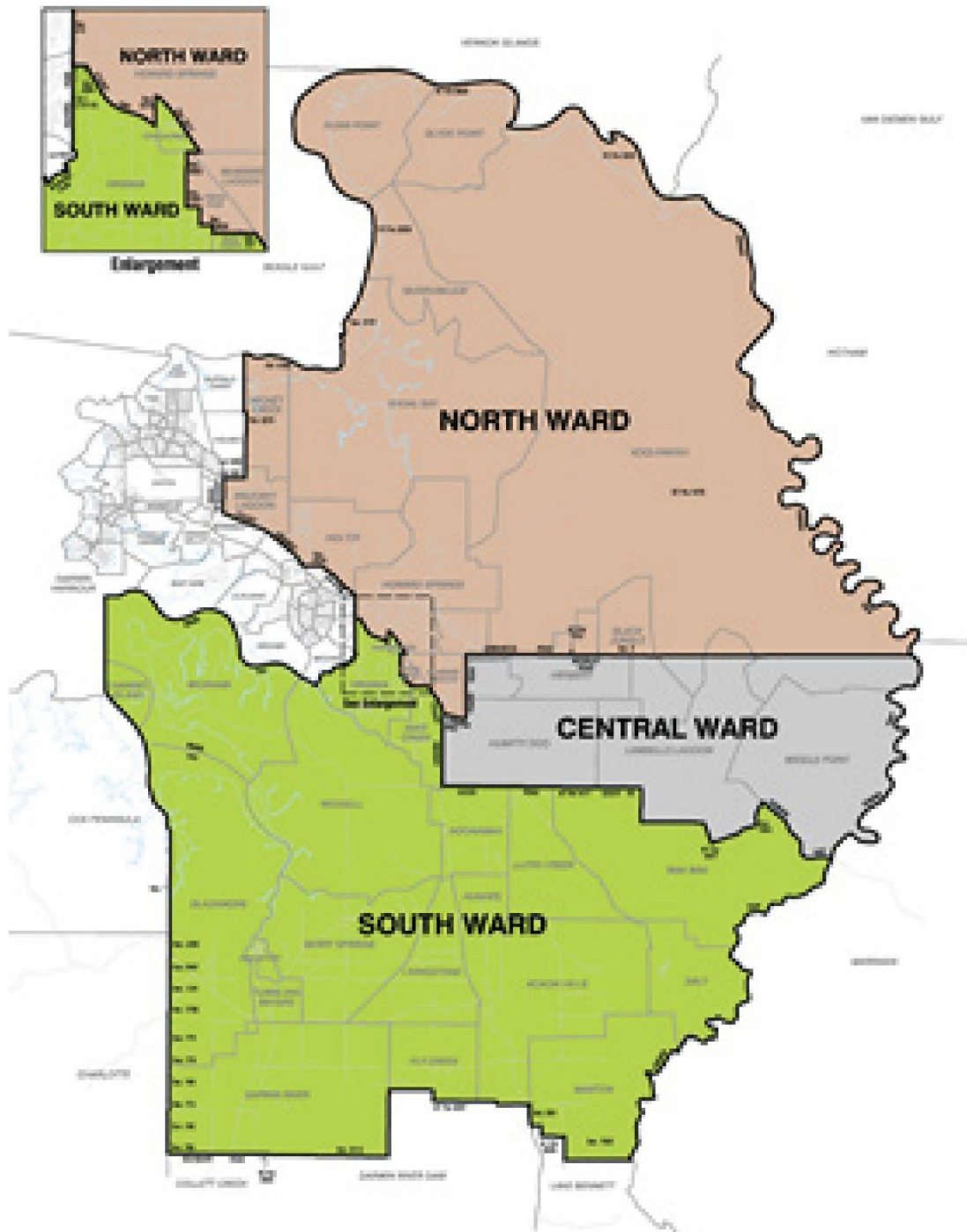


Litchfield Council

Election Report



NTEC version control

2021 Local Government Elections - Litchfield Council Report

Version Number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
1.0	Final version approved by K. Kelly	K. Kelly NTEC	21/12/2021
1.1	Addition of version control	M. O'Brien	12/04/2022
1.2	Mayoral ballot paper informal ballot table figures (pg. 11) updated to reflect correct informal ballot paper totals. Manual count error when categorising informal votes.	M. Wilton	21/04/2022

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The latest version is accessible via the NTEC website at ntec.nt.gov.au.



Election timetable

2021 Local Government Elections

28 August 2021

Date	Time	
Friday 16 July		Nominations open
Tuesday 27 July	5:00 pm	Electoral roll closes
Thursday 5 August	12:00 noon	Nominations close
Friday 6 August	12:00 noon	Declaration of nominations, draw for position on ballot papers
Monday 9 August		Postal vote mail-out commences
Monday 16 August	8:00 am	Early voting commences Mobile voting commences
Tuesday 24 August	6:00 pm	Overseas postal voting despatches cease
Thursday 26 August	6:00 pm	All postal voting despatches cease
Friday 27 August	6:00 pm	Early voting ceases
Saturday 28 August	6:00 pm	Primary counts of postal, mobile and early votes commence Election day
	8:00 am	Election day voting commences
	6:00 pm	Election day voting ceases Mobile voting ceases Primary counts of ordinary, postal and early votes commence
Monday 30 August	9:00 am	Declaration vote verification checks, commence recheck of all counts
Thursday 2 September	9:00 am	Primary counts of accepted declaration votes, further postal counts
Friday 10 September	12:00 noon	Deadline for receipt of postal votes Final counts of postal votes commence
	6:00 pm	Distribution of preferences
Monday 13 September	10:00 am	Declaration of the election result

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BACKGROUND

Elections

Election day for the 2021 Local Government Elections was Saturday 28 August. Local government general elections in the Northern Territory cover 17 local government areas and include 60 separate elections for 159 positions. For Litchfield Council, there were 4 elections: one mayoral and one for each of its 3 wards:

- Central Ward – 2 councillors
- North Ward – 2 councillors
- South Ward – 2 councillors

Legislation

This was the first general election under the new *Local Government Act 2019* (which commenced 1 July 2021), with further electoral legislative and regulations changes included in amendments passed in May and June 2021.

The key changes relating to local government elections resulting from these amendments are:

- Changes to declaration voting that allows electors who turn up at a voting centre, but are not enrolled (or are enrolled for an interstate address) to still cast a vote that can be admitted to the count. The declaration envelope acts as an enrolment form which is forwarded to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for processing. If the person is able to be enrolled, their vote is added to the count. Previously, declaration votes would result in updated enrolments, but their ballot papers would not be included in the count.
- Financial disclosure requirements were simplified so that only candidates who receive reportable donations and loans are required to complete a return, and disclosure timeframes were generally aligned to those in the *Electoral Act 2004*. (The financial disclosure requirements do not come into effect until 1 July 2022, so were not relevant to the 2021 Local Government Elections.)
- Other amendments included changes to the election timetable and nomination requirements.

Service Charter

The service charter (one document for all councils) provided an overview of service commitments and associated standards that councils could expect from the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC). The charter also described how councils could assist in the delivery of the elections and thereby offset some of their costs. These are detailed in individual service level agreements that the NTEC had with each council.

Service Level Agreement

As part of its service level agreement signed 11 March 2021, Litchfield Council opted to provide or facilitate the following for its elections:

- a candidate information session in partnership with the Local Government Association of the NT (LGANT)
- use of council owned premises for an election day voting centre
- promotion of the election via its social media outlets
- promotion of the election by displaying relevant materials in their council office foyer
- signage locations provided around Litchfield for the placement of banners at no cost.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

There were changes to the internal boundaries of the Litchfield Council gazetted in December 2020 resulting from a review of electoral representation conducted by the council.

These changes included:

- abolishing East Ward resulting in the number of wards for Litchfield Council reducing from 4 to 3.
- boundary changes to the remaining Central, North and South Wards
- adjustments to the representation numbers so that each ward has 2 elected members.

ENROLMENT

At the close of the electoral roll on Tuesday 27 July 2021 at 5:00pm there was a total of 12,374 electors enrolled in the Litchfield Council. This was a 0.87% increase in enrolment from previous local government general elections held in 2017.

The enrolment numbers per ward were as follows:

- Central Ward – 4,253
- North Ward – 3,942
- South Ward – 4,179

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Campaign overview

The public awareness campaign for the 2021 Local Government Elections was implemented in two broad phases. The first phase focused on awareness and enrolment. The second was a call to action for all eligible Territorians to vote.

The roll out of the public awareness campaign for the 2021 Local Government Elections commenced on 21 June and continued through until the declaration of the results on 13 September 2021. Social media was the primary channel used to promote the election Territory wide. Television, radio, digital and print media were also integral parts of the media mix.

In-language radio, TV and social media content was also created to promote the election throughout remote areas and communities in the Territory. Based on recommendations from the Aboriginal Interpreter Service and Aboriginal Broadcasting Australia, content was developed in 9 Aboriginal languages which were geo-targeted to the regions where the languages are spoken.

Broadly understood Aboriginal languages such as Kriol and Arrernte were used right across the northern and southern parts to the Territory respectively to ensure that content developed in at least one relevant language other than English was available Territory wide.

Website

The website for the 2021 Local Government Elections was launched early June and provided comprehensive information for candidates and electors. The site was designed to be the primary source of information for voters about enrolment and voting options, times and locations and results.

For candidates, the site provided information about nominating, campaigning, voting and scrutineering processes.

The following table shows website engagement for the election period (21 June through to 13 September) as well as specific Litchfield Council results and information page engagement, prior to and post election day.

Total website page views	865,814
Litchfield mayor results page views	13,857
Litchfield councillor results page views (all wards)	17,731
Litchfield list of mayoral candidates	3,301
Litchfield list of councillor candidates	3,407
Other Litchfield content related page views	18,102
Total Litchfield content related page views	56,398

Newsletters



2021 Local Government Elections: Newsletter 2
Issue date: Friday 18 June

A total of 10 election specific newsletters were emailed to stakeholders including councils and candidates, from 28 May through to 9 September. The newsletters kept stakeholders up to date with topics ranging from nomination information through to details of vote counting. The newsletters were also available on the NTEC website and links were shared on the NTEC's Facebook page.

Advertising – radio, television, social media

NTEC branded advertisements of 15 seconds were developed for radio, television and social media. The advertisements carried simple, concise messages such as: 'check your enrolment', 'are you correctly enrolled?', 'early voting has started', and 'vote now'.

All advertisements promoted the NTEC website as the prime source of information for electors to 'find out more'.

These advertisements were also translated into 9 Aboriginal languages and broadcast on the CAAMA, Aboriginal Broadcasting Australia, Yolngu Radio and TEABBA radio networks throughout the Territory.

In-language versions were also broadcast on Aboriginal Broadcasting Australia TV and ICTV channels and were geo-targeted to their respective language areas on social media.

The stock advertisements were run on social media in conjunction with a series of video logs (vlogs) featuring well-known Territorians such as Charlie King, who promoted key election messages on behalf of the NTEC.

A number of social media advertisements were developed in collaboration with Bellette Media featuring Territorians raising awareness about the elections.

Facebook engagement statistics show that the vlog format advertisements proved highly successful. In total, 8 of the 42 social media advertisements were produced in either a vlog or light-hearted format. Those 8 advertisements accounted for 152,988 video views from the campaign total of 377,810 views.

English language radio advertisements were broadcast on Hot 100 and Mix-FM stations in the Top End and Sun FM and 8HA in Central Australia.

English language television advertisements were broadcast on Channel 7, Channel 9 and Imparja networks. Placement of these was focused on 'event' TV, or high-rating programs and popular sports such as AFL and NRL matches.

Direct digital and print advertising

With a large decline in print media options since the 2017 general elections, newspaper advertising for the 2021 Local Government Elections was largely restricted to statutory advertising requirements as prescribed under the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021. These advertisements ran in the NT News as the Territory's primary, widely-circulated newspaper.

However, further publications with a digital presence such as Alice Springs News Online, Tennant Creek and District Times and Katherine Times were also engaged for location targeted aspects of the campaign.

Direct digital advertising placements on millennial, tech-savvy platforms such as EA Games and NewsXtend, proved highly successful in terms of campaign awareness.

From 92,893 video impressions served on EA Games, a view through rate of 89.9 per cent was achieved, or put another way, there were 83,486 complete views of the two 15 second advertisements run across the campaign.

The NewsExtend platform also served 298,501 impressions Territory-wide and achieved 30,805 complete views of awareness video advertisements.

The following tables outline relevant statistics for different advertising channels and platforms.

Television

Network	Dates aired	Number of advertisements	
Channel 7 Darwin	04/07/2021 – 28 08/2021	202	
Channel 7 Central		228	
Channel 9		78	
Imparja		127	
ICTV		120	
ABA		124	
Bold: Channels aired throughout Litchfield Council region		Total	879

Radio

Network	Dates aired	Number of advertisements
Hot 100	04/07/2021 – 28/08/2021	158
Mix FM		157
CAAMA		168
TEABBA		109
ABA		141
Yolngu Radio		104
Sun FM		104
8HA		104
Bold: Channels aired throughout Litchfield Council region	Total	1,045

Social media

Campaign	Reach	Impressions	Click through rate
2021 Local Government Elections – overall	168,472	2,825,293	1.07%*
Litchfield geo-targeted ads#	98,620	743,864	0.94%

*Industry standard 0.89%

#Includes only ads targeted to run in the Top End which included the Litchfield Council area. Due to close proximity to Darwin, Litchfield was included in a greater Darwin/Palmerston geo-targeted ad sets. NT wide ads are not included.

Call centre

A call centre was established on Monday 2 August and ran until 6pm on 28 August, election day. Staff assisted electors with a variety of enquiries related to the election during this period.

Enquiry type	Enquiry numbers
Total phone calls	1,522
Emails to ntec@nt.gov.au	261
Front counter	88
Formal complaints	43

Street banners

The NTEC placed large banners ranging in size from 4 metres x one metre up to 8 metres x one metre in high traffic locations around Litchfield Council area to promote awareness of the 2021 Local Government Elections.

The following table details where and when those banners were located and what message they carried.

Banner location	Message	Display dates
Humpty Doo Transfer station	ARE YOU CORRECTLY ENROLLED	12/07 – 26/07
	VOTE EARLY NOW	16/08 – 23/08
	VOTE SATURDAY	23/08 – 28/08
Howard Springs Transfer station	ENROL TO VOTE ONLINE	12/07 – 26/07
	VOTE SATURDAY	23/08 – 28/08
Berry Springs Transfer station	ENROL TO VOTE ONLINE	12/07 – 26/07
	VOTE EARLY NOW	16/08 – 23/08
	VOTE SATURDAY	23/08 – 28/08

Candidate information sessions

There were one candidate information session organised by the LGANT in partnership with the council, which the NTEC presented at. The table below provides details about this session.

Date	Location	Number of attendees
2 July 2021	Litchfield Council office	12

Email and SMS

Electors who have provided either their mobile phone number or email address or both are able to be contacted directly by the NTEC. Those electors in the Litchfield council area received 4 messages before election day, 28 August. Details of those messages are provided in the table below.

Message	Email	Date sent	SMS	Date sent
Enrolment	5,426	19-07-2021	7,255	22-07-2021
Voting suspended (COVID-19)	260*	16-08-2021	6,922	16-08-2021
Vote now, early voting (post lockdown)	5,157	19-08-2021	6,922	19-08-2021
Last day/s to vote#	3,157	26-08-2021	3,624	28-08-2021
Totals	14,000		24,723	

*Sent only if no SMS contact

#Sent only to electors who had not voted

Other promotional activities

The NTEC hosted stalls on the show circuit promoting the upcoming 2021 Local Government Elections in Katherine and Darwin only. Stalls were ready to be run in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek but these shows were cancelled due to a COVID-19 lockdown.

The NTEC also attended the annual Welcome to the Top End Expo for Defence families and held a stall at the NAIDOC week celebrations in Darwin.

VOTING SERVICES

Nominations

Nominations opened Friday 16 July and closed on Thursday 5 August at 12:00 noon. For Litchfield Council there were a total of 17 accepted nominations for councillor and one rejected. There were 7 accepted nominations for mayor and one rejected. The rejected applications for mayor and councillor were from the same person who was not enrolled in the council area before the close of roll.

The declaration of nominations was held in on Level 1 of the NTEC office building at 80 Mitchell Street Darwin. The event was attended by candidates, the general public, council representatives and media. A random number generator selected the ballot paper position for each candidate and results were uploaded onto the NTEC website and Facebook page as soon as the draw was completed.

Litchfield Council – summary of accepted nominations/candidates

Mayor	Trevor JENKINS
	Mathew SALTER
	Doug BARDEN
	Andrew MACKAY
	Peter COLE
	Mark SIDEY
	Maree BREDHAUER

Central Ward councillor (2 vacancies)	Kev HARLAN
	Janene TORRANCE
	Nigel PALMER
	Lynette KENYON
	Andrew MACKAY

North Ward councillor (2 vacancies)	Fletcher AUSTIN
	Trevor JENKINS
	Mathew SALTER
	Rachael WRIGHT
	George KASPAREK

South Ward councillor (2 vacancies)	Steve ASHER
	Maureen KOHLMAN
	George LOW
	Liza TOBIN
	Emma SHARP
	Mark SIDEY
	Christine SIMPSON

Electronic mark-off

An electronic voter mark-off system is now used in all voting centres across the Northern Territory. The system records when someone has voted anywhere in the NT in real time. Where there is no internet coverage, each netbook stores the voter mark off information until such time as there is internet coverage which allows the netbooks to synchronise and send the information to NTEC offices.

Voting centres are issued paper copies of the certified lists as an emergency backup option in case of complete failure of the electronic mark off system.

The system also prevents multiple voting, as a voter who is marked off electronically in one voting centre or who has completed a postal vote will appear in all voting centres as already voted.

ELECTION

Early voting

Within the Litchfield Council area, early voting services were offered for two weeks (from Monday 16 August to Friday 27 August) at Coolalinga Central shopping centre. However, from 12 noon, Monday 16 August to 12 noon, Thursday 19 August, early voting was suspended Territory wide due to a COVID lockdown. To offset the loss of service to electors, early voting times were extended.

When open, early voting for Litchfield Council electors was also available at all other early voting centres (there were in total) located throughout the Territory. The table below shows the number of votes issued at each early voting centre (EVC) for this election, with comparison statistics from the 2017 elections.

Early voting statistics compared – Litchfield Council

Voting centre	2021 Local Government Elections – votes issued	2017 NT Councils elections – votes issued
Alice Springs EVC	10	7
Casuarina EVC	66	98
Coolalinga EVC	4,266	3,245
Darwin EVC	107	183
Katherine EVC	10	15
Palmerston EVC	202	N/A
Tennant Creek EVC	4	2
Yarrowonga EVC	589	N/A
Total	5,254	3,550

Note – City of Palmerston were suspended during the 2017 NT Council Elections so there were no early voting centres located there.

Mobile voting - urban institutions

Urban mobile voting teams attended hospitals and correctional centres to provide patients and inmates an opportunity to vote. These teams issued 1 vote in Tennant Creek and 64 votes across Darwin and Palmerston to Litchfield Council electors.

Postal voting

All electors have the option to postal vote. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, postal voting services were provided to all residents of urban aged care facilities (rather than in-house mobile voting as provided previously) throughout the Territory. As Australia Post could not guarantee the delivery and return of postal votes to overseas addresses within the legislated timeframes, due to the impact of COVID-19 on international flights, no postal votes were sent overseas. The table below provides further details about postal votes for Litchfield Council residents.

Postal voting statistics – Litchfield Council

Description	Number
Number of postal vote applications received	910
Number of postal votes issued	827
Number of postal vote applications rejected	83
Number of postal votes returned	752
Number of postal votes added to the count	606
Number of postal votes rejected	146

The reasons for rejecting postal vote applications were:

- multiple applications received from the same elector (62)
- too late for Australian address (9)
- overseas elector (9)
- cancelled and rejected on request by elector (3)

The reasons for rejecting returned postal votes were:

- ordinary vote issued (i.e. elector marked off as having voted in person) (46)
- postal vote not signed (44)
- vote dated too late (20)
- returned to sender (20)
- vote received too late (16)

Declaration voting

A person who cannot be found on the electoral roll, but is entitled to vote, can be issued with a declaration vote after completing and signing a declaration envelope. Their ballot paper is placed in the envelope and a scrutiny of all declaration envelopes commences the day after election day.

Legislative amendments passed in May 2021 created a savings provision that allows eligible electors who are unenrolled at the close of roll date, a chance for their vote to be admitted to the count. During the declaration scrutiny process, all declaration envelopes are forwarded to the AEC and eligible electors are added to the roll using the envelope as an enrolment form. Where voters are unable to be enrolled, their declaration vote is rejected.

For Litchfield Council, the table below shows the declaration votes admitted to the count and those rejected.

Declaration voting statistics – Litchfield Council

Accepted	Rejected	Total
108	3	111

The main reasons for rejecting declaration votes were:

- insufficient evidence of identity to enrol the person or update their enrolment (1)
- elector enrolled for a different local government area to the one they completed the ballot paper for (1). Electors must vote for the area they are enrolled in at the close of electoral roll, even if they have since moved to another NT address.
- declaration envelope/enrolment form not signed (1)

Election day voting centres

Election day was Saturday 28 August 2021. For the Litchfield Council area, there were 4 election day voting centres (detailed in the table below) all open from 8:00am to 6:00pm. Following discussions with the council, it was agreed to have an election day voting centre in Bees Creek as used previously, but instead continue the location of the Coolalinga early voting centre to an election day voting centre.

If voting on election day, electors had to vote at a voting centre located within their council area, except at selected early voting centres that turned into election day voting centres (i.e. Coolalinga could issue votes for all council areas).

The following table shows the votes taken at election day voting centres in the 2021 Local Government Elections compared with the previous elections in 2017.

Election day voting statistics – Litchfield Town Council

Voting centre	Location	2021 votes issued	2017 votes issued
Bees Creek	Bees Creek Primary School 20 Sattler Cres, Freds Pass	N/A	812
Berry Springs	Berry Springs Primary School 1150 Cox Peninsula Road	468	565
Coolalinga	Coolalinga Central 425 Stuart Hwy	1,160	N/A
Howard Springs	Whitewood Hall 325 Whitewood Rd	644	1,476
Humpty Doo	Taminmin College Challoner Crct	484	1,402
Total		3,120	4,255

Absent voting

Electors wishing to vote on election day outside of their council area, had the opportunity to vote at specific voting centres in Casuarina, Coolalinga, Darwin City, Palmerston, Yarrowonga or Alice Springs. This option was not offered in the previous local government general elections in 2017.

Absent voting statistics – Litchfield Council

Location	Votes issued
Alice Springs election day voting centre	9
Casuarina election day voting centre	22
Darwin City election day voting centre	33
Katherine election day voting centre	5
Palmerston election day voting centre	46
Yarrowonga election day voting centre	116
TOTAL	231

Participation

Turnout for the Litchfield Council election was 75.6% (based on the mayoral election results) with 9,354 electors voted out of a total enrolment figure of 12,374 (slightly more voted in the ward elections). The turnout was a good improvement compared with the previous election in 2017, with 65.7%. The following table details the total number of vote types for those votes admitted to the count (using data from the mayor election).

Number of votes by voting centre – Litchfield Council (based on mayoral votes)

Voting centre	Number of votes counted	% of total votes
Election day voting centres	3,120	33.3%
Early voting centres	5,247	56.1%
Postal voting	586	6.3%

Voting centre	Number of votes counted	% of total votes
Declaration voting	108	1.2%
Absent voting	293	3.1%
Total	9,354	100%

Non-voters

There are 3,096 identified non-voters across the Litchfield Council area. The table below shows the age and gender demographics of these non-voters.

Non-voter statistics – Litchfield Council

Gender	18-29 years	30-49 years	50-69 years	70+ years	Total
Female	213	412	389	112	1,126
Male	402	720	654	193	1,969
Gender undisclosed		1			1
Total	615	1,133	1,043	305	3,096

Informality

Of the 9,354 mayoral ballot papers counted, 697 (or 7.5%) were considered informal and therefore not counted. For the 9,365 combined councillor ballot papers, there were 715 informal votes (or 7.6%).

Informal vote statistics – Litchfield Council

Ballot	Intentional	Unintentional	Total
Mayor	552	146	698
Central Ward	196	20	216
North Ward	178	21	199
South Ward	265	35	300

Voting system

The voting system for local government elections where there are multiple vacancies to fill is proportional representation (PR):

- Electors must number all the boxes on their ballot paper sequentially starting with the number one for their first choice.
- First preference votes for each candidate on formal ballot papers are counted, then a quota is calculated.
- The quota is calculated using the following formula: (total number of formal votes / (number of vacancies + 1)) + 1.
- The candidates with votes equal to or greater than the quota are elected. If all vacancies are filled, the election is complete.
- If not, preferences are distributed to the other candidates until all vacancies have been filled.

To learn more about the PR system, go to the vote counting page on the NTEC website. For single vacancy positions (like a mayor) a preferential count is conducted.

Vote counting – election night

Vote counting began immediately after the close of voting at 6:00 pm on election day. A count of first preference votes for mayor and councillor was undertaken at election day voting centres only. Votes taken at early voting centres and by remote and urban mobile teams were counted at the Darwin scrutiny centre.

Post-election night scrutines

- A recheck of mayoral votes from all voting centres was undertaken on the Monday after election day. Counts of absent, declaration and postal votes returned during the counting period were undertaken over the 13 days following election day.
- As the mayoral position was a single-vacancy election, all counts were done manually.
- Votes received for the councillor vacancies were entered into an electronic count system that the NTEC uses to count votes using proportional representation (Easy count). All votes are then re-entered for verification purposes.
- Using this system alleviates the need to undertake a fresh re-check of ballot papers as each paper is entered and verified by two different data operators.
- Following the deadline for the receipt of postal votes at 12 noon on Friday 10 September, a distribution of preferences for the mayor was required as the leading candidate did not secure more than 50 per cent of the first preference votes. This count was done manually. The distribution of preferences for the councillor positions was conducted electronically using the Easy Count software.

ELECTION OUTCOMES

There were 7 candidates for the mayor vacancy and 17 candidates contesting the 6 councillor vacancies. The successful candidates and first preference votes received are detailed in the tables below.

Election of mayor

At the close of nominations there were 7 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

Candidate	First preferences
Trevor JENKINS	516
Mathew SALTER	863
Doug BARDEN	1,962
Andrew MACKAY	1,648
Peter COLE	449
Mark SIDEY	928
Maree BREDHAUER	2,290
Total	8,656

The number of votes required to win as per the preferential voting system (more than half) was 4,329, which no candidate received. Following the distribution of preferences, and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (*Electoral*) Regulations, the results were as follows:

- **Doug BARDEN** received the quota at count number 6

Doug BARDEN was duly elected.

Election of 2 councillors – Central Ward

At the close of nominations there were 5 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

Candidate	First preferences
Kev HARLAN	660
Janene TORRANCE	495
Nigel PALMER	580
Lynette KENYON	315
Andrew MACKAY	1,028
Total	3,078

The quota required under the proportional representation voting system was 1,027. Following the distribution of preferences and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations the results were as follows:

- **Andrew MACKAY** received the quota at count number 1
- **Kev HARLAN** received the quota at count number 7

Andrew MACKAY and **Kev HARLAN** were duly elected.

Election of 2 councillors – North Ward

At the close of nominations there were 5 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

Candidate	First preferences
Fletcher AUSTIN	480
Trevor JENKINS	171
Mathew SALTER	542
Rachael WRIGHT	1,061
George KASPAREK	411
Totals	2,665

The quota required under the proportional representation voting system was 889. Following the distribution of preferences, and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations, the results were as follows:

- **Rachael WRIGHT** received the quota at count number 1
- **Mathew SALTER** received the quota at count number 6

Rachael WRIGHT and **Mathew SALTER** were duly elected.

Election of 2 councillors – South Ward

At the close of nominations there were 7 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

Candidate	First preferences
Steve ASHER	214
Maureen KOHLMAN	215
George LOW	308
Liza TOBIN	307
Emma SHARP	760
Mark SIDEY	679
Christine SIMPSON	424
Totals	2,907

The quota required under the proportional representation voting system was 970. Following the distribution of preferences, and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations, the results were as follows:

- **Emma SHARP** received the quota at count number 5
- **Mark SIDEY** received the quota at count number 10

Emma SHARP and **Mark SIDEY** were duly elected.

Declaration of the election results

The declaration of election results took place at the Litchfield Council office at 10:15am on Monday 13 September 2021.

Declared election results for Litchfield Council

Mayor	Central Ward (2 vacancies)	North Ward (2 vacancies)	South Ward (2 vacancies)
Doug BARDEN	Andrew MACKAY Kev HARLAN	Rachael WRIGHT Mathew SALTER	Emma SHARP Mark SIDEY

A copy of the full distribution of preferences is available on the 2021 Local Government Elections [results page](#) of the website.

ELECTION COSTS

Estimate of cost – Litchfield Council

Election area	Estimated cost
Public awareness	\$26,932
Staffing	\$85,880
Operational	\$56,184
Sub total	\$168,996
10% GST	\$16,900
Total estimated cost	\$185,896

Actual cost – Litchfield Council

Election area	Actual cost
Public awareness	\$17,364
Staffing	\$114,237
Operational	\$34,986
Sub total	\$166,587
10% GST	\$16,659
Total actual cost	\$183,246

Although the actual cost is slightly under the estimated costs, the actual staff wages is significantly higher than those estimated. This can be partially contributed to an under-estimation of staff costs on behalf of the NTEC, but also the COVID-19 lockdown and resulting extended early voting hours and additional measures taken to reduce risks. Litchfield Council agreed to pay a \$5,000 contribution towards the costs associated with the lockdown and this is included in the actual operational cost amount.

POST ELECTION DE-BRIEF

A de-brief of the election activities and outcomes took place with Litchfield Council on 13 October 2021. Overall, the council were satisfied with the level of services provided by the NTEC.

Litchfield Council were pleased with the decision to have the early voting centre situated within Coolalinga Central shopping centre and it was well utilised by voters during the early voting period and on election day.

As part of the lease agreements for early voting centres located in shopping centres, it is a condition of hire that there is no physical campaigning by candidates. For the first time at an NT election, the NTEC provided displays stands to host candidate how-to-vote material at the entrance to voting centres. Some of the feedback received by councils and the NTEC was those candidates whose material was placed at the bottom of the display stand they were disadvantaged to those candidates over the ones that were given an area higher up. NTEC has already sourced a new style of display that will give all candidates even representation for their campaign material.

It was noted that some candidates were not fully aware of what was required of them in the way of authorisation and advertising guidelines for campaign materials, and this resulted in both informal and formal complaints to the NTEC and council.

ISSUES OF NOTE

- The NTEC received a number of formal and informal complaints regarding the nomination criteria that candidates have not been 'certified mentally unfit to carry out the functions of a member'. This was regarding a candidate who stood for both the mayoral and councillor positions. It is a requirement to sign a declaration of eligibility as part of the nomination process and an offence to provide misleading information to an authorised officer in connection with an election.
- Voter turnout is the highest in the NT but the informal voting rate is high at 7.6% with a significant proportion identified as intentionally informal.
- While acknowledging the matter was not within the remit of NTEC, Litchfield Council raised concerns about misinformation on social media and impacts on elections. The council also noted that educating the community on the reliability of information and sources would be beneficial.
- NTEC would like to extend its thanks to Daniel Fletcher and Rebecca Taylor for the support they provided.