

WEST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL

FOR THE MEETING 29 October 2025

Agenda Reference:	8.10
Title:	Chief Executive Officer's Report
Author:	Katharine Murray, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is an update to Council from the Chief Executive Officer.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL accepts, receives and notes the report titled *Chief Executive Officer's Report*.

UPDATE

First Nations Employment Plan

Early in 2024, a draft First Nations Employment Plan was released to staff for consultation. Unfortunately, due to various leadership changes the plan did not progress. Since then, WARC has implemented its first Enterprise Agreement and a Special Measures recruitment policy, resulting in the successful delivery of several actions from the previous plan. With these changes, HR and I revised and refreshed the draft Plan as a key focus of mine is to ensure that WARC continues to grow, support and develop a strong, skilled and capable First Nations workforce.

The Plan has been circulated to all staff with a survey. CSM's have been told to discuss it with all staff who do not have a WARC email or access to a computer. Feedback is due back by 31 October. Once the feedback has been received the draft Plan will be brought to Council with the survey results for Council's input.

First Nations Leadership Program 2026

This is an annual program run by the Territory Government to mentor and support Indigenous Leaders and especially remote leaders. It has four face to face workshops with a focus on confidence and accountability, governance, connecting with high-profile leaders, community representatives. The Department pays the costs of people attending the workshops such as travel, accommodation and meals but not wages. For anyone interested in applying, I have said that WARC will pay the wages. I have asked CSM's and Managers to identify and talk to indigenous staff about the program and to help them complete nomination form. It closes on 31 October.

2025 Local Government Supplementary Elections

29 November 2025

Date	Time	
Tuesday 22 July	5:00 pm	Electoral roll closes
Friday 17 October		Nominations open
Thursday 6 November	12:00 noon	Nominations close
Friday 7 November	12:00 noon	Declaration of nominations, draw for position on ballot papers
Monday 10 November		Postal vote mail-out commences
Monday 17 November	8:00 am	Early voting commences
	9:00 am	Mobile voting commences
Tuesday 25 November	6:00 pm	Overseas postal voting despatches cease
Thursday 27 November	6:00 pm	All postal voting despatches cease
Friday 28 November	6:00 pm	Early voting ceases
Saturday 29 November		Election day
	8:00 am	Election day voting commences
	6:00 pm	Election day voting ceases
		Mobile voting ceases
		Primary counts of ordinary, postal and early votes commence
Monday 1 December	9:00 am	Declaration vote verification checks, commence recheck of all counts
Wednesday 10 December	9:00 am	Primary counts of accepted declaration votes, further postal counts
Friday 12 December	12:00 noon	Deadline for receipt of postal votes
		Final counts of postal votes commence
	6:00 pm	Distribution of preferences
Monday 15 December	10:00 am	Declaration of the election result

Warruwi

I have spoken to the NT Electoral Commissioner, and a by-election must be held before the middle of February 2026. If community or Council wish to delay the by-election then an application must be made to the Minister for approval. The Returning Officer for the by-election can be the CEO if appointed by Council otherwise NTEC will appoint a Returning Officer.

RAES – Remote Australian Employment Service

This program replaced CDP. East Arnhem Regional Council, Vic-Daly Regional Council and Roper Gulf Regional Council all applied for RAES and missed out. Upon calling the Federal government for the reasons why they missed out, they were advised that they didn't meet Priority Reform 2 of Closing the Gap – Building the Community-Controlled Sector. This is that you must be:

- an Aboriginal Community-controlled organisation,
- be not for profit,
- controlled and operated by ATSI people,
- connected to communities where they deliver the services
- governed by a majority ATSI body.

9 of the Regional Councils in the NT have majority Aboriginal elected members, 4 have entirely Aboriginal elected members, with 67 Local Authorities across the 9 regional councils who are almost all Aboriginal people.

WARC did not apply for RAES but this is an issue that WARC Council needs to be a strong voice for with the other regional councils.

A meeting with Senator Malandirri McCarthy was requested by East Arm Regional Council, Victoria Daly Regional Council and Roger Gulf Regional Council however the Senator has not been available.

WARC CEO and Mayor will now be liaising closely with these regional councils and others on these issues.

LGANT – Pre-NT Budget Submission 2026/27

LGANT as the top end's peak local government body is advocating to the NT Treasurer requesting the NT Government Budget include an increase in the Operational Subsidy (from \$34.5million in 2025/25) to at least \$50million in 2026/27 (not at the expense of other local government funding). The increase includes a catch-up of the five-year stagnation period, as well as additional new funding to account for the significant increase in costs in recent years.

Good news stories

Heidi Walton will start making video clips to play on WARC community tv screens on the good work WARC does. This will include Kurrung, the Maningrida Oval change rooms ceremony and other achievements.

CEO leave

The CEO is taking one day annual leave on Friday 7 November but will be on call. It is a requirement under the legislation that Council are advised of the CEO's leave.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

This report aligns to the following pillars and goals as outlined in the *Regional Plan and Budget*:

PILLAR 6 FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNANCE

Integrity is at the heart of everything we do. We are leaders of best practice and excellence in governance, advocacy, consultation and administration. Our processes, procedures and policies are ethical and transparent.

Goal 6.3 Council and Local Authorities

Excellence in governance, consultation administration and representation.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil