



The four Northern Territory land council executives met in Kalkaringi in August.

EXECUTIVES OF NT LAND COUNCILS GET TOGETHER

After the council meeting executive members of the NT's four land councils met to discuss the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Northern Territory Treaty process.

They agreed to support the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, starting with enshrining a Voice to Parliament in the nation's constitution.

They agreed to set up a joint working group with the NT and Australian electoral commissions which will report back to them by next June about how to increase voter enrolment and turnout in the bush.

They also discussed the NT Government's plans to raise rent payments in remote communities and town camps. They resolved to

seek an immediate stop until the government

- develops a framework with the land councils and consults about it
- puts in place a permanent safety net or other help with rent payments
- lowers rent charged per room to the rates proposed during earlier consultations

NEW EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Delegates from the CLC's Region 3 elected Geoffrey Matthews as their new executive member, and Sharon Anderson as his alternate. Both are from Lajamanu.

Esau Nelson's appointment to the alternative executive position for Region 7 was confirmed at the August Council meeting. He will fill in when executive member Jackie Mahoney, from Alpururulam, is unable to attend.

COUNCIL'S FIVE TOP POLICY ISSUES

Delegates added voting rights to the list of the council's policy priorities for the next three years.

Voting in elections is a right all Australians have, but in the NT a lot of Aboriginal people are not enrolled to vote. This means they are not getting a say about who runs this country.

They also miss out on a say in the referendum about the Voice to Parliament next year, and in the next Northern Territory election in 2024.

The CLC will work with the Aboriginal Peak Organisation Northern Territory (APO NT) and the NT and Australian electoral

commissions to make sure people out bush can vote.

The CLC's other policy priorities until 2025 are water, remote communities and homelands, Aboriginal governance and control, as well as keeping land rights, native title, sacred sites and heritage laws strong.

The council wants to support Aboriginal organisations that advocate about education, and law and justice issues, but doesn't want the CLC to play a leading role itself.

CLC delegates believe positive and long-lasting results can be achieved when Aboriginal people are front and centre of policy development.



Representatives of the Lajamanu GMAAAC committee presented their water park project.

LAJAMANU WATER PARK

New delegates learned about the work of the CLC's community development unit from the staff and the people who make the decisions about the projects in their communities.

Members of Lajamanu's Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) committee presented about their new water park.

"We've been waiting and planning for a very long time," Valerie Paterson said.

The committee chose the contractor to build the park on the community's old softball ground with GMAAAC income, and made sure the price and design were right for Lajamanu.

"The only time my people and my children see water in my community is in the wet season," Andrew Johnson said. "When the water is gone and the billabong is dry we got no water. But we are so happy we got this water park now".

Committee members hope the days are over when grownups worry about kids drowning or get sore eyes and ears from swimming in the flooded Hooker Creek.

The community development team also updated the council about the success of the new matched funds program which can double the money many communities can invest in great projects like the water park.



Francine McCarthy and Georgie Stewart lead the discussion on policy priorities.

YOUNG YAPA LEARN TO READ THE COUNTRY

The Northern Tanami Rangers and elders Jerry Jangala Patrick and Enid Nangala Gallagher presented about a new CLC project that aims to help young Yapa learn the skills and knowledge needed to track animals.

Former ranger Dione Kelly, from Lajamanu, said Yapa used song, dance, story, kinship, knowledge, behaviour and the seasons to learn about an animal, for example through mentoring by elders, recounting and repetition.

One of the project's biggest challenges is the loss of experts to learn from.

"We are finding new ways to learn quickly," Mr Kelly said. "We are making resources to help teachers and learners (and) a training framework that other groups across

the desert might adapt for their own training programs."

Ms Gallagher talked about the Yitaki maninjaku mind map, which contains all the important questions a tracker needs to think about.

Delegates from other communities asked for the project to come to their areas.

Next, the Murnkurrumurnkurru Rangers told the council how they work with rangers in Lajamanu, Timber Creek, Tennant Creek and the NT Government, as well as researchers from the Charles Darwin University.

They talked about joint plant and animal surveys, burning, building minor infrastructure, fencing, weeding, looking after waterholes and attending conferences.

WHAT DOES THE CLC'S LEGAL TEAM DO?

CLC lawyer David Avery said the team gives legal advice to the council and tracks land and native title rights issues and negotiates leases and agreements. The team helps with agreements about community development projects and enterprise money. It also helps traditional owners protect sacred sites and run native title claims. It writes submissions to governments and other agencies, helps with joint management of parks and consults traditional owners about distributing lease money.

Mr Avery said the lawyers are now busy with an Uluru lease agreement and joint management arrangements for NT parks, environmental protection and diversity laws that affect Uluru and Singleton Station,

and a draft master plan for NT parks.

He also explained how the council can give some of its legal powers to the CLC's executive and CEO so they can carry out the council's legal duties and help the organisation to get its business done smoothly and efficiently. This is also known as delegation of powers. The council passed a resolution to change the previous council's delegations.

WHAT DOES THE CLC'S MINERALS AND ENERGY TEAM DO?

Delegates heard that almost all the CLC region is under application for exploration of fossil fuels oil and gas. Traditional owners can say 'no' to exploration, but native title holders have no veto right.

The team is also dealing with



Enid Gallagher talked about the Yitaki maninjaku mind map.



Malkirdi Rose, Warlpiri researcher from LaTrobe University presented on the Lajamanu longitudinal study.

POLITICIANS ANSWER DELEGATES' QUESTIONS

The last day of the council meeting saw two politicians from the Australian Government and five from the NT Government answer the delegates' questions.

Member for Lingiari Marion Scrymgour and Senator Patrick Dodson, the Special Envoy for Reconciliation and the Implementation of the Uluru Statement, said it was important to vote in the referendum about the Voice to Parliament.

Senator Dodson said if most people in most states voted 'yes' in the referendum, the Voice would become part of Australia's constitution and politicians can't easily get rid of it.

Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles, Attorney-General

Chansey Paech, Water Security Minister Lauren Moss, Police and Territory Families Minister Kate Worden and Disabilities Minister Ngaree Ah Kit were asked by the delegates about outstations, roads, housing, the new rent model, water security, youth justice, community policing and many other issues.

Mr Paech said that the \$110 million for outstation housing committed by the Australian Government would next year become part of the NT Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing. The focus of the agreement would be on building new houses.

He also said he would look at changing the law to allow more Aboriginal people to be selected for jury duty.



CLC chair Robert Hoosan, Senator Patrick Dodson, Member for Lingiari Marion Scrymgour and CLC deputy chair Warren Williams.

CLC MEETINGS

Council: 1-3 November in Watarrka

Executive:

19-20 October, Desert Knowledge Precinct, Alice Springs

6-7 December, Central Land Council, Alice Springs



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COUNCIL