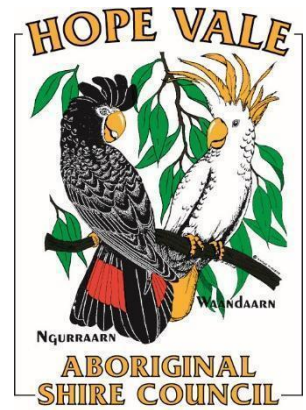


OPERATIONS REPORT

March 2025 Council Meeting

Dated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025



**Item 1: Essential Services**

***Item 1.1 - Water Treatment Plant***

Daily testing for pH, free chlorine and turbidity at all test points are compliant with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for February 2025.

**1.1 Water Treatment Plant – Daily Testing**

- Daily testing of pH, free chlorine, and turbidity throughout February 2025 met Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

**February Test Results (Averages):**

Parameter	Average	Acceptable Range
pH (Post Reservoir)	7.2	6.5 to 8.5
Turbidity (NTU)	1.3 NTU	0 to 5 NTU
Free Chlorine	0.9 mg/L	0.2 to 5.0 mg/L

- **Water Connections:** 356
- **Total Water Volume consumed February 2025:** 20,630 kilolitres
- Total Water Volume consumed January 2025: 25,571 kilolitres
- Total Water Volume consumed December 2024: 25,440 Kilolitres
- **Average Daily Water Usage February 2025:** 736 kilolitres per day
- Average Daily Water Usage January 2024: 824 kilolitres per day
- Average Daily Water Usage December 2024: 820 kilolitres per day

**Comment:** There has been approximately a 20% reduction in water usage was observed during February 2025, with total water volume decreasing to 20,630 kilolitres from January's 25,571 kilolitres. The average decreased daily consumption decreased to 736 kilolitres compared to January's 824 kilolitres. The decrease correlates with increased rainfall throughout the month and no main water blowouts, contributing to more stable and efficient water consumption patterns.

In-house microbiological test results of water for detection of Coliforms/E-Coli are compliant with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for this reporting period.

## **Rainfall totals for February = 301mm at the Water Treatment plant**

### **1.2 Incident Reporting / Water Leaks / Sewer Blocks**

- **Water Main Leaks / 0 in Total:**
- **Sewer Blockages / 0 in Total:**

There were **no reported water main leaks or sewer blockages** during the month of February 2025. This continues the positive trend observed in recent months. Regular main water flushing was carried out across the township, and no complaints regarding water quality were received.

Routine water flushing remains an ongoing practice. Residents have been informed that minor discolouration can occur during flushing; however, running tap water for a short time usually resolves the issue.

### **Outcome of Environmental Health Services Visit (March 3–7):**

Representatives from Tropical Public Health Services visited Hopevale from 3–7 March and conducted a thorough review of councils internal water management processes. The visit focused on the Safe & Healthy Drinking Water Program, water quality, and operational procedures. No major issues were identified, and water quality was reported as excellent. Council water operators worked closely with the Tropical Health team throughout the week, and the visit concluded that that all procedural and water testing processes are compliant.

### **Water Infrastructure – Condition Assessments and Departmental Engagement**

During the Environmental Health visit council initiated an opportunity to engage the department in condition assessments for its water infrastructure assets. These assessments will inform a structured and costed plan for staged upgrades to ensure long-term service reliability and system resilience.

As a direct outcome, representatives from the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers have confirmed a visit to Hopevale on **Tuesday, 18 March 2025**, to meet with Council officers and inspect current infrastructure. The visit coincides with their regional travel to Wujal Wujal and has been made possible through departmental support.

This engagement marks a positive step toward securing further technical assistance and potential funding opportunities to support water infrastructure asset management.

## **Item 2: Animal Management**

### **2.1 Wandering Horses**

Public response to the horse claiming process through RBE (Restricted Biosecurity Entity) forms has been poor, with limited uptake despite ongoing availability and promotion. It is apparent that the process is not being embraced by community, which impacts Council's ability to manage the issue effectively.

Council has secured suitable transport and logistics arrangements that support the relocation of up to six horses at a time. Basic maintenance works on the pound yard are also underway to ensure a secure and safe holding area for any animals prior to relocation.

To address growing concerns around public safety, road hazards, and animal welfare it is recommended that these relocations commence immediately.

Council will continue to hold the RBE registration process open. However, residents wishing to claim horses must act immediately by collecting and returning the relevant documentation to Biosecurity Queensland. RBE registration is free of charge and remains valid for three years.

#### ***Recommendation:***

*That Council:*

- (a) Note the continued low community uptake of the RBE horse claiming process and the operational need to prioritise public safety.*
- (b) Endorse the commencement of horse relocations to address growing concerns regarding public safety.*

### **Item 2.2 – Animal Control Officer – Animal Census**

The recent Animal Census for dogs and cats was carried out on 15th and 16th October 2024 with assistance from Tropical Health Services and members of Hopevale Council both in attendance. The last Census was undertaken in June 2022.

The Animal Census is to provide vital information to Council, such as, the number of animals and owner details, and the number of abandoned animals. It will also give data on what animals would require veterinary treatments.

**The next Vet visit is now proposed for March 27 2025.**

As part of Council's broader service review and alignment with local government procurement and regulatory requirements, Council has concluded its engagement with existing supplier, effective immediately. We extend our thanks for their past contribution to Hopevale's animal management program and acknowledge the professional support they have provided to the community.

In line with the shift towards providers who operate more regularly within the region and to support better long-term service continuity, Council has **proposed an alternate third-party veterinary provider** to deliver ongoing support to our Animal Management program. The new provider is proposed to commence services later this month as outlined above.

It is recommended that Tableland Veterinary Services be the preferred supplier for these services to council.

### **Recommendation**

*That Council:*

*(a) Appoints Tableland Veterinary Services as its veterinary provider*

*(b) In accordance with Section 235(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, resolves because of the specialised nature of the services that are sought, it would be impractical or disadvantageous for council to invite quotes or tenders for these services.*

### **Item 3: Open Spaces**

#### ***Item 3.1 - Open Spaces Operations***

The Open Spaces unit continues to deliver essential town beautification and cleanliness services, including routine refuse collection three times weekly and ongoing support to the Animal Management team with animal removal from township areas and surrounding roads.

Staffing levels have stabilised following recent transitions. We are pleased to welcome a new officer to the Parks team as a Full-Time Open Spaces Officer this month. Under the supervision of Management our new member is responsible for maintaining public spaces including parks, road reserves, sporting grounds, and the cemetery. His addition strengthens our ability to continue delivering high-standard grounds maintenance services across the community.

#### **Bin Collection to Outlying Properties**

Challenges persist with refuse collection for a small number of block holder properties due to deteriorating driveway conditions and seasonal washouts. These access issues have prevented regular bin servicing at certain locations over the past two weeks. The matter is being monitored and addressed as needed.

Given seasonal challenges, Council may consider issuing a public reminder regarding kerbside collection protocols and access requirements for refuse services.

Council is launching a concentrated clean-up effort over the coming weeks, aimed at enhancing the presentation of township roads, verges, and kerbs. This initiative will involve the coordinated deployment of all available plant, equipment, and labour resources across departments.

Recent discussions with line managers have resulted in a renewed commitment to planning, mobilising, and delivering targeted works to ensure Hopevale's streets are well-maintained, particularly during this challenging seasonal period. This whole-of-operations approach reflects Council's ongoing dedication to maintaining high standards of cleanliness and presentation throughout the community.

**Recommendation**

*That Council:*

*(a) Note the operational challenges affecting bin collection for some outlying block holder properties due to driveway issues.*

*(b) Endorse the development and release of a public reminder outlining kerbside collection protocols and access requirements for refuse servicing and supports the upcoming township clean-up initiative using cross-departmental plant and labour resources.*

**Item 4: Cleaning Services****Cleaning Services – March 2025 Update**

The Cleaning Services Unit continues to deliver essential cleaning across Council-owned buildings and facilities. The current structure consists of a supervisor and two staff members operating Monday through Thursday.

Despite multiple targeted HR recruitment campaigns over recent months, efforts to secure a fourth cleaner have remained unsuccessful. The most recent round of interviews again yielded no suitable candidates for appointment, and the position remains vacant.

Given the ongoing recruitment challenges, it is recommended that Council consider alternate service delivery models to ensure continuity and consistency across key sites. This includes the potential engagement of a contract cleaning provider, with specific responsibilities assigned to nominated Council assets under a fixed-term service agreement.

This approach would provide greater flexibility in resourcing while maintaining the required standards of cleanliness and presentation across high-use community infrastructure.

Next Steps:

- Finalise the draft Expression of Interest (EOI), which is currently being developed for release.

## **Recommendation**

*That Council:*

*(a) Note the ongoing difficulties in recruiting an additional cleaner and the operational impact on service delivery.*

*(b) Endorse the development of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose of engaging cleaning services to maintain core Council assets.*

## **Item 5: Workplace Health & Safety (WH&S)**

### **Item 5.1 - WH&S Consultant**

#### **Workplace Health and Safety – February 2025 Summary**

- **Training & Awareness:**
  - WHS awareness sessions were conducted across all departments, covering topics such as occupational first aid, skin penetrating injuries, and snake safety.
  - Toolbox talks were delivered to building contractors, warehouse staff, and civil crews, highlighting key safety areas like PPE use, mobile plant risks, and dust control.
- **Inspections & Risk Assessments:**
  - Hazard inspections completed at multiple housing sites and facilities.
  - Fire and evacuation drills conducted at the Aged Care Centre, CHSP, and Child Care
- **Contractor Compliance:**
  - Ongoing support provided to building contractors on Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) and compliance updates.
  - Contractor insurance registers updated.
- **Next WHSA Visit:**
  - Scheduled for 24–28 March 2025.

## **Item 6: Building & Construction**

Please refer to finance report for project details

## **Item 7: Civil Construction**

Please refer to finance report for project details

## **HVASC General Matters**

### **Preferred Supplier Arrangements – Tender Update**

Council is currently finalising revised tender documents for its Preferred Supplier Arrangements, with the process actively progressing and expected to conclude in early April 2025. Once completed, the updated documents will be distributed to relevant trades, allowing all suppliers and subcontractors the opportunity to review and submit updated rates and service conditions.

The revised arrangements will operate for a two-year term, with a scheduled review at the 12-month mark to ensure they continue to meet Council's evolving operational requirements.

### **Asset Vandalism and Community Safety Update**

Hopevale continues to experience ongoing incidents of anti-social and destructive behaviour targeting council building assets. Despite the continued deployment of the Night Owl security service—utilising varied patrol schedules to reduce predictability—these behaviours remain prevalent and appear senseless. Given the limited effectiveness to date, a review of this security arrangement is likely to be brought forward for discussion.

The result of this repeated damage is increasing pressure on Council resources, both financially and operationally. This is further exacerbated by the current lack of consistent enforcement pathways to deter or respond to such actions which is the responsibility of the Queensland Police service.

Similarly extended turnaround times in social housing are contributing to the issue, as vacant properties are increasingly vulnerable to vandalism, break-ins and unauthorised use. This ongoing anti-social behaviour is overflowing into council asset damages.

Moving forward, Council will continue working closely with the Department of Housing and Community Safety Committee to identify and implement more effective and sustainable strategies. These may include enhanced asset protection measures, strengthened collaboration with enforcement agencies, and community-based initiatives that foster pride and responsibility in shared spaces.

### **Recommendation:**

*That Council:*

*(a) Note the ongoing impact of vandalism on Council assets*

*(b) Formally write to the Department of Housing to outline Council's concerns regarding tenancy management delays in transitioning tenants into and out of social and transitional housing, which is contributing to lengthy property vacancies and associated vandalism. Council also supports continued engagement with the Community Safety Committee to identify enhanced asset protection strategies, including increased enforcement collaboration and community pride initiatives.*

## **Social Housing Presentation and Safety**

Council workers have continued to identify and report on growing concerns regarding the condition of external areas around some social housing properties, particularly in relation to long grass, overgrown vegetation, and unsafe yard access. These issues present multiple safety risks, including increased exposure to snakes and pests, reduced visibility, and physical hazards for tenants—especially children and elderly residents.

Poor external conditions also impact overall liveability and wellbeing for tenants, affecting how residents use and feel about their homes. Overgrown or neglected outdoor spaces often limit recreational use, reduce community pride, and contribute to a sense of disconnection from the broader neighbourhood.

Importantly, maintaining clean, safe, and accessible yards may also help support positive social outcomes. Where children have safe outdoor areas to play and families can take pride in their surroundings, there may be a reduced likelihood of engagement in negative or destructive behaviours in the wider community.

Council recommends that ongoing collaboration between Housing and the Community Safety Committee be strengthened to ensure property surrounds are maintained to a safe and healthy standard. An initiative-taking and coordinated approach will not only improve the appearance of social housing but may also contribute to broader community safety and social cohesion.

### ***Recommendation:***

*That Council:*

*(a) Note the increased safety and liveability concerns associated with overgrown and unsafe yard conditions in some social housing properties.*

*(b) Endorse strengthened coordination between Housing services, the Community Safety Committee and Council to ensure external areas of social housing are maintained to a safe and healthy standard.*

## **Mechanical Services – Fleet Servicing and Maintenance Options**

As part of Council's ongoing review into improving the maintenance and servicing of its fleet, discussions have progressed with Cooktown Mechanical, who have expressed strong interest in partnering with Council to provide regular servicing and mechanical repairs across the full range of fleet vehicles. A site inspection was carried out on 13 March 2025, during which Cooktown Mechanical confirmed the existing Hopevale Workshop facilities are fit for purpose, with only minimal upgrades required to support efficient operations.

While Council remains open to expressions of interest from other qualified providers, the proposal from Cooktown Mechanical presents an opportunity to establish a structured, staged servicing arrangement that improves vehicle uptime, reduces transport and administrative overheads, and supports value-for-money outcomes through consolidated fleet management. The flexibility of mobile on-site servicing, combined with their existing capability in servicing remote local government fleets, makes Cooktown Mechanical a strong candidate for a preferred supplier arrangement.

**Recommendation:**

**That Council:**

- (a) note the recent engagement with Cooktown Mechanical, including their inspection of the Hopevale mechanical workshop and proposal to service Council fleet vehicles.*
- (b) endorse Cooktown Mechanical as a preferred supplier for fleet vehicle servicing, subject to ongoing performance and value-for-money assessments, while remaining open to future expressions of interest from other regional service providers.*

Summary of Recommendations:

**Recommendation**

**That Council:**

- (a) receive and note the Operations Managers' report dated 14 March 2025.*
- (b) note the continued low community uptake of the RBE horse claiming process and the operational need to prioritise public safety.*
- (c) endorse the commencement of horse relocations to address growing concerns regarding public safety.*
- (d) appoints Tableland Veterinary Services as its veterinary provider*
- (e) in accordance with Section 235(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, resolves because of the specialised nature of the services that are sought, it would be impractical or disadvantageous for council to invite quotes or tenders for these services*
- (f) note the operational challenges affecting bin collection for some outlying block holder properties due to driveway issues.*
- (g) endorse the development and release of a public reminder outlining kerbside collection protocols and access requirements for refuse servicing and supports the upcoming township clean-up initiative using cross-departmental plant and labour resources.*
- (h) note the ongoing difficulties in recruiting an additional cleaner and the operational impact on service delivery.*
- (i) endorse the development of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose of engaging cleaning services to maintain core Council assets.*
- (j) note the ongoing impact of vandalism on Council assets*
- (k) formally write to the Department of Housing to outline Council's concerns regarding tenancy management delays in transitioning tenants into and out of social and transitional housing, which is contributing to lengthy property vacancies and associated vandalism. Council also supports continued engagement with the Community Safety Committee to identify enhanced asset protection strategies, including increased enforcement collaboration and community pride initiatives.*
- (l) note the increased safety and liveability concerns associated with overgrown and unsafe yard conditions in some social housing properties.*
- (m) endorse strengthened coordination between Housing Services, the Community Safety Committee and Council to ensure external areas of social housing are maintained to a safe and healthy standard.*

- (n) note the recent engagement with Cooktown Mechanical, including their inspection of the Hope Vale mechanical workshop and proposal to service Council fleet vehicles.*
- (o) endorse Cooktown Mechanical as a preferred supplier for fleet vehicle servicing, subject to ongoing performance and value-for-money assessments, while remaining open to future expressions of interest from other regional service providers.*

Mark Lawson  
Operations Manager  
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council  
17 March 2025