



## Housing advocacy nails plans to build a better Barkly

It's been an exceptionally busy month for Council with a continued focus on lobbying for improved housing and creating a safer place to live in Tennant Creek and the Barkly region.

There were several meetings with government officials, including the Federal Government's Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion and the Northern Territory Government's Chief Minister Michael Gunner, following on from community crisis talks over the alleged sexual assault of a toddler in February.

Council also held a public forum earlier in the month for residents to share their stories and opinions on the increase in Domestic Violence related assault, alcohol-related assault, break-ins and property damage.

All of the issues highlighted in the talks relate to the underlying causes of overcrowding in houses, excessive alcohol consumption and unemployment. And unless these causes are tackled head on and fixed, the problems with grog-fuelled violence and an increase in crime and anti-social

behaviour will continue.

Council was pleased to hear that alcohol restrictions have been extended for three months with takeaway purchases limited from 3pm-6pm, Monday-Saturday, and prohibited on Sundays.

Meanwhile, the NT Liquor Commissions will conduct community consultation to hear views from all residents to determine whether current controls should be removed, relaxed, retained or made stricter.

Other positive changes for the town from both Federal and Territory governments include additional resources for police in Tennant Creek as part of Operation Haven.

Territory Families have six additional staff in Tennant Creek for a six-week period and have developed an Action Plan which includes providing support for the development and implementation of a Council of Senior Elders and Respected Persons through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of the Chief Minister.

The NTG's Department of Edu-

cation is implementing a 'positive learning centre' in Term 2 for the Tennant Creek Primary School and has released a Tender for the construction of a new Pre-School and Child and Family Centre.

The Clontarf Academy & Stars Foundation program will also expand into the primary school and there will be additional training and support for staff.

I am also pleased to hear that the NT Government will deliver a \$69 million stimulus package across the Territory by the end of the 2017-18 financial year.

With approximately \$4 million allocated to the Barkly region, this will provide an economic boost to the local construction sector over the next three months.

To learn more I attended a briefing session at the Government Centre on 19 March. The package includes a \$1.5 million to upgrade Tennant Creek housing complexes; upgrades to industry housing; and security upgrades for government employee housing.

We were also advised that \$10

million is available for work in Town Camps across the Territory.

I asked whether part of these funds would be allocated to replace a house at South Camp, Elliott, which was destroyed by fire nearly 12 months ago. At this stage it remains unclear whether a portion of the funds will be allocated to replace the house.

However, Council continues to advocate for better living conditions, like we did with the poorly designed and unliveable housing extensions on homes in Ali Curung.

Earlier this month concerned residents approached the Deputy Mayor Noel Hayes, who lives in Ali Curung, about poor workmanship and lack of community consultation on home extensions built under the Room to Breathe initiative, which is the first part of the NT Government's 10-year, \$1.1 billion remote housing election commitment.

With the assistance of Council staff and councillors, a meeting was held with representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development

and the builders.

As a result of that meeting the builders will now take the sheds down and the NT Government will carry out better consultation with residents to deliver more liveable extensions.

Intense lobbying by Council has also resulted in the NT Government preparing project briefs in town for nine additional dwellings consisting of four replacement dwellings and five new dwellings with a further seven new or replacement homes proposed over two years.

While we applaud recent government announcements it is clear that much more housing is needed in Tennant Creek and the Barkly region and until both tiers of government fully address overcrowding, children will continue to face poorer health, difficulties with education and child-protection risks.

We at Council continue to represent the interests of all our residents and will doggedly advocate for better living conditions, greater job prospects and increased opportunities to build a better and safer Barkly.



● Consul Dinesh Bhardwaj, Cr Sid Vashist, Consul General Amit Kumar Mishra and Mayor Steve Edgington.

## India dignitary visit adds spice to region

Councillor Sid vashist, the Council CEO Steve Moore and I met with the Consul General for India, Mr Amit Kumar Mishra, and Consul, Mr Dinesh Bhardwaj, in mid-March.

We had an informative discussion about the Barkly region and potential opportunities for trade and investment in agriculture, mining, tourism and infrastructure.

It's always a great opportunity to highlight the richness of our region as we continue to focus on making Tennant Creek and the Barkly the preferred place to live, work, visit and invest in.

## Youth program continues to grow

It was a pleasure to visit the Tennant Creek Youth Links Program this month to see the great work by Barkly Regional Council (BRC) staff and volunteers.

On the night I turned up, 14 March, there were around 45-50 young people taking part in a variety of activities.

It is amazing how the program has developed and grown over the last couple of years. When I was previously employed by the Department of the Chief Minister it was the Tennant Creek Community Safety Committee, which included representation from Council, which developed a trial youth program for the 2015-2016 Christmas holiday period.

After the success of the trial, I negotiated, on behalf of the Department of the Chief Minister, a two-year funding agreement of \$484,000 with the then CEO of BRC which expires on 30 June this year.

Council looks forward to hearing more from the NT Government, particularly in regards to whether a five-year funding agreement will be offered with sufficient funds to support the ongoing growth of the program and the extra staff required to continue making the program a success.

Given the age and condition of the Youth Links building it is also



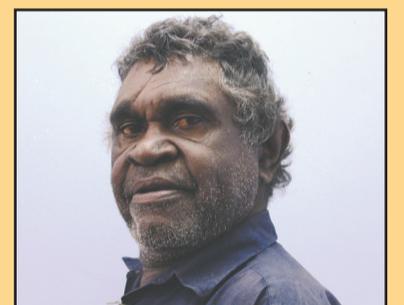
**GREAT WORK:** Youth Centre Coordinator Alba Brockie

timely to consider whether capital improvements are required or whether a bigger purpose-built facility is needed.

Council continues to support the delivery of youth services and looks forward to the NT Government's commitment to developing a Youth Action Plan for Tennant Creek.

Congratulations to the Tennant Creek Community Safety Committee and all of the Council staff, both past and present, involved in developing the Youth Program from the ground up.

This is a fine example of local decision making in the community. Well done.



## Meet Cr Jack Clubb

Councillor Jack Clubb is a Traditional Owner in the homelands of Utopia. He lives in Arlparra and for many decades has fought for his people on their traditional lands, accomplishing significant development for homeland infrastructure.

He has worked tirelessly as a Director, Chairman and committee member of many organisations including the Urapuntja Aboriginal Corporation, Urapuntja Health Service, Arlparra Aboriginal Corporation and Arlparra School.

This is his first term serving as a councillor and he represents the Alyawarr Ward. Cr Clubb continues to search for a fairer, safer and more secure homeland environment where culture is essential to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

## WHAT'S NEW...

● There were more than 50 entries for our 'Dob in a Dumper' logo competition. Judged by a panel of councillors, winners will be notified and asked to collect prize money at a special ceremony at the next Ordinary Council Meeting on 19 April.

● Council endorsed and adopted its Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Policy at the 22 March Council meeting as part of its commitment to the No More Domestic Violence Campaign. The 'Safe in our workplace: Safe in our homes: Safe in our communities' action plan was also adopted and endorsed.

● Removal of the roundabout on the intersection of Peko Road and Ambrose Street has been approved. There will be further discussions with the Department

of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics (DIPL) to select the most suitable traffic calming option following public feedback on a survey.

● G.K. Building Contractors have started work on refurbishing the Elliott Sports and Recreation building and construction of the Men's Shed.

● Mungkarta School made a popular Road Safety Song – thanks to a \$3000 Community Grant from Council. Visit <https://vimeo.com/257394954> to watch the video.

## BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



## Working together with local communities

Ali Curung, Alpuururulam, Arlparra, Ampilatwatja, Elliott, Tennant Creek, Wutunugurra

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