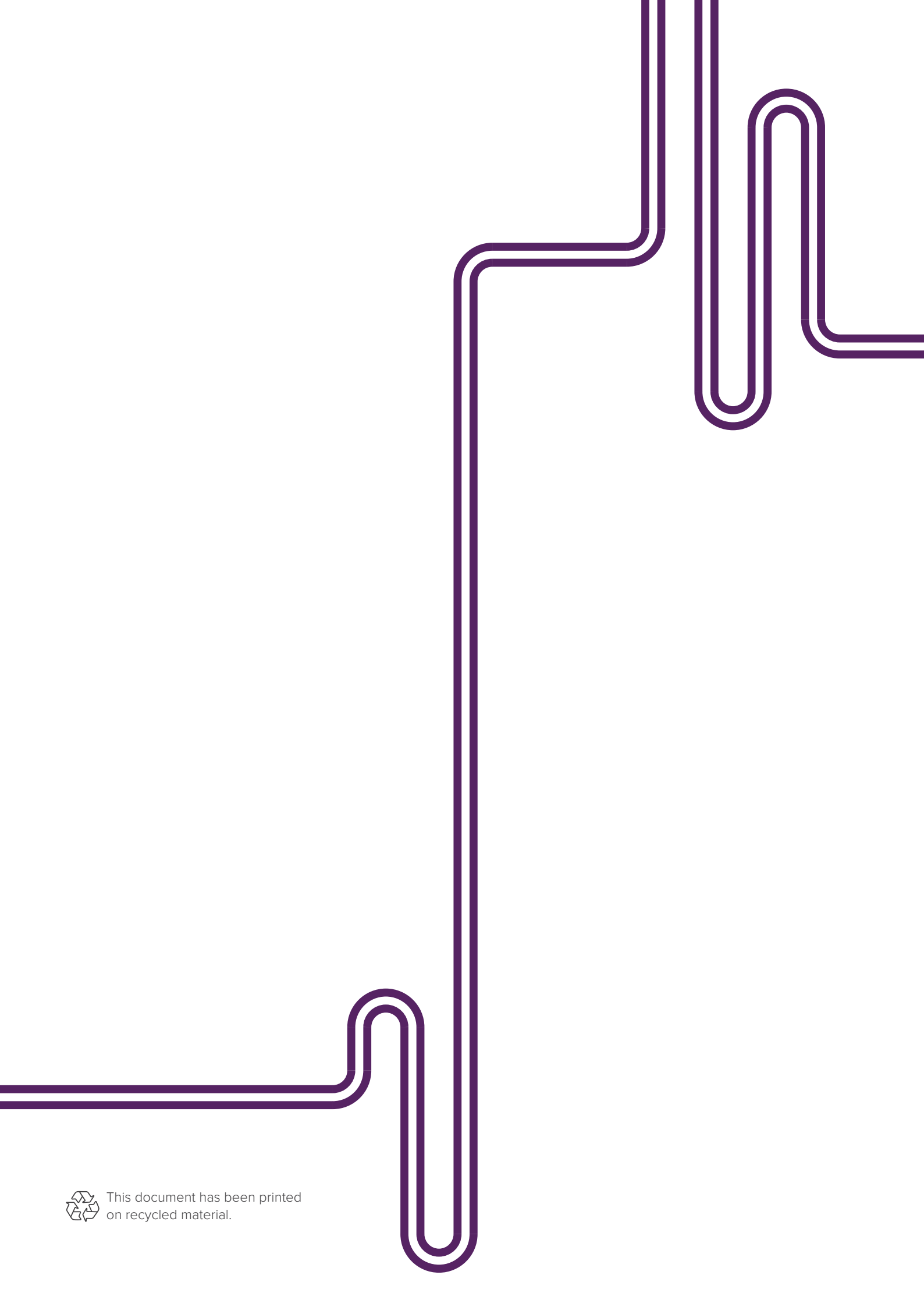


2023

=24

**MUNICIPAL
PLAN**





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2023

= 24

MUNICIPAL PLAN

Pool closing party, SWELL facility, 2022





City of Palmerston acknowledges the Larrakia people as the Traditional Custodians of the Palmerston region. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future leaders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

City of Palmerston is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination within our facilities and welcome all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or faith.

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Palmerston Municipal Plan presents the services, programs, projects and initiatives we will deliver for the Palmerston community in 2023-24. It details the allocated budget to deliver the annual program, including Council rates, fees and charges. This important document is informed by our Long-Term Financial Plan and our Community Plan.

Our community is at the heart of everything we do. In 2018, we worked with the community to develop the City of Palmerston Community Plan which provides the vision to guide our work for the next ten years.

The City of Palmerston's vision is to create 'A Place for People', where we focus on our strengths to ensure our city thrives into the future. In achieving this, we contribute to the vision where:

- Palmerston is a welcoming, vibrant, family-friendly city that fosters diversity and unity.
- In Palmerston, everyone belongs, and everyone feels safe.

Our vision recognises the importance of valuing and investing in the natural environment, balancing economic considerations, and focussing on innovation to enable social transformation in Palmerston.

The Community Plan defines this vision and outlines our priorities, which are shaped by the community members who were directly involved in creating it. The Community Plan gives our community, businesses and Territorians certainty and what they can expect from Council over the next 10 years. We will work towards these long-term outcomes our community wants and expects.

Community Plan Outcomes

1 Family and community: Palmerston is a safe and family-friendly community where everyone belongs.

2 Vibrant economy: Palmerston is a destination city for employment. It is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and grow.

3 Cultural diversity: In Palmerston, we celebrate our cultures in a way that values our diversity.

4 A Future focus: Palmerston is an innovative city that sustains itself through the challenges of the future.

5 Environmental sustainability: Palmerston is an environmentally friendly, liveable city that promotes renewable practices and sustainability.

6 Governance: Council is trusted by the community and invests in things that the public value.

The outcomes include the objectives we need to achieve and the ways we'll measure our success in achieving them.

 **POPULATION¹**
39,587

 **MEDIAN AGE**
37

 **GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**
72km²

 **GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT²**
\$1.958B

 **TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES**
\$53.5m

Source:

1 ABS Estimated Residential Population 2021. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

2 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2021. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

Public consultation

Local governments in the Northern Territory undertake planning and reporting activities in line with the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) and *Local Government Regulations*.

The City of Palmerston welcomed feedback from the public about the draft Municipal Plan and Budget 2023–24. All submissions were reviewed and Council adopted the Municipal Plan at the 2nd Ordinary Meeting, 20 June 2023.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

I am proud to lead the 10th Palmerston Council in presenting the City of Palmerston Municipal Plan 2023-24. The Council has an unwavering focus on delivering results for the Palmerston community to create a vibrant, thriving and family friendly city. We have a strong foundation of strategic planning that enables us to be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances, while remaining focused on the long-term goals and objectives of the city.

In developing this year's budget, we recognise the pressure on the community with increased costs of living. We are committed to continuing our high standard of service delivery and we are pleased to continue to support the community through:

- the Community Benefit Scheme
- free community events
- verge beautification assistance
- ongoing support of the local economy
- free parking and free facility hire
- minimal increase to majority of Council fees and charges
- financial hardship rates concession
- maintaining service levels across the municipality.

A highlight of 2023-24 will be the development of a City of Palmerston Reconciliation Action Plan. We are honoured to be on Larrakia Country, and we value and respect the oldest continuing culture in the world, the Aboriginal people. City of Palmerston has a long standing, positive working relationship with the Larrakia community and we are proud to continue our journey of reconciliation with Larrakia and all First Nations People.

It is with great excitement that we will be opening the \$19.4M Swimming, Wellness, Events, Leisure and Lifestyle (SWELL) facility by the end of 2023. The facility will boast a refurbished 50m pool, heated program pool, an adventure play zone, half basketball court, events area and plenty of shade. We will also be upgrading elements of the SWELL building, including a community room, replacement of the aged roof and installation of a solar system. This additional \$750,000 project will improve the aging facility whilst continuing Councils commitment to sustainability.

Last financial year, we launched the completed Stage 1 of Zuccoli Community Hub, with the community and their pets enjoying the new regional dog park. In 2023-24, we will deliver the second stage which includes a pump track and other associated works with \$500,000 included in the budget.

The next facility to get a major upgrade will be the Driver Resource Centre. Redeveloping this community facility is important to this area, and I'm looking forward to hearing the feedback from the community on the design of the Centre this year.

Community safety is a high priority for Council to support the wellbeing of our community. Council is implementing the following initiatives to improve community safety:

- security patrols, in partnership with the Northern Territory Government
- youth programs and events
- new Animal Management By-Laws
- management of laneways
- improved public lighting
- public places management
- advocacy for alcohol management and policing.

The Council is passionate about sustainability, and we look forward to completing the upgrade of the Archer Waste Management Facility. The design includes a new recycling area and an undercover general waste push-pit area to support improved recovery of recyclable items in line with Council's Sustainability Strategy.

Council continues to actively look for ways to partner with the Northern Territory Government and Australian Government on projects in 2023-24. City of Palmerston would like to acknowledge the support of both Governments in delivering outcomes for the Palmerston community resulting in improved lifestyle, well-being and creating our vision of *A Place for People*.

I'd like to thank the community, staff and stakeholders for your ongoing support and dedication. We look forward to working with you in 2023-24 to build on our city being sustainable, vibrant, diverse, future focused and most importantly *A Place for People*.

Althina



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As CEO, it is my privilege to ensure that Palmerston continues to thrive and meet the needs of our community. This plan reflects our commitment to providing quality services and events, developing and maintaining infrastructure, and promoting sustainable development.

In developing the City of Palmerston budget for 2023-24 we have faced the challenge of high costs caused by a range of factors including supply chain pressures, a tight labour market, higher energy costs as well as unprecedented increases to waste charges. All (non-recyclable) waste in the Top End is transported to Shoal Bay Waste Management Facility – for landfill. City of Darwin charges City of Palmerston Commercial Rates which have increased significantly over the past 5 years. City of Darwin have further increased the charge by 30% this coming financial year which has unfortunately had to be factored into customer charges.

We are aware of the increasing cost of living and have worked to minimise the cost burden to the community in the areas we can control while maintaining high quality service levels and ensuring the growth and development of our city as *A Place for People*.

I am proud to present a program for 2023-24 that will provide positive change and development for the Palmerston community for generations to come. The \$19.4 million SWELL project will be opened this year and will provide a significant addition to the social infrastructure available for the local community.

We have started delivering Council's first Local Economic Plan, developed in collaboration with the Northern Territory Government. The Plan highlights the high prevalence of small and medium businesses in Palmerston and the importance of business and economic support systems in the city. In 2023-24, we will be undertaking extensive engagement with local businesses and establishing a web site to promote economic development opportunities and support businesses to invest and grow.

We have partnered with the Northern Territory Government on the innovative and leading-edge FiberSense technology project. The technology will be completed early this financial year and will make Palmerston the first city in the world to roll out the large-scale deployment of the data monitoring software. Based on vibration sensing, the technology monitors and analyses moving object and event data in real time, with insights enabling us to better understand the community's infrastructure usage to plan for future needs.

A priority for Council is implementing programs and initiatives to promote sustainable development throughout our city. This includes efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, increase recycling, and promoting energy efficiency. We believe that by taking a proactive approach to sustainability, we can make our city a better place to live for everyone.

We will continue delivering quality services and programs to the community as well as an extensive capital works program to realise the Community Plan Outcomes. This will include delivery of a \$45.7 million operational budget and \$7.8 million capital expenditure. Capital works will include the delivery of SWELL, Zuccoli Community Hub Stage 2, playgrounds, pathways, tree planting and community facilities to continue support the growth and well-being of our community.

To successfully deliver all of these services to the community, Council requires effective systems capable of a high level of service. Council undertook a thorough review of our Enterprise Resource Planning software throughout 2022-23. In 2023-24, we will begin to implement improved systems that will allow Council to deliver services to the community more efficiently and effectively.

Finally, we understand that the needs of our community are constantly changing. As such, we are committed to engaging with our residents to gather feedback and input on how we can continue to improve. We encourage all residents to share their thoughts and ideas with us as we work towards building a better and more prosperous city. Each year we carry out a community satisfaction survey to gain an understanding of the community's satisfaction of various facilities, events and services Council provides. This informs future planning and will be delivered again late 2023.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to working together to make the City of Palmerston an even better place to live.



OUR YEAR AHEAD



4.3%

RESIDENTIAL INCREASE
WITH A \$39 INCREASE TO
THE MINIMUM RATE



\$300,000

AQUATIC CENTRE RE-ROOF



4.9%

COMMERCIAL AND
INDUSTRIAL INCREASE
WITH A \$60 INCREASE TO
THE MINIMUM RATE



OPENING

OF SWELL (SWIMMING
WELLNESS EVENTS
LEISURE LIFESTYLE)



\$7.85m

TOTAL CAPITAL
WORKS SPEND



DEVELOP

A RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN



\$250,000

COMMUNITY BENEFIT
SCHEME



\$650,000

PLAYSPACE RENEWALS
AND UPGRADES



\$50,000

WASTE EDUCATION
PROGRAMS



FREE

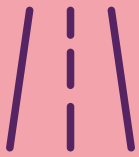
PARKING AND
FACILITY HIRE



\$500,000
ZUCCOLI COMMUNITY HUB



\$1m
PATHWAYS AND LANEWAYS



\$1.74m
ROADS



\$75,000
PUBLIC ART



\$100,000
DRIVER RESOURCE CENTRE DESIGN



\$350,000
LIGHTING



\$500,000
ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING



\$260,000
CYCLONE CLEAN-UP



\$608,000
TREE PLANTING

YOUR RATES

The development of the budget for 2023-24 has included the challenge of national and local economic pressures including high costs caused by a range of factors including supply chain pressures, a tight labour market, higher energy costs as well as unprecedented increases to waste charges. With the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at 6.6%* for Darwin, the cost of contracts, goods and services to Council has increased at a higher rate than predicted. Council has worked hard to deliver a rate increase well below the current CPI to minimise the cost burden to the community whilst maintaining high service level delivery.

Rates for the 2023-24 financial year will be increased for residential properties by 4.3% or a \$39 increase to the minimum rate. The minimum residential rate increase of \$39 applies to 9,738 (68%) Palmerston residential properties. There is a rate increase of 4.9% for commercial and industrial properties or a \$60 increase to the minimum rate. The minimum rate increase of \$60 applies to 328 (37%) commercial and industrial properties. There is a \$47 increase to kerbside collection waste charges for the 2023-24 financial year due to the substantially increased costs of Shoal Bay Waste Management Facility (SBWMF) proposed by City of Darwin. The rate increase and waste charge of \$47 will result in an impact of \$86 for the year to most of our ratepayers, which equates to \$1.65 per week.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) covers a ten year period and is Council's principle document for ensuring it remains financially sustainable in the longer term and is available at www.palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/publications.

*Source December Quarter 2022 Deloitte Access Economics

Rating Zone	Rate on UCV	Minimum Rate	Change
R, RR (Excluding RR in the suburb of Marlow Lagoon) LR, LMR, MR,HR, CL,FD, PS, SP8, SP9 (<10,000m2), SP9(>20,000m2), SP10, SP11 and SP1*20	0.6567306%	\$1,326	\$39 increase to the minimum from 2022-23
RR in the Suburb of Marlow Lagoon	0.5395266%	\$1326	\$39 increase to the minimum from 2022-23
GI and LI	0.5296233%	\$1,347	\$60 increase to the minimum from 2022-23
All Other Rateable Land	0.7945586%	\$1,347	\$60 increase to the minimum from 2022-23

Waste Management Charge	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Budget year 2023-34
Residential Kerbside Collection	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527
Manual Service Collection (<25 units)	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527
Multiple Dwelling 25 units +	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$264
Upgrade to 240L Annual Service Charge*	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$167
Additional General Waste Kerbside Bin 120L*	N/A	N/A	\$250	\$256	\$274
Additional Recycling Kerbside Bin*	N/A	N/A	\$110	\$113	\$113
Additional General Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$394	\$290	\$297	\$318
Additional Recycling Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$245	\$110	\$113	\$113

*These are charged through Fees and Charges, for more information visit <https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/fees-and-charges>



*International Day of People with Disability,
Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2022*

Early Bird Draw

Each year, Council runs a draw which gives two lucky ratepayers, who have paid their rates in full by the first instalment date, \$1,500 each. Early Bird Draw Terms and Conditions will be available in August at www.palmerston.nt.gov.au

Concessions

Council offers eligible concession holders a Rates Concession on rates. If you have any queries regarding your eligibility, please contact:

NT Concession Scheme

1800 777 704

Palmerston Community Care Centre

(08) 8999 3344

Financial Hardship

In times of financial hardship, Council offers a Rates Concession for both residential and commercial ratepayers. Financial hardship is defined as a situation where a ratepayer is unable, due to illness, unemployment, or other reasonable causes, discharge their financial obligations towards the City of Palmerston.

If you are experiencing any form of hardship that affects payment of rates or other charges applied by Council, then we strongly urge you to contact us, so together we can discuss options and/or arrange a suitable payment plan.

Council offers additional concessions and property owners can apply for more than one concession at a time. If you have any queries regarding your eligibility for any of the concessions, please contact Council's Finance Team on (08) 8935 9961 or email: rates@palmerston.nt.gov.au

OUR COUNCIL

The City of Palmerston 10th Council consists of seven Councillors and the Mayor. The 10th Palmerston Council was elected by residents on the 28 August 2021 and sworn in for a four year term on the 14 September 2021.

Elected Members



MAYOR ATHINA PASCOE-BELL

Athina and her husband moved to Palmerston in 2004. They found their perfect home in Marlow Lagoon and knew that this was the ideal place to raise their family. Athina has been serving as Mayor for 5 years, following a 20-year career in spatial science. Her experience in governance, policy, procedure, and planning has been invaluable. Currently, Athina is studying towards a law degree to further benefit the community. In her free time, she is a dedicated Scout leader and loves indulging in her creative side. She is thrilled to witness our community's growth and transformation, becoming more inclusive with better social connections and infrastructure improvements that everyone can use and enjoy



COUNCILLOR BENJAMIN GIESECKE

Ben was born in Melbourne but grew up in Adelaide. He moved to the Territory in 2004 where he began his career as a property professional after completing his Bachelor of Business (Property) degree. Ben bought his first home in Moulden in 2005, however he and his wife now live in Durack. Ben has forged a successful career in the property industry, with extensive experience in commercial and private valuations, negotiations, economics, real estate transactions and law, and investment properties. His extensive career experience provides him with a keen eye for detail. With Ben's active involvement with the local multicultural community, he is looking forward to the rest of his term as a Councillor working to ensure Palmerston really is a place for people.



COUNCILLOR MARK FRASER

Mark has joined local government after a long term interest in all tiers of politics. He sees this as his opportunity to give back to the Palmerston community after raising his family here. Mark has called Roseberry home for almost two decades. Mark would like to explore what support can be provided to the many Palmerston families impacted by FIFO employment to better cope with work life balances and raising a family. Mark believes Palmerston is well placed to capitalise on the multitude of emerging opportunities across a wide range of industry sectors. Palmerston needs to maintain its competent stewardship at Council to make the right decisions for all residents to ensure Palmerston continues to improve and always be *A Place for People*.



COUNCILLOR DAMIAN HALE

Damian came to the Northern Territory in 1974 and has lived in Maningrida, Katherine and Darwin. Damian has prior experience in politics in the Northern Territory holding the position of Federal Member for Solomon from 2007 – 2010. Damian spent nine years working for the Australian Workers Union. He is now a Director with a local indigenous owned NDIS Provider, Balanced Coordination Support Services known as Balcor. He lives with his partner Maria in the Palmerston suburb of Gunn.



COUNCILLOR SARAH HENDERSON

Sarah is a hardworking community advocate and businesswoman who has been an active member of the Palmerston community for three decades. With her husband, she has brought up five children in Palmerston and now her grandchildren are being raised in this community. She has been actively involved in many different Palmerston community groups over the years. Sarah is a member of a range of committees and clubs, continuing to support the seniors of her community. Over this term Sarah aims to improve services, provide support to community members and to contribute to the sustainability goals of Palmerston.



COUNCILLOR LUCY MORRISON

Lucy has lived in the Northern Territory since 2008 after moving to Palmerston from Queensland. She has more than 15 years' experience in the media industry and started her career as a print journalist working for newspapers in the Northern Territory and Queensland. Lucy then steered her career into communications, public relations and media advising. Having previously worked in local government and currently working for NT Government, Lucy has extensive knowledge and understanding of government. Lucy is passionate about healthy living and enjoying an active lifestyle. She is eager to involve more youth in sports and local activities in the community. Over this term Lucy will continue to work towards the beautification of parks, greening the city, lake management and supporting community events.



COUNCILLOR DANIELLE EVELEIGH

Elected in 2021, Danielle has been a resident of the Palmerston community for over 18 years. She brings both public and private sector experience to Council, holds a Bachelor of Business and has a background in human resources management, industrial relations and change management. Danielle aims to use her skills and experience to support continued growth and development for the Palmerston community. Danielle has a young family and is passionate about Palmerston being a welcoming and safe space for people of all ages and backgrounds. Danielle is an active community member with a passion for diversity, disability and mental health. Danielle holds roles as a board member with the Top End Women's Legal Service and Autism NT and is the NT Coordinator for Walking off The War Within. Since being elected, Danielle has taken on the role of Chair of City of Palmerston Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee.



COUNCILLOR AMBER GARDEN

Amber has been a Territorian since 2003 and purchased a property in Farrar in 2010. Amber has over 17 years' experience in human resources, team management, workplace health and safety and administration across a range of public and private industries including construction, local government, health and research. After being re-elected to her position on Council in 2021, and with over nine years' experience working in local government administration, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience of Council meeting processes, financial reporting and governance requirements under the Local Government Act. Amber is passionate about ensuring her local community is active and vibrant through improving animal management, safety, and accessibility to make it a liveable city for all to enjoy.

Allowances

Elected Members are provided with financial support in recognition of the significant amount of work required in representing their community. As a result of changes to legislation, the Northern Territory Remuneration Tribunal reviewed the Local Government Councils and Local Authority Members allowances in 2022. On the 14 February 2022, the Chief Minister tabled the Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Council at Parliamentary Sittings. The new allowances come into effect on the 1 July 2023 and are detailed below:

Allowance Description	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Councillor
Annual Base Allowance	\$114,000	\$39,200	\$22,000
Professional Development Allowance	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Maximum Extra Meeting Allowance	N/A	\$10,000	\$10,000
TOTAL CLAIMABLE	\$118,000	\$53,200	\$36,000

Councillors and the Deputy Mayor are entitled to claim an Extra Meeting / Activity Allowance up to a yearly maximum of \$10,000 and the claimable allowance during normal business hours is \$200 for meetings up to 2 hours, \$300 for meetings between 2 and 4 hours, and \$500 for meetings over 4 hours. Details of other entitlements for Elected Members are outlined in Council Policy "Elected Member Allowances and Expenses" available on Council's website.

Local Government Representation Review

Legislative changes resulting from the *Local Government Act 2019 (NT)* established an independent Local Government Representation Committee to make determinations about Ward boundaries and representation for all of the Territory's councils. The Committee released its report on 9 February 2023 noting no changes for 16 of the 17 councils. City of Palmerston was the only Council that had changes recommended, with the determination that a 3 ward structure would be implemented. Council has expressed strong objection to the decision, advocating for Palmerston to remain undivided (no wards). The Council believe that one electorate best represents the Palmerston community for the following reasons:

- creates strong unity in the Chamber
- wards do not promote the objectives of s24 of the Local Government Act 2019
- groups or communities of interest within Palmerston are not based within wards but are distributed throughout the community based on other factors
- wards detract from a proper balance between economic, social, environmental, and cultural consideration
- the Palmerston Community has not indicated a preference for wards
- wards do not promote diversity
- Council does not support the view that Elected Members of wards are more likely to be known by their ward constituents.

Tenth Palmerston Council, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2021



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

As per the Northern Territory Local Government Act 2019, Council employs a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and delegates responsibilities to carry out the day to day functions of Council. The CEO is responsible for the overall administration of Council and works closely with the Elected Members to ensure Council's goals and objectives are met. The CEO is supported in his

responsibilities by a Deputy Chief Executive Officer, two General Managers and one Director who, with the CEO, form Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT lead 97.55 staff and operate across five key areas: Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure, Community and Culture, Finance and Governance.



LUCCIO CERCARELLI

Chief Executive Officer

Responsibilities include:

- Office of the Mayor and Elected Members
- Executive Support
- Council and Committee Services

- Business Performance and Improvement
- Advocacy
- Strategy and Insights
- Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships
- Strategic Organisational Planning



AMELIA VELLAR

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Responsibilities include:

- Partnerships
- Strategic Projects
- Marketing and Communication
- Organisational Culture and Development
- Engagement
- People
- Customer Experience
- Safety and Wellbeing



ANNA INGRAM

General Manager Community and Culture

Responsibilities include:

- Placemaking
- Arts and Culture Experience
- Recreation and Leisure
- Community Events
- Regulatory Services
- Library Services
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Facility Management
- Community Development
- Local History and Heritage



NADINE NILON

General Manager Infrastructure

Responsibilities include:

- Fleet Management
- Asset Management
- Stormwater and Transport
- Public Lighting
- Building Maintenance
- Infrastructure Design and Delivery
- Project Management
- Waste and Resource Recovery
- Services
- Environmental Sustainability
- City and Statutory Planning
- Lake Management
- Resilience and Disaster Management
- Natural Environment Management
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Outdoor Workforce
- Smart Cities and Innovation
- Information Technology



WATI KERTA

Director Finance and Governance

Responsibilities include:

- External and Internal Audit programs
- Economic Development
- Financial Management
- Governance
- Procurement
- Property and Commercial
- Corporate Reporting
- Information and Records Management
- Risk Management

OUR PEOPLE



Council Rangers, Civic Centre, 2022

Employer of choice

The City of Palmerston is committed to becoming an employer of choice, attracting and retaining a diverse and talented workforce by offering excellent working conditions, an opportunity to make a difference in the community, and progressive supportive professional development opportunities.

The City of Palmerston Enterprise Agreement 2020 provides our employees with a clear set of benefits and conditions, such as enhanced recreational leave entitlements, salary sacrifice options, employee assistance programs and discounted health insurance. In recognition of the value we place on our people, we have enhanced our people policies to offer even more generous parental and compassionate leave provisions than those in the Enterprise Agreement.

Safety and wellbeing

With a strong focus on the safety and wellbeing of our people, community, and contractors, in 2022 we implemented our Work Health and Safety Management Plan, and this will continue to be reviewed and improved over time.

The City of Palmerston is committed to looking for ways to grow its work force. In 2022 we saw the commencement of a New Careers Programs, comprising new positions developed to provide an opportunity for people completing their studies and looking for work in their chosen career, or who have work experience and are keen to change direction in their career.

Customer service

In addition to our focus on culture, values and behaviours, in 2023-24 we will continue to work hard on embedding our Customer Service Charter. This is reflected in everything we do at Council. The pillars of our Customer Service Charter are:

- Make it Easy
- Perform with Pride
- Listen, Learn and Act
- Evaluate and Improve

The Customer Service Charter is widely included in Council documents and is a key section of our Position Descriptions enabling potential employees to see the importance of this when they are considering us as an employer. Council is committed to creating teams that support each other in delivering services efficiently and flexibly, resulting in personalised customer experiences for our residents.

City of Palmerston residents now enjoy an expanded offering of customer service options with Library staff undertaking Customer Experience training to ensure our full range of customer services is available in the Library as well as Civic Plaza.

Council also expanded our Civic Plaza opening hours from 8am to 5pm, to 7:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday. This has provided greater access to our face to face and telephone services for residents and is proving convenient for enquiries and transaction before and after work.

Innovation

At City of Palmerston, we understand that innovation and easy access services are important to our community. That's why in 2022 we released the 'City of Palmerston' app which can be download from the Apple and Google Play stores.

The app provides residents and visitors with information about Council services right in the palm of their hands. The following can be found on the app:

- Explore Council's latest events
- Check items you can recycle
- Find your bin day and set reminders
- Make an online payment or report an issue easily

This collaborative organisational project contributed to our teams' professional growth. We will continue to further develop and update the app to meet community needs.

Staffing plan

In accordance with section 165 of the *Local Government Act 2019* (the Act), the City of Palmerston directly employs a Chief Executive Officer who is ultimately responsible for the employment of all employees, in accordance with Council's approved Staffing Plan.

The Staffing Plan for 2023–24 allows for close to 100 employees who operate under the CEO's direction and are divided into our five directorates:

- Office of the Chief Executive Officer
- Office of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Community and Culture
- Infrastructure
- Finance and Governance

These positions are the equivalent of 97.55 full-time employees (known as full-time equivalents, or FTEs). This does not include casual or limited tenure positions of 12 months or less. Short-term projects, vacancies and leave without pay can temporarily change the actual number of FTEs during the financial year.

The total budget for employee costs for 2023–24 is \$11.9M, which includes wages, superannuation, and training.

OUR PERFORMANCE

How we measure performance

Council conducts a Community Satisfaction Survey each year to gain an understanding of the community's attitudes, perceptions and satisfaction of various facilities, events and services Council provides.

The survey allows us to monitor our performance and identify successful outcomes, community priorities and areas for improvement.

City of Palmerston's Community Plan, which was developed in 2018, was based around six key outcome areas. The survey reports on the following six outcomes of the Community Plan, collecting detailed feedback on key services and priorities for the community:

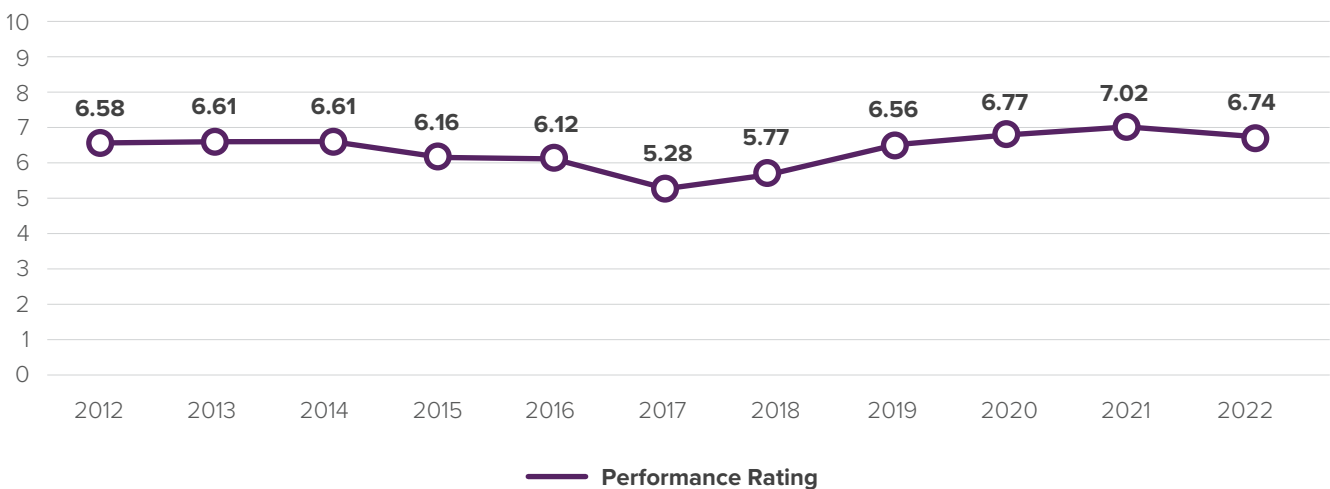
- Family and Community
- Vibrant Economy
- Cultural Diversity
- A Future Focus
- Environmental Sustainability
- Governance

In September 2022, Council engaged external consultant Kantar to conduct the survey, with a total of 670 participants, of which 601 were over the phone and 69 completed via the online questionnaire. The survey results are compared to those of previous years to track how council is performing against the 14 objectives of the Community Plan.

Since 2017, there has been a generally upward trend in the community's overall satisfaction with Council's performance. 2021 saw the highest overall score that has been recorded since the research commenced in 2012, with 70% of respondents rating Council as good or very good.

The overall results for the 2022 survey recorded a slight decrease in Council's performance rating score compared to 2021, with the rating decreasing to 6.74/10 compared with 7.02 in 2021 and aligning to the rating score of 6.77 in 2020. There were still 66% of the community that rated Council's overall performance as good or very good. This was the third highest score since the start of the annual survey in 2012.

OVERALL SCORE TREND



Compared to 2021, there were decreases in all of the scores for the six Community Plan Key Outcome Areas, again showing scores closer to the 2020 survey results. Cultural Diversity had the least reduction in score (-0.19), and Governance had the highest reduction (-0.33). This trend is consistent with other public sector surveys in other areas, with a general lower level of trust in government and higher expectations observed from respondents.

Key Area	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change
Family and Community	6.68	6.80	7.16	6.69	-0.27
Vibrant Economy	6.01	6.28	6.55	6.24	-0.30
Cultural Diversity	7.04	7.21	7.50	7.31	-0.19
A Future Focus	6.70	6.84	7.02	6.70	-0.32
Environmental Sustainability	7.15	7.33	7.36	7.08	-0.28
Governance	6.01	6.17	6.52	6.19	-0.33
Net promoter score	-9	-4	-6	-13	-7
Average Performance	6.56 / 10	6.77 / 10	7.02 / 10	6.74 / 10	-0.29

The survey identified our top two highest performing services as:

- kerbside waste collection (8.14/10)
- providing libraries and library services to the community (8.04/10).

The two lowest scoring measures were:

- providing you with the opportunity to comment on Council’s decision making and interact with Council (5.72/10)
- supporting and attracting new and existing businesses (5.83/10).

In 2022, City of Palmerston developed a communications strategy and a social media strategy to improve the community’s ability to interact with Council.

Council was proud to endorse its first Local Economic Plan in 2022, developed in collaboration with the Northern Territory Government. The Local Economic Plan provides current businesses confidence for the future. It also attracts and encourages development for new businesses providing them an understanding of the economic priorities of Council long term.

Council is committed to continual improvement and genuinely listening and responding to the community. The feedback received through this survey is highly valued and used by Council to inform future planning and responding to areas of concern.

The next survey will be in September 2023. These results will be published in our 2022–23 annual report.



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Outcome: Palmerston is a safe and family-friendly community where everyone belongs.

OBJECTIVES

- We focus on families
- The wellbeing of our community is a focus for all our work



Christmas in Wonderland performance, Palmerston Library, 2022

We focus on families

Community events

In 2023-24, City of Palmerston is proud to continue to provide the community with a variety of free family-friendly outdoor events. From the beloved Flicnics to the On Frances evenings and the music-filled Live at the Lake nights, there are plenty of options to enjoy. These events encourage use of Palmerston's stunning outdoor areas and are always a fabulous way to catch up with family and friends.

Our event calendar also includes the ever-popular Children's Week, Seniors Week, Halloween, and Families Week activities. As always, we will close the year with the immensely popular Christmas Wonderland. Over 13,000 people attended the 2022 Christmas Wonderland event and enjoyed the Northern Territory's first Christmas Truss Tree.

The Palmerston Youth Festival, which is supported significantly by the Northern Territory Government, returns in July 2023. This week-long festival has a variety of engaging activities and events, designed for young people but welcoming of all, with two major events at either end of the week. Attendance at the festival increased in 2022 and we look forward to broadening our reach to even more young people in 2023.

Palmerston Library

The City of Palmerston Library is an important community space for Palmerston residents. The library will continue to meet the information and recreation needs of the community by offering free access to high quality services and collections. Library visitors will be able to participate in a variety of programs with a focus on personal development, building connections, and enhancing literacy and lifelong learning.

Community facilities

Council will continue to provide free venue hire for 2023-24, ensuring access to use Council venues such as the Recreation Centre, Library Community Room, Durack Community Arts Centre, Gray Community Hall and Driver Family Resource Centre. Free entry to the Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre (SWELL) will also continue once the exciting new SWELL development opens in late 2023. There is also free Wi-Fi across our community parks and facilities including Marlow Lagoon, Sanctuary Lakes, Flinders, Bill Lewis, Deleny, Joan Fejo, and Phyllis Uren Parks, plus Durack Community Arts Centre, Gray Hall, SWELL, and the CBD.

City of Palmerston invests in community infrastructure to provide facilities that support community wellbeing and provide a range of options for social, recreation and leisure activities. SWELL is Palmerston's largest infrastructure project to date and is set to transform the current aging Palmerston Swimming and Fitness

Centre into a modern aquatic and leisure precinct including a refurbished 50m pool with improved accessibility, heated program pool, an adventure play zone, warm water pool, half basketball court, events area, upgraded amenities and plenty of shade. Construction works commenced in August 2022 and Council is excited to be opening the new \$19.4 million leisure facility in November 2023 for the community to enjoy.

The Zuccoli Community Hub will provide significant community and recreation infrastructure to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Palmerston community. The Master Plan for the Hub incorporates an off-leash dog park, walking trails, a skate park and pump track, a playground, children's boutique library, community centre and a garden of reflection. The project is anticipated to be delivered over a 5-year period, funding dependent, commencing in 2022.

The Community Hub will be delivered in stages, and Council was pleased to complete the first stage in last financial year. The first stage was a regional dog park featuring active and quiet dog areas, water play, dispersed sensory elements, shaded seating for park users, public toilet and car parking. The second stage includes a skate park and pump track and has \$500,000 included in the budget. The construction of the skate park and pump track will be delivered in 2023-24.

The Driver Resource Centre was constructed in the mid-1980s as a childcare facility co-located with the Driver Primary School. In October 2022, Council commenced a preliminary design for the facility, including a needs assessment for the replacement of the Centre with a modern community centre. The overall cost of the design and construction is expected to be approximately \$2 million. Work is progressing on the return brief and needs assessment, and this will drive the conceptual design development. Council will consult with the community on the design of the facility. The design is anticipated to be completed and construction commenced in 2023-2024.

Community engagement

In 2023-24, Council will embark on a refreshed approach towards marketing programs and events to increase engagement within the community. To gain significant awareness for Council's activities, alignment will be created across events so each can leverage from one another. An 'events season' program will be promoted which will include a number of activities and programs and allow Council to have an 'always-on approach' throughout a variety of mediums. This will include social media campaigns, public displays, broadcast, radio and print, as well as some traditional marketing placements to target our diverse market. Council will continue to build relationships with media to secure regular promotional segments across radio networks in the top end.

The wellbeing of our community is a focus for all our work

Community wellbeing

City of Palmerston is dedicated to continuing to provide healthy and beneficial activities to the Palmerston community and strives to do so through initiatives such as Brekkie in the Park which offers families the chance to connect with their local parks and neighbours. Council also supports local and national community initiatives such as Neighbour Day and R U Ok Day. Council sponsors Lighting Up Palmerston requests, whereby the Water Tower, Recreation Centre and Library are lit to commemorate events of importance such as International Women's Day.

Council has confirmed a four-year partnership with Palmerston and Regional Basketball Association to support the Youth Drop-in Sports program which provides after school activities such as basketball, volleyball, table tennis, badminton, dodgeball, indoor soccer and handball in the Palmerston Recreation Centre.

Play spaces

Palmerston's play spaces offer a space for community members to connect, play and relax. The Palmerston Play Space Strategy 2022 has been developed to ensure a more robust and consistent approach to playground planning in the City's open space network. The Play Space Strategy provides guidance on Council's strategic direction, planning, consultation, decision making and investment in play spaces over the next 10 years.

As part of the implementation of the Play Space Strategy an audit of all local, major and regional playground features and amenities against the Play Space Hierarchy was completed in September 2022. This is now used to make informed decisions on play space improvements, including capital spend. \$650,000 has been allocated for the 2023-24 year to grow experiences and upgrade play space areas.

Themes that emerged from the audit which will be a focus for funding include:

- replacement of sand with softfall to facilitate inclusion and all ability access
- pathway access to and within play spaces to provide all ability access
- increase all ability play equipment across the play space network
- provision of potable water (including all abilities access)
- improve shading of play spaces to increase activation and utilisation
- provision of bike parking facilities across all major playgrounds
- provision and improvement of park amenities such as shade, bins, picnic and/or BBQ areas with shelter, and shaded seating.

Other initiatives that are planned to be undertaken to progress implementation of the Play Space Strategy include:

- Review of existing play space diversity and quality of play experiences and environments to inform future play space ideas. The development of the Ninja Obstacle Course at Hobart Park, planned to be completed in 2023, exemplifies this by providing for play opportunities for older children, teenagers and adults, including active recreation and exercise equipment.
- Review and improve the information available to the community about play spaces in the City of Palmerston and promote the range of play opportunities available.
- Review of path access to and within play spaces to enhance accessibility, provide for connections to surrounding neighbourhoods and other open space areas.
- Review the process for play space inspections to improve safety and maintenance and deliver higher quality play spaces.



Community safety

Community safety is a high priority for Council to support the wellbeing of our community. City of Palmerston regulates and manages compliance with Council By-Laws to promote public safety and amenity. This includes the number of dogs registered or licensed, the number of infringements issued for dogs at large, dog attacks, unregistered, menaces, and the number of parking infringements issued.

To educate the community around the importance of complying with Animal By-Laws and responsible animal ownership and safety, there is an array of interesting and highly relevant animal education training and promotions available free to residents. These include ranger led dog walking groups and animal behavioural workshops and all of the program details are available on Council's website.

Council is in the final stages of building the first construction phase of the new pound facility. The new facility boasts larger kennels, including indoor and outdoor runs, as well as management tools and facilities to best ensure animal welfare and safety of the Regulatory Service staff.

City of Palmerston has been offering residents a heavily subsidised (\$10.00) pet desexing, microchipping and registration program. The program aims to assist in the reduction of animal abandonment as well as decrease nuisance behaviour dogs, subsequently reducing the amount of animals who come into the Council's pound. The programs and concessions provided through Council supports our goal of responsible pet ownership.

Maintaining a safe and family-friendly atmosphere for the residents of Palmerston remains a top priority for Council and we will continue to work hard to make that a reality. Council takes the safety and well-being of community members very seriously and in partnership with the Northern Territory Government we have increased security around Goyder Square to target anti-social behaviour.

In 2022, the Palmerston Community Safety Advisory Committee was established to provide strategic advice to Council on a range of community, social and animal wellbeing issues that may influence the Palmerston By-Laws, Council services and program development. The Committee will provide advice and recommendations to Council to help improve safety outcomes for the Palmerston community.

Marlow Lagoon Dog Park, 2022





Basketball Clinic, Palmerston Recreation Centre 2022

Measures of success

These measures are indicators of our success in achieving these two objectives:



Increased participation in community events, activities and programs



Increased use of free venue hire



Continued reduction in crime due to engagement, particularly youth-related crime



Decreased number of infringements issued to the members of the public



Increased compliance in areas such as number of registered dogs, valid licences to keep more than 2 dogs



Community feedback on regulatory education and awareness initiatives



Community satisfaction with the services that are provided by Council and an increase in usage of these services



VIBRANT ECONOMY

Outcome: Palmerston is a destination city for employment. It is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and to grow.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve Palmerston's image
- Palmerston's economic future is bright



*Christmas in Wonderland food vendor,
Palmerston CBD, 2022*

Improve Palmerston's image

Council's brand and visual identity are defining elements that are vital to represent who we are as a Council, and who we are as a community. Council will be looking at delivering an internal brand identity to showcase an inclusive and holistic personality of council and community as one. The purpose of brand recognition is to ensure the community recognises council run programs, initiatives, events and services. In 2023-24, efforts will continue to maintain brand consistency across all community facing communication.

Ongoing projects, initiatives and proposed plans that are designed to support our region's future growth and direction, contain several key social infrastructure developments which will aid to deliver:

- more open space and family friendly facilities
- greater lifestyle choice, especially for youth
- local jobs
- tools to fight crime and anti-social behaviour
- lower energy costs and a reduction in carbon emissions
- an increase in our urban forest.

Delivery of these projects, with support of the Federal and Northern Territory Governments, is anticipated to increase visitation and attract more people to live and work in our community.

Council has convened the Palmerston Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee to advise Council on actions and priorities relating to the local economy. The role of the Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee includes:

- Provide advice to Council identifying economic development opportunities, improving the services provided to the community.
- Provide strategic business focus, industry perspective and balanced input for the implementation of the Local Economic Plan and its Action Plan.
- Provide business perspective and advise on economic development issues and opportunities and Council's relevant plans and strategies.



Construction worker, Zuccoli and surrounds community Hub construction, 2022

Palmerston's economic future is bright

Local Economic Plan

Palmerston's Local Economic Plan 2021-2031 will guide the economic priorities of Council for the long term, and enable us to build better support networks for our local current and potential businesses.

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based around building and encouraging a well-planned, sustainable economy that involves youth, entrepreneurs and our wider business community. Engaging with local businesses and associations will assist in creating awareness of vendor opportunities in the municipality. As of 1 July 2022, City of Palmerston's Municipal boundary extended to include the areas of Elrundie, Wishart, Tivendale and Kirkland Road. The current and future businesses in the area will benefit from Council services, programs and facilities. The area offers further opportunities for an improved economic future for Palmerston and with our proximity to Darwin City, East Arm and the rural areas, makes it prime real estate, to support this growth.

As Council works to implement actions contained in the Palmerston Local Economic Plan an increased focus on business and industry attraction coupled with support for existing businesses will be apparent.

Council recognises the importance of supporting development through the delivery of infrastructure, while building a distinguishing identity for Palmerston. We'll continue to ensure the community is involved in decision-making through community consultation and by reviewing development applications and providing comment to the NT Government on the community's behalf.

Council aims to continue our support to attract people to the city. This support will extend to our local businesses to help increase employment and business occupancy rates. Free all-day parking will

continue in 2023-24 to encourage shoppers to use city-centre businesses and services, supporting the local economy.

Community Benefit Scheme

The Community Benefits Scheme (CBS) is a great opportunity for not-for-profit organisations to access economic assistance to put on events and activities that benefit the local community. The funding provided by Council has an economic multiplier effect when spent on goods and services in Palmerston. Commercial entities can apply for CBS grant funding if the request is for an environmental initiative which meets the outcomes of the City of Palmerston Community Plan. Initiatives may include waste reduction strategies, water or energy efficiency opportunities or rehabilitation of the environment e.g. native planting.

Capacity building

In 2023-24, Council is introducing entrepreneur development workshops to provide those starting out in business with the knowledge and resources necessary to launch and promote their own business ventures. Participants will receive guidance on the fundamentals of setting up a business, learn how to develop a successful marketing plan, and gain access to networking opportunities in the Palmerston area. We are committed to helping business owners build a strong foundation for their business and achieve success. We will also continue to provide support for local entrepreneurs through initiatives such as Pop Up Dining.

Council is pleased to continue to offer numerous opportunities for young people to get involved in the planning, development, and implementation of events and activities for their peers. These projects provide invaluable input from our community as well as valuable professional development and career growth prospects for our young participants.



myPalmerston local business, Bakewell, 2022



Measures of success

These measures are indicators of our success in achieving these objectives:



The people of Palmerston choose to shop locally



Employment rates increase



The population of Palmerston is growing (families stay)



More tourists visit Palmerston



More funds are available for Council to invest in the community



There are more businesses located in Palmerston



CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Outcome: In Palmerston, we celebrate our cultures in a way that values our diversity.

OBJECTIVES

- To celebrate our rich culture and diversity
- Recognise and support diversity through our partnerships and leadership



International Day of People with Disability, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2022

To celebrate our rich culture and diversity

Council is dedicated to creating an inclusive and diverse community as identified in the Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Policy Framework (IDA). This Policy Framework underpins the delivery of our programs and services, ensuring they are properly tailored to the needs of all members of the community, regardless of their age, ability, or background. In 2022, Council launched the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan (DIAP) as the first strategy to be actioned under the IDA Framework and is committed to delivering the actions identified.

The Palmerston Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee has been established to provide strategic advice to Council relating to the actions and priorities of the Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Policy Framework, specifically towards achieving key elements of the City of Palmerston Community Plan. The Committee will meet quarterly and will provide advice to Council about strategies, programs and initiatives which increase access, inclusion and participation of people from the community.

Cultural events

Council recognises and celebrates our cultural diversity and heritage in Palmerston. We are committed to hosting and supporting dynamic cultural events and programs that bring our community together. Our events and programs, such as the Pride Festival, Harmony Day, NAIDOC Week, International Women's Day, International Men's Day and the Palmerston Youth Festival, provide a platform to honour the unique contributions of all our cultural groups and recognise them as integral members of our community. City of Palmerston Library will also continue to provide programs that celebrate our diversity such as Bilingual Storytimes and Drag Queen Storytimes.

Creative Industries Plan

The recently adopted City of Palmerston Creative Industries Plan 2023 – 2027 provides a framework for the sustainable growth and development of Palmerston's creative sector. The Plan outlines goals, strategies and actions that will encourage the growth and development of the creative sector in Palmerston by providing a supportive business environment, encouraging collaboration and partnerships, and investing in infrastructure and resources. It sets out a vision of Palmerston as a vibrant and innovative creative hub, and provides a roadmap for achieving this goal. The Plan also seeks to ensure that the benefits of the creative sector are shared by all members of the community and that the growth of the creative sector contributes to the wider economic development of our city.

Durack Community Arts Centre will play an integral role in supporting actions identified in the Creative Industries Plan. The Arts Centre will host a range of arts-based activities such as creative workshops, programs and community exhibitions as part of its commitment to fostering arts and culture in the area. Entrepreneur development workshops will be tailored to upskill creatives to better understand how to start and market their own business and to attend network opportunities in Palmerston. Council will also offer artist-in-residence programs, giving local artists the opportunity to create and showcase their work, as well as public art initiatives, allowing the community to experience art in a new way.

Citizenship ceremonies

In 2022–23, over 200 people became Australian citizens from over 33 countries including Iran, Ghana, and the Philippines. Council looks forward to welcoming more new citizens in 2023-24 when we hold up to five Australian citizenship ceremonies.

Chinese New Year,
Council Chambers, 2023





Palmerston's Christmas in Wonderland, 2022

Recognise and support diversity through our partnerships and leadership

In 2023-24, Council is proud to commence a journey of reconciliation with the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. We are honoured to live and work on Larrakia Country and we strive to imbue the principles and purpose of reconciliation within our organisation. City of Palmerston has a long standing, positive working relationship with the Larrakia community and we are proud to embark on this journey of reconciliation with Larrakia and all First Nations People.

We are dedicated to promoting and embracing diversity in all our partnerships and leadership initiatives. Our strategies to ensure this objective is achieved include strengthening our relationships with our diverse community and incorporating different

opinions and viewpoints into our decision-making processes. To demonstrate our commitment to this goal, we have recently added an official statement to our website that acknowledges our commitment to diversity and our opposition to any form of discrimination. We are committed to making sure our website remains a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

The Community Benefit Scheme will continue to provide financial support to the local community in the form of Grants, Donations, Sponsorships and Representational Support. With a funding pool of \$230,000, Council promotes this initiative year-round to the community. Council will continue to work with local community groups, including culturally diverse organisations. We also recognise the efforts of exceptional young people in our community by providing funds for annual school community awards, as determined by each school.

Measures of success

These measures are indicators of our success in achieving this outcome:



Increased community participation in arts and cultural activities



CBS is promoted through a variety of channels to community groups



Increase in CBS applications from diverse organisations



Existing partnerships are inclusive of emerging communities



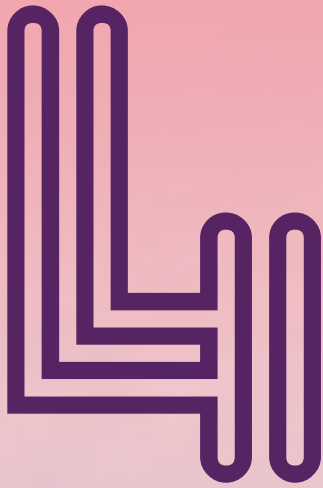
Inclusion and accessibility are incorporated into our programming and planning



Council consults with and includes the needs of all people in our programs and planning using a mechanism we've agreed with those communities



Fostering and promoting arts and culture in our community and awareness and promotion of our local history are both improved



A FUTURE FOCUS

Outcome: Palmerston is an innovative city that can sustain itself through the challenges of the future.

OBJECTIVES

- We support and foster innovation
- Infrastructure is fit for purpose

Female project team, SWELL facility, 2022



Infrastructure is fit for purpose

The City of Palmerston continued growth presents many opportunities and challenges. This growth will see the continued development of new subdivisions including residential, commercial and open space activity areas which will become part of Palmerston in 2023–24. Council is future focused and forward planning is guided by achieving outcomes aligned to the Community Plan. Council develops and implements strategic programs for capital and operational works that are designed to prioritise expenditure and deliver the most beneficial outcomes for the community. These programs will drive the delivery of the extensive capital works program and quality services throughout 2023–24.

Asset renewals and upgrades

To ensure our infrastructure and assets are sustainably maintained to provide the service levels for community usage, Council undertake forward planning to develop programs for asset renewals and upgrades. These programs capture buildings, roads, transport safety, pathways, laneways, parks, driveways, stormwater and lighting networks. The programs also include community environmental improvement initiatives such as identifying and improving dark spots, black spots, traffic calming and road safety.

A total of \$4.8 million will be spent for renewals and \$403,000 for upgrades in 2023-24. Funding of \$11.8 million is committed for operational activities such as road patching, building repairs, mowing lawns, waste management, cleaning streets, irrigation repairs, providing utilities and maintaining public lights. The funding will also go towards ensuring our assets undergo regular maintenance and service. These services ensure Council can continue to operate its facilities and provide infrastructure that's well maintained for all the community to enjoy.

The stormwater network represents more than 30% of the total value of all City of Palmerston assets. Council has committed \$50,000 to a new initiative for stormwater pipe network inspection. Ongoing condition inspection of the stormwater pipe network is required to ensure that our infrastructure is fit for purpose. Being underground, the condition of the pipework is challenging to determine. This new initiative will use conduct CCTV inspections as it is the most effective way to determine the condition of the stormwater pipe network.

IT renewals

Council is committed to renewing IT equipment throughout 2023-24 and has committed \$100,000 to ensuring that it is fit for purpose and supports Council staff's ability to deliver services to the Palmerston community. The current telephony system has limitations in the call flow, support as well as incapacibilities of reporting. Council has committed a new initiative of \$80,000 for replacement to a cloud-based telephony system with better handsets, call flow, reporting and integration with Microsoft Teams as well as other additional features.

Lake management

The City of Palmerston boasts 14 man-made lakes and one natural water body that are important ecological and aesthetic assets to the community. The presence of invasive *Salvinia* weed in the Palmerston lakes adversely impacts Council requirements and community satisfaction of the lakes, including amenity and aesthetic values for residents living near the lakes, habitat for wildlife and recreational fishing. To address this threat, Council has invested in fit for purpose infrastructure as well as innovative control measures over the past 12 months. Council procured a new second Truxor mechanical weed harvester in 2022 at a capital cost of \$265,000. The new weed harvester commenced operations in August 2022 and effectively doubled Council's weed harvesting capacity. To optimise mechanical weed harvesting, additional boat ramps, which are also used as weed collection points, have been constructed in some of the larger lakes at a capital cost of \$60,000.

In addition to mechanical weed harvesting and biocontrol (*Salvinia* weevils), Council commenced trialling foliar spraying of *Salvinia* weed with selective herbicide in June 2022. The trial involved first mechanically cleaning a lake and then spraying of residual *Salvinia* weed with selective herbicide. The trial has been regarded as a success and the use of selective herbicide to control *Salvinia* weed has now been incorporated into lake management operations. Since the implementation of the above improvements, Council has progressively cleared and continued to maintain clear lakes despite the ongoing presence of *Salvinia* weed. Bulk cleaning of *Salvinia* weed from all lakes was achieved in February 2023. Council will continue to monitor and implement lake management operations to address *Salvinia* weed and optimise the health and amenity of the Palmerston Lakes.



Construction workers, SWELL construction, 2023

Measures of success

These measures are indicators of our success to achieve this outcome:



Council consults with and includes the needs of all people in its programs and planning using a mechanism it has agreed with those communities



Improved condition data and financial valuations of assets



Optimisation of asset renewal



Improved community satisfaction of the Palmerston lakes



Increase in site visits to ArcGIS and Emergency Management system (guardian)



Council provides a platform that supports and allows for innovation by both staff members and the community



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Outcome: Palmerston is an environmentally friendly, liveable city that promotes renewable practices and sustainability.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce our footprint on the environment
- Palmerston is a cool, shaded, green city
- Encourage personal action and taking a leadership role

*Owsten Tce tree planting,
Palmerston, 2023*

Reduce our footprint on the environment

Sustainability Strategy

Council continues its commitment to reducing its environmental impact.

The Sustainability Strategy 2022 represents Council's focus on progressing sustainable development in Palmerston. Supporting objectives under the Community Plan, the Strategy focuses on the environmental dimension of sustainability. It seeks to preserve our natural assets, reduce our collective impacts, and evolve our practices so that liveability and opportunities for future generations are not compromised. Four themes frame the Strategy, each with supporting priorities and actions. These themes consider protecting our urban ecology and natural environment, empowering and connecting the community, a focus on efficiencies, and leading with purpose through responsible investment and initiatives. Council is developing an implementation plan for the Sustainability Strategy. Works programmed for 2023-24 include:

- canopy and urban heat mitigation mapping
- coordination of pathway programming with tree planting opportunities
- community waste engagement and education
- introducing a ban on single use plastics for all events held on Council land including markets
- provision of E-waste recycling at Civic Plaza.

City of Palmerston is continually looking to improve the sustainability and vehicle emissions of its fleet. Council currently has eight hybrid vehicles and two electric vehicles. A hybrid light duty truck has also been procured and is pending delivery mid-2023. Future fleet purchases will be hybrid or electric where such vehicle types are available for purchase. We recognise and encourage the transition to electric vehicles and plan to install additional electric vehicle charging stations in both the Palmerston CBD and the Civic car parks.

Council has also increased the proportion of energy used from renewable energy sources with the addition of a new solar generation system to Gray Community Hall. Council continues to monitor and improve the data collected on emissions generated from Council operations. Installation of a new solar generation system at the Durack Heights Art Centre is also planned.

Waste management

The Archer Waste Management Facility (AWMF) Upgrade remains in progress. The design includes a new recycling area and an undercover general waste push-pit area. The upgraded facility will support improved recovery of recyclable items in line with Council's Sustainability Strategy. Construction will be undertaken during the 2023 dry season. AWMF will remain open during the period of construction under a temporary waste management operations plan.

Kerbside collection of household recyclable material will continue. To assist residents to understand best practice recycling and waste management, Council will focus on public waste education by providing free community workshops and activities on sustainability and waste reduction. Council plans to further develop relationships with local schools and community groups to further support the facilitation of waste education programs.

The pre-cyclone clean-up will again be offered to residents in 2023–24 as part of the residential Waste Service Charge. The recycling component of this service will be advertised extensively, encouraging residents to separate their hard rubbish into recyclables. The pre-cyclone clean-up initiative is designed to provide residents with the opportunity to clear their property of large objects that don't fit into general waste or recycle bins and risks becoming a dangerous projectile in a cyclone.

These programs will be presented to residents in a Waste Services Calendar and Guide. We acknowledge the support received from Northern Territory Government in the form of grants to assist in the delivery of our waste services program. To further demonstrate Council's commitment to waste reduction and diversion, we will be transitioning to events held on Council premises being single-use plastic free. This will include the development of a sustainable events planning guide and a sustainable events authorised statement.

Water efficiency

There is a commitment to ongoing improvement of our irrigation systems to optimise functionality and reduce water consumption. A planned expenditure of \$250,000 will go towards the progressive refurbishment of the irrigation network with priority given to irrigation networks that are known to have a high incidence of leaks or failures. Additionally, in 2023-24 Council will develop an Irrigation Management Plan that includes:

- the landscape where the irrigation system operates
- current configuration of the irrigation system
- guidance on the operational instructions and requirements of the irrigation, including maintenance and monitoring
- strategic priorities to guide maintenance and capital expenditure to improve the irrigation system.

Palmerston is a cool, shaded, green city

Urban forest

City of Palmerston continues to face ongoing challenges related to climate change, population growth and urban heating. These issues place pressure on the built environment, service delivery and the people of the city. A healthy urban forest plays a critical role in maintaining the health and liveability within a city. Council aims to increase the urban forest density by planting more trees and improving existing vegetation health. To achieve this, Council commits to improving soil microbial activity and maintaining soil moisture levels throughout the year with regular mulch applications. Increasing urban forest diversity by expanding planting options will help protect against pests and pathogens. These small changes in direction are aimed at transforming the urban forest into a healthy, diverse and resilient forest that will enable our city to adapt to a changing climate, mitigate urban heat island effects and provide protection and wellbeing for the community.

As part of the Sustainability Strategy pillar of environment and community, tree planting programs will be introduced to look at mitigating known heat sinks, improving connectivity between public open spaces, improving the 'walkability' of our main transport links and increasing urban biodiversity. Tree planting will also continue to be a focus in parks and reserves, road reserves and roundabouts as part of beautification, greening and cooling of the municipality. To support this, Council is developing GIS mapping including a baseline study to determine monitoring approaches to urban heat and canopy cover.

Weed and fire management

A Municipal Weed Management Plan (WMP) is under development and is expected to be finalised in mid-2023. The WMP documents and maps weeds of environmental significance and provides corresponding management and control strategies. Weeds of environmental significance include but is not limited to Gamba, Mission and Grader grass, Neem, Olive Hymenachne, Candle bush and Salvinia.

A Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) is in the planning phase and is expected to be finalised in 2023-24. The BMP will identify fire management areas and provide corresponding management and control strategies that foster both asset and biodiversity protection outcomes. The BMP is being prepared in consultation with key stakeholders including the NT Fire and Rescue Service.

Weed and fire management are mutually inclusive. The effective control of weeds such as Gamba and Mission grass over consecutive years, will lead to a material reduction in fuel loads and associated wildfire risk to both personal safety and property. Weed control has already commenced through the Gunn Escarpment (focusing on Gamba and Mission grass) and late wet season burns are planned. With appropriate weed control, fire management tactics comprising of wet season and/or early dry season burning, may be undertaken to achieve biodiversity outcomes. This will mitigate hot wildfires and enable future activation of various recreational and outdoor activities for community benefit.



Shelter area, Tiverton Park park, 2022

Measures of success

These measures are indicators of our success to achieve this outcome:



The level of recycling/proportion of rubbish recycled is increased



A decrease in littering



Increase in canopy coverage (percentage of areas shaded by trees)



Improved biodiversity outcomes



Improved vehicle emissions reporting through Council's fuel usage reporting system



Number of vehicles using the new EV charging station



Uptake of Electric Vehicles within the Palmerston municipality



Decrease in costs associated with printing



Increase in online services



Name the Harvester winners, Lake 5, Durack, 2022




GOVERNANCE

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on using effective, accountable and adaptable processes to deliver on our Community Plan.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure we have a leading governance model
- Community is at the centre
- Healthy working partnerships



*City of Palmerston CEO,
Council Chambers, 2022*

Ensure we have a leading governance model

As a dynamic, multi-disciplinary organisation, the City of Palmerston delivers, facilitates and coordinates activities using modern, innovative and contemporary methods that consider public and political implications.

In 2023–24, Council will offer training to staff on governance, reporting and compliance requirements in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* and Guidelines. The training will support good decision making and include a focus on fair and transparent processes, confidentiality, privacy and conflict of interest.

Risk management

In 2022-23, Council reviewed its Strategic Risk Register to ensure it aligned with the risk profile of Council. The Strategic Risk Register identifies the matters that pose the greatest threat for Council achieving the 6 outcomes in the Community Plan. The review of the Strategic Risk Register included establishing Council's risk appetite and risk tolerance levels, assessing the effectiveness of the established controls and identifying treatment plans. The updated Strategic Risk Register will inform the 3-year internal audit plan that will start in 2023-24. The outcomes of the internal audits will be reported back to Council through the Risk Management and Audit Committee.

Council's procurement processes will be fair, equitable and transparent for everyone. A review of the procurement documentation has improved the useability for staff to achieve greater compliance. Further improvements to the documentation will continue in 2023-24 and staff training will be delivered to focus on a culture of transparent and fair buying processes.

Records management

City of Palmerston is committed to establishing and maintaining record management practices that meet its business needs, accountability requirements

and stakeholder expectations. In 2023-24 Council will undertake several initiatives to ensure our record management strategies are best practice. This will include developing an archiving strategy, archiving existing records and updating the records management policy.

Council continues to update all our policies in line with the requirements under the new *Local Government Act 2019*. In 2023-24 a review of Council's policy framework will ensure the mechanisms are in place to monitor the review of all policies and procedures as per the Act.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement and a consistent maintenance program across all Council assets will better inform Councils Long Term Financial Plan. Council currently has consistent data reporting processes in place for limited assets which will now be extended across a range of other Council owned assets such as public roads, storm water drainage, public lighting, water irrigation and buildings. Having consistent asset management inspections in place results in strengthened and improved outcomes for future planning. The new Digital Strategy will take advantage of new technology (such as the Fibersense data) to develop and continue to become a data-driven organisation.

Council, like most organisations in the Territory, is affected by skilled staff shortages. Council understands that people are key for it to be able to deliver its services to the Community. Key areas of focus for 2023-24 are employee recruitment and retention, training and professional development, leadership, the development of a workforce strategy and employee value proposition to assist in attracting and retaining staff.

Changes in the Industrial Relations landscape requires Council to continue to review and update its workforce policies, procedures, and practices to provide best practice human resource management and remain compliant with changing Fair Work requirements.

Council ranger, Palmerston CBD, 2022



Community is at the centre

Gaining the trust of the community is important to Council, and the way in which this is done is through informative, educational, opportunistic, reflective, and supportive communication. All communication is strategically aligned to delivering Council's vision and values. As a result of Council implementing its Communications Strategy in 2022, there is a commitment to the following:

- Genuine community communication
- A recognised and trusted brand
- Effective communications
- Innovative digital experience
- Promoting our city

2023-24 will see Council deliver a more refined approach to the way the community and stakeholders are involved in community engagement. A Community Engagement Strategy will be developed in line with IAP2 standards, Council policy and include engagement techniques relevant for the Palmerston Community. Implementation of the strategy will also see improvements to our website and other survey response platforms to make it easier for the community to have its say.

Our website refresh will include an updated look and importantly an improved user experience. The improvements will allow quicker access to frequently used areas of the website including online payments, registrations and forms. An overhaul of content including images will also be undertaken during this refresh.

The City of Palmerston App, which was launched in January 2023, will be an ongoing piece of work with the aim that all community members can access updated information on events, services, programs as well as being able to pay their rates all in the palm of their hands. The community satisfaction survey indicated the community would like to have more opportunity to be involved with decision making and wants to see Council be more accountable for their actions. To improve these elements, communication is key, with the overall result to improve trust within the community.

Healthy working partnerships

Our strategies to support achieving this objective are based on maintaining our strong partnerships and networks both internally with our staff and externally to achieve the best outcomes for Palmerston residents.

Council will continue to convene its Committees and Network groups through the Advisory Committees of 'Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee', 'Community Safety Advisory Committee' and 'Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee'. The 'Palmerston Safe Communities Network' and 'Palmerston Animal Management Network' will sit under the 'Safety Advisory Committee'. The 'Palmerston Kids Network' and 'Palmerston and Rural Youth Services', along with the 'Palmerston Seniors Network' will all sit under the Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee.

We aim to maintain a high degree of community involvement by delivery of clear and effective communication, working to identify and overcome concerns and barriers to involvement and actively seeking commentary and feedback. Developing the skills, confidence, and knowledge of the public in community matters, and evaluating engagement outcomes, will ensure we continue meeting the requirements of national standards and improve future Council projects.

Palmerston residents can participate in Council's decision-making in several ways:

- attend Council meetings. Council meetings are open to the public. Ordinary Council Meetings are generally held in Council Chambers on the first and third Tuesday of every month. A 30-minute public forum before the meeting encourages the community to discuss any issue with Council in an informal environment. Members of the community can also lodge written questions to be answered in Council meetings.
- follow and like City of Palmerston social media channels on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Residents have the opportunity to engage with Council through any these platforms.
- provide feedback on community engagement and consultations. Council seeks to involve the full diversity of Palmerston residents and will ensure they are engaged through several different tools, approaches and processes that are inclusive to their needs. Council will continue to advertise and provide public consultation in excess of its legislative requirements, to ensure the community has every opportunity to participate.
- participate in our Community Satisfaction Survey. Each year Council sends out a community survey to gauge feedback on how we are performing. It is an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the things which matter to them.

Measures of success

These measures are indicators of success for objectives:



The community is satisfied that Council values and encourages their participation in Council activities and is committed to delivering the highest possible levels of service and community engagement



The community is satisfied that Council shows corporate and social responsibility, ensures the sustainability of assets and services, and plans effectively, reporting performance to the community



The community is satisfied that Council has the right systems and processes in place to deliver services to the community



The community is satisfied that Council values its people and the culture of our organisation



Increase in website statistics



Increase in community satisfaction on brand recognition through the community survey



Increase in community consultation



Increase in engagement across social media channels



Council staff, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2022

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Palmerston is a young and modern municipality, with a median age of 31, and including many families. The second-largest city in the Northern Territory, Palmerston is a regional hub with a promising future. Rapid population growth coupled with a young demographic presents council with the challenge of growing and renewing essential family friendly infrastructure for Palmerston and surrounding communities.



Gray Community Hall, 2022

Opportunities

Centrally located between the population centres of Darwin and its rural area, Palmerston is close to key industry growth sectors, including Defence and energy and minerals. It is near major health, education and transport infrastructure, such as the port and railway, a university campus and a new, modern hospital and police station.

City of Palmerston continues to work to cater for the city's growth and demand on local infrastructure by delivering on the six outcomes of the Community Plan such as:

- Family and community
- Vibrant Economy
- Cultural Diversity
- A Future Focus
- Environmental Sustainability
- Governance

This gives council the ability to tackle the challenges of governance, sustainability, decision making, relevance, efficiency and thereby engage meaningfully with its stakeholders.

Council embraces the opportunities to:

- maintain trust
- be sustainable
- attract and retain the right people for the right jobs
- Effectively implement Governance practices
- make informed and timely decisions
- deliver the strategic vision for the city
- respond quickly to opportunities and challenges
- develop effective relationships with stakeholders
- respond to events that affect business continuity.

City of Palmerston staff have worked hard to develop positive relationships with the Northern Territory Government and Australian Government. This has supported Council to maximise the opportunity to work in partnership with both governments to fast track delivery of projects for the Palmerston community.

On 1 July 2022, City of Palmerston expanded its area by 37% with the changes to the municipal boundary increasing from 56km² to 72km². With this comes the addition of 11 new roads (5.46 km), over 3km of underground stormwater infrastructure and an estimated 60 streetlights. The expansion presents a great opportunity to make Palmerston bigger, more diverse, and over the long-term, increase resources to fund important community projects and infrastructure and grow and improve council services.

The expansion of the City of Palmerston presents a great opportunity to make Palmerston bigger, more diverse, and over the long-term, increase resources to fund important community projects and infrastructure and grow and improve council services.

Challenges

The challenge for the City of Palmerston is to ensure it can sustain the growth and development, whilst delivering to the lifestyle aspirations of the community, and still contribute to the Territory's overall success.

Last year the community identified the following key challenge in council's annual customer satisfaction survey:

- when asked what the most important issues are in the local area, more than half of respondents named crime and safety issues (60%), an increase from 47% last year.

The team at City of Palmerston works very closely with a variety of external stakeholders such as Larrakia Nation, NT Police and the Department of Territory Families to assist and help reduce anti-social behaviour and crime within the CBD. These partnerships will continue, and we will look at opportunities to improve the current programs as well as develop others. Council is pleased to confirm a four-year partnership with Palmerston and Regional Basketball Association to support the Youth Drop-in Sports program which provides after school activities such as basketball, volleyball, table tennis, badminton, dodgeball, indoor soccer and handball in the Palmerston Recreation Centre.

There will also be more work done to deliver more public patrols in the city centre and suburban areas to target anti-social behaviour. In partnership with the Northern Territory Government, we have increased security around Goyder Square to target anti-social behaviour. In 2022, the Palmerston Community Safety Advisory Committee was established to provide strategic advice and recommendations to Council to help improve safety outcomes for the Palmerston community.

Another important safety aspect of the community stems from incidents relating to dogs, and we are finalising the new Animal Management By-Laws. Our regulatory services team will be introducing new regulatory policies, procedures and processes to align with the By-Laws, and continued effort will be made to regulate and manage compliance to promote public safety and amenity. There will be highly relevant animal education programs and promotions free for residents to support the policies.

Other programs impacting the safety of our community that Council has already delivered on and continues to drive are:

- the management of laneways through the existing Council policy with Council currently considering the closure of two laneways within the Municipality
- investment in improved public lighting
- youth programs
- public places management
- advocating for the community regarding alcohol management and policing.

Another common issue raised in this year's survey was maintenance of the lakes. The City of Palmerston boasts 15 man-made lakes and one natural water body. *Salvinia Molesta* weed has posed a significant challenge for the City of Palmerston to manage. Council has been working closely with the Northern Territory Government Weeds Branch to ensure an ongoing successful management program is implemented and maintained.

Management of *Salvinia* is undertaken through mechanical harvesting and biological control. The biological control is a new program of introducing the *Salvinia Weevil*, which eats only the *Salvinia* leaves.

Council is now undertaking herbicide foliar spraying around the lake perimeter which is proving to be very successful in controlling the mature *salvinia* left around the lake edges. Dedication and constant follow up spraying will assist in controlling the issue into the future along with continuing manual removal via the weed harvesters.

The survey identified our top two highest performing services as:

- kerbside waste collection (8.14/10)
- providing libraries and library services to the community (8.04/10).

Our most significant achievements in the last year were (% of total respondents):

- events and entertainment for the community / youth activities (22%)
- more green spaces (18%)
- improving facilities / redeveloping the community hall / swimming pool (15%).

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Council staff, Palmerston Library, 2022



Revenue Statement

Council collects revenue from five main sources. General rates and waste management charges provide 84% of Council's revenue, the remainder provided by grants, fees and charges and investment income.

Rates for the 2023-24 financial year will be increased by 4.3% for residential properties with a \$39 increase to the minimum rate and an increase of 4.9% for commercial and industrial properties with a \$60 increase to the minimum rate. There is a \$47 increase to kerbside collection waste charges for the 2023-24 financial year. The rate increase and waste charge increase will result in an impact of \$86 for the year to most of our ratepayers, which equates to \$1.65 per week. Council continues to provide free parking; pool entry and facility hire. In addition, interest charged on overdue rates will remain at 8%. Council continues to maintain levels of service along with continuing to look for opportunities for continuous improvement and efficiency.

Valuation

City of Palmerston uses Unimproved Capital Value as the basis for all land valuations in the City of Palmerston area. Unimproved Capital Value is the value of the land without any improvements.

The Valuer-General, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, sets the Unimproved Capital values of land. The value of land is reviewed by the Valuer-General every three years to take effect the following financial year. The 2021 revaluation occurred in July 2020 and was first applied for the 2021-22 financial year and remains the same for 2023-24 financial year.

Council plays no role in the assessment of Unimproved Capital Value. If a ratepayer is dissatisfied with their valuation, it is a matter to raise with the Valuer-General. Rates must be paid in accordance with rate notices unless otherwise notified by Council.

All land within the Council area is rateable, except for lands specifically exempt (e.g. Crown Land). Where a service that is subject to a service charge is provided to non-rateable land, a service charge is levied against the land.

Waste Service Charge

Council charges a fixed amount for waste management and collection. Where multiple residential dwellings exist on the allotment of land, the fee is multiplied by the number of residential units on each allotment.

The Waste Service Charge is levied for the provision of a 120 litre, twice weekly domestic collection, a fortnightly recycling 240 litre bin, free access to the Archer Waste Management Facility and waste

management and cleaning across the city. Commercial use of Archer Recycling Centre and Waste Transfer Station is not supported as there is no direct waste charge against either commercial or industrial properties.

Concessions

Eligible NT Concession card holders may be entitled to a concession on rates. City of Palmerston receives a listing from Territory Families Housing and Communities (Northern Territory Government) of all the ratepayers eligible for concession at the time of levying the rates, in which the rebate is deducted and noted on the annual rate notice. If a ratepayer becomes eligible part way through the rating year, they must pay the rates in full to Council and then contact the NT Concession and Recognition Unit to obtain a refund. Contact details for NT Concession and Recognition Unit are: Postal: PO Box 37037 Winnellie NT 0821 Telephone: 1800 777 704 Email: ntconcessionandrecognition@nt.gov.au Website: <https://ntconcessions.nt.gov.au> Applications for other concessions on rates and charges will be considered upon application to Council in line with Council Policy "Rate Concession".

Late Payment of Rates

Any ratepayer who may, or is likely to, experience difficulty with meeting the standard instalments and due dates can contact Council to discuss alternative payment arrangements. It should be noted that interest would still be levied in accordance with the Act under any payment arrangement. Council's determined interest for late payments will be imposed in accordance with the Act. Ratepayers can apply for a remission of interest under the Act provided they agree to a repayment arrangement to the satisfaction of Council. Council has determined the interest rate for overdue rates will remain at 8% per annum. Pursuant to the Act, if rates have been in arrears for at least three years, Council may sell the land to recover unpaid rates and associated costs.

Fees and Charges

Council has only made minimal changes to majority of fees and charges for the 2023-24 year as Council continues to provide many free services and has waived further charges. Council will continue to provide free pool access to our community when the new SWELL facility opens whilst free parking and facility hire continues.

The Schedule of Fees and Charges can be viewed at Council's Civic Centre, as well as on Council's website <https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/fees-and-charges>

Rates and Charges

NT Planning Zone		Levied 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Average Change
R, RR (Excluding RR in the suburb of	Rate on UCV	0.62%	0.66%	4.3%
Marlow Lagoon), LR, LMR , MR, HR,	Minimum Rate	\$1,287	\$1,326	\$39
CL, FD, PS, SP8, SP9 (<10,000m2),	No of Properties	13,734	13,973	
SP9 (>20,000m2), SP10, SP11 and SP1*20	Estimated Income Rates	\$19,457,458	\$20,446,045	
RR in the Suburb of Marlow Lagoon	Rate on UCV	0.52%	0.54%	4.3%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,287	\$1,326	\$39
	No of Properties	251	252	
	Estimated Income Rates	\$474,033	\$497,734	
GI and LI	Rate on UCV	0.50%	0.53%	4.9%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,287	\$1,347	\$60
	No of Properties	403	496	
	Estimated Income	\$1,803,053	\$2,196,274	
All Other Rateable Land	Rate on UCV	0.76%	0.79%	4.9%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,287	\$1,347	\$60
	No of Properties	449	397	
	Estimated Income	\$2,421,213	\$2,363,120	

Waste Service Charge

Waste Management Charge	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Budget year 2023-34
Residential Kerbside Collection	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527
Manual Service Collection (<25 units)	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527
Upgrade to 240L Annual Service Charge*	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$167
Multiple Dwelling 25 units +	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$264
Additional General Waste Kerbside Bin 120L*	N/A	N/A	\$250	\$256	\$274
Additional Recycling Kerbside Bin*	N/A	N/A	\$110	\$113	\$113
Additional General Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$394	\$290	\$297	\$318
Additional Recycling Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$245	\$110	\$113	\$113

*These are charged through Fees and Charges, for more information visit <https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/fees-and-charges>

Social and Economic Effects of Rating Policy

City of Palmerston is committed to levying rates in a consistent, transparent and equitable manner, while ensuring that both financial and social considerations have been made when determining the most appropriate rate mix. Council's Community Reference Group on Rates Strategy determined that the rating system and methodology utilised at City of Palmerston should follow the principles of Administrative Simplicity, Economic Efficiency and Equity. The methodologies are easy to apply, understand and comply with. They make it difficult to avoid paying rates while being practical and cost-effective to administer. The rating methodology and rate mix consider and account for impacts of the rate burden between the differential categories and whether these will have a significant negative effect on economic behaviour. Considered fair and equitable, the methodology considers the benefits received by the ratepayer as well as their capacity to pay.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

\$'000	2022-23 Revised Budget	2023-24 Budget
Operating Income		
Rates	\$24,291	\$25,749
Charges	\$6,819	\$7,534
Fees and Charges	\$927	\$933
Operating Grants & Subsidies	\$3,599	\$3,701
Interest & Investment Revenue	\$ 714	\$1,671
Other Revenue	\$ 134	\$73
Total Operating Income	\$36,484	\$39,662
Operating Expenditure		
Employee benefits & costs	\$ 10,828	\$12,207
Borrowing costs	\$519	\$179
Elected Member Allowances	\$385	\$412
Elected Member Expenses	\$9	\$16
Materials, contracts and other expenses*	\$20,723	\$22,148
Depreciation, amortisation & Impairment	\$10,793	\$11,270
Total Operating Expenditure	\$42,863	\$45,805
BUDGETED OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(\$6,378)	\$6,143
Add: Amounts received specifically for new or upgraded assets	\$20,624	\$2,524
Add: Physical resources received free of charge (non-cash)	\$1,879	\$3,000
Changes in Revaluation surplus	\$57	\$58
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME / (LOSS)	\$16,181	(\$562)
Add: Depreciation	\$10,793	\$ 11,270
Less: Resources free of charge	\$ 1,879	\$3,000
Less: Capital Expenditure	\$40,441	\$7,848
Add: Borrowings (Loans advances)	\$6,000	-
Less: Loan Repayments	\$375	\$392
Add: Transfer from reserves	\$9,778	\$589
Less: Changes in Revaluation surplus	\$ 57	\$58
Add: loss on Disposal		
NET CASH BUDGET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$0	\$0

*Council Committee Allowances of \$8,000 is included within Materials, contracts and other expenses.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING BUDGET

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	2022-23 Budget	2023-24
Land & Buildings	27,298,894	1,250,417
Infrastructure (including Roads, footpaths, park furniture)	11,767,145	5,553,583
Fleet	624,572	363,520
Other Assets (including furniture and equipment)	750,000	680,000
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	40,440,611	\$7,847,250

TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FUNDED BY:

Operating Income	4,646,860	4,523,742
Capital Grants	20,116,137	2,023,778
Transfer from Cash Reserves	9,677,614	1,300,000
Borrowings	6,000,000	-
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FUNDING	40,440,611	7,847,520

PLANNED MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS BUDGET

Class of Assets	By Major Capital Project	2021-22 Actuals	2022-23 Budget	2023-24
Buildings	Aquatic Centre Capital Renewals	14,260	148,535	32,228
	Aquatic Centre Re-roof	-	-	300,000
	Building Management System (BMS)	-	-	20,000
	Civic Plaza Capital Renewals	20,649	69,000	56,320
	Community Hall	-	-	350,000
	Depot Capital Renewals	-	14,400	14,746
	Driver Community Hall Design	-	-	100,000
	Driver Resource Centre Capital Renewals	8,900	10,000	10,240
	Durack Community Arts Centre Capital Renewals	29,480	9,050	9,267
	Gray Community Hall Renewals	-	-	-
	Incubator Renewal	-	5,000	-
	Library Building Capital Renewals	3,000	10,500	47,616
	Odegaard Drive Building Capital Works	-	-	-
	Recreation Centre Capital Renewals	61,117	103,392	60,000
	Where We Live Matters - Zuccoli Community	113,062	-	250,000
Footpaths & Bicycleways & Driveways	All Ability Access	59,963	105,962	43,084
	Driveways Renewals	25,632	56,000	30,000
	Laneway Renewals	29,674	50,000	40,000
	New Driveways - FILOC	189,808	175,000	200,000
	New Pathways	79,589	86,655	700,440
	New Pathways - FILOC	-	-	100,000
	Pathways Renewals	-	49,856	150,000
Furniture & Fittings	ERP software	-	-	500,000
	IT Projects	62,140	150,000	100,000
	Telephone	-	-	80,000
Land Improvements	Artwork Sculpture	47,199	156,601	75,000
	Exeloo Renewal	-	-	10,000
	LRCI Phase 4 Projects	-	-	411,889
	Play Space Renewals and Upgrades (LRCI 3 partially)	-	50,000	650,000
	Pump Parks/Skate Parks Zuccoli - additional	-	-	250,000
	Tree Planting & Replacement	352,953	783,335	608,658
Public Lighting	Public Lighting Renewals	61,065	45,000	51,200
	Public Lighting Upgrades (Dark Spots)	512,381	537,619	250,000
	Sustainability Programs (Solar Panels & LEDs etc)	593,915	169,338	53,600
Roads	Bitumen Reseal & Asphalt Overlay Program (R2R)	813,197	2,412,752	1,245,393
	Road Reconstruction	581,390	256,000	200,000
	Road Safety Program	23,496	353,636	50,000
Stormwater	Stormwater Renewals & Upgrades	25,184	104,000	184,320
Vehicles	Fleet Replacement	394,829	443,852	363,520
Water Infrastructure	Irrigation Refurbishment	240,397	168,422	250,000
TOTAL	4,343,281	4,343,281	6,523,905	7,847,520

* City of Palmerston's Long Term Financial Plan provides details on the Planned Major Capital Works Budget for the next ten years and can be found on Council's website <https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/publications>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

\$ '000	2022-23 Revised Budget	2023-24 Budget
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,000	4,000
Investments	27,450	11,797
Receivables	3,094	3,258
Total Current Assets	34,544	19,055
Non-Current Assets		
Infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	597,138	596,715
Investment property	5,757	5,815
Total Non Current Assets	602,895	\$602,530
TOTAL ASSETS	637,439	621,585
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Payables	19,865	5,016
Borrowings	539	444
Provisions	1,442	1,485
Total Current Liabilities	21,846	6,946
Non-Current Liabilities		
Borrowings	6,362	5,918
Provisions	1,749	1,801
Total Non-Current Liabilities	8,111	7,720
TOTAL LIABILITIES	29,957	14,665
NET ASSETS	607,481	606,920
Equity		
Retained Earnings/(accumulated deficit)	226,410	226,379
Other Reserves	12,698	12,109
Revaluation Reserves	368,373	368,431
Council equity interest	607,481	606,920
TOTAL EQUITY	607,481	606,920

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

\$ '000	2022-23 Revised Budget	2023-24 Budget
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts:		
Rates & annual charges	30,954	33,120
User charges & fees	927	933
Investment & interest revenue received	714	1671
Grants & contributions	3,599	3,701
Other	134	73
Payments:		
Employee benefits & costs	(10,735)	(12,112)
Materials, contracts & other expenses	(20,126)	(36,997)
Finance Payments	(519)	(179)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	4,949	(9,790)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Receipts:		
Sale of investment securities	-	15,653
Amounts specifically for new or upgraded assets	22,831	2,524
Payments:		
Purchase of investment securities	(8,938)	-
Purchase of infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	(40,375)	(7,848)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(26,481)	10,329
Cash Flows from Financing Activities		
Receipts:		
Proceeds from borrowings & deposits	6,000	-
Payments:		
Repayment of borrowings & advances	(375)	(539)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) FINANCING ACTIVITIES	5,625	(539)
plus: CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS - beginning of year	19,907	4,000
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(15,907)	-
TOTAL CASH AT BANK	4,000	4,000
plus: INVESTMENTS ON HAND - beginning of year	18,513	27,450
Net Increase/(Decrease) in investments on hand	8,937	(15,653)
TOTAL INVESTMENTS ON HAND	27,450	11,797
TOTAL CASH & CASH EQUIVALEND & INVESTMENTS - end of year	31,450	15,797
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS & INVESTMENTS	(6,970)	(15,653)

FINANCIAL RATIOS

	2022-23 Revised Budget	2023-24 Budget
Operating ratio		
This ratio measures Council's ability to contain operating expenditure within operating revenue	14%	13%
Benchmark - Greater than 0%		
Cash Expense Cover Ratio		
This ratio indicates the number of months Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflow	11.96	5.52
Benchmark - Greater than 3.0 months		
Current Ratio		
This ratio represents Council's ability to meet debt payments as they fall due. It should be noted that Council's externally restricted assets will not be available as operating funds and as such can significantly impact Council's ability to meet its liabilities	1.58	2.74
Benchmark - Greater than 1.5		
Own Revenue		
This ratio measures the level of Council's fiscal flexibility. It is the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. Council's financial flexibility improves the higher the level of its own source revenue	90%	91%
Benchmark - Greater than 60% < 75%		
Own funding / total operating revenue		
Debt Service Cover Ratio		
This ratio measures the availability of cash to service debt including interest, principal, and lease payments	4.66	8.51
Benchmark - Greater than 2.0		
Interest Cover Ratio		
This ratio indicates the extent to which Council can service its interest bearing debt and take on additional borrowings. It measures the burden of the current interest expense upon Council's operating cash	9.5	29.57
Benchmark - Greater than 4.0		
Asset Sustainability Ratio		
This ratio indicates the extent to which Council is replacing its existing asset base with capital renewals of existing assets	374%	70%
Benchmark -between 89%-110%		

STATEMENT OF RESERVES

Reserve	Expected Opening Balance as at 1 July 2023	Budget transfer to reserves	Budget transfer from reserves	Projected Reserves Balance as at 30 June 2024
Internally restricted				
Election reserves	50,000			50,000
Disaster recovery	500,000			500,000
Waste	2,323,900	27,122	(29,841)	2,321,181
FILOC	828,712	80,000	(300,000)	608,712
Major initiative	914,866		(250,000)	664,866
Unrestricted				
Working Capital	5,208,602	633,528	(750,000)	5,092,130
TOTAL	9,826,080	740,650	(1,329,841)	9,236,889

BUDGET INITIATIVES

New Initiatives to commence in 2023-24	Capital Cost (\$)
Telephone replacement	\$80,000
Driver Community Hall Design	\$100,000
Reconciliation Action Plan	\$45,000
Stormwater network inspection	\$50,000
Talent Attraction Strategy	\$30,000
Enterprise agreement industrial support	\$100,000
SWELL marketing	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$505,000







'A Place for People'



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