

6.1. COMMUNITY AGENCY NETWORK (CAN) – FACILITATION OF REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS

COUNCILLOR: Cr David Carey

NOTICE OF MOTION:

I hereby give Notice of my intention to move the following Motion at the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 20th September 2016:-

"That the Council determine a response at this meeting to the request received from CAN requesting either an opportunity to present to Council or have an elected representative attend their meetings on a regular basis to ensure open, timely and transparent communication."

BACKGROUND:

The request from CAN was received some months ago and I have confirmed with the Council's CEO that no formal response the request has been provided to CAN on behalf of the Council. The CAN has not resolved the issue as suggested in a response from the CEO to me about the matter. Whilst it is not recorded in the CAN's minutes, I informed the CAN at the first meeting I attended that the Council will determine a formal response to its request, however in the interim I was prepared to attend it meetings, which I have been doing.

It appears to me that the options for the Council to consider are:

1. Do nothing
2. Appoint a Councillor to the CAN to facilitate open, timely and transparent communications
3. Arrange regular presentations by the CAN to the Council to facilitate open, timely and transparent communications
4. Determine some other means by which to facilitate open, timely and transparent communications.

In any event I consider the CAN request should be responded to formally following a direction by the Council in respect of its request.

The request is attached.

OFFICER'S COMMENT:

The attendance, participation and representation by Councillors at Community Agency Network (CAN) meetings is entirely a matter for Councillors and officers make no specific recommendation. Councillors' representation on a range of community boards and committees, and attendance at community meetings has been the subject of discussion among Councillors for some time, and it is the officers' understanding that the preference of a majority of Councillors is that each is free to attend any or all community or agency meetings as they wish, and as their busy schedules permit. Councillors' diverse interests are recognised, as are their priorities and availability at any given time.

Councillors' availability is demonstrated by attendance at the four Community Agency Network (CAN) meetings that have been held since May 2016. All Councillors received invitations to three. The Mayor has attended one meeting, Cr Noli has attended two meetings and has sent apologies for one. Cr Carey has attended two meetings and has sent apologies for one. Cr Kerr has sent apologies for one. The September CAN meeting is scheduled for 16 September to which Cr Carey has sent an apology. An off-shoot of the CAN meeting is the Youth CAN, held monthly. Cr Noli is a regular attendee at this meeting.

The letter addressed to the Mayor and attached to the Notice of Motion suggested two alternative actions: for CAN to have an opportunity to present to Council, or to have an elected representative attend CAN meetings on a regular basis.

As an alternative to the presentation, the Mayor invited all Councillors to attend the scheduled CAN meeting held in the Council offices in May 2016. According to the Minutes of the meeting, the letter was discussed along with opportunities for Mayoral and Councillor attendance and support of CAN. This was minuted as *"Present for discussion in response to CAN letter to Council were: Mayor Julia Leu, Crs Abigail Noli and David Carey."*

As an alternative to the nomination of an individual Councillor to attend meetings, the Mayor has on several occasions re-affirmed her view and those expressed by some other Councillors, that any Councillor could, as appropriate, choose to attend any community or agency meeting that is of interest to the individual Councillor and as their time permits. Councillors' attendance record at CAN meetings indicates that this option has been the preferred method of attendance to date and that no one Councillor has been available to attend all meetings.

Officers are not in a position to comment on commitments made by Councillors on behalf of Council's future actions, however in addition to the four options above in the Background to the Notice of Motion, officers' views are that a fifth option should also be considered, ie any and all Councillors may attend CAN meetings as their schedules permit.



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Mayor Julia Leu
Douglas Shire Council
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Dear Mayor

The organisations connected to the Community Agency Network, CAN representing the Douglas region's government and non-government organisations, wish to congratulate you on your return to office as the Mayor for Douglas Shire.

The CAN organisations meet monthly to discuss issues pertaining to the social needs of the Douglas community. As representatives from a range of government and non-government organisations our aim is to advocate for social justice and improved social conditions for the Douglas community as a whole. At this time we get great support from council staff on many community projects.

However, CAN's role also includes an advocacy role to assist in identifying and addressing gaps in services for Douglas community with an aim to develop new programs and local services. We believe a direct reporting mechanism to our councillors and the mayor would ensure that our local representatives are kept informed of important initiatives being explored at the earliest stages and encourage advocacy with State and Federal bodies regarding funding opportunities.

At present many of our services are supported via Cairns based organisations which are not adequately funded or positioned to address our local issues. We feel it is timely to work on locally based structures and support services to ensure our region becomes more self-sufficient and more responsive to local need. Issues impacting on our region at this time include; housing, transport, youth and health care issues.

We would welcome an opportunity to present to council or have an elected representative attend our meetings on a regular basis to ensure open, timely and transparent communication.

We look forward to hearing a favourable response.

Siobhan Delgado on behalf of the CAN committee

cc. Councillor Carey
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Noli
Councillor Zammataro
Ms Linda Cardew