



MURDI PAAKI REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Meeting Number: 55/2015

Held: 10 – 12 June 2015, Cobar NSW

Welcome

Chairperson Sam Jeffries opened and welcomed the members to the 55th Regional Assembly Meeting.

Business Arising

Some of the issues that the members raised from the previous Assembly minutes were;

- Work for the dole, members felt that it could possess the issue of inconsistency across the region due to the criteria being different for individual communities.
- Murdi Paaki Young Leaders Program, Sam informed the members that there would be a joint workshop in September. Aboriginal Affairs would circulate expressions of interest to each community in the region.
- At the last meeting, it was raised by NSW State Employee's that were having to use their person leave to attend the MPRA meetings. Sam stated that members would be reimbursed for any leave taken to attend a MPRA meeting, Sam stated that the LDM funding proposal would need to be amended to show the payed leave arrangements.
- Members raised concern regarding the Pathways Application would deter Aboriginal community from applying for housing and that Housing was need for the region.

Breaking Thru Barriers

Paul Housia and David Powe explained that Breaking Thru Barriers is a national not-for-profit organisation that is committed to empowering people with low to high disabilities to create their own future. Paul stated that they are able to support thousands of people every year with low to high disabilities to become independent (mostly on the eastern sea board). Break Thru main focus is to enable people with disabilities to live a life they've always wanted to live. Although challenging at times Break Thru thrives on the achievements of assisting people with disabilities.

Break Thru was established a two year program that helps young people with a disability gain employment after leaving school. Paul and David acknowledged that the organisation had not been pro-active in engaging the Aboriginal community but was committed to meeting with CWP's and Elders. Break thru would like to attend CWP Meetings, community events, and to travel to communities where community members required.

Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation

Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise presented a slideshow that provided an update on the Office of Environment and Heritage Projects and Remote Jobs and Community Programs.

MPREC stated that they have been researching grant opportunities for environmental projects and stated that there are ones available of up to \$10K. Information has been provided back to Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). MPREC would offer support to develop applications and offer support to roll out the project. The grants could be used for Youth and Cultural Projects or could supplement existing projects.

Under the RJCP, it was noted that 691 people commenced job seekers, 2355 people attended face to face meetings, 93 job seekers entered accredited training and 93 job seekers were placed into employment.

MPREC stated that the new Work for the Dole model has the MPRA region split, as the RJCP only operates in a proportion of Region. People aged between 18 – 49 years old would have to participate in the program. Centrelink will decide who will be required work the 25 hours per week. MPREC stated that they can offer assistance with Working with Children's checks and police checks if required.

The members suggested that a transitional plan could be put in place to ensure that all programs for the get-go could be transferred to a community controlled organisation.

MPRA Charter of Governance

The MPRA Charter of Governance is due for a review, Sam provided the Members with a copy of the document for discussion. Sam informed the members that the Charter is the Constitution for the MPRA and that MPRA has 12 months to review the document as stipulated by the Local Decision Makers. Language that is used in the Charter would need to reflect the business that is carried out by the Assembly.

After some discussion, it was decided that on Monday, 14 September there would be a half a day workshop to do a complete review of the Charter of Governance.

Family and Community Services (FACS) Western District

Darren Smith from FACS attended the Regional Assembly Meeting to seek in principal support from the Assembly for the DRAFT Family and Community Services (FACS) Western District Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Plan 2015-16.

Darren stated that this was a community driven documented, and that FACS were working with Communities to establish an Aboriginal community advisory group. In the document were 6 drafted KRA. Darren said that this document would be what would bind FaCS to what their practice would.

MPRA members raised the issue of the Grandparents role and relationship, and that it could be required to be highlighted as an important aspect of removal of children, Aboriginal employees of FACS should assist with cultural appropriate approaches, consideration could given to the situations where children are born outside of their tradition home lands and when the child has been taken into care, the reconnection should be made with family residing in their traditional home lands and resource supports required to connect children that have been removed to their families (regardless of where the children have been placed into care).

After some further discussions, the MPRA members provided in principal support for the DRAFT Family and Community Services (FACS) Western District Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Plan 2015-16.

NSW Aboriginal Housing Office

Acting Policy Director Trish Oxford provided an overview on how the AHO is structured. Trish stated that the AHO sits under the Family and Community Services (FACS) and is governed by an all Aboriginal Board. There three offices in NSW located in Dubbo, Coffs Harbour and Parramatta. The AHO are part of the home ownership working group established which consist of AHO, Aboriginal Affairs, Prime Minister & Cabinet, Department of Treasury, Indigenous Business Australia and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

Trish stated that the Housing Pathways current bid is up until June 2016. The Housing Pathways waiting list would influence where building and buying would happen on behalf of AHO. The AHO has acknowledged that the Australian Bureau of Statistic statistics do not reflectly thhe

actual numbers. AHO is encouraging community members to put their names on the healthy pathways list, Trish stated that there are options available to accept housing (based on availability) in locations different to where applicants located.

NSW Aboriginal Affairs

Aboriginal Affairs provided the MPRA members an update on the Accord, including: Affordable and appropriate housing; Economic development; Education; Early Childhood; Governance Capacity and Support.

Aboriginal Affairs perspective was that Minister Williams is interested in setting a long term agenda for Aboriginal Affairs and is the first state minister to attend the MPRA. Aboriginal Affairs is prioritising governance, economic development, youth participation etc. as opposed to social policy.

Minister Leslie Williams and Minister Nigel Scullion

Sam Jeffries opened the floor to Minister Leslie Williams and Minister Nigel Scullion who discussed Commonwealth and State issues and also relevant coordination around the IAS and OCHRE.

Also issues that were raised were;

Government Procurement

- It was stated that the Commonwealth and State were working together to get agreement
- \$25m per year each year to support start-up
- Employment process
- How will jobs be found after 12 weeks

Housing

- MPRA seek direct housing resourcing
- 75% of the final years \$45m for housing in the remote locations in NSW including MP region
- \$36m (75%) be allocated for the development of a regional housing model in the MP region

Debit Card

Three suggested trial sites; Kununurra, Ceduna and Moree.

Dialogue described community members on JSA and RJCP (considered part time work) sites and people who had been on Centrelink for more than two years qualify to go onto Health/Welfare Card.

MPRA Funding

William 'Smiley' Johnstone provided an update to the Members regarding the funding for the Assembly. Smiley stated the Indigenous Advancement Strategy Funding will fund in MPRA for the next 3 years.

A budget that was submitted to the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet was tabled by the members. The budget included;

- Proposed Chairperson Salary
- Travel and Motor Vehicle
- Office Costs
- MPRA Meeting costs
- Secretariat and Management fees

Smiley informed the members that part of the budget included a salary for the Chairperson, Sam Jeffries provided the option to Members to nominate a new Chairperson as there was a salary attached to the position. After the members has discussed options, it was agree upon that Sam Jeffries should remain the Chairperson.

The members resolved a motion that the current Chairperson Sam Jeffries continue on as the MPRA Chairperson and be remunerated as per the funding agreement.

Clontarf Academy

Gerard Neesham from the Clontarf Academy attended the meeting to provide an update to the members. Gerard stated that currently they have programs running in Coonamble, Brewarrina and Bourke with the opportunity to run programs in Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Walgett.

It was stated that out of 19 young men that had previously been involved in the program in the Murdi Paaki Region, 18 were either employed or continuing on with Study.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) Funding Rounds

Sam Jeffries provided an update on the IAS Funding rounds, Sam stated that the IAS funding rounds are negotiated projects and developed KPI's with services and that review regularity would be dependent on service provider.

University of Sydney – Community Services Hub Project 2015 – 2020

Shane Houston, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) from Sydney University and his colleagues travel to Cobar to discuss Community Services Hub Projects as part of the MoU between Sydney University and Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly.

Shane stated that building a best practice model would be a community engagement in service learning with the objective is to use the information that is collated in the project to value add and to support communities planning and development going forward.

The process to implement the projects would be;

- For each Community to nominate projects for their community
- Based on communities projects, USYD would selects teams; course and disciplines; team outcomes
- Open Innovation Team Development (internal map)
- Discussion with community and reach terms and conditions
- Implementation plan development
- Final agreement
- Staff and student selection preparation
- Onsite orientation staff and students
- Implementation
- Review

As part of the evaluation of the project, both the Community and USYD would video record aspects the project including what individuals and Community members think through the project. Shane stated that USYD would meet all cost associated with running the projects.

Members were asked to workshop with the USYD staff to establish what the priority of the Community projects should be; the members agreed principles that would assist in defining the priority of each project:

1. Cultural Strengthening and reinforcing
2. History Keeping
3. Identity and Pride building

4. Support and reinforce family and values
5. Empowering
6. Respect building – Land, People and each other.
7. Outcomes based
8. Creates and sustains community leadership
9. Sustainability and self sufficiency
10. healing

The members established a list of projects that they would like see as part of the partnership with the USYD. They included; Educational pathways, Health – rehabilitation services, Economic development, Housing – environmental plans; building housing, Cultural heritage, Lateral violence and Energy security in community.

Shane stated that between now and the MPRA meeting in September, USYD will create a plan based on the information members provided for review and to decide on direction of implementation.

The MoU between Sydney University and the Assembly will be signed in September.