

Mayor's Message



During this past year the Aurukun community has had the opportunity to celebrate some very special moments. Our Kang Kang Youth and Elders dressed up for the PCYC Aurukun NAIDOC Ball which was attended by dignitaries including Aurukun's Ministerial and Government Champions.

We held our first Aak Ngampram public holiday to celebrate the Wik Decision handed down on 23 December 1996 which allowed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people rights and interests to land and waters according to their traditional law and customs.

Two of our artists, Granny Janet Koongotema and Keith Wikmunea, made us very proud when they both received prestigious awards for sharing their culture through art at the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre.

We were also touched by deep sadness with the passing of loved ones in our community. The very significant loss of Waal Waal Chevathun and Waal Waal Martin was felt not just in Aurukun, but in the wider communities where they took their Wik voices.

There have been frustrations, in particular with the closing of the Bendigo Bank – something which many remote communities are having to grapple with. Council has worked with Australia Post to resume our all-important banking services. I thank OHub for providing much needed support to customers by assisting with internet and telephone banking and continuing to offer that valuable support in our community.

Jobs remain an issue and I have instigated a monthly Mayor's employment committee to look at local employment and how

we can transition people into jobs in their community.

Employment and education are critical for our children's future and I thank the parents for sending their children to school and the staff and principal for supporting them. Our local Paamp Board aims to further improve attendance rates next year.

The Aurukun Photo competition will be judged on 8 December and the winners announced on social media and notices around the community.

We are coming into the Christmas period, a season of sharing. Let's look out for each other and treat one other kindly while we take time to reflect on what we are grateful for.

I wish you and your family a peaceful end to the year and look forward to ushering in an enriching and happy New Year in 2024. God bless you all.

Keri Tamwoy
Aurukun Shire
Council Mayor



Grassroots opinions heard at BBQs

Neighbourhood BBQs have been held in six different locations throughout Aurukun this month to encourage the community to get involved in grassroots decision making. Leona Yunkaporta from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Sinjon Gavin from Pama Futures Backbone were part of the initiative to ensure Wik voices throughout the community were heard.

The neighbourhood approach of taking BBQs to the parks and streets near the homes of different families worked well with informal yarns capturing the many priorities of residents and allowing young and old to discuss what was and wasn't working in their community. Similar themes are emerging and these will be compiled to help inform future decision making.



Native Title Determination

On 2 November 2023, the Federal Court of Australia handed down the consent determination for the Wik and Wik Way independent parcels, as part of the Cape York United Claim. The consent determination, which covers land and waters in and around the town of Aurukun and adjacent areas, recognises the Native Title holders and the nature of Native Title rights and interests over the determined land.

The determination does not change anything in terms of the ongoing supply and delivery of important Council infrastructure.

Council congratulates the Native Title holders and looks forward to working with the Native Title holders and the Ngan Aak-Kunch Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC in relation to current and future Council projects, for the benefit of the Aurukun community.





Janet Koongotema CIAF 2023



Keith Wikmunea with his award-winning sculpture

Prepare for summer weather

get ready
QUEENSLAND

The threat of bushfires has already hit us and next we will face the threat of heavy rain, flooding and cyclones during summer. Make sure your yard is prepared by clearing away clutter and stock up on emergency supplies including batteries and tinned food. The Queensland Government has checklists to help you prepare for summer disasters at <https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/>. Queensland Traffic publishes road closures at <https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/>. Aurukun Shire Council will publish notices on our Facebook page so follow it and heed any advice given.



Wik and Kugu Arts success

Janet Koongotema and Keith Wikmunea have achieved national recognition for their art this year by winning prestigious arts awards. Keith won the coveted 2023 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, while Janet won the Premier's Award for Excellence at the 2023 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and was selected to be part of the 2023 Wynne Prize Exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The awards marked a successful year for the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre which held its first international exhibition at the JGM Gallery in London, attended the National Indigenous Art Fair in Sydney for the first time, and was part of the second Belonging exhibition at the National Museum of Australia.

AURUKUN RIVER TO BOAT RAMP FUN RUN 2023

The annual Aurukun River to Ramp Fun Run was fiercely contested this year with Owen Koongotema winning the 7km race in an impressive 35 minutes and 39 seconds, while Denica Bowden was the fastest female runner.



Owen Koongotema

FEMALE (Open 18 to 49)

- 1st: Donna Jewell
- 2nd: Sam Kilroy
- 3rd: Kerry Koo'oil

MALE (Runner Open Masters 50 & Over)

- 1st: Graham Ross
- 2nd: Tim White
- 3rd: Tim Jones

MALE

- (Runner Open 18 to 49)
- 1st: Nich Leyslian
- 2nd: Waynead Wolmby
- 3rd: Michael Collins

MALE

- (Runner Child 12 & Under)
- 1st: Taj Jones
- 2nd: Vincent Koomeeta

FEMALE

(Walker Masters 50 & Over)

- 1st: Konio Lynch
- 2nd: Brooke Dodds
- 3rd: Tina Van Bekkum

FEMALE

(Walker Open 18 to 49)

- 1st: Delina Koo'oil
- 2nd: Eloise Yunkaporta
- 3rd: Dana Livne

FEMALE

(Walker Junior 13 to 17)

- 1st: Raylene Wolmby
- 2nd: Tiana Kalkeeyorta
- 3rd: Delessa

FEMALE

(Walker Child 12 & Under)

- 1st: Brita Kooiman
- 2nd: Mirakita Blowhard
- 3rd: Jenzahni Koo'oil

MALE

(Walker Masters 50 & Over)

- 1st: Paul Dodds
- 2nd: Graham King

MALE

(Walker Open 18 to 49)

- 1st: Charlie Yunkaporta
- 2nd: Troy B

MALE

(Walker Child 12 & Under)

- 1st: Tano Agie
- 2nd: Roger Dulan
- 3rd: Issac Kooiman





Youth shine at NAIDOC Ball

Beautiful smiles, dazzling dresses and dapper suits were against the backdrop of Aurukun's red dirt as the Wik, Wik Waya and Kugu people were joined by Aurukun Ministerial Champion Di Farmer, Assistant Minister Bart Mellish, senior public servants and leaders from PCYC and the Queensland Police Service for the PCYC Aurukun NAIDOC Ball. This is the second year the ball has been held by PCYC Aurukun and it featured stunning garments donated by Tammy Robinson from Formally Ever After. Congratulations to Norma and Steve Armstrong-Ravula, the Kang Kang Youth Leadership Team and Western Cape Communities Trust for an exceptional celebration for the Aurukun community.



Harriet Pootchemunka with granddaughters Jacqueline and Harriet



Ena koongotema



Doris Poonkemeyla



Mayor Keri Tamwoy and Cr Kemuel Tamwoy



Phyllis Yunkaporta and Chantelle Walmbeng



Wik Whispers



Several Aurukun Shire Council staff have completed Aerodrome Reporting Officer training so they can work at the Aurukun Airport. It included learning how to drive airside, understanding radio calls, reporting airport activities, runway checks, working at night under lights and ensuring the airport is safe and compliant with current regulations.

The community gathered to celebrate the time before the wet season begins at Aurukun Shire Council's annual Um Thurpak Festival. Justin Wellington entertained the crowd at the Wo'uw Ko'alam Community Centre with many dancing the night away. A big thank you to the volunteers and the sponsors: ALPA stores, Skytrans, Aurukun Bauxite, and Rio Tinto.

Jonah Yunkaporta's book 'Jonah a' Gavin Aak Kech Iiy Pul' has been launched in Brisbane at The State Library. The story is about a childhood trip with his cousin-brother Gavin Korkatain and step-grandfather Rodney Karyuka to Grandfather Rodney's country on the Kendall River.

Seven very excited Koolkan Aurukun State School students got to try long jumping, hockey, AFL and many more sports at the All Abilities PE Day in Cairns. Zakeel Woolla, Albert Peinkinna, Daniel Pambegan, Lewis Koo'aila, Russell Woolla, Sherima Pamtoonda and Shane Ngakapoorgum each travelled with a family member and three staff to participate in the activities. It is the first time Aurukun students have participated in the event and Head of Special Education Services Anita Ramage who organised the trip said it won't be the last!



Aurukun joins Edor Carnival

Two teams from Aurukun State School demonstrated their prowess at the annual Edor Carnival in Cairns playing against teams from around the region in the event supported by Cairns Regional Council, Harbrow Mentoring and Our Future Mentors. Edor is a chasing and tagging game which originated in Aurukun. Mayor Keri Tamwoy, Cr Kemuel Tamwoy and Cr Jayden Marrott cheered for the Aurukun teams and Aurukun marathon runner Waynead Wolmby opened the games. The visit was part of the Aurukun Deadly Sport and Recreation program run by Aurukun Shire Council Sport and Recreation Officer Vinay Singh and funded by the Queensland Government. The students visited AFL Cape York House to see what boarding school was like, visited the Great Barrier Reef and went river tubing in the rainforest.



Upcoming Events

19 December 2023
Christmas Lights
Competition Presentation



19-20 December 2023
Pre-Cyclone Cleanup



26 January 2024
Australia Day Ceremony

9 February 2024
Pre-Cyclone Cleanup



3 March 2024
Aurukun Cleanup Day

Aurukun Shire Council Meetings

23 January
20 February
19 March



To read this newsletter online, or for more information on any of the articles, visit www.aurukun.qld.gov.au or call 07 4060 6800



www.facebook.com/AurukunShireCouncil

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