



Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES

ORDINARY MEETING

WEDNESDAY 29th April 2009

Please find attached Minutes of the above meeting held on 29th April 2009 at 9.00am – 5.00pm at *the Evelyn Tiatl Community Hall, Saibai Island.*

**Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC)
Ordinary Meeting
Held at the *Evelyn Tiati Community Hall*, Saibai Island**

Wednesday 29th April 2009

Present: Cr. Fred Gela, Mayor
Cr. Kenny Bedford, Deputy Mayor, Division 14 - Erub
Cr. Donald Banu, Division 1 – Boigu
Cr. Raymond Soki, Division 2 – Dauan
Cr. Ron Enosa, Division 3 – Saibai Island
Cr. Keith Fell, Division 4 – Mabuiag
Cr. Wayne Guivarra, Division 5 – Badu Island
Cr. Toshie Kris, Division 7 – St. Pauls
Cr. Nancy Pearson, Division 8- Hammond
Cr. Walter Mackie, Division 9 - Iama
Cr. Willie Lui, Division 10 - Warraber
Cr. Phillemon Mosby, Division 11 - Poruma
Cr. John Mosby, Division 12 – Yorke
Cr. Florianna Bero, Division 13 – Ugar
Cr. Ron Day – Division 15 – Mer Island
Mr. John Scarce, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Anthony Bird, Executive Manager Finance
Mr. Lloyd Sunderland, Executive Manager Community Services
Mr. Noel Peters, Manager Human Resources
Ms Dania Ahwang, Manager Internal Audit
Ms Elissa Shuey, Public Relations Officer
Ms Nicole Howcroft, Manager Environment & Health
Mrs Tania Sailor, Executive Secretary.

Observers: Members of the Community

9.00am: Meeting opened in prayer by Cr. Enosa

ONE MINUTE SILENCE

There was a minute silence to pay respect for families who have lost their loved ones recently.

Apologies: Mr. Patrick McGuire, Executive Manager Engineering
Cr. David Bosun, Division 6 – Kubin

Deputations: Mr. Keri Akiba, Environmental Health Worker, Saibai Island.
Pastor Glen Grey, 7 Day Adventists (Pacific Yacht Ministries)
Pastor Sigila Palesoo, 7 Day Adventists (Pacific Yacht Ministries)

WELCOME

Welcome & Acknowledgement of Traditional Land Owners

- Mayor Fred Gela
- Mr. Ronnie Akiba
- Cr. Ron Enosa

- Introduced and welcomed Nicole Howcroft, Manager Environmental & Health attending her 1st Meeting with Council.
- Requested members to introduce themselves to community members including their Portfolio.

DEPUTATIONS

see attachment A

It was resolved that Council breaks for Morning tea at 10.45am.

CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Deferred till after lunch.

FIRST BUDGET REVIEW

Resolution

Moved Cr. Bedford, Seconded Cr. Enosa that TSIRC that Council adopt the Budget Review as presented.

Motion carried.

- *It was noted that*
 - *once Audit Financial Reports comes through from Auditors in September we would know of the actual position of our budget.*
 - *Valuers are expected to visit communities soon to conduct asset valuation.*

- **Divestment of Enterprise**
 - *In response to Cr. Day's query the on the Divestment of Enterprise, Executive Manager Finance advised that it would be best to wait and see what the Consultants report would be as they are now working on them and will provide a much detailed report (sensitivity analysis) to Council.*
 - *It was noted that at Councillor's request, Executive Manager Finance could provide a report to them.*
 - *CEO noted that he will look into doing the enterprise figures externally (separate) from the budget for 2009 - 2010.*
 - *Cr. Pearson stressed that with the recent visit by Consultants to Hammond, the information they received was very limited so her Island Manager and herself had to provide them with more information including their community plan. She encouraged members to make available their community plan to the consultants when they visit to show them that this is what their community wants in progressing.*
- **Budget Training**
 - *Budget Training for members included in Agenda for Budget Meeting next week.*
 - *Five (5) people will be allocated to 3 communities each and will be their point of contact for any financial issues/queries on their community. The five (5) people are Margaret O'Connell, Annette King, Melissa Bartmettler, Anthony Bird, and Dania Ahwang.*
 - *CEO advised that if and when a Councillor requests a financial report for their community, the Finance Team will be able to provide it.*

LATE REPORT

COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Resolution

Moved Cr. Day, Seconded Cr. Kris that Council Adopt a monthly newsletter, which is printed in color in Thursday Island and distributed to Councillors at every General Meeting. The content should be regional with councillors including a column.

Motion carried.

FILMING ISLAND CULTURE

Resolution

Moved Cr. Pearson, Seconded Cr. Bedford that Council apply for the Gambling Community Benefit grant from the Queensland Treasury to fund this project as well as apply for funding from the TSRA and other appropriate Government Departments.

Motion carried.

- *Mayor advised members that the filming of Island culture is part of our Corporate Plan.*
- *It was noted that:*
 - *First and foremost engage on grassroots levels – need to go back to community for discussions, permissions etc.*
 - *Filming to be done by local organisation or individual in the community and not someone from outside.*
 - *Focus on insight on our culture and preserved for our children. It is important to preserve what we have in each community now – to capture our culture in its raw state for our community and preserving it for our children.*
 - *Copyright to remain with the TSIRC.*
- *It was recommended that TSIRC:*
 - 0. *Apply for funding first*
 - 0. *Put up proposals to Councillors to work on the basis on what they want from there in consultations with grassroot people on the ground.*
 - 0. *Put through PBC to see what we cannot do or show to public outside of the community.*

BUSINESS ARISING FROM INFORMATION REPORTS

- *Hubert Hofer's Employment*
 - *on leave at this time without pay*
 - *CEO is unable to make a decision on his employment at this time until the outcome of his appeal is known.*
- *QTC – Financial Sustainability Review*
 - *Anthony briefed members on this issue.*
 - *Mayor advised that the Financial Sustainability Review should have been done in the first instance prior to amalgamation.*
- *HEMTP Pool Plant*
 - *First and foremost have our local people locked in when Plant Pool goes around communities*
- *Standing Committee Minutes*
 - *Mayor will be provided minutes to members once finalised.*

It was resolved that Council breaks for late lunch at 1.25pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- *Council General Meeting at Erub*
 - Cr. Bedford requests that it be held on 30th June to coincide with the re-enactment of the *Coming of the Light Celebrations* on July 1.
- *Corporation Plan Booklets* for printing purposes to present to Government agencies, Business etc - Councillors to advise Mayor of their selection of the best format of the booklet covers presented to members.
- *New Vehicles* - instead of buying new vehicles it was suggested if communities could share their vehicles and just buy backhoes for their communities with the machinery grant.
- *Offenders doing Community Services in Communities*
 - Executive Manager Communities
 - to obtain copy of past agreements
 - Letter from Julia Yorkston – Correction Services
 - Present paper to Standing Committee Meeting and then to full Council meeting.
 - Cr. Kris to consult with Mr. John Black for people to actually get drivers licences in communities
- *West Wing Airlines*
 - Cost of airfares – still expensive
 - CEO to discuss with West Wing about TSIRC communities becoming an agency for them to cut down on the fee charge by IBIS for transfers of money for payment of airfares.
 - It was noted that with equipment in place now, landing fees are being charged.
 - Mail still coming by boat taking up to 4 weeks. No contract as yet between West Wing and Australia Post.
- *IBIS*
 - Cr. Kris expressed his thanks to Council for their support in getting community members to and from Kubin to do their shopping in the light of IBIS closing down St. Pauls branch store due to rat infestation.
 - Cr. Kris recommended that TSIRC takeover lease from IBIS and look at option papers using template as St. Pauls in getting rid of IBIS altogether – TSIRC step in and look at options in providing another business/store for St. Pauls as well as other communities.
 - CEO recommended that we wait for House of Representatives Inquiry into cost of living up here in the Torres Strait to see what they will announce and maybe jump on it as our chance to improve services here on goods and services, but in the meantime will work behind the scene on this issue.

- *UGAR Seaswift*
 - Cr. Bero expressed disappointment in their service to their community recently which took 3 weeks.
 - Mayor Gela - TSIRC to invite CEO of Seaswift, Fred white to attend next Council meeting at Mabuia and also invitation to John Black to attend Council Meeting at Mabuia.
 - Cr. Bero also expressed her disgust with raw sewerage dumping of 15 loads into the sea at the back of the island by a bulder called Kon.
 - Mayor requests that the CEO investigate this matter and ensures that it does not happen again.

- *Meeting with Ministers*
 - Mayor and CEO met with Minister Karen Struthers and discussions highlighted was:
 - 25% Rental Calculation
 - High Cost of Living which included groceries, airfares, freight subsidies for the Torres Strait Region.
 - Mayor advised:
 - The Government wanted to use Coen as benchmark.
 - TSIRC needs 600 homes. Need to start gazetting land, to sit down and engage in discussion with Community Forums and PBCs.
 - Look at Housing Improvement Program (HIP) document to see how much allotments communities have.
 - Look at unincumbent land – one of Federal Government requirement of funding investment into Torres Strait.

- Mer Island is Reserve land held by Department of Communities – flagged this issue with the Minister to pursue Liquor Licencing, however before we can have approval need to have authorization from Traditional Land Owners.

- Mayor advised Councillors of meeting with Minister Desley Boyle on Thursday afternoon (30th April) at 12.00pm following lunch at the TSRA Conference Room. Mayor requested a Preliminary meeting with all Councillors prior to meeting with Minister Boyle.

- Announcement made by Government on the 25th April regarding Indigenous Jobs available.
 - Submissions closed 22nd May.
 - With Council approval will do up a proposal for submission to Government for the following positions:
 0. Cultural Development Officer
 - Not to teach but to source out and facilitate cultural issues.
 - Record songs and write stories
 - Will look at 15 positions for communities

0. Dance Group to coordinate and teach in communities
 - Need input from Councillors to form the Positions Descriptions.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- *Uniforms* – HR Manager apologised no committee formed as yet but will get on top of it.
- *\$25,000 fund* (previously Mobile Can Crusher fund) - brief discussion on this issue by Mayor.
- *Sports & Recreation*
 - No further updates as yet.
 - Executive Manager Communities advised information was sent to Jason O'Brien who forwarded it on to Minister, but still no response from Minister.
- *Community Forum Training*
 - CEO advised not sure how much advanced training is needed for Community Forum members is all gibberish and are not true, because it certainly didn't come from the him.

CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Resolution

Moved Cr. J. Mosby, Seconded Cr. Bero the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 18th March 2009 be adopted as true and accurate.

Motion carried.

It was resolved that Council breaks for afternoon tea at 4.00pm.

CLOSED BUSINESS

***Moved Cr. Bedford, Seconded Cr. P Mosby* that in accordance with Section 463 of the *Local government Act 1993* it is resolved for the meeting to go into closed session to discuss section 463 (1) (a) the appointment, dismissal or discipline of employees, 463 (1) (f) starting or defending legal proceedings involving it, 463 (1) (h) other business for which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the local Government further the public in attendance are asked to leave.**

Motion carried.

ISSUES RATIFIED IN CLOSED BUSINESS

BADU ILUA

Resolution

Moved Cr. Kris, Seconded Cr. Bedford that Council ratifies the legal opinion provided by Preston Law as Council's opinion, and authorises the CEO to negotiate the changes to clauses in line with this opinion and bring it back to Council for ratification.

Motion carried.

OUT OF CLOSED BUSINESS SESSION WITH COUNCILLORS

At this time the CEO, Executive Management & Staff was asked to leave the Meeting for in-session with Councillors only.

ISSUES RATIFIED OUT OF CLOSED BUSINESS SESSION WITH COUNCILLORS

MEETING CLOSED

With no further discussions, Mayor thanked members and Executive Management and staff for their attendance at the meeting. Mayor expressed his thanks and gratitude to Cr. Enosa and the Community of Saibai Island for their hospitality in organising a successfully Council Meeting at Saibai Island, not forgetting the fantastic entertainment which was very much appreciative and enjoyed by all.

6. 35pm Meeting closed with a prayer by Cr. Day


.....
Cr. Fred Gela
Mayor


.....
Mr. John Scarce
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT A
DEPUTATION
MR. KERI AKIBA
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKER – SAIBAI ISLAND

Mr. Keri Akiba discussed with members on the following issues:

HOUSING

- Repairs and Maintenance (Extension and enclosing downstairs of houses?)
- Future housing to cater for overcrowding (utilise one block to build two?)
- When is next round of funding?

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Survey and upgrade of access road inland to new lagoon.
- Future housing sites and other infrastructure
- Access to individual clan areas
- Wharfs & Ramps - Re-dredging of channel (installation of security lights)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Implications for current state of landfill
- Toxic material waste & other building materials to be shipped out by contractors (build onto contractors as their own responsibilities)
- Erosion & Inundation (dedicated backhoe to used for seawall construction only)
- New Health Centre (lobby with QLD HEALTH)
- Referrals from Daru Hospital and not treaty villagers (implications for locals)
- 7 days Adventists Pacific Yacht Ministries

OVERSTAYERS - to be taken up with relevant authorities

- Oversteers – repeated offended (apply section 16?)
- Harboring of PNG Nationals (girl and boy relationships)
- Centre Link payments support to PNG nationals

COMMENTS

- Cr. Kris advised need to look at the issues that they have with us as well when we visit their community – look at something similar to when they visit our communities.
- Cr. Mackie need to also look at issues where:
 1. visitors turn up with no fuel for them to return - the responsibility would rely on the families who hosts them to pay for their return fuel.
 2. Councillors are put in a predicament by MMO's to sign approval of visits by traditional visitors.

- Mayor advised:
 - Councillor of Saibai and Keri Akiba to contact Brett Young (Treaty Liaison Officer) to obtain a copy of his proposal regarding initiatives happening on health issues for coast villages who require medical attention. Information also can be obtained through Health District and the TIM.
 - Council can address the impact of the seawall issues - better coordination and plan.
- Draft letter to Immigration on:
 3. Policies/Guidelines to suit community
 4. Highlighting key issues putting Councillors in the firing line because of families' predicament to Councillors.

PACIFIC YACHT MINISTRIES

Pastor Glen Grey and Pastor Sigila apologised on behalf of Mr. Terry Waia who could not address the Council on the Pacific Yacht Ministries, but asked them to attend with approval of the Mayor.

Pacific Yacht Ministries

- An independent ministry sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- It is committed to offering medical and dental care and health education to people regardless of race, religion, or creed.
- Has a network of volunteer health professionals, yacht owners, and a team structure that has formed the basis of their work.
- Each team comprises of a doctor, nurse, dentist and dental assistant.
- All yacht skippers and their crews, and all health workers are volunteers, with none receiving any remuneration for their work.

Offering their services to TSIRC to

- Alleviate medical issues from nearby coastal villages at no cost – voluntary work.
- How TSIRC will use the service is up to Council to approach the necessary authorities on these issues.

Mayor Gela thanked them for their offer and requested contact details from them.

Mayor also thanked Keri Akiba and will discuss the corporate Plan further with him.