

7 June 2022

Temporary Extension to Night Patrol Operating Hours

On 17 January 2022, Council was contacted by senior members of the Ngukurr community in regard to crime and unrest regularly occurring in the late hours of the night.

A number of break-ins, theft, property damage, vandalism, and vehicle theft had occurred after the Night Patrol team finished operating each night, with the increase in crime being attributed to an influx of residents and a number of displaced youth seeking food and shelter.

The community requested that the Night Patrol operating hours be extended past 2:00am, in an effort to mitigate crime and discourage youths from roaming the streets.

Historically, Night Patrol in Ngukurr has operated from 6:00pm to 2:00am, Monday to Friday per the funding agreement with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) (Cth).

On 21 January 2022, NIAA granted approval for the Ngukurr Night Patrol operating hours to be extended, provided that any changes fit within the existing program budget capacity and staffing levels.

Since 25 January 2022, Night Patrol in Ngukurr has operated from 6:00pm to 5:00am, seven (7) days per week.

This is utilising two teams who have staggered start times, with one team operating from 6:00pm to 2:00am, and the second team operating from 9:00pm to 5:00am. An overlap of teams occurs between the hours of 9:00pm and 2:00am, which is when the highest level of street activity occurs.

In the month prior to the extension, Ngukurr was experiencing a property-related crime rate of 73%, which is an increase of 30% on the same time last year.

Initial reports of the new delivery model show that the increased operating hours have had a positive impact on crime. In the first week, crime rates appeared to drop substantially, with no over-night property related issues reported.

Following the success of the extended operating hours in Ngukurr, the Numbulwar community submitted a request in May for longer hours for Night Patrol. The community was experiencing similar issues to those seen in Ngukurr and wanted to take a proactive response to community needs.

Since 21 May 2022, Night Patrol has been operating in Numbulwar seven (7) days per week. The patrol hours are still currently falling within the usual 6:00pm to 3:30am timeframe, while recruitment is underway for additional staff members.

A focus is being placed on recruiting females, as that will ensure that a broader range of the community can engage with Night Patrol in a culturally-appropriate way.

Data has been collected for the duration of the extended delivery, which will give a more comprehensive overview of the outcomes achieved. This will provide evidence and support to any potential future business case, should extended operating hours be requested again in the future.

Council will continue to liaise with community stakeholders regarding the delivery model, with concepts such as a combination of both extended delivery and normal delivery being considered. This may include extended delivery during times such as school holidays, known times of population increase, or community unrest, and normal delivery at other times.

For now, extended delivery in Ngukurr and Numbulwar will continue until 30 June 2022.

Should the trials prove successful, Council will liaise further with stakeholders to determine if the extended operating hours are able to continue in some form.

ENDS

For more information, please contact:

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Image description: Ngukurr Night Patrol Team