

# Giving Feedback to Government

## Report on L.A. Meeting, Galiwin'ku, 21st June 2017

**What:** Special Local Authority Meeting

**Where:** Regional Council Office, Galiwin'ku

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017

### **1. Report on engagement and coordination between the Yalu' researchers and the Local Authority**

The primary business for this Special Local Authority meeting was a visit to the site of the new multipurpose hall. The meeting was convened at short notice, and the lead Yalu' researcher, Stephen Dhamarrandji, was in Yirrkala at the time.

In his stead, Rosemary Gundjarranbuy sought permission from the Council CEO for a Yalu' research team to attend the meeting, and Anita Munyarryun and Yvonne Mitja attended the meeting, taking video and photos. They were not present during the second half of the meeting for a presentation from the Electoral Commission.

### **2. Report from Yalu' research team on government engagement and coordination**

#### **Local Decision Making**

- *Summary:*

An old man, Geoffrey Dhaljada, joined the beginning of the L.A. meeting because he wanted to report an issue of overcrowding in his house. He has 7 grandchildren and 35 grandchildren living in the house and considers it favouritism that young people are given houses, while elder people are overlooked. Video link:

<http://recier.pixelplatform.com.au/feedback-to-government-galiwinku/>

*You are the local Authority close to the government and I am reporting to you all the members how my house is overcrowded. I have been asking for a house, but nothing... You the NTG should get information from the housing commissioner. Local housing reference group needs to go and visit my house and have a look... My concern is overcrowding, and why are you giving new houses to young people, I have been here a long time. I've got 7 children, 35 grandchildren living in that same house. It is favouritism, giving houses to the people you want. There are a lot of old people that need a proper house. Next time I will come back with a proper invitation letter - Geoffrey Dhaljada*

- *Comments from Yalu' research team:*

This old man was making a presentation of this story, and talking about a new house. Most of L.A. are on the Housing Reference Group, and this is why he has come here to talk to them.

- *Comments from CDU research team:*

Many of the same people are members of both the Housing reference Group and Local Authority in Galiwin'ku. For many reasons it can be unclear when a meeting will happen, and

in this case a community member was mobilising a possible link to government that was available to him through the L.A. in an effort to activate the interest and capacities of the HRG. For Yolŋu, it is common and familiar to be able to immediately access high-level authorities and decision-makers. This reality is not often echoed in the practices of government decision-making. Attempts to inappropriately access government through the L.A. can be read as indicative of this disjuncture. **This insight should be relayed to: East Arnhem Regional Council and Department of Housing and Community Development.**

**Multiple modes for engagement and communication**

- *Summary:*

Shane Marshall (East Arnhem Council) spoke at the L.A. meeting. He showed a picture of the multipurpose hall construction site on the projector. Then he led a visit to the construction site where all the L.A. members could see the work for themselves. Video link:

<http://recier.pixelplatform.com.au/feedback-to-government-galiwinku/>

- *Comments from Yalu' research team:*

We went from the office, to out in the field. Everyone was happy to see the shelter this time. It was good and important to talk about all the specifications, and to go down and see the new shelter. It was good when we went out from the office, to the site instead of just talking inside the office. It is good to see what is happening, in a practical way, instead of just making decision inside the office. There should be equal rights for in and out, so we can experience and feel what is actually happening.

- *Comments from CDU research team:*

Discussion carried out within an office prioritises one (largely verbal) mode of communication and decision-making. Moving outside gave the L.A. members an opportunity to gain a practical and experiential sense of the issue being discussed. This was appreciated and considered valuable. **This insight should be relayed to: East Arnhem Regional Council**

**Fig. 1-2**

Discussion around an overcrowded house at the beginning of the meeting.



**Fig. 3-4**

Visit to the multipurpose hall construction site. All L.A. members and councillors/staff were let onto site, provided with safety gear and viewed the construction.

