

March 23, 2015

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

TO BE HELD

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2015

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manns' or 'Manns' with a stylized flourish.

THERESE MANNS
GENERAL MANAGER

FURTHER BUSINESS

1. MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 2/15 - DATED MARCH 23, 2015 - FAR WEST
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE FUNDING CRISIS (11/161) 3

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

March 23, 2015

MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 2/15

SUBJECT: FAR WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE FUNDING CRISIS
11/161

Summary

Council has received correspondence dated March 18, 2015 from the Far West Community Legal Centre Inc. advising of the dire situation that the Centre is currently facing regarding the security of government funding in order to continue to provide a vital service to the community of Broken Hill and the Far West region.

The Far West Community Legal Centre Inc. was established as a result of a Federal Government initiative which identified the need for a more accessible legal service in the region. This region encompasses more than one third of NSW and services Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Menindee, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Ivanhoe and Wentworth.

The Far West Community Legal Centre Inc. is also facing the impending resignations of four senior staff members including two solicitors.

In their correspondence, the legal centre has stated that family law funding will be withdrawn by the Federal Government on 30th June 2015; and meetings with Sussan Ley, Kevin Humphries and John Williams over the past 3 years and the State Attorney General have not provided secure funding; and unfortunately, neither the State nor Federal Government is of the view that they are responsible for funding for the Far West Community Legal Centre Inc.

Council have been requested to support the Centre in its endeavours to secure on-going funding to ensure that this vital service to communities in the Far West can continue into the future.

Recommendation

That Mayoral Minute No. 2/15 dated March 23, 2015, be received.

That Council supports the Far West Community Legal Centre's endeavours to gain funding.

Attachments

1. Inwards Correspondence from th Far West Community Legal Centre Inc. 2 Pages

W CUY
MAYOR

**FAR WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC.***Far West Community Legal Services Group*

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Mayor Wincen Cuy
Broken Hill City Council

18 March 2015

Dear Mayor Cuy,

RE: The Far West Community Legal Centre Funding Crisis

In 2013, Far West Community Legal Centre received additional Family Law funding from the former Federal Government. This was a 4 year grant of \$190,000 per year. Prior to this, the service had financially struggled for a very long time. The generalist 'core' funding comes from the Federal Government.

Unfortunately, as of 30 June 2015, the Family Law funding was withdrawn by the Federal Government.

We have met with the Hon. Sussan Ley, Kevin Humphries MP and John Williams on many occasions since 2012 and more recently in 2014 and 2015. We have met with the State Attorney General on three occasions.

Currently, the State and Federal Government holds the position, that the other is responsible for our funding.

This morning on 2BH, the State Attorney General was interviewed. Hon Brad Hazzard emphatically stated "FWCLC is the responsibility of the Federal Government."

We urgently require security of funding. In the last week, four senior staff members have resigned. Two of these are solicitors, including the Principal Solicitor, Mariette Curcuruto.

Mariette Curcuruto and I will stay at Far West Community Legal Centre until the 30 June 2015. We have tendered our resignation at this time for two reasons.

1. There is no guaranteed funding after 1 July 2015.
2. We require time to advertise and recruit for the senior positions to Far West NSW. This takes time to recruit people with the necessary skill and experience.

From 1 July 2015, the level of funding for the FWCLC will be **critically inadequate** and will severely curtail our ability to deliver an effective, professional and quality legal service that clients with complex needs demand.

Please note, the actual number of senior staff that we can employ from 1 July 2015, is dependent on the actual funding we will receive on 1 July 2015. There has been no indication of what this will be, and we have no knowledge of when we will receive this information.

Broken Hill Wilcannia Menindee Ivanhoe Wanaaring Wentworth White Cliffs Tibooburra

The Far West Community Legal Centre was formed as a result of a Federal Government initiative that identified a need for more accessible legal services in the region. The Far West Community Legal Centre Inc. was officially opened on 18 July 2000.

The region covered by the FWCLC encompasses more than one third of NSW. The region stretches from the South Australian border in the west, to the Queensland border in the north and the Victorian border in the south. Broken Hill is located 1160 kilometres west of Sydney.

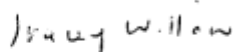
The centre is funded to provide services to the residents and communities of the Far West region including Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Menindee, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Ivanhoe and Wentworth. These services include free, accessible and responsive vital front-line legal services to the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and geographically isolated in the Far West NSW.

The Far West Community Legal Centre is the most remote generalist Community Legal Centre in NSW.

For more information on our service, and our achievements in 2014, please visit our new website: www.farwestclc.org.au

Mariette Curcuruto and I urgently request your support. We request a meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss our funding crisis.

Sincerely,



Tracey Willow
Chief Executive Officer
Far West Community Legal Centre Inc.

cc. Dave Gallagher, Deputy Mayor