

MEDIA RELEASE

21 October 2013

First Australians welcome New Australians

For the first time in the five years since formation, the Roper Gulf Shire Council formally welcomed a new Australian by hosting its first Citizenship ceremony.

Twenty five relatives and friends attended the ceremony held in Mataranka, in the heart of the "Never Never," to witness long term Katherine resident Catherine Proctor become an Australian Citizen. Catherine who was born in the United Kingdom and has now lived in Katherine for years is the first new citizen sworn in by the Mayor of Roper Gulf Shire Council Mr Tony Jack.

Mayor Tony Jack said, "Catherine has worked with the Roper Gulf Shire since 2008 and has become an important member of our organisation and community, and I am very pleased to formally welcome her as an Australian Citizen,... and what a beautiful and iconic location Mataranka is to become an Australian Citizen.

Roper Gulf Shire is twice the size of Tasmania with a population of around 7000 people, most of whom are Indigenous but like much of Australia we have people from of all over the world making their homes here. "

Mayor Jack, a Garawa man from Robinson River near Borroloola added, "... we Aboriginal people have been welcoming migrants to our country for hundreds of years and I am very excited as the Mayor of Roper Gulf Shire Council to be welcoming new Australians and witnessing their oath of allegiance on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Aboriginal people of Australia have a living culture going back at least 40,000 years. Recent Australian history is one of migration with most families having a history of arrival as migrants. In many ways these two streams are the basis and strength of our shared modern Australia. We welcome you all.

We plan to host more of these ceremonies and welcome people to join us as Australians in this special place. We have a shared future."

Mayor Jack invited people who were planning to become Australian Citizens and would like to take their oath in Roper Gulf Shire to contact the Department of Immigration.

For further information, please direct your inquiries to:-

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CEO

Roper Gulf Shire Council

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