WEST DALY
Regional Council

02 October 2026

Local Government Representation Review Committee,
Via Local Government Association of the Northern Territory,
21 Parap Road,
Parap
NT 0820

By email: submissions@lgrr2026.com.au
CC: Mary.Watson@lgant.asn.au,

Subject: Local Government Representation Review

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2026 Local Government Representation Review Committee. West Daly Regional Council (WDRC) appreciates the Committee's time in reviewing this complex matter.

As noted in the Committee's Discussion Paper, representation reviews are held after each general election to ensure all voters are fairly represented. WDRC came into existence on 1 July 2014 through the de-amalgamation of the Victoria Daly Council. At its inception, the current ward structure was split off from the Western side of the Victoria Daly Council jurisdiction. WDRC have not been able to locate justification or consultation papers for this eventual structure.

Currently, WDRC is structured as one large encompassing ward (Thamarrurr/Pindi Pindi) with two small pocket wards (Nganmarriyanga and Tyemirri). As per the 2026 Discussion Paper, the Committee is tasked with considering the community interests, population trends, and the physical features of the area, as well as the desirability of elector numbers being as near to equal as practicable.

WDRC notes that in the 2022 Representation Review, Council provided a submission seeking an increase in Elected Member representation. Ultimately, the committee determined not to recommend changes to representation in the WDRC jurisdiction.

WDRC is currently divided into the following three wards which are represented by a total of six councillors.

- Nganmarriyanga Ward (one councillor)
- Thamarrurr/Pindi Pindi Ward (Four councillors)
- Tyemirri Ward (one councillor)

It is important to note, the instability of telecommunications networks and vast distances between communities and Homelands in our region makes effective engagement challenging. The vast geographical area of the Thamarrurr/Pindi Pindi Ward further exacerbates these communication difficulties for Elected Members attempting to represent disparate communities, particularly Homelands. WDRCs region from the Western Costal land area, to the inland Eastern Flood plains, encompasses around 13,000sq kilometers, and 30 separate Homelands, as well as the three main communities. Within that landmass, are around 20 distinct clan groups, and around 7 different language groups. With distinct customs and Traditional Custodianship.

Council further points out that they are the only Local Government Council in the Northern Territory that are structured as one large encompassing ward; that being Thamarrurr/Pindi Pindi Ward. With two small pocket wards; Nganmarriyanga and Tyemirri inside that structure. Please see Annex 1 for reference; the green highlighted area is the large Thamarrurr/Pindi Pindi Ward. The purple area being Nganmarriyanga Ward and orange area representing Tyemirri Ward. None of the Homelands, even those closest to the wards of Nganmarriyanga and Tyemirri are geographically included in those wards. All Homelands are located in the large encompassing Thamarrurr/Pindi Pindi Ward, without exception.

Council have consulted with Elected Members regarding the current representation makeup and ward boundaries. Elected Members expressed that they would need to consult with other local leaders, and authoritative voices regarding the best and most appropriate structure for their numerous clans and language groups, and remote Homelands and Outstations. This is a complex matter, in which they need considered time to consult, to ensure that the various voices are heard, prior to making a final recommendation and submission to the Committee.

Our Elected Members have confirmed that they do not currently believe that the existing structure is fully representative of the distinct clan and language groups present. In particular, they are concerned that Homelands on the Eastern side of the large encompassing ward of Thamamurr/Pindi Pindi are not being represented by the existing makeup of the Ward structure.

Additionally, they expressed concerns regarding the fact that Wadeye does not have its own distinct ward, despite being the main population centre in the large encompassing Thamamurr/Pindi Pindi Ward. All bar one Elected Representative (the Mayor based in Emu Point) are located in Wadeye, but the Ward Boundaries encompass the entire region. They would like to further consider whether an additional ward, with distinct boundaries based on locality boundaries would be more appropriate. They also would like to review the current boundaries of Tyemirri and Nganmarriyanga to see if Homelands located near to those communities should be included in their ward boundaries.

Council intends to provide a further detailed submission, with recommended ward structures/boundaries, appropriate naming for any further suggested wards, as well as propose any changes to Elected Member Number representation in the next submission round. This will include any budget implications and whether they would request additional representatives. This is a preliminary submission, on the basis of initial consultation with Elected Members. Council would like it noted that they will be required to conduct additional Traditional Owner Consultation, prior to making further recommendation, this is essential to ensure that the regions complex clan groups are fully represented, prior to submitting a further detailed submission.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this matter further or require any additional information.

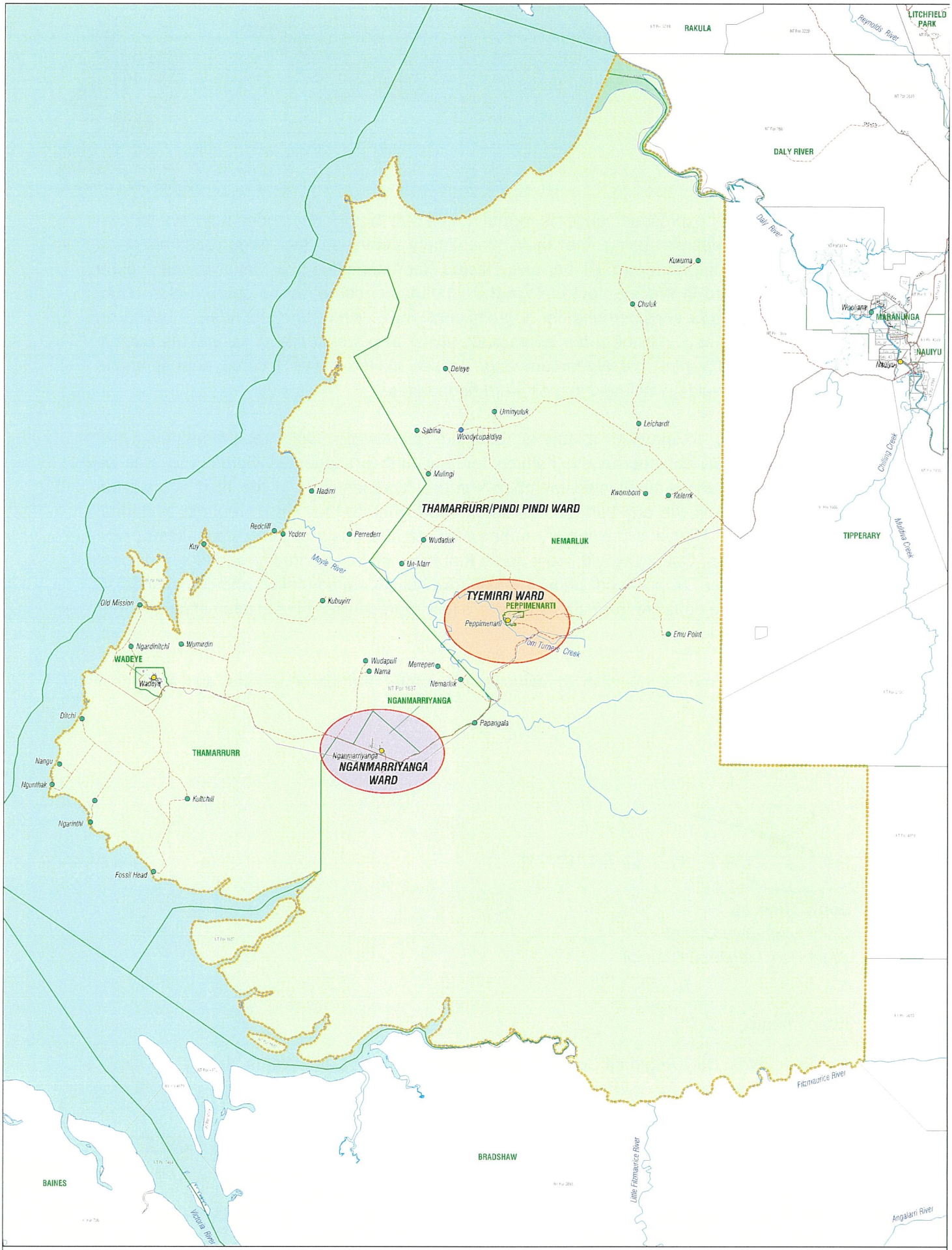
Yours sincerely,

John Thomas (Oct 4, 2026 14:42:56 GMT+9.5)

John Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
West Daly Regional Council

Attachments:

Annex 1 - West Daly Regional Council Local Government Area and Wards Map



West Daly Regional Council Local Government Area and Wards

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Scale: 1:200,000 @ A0

Legend

- West Daly Local Government Area
- Cadastre
- WADEYE Suburb/Locality

Roads

- Sealed
- Unsealed

Aboriginal Communities

- Major Aboriginal Community
- Minor Aboriginal Community
- Family Outstation
- Town Camp

Note - Local Government Area and Ward boundaries are generally co-incident with parcel boundaries (the cadastre), as well as the centre line of roads and watercourses.