ROPER GULF REGIONAL COUNCIL

Green Plan
2013-2016
THE LOGO

The logo was developed from a concept created by Lainie Joy of Borroloola. The five flowing figures have multiple meanings. They represent the five wards in our Region (Never Never, Numbulwar, Nyirranggulung, South West Gulf and Yugul Mangi); the five main rivers winding through our Region (the Limmen, McArthur, Robinson, Roper and Rose Rivers); the low-lying hills that are visible on the horizon nearly everywhere in the Roper Gulf Region and the Rainbow Serpent that underlies everything. The colours are based on the different colours of the soils and the peoples co-existing in the Roper Gulf Region.

RGRC ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

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Website www.ropergulf.nt.gov.au

Roper Gulf Regional Council ABN 94 746 956 090

REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY CENTRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barunga</td>
<td>08 8975 4505</td>
<td>08 8944 7059</td>
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<td>Beswick</td>
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<td>08 8975 4753</td>
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<td>08 8975 4905</td>
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<td>08 8978 6466</td>
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<td>Ngukurr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numbulwar</td>
<td>08 8975 4675</td>
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INFRASTRUCUTURE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPOT & CONTRACTS AND ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT

99 Emungalan Road Katherine NT 0850

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

14 Chardon Street Katherine NT 0850

COMMUNITY SERVICES

126 Victoria Highway Katherine NT 0850

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Photography: Roper Gulf Regional Council
Design and layout: Sarah Martin - sarah@sarahmartin.com.au

OTHER LOCATIONS

Robinson River
Urapunga (Rittarangu)
Werenbun
Minyerri
Awumbuninji
Badawarra
Baghetti
Barrapunta (Emu Springs)
Boomerang Lagoon
Costello
Daly Waters
Ganiyarrang (Ross Hill)
Jodetluk (Gorge Camp)
Gorpulyul
Larrimah
Lake Katherine
Mole Hill
Momob
Mount Catt
Mulgga
Mumballina (Toll Gate)
Nummerloori (Namaliiwirri)
Turkey Lagoon
Mobarn (Bluewater)
Weemol
Land and water is special to everyone. Sustainable management of our land and becoming more energy efficient is part of the future story for the Roper Gulf Region.

While Traditional Owners, land Councils and other property owners have the main responsibility for land management and government for water management, Council also has a role to play. We have 1500 hectares of land to manage in our towns and we manage most of the barge landings, river crossings and boat ramps on some of the biggest rivers in the Territory. We are all custodians of the land and responsible for the way we use the land.

The production of this Green Plan is a starting point for Council’s planning for actions to help protect our environment and make real changes to improve energy efficiency into the future. We have a responsibility for future generations in the planning and in the actions we take today and tomorrow. Our small local actions are also a part of a global movement to protect our heritage and future on what is a very small planet.

The nine towns and outstations that we manage and service in the Roper Gulf Region are important places to start the effective management of land and water. By implementing this plan we can:

• educate and train our 350 workers in technical tasks of natural resource management
• provide training and employment opportunities for 1400 job seekers in environment and land management through the RJCP
• inform and provide advice on policy about land and water through our local authorities

• engage our 7000 residents and bring important information to them through our various programs
• encourage them to use sustainable practices where they live and work.

We all have a responsibility to see that our footsteps are soft and do not damage the land we live and travel on. It is time to put into place a more sustainable way to live.

Good land management is good business; it reduces the need for increasingly expensive remedial work in the future. Land that is cared for is more productive, sustains traditional culture and is better for everyone to live in.

The Roper Gulf Regional Council has had the business of the environment on its agenda for a long time. We see our staff and executive playing a part in land and water management. For future generations we hope our towns and the rivers are cared for.

Our Green Plan 2013-16 is part of our ongoing plan for the Roper Gulf Region to be sustainable, viable and vibrant.

I would like to especially acknowledge the Department Lands, Planning & Environment – NTEPA (Northern Territory Environmental Protection Authority) for funding assistance in producing this Green Plan.

Yours for the people of the Roper Gulf Region.

Mayor Tony Jack
### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Australian Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEEP</td>
<td>Community Energy Efficiency Program</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>The term 'community' refers to all groups of people living in the Regional Council, unless specifically stated otherwise</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Community Safety</td>
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<td>CSIRO</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DLG</td>
<td>Department of Local Government</td>
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<td>DLPE</td>
<td>Department of Lands, Planning &amp; Environment (NT)</td>
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<td>DLRM</td>
<td>Department of Land Resource Management</td>
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<td>DSEWPC</td>
<td>Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities</td>
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<td>DITS</td>
<td>Directorate Infrastructure and Technical Services</td>
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<td>DCS</td>
<td>Directorate of Community Services</td>
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<td>DCG</td>
<td>Directorate of Corporate Governance</td>
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<td>DCED</td>
<td>Directorate Contracts and Economic Development</td>
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<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
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<td>KMS</td>
<td>Kilometres</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIP</td>
<td>Local Implementation Plan</td>
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<td>LRG</td>
<td>Local Reference Group</td>
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<td>NTG</td>
<td>Northern Territory Government</td>
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<td>NRM</td>
<td>Natural Resources Management</td>
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<td>RGRC</td>
<td>Roper Gulf Regional Council</td>
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<td>RJCP</td>
<td>Remote Jobs and Communities Program</td>
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<td>SDC</td>
<td>Service Delivery Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMF</td>
<td>Waste Management Facilities</td>
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<td>WoNS</td>
<td>Weeds of National Significance</td>
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Introduction

Roper Gulf Regional Council (RGRC) as a land manager and custodian of open spaces, parks and reserves has great opportunity to ensure that Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests are combined to achieve effective land, water and environmental management practices.

Council also has the potential to assist our communities to reduce their carbon footprint; improve energy efficiencies and become environmentally conscious in our day to day activities.

RGRC is not a big land user and has limited jurisdiction in regard to land and water management. These factors however do not prevent RGRC in striving for and achieving effective use of its resources to address the land and water issues impacting on nature and culture. This is evident through RGRC’s commitment of over $300,000 of the annual budget to Natural Resources Management and municipal staff’s engagement in fire, weed, pest species control, recycling and waste reuse within town localities. Activities with residents through festivals and education programs also provide strong influence and demonstrate the expertise and knowledge needed to effectively manage land and water, all of which assists with achieving RGRC’s resource management goals within our Region.

RGRC acknowledges the partnership with The Fred Hollows Foundation and its six year commitment to the people of the Roper Gulf Region in their Landcare and Horticulture program.
This program assisted Council to provide resources to build capacity of RGRC for its residents to undertake:

- Food security programs;
- Dust and wind suppression projects – reducing off road driving on local roads – contributing enormously to improve eyes, ear and nose health;
- Weed management – throughout all open spaces;
- Fire management within and around the towns;
- Animal management at the household level.

Whilst the Fred Hollows Foundation program has now come to an end, RGRC has continued the successful components and currently manages an Environment and Animal Management Program. Working effectively with the Northern Territory Government and the Territory Natural Resource Management Board, RGRC has received funding to equip municipal teams with the specialist equipment to manage fire and weeds. Environment and Animal Management staff have also been trained in Government Investigations and are recognised as Authorised Officers NT Animal Welfare Act.

The recent Local Government reforms have strengthened the capacity of local government to enter into the technical discussion relating to land and water management. In turn, this allows the people of the region to have a voice in land and water planning and management activities of government, institutions and stakeholder networks.

Residents and RGRC alike have had shared successes such as in Landcare and Tidy Towns Awards.

The Roper Gulf Regional Council Green Plan is the confirmation of RGRC’s commitment in ensuring environmental planning and management. It aims to:

- reduce the use of power and water in all towns
- deliver natural and cultural resource management outcomes
- enhance economic opportunities for sustainable development
- socially empower communities to participate in the planning process
- deliver Council activities which have minimal environmental impact

RGRC recognises climate change and resource availability as a potential future challenge. To plan and prepare for these changes, RGRC are implementing strong financial and operational policies around sustainability. These policies include the efficient use of power, water and resources, as demonstrated through the development of low energy street and public space lighting; installation of timers and insulation in its buildings and facilities. Main stream funding programs have been sourced to help reduce power usage through building redesign and introduction of new technology in our offices and buildings. RGRC managers are also charged with monitoring and actively reducing power and water usage. RGRC is constantly
updating its preparedness and resilience for our changing environment, recognising the potential increase on costs including those of power, water, fuel and freight.

To ensure that Council focuses on clear and achievable outcomes in addressing the many environmental challenges it is faces with we direct our operations to address the following strategic recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** Aim for 10% reduction in the use of mains power and water over three years.

**Recommendation 2:** Advocate for an investment in climate, land and water planning and local decision making.

**Recommendation 3:** Maintain involvement in water allocation planning; as consumptive uses such as agricultural and mining industries will place increased competitive pressure on the groundwater resources of Northern Australia.

**Recommendation 4:** Advocate for government to increase investment in social, cultural, and economic analysis in order to support the assessment of competing values and uses for land and water use planning, catchment level water planning and local decision making.

**Recommendation 5:** Encourage partnerships among land holders, communities and government to manage restoration and enhance sustainable production.

**Recommendation 6:** Continue to advocate for all communities in the Roper Gulf Region to have access to drinking water that meets appropriate water quality standards, and that future water-based developments do not negatively impact the supply or quality of drinking water.

**Recommendation 7:** Continue to monitor and seek advice on the increased diversification in land use in the region and make these subject to compliance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development, the objectives of the National Water Initiative and the ongoing coexistence of native title rights.

**Recommendation 8:** Support and promote sustainable tourism strategies across the Roper Gulf Region.

**Recommendation 9:** Advocate for the return of water rights under statutory water plans. This should explicitly recognise Indigenous Peoples’ rights and interests in water.

**Recommendation 10:** Monitor the proceedings of the North Australian Taskforce and the development of the north ensuring that sustainable development is achieved for the benefit of all local residents.

**Recommendation 11:** Increase the level of awareness of local residents, Traditional Owners/ environmental custodians and landholders of the impact of unconventional gas industry and the environmental, social and infrastructure pressures this industry can bring to the region.

The Roper Gulf Regional Council Green Plan 2013-2016 has been developed for the sustainable vibrant and viable future of the Roper Gulf Region people.
Our Mission
Working as one towards a better future through effective use of all resources

Our Vision
Roper Gulf Regional Council sustainable, viable, vibrant

Our Values
Honesty
Equality
Accountability
Respect
Trust
Our Strategic Priorities

- Effectively manage legislated responsibilities directly impacting on the Roper Gulf Region’s environment and on people’s enjoyment of it.
- Review organisational systems and processes and set in place measures to reduce carbon emissions.
- Proactively seek alliances and funding opportunities to protect and enhance the Roper Gulf Region’s natural environment and to address climate change.
- Build community and organisational resilience in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Advocate for initiatives that will protect the natural resources of the Roper Gulf Region, reduce negative impacts and explore opportunities associated with climate change.
Our Key Functions

- To increase the environmental awareness of staff and elected members.
- To establish a procedure to ensure projects are reviewed for their environmental impact.
- To implement sustainable procurement, contract and tender processes.
- To minimise energy consumption and reduce waste in offices throughout the Roper Gulf Region.
- To build partnerships with organisations that recognise the challenges of working in financially constrained and remote environments.
- To secure funding opportunities to support the Roper Gulf Region and our partners in environmental initiatives.
- To work with partners to raise community awareness of potential impacts of climate change.
- To identify and mitigate harmful effects of climate change on the Roper Gulf Region.
- To advocate for initiatives to mitigate climate change such as regional transport systems, increased uptake of alternative energy sources, protection of water systems in the Roper Gulf Region and recycling.
- To advocate at appropriate reference groups for measures to adapt infrastructure and services to overcome the potential negative impacts of climate change within the Roper Gulf Region.

Our Plan for a Cleaner Environment
The Roper Gulf Regional Council Green Plan is based on the key principle of *sustainability*. 
Key Actions

- Reduce power consumption in headquarters by 5% by end June 2014 and a further 5% (total 10%) by June 2016.
- Review water consumption and implement reduction and efficiency strategies.
- Undertake or auspice research into environmental issues within the Roper Gulf Region and its facilities, including energy usage and energy reduction strategies, water usage, waste reduction and land fill strategies.
- Complete energy audit across RGRC’s facilities.
- Target - 20% of power used by RGRC to be renewable by 2014.
- Produce a report on the Regional Council’s Green Plan annually to Council and in Annual report including new priorities and achieved actions.
- Include environmental sustainability as a measure for future project reports and Council capital works proposals.
- Develop a Landscape Plan, with community input and review annually.
- Develop partnerships with at least two external groups that will collaborate with us to enhance the Region’s natural environment and/or to address climate change by end June 2014.
- Maintain up to date research information and establish links with academic, environmental and other local government officers with environmental responsibility.
- Establish a consultative group of staff, residents and interested parties to advise on environmental issues.
- Establish a staff sub-committee to meet regularly with the appropriate Director around Green Plan implementation and review.
- Advocate around issues effecting the environment of the Region and apply for appropriate funding.
- Increase environmental awareness of staff and others.
- Education campaigns including self auditing, composting, use of lighting, IT after hours and paper usage.
- Include a category for environmental projects in the Community Grants process.
- Develop air conditioning, lighting and equipment usage guidelines and implement.
- Reduction of waste in Regional Council offices by 10% by 2015, including waste separation, and reduction of landfill used by RGRC offices.
- Increase effective recycling including the establishment of the purpose designed regional recycling facility in Mataranka.
- Advocate for the container deposit scheme and its extension.
- Review RGRC vehicle usage and review of fleet vehicle acquisition policy to include fuel economy and new technology. Promote use of RGRC vehicle trips. Use Commonwealth guidelines “Supporting new fuel efficient vehicles”.
- All future building design to include sustainable and passive energy usage, natural lighting and insulation. Replacement of all toilets with dual flush systems as upgraded.
- Appropriate shade plantings around RGRC facilities.
- Review and development of solar energy
production for small and large scale use.

- Environment plans in our civil works operations and construction programs.
- Develop the use of solar water heating for RGRC facilities and accommodation.
- Replacement of high energy use lighting with low energy lighting.
- Increase the usage of Solar Street lighting where appropriate and replacement of standard street lighting with LED lighting technologies.
- Improve the compacting of waste at tips to reduce methane production.
- End the use of firing tips as a means of waste reduction in landfills.
- Recycling strategies (batteries, waste oil, aluminium, steel).
- Review the use of office consumables and establish a policy of sustainable consumable purchase.
- Encourage the use of double sided documents and re-use of scrap paper.
- Encourage use of electronic communication.
- Develop and implement a litter management and education policy.
- Subsidise composting bins and worms for community and townships to reduce participable waste.
- Build community and organisational resilience in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Enhance RGRC’s natural environment and to address climate change.
- Feral animal control (fencing) around towns.
- Parks, gardens and open spaces to have local/native plants and trees.
- Remove non-native species from parks, gardens, open spaces and staff housing.
- Animal management—certain dog breeds not permitted for contractors as they interbreed with dingoes and camp dogs.
Performance Monitoring

Goal: To Protect and Care for our Physical Environment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Programs for 2013-2014</strong></td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Total park gardens and open space area (hectares)</td>
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<td>Cleaner Greener Challenge Program</td>
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<td>Total cost of infrastructure repairs and maintenance</td>
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<td>Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Program (incorporating Dark Spot Reduction Project, Solar Lights Project)</td>
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<td>Total maintenance costs (from running cost of assigned to asset)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing the things beneath your feet Program (incorporating the Right Path Project, Road Maintenance Project)</td>
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<td>Amount of energy consumption (kilowatts/hour)</td>
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<td>Number of kms of road requiring maintenance for the current year</td>
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<td>Amount of water consumption (kilolitres)</td>
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<td>Number of kms of roads actually maintained in the year</td>
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<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
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<td>Average cost per working hour of electricity</td>
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<td>Ratio/percentage of roads maintained to the total kilometres of road under RGRC control</td>
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<td>Ratio/percentage of municipal funding to park garden and open space areas</td>
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<td>Ratio/percentage of actual rubbish pickups to the approved service level</td>
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<td>Ratio/percentage over or under spend actual to budget</td>
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<td><strong>Efficiency Indicator</strong></td>
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<td>Percentage reduction in energy consumption</td>
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<td>Percentage reduction in cost of utilities</td>
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Our Strategies towards the Green Plan
Energy & Water Efficiency Strategy

- Reduce power and water usage by 10%
- Assist with community education and awareness energy efficiency programs in all towns
- Investigate alternative energy technology
- Managers to monitor quarterly use of power and water and to apply strategies to reduce use
- Incorporate energy efficiency designs & new technology into Building upgrades eg: install timers on Aircon and lights
Waste Management Strategy

**Recycling**
- Develop options for container deposit scheme
- Stock pile recyclables
- Work with metal merchants to have one hard rubbish removal annually
- Dead car clean up

**Compactor Trucks**
- Kerbside pickups 1-3 times a week

**Waste Management Facilities (WMF)**
- Manage 3 WMF’s under NTG License (Borroloola, Ngukurr and Numbulwar)
- Develop a site plan
- Develop formalize lay down areas for waste separation
- Perimeter fencing and signage

**Reducing**
Separating waste and reducing what goes in the landfill
- Green waste
- Containers
- Shop cardboard
- White goods
- Oil pods

**By-law Development**
- WMF management
- Litter management
- Law enforcement
- Education and awareness
- Park infrastructure

**Litter Management**
- Daily litter emu bobs in all public spaces and streets - education and awareness

**Re-use**
- One man’s rubbish is another man’s treasure
- Broken bikes - Second hand steel and iron
- Recycling (cans, bottles etc.)

**Working in partnership with DLPE to develop a regional recycling depot in Mataranka**
Weed Management Strategy

- Increased education and awareness of weed threats to all localities under the RGRC management
- Maintain a consistent strategic approach to weed management across Roper Gulf Region
- Development of an annual site-specific weed action plan for each locality
- Improved community capacity to manage existing weeds
- Improved community capacity to identify threats and WoNS species
- Provide education and awareness and participation by community members in the reduction and spread of weeds in each locality controlled or managed by the RGRC
- Work in partnership with external stakeholders to reduce the impact and spread of weeds on the natural and urban environment.
- Development of a strategic weed control program for all localities within the Councils jurisdiction
- Report annually to the Council, DLRM and DLPE on the progress of this program

ROPER GULF REGIONAL COUNCIL | GREEN PLAN
• Slash/cut all long grass where possible all times to at least 100mm

• Implement annual fuel reduction burns in open spaces within the town locality if necessary

• Manage and maintain external firebreaks in all towns and outstations

• Work with traditional owners and elders about fire regimes and management around towns.

Fire Management Strategy
Landscape Management Strategy

- Manage and maintain drainage across the town localities and reduce soil erosion
- Manage and maintain all parks and gardens within the town localities
- Incorporate landscape design and planning into municipal services
- Through vegetation and traffic management reduce off-road driving which contributes to dust and wind issues.
- Landscape around the footpath project and improve amenities
- Incorporate native bush tucker and medicine plants into landscape plantings
- Manage and maintain drainage across the town localities and reduce soil erosion
Animal Welfare Management
• Investigating formal complaints relating to dogs and domestic stock
• Improve responsible pet ownership
• Mediation
• Solution brokering
• Law enforcement

Stakeholder Engagement
• Household engagement database
• Database of all pets in each town
• Working with Police to manage dangerous animals
• Working with residents
• Partnership with NTG Animal Welfare Branch
• Tick and flea products in community stores

Vet Visits
• Improve animal health
• Reduce animal populations
• Pre and post vet household visits
• Register and record data on each pet
• Tick and flea management through hydrobaths

By-laws Development
• Development of Animal management by-laws to address:
  • Pets at large
  • Number of pets per household
  • Dangerous pets
  • Neglect and mistreatment
  • Domestic stock

AMRRIC
• Three year partnership
• Employment of two fulltime Animal Management Workers
• Support and advice
• Reporting and data collection

Feral animal control
• Fences and cattle grid

Education and Awareness
• Working in partnership with AMRICC to conduct school based education programs
• Liaison with pet owners
• Engagement with youth services

Animal Management Strategy
Cultural & Heritage Management Strategy

- Develop & upgrade Council Parks & Cenotaphs
- Engagement with communities (traditional owners and elders) in management of parks, reserves and open spaces.
- Barunga – Care and maintain billabong, biodiversity
- Beswick – Heritage Park Project
- Jilkminggan – Reduce the impact of urban centre on the river passing the town
- Manyallaluk – Management & maintenance of Heritage Park
- Mataranka – Continue to care & maintain Elsey Cemetery, statues
- Ngukurr – Cultural zone project
- Numbulwar – Cultural zone on foreshore
- Bulman – Care & maintain historical stone houses
- Borroloola – Relocate visitor information parking bay
- Weemol – Care & maintain Weemol springs
- Ngukurr – Cultural zone project
- Cemetery Management – upgrade & administration management of old cemeteries
- Weemol – Care & maintain Weemol springs
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