



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

14th Assembly

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Public Hearing Transcript

9.15 am Thursday 28 October 2022

Barra Room

Groote Eylandt Lodge

Alyangula

Members:

Mr Joel Bowden MLA, Chair, Member for Johnston
Mr Steve Edginton MLA, Member for Barkly
Mr Yingiya Mark Guyula MLA, Member for Mulka
Mr Brent Potter MLA, Member for Fannie Bay
Mr Bill Yan MLA, Member for Namatjira

Witnesses:

Anindilyakwa Land Council

Mr Mark Hewitt: Chief Executive Officer
Mr Mark Hautop: Legal and Executive Operations Manager
Mr Tony Wurramarrba: Chairman
Mr Elliott Bara: Community Representative (Milyakburra)
Mr Silas Bara: Community Member
Mr Lionel Jaragba: Clan Representative

Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation

Groote Aqua Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Sean McCarthy: Sitzler (GHAC Project Manager)
Mr Lionel Jaragba: GHAC and GAAC Director
Mr Elliott Barra: GHAC Director

Groote Eylandt Bickerton Island Primary College Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Elliott Bara: Director and Board Member

Warnumamalya Health Services Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Atnas Maeko: Deputy Chairman
Mr Elliott Bara: Community Member

Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet

Ms Melissa Beasley: Regional Director – Anindilyakwa Region

Inquiry into Local Decision Making

The committee convened at 9.15 am.

ANINDILYAKWA LAND COUNCIL

Mr CHAIR: Welcome, everybody. This is a hearing of the Public Accounts Committee about local decision making, as you know, which is why you are here. My name is Joel Bowden, I am the Chair of the committee. I'm also member for parliament in Darwin in the seat of Johnston.

Mr Yingiya Guyula you know, a member of parliament; Brent Potter is the Member for Fannie Bay in Darwin; Bill Yan the Member for Namatjira, which is southeast of Alice Springs; and Member for Barkly, Mr Steve Edgington which is Tennant Creek and everywhere around Tennant Creek—Borroloola way—the biggest electorate.

Thank you for coming today and welcome again. It's a formal proceeding so it's all recorded and there will be a transcript later. Elise doesn't write out the transcript; we know that. Someone else does that; she's just recording that. Let's put that in the minutes as well.

There's a couple of things—parliamentary privilege is available, which means you are free to say what you want. If, at any time during the hearings, you need to say something to the committee that you didn't want anyone else to hear, we could go to what they call a closed session, which means unfortunately anyone who is here as guest would have to leave and it would just be the committee. We had a hearing yesterday and that didn't happen, but it's available if you really want to say something that is commercial-in-confidence or you want to be absolutely private, that's available.

The other thing is if anyone is contributing, it's great to speak up into the microphone so that we can capture it. We do have an interpreter here today as well, which is good for our hearings. She is not here just now.

A witness: Poison cousin—she is just sitting if we need her.

Mr CHAIR: If we need her. Great, there is an interpreter option.

Mark, you and your team, Tony, Silas and Elliott. thank you for coming. Would anyone like to make an opening statement or a comment?

Mr WURRAMARRBA: Before we start, I would like to welcome the parliamentary hearing, especially for our LDM. On behalf of the land owners and the Anindilyakwa Land Council, we do welcome to have this opportunity to discuss this issue of the local decision making process.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you. Would anyone like to make an opening statement or a comment regarding LDM and how it's working?

Mr HEWITT: Joel, I'll respond, I think after we play the speech that Tony made at Garma. I think would be the best background opening we could do.

Mr CHAIR: Do you want to play that now? Play that first?

Mr HEWITT: Yes.

Mr CHAIR: We've got a copy of that speech in front of everyone. If there's bits we miss, we can still follow it.

[Video played.]

Mr CHAIR: Thank you and that's probably an easy way to present instead of doing it again. Are there any further comments from the Anindilyakwa, or do you want to leave it at that and then maybe we could go to questions?

Mr HEWITT: I think just a couple of quick comments because we're already behind time; I am aware of that.

I would just say, to add to what Tony has said, I've been here since 2011 and it was pretty clear when I arrived that the ALC board didn't really have much say in what was happening on Groote. It had entered into a big agreement with the Australian government, Territory Government, called a regional partnership agreement and those meetings were predominantly comprised of public servants flying into Groote in large numbers.

Mr WURRAMARRBA: There were 70-odd people coming in at one stage. 70 in one day.

Mr CHAIR: 70?

Mr WURRAMARRBA: 70 in one day.

Mr HEWITT: That would be a typical meeting and Tony would be the only Aboriginal in the room. For me, it was all pardon my English—arse about— so the board itself did not have a lot of awareness and certainly in the community they had no idea what the land council was up to. I'm speaking the truth, Tony. Essentially on the surface of it, it looked good. There were a lot of things happening, construction, infrastructure being addressed but local people didn't certainly have control over that. It was an outside-in job. It looked good for the government but as I said, the question was when we started to look at our own strategic plan to line up with the life of mining on Groote and we started to go around and meet with the community in every place, every opportunity over about 18 months, there were three things people were really worried about. One is they were worried about their youth being able to stand in both worlds; they were really worried about the state of infrastructure, in particular, housing and they wanted to see their culture preserved because they worried about it being lost. There was no real cultural programs going on, on Groote.

Since that time the ALC has stuck with that strategic plan which addresses all of those issues. People told us they wanted to have adequate housing but with one single system, not two systems. We were building houses out of royalties and we knew exactly how many houses had to be built and what standard and style. We knew that education was not working. Even now, to this day, we'd be lucky if 10% of the kids that should be going to school are going to school.

Mr CHAIR: Today?

Mr HEWITT: Today. And the race, the clock around that is just incredibly compressed to change that situation. We've got programs where we're seeing the results, if you have children living in a calm, stable, parental situation they will go to school and they will achieve at a very high level, very quickly. We've seen that in Cairns, up in the tablelands; we've got about 60 kids going to school there and we've seen it over at Pickertaramoor on Tiwi and it works so that's what we are doing. We're just doing it on our own patch now over on Tony's Island, Bickerton Island where Elliott lives there.

So that, it's gotta be a bilingual curriculum; these kids grow up speaking Anandilyakwa. A lot of little kids and even young men, really can't speak a lot of English. It has to be a bi-lingual curriculum. It's obvious. Without a language you've lost your culture. In terms of preserving culture, we have the Land Council now has grown from roughly 15 people when I arrived, we've got 140 staff and over half are traditional owners engaged in protecting, preserving, maintaining culture. It's been just an explosion of creativity.

In terms of taking control of housing, education, building our own mining operation it's only for one purpose, it's to generate enough income to sustain preserving culture, community support programs, recreational programs, things that people love to do, forever. We need to get our mining trust up to around \$600m to do that. That's why we're developing our own mine.

GEMCO haven't wanted to know about that; they don't like that. They see us as a threat, which is ridiculous. I wish we were a threat to GEMCO. They clean out about \$1.5bn a year from this place and we get about 2% of that. They've refused to even sell us fuel, refused for our people coming to get our approvals to sit on their flights. It's not good. I would say the local government reform has probably been the most difficult of our local decision making agreements, and it has met with. I would say, almost hysterical opposition from the non-Yolngu people that run East Arnhem. They hate what we're doing. They see that as a threat, personal threat to their careers. Fair enough. Maybe they will have less control in their jurisdiction, but that's what people here really want, and Elliott is a champion for that, and the chairman.

Mr BARA: I used to be, I used to work for East Arnhem as a councillor for four years and my (inaudible) raised a lot of things in their LA meetings and I never see them things put in our community, for example, my people in Bickerton LA members asked for the lights, three lights, and they promised us we budget in our LA money but nothing happened, and I got told like as a councillor—I put in some requests for my LA members they wanted a toilet in the old airport—Groote Eylandt airport and Bickerton airport. Now I just got last year—it has been like four years as councillor for East Arnhem—I never seen a thing—a replacement. They told me at all my meetings 'it'll be next month'. It's been going round in circles. It's been nearly six or seven years. But it would be good if we have our own local authority in Groote Eylandt, it would make things easy, because like, saying things in your LA meetings it goes to Nhulunbuy and then a councillor decides and they push like it will go ahead, but when you go back nothing happening and it's seven or six years. I'm just saying, I'm a councillor, you know that, but when my people want things to be put in our community some things never been put in. I don't know what's happening with that CEO. We struggling, you know. It's pretty hard, so it's very important to have our local authority back. Thank you.

Mr HEWITT: So just to conclude, Chair, the positive things here's this is definitely exciting, people love it. The best thing about it is the ALC board members own what is happening, they feel passionate about it and they can see changes happening in their own lives and in what they're doing. The other really fantastic thing about the framework is we've always known these are the things we have to do to turn things around, but the offer from the NT Government, through Michael Gunner, at the time Chief Minister, was to commit to support us in that action, and it's really crystallised things and made things much sharper and given us influence over the public service for what local people want.

The leadership in the ALC board now basically are running in their own right those different corporations that are charged with these different discreet areas. You'll meet Cherelle Wurrawilya who's the Chair of Housing. She's a prominent board member. You will meet Ida Mamarika who is the champion for bilingual curriculum and the

establishment of that school. She's fought for this the whole time. So you'll see those people after we get out of here. They control it, their corporations and it's not the ALC controlling them, which is a cheap shot at ALC's leadership. We remove ourselves. We support, we facilitate then we remove ourselves and we let them do what they love to do and they're very good at it. So that's an important principle.

I think I've said enough. The other thing is that a lot of what we do gets very closely looked at. We've more audits than I would care to think of going on at the moment. Every year, ALC financial audit is forensic; we've got another one going on for governance, which is forensic; our different corporations; our Act which handles royalties which we use that's being audited now—we just found out this morning. It's just crazy the amount of scrutiny we go under but we're open for it, we're up for it, we're not doing anything wrong. Thank you very much.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any questions?

Mr POTTER: Can you just explain a little bit in more detail the law and justice process you are going through, through LDM and how that's playing out for your youth because obviously that's a concern for you.

Mr HEWITT: I can quickly say that that's also has been pretty tough. We're building our own correctional facility in a remote part of the island. We've been working with the Attorney-General's office and also the Department of Corrections pretty closely—I met the commissioner the other day, the new commissioner, to look at how we can get sentencing on bail on Groote straight away, even before that thing's built. The actual Law and Justice Community Justice Group is led by prominent leaders who've been in the system. I don't think you are meeting Roderick today, but it would be good—he's the champion there.

We needed a hand in the beginning to get things rolling. We had a consultant come in and bring everyone together and everyone agreed that this is what they wanted to do. We made the mistake of bringing in NAAJA to facilitate that but that turned out to be a bad move.

Mr WURRAMARRBA: It was a very bad move.

Mr HEWITT: They wouldn't get out of the road, they wouldn't go away. They were slow and it was terrible. We've just managed to get rid of them and take ownership ourselves. We've got a local Aboriginal guy that's come in from the Cape and he looks likes doing a good job. But that was a mistake. Again, outside influence don't like to lose control. That was a mistake. But yes, back on track. In this Dry Season that facility will be built, basically out of our own money. So contractors are there now as we speak.

Mr YAN: Just following up Mark on some of the stuff you spoke about on school attendance and the rates are low. You're not alone, it's right across a number of communities. How do you see local decision making helping the community change that percentage and drive it back up and get kids in school.

Mr HEWITT: The mechanism for that is the community itself is part of the problem. When you've got 14 clans jammed into one space, it's not natural and you get a lot of conflict.

Mr WURRAMARRBA: It's not only that. We are surrounded by the mine as well.

Mr HEWITT: And Angurugu.

Mr WURRAMARRBA: Especially Angurugu.

Mr HEWITT: It's just the wrong, call it geo-political arrangements, that's just not conducive to education at all. Too much conflict. You create an ideal environment, we've observed that internally and externally.

Mr EDGINGTON: Mark, with the local decision making agreement between the land council and the NT government, do you see a role for the Commonwealth Government?

Mr HEWITT: Absolutely yes.

Mr EDGINGTON: Where do you see that, is it working as part of that agreement or does there need to be some changes to include them? How do you see it all working without the Commonwealth Government as part of that agreement?

Mr HEWITT: I think that a lot of funding already flows, for example, through local government—sport and rec, aged care, childcare. Anyway those fundings need to come through the framework that we are creating.

The previous government, federal government, sat on the fence on this. We're hopeful Linda Burney will have a different attitude. We know local decision making was a policy that came out originally it was talked about in New South Wales. I acknowledge Mark in a very prominent role in bringing this into the Territory. I very much recognise what you have done.

But I think that the opportunity now is for the new government to do as Tony is asking and that is to drive this right down to the local level. Voice and the referendum need to come from the ground up, not top down.

Mr POTTER: Can I ask another question if that's okay? Do you see LDM as a means to treaty and self-determination? So it seems like it is progressing for you. Do you see that as a pathway?

Mr HEWITT: Our proposal is, we've written a proposal—it is up on our website—by joining together elected members from the ALC and our own local government with the Australian and Territory government senior leadership in the Territory, that would be a one-stop shop for talking with Canberra.

Mr POTTER: Just one more, I asked it yesterday. They spoke about grassroots being the mechanism to get to LDM and they acknowledged that corporations get in the way in some instances. I'm just curious in the structures that you've set up individually for housing, school, law reform, if they take a governance structure that then allows funding to be provided and how you got around that because that was a sticking point in yesterday's meetings. So I'm just curious about that. What structure you have used individually to set up a corporation? Is it a standard corporate structure?

Mr HEWITT: It depends on the project, on the area of work. For example, housing, we set up an Aboriginal corporation which represented all the people in each community in the housing reference group and we constructed it out of a proportional representation from each of the three communities plus satellite communities—we don't call them outstations because they are part of daily life here.

So that's an ORIC corporation. We've used a lot of ORIC corporations, in the case of education, health, housing and once they're stood up and properly representative of what local people are passionate to be involved in, they then, in the case of housing, had to be nationally accredited housing providers. It's not easy to do that but they've got that. The same with education, they should be announced shortly as an accredited, independent schooling provider with a curriculum that's recognised.

In the case of law and justice, it's more informal but certainly recognised. People will be recognised by Corrections and the Attorney-General's department through the Aboriginal Justice Agreement mechanism. Local government—that's obvious. You've gotta have an election and elect people. Elliott will be back in there.

With the mining corporation, it's propriety limited company, 70% owned by people like Silas and Elliott. They own the island. They've just done a joint venture, had a private citizen pay for the exploration, he's a 30% partner. It'll start mining by the end of next year. Soit depends.

Mr POTTER: Fantastic, that's good.

Mr CHAIR: If there's is nothing further? Thank you, Tony, Mark, Silas, Elliot. Thank you, I think Silas your staying for next, one more.

Mr HEWITT: Just in terms of that—Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation is one of those entities so it's an Aboriginal Corporation, not for profit. It's only been around just short of two years and I's one of the largest Aboriginal Corporations in the country already. It's looking after major projects and so you'll have Sitzler, who are project managing for us; all the infrastructure that we've got to build to support the mining operation, timber milling, tourism, in particular, aquaculture. We've got a whole program on aquaculture running and solar farm, we've got a proposal in front of GEMCO to buy solar power off us. Sean's basically across all the detail of that and all the master planning for that is in these documents.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you. We have Group Holdings Aboriginal Corporation next. We will have a couple of minutes break.

**GROOTE HOLDINGS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION
GROOTE AQUA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

Mr CHAIR: My name is Joel Bowden. I am the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, along with Brent Potter, Member for Fannie Bay; Bill Yan, Member for Namatjira; Steve Edgington, Member for Barkly; and Yingiya Guyula, Member for Mulka.

If you can hear me, I'll just go through the formalities I guess so then we can try and troubleshoot. Welcome. We are meeting today on the 28th of October. This is the Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation and Groote Aqua Aboriginal Corporation. That is right? Thank you.

We've also got Lionel and Silas ...

A Witness: Elliott.

Mr CHAIR: Elliott, sorry. Thank you all for coming. It's a formal proceeding of the committee and parliamentary privilege exists. There is also the obligation not to mislead. If, at any time, it needs to go into a closed meeting, we can do that. Does anyone want to make an opening statement, or do we want to leave it to Sean?

Sean, if you would like to make a statement on the local decision making process in your area and let's see if we can hear you. Maybe a thumbs up that you can hear us clearly? Terrific. There is a start.

Mr McCARTHY: I can you hear you quite well.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you very much. You have the floor. Welcome.

Mr McCARTHY: Thank you and hello to the Public Accounts Committee and the guests there. I am Sean McCarthy from Sitzler and Sitzler are the program managers on behalf of the Groote Holdings Aboriginal Corporation. I'm here today to give a bit of an overview of the exciting activities that are currently happening with Winchelsea Mining and Little Paradise development.

We've got a bit of a master plan document I could talk through and possibly share screens, if you can see my screen. We can talk through the activities and development and what's been the progress, if that may suit.

Mr CHAIR: Yes, that's good. If you want to share a screen go for it. We also have hard copies that have been provided. I think either way we'll be okay. It seems to be a pretty extensive document as well.

Mr McCARTHY: I'll just do a summary through it, and any questions and queries feel free to ask. The masterplan for Little Paradise has had integration from all the TOs involved in the Anindilyakwa people, Tony, Silas, Lionel, James, everyone has been integrated and communicated with in this vision for Little Paradise and that speaks volumes through this masterplan and we have integrated the approach.

For those who may not be aware, Groote is roughly 630 kilometres east of Darwin and Little Paradise development is in this section of Groote Eylandt and Winchelsea Island is, where my mouse is if you can see it, just to the north. This masterplan is providing a policy and guidance design to help the Anindilyakwa community with their shared vision of a sustainable development in the future post mining, and that is really the crux—and meeting the ALC's 15 years strategic plan.

Moving forward, the long-term vision is for GHAC to manage the transition from a mining dependent economy to a sort of culturally rich and sustainable economy involving development activities, such as aquaculture, resorts, accommodation and the like. This masterplan is categorised into different horizons, immediate horizons in the next one to two years with Winchelsea mining support infrastructure, which will encompass accommodation, workshops, plant vehicle service areas, workers villages, logistics base camps, high security areas, marina upgrades and the like. Extending from that over the next horizon, three to six year mark, further sustainable activities like timber mill processing, renewable energy services, aquaculture extending from the R&D phase through to product ponds on a more commercial scale and increasing residential estates in government employee housing and local housing.

In the longer term, the aquaculture is now through a feasibility phase where we're looking to rehabilitate any mine works on the Winchelsea mining with aqua cultural economic value there, the renewable energy, solar power and battery—very exciting feasibility at the moment on that a huge requirement on island and obviously more and more housing in the resorts and the like.

As I've sort of suggested, this Little Paradise masterplan really talks to the ALC's 15 year strategic plan and provides the voice and drivers for the Anindilyakwa people to really have involvement on creating a sustainable future and employment opportunities via the different economic opportunities that we are going to discuss.

So Winchelsea mining, I'll start with the mining opportunities. So there's a current (inaudible) gas and EIS for Winchelsea Island for manganese mining, and the Little Paradise development is a support network for the housing and accommodation and travel and transport and marina opportunities to help support that mine. The mine is a sort of a seven to 12 year plan. It's still getting through to the (inaudible) options analysis at the moment on what that looks like. This plan speaks to beyond the mine life in creating an aquaculture industry and venture to reopen the mine and have black lip oyster or Trepang and other species that we are currently looking at through an R&D phase to be (inaudible) for export of that seafood industry.

As I touched on previously, there's a lot of consultation here with traditional owners and government departments to integrate the short, medium and long-term plans for Little Paradise and Winchelsea mining, constant design reviews with TOs to get their input and ideas and concepts frequently—creeping into the Little Paradise section this as an overview of what the Little Paradise development leases look like. There's nine leases in total and I will run through them quickly.

There is marina here that will harbour future fishing opportunities but also transport miners from Groote Eylandt over to Winchelsea. There will be biosecurity set down areas here as well. A logistics base camp where there will be maintenance on plant and dropping off of equipment and storage and all that sort of stuff.

Lease two is the aquaculture which, at the moment it's an R&D facility. We're capturing oyster and species from the archipelago and learning how to grow them on land. The success of that will lead to grow our ponds and further success into the commercial entity of the rehab of the mine.

Lease three is the planned timber mill. Use any wood and forests that are cut down for the community centre here to reuse that wood in a meaningful purpose.

Lease four is an employee village. Lease five is a utilities lease where solar power generation with batteries will complement the current diesel generators on island. There's a huge need for that. There is not enough power to sustain the future growth on Groote with the current power on the island so the solar power is a really exciting venture here for green, renewable energy. Also on this lease will be the water supply waste treatment and even maybe some bio-remediation opportunities in the future.

Lease six is vehicle workshop and planned business opportunities like windscreens, batteries, tyre, panel beating and that sort of stuff.

Lease seven, housing opportunities for Northern Territory government employees, nurses, doctors, lawyers and also for residents and this is a staged project.

Lease eight, workers' camp. Nice high-end attractive (inaudible) if you want to stay on the island and prosper here so it is not your typical mining fridge panel. This is a nice workers' camp, high-end to attract the right people to the mine and sustain future plans for a deep (inaudible) here on Little Paradise.

Part of the EIS there's a lot of investigations on cultural surveys, flood modelling, ecologist (inaudible) to the terms of reference of the EIS. This is just a snapshot of GIS software programs to log all of the different surveys so they can integrate that with all the design and show it as tool to the TOs so we can speak to that when we're doing planning.

Bio-security is extremely important in the Groote archipelago there are no cane toads there so its obviously at the forefront of our design and making sure that any subcontractors that are current doing work on island or coming over there aren't bringing pests or weeds over. Everything in the design to date has biosecurity at the forefront.

Obviously with the Little Paradise development there is required infrastructure upgrades, water supply, waste, septic and power, communication, mobile phone reception and the like. Some of those services will continue over to the Winchelsea Island.

Quarries, concrete, waste management, road networks; there is a need for a lot of upgrades here moving into the future. This is a staged upgrade; it doesn't need to all happen tomorrow but there's options analysis on the best way forward with these upgrades.

The marine harbour is going to be vital for passenger transport over to the Winchelsea Island mine but it will also have opportunities for fishing, or transport or tourism boats with eco-tours and the like and it will also harbours people from cyclones and things like that.

Base camp. That is where we're going to be doing some maintenance on plant equipment. It will be like a council depot yard where you would take the vehicles, store and maintain them then there will be opportunities there for paint businesses to complete that maintenance.

Next door to lease one, lease two is the aquaculture; we are in the R&D phase at the moment. These are the ponds that will take the black lipped oysters or Trepang or different species that we find in the archipelago. We will learn to grow them out and then once successful and we nail down the right species and we start doing grow-out ponds and mass producing them on a commercial scale and the ultimate goal is obviously the rehabilitation of the Winchelsea mine where there could be up to 90 hectares worth of barra ponds or for refuse—kind of like the barra farm, potentially.

Lease three, timber and forestry would be like a cabinetry workshop area here where people can learn trades on cabinetry and woodworking skills. The idea is to reuse some of the timber that may need to be felled for this development, creating trusses, beams, woodchips and cultural buildings out of this material. Some of the rehab will require nurseries, seedlings and saplings to be grown and rehabilitated so that this will happen out at this lease.

The fourth lease will be accommodation for the amount of workers who will be over here, not only through the development phase but also in the mine's implementation through to aquatic so camps and villages will need to be made for that.

Lease five, solar farms, I've touched on. Diesel generators are quite thirsty over there and there's not much power to run future development on Groote. There is a need for more power and solar and battery work quite well in this area of the world. So definitely solar is being looked at and it has (inaudible) to be successful over here, so that's a great news story.

Additionally, the waste treatment system that we're look at, keeping the theme of the renewable and biosecurity measures that Groote Archipelago has, we are looking at bio-remediation ponds which basically take out the nitrates and phosphates of the waste, treats it into reusable water, uses seaweed. It has been tested around Townsville, Cairns and other places in Australia and the world; it has (inaudible) and it is something we are also looking at down the track to help treat the waste water.

(inaudible) operation centre, lease six, the end plan will be a training centre where you can learn how to be an apprentice mechanic or trades assistant. There will be planned businesses: car and truck washes; spare parts; panel beating; windscreens and the like. Potentially a fuel station down the track as well. All these works happens in stages and will expand as the needs require.

Lease seven, is the housing opportunities. There is a need currently for emergency housing for nurses, doctors and the like. Lease seven is where these houses are going to be placed. We've a lot of talks with NT Health on the requirements and specifications and standards they are require and we're just about to start a tender process on that. It will be in stages; there might be 40 lots done first and then expanded 40 lots every year or two years. We're at the DA stage for this; DA level plans have been produced in civil and we're about to submit them.

Lease eight, the workers' camp. This is what I was talking about; more high-end workers camp to attract the right workers who want to stay on island and be part of the Groote community and integrate with locals and the beautiful parts of the archipelago. This will also be a staged development, so that it might cater for 50 people then 100 and 150 people. Long-term uses of this workers' camp could be a resort, eco-village and the like.

Lease nine, is a higher-end eco resort that will utilise the beautiful scenery and the sustainable environment that is present here on Groote. It's a longer-term plan and it's obviously something that would be really a bench mark and unique opportunity for the Territory.

That is about as quick as I can do a summary on the Little Paradise and Winchelsea developments at the moment. Work has already started. Leases one and two are already halfway through construction and the modules have been built, they're here in Darwin. There are civil works and electrical works under way on island. There's been more opportunities for lease six and (inaudible) in lease seven are all starting to happen at the moment. Next year, you will see probably three or four of these leases start having boots on ground and action happening.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you, Sean. That looks like a very large body of work—quite impressive. Are there any questions or comments about the development? Any questions for Sean?

Sean, what's the time line you are estimating for—let us go broad brush—practical completion of the development on Groote, leases one to nine?

Mr McCARTHY: Leases one to nine will be a bit of a staged program. Lease one and two, as I mentioned, has already started and I think that will be practically complete mid-next year at the latest, weather dependent.

Then we will roll out to the lease six, for example, which will start in April/March next year with a six-month construction time frame towards the next year. The houses will start next year and probably finish in two years' time. The workers village is due to start next year. Some of those activities will start next year and be finished within the next two years. Then there will be some longer-term plans, mainly like the resort on lease nine, which we can see here on the screen. This might not start for five years' time or when the Little Paradise development is up and running and there are a few runs on the board.

Mining operations on Winchelsea for feasibility and investigations are well and truly under way. We are hoping to have the BFS and the EIS early next year. The marina works will begin early. Infrastructure works will need to start next year. That is a 12-year mine life at the moment.

Mr CHAIR: It is positive and exciting, yes?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, hard work.

Mr CHAIR: No further questions? Thank you, Sean. I appreciate your time. There's no further questions so we will finish our session there and then we will move on to Anindilyakwa Housing Aboriginal Corporation. We will have a quick changeover to move seat. Thanks everybody and thanks Sean.

Mr McCARTHY: Thanks very much guys.

The committee suspended.

**GROOTE EYLANDT BICKERTON ISLAND PRIMARY
COLLEGE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

Mr CHAIR: We welcome to the table the Groote Eylandt Bickerton Island Primary College Aboriginal Corporation. Welcome, Elliott.

It is a formal proceeding of the committee. There will be a transcript and there is parliamentary privilege so you can say what you want. We welcome you and thank you for coming. If you would like to talk to us about what is happening on Bickerton and with the primary school, it would be great.

Mr BARA: I am here again because my CO didn't rock up, Josie, and my Deputy Chairman, Ida Mamarika. So I'll say things without my CO and Chairman, okay?

Mr CHAIR: Very good.

Mr BARA: Well we start this GEBIPCAC because we are building a college in Milyakburra where I live on Bickerton Island. The business we started is not only for the college in Bickerton, but also we help our people, our Anindilyakwa children that go to Alyangula School, Cairns, Darwin whatever our kids going to school, we support them with uniforms, lunch money and what they need like shoes for school, we support them.

Also we have a meeting every one month. We talk about everything, even we got these cartoons that we made but will be translated into our language so our children can understand. We doing everything like what our people need and our children. We support them every year, even we get little bit of support from our royalties to our children.

Mr POTTER: Can I just ask what your vision is for the school? Obviously I can understand you want ...

Mr BARA: My vision is, since our children didn't rock up at the school outside, we wanted to build a college just to give our children education—it's more important. You can't stay in one culture; you have to have white culture, like you. To be in white man's world, we need our children to get educated. So we are doing ...

Mr CHAIR: This is what Tony was saying.

Mr BARA: Yes, we're doing this for our own children. Many times our children suffer. Some of them didn't rock up at school, some of them didn't want to go to school but now the times changing, now it's getting easier and easier for us, so we did these things with our money.

Mr POTTER: That's fantastic. Do you think parents will get a greater buy-in to making kids go to school because it is a culturally-appropriate school in language?

Mr BARA: Yes. We can't teach them one language, English, we have to teach them both just to have our culture still strong, to keep our culture strong in our region.

Mr CHAIR: Bilingual education on Bickerton for kids to get into school?

Mr BARA: Correct.

Mr POTTER: That's fantastic.

Mr BARA: One of my directors went to Tiwi or Bathurst Island where they've that college there to get more information. Then they came back and we had a meeting. From there, we went along.

Mr POTTER: Is it local teachers from island, from community or is it a mixture?

Mr BARA: No, we'll have local teachers working with white teachers, so there will be a mix. You've gotta have government to support your businesses. So we agree that, working with government you'll get more help but if you don't work with the government you'll be lost, without nothing. Am I correct?

Mr CHAIR: Yes. A comment from me would be it's not just the Territory government, who we represent because it is also the Commonwealth Government who puts a lot of money in.

Mr BARA: That's what I am saying.

Mr CHAIR: Which is sometimes confusing. We turn up as government, and then someone says, 'Oh, no, you've gotta to speak to the other government.'

Mr BARA: I know that, yes.

Mr CHAIR: How long do you think before it is up and running?

Mr BARA: What I got told it'll be up and running next year.

Mr BOWDEN: Next year. Good. Are there any other questions?

Mr EDGINGTON: Just on that school, that's being fully funded by who? Who's funding the whole project?

Mr BARA: It's from our money.

Mr EDGINGTON: The whole lot?

Mr BARA: The whole lot.

Mr EDGINGTON: That's good.

Mr BARA: We are independent.

Mr EDGINGTON: How many students? How big will it be?

Mr BARA: We will start with 21 students. We will start with them. It is only a college for 10, nine, eight, seven year olds. We will have the college there in Bickerton.

Mr EDGINGTON: Moving on from there, you will have an opportunity to expand?

Mr BARA: Moving on from there, we will send them to high school, like college, and all of that because we have a few children, even my daughter goes to school as well, in Queensland, so we've got a few kids in Queensland now.

Mr CHAIR: Is that at Cairns?

Mr BARA: Yes, Cairns and some in Darwin.

Mr EDGINGTON: Excellent.

Mr BARA: That's how we created this GEBIPCAC to help our families and children with our own money.

Mr HAUTOP: If I could just jump in to clarify that question on the funding. So that money it's an ABA application. An application was put forward two years ago. There was two stages, so the first stage is 24 kids and full is 48, so doubling. I think it was around \$27m, or thereabouts, was approved a couple of years ago and just in this most recent round, we put in another application to do stage two. We will want to combine them. Cost pressures have increased, well costs across the board so we had to up the request but also we thought it was more efficient by building all of it at once. You have a full 48-bed college up front.

Mr BARA: It is supposed be 48.

Mr HAUTOP: So that's the funding. It's all ABA support—well, ABAAC.

Mr CHAIR: Good. Thank you.

Mr GUYULA: Is it like an independent school?

Mr BARA: *Yow*, independent—just to get our children educated. Get them education so that they can be into both worlds, Yolngu and balanda.

Mr GUYULA: And work with the government for support on your system.

Mr BARA: *Yow*. For example, if you do not work with government, you'll have nothing, but if you work with government, you'll have support. *Manymak*? That's what I am saying here.

Mr GUYULA: *Yow*, you need government to support, too.

Mr BARA: *Yow; manymak*.

Mr HAUTOP: I have just one more comment on what Elliott was saying about. It's mainly primary school-aged kids, younger kids, and trying to keep culture and the bilingual curriculum.

Mr BARA: *Yow*. That is what I was saying.

Mr CHAIR: Yes, seven, eight, nine and 10-year-olds, not grade seven, eight or nine.

Mr BARA: Seven, eight, nine.

Mr CHAIR: Years old.

Mr BARA: Yes, years old.

Mr HAUTOP: It's been very clear hasn't it that the elders want their young kids on island around culture. Some of the older kids will still probably end up going away, if they want to but you have to tailor that experience. But there is young kids going away at the moment and we're just trying to rework that so that they're still connected. That's the idea.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr GUYULA: It is just like when I talked about the younger kids needing to catch up and learn about their own language and culture first.

Mr BARA: Yow. And then English.

Mr GUYULA: Then they grow up and start to speak bilingual, take on another language. Then you can take on another language like English and walk side-by-side.

Mr BARA: Yow. Correct.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr HAUTOP: This is really good. There's some good things happening. It's fascinating. I've gone out—they have an office in Angurugu and the ladies, Ida and Elaine's out there, Millie, old ladies that are just working on this curriculum. It's fascinating.

Mr BARA: When they made this cartoon films for the kids, it was them all in there, singing and saying things. I freaked out. Yow.

Mr HAUTOP: There's some great animated videos their making kids. It's really good.

Mr BARA: I seen that too, freaked me out, but.

Mr CHAIR: Very good. Is there anything else? Nothing else from the committee? Thank you. Elliott. That concludes our session.

WARNUMAMALYA HEALTH SERVICES ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Mr CHAIR: Welcome back everyone. On behalf of the committee I welcome everyone back to the public hearing around local decision making. I welcome to the table today the representatives from the Warnumamalya Health Services Aboriginal Corporation.

It's a formal committee hearing, it's being recorded and will be transcribed, so there will be print-out if you want one. You have parliamentary privilege, which means in front of the committee you can say what you need, say what you want to say. If, for some reason, you wanted to say something really important that you did not want anyone else to hear, we can ask other people to leave and you can talk just to the committee.

Welcome, would someone like to make a statement or comment about local decision making?

Mr MAEKO: My name is Atnas. I work with the Bush Fit Mob, and my colleague, Marissa, also works for Bush Fit Mob. I am Deputy Chairman of Warnumamalya Health Corporation and we are here with the Warnumamalya health, the early stages of this organisation. We are trying to get a lot of information from our Anindilyakwa people on what is most important for health and nutrition needs. It is early stages that the corporation is at the moment.

The next signing coming up will be 14 November as the first of the Warnumamalya Health Corporation.

Mr BARA: We started this Warnumamalya Corporation. In Bickerton it's pretty difficult for my people. We get sick and we only have the clinic people come to there every fortnight. It was pretty hard for us. If we have this, it will be nice for my people at Milyakburra and Angurugu.

Mr CHAIR: It' the early stages, can you talk more about what it will look like—what you want it to look like—into the future?

Mr BARA: In the future we want this corporation to look like any other clinic in an Aboriginal community.

Mr CHAIR: Every community?

Mr BARA: Yes. We want to be like them, especially Bickerton.

Mr MAEKO: If I can go further than that, I guess the goal of the Warnumamalya Health Corporation—the idea came from similar to the Miwatj organisation. The goal is to get a lot of traditional owner on our land to pretty much be involved more in the health corporation, and also get them a lot of work in the nurse section. The goal is to get more voice coming from the Anindilyakwa people here. The philosophy is, I guess I can say, similar to the Miwatj organisation where they can place the mainland Yolngu country. So that's the goal, to have the same structure of that, led by Anindilyakwa people in term of health, nutrition and (inaudible) health.

Also because the language barrier is there too. So the goal is to get a lot of Anindilyakwa people working in the sector. With the language barrier, the more of them are included, hopefully you can prevent a lot of issues in terms of health issues.

Mr POTTER: What sort of health services would you envisage coming over and taking over? Where is the first milestone now?

Mr BARA: We'll be working with the NT Government. We won't pull out. They have to be there with us but we need them to support us as well. So we didn't get out; we're still going to use them in our corporation. We'll be working with them.

Mr POTTER: But eventually you'd like to see local people being the health professional that they see?

Mr BARA: Correct, yes.

Mr POTTER: And then government sitting back and, as you need them?

Mr BARA: Yes.

Mr MAEKO: Right now, that concerns the early stage, obviously NT Health have been here for a long time; there are a lot of people being employed by NT Health they've been here for a long time as well too so the idea is to work with them because they have experience and they have the knowledge and as Elliott is saying, we need their help; we need their expertise on this field. But later on, when the young people here have been in that field and gone to university and become a doctor or a nurse or whatever, the goal is to get them to come back here and work in this field. Right now it's pretty much trial work, our goal is to work closely with NT Health to give us their knowledge.

Mr POTTER: And if we can get kids to go to school locally and then go finish high school, there may be a chance to get them to go to uni and come back.

Mr BARA: Yes, that is correct.

Mr MAEKO: Correct, yes. And if I can speak on behalf of the other directors who are not here, Warnumamalya health sector. They can't be here right now because there are a lot of issues going on in Angurugu right now. So apologies they're not here. They've been working in the clinic for the last 30 or 40 years and they have been working in health. They are no longer here the chairman of Anindilyakwa has been working 30 some years too. So a lot of young ladies and the director, they have been involved and working this clinic a long time. The one thing they spoke of really highly is that they want to get a lot of kids to come back and work in health sector and they are afraid there are not many young people who are leaning towards the health service. So they're focus hopefully to generate as much interest for the young people so that they can come and work in this sector.

Mr CHAIR: If you get sick now, what happens?

Mr BARA: If I'm in Groote Eylandt, Angurugu, I'll have help quick because I am in Groote Eylandt but if I am in Bickerton, I will be stuck and I'll be ringing 000 because I won't ring here straight away because my phone will be going to Darwin, 000 or probably in Adelaide and then they have to ring back to Nhulunbuy or Darwin to get the answer from doctors. It's pretty difficult.

Mr MAEKO: Because in Bickerton there is not many because we do not have a nurse there permanently stay there. A lot of doctor or nurse go there for a day or two days and leave. I travel between all three communities in my role as Bush Fit. I go to Umbakumba, Bickerton and Angurugu. I was there at Bickerton yesterday. Even for my role at Bush Fit, we do a lot of trips outside (inaudible) health as well too. Next week I'll be taking three kids, six kids from here and going to Darwin for the NT Athletic championship. The goal is when I take the kids away for trips to try and go to the clinic to test to make sure they are suitable. At Bickerton you can't do it because no nurse there to open up the clinic. That's a small percentage of my issues.

As Elliott was saying here, for a lot of people in the community who live there if something were to go wrong they have to call 000 or whatever and we don't know how long that will take until a plane comes over to pick them up. But

Angurugu and even in Umbakumba there is no nurse live in Umbakumba so if something happened in Umbakumba they have to drive or they have to call the ambulance to go pick them up to bring them because no car. I'm speaking on behalf of the community but I do not want to sound negative and so forth but a lot of families from Umbakumba a lot of them don't have a vehicle so if something goes wrong they have to find their way to go Angurugu or Alyangula to get looked. I had a case myself...

Ms Wurramara: Sometimes heart attack they are getting at Bickerton Island, sometimes they die if there's no help. Sometimes CareFlight come from Nhulunbuy take them to check up. It's pretty hard. I went last month, we had a meeting there, they want a bigger hospital, nurses to work there to for nurses, to train, some education for the young teenagers.

I was living in Bickerton long time ago, when my parents were alive. I come from Bickerton, they need a big hospital down there. Every three days, like Tuesday and Friday, lets' go and check them out at Bickerton Island. When they are having a meeting for this kind of issue, sometimes they ring me to get help from me to support and interpret for them.

Mr BARA: Before, every fortnight the nurses would come—as my auntie is saying. We had a meeting with the nurses and they only come two days per week, Wednesday and Thursday, to Bickerton.

Mr EDGINGTON: Is that every week?

Mr BARA: Every fortnight.

Mr EDGINGTON: How many people live over there?

Mr BARA: 70. I live in Bikerton. Population 70. Most of the people moved out here.

Mr EDGINGTON: What about Umbakumba, how many people live over there?

Mr MAEKO: Give or take, 300 or less; maybe 400 or less. Angurugu is a bigger community. The issue with a lot of community family is they feel like when something comes up, or someone gets sick in Umbakumba or Bickerton, there is not much support. No nurses live at Umbakumba, no nurse live in Bickerton. I understand, from what I have heard from families that they have a lot of issues, safety issues, which is fair enough, for nursing people to elect to leave the community. But at the same time, in community family they need to get looked after; something could go wrong. A lot of the time, even if you call the nurse or ambulance, it takes a long time to get to Umbakumba and by the time they get to (inaudible).

Hopefully this local government and the Anindilyakwa Corporation will come out because it should be led by the Anindilyakwa people; they are the voice of how the corporation should be run and how many people should be living in a community. Like I was saying, they are in early stages right now, but hopefully it will involve more Anindilyakwa people

Mr BARA: Very important; we need that on our ground. My people—40 people a year die, every year.

Mr YAN: Where is the transition at from NT Health across to Warnumamalya health; has that process begun yet or is it still being discussed?

Mr MAEKO: It's being discussed; I think the next stage is the signing of the implementation is on I think 14 November and then the next phase. Our goal is—we are not sure how long the local government will start the transition. Early stages I guess at the moment.

Mr EDGINGTON: How long have these talks been happening?

Mr MAEKO: This Anindilyakwa Corporation has been formed in the last two years. It's early stages.

Mr BARA: The members, the directors, they have a meeting and then they take it to the members. The members have a meeting on what we need and they then take it up to the directors and the directors will take it up.

Mr MAEKO: Everything pretty much from the beginning of this, every issue is discussed on what things affect Anindilyakwa people; and what kind of stuff they have the most concern about nutrition; health; looking after the elders and aged care at Angurugu; and the clinic is not suitable enough to accommodate the elders.

Mr BARA: Back in the day, the old people used to stay in aged care and the aged care used to care for them [Yolgnu spoken].

Mr MAEKO: I think there is a proposal going on, I am not sure if Jim or Tony spoke about it; the goal is to build a better renovation of the clinic at Angurugu where the elders can go there and be looked after instead of flying to Darwin or Cairns and so forth. The goal is to get everything happening here and spend more time with their family before they're dead.

Mr CHAIR: Any other questions? No. Thank you. Elliott, thank you for coming to three in a row. We will take a break for lunch.

Mr MAEKO: Thank you.

The committee suspended.

DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER AND CABINET

Mr CHAIR: Welcome back everyone to the Public Accounts Committee hearing. We're meeting today around Local Decision Making. I'd like to welcome Melissa Beasley from the Department of the Chief Minister, welcome here today thank you for coming to, what we call, give evidence day.

This is a formal proceeding of the committee. There is a transcript which is being recorded. There is parliamentary privilege and we can have a closed session if required. They are the formalities. It is an open structure. You know Mr Yan, Mr Edgington, Mr Guyula and Mr Potter will join us shortly. My name is Joel. We are in your hands if you would like to make an opening statement about LDM and your role as the—is it regional manager?

Ms BEASLEY: Regional Director.

Mr CHAIR: Regional Director for the Chief Minister's Department. Welcome Melissa.

Ms BEASLEY: Thank you. As you said, my name is Mel Beasley. I am the Regional Director for the Anindilyakwa Region, with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, and I am based out here.

I have provided today a presentation. I will not go through all of it today, but if there are any particular questions you have on specific priority areas, I am happy to take those questions or also liaise with AHAC or GEBIPCAC or the relevant provider or service to ensure you get the answers. I note they were unable to be here today.

But what I would like to talk to the committee about is also around our monitoring and evaluation, our communication and the data work that ALC and NTG have been working together on it as well with ANU. I suppose I will start with monitoring and evaluation.

So a commitment under the LDM agreement is at the three year point that there is an action for an independent consultant to review the LDM progress for Groote. That was undertaken by the Ground Up team at CDU, So that report, which is soon to be released, mainly focusses on obtaining community views around the progress to date. CMC have also been working to build upon that report to develop a four year progress report which looks specifically at the objectives under each priority area of the LDM agreement and where that has got up to. So, where progress has been made against the objectives, and the work still to be undertaken. That report is in the process of being finalised and once it is endorsed by the ALC board, I would be happy to provide the committee with a copy of that. It is quite comprehensive.

In addition to that work, in terms of monitoring and evaluation, there is a range of ways that we are making sure that we're continuing to monitor and evaluate each area of the LDM priorities. One of them for example, is the Groote Eylandt Executive Steering Committee (GEESC) which meets quarterly. So as a part of that, and that consists of CMC, Ken Davies from Territory Families Housing Communities, Bridget Bellenger, Jim Rogers, CEO for ALC Mark Hewitt. Tony is also there and GEMCO as well. Each quarter that group meets and we provide a quite detailed progress report on all the area of LDM and it is like a traffic light report. So if everything is going smoothly, the work ahead, and any work or any discussions that need to be had at that level to continue things moving along.

In addition to that, each area- for example, for the law, justice and rehabilitation implementation plan we have a steering group for that, and so that oversees implementation of the two projects. So the community justice group and the implementation of the alternative to custody facility. So that consists of AGD, CMC, ALC and we are working through those areas as needed.

So that is just to give you a little bit of an overview of some of those monitoring evaluation aspects we are doing for Groote as well.

In terms of communication, it is obviously extremely important that we are communicating with other stakeholders, with community, and making sure that everyone continues to receive updated information. CMC, with the ALC have developed this newsletter so the intention is for this to go out at least quarterly, but we provide updates as required as well on specific areas. For example, there was a Cabinet decision made around local government a few months back and we sent out a specific update on that so everyone was aware of what is going on.

The next update will be the four year progress report and that will be sent out very broadly.

Mr CHAIR: What sort of response do you get to this newsletter?

Ms BEASLEY: Quite a positive response. It is a great way to ensure people are across different areas and if people are working on a particular aspect, just to be aware of the other priority areas that are taking place on Groote Eylandt and where there are synergies as well to kind of work together on different aspects. For example, with health and I would like to touch on health a little bit later too. But for example with Health there is concern around ganja use and also you have the Community Justice Group and that could potentially be about domestic family violence and ganja use as well. So where there are those synergies, and working together, it is important that everyone is aware of the different work being undertaken.

Mr CHAIR: Just for the record, ganja being marijuana?

Ms BEASLEY: Sorry, marijuana.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you, just to make sure.

Ms BEASLEY: And also another really important part of this work to support the LDM agreement and the implementation plans is around data. ALC have a Memorandum of Understanding with ANU. They have done a huge amount of work to collect data so that Anindilyakwa people can own their own data and make informed decisions about different areas under the LDM agreement or more broadly as well, based on up-to-date evidence.

The role NTG CMC has played in that, and the NIAA, is that we have been working quite closely with ANU and ALC to coordinate the data that has been requested. So for example, ALC and ANU identified the data required and CMC would then reach out to the relevant NTG agency, such as Territory Families Housing Communities, and request that information- to be that kind of a facilitating point of contact.

So the intention moving forward for that piece of work is to ensure that the ALC and Anindilyakwa leaders can continue to receive updated data every year. That is the next piece of work; how do we make sure that continues, and what do we need to do to put those things in place?

Mr CHAIR: How long has that data been collected? From what point in time?

Ms BEASLEY: I would need to check. It goes back a long time. I do not have a specific year. I would hesitate to give you a number but it was quite a few years back, so it has been tracked for quite a long time. I am happy to take that on notice and provide that to you.

Mr CHAIR: It is not crucial but yes, if you are going to track something, you want to track it over a reasonable amount of time.

Ms BEASLEY: Absolutely! And that has absolutely happened. So I will get those dates to you.

Mr HAUTOP: Mel, do you want me to just clarify that if I can for?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes, that would be great.

Mr HAUTOP: So there was a baseline study done as part of...

Mr CHAIR: You have to step up and be closer to the microphone.

Mr HAUTOP: Sorry. Under the Regional Partnership Agreement back in 2008–09 there was a baseline study done that wanted to obviously understand what was happening and then track it moving forward. Essentially it was a bit of a data dump. So they just got a lot of things there wasn't a lot of interpretation.

So the first piece of this work the ANU did was to basically measure the same data over that same period of time to update the baseline report. But we went a bit further and we said; "Look that is fine, but we want to know a broader picture". So we sort of had the six LDM buckets and we looked across law, justice, health etcetera, etcetera. So we have a really big report. So at this point in time it tracks back, but also moving forward as Mel said; 'we want to make this an ongoing thing'. You do not want a report that sits on the shelf for another five years so we are actually building within the ALC a data unit with that data sovereignty. So TOs only staff that can use it to update it annually. So you have got an informed decision making tool at your fingertips.

We are working through the draft at the moment and it gives you the full spectrum. So there are things that have improved quite a bit and other things that still need a lot of work. So it's a real factual insight. It's a big project and I think it's going to be a massive tool moving forward.

Ms BEASLEY: Thanks Mark.

Does the committee has any questions specifically on those areas that they have just talked about?

Mr CHAIR: Yes, sure. Are there any questions?

Mr EDGINGTON: I have just got one on the law and justice. I think this morning it was described as a correctional facility; looking at this it talks about an alternative to custody facility. Are we talking about the same project?

Ms BEASLEY: I think Mark Hewitt mentioned that they met with Corrections. But it will be an alternative to custody facility. The intention of it is to quite literally be an alternative to sentencing. So cultural programs and support programs in there. We are still working through exactly what that will look like. The Community Justice Group, which has Anindilyakwa leaders in that, they will provide important advice around how those programs should be delivered and what that service should actually look like.

Mr EDGINGTON: What age group will that facility be targeting?

Ms BEASLEY: So under the LDM agreement it has a very specific age group. Conversations have already progressed on that, that perhaps it is a good idea to open it up to a broader set of age groups. Because if you have some elder men in the program as well, that they can provide that leadership to the younger men coming through the program too. We do not have a set... that is not confirmed yet, but that is something we are working through as well. So the idea is to open it up more broadly than just the 18 to 26, I think. But I can double-check those numbers.

Mr EDGINGTON: That is what I was to get at next. Is there potential for people younger than 18 to participate in this type of program?

Ms BEASLEY: I would have to take that on notice. I am unable to talk to that today. It is not something I can provide advice on.

Mr EDGINGTON: That is all I have got on that one, thanks.

Mr YAN: In conversations yesterday at Yirrkala, there was some discussion about Department of the Chief Minister and Government talking to the right people. So what do you do here in this community to make sure you are talking to the right people?

Ms BEASLEY: Sure. So the ALC board is representative of all 14 clans in the Archipelago. Those leaders are elected via the NT electoral process so they are elected by community. So we take our lead from the elected members of the community to provide advice.

But I think more broadly it is important to- and Mark Hewitt touched on this this morning- the ALC board have the LDM agreement but those others groups, such as AHAC and GEBIPCAC, it is not just for ALC board members. There are a broad range of leaders across Groote archipelago who are involved in the LDM process through these different groups. For example, with WHSAC (Warnumamalya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation) there are leaders from across all communities and mainly leaders who are or have been involved in the health space. But if someone else from community wanted to be involved in WHSAC, in that particular area, they would just need to fill out a form and nominate to be a part of it, and then the board makes a resolution to include that community member. So it's all community driven decision making.

Mr CHAIR: Are there any issues with too many groups, with too many organisations, corporations, government entities that hamper LDM and its implementation?

Ms BEASLEY: From my perspective, I have not seen that because the way it is separated into quite clear priority areas; you have economic development, you have education, law justice and rehabilitation. So they have their own champions and their own groups that progress that specific work. So I haven't necessarily seen that.

Mr EDGINGTON: I just have another question about the law and justice area. I think you said there is a committee that has been established.

Ms BEASLEY: A steering committee to oversee the implementation of both projects.

Mr EDGINGTON: Are they focused on any other law and justice issues in the community besides those particular projects?

Ms BEASLEY: So that will be the Community Justice Groups' role. The Community Justice Group is made up of Anindilyakwa leaders. So that group, their role will be that- to identify the priority areas for Anindilyakwa people around law, justice and rehabilitation. Whether that is being more actively involved in the court system or being more actively involved in the domestic and family violence space or child protection. So it is up to the community members to identify

their priority areas and then they have a community justice manager that will support them to progress those areas in that space.

So the role of the steering group is more to oversee the implementation and make sure those projects are progressing, not to actually look at other law, justice and rehabilitation areas. That's the role of the Community Justice Group themselves if that makes sense.

Mr EDINGTON: So the Community Justice Group are looking at community issues. Is there a plan or is it too early yet, is there a plan to, I suppose focus on community safety in a broader context?

Ms BEASLEY: Exactly. SVA did some initial consultation work with community. It developed quite a comprehensive report. I am happy to provide you with a copy of that if you would like. So that sets out an initial model and includes those priority areas regarding community safety, and developing a stronger relationship with police. That SVA report will inform some of those conversations that will happen with the Community Justice Group.

But the Community Justice Group is only being established now. It is quite a newly established group. You have the peacemakers who are already very actively in this space because they are, very much first on the scene for issues that arise in the community, to help to resolve them. So a lot of those members they are going to be community justice members. So I don't want to talk for the Community Justice Group and say what their priority areas are. But community safety would be an aspect if they were open to that being addressed. That would be something they would handle.

Mr EDINGTON: Just quickly on local government, I notice that the gazette notice was signed back on 15 August. How soon from your perspective will we see a council based here on Groote Eylandt?

Ms BEASLEY: There's still a bit more of a process to go. So the Cabinet decision was made to move ahead with the idea of creating an Anindilyakwa Local Government. So what the next steps are for that is a prospective council manager will be appointed. His name is Iain Summers he has been appointed, that has been gazetted. So he will do all of the work with negotiations and working with EARC, ALC and also speaking with Anindilyakwa communities to negotiate and understand the financial viability of having two councils, so what the costs would be involved in that and things like that.

Once that report is completed, that will go back to Cabinet for Cabinet to make another decision around whether to move forward or whether the council should actually be established. So Iain's report is expected to be completed by the end of the year. I will double check, but my understanding is that Cabinet...maybe I will leave that if that is okay? But early next year we are expecting some more progress on that.

Mr EDINGTON: So just to clarify, it's Iain Summers preparing a report is it?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes. He is representing the interests of the prospective council.

Mr EDINGTON: Right. So the decision to create a council here is contingent upon what's in that report?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes. As far as I understand it. Just taking into consideration also, the previous information provided to Cabinet as well and the consultations and the other reports that were already done, I think will be considered too.

Mr EDINGTON: So the final decision hasn't been made yet to establish a council?

Ms BEASLEY: No. It hasn't.

If the committee doesn't mind I would like to build upon Elliott and WHSAC's speech today about Warnumamalya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation (WHSAC) and to give you a little more context about that process.

I have been quite involved in the development of the implementation plan with WHSAC, the ALC and with NT Health. Under the agreement, the objectives is the transition of NT Health services to community control and responsibility, so that is a long-term aspiration. WHSAC identified through- we have had lots of meetings with Warnumamalya Health Services Aboriginal Corporation- and what they identified is that, that is a long-term aspiration. At the moment they are happy with NT Health continuing the services. But what they would like is to build a stronger relationship with NT Health and with the services out here, and to also build upon their own capacity to eventually move towards that transition.

The way we are doing that is through the IP which will be signed on 14 November. WHSAC have identified the priority areas that they would like to work on, and that is here in the presentation which outlines the priority areas. Under each one, it is quite specific. For example, one of the things WHSAC would like to do is to lead the ganja (or marijuana) strategy for whole of Eylandt. So that is an issue that has been identified in the IP and WHSAC have identified they would like to take ownership of that strategy.

So the way we are going to support WHSAC is that NIAA, CMC and ALC have put funding towards an Executive or Project Officer for WHSAC to support their work. Also having an Advisory Committee so that will consist of NT Health, WHSAC Directors and any other stakeholders that are needed in that process to actually work through all of those

priority areas identified in the implementation plan. Also, if there are any specific issues that WHSAC would like to raise, than can be addressed there as well.

I note today it was raised that there was concern that Bickerton Island is only serviced every fortnight. It is serviced on Wednesdays and also now on Fridays. During the WHSAC meetings- the Health IP discussion meetings - it was identified, Elliott and the Milyakburra community identified, that having nurses fly-in fly-out on Wednesdays isn't enough for them. So that has been incorporated into the IP as something that we want to work towards with WHSAC.

Since those meetings, even though the IP has not officially been signed, NT Health, CMC and police as well, have gone out to Bickerton Island to talk to the community. Through those conversations we have actually started the second day on Bickerton Island for Fridays. That was set in October, so now it's Wednesday and Friday every week. That is just a starting point.

We have agreed to go back after six months- that will be probably around April, to assess how that is going and whether that is enough or whether we need to look at what else we can do to support the Milyakburra community. That is the model for health; it's very much working together to address those areas and noting that some things will be trickier than others. But focussing on, how do we do it, and how do we work together to get there?

Mr GUYULA: I listened to the conversation of these people about Milyakburra health issues that they have been trying to achieve to get some training, or new health workers or nurses or sisters to go on towards doctors and labour stuff in there.

Apart from around the community, which I have not heard yet, but I am talking about or asking questions about what I have heard from Bickerton Island and the struggles they have. They are moving but there are obstacles they need to get some support from the NT Government in resourcing and stuff.

Ms BEASLEY: Absolutely. That is the purpose. The priorities that were talked about earlier, around supporting training opportunities and getting more local people into the health and wellbeing space, that is incorporated as a priority under the implementation plan as well. The advisory group will be that mechanism to start working through those things and working out who needs to do what, and how we get there to achieve these goals. Noting that some of these goals, they will take time. And also working with WHSAC to build their capacity and through this process, WHSAC may identify that they want to take responsibility for one particular service or program, and then continue to build their capacity to eventually transition long term to community control and responsibility.

Mr EDGINGTON: Just a quick one. From your perspective what are the real challenges around Local Decision Making and do you see being on the ground any opportunities to improve it?

Ms BEASLEY: I think as you have heard from some Anindilyakwa leaders today, Local Decision Making it's fantastic, it's working really well here on Groote. Of course, there is always going to be, it's an iterative process- this is something that is quite new. So it is not always going to go completely smoothly. There are going to be some setbacks, whether it is about funding or whatever it may be.

What I have seen which works very well here is working together. We have a fantastic, collaborative working relationship with ALC and the ALC Board. If something is not quite working right, it is about getting together and looking at how we can do it differently, or what we need to do to address that issue. So I think we have a really good way of working here, and using the steering groups and those different mechanisms to oversee the implementation has been really helpful in that process.

I think also ensuring there is adequate communication across community and stakeholders. So using things like the newsletter and providing progress reports, or going out and speaking to different groups about what is going on, has also been really helpful. So I think it's going quite well here on Groote and it's a shame that you weren't able to hear from AHAC and GEBIPAC today, because the passion in what they are doing is very evident.

Mr EDGINGTON: Just finally, you are based here on Groote Eylandt? Is there a Commonwealth Government person from NIAA based here as well? How does that fit in with the overall progress towards Local Decision Making?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes. There is. There is a GEC based in Angurugu. To be honest, that particular role isn't, I suppose, actively involved in the LDM process in the same way perhaps I am. However, their Directors and in terms of funding and things like that, they are involved in, and at certain meetings. Perhaps it is not at the GEC level, but at the Director and higher level. NIAA has been involved in different aspects of funding and things like that.

Mr EDGINGTON: Would there be any benefit in having a NIAA person on the ground here to share some of the load, I suppose, when it comes to engagement with the different groups, corporations and dealing with particular Commonwealth funding issues?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes, perhaps... I think from my perspective, working on Groote, we have great leadership from other areas of NT Government as well. For example, Justin Sorensen is the Director for Local Decision Making for Education

out there. So he is actually based on Groote Eylandt in Umbakumba as well and he is working to progress all the priority areas under the Education Implementation Plan.

We have quite a good support network of NTG staff as well.

Just building upon what Elliott was talking about- GEBIPAC and the boarding school, in addition to that there is actually a teacher training program for Anindilyakwa staff to ensure that, when the time comes for the independent boarding school, there are teachers ready to be there and teach.

Mr CHAIR: Correct me if I am wrong, the system looks like it is reasonably well set up here in Groote. In that same vein, is there a risk of it being personality driven? Are there big personalities, I guess is the question? If Tony or Mark are not here or you are not here, does it fall away or is it systematic?

Ms BEASLEY: I do not think so, because it is not just one person, to one person, it is groups. GEBIPAC is a whole board of people who are extremely passionate. I would love you all to sit in a WHSAC meeting because the passion in the room... there is around 15 Anindilyakwa leaders in the room talking about their priorities for health. The same applies to AHAC - they have a large Anindilyakwa employment in AHAC themselves. So it is not driven by one individual, and it is not one advocate, it is very much across the board, from my perspective.

Mr YAN: On the communication stuff we heard it yesterday and Tony speak about it today; where the Regional Councils fit in Local Decision Making discussions. So you are saying it works here because I think, with the Anindilyakwa Land Council the communication is quite seamless through DCM, through the Land Council out into those various organisations that represent health, education and so on to the community. Where does the Regional Council sit in that process as far as your position goes?

Ms BEASLEY: In terms of communication, or where it sits in terms of the whole process?

Mr YAN: As far as your communication goes. So are the Regional Councils being included in those LDM discussions at your level with Anindilyakwa Land Council or is that happening somewhere else?

Ms BEASLEY: So with the Local Government Implementation Plan or the priority regarding Local Government, there is a transition committee which meets generally monthly and that includes the EARC, ALC, CMC Local Government Team, to work through the transition process around the proposed de-amalgamation and what that might look like. Those conversations absolutely involve the EARC. Further to that, sorry I've lost my train of thought...

Mr POTTER: Can I just jump on that, just to confirm the de-amalgamation? Are they separating from East Arnhem Regional Council group?

Ms BEASLEY: That is the goal for Anindilyakwa leaders but as I mentioned before, that has not actually been made a Cabinet decision yet.

Mr POTTER: No, but are we working through it?

Ms BEASLEY: Absolutely. So the Transition Committee is working through it and that is where Ian Summers' role comes in. So he is part of those committee meetings as well now. Sorry, I have another point around it...

Mr POTTER: Can I jump on that while you keep going?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes, yes. Of course.

Mr POTTER: Does that make it actually easier in some instances for ALC would actually get in and get the LDM? Is it removing some of the friction that happens by having a regional council? Because that was one of the issues we had with other organisations, by no virtue create friction because everyone has got competing priorities. But if you are working towards a de-amalgamation, does it actually make it easier to have the LDM discussions and structure things in a way that, there is government money to come in, to then start working on the individual priorities without influence? Does that make sense?

Ms BEASLEY: Yes. I am not sure if I can answer that to be honest, I am happy to take it on notice.

Mr POTTER: No. I am just curious if you knew off the top of your head.

Ms BEASLEY: And the other just to your point as well. So with the de-amalgamation, there were broad consultations among the Anindilyakwa communities and also the Yolngu communities around the proposed de-amalgamation. I have actually got the presentation that was provided to all communities as well. The EARC, ALC and CMC were all present at these consultations for questions and to talk through what that might look like. A very thorough consultation process was undertaken through that process.

Mr CHAIR: And the consultation needs to be exhaustive, right? Because not everyone can read this slide deck and understand all of that sort of stuff. So it is that buy in from everyone.

Ms BEASLEY: It is about going out physically to communities and being present. Absolutely.

Mr CHAIR: Any further questions? Any comments, questions from the floor, we are going to wrap up.

Mr HAUTOP: Just on that last, it is a good question about how this works in the Local Government space and Mark mentioned this morning, there is a paper that is on our website you may have read.

The issue you will probably find with a place like Groote; it is a very small population and fragmentation doesn't help anybody and the model; again, getting to the question we had earlier today about voice and treaty, the idea of having that local voice in Local Government is very important.

A lot of people understand that. There is a long history of having their own councils a long time ago and there would be things, remember the community councils.

But making that work together in the landscaping architecture of Groote is important. So this whole idea about getting together in the same rooms and discussing issues, obviously going back and going through all your legal requirements as a Local Government or a Land Council. But working together that has been a big push, but this is all bred from having a voice on the ground. That is where that real push is.

Because decisions are made in Nhulunbuy; if you tell anybody that, it does not make any sense to them. That is just again in my experience, through that consultation process thing many years of conversations.

Ms BEASLEY: Maybe it's also worth noting as well, I was having a look at the submissions for this, and I know that the EARC submission was submitted quite some time ago. When they perhaps were not as supportive of the de-amalgamation process. So since those consultations were undertaken the council has made a resolution to support the de-amalgamation process.

Mr POTTER: He reiterated that to us at the airport yesterday.

Ms BEASLEY: Yes, great!

Mr CHAIR: And that is because; sorry not because but partly our process here as a committee has gone for so long that things have moved and we did not have an opportunity to travel for a period of time so we have gone slow. Then I was looking at some of the submissions and they are dated 2021, whatever month and all of sudden here we are well down the track. So it is moving while we stand still a little bit and now I think potentially what we are also doing is creating that conversation again that people are going back and reviewing it and thinking about it and shining a light on it somewhat.

Mr HAUTOP: Can I add a key moment particularly around the local government's discussion. As you say it has come a long way since last year but what actually happened was there was a request from Anindilyakwa leaders and Yolngu leaders to say we do not want any balanda in the room. They locked the door and nudded it out for about an hour and a half and they walked out of that comfortable. Yolngu leaders said that we want to respect what Anindilyakwa people are doing. Tony, Thomas and Elliott were in that room as well and they put forward. That is how we got to this point. So that was so special. That was the key moment to get to where we are and subsequently East Arnhem then resolved to support us moving forward.

Obviously there are a few steps, as Mel said to get through, but that is how you resolve those issues and that is how that should be done.

Mr GUYULA: On the two trips that we have been out to, one to Alice Springs and one to Kintore last year, and now Yirrkala and here. I am hearing a lot about community councils model getting back to through the East Arnhem Regional Council is the authority with shires, and they would be the voice of the Local Government. Communities put up shires, could be the Local Government through Aboriginal community leaders. If the people wanted to return the model of Aboriginal Community Councils back in communities here, in communities and the East Arnhem shire is looking at the Local Government where they can be looking out for them. Do you follow what I am trying to say?

There has been a big demand around the Indigenous communities. I even heard about that when we were in Kintore and Alice Springs and people are saying it through Local Decision Making. Like you said, the Community Councils here, like a shire, can be run by Yolngu and the Anindilyakwa people. The Local Government and the shire system is being looked after from Gove area or somewhere anyway.

At least giving people an opportunity to run the councils the way they want it according to Local Decision Making.

I am sorry if I have confused you but I am just asking.

Mr CHAIR: From our small bit of experience, it would seem that this model is evolving, but also one that is getting more buy in.

Mr GUYULA: Yes.

Mr HAUTOP: We spoke earlier Mark. You remember 1991 when the Anindilyakwa people said, “We want to break away from the NLC and have our own voice” and that is where we are today, as a leading council. It is a similar journey they are on ...

Mr GUYULA: A similar journey, yes.

Mr HAUTOP: Tony has been a big supporter and champion of this. Groote should have always had, in his opinion, a regional council. Tiwi got one, for example. It always had two layers of the Land Council, but Groote was subsumed. That has been a fight he has taken on for 15 years now to have that strong voice back.

Mr GUYULA: Yes.

Mr CHAIR: We look forward to the next update.

Mr GUYULA: Yes. It is a funny question to you through to the Department of the Chief Minister through to the NT Government, actually.

Mr CHAIR: Thank you, everyone, for contributing today. I thank the committee and for all the support behind the scenes which has been great. I thank everyone for being part of it. We have had a really good couple of days. I think we have learned a fair bit and will certainly we will go away now and our journey is to continue to consult. If there are any other groups that would like to put in submissions, or update submission or just tell us something that you think we need to know we are always receptive to that.

Again thank you for your time and thank you for having us.

The committee concluded
