



Performance Reports

Executive Support

Councils and Government

Aim

To promote cooperative working relationships with other local authorities and governments in the best interests of the Darwin community and Darwin City Council.

Summary

The costs associated with this program include the membership fees that Council pays to the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT). This association represents the local government industry. A total of 67 local government municipal or community councils hold membership of the association throughout the Territory. The Darwin City Council holds 3 votes as well as a guaranteed position on the executive of LGANT.

LGANT provides representation to 27 committees, boards, tribunals and advisory panels either through elected council representatives or its own staff. The association also provides local government with an industrial relations service by sub-contracting the services of the Australian Mines and Metals Association.

Council also holds associate membership of the Property Council's Northern Territory Branch as well as membership of the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Council believes it is important to take an active role in these bodies to encourage cooperation between all stakeholders within the Darwin business community in the promotion of the economic development of Darwin.

Elected Members

Aim

To provide support services to Elected Members in effectively representing the community and facilitate their community involvement.

Summary

The Elected Members attended a number of conferences and seminars including: "Investment in the NT" Symposium held in Darwin, Destination Darwin Roadshow, visiting capital cities to promote Darwin, Gull Force Plaque Dedication Ceremony, Haikou, China, Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional

Australia, Noosa, the Great Australian Cities Summit in Newcastle, National General Assembly of Local Government, Canberra, the International Trade Exhibition in Brunei and LGANT (Local Government Association of NT) in Alice Springs.

The Lord Mayor hosted 22 civic receptions with approximately 2800 people attending. Civic receptions were held for the following: Gull Force Memorial Dedication Service, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, 50 Years of St John Ambulance in Darwin, Seniors Afternoon Tea to Welcome 2003 Senior Australian of Year, Australian Army Band Darwin Freedom of Entry to the City, Brothers Rugby League Confraternity, HAMS Darwin, Book Launch of Kirsty Sword Gusmao's Autobiography, Crisis Line, Announcement of the Australia Day Awards, Business and Professional Women Darwin 10th Birthday, Rotary Club, Rose of Tralee, George Brown Memorial Scholarship, Council Volunteers.

Various other functions included: Seniors Movie Morning, Neighbourhood Watch National Conference Breakfast, Dili Sister City Agreement Signing, Completion of Adelaide to Darwin Railway Luncheon, Australia Day Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony, Bombing of Darwin Commemoration Dinner and the Inauguration of the 19th Darwin City Council.

Aldermen's Payments

Aldermans Meetings												
July 03 - June 04	J Bailey	C Black	R Burridge	J Collins	R Elix	I Fraser	G Lambert	R Lesley	C Miller	KM Moir	CJ Tilley	J Sangster
Internal Meetings	41	19	33	60	5	29	17	16	37	50	15	46
External Meetings	22	21	9	10	1	1	-	5	14	27	8	6
Total Meetings	63	40	42	70	6	30	17	21	51	77	23	52
Days as Acting Lord Mayor	4	-	-	-	48	-	--	-	-	18	-	-
Days away at Conferences	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	-	-
Meeting Allowance	8710	6164	5494	9380	804	4154	2278	2814	6968	10780	3082	7236
Base Allowance	13987	13717	13717	14964	902	13717	14964	13717	13717	14274	14964	14964
Electoral Allowance	5841	5354	5354	5841	5841	5354	5841	5354	5354	5841	5841	5841
Deputy Lord Mayor Allowance	1698	-	-	-	25127	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Acting Lord Mayor Allowance	1192	-	-	-	14304	-	-	-	-	5364	-	-
Travel Allowance	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	260	-	-
Other Allowances	-	-	-	-	-	1420	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Payments	31427	25335	24565	30185	46978	24645	23085	21885	26159	36519	23887	28041



Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is a management committee of Council and meets on a quarterly basis.

The members of the Audit Committee are:

- **Mr Iain Summers** (Independent Chairman), B.Comm, Grad Dip Mngt Psych, FCA, FCPA, FAIM
- **Mr Ken Clarke** (Independent Member), B.Comm (resigned 10/11/03)
- **Mr Craig Spencer** MBA, Grad Dip Risk Management (appointed 28/1/04)
- **Alderman Kerry Moir** (Chairman of Corporate and Economic Development Committee), BA, MA, Dip Secondary Education.
- **Alderman Ian Fraser** BEc (Bachelor of Economics) CPA (Certified Practising Accountant). (replaced as a result of May 2004 elections)
- **Alderman Garry Lambert** MBA, Grad Dip Exec Mngt, BEd, Dip Ed (appointed 9 June 2004)

A number of audits on identified risk areas were carried out during the year including Investment Management, Contract Management, Internal Control Policies and Procedures, Financial Reserves, Payroll, Human Resources Policies and Procedures, Strategic Planning, Computer Security, Cash Collection and Plant Hire.

The Audit Committee endorsed a number of recommendations from the various audits and Council adopted these recommendations. As a result of the implementation of these recommendations Council has achieved a significant improvement in internal control and efficiency.

Some of the more significant achievements are:

Council's annual financial statements now include a management analysis and discussion section which provides a plain English explanation of the financial results and position of Council, an analysis of key financial performance indicators, discussion on budget performance, trend analysis of income and expenditure, analysis of the cash position and discussions on capital expenditure and debt management. This makes the annual financial statements a much more readable and understandable document for the community to peruse.

A new cash investment policy which emphasises maximising interest revenue whilst ensuring that the type of investment and the investment institutions are

secure and sound and that our investment risk is adequately spread. Better use of our 11am Call Account has seen interest from that account increase by \$81,000 compared to the previous year.

A new Contracts Management Policies and Procedures manual which clearly details procedures, roles and responsibilities. This manual has been adopted by Council and its implementation will help staff better manage the \$16 million worth of annual contracts. The manual has been supported by extensive training throughout the organisation.

An Internal Control Policies and Procedures manual has been completed and distributed to staff throughout the organisation. All accounting procedures have been documented and flow-charted with internal control points highlighted. Apart from ensuring compliance with the Local Government Act the manual has been used as a successful training tool for new employees.

All financial reserves have been reviewed and a number of reserves consolidated. Monthly reports on reserve movements are now presented to management and more attention is being given to reserve funds to ensure that the account balances are reasonable and that movements are monitored.

A number of Human Resource Policies have been either updated or introduced. During the year a consultative committee was established with one of its objectives being the implementation of up to date human resource policies and procedures. A number of important policies and procedures relating to recruitment, induction and training and development have been completed and the consultative process has helped eliminate a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings about Council's human resource processes.

An extensive computer security upgrade is nearing completion and controls have improved significantly. Information Technology is critical to Council's operations and the security upgrade will protect Council's IT integrity.

Improvements to payroll procedures, cash collection and plant hire methods have also occurred which have improved Council's efficiency.

The committee is successfully meeting its charter and is assisting Council with significant improvements to its controls and processes.

Public Affairs

Aim

To promote and maintain mutual understanding between Council and the community, as well as facilitate public consultation.

To create a positive Council presence by providing efficient and effective customer service while acknowledging the community's multicultural nature.

Review

The year began with the recruitment of a new Manager of Public Affairs, Darrin Davies, who took up the position in October 2003.

Over the following few months he undertook a review of existing public relations policies, considered the Council's public image and assessed the relationship with the media. The outcome was a revised set of policies and procedures.

Media Coverage

As can be expected, from time to time Council decisions attract both positive and negative reactions, some of which is influenced by how the media report on the decision.

Overall the Council has been given the opportunity to present its position and to a large extent that position has been accurately reported. There have been occasions, however, where the Council felt that the coverage from some media was not balanced or fair to the Council.

Events and Sponsorship

The Public Affairs Section organised a number of events for the Council including ceremonial services, displays and involvement with local major events. They included:

- Australian Citizenship Ceremony
- Bombing of Darwin Commemorative Service
- NT Expo – Business Lunch and Display
- Royal Darwin Show – Sponsorship and Display
- Tropical Garden Spectacular – Sponsorship and Display

The extent of sponsorship of events, and the benefits to the Council are being assessed but there is no doubt that there is increasing public support for the Australia Day Citizenship and Bombing of Darwin Commemorative ceremonies.

Council Image

It can be a difficult task maintaining or raising the public's image or perceptions of the Council but there can be no mistaking the positive expressions of appreciation that are received annually from the people who actually have dealings with the Council.

In 2003/04 there were 158 letters of appreciation received thanking the Council or particular staff for their efforts. The following are extracts from several:

Local Resident

"I'm writing in relation to the Darwin City Council Community Services programs provided to Darwin residents and felt it necessary to acknowledge the contributions Darwin City Council makes.

In particular the Fun Bus held weekdays at various venues provides parents/carers with a variety of creative and enjoyable activities catered for all ages. Also the range of different toys and equipment supplied for the children is wonderful, not to mention the immaculate playgrounds/gardens and safe venues made available. In addition, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Cathy and Natalie who make the fun bus a popular place to take children and above all else feel welcome. Both Cathy and Natalie deserve recognition for the integrity and dedication displayed as DCC employees.

Overall the services provided by the DCC such as, library story time and FREEPS are fabulous and should receive more positive feedback for the amazing contributions made to the community. Finally I would like to convey to DCC that it's common to hear positive responses from other parents/carers at different venues about the services offered, thank you very much!"

Visitor to Darwin

"I am visiting Darwin, on holiday from Perth, WA

I asked directions from a young lady who, it transpires, works for Darwin City Council. Concerned about my elderly person in the heat she most kindly took me in her car to all the places of interest in Darwin, including the wharves. This lovely young lady had finished work and had been on her way home to Palmerston, where, in addition to her study programme she had planned to walk dogs, clean house and cook dinner. She said she always found time to do what was important.

Her name is Julie-Ann (surname not known). I am most grateful to her and also I thought you might be interested.

I loved Darwin and it's people.".....

Ceremony Visitor

Bombing of Darwin Commemorative

"Once again thank you for all you showed me around and gave me a wonderful outing each day. Hopefully we will meet again. God Bless."

Local Resident

"I would like to convey my appreciation of the wonderful service provided by your staff.

On several occasions I have suggested new titles for acquisition by the library and all my requests have been followed up promptly and, as I recall – all of them obtained.

Friends have also commented on this aspect of your service.

I would also like to commend staff at the Casuarina Library for the friendly and efficient way in which they serve the public. I find it a very welcoming and comfortable place.

Would you please convey my appreciation to your staff."

Shelter Manager. RSPCA

"On behalf of the RSPCA, thank you for cutting down the dead Black Wattle trees near the cattery and for lopping the re-growth of the African Mahogany near the office.

The Black Wattle trees had been overhanging the cattery and were a potential hazard. Not only has this hazard now been removed, thanks to your crew, but also that section of the garden has been opened up and is no longer an eyesore.

The crew was very helpful and efficient. The trees were removed quickly with no disruption of business to the RSPCA.

Please pass on our heartfelt thanks to your crew."

