

Giving Feedback to Government: Report on L.A. Meeting, Galiwin'ku, 22nd May 2017

What: Local Authority Meeting

Where: Regional Council Office, Galiwin'ku

Date: 22th May 2017

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

Comments from Yalu' research team:

When we attended that meeting Danny Daŋataŋa (Chairman) and Diana Roper (CEO) knew we were coming, so everything went as planned. When we went into the meeting, Diana handed out the brochure (REC-IER information sheet) and explained to everyone we would be doing this work. Danny gave a presentation about the research. Everyone was happy to have us there. We had gone through the right channel instead of going the long way. Bobby, Danny the elders and Diana directed us, so went in and it was good. Everyone felt comfortable because we were welcome. Last week they had other (special) L.A. meeting but we didn't know about it, there was no announcement. We didn't go to do an evaluation because we were doing volunteer work at the sports day and there was a ceremony.

Comments from CDU research team

The Yalu' researchers describe several key aspects of a successful introduction and engagement between themselves and the Local Authority:

- The relevant Yolngu and balanda authorities knew that they were coming
- They had gone through the right channel when seeking permission to attend
- They felt welcome

The coming together of these different aspects helped the researchers to do good work. Paying attention to these aspects of engagement is also relevant for Balanda working in the community.

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

Council Budgets

- *Summary from Yalu' research team*

There was a presentation from Shane Marshall from the Shire talked about money, saying that there was a budget available for Galiwin'ku shire. The L.A. committee were asking to put a BMX track for the kids, and there were other funds available if Danny Daŋataŋa (L.A. Chairman) or the community wanted a park or recreational area, cyclone centre, swimming pool...

- *Comments from Yalu' research team*

This was good, but what we were seeing is that they were talking about an issue for the community, not about individual choice. There should have been a way to involve the community instead of the Local Authority committee getting the story and keeping it there. It could be that in between L.A. and the community there is a gap that needs to be filled.

- *Comments from CDU research team*

For Yolngu, the relevant constituency to discuss or be involved in decision-making is not always the same. While the L.A. members are supposed to represent the community, sometimes it is difficult when their opinion is prioritised over discussions with other relevant people. There may need to be further consideration of appropriate mechanisms for decision-making and communication into and out of L.A. meetings and governance processes. **This insight should be relayed to: East Arnhem Regional Council.**

New Cyclone Shelter

- *Summary from Yalu' research team*

They are putting a proper cyclone shelter in the community. This is because last year people went to the workshop, but there was a lot of risk – chemicals and in the workshop. At the meeting they talked about how contractors came into the community and they are building a large building opposite basket court. This is happening now.

- *Comments from Yalu' research team*

This was good engagement. Well-spoken balanda, with both Yolngu and balanda communicating and listening with each other. Most of the Yolngu are working with these contractors. Through Birrkpirrk people got training, and now with the cyclone shelter they have been given a proper job.

- *Comments from CDU research team*

Engagements around the new cyclone shelter at Galiwin'ku are going well. In part because people have a clear experience with what the problem has been and clear explanations of the solution to address them, also because it has demonstrated means for people to transition from training to employment. **This insight should be relayed to: Department of Housing and Community Development.**

Slow Build Project

- *Summary from Yalu' research team*

The Slow Build houses were discussed at the end of the meeting. A man from the East Arnhem Shire based in Nhulunbuy spoke to the meeting about the Slow Build houses. He showed on the whiteboard screen the old mission houses. This was to go give a clear understanding for the committee members about the process of putting in those houses. They were telling the committee, so tenants moving into new houses can understand. Sometimes tenants are confused when they move out of the demountables, he was telling the committee so they can tell others. He was gave the L.A. numbers and diagram, showing how much money has been used for the new houses. Most of the slow build houses are

finished, and now there is a job to be done putting a fence around them. Staff will be coming in from Birrkpirrk, helping the contractors putting these fences around. This is including old houses built last year and the slow build houses.

- *Comments from Yalu' research team*

The promises that the government made are happening, but we need to focus more on the future. The people who are working on this, will they keep doing this activity or will the government give them wages? The presentation was good, but can they concentrate and continue good engagement processes out in the field? There are two ways of communicating – inside the office, and out in the field. People in the LA meeting, talking about budget and talking, but outside people are doing the action. Both of these are part of engagement. Not just the people in the committee, but also those outside in the field.

- *Comments from CDU research team*

Good engagement implies more than good communication. Yolŋu in Galiwin'ku consider respectful interpersonal relations to be very important, but also often emphasise that community building is an important long-term goal that can be prioritised over the success or failure of specific face-to-face interactions. **This insight should be relayed to: NTG.**

Local Decision Making

It is minuted that Janine Bevis introduced the upcoming move towards local decision-making. However, the researchers have no notes of this and suggest they may have been busy with something else.

Comments from the Advisory Board and community members who attended the meeting:

Advisory board members: Bobby, Raylene, Danny, Rosemary, Evelyn

Researchers: Stephen, Golung, Mitja, Beulah

- Members of the Advisory Board recorded a short video suggesting that any decision about budget spending on a new facility, it not only about the facility but also about how people can get jobs, who gets the jobs and how they can keep them. (See <http://recier.pixelplatform.com.au/feedback-to-government-galiwinku/> for video)

Learnings for the researchers:

Reflecting on this process, Stephen Dhamarrandji suggested that it would be helpful for the L.A. committee to hand out the scorecard at the next meeting so that committee members can fill it in then, rather than chasing around after them after the meeting has finished. *This is a recommendation regarding handing over the responsibility for the evaluations – now the groundwork has been done – to government organisations or individual staff.*

Annotation of photos taken in the meeting:

Fig 1. Mavis translating some of the discussion from English into Yolngu matha when Shane Flanagan spoke. He was using some large words, so Mavis helped Kay Thurlow to translate to the Yolngu present.



Fig 2. Joan was asking a question about a diagram of the budget pie chart because she was confused, and once that was clear she spoke some more. There was a picture of just a dollars sign, but no figures – there were highlighted colours showing the allocation of money, but no figures.



Fig 3. Evelynna is a member of the L.A. and she has just got back from Canada and the next day went to the meeting. She was representing Galiwin'ku and representing the L.A. overseas, she was sponsored by the Cathy Freeman foundation. The photos was taken because she did so well in her race overseas.



Fig 4. These two women came for one day for a visit to the L.A. meeting. Their shirts look the same as the ones from PM&C so we thought that is where they came from.



Scorecard:

A scorecard was completed by the research team (pasted below).



Researcher's Yäku: Maliku, Goloŋ, Mitja
Meeting attended: Local Authority Meeting
Date: May 2017

Buku-roŋanmaram dhäwu gapmankal/ Giving feedback to government

Bäpurru: _____ Naŋapal Gandarrwuy Yuŋa Yolŋu

MANYMAKKURR DHUKARRKURR/ GOOD PROCESS

1. Marŋgi nhe nhäthaga gapman mala marrtji räli? Nhä nhumalangunjuny guyaŋanhawuy
Did you know when the government people were coming?

1 2 3 4 ✓ 6 7 8 9 10

2. Märr weyin walal gapmandja nhina?
Did they stay for long enough?

1 2 3 ✓ 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Nulanhuma marŋgi nhaku walal marrtji räli, ga nhaku walal ga djälthirr?
Did you understand why they were here, and what they wanted to do?

1 2 3 4 ✓ 6 7 8 9 10

4. Yolŋuny mala ŋula waŋa?
Did Yolŋu get a chance to speak?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ✓ 9 10

5. Nhaltjan gapmandja mala ŋula buthuru-bitjun Yolŋuwnydja?
Did the government people listen to what Yolŋu were saying?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ✓ 9 10

Comments: The researchers only heard about the L.A. meeting because an L.A. member told them

YORANHAWUY NAŋALAPALMIRRIWUŋ/ AUTHORITY OF THE ELDERS

6. Nula gapman mala marrtji ga nhäma wäŋa-waŋaŋuny wo ŋalapalmirrinny mala
Did government go first to the Traditional Owners and Leaders?

1 2 ✓ 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Nhä nhakuŋuny guyaŋanhawuy balayiny ŋunhi dhäwulil ŋunhi nhä nhe ŋäma
walalaŋhuŋ gapmanguŋ
Did you have enough time to think about what government was saying before making
any decisions?

1 2 3 4 5 ✓ 7 8 9 10

8. Nula yuŋany yolŋuny marrtji ga nhäma nhä malanyinha dhäwu gapmandhu mala ga
lakaram wo gurruŋan?
Where young people invited to the meeting, and given a chance to watch and learn from
their elders?

✓ 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

It would be good to have a junior committee and give the young people an opportunity. If they participate, then when they come out they will talk to other people about lots of good opportunities.

NUTHANMARRAM MÄRRMA ROM YOLŊU GA BALANDA RRAMBAŊI/ COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

9. Dhukarr walal gapandja marrtji balanya nhakun wiripu wiripuŋulil djämamirriwal mala yolŋuwal wo wanha Yolŋu mala ŋuli ga djama, dhiyakiyi dhukarrwu ŋamaŋamayunaraw
Did the government ask Yolŋu groups for help with making decisions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ✓

10. Gapman mala ŋula marrtji ga waŋanhamirr dhiyakiyi dhukurrku romgurr balanyalil wāŋalil mala nhakun Shire-lil, Clinic-lil wo wukirrilil
Did the government ask local departments for help with making decisions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ✓

11. Ŋula nhuma ga dharanŋan dhuwal dhāwu rrupiyakurr dhukarr ga wanhanuwuy ŋayi ga nhaltjan ŋanya ŋuli bāki.
Did you understand the money story - where the money is coming from, who it is for, and how will it be spent?

1 2 3 4 5 6 ✓ 8 9 10

Comments: There was a balance in making decisions at that meeting. There were many questions at the meeting asking where the money is coming from. Lots of discussion and questions about the budget. Because the L.A. members need to know where the funding will be sitting and how they can use it.

DHUKARR BUMA MANYMAKKUM RRAMNAŊI YAN/ BUILDING PATHWAYS IN A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

12. Dhukarr ga ŋula ŋorra nhumalaŋgal nhaltjan nhuma dhu lakaram wiripuwal yolŋuwal mala dhiyakuwuy dhāwupuy.
Is there a pathway for letting other Yolŋu know what you talked about?

1 ✓ 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. Nha nhumalany nayi dhiyaŋ dhāwuy malaŋuy ŋayaŋu-manymakkuŋal.
Did you feel comfortable at the meeting?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ✓

14. Nhaltjan nhe ga guyaŋa yalalaŋumirrinjdja nhe marrtji balanyalil dhārukliil bulu.
Will you come to the meeting next time?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ✓

Comments: For Q 12 – it would be good if after the meeting the members met with elders/clan group to tell them what happened.

I felt comfortable because the first place when I got in they knew who I was and I was properly introduced. Sometimes if you go to a meeting you don't feel good, but if you are elected or have a role then that is good.

It was lucky we had that brochure for the project, it was in the middle of the table.