

14 March 2023

Mayor Jack Responds to Confusion on Borroloola Town Camp Roads Responsibility

Roper Gulf Regional Council is expressing concerns from the residents of Borroloola who are facing increasingly deteriorating roads of the town camps.

The Council is hearing the cries of residents in the Yanyula, Mara, Garawa One and Garawa Two town camps regarding the condition of roads that are so poor, residents are even fixing the road themselves just to get to town and allow children to get to school.

The Council believes that because no one has taken responsibility for these roads over a long period of time, residents are expecting the Council to help.

The Council has undertaken some repairs and maintenance in the past and believes this has created the impression that Council is responsible for the Borroloola town camp roads.

Roper Gulf Regional Council Mayor Tony Jack stated,

“Let me be clear, the responsibility of town camp management and town camp roads has never been with the Council.

“We have provided assistance in the past, such as using Roads to Recovery funding to reseal the Yanyula camp in 2013 and more recently, sought funding to install a concrete causeway on the way into Garawa camp due to road conditions being so poor.

“There has been no action from those actually responsible for the roads and we have taken on repairs at a direct cost to the Council for the sake of the residents.

“We even undertook some planning several years ago for design upgrades and identified that it would cost approximately \$4m at the time to properly fix all the Borroloola town camp roads.

“When funding partners could not be ascertained and there was little interest from governments to help, the project stalled and the result is what we see today where even the school bus cannot drive through to take children to school.

“It is probably going to take \$5m or \$6m now to fix properly,” Mayor Jack said.

“The management of town camps sits within the jurisdiction of the Northern Territory Government who provide other organisations with funding to provide ‘municipal services’ including road repairs and maintenance, and not to the Council.

“The issue is that these roads were so poorly built in the first place, it is now beyond the funding provided for local organisations to cover.

“The Council does not receive any rates from the Borroloola town camps, the land does not have any formal road reserves under the jurisdiction of the Council, and we have no capability to fund or expect other ratepayers to fund.

“The issue is not new and we have called on governments to show leadership about this issue with limited response,” added Mayor Jack.

“Recently we have seen new housing built at the Garawa Two town camp where roads were built by the Northern Territory Government that were up to standard and will last for many years to come.

“Whilst we appreciate the new housing that has been provided to the other town camps at Garawa One, Yanyula and Mara, there is no point if residents cannot access the houses due to poor road conditions.

“The need is for the 4.7km of existing roads and streets to be replaced as well and this is a cost that we need to advocate, on behalf of our residents, for government to assist with,” Mayor Jack concluded.

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For more information, please contact:

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Image description: Road conditions at Garawa One town camp taken on Monday 13 March 2023 after minor flooding in Borroloola.



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