

Belyuen Community Government Council Election Report



NTEC version control

2021 Local Government Elections - Belyuen Community Government Council Report

Version Number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
1.0	Final version approved by K. Kelly	K. Kelly NTEC	08/02/2022
1.1	Addition of version control Removal of blank page	M. O'Brien	12/04/2022

Disclaimer

Copyright © 2022. This document may not be reproduced without permission. This document is controlled and has been released electronically. The version the NTEC website is the up to date document. Hard copies are uncontrolled and may not be up to date. Users of hard copies should confirm the revision by comparing it with the electronically controlled version

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

INDEX

BACKGROUND	1
Elections	1
Legislation.....	1
Service Charter.....	1
Service Level Agreement.....	1
BOUNDARY CHANGES	1
ENROLMENT	1
PUBLIC AWARENESS	2
Campaign overview	2
Website	2
Newsletters.....	2
Advertising –radio, television, social media.....	3
Direct digital and print advertising	3
Television.....	3
Radio.....	4
Social Media	4
Call centre.....	4
Email and SMS	5
Other promotional activities.....	5
VOTING SERVICES	5
Nominations	5
Electronic mark-off	6
ELECTION	6
Early voting	6
Remote mobile voting	6
Mobile voting – urban institutions	6
Postal voting	6
Declaration Votes	7
Participation	7
Non-voters	8
Informality	8
Voting system	8
Vote counting – election night	9
Post-election night scrutines	9
ELECTION OUTCOMES	9
ELECTION COSTS	10
ISSUES OF NOTE	10

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 Belyuen Community Government Council, there was 1 election for 5 councillor positions.

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 2 August 2021, Belyuen Community Government Council opted to provide or facilitate the following for its elections:

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

All electoral services were provided by the NT Electoral Commission.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

There were no boundary or representative structure changes as a result of the representation review of Belyuen Community Government Council conducted prior to the election.

ENROLMENT

At the close of the electoral roll on Tuesday, 27 July at 5:00pm there was a total of 138 electors enrolled in the Belyuen Community Government Council. This was a 4.3% decrease in enrolment from the 2017 local government general elections.

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 Belyuen Community Government Council results and information page engagement, prior to and post election day.

Total website page views	865,814
Belyuen councillor results page views	616
Belyuen list of councillor candidates	246
Belyuen council information page views	307
Other Belyuen content related page views	1,169
Total Belyuen content related page views	1,443



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 vlogs featuring well-known Territorians such as Charlie King, who promoted key election messages on behalf of the NTEC.

A number of light-hearted social media advertisements featuring everyday Territorians to promote the election in Alice Springs and Territory wide were also developed in collaboration with Bellette Media.

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 ads were broadcast on Channel 7, Channel 9 and Imparja networks. Placement of the ads 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 through-plays of the two, 15 second advertisements run across the campaign.

The NewsXtend platform also served 298,501 impressions Territory-wide and achieved 30,805 fully played video views of awareness 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

Network	Dates aired	Number of advertisements
Imparja		127
ICTV		120
ABA		124
Bold: Channels aired throughout Belyuen Community Government 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 Belyuen Community Government 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%*
Belyuen geo-targeted ads#	4,879	14,699	2.99

*Industry standard 0.89%

#Includes only Kriol language ads targeted to run in the Top End, including the Belyuen Community Government council area. Does not include Territory wide run English ads, which were also run in the council area.

Call centre

A call centre was established on Monday 2 August and ran until 6:00pm Saturday 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

Candidate information sessions

The Local Government Association of the NT (LGANT) contacted every council to offer candidate information sessions which the NTEC would also present at. There were no candidate information sessions held for Belyuen Community Government Council, but online resources for candidates were available from both LGANT and NTEC.

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 Belyuen Community Government Council area received 4 messages before election day, 28 August. Details of those messages were:

Message	Email	Date Sent	SMS	Date Sent
Enrolment	4	19-07-2021	8	22-07-2021
Voting suspended (COVID-19)	1*	16-08-2021	9	16-08-2021
Vote now, early voting (post lockdown)	4	19-08-2021		
Community specific message sent 2 days before remote team visit			9	25-08-2021
Totals	9		26	

*Sent only if no SMS contact

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. There were a total of 7 accepted nominations for 5 council vacancies.

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.

Belyuen Community Government – summary of accepted nominations/candidates

Position	Nominations
Councillor (5 vacancies)	Rex EDMUNDS
	John Mango MOREEN
	Cecilia LEWIS

Position	Nominations
	Lenard SING
	Zoe SINGH
	Teresa TIMBER
	Claude W HOLTZE

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

Belyuen Community Government Council electors had access to 5 early voting centres across Darwin, Palmerston and Coolalinga over the 2 week early voting period (16 August to 27 August). 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 early voting centres (EVCs) that issued votes to Belyuen Community Government Council electors.

Early voting statistics – Belyuen Community Government Council

Location	Votes issued
Coolalinga EVC	1
Yarrowonga EVC	3
Total	4

Remote mobile voting

A remote mobile voting team visited Belyuen community on Friday 27 August from 11:15am to 2:15pm. This team issued 83 votes (including declaration votes).

Mobile voting – urban institutions

Mobile voting teams visited Darwin public and private hospitals, and the Darwin Correctional Centre. These teams issued 3 votes to Belyuen Community Government 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 Belyuen Community Government Council electors.

Postal voting statistics – Belyuen Community Government Council

Description	Number
Number of postal vote applications received	3
Number of postal votes issued	2
Number of postal vote applications rejected	1
Number of postal votes returned	1
Number of postal votes added to the count	0
Number of postal votes rejected	1

The reasons for rejecting the one postal vote application was because multiple applications were received from same the elector.

The reasons for rejecting the one returned postal vote was because an ordinary vote was issued to that same elector (i.e. elector marked off as having voted in person).

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 Belyuen Community Government Council the table below shows the declaration votes admitted to the count and those rejected.

Declaration vote statistics – Belyuen Community Government Council

Accepted	Rejected	Total
2	6	8

The reason for rejecting the 6 declaration votes was because these electors were enrolled for a different local government area to the one they completed the ballot paper for. 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.

Participation

Turnout for the Belyuen Community Government Council election was 65.2%. That means 90 electors voted out of a total enrolment figure of 138. The turnout rate was greater than at the previous local government general election in 2017 (which was 57.6%).

Number of votes counted by voting centre type – Belyuen Community Government Council

Voting centre	Number of votes counted	% of total votes
Remote mobile voting in community	81	90.0%
Early voting (other regions)	4	4.4%
Absent	3	3.3%
Declaration voting	2	2.2%
Total	90	99.9%

Non-voters

There were 58 identified non-voters across the council area. The table below shows the age and gender demographics of these non-voters.

Non-voter statistics – Belyuen Community Government Council

Gender	18-29 years	30-49 years	50-69 years	70+ years	Total
Female	12	9	7		28
Male	9	15	3	2	29
Gender undisclosed	1				1
Total	22	24	10	2	58

Informality

Of the 90 ballot papers counted, 8 were considered informal and so not counted. This is an informality rate of 8.9%.

Informal vote statistics

Intentional	Unintentional	Total
4	4	8

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, Saturday 28 August 2021. A count of first preference votes for councillor 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

- A count of postal votes returned by election day was conducted on the Monday following election day. Counts of accepted declaration votes, and postal votes returned during the counting period were undertaken over the 13 days following election day.
- 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 councillor positions was conducted electronically using the Easy Count software.

ELECTION OUTCOMES

There were 7 candidates contesting 5 councillor vacancies. The successful candidates and first preference votes received are detailed in the table below.

Election of 5 councillors

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 preference votes
Rex EDMUNDS	22
John Mango MOREEN	2
Cecelia LEWIS	1
Lenard SING	26
Zoe SING	5
Teresa TIMBER	25
Claude W HOLTZE	1
Total	82

The quota required under the proportional representation voting system was 13.7 votes.

Following the distribution of preferences, and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government (*Electoral*) Regulations, the results were as follows:

- **Rex EDMUNDS** received the quota at count number 1
- **Lenard SING** received the quota at count number 1
- **Teresa TIMBER** received the quota at count number 1
- **Claude W HOLTZE** received the quota at count number 4
- **John Mango MOREEN** received the quota at count number 5

Rex EDMUNDS, Lenard SING, Teresa TIMBER, Claude W HOLTZE and John Mango MOREEN were duly elected.

Declaration of election results

The declaration of election results took place at the NTEC office at 80 Mitchell Street, Darwin at 2:00pm 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 costs – Belyuen Community Government Council

Election area	Estimated cost
Public awareness	\$299
Staffing	\$1,478
Operational	\$594
Sub total	\$2,371
10% GST	\$237
Total estimated cost	\$2,608

Actual cost – Belyuen Community Government Council

Election area	Actual cost
Public awareness	\$195
Staffing	\$875
Operational	\$289
Sub total	\$1,359
10% GST	\$136
Total actual cost	\$1,495

ISSUES OF NOTE

There were no issues to note for the election conducted for the Belyuen Community Government Council.