DARK SKY COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

MINUTES
OPEN MEETING

25 February 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE 4

1.1 ATTENDANCE 4

1.2 APOLOGIES 4

1.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED 4

2.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 5

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS DARK SKY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING 5

3.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES 6

3.1 FORMATION OF WORKING GROUPS PROGRESS REPORT 6

4.0 GENERAL BUSINESS 10

THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT IT IS COUNCIL POLICY TO RECORD THE PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF COUNCIL ON DIGITAL MEDIA TO ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION OF MINUTES AND TO ENSURE THAT A TRUE AND ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF DEBATE AND DISCUSSION OF MEETINGS IS AVAILABLE. THIS AUDIO RECORDING IS AUTHORISED BY THE *LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MEETING PROCEDURES) REGULATIONS 2015*

MINUTES OF AN DARK SKY COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE CIRCULAR HEAD COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 33 GOLDIE STREET, SMITHTON ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026, COMMENCING AT 4:00 PM

	From	To	Time Occupied
Open Committee Meeting	4:03pm	5:02pm	59 minutes
TOTAL TIME OCCUPIED	4:03pm	5:02pm	59 minutes

AUDIO RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY

The Chairman is to declare the meeting open (time), welcome those present in attendance and advise that the meeting will be recorded, in accordance with the Council Policy '**GOV.017 - Audio Recording of Council Meetings**' to "record meetings of Council to assist in the preparation of minutes and ensure a true and accurate account of debate and discussion at meetings is available".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Circular Head Council acknowledges the North West Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the country on which we stand, meet and play. We recognise their continuing connection to the land, waters, and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

1.0 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

1.1 ATTENDANCE

Sally Collins
Kerry Houston
Ellen Power
Jeremy Ward

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Gardner - (Chief Executive Officer & General Manager)
Jodie Smedley – (Executive Officer/Minute Taker)
Mathew Grubba - (Assistant Minute Taker)

1.2 APOLOGIES

An apology was lodged for the absence of Cr Mark Dabner, Cassie Thomas, Selina Maguire-Colgrave.

1.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

Nil received.

2.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS DARK SKY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING

001/26

MOVED BY	POWER
SECONDED BY	HOUSTON

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Circular Head Council held at Council Chambers 33 Goldie Street Smithton on Wednesday 29 October 2025, a copy of which having previously been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, be confirmed as a true record.

The MOTION was put and was CARRIED.

IN FAVOUR

	CR COLLINS	HOUSTON	POWER
	WARD		

3.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

3.1 FORMATION OF WORKING GROUPS PROGRESS REPORT

To:	Dark Sky Coordinating Committee
Reporting Officer:	Executive Officer
Responsible Manager:	General Manager
Report Date:	24 February 2026
File Reference:	
Enclosures:	1. Working Group Member List

PURPOSE

To provide an update to the Dark Sky Coordinating Committee on the establishment and progress of the thematic Working Groups formed to support progression toward International Dark Sky Reserve accreditation.

BACKGROUND

Following the formation of the Dark Sky Coordinating Committee and the adoption of the Committee Terms of Reference, thematic Working Groups were established to provide focused expertise and operational input into key workstreams required for Dark Sky accreditation.

The Working Groups were formed to align with the strategic pillars required for accreditation and implementation, ensuring coordinated effort across technical, community, tourism and infrastructure domains.

Terms of Reference were provided to each Working Group outlining scope, responsibilities, reporting expectations and alignment to Council's strategic objectives.

Since the initial Coordinating Committee meeting, each Working Group has convened its inaugural meeting to confirm membership, clarify scope, and identify immediate priority actions.

DETAILS

Working Group Structure

The following Working Groups were established:

- Communications & Engagement
- Cultural
- Infrastructure
- Accreditation
- Visitor Experience

Membership across the groups includes representatives from Council, Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC), local business operators, community stakeholders and subject matter contributors

Each group met initially following formation and has:

- Reviewed and acknowledged the provided Terms of Reference
- Confirmed their scope of work and priority focus areas
- Identified short-term actions and key deliverables
- Clarified reporting pathways back to the Dark Sky Coordinating Committee

Early Progress Themes

While detailed operational actions vary by group, the following common progress themes have emerged:

- Establishment of baseline understanding of International Dark Sky Reserve accreditation requirements
- Identification of existing regional assets and strengths
- Initial stakeholder mapping and engagement planning
- Consideration of infrastructure and policy gaps
- Alignment with tourism positioning and visitor experience opportunities

The Working Groups will now transition from establishment phase into structured implementation planning, with updates to be provided at future Coordinating Committee meetings.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Statutory Requirements

The Committee is established under the authority of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Section 41, and operates in accordance with the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan Reference

GOAL:	**Organisational Support - Circular Head Council will support a positive and innovative culture, enabling best practice delivery that is customer focussed. Strong leadership will enable the development and empowerment of our people.**
Desired Outcomes	
1.	We understand our internal customer needs and have the resources to support the organisation's service delivery goals.
Our Priorities	
1b.	Provide a clear, measurable set of service delivery goals and objectives.

GOAL: Leadership and Governance - Circular Head Council will ensure efficient, effective and cohesive leadership in which strategy drives evidence-based decision making.
Desired Outcomes
2. We encourage broad community input and feedback to create a focussed and strong sense of belonging
Our Priorities
2. Increase our community engagement, using channels that reach people where they are.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications as a result of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Dark Skies initiative supports environmental awareness and sustainable tourism opportunities through light pollution reduction and conservation of natural nightscapes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with the adoption of the Terms of Reference. Any future financial considerations will be subject to Council approval.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Reputational Risk:

Effective coordination and structured governance reduces reputational risk associated with progressing toward international accreditation.

Legislative Compliance:

Clear Terms of Reference and defined reporting structures ensure compliance with governance requirements.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

Working Group membership includes community representatives, business stakeholders and relevant expertise, ensuring early and ongoing consultation as part of the implementation framework..

CONCLUSION

The Dark Sky Working Groups have been successfully established, provided with Terms of Reference, and have each convened their initial meetings.

The groups are now progressing into structured action planning aligned with accreditation requirements and Council's strategic objectives.

The report is provided for noting and endorsement of continued progression.

002/26

MOVED BY	HOUSTON
SECONDED BY	WARD

That the Dark Sky Coordinating Committee note the progress of the established Dark Sky Working Groups and endorse the continued progression of work in accordance with the adopted Terms of Reference.

The MOTION was put and was CARRIED.

IN FAVOUR

	CR COLLINS	HOUSTON	POWER
	WARD		

4.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

Dark Skies Certification and Tourism Opportunities

Jeremy presented the Dark Skies Categories Spreadsheet (Attachment 1), outlining certification resource requirements and the varying levels of achievability across categories.

A roundtable discussion was held regarding potential implementation options across different geographic contexts, including urban and more rural locations. Consideration was also given to engaging additional organisations to support and participate in the initiative.

Paul voiced concerns regarding the application of formal certification at this stage, cautioning that this may inadvertently limit the forward progression and broader development of the overall program.

Kerry outlined three proposed tiers of tourism experiences associated with the Dark Skies initiative:

1. Self-guided experiences
2. Combined experience (e.g. dinner and guided tour)
3. Premium/fully facilitated experience (further detail to be developed)

It was noted that suitable locations will need to be identified to enable the Tourism Working Group to progress planning.

A suggestion was made to undertake mapping of potential sites and relevant infrastructure, with findings to be referred back to the Infrastructure Working Group to enable road mapping and planning, including input from Kevin.

Discussion also occurred regarding light pollution levels within the Circular Head area and surrounding locations. Ellen will investigate the potential for map layering, including the roading network and other key infrastructure and light polution.

Potential solutions were discussed, including the feasibility of incorporating a VR/Google experience, noting associated infrastructure requirements.

Ellen sought clarification regarding existing policy settings in relation to lighting.

Kerry spoke to the outcomes of the Tourism Working Group, noting that updates are to be included at each CHTA meeting.

Kerry also identified Dismal Swamp as a potentially suitable location for consideration within the Dark Skies initiative.

Confirmed,

CHAIR