



# MacNews

MacDonnell Regional Council Staff Newsletter

JULY 2018

volume 10 issue 3



MacDonnell Regional Council



Flanked by her CEO Jeff MacLeod (left) and Deputy Greg Sharman, MacDonnell Regional Council President Roxanne Kenny shows on the map where to find her community of Hermannsburg while her fellow councillors and staff wait for their piece of the special birthday cake

## Shires come of age

1 July this year marked ten years since *the Shires* were introduced across the Northern Territory and therefore our tenth birthday. During a break from a recent council meeting, our elected councillors and executive staff gathered around a birthday cake honouring the first ten years of the MacDonnell Regional Council.

They blew out the candles and made their wishes for the next ten years. Council President Roxanne Kenny, who has been a councillor for the Ljirapinta Ward since the first council formed in 2008, wished for the improvements she has seen in communities to keep coming and for governments to continue investing in local government in remote communities.

Later while eating cake councillors and staff reflected on Council's first ten years, noting they had seen many more beneficial achievements over the period than they could have ever predicted.

*many voices, one dream, building a quality desert lifestyle*

### INSIDE

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The drive is all the more beautiful when the road is not rough! Areyonga access road after recently completed repairs

## Better access into Areyonga

The beautiful drive in the West MacDonnell Ranges that leads into Areyonga along its access road has been made even better since the completion of a recent road upgrade.

The heavy rains and flooding during the 2016/17 summer caused much damage along the Areyonga road.

MacDonnell Regional Council has been able to repair the access road thanks to the disaster relief funding available through the Federal Government's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangement (NDRRA).

Other sections of the road have been improved through the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grants – Roads and Roads to Recovery funding.

The access road into Areyonga had suffered substantial damage in the form of scouring to the road pavements requiring earthworks and repairs to drainage structures. Improvements were achieved by

reforming and then grading the community's main link between it and the Mereenie Loop.

Our thanks go to the contractors Western Grader Hire Pty Ltd for the earthworks on this project.

After quietly looking after all our road projects for nearly five years Bennie Dugay is moving to work for the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.

Bennie has successfully managed large budgets and important contract works like the \$2.8m NDRRA disaster relief repair work over the past 12 months as well as an annual \$1m Roads to Recovery program and among other projects he has always been a great contributor to *MacNews*.



councils of Barkly, Central Desert and MacDonnell Regional Council that comprise the CARWMP.

Michael's presentation described the challenges, successes and opportunities for better waste management in the remote communities of Central Australia.

## Our desert Councils' waste management processes presented at national conference

At the invitation of the organisers, Michael Davis recently presented at the national 2018 Waste conference on his work for the Central Australia Remote Waste Management Program (CARWMP).

Michael is the Regional Waste Coordinator for the three regional

## CEO UPDATE

Welcome to MacDonnell Regional Council,

It is an honour to work with our dedicated and hard-working councillors. I have had the privilege to serve them in a number of roles with all three councils since the MacDonnell region joined the national community of local governments ten years ago.

I particularly thank Sid Anderson for his vision and leadership as President over a large and important period of our history. Succession of MacDonnell Regional Council's leadership has since passed to the very capable Roxanne Kenny.

In our short history we are proud of the improvements we have brought to our remote Aboriginal communities. Our communities have been able to experience reliable delivery of core civic services as well as the many other associated and supplementary services Council is contracted to deliver.

Community residents keenly engage the employment opportunities that reliable service delivery provides. It is MacDonnell Regional Council's focus to continue providing real jobs with career paths that has some communities approaching 100% Aboriginal employment.

The greatest measure of the past ten years, since *the shires* were introduced, comes from the confidence and strength of the communities' voice. This is demonstrated through our residents' increased participation in the grass roots engagement of our Local Authorities and the development of our Youth Boards that introduce the future leaders to working with government processes.

We are a proud staff that pulls together toward our mission to improve the lives of Council residents by delivering valued and relevant services.

Thanks for your great work, Jeff

Jeff MacLeod, Chief Executive Officer, MacDonnell Regional Council

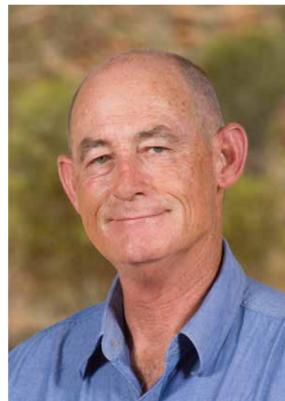


ABOVE: Recently completed upgrade on the Areyonga access road; Trying to slip out quietly, Bennie Dugay finishes packing his desk before leaving for his new job



## Mobile phone coverage in Wallace Rockhole

The best End of Financial Year special from Telstra a community could wish – Wallace Rockhole's mobile phone coverage started at the end of June.



Sid Anderson makes his farewell speech after a LGANT 25 Years Long Service medal is presented to him by LGANT President Damian Ryan (left) and Minister Gerry McCarthy

## Sid Anderson retires from service to MacDonnell Regional Council

After ten years service to the MacDonnell Regional Council, including as its President from 2009 to 2016, Sid Anderson announced his resignation due to health issues. Effective immediately, Mr Anderson stepped down from representing the Pintubi Luritja ward as a Councillor and from serving on other Council Committees.

Mr Anderson's local government service to the Papunya community and the Pintubi Luritja Ward reaches back before *the Shires* to his time with the Papunya Community Council. At his last Council meeting his legacy in those roles was acknowledged by the Northern Territory Government's Minister for Housing and Community

Development, Gerry McCarthy and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory's President, Damian Ryan when they presented him with a badge, that is the Association's highest accolade, honouring his 25 Years Long Service.

Sid Anderson was elected to represent his ward three times and he served on the MacDonnell Council since it was formed in 2008. He was promoted to President in its first year by his fellow Councillors and served in the principal role for seven years. He oversaw the Council through its formative years, bringing direction and stability, and guiding it to become a highly regarded local government of the Northern Territory.

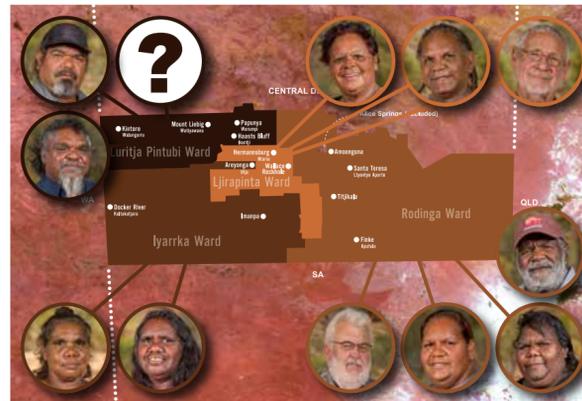
## Luritja Pintubi Ward by-election

Following the resignation of Sid Anderson from Council a by-election for the Pintubi Luritja Ward will be held during a Voting Week from 13–17 August 2018.

Voting Week will be run in the same way as the previous by-election granted residents a longer period to vote. The Nomination Period will open on 13 July.

Voting Week will be held at the Kintore, Mt Liebig, Haasts Bluff and Papunya Council Offices.

Ward councillors attend Local Authority meetings in the ward communities and Council meetings in Alice Springs and any of the 13 communities across the Council's quarter-million-square-kilometre footprint.



After ten year in local government, the lesson learnt has been:

## If you want something done – ask a busy council.

As an organisation with its heart and soul permanently engaged in serving a network of remote communities, Australian and Northern Territory Governments find MacDonnell Regional Council is well situated to deliver services beyond its primary remit of local government.

The following timeline looks at some activities and major funding arrangements:

2008

MacDonnell Shire Council was formed in 2008 when the Northern Territory Government amalgamated community councils under changes to the *Local Government Act* – they became known as *shires*. Today *the Act* has been amended and officially names us as the MacDonnell Regional Council – although we are still commonly referred to as *the shire*.

Following on from the services and representation that the community councils provided in remote Aboriginal communities, the newly formed MacDonnell Shire Council delivered a range of non-core services in addition to its local government services, such as:

**Airstrips:** contracted by the Northern Territory Department of Planning and Infrastructure to maintain eight airstrips.

**Australia Post:** full postal services in 12 of the 13 communities include air and road transport to the communities where mail is sorted for distribution. Council introduced street names to communities and some homes have had mail boxes installed so the postal services can deliver directly to households.

**Centrelink:** contract with the Australian Department of Human Services to deliver Centrelink agent services in 12 communities.

**Outstations:** Providing services including waste management, repairs and maintenance to infrastructure including bores, tanks, associated solar systems and power generators to more than 100 houses on 25 outstations under contract with the Northern Territory Department of Community Services.

**Power and Water:** Staffing and operating various essential services across all its communities comprises maintaining water supplies at 13 communities, sewerage at nine communities and power at nine communities.

**Territory Housing:** Primary contact point for all tenancy and property services, repairs and maintenance of community housing under contract to the Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Housing.

MacDonnell Council is also funded to deliver humanities based services such as:

**Aged and Disability Services:** delivery of services to clients across nine communities and funded through Community Aged Care packages, National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care program and the Disability in Home Support program.

**Children's Services:** Early Learning and Childcare programs delivered in six communities and funded through the Federal Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations).

**Community Safety:** delivery of the Community Night Patrol program in all communities except Wallace Rockhole funded by the Federal Government Department of the Attorney-General.

**Youth Development:** delivery of structured youth programming for young people aged 12-25 years old funded through a number of Federal and Northern Territory Governments departments.





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BELOW: Volunteer flag marshal Tasman Strachan waves his yellow flag signalling for Finke Desert Race drivers to slow down after finishing the first leg of the race – but the Finke community does not yield

CLOCKWISE from TOP LEFT: Finke community representatives show off their awards and commendation at the national Territory Tidy awards earlier this year; installation on Finke's solar farm is underway – once completed Finke will draw the majority of its electricity from the sun and only require their diesel generator for backup power; former Melbourne Demon Liam Jurrah marks for Yuendumu in front of the MacDonnell Regional Council solar powered street lights; Ti Tree Roosters on their victory lap after winning the Community Football Cup at Finke while their coach reminds them he has the cheque; meanwhile the softball needed a little longer to get a final result; through all of this an ABC TV crew was embedded in the community filming an episode of *Backroads* that will air during the coming summer season (subscribe online to *MacNews* to learn the scheduled screening time); national news reader and guest *Backroads* presenter Joe O'Brien interviews traditional owner Richard Doolan; *Backroads* follows our Civil Works team through their recycling and waste management; oh! yeah, a Finke buggy launches over 'the jump'; Trachoma recently launched a new mural at the Finke oval promoting clean eyes; recently completed volleyball court surfaced with a softfall of recycled rubber tyres; some folk in Finke do slow down to watch the football!



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2009



**Children's Services** are expanded through Federal Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet funding taking their service delivery of the Early Learning and Childcare program from six communities to nine communities.

**Centrelink** services are expanded to be provided in all thirteen communities. In addition to the basic service, Centrelink provides their own Remote Service Centres in Hermannsburg and Papunya operating in conjunction with council staff and independently operates its service centre in Santa Teresa.



Council's suggestion that tenancy and property services for **Territory Housing** move to a Service Level Agreement funding model to save money by more accurately capturing work requirements and inherent costs.

2011



Both **Power and Water** Corporation and MacDonnell Regional Council share a strong and enduring commitment to develop the skills of local community members for the role of Essential Services Operator and provide future opportunities for Aboriginal trainees – creating a career path in a position of real responsibility within the community.

2012

Northern Territory Government's Department of Health funds the **Central Australia Remote Waste Management Program** to deliver key changes in waste management across the Central Australian remote communities of the Barkly, Central Desert and MacDonnell Regional Councils.

New three year funding expands municipal and essential service delivery to 41 **outstations**.

Following the style set by *MacNews*, Youth Development subbrands its various services as **MacYouth** embedding its focus on Leadership and Culture, Safety and Diversion, Education and Training, Sports and Recreation, Jobs and Staff Development.

**Children's Services** take up delivery of the Outside School Hours Care in nine communities through Federal Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet funding.

2013

Following amendments to the *Local Government Act*, MacDonnell Shire Council's name becomes **MacDonnell Regional Council**. Other amendments include the introduction of the Local Authority Project Fund that increases local input into community developments.



2014

MacDonnell Regional Council loses **Territory Housing** Tenancy and Property Service Level Agreement contracts after six years but maintains all the community based employment it had developed to service the contract.

Aged Care becomes known as **Home Care** in consideration of their expanded services that include caring for aged and disabled clients in eight communities and delivering School Nutrition Programs in five communities.

**Children's Services'** Early Learning and Childcare program expands to include 10 communities.

**Community Safety's** Night Patrol program increases its focus on supporting young people to attend school by providing transport home for young people that are out late at night and assisting young people with transport to school where needed.





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## Helping grow up the Council

Levina Phillips enjoys the open spaces of the Amoonguna community where she has worked as the Council Services Coordinator for the past three years. In her role she coordinates staff over numerous tasks that keep the core functions of the community operating and delivers changes where required. It's a different environment from her previous roles with the MacDonnell Regional Council that saw her at the birth of *the Shires* and working closely with elected councillors and executive staff.

Levina started working for MacDonnell Shire Council before the council existed. She began working in an incubator styled team as the Executive Assistant (EA) to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in May 2008 from the offices of the Northern Territory Government Department of Local Government and Housing.

While the legislation had passed through parliament the previous year the small team that Levina had joined were preparing for when the *Local Government Act* would take effect on 1 July 2008.

From that day they have become known as *the Shires*.

Being the EA in a very small team at the birth of a council (that would grow to around 500 staff) Levina was doing many tasks including purchasing and recruiting as the organisation got started. There was also a lot of learning-as-they-went as they needed to be making lots of decisions and getting many things done as the team slowly grew.

Each new council across the Territory had an individual appointed by the department as 'the council' to preside over operations until the NT Electoral Commission could run general elections in September.

"I remember we had about 20 staff when we were introduced to the first Council", Levina said.

The early days also saw a lot of tensions in the communities as people's roles, responsibilities and perceptions of property ownership had to change overnight. The nature of these immediate changes compounded residents' experience of the *Intervention* only a year earlier.

"This is what gave *the Shires* their bad name" Levina recalls, "the resolution of these issues took a while and only really became possible once staff levels were built up and we could get talking to people in the communities and they could understand the benefits."

MacDonnell Council continued to grow as it developed service delivery across its communities. All council meetings and operations were still run from the department's offices upstairs in the Alice Plaza Shopping Centre, where resources were also shared with the neighbouring Central Desert Council. After a few years the two councils purchased office space together and enjoyed a spacious workplace for a while.

Throughout this period our councillors were still learning the jargon of governments and the processes of local government. Training was provided for them to learn about setting directions and strategically planning to achieve great change while addressing immediate conflicts around their separation of powers.

The previous 'handout mentality' cut back hard as councillors experienced pressure to directly provide jobs and assets. This was strongest on their communities and created problems while they were still learning their new responsibilities – but their training served to empower their confidence to perform well in their elected positions.

"I could see confidence grow in the councillors as they learned they could trust this system to work for their people" Levina said.

Levina's role as EA had included the secretariat meetings and she soon took up a Governance Officer position exclusively. In this role she travelled around all our communities and observed great changes on the ground

over the formative years of the MacCouncil. "Imanpa was a standout – they used to have broken car bodies everywhere and their services weren't working, but it has become a really good place to live" she recalls.

With all the different council operations Levina has been involved in, today she enjoys working beyond the office and turning the directions of Council and the Amoonguna Local Authority into actions on the ground through her Civil Works team.



Levina's career path with Council shows what earnest and hard-working people can achieve for themselves and for the broader community. Having a positive input into our communities is our future, as are our residents. Having grown up on a MacCouncil community Kirsten Baliva (above) is one of the latest people to join the Alice Springs office staff. We look forward to the next ten years of improvements to the lives of our residents.

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## 10 years of service recognised

As part of MacDonnell Regional Council's ten year celebration it will be recognising the duration of staff service to the organisation with a 10 Year Service Award medal.

Presentations began in Wallace Rockhole following the recent council meeting with local staff Max Baliva and Ada Williams (pictured)

both being presented with their medals by MacDonnell Regional Council President Roxanne Kenny.

Presentation ceremonies will follow in other communities during their birthday barbeque celebrations (see details overleaf) where another 21 staff will receive their 10 Year Service Award medals.



## Barunga roadtrip

The Hermannsburg MacYouth team recently took a large group of young people to the Top End to celebrate at the Barunga Festival and Sports Weekend.

Hermannsburg young people and staff were able to see some incredible Aboriginal bands perform, including B2M, Tjupi Band and the Lonely Boys along with many more great Australian talents.

While at the festival the young women from Hermannsburg competed and won the softball competition.

After the festival, the group went on to explore more Top End places like Edith Falls, Mataranka Springs and the Devil's Marbles near Tennant Creek on the way home.



## The Song Keepers

Residents of our communities and Councillor Kullitja sing in the combined Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir.

They recently performed at Melbourne's Hamer Hall and the Sydney Opera House before travelling to perform in the United States. Later this year the choir will travel to perform in India and at a music festival in Rajasthan.

*The Song Keepers* is a film that was made during a previous tour to Germany. It follows the choir as they cross the planet to return their German hymns – but sung in their traditional languages.

*The Song Keepers* has been showing in cinemas and will be screened on (channel 34) NITV on Sunday 15 July.

Following the **Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP)** exercises providing infrastructure and expertise in Titjikala the community gets a fully serviced sewerage system. This long awaited improvement reduces health risks during flooding of the Hugh River and brings the number of MacDonnell communities on sewerage to nine.

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet implement the **Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS)**, centralising the funding for a number of Council's existing services including some Early Learning Services, the Youth Development program, the School Nutrition Program and the Community Night Patrol program. Council are required to re-apply for funding for all of these services and are successful in all applications.

**Children's Services** supports 23 local Aboriginal Educators through their Certificate3 in Early Childhood Education and Care.

**MacYouth** expands services to deliver Sport and Recreation Activities in 12 communities.

2015



Children's Services is renamed as **MacKids** embedding its commitment to support children developing in mind, body and culture.

2016



Night Patrol and Community Safety is rebranded as **MacSafe**, embedding a commitment to supporting safer communities through culturally appropriate engagement and prevention activities targeting community identified safety issues.

2018



Home Care services to become known as **MacCare** embedding a commitment to caring for vulnerable members of the community.

## STAYING IN TOUCH



< Stay in touch with MacDonnell Regional Council via our website: [www.macdonnell.nt.gov.au](http://www.macdonnell.nt.gov.au)

< Council and Local Authority meeting details are easily found

< Find staff newsletters, the latest media releases and other information or subscribe to *MacNews*



# Happy Birthday to Us

Waaai! Werte! Come and celebrate MacDonnell Regional Council's 10th birthday this NAIDOC Week

**All welcome!**

community members, stakeholders and staff join in this celebration of our special birthday

12 noon  
**Friday**  
**13 July**

at your community Council Office

sports+  
cultural  
activities

community  
**BBQ**

During this special celebration Council services will be closed