The Committee
2026 Local Government Representation Review
submission@lgrr2026.com.au

1 October 2026

Subject: West Arnhem Regional Council Submission - 2026 Local Government Representation Review

Dear Local Government Representation Review Committee,

Please accept this submission from **West Arnhem Regional Council** in accordance with Council Resolution OCM318/2026, adopted at the Confidential Ordinary Council Meeting held on 22-23 September 2026. The resolution directs Council to make a submission to the 2026 Local Government Representation Review seeking:

1. An adjustment to the ward boundary on the Cobourg Peninsula to establish a dedicated **Cobourg Ward** (refer attached map); and
2. The provision of **one additional elected member** to represent the proposed Cobourg Ward; and
3. Further **consultation** between the Committee and West Arnhem Regional Council regarding these matters.

Background

West Arnhem Regional Council is currently divided into five wards: Gunbalanya, Kakadu, Maningrida, Minjilang and Warruwi. The Minjilang and Warruwi Wards each elect one councillor, while the former Barrah Ward was abolished following the previous representation review process. As a result, the communities and outstations located on the Cobourg Peninsula no longer have a dedicated elected member representing their locality.

Council submits that the current arrangements do not adequately recognise the distinct geographic, cultural and community interests of the Cobourg Peninsula. Since the removal of the Barrah Ward, residents and community leaders from Cobourg, Warruwi and Minjilang have repeatedly expressed confusion regarding electoral representation, ward boundaries and the governance arrangements that apply to their communities.

Community of Interest

The Local Government Representation Review Committee is required to consider communities of interest, remoteness, communication and travel, population distribution and physical features when making recommendations.

The Cobourg Peninsula, Warruwi (South Goulburn Island) and Minjilang (Croker Island) form a distinct regional grouping characterised by:

- Strong cultural, family and historical connections;
- Similar service delivery challenges associated with remoteness;
- Geographic separation from mainland communities within West Arnhem;
- Shared transport, communication and governance issues; and
- Longstanding expectations of local representation.

Although these communities share common interests, they are geographically dispersed and difficult to access, making clear and identifiable representation particularly important.

Population and Representation

Based on 2021 Census population data:

Community	Population	% of West Arnhem Population
Cobourg Peninsula	32	0.51%
Minjilang (Croker Island)	265	4.22%
Warruwi (South Goulburn Island)	432	6.88%
Combined Total	**729**	**11.61%**

Together, these communities account for approximately **729 residents**, representing **11.61% of West Arnhem Regional Council's population**.

Cobourg residents currently have no dedicated elected member and remain effectively split from the existing ward structure. Council considers that this arrangement diminishes local representation and contributes to ongoing uncertainty within the community regarding who advocates for their interests at the Council table.

Proposed Solution

Council therefore supports:

- The creation of a **Cobourg Ward** through an adjustment of the existing ward boundaries;

- The allocation of **one elected member** to represent the proposed Cobourg Ward; and
- Retention of representation for the existing Warruwi and Minjilang Wards.

This proposal would provide direct representation for residents of the Cobourg Peninsula while ensuring that the unique interests of the island communities continue to be represented.

Council believes the proposal aligns with the objectives of the review by:

- Strengthening community representation;
- Better reflecting identifiable communities of interest;
- Improving community understanding of local government governance arrangements;
- Recognising the challenges associated with remoteness and travel; and
- Ensuring clearer representation for communities that are geographically distinct from the mainland wards.

The Northern Land Council - West Arnhem Region is structured similarly to this proposal further supporting Council's submission.

Request for Further Consultation

Given the significance of this issue to residents of the Cobourg Peninsula, Warruwi and Minjilang, Council respectfully requests that the Committee undertake further consultation with West Arnhem Regional Council before forming its final recommendations.

Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposed boundary adjustments and provide additional information regarding community views, service delivery arrangements and governance considerations.

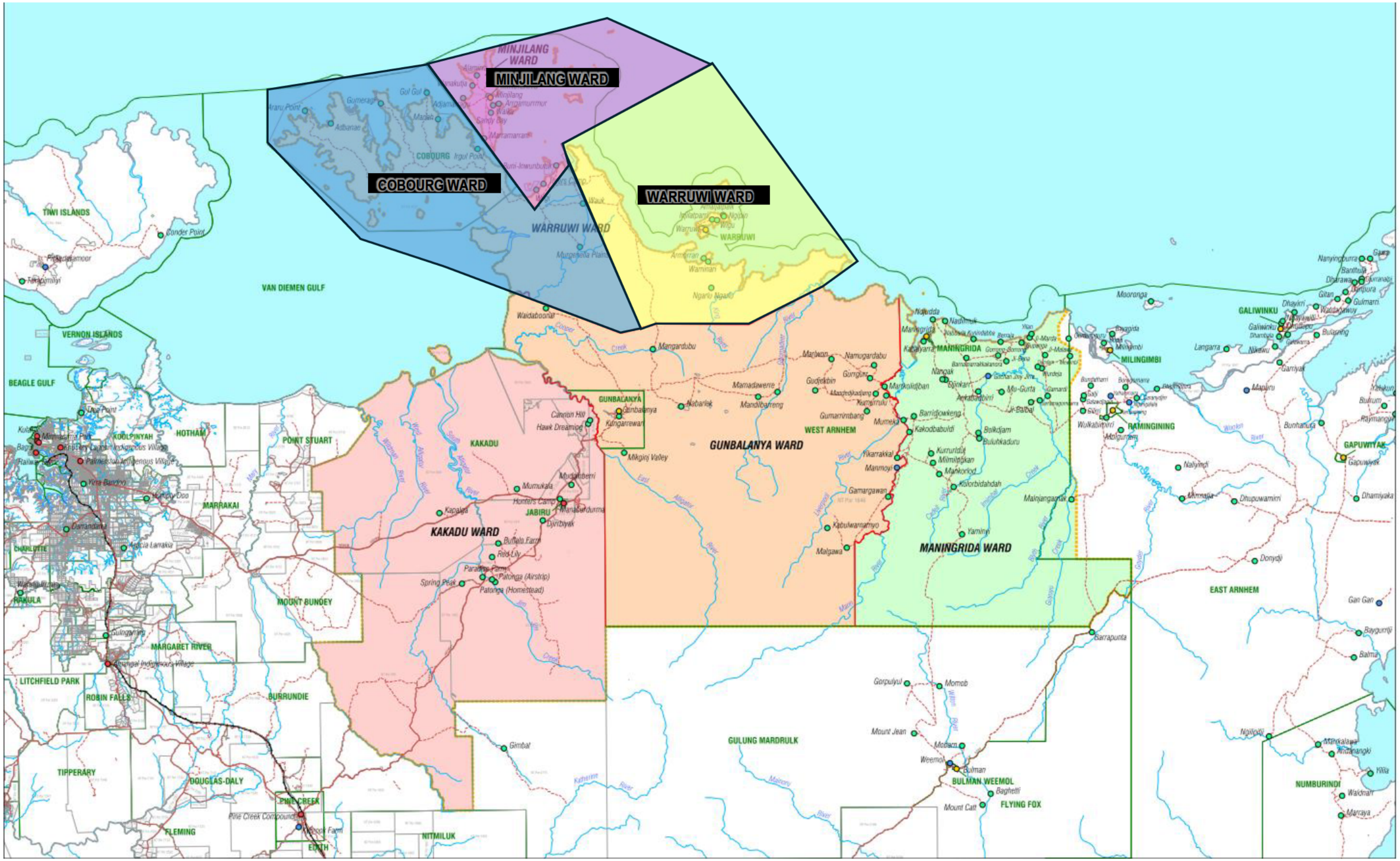
Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Mayor James Woods
Mayor
West Arnhem Regional Council

On behalf of West Arnhem Regional Council
Pursuant to Council Resolution OCM318/2026 adopted 22-23 September 2026.


MINJILANG WARD
COBOURG WARD
WARRUWI WARD
GUNBALANYA WARD
KAKADU WARD
MANINGRIDA WARD
TIWI ISLANDS
VAN DIEMEN GULF
VERNON ISLANDS
BEAGLE GULF
KOOLPINYAH
HOTHAM
POINT STUART
MARRAKAI
CHARLOTTE
KAKADU
JABIRU
WEST ARNHEM
MANINGRIDA
MILINGIMBI
RAMINGINING
GALIWINKU
GAPUWIYAK
EAST ARNHEM
NUMBURINDI
MOUNT BUNDEY
MARGARET RIVER
LITCHFIELD PARK
ROBIN FALLS
BURRUNDIE
TIPPERARY
DOUGLAS-DALY
PINE CREEK
FLEMING
NITMILUK
GULUNG MARDRULK
BULMAN WEEMOL
FLYING FOX