

COOMALIE COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

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22nd April 2022

Representation Review Committee
NTEC
GPO Box 2149
DARWIN NT 0801

Via email: secretariat.NTEC@nt.gov.au

Dear Representation Review Committee

Re: 2022 Local Government Representation Review

Council received the generic email alert issued 28th March 2022 advising of the 2022 Local Government Representation Review (the Review). As this is the first time the Review is taking place pursuant to Section 28 of the *Local Government Act 2019*, Council expected it would have received formal correspondence advising of the Review and a direct invitation to participate.

Council held its Ordinary General Meeting on Tuesday 19th April 2022 and considered the Information Guide that is generally available on the NTEC website. At its meeting, Council resolved the following;

RESOLUTION:2022/04/19/014

That Council;

- a) *receives and notes the report entitled 2022 Local Government Representation Reviews; and*
- b) *directs the Chief Executive Officer to make a formal submission by the due date of 31st May 2022 with the following inclusions;*
 - 1) *Accuracy of the recent Census report*
 - 2) *Timing of the consultation process of the incorporating of unincorporated areas*
 - 3) *Need to proactively engage with non-electors*
 - 4) *Concerns with comparisons of levels of representation of other councils*

Moved: Vice President McClymont

Seconded: Clr. Noble

Carried

I will outline Council's concerns below:

1. Accuracy of recent Census. Council appreciates that the accuracy of the Census is dependent upon the information provided by participants. The most recent Census conducted in 2021 is not yet available and Council believes very strongly that population figures for the 2016 Census are under-reported, particularly regarding the percentage of Indigenous residents in Coomalie Shire.
2. Timing. Council expressed serious concern regarding the timing of the Representation Review particularly as the Northern Territory Government is conducting a consultation process in parallel regarding the incorporation of unincorporated areas. Council is providing a joint submission with Belyuen Community Government Council regarding the incorporation of unincorporated areas and feels that the Representation Review process must be informed by the broader vision and aspiration of councils impacted by the incorporation process and not occur in isolation. Council also expressed concern that NTEC or the Review Committee have not written directly to Council regarding the Review process.
3. Engagement with Non-Electors. NTEC is well placed to access data that evidences the lack of elector participation in the electoral processes within the Shire, particularly regarding local government elections. Council impresses upon the Review Committee the importance of engaging with all eligible electors in the Review process.
4. Comparisons with other councils. Council expressed concern that the Review Committee have identified areas of focus (refer page 11 of the *Information Guide*). The Review has identified the "high number of members given the small population" as an area of focus for both Belyuen and Coomalie Councils, yet Wagait Shire Council has "no identified areas of focus". As Coomalie and Wagait have a similar number of elected members, yet Coomalie Shire has more electors, and a considerably greater population base than Wagait Shire Council, Coomalie Council can not understand the Review Committees suggestion that level of representation for one local government area in comparison with another local government area can be fairly and justly made? Coomalie Council has six elected members who are responsible for providing good governance to a population of over 1300 people over a land mass of more than 2,000 square kilometres. Council would appreciate a justification how a diverse population, spread over such a wide and differing landscape can be compared with small urban based population that occupies an area no larger than an urban residential estate?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of Council's decision, please do not hesitate to contact me at anna.malgorzewicz@coomalie.nt.gov.au or telephone 08 8976 0058.

Yours sincerely



Ms Anna Malgorzewicz
Chief Executive Officer