EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides heat mitigation information in response to a Notice of Motion, tabled by Councillor Jimmy Cocking, Monday 25 February 2019.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the heat mitigation report be received and further any Council sanctioned actions be identified.

REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

Council Jimmy Cocking tabled a Notice of Motion, for Elected Members' consideration, during an Ordinary Council meeting, Monday 25 February 2019.

The five (5) part notice of motion comprised the following:

1) That the Alice Springs Town Council write to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Police Fire and Emergency Services to request the development of a heatwave emergency management plan for Alice Springs and surrounding regions dependent on services located in the town.

2) That the Alice Springs Town Council review its operations during heatwave conditions with an aim to reduce the risk to staff, residents and visitors to Alice Springs.

3) That the Alice Springs Town Council assess its vulnerability to sustained heatwaves including street tree health, council owned infrastructure and liability for failing to act to reduce known risk to likely hazards.

4) That the Alice Springs Town Council install refrigerated bubbler taps in key locations within the CBD and identify potential public 'cool places' that provide shade and circulating air for vulnerable people.

5) That the Alice Springs Town Council work with Central Australian Health Service and the Department of the Chief Minister to develop a public warning system that will communicate to the public the risk of heatwaves and provide key safety advice to the general public on such days.
Council passed a recommendation that officers would prepare a report addressing individual components of the motion.

2. **DISCUSSION**

1) **That the Alice Springs Town Council write to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Police Fire and Emergency Services to request the development of a heatwave emergency management plan for Alice Springs and surrounding regions dependent on services located in the town.**

Council officers have not yet sent formal correspondence to the Northern Territory Minister for Health, the Honorary Natasha Kate Fyles; or the Northern Territory Government Minister for Police Fire and Emergency Services, the Honorary Nicole Manison.

It was deemed relevant to prepare a report related to in-house desktop research and consultation, first.

2) **That the Alice Springs Town Council review its operations during heatwave conditions with an aim to reduce the risk to staff, residents and visitors to Alice Springs.**

Alice Springs Town Council acknowledge work safety authorities and any special heat warnings for employers. Council staff also acknowledge Bureau of Meteorology forecasts. Further, staff strictly adhere to Workplace Health and Safety guidelines, to prevent and minimise potential heat illness.

Outdoor supervisors schedule regular water breaks for teams. As afternoons become hotter, breaks become more frequent. By the time ambient air temperature is more than 40 degrees Celsius, teams spend longer durations in shaded locations, to ensure their wellbeing.

The following are the formal guidelines we utilise for staff:

- Scheduling works so hotter tasks are performed during the cooler part of the day
- Scheduling works at suitable locations
- Providing protective clothing made of lighter fabric, which still provides adequate protection
- Reducing time spent undertaking hotter tasks (inclusive of flexible working hours and job rotation)
- Arranging for additional workers to undertake jobs
- Providing extra rest breaks in cool, ventilated areas
- Using mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion
- Ensuring that staff have an awareness of their responsibility and personal duty of care, pertaining to wellbeing in heat situations.
Council does not presently have any formal policies or position statements pertaining to heatwave conditions impacting residents and visitors. Liaison with Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia, and NT Tourism have been working collaboratively with Northern Territory Airports to introduce marketing material at the Alice Springs Airport which advises visitors to take precautions in the semi-arid environment, particularly when hiking trails and being out in heatwave conditions.

3) **That the Alice Springs Town Council assess its vulnerability to sustained heatwaves including street tree health, council owned infrastructure and liability for failing to act to reduce known risk to likely hazards.**

Council constantly monitor the health of more than 20,000 trees (see the May 2019 Technical Services report *Audit of trees within the municipality* for additional information), using our in-house arborist to remedy heat stress, enhance tree health as well as improve visual aesthetics and ensure safety for residents.

Council owned infrastructure is constantly monitored for safety concerns such as trip hazards, this is monitored through road and path inspections on a daily basis in addition to notifications from the Neat Street app.

Council owned buildings are constantly monitored for heat and environment stress. Works are actioned through a priority process.

Council’s insurance policies only cover high wind, rain, hail, water and flood weather events. Heat and heatwaves are omitted from the policies.

4) **That the Alice Springs Town Council install refrigerated bubbler taps in key locations within the CBD and identify potential public ‘cool places’ that provide shade and circulating air for vulnerable people.**

Potential cool places have been identified at Leichhardt Terrace Park and the Hartley Street Carpark exeloo. The Parks Advisory Committee is relevant for further consideration and nomination of potential public cool places.

An approximate map of existing and proposed water bubblers is attached. Refrigerated bubblers are not recommended because of health care professionals advice related to artificially cooled water, potentially detrimentally impacting health, during extreme heat conditions.

5) **That the Alice Springs Town Council work with Central Australian Health Service and the Department of the Chief Minister to develop a public warning system that will communicate to the public the risk of heatwaves and provide key safety advice to the general public on such days.**

Contact has not been made with Central Australian Health Services, or the Northern Territory Government Department of the Chief Minister to develop a public warning system, communicating risk of heatwaves for the public.
Emergency Services have an existing SMS early warning and texting system which can be utilised for extreme weather events.

2. POLICY IMPACTS

Proactively considering heat mitigation strategies from a holistic perspective at Alice Springs Town Council is in keeping with Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021, objective 3 Leadership in sustainability, a leader in sustainability and best practice, living well in our desert context and minimising our impact. It is also in keeping with objective 4 a dynamic Council, a well governed Council that leads by example, advocates for our community, innovates and delivers excellent services, and works with others collaboratively to help create the community we want to live in.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Budgetary impacts of heat mitigation strategies will not be known until such time as thorough planning and for implementation of specific priorities is ascertained. Then Council officers can suitably undertake cost-benefit analyses.

4. SOCIAL IMPACTS

If Alice Springs Town Council takes the lead with regard to considering and adopting relevant heat mitigation strategies for staff, residents and visitors in our semi-arid environment, this will be considered as a positive initiative for social and physical wellbeing.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

It might be difficult to quantify, however it is anticipated that some concerted heat mitigation strategies could have a positive dual outcome related to reducing Council’s carbon footprint.

6. PUBLIC RELATIONS

NIL

7. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Map of existing drink fountain locations within the Alice Springs CBD.

Skye Price
DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
CURRENT DRINKING FOUNTAIN LOCATED IN TREVOR REID PARK AT THE CORNER OF RAILWAY TERRACE & WILLS TERRACE

PROPOSED DRINKING FOUNTAINS

DRAWING NUMBER: DF 01
AMENDMENT:

ALICE SPRINGS TOWN COUNCIL
UNITED STREET AND GREGORY TERRACE
PHONE: (08) 89 500 900
FAX: (08) 89 500 9058

DESIGNED: N/A
SURVEYED: KHYNES
DRAWN: M RAYMOND

REV DESCRIPTION DATE INITIALS

SCALE: N/A
DATE: 1 MARCH 2019
SHEET: 01 OF 01

ATTACHMENT A