



KATHERINE
TOWN COUNCIL



KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

Communication and Engagement Plan



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

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.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may include the images of people who are deceased.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE



Community engagement gives the Katherine Town Council valuable insights into community views, sentiments, and values. This understanding enables the Council to make informed decisions and better deliver services that meet residents’ needs. Effective communication strengthens relationships and builds community trust and confidence in the Council’s leadership.

Alignment with Katherine 2027 Strategic Plan

The Katherine Town Council aligns its communication and engagement efforts with its five-year Strategic Plan, Katherine 2027, ensuring that actions reflect the community’s vision and needs:

THE STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE: STRONG LEADERSHIP

3. Community engagement

Our goal is to:
Improve Council communications and engagement with the community.

- Our strategy is to:
- Develop a communication engagement strategy and action plan to guide Council communications
 - Improve consistency of our communications and engagement in alignment with our strategy
 - Identify a number of tools to ensure our engagement is broad, inclusive and accessible to our diverse community.



SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This Communication and Engagement Plan guides Katherine Town Council's corporate communication activities and community engagement activities. It provides strategic direction for how the Council communicates with residents, stakeholders, and the broader community regarding local government roles, services, promotions and initiatives.

Out of Scope

This plan does not prescribe the communication strategies, branding, or engagement objectives of Council's associated entities, including:

- Katherine Visitor Information Centre (Visit Katherine): This centre operates with its own branding, website, and communication objectives focused on tourism and visitor engagement.
- Katherine Public Library: Maintains its own communication channels, including social media, to engage with library users and promote its services.
- While these entities align with Council's broader strategic goals, they operate with distinct communication approaches tailored to their specific audiences and purposes.



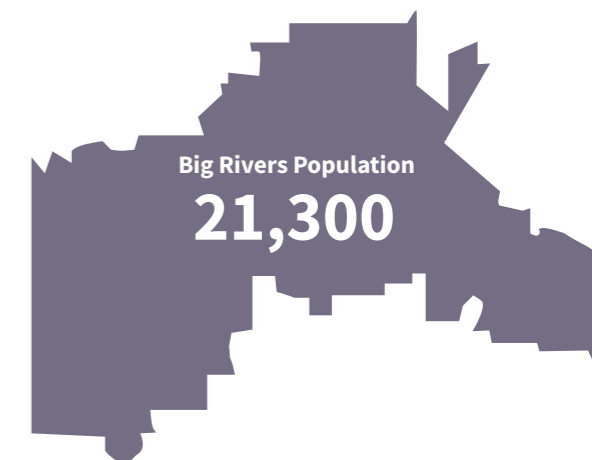
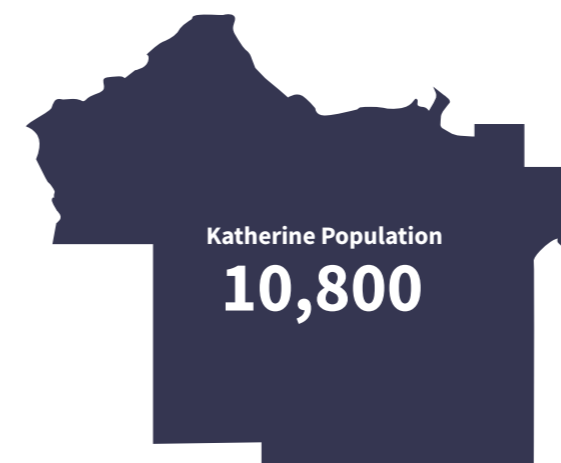
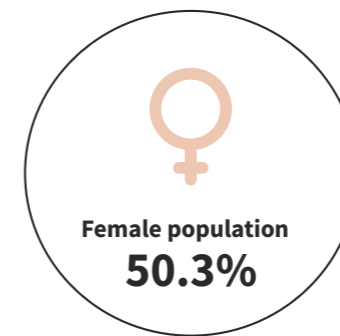
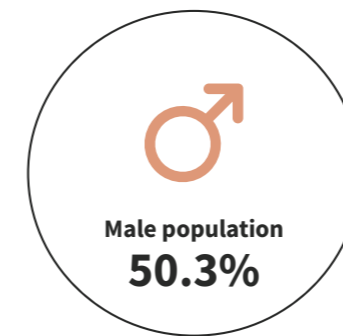
Our Communication and Engagement Commitments

- **Respectful:** We communicate honestly, openly, and respectfully to build trust with stakeholders. We value partnerships and provide meaningful opportunities for involvement in decision-making and understanding community aspirations.
- **Purposeful:** Our engagement is planned with clear goals for community input. We ensure transparency in why, how, and what we aim to achieve.
- **Inclusive:** We actively seek input from all community segments and remove participation barriers to ensure diverse voices are heard.
- **Timely:** We engage early, allowing enough time for feedback to be genuinely considered.
- **Fit for Purpose:** We tailor communication and engagement methods to suit the project and community needs, ensuring information is accessible and easily understood.

Tone of Voice

Katherine Town Council's tone of voice is:

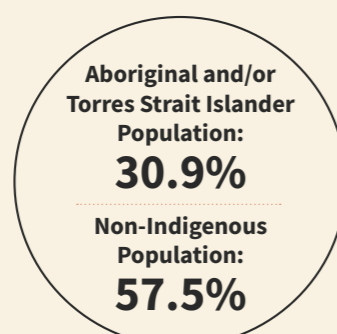
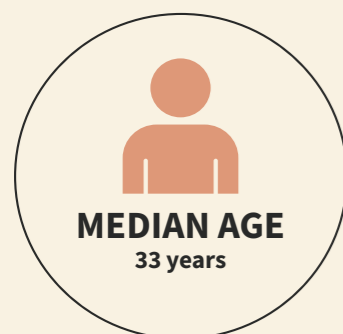
- **Friendly:** Warm, conversational, and welcoming.
 - *Example:* "We're so excited to share some great news with you. Katherine Town Council is holding a week-long amnesty on dog registrations. Drop in to the Civic Centre or call a ranger to learn more!"
- **Active:** Clear, action-oriented, and engaging.
 - *Example:* "Join us this Saturday for the town's clean-up day! Grab a pair of gloves, bring your friends, and help keep Katherine beautiful. Register now or just show up—we'd love to see you there!"
- **Reliable:** Trustworthy, informative, and reassuring.
 - *Example:* "We understand the importance of keeping people safe on our roads. The First Street upgrade aims to enhance safety and traffic flow for all residents. Our team is dedicated to keeping you informed throughout the process. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us."



UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITY

Katherine has a rich and resilient history. Established in 1926, the town will celebrate its centenary in July 2026.

However, long before its establishment, the area held deep cultural and spiritual significance for the Jawoyn, Wardaman, and Dagoman families. Recognising this heritage is key to understanding our community's diverse perspectives and needs.



Language used at home
(Other than English)

Kriol: 4.3%

Nepali: 2.5%

Tagalog: 1.9%

Punjabi: 0.8%

Warlpiri: 0.8%

Source: (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

Income and Employment

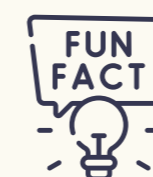
Katherine is a significant service hub in the Northern Territory, supporting tourism, agriculture, defence, and retail industries. Seasonal employment patterns and government service provision influence the local economy.

Median Weekly Income	
Personal	\$1072
Family	\$2353
Household	\$2116

Employment Status	
Full-time	71.6%
Part-time	17.7%

Top Industries	
Defence	10.8%
Social Assistance Services	4.6%
NT Government	4.2%
Hospitals	4.0%
Primary Education	3.9%

Home Tenure Type	
Owned outright	447
Owned with a mortgage	700
Rented	1508
Other tenure type	97



Other fun facts

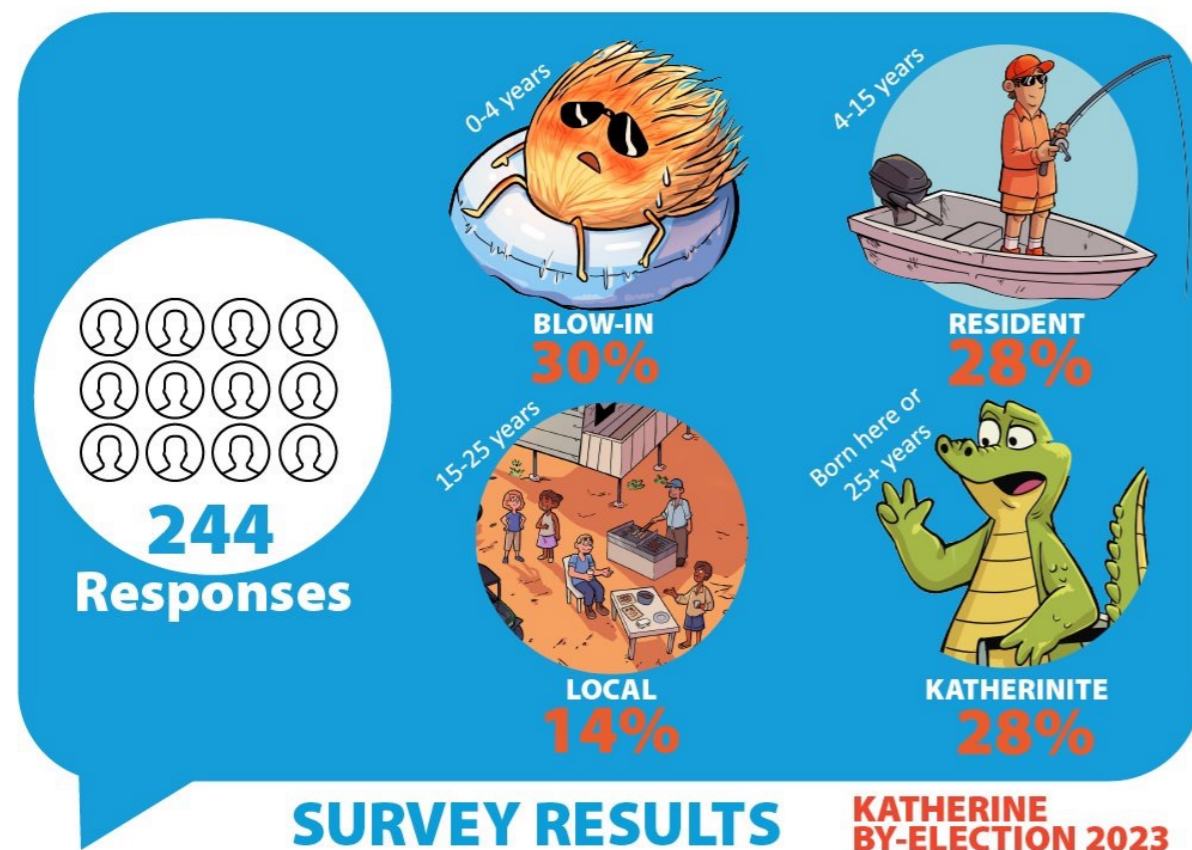
- **42.4%** of families are a couple with kids
- **68.3%** of residents travel to work by car
- **17.2%** have a university degree and **7%** have achieved year 9 or lower



COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS

Katherine Town Council invited residents to complete a survey in 2023 as part of its local government by-election promotions.

At the time of the survey, the results demonstrated that the majority of respondents had lived in Katherine for less than five years and were affectionately called 'Blow-Ins'. The second largest respondent group, 28%, stated that they have been in Katherine between 5 and 15 years. This result indicates that our resident community may have little knowledge of the town's history, are transient, and may not feel the need to participate in consultation and communication with Council.

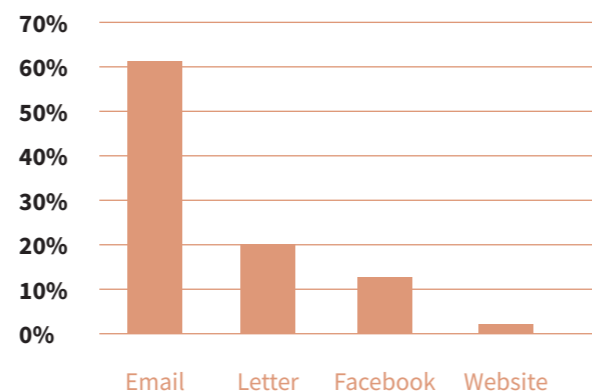


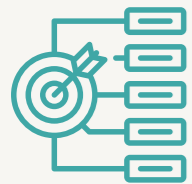
Communication Preferences

In September 2023, we surveyed Katherine residents to identify their communication preferences. We asked respondents how they like to receive Council information and what types of content they like to see. They said they wanted to see:

- Updates on Council projects and future plans
- Information on how rates are being spent
- News about local events and activities

They also indicated a preference for emails and Facebook posts.





OUR OBJECTIVES

• Communication Objectives:

- › Make Council updates clear, accessible, and relevant to residents.
- › Use multiple channels to reach all segments of the community
- › Improve transparency around Council decisions and spending.

• Engagement Objectives:

- › Encourage more residents to participate in Council discussions and decision-making.
- › Make it easier for people to share feedback, especially newer residents
- › Strengthen connections between Council and local businesses, employers, and community groups.



HOW WE'LL IMPROVE COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

The demographic survey tells us that a large part of our community is new to town or has only been here a short time.

Because of this, many residents might not know much about the town's history or feel connected to their community or to the Council. Some might not see the need to get involved in local decisions. That's why Council needs to work harder to make it easier for everyone to have a say.

How We'll Make It Easier to Get Involved

1. Make information easy to find and understand

- › Share short, clear updates about Council projects, events, and local issues in an e-newsletter and on social media.
- › Provide Council information packs that promote how they can get involved with Council and have their say, with real estate agents, Defence relocation teams, schools and the library. The packs can also be available to staff at the Visitor Information Centre to provide to new residents who come to explore Katherine.
- › Translate information into Kriol where appropriate

2. Use social media and digital tools to reach more people

- › Create more short videos and posts on Facebook and Instagram to explain what Council is doing and why
- › Run quick polls and surveys that people can respond to with just one click.

3. Meet people where they already are

- › Ensure printed copies of key Council updates are available in public spaces such as community centers, libraries, and service hubs where people without reliable internet access can find them.
- › Include information about how new residents can register for Your Say Katherine and sign up for the e-newsletter at existing pop-up stalls at markets and events.
- › Use Katherine Chain, cross-agency and community group meetings to spread Council news and information.
- › Share Council updates through Defence newsletters, community briefings, and social events.

4. Make giving feedback quick and easy

- › Offer one-click surveys and simple feedback tools on Your Say Katherine so people don't spend too much time filling out long forms.
- › Make polls and surveys open to all, rather than just registered users, on Your Say Katherine.
- › Use community Facebook groups (Everything Katherine and What's On Katherine) for quick updates about Council activities, promote the e-newsletter, and always link back to Your Say Katherine.
- › Create an easy 'New to Katherine' sign-up on the website where newcomers can request local info and sign up to the newsletter, and register for Your Say Katherine

5. Communication Channels

6. Digital Platforms:

- › Katherine Town Council website, Facebook, Instagram
- › Katherine Life, Know Your Council
- › Mailchimp (bi-monthly newsletter)

7. Traditional Media:

- › Local radio and newspapers – interviews, media releases and advertisement

8. In-Person Engagement:

- › Community forums, workshops, stakeholder meetings

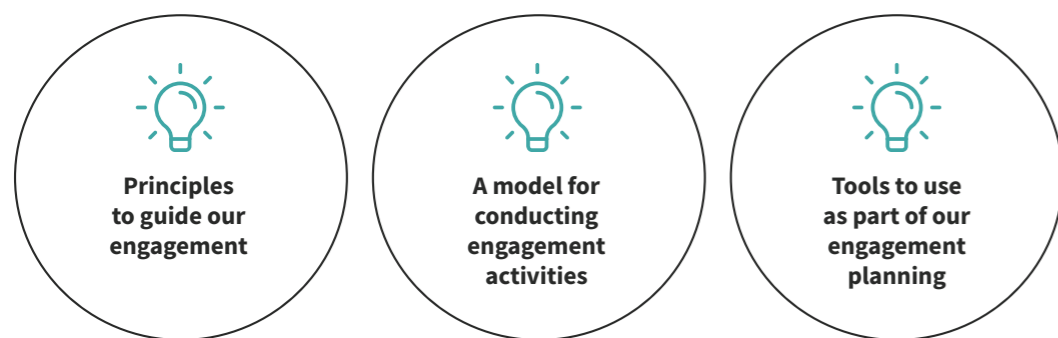
9. Feedback Mechanisms:

- › Online surveys, Your Say Katherine platform



OUR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK AND TARGET AUDIENCES

The Katherine Town Council follows the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) engagement principles, a globally recognised best practice methodology. This framework provides a strategic approach to stakeholder engagement.



Levels of Engagement

Each project requires different levels of engagement depending on stakeholders and project stages. The IAP2 framework guides the level of engagement needed, ensuring appropriate consultation.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/ or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Community role	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Lead

Target Audience

Internal Stakeholders:

- Mayor, Councillors, Council Committees
- Chief Executive Officers, Executive management team
- Operational and administrative staff, contractors and volunteers

External Stakeholders:

- Residents, ratepayers, and Tindal residents
- Indigenous communities
- Local businesses, non-profits, and community groups
- Education sector (schools, childcare centres, vocational training organisations)
- Government agencies
- Tourism, hospitality, and environmental organisations
- Youth, families, seniors, and special interest groups
- Infrastructure, utilities, and media
- Visitors and potential investors

External Stakeholder Table

Stakeholder Group	Specific Organisations
Indigenous Communities	Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation, Kalano Community Association, Wurli-Wurlinjang Health Service, Binjari Aboriginal Community Association
Local Businesses	Katherine Times (News Corp), Katherine Mining Services, Katherine Chamber of Commerce
Non-Profit and Community Groups	The Salvation Army Katherine, The Smith Family, Katherine Regional Arts, Katherine Women's Indigenous Association, Katherine Women's Information & Legal Service
Education Sector	Katherine High School, Charles Darwin University (Katherine Campus), St. Joseph's Catholic College
Government Agencies	Northern Territory Government, Department of Defence (RAAF Base Tindal), LGANT, VDRC and RGRC
Tourism and Hospitality	Tourism Top End, Nitmiluk Tours, Katherine Accommodation Association
Environmental Organisations	Northern Land Council, Greening Australia (Katherine branch), Roper River Landcare Group
Youth, Families, Seniors, Special Groups	YMCA Katherine, Council on the Ageing (COTA) NT, Katherine Women's Information & Legal Service, Katherine Women's Information & Legal Service
Infrastructure and Utilities	Power and Water Corporation, Katherine Town Council Infrastructure Department, Telstra (Katherine branch)
Media	Katherine Times, ABC Radio, Mix 104.9 FM, Katherine Radio, NT News



ACTION PLAN

External Stakeholder Table

External Communication			
Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsible
Develop a communication and engagement strategy	Finalise strategy and action plan	Q1 2025	Communications
Implement communication and engagement plan	Collaborate with Community Relations and the Infrastructure team resources to implement the plan	Ongoing	Communications, Infrastructure and Community Relations
Improve website	Redevelop website based on best UX practices	Q2 2025	Communications & Consultants
Campaign planning	Develop tailored promotional plans for Council events and initiatives, taking account of audiences and key messages. Use professionally designed campaign materials and/or templates that incorporate Council style guide elements	Ongoing	Communications, in collaboration with the Community Relations team.
Increase social media engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular updates and engaging posts scheduled throughIncreased use of video as a tool for communicating on social mediaWork with Community Relations to grow more consistent content through the Library and VIC social platforms.Partner with Community Relations to generate events content on KTC Facebook	Ongoing	Communications
Implement post Council meeting video briefings.	Mayor to record video updates after Council meetings	Monthly	Mayor & Communications
Strengthen traditional media presence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain a current media database and media networkProvide media training to the Mayor, and Elected Members CEO	Ongoing	Communications
Bi-monthly newsletter	Write and distribute bi-monthly e-news through Mailchimp covering <ul style="list-style-type: none">Council decisionsMajor project informationUpcoming events	Q2	Communications with assistance from the Community Relations team
Email campaigns	Incorporate email campaigns into event promotional activities, educational campaigns (e.g., ezy bill sign-ups, cycling clean-ups, etc.), and to promote Council initiatives.	Ongoing	Communications with assistance from the Community Relations, Infrastructure and Governance teams
Crisis Communication	Implement urgent communications, in collaboration with other agencies where required, during emergencies and when council actions will impact the community (such as facility and asset closures).	Ongoing	Communications, collaborating as required.

Stakeholder engagement			
Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsible
Enhance community engagement	Conduct stakeholder engagement training for staff	Q3 2025	Communications
Make stakeholder engagement planning easily accessible.	Create an online stakeholder engagement kit with templates for staff to use in consultation planning.	Q1 2025	Communications
Embed stakeholder engagement planning and implementation in project management processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate engagement and consultation into Project Life Cycle Framework Partner with the infrastructure team to integrate stakeholder consultation and engagement in their project plans and business case 	Ongoing	Communications
Use "Your Say Katherine" platform	Post activities and projects on Your Say Katherine for community feedback	Ongoing	Communications in collaboration with Community Relations and the Infrastructure teams
Host pop-up information booths	Attend markets and community events	Ongoing	Communications and Community Relations team and Elected Members
Measure communication effectiveness	Track website traffic, social media engagement, and feedback received	Annually	Communications
Publish communication performance report	Detail outcomes and areas for improvement	Q4 Annually	Communications

Internal Communication			
Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsible
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief elected members on communication and engagement processes and methodologies as part of their induction plan Distribute media releases to Councillors via email when distributed Quarterly communications reports to Council 		
Staff	Communicate news and information about Council initiatives and updates o staff through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intranet All staff emails 		Communications in collaboration with People and Culture and Corporate Relations and Corporate Administration



MONITORING AND REPORTING SUCCESS

- **KPIs:** Website traffic, engagement reach, social media engagement, event attendance, feedback volume
- **Periodic Reviews:** regularly assess if goals and objectives are being met and make adjustments as needed by surveying the community engagement metrics to measure the impact.
- **Annual Review:** Publish a report outlining communication outcomes and plan adjustments

This plan ensures clear, consistent, and effective communication with Katherine’s community, reinforcing transparency, inclusivity, and engagement in Council activities.



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