



Q&A with Minister Scullion

“Don’t change horses in the middle of the race.” Tjuwanpa ranger co-ordinator Craig LeRossignol explains to the minister why the rangers want to stay with the CLC.

Rangers Future

The CLC and ranger groups are worried about flagged changes to the ranger program. Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion told the Council meeting in April at Yulara Pulka he was looking at splitting ranger groups into small organisations that manage their own administration and commercial contracts. He called it “more choice”. Rangers drew lots of applause when they presented to Council about their work and then told the minister why they want to stay part of the CLC.

Tjuwanpa ranger co-ordinator Craig LeRossignol said: “The support for the rangers from CLC is second to none. Having a direct link to traditional owners who drive the work of the rangers means it is more than a job, it is a way of life. It’s working. Don’t change horses in the middle of the race.”

The minister said there were “no changes on the table” for the CLC rangers. He praised the CLC ranger program and said many kids now want to be rangers. Delegates asked the minister to expand the ranger program but he made no promises.

A new CDEP?

Minister Scullion discussed his plans to work with the CLC and local member



No promises about new ranger groups: Minister Scullion

Warren Snowdon on bringing back a “non-gammon” CDEP. He said CDEP workers would get top-up which employers would have to pay back if they did not offer them a “real job”. And that the workers, including those on outstations, would get Christmas, cultural and sick leave. He promised to support more teachers through the new CDEP because Aboriginal teachers with cultural authority and language skills are “fundamental” to better school attendance and education outcomes.



CLC delegate Raelene Silverton

Indigenous Advancement Strategy

Minister Scullion also defended the controversial Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). He said more funding is going to Aboriginal organisations. Those which had not delivered good services had missed out.

Aboriginals Benefit Account

Minister Scullion said the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) members decided to move away from funding ceremony over 3 years and want people to use their royalty money for it. “I am not dictating to the ABA anymore.”

He said it was up to ABA members to allow senior land council staff to observe ABA meetings.

Empowered Communities

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women’s Council CEO Andrea Mason sought support for a new model for managing Aboriginal communities called Empowered Communities. The NPY lands are one of eight regions across Australia where community leaders want to use the model to get more control over how taxpayer funds are spent and how services are designed and delivered. Four NPY communities are in the CLC region.

Ms Mason told delegates Empowered Communities is “a self determination model where we take control”. It is being developed from the ground up and would therefore work differently in each region. In the NPY lands the model is based on five ideas:

1. Access to quality educational opportunities and children ready, willing and able to take advantage of them
2. Safety and welfare of kids and vulnerable people
3. Housing access and mutual responsibility
4. Capable adults take part in economic and cultural opportunities
5. Tackle domestic, family and community violence and drug abuse

Other regions would be welcome to “opt in” if they liked the model. Delegates had lots of questions and some asked to talk directly with the elected leaders of the NPY Women’s Council.

The federal government is yet to respond to the Empowered Communities report from the eight regions.

For more information go to <http://www.clc.org.au/publications/content/empowered-communities-presentation-npy-womens-council/>.



Andrea Mason, NPY Womens Council CEO

First Fracking Forum



Delegates spent a lot of time on quizzing a panel of experts and advocates about the controversial gas mining technique known as hydraulic fracturing (or fracking).

The idea for the fracking forum was hatched at the last Council meeting at Alpururulam.

Representatives from the fracking industry, the environment movement, government and an independent scientist took up the CLC's invitation to present. Many speakers made the point that the NT has a lot of work to do before it

has strong rules (regulations) to make sure this new industry does not waste or poison our precious water. The NT government is currently reviewing these rules.

Professor Damian Barrett, a scientist from the CSIRO, said the CLC is in a strong position to influence the regulation of fracking.

Judging from the many questions delegates put to Professor Barrett it won't be the last time delegates wrestle with this tricky issue.



Fracking may not be everyone's idea of looking after country, but fracking company Santos' representative Che Cockatoo-Collins was the most popular member of the fracking panel

Constitutional Recognition

Sean Brennan, a constitutional lawyer from Canberra, told delegates about plans to recognise Aboriginal people in the Australian Constitution through a referendum in 2017.

He discussed the following options for reforming Australia's most important law:

- Put in symbolic recognition of Aboriginal people in the preamble
- Take out the clause allowing a race based election system
- Take out government powers to make laws that apply only to Aboriginal people
- Put in a clause about Aboriginal people's role in agreement making
- Put in a clause prohibiting race based discrimination
- Put in a clause protecting rights to land, culture, language and identity
- Put in a statement of recognition in the body of the constitution

Some delegates also raised a treaty and sovereignty. Mr Brennan said it is possible to pursue these goals and seek constitutional recognition at the same time.



Peter Jigili speaks his mind

Ned Kelly and Sandra Morrison spoke up strong

Loves Creek 'Boot Camp'

Council resolved to support traditional owners of Loves Creek who want to use their land for a camp to rehabilitate young offenders. Delegates grilled Ken Middlebrook from the NT Department of Corrections who explained the plans. He said the government wants to keep young people from ending up in adult prisons. He asked for ideas and suggestions about how to support young people in the Loves Creek camp.

Some delegates spoke about the important role of elders in teaching, healing and disciplining young people. They worried that taking young people away from communities would weaken this connection.

Others said it was difficult to discipline young people who don't listen.

Many delegates complained about the record numbers of Aboriginal people in NT prisons.

Outstation Funding

\$40 million of ABA funding will continue to be available for NT outstations, according to Minister Scullion. The CLC is seeking clarification on the funding period and process.

New Nominees for AAPA Board

Council chose three new members to represent the CLC on the Aboriginal Areas Protection Board (AAPA):



Harry Nelson

Veronica Lynch

Philip Wilyuka

Mr Wilyuka, who comes to Titjikala lease money working group meetings, wrapped up the meeting with some advice for his fellow delegates:

“Save up your lease money, then you can have your own organisation and employment in your community.”



NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Ikuntji

25-27 August 2015