

NORTHERN
TERRITORY
PLANNING
COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-20



NORTHERN TERRITORY
PLANNING
COMMISSION



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Letter to the Minister

Dear Minister,

2019–20 Annual Report – Northern Territory Planning Commission

I am pleased to present you with the annual report for the Northern Territory Planning Commission for 2019-20.

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



Since our last Annual Report, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a new context for all our work. As a community we have changed the way we live, work and recreate but it is still too early to predict what changes will be adopted in the longer term.

Planning for the immediate future faces high levels of uncertainty. This is already presenting challenges and opportunities for planning policy and highlights the importance of adaptability, flexibility and resilience in both land use planning and development. It is more important than ever for planning to be based on a coordinated approach that is open to scrutiny, community collaboration on long-term objectives and use of sound evidence.

In 2019-20, the Planning Commission engaged the community and stakeholders to plan for the future needs of Territorians. This work has focussed on results that practically benefit the community, industry and government.

The Planning Commission completed several major area planning projects including the Central Darwin, Central Alice Springs and Katherine East Area Plans - all of which, along with the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan, are now formally incorporated in the NT Planning Scheme. The Commission, in collaboration with the Palmerston community has completed a draft area plan for Central Palmerston which is anticipated to be finalised early in the coming year. We have also continued our engagement with resident communities towards finalising area plans for the Coolalinga and Humpty Doo rural activity centres. Work on these rural activity centre area plans has highlighted the importance of integrating transport and land use planning.

In the coming year, the Commission will be preparing an amendment to the land use structure identified by the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan as it relates to Gunn Point, using the comprehensive natural resource assessment recently completed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, specifically, studies of soils and availability of groundwater.

The Commission has also been engaged in work to ensure our policies and processes are relevant and effective – from the Designing Better project to the reform of the NT planning system. We are hopeful that the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment will be enacted in the forthcoming year. If enacted, the Planning Scheme 2020 will replace the outdated and overly complex

2007 Planning Scheme and will simplify assessment processes and emphasise sound planning policy.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of all my fellow Commissioners in particular, the contribution of retiring member Mr Wayne Kraft (Krafty). Krafty has been a member of the Planning Commission since October 2015 as a function of his role as Chairman of the NT Heritage Council.

Krafty has been involved in the development and implementation of many significant plans and policies in his time with the Planning Commission. His communication skills have been integral to the successes of the Planning Commission throughout his tenure. On a personal note, I thank Krafty for the support he has given me in engaging with the residents of communities across the Territory from Alice Springs to Tennant Creek to Darwin. All of us on the Planning Commission wish Krafty all the best in his future endeavours.

I also thank Dr Ilka Schacht, who as Acting Chair of the Heritage Council, served on the Commission until Mr Allan McGill was permanently appointed to that role. Allan brings a wealth of experience to the Commission and we look forward to working with him in the coming years.

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 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 2019-20, 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 of the NT
- 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 2019-20, the Planning Commission had seven members from across the Territory and interstate who provide planning leadership and deliver professional, independent advice.

The Planning Commission strengthens links between the NT Environment Protection Authority, Development Consent Authority, Heritage Council and local government.

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 roles and also senior management and executive. This work includes extensive experience with statutory boards with roles under land development, land rights, and environment and heritage legislation.

For more than 20 years, David has held chief executive roles, leading organisations responsible for land resource planning, remote service delivery, parks and 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 and 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 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, 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 (CRC) 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, an independent statutory body responsible for determining development applications in the Territory.

She 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 Agents' Licensing Board, responsible for licensing real estate, business and conveyancing agents, investigating allegations and holding disciplinary inquiries about licensed agents.

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



Mr Wayne Kraft AM

**Ex officio member
(appointed 1 October 2015)**

South Australian by birth, Krafty transferred to Australia's Northern Territory with the ANZ Bank to Tennant Creek in August 1972.

In the early stages of his 'love affair' with Australia's Northern Territory, he also resided in Darwin, and Barrow Creek before settling in Alice Springs.

Perhaps best remembered as the 'mine host' of the Overlanders Steakhouse for almost 30 years, Krafty retired from active service in 2016.

On Australia Day 2019, Krafty was bestowed the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community through a wide range of Northern Territory organisations.

These include the NT TAB Board (Inaugural Board Member 1985 to 1991), the Community College of Central Australia (now a Charles Darwin University campus), six years with the Museum and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory, including two years as chairperson, honorary treasurer of Crime StoppersNT, council member and chairperson of the Heritage Council of the NT and member of the NT Planning Commission.



Dr Ilka Schacht

**Ex officio member
(1 November 2019 – 6 May
2020)**

Ilka has extensive experience in the cultural heritage sector in Australia and internationally, with a focus on the delivery and management of museums and galleries, and the development of related policies and programs. She has particular expertise in the preservation, significance assessment and use of cultural collections. Ilka is Director of Cultural Infrastructure and Policy in the Department of Tourism, Sport and Culture, overseeing the delivery of significant gallery and museum projects and providing high level policy advice.

Originally an archaeologist working at the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History

in Jordan and at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, Ilka has since worked in executive roles in museums in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and the Northern Territory, and has provided advice to universities and governments as a heritage consultant.

Ilka holds a PhD in Cultural Heritage Management, a Master of Science in Archaeology and a Bachelor of Arts (Classics and Ancient History). She is on the Heritage Council of the NT the National Trust NT Council, and is a member of the Australian Museums and Galleries Association.



Robert Jennings

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

Robert is the Chief Executive Officer of the Alice Springs Town Council, and previous CEO of the 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.



Fran Kilgariff AM

Member

(appointed 13 July 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 eight years, on the Board of St John Ambulance NT

since 2004, president of the YMCA of Alice Springs for eight years and on the national YMCA board where she was vice president for three years. She is currently on the board of Venture Housing, a not-for-profit affordable housing company and a chair of Olive Pink Botanic Garden.

Fran was awarded the Order of Australia Medal 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.



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 Director-General in the ACT Environment and Planning portfolio, Deputy Director-General of WA Department of Planning and Infrastructure, a commissioner on the WA Planning Commission

and was head of the Major Cities Unit in the Australian Government. She is currently Strategic Advisor – Office of CEO with SMEC (Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation), is an independent director on the boards of ICON Water and the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia, is on the University of Wollongong's Smart Infrastructure Facility Advisory Council and is an adjunct professor in planning at the University of Canberra.

Dorte holds a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Class 1 Hon.) and a Master of 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 five times per year.

The Planning Commission held FIVE meetings in 2019–20.

With travel restrictions and physical distancing requirements resulting from the global novel coronavirus pandemic, meetings 41 and 42 were held by videoconference.

MEETING	PRESENT	APOLGY
32 nd meeting: 15 August 2019	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff Wayne Kraft Robert Jennings
39 th meeting: 2 December 2019	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip	Ilka Schacht Robert Jennings Dorte Ekelund
40 th meeting: 26 February 2020	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Ilka Schacht	Robert Jennings Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff
41 st meeting: 21 April 2020	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Robert Jennings	Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff Ilka Schacht
42 nd Meeting: 30 June 2020	David Ritchie Paul Vogel Suzanne Philip Allan McGill	Robert Jennings Dorte Ekelund Fran Kilgariff

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 2019–20 the Planning Commission has made significant progress on a number of priorities in the strategic plan, including:

- planning for major centres with:
 - the completion and inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme of Area Plans for Central Darwin and Central Alice Springs
 - continued work on the Central Palmerston Area Plan
- planning for regional centres through:
 - the completion and inclusion of the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan and Katherine East Area Plan in the NT Planning Scheme
 - continued work on the Coolalinga/Freds Pass and Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plans
- significant progress on reforming planning systems through the first stages of stakeholder consultation on the Designing Better project.



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

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

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

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

Darwin Northern Suburbs Area Plan (DNSAP) launched with community support

Casuarina Area Plan (CAP) 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. 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 Planning Commission consults with the community to develop plans and policies that will form part of the strategic planning framework.

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
- sub regional land use plans
- area plans.

Territory-wide policy

Regional land use plans

Sub regional land use plans

Area plans



Planning for Major Centres

Area plans

Central Palmerston Area Plan

Project status: Ongoing

Palmerston is now the fastest growing city in the Northern Territory and is quickly becoming established as a family-focused, dynamic and multicultural regional hub. Central Palmerston is the centre of economic and social activity for the Palmerston Local Government Area and neighbouring districts.

NT Planning Commission is preparing the Central Palmerston Area Plan as a framework to guide growth and development in this area over the next 50 years. The Planning Commission conducted two stages of stakeholder consultation on the Central Palmerston Area Plan project during 2019-20.

The first stage of consultation, running for five weeks from 24 July to 30 August 2019, engaged with over 700 people and focused on gathering information, building an understanding of stakeholder issues and sensitivities, and providing opportunities for community feedback. This stage was an

opportunity for the community to participate in the planning process, contributing to the development of a vision to meet the future needs of the Palmerston community.

Particular issues explored with stakeholders during Stage One engagement include:

- perceptions of the area now and aspirations for the future
- current and expected needs of stakeholders for movement and transport, essential infrastructure and social infrastructure.

Following the initial stage of stakeholder engagement, the Planning Commission prepared the draft Central Palmerston Area Plan. The draft area plan takes into account the findings of stakeholder consultation and previous planning work as well as studies into demographics, economics, transport, social infrastructure and essential infrastructure.

The area plan is intended to provide a land use and development framework for Central Palmerston that:

- caters for the changing needs of the population

- 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
- fosters improved amenity to create a sense of place for residents and visitors.

Stage Two consultation included the release of the Draft Central Palmerston Area Plan and the Draft Needs Assessments for feedback. Stage Two commenced on 25 June 2020 and finished on 7 August 2020.

The Planning Commission looks forward to finalising the draft Central Palmerston Area Plan early in 2020-21 and recommending the area plan to the Minister for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme.



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Central Darwin Area Plan

Project status: Complete

The Central Darwin Area Plan provides long-term guidance for land use and development for areas from the Waterfront to Cullen Bay, including Frances Bay, Larrakeyah, the former Tank Farm and the city centre.

The Planning Commission commenced work on the Central Darwin Area Plan in mid-2017. The area plan brings together and builds on previous studies, projects and community feedback and provides a guide for land use and development that will strengthen Central Darwin as the heart of a vibrant, functional and attractive capital by:

- reinforcing the CBD as the vibrant commercial, cultural, administrative, tourist and civic heart of the Territory
- encouraging improved links between the CBD and surrounding areas
- supporting improved amenity for residents and visitors
- incorporating and revising the current Frances Bay and Waterfront Area Plans
- maintaining the character of established localities such as Larrakeyah
- respecting environmental, heritage and recreation values of the locality.

Following two stages of stakeholder consultation during 2017 and 2018, the Planning Commission recommended the draft Central Darwin Area Plan to the Minister for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme.

A proposed Planning Scheme amendment to include the draft Central Darwin Area Plan in the NT Planning Scheme was exhibited by the Minister in June 2019, with the Planning Commission holding a hearing on submissions received during this third stage of consultation on 19 August 2019.

The Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics has since amended the NT Planning Scheme to include the Central Darwin Area Plan as part of the strategic framework and make a number of minor amendments to the NT Planning Scheme in response to the introduction of the document.

Amendment No. 518 came into effect on publication in the *NT News* on 15 November 2019.





Area plans

Central Alice Springs Area Plan

Project status: Complete

Alice Springs is the largest urban centre outside of Darwin and Palmerston and is seen as Australia’s inland capital. Alice Springs has developed as a significant regional economic hub serving the remote areas of the Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland.

To cater for change and to keep up to date with current planning for Alice Springs, the Planning Commission has completed work on an area plan for the Central Alice Springs area, covering the CBD and surrounds.

Stage One consultation for Central Alice Springs was held during

October and November 2017. Community information sessions, a community workshop and information stalls all formed part of that consultation.

The Planning Commission’s Stage Two consultation during July and August 2018 centred on a draft area plan. Key issues raised by the community during Stage Two were to:

- include more of the Todd River in the study area
- provide for better facilities and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists
- discourage industrial use of the old ‘Shell site’, and promote development that caters for tourism while addressing the cultural and environmental values of the locality
- retain public open space and community use at Anzac Oval.

With two stages of consultation complete, the Planning Commission recommended the Minister consider amending the NT Planning Scheme to include the Central Alice Springs Area Plan.

Statutory exhibition of a proposed Planning Scheme Amendment occurred during January and February 2019 and the Planning Commission conducted a hearing in relation to submissions received on 15 April 2019.

The Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics has now amended the NT Planning Scheme.

Amendment No. 523, came into effect on publication in the *NT News* on 23 August 2019.

Planning for Regional Centres

Rural Activity Centre Area Plans

The Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan, introduced into the NT 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.

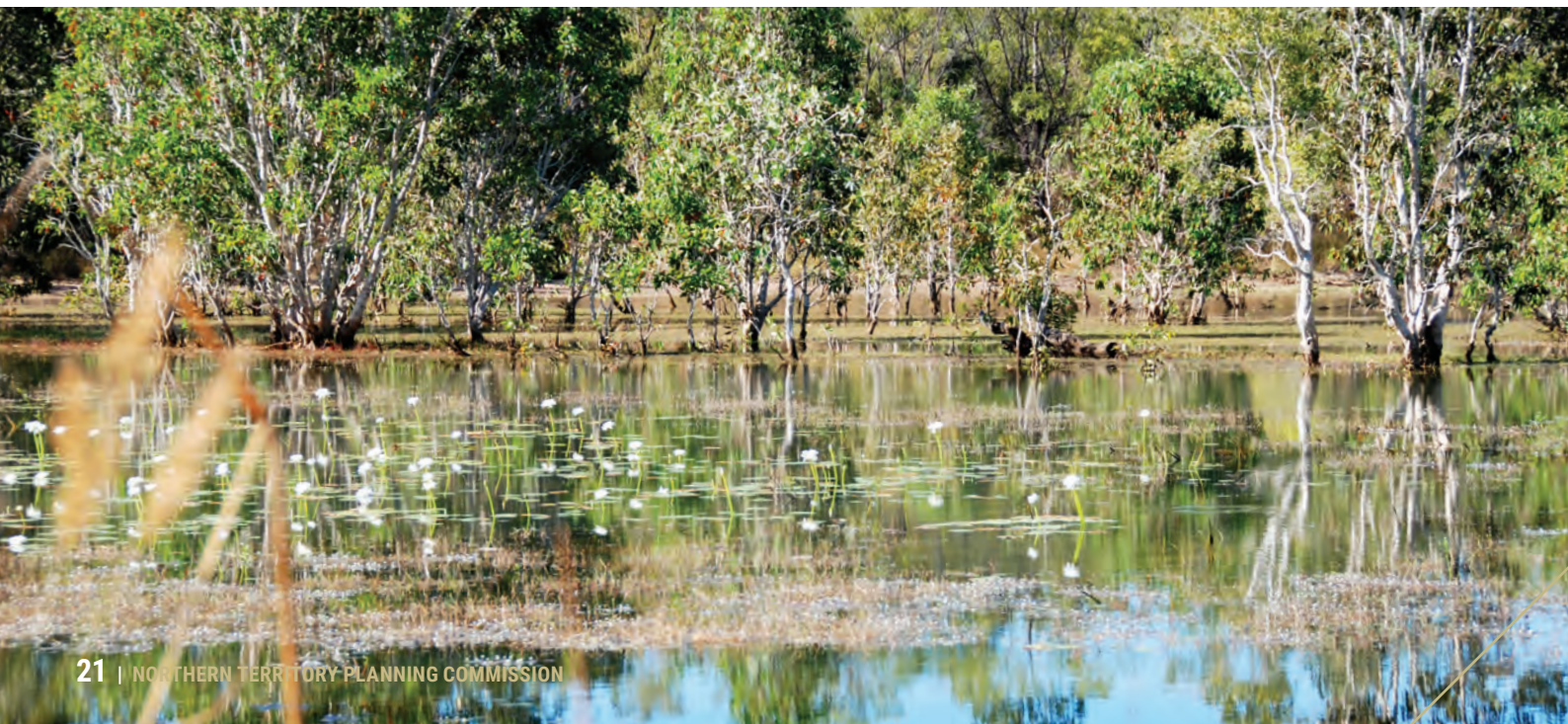
The subregional plan identified four rural activity centres as locations to focus future housing options and to plan for transport and infrastructure services. These rural activity centres are:

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

The Planning Commission developed, in consultation with the community, an area plan for the Rural Activity Centre of Howard Springs, which was included in the NT Planning Scheme in

March 2018. The Howard Springs Rural Activity Centre Area Plan now helps to guide land use change and development in that area.

2019-20 saw the Planning Commission continue to develop area plans for the remaining Rural Activity Centres, with a focus on Coolalinga/Freds Pass and Humpty Doo.



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
- 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, are continuing the development of a road network strategy, including plans for duplication of the Arnhem Highway.

The Planning Commission will consider the outcomes of the road network strategy in progressing the Humpty Doo Rural Activity Centre Area Plan during 2020-21.



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.

Key themes that emerged from the consultation were:

- broad support for the proposed land use mix and distribution, including 800m²

urban residential lots and 4000m² rural residential lots

- an aspiration for increased and improved community facilities, as well as protection of environmental and heritage values
- a desire for improvements to the active transport network
- a desire for a better connected local road network, with improved safety and access to the arterial network.

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 and work progressing on traffic management options for the area, the Planning Commission

finalised the Coolalinga/Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan and recommended the Minister consider amending the NT Planning Scheme.

The Coolalinga/Freds Pass Rural Activity Centre Area Plan has since been exhibited as a proposed Planning Scheme amendment with a 28-day statutory exhibition period closing on 7 August 2020.

The Planning Commission looks forward to the Minister's decision on the proposed Planning Scheme amendment in 2020-21.





Sub regional land use plans

Gunn Point – Update to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan

Project status: Ongoing

Increased interest in the use of land within the Gunn Point Peninsula and the outcomes of recent natural resource investigations have triggered a broad review by the Planning Commission of the land use structure identified by the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan.

The current version of the plan is based on historic information for land capability and water availability.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently completed the Mapping

the Future Gunn Point project. This was a comprehensive study that assessed and mapped the natural resources of the Gunn Point area. The Mapping the Future Gunn Point project focused on:

- soil and land capability
- identification and distribution of biodiversity assets
- groundwater availability.

With this current information about land capability, the land use structure plan can be updated to reflect the highest and best use of land, while protecting and preserving areas of the landscape that are important to the environment and the community.

The Planning Commission's work seeks to update the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan to:

- respond to cultural, historical and natural assets of the locality

- provide opportunities for residential and economic growth
- enable tourism ventures that respond to environmental, cultural and recreational opportunities
- protect the transport and infrastructure corridors required for development on the Gunn Point Peninsula
- support detailed planning in the future for the Township of Murrumujuk.

The Planning Commission commenced preliminary consultation with directly affected land owners in 2019 and anticipates broader consultation with stakeholders including land owners and users of the Gunn Point Peninsula in early 2020-21.



Area plans

Katherine East Area Plan

Project status: Complete

Katherine is the fourth largest settlement in the Northern Territory with a population in the order of 10 000 people. Katherine is central to the region's tourism, agribusiness and defence sectors and sits at the junction of the Stuart and Victoria highways linking north to south and out to Western Australia.

The Katherine Land Use Plan 2014 identifies Katherine East as an area for future suburban development outside the

1 percent Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood extent and not affected by the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast associated with the Tindal RAAF base.

The Planning Commission engaged with the local community and all stakeholders over two stages of consultation in 2018-19 to develop the Katherine East Area Plan. The central elements of the area plan are the identification of the land use constraints that shape the remaining developable areas of Katherine East and the social infrastructure needs to support continued growth in the suburb. The area plan's main purpose is to enable this growth

in a sensible way and provide a decision making framework for future land use and development proposals.

Statutory exhibition of a proposed Planning Scheme amendment to include the draft Katherine East Area Plan in the NT Planning Scheme occurred during January and February 2020.

The Planning Commission welcomed the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics' decision to include the Katherine East Area Plan in the NT Planning Scheme. Amendment No. 552 included the Katherine East Area Plan in the NT Planning Scheme, which came into effect on 13 May 2020.

Regional land use plans

Tennant Creek Land Use Plan

Project status: Complete

Tennant Creek is strategically positioned to provide expansion for an important range of services to support the broader Barkly Region.

Following two stages of stakeholder engagement during 2017-18 and 2018-19, the Planning Commission recommended the Minister consider amending the NT Planning Scheme to include the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan.

The Tennant Creek Land Use Plan identifies current and future land uses and potential land development requirements for Tennant Creek in order to cater for

future population growth, while balancing growth with preserving the established lifestyle of residents.

The objectives of the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan are to:

- provide for orderly and appropriate land use and development catering for a growing population
- reinforce the existing business hub on Paterson Street
- preserve the existing rural character of the established small lot rural subdivision south of the town
- provide appropriate areas for future industrial development to the west of the town
- identify and protect major corridors for transport, energy and servicing infrastructure.

Statutory exhibition of a proposed Planning Scheme amendment to include the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan in the NT Planning Scheme occurred during February 2019.

The Planning Commission welcomed the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, decision to include the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan in the NT Planning Scheme. Amendment No. 528, which introduced the Tennant Creek Land Use Plan as a reference to policy to clause 2.7 came into effect on 6 September 2019.



Reforming Planning Systems

Designing Better

Ideas for Improving Mixed Use and Residential Apartment Developments

Project status: Ongoing

The Designing Better project is a suite of suggestions by the Planning Commission that specifically relates to apartment and mixed use buildings in:

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

Designing Better is Territory-wide in scope and seeks to encourage and enable 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
- make great places that provide meaningful, vibrant and liveable spaces for people.

This project draws upon feedback received from the community and industry through other projects and targets a number of key design elements for improvement.

In July 2019, the Planning Commission commenced Stage One consultation with stakeholders on its Designing Better project. Running through a number of sub-stages of consultation until March 2020, the purpose of Stage One was to gauge stakeholder feedback on:

- the elements the Planning Commission has identified as influencing the design of mixed use and high density developments
- a range of options for improve individual design outcomes in our places and spaces.

Stage One consultation has allowed the Planning Commission to consult with stakeholders on the ideas and concepts and reforms suggested by the Designing Better project. While there are mixed views on the best way to achieve the Designing Better project outcomes, there appears to be general agreement with the project principles and objectives. It was clear to the Planning Commission that, overall, stakeholders are keen to see useable, viable, context responsive building design contributing to functional and vibrant communities.

The next step, expected to occur in 2020-21, is to prepare a suite of potential Planning Scheme amendments for community feedback before possible inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme.



Providing the Minister with information and advice to inform decisions

Significant Development Proposals

No significant development proposals were referred to the Planning Commission in 2019-20.

Proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permits

In 2019-20 The Planning Commission conducted 10 hearings and reported to the Minister on 13 proposals (refer Table 1).

Additionally, the Planning Commission provided the Minister with reports on 18 proposals that were exhibited but did not receive submissions prompting the need for a public hearing (refer Table 2).

TABLE 1: HEARINGS - PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS AND EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

NO.	HEARING DATE	PARCELS	PURPOSE	MEMBERS CONDUCTING HEARING
40	11 June 2020	Lots 5531, 8111 and 9349, (95, 115 and 116) Stegar Road, Town of Alice Springs.	Application type: EDP, Subdivision to create 52 lots (including 2 for Drainage Reserve purposes) for rural residential/living	David Ritchie Fran Kilgariff
39	9 June 2020	Section 3181 (398) Mermaid Circuit, Dundee, Hundred of Glyde	Application type: EDP, Hostel comprising 6 guest rooms (maximum 15 guests) in 1 x 5 bedroom single storey building and 1 x 1 bedroom two-storey building, managers residence in a single storey building, combined staff accommodation and storage in 1 x 4 bedroom single storey building, ablutions and associated storage with reduced side setbacks	David Ritchie
38	20 May 2020	NT wide	Application type: PSA, Repeal the NT Planning Scheme in full and substitute it with the Northern Territory Planning Scheme 2020	David Ritchie Fran Kilgariff Dorte Ekelund

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED): HEARINGS - PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS AND EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS.

NO.	HEARING DATE	PARCELS	PURPOSE	MEMBERS CONDUCTING HEARING
37	25 February 2020	Lots 6907 and 6908 (16 and 25) Blake Street, The Gardens, Town of Darwin	Application type: PSA, Rezone from Zone CP to a Specific Use Zone that facilitates residential development in accordance with Zone HR, Zone MR and specific non-residential activity	David Ritchie
36	4 February 2020	NT wide	Application type: PSA, Introduce reduced car parking rates and criteria to inform a reduction in parking requirements within Zone CB in Darwin, and to include provisions to require end of trip facilities in the NT Planning Scheme more broadly	David Ritchie
		Lot 9077 (47) Progress Drive, Town of Nightcliff	Application type: PSA, Rezone from Zone MR to a Specific Use Zone to facilitate the redevelopment of the site for a mix of commercial, community, residential and public open space purposes.	
35	3 February 2020	NT wide	Application type: PSA, Proposal to amend the NT Planning Scheme by introducing planning policy that regulates sex services businesses	David Ritchie
34	28 November 2019	Lot 8508 (1) Armstrong Court, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: EDP, 2 x 4 bedroom multiple dwellings in 2 x 1 storey buildings	David Ritchie
		Lots 903 Todd Street & 910 Leichhardt Tce, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: EDP, 71 units in a 6 storey building (exceeds height limit)	
33	8 October 2019	Lot 1768 (15) Francis Street, Millner, Town of Nightcliff	Application type: PSA, Rezone from Zone SD to Zone MD	David Ritchie
32	22 August 2019	Sections 5827, 507, 5758 and 5761 Hundred of Strangways (Noonamah Ridge)	Application type: PSA, Rezone from Zones R and RL to Specific Use Zone	David Ritchie
31	19 August 2019	NT wide	Application type: PSA, Amend Clause 7.5 – Private Open Space	David Ritchie
		N/A	Application type: PSA, Proposal to amend the NT Planning Scheme to include the Central Darwin Area Plan as a policy document	

TABLE2:REPORTSTOMINISTERWITHOUTHEARINGS-PLANNINGSchemeAMENDMENTSANDEXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

PARCELS	PURPOSE	EXHIBITION START DATE	EXHIBITION END DATE
NT wide	Application type: PSA, Proposal to amend the NT Planning Scheme to allow multiple dwellings in Major Remote Towns to be a permitted form of development	15/11/2019	13/12/2019
Lot 2084 (29) Eden Street, Stuart Park, Town of Darwin	Application type: EDP, Subdivision to create two lots - with one lot area more than 450m ² but with a boundary to a public road less than 13m	09/04/2020	08/05/2020
Lot 1826 (3) Ashwin Street, Gillen, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: EDP, Multiple DZ dwelling in Zone SD	24/01/2020	03/04/2020
Lot 3461 (73) Flynn Drive, Gillen, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: EDP, Multiple dwelling in Zone SD	24/01/2020	03/04/2020
Lot 8751 (48) Tmara Mara Circ, Araluen, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: EDP, Single dwelling exceeding maximum building height of 8.5m	18/10/2019	15/11/2019
NA	Application type: PSA, Proposal to amend the NT Planning Scheme to include the Katherine East Area Plan as a policy document and make consequential amendments to Katherine Land Use Plan 2014.	22/01/2020	21/02/2020
Lot 1 LT083/070A (1795) Stuart Highway, Noonamah, Hundred of Strangways	Application type: EDP, Leisure and recreation	24/01/2020	21/02/2020
Section 6574 (41) Howard Springs Rd, Howard Springs, Hundred of Bagot	Application type: PSA, Rezone from Zone TC to Zone CP	01/11/2019	06/12/2019
NT Portion 1640 Tiwi Islands (Airport Road, Wurrumiyanga)	Application type: PSA, Rezone from Zone FD & C to Zone LI	06/09/2019	04/10/2019

TABLE 2: REPORTS TO MINISTER WITHOUT HEARINGS - PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS AND EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

PARCELS	PURPOSE	EXHIBITION START DATE	EXHIBITION END DATE
Lot 2921 (83) Bloomfield St, Gillen, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: EDP, Two multiple dwellings (upgrade existing dwelling and construct new single storey building) within Zone SD	26/07/2019	23/08/2019
Sections 1792, 1794 and 1795 (32, 36, and 38) Challoner Circ, Humpty Doo, Hundred of Strangways	Application type: PSA, Rezone SD to MD	26/07/2019	23/08/2019
NT wide	Application type: PSA, Remove car parking requirements for outdoor dining areas, exempt development of ground level outdoor dining areas and exempt subleasing of car parking spaces in zone CB in Darwin.	26/07/2019	23/08/2019
Lot 3138 (70) Victoria Hwy, Katherine	Application type: PSA, Rezone PS to CP	17/07/2019	14/08/2019
Lots 4 and 5, LTO 76/011 and Lot 11, LTO 82/009 (1340, 1366 and 1370) Bees Creek Road Hundred of Strangways	Application type: PSA, Rezone TC to RL	28/06/2019	26/07/2019
Lots 2800, 2801 and 2802 (2, 4 and 6) Casuarina Street, Town of Katherine	Application type: PSA, Rezone SD to MD	10/07/2019	07/08/2019
Section 4277 (16) Bowerlee Rd, Berrimah, Hundred of Bagot	Application type: EDP, Warehouse (self-storage facility) and caretaker's residence in Zone R	05/07/2019	02/08/2019
Lot 5812 (257) Stuart Highway, Stuart, Town of Alice Springs	Application type: PSA, Rezone from OR to LI	29/03/2019	26/04/2019
Part NT Portion 2079 (1181) Larapinta Dr / Administrative Lot 198 (3) Renkeraka Ct, Townsite of Hermannsburg	Application type: EDP, Single dwelling	22/03/2019	19/04/2019

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 2019 to 30 June 2020, 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.

	2018-19	2019-20
	\$'000	\$'000
Income		
Appropriation	374	370
TOTAL INCOME	374	370
Expenses		
Employees	82	100
Other expenses		
Planning Commission Member remuneration	156	109
Purchases of goods and services	88	58*
TOTAL EXPENSES	326	267
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	48	103

*Includes \$3457.78 expended from Lands Planning DIPL budget

PLANNING COMMISSION BUDGET

2018-19

Budget \$'000	Estimate \$'000	% Change between budget and estimate	Actual \$'000	% Change between actual and estimate
374	374	0%	326	12.84%

2019-20

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







NORTHERN TERRITORY
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