

AGENDA



RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER 2025

The Committee Meeting of City of Palmerston will be held in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, NT 0830 commencing at 5:00 PM.

Council business papers can be viewed on City of Palmerston's website palmerston.nt.gov.au or at the Council Office located:
Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston NT 0830.

ANDREW WALSH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2 OPENING OF MEETING

3 APOLOGIES

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4.1 Committee members

4.2 Staff

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 Confirmation of minutes

THAT the Minutes of the Risk Management and Audit Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 29 July 2025 pages 330 to 336 be confirmed.

5.2 Business arising from previous meeting

6 DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7 VERBAL UPDATE

7.1 Mayoral Update

7.2 Chief Executive Officer Update

8 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

8.1 Moving confidential items into open

8.2 Moving open items into confidential

8.3 Confidential items

THAT pursuant to Section 99(2) and 293(1) of the *Local Government Act 2019* and section 51(1) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the following confidential items:

Item	Confidential Category	Confidential Clause
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18.1.1	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
18.1.2	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
18.1.3	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
18.1.4	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.

18.1.5	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
18.1.6	Council Project Initiative	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
18.2.1	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
18.2.2	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.



9 OFFICER REPORTS

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

Agenda Item:	9.1.1
Report Title:	Risk Management & Audit Committee Annual Work Plan
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 October 2025
Author:	Executive Manager Organisational Performance, Penny Hart
Approver:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

Community plan

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

Purpose

This report seeks Risk Management and Audit Committee (RMAC) approval of the 2025/26 work plan and meeting dates.

Key messages

- A workplan has been prepared for RMAC which sets out key activities, responsibilities and priorities for RMAC over the course of the year.
- The workplan provides a structured schedule for RMAC to monitor financial reporting, internal controls and audit processes.
- The work plan has been prepared to ensure that RMAC is able to meet governance and oversight obligations in line with the Terms of Reference.
- RMAC's Terms of Reference provides that the committee must meet a minimum of four times per year, with meetings scheduled during various reporting and audit cycles.
- Four meeting dates have been proposed for 2026.

Recommendation

1. THAT Report entitled Risk Management & Audit Committee Annual Work Plan be received and noted.
2. THAT the Risk Management and Audit Committee recommend:
 - a. THAT Council endorse the risk Management & Audit Committee Work Plan for 2026 at **Attachment 9.1.1.1** and adopt the 2026 meeting dates:
 - i. 26 February 2026
 - ii. 26 May 2026
 - iii. 25 August 2026
 - iv. 22 October 2026.

Background

The Risk Management and Audit Committee (RMAC) is established as an advisory committee to the City of Palmerston. RMAC is established by Council, pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) (the Act).

In addition to this, RMAC's Terms of Reference (TOR), adopted by Council in July 2024, require RMAC to meet a minimum of four times per year. RMAC's TOR is due for review in the second quarter of 2026 and will be reported to RMAC for endorsement to Council at the February 2026 meeting.

To enable RMAC to meet its requirements outlined in the TOR, an Annual Work Plan is presented to the committee for consideration.

Discussion

The annual work plan of RMAC, refer **Attachment 9.1.1.1**, provides a structured program of oversight activities that guide the Committee's work throughout the year. It ensures that the Committee fulfils its governance responsibilities by monitoring key areas such as the organisation's risk management framework, insurance program renewals and the internal and external audit functions.

The plan also incorporates regular reviews of critical governance frameworks, such as the development of the Fraud and Misconduct Framework and the ongoing Compliance Framework, to ensure they remain robust, effective and aligned with best practice.

The work plan schedules oversight of the organisation's financial and strategic reporting obligations. This includes reviewing the Annual Report and Annual Financial Statements, as well as receiving annual updates to the Asset Management Plan. In addition, the Committee tracks progress on major initiatives such as the Enterprise Resource Planning project and monitors the Action Report (open and confidential items) to ensure transparency and accountability.

In addition, the plan provides for the Committee to review and update its own Terms of Reference and endorse its own annual workplan. The annual work plan gives the Committee a clear roadmap to deliver effective assurance, maintain sound governance, and support Council in achieving its objectives.

To meet RMAC's obligations and taking into consideration Council's compliance obligations, it is proposed that RMAC meet on the following dates:

Proposed meeting date:	RMAC/Council obligation/Responsibility
26 February 2026	RMAC will receive an update on the management of Strategic Risk
26 May 2026	As a result of the review of the Strategic Risk RMAC will be required to review Internal Audit Program. Opportunity to update RMAC's Terms of Reference will commence
25 August 2026	This meeting will largely be RMAC's routine reporting including internal and interim external audits.
22 October 2026	RMAC will review the Annual Report and audited financial statements. Council is required to provide the annual statements to the Minister for Local Government by 15 November 2026.

The proposed dates do not interfere with Council meetings and are not scheduled to occur on public holidays.

Consultation and marketing

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this Report:

- Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Assistant to General Manager Finance and Governance
- Executive Support Officer
- Governance Lead
- Executive Manager Financial Performance

Policy implications

The Annual Work Plan has been developed in line with RMAC's Terms of Reference.

Budget and resource implications

Council remunerates the Independent members of RMAC in accordance with the remuneration schedule set out by the Northern Territory Government for a Class C1 Advisory and Review Board. Remuneration is included in budget considerations each year.

Risk, legal and legislative implications

If the Annual Work Plan is not endorsed by the Committee and adopted by Council in accordance with the Terms of Reference, Council risks not being compliant with the



requirements of the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) with regard to audit committees and their oversight functions.

This Report addresses the following Risk Management and Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

- Risk Management and Internal Controls

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

6. Governance

Failure to effectively govern.

Strategies, framework and plans implications

There are no strategy, framework or plan implications for this Report.

Council officer conflict of interest declaration

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

Attachments

1. Risk Management and Audit Committee Workplan 2026 [**9.1.1.1** - 4 pages]

CITY OF PALMERSTON - RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2026



The RMAC Annual Work Plan is closely aligned with the Committee's Terms of Reference and guiding principles, ensuring that all activities, reviews and monitoring functions directly support its mandate to provide effective oversight, promote accountability and strengthen governance and risk management across Council.

Key: *P, C, NC* – Planned, Completed, Not considered.

AUDIT COMMITTEE'S ROLE / RESPONSIBILITY	HOW THIS OCCURS / DOCUMENT	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	NOTES
Monitor Risk Management	Strategic Risk updates	P		P		A six-monthly report will be presented to RMAC on the Strategic Risk Register that addresses any change to the Council Risk Profile; any emerging risks; and progress against treatment plans.

Magiq ID: 646950

AUDIT COMMITTEE'S ROLE / RESPONSIBILITY	HOW THIS OCCURS / DOCUMENT	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	NOTES
Insurance Program Renewals	Work to prepare insurance renewals is undertaken taken between February and May.		P			The annual insurance program is developed in March/April in preparation for the next financial year.
Internal Audit Program Review	In line with the Internal Audit Plan, reporting will be done quarterly.	P	P	P	P	Ongoing reporting in line with the TOR to ensure oversight of the internal audit function. This will include update on Fraud controls
External Audit	Council engages an external auditor to review the annual finances. Audited annual financial statements are presented to RMAC for review prior to adoption by Council and presentation to the Minister for Local Government with the Annual Report.	P	P	P	P	Progress reports are provided to each meeting.
Fraud and Misconduct Framework and Compliance Framework Performance	In line with TOR, this will be reviewed in May each year.		P			

Magiq ID: 646950

AUDIT COMMITTEE'S ROLE / RESPONSIBILITY	HOW THIS OCCURS / DOCUMENT	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	NOTES
Review Annual Reports and Annual Financial Statements	Review financial statements for compliance with the <i>Local Government Act and Regulations</i> .				P	The Annual Report and financial statements are provided to the October meeting annually.
Asset Management Plan Annual Updates	Review Council's Asset Management Plan.	P				Moving this to February enables the data from end of financial year to be input to inform the AMP. This timing also aligns with budget development process.
Annual Workplan	The Committee determine the following years Annual Workplan in line with the TOR and Council requirements.				P	Reporting of the workplan will be included in the Actions Report at each meeting to confirm that all items have been presented
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Update	As the ERP project is ongoing, reporting to the Committee is quarterly.	P	P	P	P	This will remain until project is implemented

Magiq ID: 646950

AUDIT COMMITTEE'S ROLE / RESPONSIBILITY	HOW THIS OCCURS / DOCUMENT	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	NOTES
Independent Committee Member Recruitment	The TOR sets out the length of service for Committee Members. Recruitment for positions is endorsed by Council.	P				The terms of the current two members expire in May 2026.
Review of advisory and consultancy services	Annual review	P				Detailing the businesses that have provided significant >\$20,000 advisory or consultancy services in 2022-23 related to risk, financial management and governance, including audit.
Terms of Reference (TOR)	The TOR requires bi-annual review by the Committee and adoption by Council.		P			The TOR was last reviewed in 2024.
Action Report (Open & Confidential)	Quarterly presentation of decisions of the committee.	P	P	P	P	

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

Agenda Item:	9.1.2
Report Title:	Whistleblower Policy
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 October 2025
Author:	Governance Lead, Angie Torr
Approver:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

Community plan

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

Purpose

This report seeks the Risk Management and Audit Committee's (RMAC) endorsement of a new Whistleblower Policy for presentation to Council.

Key messages

- A Whistleblower Policy supports Council's obligations under the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017* (NT).
- The policy encourages staff to report wrongdoing safely and without fear of reprisal.
- The policy strengthens Council's Fraud and Corruption Framework.
- The policy provides clear procedures for reporting, investigation and protection of Whistleblowers.
- To compliment the policy, education materials will be developed to ensure staff and Elected Members know their reporting obligations and rights when making a report.

Recommendation

1. THAT Report entitled Whistleblower Policy be received and noted.
2. THAT the Risk Management & Audit Committee recommends to Council:
 - a. THAT a report is presented to Council to consider the adoption of the new Whistleblower Policy at **Attachment 9.1.2.1** to Report entitled Whistleblower Policy.

Background

The *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017* (NT) (the Act) places obligations on public officers, including Council staff and Elected Members, to report suspected misconduct, corruption or improper conduct. Council is committed to the objectives and responsibilities, as set out in the Act, resulting in a Whistleblower policy that focuses on mandatory reporting obligations.

While Council has various governance and integrity-related policies, a dedicated Whistleblower Policy has not previously been adopted. Developing and implementing this policy ensures Council provides a safe, transparent and legislatively compliant mechanism for disclosures.

Discussion

The Whistleblower Policy at **Attachment 9.1.2.1** has been developed in alignment with the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017* (NT) (the Act) and the Mandatory Reporting Directions and Guidelines for Public Officers, providing a framework for reporting suspected misconduct, corruption, maladministration or improper conduct within Council.

The draft policy was circulated to the Senior Leadership Team for feedback. Feedback was largely on the structure of the policy, recommending wording changes to increase clarity and understanding for readers, in particular explaining the difference between a Public Officer and a Prescribed Public Officer.

It is important to note that Public Officers (all staff and Elected Members) are subject to mandatory reporting; however, Prescribed Public Officers (the Chief Executive Officer and Nominated Recipient) hold additional reporting requirements. The different reporting requirements are set out below:

Role	Must Report:
Public Officer	Any suspected corrupt conduct & anti-democratic conduct.
Prescribed Public Officer	In addition to the above, any suspected misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct.

Prescribed Public Officers have additional reporting obligations beyond those of public officers. This includes to report suspected misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct, unless the Prescribed Public Officer knows that the conduct has already been reported to the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC). The suspected conduct must be reported within 4 weeks of the conduct coming to their attention.

Prescribed Public Officers include the Chief Executive Officer, a Nominated Recipient (a person chosen by the organisation) or a public officer who is responsible for the control and management of a public body.

The adoption of a Whistleblower Policy ensures Council is meeting statutory obligations, supports good governance and promotes public trust in Council's operations. The policy will be the first step in developing procedures and training modules for mandatory reporting.



It is recommended that RMAC endorse the policy for presentation to Council.

Consultation and marketing

In preparing this Report, the following internal parties were consulted:

- Executive Leadership Team
- Senior Leadership Team

Policy implications

This report relates to Council's suite of governance and compliance policies and strengthens Council's fraud and corruption prevention framework.

Budget and resource implications

There are no direct budget or resource implications relating to the adoption of the Whistleblower Policy. Implementation will be managed within existing resources.

Risk, legal and legislative implications

ICAC's guidelines, particularly the Mandatory reporting directions and guidelines for public officers, strongly recommends that all public bodies (including councils) implement internal frameworks to:

- Encourage reporting of suspected improper conduct,
- Ensure confidentiality and protection of reporters, and
- Comply with obligations to notify the ICAC.

These frameworks are generally documented as a Whistleblower Policy or Public Interest Disclosure Policy.

Adopting the Whistleblower Policy reduces legal and compliance risk by ensuring Council meets its obligations under the Act. It also reduces reputational risk by demonstrating Council's commitment to transparency and accountability.

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

6. **Governance**
Failure to effectively govern.

Strategies, framework and plans implications

This Report relates to the following City of Palmerston Strategies, Framework and Plans:

- Fraud and Corruption Framework

Council officer conflict of interest declaration

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

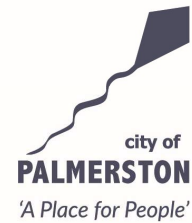


Attachments

1. Draft Council Policy - Whistleblower [**9.1.2.1** - 6 pages]

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

COUNCIL POLICY



PURPOSE

City of Palmerston is committed to fostering a culture of transparency and accountability by encouraging the disclosure of misconduct and corruption. City of Palmerston will create an environment where individuals will be empowered to report corrupt and illegal practices, without being subjected to retaliation.

PRINCIPLES

City of Palmerston is a public body as defined in section 16(1) of the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption 2017 (NT)* (the Act).

Mandatory reporting of suspected improper conduct applies to all public bodies and associated public officers as defined in section 16(2) of the Act.

Whistle-blowing protections are applicable to any person reporting suspected improper conduct as per section 146A of the Act.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

TERM	DEFINITION
Code of Conduct	means the City of Palmerston and Elected Members Code of Conducts as they apply to staff and Elected Members.
ICAC	Independent Commissioner Against Corruption.

TERM	DEFINITION
Improper Conduct	Section 9 of the Act defines improper conduct as: (a) corrupt conduct; (b) misconduct; (c) unsatisfactory conduct; (d) anti-democratic conduct; (e) conduct constituting an offence against the Act; (f) conduct (the secondary conduct) engaged in by any person in relation to conduct mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (e) (the primary conduct). Secondary conduct is conduct that would constitute an offence against one of the following sections of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1983</i> (NT) on the assumption that the primary conduct is an offence, whether or not the primary conduct is in fact an offence: (a) attempt (b) complicity and common purpose (c) innocent agency (d) incitement (e) conspiracy. Secondary conduct is taken to be the same type of improper conduct as the primary conduct to which it relates. Examples are available in section 9 of the Act.
Nominated Recipient	Pursuant to section 97 of the Act, a nominated recipient is a person appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. Nominated recipients act on behalf of City of Palmerston and are responsible for providing advice about the process of making a disclosure, receiving disclosures from employees, facilitating disclosures to the ICAC and protecting employees from retaliation. The Nominated Recipient for City of Palmerston is the General Manager Finance and Governance.
Protected Action	Section 92 of the Act states that a person takes protected action if: (a) the person, being an individual, makes a protected communication or (b) the person (whether or not an individual) takes another action in the course of, or for the purpose of: (i) complying with the ICAC Act or (ii) cooperating with a person or body performing functions under the ICAC Act. An action is not protected action if the person providing or communicating the information knows or believes the information is misleading.

TERM	DEFINITION
Protected Disclosure/Communication	Protected communication is information in a report made by a person to the ICAC when making a disclosure of improper conduct.
Protected Person	A Protected Person is a person who takes or has taken protected action.
Public Officer	Section 16(2) of the Act defines a Public Officer as a person who: (a) the holder of an office established under an Act who appointed by the Administrator or a minister; (b) a member, officer or employee of a public body; or (c) any other person engaged, whether under the <i>Contracts Act 1978</i> (NT) or otherwise, by or on behalf of a person mentioned above in relation to the performance of official functions.
Whistleblower	A Whistleblower is a person who makes a disclosure about improper conduct.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Council Commitment

- 1.1. City of Palmerston is committed to the objectives of the Act and to ensure that its responsibilities under the Act are properly fulfilled.
- 1.2. City of Palmerston will provide education to staff to ensure they are aware of their mandatory reporting obligations under the Act.
- 1.3. Disclosures will be taken seriously, and prompt action will be taken to address any alleged improper conduct any investigation by ICAC is undertaken.
- 1.4. Employees who communicate their suspicion or allegation in good faith and out of genuine concern will be protected from reprisal and retaliation, regardless of the outcome.
- 1.5. The identity of a Whistleblower will be kept confidential wherever possible as anonymity is the best protection of a person from retaliation.
- 1.6. This policy is designed to complement normal communication channels between City of Palmerston management, staff and the public. Employees are encouraged to continue to raise matters at any time with their managers/team leaders, unless the matter is a mandatory report according to the Act.
- 1.7. City of Palmerston will adhere to the Act and any directions and guidelines issued by the ICAC to allow employees or members of the public to provide information in accordance with the Act.
- 1.8. Serious and proven fraud and corruption will be referred to the Northern Territory Police

2. Mandatory Reporting

- 2.1. All public officers of City of Palmerston must report any suspected corrupt conduct of anti-democratic conduct as soon as practical to ICAC. Using an internal process to report the conduct does not discharge this duty.
- 2.2. City of Palmerston will ensure that the mandatory reporting directions and guidelines issued by ICAC are made available to all employees and Elected Members either electronically or by hard copy.
- 2.3. City of Palmerston will provide mandatory training to ensure that all staff and Elected Members are aware of their reporting obligations under the Act, in particular, which types of conduct are required to be mandatory reported.

3. Making a disclosure/report

- 3.1. Mandatory disclosures can be made directly to ICAC or to City of Palmerston's Nominated Recipient.
- 3.2. City of Palmerston's Nominated Recipient must report mandatory disclosures about corrupt conduct and anti-democratic conduct to ICAC.
- 3.3. Voluntary reports about improper conduct (other than corrupt conduct and anti-democratic conduct) can be made to ICAC or the Nominated Recipient at any time.
- 3.4. Disclosures can be made verbally, in writing, by telephone or by email.
- 3.5. Disclosures can be made anonymously.

4. Prescribed public officers

- 4.1. In addition to reporting obligations for public officers, prescribed public officer must:
 - 4.1.1 Comply with the mandatory reporting directions issued in respect of all public officers.
 - 4.1.2 Report to the ICAC suspected misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct, unless the prescribed public officer knows that the conduct has already been reported to the ICAC.
 - 4.1.3 Report suspected misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct to the ICAC within four weeks of the conduct coming to that person's attention. The report should be accompanied by an explanation of action that has been, or is being, or is to be taken in respect of the matter.
- 4.2. The following are prescribed public officers:
 - 4.2.1 a nominated recipient
 - 4.2.2 the Chief Executive Officer of a local council; or
 - 4.2.3 the public officer who is responsible for the control and management of a public body, however described.

5. Whistleblower protection

- 5.1. City of Palmerston recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices. CoP supports reporting that reveals improper conduct involving substantial mismanagement of public resources or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

- 5.2. City of Palmerston does not tolerate improper conduct by its public officers, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to report such conduct.
- 5.3. City of Palmerston will take every care to keep the identity of any person making a report confidential, subject to any legal requirements that are imposed on City of Palmerston to disclose information. The identity of a Whistleblower will be maintained as confidential in accordance with the Act. Confidentiality will remain in all circumstances, unless the Whistleblower consents to their identity being disclosed or disclosure is otherwise required so that the matter may be properly investigated.
- 5.4. Harassment, intimidation or other reprisal action against a person who discloses alleged improper conduct will not be tolerated and action will be taken in accordance with the Act and City of Palmerston's Code of Conduct against persons who indulge in harassment, intimidation or reprisal action.

6. Employees who are the subject of disclosures

- 6.1. City of Palmerston will afford natural justice to a person who is the subject of a report whilst the investigation is completed by ICAC.
- 6.2. City of Palmerston will give its full support to a person who is the subject of a report where ICAC has determined the allegations are unfounded or unsubstantiated.
- 6.3. If the matter has been reported, the Chief Executive Officer will consider any request by that person to issue a statement of support setting out that the allegations were clearly wrong or unsubstantiated.
- 6.4. City of Palmerston will follow the strategies outlined in the Act and associated regulations and guidelines to ensure that Whistleblower protections are in place.
- 6.5. Reporting alleged improper conduct to persons other than the above named, including the media, will not be protected under the Act.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- City of Palmerston – Codes of Conduct for Staff and Elected Members
- City of Palmerston Risk Management Policy
- City of Palmerston Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
- Office of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption:
 - Guidelines for the minimisation of retaliation against protected persons, January 2024
 - Dealing with voluntary protected communications – directions and guidelines, January 2024
 - Mandatory reporting directions and guidelines, November 2023
 - Comprehensive information regarding disclosure, the role and powers of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, as well as links to the Act and the associated regulations and guidelines, are available at <https://icac.nt.gov.au/home>.

REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption 2017 (NT)*
- *Information Act 2002 (NT)*
- *Local Government Act 2019 (NT)*
- *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021*

POLICY DETAILS

OWNER	Chief Executive Officer	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	General Manager Finance and Governance
APPROVAL DATE	[Approval Date]	NEXT REVIEW DUE	[Next Review Due]
RECORDS NUMBER	611186	COUNCIL DECISION	[Council Decision]

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

Agenda Item:	9.1.3
Report Title:	Annual Audit Committee Self-Assessment
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 October 2025
Author:	Executive Manager Organisational Performance, Penny Hart
Approver:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

Community plan

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

Purpose

This Report seeks Risk Management and Audit Committee (RMAC) consideration of an annual self-assessment process for the committee and its members.

Key messages

- The current RMAC Terms of Reference were adopted by Council on 2 July 2024.
- They include a guideline for RMAC that the Chairperson will initiate an assessment of the committee's performance annually and report to Council.
- It is good governance practice for an audit committee to regularly assess its own performance, including the adequacy of its terms of reference.
- A questionnaire has been developed for members to self-assess the committee and their own performance.
- The self-assessment will help inform the next review of RMAC's Terms of Reference, scheduled for 2026.
- This report proposes that RMAC recommend to Council that the work plan list the annual committee self-assessment for October and that the outcomes of the assessment are reported to Council.
- If endorsed by Council at the first ordinary November 2025 meeting, the self-assessment will be circulated to all RMAC members.

Recommendation

1. THAT Report entitled Annual Audit Committee Self-Assessment be received and noted.
2. THAT the Risk Management and Audit Committee recommend to Council:
 - a. THAT the Risk Management and Audit Committee work plan list an annual committee self-assessment to be completed following the last RMAC meeting of the year.
 - b. THAT the Risk Management and Audit Committee Chairperson write to the Chief Executive Officer annually to report on the committee's activities and the outcomes of the annual self-assessment and that this be to be presented at a Council meeting.

Background

The current RMAC Terms of Reference were adopted by Council on 2 July 2024. They include a brief guideline for RMAC that the Chairperson will initiate an assessment (self-assessment, internal or external) of the committee's performance annually and report to Council.

To date, RMAC has not undertaken an assessment. To continue to improve the organisation and audit committee's maturity, this report recommends that RMAC commence an annual self-assessment for the committee and individual members.

Discussion

It is good governance practice for an audit committee to regularly assess its own performance, including the adequacy of its terms of reference, work plans, forums of discussion and communication, with a view to identifying areas in which the committee and its processes might be more effective.

The RMAC Terms of Reference are due for review in the first quarter of 2026. To provide information to support that review, it is recommended that RMAC undertake an inaugural annual self-assessment of the committee and its members to identify improvements that the committee might recommend to Council.

Matters for consideration in any review of performance should include feedback to Council regarding:

- Identifying and agreeing to the criteria by which the performance of the audit committee should be assessed (Terms of Reference)
- Assessing compliance with the audit committee's Terms of Reference
- Assessing the effectiveness of the audit committee as a whole and the performance of individual audit committee members.

Any assessment must have clear goals and be designed to encourage members to perform the task of constructively critiquing each other's contribution as well as their collective performance as a committee.

Self-assessment

A questionnaire (**Attachment 9.1.3.1**) has been developed based on materials available from Council's current appointed auditor, BDO, and other resources from organisations such as the Australian Government Department of Finance.

The questionnaire covers the areas of:

- Composition of RMAC
- Committee Management and Communications
- RMAC Chairperson
- Consideration of Risk
- Oversight of Financial Reporting
- Oversight of Internal Controls
- Oversight of Internal and External Audits
- Overall Assessment
- Individual Assessment.

Scoring and a summary of each section will be provided by staff once the results from all survey participants are received, including areas for improvement and suggested action plans.

While members will be asked to identify themselves in individual responses, confidentiality will be observed with respect to each participant's feedback. Implementing an assessment process depends on the committee's ability to develop a culture of frankness and mutual trust.

If endorsed, the questionnaire will be circulated to all RMAC members, including independent and Elected Members following the first ordinary Council Meeting in November 2025. Council staff will combine the survey submissions and circulate the consolidated results to RMAC members.

Reporting to Council

Following the annual self-assessment there should be a reporting method for the committee to communicate not just the results of the assessment and any recommendations to Council, but to report a summary of its activities for the year.

It is recommended that the Chairperson writes to the Chief Executive Officer following the last RMAC meeting of each year and prior to the first RMAC meeting of the following year, to outline the committee's activities and present the results of the self-assessment of the prior year. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure the correspondence is tabled at the next Council meeting for their review and consideration.

Consultation and marketing

The following internal staff were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- Marketing and Communications
- IT & Assets Manager.



Policy implications

Council set the procedures for RMAC through the Risk Management and Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy.

It is intended that the self-assessment and report from the Chairperson will be undertaken annually to comply with the RMAC Terms of Reference.

Budget and resource implications

There are no budget or resource implications relating to this Report. Activities will be funded from within existing budget.

Risk, legal and legislative implications

Audit committees are established pursuant to Part 5.3 of the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT).

This Report addresses the following Risk Management and Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

- Risk Management and Internal Controls
- Review of Committee's Annual Performance

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

6. Governance

Failure to effectively govern.

Strategies, framework and plans implications

There are no strategy, framework or plan implications for this Report.

Council officer conflict of interest declaration

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

Attachments

1. RMAC Self Assessment Checklist [9.1.3.1 - 8 pages]

PERFORMANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT



RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Among other important duties, the Risk Management and Audit Committee (RMAC) should review its own effectiveness on an annual basis. This survey is a tool designed to assess the overall effectiveness of the Risk Management and Audit Committee (RMAC) in fulfilling its objectives under the Terms of Reference, the Local Government Act, and best practice principles of governance, risk, and assurance.

The survey covers the following areas:

1. Composition of RMAC
2. Committee Management and Communications
3. RMAC Chairperson
4. Consideration of Risk
5. Oversight of Financial Reporting
6. Oversight of Internal Controls
7. Oversight of Internal and External Audits
8. Overall Assessment
9. Individual Assessment

KEY	
0	N/A
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

RMAC Member:

Date completed:

1. COMPOSITION							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC has the appropriate qualifications, time and resources to serve Council and the Community.							
RMAC has the appropriate number of members to address risk adequately and efficiently.							
All members of RMAC understand their roles and responsibilities.							
RMAC has at least one financial and/or risk expert member.							
RMAC has the appropriate operational and industry expertise along with diversity in members, to allow a solid understanding of and to address the risks faced by Council.							
Conflicts of interest are disclosed and managed appropriately.							

2. COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC allocates adequate meeting time throughout the year.							

2. COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS							
The agenda and reports are prepared timely, informatively, concisely and are distributed with time for adequate review by members in advance of meetings.							
The audit committee conducts its meetings efficiently and is able to focus, discuss, and debate significant issues.							
Audit committee members are able to speak freely during audit committee meetings.							
The Committee maintains constructive and transparent relationships with management.							
The Committee provides timely and clear advice and reporting to Council							

3. RMAC CHAIRPERSON							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
The Chairperson is knowledgeable of RMAC' members' skill sets and draws on such expertise/experience as needed.							
The Chairperson sets the appropriate tone for meetings, demonstrates effective leadership, and is able to manage a productive and respectful environment.							

4. CONSIDERATION OF RISK							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC ensures the risk management framework is current, robust, and effectively implemented.							
RMAC reviews and provides advice on key strategic, operational, and emerging risks.							
The quality, frequency, and clarity of risk reports support effective oversight.							
RMAC is alert to fraud and risk factors, particularly the potential for management override of internal controls.							
RMAC is adequately briefed on management's fraud & corruption framework and has confidence that this program is designed and operating effectively.							

5. OVERSIGHT OF FINANCIAL REPORTING							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC provides effective oversight of financial statements and accounting processes.							
RMAC understands and challenges the completeness and transparency of the financial statements, annual report, and other related communications.							

5. OVERSIGHT OF FINANCIAL REPORTING							
RMAC is satisfied with the quality and transparency of disclosures within the financial statements.							
RMAC reviews materials outside of the financial statements (e.g. quarterly reports, draft budgets) and encourages management to provide this information on a timely basis.							

6. OVERSIGHT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC has a good understanding of Council's internal controls and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls.							
RMAC is alert to "red flags" which may signal improper earnings management, fraudulent financial reporting, and misappropriation of funds or illegal acts.							
Management communicates significant deficiencies or material weaknesses directly to RMAC along with plans for remediation.							
RMAC adequately monitors and follows up on management's remediation plans.							

7. OVERSIGHT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDITS							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC has an advisory role to Council for the internal audit function, including reviewing recommendations.							
RMAC monitors internal audit outcomes and management's implementation of recommendations.							
RMAC reviews annual external audit reports.							
RMAC inquires of and is satisfied that the auditors have adequate quality control policies and procedures in place to ensure services rendered meet professional and regulatory requirements.							

8. OVERALL ASSESSMENT							
TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
RMAC understands the organisation's strategic objectives and considers these in decision-making.							
RMAC seeks to enhance processes, frameworks, and governance practices.							

8. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

RMAC's function is operating efficiently and effectively in fulfillment of its oversight responsibility in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

9. INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

TOPIC/ISSUE	0	1	2	3	4	5	ACTION REQUIRED/COMMENTS
Do I actively prepare for and contribute meaningfully to Committee discussions and decisions?							
Do I have a clear understanding of the Committee's Terms of Reference, key risks, and governance responsibilities?							
Do I apply sound, independent judgment when reviewing reports, challenging assumptions, or making recommendations?							
Do I work constructively with other Committee members, management, and auditors to support effective oversight?							
Have I sought opportunities to enhance my knowledge of risk management, audit practices, and the organisation's operations?							

CONSOLIDATION

The responses will be consolidated following the submission of the survey and will be presented to RMAC

Summary

Section	Average score
1. Composition of RMAC	
2. Committee Management and Communications	
3. RMAC Chairperson	
4. Consideration of Risk	
5. Oversight of Financial Reporting	
6. Oversight of Internal Controls	
7. Oversight of Internal and External Audits	
8. Overall Assessment	
TOTAL /40	
9. Individual Assessment	

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Meeting

Agenda Item:	9.2.1
Report Title:	Action Report
Meeting Date:	Thursday 23 October 2025
Author:	Executive Assistant to General Manager Finance and Governance, Alexandra Malady
Approver:	General Manager Finance and Governance, Wati Kerta

Community plan

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

Purpose

This report updates the Risk Management and Audit Committee on the progress of outstanding open actions on the register.

Key messages

- A register is maintained with decisions from the Risk Management and Audit Committee (RMAC) meetings.
- Updates are provided at each committee meeting to ensure that RMAC has oversight over progress of actions.
- There are currently no outstanding actions on the open Action Report for review.

Recommendation

THAT Report entitled Action Report be received and noted.

Background

At each meeting, the committee receives an update on actions that remain on the decision register for RMAC.

At the 29 July 2025 RMAC meeting, the committee recommended to Council that an item from the Open Action Report be removed, as all actions had been completed within the May 2025 Open Action Report.



Discussion

This report confirms that there are currently no outstanding actions on the open Action Report for review.

Consultation and marketing

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this Report:

- Governance Lead
- Executive Manager Organisational Performance

Policy implications

This Report relates to:

- Risk Management and Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Budget and resource implications

There are no budget or resource implications relating to this Report.

Risk, legal and legislative implications

This Report addresses the following Risk Management and Audit Committee Terms of Reference:

- Risk Management and Internal Controls

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

6. Governance

Failure to effectively govern.

Strategies, framework and plans implications

There are no strategy, framework or plan implications for this Report.

Council officer conflict of interest declaration

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

Attachments

Nil



10 INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 Information

10.2 Correspondence

11 GENERAL BUSINESS

12 NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

THAT the committee note the proposed date of the next meeting of Thursday 26 February 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston is subject to Council approval.

13 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO PUBLIC

THAT pursuant to *section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the Confidential items of the Agenda.



MINUTES

RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY 29 JULY 2025

The Committee Meeting of City of Palmerston held in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, NT 0830.

Council business papers can be viewed on City of Palmerston's website palmerston.nt.gov.au

Minutes of Risk Management and Audit Committee Meeting
held in Council Chambers
Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston
on Tuesday 29 July 2025 at 5:00pm.

PRESENT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Clare Milikins, Independent Member (Chair) Craig Kirby, Independent Member (Via Audio/ Audiovisual) David Ray, Independent Member (Via Audio/ Audiovisual) Deputy Mayor Damian Hale (Proxy) Councillor Sarah Henderson
STAFF	Acting Chief Executive Officer, Nadine Nilon Acting General Manager Finance and Governance, Penny Hart General Manager Community, Konrad Seidl Acting General Manager People and Place, Emma Blight Acting Executive Manager Financial Performance, Jeffrey Guilas Minute Secretary, Alexandra Malady
GALLERY	Nil members of the public

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.

2 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting open at 5:01 pm.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies

Moved: Councillor Henderson

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Hale

1. THAT the apology received from Mayor Pascoe-Bell for Tuesday 29 July 2025 be received and noted.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/218 – 29/07/2025

3.2 Leave of absence previously granted

Nil

4 AUDIO/AUDIOVISUAL CONFERENCING PREVIOUSLY GRANTED

THAT it be noted the following Elected Members have been granted attendance via Audio/Audiovisual Conferencing for this meeting in accordance with the policy:

Independent Member Kirby.

Independent Member Ray.

5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

5.1 Committee members

Nil

5.2 Staff

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1 Confirmation of minutes

Moved: Councillor Henderson
Seconded: Deputy Mayor Hale

THAT the Minutes of the Risk Management and Audit Committee Meeting held on 27 May 2025 pages 317 to 323 be confirmed.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/219 – 29/07/2025

6.2 Business arising from previous meeting

Nil

7 DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nil

8 VERBAL UPDATE

8.1 Mayoral Update

Moved: Deputy Mayor Hale
Seconded: Councillor Henderson

THAT the verbal report provided by Deputy Mayor Damian Hale regarding Mayoral Update be received and noted.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/220 – 29/07/2025

8.2 Chief Executive Officer Update

Moved: Craig Kirby
Seconded: David Ray

THAT the verbal report provided by Acting Chief Executive Officer Nadine Nilon regarding Chief Executive Officer Update be received and noted.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/221 – 29/07/2025

9 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

9.1 Moving confidential items into open

Nil

9.2 Moving open items into confidential

Nil

9.3 Confidential items

Moved: Deputy Mayor Hale
Seconded: Councillor Henderson

THAT pursuant to Section 99(2) and 293(1) of the *Local Government Act 2019* and section 51(1) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the following confidential items:

Item	Confidential Category	Confidential Clause
19.1.1	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021</i> , which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
19.1.2	Council Project Initiative	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021</i> , which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice

		the interests of the council or some other person.
19.1.3	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> and section 51(1)(c)(i) of the <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021</i> , which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to cause commercial prejudice to, or confer an unfair commercial advantage on, any person.
19.2.1	Council Project Initiative	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> and section 51(1)(c)(i) of the <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021</i> , which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to cause commercial prejudice to, or confer an unfair commercial advantage on, any person.
19.2.2	Council Performance, Service Delivery and Budget Review	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021</i> , which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
19.2.3	Council Project Initiative	This item is considered 'Confidential' pursuant to section 99(2) and 293(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> and section 51(1)(c)(iv) of the <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2021</i> , which states a council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of, or a motion or both relating to, information that would, if

		publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.
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CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/222 - 29/07/2025

10 OFFICER REPORTS

10.1 Action reports

10.1.1 Action Report

Moved: Councillor Henderson
 Seconded: Craig Kirby

1. THAT Report entitled Action Report be received and noted.
2. THAT the Risk Management and Audit Committee recommend to Council that the following item can be removed from the Action Report at **Attachment 10.1.1.1.**
 - a. New Council Policy – Risk Management.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/223 - 29/07/2025

10.2 Receive and note reports

Nil

11 INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

11.1 Information

Nil

11.2 Correspondence

Nil

12 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

13 NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved: Deputy Mayor Hale

Seconded: Councillor Henderson

THAT the next Risk Management and Audit Committee Meeting be held on Tuesday, 23 October 2025 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers, Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/224 - 29/07/2025

14 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO PUBLIC

Moved: Clare Milikins

Seconded: David Ray

THAT pursuant to *section 99(2) and 293(1) of the Local Government Act 2019 and section 51(1)(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the Confidential items of the Agenda.

CARRIED (5/0) - RMA10/225 - 29/07/2025

The open section of the meeting closed at 5:17 pm for the discussion of confidential matters.

The closed section of the meeting reopened at 6:12 pm.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6:12 pm.