

**MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 64-66 FRONT STREET, MOSSMAN
ON THURSDAY 2 JANUARY 2014, COMMENCING AT 11.00AM**

PRESENT

Cr Julia Leu (Mayor), Cr David Carey, Cr Bruce Clarke, Cr Terry Melchert, Cr Abigail Noli, Jeff Tate (A/Chief Executive Officer), Darryl Crees (General Manager Corporate Services), Paul Hoye (General Manager Operations), Brendan Leishman (Community & Economic Development Officer) and Nicole Barton (Minutes Officer).

1. OFFICIAL OPENING

Mr Tate welcomed everyone to the meeting and to the new Douglas Shire Council. Mr Tate thanked everyone for attending and congratulated the new Councillors.

Mr Tate invited Brendan Leishman to step forward and give the Acknowledgement of Country.

Acknowledgement of Country

Mr Leishman stated that as a mark of recognition, respect and reconciliation Council would like to acknowledge that the meeting this morning is on the lands of Eastern Kuku Yalanji people and on behalf of Council he would like to pay respect to their elders both past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be present here today.

Mr Tate thanked Mr Leishman for his words.

2. DECLARATION OF OFFICE

In accordance with Section 169 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, the A/Chief Executive Officer officiated the Declarations of Office from the following Councillors:

Cr Julia Leu (Mayor)
Cr David Carey
Cr Bruce Clarke
Cr Terence Melchert
Cr Abigail Noli

Mr Tate congratulated the Councillors individually.

3. MAYORAL ADDRESS

I am thrilled to declare the historic first meeting of the new Douglas Shire Council open and deliver my Mayoral address.

First of all I want to thank Brendan Leishman for his Acknowledgement of Country and Jeff Tate, now our acting Chief Executive Officer for taking us through the Declaration of Office ceremony. Congratulations to the newly elected Councillors, Crs Abigail Noli, David Carey, Bruce Clarke and Terry Melchert.

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I would also like to acknowledge the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land, and pay my respects to their Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other indigenous Australians who are present this morning.

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome everyone to this historic first meeting of the new Douglas Council. It is fantastic that so many people have joined us this morning to witness and celebrate the birth of our new council. Welcome also to the Hon. Warren Entsch MP, Federal Member for Leichhardt and Mike Berwick, OA, former Mayor of Douglas Shire Council for 17 years as well as former Douglas Councillors Marj Norrish and Paul Lucas. We have had many apologies for today, including David Crisafulli, Minister for Local Government, David Kempton, MP for Cook and Howard Hobbs MP.

I also want to warmly welcome family and friends of the elected members who are here to witness this important occasion.

Well, they said today would never happen, that you could never ever unscramble the egg. However, this community proved them wrong. From the moment the amalgamation of Cairns and Douglas was announced on 27th July 2007, there was disbelief followed by significant opposition and protest. A group of Douglas residents never lost faith and spearheaded an amazing campaign for nearly 6 years that was supported by the majority of this community and resulted in the birth of the new Douglas Shire Council.

We have been given a rare opportunity to create a new council and today we begin an exciting new era. It is indeed a chance for a fresh start, so on that theme it is interesting to reflect on how the local government sector has evolved and changed in the last couple of decades. Increasing community expectations and a desire to participate in our local democracy means that local government has to be far more consultative, more inclusive, culturally aware, environmentally and socially responsible. These days, councillors must focus on all aspects of strategic management, conduct business like a board of management and ensure that decisions are ethical, accountable, transparent, free of bias and conflict of interest.

During the election campaign I promised to provide strong leadership and strong economic management. As Mayor I am committed to achieving a modern, inclusive council that works with and for all the various communities in Douglas. A council that is based on best practice governance principles, is financially responsible, promotes a vibrant economy, respects our unique environment and effectively consults and engages with the community.

But the Councillors and staff cannot do this alone, and members of this community have an important role to play. We need the involvement and support of our local business, tourism, agricultural, indigenous, community, arts, cultural and sporting organisations. As we all know, Douglas is an international tourism destination – the only place in the world where two World Heritage areas meet – the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics of Far North Queensland. We also have an innovative agriculture sector with enormous potential and emerging young leaders with new ideas. New diversification opportunities that promote appropriate and sustainable growth, consistent with community aspirations must be explored and embraced.

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There are many people I would like to thank.

First of all, the Friends of Douglas Shire (FODS), a politically non-aligned group who spearheaded the de-amalgamation campaign for nearly 6 years that was supported by the majority of this community. The dedication and hard work of this group and that of its chief spokesman Robert Hanan will be remembered for many years to come.

Secondly, the Newman State Government, Minister for Local Government David Crisafulli and our local MP for Cook, David Kempton who listened to this community and kept their promise to allow the referendum last March. I also want to thank MP Howard Hobbs who has been a friend of FODS and this community for many years and given invaluable advice when requested.

Next, I want to thank Jeff Tate and pay tribute to all our staff for their tireless efforts during the last few months. This community really hit the jackpot with appointment of the highly competent and experienced Jeff Tate as our Transfer Manager. He has earned the respect and support of staff and the community and I cannot under estimate the expert work, achieved with our staff team, also led by General Managers, Darryl Crees and Paul Hoyer. It is also extremely important to acknowledge the work done by Jeff Tate, Geoff Habersfeld, our finance team and everyone involved in achieving such a positive result in relation to our opening cash bank balance.

Most people would not realise the mammoth job done by staff that has occurred behind the scenes in all program areas to ensure that the doors opened today as the new council, and that essential services continue as normal. We have a new IT system, website, new staff structure and essential new appointments have been finalised. There have been significant achievements and milestones that were critical to get us to this point and of course there is still more to come. I also want to take the opportunity to welcome all new staff, including those who were previously based in Cairns.

Now a thank you on a personal note, I would like to thank my husband Andre, my sons Asha and Nick, my mother Shirley, sister Elizabeth and nephew Robert and to all those who have supported and encouraged me since being a Councillor.

A final thank you is to the wonderful Nicole Barton, my Personal Assistant who always goes way and beyond the call of duty and is the best ambassador this shire and I could ever have.

In conclusion, I am honoured to be the Mayor of the new Douglas Council and will do my absolute best to serve the community during this council term. On behalf of my fellow Councillors, I acknowledge and recognise the enormous responsibility, trust and faith you have placed on us.

I am however, confident that with the support of Councillors and staff and you the community, the new council will be the success that Douglas deserves.

Thank you

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4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

Election of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor.

Moved Cr Carey

Seconded Cr Melchert

"That Cr Noli be appointed to the position of Deputy Mayor."

Carried unanimously.

On behalf of Council, the Mayor congratulated Cr Noli on her appointment to the position of Deputy Mayor and invited Cr Noli to say a few words.

Cr Noli stated that she felt humbled to be voted in by the community as a Councillor and also by being voted into the role of Deputy Mayor by her fellow Councillors.

Date, Time and Place of Council Meetings

Moved Cr Clarke

Seconded Cr Carey

"That the Ordinary Meetings of Council be held at 10.00am on the following dates for the 2013/14 financial year:

Friday 3 January 2014
Tuesday 14 January 2014
Tuesday 28 January 2014
Tuesday 18 February 2014
Tuesday 11 March 2014
Tuesday 1 April 2014
Tuesday 22 April 2014
Tuesday 13 May 2014
Tuesday 3 June 2014
Tuesday 24 June 2014

Carried unanimously.

VOTE OF THANKS

Moved Cr Carey

Seconded Cr Noli

"That on behalf of the entire Douglas community, Mayor Julia Leu be acknowledged with thanks and gratitude for her outstanding and tireless representation of the Douglas community as Division 10 Councillor with the Cairns Regional Council over the period March 2008 to December 2013 and further, that this motion be carried with acclamation."

Carried unanimously.

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CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 11.30am.

CONFIRMED THIS 3 DAY OF January 2014


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MAYOR


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A/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER