupingu and Malakhi Puertollano are absent with permission of the Local Authority.**
- (d) **Requests to contact the members regarding their continuation as LA members.**

MEETING ESTABLISHMENT

1.4 Conflict of Interest

SUMMARY:

This report is tabled for members to declare any conflicts they have within the agenda.

GUN 2025/41 **RESOLVED (Doug Yunupingu/Kingsley Dhamarrandji)****That the Local Authority notes no conflicts of interest declared at today's meeting.**

GUNYANGARA LOCAL AUTHORITY MINUTES

26 MARCH 2026

MEETING ESTABLISHMENT

1.5 Previous Local Authority Minutes

The meeting was provisional due to lack of quorum. As a result, the proposed resolution to approve the minutes of 29 January 2026 and 30 October 2025 did not pass and will be considered at the next meeting.

2 Noting Progress and Achievement

YOW GALKI MEETING DJA DHAWARYUNA YURRU NGILIMURR RONGIYI GA NHAMA NGUNIYI

NANYTJAK NGU DHARUK MALAN GA YURUM GA BUKU WEKAM DHIYAKU MEETING GU

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.1 Local Authority Action Items

SUMMARY:

The Local Authority is asked to review the range of actions and progress to complete them.

GUN 2025/37 **RESOLVED** (Cr. Murphy Yunupingu/Kingsley Dhamarrandji)

That the Local Authority notes the progress of actions from the previous meetings, new actions and request that completed items be removed from the Action Register for the Council to endorse.

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.2 CEO Report

SUMMARY:

This is a report of the key broad issues since the last report to the Local Authority, in addition to those covered in other parts of the agenda.

GUN 2025/36 **RESOLVED** (Kingsley Dhamarrandji/Doug Yunupingu)

That the Local Authority :

(a) Notes the CEO report.

(b) Endorses the improved and expanded Advocacy issues as endorsed by Council.

GUNYANGARA LOCAL AUTHORITY MINUTES

26 MARCH 2026

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.3 Council Services Report

SUMMARY:

This report is provided by the Council Operations Manager at every Local Authority Meeting to provide information and updates to members.

GUN 2025/39 **RESOLVED (Doug Yunupingu/Kingsley Dhamarrandji)**

That the Local Authority notes the Council Services Managers report.

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.4 Technical and Infrastructure Services Report

SUMMARY:

This report is submitted for the Local Authority's consideration and provides program updates from the Technical and Infrastructure Directorate. The updates pertain to capital projects and initiatives aligned with the 2025-2026 Annual Plan.

GUN 2025/38 **RESOLVED (Antoine Gintz/Cr. Murphy Yunupingu)**

That Local Authority note the Technical Services Report.

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.5 Human Resources and Finance Report

SUMMARY:

This report presents the financials plus employment statistics as of 28 February 2026 within the Local Authority area.

GUN 2025/40 **RESOLVED (Antoine Gintz/Doug Yunupingu)**

That Local Authority receives the Human Resources and Employment information as of 28 February 2026.

3 General Business and Date of Next Meeting**DISCUSSION WITH THE LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT**

3.1 Discussion with the Local Police Department

GUN 2025/35 **RESOLVED (Antoine Gintz/Doug Yunupingu)**

That the Local Authority

(a) Notes the updates provided by the local Police Department.

GUNYANGARA LOCAL AUTHORITY MINUTES

26 MARCH 2026

- (b) Calls for an official review to be conducted to determine the structural safety rating of all housing and other buildings across the local communities and homelands of East Arnhem land and beyond, to ensure the protection of lives, through all people being properly informed of where they can safely shelter, and provision of funding to construct new cyclone shelters / multi purpose halls where needed, in the event of cyclones up to a category level 5.

YOUTH REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

3.2 Youth Representation and Engagement

GUN 2025/43 **RESOLVED** (Doug Yunupingu/Kingsley Dhamarrandji)

That the Local Authority Endorses the appointment of at least one young woman and one young man (16 to 25 years of age) – to formalise the greater direct engagement of young people, and their voices on important issues, challenges and opportunities.

4 Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 02:54 pm.

This page and the preceding pages are the minutes of the Gunyangara Local Authority Ordinary Meeting held on 26 March 2026.

2 Noting Progress and Achievement

YOW GALKI MEETING DJA DHAWARYUNA YURRU NGILIMURR RONGIYI GA NHAMA NGUNIYI

NANYTJAK NGU DHARUK MALAN GA YURUM GA BUKU WEKAM DHIYAKU MEETING GU

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.1 Local Authority Action Items

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Authority notes the progress of actions from the previous meetings, new actions and request that completed items be removed from the Action Register for the Council to endorse.

SUMMARY:

The Local Authority is asked to review the range of actions and progress to complete them.

BACKGROUND:

The current Local Authority Action Items List, and updates on progress to complete them, is attached.

GENERAL:

The attached report gives the Local Authority an opportunity to check that actions from previous meetings are being implemented. New actions will be added to the Action Register.

If an action is completed the Local Authority need to request the item to be removed from the Action Register, for the Council to endorse.

The report author does not have a conflict of interest in this matter (Section 179 of the Act).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Local Authority Action items Gungahlin 2026 [2.1.1 - 5 pages]

GUNYANGARA ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM	ACTION OWNER	ACTIONS	STATUS
Kava		<p>That the Local Authority:</p> <p>a) Notes the report on the Kava Pilot: Allowing the commercial importation of kava.</p> <p>b) Supports comprehensive community consultation as highlighted in the Northern Territory Government’s submission to the Australian Government’s Kava Pilot Phase 2: Allowing the Commercial Importation of Kava consultation paper, and the call for Commonwealth funding to support either: 1) increased compliance and policing for the increase in the illicit kava trade, or 2) effective and informed local decision making about kava management to minimise potential harms.</p> <p>c) Supports the Northern Territory Government’s request for funding to support research into the health and social impacts from increased kava availability</p>	<p>20.10.22 - President and CEO to follow up a positive discussion on this issue at a meeting with the Chief Minister to the region, with the Executive Director of the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, on gaining action on the Local Authority and Council resolutions.</p> <p>28.09.23 – CEO to provide update in his report during meeting.</p> <p>14.12.23 – Dr Frank Daly no longer works for NTG, waiting on replacement to continue discussions. Meeting with Jim Rogers and NIAA postponed until Feb Council meeting.</p> <p>02.02.24 – NIAA and NTG and Police to attend next Council meeting to continue discussions.</p> <p>21.02.24 – Discussion took place among the PFES and NTG regarding issues relating to Kava and Alcohol in the communities. PFES requested continuous support from communities to provide information so that these can be addressed.</p> <p>09.04.24 – Ongoing.</p> <p>24.04.24 – CEO to follow up with Department.</p> <p>03.06.24 NIAA and NTG to be invited to next Council meeting to provide an update.</p> <p>25.06.24 – NIAA and NTG attending June Council meeting to provide update and discuss.</p> <p>29.07.24 – No further updates to provide.</p> <p>31.01.25 – No further updates, Jacinta Price’s office has been engaged in line with the 8 Advocacy items.</p> <p>19.02.25 – Council is going to seek the support of Local Member Mark Yingiya Guyula MLA for Mulka to raise this issue.</p> <p>03/04/2025 – Further information in CEO Report.</p> <p>23.04.25 – No change will re-address with newly elected Government.</p> <p>25.06.25 – Councillors want to form a committee and travel to Darwin to raise their concerns and get some action. They are tired of no action and are especially worried about the harm the illegal sale of kava is causing in the community, particularly to children.</p> <p>30.10.25 - Police in Nhulunbuy informed that they received a letter from the Minister stating that the NT Government is willing to conduct community consultations.</p>

GUNYANGARA ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM	ACTION OWNER	ACTIONS	STATUS
<p>Speed safety signage and merged action 'Council to provide stickers for bins, providing correct orientation.'</p>		<p>Members request speed/safety signage be added to both sides of rubbish bins.</p>	<p>27.09.24 – Director Council Services to action with Manager Council Services and provide update. From merged action - 09.04.24 – Murphy Yunupingu to provide translation wording for the sticker. 09.04.24 – Council Services Manager to work with Murphy to get the wording to start the sticker process. 24.04.24 – Stickers to be provided. 03.06.24 – Council Services/MSS to find out where current stickers are located and get them out to community. 25.06.24 – Ongoing Council Services Manager to update. 27.09.24 – Request waste services Manager provide stickers be attached to rubbish bins. 31.01.25 – No further updates. Decision to be made on what signs need to say on the bins. Look at one for top of bin showing direction to point to street, - speed signs in language - 'fill me up' being one suggestion. General Manger Technical and Infrastructure Services waiting on signage suggestions from members. Do members want 'slow down' in Yolngu? Options to be provided at next LA meeting. 'Correct orientation for the bin'. 03.04.2025 — Members looked at the handout provided by Communications Advisor which was written in Gumatj – it stated, 'fill me up'. On other side it says 'slow down 40ks' – Members would like signage just to say 'Slow Down' with a pedestrian with a child to show people walking. Without a speed limit. (Members also noted that 40ks and hour is too fast. General Manager Technical Services advised the current audit that also includes road safety will be able to investigate this as well) Review the artwork and provide Council Services Manager with revised artwork and further discussion with Murphy prior to next LA Meeting. Also correct spelling on the other side. 23.04.25 – In last LA meeting some artwork was presented to members and the chair has approved the latest signage, so production of the stickers for the bins will commence. 25.06.25- stickers have been ordered, once received they will be applied to the bins. 30.10.25 – The stickers have been received and will be installed on the bins by 30th of November.</p>

GUNYANGARA ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM	ACTION OWNER	ACTIONS	STATUS
			<p>26.11.25 – In progress. 26.03.26 - In progress.</p>
Speed humps.		Speed Humps are required across community.	<p>03.04.25 – General Manager Infrastructure Services to implement with audit and requires a map of community to show where the community wants the speed humps. Working with Council Services Manager and members – sit down and map it out. 23.04.25 – Engaged with contractor for new speed humps. 25.06.25 – No further update yet. 30.10.25 - TransportWise has finished the audit and submitted their report. The GM Technical & Infrastructure Services and RM Transport Infrastructure will meet with TransportWise to go through the recommendations and plan a 5–10 year strategy for transport infrastructure. To make sure grant money is used for the most important repairs, maintenance, and upgrades. 22.11.25 – Review of report has been completed waiting on community signage maps to undertake installation of signage and speed humps. 24.02.26 – Currently being procured. 26.03.26 – Engaged Local contractor. Estimated completion by end of April.</p>
Need for the provision of environmental flows to be re-established between north and south water bodies currently separated by the causeway accessing Gunyangara.		The lack of tidal flow has resulted in the silting up of the south water body.	<p>27.09.24 – Director Technical and Infrastructure Services to investigate and provide an update. 11.12.24 – Ongoing 31.01.25 – Regional Manager Transport and Infrastructure currently investigating and looking at different solutions. 03.04.25 - Currently in discussions with ARRCOS requested them to look at it and provide a solution. 23.04.25 – Ongoing with ARRCOS 25.06.25 – Further update to be provided once received. 30.10.25 - RM Transport Infrastructure seeking confirmation on the location and extent of work/water bodies area so further investigation can be undertaken appropriately. 24.10.25 – Needed to Seek External funding. 26.03.26 - Needed to Seek External funding.</p>

GUNYANGARA ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM	ACTION OWNER	ACTIONS	STATUS
Footpath from Boat club to EARC council office road corner along the Drimmie Head road and additional solar lights installed.		This Footpath is needed for safety reasons as residents are walking along the road in the dark.	<p>30.10.25 – Proceed with further works when the Gunyangara Infrastructure assessment has been finalised.</p> <p>22.11.25 – To be mapped in the new year and released as Tender pending funding available.</p> <p>24.02.26 – Will be mapped in Grant Funding in the New Financial Year.</p> <p>26.03.26 – Seeking the funds.</p>

ADVOCACY ITEMS/ITEMS ON HOLD:

Gunyangara Roads Stormwater Drainage Upgrade Project		<p>28.09 – Waiting on tenders to close. To hopefully be taken to October Council meeting. Updating at next meeting.</p> <p>26.10 Tenders will be going to special meeting in 2 to 3 weeks. Update to be provided.</p> <p>02.02.24 – Ongoing awaiting further negotiation of the contract.</p> <p>09.04.24 – Ongoing.</p> <p>24.04.24 – Going back to Tender.</p> <p>03.06.24 – Still out to tender.</p> <p>25.06.24 – As above - rolled over as part of draft budget and annual plan.</p> <p>27.07.24 to be placed in Advocacy.</p> <p>11.12.24 May be able to access additional funding, may be able to advertise for third round – give an update once tender submissions received in next couple of months.</p> <p>31.01.25 a Road audit is coming through for road safety – waiting on it’s completion to understand what needs to occur – current potholes will be filled in next week.</p> <p>23.04.25 Will commence early May.</p> <p>26.03.26 – Waiting for Survey plans of community roads infrastructure from Gumatj.</p> <p>Seek external funding for this project.</p>
Growing Regions Grant Round.	Gunyangara Oval Cyclone and sports building.	<p>28.09 – EOI still underway – hopefully have made the second round in the application process – more updates next meeting.</p>

GUNYANGARA ACTIONS

		<p>26.10 Has made the 2nd round. NO NTG funding required. Will provide update.</p> <p>14.12.23 – Contact from Grant Dept states this has made the 2nd round of Grant process. New Letter of Support submitted.</p> <p>02.02.24 – Application lodged in December and waiting to hear back on result of application. Will keep updating the members.</p> <p>09.04.24 – No update. Waiting to hear back on result of application. Will keep updating the members.</p> <p>24.04.24 – as above, still waiting on information.</p> <p>03.06.24 unsuccessful – covered in Tech report.</p> <p>31.01.25 – Move to Advocacy</p>
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NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.2 CEO Report

AUTHOR Dale Keehne (Chief Executive Officer)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Authority notes the CEO Report.

SUMMARY:

This is a report of the key broad issues since the last report to the Local Authority, in addition to those covered in other parts of the agenda.

GENERAL:

The latest issue that the Council and Local Authorities have added to the Council's Advocacy Agenda is:

The de-registration of providers or related companies of disability services that are involved in exploitation and abuse of clients, and other illegal activities.

As CEO I have provided direct input from Council to the NT News / news.com.au on the nature and extent of the exploitation of community members with a disability, and a call for action by the Federal Government to address it.

These points were included in the published news article, that I will talk through with Local Authority Members.

The report author does not have a conflict of interest in this matter (Section 179 of the Act).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 17052026 N T- News East- Arnhem- Regional- Council-moves-to-protect- NDI S-participants-from-dodgy-p [2.2.1 - 2 pages]
2. 17052026 N T- News EAR C-moves-to-protect- NDI S-participants-from-dodgy-providers-online 1_i 7 A 89 [2.2.2 - 3 pages]

SUNDAY Territorian

MAY 17, 2026

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PAGE 2



BASS FANS BRAVE HEAT
PAGES 4 - 5



NT'S BUDGET CLASH
PAGES 10 - 11

FOOTY FEVER HITS NT

GC Suns shine in the Top End as they notch their 10th win in a row at their Darwin fortress **PAGES 12-13**



Council calls for crackdown on dodgy NDIS providers

CARE CROOKS

A remote Northern Territory regional council has taken an unprecedented step in its battle to protect vulnerable citizens from "abuse" by unscrupulous National Disability Insurance Scheme providers.

FULL STORY, PAGE 7

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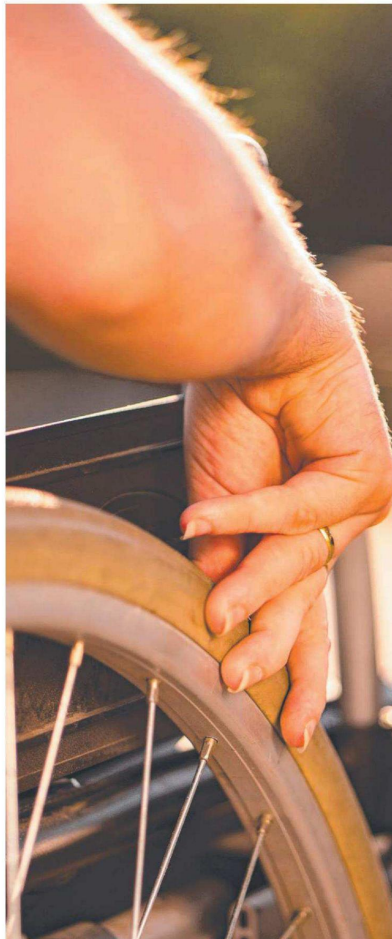


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DODGY PROVIDERS TOLD TO GET OUT OF TOWNS



REMOTE COUNCIL ACTS TO PROTECT THE VULNERABLE

Camden Smith

A remote Northern Territory regional council has taken an unprecedented step in its battle to protect vulnerable citizens from "abuse" by unscrupulous National Disability Insurance Scheme providers.

East Arnhem Regional Council recently moved to protect scores of NDIS participants from dodgy service providers, as Territory courts prepare to hear allegations of systemic fraud by NT providers.

At a meeting earlier this year East Arnhem Regional Council carried a formal resolution to protect local NDIS users from operators believed to be acting unethically or illegally.

Communities in East Arnhem Regional Council include Galiwinku, Gapuiyak, Milingimbi and Ramingining. Council's motion sought "the de-registration of providers or related companies of disability services that are involved in exploitation and abuse of clients, and other illegal activities."

East Arnhem Regional Council chief executive Dale Keehne said NDIS providers have entered communities without local ties, housing, workforce or resources and approached people with pre-filled service agreements.

"They were falsely claiming links to councils, community leaders or existing providers," Mr Keehne said. "Over-quoting and overcharging are common and there are community reports of inducement



National Disability Insurance Scheme

ments including illegal supply of kava and alcohol.

"We have had reports of incentives being offered including phones, food, alcohol, cigarettes, cash and vehicles to switch providers. That rapidly exhausts plans and leaves trusted providers as a last resort.

"Participants are then unable to access other genuine and needed services. We have reports of providers claiming significant funds from participants' NDIS allocations by manipulating the participant's need to travel to Darwin for apparent respite."

Another lurk involved support co-ordination services claiming payments for phoning participants in remote communities, then providing no follow-up services or physical visits or participant assessments.

"Unscrupulous providers attempt to gain permits from the Northern Land Council on false grounds, to gain access to communities for their exploitation," Mr Keehne said.

"There are reports of them targeting Aboriginal people with disability at Royal Darwin Hospital, particularly young mothers of children with disabilities."

He said a result of the cor-

ruption is that participant plans are exhausted without essential supports being delivered, meaning participants return to established providers in poorer condition and without funding.

"Remote participants are especially vulnerable due to complexity, poverty and thin markets," Mr Keehne said.

"Trust in the NDIS and its providers is eroded, and legitimate providers are tarnished by bad actors. As well, fraudulent claiming distorts utilisation data, overstating market capacity."

In a column in this newspaper (below), Somerville Community Services chief executive Natasha Fyles noted the need for registration in the Northern Territory to deliver kid sports voucher programs, but not NDIS programs. Dale Keehne agrees that substantial anomaly must be reversed.

"Providers operating in remote communities should be NDIS registered, given heightened vulnerability and risk," he said. "Amendments to registration claims should be proportionate to risk, but remote -

ness and vulnerability do not appear to be considered in these assessments.

Community safeguards are important but cannot replace regulation. "Questions remain about how providers with no local ties, housing or infrastructure receive permits to operate in the community."

Mr Keehne said in conjunction with sweeping changes announced to the NDIS last month, a major increase is required to resource the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission "to support effective education, regulation and enforcement - which is significantly under resourced."



East Arnhem Regional Council's Dale Keehne.

NDIS changes necessary to secure scheme's future

Natasha Fyles



The National Disability Insurance Scheme, or NDIS as it is known, was established in 2013 after a grassroots advocacy campaign that fought for a fairer system for disability support recognising that "Every Australian Counts".

Since it started the NDIS has empowered Territorians living with disability to have choice and control. People with a disability are individuals and therefore the packages that support them need to be designed individually. There can't be a broadbrush approach.

There's an acknowledgment

that this vital service for many Territorians needs to change and the NDIS needs to be sustainable for the long term.

Minister Mark Butler recently outlined to the National Press Club the most significant changes in the way disability supports will be provided since the inception of the NDIS. The government's plan to secure the future of the scheme will be delivered through four pillars: fighting fraud and stopping rorts; slowing rapid costs increases; clearer eligibility requirements; and delivering quality services and support.

The minister spoke about a reduction in NDIS expenditure from over \$70bn to \$55bn by 2030. Figures have been quoted of a reduction of 160,000 people on the scheme. There is much uncertainty as

to who these people will be and what services will be available to them. Understandably, it was what was not announced that has caused much anxiety. When you're taking something away from people, you need to identify who and what will replace that.

Sadly, since the introduction of the NDIS there have been people who have come to the sector who are doing the wrong thing. Presently, it seems those doing the wrong thing are thriving with very little oversight.

It is astounding that you need to be registered to deliver a program for a kid's sports voucher, yet you can claim thousands of dollars from the government without being registered and without being monitored.

People with a disability are

often isolated and vulnerable, and we have both here in the NT making them more exposed to these poor practices. We need to make sure providers operating in the Territory have the right mission, vision and values.

There have been appalling stories of fraudulent behaviour, and the move to a digital payments system is welcomed as it will enhance transparency and provide stronger oversight.

The changes around NDIS plans being reviewed is also much welcomed.

People with a lifelong disability should not have to go through red tape and prove they have a disability time and time again.

This causes great distress for families and guardians. Reviews should occur when

requested or when they contribute to improving a person's quality of life but not unnecessary plan reviews for bureaucracy's sake.

There are plenty of good stories where the NDIS has changed lives, increased independence and allowed improved choice and control. One such program is Community Access. It is an important program to support individual wellbeing and community life, so it is vital to ensure the views of participants are heard. We must remember the NDIS was designed with a key principle to enhance social inclusion and community participation.

Unlike many areas of the federal government where decisions are made thousands of kilometres away in Canberra, the National

Disability Insurance Agency who implement the scheme for Territorians are based here in the Territory and are approachable. The NT government is also well placed with foundational support programs such as the Child Development Team.

Presently over \$950m in NDIS funding could be allocated to Territorians. This provides a huge opportunity to deliver quality supports in a culturally safe manner across the NT in urban centres, regional towns and remote communities.

Understanding how these scheme changes will impact the quality of life for some of the most isolated and vulnerable in the Territory.

Natasha Fyles is the CEO of Somerville Community Services

VL - NTNE0120114A

NT News | 17 May 2026

East Arnhem Regional Council moves to protect NDIS participants from dodgy providers

The leaders of an NT regional council have moved to stop systemic corruption of the NDIS. Read what's happened.

[Camden Smith](#) – Reporter - [@CamdenSmith1](#)

2 min read | May 17, 2026 - 12:30AM

A remote Northern Territory regional council has taken an unprecedented step in its battle to protect vulnerable citizens from “abuse” by unscrupulous National Disability Insurance Scheme providers.

[East Arnhem Regional Council recently moved to protect scores of NDIS participants from dodgy service providers](#), as Territory courts prepare to hear allegations of systemic fraud by NT providers.

At a meeting earlier this year East Arnhem Regional Council carried a formal resolution to protect local NDIS users from operators believed to be acting unethically or illegally.

Communities in East Arnhem Regional Council include Galiwinku, Gapuwiyak, Milingimbi and Ramingining.



East Arnhem Regional Council Dale Keehne

NT News | 17 May 2026

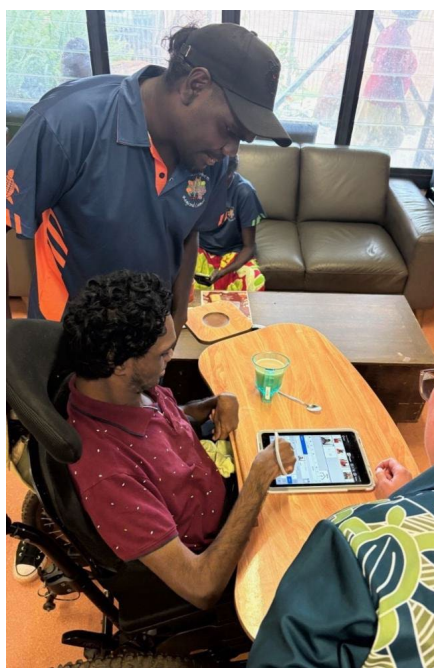
Council's motion sought "the de-registration of providers or related companies of disability services that are involved in exploitation and abuse of clients, and other illegal activities."

East Arnhem Regional Council chief executive Dale Keehne said NDIS providers have entered communities without local ties, housing, workforce or resources and approached people with pre-filled service agreements.

"They were falsely claiming links to councils, community leaders or existing providers," Mr Keehne said. "Over-quoting and overcharging are common and there are community reports of inducements including illegal supply of kava and alcohol.

"We have had reports of incentives being offered including phones, food, alcohol, cigarettes, cash and vehicles to switch providers. That rapidly exhausts plans and leaves trusted providers as a last resort.

"Participants are then unable to access other genuine and needed services. We have reports of providers claiming significant funds from participants' NDIS allocations by manipulating the participant's need to travel to Darwin for apparent respite."



NDIS participants in East Arnhem Regional Council.

Another lurk involved support co-ordination services claiming payments for phoning participants in remote communities, then providing no follow-up services or physical visits or participant assessments.

NT News | 17 May 2026

“Unscrupulous providers attempt to gain permits from the Northern Land Council on false grounds, to gain access to communities for their exploitation,” Mr Keehne said.

“There are reports of them targeting Aboriginal people with disability at Royal Darwin Hospital, particularly young mothers of children with disabilities.”

He said a result of the corruption is that participant plans are exhausted without essential supports being delivered, meaning participants return to established providers in poorer condition and without funding.

“Remote participants are especially vulnerable due to complexity, poverty and thin markets,” Mr Keehne said. “Trust in the NDIS and its providers is eroded, and legitimate providers are tarnished by bad actors. As well, fraudulent claiming distorts utilisation data, overstating market capacity.”

In a column in this newspaper, Somerville Community Services chief executive Natasha Fyles noted the need for registration in the Northern Territory to deliver kid sports voucher programs, but not NDIS programs. Dale Keehne agrees that substantial anomaly must be reversed.

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Community safeguards are important but cannot replace regulation.

“Questions remain about how providers with no local ties, housing or infrastructure receive permits to operate in the community.”

Mr Keehne said in conjunction with sweeping changes announced to the NDIS last month, a major increase is required to resource the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission “to support effective education, regulation and enforcement - which is significantly under resourced.”

A Darwin man is facing court on fraud counts in relation to about \$5m in suspicious NDIS claims.

Full Article: <https://www.ntnews.com.au/business/northern-territory/east-arnhem-regional-council-moves-to-protect-ndis-participants-from-dodgy-providers/news-story/c0d1a05872a0069b8c9e003656d68e9f>

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.3 Council Services Report

AUTHOR Labhjeet Kaur Bhullar (Council Services Manager)**RECOMMENDATION****That the Local Authority notes the Council Services Manager report.****SUMMARY:**

This report is provided by the Council Operations Manager at every Local Authority Meeting to provide information and updates to members.

BACKGROUND:

In line with Guideline 1: Local Authorities, it is a requirement for a report to be included on service delivery issues in the Local Authority area.

GENERAL:Council Support Services

Over the past couple of months, the East Arnhem Regional Council in Gunyangara has continued to strengthen existing relationships with stakeholders and support local events and celebrations across the region.

Municipal Services

It has been a busy period maintaining community clean-up efforts following Cyclone Narelle. Many debris and fallen tree branches have been cleaned up, and beautification works across local areas have also continued.

The oval irrigation system had some issues following the cyclone. However, these have now been rectified, and everything is operating well again.

A huge thank you to our Yirrkala Municipal team for their assistance in cleaning up the Gunyangara community following Cyclone Narelle. The team has worked diligently to clear fallen trees and branches, ensuring public areas are safe and accessible again. Their prompt response, teamwork, and commitment have made a significant difference in restoring normal conditions for the community.



Gunyangara/Yirrkala Municipal Team During Post Cyclone Cleanup



Troy Dwyer (Municipal Services Supervisor Gunyangara) assisting with the Post Cyclone Cleanup

Gunyangara has now hosted two GAFL games and there has been good attendance by community members to this event.

The “Post Wet” clean-up will commence in the coming weeks giving local community members the chance to discard any bulky items.

No new employees have started in Gunyangara due to the limited time Municipal Services Supervisor can spend there at present. Once staffing shortfalls in Yirrkala have been rectified then a casual worker for Gunyangara will commence as a Municipal Services Officer.

In March 2026, the combined Municipal Services team achieved a significant milestone by successfully completing their Medium Rigid (MR) truck driving license assessments. This accomplishment ensures that team members are now qualified and authorised to operate MR-class vehicles, improving operational efficiency, flexibility, and service delivery across municipal tasks.

Community Night Patrol (CNP)

Community Night Patrol continues to strengthen as a team. We are increasingly collaborating with other organisations and actively engaging with youth. Night Patrol is making additional efforts to connect with young people during community activities. Night Patrol has been making significant progress in engaging with youth, strengthening relationships, and it is becoming evident that children are developing greater trust in Night Patrol.



CNP engaging with Youth

Jonathon Marawili resigned from his position as Night Patrol officer. We currently have no new staff members, but in the process of new hires.

Night Patrol has been actively participating in community activities, hosting Milo and bickie stations bi-weekly and engaging in events with the youth. CNP are enjoying the engagement and are always working towards building stronger relationships with not only youth but the community in general.

Night Patrol continue to collaborate with community organisations and youth programs.

CNP will continue to participate in any available training opportunities. On 30 April 2026 CNP will meet with Anglicare to gain further insights into Volatile Substance Use (VSU) and to discuss potential ideas for supporting youth who are currently engaging in VSU and their families.

Night Patrol will be trailing a new shift from 4PM to 8PM to better support active communities and increase engagement with youth. This initiative aims to connect with young people who may remain in the area after activities conclude. The Night Patrol bus will be utilized for this shift, with a handover to the following shift afterward. The focus will be on building relationships with youth and their families during more convenient hours.



CNP and Active Communities Collaborating for youth activities

Night Patrol staff occasionally experience some frustration due to differences between community members' expectations and the actual regulations of their responsibilities. A few team members have shared concerns that their efforts may not always be fully recognised, and that attempts to communicate the purpose of Night Patrol to clients can sometimes result in difference of options, particularly when interacting with intoxicated individuals.

Recently, some community members have expressed concerns linking Night Patrol not “fixing” the youth sniffing, which can be disappointing for officers who are consistently aware of these issues and are doing their best to support the youth and their families. Additionally, Night Patrol officers sometimes encounter verbal abuse and threats from clients and community members, when they are simply trying to do their job.

Active Communities and Youth Services (ACYS)

In March, the Break'n Barrierz workshops ran in Yirrkala and Gunyangara with three artists teaching dance, and many young people joined in.



Young children with Break'n Barrierz team during music workshops



Break'n Barrierz team share a group picture post workshops with participants

We planned to run the AFLX U17 Boys Gala Day on 28 March in Gunyangara, but we could not do it because of cyclone issues.



Basketball nights at Gunyangara

Our Wednesday night basketball program is going very well, with many people coming every week and different stakeholders joining us.



Huge turnout for basketball nights

On 15 April, Tennis NT came to Gunyangara to run tennis workshops for kids, and many children took part. We hope to have more tennis visits in the future.



Tennis workshops for children

We are looking forward to running an open day at our Drop-in Centre in Yirrkala on 29 May 2026 Friday. We would love to have Local Authority members visit the newly renovated space on that day.



The team includes Rob Kestle (ACYS Coordinator), Denzel Marika, Sharee Yunupingu and Rosie Munungurr who assist in delivering programs in Yirrkala and Gunyangara. Recruitment is actively underway for two Active Communities Worker positions in Gunyangara.

Waste and Environment

The Gunyangara Municipal Services team has been directed to use the Nhulunbuy landfill, where practicable, to reduce barge costs to Darwin. Scrap metal and degassed white goods are accepted at the landfill and added to the Nhulunbuy scrap metal stockpiles for onward transport to Darwin for recycling, providing economies of scale.

Fire extinguishers, e-waste, wheelie bins and tyres are currently barged to Darwin. The team is assessing road transport for Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) containers to deliver savings compared to barge freight.

Some of Gunyangara recycling is bulk processed with Yirrkala.

Community	Waste Stream	No. of Pallets/Bags	Quantity	Estimated Weight (s)
Gunyangara	White Goods	Tipper truck	19	1.045
TOTAL				1.045

Community	Waste Stream	No. of Pallets/Bags	Quantity	Estimated Weight (s)
Gunyangara	Tyres	10' container	112 units	4
	Fire Extinguishers	Stillage	4 units	0.26
	White goods	Battery box	3 X 20' containers	5.5
	CDS – Depot	Bulk bags	1 skip bin	0.5
	Scrap metal	Containers & skip bin	3	4.5
	E-Waste	IBC	4	1
	Wheelie bins	Pallets	7	1.7
TOTAL				17.46

Animal Management Program (AMP)

- The veterinary visits over this period have included 3 - 4 March by Sarah and then Dr Vic and Sarah visited during the week of the 24 - 27 March. The team has also visited Gunyangara on separate occasions to follow up on urgent cases. The demand for veterinary attention is high in this community in proportion to the animal population. The animals are in great health generally in this community.
- The team performed five remote consultations across the period when not working in community.
- Upcoming vet visit:
 - The next veterinary visit has been cancelled due to veterinary staffing issues so the next veterinary visit will be on 1 May by Sarah and Saraya and will be a veterinary nurse only visit.

Service Delivery Table:

Gunyangara	Mar/Apr 26	FY 25-26 to date	FY 24-25
Dogs Desexed	10	16	10
Cats Desexed	0	5	13
Community consultations	14	29	59
Remote/Phone consultations	5	15	24
EARC Veterinary Cabinet medication dispensed	5	10	12
Minor procedures/other surgeries	0	3	3
Parasite Treatments	10	138	387

Euthanasia	1	9	0
Private practice consultations (Mainland)	0	0	0
Total Engagements	45	225	508

Staff Education/training activities:

- Dr Maddy completed the AVA Chartered Veterinary Practitioner Course – Wellbeing Science for Veterinarians – promoting mental health awareness for the profession and particularly important to our team during the difficulties that arise during our work.

Additional Collaborations/Community education activities:

- The AMP team has contacted the Dhupuma Barker school and school visits are being arranged by Sarah and the team.
- Laynhapuy homelands: The veterinary nursing team has been busy providing veterinary nurse visits to Laynhapuy homelands as part of our contracted fee for service arrangements. These have been day trips by Sarah and Saraya. We will be providing veterinary surgical visits later this year in August.

Any issues or concerns that need to be addressed at LA or council meeting:

n/a



The dog ‘Cody’ getting treatment remotely by the help of EARC staff member Troy at Gunyangara. Cody had a run in with a baru. A special thanks to all EARC staff that assist our EARC Animal Management team deliver remote treatments, we really appreciate your help (and so do the animals like Cody)

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.4 Technical and Infrastructure Services Report

AUTHOR	Sonia Campbell (General Manager - Technical and Infrastructure Services)
RECOMMENDATION	
That Council notes the Technical and Infrastructure Report.	

SUMMARY:

This report is submitted for the Council's consideration and provides program updates from the Technical and Infrastructure Directorate. The updates pertain to capital projects and initiatives aligned with the 2025-2026 Annual Plan.

BACKGROUND:

As part of Council's Annual Plan, a range of projects and initiatives were tabled and subsequently approved by the Local Authorities and Council for the 2025-2026 financial year. Ongoing updates on these projects will be provided at each meeting. In addition, any new initiatives or emerging matters of relevance to the community will also be discussed.

The information within this report covers actions associated with the below Technical Services areas and report owners:

Fleet Services

Errol Weber – Regional Manager - Fleet

112 - Fleet Services

Transport and Infrastructure Department

Arvin Roping – Transport and Infrastructure Manager

116 - Lighting for Public Safety

118 - Local Road Maintenance & Traffic Management

119 - Local Road Upgrade and Construction

Building and Infrastructure Department – Capital Projects

John Shrethra – Project Manager

122 - Building and Public Infrastructure Services

LAPF Projects

Aaron Mc Kenna – Senior Project Manager

Milingimbi and Galiwinku Toilet Block Construction

Gapuwiyak Communications Tower Deconstruction

REPORT STORY:**112 - Fleet Services (Report Owner –Errol Weber)**

The scheduled replacement of fleet items ensures that the EARC fleet is replaced at the optimum time to ensure that the user has access to a modern and reliable fleet. In the 2027 budget the items detailed below are scheduled for replacement, plus new fleet that has been identified to meet new requirements:

	Ramingin g	Milingimb i	Gapuwiya k	Galiwink u	Yirrkal a	Gunyangar a
Loader	Yes		Yes			
Tractor	Yes	Yes				
MR Truck			Yes			
Dual Cab Tipper				Yes	Yes	
Toyota Hiace	Yes		Yes	Yes x 2	Yes	
MS Hilux	Yes	Yes	Yes			
NP Hilux					Yes	
Troop Carrier s		Yes		Yes		
Toyota BZ4X (electri c vehicle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes x 2	
Trailer 10 x 5 Tipping			Yes			Yes
Mower Trailer		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Barge Trailer	Yes		Yes		Yes	

116 – Lighting for Public Safety (Report Owner – Arvin Roping)**Repair and maintenance of public streetlights**

Community	LED Streetlights out of service	Public out of	Tentative mobilisation date	Progress update
Gunyangara	4 - LED street lights 6 – GFS200 solar street lights		NIL	100% complete

118 – Local Road Maintenance & Traffic Management (Report Owner – Arvin Roping)

T25-203320.1 Civil Maintenance of Pavements and Drainage for a Period of 12 Months – Access Grade Contract

Revised Round 2 Mobilisation Dates 2025/26		Project Status
Ramingining	18 May 2026	Note: To be confirmed, pending wet season and road conditions (truck access)
Gapuwiyak	25 May 2026	Note: To be confirmed, pending wet season and road conditions (truck access)
Yirrkala	28 June 2026	Note: To be confirmed, pending wet season and road conditions (truck access)
Gunyangara	6 July 2026	Note: To be confirmed, pending wet season and road conditions (truck access)
Galiwin'ku	9 July 2026	Note: To be confirmed, pending wet season, road conditions (truck access) and sea freight via Sea Swift
Milingimbi	21 July 2026	Note: To be confirmed, pending wet season, road conditions (truck access) and sea freight via Sea Swift

119 – Local Road Upgrade and Construction (Report Owner – Arvin Roping)

Capital works scoping is currently underway for the 26/27 financial year.

The report authors do not have a conflict of interest in this matter (Section 179 of the Act).

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

NOTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

2.5 Human Resources and Finance Report

AUTHOR Ralph Reddy (Finance Manager)

RECOMMENDATION

That Local Authority receives the Human Resources and Employment information as of 30 April 2026.

SUMMARY:

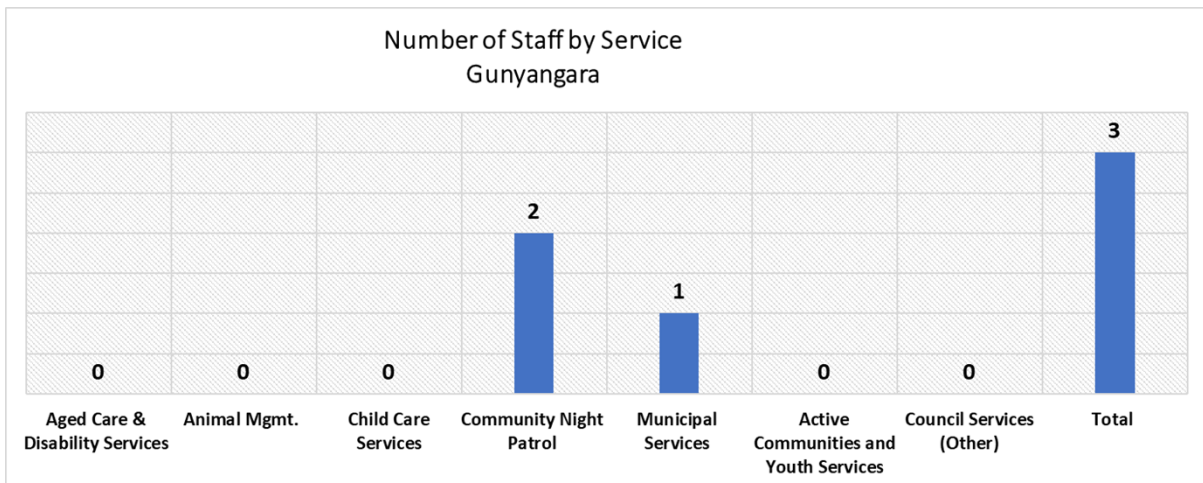
This report presents the financials plus employment statistics as of 30 April 2026 within the Local Authority area.

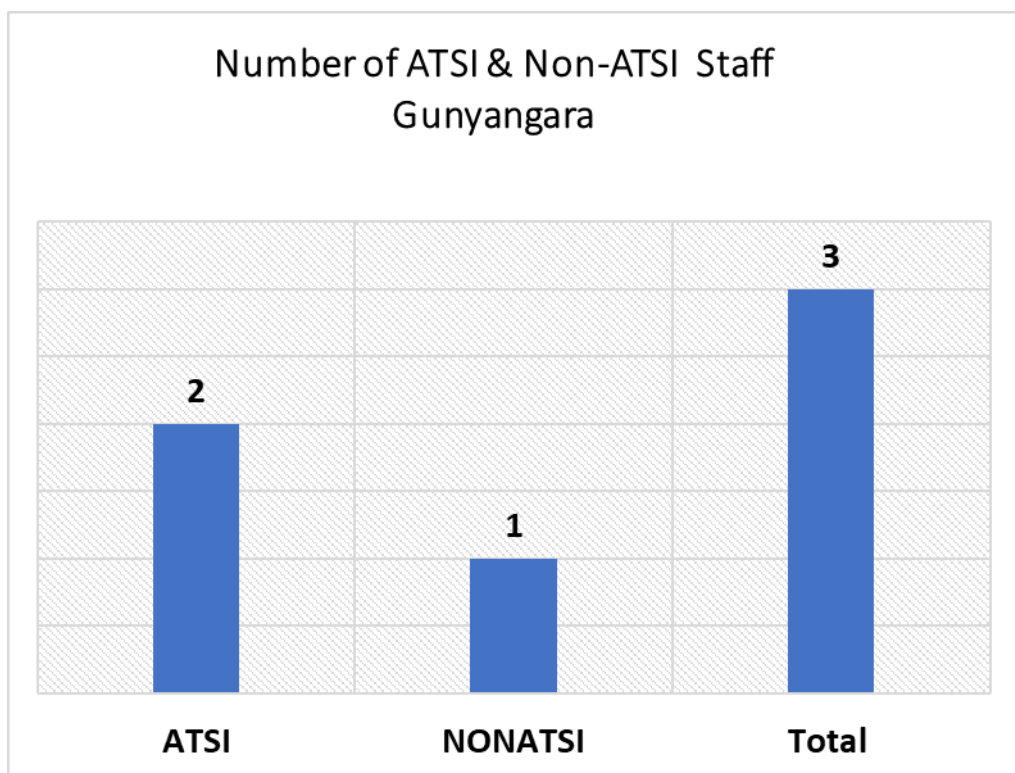
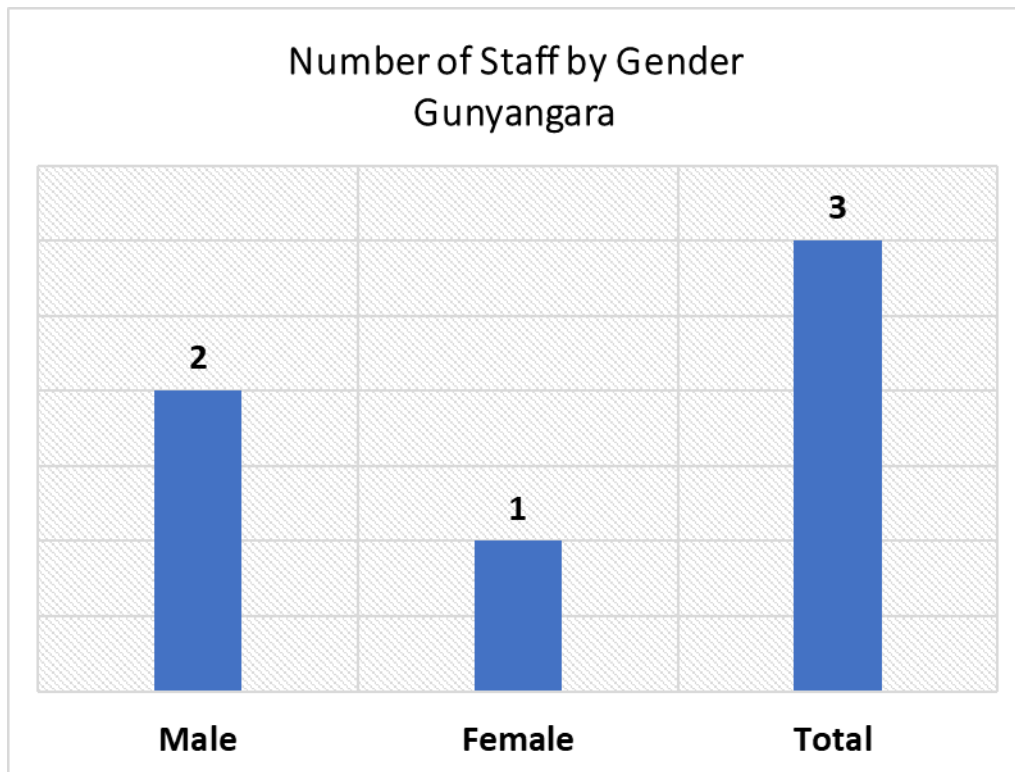
BACKGROUND:

Local Authorities need to consider the Finance Report carefully as it details the current actual figures against the budget for the Local Authority area. Also, the report details the number of staff against the different service areas.

GENERAL:

Employee Statistics:





Vacancies as of 30 April 2026:

Job Title	Location	Employment Type	Recruitment Type	No. of Vacancies
Active Communities Worker	Gunyangara	Community	Casual	1
Municipal Services Officer	Gunyangara	Community	Casual	1
Community Night Patrol Officer - Gove Peninsula	Gunyangara	Community	Casual	1

The report author does not have a conflict of interest in this matter (Section 179 of the Act).

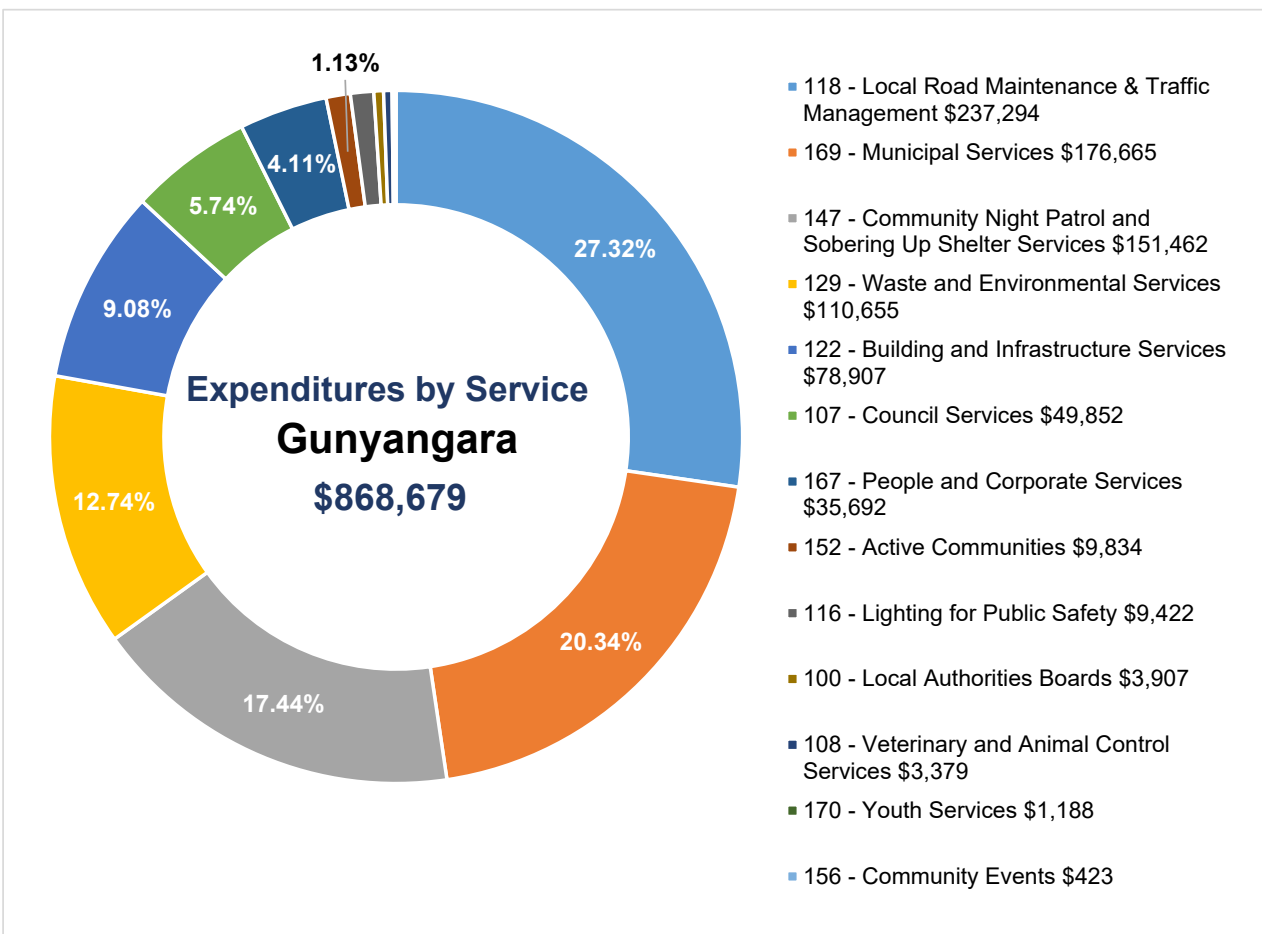
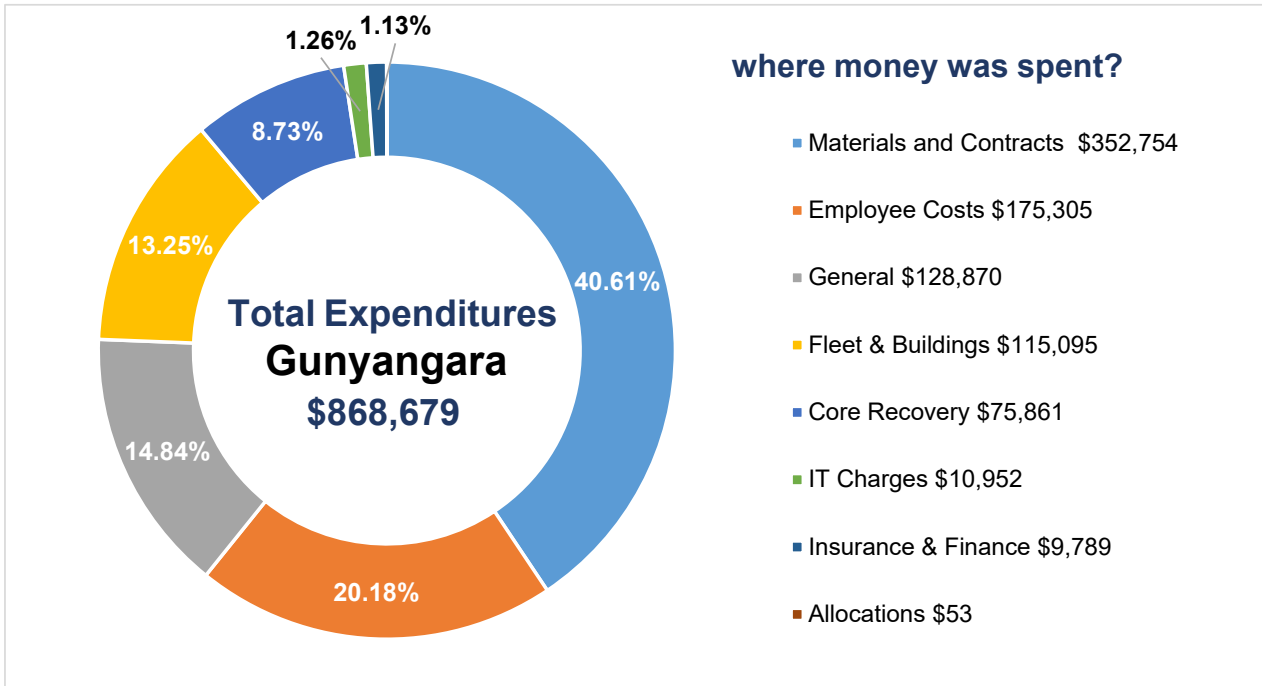
ATTACHMENTS:

1. 10. April 2026 Gunyangara LAPF and Chart Reports [2.5.1 - 2 pages]

LOCAL AUTHORITY PROJECT FUNDING (LAPF) - GUNYANGARA FUNDS LEFT

As at 30th April 2026

	YTD ACTUAL	COMMITMENTS	ACTUAL + COMMITMENTS	FULL YEAR BUDGET	PROGRESS % (ACTUAL vs BUDGET)
CARRIED FORWARD LAPF FROM PRIOR YEAR	121,795	-	121,795	121,795	
LAPF RECEIVED THIS FINANCIAL YEAR	34,900	-	34,900	34,900	
TOTAL AVAILABLE LAPF THIS FINANCIAL YEAR	156,695	-	156,695	156,695	
LESS LAPF PROJECTS					
301419 - LAPF - Gunyagara - Footpaths (school to Gumatj Office)	(594)	(143,799)	(144,392)	(156,695)	0%
304919 - Local Authority Project Funding Gunyangara - Revenue	(594)	-	(594)	-	0%
TOTAL PROJECTS	(1,188)	(143,799)	(144,986)	(156,695)	1%
ESTIMATED LAPF - LEFT (OVERSPEND) / UNDERSPEND			11,708	-	



3 Presentations and General Business

PRESENTATION

3.1 Discussion with the Local Police

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Authority notes the updates provided by Local Police.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

PRESENTATION

3.2 Presentation from the Australian Border Force

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Authority notes the updates provided by Australian Border Force.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

PRESENTATION

3.3 Presentation from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Local Authority notes the updates provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development.

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil

GENERAL BUSINESS:

4 Meeting Close