

MINUTES OF THE **ORDINARY** MEETING OF THE FOURTEENTH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY
26 SEPTEMBER 2023 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

Mayor Matt Paterson declared the meeting open at **11.03am** and welcomed all present to the meeting.

Mayor Matt Paterson acknowledged the Central Arrernte people who are the traditional owners and custodians of Alice Springs.

Mayor Matt Paterson advised 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 (Chair)

Deputy Mayor A. Bitar (via Zoom)

Councillor M. Banks

Councillor S. Brown

Councillor M. Coffey (via Zoom)

Councillor K. Hopper

Councillor M. Liddle

Councillor E. Melky

Councillor G. Morris (via Zoom)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A. Wilsmore – Chief Executive Officer

Mr J. Andrew – Director Technical Services

Ms N. Battle – Director Community Development

Mr J. McCabe – Acting Director Corporate Services

Mrs E. Williams – Executive Assistant (Minutes)

Mrs M. Woods – Executive Support Officer (Observing)

Mr A. Geppa – Media Officer

16. PRAYER

Pastor Bruce Mahlangu, Amazing Grace Church

Councillor Banks arrived at 11.08am

17. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

18. WELCOME

The Mayor acknowledged and congratulated the former Mayor, Damien Ryan who was present to receive the Honorary Life Membership from the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT).

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

19.1 Edan Baxter – The Voice Referendum

Mr Baxter asked what the feeling of Elected Members was around the upcoming Voice referendum.

The Mayor responded that Council as a whole don't have a collective view, it's up to Elected Members if they wish to share their position.

Councillor Hopper and Deputy Mayor Bitar spoke in support of the Voice.

Councillor Morris provided a rationale for both sides of the argument.

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 22 August, 2023

Moved – Councillor Hopper

Seconded – Councillor Coffey

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 22 August, 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

CARRIED (22758)

21.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

21.2.1 Councillor Banks – Mayor Credit Card transactions

Councillor Banks asked around the transaction with Iris Capital and if the meeting had appeared in the Mayor's report.

The Mayor responded that this discussion was mainly around child-care development support and was an oversight for not being in the August Mayors report.

21.2.2 Councillor Hopper – Development Applications

Councillor Hopper asked for an update on this item.

Director Technical Services advised that, the internal processes are being updated to reflect Council papers at the time.

21.2.3 Councillor Hopper – Local Buy Parameters

Councillor Hopper asked for an update on this item.

Acting Director Corporate Services took the question on notice.

21.2.4 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Off-leash Dogs

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked for an update on this item.

Director Community Development responded that the Rangers have been undertaking a blitz on off-leash dogs which includes the cemetery.

22 MAYORAL REPORT

22.1 Mayor's Report

Report No. 175 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Hopper

Seconded – Councillor Brown

That the Mayor's report be received and noted.

CARRIED (22759)

22.2 Business Arising from the Report

22.2.1 Councillor Hopper – Meeting with Michael Murphy

Councillor Hopper asked if this meeting involved discussion on the recent bushfires.

The Mayor responded that this was the first meeting held with Mr Murphy since becoming NT Police Commissioner and at that stage there were no fires in Tenant Creek.

22.2.2 Councillor Hopper – Meeting with Dorrelle Anderson

Councillor Hopper asked for context on this meeting.

The Mayor responded that it was to discuss the current funding commitments.

22.2.3 Councillor Coffey – NT Cattleman's Association

Councillor Coffey asked if their upcoming 40-year celebrations were discussed.

The Mayor responded that the 40-year celebration is scheduled for March 2024 over several days in Alice Springs and how Council can assist was discussed.

22.2.4 Councillor Brown – 2023 National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress

The Mayor gave a verbal update on his attendance at the conference held recently in Canberra.

22.2.5 Councillor Hopper – Correspondence from the Member for Araluen, Robyn Lambley

The Mayor responded that he has advised the Member for Araluen that her queries were mainly operational.

The CEO advised that correspondence will appear in the October Ordinary Meeting of Council around her queries.

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 Melky – Community Football

23.1.2 Councillor Banks – Community Football

23.1.3 Councillor Banks – Social Order Response

23.1.4 Councillor Hopper – Gap Road, Road Safety

23.1.5 Councillor Hopper – Correspondence Received from Buffel Grass Action Group

24. MEMORIALS

Nil

25. PETITIONS

Nil

Councillor Liddle arrived at the meeting at 11.44am

26. NOTICES OF MOTION

26.1 Councillor Hopper – Lhere Mparntwe Management Strategy (LMMS)

Moved – Councillor Hopper

Seconded – Councillor Banks

1. **Request a formal review of performance against all KPIs as set out in the LMMS Evaluation Framework, including recommendations for improvement.**
2. **Provide a report to Elected Members that;**
 - a. **summarises Alice Springs Town Council's (ASTC) performance against its obligations contained in the LMMS and the ATSC Trusteeship of the Todd and Charles Rivers.**
 - b. **identifies potential risk (reputational, financial, other) and legal liability in meeting or failing to meet ASTC obligations**
 - c. **provides recommendations to improve management of the Todd and Charles Rivers including immediate and long-term solutions.**

CARRIED (22760)

26.2 Business Arising from the Motion

26.2.1 Councillor Coffey – Disaster Response Funding

Councillor Coffey asked around available disaster response funding.

The Mayor took the question on notice.

27. FINANCE

27.1 Finance Report

Report No. 171 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Morris

Seconded – Councillor Brown

That the report be received and noted.

CARRIED (22761)

27.2 Business Arising from the Report

27.2.1 Councillor Hopper – Item 3.2

Councillor Hopper asked for further detail on the P&L statement.

The Acting Director Corporate Services responded that the figures are indicative only due to year end rollover still needing to be completed.

Councillor Melky left the Chamber at 12.01pm

Councillor Melky returned to the Chamber at 12.05pm

27.2.2 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Reserves Transfers

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked why the movements aren't indicated

The Mayor responded that this will be tidied in October with all movements shown.

27.2.3 Mayor Paterson – Approved Operating Budget

The Mayor noted that the approved annual budget did not reflect the adopted budget.

The Acting Director Corporate Services responded that treatment of income from audit review had altered and that was being fixed to reflect adopted budget.

28. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

28.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

28.1.1 CEO Report

Report No. 177 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Hopper

Seconded – Councillor Coffey

1. **That this report be received and noted.**
2. **That pursuant to section 38(2) of the *Local Government Act 2019*, Council resolves to authorise the Mayor and CEO to affix and attest its common seal to the Northern Territory of Australia Variable Term Standard Grant Funding Agreement - Housing, Municipal and Essential Services Grant 2023-25 - Grant Number HMES00003.**

CARRIED (22762)

Councillor Melky left the Chamber at 12.06pm

Councillor Melky returned to the Chamber at 12.07pm

28.1.2 Business Arising from the Report

28.1.2.1 Councillor Hopper – Business Support for Central Australia

Councillor Hopper asked for more information around this and how does it align with organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce.

The CEO responded that its an initiative of the Department.

28.1.2.2 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Summer Program

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked if further funding can be obtained from the NIAA for Summer holiday programs, such as free entry to the pool.

The Mayor asked that a request needs to be sent to Territory Families rather than NIAA.

28.1.2.3 Councillor Banks – Crown Land and Fire Breaks correspondence

Councillor Banks asked for an update on the fire breaks around the properties that share boundaries with Crown Land.

The CEO gave a response on what parties are responsible and where.

Councillor Coffey asked how residents are able to gather information on when and who will assist with fire breaks.

Director Technical Services responded that he will request information through the working group he sits on.

28.2 CORPORATE SERVICES

28.2.1 Adoption of Council Policies Report No.182 / 23 cncl

Moved – Councillor Melky

Seconded – Councillor Brown

That Council adopts the following policies:

- 1. Shared Services Policy (*Attachment A*) amended so that any Shared Services arrangement takes into account the impact of local business.**
- 2. Sufficient Interest in the Assessment Record Policy (*Attachment B*)**
- 3. Rates Concession Policy (*Attachment C*)**
- 4. Confidential Information and Business Policy (*Attachment D*)**
- 5. Accountable Forms Policy (Members and CEO) (*Attachment E*)**
- 6. Filling Casual Vacancies Policy (*Attachment F*)**
- 7. Conflict of Interest – CEO and Employees Policy (*Attachment G*)**
- 8. Elected Member and Staff Interaction Policy (*Attachment H*)**
- 9. Investment Policy (*Attachment I*)**

CARRIED (22763)

28.2.2 Business Arising from the Report

28.2.2.1 Councillor Coffey – Legislative Requirements

Councillor Coffey asked if legal advice is sought on those policies that involve legislative requirements.

The Acting Director Corporate Services responded that the Local Government Department have provided overview and advice on the policies where required.

28.2.2.2 Councillor Coffey – Shared Services Policy

Councillor Coffey asked that Local Buy be included in this policy to support locally where possible.

The Acting Director Corporate Services will include this detail in the policy

28.2.2.3 Councillor Melky – Rates Concession Policy

Councillor Melky asked if this a Council Policy or Elected Member Policy.

Acting Director Corporate Services responded it is an Elected Member Policy as its adopted by Council. Operational policies aren't presented to Council as they are approved by the CEO and not Council.

28.2.2.4 Councillor Coffey – Accountable Forms Policy

Councillor Coffey asked if this includes credit cards.

The CEO responded that there is a separate policy for credit cards but this will be included in this policy acknowledging this.

Councillor Banks left the Chamber at 12.32pm

Councillor Banks returned to the Chamber at 12.40pm

Director Technical Services left the Chamber at 12.35pm

Director Technical Services returned to the Chamber at 12.37pm

28.2.2.5 Mayor Paterson – Casual Vacancies Policy

With a change to the Filling Casual Vacancies policy to change the word “will” to “may” in relation to filling Ordinary Member casual vacancy <18 months but not >6 months before the next general election.

28.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

28.3.1 Community Development Update to Council
Report No. 169 /23 cncl

Moved – Deputy Mayor Bitar

Seconded – Councillor Hopper

That this report will be received and noted

CARRIED (22764)

28.3.2 Business Arising from the Report

The Mayor thanked the Director and her team for the recent successfully held events.

Councillor Coffey asked that it be noted that the Deputy Mayor and himself read at the Pawsome Tales event co-hosted by the Library and Ranger Unit.

28.3.2.1 Councillor Hopper – Hard Rubbish Collection

Councillor Hopper asked if the discussion around the collection of hard rubbish is still continuing.

Director Technical Services responded that he’s not aware of this.

Councillor Hopper asked that it be raised in the working group discussions to assist in the illegal dumping of hard rubbish.

28.3.2.2 Deputy Mayor Bitar – ASALC Anti-social Incidents

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked if the incidents were from people who had paid to enter or had accessed the facility as non-paying users.

Director Community Development took the question on notice.

28.3.2.2 Councillor Brown – River Patrols

Councillor Brown raised concerns that the Ranger river patrols aren't deterring those who are camping illegally in the river and for this to be reviewed.

28.3.3 Roundabout Art Update
Report No. 184 /23 cncl

Moved – Mayor Paterson

Seconded – Councillor Hopper

That this report will be received and noted

CARRIED (22765)

28.3.4 Business Arising from the Report
Nil

28.3.5 Community Grants – Endorsement of Round One Recipients
Report No. 172 / 23 cncl

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.3.1

Moved – Councillor Brown

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

1. That Council endorse \$78,524.50 in Community Grants and Events Sponsorship.

2. That this recommendation be moved from Confidential to Open.

CARRIED (22744)

28.4 TECHNICAL SERVICES

28.4.1 Alice Springs Town Council CCTV, Security Lights and Security Fencing Upgrades

Report No. 168 / 23 cncl

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.4.3

Moved – Councillor Melky

Seconded – Councillor Coffey

That this report be received and noted.

CARRIED (22747)

28.4.2 Park Upgrades and Shade Sail Installation

Report No. 179 / 23 cncl

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.4.5

Moved – Councillor Brown

Seconded – Councillor Hopper

1. **That Council approve the upgrades of Finlayson Park and Oleander Park for 2023/2024FY.**
2. **That Council approve the installation of shade structures in Campbell Park and Grant Park.**
3. **That this report be moved from Confidential to Open.**

CARRIED (22748)

28.4.3 Road Re-seal Program

Report No.181 / 23 cncl

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.4.7

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

1. **That Council approve Council Officers going to tender for the FY 2023-24 to 25-26 Road Reseal Program at a cost of \$2,150,000 across three years.**
2. **That Council approve the commitment to the budget for the road reseal in the 2025 and 2026 financial years.**
3. **That the resolution be moved from Confidential to Open.**

CARRIED (22749)

28.4.4 Frances Smith Memorial Park – Pump Track and Skill Trail Upgrade
Report No.180 / 23 cncl

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.4.11

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Hopper

1. **That Council allocate \$200,000.00 from the parks budget line for the development of the Frances Smith Memorial Park, pump track, and skill trail.**
2. **That this report be moved from Confidential to Open.**

CARRIED (22751)

29. QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Nil

Council recessed for lunch at 12.50pm and returned at 1.20pm

30. GENERAL BUSINESS

30.1.1 Councillor Melky – Community Football

Councillor Melky asked for information to be presented to Council around the community football held in town vs the increase in crime.

The Mayor advised that this process has commenced with the information being tabled for discussion at a future Forum.

30.1.2 Councillor Banks – Community Football

Councillor Banks gave an overview of the positive behaviour inside the grounds of both the players and supporters at the recent community football grand final.

30.1.3 Councillor Banks – Social Order Response

Councillor Banks reiterated her concerns that were raised at recent meetings with NT Police and the Police Minister around the response times following criminal damage at the Araluen precinct.

Councillor Banks asked the Mayor to speak with the Police Minister asking her to speak with the individuals impacted by the recent criminal damage at the Araluen precinct.

Councillor Banks will supply the Mayor with the contact details.

30.1.4 Councillor Hopper – Gap Road, Road Safety

Councillor Hopper tabled correspondence received from a resident of Gap Road around street lighting and speed limit concerns.

As an Alice Springs resident of almost 5 years I remember being advised by a local upon moving to avoid driving along gap road at night. I was warned that due to the poor lighting and location, it was more common that pedestrians were hit by cars along the road, and it is not uncommon for pedestrians to be unconscious or in distress on the road itself.

Gap road attracts some of our communities most vulnerable - with the hospital, AHL hostel, youth drop in centre, hospital laws, KFC and Gap View Hotel. It's also the road connecting town to the south - creating significant foot traffic. And yet - it is a 60km/hour zone in some part with no enforcement of the 40km zone, and arguably the poorest lit main street in Alice Springs.

Just two weeks ago I pulled over on Gap Road to respond to a woman in mental health crisis laying in the middle of the road. I stood holding my hand out to traffic as the sun went down hoping the ambulance would arrive before dark, knowing full well we would both be in danger given the inadequate lighting.

As a social worker within 18 months two women known to me have been killed in hit and runs on the road. One begs to question whether these deaths may have been avoidable should the driver had better visualisation with more adequate street lighting.

A brief google search brings up 5 serious incidents on the road in the last 5 years, several of which involve the death of Aboriginal women. I am certain a freedom of information request would highlight that this is one of the most dangerous roads for pedestrian fatalities in Central Australia.

- Sept 2023 - Fatal Hit and run of woman
- June 2022 - Woman dragged on to road in DV incident, serious spinal injuries
- May 2022 - Fatal Hit and run of woman escaping family violence
- Jan 2021 - Ms Rubuntja killed outside the hospital
- January 2018 - Fatal hit and run of woman

I am writing to you in the hopes you will raise my concerns with fellow counsellors and propose urgent attention to:

1. Upgrade street lighting on gap road and
2. Propose adequate traffic management initiatives such as a 50km speed limit and speed bumps around the hospital and Gap Youth/Piggleys area

I appreciate your time in considering my concerns, and welcome any feedback you may have in how best to proceed in drawing the right attention to this issue.

Warmly,

Amy

Councillor Hopper asked for a please explain letter be sent to Power and Water on the lack of street lighting along Gap Road and request an update from DIPL on what is being done around traffic safety in that area.

The Mayor will write a response to the author of the original letter.

30.1.5 Councillor Hopper – Correspondence Received from Buffel Grass Action Network

Councillor Hopper tabled correspondence received from the Buffel Grass Action Network.

Dear Elected Members,

Buffel grass invasion poses a serious risk to our community. This grass dramatically increases the risk from fire, impacts health and impedes our access to, and enjoyment of, many special places.

Many members of the community spend a significant amount of time and energy clearing buffel grass from private and public places.

The ongoing damage to important sites across town caused by buffel grass invasion and buffel- fueled fires has caused great distress.

The Lhere Mparntwe is burning. Trees that are hundreds of years old are being lost and damaged. These fires are a real and ever-present threat to cultural heritage, residents, property, tourism, local businesses, and of course, the natural environment and its biodiversity. The Alice Springs Town Council must act now.

We call on our Town Council to respond with urgency to this crisis. We call on you to take the following actions:

- 1. Respond to the fires in the Lhere Mparntwe*
 - a. ensure fallen branches are left in place. Fallen branches are an important habitat element, especially in the context of fire, as they provides shelter and support flora and fauna recovery.*
 - b. institute careful use of herbicides to poison emergent buffel in order to halt positive fire-invasion feedback as recommended in best practice buffel management guidelines e.g. https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/275906/4108_PIRSA_factsheet_Buffel_Grass_Control.pdf*
- 2. Implement short-term fire risk mitigation for ecosystems and public safety - e.g. ensuring cleared collars around the river gums*
- 3. Implement long-term fire risk mitigation - including implementation of the Lhere Mparntwe Management Strategy (see questions on the implementation of the Strategy below)*
- 4. Encourage and support big picture and big ideas. Some ideas already put forward by the community are:*
 - a. Raising community awareness through information and education campaigns*
 - b. Encouraging and supporting private and public buffel removal and native plantings*
 - c. Aiming for Alice Springs to be a buffel-free municipality*

Councils can respond decisively to the threat of buffel grass. Please see this Annual Report from Roxby Council SA as an example: <https://lgasa-web.squiz.cloud/?a=279194>

Questions to ASTC regarding their responsibilities under the Lhere Mparntwe Management Strategy 2019 (Town Area Management Zone)

Objective 1: Protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the river

Could you please explain what action the ASTC is taking to fulfil the responsibilities listed below:

Prioritise buffel and couch grass hazard reduction for fire management into areas important for tree protection and re-emergence of native species?

Conduct fire and vegetation management for targeted sub-zones on the basis of biological and cultural values as well as expected intensity and type of use?

Expand support for the existing efforts undertaken by Alice Springs Landcare between Gosse Street and Stott Terrace on the eastern bank and by the Olive Pink Botanic Garden between Stott Terrace and Tuncks Road?

Include weed management been in the vegetation and fire management for the town area?

We understand a formal Vegetation and Fire Management Plans for each management zone has been drafted and presented to the Lhere Mparntwe Advisory Group.

When will this Plan be finalised / endorsed?

Objective 2: Encourage more locals and visitors to use the rivers in culturally and ecologically sensitive ways for recreation and relaxation.

Has a series of communication products to assist the community to understand and celebrate the cultural and ecological values of the rivers been developed?

Where can we find these products?

Objective 3: Governments, business and the community to work collaboratively to care for the rivers.

Could you please explain what action the ASTC is taking to fulfil the responsibilities listed below:

Encourage and facilitated commitment by individuals, schools and community groups in managing fuel loads in small sections of the rivers?

Encourage recurrent funding from all levels of government and philanthropists to promote maintenance and eventual expansion of the management area?

Encourage and support the development of an Mparntwe Ranger Group in conjunction with relevant organisations in accordance with the aspirations of Mparntwe sacred site custodians?

Thank you for considering our concerns and requests. We look forward to your response.

Councillor Hopper asked that a response from Council be sent to the Network on the strategies Council are using, or plan to use around weed management.

30.1.6 Councillor Liddle – Tangentyere Council

Councillor Liddle asked what is being done to encourage Tangentyere to meet with Council.

The Mayor responded that many requests to meet have been sent with no response from Tangentyere.

Councillor Coffey asked that the lack of engagement be raised with the Northern Territory Government and/or funding bodies.

That Council request assistance from the Northern Territory Government to broker a meeting with Tangentyere Council to address service delivery within the municipality of Alice Springs and community concerns around safety.

Moved – Councillor Liddle

Seconded – Councillor Melky

CARRIED (22766)

30.1.7 Councillor Liddle – Illegal Gambling

Councillor Liddle raised concerns around the increase in illegal gambling on the various grassed areas in town and asked who is responsible, is it Rangers or Police, or both.

The Director Community Development took the question on notice.

30.1.8 Councillor Liddle – Statues

Councillor Liddle asked for an update on the statues.

Director Community Development advised that an EOI has been circulated with responses pending.

30.1.9 Deputy Mayor Bitar – ASALC Free Entry in January

Councillor Bitar asked that Territory Families be approached to provide funding to support free entry to ASALC in January.

That Council writes to Territory Families to request funding to support free entry inclusive of staff costs to the Alice Springs Aquatic Leisure Centre (ASALC) for the Summer school holidays.

Moved – Deputy Mayor Bitar

Seconded – Mayor Paterson

CARRIED (22767)

Director Community Development will investigate the staffing requirements if there is free entry to ASALC throughout the Summer school holidays.

Councillor Liddle left the Chamber at 2.30pm

Councillor Liddle returned to the Chamber at 2.32pm

31. MATTERS FOR MEDIA ATTENTION

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

32. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 24 October, 2023

33. CLOSURE OF OPEN MEETING

Mayor Paterson declared the meeting closed at **2.33pm.**

Moved – Councillor Melky

Seconded – Councillor Brown

The Council meeting be closed.

CARRIED (22768)

Confirmed on 06.12.2023

CHAIRPERSON

