

Keri Tamwoy, Aurukun Shire Council Mayor



I am humbled that the Aurukun community has chosen me and an enthusiastic and dedicated young team of Wik leaders to bring about the change that the community wants. To the outgoing Mayor and previous Councillors, I thank them for their service to the community of Aurukun and its people and I wish them all the best with their future endeavours. They may have retired from Council but their leadership in our community remains very important.

Our goal as a Council is to help restore peace in Aurukun and build a positive future for our young people to strive for. As Mayor I will be focused on bringing the stability our community needs so we can all coexist like we did before in the past.

It is going to be a very long process as healing needs time, but I believe if we all work together we can bring about the right change in our community. I have been talking with people in general and many are saying they are tired of the fighting and tired of the arguing. They want to move on

and get on with their lives in the place they call home. I will use my skills as a mediator to work closely with the mediation service to help bring back the stability that we need for this community to heal.

Law and order is a major challenge and I want Council to make this a priority by supporting whole of community strategies like mediation and addressing the home brew problem. There needs to be respect for the laws of our community and consequences if they are not adhered to. Respecting the law begins with respecting each other and the police. I appreciate police initiatives to spend time with our school children reading through the Drop Everything and Read program and kicking a ball which in turn teaches children to respect police officers.

Sadly, breaking and entering homes, even when the families are home, has become a trend in our community with young children thinking this is the norm. I have a good working relationship with the police and know how hard they work, but it is a two-way street. We need more community involvement in advising police by talking to the Police Liaison Officer or the Justice Group who can then pass on the information to the police. I understand that families are angry when they are a victim of this behaviour but they must not take matters into their own hands.

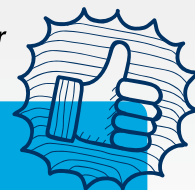
Housing and overcrowding is an ongoing issue and I will be advocating for the outstations to be opened with infrastructure so people who wish to live out on country can make it their primary place of residence. This will enable the community to uphold cultural protocols and customs and will help bring back some calm in the community. Our community is stressed, all they want to do is go out camping and go down to the beach, but they need a means of getting there.

If we are to find out what the burning priorities of the community are then we need to find that out from the people themselves. What do the people want Council to act upon on the community's behalf. The community has given us this platform, so we are here to listen.

Our youth have stepped up and we have a young Council wanting to take the community forward. That gives a strong message that it's time for all young people to rise up and use their voice to consider what they need to do to bring stability to Aurukun.

Aurukun is our home and we need the whole community to treat our home and our people with care and respect.

Keri Tamwoy
Aurukun Shire Council Mayor



New Council Sworn In

A young guard of Wik leaders spearheaded by new Mayor Keri Tamwoy was sworn into their roles at Aurukun Shire Council on April 14 and have met for the first time as a Council.

New Councillors (from left) Anna Kerindun, Delys Yunkaporta, Craig Koomeeta and Kempo Tamwoy all live and work in Aurukun.



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



Introducing Aurukun's New Councillors



Cr Keri Tamwoy

Mayor Keri Tamwoy follows proudly in the footsteps of her late mother Alison Woolla, a dynamic reform leader and first female to serve as Mayor of Aurukun from 1983 to 1985 and 1991 to 1994.

"My Mum was a mayor for the people and the community who always had the whole community's aspirations and needs at heart and this is what I want to take into my service for my people," she said.



Of the Putch Clan, Mayor Tamwoy, 45, has lived her entire life in her hometown, where she has raised her six children with husband Gerald, and feels privileged to have three grandchildren with two living in Aurukun.

Mayor Tamwoy's strong leadership and dedication to her community was recognised when she was appointed as a local Family Responsibilities Commissioner in 2019.

She is qualified mediator who heads the community's mediation agency Thaa' Pant Services and chairs a community land management organisation Aak Puul Ngantam (APN Cape York).

Mayor Tamwoy delivers cultural awareness training to mining companies and has a background in administration with roles at APN Cape York and in her husband's machinery hire business.

Committees

- Aurukun Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)
- Aurukun Supermarket Advisory Committee
- Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA)
- Western Cape Communities Southern Sub-Regional Trust

Portfolios

- Employment and Training Business Development



Cr Craig Koomeeta

Craig Koomeeta has been elected Deputy Mayor of Aurukun Shire Council. It is Cr Koomeeta's second stint on Council having served from 2000-2003 under Jacob Wolmby when he was just 22 years of age. Now 43, the Apalech man has a strong family history in the community. His father Edwin Merkool Koomeeta was a councillor in the eighties and his older sister Vera Koomeeta has just retired as a councillor.

After leaving Townsville Grammar, Cr Koomeeta returned to Aurukun where he started a career with Queensland Health mowing lawns and worked in various roles before becoming a health officer doing home visits monitoring the health of local residents. He is currently a community enabler with Apunipima.

Following his first Council term, Cr Koomeeta became a full-time artist at the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre where he created sculptures which he exhibited around the world. Cr Koomeeta also served on the board of Trustees for the Queensland Art Gallery and the Gallery of Modern Art alongside the likes of former premier Wayne Goss.

A regular performer at concerts in Aurukun, Cr Koomeeta has written songs in Wik about his community and its five clans, with his first CD released in 2018. His passion for music was ignited after the passing of his adopted daughter at the age of 22.

Cr Koomeeta and his partner, Community Police Officer Janine Chevathen, enjoy camping at Knox River south of Aurukun where his father is from. "I can't stop thinking about my favourite memory of our dad gathering us to do family activities on country like fishing, hunting and gathering. Wik is my first language and we used to go out as a family camping to learn traditional cultural practices. As a councillor I want to see our community living in peace like we did in the old days before alcohol infected families and our community."

Committees

- Aurukun Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)
- Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA)
- Aurukun Health Action Team

Portfolios

- Health
- Community Safety
- Environment
- Arts, Craft and Culture





Cr Anna Kerindun

At the age of 27 Cr Anna Kerindun is following in the footsteps of her uncle Edgar Kerindun, who has just retired as an Aurukun Shire Councillor. From the Wik Waya tribe, Anna's first language is Wik and she has spent her whole life in Aurukun.

She attended boarding school in Cairns completing her high schooling at St Monica's College and returned to Aurukun to work in administration at Rio Tinto. More recently Cr Kerindun has been working in childcare.

Her three children are aged 11 months, 2 and 5 with the eldest starting Year 1 at Aurukun State School this year. Councillor Kerindun takes them out bush to Wutan, her father's country, where they camp and practise cultural traditions including fishing at the mouth of the Ward River.

"I want to see more young people stepping up and showing leadership in our community. My focus as a councillor will be ensuring there are jobs for young people to stay in the community."

Responsibilities

- Aurukun Supermarket Advisory Committee representative
- Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Child Care representative

Portfolios

- Employment and Training



Cr Kempo Tamwoy

Cr Kempo Tamwoy of the Putch Clan, is excited to be elected at the age of 24. "I think we young people bring a different perspective to decision making," he says. Growing up mostly in Aurukun, Cr Tamwoy earned a scholarship with the Cape York Leaders Program while attending Brisbane Boys College. He was Digi Youth Arts board member and co-directed a play about Indigenous students attending boarding school.

Cr Tamwoy has worked as a trades assistant, Quality Assurance Officer, in his family's business and with Glencore. He was Co-Chair of the Joint Working Group with Glencore and on the Aurukun Youth Advisory Council Board. Now a school attendance officer at Aurukun State School, Cr Tamwoy is studying a Diploma in Remote Area Teaching and is involved with the Aurukun Rugby League Football Club.

"My priorities are youth engagement and promotion of healthier lifestyle choices through sport. I am passionate about growing work ethic and capability in young people, as well as cultural pride and respect. Our youth are my priority, and I aim to help build a future for them where they have something to look forward to, a purpose. You cannot be what you cannot see, so I want to show them what is possible. Building this capacity within young people will steer Aurukun toward a peaceful and bright future."

Committees

- Western Cape Communities Southern Sub-Regional Trust

Portfolios

- Transport and Infrastructure
- Youth, Sports and Recreation



Cr Delys Yunkaporta

Fishing and camping on country at Moving Stone on the Kirke River are Cr Delys Yunkaporta's favourite pastimes. It is there that the Apalech woman shares her cultural knowledge and practices with her three daughters, two grandsons and granddaughter.

The 54-year-old school attendance officer is sad that Wik culture has been lost for some of the community's young children. "My mother wove pandanus and my girls love doing that with me. We strip down the pandanus and collect dyes which we put on the boil. We then sit down and start weaving. It is a good time to talk," she says.

"I come from a good family. My parents were Christians. Growing up in the sixties and seventies we never had to worry about alcohol and drugs coming into the community. The mining was our only concern. We need to work towards peace in Aurukun as people have had enough of the conflict between clans."

Cr Yunkaporta is a Director of APN Cape York and previously worked as a Justice of the Peace, at the safe house and in aged care. Her grandfather Francis Yunkaporta was Chairman of Aurukun Council from 1968 to 1978 and played a key role in challenging the Queensland Government over mining on traditional lands and their attempt to take over the Aurukun Aboriginal Reserve.

Committees

- Wik Kath Min Committee

Portfolios

- Housing and Community Services
- Education Services





Travel Restrictions

Aurukun Shire Council has discussed travel restrictions with the Aurukun Local Disaster Management Group and the Aurukun health services to protect Aurukun community residents from the rapidly developing COVID-19 situation.

Aurukun Shire Council advises that:

- Non-Essential travel (road and air) to Aurukun is restricted
- Exceptions to this restriction are Police, Council, teachers, health services and essential Government / other services
- Outwards travellers must be aware of the risk of not being permitted back into community depending on advice from Queensland Health as amended from time to time.

The following people **SHOULD NOT TRAVEL** to Aurukun:

- Any person who has been diagnosed with or suspected to be infected with COVID-19
- Any person who is feeling unwell or has had close contact with someone who is unwell, in the last 14 days
- Any person who has travelled overseas or returned from, in the last 14 days.



2020 Aurukun Shire Council Meetings

**19 May • 16 Jun • 21 Jul
18 Aug • 15 Sept • 13 Oct
17 Nov • 15 Dec**



COVID-19 Restrictions

Aurukun Shire Council services operating:

- Post Office and Bank
- Aged Care – no service delivery at the Chivaree Centre. Meals and other services being delivered in the community
- Child Care – Koolkan Early Childhood Centre open to children of essential workers only
- Water
- Sewerage
- Waster Facility – garbage collection
- Social Housing
- Airport
- Council Office
- Community Police
- Art Centre – artists working at home
- Quarantine Centre – MacKenzie Camp One is ready with 23 rooms available

Aurukun Shire Council closed:

- Information Knowledge Centre (IKC)
- Wo'uw Ko'alam Community Centre
- Splash Park
- Recreation Centre
- Playgroup – staff have prepared activity packs to distribute to families

Funeral Services will be delayed. Arrangements are in place for funerals to be conducted when restrictions have been lifted.

Aurukun State School is open with strict handwashing and social distancing measures in place. The school is also supporting boarders who cannot return to their schools yet.



Entries open for the annual Aurukun Photo Competition on 1 May. Keep an eye on the Aurukun Shire Council Facebook page for more details on how to enter.



Wik artist Irene Pootchemunka

is an Apalech Clan Elder and a master weaver at the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre in Aurukun. She shows how to collect bush dye for the first

episode of "mee'- aathan, meet our Wik Artists", a new short film series showcasing the importance of Wik cultural practices such as bush dying and the need to pass these on to the younger generations. Look on the Aurukun Shire Council Facebook page to see this collaboration between the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre and the WOYAN-MIN Biocultural Project at the IKC.

The Wik and Kugu Arts Centre closed its doors to visitors and artists on 26 March due to COVID-19 and has been encouraging the artists to work from home. Arts Centre staff deliver arts supplies including Belgian linen canvases, ochre paint, tools and glue so work can continue in preparation for the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair which will be held online this year. The artists are also receiving breakfast packs instead of having breakfast at the Arts Centre each morning.



'Songlines of the Dog'

an installation of five Aurukun Ku' camp dogs, opened at

the prestigious Chapman & Bailey Gallery in Abbotsford, Melbourne on 20 March. The five Ku' carvings from the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre represent the Dog Ancestral Being, the totem of the Apalech clan in Aurukun. The Ku' travelled from the Northern Territory to Cape York Peninsula where it left the land and entered the Knox River to become Nyiingkuchen, the Freshwater Shark. From left: Ku'Prince - Garry Namponan, Snowy - Roderick Yunkaporta, Ku'Bruce - Keith Wikmunea, Ku'Buffy - David Marpoondin, Ku'Tracker - Leigh Namponan.



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



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