Council members voted “Yes” to direct the CLC to write to the Water Minister and call for a review of the Singleton Station water licence decision.

COUNCIL VOTES FOR WATER LICENCE REVIEW

The delegates voted unanimously to call for a ministerial review of the Singleton Station water licence decision. They want independent experts to review Fortune Agribusiness’ management plan for its proposed fruit and vegetable farm south of Tennant Creek. They also want all work on the controversial proposal to stop until the review is finished. Staff will work with the traditional owners of the Singleton area to identify important cultural sites ahead of an environmental impact assessment.

INTERIM CEO

Former NSW Aboriginal Land Council CEO Lesley Turner joined the CLC in April as interim CEO. Mr Turner, an Arrernte man from Alice Springs, was a senior executive in the Commonwealth public service for many years before joining the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, then the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service. A subcommittee of the CLC executive is managing the recruitment process.

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT IN THE CONSTITUTION

The council voted for the executive to tell the government yet again to adopt the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. This means the voice to parliament must be enshrined in the constitution after a referendum. The council wants to be part of a Central Australian regional voice and will send its submission to the Australian Government.

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Doctor Pradeep Mishra and Aboriginal health workers Rhonda O’Keefe and Prisandra Devery from Anyinginyi Health updated the council on the COVID-19 vaccination. Two different vaccines will be available and your doctor will work out which one is right for you. If you are older or have a chronic illness you should get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Mr Turner, an Arrernte man from Alice Springs, was a senior executive in the Commonwealth public service for many years before joining the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, then the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service. A subcommittee of the CLC executive is managing the recruitment process.

The council has updated its meeting rules and code of conduct. Among the changes is a ban on people under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol and on using phones to film or record council business without permission. Behaviour standards for visitors and guests were also added.

NEW COUNCIL MEETING RULES

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POLICE BOSS BACKS YOUTH DIVERSION

NT Police Commissioner Jamie Chalker attended his first CLC council meeting. He said that a small group of young people (16 out of 100) are responsible for half of all offences and that police will work better with elders and communities to stop crime. He said police don’t want to arrest young people, and that he believes youth diversion works better than detention. He also announced that 15 new Aboriginal liaison officers would start work across the Territory - two in Tennant Creek and another two in Alice Springs. Members told him communities should decide who gets these jobs.

HOUSING UPDATE

A public servant from the NT housing department said it had spent almost a quarter of the $1.1 billion Remote Housing Investment package and a quarter of the $550 million National Partnership for Remote Housing money. He said that means 1900 bedrooms will be built in the CLC region by 2025 and almost half (47 out of 100) of the construction workers must be local Aboriginal people.

YOUTH JUSTICE PANEL

Speakers from Aboriginal community-led programs informed the council about community-led youth programs in the Barkly region that are alternatives to detention. Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment (CASSE) talked about their program in Lajamanu, Tempe Downs and Lyentye Apurte, where elders teach on country how to make boomerangs and spears. The program is much cheaper than prison and kids report feeling safe, strong and proud.

CASHLESS DEBIT CARD

Territorians can now volunteer to move from the Basics Card to the Cashless Debit Card. Nobody can force them, but once they move, they can’t go back to the Basics Card. A representative of the federal Department of Social Services said the government has the power to cut the amount of cash people can take out on the new card in the future. Many council members asked when income management will stop. Call the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency on 1800 636 079 for advice about the card.

CLC MEETINGS

Executive
11 - 12 August, Alice Springs
6 - 7 October, Alice Springs
Council
24 - 26 August, Kalkaringi
2 - 4 November, TBC