

**2014 to 2019**

**Aurukun Shire Council Corporate Plan**



**Our Plan for our Future**

**Aurukun Shire Council**

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# Message from the Mayor

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One of the important roles for any Council is to provide leadership to its community. There is no greater role in leadership than providing a vision for the future. What do we want for our community in the future? What do we hope to achieve in the future? How can we make our future better than the present? What are the important priorities for our community?

The key message in this Corporate Plan is that it is our plan for our future. For years, we have had well meaning agencies and organisations coming to our town and telling us what they believe we need.

This Corporate Plan is our opportunity to put forward what we believe is important for the future of our community. It is the Council and community's shared vision for our Shire and community. This will provide a clear direction for Aurukun. We believe that we have planted the seed for our future.

Our expectation is that any agencies or organisations who interact with our community will abide by the Council and community's shared vision for Aurukun and undertake consistent programs that give effect to that vision.

**Mayor Dereck Walpo**  
**Aurukun Shire Council**



# How this Corporate Plan was developed

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We wanted to make sure that this Corporate Plan was well researched and reflected our community aspirations. Accordingly, the Corporate Plan was developed in a number of stages.

**Stage 1** - Community Plan review and adoption. During 2011 and 2012, an extensive research and community consultation program was undertaken to develop a community plan for Aurukun. The community plan process included consultation with all stakeholders involved in Aurukun including the Councillors, government agencies, community organisations, Council officers, indigenous organisations and members of the public. Although the State government changed the relevant legislation so that it was no longer mandatory for a Council to have a Community Plan, the Council decided to continue with the Community Plan given its extensive investment in the consultation process. The Community Plan has been adopted by the Council as part of the package of forward planning documents for the community.

**Stage 2** - Research. Extensive research of previous plans and studies of Aurukun were undertaken. This gave perspective and understanding of the past and present. The 2011 census outcomes were also analysed.

**Stage 3** - Council workshop. A detailed Council workshop facilitated by de Chastel and Associates was undertaken. This workshop identified the research, census outcomes and other background information. The Council workshop articulated the vision for the Aurukun community, the key role of the Council and detailed priorities for the future.

**Stage 4** - Draft Corporate Plan for community consultation. Following the Councillor workshop, a draft Corporate Plan was prepared. It was made available for 30 days community consultation and comment. This was consistent with the Council's desire for an inclusive corporate plan reflecting community aspirations.

**Stage 5** - Adoption of Corporate Plan by Council. As part of its leadership role for the Aurukun community, the Council adopted the Corporate Plan on behalf of its community.

## The planning framework for the Aurukun community and its Council



# Our Community Values

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We have a number of values which are important to our community. They are what sets us apart and guide our community. Values are important to a community. They need to be preserved and followed by current and future generations.

**Respect** – This underpins our society. We need to have respect for ourselves, respect for our families, respect for others and respect for our country. Respect is critical to our community at so many levels. It is not just about what we say but also about how we behave. In that regard, it is important for our leaders to lead by example when it comes to respect.

**Tradition** – We have traditions which are important to individuals, families and our community. It is these traditions which bind us together and unite us. These traditions link our past to our future. It reinforces our sense of duty to ourselves and our people.

**Leadership** – Our community needs good leadership. An important role of this generation of leaders is to nurture the next generation of leaders for our community. Without that leadership, our future will not be as positive. Leaders must lead but our leaders must also listen to our community.

**Family** – Our family ties are important to us. Respect for family is crucial to the future of our community and maintaining our community values.

## **Our Community Vision and Council Mission**

**OUR VISION:** Our Vision for our community is based on our core community values. Our vision focuses on our community, our future leaders and the importance of respect in our community.

**Aurukun – Growing Community,  
Growing Respect and Growing Leaders**

**OUR MISSION:** As a Council it is important to understand our role and purpose. We exist to both lead and serve our community.

**Aurukun Shire Council – Strong  
leadership and excellence in service to  
our community**

# The Context of this Corporate Plan

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In order to plan for the future, we need to understand where we have come from. Our past history and our current environment set the context for our future. This section of our Corporate Plan puts our future into context.



# Where we have come from

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Our people have inhabited these lands for thousands of years. Many of our residents are traditional owners of the lands in this region. The traditional homelands of the Wik, Wik Way and Kugu people lie in and around the Aurukun Shire. The community has a rich tradition in cultural practices. The predominant language is Wik Mungkan with remains of other dialects still spoken. There are 5 spiritual clan groups in Aurukun: Apalech, Winchanam, Wanam, Sara and Puutch.

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.

The traditional language of our people is still the predominant language in our town. Aurukun is one of the few communities that maintains its traditional language in day to day use.

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.

The Aurukun Shire Council has been operating for 35 years as a local government providing local government related services to the community. The Council is represented by a Mayor and 4 Councillors who are elected every 4 years.

In recent times, there has been a movement to resettle the community outstations during the dry season which has assisted with preserving community culture. These outstations are now governed by our local people, not the Council.



# About Aurukun Today

Covering an area of 7,374 km<sup>2</sup>, Aurukun Shire is situated on the west of Cape York in Queensland. A remote community, it is over 800 km North West of Cairns and is isolated for significant periods of the year due to flooding and road conditions.

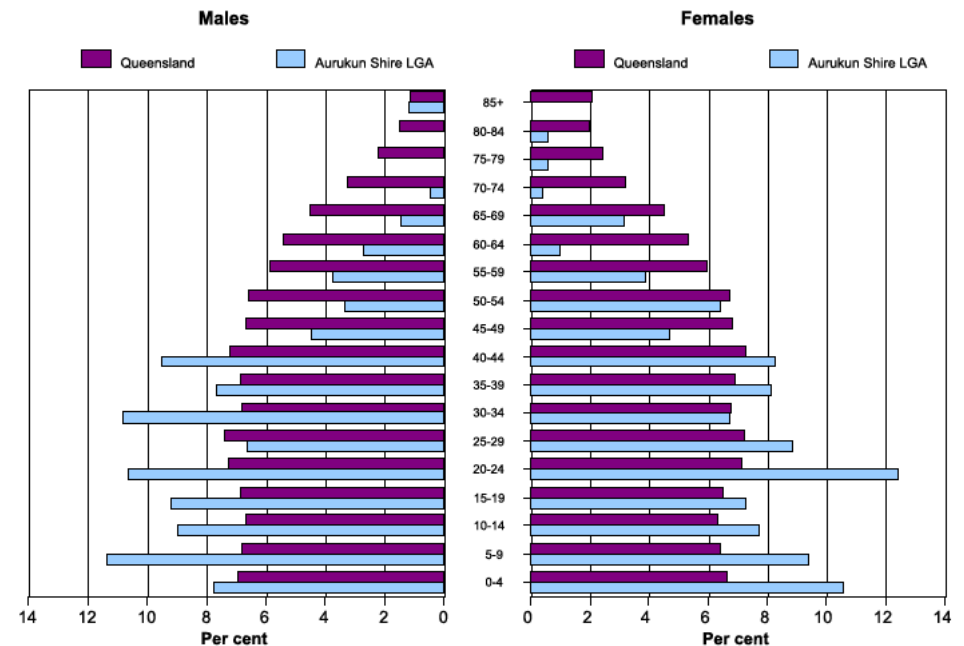
Our population is 1,294 based on the 2011 census. Some key statistical indicators of our community are:

- 69% of our residents over the age of 15 have a weekly income less than \$400 per week (compared to the Queensland State average of 34%)
- Our unemployment rate is usually more than 10% above the State average and has historically been around 16% to 18% of our community
- The average number of residents living in each of our houses is 5. The State average number of people per house is 2.6.

We have a very young community. As can be seen from our community profile (see right). Almost 26% of our population is under the age of 15 (compared to the Queensland State average of 20%).

The age and gender profile of our community is set out below. We have:-

- a lower than State average lifespan due to health issues resulting in proportionally fewer elderly people than the rest of Queensland
- a significant number of young people
- a large number of residents between 20 and 35 looking for work.



# Aurukun – Our Future Challenges

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Our research identified a number of key challenges facing Aurukun. Those challenges are:-

- Community unrest and infighting
- Lack of respect within the community
- Restoring a sense of pride within our town
- Rebuilding a strong work ethic
- Maintaining town infrastructure
- Having the resources to be able to achieve our goals.

We have some real challenges ahead but we also have some fantastic opportunities to shape our future with this plan. We are optimistic that if we use our community plan wisely and if government agencies use this plan to guide their support for our community, then we will be able to make good progress as a community.

Our opportunities include:

- proposed mining in our region
- good education facilities to make sure that our next generation receives a good education
- a Council that can work well with other levels of government and other Councils on the Cape
- a clear vision for our future as set out in the Corporate Plan.

*We also have some tremendous strengths in our community including:*

- *a Council willing to undertake community engagement*
- *a variety of cultural activities*
- *the outstation movement*
- *more housing becoming available*
- *world class artists*
- *a good airport and other transport facilities*

## Our Key Priorities

There are a lot of really important goals in this Corporate Plan. However, we realise that it is important to dream about the future with our eyes open. As such, we are realistic and realise that it will take a lot of years to achieve all of these goals and not all of them might be done straight away. However, there are some priorities which stand out from others and these will be our main focus for our community. Our top 5 priorities in this Corporate Plan are:-

- **Re-building respect in our community.** We need to re-focus on growing respect in our community. This is more than just about respect for law and order although that is important. It is about restoring pride within our community and respect for each other. How our town looks, how we treat each other and how we look after ourselves. If we achieve this as a community, we will have a much better future.
- **Taking advantage of opportunities arising from mining in our region.** We are fortunate to have abundant mining resources in our region. Those resources will be mined and when they are, there will be great economic opportunities for our community if managed properly. These opportunities include development of our own businesses to support the mining industry, direct employment opportunities for our people and additional revenue coming into our town to break a dependence on welfare payments.
- **Leadership.** Our community needs strong leadership. Without good leadership, we will not strive to set and achieve our vision for our future. However, an important part of leadership is to nurture our future leaders. We need to prepare the next generation of leaders so that they can look after our community into the future.
- **Diversifying Council's revenue stream.** In order to be able to achieve a lot of the goals set out in this Corporate Plan, we need resources. The Council needs to find extra revenue to be able to apply resources to this plan. While the mining development will provide opportunities, the Council also needs to look at business and other opportunities to gain extra revenue that it can apply to this community.
- **Developing local employment.** Develop more opportunities for local staff to gain employment with our Council. We need to make sure that in the future, more local people are working at their local Council.

# Our Economic Future

"I hope that one day, Aurukun becomes a booming mining town."

<b>Key Economic Goal 1 – Maximising opportunities from mining</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Establish a good working relationship with companies undertaking mining in our region.	Enter a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the mining company to create positive ongoing working relationships.
Establish a light industrial precinct in Aurukun.	Establish a light industrial precinct in Aurukun which can service future business needs to support business growth.
Upgrade to airport to improve transport linkages.	Secure funding to upgrade the airport including a runway extension and terminal upgrade.
Maximise Council revenue from future mining opportunities.	Position the Council's current businesses such as accommodation services to take commercial advantage of future mining activity.

"I hope that one day, Aurukun is a thriving hard working and happy community."

<b>Key Economic Goal 2 – Employment and training</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Apprenticeship schemes are operating in town.	Council operates an apprenticeship scheme focusing on local staff to develop skills in the local workforce.
A co-ordinated approach is taken to training programs.	Facilitate the co-ordination of training programs to ensure that future training is focused on real job opportunities.

<b>Key Economic Goal 3 – Locally owned businesses</b>	<b>Focus</b>
More local residents own and operate their own local businesses.	Identification of opportunities for local residents to own and operate local businesses and work with the new mine to encourage support of local businesses.
Support programs for local residents as they start and operate their local business.	Work in partnership with Indigenous Business Australia and other business service deployment programs to target business opportunities for local residents associated with the new mine.

“Wouldn’t it be great if there was greater unity in town.”

“I hope that one day, Aurukun has a lot of small businesses being operated by local people”

<b>Key Economic Goal 4 – Council business growth</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Grow revenue from accommodation services.	Maximise revenue from Council accommodation facilities.
Batching Plant opportunity.	Undertake a business plan to examine the feasibility of re-establishing a batching plant in Aurukun based on construction opportunities.
Finalise establishment of Aurukun Business Precinct.	Complete the leasing of the Aurukun Business Precinct and maximise the use of existing floor space.
Grow revenue from the landing facility.	Be ready to gain a revenue stream from third party use of the barge landing facility.
Secure revenue from the furniture factory.	Identify how Council can maximise its revenue from the furniture factory.

<b>Key Economic Goal 5 – Diversified Economy</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Mining operations are established in the region.	Work with the State Government and other stakeholders to establish mining in the region.
Aurukun is recognised as a source of world class art.	Implementation of the Aurukun Arts Centre Business Plan.
Tourism visitation is increasing.	Promote Aurukun as a unique fishing and cultural destination in consultation with the traditional owners.

# Our Community

“Wouldn’t it be great if Aurukun had more police to stop sly grogging and drugs coming into town so we can be safe again.”

Key Community Goal 1 – Better community facilities	Focus
More housing for the community.	<p>Continue to grow the housing stock in the community to reduce overcrowding.</p> <p>Ensure that the type of housing that is built is suitable for Aurukun.</p> <p>Council plays a role in housing maintenance to develop trade skills and encourage locally owned businesses.</p>
Better sport and recreation facilities.	<p>Investigate opportunities to upgrade and manage the indoor sports facility and former tavern including options to work with PCYC on program management.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to re-open the pool facility.</p> <p>Undertake planning for open spaces to complement the Aurukun lifestyle.</p>



“I hope that one day, Aurukun will come back together with no more fighting.”

<b>Key Community Goal 2 – Better community services</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Better pathways for our young people.	Implement the Aurukun Youth Strategy.
Focus our young people on getting a better education.	Work in partnership with the school to mentor future community leaders to ensure that they receive a good education.
Our culture continues to be strong in our community.	Work in partnership with the school to teach our culture at school using traditional owners.

<b>Key Community Goal 3 – A healthy and safe community</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Improve education about health within our community.	Partner with Queensland Health and the Aurukun Primary Health Care Clinic to promote more education about healthy choices including nutrition and lifestyle.
More residents are involved in the outstation movement.	Encourage the outstation movement to encourage more people to work with traditional owners and reside in outstations.
Town safety improves with lower crime rates.	Advocate for more Community Police Officers to be funded by the State Government to work with the local community and reduce crime.  Partner with police to reduce the incidence of drug and alcohol related crime in the community.

“Wouldn’t it be great if Aurukun residents continue to educate, participate and appreciate.”

“Wouldn’t it be great if Aurukun became a safe community.”

Key Community Goal 4 – Our culture and identity	Focus
Grow our arts community.	Encourage more residents to become involved in the Aurukun Arts Centre to gain skills and retain our culture.
Focus on our young people as our next generation of leaders.	Identify our next generation of future leaders and develop formal mentoring programs linking them with current traditional owners and community leaders.
Maintain our cultural practices.	Ensure that our traditional cultural practices are maintained.



"I wish that in 10 years, Aurukun will be a peaceful, well run and growing community."

# Our Environment



<b>Key Environment Goal 1 – Clean water and efficient sewerage services</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Maintain existing water and sewerage infrastructure.	Ensure that adopted Asset Management Plans are followed particularly in relation to maintenance standards.
Ensure that water and sewerage infrastructure can cater for growth.	Review water and sewerage infrastructure capacity and plan for future growth.
Ensure that existing water supply sources are protected.	Protect the water supply source from any potential impact of future development including mining.

<b>Key Environmental Goal 2 – A cleaner town</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Improved waste dump facility.	Improve waste dump facility operations.
Improved town streetscapes.	Undertake a series of community promotions to improve the look and feel of the town streetscapes.
Improve household pride.	Encourage residents to improve and maintain their household properties.

<b>Key Environment Goal 3 – Managing the impact of future mining on our environment</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Ensure that proposed mining does not impact on our local environment.	Undertake planning to minimise the impact of mining on our land and waterways and its continued use for traditional purposes.
Ensure that the operation of any future mine is well planned in relation to its impact on our community.	Undertake planning to minimise the impact of mine operations associated with the transport of staff and equipment.

<b>Key Environment Goal 4 – Improved community health and animal control</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Improve community health services to our community.	Advocate to increase the level of community health specialists visitation to our community.  Advocate to improve the health centre with a wide range of services being provided from the health centre.
Improve community health standards in our community.	Partner with other government agencies to undertake community education campaigns focused on improving community health.
Improve animal control in our community.	Improve the management of the animal control local law and reduce the number of unwanted dogs.

“Wouldn’t it be great if everyone took pride in our community – the streets and houses were well looked after and showed pride in our town.”

# Our Council

"I hope that in 10 years, Aurukun is less dependent on other levels of government and increasingly making its own decisions."

Key Governance Goal 1 – Our leadership role for our Community	Focus
This Corporate Plan becomes the focus for all future planning in our town.	All government agencies and other organisations undertaking program work in Aurukun focus on the key goals in this Corporate Plan.
The Council takes a stronger leadership role in the community.	The Council facilitates regular meetings of all stakeholders in the community to provide direction and ensure consistency in program delivery.
Council is setting the agenda.	Each year, the Council identifies the top 3 or 4 priorities based on its community needs and communicates those priorities to all stakeholders.
Consistent messages are provided about Aurukun.	Proactive messages about Aurukun are provided to external agencies on a regular basis via newsletters, minutes and meetings.
Establishing the role of Town Spokesperson.	Establishing a protocol to ensure that there is one spokesperson for the town with the Mayor undertaking that role.

"I wish that in 10 years, Aurukun has the next generation of future leaders emerging and having their say on their town and their future."

<b>Key Governance Goal 2 – Better Communication</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Improve internal communication within our town.	<p>Keeping our community informed about what is happening in our town.</p> <p>Undertaking regular town meetings so residents can speak on issues affecting our community.</p>
Improve communication with external agencies and external media.	<p>Providing regular newsletters to stakeholders about Aurukun.</p> <p>Promoting Aurukun and its Council by accessing mainstream media to improve the image of Aurukun.</p>

<b>Key Governance Goal 3 – Improve customer service</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Improve the quality of customer service provided by Council to the community.	Provision of regular customer service training to all Council staff to improve the quality of service to the community.
Develop a more business focused customer service.	Undertake focused customer service training on specific Council business activities such as accommodation and hospitality to improve those Council businesses.



<b>Key Governance Goal 4 – Our staff</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Improve attraction and retention of quality staff.	Council has an effective attraction and retention strategy for quality staff.
Develop more local staff in technical and supervisory roles.	Dedicate more senior staff time on developing local staff in both technical and supervisory roles.
One workforce providing services for the town.	Over time, move to Council having control of one workforce that provides services to the town.

<b>Key Governance Goal 5 – Financial sustainability</b>	<b>Focus</b>
We have a financially viable community and Council	We work towards ensuring that the town is financially sustainable in the long term with income from grants and other sources being able to meet the reasonable needs of our community.
Council diversifies its revenue stream.	Council focuses on developing revenue streams from its business operations and continues to source funding from grants for community projects.

“I hope that one day, Aurukun is a self-reliant community with less dependence on government funding.”

<b>Key Governance Goal 6 – Relationships with other governments</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Council is an active member of regional Local Government bodies.	Co-operating on regional local government issues to identify opportunities and improve our efficiency.
Council builds better relationships with State and Commonwealth governments and agencies.	Create better working relationships by meeting frequently with key government stakeholders to keep them informed about Aurukun issues.



# Implementation of this Corporate Plan

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All of the work to develop our Corporate Plan will only be worth it if we are able to advance the issues we have identified as priorities for our community. There is a risk that our Corporate Plan will not be implemented – sitting on a shelf and gathering dust. Success will depend on our Corporate Plan being recognised and supported by government agencies, community organisations as well as our own Council and community, as a framework for the future of our town.

Our Council has a special role in ensuring that it advocates on behalf of our community to ensure that the various government agencies etc align their services and focus to achieve the goals set out in this plan. The Council needs to take a strong leadership role on behalf of the community.

Once this plan has been adopted by the Aurukun Shire Council on behalf of the Aurukun community, the Council will focus each year on its Budget and Operational Plan to ensure that there is:-

- ✓ identification of resources necessary to bring this plan to fruition
- ✓ prioritisation of the various goals and strategies
- ✓ identification of performance measures to monitor progress
- ✓ a requirement for the Council to report to the Aurukun community on progress in implementing this plan.

**Dedication** – This Corporate Plan is dedicated to the children of Aurukun. They are why we need to plan for the future. They are our future leaders.

