The delegates met at Yulara Pulka outstation inspired by the Uluru climb closure celebration a day earlier. Their good mood carried through to their discussions with public servants and politicians on day one of the year’s last council meeting.

Ray Griggs, the CEO of the new National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA – formerly PM&C), said the agency wanted more decisions to be made in the regions rather than in Canberra. He said the NIAA’s priorities were suicide prevention, school attendance, the voice to parliament and reforms of the Closing the Gap policy, remote housing and the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA). The delegates told Mr Griggs that Aboriginal people should have the final say about ABA grant funding. Federal Labor politicians Linda Burney, Malarndirri McCarthy and Warren Snowden re-stated their opposition to the cashless debit card, raising concerns about the lack of consultation with communities in the NT. They also supported replacing the work for the dole scheme CDP with a real jobs program guided by community priorities.

Ahead of the Northern Territory election next year, Chief Minister Michael Gunner and a group of his ministers talked about the NT treaty consultations, school attendance, housing and roads. Delegates asked them not to only consult Aboriginal people just before elections.

Jody Nobbs, the CEO of the new National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA – formerly PM&C), said the agency wanted more decisions to be made in the regions rather than in Canberra. He said the NIAA’s priorities were suicide prevention, school attendance, the voice to parliament and reforms of the Closing the Gap policy, remote housing and the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA). The delegates told Mr Griggs that Aboriginal people should have the final say about ABA grant funding. Federal Labor politicians Linda Burney, Malarndirri McCarthy and Warren Snowden re-stated their opposition to the cashless debit card, raising concerns about the lack of consultation with communities in the NT. They also supported replacing the work for the dole scheme CDP with a real jobs program guided by community priorities.

Ahead of the Northern Territory election next year, Chief Minister Michael Gunner and a group of his ministers talked about the NT treaty consultations, school attendance, housing and roads. Delegates asked them not to only consult Aboriginal people just before elections.

Federal and Territory Labor politicians answered the delegates’ questions. Federal Labor politicians answered the delegates’ questions. Federal and Territory Labor politicians answered the delegates’ questions. Federal and Territory Labor politicians answered the delegates’ questions.
The delegates were concerned to hear that the federal government plans to roll out a cashless debit card across the Territory next year, replacing the BasicsCard. The new card would affect more than 22,000 Territorians, most of them Aboriginal.

In regional groups, the delegates discussed the Closing the Gap policy. The discussions were part of consultations by the national coalition of peak Aboriginal organisations.

The delegates said they wanted Aboriginal people to be involved in all levels of decision making about the policy. They also wanted to build the Aboriginal controlled sector and improve mainstream service delivery, for example through hospitals.

They called on governments to drop actions and policies that undermine Closing the Gap aims, such as closing clinics in their communities, the cashless debit card plans and the work for the dole scheme (CDP).

Constitutional lawyer Megan Davis and Lowitja Foundation chair Pat Anderson updated the delegates about the voice to parliament.

They said Minister Ken Wyatt’s view is that the voice will not be enshrined in the constitution.

Council rejected this view and resolved to protect the voice from changing government policies and priorities. It continues to support a co-design process involving Aboriginal people and government.

In the release, chair Sammy Wilson said people living in poor remote community houses are particularly at risk during the longer and hotter summers we are experiencing because of climate change. The delegates agreed that their houses are too hot in summer for people to sleep in and that it is hard for kids to go to school without sleep. They resolved to call on governments to include air conditioning in all new and refurbished houses.

The CLC is using its membership of a steering committee on the National Agreement on Remote Housing to advocate for more energy efficient houses.

The delegates said being on compulsory income management is very hard. They criticised that the government did not consult them about the changes. They asked how they would get help if something goes wrong with the new card, especially in places without mobile coverage, and very few landline phones and computers. The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) interviewed delegates about their experiences with the BasicsCard. CLC staff showed the video to a Senate inquiry hearing about the proposal in Alice Springs following the council meeting.

CAAMA’s Chris Fitzpatrick recorded Lynda Lechleitner’s comments on the cashless debit card.

Georgia Stewart and Josie Douglas presented about the Closing the Gap policy reform.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

The delegates heard that the media interviewed deputy chair Barbara Shaw about a CLC media release supporting the climate strike in November and that she spoke at a large Alice Springs rally attended by members and staff.

In the release, chair Sammy Wilson said people living in poor remote community houses are particularly at risk during the longer and hotter summers we are experiencing because of climate change.

The delegates agreed that their houses are too hot in summer for people to sleep in and that it is hard for kids to go to school without sleep. They resolved to call on governments to include air conditioning in all new and refurbished houses.

The CLC is using its membership of a steering committee on the National Agreement on Remote Housing to advocate for more energy efficient houses.

Megan Davis (above), Pat Anderson and Sally Scales (below) told council about Ken Wyatt’s change of heart.

Georgia Stewart and Josie Douglas presented about the Closing the Gap policy reform.

CAAMA’s Chris Fitzpatrick recorded Lynda Lechleitner’s comments on the cashless debit card.