DARK SKY COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

MINUTES
OPEN MEETING

22 July 2026

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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 22 JULY 2026, COMMENCING AT 3:00 PM

	From	To	Time Occupied
Open Council	3:01pm	3:47pm	46 minutes
TOTAL TIME OCCUPIED	3:01pm	3:47pm	46 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
Jeremy Ward
Tony McGillvery

IN ATTENDANCE

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

1.2 PRAYERS

1.3 APOLOGIES

An apology was lodged for the absence of Ellen Power and Stephen Hafner.

1.4 LEAVE OF ABSENCE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

Cr Mark Dabner - 1 July 2026 to 31 July 2026 inclusive.

2.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS DARK SKY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING

001/26

MOVED BY	WARD
SECONDED BY	HOUSTON

RECOMMENDATION
That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Circular Head Council held at Council Chambers 33 Goldie Street Smithton on Tuesday 26 May 2026, 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	
WARD		MCGILLVERY	

3.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

3.1 WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

To:	Dark Sky Coordinating Committee
Reporting Officer:	Executive Officer
Responsible Manager:	General Manager
Report Date:	29 June 2026
File Reference:	
Enclosures:	Nil

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a consolidated update on the progress of each of the five Dark Sky Working Groups and to ensure the Committee maintains strategic oversight of the implementation of the Circular Head Dark Sky Program.

BACKGROUND

The Circular Head Dark Sky Program is being delivered through five Working Groups established by the Dark Sky Coordinating Committee.

Each Working Group has responsibility for progressing actions identified within the endorsed Dark Sky Accreditation Roadmap and associated implementation plans. Regular reporting to the Coordinating Committee supports effective governance, enables monitoring of progress, encourages collaboration between workstreams and provides the opportunity to identify emerging issues requiring Committee consideration.

The Working Groups comprise:

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

DETAILS

The Chairperson of each Working Group will provide a verbal update to the Committee outlining progress since the previous meeting.

Updates may include, but are not limited to:

- Visitor Experience Working Group

Progress relating to visitor experiences, tourism product development, infrastructure opportunities, interpretation, partnerships and initiatives that support sustainable tourism outcomes consistent with the Dark Sky Program.

- Cultural Working Group

Progress relating to engagement with Aboriginal organisations and cultural stakeholders, cultural heritage opportunities, interpretation and incorporation of cultural values within the Dark Sky Program.

- Communications and Engagement Working Group

Progress relating to community engagement, education initiatives, stakeholder communications, promotional activities, branding and awareness of the Dark Sky Program.

- Infrastructure Working Group

Progress relating to lighting audits, public lighting improvements, infrastructure planning, policy development, engineering considerations and implementation of lighting standards.

- Accreditation Working Group

Progress relating to the International Dark Sky accreditation process, evidence collection, policy alignment, documentation, compliance requirements and accreditation readiness.

Where appropriate, Working Groups may identify matters requiring future consideration by the Coordinating Committee or Council through separate officer reports.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Statutory Requirements

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

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Vision 2050 Reference

GOAL: Governance - To be trusted, high-performing Council that delivers quality services, demonstrates strong governance and accountability, embraces innovation and continuous improvement, and ensures long-term financial sustainability for the Circular Head community.
Desired Outcomes
Navigating increasing regulatory and compliance requirements
Our Priorities
Management of Council's corporate governance responsibilities and accountabilities

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Environmental initiatives continue to be progressed through implementation of the Dark Sky Program and will be reported to the Committee as individual projects are developed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Regular reporting by the Working Groups assists the Committee to identify implementation risks, monitor project delivery and ensure appropriate governance oversight throughout the accreditation process.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

Consultation activities continue to be undertaken by each Working Group in accordance with their respective work programs and stakeholder engagement requirements.

CONCLUSION

The Work Group Progress Reports provide the Committee with an overview of progress across the Dark Sky Program and support effective governance through regular monitoring of implementation activities.

The verbal updates ensure the Committee remains informed of achievements, emerging priorities and matters requiring future strategic consideration as the Program progresses towards Dark Sky accreditation.

002/26

MOVED BY	WARD
SECONDED BY	MCGILLVERY

RECOMMENDATION

That the Dark Sky Coordinating Committee:

1. **notes the progress reports provided by each of the Dark Sky Working Groups;**
2. **acknowledges the progress being made towards implementation of the Dark Sky Accreditation Roadmap: and**
3. **notes that matters requiring Committee direction or future Council consideration will be presented through separate reports as required.**

The MOTION was put and was CARRIED.

IN FAVOUR

	CR COLLINS	HOUSTON	
WARD		MCGILLVERY	

4.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

Verbal Workstream Updates

Cultural

The cultural workstream is developing clear and culturally appropriate material explaining the significance of dark skies to North West Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Steven Hafner is coordinating the content and will confirm the accuracy of each story and obtain permission before it is used publicly; sacred or restricted material will not be included. The material will be presented in a simple, accessible format and incorporated into visitor information, the proposed brochure, website content and possible interpretive elements such as Indigenous star names and constellation information in future signage or public artwork.
Immediate priorities
· Complete the cultural presentation for consideration at the next meeting.
· Verify facts and permissions before any cultural content is published.
· Provide approved material for integration into visitor-experience and communication products.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure planning is concentrating on safe, accessible and practical locations where Dark Skies activities can be introduced with limited cost and lighting modification. Site inspections have been undertaken across Circular Head, with Stanley Foreshore, Marrawah, Arthur River, Green Point and Cooter Rocks among the confirmed locations. Dovecote Road at Stanley is favoured as an initial Tier 1 test site because it is close to town, offers suitable viewing conditions and may require attention to only one streetlight. Council-controlled and TasNetworks lighting will be mapped against priority sites. The Pavilion Theatrette refit and the West Esplanade and Kings Park redevelopment also provide opportunities for Dark Skies experiences, murals, interactive signage and related visitor infrastructure.
Immediate priorities
· Compile and circulate the complete list of inspected sites and assessment information.
· Map lighting ownership and required modifications at the priority locations.
· Explore Dark Skies elements within the Pavilion, West Esplanade and Kings Park projects.

Accreditation

Accreditation planning is moving towards a focused application based on a defined site or compact geographic area rather than the whole Circular Head municipality. This approach reflects strong global demand and the advice that an overly broad application would be more difficult to progress. Priority sites will be informed by safety and accessibility assessments, lighting requirements, visitor use and the destination management plan being developed with Waratah-Wynyard and Burnie Councils. A lighting policy template has been identified and the review is approximately 60–70 per cent complete, with $5,000–$10,000 allowed for legal review. The policy will provide an important foundation for site selection, lighting improvements and the accreditation evidence base.
Immediate priorities
· Identify and recommend the specific site or area to form the basis of the application.
· Finalise and table the draft lighting policy at the next committee meeting.
· Align site prioritisation and accreditation planning with the destination management plan.

Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience development is focused on practical early activities and longer-term tourism products. A low-barrier astronomy test event is proposed at Stanley Caravan Park around the new moon, weather permitting, with two to three days' notice to committee members. The aim is to establish a regular new-moon activity and build a local astronomy culture. Lindsay Kelly has approval to prepare a Dark Skies brochure and website landing page once cultural and visitor content is supplied. Other opportunities include a self-help information kiosk, a mock Dark Skies experience in the Pavilion theatrette, interactive signage, and future development at locations such as Little Swamp. Tier 1 sites will favour accessibility, tourist foot traffic and minimal lighting changes, while more remote Tier 2 sites may support stronger but seasonal astronomy experiences.

Immediate priorities

· Confirm and promote the Stanley Caravan Park astronomy test event.
· Prepare the information brief required for the brochure and website landing page.
· Explore the Pavilion, self-help kiosk, Little Swamp and interpretive-signage opportunities.

Communications and Engagement

The Communications and Engagement workstream will be strengthened by formally moving Fiona Loughran, Council's Strategic Communications Adviser, from the cultural workstream to lead development of a dedicated Dark Skies communications and engagement plan. The plan will include a social-media strategy and promotion of activities in which the community can participate, drawing on the Northern Midlands approach as a useful model. Early opportunities include a Western Echo article, with Alan Jennings offering publication at no cost, possible coverage through the Advocate, a nightscape photography competition that could also generate website imagery, and community astronomy or adult-learning activities. Communications will be coordinated with the cultural and visitor-experience workstreams so that all public information is accurate, approved and consistent. The Committee supported the General Manager's proposal to refine the working group structure to improve its effectiveness and authorised the General Manager to undertake this work on the Committee's behalf.

Immediate priorities

· Confirm the workstream role change.
· Draft community-awareness content for the Western Echo and the Advocate.
· Develop participation opportunities, including photography and astronomy activities.