

Mayor's Message



The Wik Kath Min Community Values Statement is at the heart of what the people of Aurukun want for their community moving forward. We were all given the opportunity to have input into this statement to ensure it represented the wishes of our people.

I am very proud that Aurukun Shire Council is moving forward with this statement to embed its 11 values into everything that we do in local government. I am also grateful that our representatives in the State Government are supportive of the community's values.

Ministerial Champion Di Farmer and Co-Government Champion Rob Setter met with myself, the Councillors and the Executive team in Aurukun to hear why these values are so important. We told them that we need all community service providers to be on the same journey as our community as we move forward to a better future.

Aurukun is very fortunate to have Champions who are passionate about our community and who have been getting to know key individuals, especially our Elders, on their regular visits. I thank them for their commitment to our community's needs and their friendship with the Wik people.

I encourage all members of our community – residents and stakeholders – to familiarise themselves with the Wik Kath Min Community Values Statement and make its values a part of their work and personal values. We need to work together to build the future that the next generation deserves.

Keri Tamwoy
Aurukun Shire Council Mayor

Council to embed community values

Aurukun Shire Council is reviewing its policies and procedures to ensure the Wik Kath Min (The Good Story) Community Values Statement is embedded within the local government framework.

Mayor Keri Tamwoy said the Values Statement was a clear vision of what the community wanted to help Aurukun move forward to a better future.

"More than 300 members of our community contributed to this statement which was launched towards the end of 2019," Mayor Tamwoy said.

"With the pandemic becoming less of a focus for Council it is time to move forward with the Values Statement and ensure this vision is at the forefront of government and the community working together.

"We as a community need to drive social, cultural and economic improvements that ensure a sustainable socio-economic outcome for Aurukun.



"Aurukun Shire Council supports these values and has aligned them with our Corporate Plan and the Community Safety Plan.

"We will now make sure that these values flow through to every aspect of Council policies and procedures.

"We want to encourage all levels of government and service providers in Aurukun to support these values and embed them in future planning for their services in our community.

"Aurukun's Ministerial Champion Di Farmer and Co-Government Champion Rob Setter have both agreed to progress a draft Wik Kath Min Governance framework to review Whole of Government service delivery in Aurukun.

"Council proposes establishing a Wik Kath Min Taskforce with targets based on each community value to develop the framework.

"The current performance outputs of all service providers would be reviewed to ensure resources and investment is better targeted towards outcomes and that there is not a double-up in service delivery."

The Wik Kath Min Community Values Statement

- We empower our children through teaching culture and sending them to school
- We care for and protect our children, our Elders and our families
- We teach our children the right way – to follow western laws and traditional cultural ways
- We love doing things together and feel connected by our shared experiences
- We seek worthwhile employment and training and mentoring so we can support our families and provide stability in our home
- We like to make connections and bring back experiences from the world outside Aurukun
- We are friendly and respectful to everyone in our community
- We care for each other and share what we have
- We like a nice place to live
- We are skilled at making peace and we have the hearts to forgive each other
- We have an in-depth spiritual connection to our country and our kin

Cr Jayden Marrott

"I didn't find out about the Wik case until I was 19 and watched Wik vs Queensland. Hearing the old people speak has helped me find my place and what I want from the community. We were taught from a young age to go into the white man's world to get an education, but I did this at the expense of my own culture. I want our children to be educated and have jobs on country. We need to be connected to our land – that is our spiritual connection."



Cr Kempo Tamwoy

"Today our skills have been watered down and diminished as there are not many opportunities for the training and upskilling of our people. We used to have services like the Men's Shed and TAFE where we could train to work in our community. The biggest problem I have had is that there is never upskilling to get a job, but there is money for people to fly in and out for those jobs."



Aurukun Champions visit

Aurukun Ministerial Champion Di Farmer, Co-Government Champion Rob Setter and Assistant Ministerial Champion Bart Mellish spent two days in community meeting with Aurukun Shire Council and stakeholders.

In between meetings they listened to members of the community at functions including dinner at the Wo'um Ko'alam Community Centre, breakfast at the Chivaree Centre and lunch in the Town Square. The group visited the PCYC to see the school holiday activities, joined the Playgroup at the Splash Park and inspected the health facilities at the clinic and Apunipima.



Norma Armstrong-Ravula, Waynead Wolmby and Janine Chevathun talk with the Minister.



Minister Di Farmer handed out Easter eggs to the younger children at the Aurukun PCYC while observing the school holiday activities.



Ball games paused for the Champions to have a group photo with the AFL Cape York representatives working with the PCYC team to deliver school holiday activities in Aurukun.



Assistant Ministerial Champion Bart Mellish heard about the paintings Janet Koongotema and Jean Walmbeng are working on for the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.



Percy Koonnta, Henry Peinkinna and Jasper Kowearpta joined the Champions for breakfast at the Chivaree Centre.



Co-Government Champion Rob Setter caught up with Deputy Mayor Craig Koomeeta and CEO Ilario Sabatino.

A special friendship

Martha Koowarta shared a very special moment with Aurukun Ministerial Champion Di Farmer when she took the Minister to visit the grave of her late husband, John Koowarta. Known as the Mabo of the mainland, John Koowarta played a pivotal role in securing land rights for the Wik people when he took the Queensland Government to court to buy back the land of his birth at Archer River before passing away in 1991. Martha led the Wik people in successfully challenging the Wild Rivers Declaration and in recent years has forged a strong bond with Minister Farmer, meeting with her each time she has been in community. In this video of Martha speaking Wik Mungkan, she tells her husband that she has brought a white woman to his grave for the first time because "she is our friend".



The Minister chatted with Albert Peinkinna and Warwick Yunkaporta, while Henry Koonnta met the Minister's assistant Debra Macqueen.



The team from Apunipima took time out from their busy schedules to meet with the Champions and discuss health issues in the community.



Irene Pootchemunka and sisters Olive and Dorothy Keppel with the Minister at the community dinner.



Nita Yunkaporta and Rita Wikmunea chatted with Minister Farmer over breakfast.



Minister Farmer inspected the Queensland Health Clinic and met with the Director of Nursing Ann-Marie Scully. She stopped for a pic with administration officer Atima Bin-Juda (centre) and Ann-Marie.



After dinner the ladies entertained guests with their singing including a special song for Minister Di Farmer who is pictured with Irene Pootchemunka, Jean Walmbeng, Olive Keppel and Martha Koowarta.



Artists to attend CIAF

Artists at the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre have been busy preparing for the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair on 6-10 July and are very excited to be travelling to Cairns to be a part of the prestigious event. About 16 artists will attend the many events which include the Big Sculpture Showcase.

Rhonda Woolla has created an intricate punth-paam (feather flower) sculpture for the Showcase utilising feathers from native birds that are a food source for the Wik people.

Garry Namponan is working on a series of paintings that reflect the markings he gives his famous ku', the milkwood carvings of Aurukun camp dogs which are sought by art collectors.

Janet Koongotema is working on large format paintings that reflect her tribal country on the southern Wik lands.

Aurukun's camp dog carvings are a favourite at CIAF and Leigh Namponan has been working on a large ku' to exhibit.

Photo: Sonia Waller



2022 Aurukun Shire Council Meetings

17 May • 21 June
19 July • 28 July



Upcoming Events

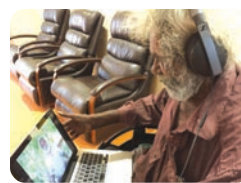
- **25 April** Anzac Day
- **27 May – 3 June** National Reconciliation Week
- **1 June** Aurukun Photo competition opens
- **3-10 July** NAIDOC Week
- **15 July** Aurukun Show Holiday
- **23 July** Ngangk Min Festival
- **4 August** Aurukun Day Celebrations



Wik Whispers

Ilario Sabatino is the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer at Aurukun Shire Council.

Originally from the Torres Strait and with Aboriginal heritage, Mr Sabatino is the Council's first Indigenous CEO. He was previously the Chief Operating Officer at Torres Strait Island Regional Council and the CEO at Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council.



Aurukun's Elders have been learning new skills through the Tech Savvy

Seniors Program. Nita Yunkaporta has been recording her stories and Peter Peemuggina has been watching video recordings on a laptop. The program trained 32 seniors at small group and one-on-one sessions helping them to research family history and to record their own stories for future generations. Participants will be able to continue to build on these skills and use the technology at the Chivaree Centre and the Indigenous Knowledge Centre.

International Women's Day at the IKC was a double celebration with



Wanam Clan Elder Maree Kalkeeyorta celebrating her birthday too. It was an ideal opportunity for the next generation to get stronger in their mothers' and grandmothers' arms.



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Welcome to the latest edition of **Wik Kath**, your community newsletter highlighting all the positive news and achievements happening in Aurukun. 'Wik Kath' means 'the story' in English. If you would like to suggest stories for the next edition of Wik Kath, please email liz@lizinglismedia.com