



# **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

**Ordinary Meeting held on 4 February 2025**



**SHIRE OF CHRISTMAS ISLAND  
MEETING MINUTES CERTIFICATION**

**Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Shire of Christmas Island Council held at the George  
Fam Chambers at 7.00pm on Tuesday 4 February 2025**

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## **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

**Ordinary Meeting of the Shire of Christmas Island held at the George Fam Chambers at 7.00pm on Tuesday 4 February 2025**

### **1 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**

1.1 The Shire President declared the meeting open at 7.00pm.

### **2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE/DECLARATIONS OF FINANCIAL INTEREST**

1.2 Record of Attendance

Shire President

Deputy President

Councillors

Cr Gordon **THOMSON**

Cr Azmi **YON**

Cr Kee Heng **FOO**

Cr Philip **WOO**

Cr Hafiz **MASLI**

Cr Swee **TUNG**

Cr Kelvin Kok Bin **LEE**

Cr Azmi **YON**

Cr Steve **PEREIRA**

Chief Executive Officer

Director Planning, Governance & Policy/Minute Taker

Director Community/Recreation Services

Director Works, Services & Waste

Assistant Director of Finance and Corporate Services

David **PRICE**

Chris **SU**

Olivier **LINES**

Troy **DAVIS**

Wei **HO**

2.2 **Leave of Absence**

2.3 **Apologies**

2.4 **Declarations of Financial/Impartiality/Proximity Interest**

### **3 RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE**

3.1 CEO David PRICE advised that rising from a previous question by Cr Swee TUNG a recommendation for a two-year program to provide shade over combination equipment within selected parks will be made to the Audit/Budget Committee in April for consideration in the 25/26 budget.

3.2 Cr Kelvin LEE raised a query about a 1st February 2025 legislative change for superannuation application. CEO David PRICE informed the meeting that WALGA has sent updated advice that Band 1 and 2 Councils will be required to pay superannuation for council member sitting fees, but that it would be optional for Band 3 and 4 Councils.

CEO David PRICE had referred the WALGA advice to councillors for their consideration, and an invite to an upcoming information webinar from WALGA on the matter.

#### 4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 4.1 Cr PEREIRA inquired if the Shire provided any Term 4 School Holiday Programs. CEO David PRICE advised that the Shire did not provide a program for the Term 4 Christmas School Holiday period.

Director Oliver LINES advised that the numbers of students on the island at the end of the year were very low, and that staff numbers were also pressed. CEO David PRICE advised that the Shire does support the Recreation Centre's holiday programs with bus runs during the period. Shire President Gordon THOMSON observed the low numbers of people on the island, including children, at the end of the year overall.

- 4.2 Cr PEREIRA asked about the green maintenance at the Telstra tower corner on Murray Road. Noted that there were branches overhanging from the cliff above; Cr PEREIRA asked if there was consideration in conducting an inspection of the area prior to the winds picking up in the last week for green maintenance?

Director Troy DAVIS advised that the crews had been conducting inspections in the lead up to the storm event, and that Murray Road had been addressed satisfactorily. Priority attention had been given to Flying Fish Cove preparations. The township roads had been addressed in the last fortnight overall; noted that staff were stretched thin at the moment due to the scale of the debris caused by the recent storm event.

- 4.3 Cr PEREIRA asked what the current outstandings were for overdue rates, and what the Shire's follow up actions were?

CEO David PRICE advised that he would follow that up and report back to the Council.

- 4.4 Cr PEREIRA asked if the Shire had made any plans to remove the sails at the Foreshore Padang following advice from Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> Jan that the winds would be picking up.

CEO David PRICE advised that it was dangerous to do so after the forecast was given with the quick changing nature of weather on island. Director Troy DAVIS advised that a cherry picker was required to do the work; availability of cherry picker was dependent on outside vendors being available as Shire did not have one.

Cr PEREIRA observed that the Recreation Centre were able to remove their sails; Director Troy DAVIS advised that the Shire's sails were different in design and complexity to the Recreation Centre's pool sails.

- 4.5 Cr PEREIRA asked what was the timeframe for roadworks on Jalan Ketam Merah to commence? Director DAVIS advised that when the current works relating to weather clearing is done, the Shire will be able to continue their usual work plans.

Cr PEREIRA requested clarification on when the work plan for Jalan Ketam Merah was? Shire President Gordon THOMSON summarised that it wasn't on the works schedule for a particular date, and to take the question on notice.

Director DAVIS advised that the Shire was still waiting for a shipment of emulsion needed for the roadworks program.

- 4.6 Cr PEREIRA asked for an update to the Historical Temple Book project. Director Chris SU advised the meeting that the first series of artworks had been completed, and that Council could view if requested on the proviso that the artworks could be for councillors viewing only at this stage. Shire President THOMSON advised that showing the final completed works would be more advisable.

- 4.7 Cr PEREIRA noted that there were a number of abandoned vehicles in Poon Saan near the SERCO accommodation and Lucky Ho restaurant and requested to know how is Shire addressing these vehicles?

Director DAVIS advised that the Shire Ranger is pursuing owners with the AFP based on registration files with the Commonwealth. Shire has a list of vehicles submitted to the AFP.

Shire President Gordon THOMSON asked if this was the Shire's responsibility to liaise with the AFP for this information? Director DAVIS advised that it was and provided an overview of the protocols and permissions required around registered and unregistered vehicles; there is a 28 day lead time on this information with the AFP.

## 5 APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

## 6 PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

## 7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS/BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### 7.1 Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting held on 10 December 2024

Members considered the unconfirmed minutes.

#### Council Resolution

Moved: Cr YON

Seconded: Cr WOO

Res. No: 1/25

That Council adopt the unconfirmed minutes of the 10 December 2024 Council Meeting.

Carried: 8/0

### 7.2 Business Arising from the Minutes of Previous Meetings

## 8 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION

### 8.1 Shire President Gordon THOMSON advised the meeting of the passing of former Shire of Christmas Island CEO Dr. Kelvin John Matthews.

Shire President Gordon THOMSON read the obituary into the minutes.

*Vale Kelvin Matthews*

*Dr Kelvin Matthews PhD died on Friday, 17 January 2025, after months of suffering the terrible effects of mesothelioma, the very worst and most painful disease caused by the inhalation of asbestos. During his childhood Kelvin lived in the town of Wittenoom, Western Australia, the site of the infamous blue asbestos mine. So many of the workers of Wittenoom lost their lives to this incurable disease that the asbestos mining ceased and the WA government was forced to close the town of Wittenoom. Endless campaigning by unions, the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia and the many individual legal cases forced the government's hand in this regard. Tragically now it is the time for the children of the Wittenoom workers, the innocents, to suffer that same terrible and painful and inevitable death that mesothelioma delivers so swiftly.*

*Last October I met Kelvin, his wife Neung and son Justin at our favourite catch-up joint – Tilleys Pie Shop in Fremantle. He delivered the bad news. He had been delivered the confirming diagnosis of his breathless condition – mesothelioma. He walked with the aid of a stick, supported by Neung and son Justin. Justin is a nurse and he knows and understands how this disease works. He will be there for Kelvin's final journey. Justin is now organising his father's funeral Friday 31 January in Mandurah. Justin will forward the details of time and place in coming days.*

*Kelvin Matthews came to the Shire of Christmas Island in 2010 with great depth of knowledge and experience in local government, just what we needed. His career in local government extended from NSW to his home State of WA. He served as CEO of the Broken Hill Council at the time of "colourful" characters like the famous and progressive Mayor Black who entertained the world of local government with his memorable speeches at the annual National Assembly of Local Government in Canberra. Some of Kelvin's favourite stories about Mayor Black, are lessons in humanity, the mentoring of Kelvin Matthews in the art and craft of the political life. On his return*

to WA, Kelvin did a brief stint in the office of Mark McGowan MLA during one of McGowan's early terms as a member of the WA parliament. Kelvin took no credit or responsibility for McGowan's later elevation to the office of Premier of WA. Kelvin returned to the work of local government at the Shires of Shark Bay, Christmas Island, Mt Magnet and most recently Meekatharra.

During his time serving our Christmas Island Council 2010 to 2016 his contribution to the quality of life of Christmas Islanders was a sincere pursuit, including the building of the seniors centre at Poon Saan. He worked closely with Helene Bartleson, author of *Golden Leaves, an Introduction to the Chinese Cemeteries of Christmas Island*, delivering many important strategic and practical stages of the Shire's Cemeteries Management Plan. An enthusiastic scholar and historian Kelvin's work with Helene has taken them to historic finds through their spirited pursuit of inquiry into burial practices and customs of our Christmas Islanders and then in the Shire of Mount Magnet and latterly the Shire of Meekatharra. Helene Bartleson is shattered by Kelvin's passing, her despair at the loss of friend and colleague speaks for her affection for the man, but also the fact that the fruits of their inquiry and labour continue to emerge, with so much more to be done, particularly in the first nations communities of Western Australia where despite the fragmentation and disparagement of their culture and traditions, cultural leaders in those regions have been working with Helene and Kelvin to reveal burial grounds and culture that was never lost but historically traduced.

With the encouragement of the Shire Council, Kelvin embarked on his major project and hopefully his most significant legacy to Christmas Islanders – his application for entry into the University of Notre Dame's doctoral research programme. Kelvin's experience and understanding of the system of government in Australia was challenged by the very unusual system of government in the external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Our discussions about the lack of implementation of the recommendations of the Reports of the Parliamentary Inquiries, *Islands in the Sun, 1991*, and the Joint Standing Committee of the National Capital and External Territories' Governance Inquiry of 2005, suggested to Kelvin that his PhD deal with the history of exploitation of the mine workers and the enabling ideology, political and governance regimes that persist today. The PhD he earned from this inquiry is one of the proudest achievements of Kelvin's working life. Its value to Christmas Islanders is that it provides a framework of analysis that should inform the ambitions of Christmas Islanders to overcome the "democratic deficit" that pertains to this day. Christmas Islanders can't vote for the members of the WA Parliament, which is the Parliament that makes the laws that we must live by on Christmas Island. This is the "democratic deficit". In every mainland State and Territory the people DO VOTE for their representatives in their State and Territory parliaments and assemblies. Why not Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands or Norfolk Island?

True to form Kelvin advocated the interests of Christmas Islanders that he defined in his PhD Thesis - *Christmas Island A question of self-determination*. We combined with the Shires of Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Torres Strait Council and the Council of Norfolk Island to create a governance forum on the sidelines of the annual National Assembly in Canberra in 2015. In 2019 Kelvin and his PhD supervisor Professor Martin Drum came to Christmas Island to lead a governance forum at the Poon Saan Hall. It was well attended. There is an interest in the question of democracy in our community. Thanks to Dr Kelvin Matthews we have a thoroughly researched and rigorously reviewed academic work that provides a framework of analysis to which current and future generations of Islanders may turn when the time comes to act to end the longstanding remnant of colonialism that is the governance regime of our non-self-governing Territory of Christmas Island.

Kelvin's devotion to Neung, the love of his life, was oft expressed in Mayor Black's terms: "Happy wife. Happy life" There was no mistaking his deepest affection for Neung in his tone in that oft spoken flippant phrase – a reasonable philosophy of life. Devoted as they were to each other, Kelvin and Neung generously and lovingly supported the development of the children in their lives. Poppy came to school on Christmas Island and is now happily working in her chosen profession. Justin is a nurse with other commitments to community service of which Dr Kelvin Matthews is so proud.

*We salute you Kelvin. Your service to our Christmas Island community was extraordinary by any measure. Your long public service to many communities is an example that future generations of public servants may follow to give us all hope for the advancement of humanity – an altruistic humanity of compassion and generosity.*

*May you rest in eternal peace.*

*Gordon Thomson  
President Shire of Christmas Island*

*The meeting rose for a minute of silence and reflection for Dr. Kelvin John Matthews.*

## **9 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

## **10 REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

### **10.1 Chief Executive Officer**

#### **10.1.1 Budget Review 2024-25**

##### **Council Resolution**

**Moved: Cr MASLI**

**Seconded: Cr LEE**

**Res. No: 2/25**

That the variations in the existing budget line items as set out in the attached proposed budget review report be approved.

**Carried: 8/0**

**Absolute Majority**

### **10.2 Director Finance & Administration**

#### **10.2.1 Schedule of Accounts – December 2024**

##### **Council Resolution**

**Moved: Cr YON**

**Seconded: Cr FOO**

**Res. No: 3/25**

That Council approves the expenditure as presented in December 2024 Schedule of Accounts.

**Carried: 8/0**

#### **10.2.2 Financial Statements – December 2024**

##### **Council Resolution**

**Moved: Cr YON**

**Seconded: Cr FOO**

**Res. No: 4/25**

That Council receives the Financial Statements of December 2024 for the Municipal Fund.

**Carried: 8/0**

#### **10.2.3 Schedule of Accounts – January 2025**

##### **Council Resolution**

**Moved: Cr LEE**

**Seconded: Cr YON**

**Res. No: 5/25**

That Council approves the expenditure as presented in January 2025 Schedule of Accounts.

**Carried: 8/0**



### 10.3 Director Community/Recreation Services & Training

### 10.4 Director Works, Services & Waste

### 10.5 Director Planning, Governance & Policy

#### 10.5.1 Short Term Accommodation Planning Applications

##### **Council Resolution**

**Moved: Cr PEREIRA**

**Seconded: Cr LEE**

**Res. No: 6/25**

That Council accepts the planning application requests for Short-Term Accommodation for the following locations as submitted by their respective applicants:

- 1.Roundabout Retreat, Unit 7/6 Tong Chee Road
- 2.Three Waters Accommodation, 12b Gaze Road
- 3.Coconut Cottage, 87 Gaze Road
- 4.Tong Chee House, 8 Tong Chee Road
- 5.Villa Papaya, 91 Gaze Road
- 6.Tropical Retreat, 4/4 Tong Chee Road

**Carried: 8/0**

#### 10.5.2 Policy Manual Reviews

##### **Council Resolution**

**Moved: Cr LEE**

**Seconded: Cr MASLI**

**Res. No: 7/25**

That Council adopts the following reviewed policies –

Administration 1 – Agendas and Minutes of Council Meetings

Administration 2 – Enforcement of Legislation

Administration 3 – Manager Conditions

Administration 4 – Translation Policy

Administration 5 – Vehicle and Plant Allocation and Usage

Community Services 1 – The Islander Editorial Policy

Community Services 2 – Use of the Community Facilities

Community Services 3 – Community Welfare Fund

Elected Members 1 – Policy Development and Review

Elected Members 2 – Donations to Community Organisations, Other Groups  
and Persons

**Carried: 8/0**

### 10.5.3 Commonwealth Mirrored WA State Grants

**Council Resolution****Moved: Cr YON****Seconded: Cr TUNG****Res. No: 8/25**

That Council notes the Community Consultative Committee's advocacy efforts in 2024 and the resulting successful application of two WA State Government grants applying to the island in 2025, the *2024 Short-Term Rental Accommodation Initiatives* and *2024 Attraction and Retention Packages for Regional Child Care Workers Program*.

**Carried: 8/0**

- 11 ELECTED MEMBERS MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**
- 12 NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE INTRODUCED BY DECISION OF THE MEETING**
- 13 BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**
- 14 CLOSURE OF MEETING**  
The Shire President closed the meeting at 7.44pm
- 15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 18 March 2025**