



# MINUTES

**Ordinary Meeting of Council  
Held on Tuesday 27 January 2026**

Godinyamyin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre  
Lot 3238 Stuart Highway, Katherine



## 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the first nations people of the Katherine township and surrounding council communities. We recognise the first nations culture as one of the longest surviving cultures in the world and we pay our respects to Elders both past, present and future.

## 2 OPENING PRAYER

Grant O God to this Council wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose in the Governance of this Municipality. Amen

## 3 OPENING OF THE MEETING

Mayor Holden declared the Ordinary Meeting of Council - 27 January 2026 open at 6:01 pm.

## 4 ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 PRESENT

#### ELECTED MEMBERS

- Mayor Joanna Holden (Chair)
- Deputy Mayor Mel Doyle
- Councillor Jim King
- Councillor Kathy Glass
- Councillor Anjali Palmer
- Councillor Toni Tapp Coutts

#### OFFICERS

- Casey Anderson – Acting Chief Executive Officer
- Amanda Haigh – Manager Governance and Risk - Minute Taker
- Brett Kimpton – Manager Environment and Municipal Services
- Matt Arnott - Manager Project Portfolio
- Rhett English - Manager Community Relations
- Rebecca Baguley – Chief Finance Officer
- Meredith Blair – Finance Manager
- Kimberly Worrigal – Contracts Coordinator

**PUBLIC** - 9

### 4.2 APOLOGIES

Council noted the apology of Councillor Whitehouse.

### 4.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Councillor Whitehouse is on leave of absence for this meeting.

## 5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST



The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to declare any conflicts of interest.

Nil conflicts declared.

## **6 PRESENTATIONS FROM EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

UNCONFIRMED



## 7 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

### 7.1 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 9 DECEMBER 2025

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-001**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

That Council confirm the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 9 December 2025 as a true and accurate record.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

#### Discussion

Clarification was sought on the item 6.3 page 29 that the Mayor would report back to council discussions at the GYRACC meetings. The appointment only relates to the AGM. Note: this relates to the next item on the agenda.



## 7.2 MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 17 DECEMBER 2025

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-002**

**Moved:** Councillor Tapp Coutts; **Seconded:** Councillor Palmer

That Council confirm the minutes of the Special Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 17 December 2025 as a true and accurate record.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

## 8 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

### 8.1 ACTION UPDATE JANUARY 2026

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-003**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

1. That Council receive and note the Action update.
2. That Council remove action 23-09-2025 14.1 from the action list.

**LOST 0|6**

FOR: Nil

AGAINST: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer

Discussion on the status of various ongoing actions including:

- clarified that the telecommunications lease with NBN is still under negotiation, as NBN requested an extension beyond the current policy limits. The Council is working to resolve the issue, and the action item remains open.
- the policy regarding legal representation costs for Elected Members and Council employees needs to be revisited with the incoming Council, with a review scheduled for March.
- Waste Management Facility Trading Hours update that staff consultations regarding rostering and contract compliance for the waste management facility's trading hours are ongoing, with a follow-up meeting scheduled for early February and a further update to be provided at the February Council meeting.

Noted the RAP is still not on the action list, which was raised as new business in the meeting on the 23 September 2025. Followup required and requested for the RAP to be placed back on the action list.

Requested to defer recommendation number 2.



## 9 MAYORAL BUSINESS

### 9.1 MAYOR ACTIVITIES DECEMBER 2025

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Tapp Coutts

That Council receive and note the Mayoral activities for December 2025.

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-004**

**Moved:** Councillor King; **Seconded:** Councillor Palmer

That the Mayor will remove the following activities as she did not attend them:

- 10 December Centenary of Katherine - Community Action Group meeting
- 16 December End of Year Celebration - Big Rivers Regional Coordination Committee

**CARRIED 7|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

### 9.2 COUNCILLOR GOALS FIRST 6 TO 12 MONTHS UPDATE

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-005**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

That Council receive and note the Councillor First 6 to 12 Months Goals update.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Noted more information will be provided in the updates going forward.

## 10 CORRESPONDENCE AND DOCUMENTS

### 10.1 CORRESPONDENCE INCOMING DECEMBER 2025

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-006**

**Moved:** Councillor Glass; **Seconded:** Councillor Palmer

That Council receive and note the Incoming Correspondence:

- Attachments: 1. Letter - NTLRC - Review of S182 LG Act 2019 - 24 Nov 2025 - 244068 [10.1.1 - 1 page]



2. Letter - Minister LG - REsponse to request for extension - 28 Nov 2025 [10.1.2 - 2 pages]
3. Invitation - Katherine Seniors Citizen Community Christmas Party - 2 Dec 2025 - ID244297 [10.1.3 - 1 page]
4. Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment - DCA Appointments - 2 Dec 2025 - ID245234 [10.1.4 - 1 page]

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
 AGAINST: Nil

## 10.2 CORRESPONDENCE OUTGOING DECEMBER 2025

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-007**

**Moved:** Councillor Glass; **Seconded:** Councillor Tapp Coutts

That Council receive and note the Outgoing Correspondence:

- Attachments:
1. Letter - Minister for Local Government - Request for Funding - Katherine Aquatic Centre - 17 Nov 2025 [10.2.1 - 1 page]
  2. Letter - Hon Steven Edgington - Service Level Delivery Assessment - 12 Dec 2025 - I D 245383 [10.2.2 - 2 pages]
  3. Email - Hon Steven Edgington - Service Level Delivery Assessment - 12 Dec 2025 - I D 245390 [10.2.3 - 2 pages]
  4. Email - Minister Edgington - Submission of Annual Report Delay - 12 Dec 2025 - I D 245392 [10.2.4 - 1 page]

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
 AGAINST: Nil

### Discussion

Council thanked NTG for the financial support to allow for free access for the pool. Report's indicate this has been very successful over the January school holiday period.

## 11 PETITIONS

## 12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (MATTERS REFERRED TO THE AGENDA)

There were no Questions from the Gallery at the Ordinary Meeting of Council - 27 January 2026

Question	Response
In the Mayor activities 10 December was a LGANT briefing on the Local Government Act tranche 2 amendments. Was there any update on these amendments?	The information is not for public distribution and no further updates have been provided.
Item 14.1 is the Call for Motion from ALGA, what ideas are Council proposing and which Elected Members will attend the conference?	No motions at this point and no decision of who will attend yet.



Page 94 table 1.2 monthly drawdown borrowings show \$1m where other figures say it is different?	The transfers are to reserves and the drawdown for the borrowings is for the loan. Investigations have been undertaken on the Civic Centre upgrade.
In the budget review table there is transfer of reserves for the aquatic centre upgrade. Is this surplus from the project going back into reserves?	This was a previous council decision which now has been expended and moving the funds into operating.
The late agenda seeking approval for the CEO and Governance Officer to be signatories, should this be the Mayor and CEO?	Mayor has no financial delegation, the financial delegation sits with the CEO then is delegated.

### 13 NOTICE OF MOTION

### 14 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

#### 14.1 CALL FOR MOTIONS: 2026 ALGA NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

1. That Council consider motions to submit to the 2026 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) in Canberra from 23 to 25 June 2026.
2. That Council approve the elected members and CEO to attend the 2026 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) in Canberra from 23 to 25 June 2026.

Discussion

Council noted that it is not proposed to send the entire Elected Members to the conference.

**AMENDMENT RESOLUTION OMC-2026-007**

**Moved:** Councillor Palmer; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

That Council consider motions to submit to the 2026 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) in Canberra from 23 to 25 June 2026 at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

**CARRIED 7|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

#### 14.2 NOMINATION - MEMBERSHIP TO THE MINISTERS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (MACMA)

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-008**

**Moved:** Councillor Tapp Coutts; **Seconded:** Councillor King

That Council endorses Councillor Palmer to be nominated for membership on the Minister’s Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs (MACMA).



**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

### 14.3 GRANT AGREEMENT - AQUATIC CENTRE FREE ENTRY 2025/2026

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-009**

**Moved:** Councillor Glass; **Seconded:** Councillor Palmer

Council approves the Mayor and Acting Chief Executive Officer to execute Grant Agreement KATHAQ00001 for the Katherine Aquatic Centre, enabling free entry during the school holiday periods, specifically December 2025/January 2026 and April 2026.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Council acknowledged the support from NTG.

### 14.4 FIRST BUDGET REVIEW 2025-2026

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-010**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Palmer

##### 1. That Council

- a. Note the first Budget Review for 2025-2026.
- b. Adopt and Approve the Amended 2025-2026 budget with a forecast Net surplus of \$2,929.
- c. Approve the adoption of Council's amended Long-term financial plan which reflects the Amended 2025-2026 Budget

In accordance with Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, Division 4, Item 11 Reserves;

##### 2. That Council

- a. Approve the transfer of reserve funding of \$933,737 previously set-aside for the Aquatic Centre Capital upgrade into the Capital Budget for 25-26.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

### 14.5 FINANCE REPORT DECEMBER 2025

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-011**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

That Council endorses the Finance Report for the month of December 2025.



**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Revised report attached, noting the original report in the agenda had a few words missing.

#### 14.6 COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2025

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-012**

**Moved:** Councillor Palmer; **Seconded:** Councillor Tapp Coutts

That Council receive and note the Community Relations Department report for the month of December 2025.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Council paid recognition of the great work of the Visitor Information Centre and library staff.

#### 14.7 CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2025

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-013**

**Moved:** Councillor King; **Seconded:** Deputy Mayor Doyle

That Council receives and note the Corporate Administration Report for the month of December 2025.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Council's fourth consecutive award for the Snap Send Solve community engagement tool, with a media release planned.

Council highlighted ongoing work in animal management and improvements at the library and Visitor Information Centre.

Council discussed the need for continued focus on dog registrations and noted the old dog pound site is still operational.

#### 14.8 ENVIRONMENTAL AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2025



**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-014**

**Moved:** Councillor Tapp Coutts; **Seconded:** Deputy Mayor Doyle

That Council receives and notes the report of the Environmental and Municipal Services Department for December 2025.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Noted that reporting indicates that most waste at the facility comes from commercial activity and Council's kerbside service.

The Council also discussed the well-attended Binjari Community Fund Day and ongoing improvements at the new dog pound facility.

**14.9 INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROJECTS REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2025**

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-015**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor King

That Council receive and note the report of the Infrastructure Services Department for December 2025.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

Discussion

Noted the report detailed the planting of 12 new native trees at local parks to replace those removed for safety reasons, with Council expressing support for ongoing green initiatives.

**15 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**15.1 MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES**

**16 ELECTED MEMBER ACTIVITIES**

**16.1 ELECTED MEMBER ACTIVITIES DECEMBER 2025**

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-016**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor Glass

That Council receive and note the Elected Member activities for December 2025.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer



AGAINST: Nil

## 17 LATE AGENDA

### 17.1 EXTENSION OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-017**

**Moved:** Councillor Tapp Coutts; **Seconded:** Deputy Mayor Doyle

That Council appoints KPMG as Council's external audit service provider for a further 12-months period to undertake the external audit for the 2025/2026 financial year.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer

AGAINST: Nil

### 17.2 ATO AND BANK SIGNATORY AUTHORISATIONS

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-018**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor King

That Council approve:

1. The appointment of Casey Anderson, Acting Chief Executive Officer (ACEO) as an authorised signatory on Katherine Town Council's account held with the National Australia Bank (NAB) and;
2. The appointment of Casey Anderson, (ACEO) and Amanda Haigh, Manager Governance and Risk as an authorised signatory on Katherine Town Council's account held with the Bank of Queensland (BOQ) and;
3. The appointment of Casey Anderson, (ACEO) as the Relationship Authorisation Manager for Katherine Town Council's account held with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer

AGAINST: Nil

#### Discussion

For awareness noted council has investments that are coming up for review and need to have current signatories to be able to reinvest those funds as decided by the Council.

## 18 GENERAL BUSINESS

Councillor Coutts raised the following:

- Noted disappointment that Council were not successful in a position on the Place Names Committee.
- Katherine East Area Plan and stage 2 development report raised and suggested that council should buy land for the library and visitor centre, near the community centre. There is opportunity for aged care and low income accommodation within the plan, noting council consider within the 2026-27 Municipal Plan. Also noted that previously there was allocation of a site for the new Cemetery which now is not within the plan. Requested for a briefing from NTG to be organised.



- The Walkway next to ANZ requires a pedestrian crossing on Railway Terrace and requested for inclusion in the next Municipal Plan.
- Regarding the Centenary number plates Elected Members expressed disappointed that Council were not informed about the release after being an initiative of the Council Centenary of Katherine 2026 Advisory Committee. Mayor advised that she had spoken with various Ministers and expressed Councils disappointment.

Councillor Glass raised the following:

- Queried why the past councillors where not invited to the events like Australia Day and the pool opening. The Mayor noted the previous Council has been recognised in press releases, speeches and a plaque installed at the Aquatic Centre.
- Dukes Park is used by many families and only has one swing and recommends equipment upgrades in the park be included in the Municipal planning.
- The lawn cemetery new site needs to be revisited and the rules be abided by to show respect for loved ones. Acting CEO advised that we are looking at dedicating a staff member three days a week to provide tender loving care at the Lawn Cemetery.
- Stated there are hairline fractures in both the high- and low-level bridges. If the bridges fail this will be an issue for Katherine. Wants Council to act on this issue.
- Regarding the Edith Bridge name change, queried if the Mayor was undertaking consultation for the name change. Mayor advised a request for a letter of support had been received from the local member. As agreed by the Council a reply was sent asking if the Jawoyn had been consulted. No response has been received to date.

Councillor King recognised Malcolm Brooks who sadly passed away and was buried last Monday. Councillor read out portions of the extract attached.

Councillor Coutts advised of her planned leave of absence being on the 12 to 15 February and 22 February to 8 March.

## 19 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO PUBLIC

The open meeting was declared closed to the public at 7:09 pm.

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-019**

**Moved:** Mayor Holden; **Seconded:** Deputy Mayor Doyle

Members, pursuant with Section 99(2) and 293(1) of the *Local Government Act 2019* gives power to the council to close a meeting to the public to discuss the following confidential items, in relation to matters referred to in regulations 51 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021*. This means that all members of the public are now asked to leave the Council Chambers.

I now move a motion to close the meeting to public.

Your Worship, I wish to second that the meeting be closed to public.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

## 20 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS



## 20.1 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES 9 DECEMBER 2025

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(c) (i) information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to: cause commercial prejudice to, or confer an unfair commercial advantage on, any person.

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(d) information subject to an obligation of confidentiality at law, or in equity.

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(e) subject to subregulation (3) – information provided to the council on condition that it be kept confidential and would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to be contrary to the public interest

## 20.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS CONFIDENTIAL MEETINGS

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(c) (i) information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to: cause commercial prejudice to, or confer an unfair commercial advantage on, any person.

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(c) (iv) information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to: Subject to subregulation (3) – prejudice the interests of the council or some other person.

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(d) information subject to an obligation of confidentiality at law, or in equity.

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
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Sub-clause and Reason:	(e) subject to subregulation (3) – information provided to the council on condition that it be kept confidential and would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to be contrary to the public interest
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**20.3 LEASING OF THE COUNCIL PROPERTY - 35 NEEDHAM TERRACE - SMILE-A-MILE TOY LIBRARY**

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(c) (i) information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to: cause commercial prejudice to, or confer an unfair commercial advantage on, any person.

**20.4 TENDER AWARD - T25-13 - CLEANING ALL FACILITIES**

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .
Sub-clause and Reason:	(c) (i) information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to: cause commercial prejudice to, or confer an unfair commercial advantage on, any person.

**20.5 KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL - INVESTIGATION REPORT - DHLGCD**

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .	
Sub-clause and Reason:	Sub-clause and Reason:	(a) information about the employment of a particular individual as a member of the staff or possible member of the staff of the council that could, if publicly disclosed, cause prejudice to the individual.

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .	
Sub-clause and Reason:	(c) (ii) information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to: prejudice the maintenance or administration of the law.	

Section Under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 99(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> .	
Sub-clause and Reason:	(e) subject to subregulation (3) – information provided to the council on condition that it be kept confidential and would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to be contrary to the public interest	



**COUNCIL RESOLUTION OMC-2026-024**

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor Doyle; **Seconded:** Councillor King

4. That Council approves the attendance of all Elected Members, A/CEO and Manager of Governance and Risk to attend the Australian Institute of Company Directors (ACID) course, organised by LGANT.

5. That Council approves releasing the recommendation number 4 to the public minutes and recommendations 1,2 and 3 are to be added to the review list.

**CARRIED 6|0**

FOR: Mayor Holden, Councillor King, Deputy Mayor Doyle, Councillor Tapp Coutts, Councillor Glass and Councillor Palmer  
AGAINST: Nil

## **21 RESUMPTION OF OPEN MEETING**

The open meeting resumed at 7:41 pm.

## **22 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

The Ordinary Meeting of Council - 27 January 2026 was declared closed at 7:41 pm.

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on 24 February 2026.



## 14.5 FINANCE REPORT DECEMBER 2025

Author: Rebecca Baguley, Chief Financial Officer  
Authoriser: Casey Anderson, Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Report Type: For decision  
Attachments: 1. Finance Report December 2025 [14.5.1 - 10 pages]

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council endorses the Finance Report for the month of December 2025.

### **Purpose of Report**

This report is to present to the Council the Financial position of Council for the month of December 2025.

### **Strategic Plan**

#### 4. GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY - 4.2 Lead with Best Practice

**Lead by example and set a high benchmark.**

4.2.4 Be prudent with our financial management for stronger returns for ratepayers and sustainable long-term finances with current risk management practices at all times.

### **Municipal Plan**

- 1.1.2.2 Ensure compliance with local government legislation
- 1.1.2.3 Ensure compliance with other legislation applicable to Council
- 4.2.1.3 Finance policies and procedures are up-to-date and followed
- 4.2.4.7 Comply with financial legislative requirements

### **Background**

In accordance with the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021 – Part 2 (Division 7), the below monthly report must be presented to the Council at the monthly Ordinary Meeting of Council.

The Financial Report is compliant with Local Government (General) Regulations 2021 – Part 2 (Division 7) Clause 17, Items 1 and 2, whereby material variances between the most recent actual income and expenditure of the council have been identified in detail against the adopted Municipal Plan Annual Budget.

Accordingly, the commentary attached presents the preliminary financial position of the council at the end of December 2025 with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Certification.

### **Discussion**

#### **Table 1.1 Monthly Income and Expenditure Statement, - Review of Operating Income**

The total year-to-date (YTD) operating income exceeds budget expectations by 0.62%. This is due to the following factors: -

- a) Rates Revenue is 6.87% above YTD forecast with a positive variance of \$647,753 for December
- b) Waste Charges (Rates) is 19.5% above YTD forecast result.
- c) Interest for Investment Income is \$239,466 above YTD December. At-call investment interest received of \$35,525 YTD now included in the Budget forecast. 9 of the total 17 Investments are due to mature by 30 June 2026.
- (d) Operating grants revenue is currently 49.15% below budget expectations, primarily due to timing. Council has received 75% of the total Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grant funding. 2025-2026 year – totaling \$322,940. Council received \$658,144 as an early payment made in June



2025 for the 2025-2026 Financial year. The total approved Commonwealth FAG was \$1,304,024.

**Table 1.1 - Monthly Income and Expenditure Statement - Review of Operating Expenditure**

YTD operating expenditure is 13.91% below budget for the month of December, attributed to the following factors:

- a) Employee expenses are 16.31% below YTD budget due to vacancies in several positions will be filled in the coming months. A reforecast of employee expenses will be undertaken in the bi-annual Budget Review.
- b) Materials and Contracts expenditure constitutes the largest variance in expenditure with a variance of (\$1,139,474) against YTD Budget forecast. This is attributed to contract payments scheduled for December now due in January of \$666,000.
- c) Election Expenses – down on original forecast. The savings will be transferred to offset hire of Meeting rooms for the Council meetings.

Monthly payments have been processed for all approved suppliers, with disbursements occurring on a weekly basis.

**Table 3. Monthly Balance Sheet Report and Notes 2 & 3. Statement on Debts Owed to Council (Accounts Receivable) and Statement of Debts owed by Council (Accounts payable)**

**a) Aged Payables - Trade Creditors**

A total of \$15,455 was due at 31.12.2025 - With \$14,455 applicable to 50% retention monies payable on completion of contracted work. The supplier will be paid in January.

Other Creditors - \$1,120 relates to Council's Social Club – payroll liabilities

**b) Aged Receivables – Trade Debtors**

Indicates 57.79% of debtors (excluding infringements and rates) have outstanding balances for more than 90 days. Follow-up actions continue through the issuance of monthly statements and follow-up direct calls.

**Rates Revenue** – Of the \$10,077,518 invoiced in 25-26, \$3,842,435, is current as at 31 December.

\$1,498,470.68 (28.2%) of total Aged Receivables relates to unpaid rates from the 2024/2025 financial year and prior periods. A comprehensive update is provided in the Corporate Services report for November regarding rates debtors.

**Consultation Process**

- Rates and Regulatory Affairs Co-Ordinator
- Financial Accountant
- Financial Consultant – CFO Business Associates

**Policy Implications**

There are no policy implications

**Budget and Resource Implications**

The Bi-Annual Budget Review has been completed with a separate report provided to council as at 31 December, 2025.

**Risk, Legal and Legislative Implications**

There are no risk, legal and legislative implications.

**Environment Sustainability Implications**

There are no environmental sustainability implications.



**Council Officer Conflict of Interest**

The Author and Approving Officers declare they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this report.

**Certification by the CEO to the Council**

<b>Council Name:</b>	Katherine Town Council
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	31/12/2025

That, to the best of the CEO's knowledge, information and belief:  
 (1) The internal controls implemented by the council are appropriate; and  
 (2) The council's financial report best reflects the financial affairs of the council.

**A/CEO Signed** *Clayton Anderson*  
**Date Signed** 19 / 01 / 2026

**Note:** The monthly financial report to council must either be accompanied by a written certification by the CEO to the council, as set out above, or the CEO is to provide written reasons for not providing the certification. (Regulation 17(5) of the General Regulations)

**Table 1.1 Monthly Income and Expenditure Statement**

	YTD Actuals \$	YTD Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	Annual Budget \$
<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>				
Rates*	10,077,518	9,429,765	647,753	9,990,399
Waste Charges**	1,612,766	1,349,570	263,196	1,645,818
Fees and Charges	1,257,676	1,341,824	( 84,148)	2,525,689
Operating Grants and Subsidies	932,171	1,833,046	( 900,875)	2,193,222
Interest / Investment Income	547,884	308,418	239,466	576,365
Commercial and Other Income	118,797	194,486	( 75,689)	372,182
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>14,546,812</b>	<b>14,457,109</b>	<b>89,703</b>	<b>17,303,675</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>				
Employee Expenses	2,544,858	3,040,805	( 495,947)	6,069,690
Materials and Contracts	3,246,029	4,385,502	( 1,139,473)	8,350,845
Elected Member Allowances	104,159	137,760	( 33,601)	275,520
Elected Member Expenses	17,912	44,384	( 26,472)	55,000
Council Committee & LA Allowances	880	7,640	( 6,760)	29,615
Council Committee & LA Expenses	235	3,333	( 3,098)	8,360
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	2,588,743	2,400,003	188,740	4,800,007
Other Expenses	( 109,255)	-	109,255	-
Interest Expenses (Finance Costs)	6,134	16,943	10,809	58,416
Gain/Loss on Remeasurement of Landfill	-	-	-	465,321
<b>*TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>8,399,695</b>	<b>10,036,370</b>	<b>( 1,396,547)</b>	<b>20,112,774</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS /(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>6,147,117</b>	<b>4,420,739</b>	<b>1,726,378</b>	<b>( 2,809,099)</b>

\*NOTE: Rates Revenue is what is billed and not received

\*\*NOTE: Waste Revenue is what is billed and not received

**Table 1.2 Monthly Operating Position**

	YTD Actuals \$	YTD Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	Annual Budget \$
<b>BUDGETED OPERATING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>6,147,117</b>	<b>4,420,739</b>	<b>1,726,378</b>	<b>( 2,809,099)</b>
<b>Remove NON-CASH ITEMS</b>				
Less Non-Cash Income	( 48,019)	-	48,019	-
Add Back Non-Cash Expenses	2,549,528	2,400,003	( 149,525)	5,265,328
<b>TOTAL NON-CASH ITEMS</b>	<b>2,501,509</b>	<b>2,400,003</b>	<b>( 101,506)</b>	<b>5,265,328</b>
<b>Less ADDITIONAL OUTFLOWS</b>				
Capital Expenditure	5,554,923	6,362,343	807,420	9,705,621
Borrowing Repayments (Principal Only)	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Reserves	-	-	-	-
Other Outflows	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL ADDITIONAL OUTFLOWS</b>	<b>5,554,923</b>	<b>6,362,343</b>	<b>807,420</b>	<b>9,705,621</b>
<b>Add ADDITIONAL INFLOWS</b>				
Capital Grants Income	2,979,471	4,435,029	1,455,558	5,191,029
Prior Year Carry Forward Tied Funding*	186,580	-	( 186,580)	-
Other Inflow of Funds	70,040	36,089	( 33,951)	72,178
Application of Retained Earnings	-	-	-	-
Transfers from Reserves	1,000,000	-	( 1,000,000)	-
Drawdown of Borrowings	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	2,000,000
<b>*TOTAL ADDITIONAL INFLOWS</b>	<b>5,236,091</b>	<b>5,471,118</b>	<b>235,027</b>	<b>7,263,207</b>
<b>NET BUDGETED OPERATING SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>	<b>8,329,794</b>	<b>5,929,517</b>	<b>1,052,480</b>	<b>13,815</b>

\*NOTE: Prior year Carry Forward Tied Funding is subject to audit and may change

**Table 2.1 Capital Expenditure and Funding**  
**By class of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment**

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	YTD Actuals \$	YTD Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	Current Financial Year (Annual) Budget \$
Land and Buildings	15,739	170,000	( 154,261)	2,350,000
Facilities & Improvements	5,412,300	5,286,750	125,550	4,300,000
Plant & Machinery	9,045	125,000	( 115,955)	300,000
Furniture, Fittings & Equipment	-	62,500	( 62,500)	150,000
Fleet	-	80,197	( 80,197)	240,592
Infrastructure Paths & Cycleways	-	140,395	( 140,395)	1,080,000
Infrastructure Roads	28,203	120,000	( 91,797)	1,035,029
Infrastructure Storm water & Drainage	24,499	30,000	( 5,501)	100,000
Infrastructure - Outdoor Lighting	-	-	-	150,000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>5,489,788</b>	<b>6,014,843</b>	<b>(525,055)</b>	<b>9,705,621</b>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FUNDED BY:</b>				
Operating Income (amount allocated to fund capital items)	1,297,686	543,724.81	753,961	2,442,414
Capital Grants	3,122,062	4,435,029	( 1,312,967)	5,191,029
Utilisation of Retained Earnings	-	-	-	-
Transfers from Cash Reserves	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	-
Borrowings	-	1,000,000	( 1,000,000)	2,000,000
Sale of Assets (Including Trade-In)	70,040	36,089	33,951	72,178
Other Funding	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FUNDING</b>	<b>5,489,788</b>	<b>6,014,843</b>	<b>(525,055)</b>	<b>9,705,621</b>

**Table 2.2. Quarterly Report on Planned Major Capital Works**

Class of Assets	By Major Capital Project	Total Prior Year(s) Expenditure \$	YTD Actual Spend \$	Total Planned Budget \$	Total Yet to Spend \$	Expected Project Completion Date
Buildings & Other Structures	Aquatic Centre Redevelopment	6,548,019.40	4,942,654.41	10,162,000	-	Oct-25
Buildings & Other Structures	Changing Places Aquatic centre	-	-	162,000	162,000	Dec-26
Buildings & Other Structures	Civic Centre Upgrade	-	-	5,000,000	5,000,000	Dec-26
Buildings & Other Structures	Carpark Shelters Civic Centre (Solar)	-	-	250,000	250,000	Dec-26
Buildings & Other Structures	Lindsay St Amenities upgrade LRCI	248,508.60	3,081.90	324,000	72,410	Oct-25
Buildings & Other Structures	Waste facility shed raise tipshop	-	344,573.54	350,000	5,426	Jun-25
Improvements	x4 nature playgrounds	78,961.84	12,657.50	200,000	108,381	Jun-25
Improvements	Irrigation Upgrades: priority for Railway Terrace, Glencoe Park, Fuller Park	-	-	400,000	400,000	Jun-26
Infrastructure - Footpaths & Cycleways	Zimin Drive Footpath/Cycleway	-	16,050.00	1,080,000	1,063,950	Jun-26
Infrastructure - Roads	First Street Improvement LRCI P4	329,854.06	12,153.35	350,000	7,993	Jun-26
Infrastructure - Roads	Local Road & Pavements: Sheppard, Needam, Zimin & Giles	-	-	635,029	635,029	Jun-26
Infrastructure - Roads	Rural Intersection Upgrades: Helena/ Florida, Hendry/ Florida, Collins/Byers, Collins/Craigborn	-	-	400,000	400,000	Jun-26
Infrastructure- Outdoor Lighting	Solar Streetlight Trial	-	-	150,000	150,000	Jun-26
Plant & Equipment	30 Tonne Excavator	-	-	300,000	300,000	Jun-26
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,205,343.90</b>	<b>5,331,170.70</b>	<b>19,763,029.00</b>	<b>7,226,514.40</b>	

**NOTE: Council has adopted by ARMC resolution a definition for capital works consistent with the NT Government guidelines a minimum threshold for major capital works of \$150,000**

**Table 3. Monthly Balance Sheet Report**

BALANCE SHEET	YTD Actuals \$	Note Reference*
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Cash at Bank</b>		
Tied Funds	18,695,750	(1)
Untied Funds	8,931,173	(1)
Trade Debtors	206,293	(2)
Rates & Charges Debtors	5,347,819	(2)
Other Current Assets	771,080	
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>33,952,115</b>	
Non-Current Financial Assets	-	
Property, Plant and Equipment	133,324,707	
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>133,324,707</b>	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>167,276,822</b>	
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	58,217	(3)
ATO & Payroll Liabilities	(11,775)	(4)
Current Provisions	608,956	
Accruals	132,817	
Other Current Liabilities	239,548	
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,027,763</b>	
Borrowings	1,000,000	
Non-Current Employee Provisions	33,160	
Waste Management Make Good Provision	20,391,239	
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>21,424,399</b>	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>22,452,162</b>	
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>144,824,660</b>	
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Asset Revaluation Reserve	98,420,175	
Reserves	9,121,899	(1)
Accumulated Surplus	30,887,983	
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>138,430,057</b>	

**Note 1. Tied Funds**

11210 · Imprest Petty Cash	1,127.68
11220 · Employee Liabilities (Provisions)	642,118.00
33310 Capital Renewal Reserve	6,487,646
33520 Contingency Reserve	1,933,738
33610 Municipal Election Reserve	100,000
33620 Council Motion Funding Reserve	600,515
11230 · Equity Reserves	9,121,899.04
11240 · Waste Management Make Good	7,731,354.00
11250 · Unspent Loan funds for Civic Centre	1,000,000.00
11251 · Unspent Capital Grants	43,989.46
11260 · Deposits Held	155,262.00
	<b>18,695,750.18</b>

**Untied Funds - Cash and Cash Equivalents less Tied Funds** **8,931,172.50**

**Note 1. Details of Cash and Investments Held**

<i>Cash at Bank consists of Term Deposits of \$22.8M with maturities as detailed below, with the remaining \$4.2M</i>	
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>
Commonwealth Bank	
Balance as per bank statement as at 31 Dec 2025	27,626,922.68
Credit card balances	6,455.00
Balance of Imprest and Petty Cash	1,127.68
Plus net outstanding deposits/(withdrawals)	
<b>Adjusted cash at bank balance, 31 Dec 2025</b>	<b>27,621,595.36</b>

INVESTMENTS	INSTITUTION	PRINCIPAL \$	INTEREST RATE	EFFECTIVE DATE	MATURITY DATE	INTEREST	INSTITUTION TOTALS \$	%
	AMP	549,249	4.05%	28-Aug-25	31-Mar-26	13,102.97		
	AMP	1,028,326	4.00%	14-May-25	1-May-26	39,668.03		
	AMP	514,230	4.00%	14-May-25	14-May-26	20,569.21		
	AMP	1,649,483	4.00%	14-Nov-25	14-May-26	32,899.28		
	AMP	1,104,170	3.95%	29-Jun-25	29-Jun-26	43,614.73		
	AMP	1,544,904	3.95%	30-Jun-25	30-Jun-26	61,023.70	6,390,362.27	27.9%
	BOQ	524,117	4.00%	6-Nov-25	6-Nov-26	20,964.70		
	BOQ	523,773	4.10%	8-Oct-25	8-Apr-26	10,707.93	1,047,890.30	4.6%
	CBA	2,730,592	4.01%	26-May-25	26-May-26	109,496.74		
	CBA	547,284	4.05%	1-Aug-25	31-Jul-26	22,104.29		
	CBA	549,639	4.01%	31-May-25	29-May-26	21,919.74	3,827,515.04	16.7%
	NAB	3,669,750	4.05%	11-Nov-25	11-Nov-26	148,624.88		
	NAB	539,105	3.90%	11-Jul-25	13-Jul-26	21,140.30		
	NAB	3,156,000	4.00%	30-Jul-25	30-Jul-26	126,240.00		
	NAB	1,049,863	3.90%	6-Aug-25	6-Aug-26	40,944.66		
	NAB	1,097,684	3.95%	4-Sep-25	4-Sep-26	43,358.51		
	NAB	2,095,000	4.00%	14-Oct-25	14-Oct-26	83,800.00	11,607,401.82	50.7%
	AMP (oncall)	564,578.00		on call	on call 30 days			
	CBA	2,132,022.00		on call	on call 30 days		2,696,600.00	
	<b>Total Investments</b>					<b>860,179.65</b>	<b>25,569,769.43</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Total Funds</b>						<b>27,626,922.50</b>	

**Note 2. Statement on Debts Owed to Council (Accounts Receivable)**

Council's Debtor Summary	Current	Past Due 1 – 30 Days	Past Due 31 – 60 Days	Past Due 61-90 Days	Past Due 90+ Days	Total
Rates Debtors	3,842,435	-	-	-	1,509,245.89	5,351,681
Trade Debtors	1,102	24,245	17,034	6,890	67,469	116,741
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,843,537</b>	<b>24,245</b>	<b>17,034</b>	<b>6,890</b>	<b>1,576,715.25</b>	<b>5,468,422</b>

**Note 3. Statement on Trade Creditors**

<i>(Council can select timing of the age of creditors)</i>	Current	Past Due 1 – 30 Days	Past Due 31 – 60 Days	Past Due 61-90 Days	Past Due 90+ Days	Total
Trade Creditors*	99,966	14,455	-	1,000	0	115,421
Other Creditors	1,120	-	-	-	-	1,120
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<b>101,086</b>	<b>14,455</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>116,541</b>

KTC processes Accounts Payable weekly. Balance owing will be paid in the next payment run after the end of the month.

**Note 4. Statement on Australian Tax Office (ATO) and Payroll Obligations**

*Council is a large withholder for PAYG purposes and consequently remits withholdings to the ATO on the day of payroll. As its revenue is GST Free monthly net GST is generally an amount payable to Council unless significant grants are received in the period. Payroll liabilities include Superannuation payable and Salary Sacrifice deductions.*

**KTC is due for refund this amount from ATO - GST	29,763
**Superannuation Payable Liability at 31 Dec 25	36,707
**Prepaid Fringe Benefits Tax	12,265

\*\*Note this is an estimate only due to timing of reports

**Note 5. Current Ratio**

* NT Local Government Regulatory Framework	LGR Benchmark	%
Current Ratio (current assets/current liabilities)	0 to + 10%	33.03

Current Ratio adjusted for Tied Funds	0 to + 10%	14.84
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**Table 4. Member and CEO Council Credit Card Transactions for the Month**

Where a council credit card has been issued to an Elected Member and/or the CEO, a list per cardholder of all credit card transactions in the month is to be published including the name of the supplier, the amount for each transaction and the reason for the transaction.

Example:

Cardholder Name: Casey Anderson

Transaction Date	Amount \$	Supplier's Name	Reason for the Transaction
1-Dec	233.65	Woolworths Online BellaVista	General Office amenities
1-Dec	31.75	Dollar and Sense KATHERINE	General Office amenities
3-Dec	\$154.00	XPNA.CO LANE COVE WENSW	Financial Subscription
8-Dec	\$223.90	ZOOM.COM 888-799-9666 SAN JOSE CA	Meeting Software Subscription
9-Dec	\$291.65	XERO AU INV-48562348 HAWTHORN VIC	Financial Subscription
11-Dec	\$286.50	STARLINK INTERNET Sydney AUS	CEO Internet
17-Dec	\$97.73	Dollar and Sense KATHERINE	General Office amenities
17-Dec	\$20.00	NEWS PTY LIMITED SURRY HILLS NSW	Subscription
22-Dec	\$10.00	XRO: XERO CUSTOM CONNE MELBOURNE VIC	Financial Subscription
23-Dec	\$9.14	LS The Black Russian C Katherine AUS	Coffee - Indo Consulting Meetings
24-Dec	\$73.65	WOOLWORTHS 5636 KATHERINE NT	Catering - Staff Farewell
24-Dec	\$2,679.68	TRAVELMANAGERS HAYMARKET NSW	Flight and Accommodation bookings
29-Dec	\$321.55	EZI* Happy HR Pty Ltd Essendon WesAUS	Subscription
29-Dec	\$12.00	NEWS PTY LIMITED SURRY HILLS NSW	Subscription
29-Dec	\$771.88	Adobe Sydney AUS	Subscription
30-Dec	\$370.20	Woolworths Online BellaVista	General Office amenities
<b>Total</b>	<b>5587.28</b>		

Cardholder Name: Ingrid Stonhill

Transaction Date	Amount \$	Supplier's Name	Reason for the Transaction
3-Dec	\$92.52	Intuit Mailchimp Sydney AUS	Subscription
15-Dec	\$0.75	Bank Fees & Charges	ChatGPT Exchange rate fee
15-Dec	\$30.16	Openai *ChatGPT	ChatGPT fee
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$123.43</b>		



## ARRIVAL TO THE TOP END OF NT.

### MALCOLM AND IRENE BROOK

*Eileen Doyle*

Malcolm worked for the Post Office in South Australia in 1957. He had the choice of delivering mail on a bicycle in Port Augusta, or coming to the Post Office in Darwin Northern Territory. As a young, adventurous man he thought why not go to the outback. What lay ahead he had no idea. But like other young men he felt it was an opportunity for something different than riding a bicycle in Port Augusta.

His mother packed his white shorts, white shirts, long socks, and off he went.

On March 10<sup>th</sup> 1957 Malcolm boarded a plane headed to Darwin. When the plane landed at Tindal, he wondered what he had gotten into. The airstrip was covered in water., As he disembarked, he felt water covering his shoes and seep up his long white socks.

A helpful Aboriginal fellow Johnny O' Sullivan who worked for TAA met him and offered him a ride to Katherine.

'I'm waiting for a flight to Darwin. I better stick around here.' Malcolm said.

'No flights leaving or arriving today,' Johnny replied, 'the town is flooded.'

'I have a job in Darwin with the Post Office. I need to get there.' Malcom responded.

'Not today,' Johnny said, 'We are shorthanded at the Post Office here since the last fellow shot through when the flood hit. I'm sure they could use you.'

Johnny drove him to the flooded Post Office, making a wake all the way. The Post Office back then was where it is now, but looked very different with a veranda on the back, made of bamboo poles. Malcolm was offered a job and accommodation. As he looked around at the small kitchen the bed, mattress, set of sheets a mossie net and a cold shower that would cost him five pounds a year. He decided to take the job. He found out later, the toilet was out the back.

I can see Darwin later he thought. His adventure in Katherine began.

He settled into his job, met some friendly locals enjoyed a relaxed lifestyle, which suited him fine. When the week-ends came he began exploring. He would travel roads that were barely a track. He even made his own roads looking for a water-hole to skinny dip in or a place to fish that few had seen before. He explored old mine sites; Pine Creek was looked over with a fine-tooth comb. He enjoyed the fact that there were few fences, or rangers to bother him. He caught barramundi and cooked them under the stars.



He finally made a trip up to Darwin to see what he had missed out on. but by then he was happy with the friends he had made, and laid-back life style. so, he came back to Katherine and stayed.

Malcolm had many friends, but something was missing.

Irene arrived in Oct 1959 to be a relief telephonist. She was a telephonist in South Australia, when she was asked if she would like to go to Katherine to do some relief work. Why not she thought, I'm up for a bit of adventure. Irene is one of seven siblings of a farming family. She loved being out in the country, and was a hard worker. She was offered this relief job in Katherine and decided she wanted to see what the Territory was all about. After all it was only for three weeks.

Rene, as she is affectionately called, is barely five feet tall, quiet as a mouse, and her parents worried about her coming up to the wild country of the NT by herself. She firmly told them, I can take care of myself, and its only for three weeks. What can happen in three weeks?

She met young handsome Malcolm Brook and never left. Malcolm showed Rene around all the secret spots he had found. They went hiking and canoeing, fishing, soaking in the pristine water holes. They would take long walks, carrying their swags, find an isolated spot and camped. Malcolm said he talked Rene into skinny dipping one day. As they swam in the water, an aeroplane went overhead. Rene headed for the bank.

'It's a plane from Brisbane or somewhere, it's high up' Malcolm laughingly told her. Rene didn't care she climbed the bank and covered up.

They visited Pine Creek; Malcolm had studied the history going back to 1884 when a survey for the township of Burrundie was completed and the first building the hospital started taken shape. This was due to new mineral discoveries. It was located 19 miles north of Pine Creek. It grew for a while, then as many things do in the Territory it slowly moved to Pine Creek. By 1911 the town was nearly deserted. Rene spent hours, looking for gold, and coins that had holes in them. Rene also found two diamonds on one excursion. Tiny ones I was told. Their love of the bush and all it held was evident.

On an excursion behind Edith falls, towards the top of the Ferguson River, they were bird watching when they had a misadventure. They parked the Ute, went for a long walk exploring for quite some time. When it was time to head back, they climbed up the bank and started walking to their Ute. After walking a long way, they decided they had walked right past the Ute without seeing it, so they turned around and had to walk a long way back. Malcolm said they were not lost. I envisioned Malcolm still bird watching, and her name was Rene.

They told me a story about being on a camping trip on the South Alligator River between Pine Creek and Darwin crossing. There was no road to the spot they camped. Malcolm began to feel unwell, he had fever, then chills, unbearable pain. They decided they better pack up and head



home. Trying to manoeuvre between the scrub, the vehicle got stuck between two trees. He could not go forward or back. They were firmly stuck, a winch job. It took him a couple of hours to finally get out. By then he was sicker than ever. His comment was 'I was buggered when I started, and completely stuffed when we got out' He also said 'his swearing had improved with the two-hour practice'. At the Katherine Hospital he found out he had kidney stones.

They travelled around Australia in their Falcon, during a holiday. But soon came back to Katherine. as by then they knew that was where their hearts were. They both had permanent jobs and Katherine was home. Rene being the towns telephonist knew everyone's phone number; the numbers were only two digits. Not like now. There were only about 100 phones on line then, and Rene can still tell you who had what number.

Malcolm knew all the locals, and where they lived. Who ordered clothes from a catalogue, and who shopped local. They were a great team, they knew which people would stay, which ones were just blowing through.

Malcolm and Rene married. They settled in their first home, a two room (uncompleted) shack on Lucy Street. Later they shifted to a government house on Downing St. The children. Kerry, Damen, and Justin were born. Rene changed jobs from a Telephonist to a wife and mother, taking care of a husband and three growing children. Malcolm stayed with the Post Office. The Post Office was rebuilt, and enlarged four times while Malcolm worked there. Always in the same place.

During those years, they continued to explore the bush, with the children. Malcolm became interested in playing baseball, and worked alongside several locals to get a baseball field and a team going. There was Dick Dobie (Log) Ian Lane (claw), Glenn Abbott, Robby, and Barry Philips just to name a few. Baseball was very popular back then. They had several teams in the early years the Pints, Works Club, CSIRO, and the Bombers. Quite a crowd gathered to watch them play on the weekends. On long weekends the teams travelled to Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, and Mt Isa for competition games. They won some Premierships and lost some. There is a field called Brook/Abbott field named after Malcolm and Glenn here in Katherine.

Probably the worst thing Malcolm would say about the Northern Territory was the build-up. Back then we did not have air-conditioned cars and homes, so sometimes we sweat buckets of sweat. Then the glorious rain would fall, the breeze would blow, the air would cool, and all was good again. Until the next day.

Sometime later they bought a block on Walter Young Street and built a home.

Malcolm worked for Australian Post for forty-two years. They are now retired on a rural block, tending mangos, a lush garden, and entertaining friends with stories of days gone by.



While talking to these two Territorians I could feel their love for this area, and each other, as they held hands, and talk about having lived through floods, droughts, washing clothes in a copper, cold showers, I did see a photo of Malcolm bathing in a 44-gallen drum, out houses, no tv and listening to the radio powered by two car batteries. They ended by saying those really were the good old days!

As I waved good bye, got in my air-conditioned car, I watched them enter their air-conditioned room for a nap. I thought. Some things have changed for the better.

Malcolm and Irene Brook are what has helped make Katherine the place it is today, they came, saw, loved, and stayed.

