

DRAFT MUNICIPAL PLAN 2024-25





Above: Smokng ceremony, SWELL facility, 2023.

Front cover image: Zuccoli Dog Park, 2023.

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.



This document has been printed on recycled material.

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INTRODUCTION

City of Palmerston's Municipal Plan formalises all the services, programs, projects, and initiatives we have in store for the Palmerston community in 2024–25. This document goes beyond outlining our plans, it details how we will allocate resources, including Council rates, fees, and charges, and how we will bring important community projects to life.

At the heart of our efforts is you, our vibrant community. In 2018, City of Palmerston collaborated with the community to draft City of Palmerston's Community Plan, a blueprint that sets our course for the next decade. Our shared vision, 'A Place for People', underscores our commitment to leveraging our strengths to ensure the people and community of Palmerston flourish for generations to come.

We strive to cultivate a welcoming, vibrant, and family-friendly city where diversity is celebrated, and unity thrives. In Palmerston, we want everyone to feel a sense of belonging and safety, where each individual is valued.

We understand the importance of preserving our natural environment, while also fostering economic growth and embracing innovation to drive positive social change. The Community Plan embodies these ideals and serves as a roadmap for our priorities, shaped directly by input from our community members.

Aligning our actions with the aspirations outlined in the Community Plan, we aim to provide certainty to our residents, businesses, and fellow Territorians about what they can expect from Council over the next decade. Together, we'll work towards achieving the long-term outcomes our community desires and deserves. Thank you for being an integral part of shaping the future of Palmerston.

COMMUNITY PLAN OUTCOMES

- 01 Family and community:** Palmerston is a safe and family-friendly community where everyone belongs.
- 02 Vibrant economy:** Palmerston is a destination city for employment. It is a place where businesses are encouraged to set up and grow.
- 03 Cultural diversity:** In Palmerston, we celebrate our cultures in a way that values our diversity.
- 04 A Future focus:** Palmerston is an innovative city that sustains itself through the challenges of the future.
- 05 Environmental sustainability:** Palmerston is an environmentally friendly, liveable city that promotes renewable practices and sustainability.
- 06 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

41,113



MEDIAN AGE

31.8



GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

72KM²



GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT²

\$1.723 B



TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES

\$59.7 M

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Local governments in the Northern Territory undertake planning and reporting activities in line with the *Local Government Act 2019 (NT)* (Local Government Act) and *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021 (NT)* (Local Government Regulations).

City of Palmerston welcomes feedback from the public about the draft Municipal Plan and Budget 2024–25, which will be online and open for submissions palmerston.nt.gov.au/haveyoursay from 13 May 2024 to 10 June 2024.

Council will review all submissions at the Ordinary Council Meeting in June 2024. Council will adopt the approved Municipal Plan before 30 June 2024, in line with the Local Government Act.

MAKING A SUBMISSION:

Online

Have Your Say at Council's website: palmerston.nt.gov.au/haveyoursay

Mail

Attn: Chief Executive Officer
Municipal Plan and Budget 2024–25 submission
City of Palmerston
PO BOX 1, Palmerston NT 0831

Email

governance@palmerston.nt.gov.au

Source:

¹ ABS Estimated Residential Population 2023. (<https://dbr.abs.gov.au>)

² [National Institute of Economic and Industry Research \(NIEIR\) ©2023](https://economy.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/gross-regional-product?WebID=200). 2023. Compiled and presented in economy.id by [.id \(informed decisions\)](https://economy.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/gross-regional-product?WebID=200). Data are based on a 2020/21 price base for all years. NIEIR-ID data are inflation adjusted each year to allow direct comparison, and annual data releases adjust previous years' figures to a new base year. (<https://economy.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/gross-regional-product?WebID=200>)

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It is both an honour and a privilege to continue to serve this community as Mayor. I and all the Elected Members strive to ensure the continued growth and sustainability of our city, while meeting the diverse needs of our community. I am thrilled to address you as we embark on another year of continued improvement for our Palmerston community.

I am honoured to present City of Palmerston's Municipal Plan 2024-25, outlining our ongoing commitment to improving our community's lifestyle and wellbeing. Our Council remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering a vibrant, thriving, family-friendly and inclusive city.

Recognising the many challenges faced by our community including the increased living costs, we are committed to maintaining high standards of service delivery while minimising increases to Council fees and charges where possible and providing financial hardship rates concessions to people in need. We will continue to advocate on behalf of our community for partnerships with the Australian and Northern Territory Governments for the delivery of projects in Palmerston.

We are pleased to announce our continued support through initiatives such as the Community Benefit Scheme, free community events and facility hire, ongoing free entry to SWELL, verge beautification assistance, and ongoing support for local businesses.

A significant highlight of the upcoming year will be the roll out of the new Animal Management By-Laws. After significant process including multiple community consultations, the By-Laws were endorsed by Council and will be enacted as of 1 July 2024. The By-Laws are a significant improvement on the old By-Laws, future-proof animal management for the community and address matters raised by our community. We appreciate that there are some big changes for the community in these new By-Laws, such as the inclusion of cats, poultry and livestock, and significant penalties for animal attacks, and Council will be undertaking education to enable better understanding and compliance, as well as offering incentives for people to microchip, register their animals and contain cats within their property.

In line with our commitment to community development, we will continue with further stages of the Zuccoli Community Hub including designing the new community hall and library buildings. The planning and delivery for the redevelopment of the Driver Community Centre is underway and will continue through this Municipal Plan. Projects including in this budget are to ensure that our facilities meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.

The safety of our community remains a top priority, and we are implementing various initiatives, including youth programs, activation of spaces through events and activities, and improved public lighting, to enhance community safety and well-being.

We are looking forward to further implementation of the Local Economic Plan with an emphasis on fostering business growth, investment, and city activation.

Sustainability remains a core priority for Council, as we strive to reduce our environmental footprint, enhance recycling efforts, and promote energy efficiency initiatives. We are excited to begin the upgrade of the Archer Waste Management Facility to help support these efforts and see the implementation of new infrastructure.

I extend my gratitude to you the community, staff, and all stakeholders for your ongoing support. Together, we will continue to build a sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive city that truly embodies our vision of *A Place for People*.

Thank you and let us look forward to a year of progress and prosperity.



Athina Pascoe-Bell



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

City of Palmerston's Municipal Plan 2024-25 underscores our unwavering commitment to delivering quality programs and services, maintaining, and delivering new infrastructure, and fostering sustainability for you, our community.

The process of developing the City's budget for the upcoming year has presented challenges, with the continuing rising costs throughout all industries, labour market constraints, general cost of living for our community and revaluations of land. These challenges necessitate careful consideration to minimise the impact on our community while upholding service excellence, delivering infrastructure needs, and advancing Palmerston as *A Place for People*.

City of Palmerston continues to grow, presenting many opportunities and challenges. This growth will see new residential areas being developed and the need for the continued development and renewal of community infrastructure to ensure the lifestyle and well-being of our community.

The budget is the basis of what services, programs, and infrastructure that we need to deliver to continue to deliver the Community Plan outcomes and meet our community's needs. This will include delivery of a \$48 million operational budget and \$10.8 million capital expenditure.

Our extensive, diverse, inclusive, and very popular community events and creative industries will also continue to be delivered such as Palmerston Youth Festival, Australia Day Celebrations, Brekkie in the Park, Proms by the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and Christmas Wonderland. We are continuing to work on further collaborations with the Creative Industries to bring new events to the Palmerston community.

We will continue to support the local economy and businesses with our commitment to delivery of the Palmerston Local Economic Plan, procurement policy and city activation.

The plan includes investing in our people through various initiatives such as implementation of a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, continuous training and development opportunities, improved technologies and increasing staff levels to ensure the ongoing delivery of exceptional programs and services, and customer experience to meet our growing community's needs.

City of Palmerston are seeking to partner with the Australian and Northern Territory Governments for the delivery of projects. I acknowledge the support of both Governments in delivering outcomes for the Palmerston.

Lastly, we recognise the diversity of our community, and we remain dedicated to engaging with you to gather feedback and insights. Your input is invaluable as we strive to continually improve and adapt to meet the evolving needs of our community.

It is an honour and a privilege as Chief Executive Officer to lead the dedicated team of City of Palmerston. The Community remain at the centre of all we do with a strong ongoing focus on the customer experience.

I would like to thank the community for their ongoing support in making Palmerston *A Place for People*.



Luccio Cercarelli



OUR YEAR AHEAD



4.9%

RESIDENTIAL INCREASE TO THE MINIMUM RATE BEING A \$65 INCREASE



4.9%

INCREASE IN THE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ON THE UCV, AND A \$66 INCREASE TO THE MINIMUM RATE



\$10.83M

TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS SPEND



\$250,000

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SCHEME



\$50,000

WASTE EDUCATION PROGRAMS



\$95,000

CITY ACTIVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



INTRODUCTION OF THE REVISED ANIMAL MANAGEMENT BY-LAWS



CREATING A MARLOW LAGOON MASTER PLAN



\$846,600

PLAYSPACE RENEWALS AND UPGRADES



\$2.08M

ROADS CAPITAL PROGRAM



\$1.25M

DRIVER COMMUNITY HALL PHASE 1



\$300,000

ZUCCOLI COMMUNITY HUB DESIGN



\$750,000

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING



\$500,000

TREE PLANTING



+

DEVELOP A RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



\$715,000

PATHWAYS AND LANEWAYS



\$500,000

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES - PUBLIC ART



+

FREE PARKING, FREE FACILITY HIRE AND FREE ENTRY TO SWELL



\$556,400

LIGHTING UPGRADES AND RENEWAL



\$340,000

PRE-CYCLONE CLEAN-UP

YOUR RATES

As the overall costs of living and business across the country rises, City of Palmerston and its community have faced the economic reality of rising costs in supplies and services.

We as a Council are deeply aware of the impacts to residents of Palmerston and their household. While Council aims to mitigate these impacts, the ongoing challenges of economic pressures, supply constraints and general elevated cost of living, have also contributed to increased costs for contracts, goods and services to Council. Despite this, Council has strived to keep the rate increase as minimal as possible, aiming to alleviate too much financial burden on the community, whilst upholding high standards of service delivery.

For the 2024-25 financial year, many residents will see an increase in the value of their Unimproved Capital Value (UCV) as a result of the recent valuations conducted by The Valuer General, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. As City of Palmerston apply the unimproved capital value method as the basis for determining the assessed rates for each property, majority of residents would have seen a significant increase in their rates. To alleviate this burden Council has undertaken a rate modelling strategy for the 2024-25 financial year, to reduce the residential rate which is applied to the

UCV (also known as RID -rate in the dollar). This is balanced by increases in the minimum rate for all properties and an increase in the rate on the UCV for industrial and commercial properties. This shifts the increase more evenly across the majority of residential residents.

Minimum rates for Residential properties in Palmerston will increase by \$65, while the RID will decrease. This will result in 10,273 (68.5%) of the residential properties remaining on the minimum rate of \$1,391.

Commercial and industrial properties will see a \$66 increase to the minimum rate and an increase of 4.9% to the RID. This will result in 446 (43.5%) properties remaining on the minimum rate of \$1,413.

Over the last five years, the minimum rates have increased by 10.8% or \$129, all whilst delivering a number of facilities programs and events to council, not to mention free parking, facility hire and free entry to SWELL.

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 palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/publications.

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 (<10,000m ²), SP9(>20,000m ²), SP10, SP11 and SP1*20	0.584490%	\$1,391	\$65 increase to the minimum from 2023-24 11% decrease on the to the Rate on the UCV
RR in the Suburb of Marlow Lagoon	0.480179%	\$1,391	\$65 increase to the minimum from 2023-24 11% decrease on the to the Rate on the UCV
GI and LI	0.555575%	\$1,413	\$66 increase to the minimum from 2023-24 Increase of 4.9% to the Rate on the UCV
All Other Rateable Land	0.833492%	\$1,413	\$66 increase to the minimum from 2023-24 Increase of 4.9% to the Rate on the UCV

WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGE	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-34	BUDGET YEAR 2024-2025
Residential Kerbside Collection	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527	\$557
Manual Service Collection (<25 units)	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527	\$557
Multiple Dwelling 25 units +	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$264	\$279
Upgrade to 240L Annual Service Charge	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$167	\$174
Additional General Waste Kerbside Bin 120L*	N/A	N/A	\$250	\$256	\$274	\$294
Additional Recycling Kerbside Bin*	N/A	N/A	\$110	\$113	\$113	\$120
Additional General Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$394	\$290	\$297	\$318	\$339
Additional Recycling Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$245	\$110	\$113	\$113	\$120

*These are charged through Fees and Charges, for more information visit www.palmerston.nt.gov.au

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 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 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.

City of Palmerston 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

City of Palmerston's 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 settled in Palmerston in 2004, choosing Marlow Lagoon as their home. They've built their life there, raising their children, now 12 and 15. With 20 years in spatial science, split between private and public sectors in NSW and NT, Athina brings extensive governance and planning expertise. Recently, she pursued a Bachelor of Laws at CDU to enhance her contribution to the community. Beyond work, she enjoys outdoor activities with Scouts and indulges her creativity in sewing, crochet, and occasional woodwork. Athina prioritises sound decision-making and quality outcomes and is eager to collaborate with diverse community groups within the Palmerston community and beyond.



COUNCILLOR AMBER GARDEN

Amber has been a Palmerston resident for over two decades and boasts 17+ years of expertise in human resources, team management, workplace health and safety, and administration. Her experience spans various sectors including construction, local government, health, and research. Re-elected to Council in 2021, she leverages over a decade of local government administration experience, adept in Council meeting procedures, financial reporting, and governance under the Local Government Act. Committed to an active and vibrant community, Amber focuses on enhancing animal management, safety, and accessibility to create a liveable city for all.



COUNCILLOR BENJAMIN GIESECKE

Ben, a Territory resident since 2004, launched his career in property after earning a Bachelor of Business (Property). Residing in Palmerston for close to two decades with his wife and newborn son, he brings vast expertise in residential and commercial valuations, urban economics, real estate, property law, and investments. Ben's attention to detail stems from his successful career in the property industry. Actively engaged with the local multicultural community, he's dedicated to his term as Councillor, striving to make Palmerston truly "A Place for People".

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN HALE



Damian has called the Northern Territory home since 1974, residing in Maningrida, Katherine, and Darwin before settling in the Gunn suburb with his wife Maria. With prior experience as the Federal Member for Solomon from 2007 to 2010, Damian is well-equipped to advocate for the Palmerston Community on significant future matters. He is currently the assistant coach for Palmerston Raiders Rugby League Club as well as the NT Titans Men's Senior Team. His background includes work with the Australian Workers Union and his current role as Director at Balcor, a local Indigenous-owned NDIS provider.

COUNCILLOR SARAH HENDERSON



Sarah, a dedicated community advocate and entrepreneur, has been an integral part of the Palmerston community for thirty years. Together with her husband, she has raised five children in Palmerston, and now her grandchildren are growing up in this vibrant community. Actively engaged in various Palmerston community groups over the years, Sarah participates in multiple committees and clubs, particularly supporting the seniors in her community. Throughout this term, Sarah is committed to enhancing services, extending support to fellow community members, and advancing Palmerston's sustainability objectives.

COUNCILLOR DANIELLE EVELEIGH



Elected in 2021, Danielle (Dani), a Palmerston resident for 20+ years, has a Bachelor of Business and is currently completing her Law Degree. With a background in human resources, industrial relations, and change management, Dani aims to promote community and economic growth in Palmerston. Dedicated to creating a welcoming and safe environment, Dani a mother, actively supports diversity, disability, and mental health initiatives. She serves on the boards of the Top End Women's Legal Service and Autism NT, coordinates the "Walking off The War Within" annual suicide prevention, chairs City of Palmerston Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee and can be seen at most Council run events.

COUNCILLOR LUCY MORRISON



Lucy has lived in the Northern Territory since 2008, after moving to the Top End from Queensland. With nearly 20 years' experience in the communications and media industry, she has worked as a journalist, and other media roles, as well as in public relations. Lucy's local government and NT Government roles and experience provide her deep governmental insight which she uses to help the community navigate the sometimes heavy bureaucracy. Passionate about healthy living and an active lifestyle, she advocates for involvement in sports and community activities. Lucy focuses on park beautification, city greening, lake management, and fostering community participation at events and activities.

COUNCILLOR MARK FRASER



Mark has been a Palmerston resident for over two decades and together with his wife Nora, have raised a family in Palmerston. Mark speaks fluent Bahasa Malay from his time in S.E Asia where he was immersed in the culture whilst working with a number of diverse people from multiple disciplines. He also has extensive experience in the heavy industrial manufacturing and services for resource industries. As a grandfather now, Mark is actively involved with many local sports, and other community and industry organisations, and you'll often spot him and his grand children at most Council run events.

ALLOWANCES

Elected Members are provided with financial support in recognition of the significant amount of voluntary 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. These have since been revised and on the 14 February 2024, the Chief Minister tabled the Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Council at Parliamentary Sitings. The updated allowances come into effect on the 1 July 2024 and are detailed below:

ALLOWANCE TYPE	PRINCIPAL MEMBER	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL MEMBER	COUNCILLOR'S
Annual Allowance	\$24,600.00	\$24,600.00	\$24,600.00
Additional Allowance	\$92,000.00	\$17,200.00	-
Extra Meeting Allowance	-	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Professional Development Allowance	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Travel Vehicle Allowance	-	-	\$10,000.00
Provision of Motor Vehicle	\$25,000.00	-	-
TOTAL	\$145,600.00	\$55,800.00	\$48,600.00

Further information can be found:
cmc.nt.gov.au/supporting-government/boards-and-committees/reports-determinations

Councillors and the Deputy Mayor are entitled to claim an Extra Meeting Allowance up to a yearly maximum of \$10,000 and the claimable allowance 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.

Below: Elected Members, SWELL facility, 2023.



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). This will not come into effect until after the 2024-25 financial year.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

In line with the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT), 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, and three General Managers, who all form Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT lead 96.35 staff and operate across five key areas: Office of the Chief Executive Officer, People and Place, Infrastructure, Community, 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, General Manager People and Place

Responsibilities include:

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



KONRAD SEIDL
General Manager Community

Responsibilities include:

- Recreation and Leisure
- Regulatory Services
- Library Services
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Community Facility Management
- Community Development
- Local History and Heritage
- Community Grants



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
General Manager 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



Above: Council staff, SWELL grand opening, 2023.

City of Palmerston is committed to providing its employees with a comprehensive set of benefits and conditions through City of Palmerston’s Enterprise Agreement.

The current agreement ensures clarity and fairness in our employment policies, offering enhanced recreational leave entitlements, salary sacrifice options, access to employee assistance programs, and discounted health insurance. City of Palmerston are dedicated to recognising the invaluable contributions of our staff by enhancing our people policies. This includes bolstering leave provisions, improving flexible working arrangements and further demonstrating our commitment to supporting the well-being and needs of our workforce.

In 2023-24 we saw the New Careers Program roll out, providing a unique opportunity for people completing their studies and looking for work in their chosen career, to enter and gain experience within a local Government environment.

Rolling out City of Palmerston’s Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and embedding our Customer Service Charter are a primary focus for 2024-25. Focussing on our culture, values and behaviours are key to embedding the important work that was done internally on the EVP. This work reinforces a focus on ‘Investing in the community, through investing in our people’, which resulted in a focus on employee attraction and retention, and aligns with the pillars of our Customer Service Charter which are:

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

Council is committed to creating a positive work environment that exists through the core process of professional development and collaboration. With a supportive team environment, we are genuinely committed to make a tangible and positive impact on the community.

The extension of the Civic Plaza opening hours was well received by the community, as was the extension of customer service options now offered through the Library. As these services expand, so too does our commitment to offer opportunities for our internal staff to continuously upskill, which intern provides value to the community.

Additionally, we encourage members of the community to access Council information via the City of Palmerston app, which can be downloaded via Apple and Google Play stores. For those preferring to access Council information via the website, you will be able to access information better via the refreshed website design.

Continuous upgrades of the app will be rolled out in the 2024-25 financial year and include options such as:

- Adding important events directly to the smart device calendar
- Participating in community engagement via online feedback
- general refresh in line with the website and stronger brand enhancements

In accordance with section 165 of the Local Government Act, City of Palmerston directly employs a CEO who is ultimately responsible for the employment of all employees, in accordance with Council’s approved Staffing Plan.

The Staffing Plan for 2024–25 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
- People and Place
- Community
- Infrastructure
- Finance and Governance

These positions are the equivalent of 101.35 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 2024-25 IS \$12.7M, WHICH INCLUDES WAGES, SUPERANNUATION EMPLOYEE INSURANCE.

OUR PERFORMANCE

HOW WE MEASURE PERFORMANCE

To gain an understanding of the community's attitude, perceptions and satisfaction of various facilities, events and services Council provides, Council relies on the yearly Community Satisfaction Survey. 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

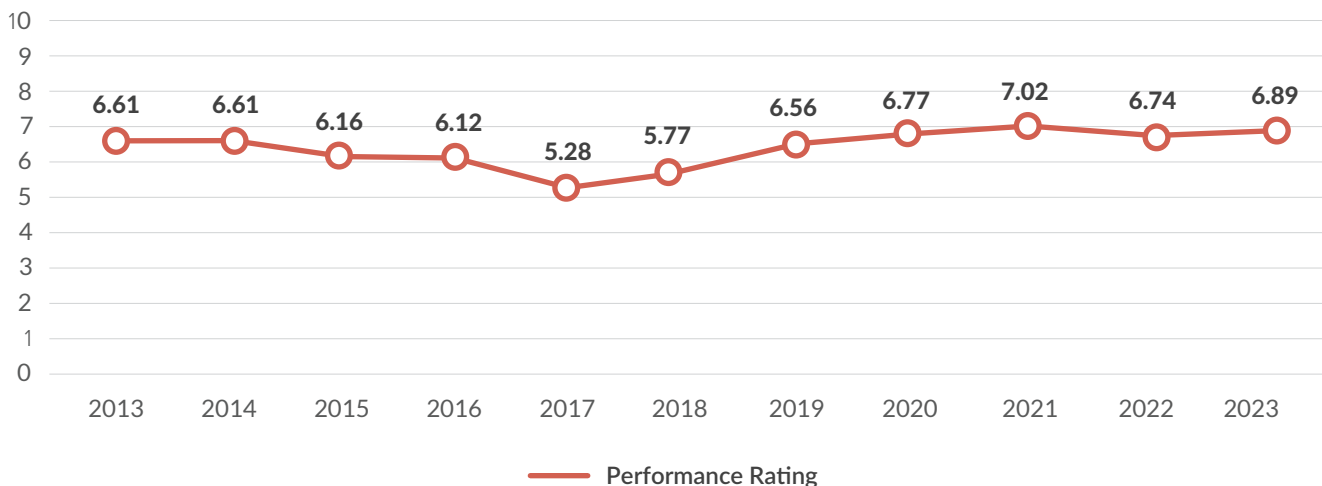
In 2023, we received feedback from 600 residents via telephone and 35 online. Overall, Council performance increased slightly to an average score of 6.89/10, with improvements in key areas such as kerbside waste collection, library services, improved recycling opportunities and delivering quality events and activities that support culturally diverse community members.

The Net Promoter Score of minus 18 still indicates a favourable sentiment, albeit slightly lower than last year. This score is a standardised measure which can range from -100 (100% detractors) to +100 (100% promoters). A Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the proportion of detractors from the proportion of promoters. The 2023 score of minus 18 is a relatively good score when compared to a benchmark of minus 19 for three other Australian Councils, noting that this is not a traditional measure for Council.

Challenges persist in community engagement, business support, and innovation. Crime, safety, cleanliness, and homelessness emerged as key concerns. Noteworthy achievements include upgraded facilities and enhanced green spaces.

Communication remains an area for enhancement, with residents expressing preferences for alternative channels like social media and email. Addressing these gaps will be pivotal in fostering stronger community-council interactions.

OVERALL SCORE TREND



In 2023, there were increases in all scores for the six Community Plan Key Outcome Areas compared to the previous year, except for the Net Promoter Score, which saw a decrease of 5 points. These reductions brought the scores closer to those observed in the 2021 survey, which was our highest customer survey response in the past 10 years.

KEY AREA	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	CHANGE
Family and Community	6.68	6.80	7.16	6.89	6.96	+ 0.07
Vibrant Economy	6.01	6.28	6.55	6.24	6.44	+ 0.20
Cultural Diversity	7.04	7.21	7.50	7.31	7.39	+ 0.08
A Future Focus	6.70	6.84	7.02	6.70	6.84	+ 0.14
Environmental Sustainability	7.16	7.33	7.36	7.08	7.29	+ 0.21
Governance	6.01	6.17	6.52	6.19	6.43	+ 0.24
Net promoter score	-9	-4	-6	-13	-18	-5
AVERAGE PERFORMANCE	6.56/10	6.77/10	7.02/10	6.74/10	6.89/10	+ 0.15

Some of the highest performance services continue to be kerbside waste collection (8.09/10), providing libraries and library services to the community (8.06/10) and providing and maintaining Archer Waste Management Facility. The highest increases experience in comparison to the previous year was Maintaining Lakes (+0.79), effectiveness of Council (0.35+) and providing community with the opportunity to comment on Council's decision making and interact with Council (0.42+).

The lower scoring measures was across supporting and attracting new and existing businesses (5.96/10 – an increase of 0.13 from 2022) and advocating for the community in planning issues (6.19/10) – an increase of 0.07+ from 2022).

In 2023, a review of the Communications strategy and Social Media strategy was completed with an action to continue to deliver educational, timely and accurate information via a variety of platforms.

Consideration will be taken towards accessibility of information for all residents and visitors alike, as well as beginning electronic mail as a key communication tactic.

A focus for Council in 2024-25 will be the implementing elements of the Local Economic Plan 2021 – 2031. The Plan was developed in collaboration with the Northern Territory Government and provides current businesses confidence for the future. It aims to identify support mechanisms to help attract and develop new and existing business opportunities.

Council remains dedicated to ongoing community engagement and gathering valuable feedback on delivered services. Identifying opportunities for improvement is crucial in laying the groundwork for future actions by the council. The next customer satisfaction survey is scheduled for September 2024.

01

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.



Above: Meeting the Easter Bunny, Palmerston Shopping Centre, 2024.

WE FOCUS ON FAMILIES

City of Palmerston strives to support a safe, friendly and family orientated city that offers a high-quality lifestyle.

We will continue to support and work in collaboration with organisations representing the varied and diverse cultures and demographics within the Palmerston community through events and programs, capacity building and networking.

To honour the significance of children and families as a core demographic in Palmerston, we will be celebrating Children's Week again in October, highlighting the United Nations' Child Rights Convention. Likewise, in May, we commemorate National Families Week, emphasising the pivotal role families play in our community. Throughout 2024-25, we proudly present a diverse lineup of free family-friendly outdoor events, including Flicnics, On Frances Street parties, and Live at the Lake, fostering community bond in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Our calendar also features other favourites like Seniors Week, Halloween, and Families Week activities, culminating in the highly anticipated Christmas Wonderland, which drew over 16,000 attendees in 2023, featuring an all-abilities night and a hybrid makers market and Santas Grotto, proving our ability to innovate and adapt.

The Palmerston Youth Festival (PYF) will return in July 2024. The PYF showcases the amazing talents and interests of young people within our community. The festival is supported by the Northern Territory Government and coordinated by City of Palmerston, with collaboration and partnerships with local organisations, businesses and young people. Diversity is honoured throughout the festival with celebrations of Geek Culture, LBGTQIA+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, performing arts and sports, all being highlights of this year's festival.

City of Palmerston's Library remains 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 continue to be able to participate in a variety of programs with a focus on personal development, building connections, and enhancing literacy and lifelong learning.

The Zuccoli Community Hub aims to enhance the Palmerston community's lifestyle and wellbeing by offering substantial community and recreational

amenities. Its Master Plan integrates features like an off-leash dog park, walking trails, a skate park with a pump track, a playground, a specialised children's library, a community centre and a contemplative garden. The phased delivery of the Community Hub has been an ongoing priority, with the initial phase, which included a regional dog park, and a public toilet completed in April 2023. The upcoming second phase will introduce a pump track and walking trail with construction slated for the 2024-25 period.

THE WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITY IS A FOCUS FOR ALL OUR WORK

City of Palmerston is dedicated to continuing to provide beneficial activities to the Palmerston community and strives to do so through initiatives such as Brekkie in the Park and Get Active. Both programs promote inclusive and safe health and wellbeing lifestyle opportunities to our community. In addition to providing health outcomes for our community, these programs also support local businesses by promoting local providers. Brekkie in the Park will be held in our local park areas and provides valuable opportunity for City of Palmerston employees and Elected Members to genuinely engage with the community.

CITY OF PALMERSTON REMAINS DEDICATED ENABLING EVERYONE TO FEEL WELCOME AND AT HOME IN OUR CITY BY FOSTERING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND INCLUSIVITY.

Continuing to provide accessibility to Council facilities in 2024-25, reaffirms Council's commitment to the interests of families and community members. Council offers free venue hire across various facilities, including the Recreation Centre, Library Community Room, Durack Community Arts Centre, Gray Community Hall, and Driver Family Resource Centre. These spaces accommodate a wide array of activities, spanning from fitness sessions and cultural workshops to gatherings tailored for seniors, youth, and children. This initiative underscores our ongoing efforts for genuine community engagement and maintaining Palmerston as a welcoming environment for families.

Beyond the above-mentioned benefits, the Council will continue free access to SWELL until 2026.

Other benefits for our community members include complimentary Wi-Fi services across our parks and facilities, ensuring connectivity and accessibility across Marlow Lagoon, Sanctuary Lakes, Flinders, Bill Lewis, Deleny, Joan Fejo, and Phyllis Uren Parks, as well as at Durack Community Arts Centre, Gray Community Hall, SWELL, and the CBD.

City of Palmerston will support the management of Harvest Corner Community Garden, by supporting the management group to offer community activities and events. Steps Group Australia, Life Without Barriers and Helping People Achieve will be upholding the vision for the community garden to provide a shared gardening space for the Palmerston community that allows members to engage with each other and nature, be active and learn new skills, improving health, wellbeing and community connectedness in an inclusive environment.

Council will continue to sponsor Lighting Up Palmerston requests, whereby the Water Tower, Recreation Centre and Library are lit to raise awareness of important events and causes such as mental health awareness, health conditions and child safety.

Palmerston's play spaces offer a space for community members to connect, play and relax. The Palmerston Play Space Strategy 2022 was developed to ensure a more robust and consistent approach to playground planning and maintenance 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 Council continues to implement the Play Space Strategy a new and updated maintenance program focuses on improvements and accessibility upgrades to play space infrastructure, including playgrounds.

A budget of \$846,600 has been allocated for the 2024-25 year to improve the current Play Space areas and will continue to focus on replacing sand with soft fall, replacing aged play infrastructure and incorporating additional all abilities equipment, and improving shade to increase activation and utilisation.

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.
- Review and improve the information available to the community about play spaces in Palmerston and promote the range of play opportunities available.
- Continual improvement of inspection and maintenance activities.

Reflecting on Council's commitment to the overall wellbeing of our residents and ensuring community safety remains a top priority, City of Palmerston is set to introduce new Animal Management By-Laws on 1 July 2024, marking a substantial step towards enhancing community safety and pet welfare. The By-Laws went through an exhaustive consultation process with relevant stakeholders and community and were endorsed by Council in March 2024.

Key revisions within the By-Laws include:

- Incorporation of modern and contemporary practices in alignment with community expectations
- Provisions for the management and ownership of various animals, notably cats and livestock
- A review of prescribed penalties in relation to offences
- Strengthened licensing requirements and the registration process for dangerous animals
- Compulsory microchipping for both cats and dogs
- A comprehensive educational and marketing campaign will accompany the rollout of these By-Laws, offering support programs and services to the community to ensure widespread compliance such as:
 - > Delivery of desexing and microchipping programs for both cats and dogs
 - > Regular animal education programs to promote responsible pet ownership
 - > Financial rebates for building cat runs and enclosures.



Above: Zuccoli Dog Park, 2023.

Furthermore, there will be deliberation on the feasibility of establishing a cattery facility, prompted by the inclusion of cat ownership within the Animal Management By-Laws. This endeavor represents a significant project, contingent upon available land space and resources.

Ensuring Palmerston remains a safe and welcoming destination for families is at the forefront of our priorities. Teaming up with the Northern Territory Government, we've implemented enhanced security measures around Goyder Square to address anti-social behaviour. Moreover, Council is actively exploring initiatives to revitalise the CBD, aiming to improve commercial sustainability and deter criminal activity. Council's proposed rejuvenation plan will be instrumental in achieving these goals.

A proactive and significant step in this endeavour is already underway in partnership with the Northern Territory Government. The Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) audit is a comprehensive assessment into various design-based recommendations to enhance safety and security within the CBD. This proactive approach aims to cultivate a secure and inviting atmosphere for both residents and visitors alike.

Council anticipates a ripple effect of positive outcomes by implementing these safety recommendations, including a revitalisation of the CBD. Enhancing safety will benefit local families and serve as a magnet for tourists and potential visitors, promoting economic growth. Additionally, local business operators stand to gain from the increased foot traffic and improved perception of safety, ultimately contributing to the overall vibrancy of our community.



Above: Zuccoli Dog Park, 2023.



Above: Multicultural Festival, Goyder Square, 2023.

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



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



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



Community feedback on regulatory education and awareness initiatives



Decreased number of infringements issued to the members of the public



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

02

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



Above: Cheeky Cheeky Churros food truck, SWELL grand opening, 2023.

IMPROVE PALMERSTON'S IMAGE

City of Palmerston's brand and visual identity are defining elements that are vital to represent who we are as a Council and a community.

To realise a positive image, we will be looking at showcasing an inclusive and holistic personality that the community can resonate with. In 2024-25, efforts will continue to maintain brand consistency across all community facing communication to ensure recognition for all the events, programs, initiatives and services that are delivered.

Ongoing projects, initiatives and proposed plans that are designed to support positive impact to our region's growth and direction will aid to deliver:

- Improved open space and family friendly facilities
- Improved accessibility to more council owned assets and facilities
- Continued opportunities through development programs, particularly for young people
- Local economic growth through increased local business opportunities and support
- More tools to curb criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT, FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PALMERSTON LOCAL ECONOMIC PLAN WILL OFFER SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS TO BOTH EXISTING AND EMERGING BUSINESSES IN THE AREA.

To support these developments and more, Council convened a new Palmerston Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee in 2023 to advise Council on actions and priorities in this space. 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.

As an integral component of the Palmerston Local Economic Plan, enhancements to the Invest Palmerston website will be made, leveraging it as a pivotal resource to assist local businesses and foster economic growth. A marketing campaign and tactics will be launched to complement these endeavours, alongside a development program aimed at guiding both new and established businesses.

Council will continue to sponsor key community events and organisations through the Community Benefit Scheme. These sponsorships help create vibrancy and improve the image of Palmerston by creating community connection. Some key sponsorships include the Palmerston RSL Sub-branch for the delivery of ANZAC day, RSPCA NT Darwin Regional Branch for the Marlow Lagoon based Million Paws Walk and Darwin Festival events being held in Goyder Square for the first time in 2024.

PALMERSTON'S ECONOMIC FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Palmerston's Local Economic Plan 2021-2031 continues to serve as a blueprint for the Council's long-term economic priorities, empowering us to establish stronger support systems for both existing and prospective local businesses. Our approach to realising this goal revolves around fostering a well-structured, sustainable economy that actively involves youth, entrepreneurs, and our broader business community. By collaborating with local businesses and associations, we aim to raise awareness of vendor opportunities within the municipality.

City of Palmerston's Business Survey is a key deliverable in the Palmerston Local Economic Plan, it was completed in April 2024. The results from the Business Survey will inform Council's role in supporting existing businesses in our community and how we will attract new investment.

In 2022, Palmerston expanded its land area through the Municipal boundary expansion, with local industries standing to gain significant advantages through this development. The strategic location of Wishart, coupled with ample space, presents both current and future businesses in the area with access to Council services, programs, and facilities.

This expansion not only opens doors for enhanced economic prospects for Palmerston, but it also positions the area as prime real estate, given its proximity to Darwin City, East Arm, and rural locales, further fuelling growth opportunities.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NURTURING DEVELOPMENT, COUNCIL EMPHASISES THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING INFRASTRUCTURE WHILE CULTIVATING THE DISTINCT IDENTITY FOR PALMERSTON.

Community engagement remains central to decision-making processes, with ongoing consultation and thorough review of development applications. Additionally, Council advocates for the community's interests by providing feedback to the NT Government.

Council remains committed to improving the city's appeal, with a particular emphasis on supporting local businesses to drive employment opportunities and enhance business occupancy rates. The initiative of free all-day parking in the CBD will be maintained in 2024-25, incentivising locals and visitors to shop local, contributing further to the local economy.

The Community Benefits Scheme (CBS) presents a valuable 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, goes beyond benefitting the initial recipient, it generates a positive economic impact when the funds are then further invested in Palmerston based goods and services. This also supports local artists and young people at a grassroots level to support their growth and development.

A review of the CBS program will see the process to become a lot more streamlined and easier to administer. Commercial entities can apply for CBS grant funding if the request is for an environmental initiative which meets the outcomes of City of Palmerston's Community Plan. Initiatives may include waste reduction strategies, water or energy efficiency opportunities or rehabilitation of the environment e.g. native planting.

Through the Crime Prevention Through Environment audit, we can look to implement safety measures and revitalise the CBD. We anticipate this to have a ripple effect of positive outcomes for not only local families but will also serve as a magnet for tourists and potential visitors, fostering economic growth. Additionally, local business operators stand to gain from the increased foot traffic and improved perception of safety, ultimately contributing to the overall vibrancy of our community.



Left: Playground, Marlow Lagoon recreation area, 2024.



Above: Community event, Goyder Square, 2023.

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



More funds are available for Council to invest in the community



The population of Palmerston is growing (families stay)



There are more businesses located in Palmerston.



More tourists visit Palmerston

03

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



Above: Multicultural Festival Aboriginal performance, Goyder Square, 2023.

TO CELEBRATE OUR RICH CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

City of Palmerston is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, diverse, and accessible community, as outlined in the Community Plan, Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Policy Framework (IDA) and Disability Inclusion and Access Plan (DIAP).

This group of policy frameworks underpin the delivery of all 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. A key initiative for 2024-25 will see the development and implementation of the “Accessible and Inclusive Event Guidelines” to ensure that all community events are accessible to everyone, in line with the objectives of the DIAP.

COUNCIL PROUDLY EMBRACES THE RICH CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY AND ARE COMMITTED TO FACILITATING AND SUPPORTING CULTURAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS, INCLUDING NAIDOC WEEK, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PRIDE.

These initiatives foster collaboration and connections across diverse cultures. Community working groups will be established to ensure inclusivity and diversity at various events.

The continuation of the Palmerston Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee will provide further strategic advice on the actions and priorities of the Inclusive, Diverse, and Accessible Policy Framework (IDA) and Disability Inclusion and Access Plan (DIAP). The committee will continue to meet quarterly with the aim to provide advice to Council about programs and initiatives that support the increase of access to cultural diversity and inclusivity.

The Library will continue to provide programs that celebrate our cultural diversity such as Bilingual Storytimes and Drag Queen Storytimes, and programs which provide accessibility, such as Auslan Storytimes by Deaf Connect. The Library has been connecting with Dementia Australia to work towards making the Library a certified Dementia friendly space. This includes staff training and liaising with Dementia Australia to determine potential improvements to the Library environment and services.

City of Palmerston's Creative Industries Plan 2023 – 2027 provides a framework for the sustainable growth and development of Palmerston's creative sector. The Plan sets out a vision of Palmerston as a vibrant and innovative creative hub and provides a roadmap for achieving this. The Plan outlines goals, strategies and actions that will encourage the growth and development of Palmerston's creative sector by providing a supportive environment, encouraging collaboration and partnerships, and investing in infrastructure and resources. 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. In order to upskill the creative arts community, the Council will host entrepreneur development workshops, the program aims to empower artists to better understand how to start and market their own business and to attend networking opportunities in Palmerston.

Council will also offer artist-in-residence programs, giving local artists the opportunity to create and showcase their work. The Council will also introduce public art initiatives, allowing the community to experience art in a new way. 2024 will see the first Palmerston Street Art Festival being delivered in partnership with the Northern Territory Government.

Welcoming new citizens to Palmerston is a great way to see how vibrant and diverse our community is. 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 2024-25 when we hold up to five Australian citizenship ceremonies.

RECOGNISE AND SUPPORT DIVERSITY THROUGH OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND LEADERSHIP

Living and working on Larrakia Country is a privilege, and we're committed to integrating the values and goals of reconciliation into every aspect of our organisation through the actions and goals of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our relationship with the Larrakia community has always been positive and mutually respectful, and we're excited to embark on this journey of reconciliation together, not just with the Larrakia people, but with all First Nations People.

Each year, Council allocates funding through the Community Benefit Scheme (CBS) to facilitate community led and delivered initiatives which benefit the Palmerston Community. The CBS includes Community Grants, which support a varied range of events, activities and projects which reflect the needs and cultural diversity of our community. The

Individual Representation Support will continue to help alleviate the cost of representation for Palmerston residents. This funding allows those selected the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills at a state, national or international level. Young leaders in our schools are also recognised each year with the annual school awards.

Council's partnership with Palmerston and Regional Basketball Association will continue with the ongoing support of Youth Drop-in Sports. This program provides after school sporting activities which not only provide physical development, but promote social connections, a sense of responsibility and wellbeing. The young people engaged in the program can develop organisational and life skills through program participation. Participants are mentored and supported to create healthy relationships and encouraged to pursue pathway and employment opportunities. Youth Drop in Sports is held in the Recreation Centre Stadium, providing a safe and airconditioned environment where all young people are welcomed!

The Australia Day Awards provide an invaluable opportunity to pause and reflect on the significant contributions made by our residents to improving the outcomes of our community. By shining a spotlight on the incredible depth and breadth of the work being done in Palmerston we can show our deepest and most sincere appreciation for our volunteers. In 2024-25 City of Palmerston will make it easier for residents to nominate outstanding volunteers and has planned to hold a special event to celebrate all nominees



Left: Colombian dancers and City of Palmerston Mayor, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2024.



Above: Multicultural Festival Chinese lion dance, Goyder Square, 2023.

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.

04

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 our partnerships and leadership



Above: Community consultation, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2024
Community consultation, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2024.

WE SUPPORT AND FOSTER INNOVATION

The Fibresense project includes 60km of fiber optic cable being laid throughout Palmerston CBD and Tiger Brennan Drive to detect vibrations in real time to understand and capture vehicular and pedestrian movements.

The installation has been completed with traffic data systems being developed and implemented over the coming year. The resulting data will aid City of Palmerston in making more informed decisions regarding future pathway, amenity, and infrastructure planning.

As a part of the website redevelopment, we will be looking at ways the community can directly access live project works in systems such as ArcGIS (Council's mapping system) and our Emergency Management Dashboard. ArcGIS is a live mapping system that shows 'tasks' or 'reported actions' on things such as faulty streetlights, park issues, road repairs and more. Residents can access this system currently to report a fault and monitor works, and improvements will be made to allow the community to access this map in a more consumable format.

With the opening of our state-of-the-art Gulwa Community Recording Studio in 2022, visitors can try music recording, mixing, production, podcast recording, broadcasting, video production, and use it as a rehearsal, workshop and event space. The Library will continue to upskill the community in using the studio to further their creative endeavours.

The Library is committed to enhancing digital literacy and accessibility to technology to our community. We're excited to introduce several initiatives aimed at getting more people online. This includes upgrading our self-service tablet devices, known as Hublets to the latest versions, expanding opportunities for digital engagement.

Additionally, to address the high demand for public access computers, we're introducing three in-house laptops exclusively for member use, reducing wait times and ensuring equitable access to technology.

Furthermore, we're proud to announce the launch of Libby by Overdrive, a new e-resource platform offering a vast collection of e-books, e-audiobooks, and e-magazines, including the latest releases. With over 5,000 e-magazines available, members can enjoy digital reading across various platforms, from PCs to e-readers, and even through the convenient Libby app.

THESE INITIATIVES REFLECT OUR COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING DIGITAL LITERACY AND MAKING DIGITAL RESOURCES MORE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

Significant progress has been achieved in the development and implementation of our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software. The ERP system aims to encompass all organisational systems necessary to fulfill regulatory and rating business requirements. In the upcoming year, we will initiate the phased implementation of enhanced systems. These improvements will enable the Council to deliver services to the community more efficiently and effectively. Residents will benefit from increased online service management capabilities, enhancing the overall customer experience. With the municipality's ongoing growth in size and population, the introduction of an effective ERP system will facilitate sustainable development.

We will be expanding Wi-Fi coverage to SWELL, Zuccoli Community Hub, and Driver Community Centre enhancing connectivity throughout the municipality. This promotes safety and enables direct issue reporting to the council via app, website, or social media. We strive for continual improvement and seek out service enhancements opportunities and emerging technologies in an effort to improve existing community services

INFRASTRUCTURE IS FIT FOR PURPOSE

As our Municipality continues to grow in population and size, we are presented with both opportunities and challenges.

This growth demands ongoing infrastructure and public asset improvements to meet the evolving needs of our community. Guided by our forward-thinking approach and the Community Plan, Council prioritises capital and operational planning in order to achieve meaningful outcomes for the whole community.

Each year, we develop and implement strategic programs for capital and operational works, carefully allocating resources to deliver the most impactful results for our community. These efforts drive our extensive capital works program and ensure the delivery of quality services throughout the year ahead.

In recent years, we've concentrated on fostering innovation within our infrastructure, with notable additions such as the Gulwa Community Recording Studio, SWELL, and Gray Community Hall. Moving forward, our focus shifts to maintaining these assets to the highest standards, safeguarding their integrity and longevity for the future. To sustainably manage these assets, Council utilises its Asset Management Plan to guide asset renewals and upgrades. These encompass a wide range of elements, including buildings, roads, transport safety, pathways, parks, stormwater, and lighting networks. Additionally, our programs encompass community safety initiatives, such as addressing dark spots with lighting upgrades, and road safety enhancements, ensuring a safe and vibrant environment for all.

A total of \$5.6M will be spent for renewals and \$5.2M for upgrades in 2024-25. Funding of \$18.2M is committed for operational activities such as road maintenance, building repairs, mowing parks, waste management, cleaning streets, irrigation repairs, 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.

Palmerston takes pride in its 14 man-made lakes and one natural water body, which serve as vital ecological and aesthetic importance for the community. Mitchell Creek remains an important focus for Council as developments begin with the Zuccoli Community Hub, and plans for connectivity in this space. Previous efforts in the extensive lakes networked have successfully managed the invasive Salvinia weed, which posed significant challenges. Through the acquisition of an additional weed harvester and the implementation of a multi-faceted approach, Council effectively managed the weed, however this is an ongoing endeavour. Regular harvesting will be maintained on a scheduled basis throughout the year, especially during the rapid growth period in the wet season. To further prevent contamination, educational materials will be provided to the community, promoting responsible practices, and encouraging everyone to play their part in preserving these valuable water resources.

Following a thorough evaluation and community engagement process in 2023, detailed design of the Driver Community Centre will be completed this year, enabling construction to commence as soon as funding is confirmed. The anticipated cost for the construction is estimated to be around \$3 million.

To ensure we are future proofing Palmerston, a Marlow's Lagoon Masterplan will be created. This will ensure that planning for the vision for any development of this key location is considered and ready for community input.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

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

Above: Basketball, SWELL grand opening, 2024.



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



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



Optimisation of asset renewal



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



Improved community satisfaction of the Palmerston lakes

05

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



Above: All abilities swing, Marlow Lagoon recreation area, 2023.

REDUCE OUR FOOTPRINT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

City of Palmerston continues its commitment to reducing its environmental impact through actioning items from the Sustainability Strategy 2022-26.

Supporting objectives under the Community plan, the Strategy 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 focus on 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. City of Palmerston has many ongoing and new initiatives that address actions and priorities under each theme.

City of Palmerston is continually looking to improve its fleet's sustainability and vehicle emissions, and currently has twelve hybrid vehicles and one electric vehicles. A hybrid light duty truck was added to the fleet in 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 will be installing additional electric vehicle charging stations throughout the municipality as the need increases.

City of Palmerston continues investing in renewable energy sources and plans to install new solar generation systems for SWELL, Driver Community Centre, Durack Heights Art Centre and the Palmerston Operations Centre over the coming years. In order to measure and monitor our successes, City of Palmerston also continues to improve the data collected on emissions generated from operations.

The Archer Waste Management Facility (AWMF) upgrade commenced in 2023-24. 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 City of Palmerston's Sustainability Strategy. Construction is expected to be completed in 2024-25. AWMF will continue to remain open during the period of construction.

City of Palmerston continues to maintain kerbside collection of household recyclable material. To assist residents to understand best practice recycling and waste management, City of Palmerston has focused on public waste education by providing free community workshops and activities on sustainability and waste reduction. City of Palmerston will continue providing waste education opportunities for the public, including facilitating programs for local schools and community groups.

The annual pre-cyclone clean-up will be offered to residents in 2024-25 will be funded through part of the residential Waste Service Charge. The pre-cyclone clean-up initiative is designed to provide residents with the opportunity to clear their property of large objects that do not fit into general waste or recycle bins and risks becoming a dangerous projectile in a cyclone. Council will advertise and promote the recycling component of this service, encouraging residents to separate their hard rubbish to maximise the diversion of material from landfill.

TO FURTHER DEMONSTRATE CITY OF PALMERSTON'S COMMITMENT TO WASTE REDUCTION AND DIVERSION IN 2024-25, WE WILL BE TRANSITIONING TO BEING SINGLE USE PLASTIC FREE AT COMMUNITY EVENTS HELD ON CITY OF PALMERSTON PREMISES.

This will include the development of a sustainable events planning guide and a sustainable event authorised statement.

Council has made a commitment to ongoing improvements of our irrigation systems to optimise functionality and reduce water consumption. City of Palmerston continues to refurbish and upgrade its irrigation network and works will continue throughout 2024-25. City of Palmerston is also continuing to work towards establishing an Irrigation Management Plan which includes guidance on maintenance and capital expenditure to improve the irrigation system.

PALMERSTON IS A COOL, SHADED, GREEN CITY

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 Palmerston.

A healthy urban forest plays a critical role in maintaining the health and liveability within a city. City of Palmerston aims to increase the urban forest density by planting more trees and improving existing vegetation health. To achieve this, City of Palmerston 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 an integral component of the Sustainability Strategy's focus on environment and community, targeted tree planting initiatives will be strategically rolled out to combat known heat retention areas and improve urban biodiversity. By aligning tree planting programs with pathway development, City of Palmerston aims to enhance connectivity between public open spaces and promote pedestrian-friendly transport routes. Additionally, tree planting efforts will persist in parks, reserves, and road reserves, with City of Palmerston advancing GIS mapping and conducting baseline studies to establish monitoring strategies for urban heat and canopy cover.

The implementation of both a municipal Weed Management Plan (WMP) and a Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) will be a focus this year. Recognising the interconnectedness of weed and fire management, these plans are designed to complement each other, aiming to mitigate wildfire risks to both personal safety and property while also addressing the impacts of invasive weeds and wildfires on biodiversity. By strategically controlling weeds such as gamba and mission grass, we aim to reduce fuel loads and subsequent wildfire risks. As part of this endeavour, an annual weed control program is being developed for the Gunn Escarpment, incorporating late wet season burns. Additionally, fire management strategies, including wet season and early dry season burning, will be employed to protect life and property while promoting biodiversity. Timely burns will not only reduce the severity of wildfires but also facilitate the safe use of recreational spaces for the community's benefit.

The municipal Weed Management Plan (WMP) will outline targeted strategies to combat significant weed infestations, including gamba grass, mission grass, neem, olive hymenachne, and salvinia. Meanwhile, the Bushfire Management Plan (BMP), will delineate fire management zones and corresponding strategies to safeguard assets and biodiversity. This plan is being crafted in consultation with key stakeholders, including the NT Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure comprehensive and effective fire management practices for the community's safety and environmental preservation.

City of Palmerston continues to successfully implement the Lakes Management Plan. This plan outlines maintenance activities for the lakes, including methods for controlling aquatic weeds and vegetation, topping up lake water levels during the dry and maintaining the environment around the lakes. The plan includes initiatives for improving water quality so that the lakes meet their purposes of stormwater retention and water quality treatment, amenity and recreation opportunities, water source for irrigation and habitat for wildlife. One of the initiatives includes installing lakebed aeration systems to improve water quality. City of Palmerston installed 3 new lakebed aeration systems during 2023-24. City of Palmerston plans to install further systems during 2024-25, and to install access ramps at Marlow Lagoon so City of Palmerston can carry out aquatic vegetation management to better maintain the lagoon's health.



Above: Plant giveaway, Palmerston Recreation Centre, 2023.

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.

06

GOVERNANCE

OUTCOME

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



Above: Community consultation group.

ENSURE WE HAVE A LEADING GOVERNANCE MODEL

City of Palmerston is dedicated to employing proactive strategies that consider both public perception and the political environment.

As we embark on the 2024-25 period, we are excited to introduce our forward-thinking approach to governance, exemplified by the creation of our Governance Framework. Rooted in innovation, this framework will provide clear direction and purpose for our actions and decisions. Serving as the bedrock of our operations, the Governance Framework will uphold principles of transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making, all aimed at better serving the Palmerston community.

In 2024–25, City of Palmerston will provide training to staff on governance, reporting and compliance requirements in accordance with the Local Government Act. The training program will support good decision making and include a focus on fair and transparent processes, confidentiality, privacy and conflict of interest. By equipping staff with the necessary knowledge and skills in these areas, City of Palmerston aims to empower them to effectively navigate the complexities of governance and compliance, thereby fostering public trust and confidence in the decision-making processes of City of Palmerston.

In 2022-23 City of Palmerston undertook a review of the Strategic Risk Register, which established the next three-year internal audit program. During 23-24, City of Palmerston commenced a series of internal audits. 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. City of Palmerston will continue with the internal audit plan in 2024-25. A review of the next three-year period will commence in early 2025 and will identify the next series of internal audits to occur. The outcomes of the internal audits will be reported to Council through the Risk Management and Audit Committee.

CITY OF PALMERSTON IS COMMITTED TO HAVING A FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE PROCUREMENT PROCESS.

Continuous improvement on the procurement documentation is performed to enhance the effectiveness for all stakeholders. Further improvements to the documentation will continue and staff training delivered to focus on the practice of best value for Palmerston outcomes.

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

In 2024-25 City of Palmerston will undertake several initiatives to ensure our record management strategies are best practice. We will continue to develop an Information Management Framework which will enable strategic data handling and improved decision making for records management. City of Palmerston will be carrying out internal audits on our hard copy and digital record management programs to ensure legislative compliance for records destruction, whilst developing an archiving strategy.

City of Palmerston continues to update Council policies in line with the requirements under the Local Government Act. In 2024-25, a review of Council's policy framework will ensure the mechanisms are in place to monitor the review of Council and City of Palmerston's policies and procedures as per the Local Government Act.

By fostering innovation, continuous improvement, and implementing a robust maintenance program, City of Palmerston aims to enhance its Long-Term Financial Plan. Currently, City of Palmerston maintains consistent data reporting processes for select assets, a practice that will now extend to a broader range of City of Palmerston-owned assets, including public roads, stormwater drainage, public lighting, water irrigation and buildings. Standardising asset management inspections yields stronger and improved outcomes for future planning endeavours. Leveraging new technologies, such as Fibersense data, within the new Digital Strategy, City of Palmerston is poised to evolve into a more data-driven organisation, ensuring continued development and innovation.

Similar to many organisations in the Territory, City of Palmerston faces challenges due to shortages of skilled staff. Recognising the pivotal role of personnel in service delivery to the community, City of Palmerston places emphasis on several priorities for 2024-25.

These include:

- Employee recruitment and retention
- Training and professional development initiatives
- Leadership cultivation
- Delivery of new well regarded Enterprise Agreement
- Implementing our employee value proposition aimed at attracting and retaining talent.

Changes in the Industrial Relations landscape necessitated Council to continuously review and update its workforce policies, procedures, and practices to ensure best practice human resource management and maintain compliance with evolving Fair Work requirements.



Left: Palmerston CBD, 2024.

COMMUNITY IS AT THE CENTRE

Maintaining and building the trust of the community is important to Council, the way in which this is done is through transparent, educational, opportunistic, reflective, and supportive communication.

All communication is strategically aligned to delivering Council's vision and values. The Communications Strategy identifies the following as key deliverables:

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

In 2024-25 a focus will be placed on genuine community engagement and consultation, with City of Palmerston upholding the principles of inclusivity, transparency, innovative, adaptability, accountability, and sustainability. A Community Engagement Strategy will be developed in line with IAP2 standards, the new Community Policy and include engagement techniques relevant for the Palmerston community.

City of Palmerston's website will be delivered with improvements made to the overall user experience. The improvements will allow quicker access to frequently used areas including online payments, registrations and forms. An overhaul of content including images will also be undertaken during this refresh and launched with a new look and colour palette that presents City of Palmerston as a more mature and contemporary organisation.

Language and accessibility remain important elements in communications and align with the DIAP. The updated internal writing style and accessibility guide will help us to achieve accessibility for our community. Our website is backed by a governance platform that essentially ensures compliance and accessibility, offering automated optimisations for improved performance. It provides a quality assurance, search engine optimisation (SEO) and compliance with Web Content Guidelines (WCAG).

The City of Palmerston App is 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 App will reflect the changes and look of the new website to maintain brand integrity.

Once again, an 'events program' will be rolled out for the dry season, presented in both print and digital formats. Additionally, various supplementary tactics such as direct email marketing will be introduced to better engage with the Palmerston community. This approach hinges on the accumulation of a robust database and aligns with our commitment to continuously enhance communication efforts.

Furthermore, City of Palmerston will continue to foster relationships with local media outlets and influencers to secure regular promotions, extending our reach to a wider audience.

HEALTHY WORKING PARTNERSHIPS

In order to meet our objectives around healthy working partnerships, City of Palmerston is dedicated to upholding our strong relationships both internally with our team and externally with our partners and networks. This commitment enables us to provide the best possible outcomes for residents of Palmerston.

Council continues to seek input through the following Advisory Committees:

- Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee
- Community Safety Advisory Committee
- Vibrant Economy Advisory Committee.

These advisory committees provide Council with advice and recommendations from community members and stakeholders in their area of expertise. The Advisory Committees are informed by the Palmerston Kids Network, Palmerston and Rural Youth Services Network Palmerston Seniors Network and Palmerston Animal Management Network who provide inputs from their relevant community sectors.

In response to feedback from the Community Satisfaction Survey, City of Palmerston is committed to enhancing communication with stakeholders through clear and transparent channels. Open distribution of information across all Council platforms and mainstream media remains pivotal, with a focus on gaining feedback, both prior to and after initiatives are undertaken. The newly established Community Engagement Policy underscores the importance of ongoing community consultation at project and strategic levels, aligning with national standards and tailored to the needs of the local community.

Various ways collaborative conversations are through:

- Attendance at Council meetings: Open to the public, these meetings offer a dedicated public forum before official proceedings, allowing informal discussions with Councillors. Additionally, written questions can be submitted for consideration during meetings. Council to the Community sessions will continue to be held at alternative venues within the municipality for enhanced accessibility.
- Social media engagement: City of Palmerston manages multiple social media channels, providing residents with opportunities to interact and provide feedback through direct messaging. A comprehensive Social Media Strategy and Policy ensure timely and constructive communication, fostering a safe online space for feedback.
- Community Engagement Policy implementation: Encouraging ongoing feedback on projects and initiatives, this strategy incorporates IAP2 principles and diverse engagement methods, including in-person, online, print, and digital avenues.
- Annual Community Satisfaction Survey: Conducted by an external agency via various channels, including phone, in-person, and online, this survey aims to identify areas for improvement and inform operational enhancements.
- Event participation: City of Palmerston information stalls at events offer direct feedback opportunities, with online surveys available for input.



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 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



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



Increase in engagement across social media channels



Increase in website statistics



Increase in community satisfaction on brand recognition through the community survey



Increase in community consultation.

Above: Council staff and Hugh Heggie AO PSM Northern Territory Administrator, SWELL grand opening, 2023.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Palmerston is a young and modern municipality, with a median age of 31.8, and includes 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 and activities for Palmerston and surrounding communities.



Above: Zuccoli, 2023.

OPPORTUNITIES

Palmerston is centrally located between Darwin and its rural area, and conveniently close to the NT's 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 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 provided Council the ability 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.*

CHALLENGES

Challenges identified in the community survey responses included ongoing challenges with community engagement, business support and innovation.

Crime, safety, cleanliness and homelessness also emerged as key concerns. Noteworthy achievements included upgraded facilities and enhanced green spaces.

The challenge for 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.



Left: Durack Lakes, 2024.

The team at City of Palmerston work very closely with a variety of external stakeholders such as Larrakia Nation, NT Police and the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Community Development 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.

We will continue to partner with the Northern Territory Government, to deliver security patrols in the city centre 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 finalise 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 City of Palmerston 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.

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



Above: Elected Members with Chinese lion dancers, Civic Chambers, 2024.

REVENUE STATEMENT

Council collects revenue from five main sources. General rates and waste management charges provide 85% of Council's revenue, the remainder provided by grants, fees and charges and investment income.

Council has increased the minimum rates by a moderate 4.9% with a \$65 increase to the minimum rates for Residential including Marlow Lagoon and \$66 increase to the minimum for Commercial and Industrial. The Commercial and Industrial rate in the dollar (RID) which is applied to the unimproved capital value was increase by 4.9% whereas the Residential including Marlow Lagoon saw a decrease in the rate in dollar of 11%, which assists the residential ratepayers in reducing the increases seen as a result of the increase in valuations in the unimproved capital value. Over the last 5 years, majority of the residential ratepayers saw an average increase of \$26 with no increase in the year 2020-21. 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 OF UNIMPROVED CAPITAL VALUES

City of Palmerston uses Unimproved Capital Value as the basis for all land valuations in the Palmerston area to determine the rates assessment. 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 affect the following financial year. A revaluation occurred in July 2023 and will be applied for the 2024-25 financial year.

Council plays no role in the valuation of the 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 and is called a waste service charge. Where multiple residential dwellings exist on the allotment of land, the charge is multiplied by the number of residential units on each allotment.

The Waste Service Charge is levied for the provision of domestic waste and recycling collection, 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 available.

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: 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 City of Palmerston 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 City of Palmerston. 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 fees and charges for the 2024-25 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 until 30 June 2026 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 City of Palmerston's website palmerston.nt.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/fees-and-charges.

RATES AND CHARGES

NT PLANNING ZONE		LEVIED 2023-24	BUDGET 2024/25
R, RR (Excluding RR in the suburb of Marlow Lagoon), SD, MD, MR, HR, CL, FD, PS, SP8, SP9 (<10,000m2), SP9 (>20,000m2), SP10 and SP11	Rate on UCV	0.656731%	0.584490%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,326	\$1,391
	No of Properties	14,737	14,884
	Estimated Income Rates	\$20,554,637	\$21,494,258
RR in the Suburb of Marlow Lagoon	Rate on UCV	0.539527%	0.480179%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,326	\$1,391
	No of Properties	254	254
	Estimated Income Rates	\$497,734	\$487,686
GI and LI	Rate on UCV	0.529623%	0.555575%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,347	\$1,413
	No of Properties	494	494
	Estimated Income	\$2,148,369	\$2,651,806
All Other Rateable Land	Rate on UCV	0.794559%	0.833492%
	Minimum Rate	\$1,347	\$1,413
	No of Properties	531	531
	Estimated Income	\$2,495,280	\$2,645,856

WASTE SERVICE CHARGE

The Waste Service Charge for customers with a regular waste service will be charged at \$557 per household which is a \$30 increase from prior years.

WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGE	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	BUDGET YEAR 2024-2025
Residential Kerbside Collection	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527	\$557
Manual Service Collection (<25 units)	\$490	\$490	\$480	\$480	\$527	\$557
Multiple Dwelling 25 units +	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$240	\$264	\$279
Upgrade 120L to 240L General Waste Kerbside	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$149	\$167	\$174
Additional General Waste Kerbside Bin 120L*	N/A	N/A	\$250	\$256	\$274	\$294
Additional Recycling Kerbside Bin*	N/A	N/A	\$110	\$113	\$113	\$120
Additional General Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$394	\$290	\$297	\$318*	\$339*
Additional Recycling Waste Manual Bin*	N/A	\$245	\$110	\$113	\$113	\$120

*These are charge through Fees and Charges, not through Rates. These charges have increased based contractual costs.

Right: Durack Lakes, 2024.

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. In 2019 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.



Left: Durack Lakes, 2024.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

\$'000'S	2023-24 REVISED BUDGET	2024-25 BUDGET
Operating Income		
Rates	25,806	27,552
Charges	7,534	8,112
Fees and Charges	933	1,080
Operating Grants & Subsidies	1,551	3,457
Interest & Investment Revenue	1,671	1,930
Other Revenue	16	13
Total Income	37,511	42,144
Operating Expenditure		
Employee Benefits and Costs	12,207	13,091
Borrowing Costs	179	298
Materials, contracts and other expenses	21,906	22,980
Elected Member Allowances	428	497
Elected Member Expenses	40	89
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	11,270	12,000
Total Expenditure	46,030	48,955
BUDGET OPERATING SURPLUS /(DEFICIT)	(8,519)	(6,811)
Add: Amounts received specifically for new or upgraded assets	10,099	4,340
Add: Physical resources received free of charge (non-cash)	3,000	3,000
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME / (LOSS)	4,638	(2,529)
Add: Depreciation	11,270	12,000
(Less): Resources free of charge	(3,000)	(3,000)
(Less): Capital Expenditure	(26,813)	(10,833)
Add: Borrowings (Loans advances)	5,000	0
(Less): Loan Repayments	(517)	(504)
Add: Net Transfer to/from reserves	9,480	1808
NET CASH BUDGET SURPLUS /(DEFICIT)	0	0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING BUDGET

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	2024-25
Land & Buildings	2,964,500
Infrastructure (including roads, footpaths, park furniture)	5,648,600
Public Lighting	966,400
Fleet	350,000
Other Assets (including furniture & office equip)	903,600
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	10,833,100

TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FUNDED BY:

Operating Income	4,335,100
Sales of Assets (including trade-ins)	180,000
Capital Grants	3,920,000
Transfers from Cash Reserves	2,198,000
Borrowings	-
Other Funding	200,000
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FUNDING	10,833,100

PLANNED MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS BUDGET

CLASS OF ASSETS	BY MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECT	CURRENT PLANNED BUDGET \$	EXPECTED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE
Buildings	Building Management System (BMS) *IT Projects	\$30,000.00	Ongoing
	Aquatic Centre Capital Renewals	\$80,000.00	Ongoing
	Civic Plaza Capital Renewals	\$67,100.00	Ongoing
	Driver Resource Centre Capital Renewals	\$10,300.00	Ongoing
	Durack Community Arts Centre Capital Renewals	\$9,300.00	Ongoing
	Library Building Capital Renewals	\$67,000.00	Ongoing
	Recreation Centre Capital Renewals	\$86,000.00	Ongoing
	Depot Capital Renewals	\$14,800.00	Ongoing
	Creative Industries	\$500,000.00	4-year program
	Archer Waste Management Facility Renewals	\$50,000.00	Ongoing
Parks & Reserves	Tree Planting & Replacement	\$500,000.00	Ongoing
	Hobart Park bathroom and Park Upgrade	\$450,000.00	Jun-25
	Play Space Renewals and Upgrades	\$846,600.00	Ongoing
	Irrigation Refurbishment	\$277,700.00	Ongoing
Furniture & Fittings	IT Projects	\$153,600.00	Ongoing
	ERP software	\$750,000.00	Jun-26
Ancillary Roads	Driveways Renewals	\$51,200.00	Ongoing
	Laneway Renewals	\$40,000.00	Ongoing
	Pathways Renewals	\$175,000.00	Ongoing
	New Pathways	\$500,000.00	Ongoing
Roads	All Ability Access	\$60,000.00	Ongoing
	New Driveways – FILOC	\$200,000.00	Ongoing
	Road Safety Program	\$320,000.00	Ongoing
	Bitumen Reseal & Asphalt Overlay Program (R2R)	\$1,318,100.00	Ongoing
	Road Reconstruction	\$450,000.00	Ongoing
Public Lighting	Public Lighting Upgrades (Dark Spots)	\$500,000.00	Ongoing
	Public Lighting Renewals	\$56,400.00	Ongoing
	Sustainability Programs (Solar Panels & LEDs etc)	\$410,000.00	Ongoing
Stormwater	Storm water Renewals & Upgrades	\$160,000.00	Ongoing
Vehicles	Fleet Replacement	\$350,000.00	Ongoing
Major Projects	SWELL Café	\$500,000.00	Jun-25
	Driver Community Facility	\$1,250,000.00	Jun-26
	Marlow Lagoon Masterplan	\$150,000.00	Jun-25
	Where We Live Matters – Zuccoli Community	\$300,000.00	Jun-26
	Pump Parks/Skate Parks Zuccoli	\$150,000.00	Jun-25

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

\$'000'S	2023-24 REVISED BUDGET	2024-25 BUDGET
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,000	4,000
Investments	27,842	27,589
Receivables	4,501	3,372
Total Current Assets	36,343	34,961
Non-Current Assets		
Infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	580,424	582,257
Investment property	5,858	5,917
Total Non-Current Assets	586,282	588,174
TOTAL ASSETS	622,625	623,135
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Payables	9,250	9,517
Borrowings	442	478
Provisions	1,317	1,357
Total Current Liabilities	11,009	11,352
Non-Current Liabilities		
Borrowings	5,345	4,867
Provisions	1,869	1,926
Total Non-Current Liabilities	7,214	6,793
TOTAL LIABILITIES	18,223	18,145
NET ASSETS	604,402	604,990
Equity		
Retained Earnings(accumulated deficit)	228,474	230,035
Other Reserves	10,144	9,112
Revaluation Reserves	365,784	365,843
Council equity interest	604,402	604,990
TOTAL EQUITY	604,402	604,990

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

\$'000'S	2023-24 REVISED BUDGET	2024-25 BUDGET
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts:		
Rates & annual charges	33,312	36,794
User charges & fees	933	1,080
Investment & interest revenue received	1,671	1,930
Grants & contributions	1,551	3,457
Other	16	12
Payments:		
Employee benefits & costs	(12,114)	(12,995)
Materials, contracts & other expenses	(22,113)	(23,298)
Finance Payments	(179)	(298)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	3,077	6,682
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Receipts:		
Sale of investment securities	-	253
Amounts specifically for new or upgraded assets	21,658	4,340
Payments:		
Purchase of investment securities	(13,334)	
Purchase of infrastructure, property, plant & equipment	(26,813)	(10,833)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(18,489)	(6,240)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities		
Receipts:		
Proceeds from borrowings & deposits	5,000	-
Payments:		
Repayment of borrowings & advances	(248)	(442)
NET CASH PROVIDED (OR USED IN) FINANCING ACTIVITIES	4,752	(442)
plus: CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS - beginning of year	14,660	4,000
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(10,660)	-
TOTAL CASH AT BANK	4,000	4,000
plus: INVESTMENTS ON HAND - beginning of year	14,508	27,842
Net Increase/(Decrease) in investments on hand	13,334	(253)
TOTAL INVESTMENTS ON HAND	27,842	27,589
TOTAL CASH & CASH EQUIVALEND & INVESTMENTS - end of year	31,842	31,589
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS & INVESTMENTS	2,674	(253)

FINANCIAL RATIOS

	BENCHMARK	2023-24 REVISED BUDGET	2024-25 BUDGET
Operating ratio			
This ratio measures Council's ability to contain operating expenditure within operating revenue	Greater than 0%	13%	13.02
Cash Expense Cover Ratio			
This ratio indicates the number of months Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflow	3 months	11.05	10.34
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	1.5 times	3.3	3.08
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	Between 60%-75%	98%	92%
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	Greater than 2.0	8.51	7.07
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	Greater than 4.0	29.57	18.41
Asset Sustainability Ratio			
This ratio indicates the extent to which Council is replacing its existing asset base with capital renewals of existing assets	Between 89%-110%	238%	90%

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS


INITIATIVES TO COMMENCE IN 2024-25	CAPITAL COST (\$)
Introduction of Animal Management By-Laws	95,000
Software Subscriptions – Finance and accounting efficiency	11,000
Diversity, Inclusion and Access Plan Initiatives	10,000
Weed management	40,000
Fire management	40,000
City Activation and Economic Activities	95,000
Safety Community Event	40,000
TOTAL	331,000

STATEMENT OF RESERVES

RESERVE	EXPECTED OPENING BALANCE AS AT 1 JULY 2024 \$	BUDGET TRANSFER TO RESERVES \$	BUDGET TRANSFER FROM RESERVES \$	PROJECTED RESERVE BALANCE AS AT 30 JUNE 2024 \$
Internally restricted				
Election reserves	100,000	50,000		150,000
Disaster recovery	500,000			500,000
Waste	2,335,825	231	(50,000)	2,286,056
Developer Funds In Lieu Of Construction	864,011	320,000	(200,000)	984,011
Major initiative				-
Unrestricted				
Working Capital	6,344,404	20,000	(1,948,888)	4,415,516
TOTAL	10,144,240	390,231	(2,198,888)	8,335,583



 Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrance

 08 8935 9922

 palmerston@palmerston.nt.gov.au

 palmerston.nt.gov.au

