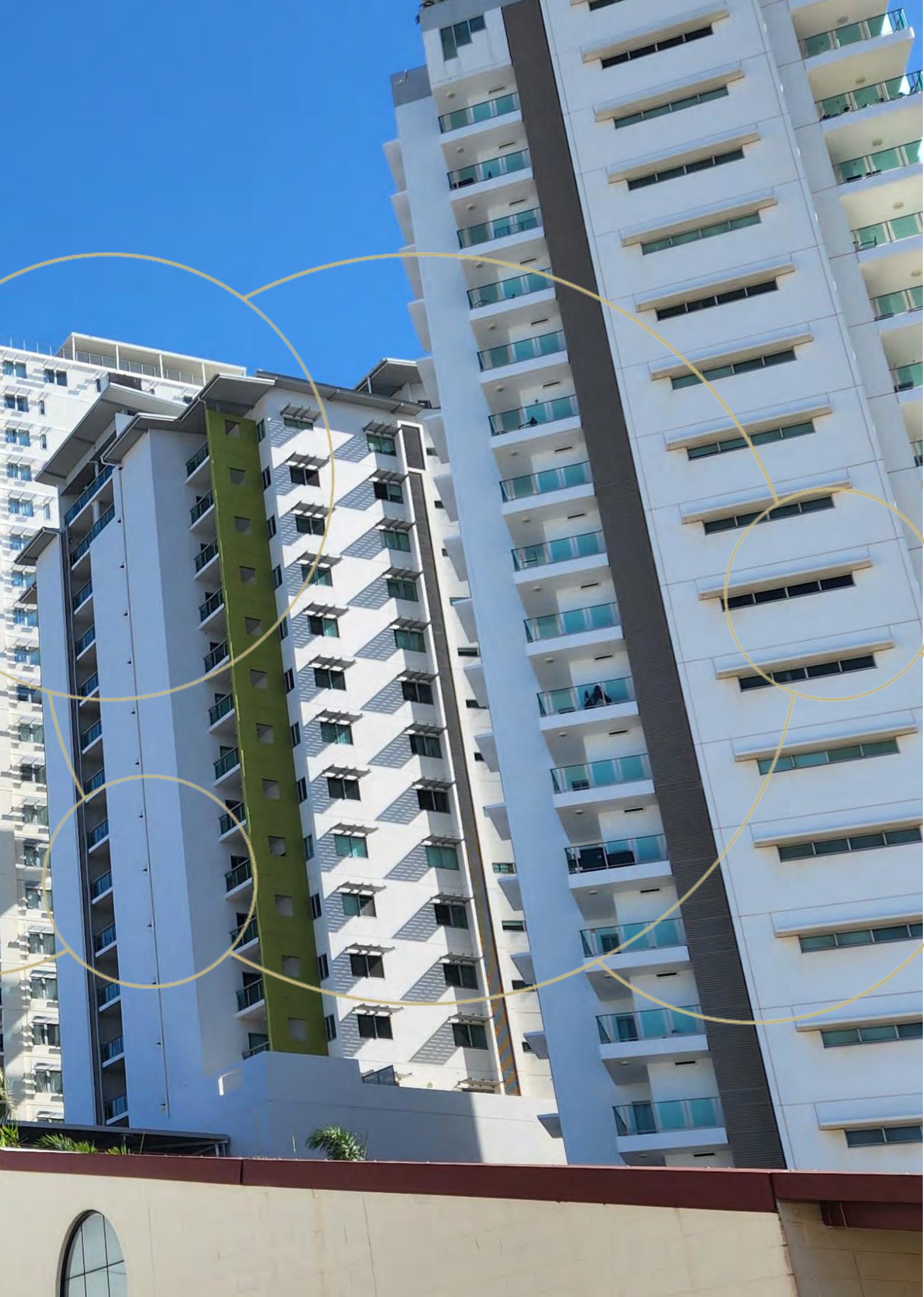




NORTHERN TERRITORY  
**PLANNING  
COMMISSION**

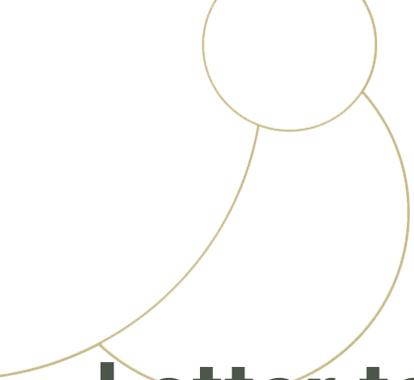
# Annual Report 2022-23





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# Letter to the Minister

Dear Minister

## **2022-23 Annual Report – Northern Territory Planning Commission**

I am pleased to present you with the annual report for the Northern Territory Planning Commission for the 2022-23 financial year.

Under section 81Y of the *Planning Act 1999*, the Chairman must prepare and give to the Minister a report on the performance of the Planning Commission against its functions during each financial year. The report must be given to the Minister by 31 October following the end of the financial year.

As the responsible Minister, you are required to table a copy of the report in the Legislative Assembly within six sitting days of receiving the report.

Yours sincerely



**David Ritchie PhD**

Chairman

Northern Territory Planning Commission

# Chairman's message



This year, community consultation has again been at the forefront of the work of the Planning Commission, ensuring the knowledge, experiences and views of the community and stakeholders resonate in every decision we make.

Throughout the past year, we've made progress on several projects that have the potential to redefine the landscape of the Territory, both economically and socially. These projects exemplify our approach to sustainable, forward-thinking land use planning and development.

Throughout 2022-23 we have engaged with community, Governments and other stakeholders to progress land use plans for the Greater Holtze and Humpty Doo areas. We've also commenced investigations into the future of Greater Weddell in the Darwin region and the area south of Heavitree Gap in Alice Springs and look forward to having conversations with the community on those projects in the coming year.

The Commission has continued work this year on the development of a Strategic Directions Planning Policy. The Commission sees the development of this policy as an opportunity to set directions that will underpin the delivery of future strategic policies, land use plans and development. It will contribute to ensuring the Territory is a liveable, resilient and sustainable place. The Commission aims to release a Discussion Paper to kick off broad community and stakeholder engagement during 2023-24.

We'd like to acknowledge the departure of Robert Jennings from the Commission in February this year and express our gratitude for his invaluable contributions over more than 5 years as a member of the Commission. As we commence a new chapter, we are pleased to introduce Joel Andrew as the newly appointed representative of the Local Government Association of the NT on the Planning Commission. Joel will bring a fresh perspective and expertise to the Commission and we're looking forward to working alongside him.

This annual report encapsulates the Commission's journey this year, providing an overview of our activities, achievements, and aspirations. Join us in this exploration of the past year's achievements and the exciting future that lies ahead for the Northern Territory.

# About the Northern Territory Planning Commission

The Northern Territory Planning Commission is an independent statutory authority.

## What we do

The Planning Commission sets the strategic framework for integrated land use, transport and infrastructure planning that provides flexibility to meet emerging needs, for economic growth, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

We perform our functions and exercise our powers independently, impartially and in the public interest, according to the *Planning Act 1999*.

## Developing strategic land use plans

Our primary role is to prepare integrated strategic land use plans in consultation with the community. These plans may identify future transport corridors, utility corridors and sites for essential facilities including communication, water and power supply, gas, effluent treatment and regional waste, public and social infrastructure.

The Planning Commission may provide guidance on where and how communities or urban areas should grow. Our plans can include maps, policy statements and objectives relating to housing, transport, economic development, the environment, open space and conservation.

## Providing statutory advice

The Planning Commission advises the Minister on statutory matters including significant development proposals, proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permits.

The Minister may refer significant development proposals to the Planning Commission for assessment.

A significant development proposal is one that may significantly impact on:

- the strategic planning of the Territory;
- the natural environment or existing amenity;
- land, adjoining land or other areas.

When assessing a significant development proposal, the Planning Commission must consider the objects of the Act, and the significant development report must identify and give advice about the possible impacts of the proposal on future land use and development in the Territory.

The Act also requires the NT Planning Commission to receive submissions, carry out consultation and hold hearings in relation to proposed Exceptional Development Permits and Planning Scheme Amendments. The Planning Commission reports to the Minister on these proposals.

## Advocacy and collaboration

The Planning Commission seeks to model and promote innovation, leadership and excellence in land use planning. In addition, a key guiding principle of the Planning Commission's work is collaborating with stakeholders and government agencies to maximise good outcomes and ensure land use planning is integrated with infrastructure planning and environmental protection.

Throughout 2022-23 the Planning Commission has provided expert advice and input to a number of initiatives and consultation processes including Government's continued work to build on the new system established through Planning Reform.



## Arrangements with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

Under section 81E of the *Planning Act 1999*, the Chief Executive of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) provides the Planning Commission with staff and facilities to enable it to properly exercise its power and perform its functions.

Professional and technical support is provided by the department under the Planning Commission's direction.

The Planning Commission accesses expertise throughout the department in areas such as strategic planning, demography, spatial information, commercial analysis, infrastructure planning and stakeholder engagement.

DIPL also supports a secretariat that manages the daily operations of the Planning Commission.

## Our members

The Planning Commission comprises:

- Chairperson
- Chairs of the Development Consent Authority, Heritage Council and NT Environment Protection Authority
- a representative of the Local Government Association
- up to five additional members with appropriate qualifications and expertise appointed by the Minister.

The Planning Commission membership includes the chairs of three bodies with statutory decision-making powers for development, providing for a greater shared understanding of the aspirations of the planning system in delivering outcomes.

Throughout 2022-23 the Planning Commission had seven members from across the Northern Territory and interstate who provide planning leadership and deliver professional, independent advice. The Planning Commission strengthens links between the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority, Development Consent Authority, Heritage Council and Local Government Association.

# Our Members



**Dr David Ritchie**  
Chairman  
(appointed 13 July 2017)

Dr David Ritchie has 38 years' experience working in the NT for organisations responsible for land management, in professional expert and also senior management and executive roles. This work includes extensive experience with statutory boards with roles under land development, land rights, and environment and heritage legislation.

For more than twenty years, David has held Chief Executive roles, leading organisations responsible for land resource planning, remote service delivery, parks & wildlife, natural resource management, environment protection, Aboriginal cultural heritage and museums, art galleries and archives.

Throughout his career, David has had extensive involvement working closely with Aboriginal communities in remote regions of the NT.

David also brings specific planning experience gained in the roles of Executive Director Lands, Chief Executive Department of Lands & Planning and Chief Executive of the NT Land Development Corporation.

David is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Anthropological Society. He is also a director of not-for-profit company Ninti One Limited, on the board of the Northern Territory Land Corporation and Chair of the NT Grants Commission.



**Dr Paul Vogel AM**  
Ex officio member  
(appointed 14 November 2016)

Dr Paul Vogel was appointed as the chairperson of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) on 14 November 2016.

Now a non-executive board chair/director and strategic consultant, Paul was chairman of Western Australia's Environmental Protection Authority from 2007 to 2015. Paul was also the inaugural Chief Executive and Chairman of the South Australian EPA from 2002 to 2007 and prior to that held senior executive positions in the WA departments of the Premier and Cabinet and Environmental Protection.

Paul has a PhD in Chemistry from the University of WA and has extensive knowledge and experience across a broad range of environmental issues and sustainability, environmental regulation, organisational and regulatory reform and in the delivery of strategic environmental and business outcomes.

Paul is also chair of the WA Marine Science Institution, deputy chair of the CRC on Transformations in Mining Economies; Special Counsel at Cannings Purple and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He was appointed to the NT EPA from 1 January 2016.



**Suzanne Philip**  
Ex officio member  
(appointed 31 July 2017)

Suzanne Philip is the Chair of the Development Consent Authority, which is an independent statutory body responsible for determining development applications in the Territory.

Suzanne has lived in Darwin since 1982, raising a family and contributing extensively to the Territory's legal and business sectors and the community, from a number of platforms.

She is a Solicitor and Barrister of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, and has extensive experience as a Senior University Lecturer, teaching Contract, Commercial, Vendor and Purchaser and Property law.

From 2008 to 2014, Suzanne held the position of legal member and Chair of the NT Agent's Licencing Board, responsible for licencing real estate, business and conveyancing agents and investigating allegations and holding disciplinary inquiries about licenced agents.

Suzanne has participated in both the development and community advocacy side of the planning process and has a high-level experience, and long-held interest in planning matters.



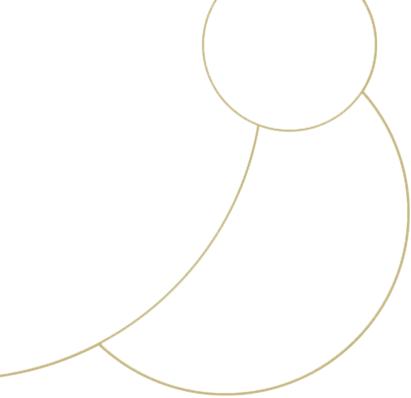
**Robert Jennings**  
Representative of the  
Local Government  
Association of  
the NT  
(13 July 2017 -  
2 February 2023)

Robert Jennings is the former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Alice Springs Town Council, and previous CEO of Katherine Town Council. Robert has served as an executive officer in government across three states and territories. He has an ongoing personal commitment to integrity, excellence and service to the organisations he leads as well as to the community and the Northern Territory.

Robert has performed the roles of CEO, General Manager and founding partner in a number of government entities and commercial architectural and developer organisations over the last 20 years. He has experience across a wide range of businesses, government, infrastructure, land development, urban planning,

architecture, building and construction, large-scale design and project management, sustainability, emergency management, tourism, community and economic development.

Robert combines his people and project management skills with his qualifications that include a Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Economics, Bachelor of Applied Science, Diploma of Business (Leadership and Management) and registration as an Architect. He is also a member of numerous other government and community boards, institutes and associations.



**Allan McGill AM**  
Ex officio member  
(appointed 7 May 2020)

Allan’s career has spanned 40 years of local government employment, working in councils from inner city urban to the most remote reaches of the Northern Territory. Experience with Melbourne City Council and a range of councils in rural Victorian and NT communities led to senior and executive positions in Katherine, Alice Springs and Darwin city councils.

He has spent the past 40 years as a CEO or in senior management positions and as Chief Executive of the Northern Territory departments of Local Government and Housing. Allan has held and continues to hold many longstanding committee and board positions, often as chair, president or in a key office bearing position.

Since retiring in 2017, Allan has taken on a number of short-term roles, has completed several project reviews and has been seconded to organisations under special administration.

Allan is an advocate for the arts and appreciates the Territory’s eclectic local scene. As a drummer in a local band, he understands the importance of teamwork and active listening; skills he transfers to his professional life too! Currently Allan is chairman of Venture Housing, chairman of Tiwi Partners Pty Ltd, a member of the Tiwi Leaders Forum and a member of the Northern Territory Racing Commission. Allan was appointed as a member of the Heritage Council of the NT, and as Chairperson, on 7 May 2020.



**Joel Andrew**  
Representative of the  
Local Government  
Association of the NT  
(appointed 14 April 2023)

Appointed to the Planning Commission on the nomination of the Local Government Association of the NT (LGANT), Joel commenced with Alice Springs Town Council in mid-2022 after moving to Alice Springs from New Zealand with his young family in 2019.

Joel brings with him experience in both government and private practice where he has held senior project roles for over 10 years. Before commencing with Alice Springs Town Council, Joel worked in senior construction roles in both Australia and New Zealand.

Joel holds a Masters of Construction in Project Management and has experience in managing complex projects of all shapes and sizes where he has gained substantial knowledge in technical infrastructure matters.



## Fran Kilgariff AM

Member

(appointed 13 October 2017)

Fran has a long history of involvement in many areas of regional and economic development, local government and community in the Northern Territory. She was born in Alice Springs and educated there and in Adelaide. She has qualifications in radiography, prehistoric archaeology and teaching plus long experience in various aspects of Territory affairs.

Her community involvement has included being Mayor of Alice Springs for eight years, a 16 year tenure on the Board of St John Ambulance NT, President of the YMCA of Alice Springs for eight years and on the national YMCA board as National Vice-President for three years.

She is currently on the board of Venture Housing, a not-for-profit affordable housing company, chairs Olive Pink Botanic Garden, and sits on the NT Mental Health Tribunal and the NT Parole Board.

Fran was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (AM) in 2010 for services to local government and contributions to the social and economic development of Central Australia.



## Dorte Ekelund

Member

(appointed 13 July 2017)

Dorte is an urban and regional planner with extensive experience in land use and infrastructure planning across all levels of government and in various jurisdictions. She also has considerable experience in environmental policies and management, including water policies and programs; climate change mitigation and adaptation action; and ecological preservation and management. Her experience in energy includes membership of the COAG Energy Senior Officials and delivery of significant investment in renewables.

Dorte has held the roles of Principal Advisor Smart Cities and Strategic Advisor to the CEO in SMEC, Director-General of ACT Environment and Planning, Deputy Director-General of the WA Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Commissioner with the WA Planning Commission and

head of the Major Cities Unit within the Australian Government.

Dorte is a director on the boards of Icon Water and the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (until November 2022), is an Adjunct Professor in planning with the University of Canberra and serves on the University of Wollongong Smart infrastructure Facility Advisory Council.

Dorte holds a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Class 1 Hon.) and a Masters in Business Administration, is a Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



# Meetings

In accordance with the *Planning Act 1999*, the Planning Commission is to meet as often as necessary; however, must meet at least four times per year.

**The Planning Commission held six meetings in 2022-23.**

Meetings throughout 2022-23 have been conducted as a mix of in-person and video conferences.

MEETING	PRESENT		APOLOGY
56 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 9, 10 & 11 August 2022	David Ritchie Suzanne Philip Paul Vogel Allan McGill	Dorte Ekelund Robert Jennings Fran Kilgariff	Suzanne Philip (partial) Paul Vogel (partial)
57 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 18 October 2022	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Robert Jennings	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	Allan McGill
58 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 8 December 2022	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff Allan McGill	Allan McGill Robert Jennings
59 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 23 February 2023	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Allan McGill Robert Jennings	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	Suzanne Philip

Table 1: Planning Commission meetings in 2022-23



MEETING	PRESENT		APOLOGY
60 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 26 & 27 April 2023	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Allan McGill	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	Paul Vogel (partial) Dorte Ekelund (partial) Joel Andrew
61 <sup>st</sup> meeting: 5 June 2023	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip	Joel Andrew Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	Allan McGill

Table 1 (con't): Planning Commission meetings in 2022-23



# Our Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027

## Vision

The Planning Commission will set the strategic framework to guide integrated land use, transport, social and physical infrastructure planning to meet emerging needs for economic growth, community wellbeing, environmental sustainability and resilience.

### *Liveable Communities*

The Planning Commission will champion and facilitate liveable communities through:

- recognising, retaining and enhancing the places and spaces that the community value
- promoting high quality, flexible urban design, and safe, inclusive, healthy and comfortable places for everyone
- promoting technological solutions that improve efficiency and effectiveness in managing urban and environmental systems
- promoting a variety of recreational, workplace and housing choices
- encouraging community building through resilient, accessible, dynamic and inclusive places
- encouraging a built environment contributing to net zero greenhouse gas emissions
- promoting using the built environment to ameliorate impacts of climate change on communities
  - promoting ways for the built environment to contribute to mitigating risks generated by climate change.

### *Innovate and Influence*

In conducting its business, the Planning Commission will:

- deliver a planning system that is adaptive to meet changing community needs and technologies
- model and promote innovation, leadership and excellence.

## ***Jobs and Infrastructure***

Plans and policies prepared by the Planning Commission will:

- integrate and align land use planning, infrastructure planning and transport planning
- protect long-term strategic industry and infrastructure corridors and nodes
- support improved efficiency of urban and regional infrastructure
- plan for a sufficient volume and balance of urban, commercial and industrial land for growth
  - protect priority horticultural land from urban encroachment and other incompatible uses.

## ***Integrate and Include***

The Planning Commission will:

- engage community and stakeholders in quality, meaningful dialogue; and demonstrate how that engagement influences the Planning Commissions' work
- collaborate with government agencies to maximise good planning outcomes
- strengthen and nurture engagement with Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal community.

## ***Heritage and Natural Environment***

The Planning Commission's work will recognise and celebrate heritage and the natural environment by:

- integrating land use planning, heritage management and environmental protection
- recognising the value of and promoting the protection of heritage assets
- recognising the value of existing natural environments to the community
- promoting sustainable use of resources
- promoting integration of resilience to natural risks and disasters
  - acknowledging and supporting the lifestyle and opportunities afforded by the Territory's unique natural environment.

# Strategic planning framework

**The strategic planning framework is made up of plans and policies that form part of the NT Planning Scheme 2020. The framework establishes a strategic direction for the Northern Territory and its regions that facilitates long-term management of development to achieve coordinated and efficient planning outcomes. The plans and policies of the framework describe how the government expects land to develop now and in the future.**

The strategic framework covers different areas of the NT. Policies and plans are arranged in the following order:

- Territory-wide policy
- regional land use plans
- subregional land use plans
- area plans.

The plans and policies forming the strategic framework are designed to work together to coordinate future development. This ensures that needs are met in a way that considers and reflects local differences.

The Planning Commission consults with the community to develop plans and policies that will form part of the strategic planning framework.

Since 2015, the Planning Commission has completed 14 land use plan projects, and as at 30 June 2023 is preparing five new land use plans in consultation with the community and key stakeholders, .

Land Use Plan projects on the Commission's work program include the Coolalinga Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan, the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan, an Area Plan for Greater Holtze and Subregional Land Use Plans for Greater Weddell in the Darwin region and South of the Gap in Alice Springs.

The Commission is also actively investigating new planning policy and revision of guidelines and assessment criteria for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme. This includes the development of an enduring Territory-wide Strategic Directions Planning Policy and finalisation of the Designing Better project, which aims to deliver better building design and encourage quality built form outcomes for apartment and mixed use developments across the Territory.

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**Territory-wide Policy**

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**Regional Land Use Plan**

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**Subregional Land Use Plan**

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**Area Plan**



# Stakeholder engagement

The *Planning Act 1999* requires that the Planning Commission's Annual Report include a review of the Commission's activities in relation to its Community Engagement Policy.

In 2022-23, the Planning Commission engaged with stakeholders in relation to four projects.

More detailed discussion on each of these projects may be found on the following pages.

## Greater Holtze Area Plan

The Planning Commission completed two stages of community and stakeholder engagement on the draft Greater Holtze Area Plan in 2022-23.

## Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan

The Planning Commission is considering the outcomes of Stage 2B consultation, conducted in May and June 2023 and refining the draft Area Plan. The Planning Commission looks forward to presenting the final draft Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan to the Minister for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme 2020 during 2023-24.



**LETTERS / MAIL-OUTS**  
1642



**FACE TO FACE**  
174



### NT Strategic Directions Planning Policy

The Planning Commission is currently undertaking an investigation and research stage, into an overarching NT Strategic Directions Planning Policy, which will inform and guide more detailed planning work. This stage has actively involved an across government project working group. Broad community and stakeholder engagement is likely to occur in 2023-24 and inform the development of this policy.

### Alice Springs South of the Gap Subregional Land Use Plan

The Planning Commission is undertaking technical studies and has commenced engagement with a project working group. This group comprises representatives of key government and non-government organisations. This work will investigate opportunities for the area identified by the Alice Springs Regional Land Use Plan south of Heavitree Gap. Community and stakeholder engagement is likely to occur in 2023-24 to inform the development of a draft Subregional Plan.



**WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS**  
99



**WEBSITE HITS**  
4100



**EMAILS SENT**  
158

# Project updates

## Area Plan

### Greater Holtze

*Project status: Ongoing*

The Northern Territory Planning Commission commenced preparation of the Greater Holtze Area Plan (GHAP) in 2022-23. The Greater Holtze district includes Holtze, Kowandi, Howard Springs North and Holtze North localities.

The preparation of the GHAP follows the inclusion of the Holtze to Elizabeth River Subregional Land Use Plan in the NT Planning Scheme in July 2022. It provides the next level of detailed planning for the Greater Holtze area.

The GHAP is a plan for the long term, facilitating development of residential land, identifying and confirming strategic corridors for main roads, rail and utilities and responding to the pattern of current and future land uses for the growth of the broader Holtze to Elizabeth River subregion.

The draft GHAP was prepared in close collaboration with a Project Control Group comprising representatives from the Litchfield Council, City of Palmerston Council and various NT Government agencies. Two stages of stakeholder engagement also informed the draft Area Plan.

The first stage of stakeholder consultation, conducted in June 2022, centred on a discussion paper that summarised the context and issues to be addressed through the preparation of an area plan. Feedback received through that stage of engagement informed the Commissions' preparation of the first draft GHAP.





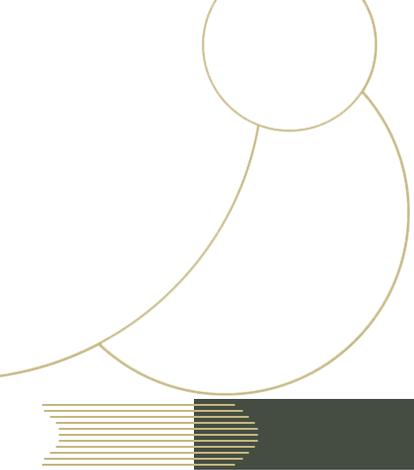
A second stage of stakeholder engagement, with a focus on the first draft Area Plan, was then conducted from November 2022. Key issues raised during this stage of consultation were:

- calls to protect waterways, wetland and wildlife
- support for shared movement corridors and recognition of the active recreation benefits
- concerns regarding potential impact to established rural character
- requests to maximise recreation and conservation areas for their contributions to lifestyle and wellbeing

- requests to respond to climate change
- requests to respond to the urban heat island effect
- concerns regarding lot sizes and limited housing choice
- concerns regarding standardised designs reflecting developer interests.

The Planning Commission has now completed the draft Greater Holtze Area Plan and looks forward to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics' consideration of the plan for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme 2020 during 2023-24.





## Area Plan

### Coolalinga Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre

*Project Status: Complete*

The Coolalinga Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre is increasingly becoming a conveniently accessed, interconnected and diverse service centre that serves a broad regional catchment, offering higher order shopping, commerce, entertainment, health and community facilities.

In 2016, the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan was included in the NT Planning Scheme. It identifies that the Litchfield subregion could accommodate a projected need for 500 dwellings over the next five to ten years within existing rural activity centres. As well as the future urban areas of Holtze, Weddell and Murrumujuk, the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan identifies four rural activity centres with potential for growth. These are Howard Springs, Coolalinga Freds Pass, Humpty Doo and Berry Springs.

In May 2017, the NT Planning Commission commenced public consultation to develop the proposed Area Plan and planning principles for the Coolalinga Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre. The land use concept for Coolalinga and Freds Pass within the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan was used as the starting point for infrastructure investigations and community engagement to develop

options for the draft planning principles and area plan.

Concurrent to the Planning Commission's work on the area plan, the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics has been working on and consulting with stakeholders on traffic management options for the area.

On 10 March 2023, following two stages of community and stakeholder engagement by the Planning Commission, and statutory exhibition of the draft area plan, the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics amended the NT Planning Scheme 2020 to include the Coolalinga Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan.

The Area Plan will guide the development of land within the Coolalinga Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre. The identified opportunities for change will accommodate growth without impacting on the amenity of the broader rural living area and support the efficient delivery of infrastructure for the continued viability of the rural activity centre.





## Area Plan

### Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre

*Project Status: Ongoing*

The NT Planning Commission began consultation on a land use plan for Humpty Doo and completed two rounds of community consultation in 2018.

Stage One consultation occurred in February and March 2018. The Planning Commission asked the community to imagine what the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre should look like in the future. This stage included a Discussion Paper that outlined what was already known about land tenure, the natural environment, infrastructure, traffic management options, and details on integrated land uses and land use transitions.

Stage Two consultation, conducted in October and November 2018, presented a draft Area Plan and Planning Principles based on investigations and feedback received during Stage One. During Stage Two, feedback was sought on the draft Area Plan that included potential areas for change, traffic management options, draft Planning Principles, and options to expand or reduce the extent of the Rural Activity Centre boundary.

Feedback from Stages One and Two made it clear that further investigations into the arterial and local road networks of Humpty Doo were needed before land use plans could be finalised. In particular, the location of a future collector road network connecting Humpty Doo to other centres to the north and south, and the location and treatment of intersections along the Arnhem Highway when the highway is eventually duplicated was needed.

A final concept design for the future duplication of the Arnhem Highway between the Stuart Highway and Kostka Road intersections was completed by the NT Government Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and released to the community in late 2022.

The NT Planning Commission subsequently revised and updated the draft Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan, taking into account previous consultation and the outcomes of the Arnhem Highway Duplication Planning Study.

Stage 2B consultation launched with a community information stall at Freds Pass Rural Show on 27 and 28 May 2023.

Stage 2B consultation presented an opportunity for members of the public, community organisations, government and industry to comment on the draft Area Plan and its planning principles and objectives. Thoughts, comments, questions and feedback on the draft Plan were encouraged to assist the Planning Commission to refine and finalise the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan.

Stage 2B consultation concluded on 30 June 2023, with a total of 28 public and government agency submissions being received. Key topics raised through the consultation period included:

- required and potential road networks and Arnhem Highway duplication
- lot sizes and proposed rural residential transition areas
- pressures of development and impacts on the natural environment and character of Humpty Doo.

The Planning Commission is considering the outcomes of Stage 2B consultation and refining the draft Area Plan. The Planning Commission looks forward to presenting the final draft Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme 2020 during 2023-24.



## Subregional Land Use Plan

### Alice Springs - South of the Gap

*Project Status: Ongoing*

Development in Alice Springs has traditionally been located predominantly to the 'North of the Gap' – 'The Gap' referring to Heavitree Gap – an opening between the MacDonnell Ranges which serves as the primary southern entrance into Alice Springs for road and rail.

Much of the developable land available for the continued growth of Alice Springs sits to the south of the Gap due to a range of development constraints to the North.

The recent report 'Bringing Land to Market: An Independent Review of Land Development Processes, Land under Development and Titled Land' recommends prioritising land-use planning and infrastructure planning for key localities south of the Gap. The report also noted that suitable industrial land is limited in Alice Springs north of the Gap.

The overarching objective of the South of the Gap Subregional Plan is to provide a detailed land use plan for South of the Gap, in line with the vision expressed in the overarching Alice Springs Regional Land Use Plan. The plan is to be completed at a subregional level, providing a land use framework and associated policies to guide long term future development opportunities South of the Gap.

A number of preliminary background studies are currently being developed that will provide input into the South of the Gap subregional plan including an Alice Springs commercial and retail study, investigation into land suitable for industrial uses and a preliminary Bohning Road redevelopment concept.

Community and stakeholder engagement on this exciting project is anticipated during 2023-24.



## Territory-wide Policy

### NT Strategic Directions Planning Policy

*Project Status: Ongoing*

The Northern Territory Planning Commission sees the benefit of the NT articulating its interests in town planning from a whole-of-Territory perspective. Recognising the need for such perspective, in 2020-21, the Planning Commission resolved to develop an enduring Territory-wide Strategic Directions Planning Policy.

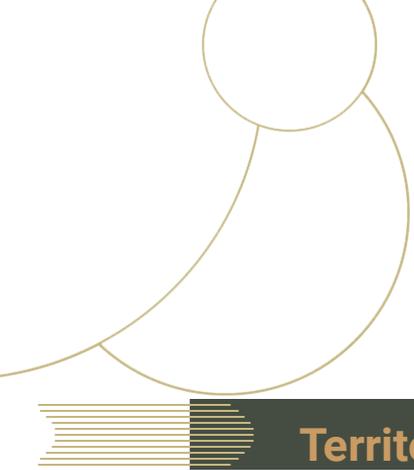
It is envisaged the policy will sit at the apex of the strategic planning framework within the NT Planning Scheme 2020 and address a wide range of matters (topics) that need to be considered in strategic planning and decision making in the Territory. The policy will set directions to underpin the delivery of future strategic polices, land use plans and development to ensure the Territory is a liveable, resilient and sustainable place, in line with other key government policies.

Five themes will form the initial basis of inquiry for the policy development:

- Respect, Respond and Protect
- Liveable & Diverse
- Connected and Efficient
- Prosperous and Productive
- Resilient and Responsive.

Broad stakeholder engagement on the NT Strategic Directions Planning Policy is expected in 2023-24.





## Territory-wide Policy

### Designing Better

*Project Status: Complete*

The Designing Better project was an initiative of the NT Planning Commission. It focused on development controls specifically relating to apartment and mixed use developments in Zones MR, HR, C and CB. Designing Better aimed to:

- respond to context through design
- respond to climate and contribute to the Territory's built form character
- embrace innovation through flexible, best practice design solutions
- encourage well designed liveable spaces for people living in apartment and mixed use developments.

The Stage One consultation paper identified key areas for discussion within existing requirements in the then NT Planning Scheme (2007). Consultation on this stage was completed in March 2020.

Stage Two material presented a suite of draft development requirements and amendments for consideration in the NT Planning Scheme, with additional guidance notes as supporting documentation. Stage Two consultation was completed in April 2021.

The feedback received through both stages of consultation informed the finalisation of the proposed changes to the planning scheme and the guidance notes, with the Planning Commission providing the final proposal to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and requesting that it be considered for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme 2020 through a planning scheme amendment in 2021-22.

The Minister subsequently decided to consolidate the Designing Better proposal with ongoing work of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. This work focussed on improving the design of buildings and places, and proposed changes to the development requirements in Part 5 of the planning scheme.

The consolidated planning scheme amendment was initially exhibited in February 2022 and sought to incorporate economic recovery actions and Designing Better into the NT Planning Scheme 2020 by:

- introducing Overlay 3.x GL – Gateway Locations
- amending components of Part 4 (Zones and Assessment Tables) and Part 5 (Development Requirements)
- amending Schedule 2.2. (General Definitions)

Following the initial exhibition period, the proposed amendment was updated to incorporate and respond to feedback received. An altered proposal was exhibited throughout September 2022.

The Planning Commission welcomed the Minister's decision in February 2023 to amend the NT Planning Scheme 2020.



# Providing the minister with information And advice to inform decisions

## Significant Development Proposals

There were no significant development proposals referred to the Planning Commission in 2022-23.

## Proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permits

In 2022-23 the Planning Commission conducted hearings and reported to the Minister on three proposals (refer Table 2).

Additionally, the Planning Commission provided the Minister with reports on ten proposals that were exhibited but did not require hearing (refer Table 3).

Table 2: Hearings - Planning Scheme Amendments (PSA) and Exceptional Development Permits (EDP)

NO.	HEARING DATE	PARCELS	PURPOSE	MEMBERS CONDUCTING HEARING
53	8 March 2023	Lot 2 LT076/006 (335) Old Bynoe Rd, Hundred of Cavenagh	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Club (veterans retreat) with ancillary Caravan Park	David Ritchie
52	16 February 2023	Lot 9107 (112) Barrett Dr, Desert Springs, Town of Alice Springs	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Staged redevelopment & expansion of hotel, casino and entertainment complex and 235 dwellings-multiple in buildings of up to 5 storeys.	David Ritchie Fran Kilgariff
51	2 November 2022	N/A	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Amend the NT Planning Scheme 2020 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce an overlay to Part 3</li> <li>• Omit and replace Parts 4 and 5</li> <li>• Amend Schedule 2</li> </ul> (Planning Reform Phase 2 Stage 1 – incl Designing Better)	David Ritchie



Table 3: Reports to Minister without Hearings - Planning Scheme Amendments (PSA) and Exceptional Development Permits (EDP)

PARCELS	PURPOSE	EXHIBITION START	EXHIBITION END
Lot 38 (7) Bray St, Town of Elliott	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Change of use to office and ancillary rooming accommodation	20/01/2023	17/02/2023
Lots 1954 & 1955 (20 & 22) Bloomfield St and Lot 1971 (7) Newland St, Gillen, Town of Alice Springs	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Subdivision to create two lots less than 760m <sup>2</sup> and boundary realignment	04/11/2022	02/12/2022
Lot 8167 (8) Traeger Ave, The Gap, Town of Alice Springs	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> <i>Car Park (88 car parking spaces)</i>	30/09/2022	28/10/2022
Lot 1018 (2) Stuart Tce, The Gap, Town of Alice Springs	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> <i>Car Park (83 car parking spaces)</i>	30/09/2022	28/10/2022
Lot 8898 (7) Waratah Cres, Fannie Bay, Town of Darwin	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Change of use from Vehicle Sales and Hire to Gymnasium (Leisure and Recreation)	28/10/2022	25/11/2022
Lot 9139 (6) Colson St, Town of Alice Springs	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone part of Lot 8898 (0.55 hectares) from Zone MR (Medium Density Residential) to Zone CP (Community Purpose)	04/11/2022	02/12/2022
Lot 7538 (25) Undoolya Road, East Side, Town of Alice Springs.	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Alterations and additions to an existing hotel/motel	26/08/2022	23/09/2022
Lot 3060 (86) Ross Smith Ave, Fannie Bay, Town of Darwin	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone LR (Low Density Residential) to Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential)	28/10/2022	25/11/2022
Lot 3062 (82) Ross Smith Ave, Fannie Bay, Town of Darwin	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone LR (Low Density Residential) to Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential)	07/10/2022	04/11/2022
N/A	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Introduce an overlay to allow greater residential density in Zone LR (Low Density Residential) in Katherine East	15/07/2022	12/08/2022

# Financial performance

## Planning Commission budget

The Planning Commission is financially supported by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.

The Northern Territory Government allocated \$365 000 to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics to fund the Planning Commission to develop strategic plans and planning policy, and to advise on significant development proposals.

From 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, the Planning Commission expended about \$317 000 or 87 per cent of the budget.

## Operating statement

The annual operating statement has been prepared from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics' accounts to reflect the financial activity of the Planning Commission.

### PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT

	2022-23
	\$'000
<b>Income</b>	
Appropriation	365
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	365
<b>Expenses</b>	
Employees	113
Other expenses	
Planning Commission member remuneration	130
Purchases of goods and services	74
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	317
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	48

### PLANNING COMMISSION BUDGET 2022-23

Budget \$'000	Estimate \$'000	% Change between budget and estimate	Actual \$'000	% Change between actual and estimate
365	365	0	317	13%





NORTHERN TERRITORY  
**PLANNING  
COMMISSION**