

Questions and Answers

Updated March 2008

What is a prospective Shire Council?

Prospective Shire Council is the legal description of a new shire council before it comes into full operation on 1 July 2008.

However, you will normally see the shires referred by name as, for example, Barkly Shire Council rather than Barkly Prospective Shire Council.

Why have prospective shire councils been established and managers appointed?

The Northern Territory Government wants to ensure that all the administrative processes are in place for the new shires to begin full operations from day one – 1 July 2008.

Eight prospective shire councils have been established by the Minister for Local Government to undertake all the tasks that need to be done to set up a local council such as a common seal, bank account, recruitment of staff and setting up ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and business systems.

The first elections for the new shires will be held in October 2008. In the meantime the Minister has appointed a manager for each shire to exercise the powers and functions of the shire council from 1 July 2008 pending establishment of an elected shire council. A manager has the role of 'the Council' during this period.

What are the roles and functions of the prospective shire councils and the managers?

The prospective shire councils have been established to do all those things needed to set up a functioning shire such as establishing a bank account, office accommodation, recruiting staff and buying and installing business systems.

The Minister has appointed a manager for each prospective shire council. The function of a prospective council is to prepare for its future role as the sole local governing authority for the proposed shire.

A manager acts like a council and will follow rules of good governance and comply with the [Local Government Act](#).

When the new council is formed on 1 July 2008, the manager of the prospective council will become the manager of the new council until council members are elected.

What is the timetable for all this to happen?

Set out below are some key dates.

Key Date	Item
October 2006	Northern Territory Government announces reform of local government, known as New Local Government.
17 October 2007	The prospective shire councils created and managers appointed.
January - March 2008	Shire Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Directors of Corporate and Community Services start work.
March 2008	Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs hold council elections as per the normal cycle.
1 July 2008	Current councils are dissolved except for Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Alice Springs, Litchfield, Belyuen, Coomalie and Cox Peninsula.
1 July 2008	The eight shire councils come into existence.
October 2008	First elections for the eight new shires.

How does the Shire Manager relate to the existing councils that are to be 'incorporated' or 'included' as part of the Shires?

The Shire Manager is appointed to do all the things necessary to set up the new shire. The manager will work with the existing councils in setting up the new shire. However, the manager will not interfere with the day-to-day operations of existing councils.

Who are the Shire Managers?

Shire	Manager	Contact	Email
Barkly	Wayne Hoban	8962 4688	wayne.hoban@nt.gov.au
Central Desert	Andrea Martin	8951 5243	andrea.martin@nt.gov.au
East Arnhem	David Willing	8987 0521	david.willing@nt.gov.au
MacDonnell	Andrea Martin	8951 5243	andrea.martin@nt.gov.au
Roper Gulf	John De Koning	8973 8533	john.dekoning@nt.gov.au
Tiwi Islands	Des Harris	8999 8351	des.harris@nt.gov.au
Victoria Daly	John De Koning	8973 8533	john.dekoning@nt.gov.au
West Arnhem	David Willing	8987 0521	david.willing@nt.gov.au

Do prospective shire councils have meetings?

Yes, but a meeting of a prospective shire consists of the manager only and the CEO attends where possible if there is a CEO in place. CEOs report monthly to the manager. All decisions taken by resolution are formal resolutions of the prospective shire and will be put on each prospective shire council's web site as they are made. Shire Managers meet regularly together to ensure the set up of the shire councils is proceeding smoothly.

When will elections be held?

Elections for Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs were held as normal in March 2008.

The first elections for the eight new shires will be held in October 2008.

An announcement will be made by the Government on the election date for Litchfield, Belyuen, Coomalie and Cox Peninsula.

Will the Shire Manager be based in a community?

No. The Shire Managers will have a low key role in setting up the new shires. The shire managers are senior public servants in the Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport (DLGHS) and will be located in DLGHS offices throughout the Northern Territory.

Does the Shire Manager take any notice of what the community wants?

The Shire Manager will be taking considerable advice from the community in many ways. This includes:

- Taking account of advice and recommendations by the Shire Transition Committee;
- Feedback from members of the community, including at community briefing sessions;
- Taking advice from existing councils and CEOs that will constitute the shire.

People in the shire area can also contact the Shire Manager direct on the phone number or email set out above or by writing to GPO Box 4246, Darwin, NT, 0800.

What does the shire CEO do?

The Shire Manager delegates a range of functions to the CEO similar to the way that a normal council delegates functions to a CEO. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that many of the administrative tasks are completed, and importantly, the CEO makes comprehensive contact with constituent councils (up until 1 July 2008) and with the community.

Employment in the new shires

Currently the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, DLGHS and the Australian Services Union (ASU) are working together to formulate workplace agreements which will cover the specific needs of the shires. These agreements will form the basis of the employment of local government employees transitioning to New Local Government (Shires) and for new employees.

For those staff transitioning to New Local Government (shires) there may be specific issues relating to status of entitlements held under previous working conditions such as housing, vehicles, computers and salary packages. It should be noted that long service leave, sick leave and recreation leave entitlements will transfer with the employee.

Questions from individuals relating to specific issues outside of the Agreement will need to be responded to through discussions with appropriate union and industrial relations experts. In this regard DLGHS has been discussing issues with the ASU and also seeking options for industrial relations advice through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment. Individual questions, which fall outside the Agreements, will then be dealt with appropriately as the transitioning of staff commences.

**I am a staff member of a current council which will be subsumed into a shire.
What will happen to my job and who can I contact for information?**

Anyone who is an employee of an existing council on 1 July 2008 automatically becomes an employee of the new shire. In the first instance you should talk to the CEO of the new shire and/or the CEO of your existing council. The shire CEO and the CEO of the existing council are working closely together on placing people in jobs.