

# BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**20 March 2018**

## **Call for permanent police presence in Barkly community**

Barkly Regional Council Mayor Steve Edgington is calling for police to be permanently based in a remote community following the withdrawal of full-time officers earlier this year.

During a visit to Alpururulam in February Mayor Edgington was told by residents that within three weeks of the withdrawal of a permanent police presence there was an increase in anti-social behaviour and drink-driving related incidents in the community.

“Residents expressed their concerns about high levels of domestic violence and the amount of alcohol being brought into the community and fear this will only increase if there is not a permanent police presence,” he said.

“Local people said it is common knowledge that people across the region, including Tennant Creek, use the Sandover Highway to travel to Queensland to buy alcohol due to the Banned Drinker Register and police being positioned outside licensed premises in the Northern Territory.”

Mayor Edgington then wrote to the Northern Territory Government outlining his concerns and the importance of police being based in the community fulltime. The closest police station, Avon Downs, is 170km away.

In a reply from the Chief Minister Michael Gunner this month the letter outlined that Alpururulam has a Commonwealth-funded police placement for two positions staffed on a temporary basis.

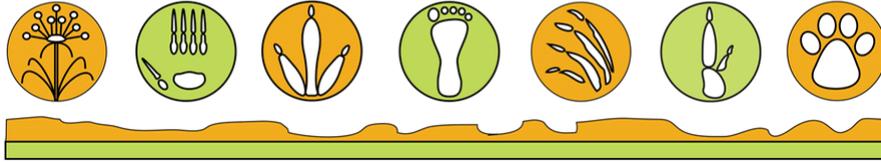
The letter went on to explain that the community, around 600km east of Tennant Creek, is patrolled by police weekly or fortnightly with staff staying overnight for each visit.

However, the Mayor said residents are not happy with the response and at an Alpururulam Local Authority meeting last week they made another call for police officers to be permanently based in the community.

“Residents tell me that the gate to the police station is often padlocked,” he said. “Many locals have no choice but to use the public pay phone when they make a call as there is no mobile phone coverage.

“People that have reported matters to the police do not hear back from the police call centre in Darwin about what’s going on or if an officer is even going to the community.

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“This really is not good enough and the residents deserve better. Having a permanent police presence was working and now that lack of a presence is having a detrimental effect.”

Mayor Edgington said it is the role of Council to advocate for the people of the Barkly region and that he would actively pursue the matter until there was a solution that benefited the community.

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