



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

COUNCIL OF TERRITORY CO-OPERATION

PUBLIC HEARING, WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2010, ALICE SPRINGS

Witnesses:

MacDonnell Shire Council, represented by:

Mr Syd Anderson, President
Mr Graham Taylor, CEO
Mr David Doolan, Elected Member
Mr Gary Wilson, Elected Member
Mr Joe Rawson, Elected Member

Mr CHAIRMAN: I declare open this meeting of Council of Territory Corporation and welcome the following witnesses. We have Mr Syd Anderson, the Shire President; we have Councillor David Doolan; we have Councillor Gary Wilson and we have the CEO Mr Graham Taylor and they are appearing before this Council to brief it in relation to its terms of reference. This hearing is open to the public and is being recorded. The transcript will be produced and will be available for the public. In certain circumstances the committee may decide that evidence or parts thereof can be taken in camera and remain confidential. Please advise me if you wish any part of your evidence to be in camera, but I remind you that this is at the discretion of the committee. You are reminded that evidence given to the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. For the purpose of the *Hansard* record, I ask that you state your full name and the capacity in which you are appearing today. I also ask that you state your name each time you speak.

So Syd will you be able to give your name and then the councillors and then the CEO just for the record of *Hansard* and what your role is.

Mr ANDERSON: Sid Anderson, the Shire President.

Mr DOOLAN: David Doolan (inaudible)

Mr RAWSON: Joe Rawson Macdonnell Shire Council

Mr TAYLOR: Graham Taylor CEO for Council

Mr CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for attending today I think it is about six months I guess since we last met you and I think Graham was just new in the job so he has had a bit of time to think about licensing.

Joe from Macdonnell Shire we should also say that (inaudible) yesterday so they raised some issues that we probably will presume a little bit later that is okay.

But I just like to start off and say maybe you can give us a run down of how things are going in relation to the Macdonnell Shire. Are you able to give us a bit of a summary of the good things that are happening that would be sort of Macdonnell Shire or any Shire now to we just want to see what the good things that are happening and what key issues keep the CTC (inaudible). What is happening out there that are positive? (inaudible) what is being achieved with the new Council?

Mr ANDERSON: (inaudible) the Shire is working well and (inaudible) and the Shire with community people can work together and I (inaudible) the way we are going.

Mr TAYLOR: Absolutely it is Graham Taylor yes President Syd is speaking very well on behalf of the Council because they have chosen a path to work with the community and come from the bottom up rather than provide services from the top down find out needs than look at how to meet those needs that match the lifestyle for the community that they are looking for in their own communities. So there is a shift in the mind set and a shift in our approach like all things we are evolving and things become new and as they evolve and new first time we do something that is new you quite often do not get it perfect but we are expecting that we learn from that and we go forwards and that is the process that is happening in the Council if we make a mistake we fix it and go forwards.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Is there a change in what you were doing (inaudible)? When you go to places that Council first (inaudible) in the government promised you a whole range of (inaudible) also put a whole range of core functions and things that you had to do are you

more or less setting some of that aside and saying this is our opportunity and we would like to (inaudible) and we would move things around and so this is what we see as the important things because after what happened from the top down that was from the government saying this is for the government are you now sort of not taking that too much into account but working at your own agenda (inaudible)?

Mr ANDERSON: I think both the communities are dealing in remote area and the government gives us to work with it so mix together and make it good (inaudible) work together not just getting one thing thrown at us and forgetting about the grass roots community so if we can bring them together closer so when we work together we have got a force.

Mr CHAIRMAN: This was a document they first brought out it was called Reform Benefits and the Council being amalgamated and I suppose our job is to say or ask are these benefits happening on the ground because one of the reasons the government said we wanted to make it bigger Councils is to amalgamate Councils because for certain reasons and I suppose our job is to say well you have those reasons that gives you people rather than big Councils absolutely happen on the ground. And I will give you an example it says the benefits will be real local jobs so the question would be has the Shire produced more jobs or are there less jobs than before?

Mr ANDERSON: That is the question we are always asking in the community to our self and like it said the government said there will be more jobs for people it is not happening. And people are saying there should be more jobs and I can not get one because the government looking at people that are more educated now to get a proper job but what about the people that have worked for the community government. You know steady jobs they should be given an opportunity to keep growing and to look after their community and then you get kids behind us you know that could get more education can take over the **ASM** jobs and community job they can do that. But there is other people that have been working through before you amalgamated you should give them the opportunity to continue and train on the job to get more capable for what they are doing sort of thing. That is what I want to see.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (inaudible) through community government.

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Are there the same number of those people still working or less or has the amalgamation meant that layer of people some of them lost their jobs?

Mr ANDERSON: I think they lost their jobs sort of thing. You might get one person working there.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do we have any idea how many jobs would have been lost? Do you have a number? Does anybody know how many people were employed pre (inaudible)?

Mr DOOLAN: When we were CDEP for instance with the Titjikala, with the tourist industry we had 64 people employed, today we are luck to have 10 because we lost all our CDEP and we cannot run the camps or anything like that, so when the intervention come into it they killed a lot of communities and like was saying, you know, like the people who worked for the Community Government Council in the old days were actually up there giving the younger generation (inaudible) and how to get to where they were, but when the intervention stepped in it just (inaudible) early, it was killed early. We could (inaudible) to the (inaudible).

Mr CHAIRMAN: Was it the intervention or was it the amalgamation of the Councils, because they are two separate things?

Mr DOOLAN: It was the intervention, because the intervention was one (inaudible) community.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: With the intervention and (inaudible) that is where the position (inaudible) out to (inaudible) CDEP (inaudible) and then there was the decision to remove CDEP so shires or the local government councils were not allowed to use CDEP as a labour force, which really took away the capacity of shires to have this workforce and that is a major issue.

Mr DOOLAN: And that is one of the big issues that we have in the community because we only have a limited amount of money, we only have a limited amount of positions for the people on the communities to work. So you go point 5 up to point 2 and like that and the money that is allocated to the communities is not what it used to be. Mind you I am talking about \$50 000 when we used to get \$9m a year. The Macdonnell Shire does not get \$9m a year for each community.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: I can add to that when you are finished.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: You raised an important point (inaudible) for this – with that removal of that \$9m because it is not only just (inaudible) but it is also a capital (inaudible) ...

Mr DOOLAN: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR... that those payments brought into those communities with the tourists and staff because I remember – I (inaudible) going to really impact on the Titjikala issue with the tourism (inaudible). CDEP did allow community government councils to engage (inaudible) (inaudible) proper ...

Mr DOOLAN: Yes, (inaudible).

Ms SCRYMGOUR... and which gave communities and councils the ability to hire someone on a full-time job. The federal government's decision took that away, removed that, because people thought the CDEP was not a real job, but it was a mechanism in which you could (inaudible) enterprises and working towards (inaudible).

Mr CHAIRMAN: The Macdonnell does not run the CDEP program. So when we went to Santa Teresa yesterday, how many people will be directly employed (inaudible) Santa Teresa by the Macdonnell Shire?

Mr TAYLOR: 18, I think. 18, 19.

Mr CHAIRMAN: And they would be all Indigenous?

Mr TAYLOR: I can tell you collectively, not all, but dominantly, yes. As an organisation we have got about 380 employees, 342 are Indigenous, across the whole organisation.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Just say with Santa Teresa (inaudible) ...

Mr TAYLOR: Okay.

Mr CHAIRMAN: How many (inaudible) people would be employed before the amalgamation (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: Do not know. I have not seen the figures pre the old audits, etc. But the question, CDEP has been a big one for us; it has been a big shift. It is now CEA looking after CDEP. The shift for us is about – and following on from the council's direction of what they are giving us is to raise people through levels and give them career advantages and career supports and development, get them ready for advancement. We are actually doing that now, because you cannot suddenly create new jobs overnight.

As I was just saying a little while ago, we have a \$36m budget. \$1m of that is rates and about \$2m of that is financial assistant grants, so the \$33m is basically tied to giving a particular service so you are employing for that service not – and you have to get a specific skill for that service, so it makes things very tricky. So what we are doing is raising development for people to come up from a worker into a supervisor, a supervisor to a team leader and team leader eventually into shire service manager. That is actually happening now. We have got, in two of our communities, the Indigenous workforces have come up now and we are just about to appoint someone going into a team leader's position, senior position for it, and we have got two others coming in at the senior position – one is a team leader and two others are the senior, so we are starting to lift that.

We have entered into an agreement with NT Training, so we are taking up sponsorship for apprenticeships. We need a plumber, electrical and carpenter, so we are looking for Indigenous trainees coming through the training program that do sponsorships when they finish they come back to us work in our communities for two years and provide skills and training back to others and with that skill we are doing that already. That is just being agreed to with NT Training so there is a process now about trying to lift people as best as we can with extra skills and extra training to bring them up.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So that we understand you correctly you are giving 18 people (inaudible) how many do the basic (inaudible) fund through your specific grants like someone with (inaudible)

Mr TAYLOR: They are partly funded between which projects they are doing they are costed out per hour to the work they do against that project or that project whether it is a civil program under our core funding or our funding or whether it is an agency service if they are doing work on an agency but their hours of work is then costed to that. They do a mixture rather than have sometimes the project requires a full time employer but it needs someone to do some of the support work for others for example sporting and recreation running programs so you get the qualified people for sport and recreation that they bring in community members to work with them as adult supervision. The next thing that happens with that is that if there are no repairs and maintenance required for reporting these facilities to allow that program to happen then these people come in and work on that maintenance. Some of our civil crews come and work as well do that work and they get charged, we cost their hours working on that to that sports program and then they go back to the civil works over here.

Santa Teresa you have got Di Nona who is the Shire Service Manager I think you have got two others the rest I think is indigenous. I am just playing from memory at Santa Teresa I think you have got Di and two so there are three people the rest are indigenous and including one of the team leaders.

Mr DOONLAN: What about the (inaudible)

Mr TAYLOR: Yes he is so that is three other so that makes four. Sorry you are right that is four.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Four non Indigenous staff is Aboriginal staff how are they employed are they employed full time? , through the Shire?

Mr TAYLOR: There are 13 employees with us some work 50/50 which is the half time which is that issue that links in the Centreline as well it has an impact on people wanting sometimes, some people do not want work full time, other do. Other jobs are not full time jobs so some are part time.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Can I ask how many full time positions are (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: Off the top of my head no I do not know. As an organisation we have got 294 full time equivalents. We have got 294 as an organisation I know that much. As an organisation full time equivalents but when you have got 384 staff there is a fair few in their doing part time as in half worked jobs.

Mr CHAIRMAN: I may just ask you a few questions through this. It also says that there will be better services and what it says it that there will be minimal service (inaudible) government services in the community and more (inaudible) more government money spent on (inaudible) local government services, roads, land fill and also none core services such has housing maintaining (inaudible) Do you think that has got better the delivery of services under the new a town that the Community Government Council do people say the services are better now under the new Shire or do they (inaudible) happy because the feeling (inaudible)

Mr ANDERSON: (inaudible) so it is not sort of working.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (inaudible) lost that control.

Mr TAYLOR: Can I make a comment on that. I think that is an issue we have missed in the merges of councils into a greater shire it is an understanding of what has actually happened it is not clear so the community has not been sold or promoted just happened. The clarity of roles and responsibilities and also the impact of council as a service delivery agent not necessarily an owner or a community runner so there is still an issue there for individuals to set their own community standards and values of how they would live yet keep looking to the shire for and there is a bit of that and I think some of that really an issue about information first and how that information is put across. But yes I agree with Syd some of these things are not necessarily bad we are doing what we can because we are still coming together.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: I was saying to member for Katherine some of the small union government councils roles are not perfect at least the ownership of those council's Aboriginal people in those communities felt that they owned the council. The sense of ownership was there in those councils and I know this from my own electorate that people feel that is gone and that there is no (inaudible) by an organisation that sits a long way away from their community. If you guys in Alice Springs (inaudible) is how far away? I mean it might seem like 60 or 80 kilometres but that is a bit distance and that is what (inaudible)

Mr CHAIRMAN: and I think what we aim to do in terms (inaudible) comment I get by the Shire (inaudible) councils that they are asking now (inaudible) Daly River (inaudible)

Ms SCRYMGOUR: The Shire Manager tells you to go back to the CEO or President of the Shire (inaudible) you have got to bring out CLC (inaudible)

Mr DOOLAN: If visitors wanted to come in the old days if they wanted to come to the community they had to go to the CLC first to get permission.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Has the CLC delegated that to any of the (inaudible)

Mr DOOLAN: In the old days we use to have elected members in all regions.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: And they do not work anymore?

Mr DOOLAN: (inaudible) people just ride in and out whenever they like. There is nothing there for (inaudible) if you would like to come out now all you have to do is get in contact with the Shire and you are on the doorstep.

In the old days you had to go through that Council and come back to our representative of the Land Council to give (inaudible) Local government come we all know straight up you drive in the communities now not only keep your car (inaudible) government policy to rock up who are you we were out do you drink (inaudible) people turn up to your doorsteps (inaudible) in that area we can come back and say right (inaudible) come to the shire councils they must get in contact with the shire first and go through the right process through those shires and then the shire service deliver the operator (inaudible) elected councils that these people turn up and what day are you leaving (inaudible) issue for the councils.

Mr CHAIRMAN: That is an important issue. The other one reform the (inaudible) road and infrastructure have the roads improved are they better or worse or just money (inaudible) do you know what roads are your yet?

Mr TAYLOR: We have a list we are still checking whether that is still relevant or right.

Mr ANDERSON: (inaudible) the roads need to be upgraded (inaudible)

Mr CHAIRMAN: So it is said here there would be road money spent on roads (inaudible), more sealed roads in townships, scheduled road grading program for local and link roads and new and better (inaudible) facilities. That is for the guidelines there. Have there been any new roads built?

Mr DOOLAN: Yes. The Maryvale Road has been – I think that has been nearly \$7m.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, NT.

Mr DOOLAN: (Inaudible) spent nearly \$7m on the road, so we are happy with what we got so far.

Mr CHAIRMAN: But in regard to your own roads, do you know what roads you have got here (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: We have a listing of – the Northern Territory government's listings of what they believe are ours and theirs. We are currently going through that and there are some on there, that list, we do not believe are quite correct, but we are having this to and fro to explain and clarify just to finite the list before we start getting into accepting responsibility for other assets unless there is some appropriate obligation to fund to be able to do the work and take the responsibility for them.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Was the Santa Teresa Road on the list they want to give you?

Mr TAYLOR: No. Yes, that is an NT government road that one.

Mr ANDERSON: (Inaudible) government funded one (inaudible).

Mr CHAIRMAN: You might like this one, according to this it is said there would be less humbug. It talks about local communities will deal with issues (inaudible), not complex administration and finance. Community members and local staff will focus on getting things done and it says focus on service delivery, not administration and (inaudible) and pressures from outside agencies and local managers (inaudible) support of our staff will get things done.

Syd, is there less or more people from outside agencies turning up in your community?

Mr ANDERSON: I think there are more coming into communities. We had one agency come and talking about this one, the next minute, two days later we get people back on the community – meeting, meeting, meeting – and we have too much humbug, I think.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We are probably part of that, but you have to believe we are trying to do it for the right reasons.

Mr ANDERSON: Yes, I understand that.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: What is the role, Syd, of the GBMs (inaudible)?

Mr ANDERSON: Maybe they are a holiday camp.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible).

Mr ANDERSON: But some of ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (Inaudible) holiday camp ...

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR... but with those GBMs though, are they not – or it seems like they are not (inaudible) because they were put in – you know, after the intervention they were put there to coordinate ...

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR... you know, the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory government homelands to try and make things better, but it seems like everywhere we go there are problems. Somewhere, some places it is working when you have got GBMs that work with the community we think is working quite well.

Mr ANDERSON: I think ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Some places it is not.

Mr ANDERSON: Yes. I think the first GBM was all right. They were here to engage with people at informal meetings and tell what is going on with the intervention or what the community people saw some of the intervention or whether they are happy with it or those sorts of things and we have a new GBM now. He is getting on board, he is all right, but we need to see him come out to the people, informal meeting and talk about (inaudible) where

we stand with government and how can we sort of achieve and go forward. But still people are wondering what they are doing there.

Mr TAYLOR: I totally support what the President is saying; it is about getting closer to the community and working with them. The issue of coordination is a very interesting one and it has been one of frustration in some of our communities about the white Toyota brigade turning up at various times and unannounced and the community having to drop everything and speak and change and deal with it as they turn up and go out at will.

It has caused some problems. The council has spent some time and came back through its local boards about the community's frustration with that, so they spent some time and we have had some discussions with Matt Fagan and Laurie Berryman about trying to find an MOU about processes so that there are maybe arranged days for coming out and there are who coordinates it and who handles it so that they come through a single contact to coordinate arrival, the GBMs do not turn up. So some of that is actually happening, but it is very slow and change sometimes is not as quick as turning a light on, so, yes, it is the human factor, I think, about just the change of coordination that goes with the role of GBM.

Ms WALKER: And through the Chair such an important point that you have raised as well (inaudible) you have got community members (inaudible) in and just not only in my electorate sometimes I bump into a TO and say I have got to go to a meeting and I say what meeting is that and they say Oh I do not know so we really need to deal with that the judgement that with consultations (inaudible) meetings with meetings (inaudible)

Mr ANDERSON: That is like when we had meetings with all of the government people they put us here to accept for the local government but they still went round our back and had a lot of meeting and people got frustrated. Why can we not get the government and the agency come to the shire and come (inaudible) come to the right channel then we can work together.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (inaudible) not necessarily but unless you first of all ask then you have got the right to say that is not suitable, that is not the right time (inaudible) you can not come on that

Mr ANDERSON: Maybe Saturday you know they would not come.

Mr TAYLOR: It is Mr Chairman it is coordination which if you think about it is one of the prime roles of the GBM and the discussions we have had with Matt and Laurie was maybe that is the simple focus where people need to coordinate their difference services duties through that person about the right day to come to community, no there are too many things on, not that day, maybe another day.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Well I sent out to some of the communities and I heard again yesterday at Santa Teresa that the GBM is not necessarily not there all of the time

Mr TAYLOR: That is another issue.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: But it is a major issue so if you are talking about coordination and trying to get on top of who is coming and going in this community you want someone who is going to be there all of the time and seems to know that goes and sits down with the traditional owners in that community or the shire council addresses (inaudible) about who is coming and doing (inaudible).

Mr CHAIRMAN: Can I just ask then who GBM overrides the Councils say not only in your community Syd some department might come and ask you they will also (inaudible) GBM

ask the people in the community of let them know or have they got some sort of overriding power?

Mr ANDERSON: I think in my community we get a letter from one Council listen these people might be coming can we (inaudible) get approval from them and we take it and fax it back and get (inaudible) back for that month they are going to come around and I guess the total GBM for accommodation we are coming on this day and we have got approval from the community for accommodation for our visitor so that is the only way we get (inaudible).

Mr DOOLAN: (inaudible) I get the GBM coming to me and telling me that they are going to have a meeting about issues on the communities and she sets it all up but she does not come to talk to me or the (inaudible) this is where the GBM have to understand that the Aboriginal life like you have got someone that comes from Canberra or New South Wales does not know anything about Indigenous culture. That is where I have a problem (inaudible) see you later I am the elder of the community my ancestors were born and bred there and she would come up to me and say like last week (inaudible) she said I had to leave town for a government meeting with a tourist I said no I am not going no where I have got nothing to do with the tourism it has closed down no you have got to go I said you do not tell me what to do. These are the things that really hurt the people (inaudible) and also it is like where Graham is at (inaudible) he does not know what goes on in every community, all the 14 communities, because even the shire service manager does not know himself because he gets (inaudible) and nominating to him. 'We have got to (inaudible) housing, we have got to talk about these things' but it is nothing outside the community people that understand and even the CEO of the Macdonnell Shire does not know what is going on.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Could I ask about the GBM? What difference does a GBM make?

Mr DOOLAN: Well ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I mean have they done anything that he could say they have achieved?

Mr ANDERSON: Some of the grants and maybe we asked for bluestone metal, we got that. That is the only one. But we still communicate with the GBM how can we sit on the table together, engage and ask what sort of project we want to get and where we are going to get money to one project for other project. We are trying to get that together at Papunya, not just only with Aboriginal people, maybe a few elders, education, police, health, school and maybe shop members. You know, we are trying to engage one another and trying to figure out how we can get funding for most of our projects. We try to do that but, yes, taking too slow.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Would those positions, those GBM positions be better placed – I suppose they could become (inaudible) if the manager was in the shire to become – I mean I am not necessarily saying you have got your GBM Titjikala ...

Mr ANDERSON: Anywhere you go.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: ...if you had control over that funding though, that is to that position, you could employ your own person to be able to then get better coordination of services.

Mr DOOLAN: Well, we do, Marion, because like our shire service managers, they are more adapted to what community issues and all of the – I think your GBMs is just a waste of government money. They do nothing. Some other places they might do, but I (inaudible) really do just the core function. It is just a waste of good government money.

Mr ANDERSON: I think at Papunya we have got an (inaudible) office there with GBM, Aboriginal person working beside him, so we talk among ourselves how can we use him and

the GBM to our informal meeting and ask for how can we get funding, not just from the shire but from the GBMs (inaudible) to support the four communities out at Luritja/Pintubi area (inaudible) area. Like from the (inaudible) Papunya, Mount Liebig and Kintore. So we work together.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Because they are Commonwealth officers they could be chasing up other funding ...

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR... avenues for the shire's communities to try and get (inaudible).

Mr ANDERSON: Yes, that is what we always thought.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes. Look, like all things there is a human factor in any person who is sitting in that position. The position is from a federal government point of view is to try and coordinate and get better service delivery through the coordination processes in each community. Some of those shire GBMs look after more than one community. For example, Syd said he has got one GBM that is Papunya, Haasts Bluff, Mount Liebig and Kintore, so, yes, it is possible, but they are not in the community at the time, because they could be – but one of the keys and the success factor that Syd is raising is very good, is to become part of the community and working at the community about the lower level, what are their needs, and then trying to work facilitation processes around the community achieving something and all the other resources that apply in that community service delivery agencies to try and find the best solution and then find the funding for it. And that is basically, at the moment, what tends to be happening with the GBMs, is a shift from coordination into a grant chaser.

And sometimes it is a grant chaser based on what they think rather than, as Syd is saying, is come down to the people, find out what it is they are looking for and what do they need to make their lifestyle a bit different.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible) money. That is where it stops and that is what - and the council (inaudible) – my old council would not got down that path and I must admit they said that the amount of money we had to get in grants (inaudible) enough money to spend on (inaudible) to get (inaudible). One idea is that the council (inaudible) (inaudible) the council would (inaudible) but it seems to be just a layer of complexity that, I do not know. Do the GBMs (inaudible) (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: Again that is a human factor.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: That is right (inaudible)

Mr TAYLOR: That is not a criticism of the system but there is always a human factor whether you have the right match for the person for the position. And some work well, some work very industriously towards trying to achieve for the communities, some over industriously I understand you are going to (inaudible) this afternoon is that right or tomorrow? You will see a beautiful BMX track that was built and developed out there, actually an initiative that came out of the GBM as a result of a few people talking to the GBM about need. Yes it was a good thing and local communities come out of the teams come out of Alice and go out there and race against the local community kids as well. Great, fantastic it was a big opening.

If we just took a little bit extra time and working on that now because we now have a very high quality dirt BMX track which meant roads washes away so if we take a little bit more time in the thinking and maybe spent a little bit more money at the beginning and put a

sealed surface or something on it we may have had a whole new ball game. For now it has got a limited life.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Normally that would be a shire (inaudible) so you have got a Commonwealth body moving into jobs that really are saying (inaudible) it would normally be funds from the Shire?

Mr TAYLOR: If you were a local government else where in traditional in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland yes it would be and some of that would be sport and rec grants to do some of that as well but here as I mentioned earlier we have very limited, we have virtually got up to \$3m of untied money the rest of it is all tied.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: But this was always going to be a problem? Were the Labor government (inaudible) came and immediately (inaudible)

Mr TAYLOR: Yes change with change with change.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: The intervention (inaudible) I mean sometimes (inaudible)

Mr DOOLAN: That is (inaudible) called Canberra.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Let's just move off there to areas (inaudible) work with regional shires to set local priorities and (inaudible) shire council regarding (inaudible) funding employments (inaudible). I suppose the general question would be simply how the local boards are going and specifically in relation to Santa Teresa they gave some questions (inaudible) so how do you see the local boards working are the people (inaudible)

Mr ANDERSON: (inaudible) intervention took over and Councils just fell down and we let the local government get the community Global Board more than its responsibility to talk about the issues and being towards its elected members and in some of the communities they have been given an opportunity and they elect their local board and some of them are not interested in coming to talk about it I do not know. What is happening with the people themselves not interested to go for board meetings because we give the opportunity for them to talk and raise issues for their communities?

Mr CHAIRMAN: (inaudible) generally speaking in the local board asks the Council to do something the Council would take it seriously and sort those issues?

Mr ANDERSON: I think we listen to the local board and we put it to the CEO to take notes and (inaudible) and then we bring it down to the local board and then we listen what each community are talking about, what needs (inaudible) and we just think of the funding that we are going to use for this and that. So we look at it both ways and we cannot just give Santa Teresa so much and others (inaudible) miss out, so we have got to evenly look after the 14 communities.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: In the context – you are at Papunya?...

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: In the context of local board at Papunya do you see some benefit in the community because of the work the local board is doing?

Mr ANDERSON: Yes, the local board is doing a good job at Papunya. Like we have informal meetings before we come to a local board meeting, we discuss what can we see (inaudible) for the Papunya area, you know, Papunya itself, so we discuss there and the

local board pick up what the community members say and then they bring it up to the local board meeting. Then, like myself and other two councillors from Kintore will listen properly and notes taken down and then when we come to our council meeting, elected members, then the thing is just put on the agenda and we talk about it, and then we talk about the money and the job, how can we spend so much for this community and Kintore and Mount Liebig miss out, or Haasts Bluff, that have not got elected members in the council. So we look after both, Haasts Bluff and Mount Liebig who have not got elected members, so we look after the whole four.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: So you feel it is working all right?

Mr ANDERSON: Yes, it is working. Yes.

Ms WALKER: I understand that as shire councillors here and I am hoping (inaudible) the council and council members will have been through the governance training to understand what your roles and responsibilities are and how you work; does that training also extend to local board members such that they understand?

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Ms WALKER: Because I am just sort of getting a sense that the people that (inaudible) at Santa Teresa and I guess it (inaudible) to the East Arnhem Shire in my electorate (inaudible) not in your community obviously, but it just connects the local to the shire council to get the message through so I am just trying to understand what level of education and support training your board members have had around governance which equips them to be the representative in their community and feed into the shire council and with that to understand the bigger picture about the shire and I certainly understand that right back to the implementation of local government reforms before 1 July 2008 people were quite confused in my electorate as to whether or not they had been adequately communicated with and were consulted about these changes that were coming, some of the disconnect we might be seeing or that I am seeing goes right back to before caucus came in to understand why we are going through this change.

Mr ANDERSON: We started governance training since we were a transition committee, that eight months, sort of thing, and we carried on from there, where the council is now and we try to emphasise the same governance training to each of the local boards in the community, whereas at Santa Teresa, you cannot hardly get local board members to do that. In each other communities where I go with Graham, there are a lot of people attending the local board and they learn governance. We teach the governance work, because we were taught from the beginning and now we have got to emphasise the local board. A few communities understand the governance and whereas, like Santa Teresa, you can hardly get people there and they complain. That is why they complain.

Mr DOOLAN: Like Syd is saying, to get the community people to understand the level of governance training and all that you must have attendance in the community, people that come to the meetings, like the local board meetings, but when we go to (inaudible) or this (inaudible) area, I must admit David and two other councillors, we go to every community – , Santa Teresa, Titjikala and Finke. Well, four of us attend that meeting, so there are four of the council are there to make up a (inaudible) and we try and explain that to the people in the community. You have got to have more than local people and do not look at your board members, you know, like your shire. And we are trying to teach these people what is going around in the community, to tell them that we are the listeners. They are the ones who have to speak on behalf of the community. I can speak and that is how I knew you were going to council next week but we will forget about that.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: But at ...

Mr DOOLAN: This is where it is has got to – it has got to start from the ground and come up so that Aboriginal people understand their limitations. You know, like where they have got to be able to stand up and take this to the board. We want to take this to the local board and we want you to take it to the council. Like that. As soon as they can start understanding that area then we will have a better understanding of Aboriginal community members.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: I think that at Santa Teresa we met quite a dynamic young, chairperson of the local board ...

Mr ANDERSON: Robbie?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, he is an employee.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Sorry?

Mr TAYLOR: He is an employee of ours.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: No, no, a young female.

Mr TAYLOR: The lady, sorry, yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: A young lady.

Mr ANDERSON: Yes, Young. Ms Young or something.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: And she was – she said some of that ...

Mr DOOLAN: Analise, was it not?

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, Analise, I think.

Mr ANDERSON: Analise, yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Yes, she said the same thing that when there are meetings people do not turn up ...

Mr DOOLAN: Do not turn up, yes.

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR:... and that is part of the – she said some of that as well.

Mr DOOLAN: And that is a few of the – well, I have been out there a few times family members are traditional owners there. They put their names on the board, you know, they think 'I will put my name down there', but when it comes to the meeting they never turn up and they are the main part of the body is a traditional owner has been to one – what, two meetings out of ten. That is where you have a downfall is with the people in community. They have got to realise that it is a responsibility that you have got to take on and if you do not take it on nothing will get done.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: So who calls through the Chair and coordinates those meetings on the ground in the community?

Mr DOOLAN: Well, we go through the shire because we have a calendar of where the local board meetings are for the year and what we get back – the feedback through the people comes to our local council meetings in the shire.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: So we heard yesterday that it is up to – so that the Shire Services Manager does not call the meetings, it is up to the local board to call the meeting?

Mr DOOLAN: The Chairman and the Vice Chairman. They should be able to says 'yes'. Like if they just want an informal meeting they can have it every day of the week. If you want to come to a council one, formal board meeting ...

Mr ANDERSON: It is already on the calendar.

Mr DOOLAN: That is right, on the calendar.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: So you have got formal labelled management board meetings set out.

Mr DOOLAN: We have got to do – Graham might correct me – I think we have got to do four per community – three, sorry, three.

Mr ANDERSON: Three.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Local board meetings?

Mr ANDERSON: Yes.

Mr DOOLAN: Local board meetings.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Okay and it is the president of the local board that then ...

Mr DOOLAN: Yes, (inaudible).

Ms SCRYMGOUR: puts the message out

Mr DOOLAN: And we put up notices all over the communities. They are getting them a week in advance and say you have got to have a ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I am just conscious of time.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Willem has got a few questions he would like to ask.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Go Willem.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Thank you. Let us sort of go back in into the history because I need to do this. We have some information provided to us six months ago by a shire and I want to see how things are travelling.

Your 12 incorporated a local government body that was sub tuned into MacDonnell Shire. Well, according to you're Shire Plan...

Mr TAYLOR: Do we? I thought it was 13 and we have won one which is in the (inaudible) land of Mutitjulu, which are 14.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Of that number or perhaps all of those incorporated bodies that were sub tuned, have all those financials handed over to you been audited and what quality of audit have come back to you?

Mr TAYLOR: We have. We received the audits back in March, late March, and we had to have a special meeting because our own audits could not be balanced until the start point. In other words ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Yes, it was

Mr TAYLOR: ... the closing of all the other audits of associated councils were found and they provided our start point, so then our audit had to be finished. We then had a special meeting and sent those audited statements off to the minister, but until they came in we had some difficulties of getting our own up. The content of them, they are certainly well and truly qualified audits.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE:

Mr TAYLOR: They are ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: All qualified audits.

Mr TAYLOR: Every one of them. Basically about – not necessarily right or wrong and I do not want to comment too much on that, but basically because there is not enough information to substantiate a lot of the data that is around and there are gaps in the data, so they have had to make assumptions.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Okay.

Mr TAYLOR: It is more about the data recording.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: I will have to get more information about the qualification of those audits at another time, but just in the same vein, back in November last year when we spoke to the Macdonnell Shire, we were told that there were \$650 000 worth of non acquitted funding at that point in time. Has that situation resolved itself, if so, by how much?

Mr TAYLOR: If you are talking about non-acquitted funding I ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: That was out of the previous...

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, it sounds very much like a figure of – an amount of money which is tied into a separate trust which came out of one of the communities who shifted it sideways, matters of days before the handover to the new shire and funds disappeared into a trust fund and there is some legal action between the Northern Territory, ourselves and the trust body about getting those funds back into the community. I think that is the one that is not accounted for.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Okay, so that was the \$650 000, are there other unacquitted grants money out of the qualified, the audits of these.....

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, we have a few smaller ones which have carried over which need to be completed. There are about three ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: So you have extensions to expend that money?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, we have got the extensions for them, yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: All right.

Mr TAYLOR: Just to add on to that, some of those smaller ones did not come to light until those audits came out and showed them up.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Yes, sure. Your 2008-09 financials have been audited?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Yes, and that has come back in what condition...

Mr TAYLOR: Qualified.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Is that qualified

Mr TAYLOR: It must be because the beginning point is totally qualified.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: mmmmmmm.

Mr TAYLOR: If your base data position, which is the finished point of all your prior councils which are totally qualified, then your beginning point becomes a qualified impact on your own audit.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Is the Shire's qualified situation only as a result of the qualifications and the other

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, base start – financially sound, performing reasonably well.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: There were also issues around assets ...

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: ... that existed under the old Community Government Council. Has the shire been able to acquit or locate all of the assets from all the previous council?

Mr TAYLOR: We have been able to substantiate the assets that were identified in those audits, yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: can you elaborate?

Ms WALKER: That could raise a number of questions.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, it does. I will put it subtly for you. There are many assets that we are not able to find and there are many assets which were only those identified in books that we could track down. Their value and condition as held on the old council's books as a certain condition was certainly not the condition they were in, so they had a certain value based on a condition that was certainly not the case. We have rationalised all that and brought them all back in and that has been a big project for us for asset management and council have been very supportive on fixing all that. No point having assets that are of no value and not used, so they agreed to get rid of those and cash them up and build a plant reserve and an equipment reserve fund.

Secondly, plant and equipment that was beyond economic repair, that would cost you more than it is worth to fix, again auction it off, get rid of it, put it back into a reserve fund to replace your existing plant and manage – they also looked at and agreed to managing the plant that we have got differently, so it is about use. Instead of a grader being in a community and being used two weeks a year, you do a cyclic program and move them around.

They have adopted that program and we are implementing it now and, of course, we are downgrading all sorts of things to what we need. For example, I do not drive a 4WD anymore I am down to a four cylinder Camry, I do not need it. There are other vehicles that go to communities with; we do not need everybody to have one. Those sorts of things are happening. You drop your asset value down, your replacement depreciation is less, and your fundings are easier.

We have now adopted a plan, it is rolling out and it is about \$2m savings over three years for us

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: And with respect to the assets you cannot find ...

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: ... what action has the Shire taken?

Mr TAYLOR: We took ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE:... to deal with that issue, because there may be a number of issues arising out of that? For example, is there a complaint in with the police in regard to either misappropriation or the theft of the assets?

Mr TAYLOR: There are assets which were identified as – sort of recognised that they were community assets but not on a register. We have been to the community to find out who owns, and we have done preliminary investigations in the community and recorded that and put it on the books and based on our auditor's advice, he said 'That was enough. You have taken reasonable steps to try and find it, identify it and then move forward'. Some assets we were unsure and on other occasions we brought those assets into our books and identified it as we were unsure who owned it, but no-one owned it so we took it on and we are running with it, and that then leaves it for someone else to come and show us the proof. If the event proves evident we will return the value of the asset. It is not a straightforward process. It is a very mixed process for step one to get into a formalised process. **(DVD recording stops)**

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Okay. You said that there are still assets that you cannot find?

Mr TAYLOR: That is correct.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: So what are you going to do you doing about them?

Mr TAYLOR: They will come off your asset register.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: (Inaudible) they come off your asset register.

Mr TAYLOR: I agree.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Who is accountable, who is responsible for those assets?

Mr TAYLOR: Well, you make ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: I mean someone has either misappropriated them or stolen them.

Mr DOOLAN: (Inaudible).

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Surely there is some other explanation?

Mr TAYLOR: Well, you have got to be a little careful because there are versions of information – and I am not saying factual or not factual – but versions of information which indicate certain people weeks before the end left with certain types of vehicles as benefits and whatever, but if the council has made that resolution I cannot override that. If the prior council made that resolution to give them (inaudible) that is its decision if they wanted to do that. Maybe not the most wise or the best decision or whatever, but if that has happened then I cannot go chasing that one.

It is a level of making a judgement who you think you have got a reasonable chance of finding those assets. Most of the ones we cannot find are small pieces of plant or the medium pieces of plant that when you look at the date of purchase they are not a lot of value now – they would not be a lot of value, so if you spent \$20 000 in legal fees to try and find something that could be sitting out a kilometre away in the bush somewhere because it has just been left where the project finished, I do not think that is a reasonable process for me. I do not think that is a reasonable use of my resources.

So we have not – you know, if something is worth \$200 000 you go chasing it, you go look for it, but we do not have that. We have lots of things like a backhoe that is 25 years old. We can find its purchase date but we cannot find where it is now. Yes, we know it was in the community six months beforehand, but bearing in mind it was 25 years old, it will not be worth – you would be lucky if it is worth a couple of thousand dollars. For me to go and spend time and chase, you are better to take it off the books and just let it go, cannot find it. We investigated, could not find it, took it off.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: At the end of the day it was purchased, the actual asset was purchased with taxpayers' dollars (inaudible) ...

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: ...and that is your council, but if you remember (inaudible) at the start when all these (inaudible) before the CEOs were put on (inaudible) CEOs through that transition local government employees, so ...

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: (Inaudible).

Ms SCRYMGOUR: I can sort of (inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible).

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Yes, because I am aware and we are aware as a committee that there was an undertaking given by the Department of Local Government that the finances (inaudible) due to the council (inaudible) handed over that an asset register would be provided to the shires and clearly that has not occurred. You have had to pick up all the additional work and angst that goes with sorting the problem out.

Going back to the point that Marion has made, it is taxpayers' money (inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: I do understand.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: .My view is that more effort should be made to bring to account those who may have been responsible for the loss or movement of these (inaudible) and they need to be located and someone made accountable for them.

Mr TAYLOR: I do not disagree with you in principle, I make a judgement, a pragmatic judgement of whether it is worth pursuing to what return and what benefit and we have made those judgements. However, in a similar vein, as I said to you, there was a particular – previous government council who, for whatever reason, decided and made a resolution to pass – well, they passed money into a private trust of beneficiaries to two or three people \$650 000 odd prior to changeover of the councils, only days before changeover to shires. We are trying to get those funds back because those funds were provided by government into that community to provide for those people.

We are in the middle of a legal battle to get that money back which is now sitting benefiting two people through that trust. So a lawyer set them up, created that process. The NT government is actually also fighting that one as well. So, to me, yes, go for it. Something that is worth \$2000 now and you spend \$5000 trying to find it before you even know it exists is not a good value return for me. I am spending more away.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible).

Mr DOOLAN: Yes, that is why – I go back to where you say about assets, right, I give my community's point of view. Before the shires took over there were outstanding, like we have a (inaudible) (inaudible) all the people that we have to – you know, that we have written off (inaudible) and say whatever (inaudible) before the CEOs (inaudible) before the Macdonnell Shire took over, but where Graham has come on in the last eight months – 12 months is it not?

Mr TAYLOR: Eight months.

Mr DOOLAN: Eight months. The CEO before that, he was in charge of all that drainage (inaudible) when they took over. Like he had CEOs (inaudible) in the communities. They never did the asset register. They just left everything like that. They (inaudible) (inaudible) – and they said 'Leave it there'. I got hold of it. I went through all the legals and I named every vehicle that was sold at auctions (inaudible) and like (inaudible) was saying what about the assets, it is not the shire's fault. It is the previous government – like when the shires – before the shires came in, there were all these things that were not looked at.

My motor vehicle is in town (inaudible) being sold for a carton of beer.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: And do not get me wrong, I am not saying it is the shire's fault; it is the system that was handed to you.

Mr DOOLAN: (Inaudible) ongoing sagas with the assets (inaudible) shires (inaudible) quite right.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (Inaudible) Willem was asking about the assets, you know, like Titjikala and most communities (inaudible) whether the shire has this information and I go back to the CDEP programs, all of the assets from the CDEP programs, was that transferral of those assets done.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: So the shire (inaudible) (inaudible) all the assets on every CDEP program?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, we can.

PERSON UNKNOWN: (inaudible).

Ms SCRYMGOUR: No.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: One final question on assets, I imagine at handover you were probably given the value of the assets that were being handed over to you. What is the difference between that figure and the reality?

Mr TAYLOR: Significantly less.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Yes, I figures that. Are you able to quantify that (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: No. Look, millions less, millions less, but that is collectively across the 14 communities.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Yes.

Mr TAYLOR: But unless I had those audits in front of me I would not like to quote figures to you, as it will pick them up in there. Multi-millions less.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible) (inaudible) in relation to Santa Teresa.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr CHAIRMAN: One was in relation to the tip, what is the problem with the tip there? They are saying that they cannot get permission to remove the tip (inaudible). Is that a Macdonnell Shire issue or a Land Council issue or ...

Mr TAYLOR: It is a collective issue. With respect, Mr President, council's adopt – one of the things that come out of local boards and council adopted going around in all the communities was improved waste management and refuse sites. Santa Teresa is one of the last ones to get done and it is about a formalised site. Where it is currently located it has a bit of a wash way that goes through it and washes things back down through the creek ways and we do not need that.

Mr CHAIRMAN: It is not a (inaudible) area, is it?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, it is not defined and it is a bit of a 'over there' type tip.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, so what we are looking at is trying to – how to get the cleaned up, how to get it formalised behind a fence with trench burying and whitegoods and batteries separated and those sorts of things, which happens in other communities, so that is where we are heading with it.

To do that we have to step outside the community boundary so it is negotiations through elders, it is negotiations through the CLC. It is not a big problem; it is just the time processes to get that buried down. I do not think anybody is objecting in principle, it is just an okay to get those endorsements.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The other issue is, of course, the water and the issue we got there is we were told Power and Water were charging for water the oval and the garden and that meant the garden had to close down and (inaudible) lawns were getting watered, so (inaudible) (inaudible) someone (inaudible) and smashed the sprinklers. So I do not know what – can you give us maybe an update on the water at Santa Teresa?

Mr TAYLOR: Well, one of them was an old CDEP nursery arrangement, was it not, an orchard arrangement.

Mr ANDERSON: Orchard. It was the orchard.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, and ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible) to be a garden.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes and the water program for that was that we have got a government directive that we have to keep that operating because that was a program that was ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: Which includes the water, and I have basically said 'Why the hell, turn it off. You are watering nothing which is not going to produce any product. People are not going to use it. They are not identifying, they are not functioning with it. Turn it off'. We are spending more water on that than we do in our swimming pool for the year.

Mr CHAIRMAN: And on the swimming ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: On the orchard?

Mr CHAIRMAN: And on the swimming pool there is a leak (inaudible) ...

Mr TAYLOR: It did leak. We have only just finished repairs on it. On the downhill side there were leaks through the wall, the slab had dropped and ground had washed away underneath so we had to fix that back up. That has just been done. So while we are at it we are upgrading around it to keep the dust down, hence it has got some grass and some concrete areas and things around it now.

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible) ask you if you turn the water off the garden, do you see horticulture as a function of the local government or do you see it as a private enterprise (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: I think it is a good opportunity for the community for a private business – take over private industry. What I have read, looking backwards, and what has happened in some of the previous communities, horticulture as in – depending what you get into because horticulture is this big, but if you are into vegetable growing, those sorts of things are very traditionally been grown within communities for self-sufficiency and sold within the community. Those sorts of things can be a quite good one or two man business.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So was it turned off because the cost of the water was so high?

Mr TAYLOR: Just at the moment because of the issue of the orchard because they are not really operating.

Mr CHAIRMAN: No, it did not look like that when I lived there. It needs a large sum of money to get the backhoe going.

Mr TAYLOR: Absolutely.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So (inaudible) was that Power and Water were charging it something like \$40 000 a year.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: But it was not Power and Water. Can I just clarify this status, Mr Chairman?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Can I please get clarified (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: So it was not a directive from Power and Water to turn the water off, but rather it was a decision by the Macdonnell Shire ...

Mr TAYLOR: Commercial decision.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: ... to do this because of the water usage which in turn was a cost incurred by ...

Mr TAYLOR: Back to the community through us.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Yes.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, that is correct.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Okay. Thank you, Mr Chairman that is all I wanted to clarify.

Mr CHAIRMAN: And (inaudible) before you clarified it.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (Inaudible) let me tell you, it was because it was (inaudible) yesterday ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible).

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Yes, that Power and Water had turned it off, so, Mr President – can I, Syd – I think that that is something that needs to be clarified to the community of Santa Teresa that it was not Power and Water who turned off the water. I turned Power and Water inside out yesterday...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I understood all the (inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: Okay.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: What you must do though (inaudible) ...

Ms WALKER: Can you just clarify all the information that Santa Teresa (inaudible) yesterday? (Inaudible) seek advice (inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: They should have, because the advice flowed down to me into the community. How far it went out I have no idea.

Ms WALKER: Okay, so we were told about it and ...

Mr TAYLOR: That is ...

Ms WALKER: ... no knowledge or prior (inaudible) ...

Mr TAYLOR: That is a communication issue for us.

Ms WALKER: ... that water was meant to be (inaudible).

Mr TAYLOR: That is a communication issue for us. The economics of and the cost to actually reinstate and get it back running and then to have someone be able to run that business was very huge for us, so the issue was – as far as the running costs and then see about if there is an opportunity then restart.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Willem has got one last important question.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: I was just referring to your 2009-10 Macdonnell Shire Service Delivery Report which (inaudible) the budget, it is not a (inaudible) budget. I was just curious about who was (inaudible) here. It says here that it under a few (inaudible) streams. Loan borrowings of \$1m.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Is that a loan that the shire has taken out?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, it has, with the approval of the Minister.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: (Inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: We took that out as a joint venture with Central Desert Shire to buy our head office. We both co-own our office building. We are both operating in the same building and we co-own it. So we both borrowed \$1m each and you will problem see down there a little bit 'Debt Servicing' down on the 'Outgoings'.

So that is the income of \$1m from a loan, which was actually a good buy. That was a good buy for the size of the building in the middle of Alice. It is directly across the road from the hospital.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: I just wanted to make sure you are not running debts (inaudible)?

Mr TAYLOR: No, that is it. No, we are certainly not.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Can I just one last question, Mr Chairman?

Mr CHAIRMAN: I am not sure; I will put that to the other members.

Mr TAYLOR: I understand where you are coming from Willem, because the previous one was like that.

Mr WESTRA van HOLTHE: Right.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (Inaudible) the CEO (inaudible), you said your rate base was \$1m.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Did that \$1m generate that rate base from outside of all of the communities?

Mr TAYLOR: No, we had a total rate base of approximately \$1m of which about \$750 000 is out of NT for the housing and communities.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Northern Territory government and housing (inaudible) and then the rest is generated from ...

Mr TAYLOR: Pastoralists.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: ... pastoralists. How many of – if you had the (inaudible) ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: I think she was going to ask if you rated all the people – the houses in your communities your (inaudible) ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Would you get more money? Would you be supportive of service fees?

Mr TAYLOR: Well, I have to say, no.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Why?

Mr TAYLOR: Because at the moment we have got a guaranteed rate base and set figure by the minister to charge no greater than the CPI rate on the previous year.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (Inaudible).

Mr CHAIRMAN: Yes, but did you (inaudible) every house for responsible (inaudible) ...

Mr TAYLOR: Look, I understand where you are coming from. The theoretical figure would be yes, because you would be rating more about based on need and cost rather than – so that you have got a return of income versus expenditure and returned back to the community, but for that to happen the question of affordability and social benefit is really a question that has to be considered about rating. It is not just a money in and a money out process.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: (Inaudible) both the rating and service fees?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, it is possible, but then again you are separating those in the community who can afford a service fee and those who cannot so you change their life ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Yes, but everyone in that community has an interest.

Mr TAYLOR: But do they have the ability to pay the bill that is the issue for what they get?

Mr CHAIRMAN: (Inaudible) should ask the last question.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Sorry, Mr Chairman, but I ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Do you keep a record of the rents at Santa Teresa? If I go to the council ...

Mr DOOLAN: Territory Housing.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Now, the council does the repairs and maintenance of (inaudible) on behalf of Territory Housing?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, we do.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Who actually (inaudible) the rents ...

Mr TAYLOR: NT.

Mr CHAIRMAN: So it is nothing to do with you?

Mr TAYLOR: We do not collect the income. What happens is that, I think it is about \$25 odd a week or something on the houses, or \$30.

Mr ANDERSON: \$30.

Mr TAYLOR: \$30 a week for the house, and that goes into the pool for funding into NT Housing and they have other funding, of course, and what comes back is three parts – one is into SIHIP, one is into refurb and major bring backs and the other one is the minor maintenance and repair, which they give back to us at around about ...

Ms SCRYMGOUR: \$6500, is it not?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, about \$6000 or something a house and that is the cost we get for the maintenance to do the repair and maintenance, but we can only do certain. This is where you must – so you get demarcation lines between us, what is maintenance, what is refurbing and then what is a new one. So you get these – different providers provide demarcation lines and it is always a problem.

Mr CHAIRMAN: All right. Well, thank you very much for (inaudible) (inaudible) we appreciate the time you give us, though I should just say the (inaudible) (inaudible) MGM Grand for (inaudible).

(Inaudible) record of what we are doing. We very much appreciate you taking your time. We will be back again because I think it is important we keep an eye on what is happening and we want to make sure that these benefits we (inaudible) are actually going to happen because it is what the government has promised and if it is not asking we will be asking the government why it is not happening. I think that is our role as well.

If you have other issues that you would like the CTC to raise that we have not touched on today, if there are issues that you think that this council should be raising with the government please write to us or if you come to Darwin for a local government meeting and want to make the time (inaudible) (inaudible) invitation the council, we will certainly consider it here and say that these are the issues we are going to look at. Any time you have got issues, please, you are most welcome to (inaudible).

So thank you once again for coming and for taking the time (inaudible).

MEETING CLOSED