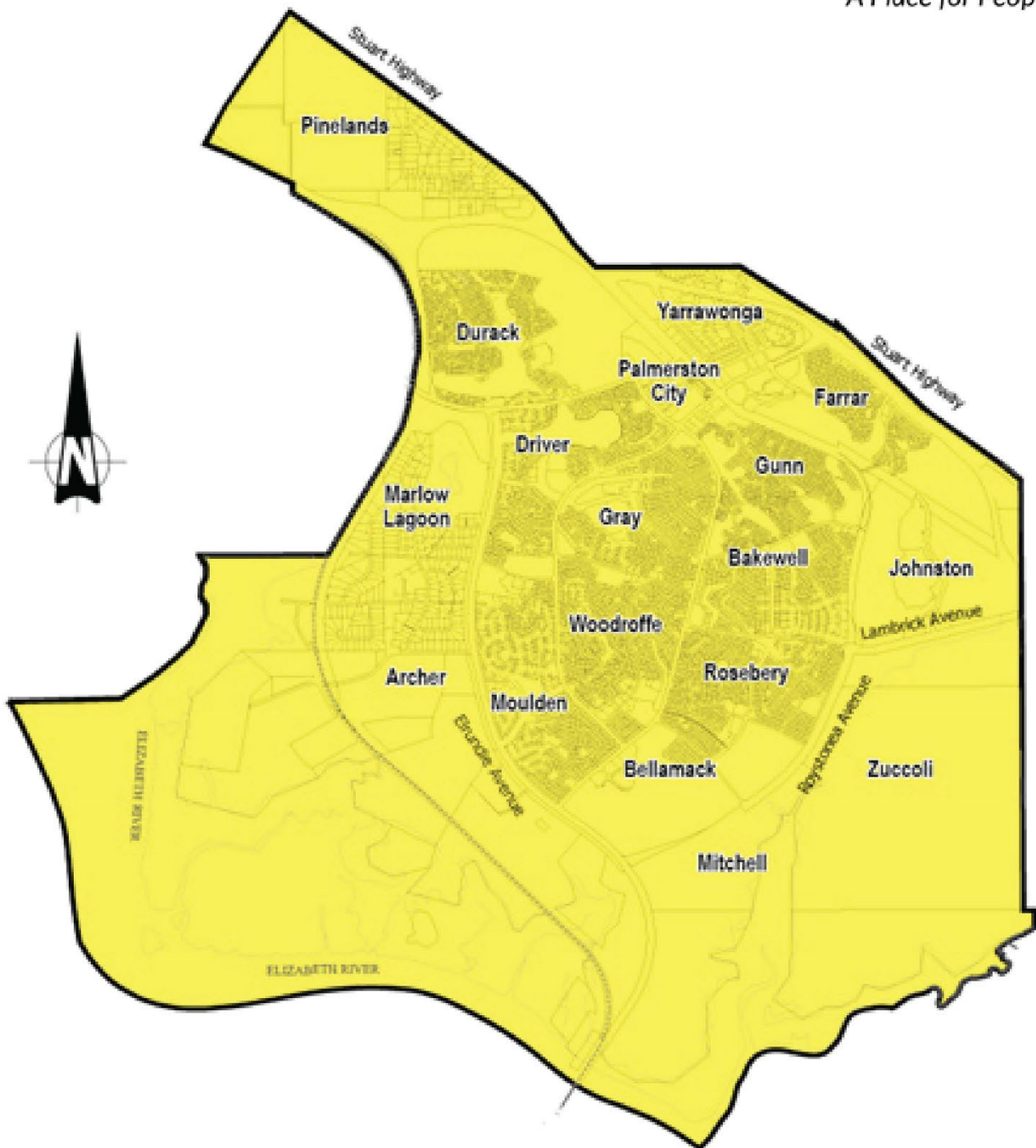
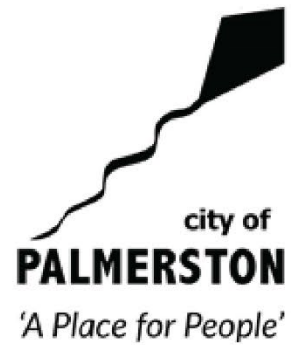




City of Palmerston Election Report



NTEC version control

2021 Local Government Elections - City of Palmerston 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 Removal of blank page	M. O'Brien	12/04/2022

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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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For more information go to www.ntec.nt.gov.au

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 the City of Palmerston, there were two elections: one mayoral and one to elect 7 aldermen. (At the first council meeting post-election, a decision was made to change the name of the elected members from alderman to councillor)

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 21 April 2021, the City of Palmerston opted to provide or facilitate the following for its elections:

- a candidate information
- promotion of the election via its social media outlets
- banner space on council signage at no cost

BOUNDARY CHANGES

There were no boundary or representative structure changes as a result of the representation review of City of Palmerston conducted prior to the election.

ENROLMENT

At the close of the electoral roll on Tuesday 27 July 2021 at 5:00pm there was a total of 23,559 electors enrolled in the City of Palmerston. This was a 10.8% increase in enrolment from the previous City of Palmerston elections in 2018.

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 City of Palmerston results and information page engagement, prior to and post election day.

Website engagement

Total website page views	865,814
City of Palmerston mayor results page views	6,572
City of Palmerston alderman results page views	11,063
City of Palmerston list of mayoral candidates	2,522
City of Palmerston list of alderman candidates	3,937
All other City of Palmerston content related page views	11,515
Total City of Palmerston content related page views	35,609



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

Newsletters

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

Network	Dates aired	Number of advertisements
ICTV		120
ABA		124
Bold: Channels aired throughout City of Palmerston 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 City of Palmerston region		Total 1,045

Social media

Campaign	Reach	Impressions	Click through rate
2021 Local Government Elections – overall	168,472	2,825,293	1.07%*
City of Palmerston 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 City of Palmerston area. Due to close proximity to Darwin and Litchfield, Palmerston 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 a large banner of 8 metres x one metre in a high traffic location on the Stuart Highway near the City of Palmerston to promote awareness of the 2021 Local Government Elections.

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

Banner location	Message	Display dates
Stuart Highway, Pinelands	ENROL TO VOTE	12/07 – 27/07
	VOTE EARLY NOW	11/08 – 28/08

Candidate information sessions

There was one candidate information session organised by the Local Government Association of the NT in partnership with the council, which the NTEC presented at. The table below provides details about this session.

Date	Location	Number of attendees
15 July 2021	Palmerston Recreation Centre	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 City of Palmerston 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	10,298	19-07-2021	13,072	22-07-2021
Voting suspended (COVID-19)	408*	16-08-2021	12,057	16-08-2021
Vote now, early voting (post lockdown)	9,358	19-08-2021	12,057	19-08-2021
Last day/s to vote#	5,600	26-08-2021	6,445	28-08-2021
Totals	15,733		26,751	

*Sent only if no SMS contact and if elector had not already voted

#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 the City of Palmerston, there were a total of 12 accepted nominations for alderman, although one candidate withdrew and 3 accepted nominations for mayor.

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.

City of Palmerston – summary of accepted nominations/candidates

Position	Nominations
Mayor	Athina PASCOE-BELL
	Ryan PETTIFER
	Raj Samson RAJWIN
Alderman (7 positions)	Sarah HENDERSON
	Mark FRASER
	Dave EAKINS
	Damian HALE
	Themis MAGOULIAS
	Gregory KNOWLES
	Amber GARDEN
	Lucy MORRISON
	Ben GIESECKE
	Danielle EVELEIGH
	Colin SOUTHAM
Raj Samson RAJWIN	

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

Early voting services were offered for two weeks (from Monday 16 August to Friday 27 August) at 8 early voting centres across the Territory, including 2 in the City of Palmerston area at the Palmerston Shopping Centre and Gateway 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.

The table below shows the number of votes issued at each early voting centre (EVC) for this election, with comparison statistics from the 2018 City of Palmerston elections.

Early voting statistics compared – City of Palmerston

Voting centre	2021 Local Government Elections - Votes issued	2018 City Of Palmerston election - Votes issued
Alice Springs EVC	23	7
Casuarina EVC	120	N/A
Coolalinga EVC	673	N/A
Darwin EVC	200	300
Katherine EVC	17	N/A
Palmerston EVC	3,639	7,164
Tennant Creek EVC	2	N/A
Yarrowonga EVC	3,800	N/A
Total	8,474	7,471

While the figures are difficult to compare due to 2018 election not being held at the same time as the local government general elections, it is clear there was a higher number of people using early voting services in 2021. It should also be taken into account that the early voting period was extended at the 2018 election due to Cyclone Marcus.

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 3 votes in Alice Springs and 125 votes across Darwin and Palmerston to City of Palmerston 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 Central Desert Regional Council residents.

Postal voting statistics – City of Palmerston

Description	Number
Number of postal vote applications received	1,817
Number of postal votes issued	1,631
Number of postal vote applications rejected	186
Number of postal votes returned	1,453
Number of postal votes added to the count	1,199
Number of postal votes rejected	254

The reasons for rejecting postal vote applications were:

- multiple applications received from the same elector (142)
- overseas elector (17)
- cancelled and rejected on request by elector (15)
- too late for Australian address (9)
- age care – incapacitated (3)

The reasons for rejecting returned postal votes were:

- ordinary vote issued (i.e. elector marked off as having voted in person) (100)
- postal vote not signed (88)
- vote dated too late (25)
- vote received too late (20)
- returned to sender (19)
- ballot paper outside envelope (2)

Declaration votes

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 the City of Palmerston, the table below shows the declaration votes admitted to the count and those rejected.

Declaration vote statistics – City of Palmerston

Accepted	Rejected	Total
194	15	209

The main reasons for rejecting declaration votes were:

- elector enrolled for a different local government area to the one they completed the ballot paper for (10). 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.
- insufficient evidence of identity to enrol the person or update their enrolment (5)

Election day voting centres

Election day was Saturday 28 August 2021. For the City of Palmerston, there were 5 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 reduce the number of election day voting centres due to the increasing trend of early voting by City of Palmerston electors. In addition, NTEC proposed to use the 2 Palmerston located early voting centres as election day voting centres. Overall, the overall reduction of election day voting centres was from 6 to 5, however, the locations of election day voting centres also changed. Previous locations in Driver, Bakewell, Durack and Johnston were not used, and Zuccoli Primary School was added.

If voting on election day, electors had to vote at a voting centre located within their council area, although any elector could vote at the 2 early voting centres that were also open on election day (Palmerston and Yarrowonga).

Election day voting statistics – City of Palmerston

Election day voting centre	Location	Votes taken
Palmerston City	Palmerston Shopping Centre 22 Temple Terrace	1,374
Rosebery	Palmerston College (7-9 Middle Campus) 185 Forrest Parade	879
Woodroffe	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, 34 Emery Ave	1,045
Yarrowonga	Gateway Shopping Centre, 1 Roystonea Avenue	1,483
Zuccoli	Zuccoli Primary School, Corner of Zuccoli Pde & Peaflower St	631
Total		5,412

Participation

Turnout for the City of Palmerston election was 64.7% for the alderman election and 64.6% for the mayoral election. This was a slight increase from the 2018 city of Palmerston election which had a turnout rate of 64.3%. The following table details the total number of vote types for those votes admitted to the count.

Number of votes by voting centre – City of Palmerston (based on alderman votes)

Voting centre	Number of votes counted	% of total votes
Election day voting centres	4,976	32.6%
Early voting centres	8,483	55.6%
Postal voting	1,196	7.8%
Declaration voting	193	1.3%
Absent voting	400	2.6%
Total	15,248	99.9%

Non-voters

There were 8,489 identified non-voters across the council area. The table below shows the age and gender demographics of these non-voters.

Non-voter statistics – City of Palmerston

Gender	18-29 years	30-49 years	50-69 years	70+ years	Total
Female	1,276	1,633	589	153	3,651
Male	1,636	2,231	798	172	4,837
Gender undisclosed	1				1
Total	2,913	3,864	1,387	325	8,489

Informality

Of the 15,248 ballot papers counted for the alderman election, 1,324 (8.7%) were considered informal, and for the mayoral election, of the 15,227 ballot papers counted, 768 considered informal (5.0%). and so not counted.

Informal vote statistics – City of Palmerston

Position	Intentional	Unintentional	Total
Mayor	639	129	768
Alderman	784	540	1,324
Total	1,641	451	2,092

Voting system

The voting system for local government elections 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.

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 alderman was undertaken at each voting centre. First preference votes cast at early and mobile voting centres were counted at the Darwin scrutiny centre.

Post-election night scrutinies

- In the two weeks following election day, postal, absent and declaration votes were counted.
- For the mayoral count, a recheck of votes from voting centres were undertaken on the Monday after election day.
- As the mayoral position was a single-vacancy election, all counts were done manually.
- Votes received for the alderman 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 Palmerston mayor was not required as the leading candidate secured more than 50 per cent of the first preference votes. The distribution of preferences for the alderman positions was conducted electronically using the Easy Count software.

ELECTION OUTCOMES

There were 3 candidates for the mayor vacancy and 12 candidates contesting 7 alderman 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 3 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

Candidate	First preference votes
Athina PASCOE-BELL	10,698
Ryan PETTIFER	2,257
Raj Samson RAJWIN	1,504
Total	14,459

The number of votes required to win as per the preferential voting system (more than half) was 7,230. A distribution of preferences was not required as **Athina Pascoe-Bell** received more than half the votes in first preferences.

Athina PASCOE-BELL was duly elected.

Election of 7 alderman

At the close of nominations there were 12 candidates. An election was duly held and the first preference votes were recorded as follows:

Candidate	First preference votes
Sarah HENDERSON	2,547
Mark FRASER	598
Dave EAKINS	414
Damian HALE	2,286
Themis MAGOULIAS	561
Gregory KNOWLES	203
Amber GARDEN	1,280
Lucy MORRISON	3,128
Ben GIESECKE	666
Danielle EVELEIGH	510
Colin SOUTHAM	534
Raj Samson RAJWIN	1,197
Total	13,924

The quota required under the proportional representation voting system was 1,741. Following the distribution of preferences, and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the *Local Government (Electoral) Regulations*, the results were as follows:

- **Lucy MORRISON** received the quota at count number 1
- **Sarah HENDERSON** received the quota at count number 1

- **Damian HALE** received the quota at count number 1
- **Amber GARDEN** received the quota at count number 3
- **Mark FRASER** received the quota at count number 38
- **Ben GIESECKE** received the quota at count number 49
- **Danielle EVELEIGH** received the quota at count number 76

Lucy MORRISON, Sarah HENDERSON, Damian HALE, Amber GARDEN, Mark FRASER, Ben GIESECKE and Danielle EVELEIGH were duly elected.

Declaration of the election results

The declaration of election results took place at the City of Palmerston Civic Centre at 9:00am on Monday 13 September 2021.

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 – City of Palmerston

Election area	Estimated cost
Public awareness	\$49,003
Staffing	\$108,389
Operational	\$94,288
Sub total	\$251,680
10% GST	\$25,168
Total estimated cost	\$276,848

Actual Cost – City of Palmerston

Election area	Actual cost
Public awareness	\$33,051
Staffing	\$211,281
Operational	\$70,173
Sub total	\$314,505
10% GST	\$31,450
Total actual cost	\$345,955

The main reason behind the large difference between the estimate and actual costs for the City of Palmerston election was a significant under-estimation of staffing costs on behalf of the NTEC. This is partially due to COVID-19 related issues, including the lockdown during the early voting period and additional measures taken to reduce risks. COVID-19 also impacted the ability to second specialist electoral expertise from interstate electoral commissions which is usual practice and saves on costs. None of the interstate specialist staff utilised were seconded. There were also significant increases in the costs for express postage.

It was determined by the Electoral Commissioner that the City of Palmerston would be only be invoiced for the estimated amount plus a \$10,000 contribution to offset the COVID-19 costs incurred during this election.

The causes behind the increased staffing and operational costs were explained to Treasury who agreed to meet the shortfall left after the COVID contributions.

POST ELECTION DE-BRIEF

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

City of Palmerston were pleased with the decision to have a second early voting centre and the location of early voting centre in shopping centres. For future elections, Zuccoli Shopping Centre should be considered as an early voting centre.

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.

There was discussion about how the council could assist, or how candidates can assist themselves, in campaigning. The discussion noted that in a large council area where there are no wards, there is added pressure on candidates to promote themselves with limited resources across the whole council area.

City of Palmerston expressed interest in the idea of undertaking a project or working with the NTEC on understanding why electors choose not to vote and how to improve voter turnout, rather than pursuing non-voter infringement notices. The council requested further data about non-voters in their area which has been provided in Appendix A.

ISSUES OF NOTE

- Of the 43 formal complaints the NTEC received for the 2021 Local Government Elections, 11 were directly related to the City of Palmerston elections. All complaints were either made by a candidate or about a candidate, and some were repeated. The main themes of the complaints were about interference with election signage, election signage put up without permission, incorrect authorisation of signage, false allegations made by a candidate about other candidates, as well as complaints about campaign workers.
- In response to the complaints received, candidates were reminded on a number of occasions either directly or through election newsletters of the code of practice for candidates, authorisation requirements and placement of election signage policies.
- As part of the lease agreements for early voting centres located in shopping centres, it was a condition of hire that no physical campaigning by candidates was permitted to minimise disruption to shoppers. 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. The material was displayed in the order that candidates appeared on the ballot paper. 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 sourced a new style of display that will give all candidates even representation for their campaign material.
- An application was lodged with NTCAT by a candidate following the declaration of results on the grounds that the preferential/ proportional voting system was not fair. The application was dismissed by NTCAT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- NTEC and the City of Palmerston to meet in person to do a thorough estimate of election costs before the next election.

- Review the number of election-day voting centres given the increase in electors early voting.
- Review the number and location of election day voting centres following the 2022 Local Government Representation Review.

APPENDIX A

Non-voter demographics – 2021 Local Government Elections – City of Palmerston

City of Palmerston - Male				
Locality	18 - 29	30 - 49	50 - 69	70+
	3	10	8	1
BAKEWELL	156	183	81	14
BELLAMACK	126	114	28	12
DRIVER	137	225	72	13
DURACK	177	248	73	7
FARRAR	64	94	21	11
GRAY	176	247	125	30
GUNN	106	178	49	9
JOHNSTON	59	82	11	3
MARLOW LAGOON	7	16	13	3
MOULDEN	192	250	122	20
PALMERSTON CITY	7	4	1	
PALMERSTON INDIGENOUS VLG	3	9	11	1
PINELANDS		4	6	
ROSEBERY	177	254	62	17
WOODROFFE	183	207	91	26
YARRAWONGA		3	4	1
ZUCCOLI	63	103	20	4
TOTAL	1,636	2,231	798	172
City of Palmerston - Female				
Locality	18 - 29	30 - 49	50 - 69	70+
	6	10	7	2
ARCHER			1	
BAKEWELL	94	152	58	16
BELLAMACK	117	85	16	15
DRIVER	129	146	56	7
DURACK	121	183	44	10
FARRAR	52	55	23	9
GRAY	162	198	99	31
GUNN	85	111	31	6
JOHNSTON	51	47	12	1
MARLOW LAGOON	6	5	7	3
MOULDEN	161	214	80	25
PALMERSTON CITY	2	3		
PALMERSTON INDIGENOUS VLG	2	8	3	
PINELANDS	1	1		
ROSEBERY	106	173	56	11
WOODROFFE	131	172	81	14
YARRAWONGA	1		2	
ZUCCOLI	49	70	13	3
Total	1,276	1,633	589	153
City of Palmerston - Gender undisclosed				
Locality	18 - 29	30 - 49	50 - 69	70+
MOULDEN	1			
Total	1			