

MINUTES OF THE **OPEN** ORDINARY MEETING OF THE FOURTEENTH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2024 IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, ALICE SPRINGS

14. RESUMPTION OF MEETING IN OPEN

PRESENT

Mayor M. Paterson (Chair)

Deputy Mayor A. Bitar

Councillor M. Banks

Councillor M. Coffey

Councillor M. Liddle

Councillor E. Melky

Councillor G. Morris

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 Finance and Governance

Mrs K. Sanders – Executive Assistant to the CEO (Minutes)

Ms J. Lindner - Executive Assistant Finance and Governance (Observing)

Mrs E. Williams – Governance Project Officer (Minutes)

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

Mayor Paterson declared the meeting open at **11.04am** and welcomed all present to the meeting.

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

Mayor 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 – Centralian Today, 8CCC

16. PRAYER

Nil

17. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Councillor Hopper

Moved – Councillor Morris

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

- 1. That the apology from Councillor Hopper be received and accepted.**

CARRIED (24/22929)

18. WELCOME

Mayor Paterson welcomed members of the public in the gallery.

Councillor Liddle entered the Chamber at 11.06am

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil

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 27 February 2024

Moved – Deputy Mayor Bitar

Seconded – Councillor Banks

- 1. That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 27 February, 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.**

CARRIED (24/22930)

21.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

21.2.1 Councillor Coffey – Finance Report

Councillor Coffey asked for the minutes to be amended to reflect his comment on local fuel suppliers.

Councillor Coffey asked for an update on this in the future.

22. MAYORAL REPORT

22.1 Mayor's Report
Report No. 42/24 cncl

Moved – Deputy Mayor Bitar
Seconded – Councillor Coffey

1. That the Mayor's report be received and noted.

CARRIED (24/22931)

22.2 Business Arising from the Report

22.2.1 Councillor Melky – Correspondence from Maree de Lacey

Councillor Melky expressed his concern that the correspondence doesn't capture the damage caused by the discussion that was held as part of the "Decision Making and Working as a Team" training in the January 2024 Ordinary meeting.

22.2.2 Councillor Coffey – Correspondence from Chief Minister

Councillor Coffey asked Mayor Paterson to reply to the correspondence as to why Council are requesting additional funding around free entry to ASALC, and to clarify the benefits to the community.

Mayor Paterson confirmed he will reply to the Northern Territory Government.

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 Banks – Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

23.1.2 Deputy Mayor – Visual Amenity

23.1.3 Councillor Coffey – ASLAC Entry

24. MEMORIALS

Mr David Hewitt, OAM

David Hewitt, a long-time Centralian who spent decades working in remote communities and researching their histories, has been remembered as a "true gentleman" with boundless energy for his community.

Mr Hewitt died on the 27th February 2024, aged 84, having been ill with cancer.

He soon came to call the outback his home after moving to the Red Centre in the mid-1960s. He worked as an electrician and carpenter, alongside his wife Margaret, in remote communities in the APY Lands and Western Desert region for more than 40 years.

The couple was awarded an Order of Australia each in 2009 for their contributions.

In his later years, Mr Hewitt became heavily involved in heritage projects and recording the history of Central Australia, working as a key member of several community-based organisations right up until his death.

He had boundless energy with one of his final projects was coordinating the installation of a memorial site for five Arrernte men who perished during a heatwave east of Coober Pedy in 1960. It was finally delivered late last year after a more than two-decade battle getting the necessary approvals.

"His energy was boundless and his generosity of spirit and action was equally limitless," said friend and fellow historian, Alex Nelson.

"He was the sort of person who could be — at first impression — fairly easily underestimated, but I found him to be very incisive at critical moments in discussions.

Mr Hewitt could often be found at public meetings and forums in Alice Springs and was a valued member of National Trust Alice Springs, Heritage Alice Springs, the Old Timers Traeger Museum, and the Central Australian Aviation Museum.

He worked alongside Indigenous men to build the general store at Yulara, the town site near Uluru, in the 1970s.

His Christian faith played a central role in his life, and he was an active participant in the Uniting Church congregation.

"He was someone who didn't just give up at the first rejection," Reverend Emily Hayes said.

"He would follow through on things, and I will certainly remember him for that."

Mr Hewitt spent many years facilitating Sunday church services at the town's prison and would get to know the prisoners on a personal level.

"People would just line up for a long time to talk to David and he would have known a lot of them since they were children," Reverend Hayes said.

"He was a man in his early 80s doing this and had this extraordinary memory for people and extraordinary time for them and commitment to them."

Mr Hewitt is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter Heather, and three grandchildren.

Thank you to Lee Robinson, ABC Alice Springs for granting use of this article

25. PETITIONS

Nil

26. NOTICES OF MOTION

26.1 Councillor Michael Liddle – King Charlie Statue

Commonly referred to as King Charlie, King Unchalka Irrapmwe was the headman of the Alice Springs Arrernte in the later part of the nineteenth century.

According to Arrernte law, large parts of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) were created by caterpillar ancestors, to whom Irrapmwe was said to be directly connected. Ultimately, it was this connection, along with his expert knowledge of Aboriginal lore, which saw King Charlie control much of the land around Alice Springs – deciding who could and couldn't enter Arrernte country through Heavitree Gap.

Indeed, when the first white settlers came to Mparntwe, it has been recounted that they were greeted by King Charlie and other Aboriginal men at Honeymoon Gap. Approaching in the spirit of friendship, King Charlie offered water and showed the settlers the way to the Atherreyrre – a waterhole that would eventually be named the Alice Springs Waterhole, directly next to what would become the Alice Springs Telegraph Station.

To this day, there is still a large number of King Charlie's descendants living in Mparntwe. These family members would very much like to see the construction of a statue in Alice Springs, clearly commemorating the important and ongoing legacy of King Unchalka Irrapmwe.

It is noted that there are currently no statues of Arrernte people within Alice Springs.

The purpose of this Notice of Motion is for Council officers to undertake initial consultation with community and other relevant stakeholders regarding the design and construction of a statue of King Charlie within Alice Springs, with a view to providing a report for further consideration by Council in due course.

Moved – Councillor Liddle

Seconded – Councillor Melky

- 1. That Council Officers consult with the community and other key stakeholders regarding the design and construction of a statue to commemorate King Unchalka Irrapmwe (King Charlie) in Alice Springs.**
- 2. That Council Officers prepare a feasibility report for further consideration by Council pending the outcome of this consultation.**

CARRIED (24/22932)

26.2 Business Arising

Mayor Paterson thanked Councillor Liddle for the Motion, supported the proposal while also looking forward to the outcomes of the consultation process.

Councillor Banks asked that Council be mindful in the consultation period around the statue by ensuring Native Title holders of Alice Springs have a voice in the process.

Councillor Liddle asked that other key stakeholders be invited to present to Council on the story of King Charlie.

Director Community Development to manage this process.

26.3 Councillor Mark Coffey – Illegal Dumping

Illegal dumping of rubbish has been an issue across Alice Springs for some time. This dumping takes place in and outside the municipality, on crown land, on road corridors, on national parks and on private property. There is dumping of household rubbish as well as industrial waste and vehicles in these areas. In recent times, several constituents have raised these concerns and I have personally seen numerous dumping areas on the road corridor and on parks land adjacent to the North Stuart Highway between town and the Tanami turnoff.

In an effort to deal with these issues, the Alice Springs Town Council (ASTC) CEO advised the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics (DIPL) of several areas of concern late last year which did eventually get cleaned up but it took the intervention of the CEO to get any action.

This illegal dumping has been reported to the authorities through the Neatstreets app with minimal action.

Examples of this include:

Vehicle abandoned at Tanami turn-off. DIPL advised in December 2023 and then notifications sent through Neatstreets on 26 January and 3 February 2024 and the only feedback received was that it has been referred to Northern Territory Government (NTG) roads. The vehicle is still there 3 months since notification obviously with less parts than when first abandoned. It is a wreck, makes the place look untidy and is a danger.

Other reports have not been acted upon other than receiving a notification that they have been sent to the relevant authority. All of these notifications all relate to areas outside the municipality.

The practice of illegal dumping creates environmental issues, is a really bad look for a town that is already dealing with significant issues including a really poor perception, is a public health issue and a general public hazard.

The main areas impacted by this illegal dumping appears to be on land controlled by NTG and they are not following up on reports nor see this issue as a priority. The council had a discussion early in this term about the NTG having cameras that could be deployed to deter and detect the offenders however there does not seem to be any appetite to deploy these cameras nor follow up on these matters.

Therefore, we call on the NTG to take action on this illegal activity and request they consider the following strategies:

- Improved and more timely response to reports of illegal dumping
- Improved feedback to complainants who report illegal dumping.
- Pro-active targeting of those areas that are prone to illegal dumping
- Identifying offenders and taking appropriate action
- Messaging to ensure the public are aware that the government are targeting this type of behaviour.

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Melky

1. **That the Alice Springs Town Council write to the Northern Territory Government requesting urgent action on illegal dumping in and around Alice Springs particularly on crown land, road corridors and surrounding national parks.**
2. **That the Alice Springs Town Council consider strategies to support the Northern Territory Government including improved access to the regional waste management facility.**

CARRIED (24/22933)

26.3.1 Business Arising

Mayor Paterson reiterated for the media that Council are already considering strategies for improving access to the waste facility.

Councillor Morris left the Chamber at 11.44am

Councillor Morris returned to the Chamber at 11.45am

27. FINANCE

27.1 Finance Report
Report No. 47/24 cncl

Moved – Councillor Morris

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

1. **That the monthly financial report for the period ending 29 February 2024 be received and noted.**

CARRIED (24/22934)

27.2 Business Arising from the Report

27.2.1 Councillor Coffey – LJ Hooker Rates Refund

Councillor Coffey asked what the rates refund to LJ Hooker relates to.

Acting Director Finance and Governance took the question on notice.

27.2.2 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Civica

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked for an update on Civica.

CEO responded that he recently met with senior members of Civica and that they have been able to address some of the issues Officers are having. At this stage Council are willing to keep working with Civica but this is being closely monitored.

27.2.3 Mayor Paterson – Depreciation YTD Budget vs Actual

Mayor Paterson asked for an explanation on the figures presented.

Acting Director Finance and Governance advised that he believes that it is an accounting error but will investigate and advise.

28. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

28.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

28.1.1 CEO Report
Report No. 44/24 cncI

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Morris

1. **That this report be received and noted.**
2. **That Council endorses the Alice Springs Town Council CEO becoming a member of the Central Australian Regional Economic Growth Committee.**

CARRIED (24/22935)

28.1.2 Business Arising from the Report

28.1.2.1 Councillor Coffey – Weather Event Response

Councillor Coffey asked if Council need to provide any additional support for teams to respond appropriately.

CEO responded that the situation is being monitored and assessed but will advise if any additional support is required.

28.1.2.2 Councillor Coffey – CCTV Project

Councillor Coffey asked for an update on the CCTV project.

Director Technical Services responded that in discussions with police, they are looking at completing the CCTV project by November 2024.

28.1.2.3 Councillor Coffey – Community Housing Central Australia correspondence

Councillor Coffey asked about Council's response to the request for land.

CEO responded that Council would keep correspondence in mind for future consideration around park and land divestment.

28.1.2.4 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Eastside Community Garden

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked for an update on the leases review.

CEO responded that an initial response was provided through the Monday.com database which he will separately report for Elected Members.

The Manager Governance is currently managing the lease review process, which has further internal meetings prior to bringing to Council.

28.2 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Nil

28.2.1 Business Arising from the Report

Nil

28.3 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

Nil

28.3.1 Business Arising from the Report

Nil

Councillor Melky left the Chamber at 12.06pm

Councillor Melky returned to the Chamber at 12.09pm

28.4 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

28.4.1 Community Development Update
Report No. 45/24 cncI

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

1. That this report and its attachments be received and noted.

CARRIED (24/22936)

Councillor Melky was not in the Chamber at the time of voting

28.4.2 Business Arising from the Report

28.4.2.1 Councillor Coffey – Illegal Dumping Infringements

Councillor Coffey asked how much the illegal dumping infringements are.

Director Community Development responded that it is \$880 for an individual, \$88,000 for commercial and \$528 for littering.

The Mayor advised that these fines are set by the Northern Territory Government, not Council.

28.4.3 Community Grants and Events Sponsorship Program 2023/2024 Round 2 Report No. 53/24 cncI

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.4.3

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

- 1. That Council endorse the following nine recommended Community Grant applications outlined in Attachment A and two recommended Event Sponsorship Program applications outlined in Attachment B, with an overall funding allocation of \$51,171.99 to be provided.**

Community Grant Applications:

1. Arid Lands Environmental Centre – Movies That Matter
2. Bring A Plate Dance – Bring A Plate Dance
3. Alice Springs Ministers Fellowship – Carols by Candlelight
4. Children's Ground – Arts & Culture Program
5. Barbara Kimber – Bush Christmas
6. Yirara College – Reconciliation Event
7. Central Australian Art Society – Advocate Art Award 2024
8. Alice Springs Bushfire Brigade – Laptop Purchase (equipment funding)
9. Central Australia Aviation Museum Inc. – 13th Children's Art/Literary Program

Event Sponsorship Applications:

1. Rapid Ascent – 2024 Run Larapinta Stage Race
2. Red Hot Arts – 2024 Desert Festival

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

CARRIED (24/22921)

28.4.4 Community Football
Report No. 55/24 cncI

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.4.4

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Councillor Liddle

1. That the draft fixture for the 2024 Central Australian Football League Community Competition as outlined within Attachment A, be endorsed by Council subject to changes made between rounds eight and nine so they are no longer back to back.
2. That Alice Springs Town Council request that AFL NT design and implement an evaluation framework to assess the impacts to the relevant communities since the changes to the community competition in 2023.
3. That the Alice Springs Town Council enquire with AFL NT when and where they intend to hold the under 18 community carnival.
4. That this item be moved from Confidential into Open.

CARRIED (24/22922)

28.5 TECHNICAL SERVICES

28.5.1 Asset Condition Assessment Report
Report No. 48/24 cncI

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.5.1

Moved – Deputy Mayor Bitar

Seconded – Councillor Melky

1. That Lucid Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd is awarded the tender for the Buildings/ Assets Condition Assessment of Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre (ASALC) and Alice Springs Civic Centre (ASCC) at a cost of \$103,203.64 excluding GST.
2. That the decision in regard to the Buildings/ Assets Condition Assessment of Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre (ASALC) and Alice Springs Civic Centre (ASCC) Tender 2024-06ST be moved from Confidential into Open to allow the contract to be awarded.

CARRIED (24/22923)

28.5.2 Frank McEllister Community Park - Detailed Design Tender
Report No. 49/24 cncI

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.5.3

Moved – Councillor Melky

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

1. **That Council ratifies the awarding of tender to Bennett Architecture Pty Ltd for the Detailed Design Services – Frank McEllister Community Park Redevelopment at a cost of \$83,713.00 excluding GST.**
2. **That the decision regarding the Alice Springs Park Upgrade Tender 2023-15ST report be moved from Confidential into Open.**

CARRIED (24/22924)

28.5.3 Cemetery Niche Wall Tender
Report No. 50/24 cncI

Item transferred from Confidential Agenda Item 9.5.5

Moved – Councillor Coffey

Seconded – Deputy Mayor Bitar

1. **That Council ratifies the awarding of tender to Bluedust Solutions for the new Garden Cemetery Niche Wall works at a cost of \$110,992.30 excluding GST.**
2. **That the decision regarding the New Garden Cemetery Niche Wall Tender 2023-17ST be moved from Confidential into Open.**

CARRIED (24/22925)

Councillor Liddle left the Chamber at 12.08pm

Councillor Liddle returned to the Chamber at 12.09pm

29. QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

29.1 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Council Connects

Deputy Mayor Bitar asked about the frequency of the Council Connects as its missed by the community.

The CEO responded that it will be issued with less frequency as Council increases its focus on a more forward-looking focus with the new events calendar.

Director Technical Services left the Chamber at 12.10pm

Director Technical Services returned to the Chamber at 12.11pm

30. GENERAL BUSINESS

30.1.1 Councillor Banks – Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

Councillor Banks asked if Council will be making a submission to the inquiry.
Mayor Paterson responded that he thinks Council should make a submission.

Moved – Councillor Banks

Seconded – Mayor Paterson

1. That Alice Springs Town Council hold a Forum to discuss a submission and representations to the Local Government Sustainability Inquiry.

CARRIED (24/22937)

Councillor Melky left the Chamber at 12.18pm

Councillor Melky returned to the Chamber at 12.18pm

30.1.2 Deputy Mayor Bitar – Visual Amenities

Deputy Mayor Bitar, on behalf of Councillor Hopper, raised concerns around the visual amenity of the Todd Tavern, especially the cleaning of the external walls which could now be deemed as a public health concern.

Deputy Mayor Bitar raised her own concerns about the Coles complex and the chipped tiling which could be deemed as a tripping hazard.

Can Council write to both the property managers of these locations under the Visual Amenities Bylaws.

CEO responded that Rangers have undertaken an inspection of the Todd Tavern and are escalating discussions.

The CEO will advise the Rangers of the issues at Coles and ask that they please inspect.

Mayor Paterson advised that if there is a safety concern around public health to contact the CEO and/or Director Community Development immediately, rather than wait for Council meetings.

Councillor Coffey asked if Neatstreets is the best platform to report these issues.

CEO confirmed that it is.

30.1.3 Director Community Development – ASALC Free Entry

Director Community Development gave an overview of the numbers of attendees over the Summer period, highlighting that over 30,000 attended over a 6-week period, which is double the attendees normally at the same time of year.

Councillor Coffey asked if Council will receive a report to provide advice and guidance following on from the free entry to ASALC over Summer.

Mayor Paterson responded that this is already a standing motion.

31. MATTERS FOR MEDIA ATTENTION

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

32. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 23 April 2024

33. CLOSURE OF OPEN MEETING

Moved – Deputy Mayor Bitar

Seconded – Councillor Morris

The Council meeting be closed.

CARRIED (24/22938)

Mayor Paterson declared the meeting closed at **12.21pm**.

Confirmed on (date) _____

CHAIR _____