

# Local Authorities Policy v3

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## 1. Legislation

Council manages local authorities in adherence to Part 5.1 of the Northern Territory's *Local Government Act 2019* (LG Act):

- The establishment and maintenance of local authorities in accordance with Guideline 1: Local Authorities (s76).
- The constitution of a local authority (s77).
- The functions and limits on functions of a local authority (s78 and s79).
- The reporting required of *the Council* and the local authority (s80).
- How *the Council* must work with the local authority (s81).

## 2. Definitions

**Council** means the MacDonnell Regional Council's administration.

**The Council** means the Councillors, President and Deputy President.

**Member** means any person appointed to a local authority.

**CEO** means the Chief Executive Officer.

**Staff** is any person who carries out work for Council including (but not limited to) employees, contractors, consultants or volunteers.

## 3. Statement

This policy provides the principles to:

- Make sure local authorities provide good local representation, are properly supported and remain a valued resource for Council and its communities.
- Ensure opportunities exist for residents to meaningfully engage in local government processes that impact their lives while complying with the applicable relevant legislation.

## 4. Policy

### 4.1 Principles

#### 4.1.1 Strengthen Good Governance

Local authorities are a key mechanism for ensuring culturally informed decision-making at the community level.

#### 4.1.2 Ensuring Legal Compliance

Promote transparency in Council business to ensure Council operates in a way that aligns with legislation, regulation and any relevant Ministerial guidelines.

### 4.2 Delegations

**4.2.1** Local authorities have an advisory role to *the Council*. Local authority decisions and recommendations made need the approval of *the Council*.

**4.2.2** Local authorities are allocated specific funding granted by the Northern Territory Government. This funding may be expended on activities the local authorities support in their communities. This can be spent under the delegation made to the local authority and must be spent in line with the Local Authority Projects and Discretionary Funding Policy.

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## 4.3 Local Authority Areas

4.3.1 The local authority areas will include the community in which they are based and the surrounding areas which the community residents identify as part of that community for accessing services or for cultural reasons.

## 4.4 Number of Members

4.4.1 The number of members for each local authority will be as follows:

Community	Appointed Members	Elected Members	Quorum (Total of Elected and Appointed Members)	Provisional (1/3 of all Members)
Amoonguna	7	4	6	4
Areyonga (Utju)	7	2	5	3
Docker River (Kaltukatjara)	7	2	5	3
Finke (Aputula)	7	4	6	4
Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji)	7	3	6	4
Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	7	3	6	4
Imanpa	7	2	5	3
Kintore (Walungurru)	7	3	6	4
Mount Liebig (Watiyawanu)	7	3	6	4
Papunya (Warumpi)	8	3	6	4
Santa Teresa (Ltyentye Apurte)	7	4	6	4
Titjikala	7	4	6	4
Wallace Rockhole	6	3	5	3

## 4.5 Nomination and Appointment Process

4.5.1 A local authority consists of the ward Councillors for the relevant ward, and other members of the community as appointed by *the Council*.

4.5.2 The President is a member within their own ward and will attend other meetings (outside their own ward) as a visitor.

4.5.3 In the event of a vacancy, a new member will be nominated and appointed in accordance with the LG Act and Guideline 1: Local Authorities.

4.5.4 Calls for community nominations will remain open for 21 days. Signage to advise of a vacancy will be posted at the community Council office and other suitable venues.

4.5.5 The local authority should:

4.5.5.1 Be representative of key groups within the area such as family groups, women and men, outstations and community residents.

4.5.5.2 Ensure members are committed to attend and participate in meetings and give two-way feedback to community members and *the Council*.

4.5.5.3 Where possible include members of Youth Boards.

4.5.5.4 List all nominations received along with any indications of community support, including current members' support for the nomination to be considered at the first Ordinary meeting of *the Council* after nominations have closed.

4.5.5.5 Select the Chair and a Deputy Chair of the local authority from the members.

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## 4.6 Meetings

- 4.6.1 The Chair has control of the meeting agenda and the general conduct of the meeting with assistance provided by the Governance Coordinator and/or senior staff in attendance.
- 4.6.2 If the Chair is absent from a meeting the Deputy Chair will chair the meeting.
- 4.6.3 If members leave the meeting and as a result there are insufficient numbers in the room to count as a provisional quorum, the meeting will be suspended until quorum is restored.
- 4.6.4 Staff should not participate in discussions where a decision is the responsibility of the local authority, unless asked to do so by members.
- 4.6.5 Where culturally sensitive matters are being discussed, visitors and staff will be asked to leave the room for the duration of those discussions.
- 4.6.6 Meetings are convened by the CEO or their delegate and are set at the start of the calendar year.
- 4.6.7 Meetings will be provided administrative support whilst following the Meeting Procedure.

## 4.7 Consultation with External Bodies

- 4.7.1 Local authorities may act as representative bodies for their communities to Commonwealth and Northern Territory government representatives or agencies, non-government organisations and other groups that wish to meet with the community.
- 4.7.2 Meetings are open to the public, however any person wishing to present to the local authority must make a request in writing to Council at least two weeks prior to the meeting. These requests must have the prior approval of *the Council*.
- 4.7.3 These agenda items will be discussed after the completion of local government business or as determined by the meeting.

## 4.8 Special Local Authority Meetings

- 4.8.1 Special meetings are convened by the Chair through the CEO or their delegate.
- 4.8.2 The purpose of a special meeting is to deal with important issues that cannot wait until the next scheduled ordinary meeting.

## 4.9 Rescheduled and Cancelled Meetings

- 4.9.1 Council is committed to achieving the minimum number of meetings (4) per year. Due to the large number of meetings that Council holds, it will not be possible to reschedule all postponed meetings.
- 4.9.2 Priority will be given to rescheduling meetings that have been postponed due to legitimate reasons and where advanced warning has been given.
- 4.9.3 Where every effort has been made to reschedule a meeting without success the meeting will be cancelled in consultation with the CEO and local authority members.
- 4.9.4 A meeting cancellation will be deemed to be legitimate where:
  - 4.9.4.1 Access to a community is restricted (e.g. weather, cultural business).
  - 4.9.4.2 Sorry or cultural business prevents the meeting proceeding.
  - 4.9.4.3 A conflicting community meeting or event would significantly restrict community participation.
- 4.9.5 Members are able to change the meeting dates with less than seven days' notice if the majority of members agree.

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- 4.9.6 If a rescheduled meeting does not proceed, no further attempts will be made to reschedule that meeting.
- 4.9.7 If there are changes to the scheduled meeting time made by the CEO or their delegate, members must be given as much notice, as practicable, about the rescheduled date, time and place for the meeting, as practicable.

## 4.10 Provisional Meetings

- 4.10.1 Where a quorum cannot be achieved a provisional meeting can be held. See 4.4 of this policy for the specific number of total members required to attend the meetings at each community.
- 4.10.2 Provisional meetings contribute to the annual requirement of four (4) meetings.

## 4.11 Member Attendance and Allowance

- 4.11.1 Members are required to attend meetings as often as possible. If a member cannot attend a meeting, they must submit an apology. Membership of the local authority may be revoked if a member does not attend as required.
- 4.11.2 If a Councillor cannot attend a meeting they must submit an apology.
- 4.11.3 In accordance with the Attendance at Meetings via Audio or Audio-visual Conferencing System Policy, members may participate in a meeting via audio and/or audio –visual technology. Where this can be arranged this is preferable to not having a meeting take place.
- 4.11.4 Members are entitled to an allowance for all meetings they attend in accordance with the Allowances Policy.

## 4.12 Revocation of Appointed Member

- 4.12.1 A person ceases to hold office as a member if the person:
  - 4.12.1.1 Passes away.
  - 4.12.1.2 Resigns in writing.
  - 4.12.1.3 Has their membership revoked.
  - 4.12.1.4 Is absent for 2 consecutive meetings without the permission of the local authority.
  - 4.12.1.5 If they are physically unable to attend 2 meetings, for example if they are in jail or in hospital for an extended time.
- 4.12.2 A letter revoking the membership will be sent to the last known residential address of the member in question.

## 5. Breaches and Consequences

Action or behaviour that does not comply with any element of this policy can be found to have breached the Code of Conduct. Such action or behaviour must be referred to as 'suspected misconduct' until a decision is made that the action or behaviour amounts to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

## 6. Authority

*The Council, 17 April 2026*

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## 7. Owner

Office of the CEO, Governance and Strategy

## 8. Review Date

30 April 2029

## 9. Related Documents

Guideline 1 - Local Authorities

Allowance Policy

Attendance at Meetings via Audio or Audio-visual Conferencing System Policy

Local Authority Meeting Procedure