

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**CABINET DECISION**

No. .... 4094 ....

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Submission No.: 3534

Title: PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE DARWIN OUTER RURAL  
AREA

Cabinet approved in principle the establishment of Local Govern-  
ment in the Darwin outer rural area.



R. A. HANRAHAN, M.L.A.  
Secretary to Cabinet.

24 May 1985

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FOR CABINET

SUBMISSION No: .....3534.....

<p>Title:</p> <p>Minister</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <p>Relation to existing policy:</p> <p>Timing/ legislative priority:</p> <p>Announcement of decision, tabling, etc:</p> <p>Action required before announcement:</p> <p>Staffing implications, numbers and costs, etc:</p> <p>Total cost:</p>	<p><u>PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL</u></p> <p>FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE DARWIN OUTER RURAL AREA.</p> <p>THE HON. BARRY F. COULTER, M.L.A., DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>To establish Local Government in the Darwin Outer Rural Area by September/December 1985.</p> <p>In accordance with Government policy as outlined in the Address in Reply Debate in the Legislative Assembly earlier this year.</p> <p>The implementation of any new Local Government Areas should proceed before December 1985. No legislative action required.</p> <p>Any new Local Government Areas to be announced prior to the 1985/86 financial year.</p> <p>The presentation of a detailed submission to Cabinet on the new Local Government Areas.</p> <p>1 E2 That Town Clerk experience be used for the establishment of the new Local Government Area and as a relief Town Clerk where necessary.</p>
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PRELIMINARY CABINET SUBMISSION

THE ISSUE

1. To establish Local Government in the Darwin outer rural area by September/December 1985.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government in the Address in Reply Debate earlier this year indicated that the resolution of an appropriate form of Local Government for the outer Darwin Area was under consideration. This follows on from the Report of the Darwin Rural Advisory Council which was submitted to the then Minister for Community Development, the Hon. Daryl Manzie in late June 1984.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES

3. For some considerable time the Government has been under pressure from the Commonwealth Grants Commission to ensure that a local contribution towards the cost of providing municipal type services in the Darwin Rural and other unincorporated areas of the N.T. is forthcoming.
4. Whilst this requirement to raise a local contribution (a rate) has been acknowledged by the Government it has been reluctant to proceed to rate without providing the mechanism for local representation.

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5. The Hon. Ian Tuxworth, Minister for Community and Development in March 1983 established the Darwin Rural Advisory Council to advise on appropriate mechanisms for, among other things, a method of rate collection and a system of local representation.

6. The Reports recommendations received in June 1984, were of a conceptual nature rather than detailed implementation strategy and as a consequence, the Local Government Division of the Department of Community Development has had to develop a detailed implementation strategy for this and other similar areas of the N.T.

7. The required data to establish full costing of services together with the relevant information required to analyse the potential rate base in the Darwin Rural Area in particular, has now been assembled and preliminary consultations with local resident representative bodies has taken place via the medium of the Conference on Local Government held in March this year.

8. The question of local contribution and Local Government in general has come under close examination from the National Inquiry into Local Government Finance.

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9. The establishment of further unincorporated Local Government Areas in the Territory support the N.T. claim to an expanding and rapidly developing growth area. The growth in Local Government Areas is arguably proportionate to the growth in the N.T.'s share of Local Government Finances from the Commonwealth.

OPTIONS

10. The option is -
- (1) To proceed with the establishment of Local Government in the Darwin outer rural area by September/December 1985.

PUBLIC IMPACT

11. To proceed with the above option, the establishment of Local Government in the Darwin outer rural area by September/December 1985, can be seen to have significant advantages to the Government in the current economic climate. Commonwealth expenditure cuts together with the pressure from the Commonwealth Grants Commission requiring a local contribution for services provided, present an opportune set of circumstances for the introduction of Local Government which will of necessity, attract some adverse public comment whenever it is introduced.

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12. However, community acceptance and indeed, community demand for local representation on local matters is becoming more and more widespread, eg, the significant degree of interest being shown in the forthcoming Palmerston elections.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

13. The establishment of Local Government in the Darwin outer rural area is estimated to cost approximately \$200,000. See Attachment 1.

14. One additional staff position will be required within Department of Community Development as a result of the development of the new Local Government area;

15. 1 E2 with Town Clerk experience to be used for the establishment of Local Government in the proposed region and to act as a relief Town Clerk where necessary.

COMMONWEALTH, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

15. The further incorporation of municipal areas within the Territory is in accordance with Commonwealth Government policy and is a move which would be widely endorsed by the Northern Territory Assembly, Local Government Association (N.T.L.G.A.) and Local Government Councils.

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CO-ORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

16. If the establishment of Local Government in this region is endorsed further consultation in the form of local public meetings within each of the proposed wards would take place with Local Government Division officers explaining the role and services to be provided by Local Government in the area.

17. The September/December 1985 time scale is largely in line with that recommended in the Darwin Rural Advisory Council Report which endorsed the establishment of a rating system in this area by 1 July 1985.

LEGISLATION

18. There is no legislative action required.

PUBLICITY

19. The Government could announce the decision to proceed with Local Government in the Darwin outer rural area as a result of Commonwealth Government expenditure cut backs and the requirement to obtain a local contribution in order to attract Commonwealth Government Financing for municipal type services.

TIMING

20. The establishment of Local Government in this region should commence immediately in order for its completion by September/December 1985.

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RECOMMENDATION

That this proposal be endorsed, ie, the establishment of Local Government in the Darwin outer rural area.

Howard Springs

Slacks Creek

Rocky Creek

McMillan's Lagoon

Woodroffe

and if Howard Springs was included there would be Howard Springs and 5 others.

The attached map setting out boundaries is preliminary only and further consultation and approval of Council would be required before final boundaries are settled.

Estimates of the support required in the first year of operation are -

Item	
Staff	
- Clerk	20,000
- Secretary to the three wards	20,000
- Financial Controller	20,000
	60,000



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ATTACHMENT 1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPOSITION Following experience in the establishment of a Town Council at Palmerston where a traditional-style, elected council, the establishment of Local Government in the Darwin rural area is tentatively envisaged to comprise; a mayor elected from the shire at large and 5 aldermen from 5 wards -

- . Howard Springs
- . Humpty Doo
- . Bees Creek
- . McMinn's Lagoon
- . Noonamah

and if Berry Springs was included there would be 6 wards and 6 aldermen.

NOTE: The attached map setting out boundaries is preliminary only and further consultation and approval of Cabinet would be required before final boundaries are settled.

Estimates of the support required in the first year of operation are -

<u>STAFF</u>	\$
. Shire Clerk	30 000
. Secretary to the Shire Clerk	20 000
. Financial Controller	<u>30 000</u>
	<u>80 000</u>

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INITIAL COSTS

	\$
. Salaries (as above)	80 000
. Establishment cost:	
On-cost (employment)	
On-site accommodation	120 000
Admin. expenses - phone, power, vehicles, travel, office requisites, legal expenses,etc	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$200 000</u>

Initial estimates of revenue raised through rates would be in excess of \$200,000 with the potential to increase.

# TOWN AND ENVIRONS

**LEGEND**

Boundary	1/4" = 1 MILE
Water	Blue
Highway	Black
Railroad	Black with cross-ticks
Forest Reserve	Green
City	Black with dots
Village	Black with squares
Hamlet	Black with circles
Unincorporated	Black with triangles

