

Minutes of the Meeting of the Belyuen Local Advisory Group held on the 5th July 2016

Meeting held at the Council Training Room 4.30pm

Present: Brendan Bigfoot community member
Regina Bigfoot community member
Gwen Rankin community member
David Willing Executive Director Department of Local Government
Cathy Winsley CEO Belyuen Council

The following people were invited but unavailable to attend

Leslie Nilco
Zoe Singh

1. CEO welcomed everyone and introduced David Willing.

CEO briefly talked about why the Advisory Group has been set up:

Two way communication – community people having input into decisions that Council makes or programmes and services needed and Council to let community know what is happening within Council.

The Advisory Group is not a Council like the previous Belyuen Council. It is similar to Local Authorities that other communities have as part of the Regional Shires.

The Advisory Group is not represented by organisations or other work places. Members are all there as individuals and not representing anyone.

The Advisory Group to meet once a month and members who attend will be paid \$50 sitting fee in cash.

2. CEO asked David to talk about proposals for the future of Local Government for Belyuen:

David gave a brief background to the old Top End Shire idea of Belyuen joining together with Wagait, Coomalie, Litchfield and all areas around such as Dundee and Marrakai that do not have Local Government.

When the proposed Top End Shire was abandoned by the NT Government Belyuen Council commenced discussions with Darwin Council about joining with them. This was not supported by Darwin City Councillors and did not progress.

Belyuen then started talking with Coomalie (Batchelor) Council about working with them. Both Councils were happy to continue negotiations to work together. This was not supported by the Northern Land Council and in turn the NT Government would not consider it.

This means that Belyuen is still in the same position it has been in since the Council was stood aside in 2007.

David commented that the Council Manager Bill Stuchbery lives down south now and along with the fact that Belyuen has been without local government representation since 2007 neither make for an ideal situation.

The NT Government has provided funding to Coomalie to engage a Consultant to talk with Belyuen, Coomalie and Wagait and put a proposal together for a way forward for the three councils and areas in between to work together and make the communities more sustainable. Increase funding, services and employment are some of the benefits of the councils working together. The Consultants will come to Belyuen and talk with the CEO and the Advisory Group.

David explained how Local Authorities worked in communities. The Authorities are made up of community members who meet regularly and provide feedback, ideas, support to the Regional Shire. Local Authorities are only in Indigenous Communities.

3. Open Discussion

Members talked generally about some of the things they would like to see:

Gwen asked about Child Care for mothers so they can work. Child Care also provides employment.

Brendan talked about the need for Sport and Recreation Officers and need more money to employ Sport and Recreation officers on a full time basis. CEO commented that one of the problems is not enough funding so Council can only employ people on a short casual basis. People do not want to start working late in the afternoon when everyone else has finished work and relaxing.

David commented that the Advisory Group will be a good place for members to bring ideas to or discuss things going on in the community. Members can bring ideas to the meetings or ask the CEO to put them on the agenda for the next meeting.

4. Meeting with Youth 6th July

CEO commented that youth (16-20yr olds) in the community have been invited to come to the training centre the following afternoon to have a discussion about what they would like to see in the community for the youth and how they can be involved in making things happen.

5. Next meeting

CEO advised that a copy of notes from the meeting would be given to everyone and the next meeting date set.

CEO thanked everyone for coming.

David thanked the members and offered to attend further Local Advisory Group meetings if members would like.

The meeting finished 5.30pm.