

NORTHERN  
TERRITORY  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION



# CONTENTS

<b>Letter to the Minister</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Planning for Regional Centres</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chairman's Message</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Rural Activity Centre Area Plans</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>About the NT Planning Commission</b>	<b>3</b>	Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre	18
<b>What We Do</b>	3	Coolalinga / Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre	19
<b>Developing Strategic Land Use Plans</b>	3	Gunn Point – Update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan	20
<b>Providing Statutory Advice</b>	3	<b>Reforming Planning Systems</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Advocacy and Collaboration</b>	3	<b>Designing Better</b>	21
<b>Arrangements with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics</b>	4	<b>NT-Wide Strategic Directions Planning Policy</b>	22
<b>Our Members</b>	4	<b>Providing the Minister with Information and Advice to Inform Decisions</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Meetings</b>	9	<b>Significant Development Proposals</b>	23
<b>NT Planning Commission Strategic Plan 2018-2021</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permits</b>	23
<b>Strategic Planning Priorities</b>	10	<b>Financial Performance</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Strategic Planning Framework</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Planning Commission Budget</b>	25
<b>Planning for Major Centres</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Operating Statement</b>	26
<b>Central Palmerston Area Plan</b>	15		
<b>Palmerston Environs Subregional Land Use Plan</b>	16		



# Letter to the Minister

Dear Minister,

## **2020–21 Annual Report – Northern Territory Planning Commission**

I am pleased to present you with the annual report for the Northern Territory Planning Commission for the 2020-21 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



**Successful communities are not made by planners – they are made by the people who live there. Understanding this, the work of the Planning Commission is to lay out a framework that enables safe, convenient, attractive and sustainable communities. This means understanding the needs of existing communities and giving them priority. This is why all plans prepared by the Commission are based on extensive engagement with affected communities and stakeholders.**

For much of this year, the restrictions necessary to keep Territory communities safe from Covid 19 required the Commission to adapt the way we engaged the community and stakeholders in our work. This was done by implementing a more comprehensive and user-friendly on-line service. Improved on-line services have had the welcome knock-on effect that the level of engagement by the community in

the work of the commission has increased significantly this year.

This year the Commission completed planning and stakeholder engagement on the Central Palmerston Area Plan and the Gunn Point update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan. The Central Palmerston Area Plan was formally made part of NT Planning Scheme on 16 April 2021. The work to update the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan was in response to the increased interest in Gunn Point and new more reliable data on soil and groundwater capability from the Mapping the Future project.

The Planning Commission is looking forward to working with the community throughout 2021 and 2022 to progress the Palmerston Environs Subregional Land Use Plan, and commencement of an Area Plan for Greater Holtze. The Planning Commissions' work with the community and stakeholders to plan for these regional centres responds to the fact that this area continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in the Territory. Engagement with the community will provide an understanding of what the community most values, the demand for social and physical infrastructure and what land use changes will be needed to support anticipated future growth.

As well as planning for individual communities, the Planning Commission has continued work on the all-embracing project on built form: "Designing Better" – that will

contribute to the Territory's unique character and encourage innovation. The commission is also working on a Territory wide scale in developing the NT Strategic Directions Planning Policy. This policy will sit at the apex of the strategic planning framework within the NT Planning Scheme 2020 and set broad objectives to be achieved across strategic planning and decision making in the Territory.

Finally, I would like to welcome Allan McGill to the board and also thank fellow commissioners for maintaining their enthusiasm and support throughout a year of video conferencing. All of us on the Commission extend our thanks to our support staff who have adapted to the new working arrangements with energy, good humour and professionalism.

# 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; and/or
- 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 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 2020-21 the Planning Commission has provided expert advice and input to a number of initiatives and consultation processes including Government's Planning Reform agenda.



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

Under section 81E of the Act, the Chief Executive of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics 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.

The department 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 2020-21 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 Associations.

## 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

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– 2015. Paul was also the inaugural Chief Executive and Chairman of the South Australian EPA from 2002 – 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, in organisational and regulatory reform and in the delivery of strategic environmental and business outcomes.

Paul is also chairman of a national Cooperative Research Centre on Contamination and Remediation of the Environment; chair of the WA Marine Science Institution, deputy Chair of the CRC on Transformation 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 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.



## Fran Kilgariff AM

Ex officio 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 a long experience in various aspects of Territory affairs.**

Her community involvement has included being Mayor of Alice Springs for 8 years, on the Board of St John Ambulance NT for over 16 years, president of the YMCA of Alice Springs for 8 years and on the National YMCA Board where she was vice-President for 3 years. She is currently on

the Board of Venture Housing, a not for profit affordable housing company and Chair of Olive Pink Botanical Gardens.

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 Alice Springs. She is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (FAICD)



## Dorte Ekelund

**Ex officio 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, 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.



## Robert Jennings

**Representative of the Local Government Association of the NT  
(appointed 13 July 2017)**

**Robert is the 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/ 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/ developer organisations over the last 20 years. He has experience across a wide range

of businesses, government, infrastructure, land development, urban planning, architecture, building & 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 Bachelors of Architecture, Bachelors of Economics, Bachelors 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 last 40 years as a CEO or in senior management positions, and as Chief Executive of the Northern Territory Departments of Local Government and Housing.**

His method of working relies on strong links to the community through formal consultation and informally by simply participating in community life. With this in mind, Allan has held and continues to hold many longstanding committee and board positions, often as Chair, President or in a key office bearing position.

Allan's skills and experience in governance, leadership and corporate development are particularly well suited to managing projects, navigating intergovernmental relations and organisational capacity-building, whether in local government, state government, not-for-profit, or institutional settings. He has strong links with the Indigenous community and a thorough understanding of

Aboriginal culture and service delivery in remote regions. His experience as Manager of the construction company, Territory Alliance constructing housing and infrastructure across the NT, provided him with an insight into the private sector and the complexities of working across three levels of Government and a program with competing objectives.

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 Company, 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.

# Meetings

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

## The Planning Commission held FIVE meetings in 2020–21.

With travel restrictions and physical distancing requirements resulting from the global novel coronavirus pandemic, meetings throughout 2020-21 have been conducted as a mix of in-person and video conferences.

MEETING	PRESENT	APOLOGY	
43 <sup>rd</sup> meeting: 13 August 2020	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Allan McGill	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	Suzanne Philip Robert Jennings
44 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 20 Oct 2020	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip	Robert Jennings Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	
45 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 1 December 2020	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip	Robert Jennings Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	
46 <sup>th</sup> meeting: 26 February 2021	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Allan McGill	Robert Jennings Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	
47 <sup>th</sup> Meeting: 19 April 2021	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Allan McGill	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff	Robert Jennings

Table 1: Planning Commission meetings in 2020-21

# *NT Planning Commission* **Strategic Plan 2018–2021**

The NT Planning Commission 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is a high-level document that outlines:

- the vision for how our work will affect the Northern Territory
- our purpose
- the principles that will guide our consideration of issues and decision-making.

The Strategic Plan also identifies a broad work program for the 2018-2021 period. The Strategic Plan is a flexible document meaning that projects and priorities can be added as the need arises.

The Strategic Plan is available on the following pages and on our website.

## **Progress on Strategic Priorities**

Throughout 2020-21 the Planning Commission has made significant progress on a number of priorities identified in the Strategic Plan, including:

- Planning for major centres with:
  - the completion and inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme of the Central Palmerston Area Plan; and
  - initial work on the development of the Palmerston Subregional Land Use Plan.
- Planning for regional centres through:
  - continued work on the Coolalinga/Freds Pass and Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plans; and
  - the completion and inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme of amendments to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use plan as it relates to Gunn Point.
- Continuing progress on reforming planning systems through the second stage of stakeholder consultation on the Designing Better project and commencement of preliminary work on an NT-wide Strategic Directions Planning Policy.

# Our Strategic Plan

## Vision

As the Territory's economy grows, the community and stakeholders are engaged in an open and meaningful way to enable planning for future needs.

## Purpose

Set 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.

## Principles

The Planning Commission will have regard to the following principles:

- Engage the community and stakeholders
- Collaborate with government agencies to maximise good planning outcomes
- Model and promote innovation, leadership and excellence
- Integrate land use planning, infrastructure planning and environmental protection
- Manage resources sustainably
- Integrate resilience to natural hazards
- Promote a variety of recreational, workplace and housing choices
- Support improved efficiency of urban and regional infrastructure
- Protect and sustain existing natural and built environments that are valued by the community
- Promote ways for the built environment to contribute to mitigate risks generated by climate change
- Promote high quality, flexible urban design, and safe, respectful and comfortable places for everyone
- Promote technological solutions that improve efficiency and effectiveness in managing urban and environmental systems.



# Goals

The functions of the Planning Commission as listed in section 81B of Planning Act 1999

Develop Integrated Strategic Plans, Guidelines and Assessment Criteria

Advise on Significant Development Proposals

Consult and report on proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permit applications

Research and analysis of strategic planning issues  
Regularly review NT Planning Scheme

# Priorities

Projects identified in the NTPC Work Program

Reform planning systems to promote effectiveness and efficiency

Provide the Minister with information and advice to inform decisions on proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permit applications

Provide the Minister with information and advice to inform decisions on Significant Development Proposals

Planning for regional centres

Planning for major centres

# Results

Tangible outcomes that can be practically used by the community, industry and Government

Central Darwin Area Plan (CDAP) launched with community support

Central Alice Springs Area Plan (CASAP) launched with community support

Central Palmerston Area Plan (CPAP) launched with community support

Stuart Highway (Darwin Region) Employment Corridor planning study and Area Plans (11 Mile, Pinelands, Holtze & Kowandi) launched with community support

Coolalinga/Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan launched with community support

Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan launched with community support

Tennant Creek Land Use Plan (TCLUP) launched with community support

Gunn Point Subregional Land Use Plan launched with community support

Katherine East Area Plan (KEAP) launched with community support

To provide considered and timely Significant Development Reports as required from time to time

To provide considered and timely reports to the Minister on consultation conducted and submissions received relating to proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permit applications

Amendments to the Planning Scheme and design guidelines Designing Better Multiple dwellings and mixed-use developments

Introduce Planning Scheme Amendments relating to building design criteria, including built form, heights and interaction with public space

Review NT Planning Scheme Assessment Criteria

# 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.

**Territory-wide policy**

**Regional land use plans**

**Subregional land use plans**

**Area plans**



# Planning for Major Centres

## Area plans

### Central Palmerston Area Plan

*Project status: Complete*

**Palmerston is the family capital of the Territory.**

The NT Planning Commission has prepared the Central Palmerston Area Plan as a framework to guide growth and development for Central Palmerston that:

- prioritises investment in the Palmerston City Centre as an employment, living and entertainment hub;
- retains Yarrowonga as a key industry and employment hub for the Darwin Region;
- promotes a connected, multi-modal movement and transport network; and
- fosters improved amenity to create a sense of place for residents and visitors.

The Area Plan returns the focus to the city centre and envisions Central Palmerston as a thriving destination, reflecting the energy and opportunities of the growing and diverse community.

High quality built form and welcoming public spaces will further establish the city centre as an engaging civic heart with a focus on lifestyle, entertainment and hospitality. Central Palmerston is to have a balanced mix of commercial, retail, community, residential and recreational opportunities, underpinned by an efficient multi-modal transport network.

The Central Palmerston Area Plan considers the role Central Palmerston plays in providing key services and employment opportunities to the wider region that includes East Arm, Holtze, Howard Springs, Coolalinga, Virginia and Humpty Doo, with focus areas being the Boulevard Precinct, North Link and South Link.

Since 2017, the Planning Commission has undertaken extensive consultation over two stages. Feedback was collected from all areas of the community, including residents, landowners, local government, businesses and industry. Key outcomes sought by the community for Central Palmerston were for:

- more green spaces and shading;
- a welcoming City Centre;

- more recreation facilities for all age groups; and
- better walking and cycling experiences.

Concerns have also been taken into consideration, including the key concern from the business community about the economic viability of the City Centre, noting the impact of additional commercial developments in Yarrowonga and the broader region.

With consultation complete, the Planning Commission finalised the Area Plan and recommended the Minister consider amending the Planning Scheme to include the Central Palmerston Area Plan.

Following a period of public exhibition and submissions, the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistic amended the NT Planning Scheme to include the Central Palmerston Area Plan as part of the strategic framework on 16 April 2021.

The Central Palmerston Area Plan will now provide the future planning policy for Central Palmerston when assessing requests to vary planning scheme provisions, change land use and/or rezone land.

## Subregional land use plans

### Palmerston Environs Subregional Land Use Plan

*Project status: Ongoing*

The Planning Commission is developing a subregional land use plan for the environs of Palmerston, being the area surrounding Palmerston. The area includes Greater 11 Mile, Greater Holtze, Virginia South-West, Archer and Mitchell West.

The Planning Commission works to identify and plan for the provision of suitable land to accommodate growth of the Darwin region in the near to far term.

The Planning Commission's work in preparing the subregional land use plan for the environs of Palmerston seeks to:

- help the community to understand the challenges and contribute to a land use plan for the longer term;
- respond to the opportunities and constraints present;
- identify extensive areas for open space and/or conservation; and
- to identify optimal land uses within the study area to support the hierarchy of activity centres, with consideration given to the primacy of the Palmerston City Centre.

Stage One consultation commenced on 27 May 2021 and was an opportunity for key stakeholders and residents of the study area to learn about the project and have their say.

The feedback from Stage One consultation will aid the Planning Commission in preparing a draft Subregional Land Use Plan for further consultation in 2021-22.



# Planning for Regional Centres

## Rural Activity Centre Area Plans

The Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan, introduced into the Northern Territory Planning Scheme in July 2016, was a major step towards providing an updated strategic land use framework for the Litchfield area.

The subregional plan was a result of extensive consultation with the rural community about the importance of protecting the rural lifestyle, while planning for future population growth in the area.

The subregional plan identified four rural activity centres as locations to focus future housing options and to plan for transport and infrastructure services. These rural activity centres are:

- Howard Springs;
- Coolalinga/Freds Pass;
- Humpty Doo; and
- Berry Springs.

The Planning Commission developed, in consultation with the community, the Howard Springs Rural Activity Centre Area Plan, which was included in the NT Planning Scheme in 2018.

The Howard Springs Rural Activity Centre Area Plan now helps guide land use change and development in that area.

The Planning Commission in 2020-21 continued to focus on the Coolalinga/Freds Pass and Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plans.



## Area plans

### Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre

*Project status: Ongoing*

**It is important to plan for growth of the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre in a way that maintains the amenity and lifestyle of the rural area.**

Humpty Doo is facing many challenges and with them come planning opportunities. These challenges include:

- meeting housing demand and choice for all stages of life;
- providing adequate infrastructure services to support growth within the boundaries of the activity centre; and
- identifying subregional transport connections to Noonamah and Howard Springs.

Our focus on planning in the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre will help maintain the amenity and lifestyle of the rural area, ensuring there are reticulated services available to the growing population, and help protect the rural area from ribbon development.

The Planning Commission, in 2018, conducted two stages of community engagement on the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan.

It became clear throughout the second stage of engagement that additional consideration of the local and regional road connections, including the Arnhem Highway, was required to progress the development of the area plan.

Key considerations are the north to south road connection, how the local roads will intersect with

the Arnhem Highway, and how these connections may improve movement north and south of the Arnhem Highway without compromising the existing Humpty Doo commercial centre.

The Planning Commission and the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, in partnership with Litchfield Council have continued to progress the Arnhem Highway Duplication Planning Study.

Once the outcomes of the Arnhem Highway Duplication are known the Planning Commission will incorporate the findings into Stage 2B community engagement on the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan. This is anticipated to commence in the latter half of 2021.



## Area plans

### Coolalinga/Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre

*Project status: Ongoing*

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

The Planning Commission's community engagement process for the Coolalinga/Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan was initially completed during 2017-18.

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.

With two stages of consultation complete on the Rural Activity Centre Area Plan the key themes that emerged from the consultation were:

- support for the proposed land use mix and distribution, including 800m<sup>2</sup> residential lots and 4000m<sup>2</sup> rural residential lots;
- an aspiration for increased and improved community facilities, as well as protection of environment and heritage values;

- a desire for improvements to the active transport network;
- a desire for a better connected local network, with improved safety and access to the arterial network; and
- a desire for improved pedestrian safety and connectivity in the area.

The Coolalinga/Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan has since been exhibited as a proposed Planning Scheme amendment.

The Planning Commission looks forward to the next steps in the planning process.



## Subregional land use plans

### Gunn Point – Update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan

*Project status: Ongoing*

**Gunn Point Peninsula, including the future township of Murrumujuk, sits within the municipality of Litchfield. There are few permanent residents within the area, however there is a high level of visitation for a range of recreational pursuits, including access to popular camping and fishing locations. Murrumujuk was first identified in 1984 as having potential for a rural centre.**

**The Darwin Regional Land Use Plan 2015 identified an opportunity for strategic industry to be established in the far-term at Glyde Point and a potential deep water port in its Darwin Region Structure Plan.**

The Planning Commission's work to update the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan was in response to the increased interest in Gunn Point and the outcomes of the natural resource investigations from the Mapping the Future project, which assessed and mapped the natural resources of the Gunn Point area.

With the outcomes from the Mapping the Future project, the Planning Commission was able to define current information about land capability and the land use

structure plan could be updated to reflect the best use of land while protecting and preserving the environment for the community.

The Planning Commission commenced preliminary consultation with directly affected land owners and government agencies in late 2019; findings from this stage assisted in preparing the draft update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan.

The Planning Commission launched Stage Two community consultation in July 2020. Key issues raised by the community during Stage Two were:

- a need to maintain the natural and recreational environment;
- a need to ensure groundwater availability is not hindered;
- concern that hunting grounds may be eroded or diminished;
- concern that Murrumujuk beach may be diminished; and
- a need for additional consideration for the protection of the environment.

With completion of the two stages of consultation, the Planning Commission recommended the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics consider amending the NT Planning Scheme to include the Gunn

Point update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan 2016. The recommended update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan:

- confirms the opportunity for strategic industry and a potential deep water port to be established at Glyde Point, in the long term;
- responds to cultural, historical and natural assets of the locality;
- provides opportunities for residential and economic growth;
- enables tourism ventures that respond to environmental cultural and recreational opportunities;
- protects the transport and infrastructure corridors required for development on the Gunn Point peninsula; and
- supports detailed planning for Murrumujuk at a future time.

A proposed Planning Scheme amendment to include the update Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan in the NT Planning Scheme 2020 was exhibited by the Minister in February 2021, with the Planning Commission holding a hearing on submissions received during the third stage of consultation on 18 May 2021.

The Planning Commission looks forward to the Minister's decision on the proposed Planning Scheme amendment.

# Reforming Planning Systems

## Designing Better

### *Project status: Ongoing*

Designing Better is a territory wide project that seeks to encourage and enable commercial, residential apartment and mixed use buildings in the Northern Territory to:

- respond to context and celebrate local and regional differences;
- respond to climate and contribute to the Territory's built form character;
- embrace innovation through flexible, best practice design solutions; and
- make great places that provide meaningful, vibrant and liveable spaces for people.

Stage One of Designing Better consultation occurred over three sub-stages in 2019-20. Using the feedback received during Stage One, the Northern Territory Planning Commission prepared a suite of draft development requirements and guidance notes that specifically relate to apartment and mixed use buildings in:

- Zone MR (Medium Density Residential)
- Zone HR (High Density Residential)
- Zone CB (Central Business)
- Zone C (Commercial).

The draft development requirements were central to the Planning Commission's second stage of engagement and were structured to give community and industry a clear understanding of what may be amended within Part 5 of the NT Planning Scheme 2020, should the proposed development requirements be included within the Scheme.

Stage Two consultation was undertaken between 10 March 2021 and 16 April 2021. Over 1500 industry representatives and land owners were targeted via direct mail out and email to provide details of the project and encourage feedback, with more than

60 people across industry providing their views and input either by attending briefing sessions, one-on-one meetings, or via written submission.

The key themes during consultation focused on:

- Density controls for apartments;
- Residential setbacks for apartments; and
- Height controls for mixed use building.

While there were mixed views, overall stakeholders were supportive of policy and potential development requirements that promote better design outcomes, noting that the proposed recommendations will have positive impacts for streetscape, amenity, the built form and energy efficiency of buildings.



With two stages of consultation complete, the Planning Commission looks forward to finalising the Designing Better draft development requirements and guidance notes and anticipates recommending those to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for consideration as a proposed Planning Scheme amendment in 2021-22.

# NT-wide Strategic Directions Planning Policy

## *Project status: Ongoing*

The Northern Territory Planning Commission sees the benefit of the NT articulating its interests in urban and regional 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 explore the range of matters 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 policies, 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.

The Planning Commission looks forward to engaging with the community and stakeholders on this project during 2021-22.



# 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 2020-21.

## Proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permits

In 2020-21 the Planning Commission conducted hearings and reported to the Minister on seven proposals (Refer Table 2).

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

TABLE 2: HEARINGS - PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS (PSA) AND EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS (EPD)

NO.	HEARING DATE	PARCELS	PURPOSE	MEMBERS CONDUCTING HEARING
47	21 June 2021	Lot 5985 (19) Lambell Terrace, Town of Darwin	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone CP (Community Purpose) to Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential)	David Ritchie
46	7 June 2021	Portions 1841 – 1843 (440, 450 & 460) McMillans Road Hundred of Bagot	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone CV (Caravan Park) to Zones LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential) and PS (Public Open Space)	David Ritchie
45	18 May 2021	N/A	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Amendments to Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan – Gunn Point	David Ritchie
44	31 March 2021	Lot 5410 (41) Copeland Cres, Nakara, Town of Nightcliff	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone LR (Low Density Residential) to Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential)	David Ritchie
43	23 February 2021	NT Portion 4883 (81) Mahoney Rd, Cossack	<i>Application Type: EPD</i> Change of use to offices and dwelling-caregivers	David Ritchie

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED): HEARINGS - PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS (PSA) AND EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS (EPD)

NO.	HEARING DATE	PARCELS	PURPOSE	MEMBERS CONDUCTING HEARING
42	22 February 2021	Lot 6774 (8) 8 Albrecht Dr, Larapinta, Town of Alice Springs (Albrecht Oval)	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone PS (Public Open Space) to Zone OR (Organised Recreation)	David Ritchie Fran Kilgariff
41	8 September 2020	N/A	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Include the Area Plan for Coolalinga / Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre in the NT Planning Scheme.	David Ritchie Fran Kilgariff

TABLE 3: REPORTS TO MINISTER WITHOUT HEARINGS - PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS (PSA) AND EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS (EPD)

PARCELS	PURPOSE	EXHIBITION START DATE	EXHIBITION END DATE
Lot 89 (5) Noble Street Tennant Creek	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Rezone from Zone C (Commercial) to Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential)	12/03/2021	09/04/2021
Lot 1204 (161) Mitchell Street, Larrakeyah, Town of Darwin	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Alterations and additions to an existing two story building for a food premises-café and shop.	21/01/2021	26/02/2021
N/A	<i>Application Type: PSA</i> Proposal to amend the NT Planning Scheme 2020 to: omit the Palmerston City Centre Planning Principles and Area Plan and introduce the Central Palmerston Area Plan, and to amend the Palmerston Eastern Suburbs Planning Principles and Area Plans.	13/11/2020	11/12/2020
Lot 5310 (17) Nardoo Crt, Sadadeen, Town of Alice Springs	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Construct 2x multiple dwellings in 2 single storey buildings	28/08/2020	02/10/2020
N.T. Portion 981 570 Quarry Rd Lansdowne	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Industry (concrete batching plant)	15/07/2020	12/08/2020
N.T. Portion 7006 (Administrative Lot 535) Townsite of Angurugu	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Light industry, community centre with ancillary shop and office (Bush Medijina program)	06/03/2020	03/04/2020
Lot 3054 Town of Alice Springs 49 Carruthers Cres, Gillen	<i>Application Type: EDP</i> Construct 2x2 bedroom dwellings in 1 single storey building and retain an existing 3 bedroom dwelling	03/07/2020	31/07/2020

# Financial Performance

## Planning Commission Budget

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

The Northern Territory Government allocated \$370 000 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 2020 to 30 June 2021, the Planning Commission expended about \$267 000 or 72.16 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

	2019-20	2020-21
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Income</b>		
Appropriation	370	368
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employees	100	96
Other expenses		
Planning Commission Member remuneration	109	113
Purchases of goods and services	58*	56
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>103</b>

\*Includes \$3457.78 expended from Lands Planning DIPL budget

### PLANNING COMMISSION BUDGET

#### 2019-20

Budget \$'000	Estimate \$'000	% Change between budget and estimate	Actual \$'000	% Change between actual and estimate
370	370	0%	267	27.84%

#### 2020-21

Budget \$'000	Estimate \$'000	% Change between budget and estimate	Actual \$'000	% Change between actual and estimate
368	368	0%	265	27.98%







NORTHERN TERRITORY  
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