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Thursday, 12 August 2021

Attention: Mr. Russell Keith

First Clerk Assistant and Committee Secretary

GPO Box 3721

DARWIN NT 0801

Telephone: (08) 8946 1480

pac@nt.gov.au

**RE: MacDonnell Regional Council submission to
Inquiry into Local Decision Making**

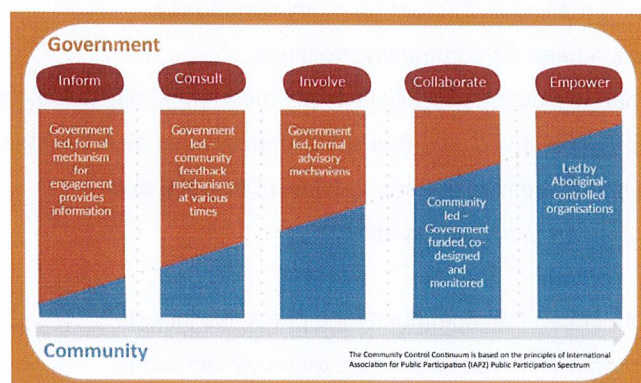
Dear Mr. Keith,

Please find the submission from MacDonnell Regional Council (MRC) to the Inquiry into Northern Territory Government (NTG) Local Decision Making (LDM). At the Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 June 2021, the Councillors discussed the focus areas put forward by the Public Account Committee and provided the following submission.

After LDM videos were played, a number of Councillors expressed that this was the first time they had heard of the NTG LDM initiative.

After viewing the LDM snapshot

(https://ldm.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/791344/ldm-snapshot.pdf)



Public Participation Spectrum:

- MRC was rated as in the “collaborate” phase
- NTG was rated as in the “inform” phase



The Councillors stated that the following were good examples of organisations / processes that supported “all working together” decision making by the community:

- Papunya Leadership Group (Papunya),
- Atyenhenge Atherre Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC) (Santa Teresa),
- Pintupi Homelands Health Service (Kintore),
- Kintore School Board (Kintore), and
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress – Remote Health Boards (Amoonguna Health Service).

The Councillors stated that the Local Authorities discuss local non local government matters that are not discussed at the Council meetings. The Councillors noted that the LA “non-Council Business” agenda item, where the NTG Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet, Local Government and Regional Development representatives receive and answer queries on behalf of the NTG is needed, as there is nowhere at community level that residents can raise issues or get answers on services (health, education, police, housing, etc.) delivered by the NTG. This makes people angry, upset and frustrated. Council feels that there is a lack of accountability by the NTG for its services on community and this could be addressed by LDM.

Councillors stated that:

- people should be living in community for a long-time to make the decisions,
- decision-making is different for every community,
- there is a need for community meetings,
- community meetings should involve other community to learn and share story,
- young people and Youth Board Members should be present for learning,
- there should be help to keep the flow of funding, and
- this will keep communities strong.

The Councillors stated that community-led principles include:

- Each community needs to make their own decisions,
- local boards should be supported,
- communities should support other communities,
- 2-way conversations,
- At own-pace,
- Training and support should be provided, and
- Strong and smart young people should be picked for committee and trained.

In regards to Treaty, Truth-Telling, Voice and LDM development, the Council were in agreement that there is confusion because of the multiple initiatives and their complexity. The Council requested that more thought is put into assisting communities to understand what is exactly the same and what is different between the initiatives, and this should be done at the one time, rather than there being multiple visits to community from the different initiative representatives.

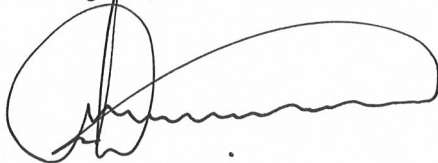
The Council stated that there should be one strong Advisory Committee in each community that makes decisions on community matters including:

- Council,
- education,
- health,
- Police,
- Non-government organisations (NGOs),
- children,
- families, and
- Aged care.

The Council stated that this Advisory Committee should be made up of Traditional Owners and long term residents, with meetings in language, so decisions are 100% Anangu. Additionally, there should be staff to support this committee. The decisions from the Advisory Committee should be treated as "We will do what you say".

The Council stated that these meetings should be regular, with agendas, minutes of previous meeting and reports presented. There should be proper consultation, and there should be the development of integrated infrastructure plans for each community which details current and future development.

Kind regards,



Jeff MacLeod
Chief Executive Officer
MacDonnell Regional Council

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