



At the council meeting at Watarrka Nikki Flook, Rosalie Morton and Charles Gibson reported back to the delegates about the discussions of the Region 2 delegates.

REGIONAL GROUPS PREPARE FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING

Delegates spent most of the first meeting day in nine regional groups.

The groups talked about issues in their communities. They also

discussed the agenda for the three-day meeting, what to do about domestic and family violence, and learned about the federal budget and next year's referendum about

an Aboriginal voice to parliament. In the late afternoon each region's executive member reported back on their group's discussions to the council.

UPDATES ON HOUSING AND RENT INCREASES

The land councils are part of a committee overseeing the \$1.1 billion remote housing partnership with the Territory and Australian governments. With just seven months of the agreement left to go, overcrowding is still bad and there is a long way to go to close the housing gap. At the end of June, 142 of a total of 650 promised new houses need to be built but are on track for completion. The CLC's policy team told the delegates about its work towards a community-controlled housing model and a new housing partnership.

The government postponed its rent increases for remote and town camp houses to February after the CLC and its allies spoke up strongly against them. They are now waiting for a meeting with the government.



Rachel Perkins talked about strengthening sacred site protection.

IS A NATIONAL SACRED SITE PROTECTION LAW GOOD NEWS FOR THE NT?

After Rio Tinto blew up Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara in 2020 Aboriginal leaders wanted to make sure it could never happen again. They formed the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance to push for one strong sacred site protection law for the whole country. The alliance also wants Aboriginal people, not just politicians, to decide about sacred site protection.

Rachel Perkins and other members of the alliance presented three options to the council on how

to protect country. They asked the delegates what they thought about each option.

The delegates heard that the Northern Territory already has strong sacred site protection laws, mostly because of land rights and the NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act.

Some delegates were worried that a single national law would not be as strong or might even weaken sacred site protection in the NT. Others wanted to keep talking about the three options before making a decision.

DELEGATES TALK TERRITORY TREATY RECOMMENDATIONS

Delegates listened to a video message from Tony McAvoy, the NT's outgoing treaty commissioner, in which he explained his final report.

Mr McAvoy recommended to set up a forum for Aboriginal Territorians to decide on a treaty model and how they want to be represented in treaty negotiations. He said the next step should be to develop a treaty process that allows for many individual treaties between the government and Aboriginal groups.

The government should set up a treaty making office and turn the treaty commission into a treaty and truth telling commission. The government should appoint an Aboriginal ombudsman and set up a treaty tribunal to deal with complaints and disputes, he said.

Senior NT government staff then answered the delegates' questions about the best way forward.

Before the session delegates listened to background information in their own languages prepared by the treaty commission.



Region 5 delegates listened to a Luritja language recording about the NT treaty process.

UPDATES ON WATER AND INCOME MANAGEMENT

The delegates heard about the CLC's ongoing court case against the Singleton Station water licence and its call for tough environmental and cultural impact assessments.

Singleton is part of the Western Davenport water region and the CLC is on the region's water advisory committee. The committee opposes the government's draft water allocation plan for the region because it no longer talks about protecting environmental and cultural values. This would make it even easier to ignore the harm that taking too much water would do

to Aboriginal sites, native animals and plants. The Georgina and Wiso basin water allocation plans are being made without advisory committees.

The policy team also explained what will change when compulsory income management finishes next year. There will be three cards during a changeover time – the basics card, the silver card and a new 'enhanced income management' card. The CLC will make sure people are consulted about a new voluntary income management system.



CEO Les Turner, executive member Jackie Mahoney and regional officer Wayne Clarke.

FEDERAL LABOR POLITICIANS DROP IN ON THE COUNCIL

Three Labor politicians from Canberra visited the council meeting to talk about what the federal budget might mean for central Australian communities.

The delegates had lots of their own questions for Indigenous Australians Minister Linda

Burney, NT Senator Malarndirri McCarthy and the Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour. The delegates spent around 40 minutes asking questions, but the politicians spent roughly 20 minutes answering their questions.



James Glenn from Region 9 quizzed Marion Scrymgour about jobs, education and services.

WHAT DO THE CLC'S LAND MANAGEMENT, NATIVE TITLE AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION TEAMS DO?

New delegates – about half of the current council – learned who these teams are and what their jobs are.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Most CLC staff are part of this team, and about half of them are rangers. Delegates heard how the ranger program is funded, that most rangers work part time or casually and that fewer than one in three rangers are women.

They looked at where the rangers work, where the parks and other protected areas in the CLC region are and where the traditional owners may declare new protected areas next.

NATIVE TITLE

Delegates looked at maps of Aboriginal freehold land and native title land in the CLC region and heard that traditional owners of Aboriginal freehold land have stronger rights than native title holders.

Across the CLC, 25 staff work for the native title program. Of these, 11 are in the native title and prescribed bodies corporate (PBC) team. The team helps to set up PBCs (corporations that hold

the title to the land) and supports these bodies to grow stronger.

It organises gatherings such as annual general meetings and PBC camps, puts together native title determination handbooks for every PBC and publishes information about native title in easy English and many local languages. A phone app called PBCmob will be ready soon.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

The CLC is still working out what this new team will be doing. It is talking with CLC delegates and managers about their ideas before presenting a business plan.

The team has helped Aboriginal people and organisations apply for money from the Aboriginals Benefit Account for community projects and to set up or grow businesses.

Delegates heard how it approved dozens of proposals for a share of some of the CLC's \$36.7 million 'economic stimulus' fund. Most proposals were in the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek regions. Community development activities topped the list, followed by housing and construction activities.

The team also helps Aboriginal people find jobs or training courses.



Sharon Anderson from Region 3 had a question for the politicians.



Joyce Jones from Region 7 talked up at the council meeting.

CLC MEETINGS

Executive: Alice Springs, 6-7 December 2022
Alice Springs, 21-22 February 2023

