

NEWS RELEASE



January 10, 2020

Statement by Aurukun Shire Council Mayor

After respecting an appropriate amount of time for mourning, Aurukun Shire Council Mayor Dereck Walpo has been given the blessing of his family to speak about the events that have unfolded in the community since New Year's Day.

"I understand my family remains in mourning and respect that. However, as the leader of the Aurukun community I represent the whole community and have a duty of care for all Aurukun residents including those who have left the community," he said.

"I encourage Aurukun people to return to their community. It is their right to live harmoniously alongside their fellow Wik clan families.

"It is undesirable that displaced residents continue to live in locations outside the Aurukun Shire.

"More than 1000 members of the Aurukun population of 1450 continue to live in the community and I am pleased to see a number of people have already returned from the camp to access the services which are operating normally in Aurukun.

"I thank the people of Coen for taking in Aurukun residents, but having these people there puts pressure on another community's supplies and services. Aurukun can cater for these people at home.

"It is paramount for their health and well-being that they make use of the services provided in Aurukun especially the health clinic and aged care facilities.

"Aurukun Shire Council continues to provide many of the community services to ensure residents have access to school, the community centre, supermarket, bank, post office, PCYC, airport, and childcare.

"I encourage any community member from each of the clans to meet with me and the councilors to talk about their concerns and how we can move forward.

"We have to positively move forward in a peaceful and harmonious manner. It may be difficult to forgive, but our community needs the anger and retaliations to stop. We must all respect one another and move on positively in a peaceful environment.

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“The safety of all residents is of utmost importance. We must be able to lead normal lives and provide positive futures for our children.

“Council is appreciative of the Police Commissioner’s advice that a large police contingent will remain in Aurukun as long as is required to ensure the safety of residents and service providers.

“Council is pleased with the appointment of State Government coordinator Gary Kleidon because of his knowledge of the Wik people and the community of Aurukun and will continue to work closely with him in the recovery process.

“Council is fully committed to working closely with all agencies to resolve the current issue and we encourage the community to come on board and support these efforts.

“I would like to thank the Police, DATSIP and other Government Agencies for their ongoing commitment and support in this current situation.”

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