

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

COUNCIL REPORT

Meeting 18 January 2023



Item 1: Meetings Attended

- CEO and Operations Manager attended a Hope Vale Disaster Management Group meeting held on 12 January 2022 in Hope Vale to review disaster management arrangements over the Christmas/New Year break.
- Mayor, Councillors Bruce Woibo, Barry Bowen, Keithan Bowen, and the CEO attended a Discussion Forum in Cairns on 13 December 2022 for a briefing on Council's proposed Human Resources policies.
- CEO attended (via teleconference) a District Disaster Management Group briefing by BOM on 13 December 2022 on the 2022/2023 Cyclone Season.
- CEO and Director of Finance and Corporate Services attended a meeting with Altius Advisors in Cairns on 13 December 2022 for discussions on the provision of financial and internal audit services
- Mayor, Councillors, and CEO attended the Council Meeting in Cairns on 14 December 2022.
- CEO met with John Riley from Apunipima in Hope Vale on 10 January 2023 for discussions on the Hope Vale Men's Group.
- CEO attended (via Teleconference) Northern Queensland Weather Briefing presented by BOM on 12 January 2023.
- CEO met with Kerry-Lee Bird from Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships in Hope Vale on 12 January 2023 for discussions on the reporting requirements in relation the Local Thriving Communities funding.
- CEO met with Neil McIntyre and Robyn Bartlett from Diatrema Resources in Hope Vale on 12 January 2023 for discussions in relation to the status of its proposed mining operations.
- CEO met with Cook and Wujal Wujal Shire Council Chief Executive Officers in Cooktown on 19 January 2023 for discussions on more regional collaboration and a review of the joint Memorandum of Understanding in relation to disaster management.
- A number of other meetings were also held by the CEO in relation to various administration, organizational, staffing and tenure issues.

Recommendation:

That Council

- (a) receive the Chief Executive Officer's Report, and**
- (b) note the meetings attended by the Chief Executive Officer**

Item 2: State Government Inquiry - Office of the Independent Assessor

On 12 January 2023, the State Government tabled its response (Attachment A) to the Inquiry into the Office of the Independent Assessor and the councillor conduct complaints system.

The Government has supported 22 recommendations made by the parliamentary State Development and Regional Industries Committee and supported in principle the remaining 18 recommendations.

The LGAQ advises –

The LGAQ welcomes the government's response to the recommendations which promise to bring much needed common sense back to the system.

Significantly, the initiatives endorsed by the Government will put beyond doubt the right of Queensland councillors to freely speak out in support of their local communities.

The recommendations would ensure that the Office of the Independent Assessor and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal adhere to speedier timeframes in managing complaints as well as give consideration to a new offence for vexatious complainants.

Councillors would also be able to confidently block trolls on social media without fear of being sanctioned by the OIA and – in other changes vigorously sought by the LGAQ – there would be a statute of limitations on complaints and councils would no longer be required to list unfounded, dismissed complaints in Councillor Conduct Registers.

The LGAQ's focus now will be to meet and work with the Local Government Department to progress the implementation of these changes. Our priority is to ensure they are legislated as quickly as possible.

In particular we do not want to see these recommendations watered down by 'further consultation' or their introduction dragged out for another 12 months.

The key will be timeliness ... and how we can get these reforms drafted and introduced – together with the earlier work that the LGAQ did with members and the government on Conflict-of-Interest reforms in 2021.

Recommendation:

That Council note the State Government's response to the Inquiry into the Office of the Independent Assessor and the councillor conduct complaints system.

Item 3 – Organisational Structure

Section 196 (1) of the Local Government Act 2009 states –

(1) A local government must, by resolution, adopt an organisational structure that is appropriate to the performance of the local government's responsibilities.

Council is aware that an extensive review is being undertaken on the Council's Human Resources role on how we deliver this important function for the organisation. All policies documentation, systems and processes are being reviewed.

The attached Organisational Structure (Attachment B) reflects the current Council Structure and confirmation is requested from council that it endorses this structure

Recommendation:

That Council endorse Organisational Structure attached to the Chief Executive Officers Report

Item 4 – Internal Auditors and Accounting Advisors

Altius have advised that they will cease being Council's Internal Auditors and Accounting Advisors.

Altius have expressed *"their sincere thanks to the respective Mayors, Councillors, CEOs and Council staff with whom we have had the pleasure of working. Most particularly we would like to express our gratitude to Shannon Gibbs without whom for many years much of Council's success and achievements would not have been possible and our professional partnership with Council would not have been so fruitful. It has been our privilege to be associated with Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council in our professional capacity over the last 10 years and more."*

Accordingly, action is currently being taken to appoint new internal auditors and accounting advisors

Recommendation:

That Council

- (a) note that Altius will be cease being Council's Internal Auditors and Accounting Advisors,**
- (b) thank Altius for their services over the past 10 years, and**
- (c) particularly express its appreciation to Eve Jacks for her commitment to service for the Council over the last 10 years, and**
- (d) note that action is being taken to appoint new internal auditors and accounting advisors**

Item 5 CEO Verbal Briefing

**Steve Linnane
Chief Executive Officer
15 January 2023**