



**Torres Strait Island**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**MINUTES**

**POST-ELECTION MEETING**

**MONDAY 11 APRIL 2016**

Please find attached Minutes of the above meeting held on Monday 11 April 2016 10.37am-2:50pm in the Dunbar Room, DoubleTree by Hilton, 121-123 The Esplanade, Cairns.

## **MONDAY 11 APRIL 2016**

### **Present**

Cr Fred Gela, Mayor

Cr Keith Fell, Deputy Mayor, Division 4 – Mabuiag Island

Cr Dimas Toby, Division 1 – Boigu (from 12:43pm)

Cr Torenzo Elisala, Division 2 – Dauan Island

Cr Ron Enosa, Division 3 – Saibai Island

Cr Laurie Nona, Division 5 – Badu Island

Cr David Bosun, Division 6 – Kubin Community at Moa Island

Cr John Levi, Division 7 – St Pauls Community at Moa Island

Cr Mario Sabatino, Division 8 – Hammond Island

Cr Getano Lui Jnr, Division 9 – Iama Island

Cr Clara Tamu, Division 10 – Warraber Island

Cr Francis Pearson, Division 11 – Poruma Island

Cr Ted Nai, Division 12 – Masig Island

Cr Rocky Stephen, Division 13 – Ugar Island

Cr Patrick Thaiday, Division 14 – Erub Island

Cr Bob Kaigey, Division 15 – Mer Island

Ms Dania Ahwang, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Ms Melissa Barmettler, Executive Manager Financial Services (EMFS)

Mr David Baldwin, Executive Manager Engineering Services (EMES)

Mr Chris McLaughlin, Executive Manager Corporate Services (EMCS)

Mr David Abednego, Executive Manager Community Services (EMCoS)

Ms Helen Tarrant, Executive Assistant (EA) (Minutes)

1. **10:37am-10:40am**                      **Opening Prayer and Welcome**

Cr-elect Enosa had opened the day's proceedings in prayer.

**One Minute's Silence**

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

The CEO welcomed family and staff to the meeting as well as the Mayor-elect and Councillors-elect.

2. **10:40am-11:00am**                      **Declaration of Office conducted by Ms D Ahwang, Chief Executive Officer**

The CEO invited Councillors-elect to make their Declaration of Office in unison. The CEO welcomed all Councillors to Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

The CEO invited Mayor-elect Gela to make his Declaration of Office. The Mayor then addressed the meeting.

3. **11:00am-11:45am**                      **Address by the Mayor, Cr Fred Gela**

The Mayor welcomed family and staff, acknowledged Traditional Owner's of the land and Councillors both returned and newly elected. The Mayor thanked the CEO and staff for their hard work and support.

The Mayor noted his disappointment that the Declaration of Office and Swearing In of Council was not held in the Local Government Area. The Mayor noted that Council had designed its own Induction Programme for Councillors rather than delivering a generic programme as the previous term. The Induction Programme would provide Councillors the tools to know from whom to seek advice and assistance. It provides a broad overview, giving the basics. The Mayor envisaged the Programme would be delivered in four blocks.

Mayor Gela thanked everyone for the mandate to lead and represent the rights and interests of our constituents and emphasised Council's commitment to governance reform as the critical issue to "going forward and driving change".

"The Torres Strait is over-governed and over-regulated. There is too much skimming and too many organisations. We have organisations feathering their own nests and protecting their own brand".

"Money is being funnelled through layers and layers of bureaucracy, which is simply absorbing much needed program dollars. We are lucky if we get 15c out of the dollar. The delivery of services and jobs needs to be delivered at a grassroots level so we can effectively address our high unemployment levels".

"If we want to continue to elevate governance reform we need key organisations sharing the same vision. I don't want my kids, or grandchildren, talking about our region's high unemployment levels in years to come".

"Our Council is in an opportune position to jointly broker and advocate the establishment of regional economic Initiatives, such as a joint venture barge operation. Our constituents should be afforded the opportunity to become shareholders. Other industries such as ownership of hotels and motels should also be looked at".

*Financial Sustainability and Asset Rehabilitation*

The Mayor called for Councillors "to manage community expectations of the wants and the needs, because there is a distinctive difference between the two when it comes to community assets. Council is not in a position to replace assets as and when they fall due. It is not sustainable. We need to develop and implement a three-year improvement plan to rehabilitate our assets".

“Council has an asset base of \$1.1 Billion. In the perfect world we would need an injection of between \$15-20 Million annually, so that we’re able to replace and renew assets to an acceptable standard. Federal and State funding needs to align with Local Government Asset Management Plans”.

“We are currently operating with a small budgeted operating surplus which means we are able to manage within our means. We can continue to provide services and we can continue to provide local employment. We cannot however cover this asset depreciation”.

“Sustainability has to be at the forefront of our conversations going forward”.

*Climate Change Adaptation:*

“Council will continue to have serious conversations around Climate Change adaptation and continue to advocate for further investments for the implementation of protection works to identified priority communities. This includes building seawalls, sand replenishment and maintaining foreshores to protect cultural sites of importance”.

“We know what our communities will look like in 30 years with rising sea levels and we haven’t even considered the repercussions of a catastrophic event”.

“For some of our islands we will need to consider relocating people, within their own island, – this is why our future planning is critical. Our peoples’ land is their birthright. This will involve a lot of complex negotiations for our people”.

“I thank God for his many blessings and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Torres Strait - including the Kaurareg people. I would like to acknowledge our Elders past and present our spiritual leaders and all of our constituents across Zenadth Kes”.

**4. 11:45am-12:30pm Election of Deputy Mayor**

The CEO called for nominations from the floor for Deputy Mayor and referred Councillors to the position description previously circulated.

Cr Fell was nominated as Deputy Mayor, with the motion moved by Cr Bosun and seconded by Cr Tamu. Cr Fell accepted the nomination.

Cr Nai was nominated as Deputy Mayor, with the motion moved by Cr Kaigey and seconded by Cr Elisala. Cr Nai declined the nomination.

Cr Lui was nominated as Deputy Mayor, with the motion moved by Cr Thaiday and seconded by Cr Levi. Cr Lui declined the nomination.

Cr Sabatino was nominated as Deputy Mayor, with the motion moved by the Mayor and seconded by Cr Bosun. Cr Sabatino accepted the nomination.

Each nominee delivered a brief address in support of their nomination. EMCS explained the rules of the secret ballot and the votes were cast:

Cr Sabatino received 7 votes and Cr Fell 8 votes.

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Bosun, Seconded Cr Pearson*

That in accordance with s175 (2) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 appoint by nomination and resolution Cr Keith Fell as the Deputy Mayor.

**MOTION CARRIED**

TSIRC staff, families and friends left the meeting.

**5. 12:30pm-1:00pm Day and Times of Ordinary Meetings**

The CEO presented proposed dates to Council and noted that the schedule of meetings for the year was published on Council's website, in the Torres News and at TSIRC Head Office at Kirriri and Cairns and Thursday Island offices.

Broadly, the meetings take place on the third Tuesday and Wednesday of each month with some exceptions.

The May meeting proposed for Erub would be dependent on the recent Dengue outbreak. April and May meetings would be preceded by Councillors Inductions Blocks 2 and 3.

Cr Lui queried whether it was appropriate to visit new Councillor's communities now or whether it would be better to allow new Councillors to work with their communities and hold meetings on Thursday Island in the meantime.

A discussion followed regarding potential locations of each month's meeting and the following schedule for 2016 was agreed:

20 & 21 April	Kirriri
19 & 20 May	Mabuiag*
28 & 29 June	Erub
19 & 20 July	Boigu
24 & 25 August	Poruma
20 & 21 September	St Pauls
25 & 26 October	Warraber
15 & 16 November	Iama
13 & 14 December	Badu or Mer – to be confirmed.

All meetings commence on each day at 9:00am.

***\*Following this meeting it was agreed that the May meeting would take place at Kirriri.***

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Stephen, Seconded Cr Enosa*

That in accordance with section 256 (1) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 that Council endorse the dates, times and locations of the Council meetings for the 2016 calendar year.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**1:05pm-2:15pm Closed Business**

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Bosun, Seconded Cr Sabatino*

That in accordance with s275 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 it is resolved for the meeting to go into closed session to discuss:

(e) Contracts proposed to be made by it; or

(h) Other business for which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the local government or someone else, or enable a person to gain a financial advantage.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Audit Committee Membership**

**Subcontracting of one new house on Hammond Island**

**Subcontracting of four new houses Hammond Island**

Cr-Elect Toby joined the meeting at 12:43pm.

The meeting broke for lunch at 1:19pm.

The meeting resumed at 2:00pm

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Stephen, Seconded Cr Fell*

That Council move out of closed business.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6. CLOSED BUSINESS: Audit Committee Membership**

The Mayor is an ex-officio member of the Audit Committee.

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Sabatino, Seconded Cr Bosun*

That in accordance with Council's Audit Committee Procedure, Council appoint by nomination and resolution Councillor Fraser Nai as the Audit Committee member.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7. CLOSED BUSINESS: Subcontracting of one new house on Hammond Island**

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Sabatino, Seconded Cr Nai*

That pursuant to the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld) and Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld), Council delegates power to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into contracts, authorise expenditure and do any and all things necessary to effect the award of the various elements of work involved in the construction of one Rural and Remote house on Hammond Island to Torres Strait Island homes (TSIH) for the lump Sum Price of \$574,700 EX GST.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**8. CLOSED BUSINESS: Subcontracting of four new houses Hammond Island**

**RESOLUTION**

*Moved Cr Nona, Seconded Cr Stephen*

That pursuant to the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld) and Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld), Council delegates power to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into contracts, authorise expenditure and do any and all things necessary to effect the award of various elements of work for four new NPARIH houses on Hammond Island to Torres Strait Island Homes (TSIH) for the lump Sum Price of \$1,792,392 EX GST.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**9. 2:15pm-2:26pm Declaration of Office**

Cr-elect Toby apologised for his lateness. The CEO invited Cr-elect Toby to make his Declaration of Office and congratulated him on his return to office.

**10. 2:27pm-2:37pm Leave of Absence**

Councillors Nona, Toby, Tamu and Enosa applied for leave of absence from the April Ordinary meeting. However, Councillor Tamu noted she may attend by teleconference.

**11. Next Meeting 20 and 21 April 2016, Kirriri Island**

**12. Meeting Close The meeting closed at 2:50pm**