

BCWLG Advisory Group Meeting

9 June 2015 – 10:30am @ Belyuen.

Attendee's:	
Belyuen Council:	Cathy Winsley – CEO Bill Stuchbery – Official Manager
Coomalie Council:	Andrew Turner – President Leigh Ashford - CEO
Wagait Council:	Peter Clee – President Veronica Thorpe - Councillor Deborah Allen – CEO
DLG&CS:	Shaun Hardy – Director Strategic Projects & Regions, DLGCS.
LGANT:	Tony Tapsell – CEO
<u>Visitors:</u>	
NT Grants Commission	Bob Beadman - Chairman
Department of the Chief Minister:	Hannah Feneley – Director PEDIL
City Of Palmerston Council	Jan Peters – Director Corporate Services Maxie Smith – Finance Manager

Meeting Open 1:05pm

1. Minutes of Previous meeting held on 2 March 2015.

Moved Cathy Winsley Seconded Veronica Thorpe Accepted

2. Business Arising from Minutes.

Nil.

3: PRESENTATION: Palmerston Financial Management System. NAV

Ms Jan Peters introduced Maxi Smith who provided a presentation of the benefits of the financial management system used by Palmerston. It is a Windows based system using cloud storage

Leigh Ashford (Coomalie) had previously visited Palmerston to have an in depth look at the system. He felt that the low cost of the system was attractive to a small council, that it was more complete than their current system with integrated HR systems etc. IT support to smaller councils could be provided by Palmerston.

Cathy Winsley (Belyuen) advised that the current arrangements at Belyuen involving outsourced financial managers and in-house hard copy HR documentation was more suited to Belyuen staff.

Deborah Allen (Wagait) asked about the software package and the IT support. Maxie advised that it was windows based with plenty in support and information available – much of the info could be easily found by a Google search.

Shaun Hardy (Chair) suggested that the group request that Palmerston Council provide a paper for further discussion by the group at the next meeting.

ACTION: CoP to draft paper on Financial Management System for discussion at next BCWLGCAG.

4: WASTE MANAGEMENT:

Chair invited Hannah Feneley, Director, Pursuing Economic Development on Indigenous Land, Department of the Chief Minister, to provide an update on Kenbi Land Claim issues - in particular closure and remediation of the Wagait dump.

Ms Feneley gave an update on the status of the Kenbi Land Claim. Points raised:

- \$31.5M is committed by the Commonwealth to remediate contamination on s.32, s.34 and s.41 on Cox Peninsula.
- It is anticipated that, pending project approval, remediation project will commence in the 2015 Dry Season for a period 2-3 years
- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works held a hearing in Darwin on 22 April 2015. Stakeholders will be advised of approval for the the project proposal by the end of June 2015. The remediation works will present an opportunity for local business and employment.
- A key issue for resolution to support the remediation project is closure, and cessation of use and Wagait rubbish dump site use on s.32 before November 2015. Before the tip site on s.32 is closed another waste management solution for Wagait residents is required. It is suggested that a short term solution be arranged whilst permanent arrangements are established. Bill Stuchberry said that Belyuen were amenable to the Wagait Shire Council utilising the Belyuen tip site as a short term solution. Peter Clee also agreed to this option and committed to further discussion.
- All parties acknowledged that the Belyuen tip is unauthorised, and consultation with Traditional Owners is required in order of Wagait to use the Belyuen tip or identify another site for a tip in s.25. Options discussed for long term solutions included a transfer station, new landfill site or transport waste to Shoal Bay.
- Members agreed that the possibility of a large mobile compactor may be the most cost effective way to service the intended transfer station sites for all councils – depending on the dispersal.
- Chairman suggested that the group should seek advice as to potential funding sources such as the TIO Infrastructure Development Fund and should meet with the Larrakiah Development Corporation (LDC), then prepare paper for next meeting.
- Arterial roads on Cox Peninsula have been surveyed, mapped and corridors widened to ensure alignment of *Control of Roads Act* standards.

- Tony Tapsell asked Hannah if there had been any consideration of widening the local government roads in the area. Hannah will distribute maps showing the roads that are affected.

ACTION: 1 - Chairman to facilitate meeting with NLC, Minister, Traditional Owners, Belyuen Council and Wagait Council to discuss short term and long term arrangements for waste management.

ACTION: 2 - Belyuen and Wagait to meet to investigate options and arrangements for short term solution using current Belyuen dump.

ACTION: 3 – Prepare paper for next meeting to summarise info from TIO infrastructure fund and Larrakeyah Development Corporation.

ACTION 4: Chairman to seek LDC’s staged development plan and their views on what model of local government is being planned.

5: RESOURCE SHARING ACTIVITIES

- Peter Clee reaffirmed the offer to provide contact details for the Grants Co-ordinator currently used by Wagait.
- There was some discussion about the impact the new CDP arrangements would have on councils.

6: DUNDEE BEACH PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

- Andrew Turner reiterated his view, previously expressed in email, that the terms of reference for the BCWLGAG limited membership to local government councils, but that he did not have a problem with Dundee Beach attending as observers.
- Peter Clee expressed similar view to Andrew Turner.
- Cathy Winsley, advised that her first reaction to the suggestion was “the more the merrier” but on reflection agreed with the Coomalie and Wagait position.
- It was agreed that Dundee Beach Progress Association could attend as observers and could be invited to take part in discussions on any issues related to their area.

ACTION: Chairman to invite Dundee representation as observers.

7: DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (DLGCS) UPDATE – David Willing, Executive Director, Local Government.

David advised that there were three issues relative to the BCWLGAG that were priorities for the DLGCS at present.

- (a) Management of Belyuen. The council has been under management for far too long and the situation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The outcomes of this forum could impact on the solution.
- (b) Sustainability of the three councils that make up the membership of this LG Advisory Group. Whilst each council is seeking boundary expansions and exploring other options towards improving sustainability, small councils will continue to struggle to be sustainable.

- (c) Residents of unincorporated areas enjoying the benefit of local government type services delivered by the NT Government without the impost of rates and without local government electoral representation. All NT taxpayers in council areas are subsidising the cost of services to those in unincorporated areas. This is unjust and needs to come to an end.

David Willing suggested that the BCWLGAG needs to apply to the Minister to be a formal Transition Committee that could undertake the necessary consultations to transition to a more sustainable form of local government for the region.

Members were somewhat reluctant to be perceived as being responsible for coercing neighbours to join a local government organisation, but would be supportive if the NT Government were to incorporate the unincorporated areas – perhaps with Belyuen to resolve their management problem – as a transition stage that a formal Transition Committee could work with towards a unified LG Council for the area.

Chairman of the NT Grants Commission, Bob Beadman, suggested that the NT Grants Commission could assist with modelling options from a funding perspective to inform the group as it was likely that a larger local government body would receive more funding than the total of any prior smaller councils.

Mr Beadman also expressed concern at the continued arrangements for official management of Belyuen. It was noted that this concern had been highlighted in the Chairmans letter to the Minister for Local Government contained in the 2013/14 NT Grants Commission Annual report, where he questioned whether the arrangements were inconsistent with provisions of the *Local Government Act* and the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act*.

Andrew Turner suggested that it would be preferable for the NTG to take the lead on decisions/announcements relating to any new form of local government for the expanded area and to also fund the process.

David Willing advised that the DLGCS were not sure of the preferred position of the NT Government at this stage but were expecting some direction from Cabinet considerations later this month. Once this advice is received it can be discussed at the next meeting.

8: OTHER BUSINESS: No other business was raised.

9: Confirm date, time and venue of next meeting.

The Chairman suggested that a firm date for the next meeting not be set at this stage as it is likely that some issues (eg; waste management, Transition Committee, etc) may need to be addressed earlier than the usual 3 month period between meetings.

Wagait confirmed as venue for next meeting.

Meeting closed: 4:35pm