

MINUTES OF THE **ORDINARY** MEETING OF THE FOURTEENTH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2022 IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, ALICE SPRINGS

14. RESUMPTION OF MEETING IN OPEN

15. Opening of the Open Meeting by the Mayor (Chair) and Acknowledgement of Country

Deputy Mayor Eli Melky declared the meeting open at **11.05am** and welcomed all present to the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Eli Melky acknowledged the Central Arrernte people who are the traditional owners and custodians of Alice Springs.

Deputy Mayor Eli Melky reminded that this meeting is being recorded and will be placed on Council's website. By speaking at a Council meeting, you agree to being recorded. Alice Springs Town Council accepts no liability for any defamatory or offensive remarks or gestures made during the course of this Council meeting.

Media present – ABC Alice Springs

PRESENT

Mayor M. Paterson (*arrived at 11.13am*)

Deputy Mayor E. Melky (Chair)

Councillor M. Banks

Councillor A. Bitar

Councillor S. Brown

Councillor M. Coffey

Councillor K. Hopper

Councillor M. Liddle

Councillor G. Morris

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr R. Jennings – Chief Executive Officer

Mr J. Andrew – Director Technical Services

Ms N. Battle – Director Community Development

Mrs N. Brennan – Acting Director Corporate Services

Mrs E. Williams – Executive Assistant (Minutes)

16. PRAYER

Father Bang from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church

17. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

18. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Senator Malarndirri McCarthy and Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour to the gallery

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Christine Bourke asked what proactive, inclusive and practical strategies can the Council do to bring the community together to work and walk together. In all types and levels of education.

The Chair responded that the Motion presented for discussion later in the meeting may provide a response to this question.

Director Corporate Services left the Chamber at 11.10am

Director Corporate Services returned to the Chamber at 11.15am

Sandy Taylor asked the following:

Firstly, my heartfelt thanks to local business men Darren Clarke, Action for Alice 2020, and Garth Thompson, and the Mayor Matt Paterson for throwing the spotlight on Alice Springs in no less than 12 interviews. Thank you, Mayor Matt, Thank you Darren and Garth. I truly hope that the NT Government will take this on board; perhaps purchase a suitable property to use as a safe house and get these kids off the streets of Alice Springs; those who are roaming the streets late at night. Place them in family groups, that's the only way it will work: boys and girls separate; get them live-in house mums or dads, get them to school regularly, get them tutors, buses for school, troopies to continue with culture, Indigenous Mentors, young ones, like Charlie Maher Jnr, Shaun Cussack or whatever it takes to close the gap. Everyone is just paying lip service, but they are not asking the people that matter, why isn't anyone talking to the kids either? Why aren't the three (3) tiers of Government, and the peak Aboriginal bodies in this town all talking together, and working together? Why aren't they all trying to work through this catastrophic mess that we are in together? Clearly the kids we are all talking about need help! Clearly, their parents are incapable of looking after these children and young teens. Clearly the Federal Government needs to look at rescinding or suspending the current laws surrounding Centrelink and baby bonuses for a start. Ludicrously, a mother can get:

- Newborn Upfront Payment, as a lump sum of \$595 per child and a*
- Newborn Supplement for 13 weeks, at a maximum rate of \$1,785.42 per child.*
- Even more for multiple births.*

My question: Why do people need to get paid to have babies? I might add that I had two beautiful children of my own whom I never got paid to have. We had them because we wanted them. We only had two because that is what we could afford! So that we could love them, and give them everything that they would need to have a good life. My husband and I both worked hard, we still love and support our children and our four grandchildren with all our heart. We raised them to be decent human beings, educated them; and now they make us proud; both working hard for a living and each of them have two beautiful children of their own, who are also being educated.

My mother wasn't educated, she was illiterate, but she worked hard, to raise her 8 daughters alone. She actually said to me that she wished that she had been part of the Stolen Generation so she could have got an education. Bless you mum, RIP. Supplementary question: Why are we still pandering to non-conformists, and I don't care what colour, who will not, and never will do anything to help themselves?

Question: Why are we even talking about The Voice in Parliament before we fix this problem? We already have 17 Indigenous voices in Parliament, and yet the Prime Minister is not listening to any of them! God forbid we should have another version of ATSIC! Lessons learnt people, let's not have the big wheel go around again, take note, its every 20 years! Dumb, dumb, dumb! Or as another infamous man once said it, you must be Stupid, Stupid, Stupid!

Secondly, regarding the By Election Costs to the Ratepayers of Alice Springs which was an exorbitant \$163,763. That is outrageous to say the least; not to mention that the votes were recounted twice previously after the 2017 Election because the person who later resigned wanted it done! Surely there is a time when NTEC and ASTC say no to all this nonsense. Surely, there is time to make a BY LAW under the Local Government Act which will prevent this nonsense from repeating itself? There are plenty of examples of where Council has carried on without the extra person. My question: When is the next FULL Council Election in the NT and will ASTC do something to prevent this debacle happening again in future; perhaps radical even, why not have a first over the post, when the preferential voting system all seems like such a waste of time and money, and only 54% of the population bothered to vote? Why can't local government be different?

Finally, may I please comment on the ridiculous situation we have already in Hartley Street; the site manager of McMahons Construction wasn't aware that before they dug a big fat hole in the ground that there were power cables, and water pipes that run along that whole section. Really?

The width of the concrete tree curbs to accommodate a huge Jacaranda in years to come; already which I cannot even drive my Honda Civic around that corner without running over the existing white line and the cuts already made into the bitumen. Having looked at the site plans and the actual on ground, even I can tell that it will be impossible for the Town Bus to come around the LJ Hooker corner without running over the curb: not to mention the loss of a valuable car parking space. How will the delivery driver now park outside of Peoples Choice Bank to make deliveries to all the small shops in that area? Might I also mention that we are getting another big Jacaranda where there are two trees existing at the Residency corner of the Parsons Street/Hartley Street roundabout; not to mention the loss of yet another car space!

What on earth was ASTC and its Councilor's thinking to approve such plans by Dept of Lands and Planning? What an absolute waste of \$7 million!

GOD HELP US WHEN YOU COME TO PLANS FOR THE TODD MALL! I hope they are better than Bath Street, which is still incomplete after 18 months, no shade structures; and Hartley Street which is supposed to be finished in 3 weeks, and they haven't even started on Gregory Terrace either. The brilliant middle of road shade structures with sprinkler system that blocks up with calcium should also be very interesting. Perhaps that will allow for cooler fighting in the street?

The Mayor resumed his role as Chair at 11.23am

The Mayor gave an overview of the costs and process of the by-election and why it was managed the way it was. With the implementation of the 2019 Local Government Act, the Northern Territory Electoral Commission now manage all elections with the power being taken from the Councils.

The Mayor took the question around Hartley Street on notice.

The Mayor explained the process around the three tiers of government working together. There needs to be a community led solution, rather than relying on Darwin or Canberra.

Ruth Furbur asked that town camps be just for sick people and those willing to work. Those that are able, need to go back home to their communities along with their children. The Mayor responded that a Northern Territory Government review is underway regarding Town Camps with the public able to provide comment on the "Have Your Say Northern Territory" website.

Steve Rogers expressed his frustration of being a long-term resident and seeing the degradation of Alice Springs.

Helen Checker is seeing the stress and the impact of the crime in town in her work as a dental therapist and hypnotherapist. Concerned that it will become a political game between the Federal and Northern Territory Government.

The Mayor agreed that it's confronting and that Council is working hard to take politics out of the situation.

Owen Cole spoke as the Managing Director of Yeperenye – the issues in Alice Springs are also being experienced in remote communities – its not just an Alice Springs problem. As a representative of the Aboriginal Combined Organisations, they are looking at gaining support for diversion programs.

Mr Cole went on to ask for the transfer of Community Football out of Alice Springs and back to community.

Review permit system, similar to during COVID lockdowns along with a curfew for all residents, not just the youth. A circuit breaker solution is required.

Sly grog trading is also a huge problem within the community – the Liquor Commission need to do their job.

A number of stores in Yeperenye Shopping Centre have needed to reduce their hours, or close, due to the amount of harassment being experienced by staff.

In response, the Mayor asked if the footage from Yeperenye has been provided to the police to show that the community "is not exaggerating".

Mr Cole responded that he has provided a compilation of footage to authorities and politicians but they are more concerned around the effect on the economy and tourism.

Discussion ensued.

The Mayor outlined that Council are in support of Community Football relocating to community.

The Mayor went on to explain that Council are unable to implement a curfew but that the Northern Territory Government have been asked numerous times for this to happen.

Charlotte Martley asked what are the current services, programs and diversionary activities and in the future being offered by Council?

The Mayor responded that as a Council we are unable to be involved in the justice response.

Director Community Development responded that the Youth Services team work with services in town such as Brown Street. Activities are held at ASALC and through the library. Discussions are also being held around after-hours sports programs.

Ms Martley went on to ask if infrastructure is being planned specifically to support the youth.

The Mayor responded that a tender has recently been awarded for the design and construction of a skate park.

Discussion ensued.

Councillor Hopper left the Chamber at 11.51am

Councillor Hopper returned to the Chamber at 11.52am

Lisa Stefanoff asked if Council would be prepared to issue a statement that prioritises the safety of the community vs the right to consume alcohol?

The Mayor took the question on notice.

Jasmine Shepherd asked where were Council during the intervention 15 years ago.

Peter Burns commented that has worked with youth over a number of years and what they want is activities, or a place to hold activities especially during the evening.

Sally Westaway said that love, share and care is needed, not the army. Have the youth been asked what they want to do? Rather than scaring them away, listen to them.

The Mayor responded that he has spoken both to the Prime Minister and Peter Dutton and they have agreed to work together for the benefit of Alice Springs.

Greg Barnes was pleased to hear that the skate park is progressing but was disappointed that the user group wasn't contacted during the tender process and asked when is the first community consultation with Playce around the design and construction. A group has recently been formed rollingalldirections@gmail.com.

The Mayor responded that there are legal obligations when awarding tenders and that Council look forward to continuing the discussion with all users of the skate park.

Director Technical Services responded that the consultation plan is being drawn up with the first planned for mid-February.

Deborah Micallef said that she and her children witnessed the recent incident in Woolworths and spoke of that experience. She asked what other solutions and options are being explored as a circuit breaker to guarantee safety within the community. How can she be involved in that response?

The Mayor responded that he will be speaking with the Prime Minister around community led responses. A specific answer can't be given and a guarantee around an immediate response is at the moment, unknown.

Shane Martyn raised his concerns about Neatstreets and the lack of response when lodging a request.

The CEO responded that he can assist with this issue.

Mr Martyn also gave an account his experience of living with crime and anti-social behaviour and raised concerns around a store in Alice Springs providing gang clothing.

He went on to ask about the increase of lighting in the Hartley Street carpark. The Mayor advised that the upgrade will be commenced around April, 2023.

The Mayor responded that he will advise the government regarding the sale of gang clothing.

Brendan Heenan asked for the government to provide better infrastructure and services in remote communities so that people didn't feel the need to travel to and stay, in Alice Springs.

Director Technical Services left the Chamber at 12.23pm

Director Technical Services returned to the Chamber at 12.25pm

Leo Abbott said that the same discussions have been held over a number of years with nothing coming of it. Talks are being held behind closed doors, rather than out in the community. Governments aren't building stronger communities, programs and funding is constantly being cut. Time for action, not talking.

Sandy Taylor asked why aren't the Traditional Owner's speaking up?

The Mayor responded that that's a question for Lhere Artepe.

Rex Spencer thanked the Council for taking this on and speaking up. This isn't a job for Council, rather the Traditional Owners and higher government. This isn't a new issue, rather a long-term problem and it needs to be taken seriously so that vigilante responses aren't given. Police hands are tied with the response they can provide.

Mr Spencer asked if anyone has considered the underlying issues – where is the alcohol coming from? Do they have more money to spend, is it because of the cessation of the Cashless Debit Card?

The Mayor responded that in the Northern Territory, those that were on the Cashless Debit Card were being moved over to the Basics Card.

Councillor Hopper left the Chamber at 12.35pm

Councillor Hopper returned to the Chamber at 12.38pm

The Mayor thanked all of those in the gallery and that as a Council, we are also working hard to make change.

20. DECLARATION OF INTEREST OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Nil

21. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

21.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Open Meeting held on 13 December, 2022

Moved – Councillor Morris

Seconded – Councillor Bitar

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 13 December, 2022 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

CARRIED (22464)

21.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

21.2.1 Councillor Bitar – Evening Sports Program

Councillor Bitar asked for an update.

Director Community Development responded that discussions have commenced with it starting in the first week of February. This is due to a number of organisations being without staff or closing over the Christmas period.

21.2.2 Councillor Hopper – MHACA Wall Graffiti

Councillor Hopper asked for an update on the

Director Technical Services advised that a contractor has been engaged to remove the graffiti, commencing soon.

21.2.3 Councillor Hopper – ALGA budget priorities

Councillor Hopper asked for an update.

CEO responded that it is being actioned.

21.2.4 Councillor Coffey – Conflict of Interest

Councillor Coffey asked that the information recorded to be changed to him carrying out consultancy work for Henley on Todd and a Director on the CASA Board.

The Executive Assistant will make the relevant changes to the December minutes.

Councillor Bitar left the Chamber at 12.41pm

Councillor Bitar returned to the Chamber at 12.42pm

22 MAYORAL REPORT

22.1 Mayor's Report
Report No. 3 / 23 cncl

Moved – Deputy Mayor Melky
Seconded – Councillor Coffey

That the Mayor's report be received.

CARRIED (22465)

22.2 Business Arising from the Report

22.2.1 Deputy Mayor Melky

Deputy Mayor Melky acknowledged the effort and media interviews that the Mayor has recently undertaking in getting the story out on the negative issues currently facing Alice Springs.

23. ORDERS OF THE DAY

23.1 That Elected Members and Officers provide notification of matters to be raised in General Business.

23.1.1 Councillor Hopper – Return to Country

23.1.2 Councillor Hopper – CBD Revitalization

24. MEMORIALS

Nil

25. PETITIONS

Nil

26. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Marli Banks – Social Order State of Emergency

Moved – Councillor Banks

Seconded – Councillor Morris

That the Alice Springs Town Council calls on the Northern Territory Government to declare an immediate State of Emergency in regards to social order, and that Council call on the Federal Govt to support the NTG in addressing the issues of social disorder in Alice Springs immediately.

That the Alice Springs Town Council leads by facilitating a summit where indigenous elders are invited and engaged, members of the community, youth services business, indigenous organisations and any other relevant parties to address these issues on a view of an outcome that can deliver community safety. public forum to address the issue with the public in February 2023.

LAPSED

Councillor Morris responded to the Motion presented and thanked Councillor Banks for her courage in presenting the item.

Discussion ensued.

Councillor Liddle left the Chamber at 12.50pm

Councillor Liddle returned to the Chamber at 12.52pm

That the Northern Territory Government and Federal Government to declare an immediate State of Emergency in regards to social order and impose a two-week alcohol moratorium and night-time CBD curfew; and

That Alice Springs Town Council facilities a leader's forum to address the issue with the public in February 2023; and

That Alice Springs Town Council cancel community football for 2023; and

That Alice Springs Town Council call on the Federal Government to provide needs-based funding for Domestic Violence.

LAPSED

Moved – Councillor Banks

Seconded – Councillor Morris

That Alice Springs Town Council calls on the Northern Territory Government and Federal Government to declare an immediate State of Emergency in regards to social order, and that the Alice Springs Town Council facilities a leader's forum to address the issue with the public in February 2023

CARRIED (22466)

Council recessed for lunch at 1.37pm and returned at 2.15pm

The Mayor resumed the meeting at 2.18pm and handed the Chair role over to the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor did not return to the meeting.

27. FINANCE

27.1 Finance Report
Report No. 14 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Morris

That the report be received and noted.

CARRIED (22467)

27.2 Business Arising from the Report

Director Corporate Services advised that on Page 154 in Diligent – Attachment 2 there was a correction to the data presented.

27.2.1 Councillor Hopper – Investment Policy

Councillor Hopper asked at what stage is Council around the Investment Policy.

CEO responded that Council are awaiting feedback from the consultant which will be followed up.

27.2.2 Councillor Coffey – Manual Entering of Data

Councillor Coffey raised his concerns regarding the continuation of entering data manually which results in mistakes. He asked that it be a priority that it be automated with Civica.

The CEO responded that Finance Manager will be commencing in mid-February which will assist.

Acting Director Corporate Services responded that issues are arising each time something new is tried which the team aren't aware of until they go to use it.

Discussion ensued.

27.2.3 Councillor Hopper – EFT Transactions

Councillor Hopper asked about the \$10k spend on ice cream.

Director Corporate Services responded that the purchase was part of a Youth Program and also for re-sale at ASALC.

Director Community Development will confirm this figure and provide a response.

Director Technical Services left the Chamber at 2.25pm and did not return to the meeting.

28. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

28.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

28.1.1 CEO Report

Report No. 4 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Hopper

Seconded – Councillor Bitar

That this report be received and noted.

CARRIED (22468)

28.1.2 Business Arising from the Report

28.1.2.1 Councillor Hopper – Suncable

Councillor Hopper asked for an update in light of the project recently collapsing.

The CEO took the question on notice.

28.1.2.2 Councillor Coffey – Summer Night-time Sports Program

Councillor Coffey asked where have Council got to with this and why has it been delayed.

Director Community Development responded that due to a lack of staff by agencies over the Christmas period, there has been a delay.

Discussion ensued.

28.1.2.3 Councillor Hopper – Response to Pokies Petition

Councillor Hopper asked if correspondence had been sent to the Attorney General, Chansey Paech.

The CEO responded that the Mayor sent a letter of invitation to the Attorney General in October, 2022 with no response received.

28.1.3 LGANT – Call for Nominations to the Northern Territory Planning Commission
Report No. 17 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Banks

Seconded – Councillor Coffey

- A. That Council nominates a senior Council officer to be a member of the Northern Territory Planning Commission.**
- B. That Council forwards the above nomination and a short biography to LGANT no later than Friday 24 February, 2023.**
- C. That Director Technical Services, Joel Andrew be nominated for the Northern Territory Planning Commission.**

CARRIED (22469)

28.1.4 Business Arising from the Report

Councillor Banks asked if it is an Officer or Elected Member that needs to be nominated.

The CEO responded that it needs to be an Officer and that he has served for two terms but following his departure, he recommends the Director Technical Services Joel Andrew be nominated.

28.2 CORPORATE SERVICES

28.2.1 2022 By-Election Northern Territory Electoral Commission Report
Report No. 15 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Brown

That this report be received and noted

CARRIED (22470)

28.2.2 Business Arising from the Report

Councillor Coffey raised that in the future, Council needs to review the process. A by-law also needs to be developed for when a vacancy arises mid-term to prevent these types of scenarios.

Discussion ensued.

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Brown

That Council provide a report in response to the NTEC By-Election report that addresses the cost of by-elections, the number of polling stations and that Council considers by-laws for future by-elections.

CARRIED (22471)

28.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

28.3.1 Community Development Report to Council
Report No. 5 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Brown

Seconded – Councillor Morris

That this report be received and noted.

CARRIED (22472)

28.3.2 Business Arising from the Report

Nil

28.3.3 Sports Facilities Advisory Committee (SFAC) Priority Works List
Report No. 12 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Brown

Seconded – Councillor Banks

That Council endorse the updated priority works list for the Sports Facilities Advisory Committee (SFAC).

CARRIED (22473)

28.3.4 Business Arising from the Report

Councillor Coffey raised that the funds will come from the Federal Government election funding.

Discussion ensued.

The CEO will have a note added to the bottom of the document explaining this.

28.4 TECHNICAL SERVICES

28.4.1 Technical Services Update to Council
Report No. 6 / 23 cncI

Moved – Councillor Brown

Seconded – Councillor Coffey

That the Technical Services Report to Council be received and noted.

CARRIED (22474)

28.4.2 Business Arising from the Report

28.4.2.1 Councillor Coffey – Abandoned Vehicles

Councillor Coffey thanked the Officers involved in removing the abandoned vehicles in and around town in a timely manner.

Councillor Bitar left the Chamber at 2.56pm

Councillor Bitar returned to the Chamber at 2.58pm

Councillor Liddle left the Chamber at 2.56pm

Councillor Liddle returned to the Chamber at 3.00pm

29. QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

29.1.1 Councillor Bitar – Ranger Foot Patrols

Councillor Bitar asked when foot patrols will recommence.

Director Community Development responded that discussions have commenced but with new staff, it will take time

Discussion ensued.

Councillor Morris asked about protocol around parking over the indicated time limits

The CEO responded that Rangers are trying to enact bylaws with a warning given before giving a ticket.

Director Community Development responded that there has been a real focus on disabled and loading zones.

29.1.2 Councillor Bitar – Additional Night Markets

Councillor Bitar asked around the additional night markets.

Director Community Development responded that there is only so much that can be spent with the budget provided but has asked the team to put together a report outlining the events that are being held throughout the year.

29.1.3 Councillor Bitar – Verge Maintenance

Councillor Bitar asked for a potential timeline around verge maintenance.

The CEO responded that a program is in place which will be circulated throughout the community.

30. GENERAL BUSINESS

30.1.1 Councillor Hopper – Return to Country

Councillor Hopper asked if the various community leaders coming into Alice Springs to take their young people home was following a formal process or was it of their own doing?

The CEO responded that the Chief Ministers office has been doing a large amount of work around this but is unsure if they correlate. The CEO will provide further information.

30.1.2 Councillor Hopper – CBD Revitalization

Councillor Hopper asked if it is bricks and mortar or policy setting work.

The CEO responded that the EOI will be provided to Elected Members.

Discussion ensued.

Councillor Coffey raised that he rents an office in the CBD and that this will possibly become a conflict as the project continues.

Councillor Liddle left the Chamber at 3.08pm

Councillor Liddle returned to the Chamber at 3.11pm and left the meeting.

30.1.3 On behalf of Council, the Deputy Mayor thanked the outgoing CEO, Robert Jennings for his work since his commencement in mid-2019.

Councillor Coffey reiterated the Deputy Mayor's sentiments.

31. MATTERS FOR MEDIA ATTENTION

Media matters will be covered via the media attendance at this meeting.

32. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 28 February, 2023

33. ADJOURNMENT OF OPEN MEETING

Deputy Mayor Melky declared the meeting closed at **3.15pm**

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Hopper

The Council stands adjourned.

CARRIED (22475)

Confirmed on 21st August, 2023

CHAIRPERSON  _____

Date _____