

Aurukun Shire Council

2013



AURUKUN SHIRE PROFILE

Shire Population

1,400

Location

Aurukun is located on the north-west coast of the Cape York Peninsula, 200km (2hrs 30mins) by road south of the mining town of Weipa and 790km (11hrs) from Cairns. The community is located within the Aurukun Shire; nearly the entire population (99.6%) lives within the township. The Shire covers an area of 7,500 sq. km. (approximately 192km long and up to 50km wide). It has about 107 km of Gulf of Carpentaria coastline.

Our Shire History

Cape Keerweer, on the Gulf of Carpentaria coast, was the site of the first attempted European settlement in Australia. In 1605 the Dutch ship *Duyfken*, under Captain Willem Janszoon, sailed down the west coast of Cape York Peninsula and made the first recorded Dutch landing in Australia at Cape Keerweer, south of Aurukun. Janszoon planned to build a city at the site. However, after exploitative actions by the crew, fighting broke out with the local people, several sailors were killed and the *Duyfken* departed.

Aurukun was established as a Presbyterian mission (formerly known as the Archer River Mission Station) in 1904. Aboriginal people were relocated from large surrounding areas to the mission settlement over several decades. Today's township is on the site of the original mission.

On 22 May 1978 the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act came into force, constituting the Aurukun Shire Council. The Act granted a 50-year lease to the Council over most of the land in the original Reserve, a large part of the traditional lands of the Aurukun people.

Legal Status

The Aurukun Shire Council operates under Queensland Government Legislation, namely *The Local Government Act 2009*. Furthermore, two Regulations working hand-in-glove with the Act are the *Financial Planning & Reporting Regulation* and the *Operations Regulation*. Council is constituted by the Councillors who are elected or appointed to the local government under this Act.

Our Council

Aurukun Shire Council is represented by an elected five member Council comprised of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and three Councillors. Council meets every third Tuesday and the meetings are open to the public.



Socio-Economic Status & Disadvantage

Welfare Reform Community

Aurukun is one of only four Welfare Reform communities in Queensland. This means that possession of alcohol within the Shire is illegal and that Family Income Management is applied to families who do not satisfy certain criteria related to child care. Since 2007/08 (when the average rate of school attendance was recorded as 37.9%) the rate of attendance as at August 2013 is 64%.

Our Community

Access to Country

Unless booking through Aurukun Wetland Charters, specific approval is required for those who wish to camp, hunt or fish within the Shire

Community Events

The annual events include Anzac Day, Aurukun Day, Women's Conference and Christmas Carols. Other occasional events are held.

Recreation

The most popular recreational activities are fishing and camping. But the permission of Traditional Owners should always be sought where necessary. The great sunsets over the Gulf of Carpentaria are a sight to behold. There are great walks within the Aurukun township vicinity.

Fishing & Wetlands Charters

Aurukun Wetlands Charters conduct eco-cultural charter tours and fishing tours in the Aurukun Wetlands and adjacent waters.

Housing

The Council provides housing within Aurukun with a stock of 182 community houses and 16 staff houses. The new federally funded 10 year housing programme has commenced. The Federal Government has allocated money to the Queensland State Government to build 91 houses and complete 247 refurbishments over the next 10 years in Aurukun. This will have a significant impact on the current level of overcrowding in community housing.

The Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office assists in removing impediments that may impact on the program. This program will relieve overcrowding and facilitate social and economic development in Aurukun.

Houses are closed by the relatives for cultural reasons upon the passing of a resident. After a Council-prescribed period of three months an Opening Ceremony is held. The five clan groups come together at the opening to celebrate this event with traditional dancing and a smoking ceremony. After this ceremony the family returns to reside within the house.

Meals and Supplies in Aurukun

The supermarket carries a range of foodstuffs including groceries, milk, meat, fruit and vegetables. The hours of the General Store are 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays. The supermarket also opens on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

A new café / bakery outlet operates out of the Aurukun Business Precinct building in Kang Kang Street. This outlet operates 6 days per week.

Travelling to Aurukun by Road

Aurukun is approximately 752 km by road from Mareeba and 815 km from Cairns. Sealed from Cairns, the road is mainly good standard gravel surface from Lakeland (564 km) with many short sealed sections. During the wet season (variable - but often from December or January to May or June) road access is closed due to flooding.

Fuel can be purchased at Mareeba, Lakeland, Musgrave, Coen and Archer River Roadhouse.

Travelling to and freight by Air

Passenger and freight transport to Aurukun is available on daily weekday scheduled flights operated by Sky trans. Visit their website at <http://www.skytrans.com.au/> for schedules and bookings. Phone: 1300 759 872.

When accessible by road, freight is provided by Hawkins Transport, phone 0427 028 966 (Wednesdays) and Tux worth & Wood, phone 4035 4022 (Mondays).

During wet season by Sea Swift barge, phone 4035 1234.

Alcohol

The whole of the Aurukun Shire is a “dry” area. Alcohol may not be transported into or consumed within the Shire, it is an offence to do so and heavy fines can be imposed on offenders. The Aurukun Police frequently conduct searches of vehicles, baggage and persons entering the Shire by road, by sea or by air and offences are prosecuted.

Wet Season

The climate creates special challenges. Roads outside of the community are impassable during the wet season. This greatly increases freight costs - which flow through and raise the cost of just about everything.

Environment

Wik, Wik Way & Kugu Country - Almost the whole Shire is comprised in 5 areas of high conservation significance. The majority of the Shire is very high quality wilderness. There are several areas that demonstrate the geology of the region and the geological processes that formed most of the Gulf coastline. Landform and vegetation types are varied and many vegetation types are among the best of their class. Large, powerful and ancient species like the saltwater crocodile are not the only natural treasures in the Aurukun Shire.

The Spotted Cuscus and the Palm Cockatoo are two other important species. Freshwater Anchovies and the River Garfish have their only known habitats on Cape York Peninsula in the Archer and Embley Rivers respectively. The vulnerable Northern Crimson Finch has important habitat in the coastal section of the Holroyd Wilderness. The Aurukun Wetlands has important breeding sites for Magpie Geese - a culturally important species.

Rich in barramundi, mud crabs and numerous other species including some that are rare and threatened the lands and waters of the Aurukun Shire benefit from having had little commercial exploitation. Many areas have large shell middens left by the ancient Aboriginal populations. These contain valuable scientific evidence of past climatic conditions, plant populations and cultural artefacts.

The traditional culture and heritage of the Wik and Wik Way people is vibrant. Most Aboriginal people in Aurukun still speak their native tongue. The Traditional Owners’ association with land and water is deeply significant.

The Aurukun Wetlands comprise high quality coastal wetland habitats. About 25% of their extent is of very high wilderness quality. They may be the most important dry season refuge for water

birds on Cape York Peninsula. They include major breeding colonies for Magpie Geese and other water birds and two wader roost sites of over 5,000 birds. The area is a biodiversity hotspot.

Corporate Vision

Community

Aurukun will continue to strive to be the leading Cape York Aboriginal Community providing a safe and healthy living environment for its people.

Employment

Increased employment opportunities for local Indigenous people will continue to be the focus of all community programs and projects.

Education and Training

People will have access to appropriate education and training programs aimed specifically at improving their employment opportunities.

Economy

Support and encourage employment of local people by development of economic opportunities through both local and joint venture initiatives.

Land and Sea

Implementation of management programs to support traditional owners to preserve and manage their land and sea resources for the benefit of the current and future generations.

Growth Opportunities

Aurukun has strong potential to grow in prosperity. To do that it will need investment in business infrastructure. It will also need appropriate management able to develop business in a manner that harmonises with the local culture and protects the natural and cultural resources of the Wik and Wik Way people. Opportunities exist in:

- Eco-cultural tourism - supported by the large and pristine areas of the Shire with rare ecological values and the strong traditional culture and arts and crafts industry of the community;
- The development of the Shire through road improvement and transport services supporting outstations and production for local consumption of beef and other agricultural, fishing and aqua cultural products.
- Mining - in direct employment, in service industries to support mining operations, and in the clearing and rehabilitation of the land mined including plantings. An announcement is expected on the successful mining proponent of the Aurukun bauxite lease in December 2013.
- Employment in construction - approved and anticipated infrastructure development in the next two years includes many new community dwellings; a large number of dwelling refurbishments; upgrading of the water supply. The development of a major art complex; the extension of the community store to provide improved wet season storage. Refurbishment of the swimming pool and recreation hall; and refurbishment of the former tavern building, are all planned for the future.

Council considers that Aurukun shire is on the brink of an exciting development phase.

Services & Facilities in Community

- Health Clinic
- RFDS (Emergency Service)
- Wellbeing Centre
- Education facilities – Primary School to grade 7
- Child Care Centre/CYP Parenting Hub
- Police Services (12 person station)
- SES Unit
- Community Police
- Bendigo Bank
- Post Office
- Library/IKC Services and internet facilities
- Cape York Partnerships Opportunity Hub
- Centrelink
- Freight Services:
 - Dry Season (Tuxworth & Woods, Hawkins)
 - Wet Season (Sea Swift)
- Police Youth Citizens Club/Activities
- Sports Stadium
- Gymnasium
- Skate ramp
- Pool (to be repaired)
- Rugby Field
- Tennis/Basketball Court
- Art Gallery
- Guest Houses
- Accommodation Units
- Supermarket
- Fuel outlet
- Café/Bakery
- Laundromat
- Churches
 - Uniting Church
 - Australian Christian Churches
 - Kids Club
- Old Tavern (possible Community Centre)
- 2 Take away outlets
- Boat ramp for recreational fishing
- Training Centre
- Family Responsibilities Commission
- Community Justice Group
- Local Program Office
- Department of Housing
- Cape York Employment (CDEP)
- Airport (Monday to Friday Service)
- Aak Puul Ngantam (APN) Office
- Ngan Aak Kunch (NAK) Office/Depot
- Child Support Services
- Women's Shelter
- HACC Facility
- Rio Tinto Alcan Office
- Ergon Power Station
- Radio Stations:
 - ABC
 - Blackstar
 - Vision
 - RIBS
- TV Stations
 - ABC Regional
 - SBS
 - AABC 24 hours news
 - WIN
 - Imparja



Applying for Positions at Council

To apply for positions at Council, you need to review the Position Description and submit:

- A covering letter of no more than two pages addressing the selection criteria in the Position Description
- Attach a copy of your resume ensuring it covers contact details, education, qualifications and employment history (please do not attach copies of qualifications, certificates or licences at this stage)

All applications must be addressed to the Human Resources Manager and submitted via:

Email: humanresources@aurukun.qld.gov.au

Post: Aurukun Shire Council, C/- Post Office, Aurukun, QLD, 4892

Enquiries relating to advertised positions can be directed to the Human Resources Manager on 07 4060 6800.

For further information on Aurukun, our community and shire, please check out the developing website www.aurukun.qld.gov.au

