



UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Ordinary Meeting held on 16 September 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 16 September 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 16 September 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 Vincent Cheng-Siew **SAW**

Cr Kelvin Kok Bin **LEE**

Cr Swee **TUNG**

Cr Steve **PEREIRA**

Chief Executive Officer

Director Planning, Governance & Policy/Minute Taker

Director Community/Recreation Services

Assistant Director of Finance & Corporate Services

David **PRICE**

Chris **SU**

Olivier **LINES**

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

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 4.1 David WATCHORN of 10 Rocky Point Crescent raises questions around the August 2025 vet visit funded by the Shire of Christmas Island.

Question 1 – David WATCHORN stated that he had written to the Shire requesting further information on the vet visit and informs the meeting he had not received a response to date. Put to the meeting that the Christmas Island environment is very important and requested the Shire to inform him as to the scientific basis of their decision to engage a vet for the cat desexing program in August 2025.

Cr THOMSON responded that the basis for Council's decision to progress with the cat desexing visit was based on the evidence from the Youth Advisory Council submissions on the matter. Their evidence went to the mental health of young people and to their improvement should they be able to follow the local cat law and keep cats legally. The local cat law was produced from public consultation and scientific input. Summarized that denying people the opportunity to follow the law imposed on them was poor public governance.

21 cats had been treated and now can be kept inside their registered houses. Cr THOMSON put to the meeting that taking the cats out of the jungle and into the control of a household to be kept indoors as per the local cat law may not present such a detriment to the environment. Cr THOMSON concluded that SOCI's position was to enable a person to follow the law.

Question 2 – How were risks such as toxoplasmosis assessed, and how will ongoing animal welfare be managed in compliance with the local cat law and the WA Animal Welfare Act (2002) without a permanent vet?

Cr THOMSON put that the question leads to a position that the decision Council took to commit to the cat program is not supported.

Question 3 – How does this program align with the long-standing goal of feral cat eradication?

Cr THOMSON advised that all cats that are not chipped are subject to the feral cat eradication program.

Question 4 – What is the justification for using ratepayer and taxpayer funds on a program that appears inconsistent with eradication goals?

Cr THOMSON advised that the meeting has answered those questions already, referred to the mental health issue raised by YAC.

Question 5 – After 15 years of weak enforcement, what has changed? What new measures will guarantee compliance and accountability? How many permits have been issued?

CEO confirms that it is 21 cats that have been desexed during the August 2025 program. Cr THOMSON responded that the cat workshop led by the visiting vet team comprehensively provided guidance into the accountability and responsibility of pet ownership. The workshop covered the process of chipping, desexing, registration and tattooing with the vet and the Shire facilitator.

Question 7 – Were the cats that were treated confirmed healthy and free from Toxoplasmosis; are they healthy?

Cr THOMSON provided that the health of the cats were assessed by the vet who has a record of the patient cats now for his veterinary service's files. Cr THOMSON noted that keeping cats perpetually indoors, as is required by the local cat law, would drastically reduce their chance of exposure to toxoplasmosis.

Question 8 – What programs does the Shire pursue to address youth mental health matters?

Cr THOMSON responded that the local government does not pursue any clinical services.

Question 9 – David WATCHORN asked why was his name publicly shared with the school and under what authority was this done?

Cr THOMSON confirmed that David WATCHORN was referring to the correspondence he sent to the Hon. Marion SCRYMGOUR in August. This correspondence was at the member's request for additional information regarding a stream of contact with her electorate office raising concerns and objections about the vet program on Christmas Island, requesting it to stop. Cr THOMSON recounted that for several days there was heated campaigning against the Council's decision which involved widespread requests for the vet visit to be axed.

The campaign ended up at the school where students had been told that the vet 'would be arrested' if he were to fix a cat, and that people would be 'fined and arrested' if they were to bring a cat for the vet's attention. A misinformation campaign was underway involving school children. Cr THOMSON expressed that it was 'offensive to me' that children had suffered this misinformation campaign.

Cr THOMSON stated David WATCHORN's name was not mentioned in the letter, and that he was a cc to it. Cr THOMSON stated that he wished David WATCHORN to know the contents of the letter and did not state in the letter that David WATCHORN had been offensive. Cr THOMSON summarized that David WATCHORN's method of contacting the Minister to raise grievances was not unusual, and often followed on island.

Cr THOMSON concluded that it was troubling to see this misinformation campaign which potentially could have resulted in people not complying with the law; there was work to be done to correct this information and so the letter was sent to the honourable member with its request to be distributed through the school network. Cr THOMSON put that the cc'ing of the letter to David WATCHORN was in his view a transparency and that it is regrettable he feels aggrieved by the action; the Shire President did not see an issue with keeping a party informed who is so passionate about the situation.

David WATCHORN exited the meeting, stating that it was 'disgraceful' that the Shire President was not answering the questions put. Cr THOMSON requested that David WATCHORN withdraw that comment; David WATCHORN exited the meeting without a response to that request.

- 4.2 Cr PEREIRA asked if the Shire was responsible for the walking trail between Taijin House and Territory Day Park?

CEO David PRICE advised that Shire was not responsible for the trail; it was the Commonwealth's responsibility.

Cr THOMSON provided that the Shire built the trail initially but that the Commonwealth is responsible for the maintenance. Provided a history of the joint SOCI-Parks collaboration on the initial development of the trail. Both agencies observed that there was no way to traverse between the two points easily; Parks officer Alisdair GRIGGS had at one point a team of research students who would benefit from access. SOCI requested Commonwealth permission to construct the infrastructure for a trail, and did so when permission was granted.

CEO PRICE advised that it will be raised with IOTA.

- 4.3 Cr PEREIRA requested to know if there was an update for shade cover at the park adjacent to Kookai'z Cafe?

Director of Community Services Oliver LINES advised that the shade cover had been ordered, in addition to some for the foreshore padang.

- 4.4 Cr Mel TUNG requested an update regarding the maintenance of new park equipment in Drumsite.

Director of Community Services Oliver LINES advised that the Parks and Gardens team had been regularly assessing the new play modules; he had also inspected it recently and it seemed in good order. A wasp nest had been removed which he noted may need to be a regular occurrence for that area.

- 4.5 Cr YON raised feedback from the community about the recent incident of hate-speech graffiti at Lily Beach. Community members had sighted the hate-speech and informed the Shire and the AFP where a report was made. The matter is now under investigation. Cr YON noted recent narratives in the Australian news in this era with the effects of social media amplifying extremist viewpoints.
- 4.6 Cr MASLI asked about the progress on the second Silver City Park? Director for Community Services advised that council was working through the park program with assets for each park. CEO David PRICE advised that the mid-year budget review could be a time to make adjustment to the park program.

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 19 August 2025

Members considered the unconfirmed minutes.

Council Resolution

Moved: Cr LEE **Seconded: Cr SAW** **Res. No: 74/25**

That Council adopt the unconfirmed minutes of the 19 August 2025 Council Meeting.

Carried: 9/0

For: Cr THOMSON Cr YON Cr FOO Cr MASLI
Cr WOO Cr TUNG Cr PEREIRA Cr LEE
Cr SAW

Against

7.2 Business Arising from the Minutes of Previous Meetings

8 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION

- 8.1 President Gordon THOMSON reads out the Shire report to the AFP prepared by Director for Policy Chris SU in relation to the hate speech appearance on the halal bbq signage at Lily Beach.

Shire became aware of a racially and religiously offensive graffiti defacement at approximately 9.00pm on Friday 12th September. Councillor Azmi Yon reported a photo to Shire staff Chris Su of a Halal BBQ sign at Lily Beach defaced with upsetting symbols and wording. He had received the photo from some local youth earlier that evening. Chris Su informed Cr Yon that he would make a report to the police the next day.

President THOMSON had met with the presidents of the Islamic Council of Christmas Island and the Malay Association of Christmas Island on the morning of Saturday 13th September at the Malay Club to discuss the matter.

Community members met at the AFP offices at 1400 on Saturday 13th September, with Chris Su in attendance to make the official Shire report of racially offensive graffiti as required by local governments. The AFP requested Shire to advise when the last time Shire staff may have cleaned the toilets in the area? Chris Su advised that he would find out after the meeting.

Chris Su met with the relevant staff member Mr Rashid Saptu who advised that he had cleaned the toilet onsite at 1500 on Thursday 11th September. He had not noticed anything unusual.

On 16 Sept 2025 Chris Su called Lisa Preston to ask if she or her tour guests had visited the site on Friday 12th September and had seen anything? Lisa reported that she had seen the graffiti a week earlier on Saturday 6th September when she was there with tour guests. She had made a note to report it to Shire, but it had slipped her mind afterwards. She recounted that other tour guests had mentioned distressing graffiti at the Lily Beach site earlier that week; she had not known what they were talking about realizing only on Saturday 6th September when she was there herself.

A large amount of the graffiti was erased off by the public over the weekend of 13th and 14th September, however still partially visible Monday morning. Shire staff used acetone on Monday 15th September to clear away the graffiti completely.

Shire updated Officer Rebecca Kelly by email on Tuesday 16th Sept advising the AFP of this updated information from Lisa Preston around dates. Shire also requested that the AFP log the picture of the graffiti with the WA Police Graffiti Task Force for their state-wide graffiti register in hopes it may be a clue to assist investigations into hate-speech graffiti by WA police on the mainland.

Shire is awaiting an incident report number from the AFP for our records.

8.2 President Gordon THOMSON advised that clean energy development will be discussed later in the meeting, should councillors accept a new item of business.

8.2 President Gordon THOMSON provided an update from the WA Electoral Commission. They had not been able to deliver the election materials, including the ballots to the island. The WAEC had planned for the material to arrive on the flight of that day, Tuesday 16th Sept 2025.

This frustrates the ability to begin the gazetted early voting for Wednesday 17th September 2025. WAEC are responsible for the logistics and execution of the 2025 Local Government Election on Christmas Island.

8.4 President Gordon THOMSON thanked Cr Vincent SAW and Cr Phillip WOO on behalf of the Shire of Christmas Island for their years of service as councillors at the Shire. He stated that it takes a great deal to respond to the call for public service over the many years that they did so. He thanked the two councillors on behalf of the Council.

9 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

10 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

10.1 Chief Executive Officer

10.2 Director Finance & Administration

10.2.1 Schedule of Accounts – August 2025

Council Resolution

Moved: Cr FOO

Seconded: Cr SAW

Res. No: 75/25

That Council receive the expenditure totalling \$1,329,030.56 as presented in August 2025 Schedule of Accounts.

Carried: 9/0

For:

Cr THOMSON

Cr YON

Cr FOO

Cr MASLI

Cr WOO

Cr TUNG

Cr PEREIRA

Cr LEE

Cr SAW

Against**10.2.2 Financial Statements – August 2025****Council Resolution****Moved: Cr MASLI****Seconded: Cr LEE****Res. No: 76/25**

That Council receives the Financial Statements of August 2025.

Carried: 9/0

For:	Cr THOMSON	Cr YON	Cr FOO	Cr MASLI
	Cr WOO	Cr TUNG	Cr PEREIRA	Cr LEE
	Cr SAW			

Against**10.3 Director Community/Recreation Services & Training****10.4 Director Works, Services & Waste****10.5 Director Planning, Governance & Policy****11 ELECTED MEMBERS MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN****12 NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE INTRODUCED BY DECISION OF THE MEETING****12.1 Resolution to add new business regarding the Lily Beach incident****Council Resolution****Moved: Cr MASLI****Seconded: Cr YON****Res. No: 77/25**That a resolution dealing with the Community Consultative Committee's request to facilitate the community solidarity bbq for Saturday 20th September 2025 be accepted to the meeting.**Carried: 9/0**

For:	Cr THOMSON	Cr YON	Cr FOO	Cr MASLI
	Cr WOO	Cr TUNG	Cr PEREIRA	Cr LEE
	Cr SAW			

Against

12.1.2 Cr Azmi YON spoke to motion. Cr YON stated that the Lily Beach incident was 'nonsense' and had no place in Christmas Island or anywhere else. He reported that he met with the AFP on Saturday 13th September to report the matter.

Cr Hafiz MASLI spoke to the motion. Cr MASLI noted the rise of 'fear mongering' in online spaces in particular with anti-multiculturalism, anti-immigration and Islamophobia.

Cr Gordon THOMSON referred to the report tabled by Australia's first Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Canberra this month; it showed that incidents of Islamophobia were increasing.

Councillors noted the coinciding of the appearance of hate-speech graffiti with the August 31st March for Australia protests on the mainland. Council agreed on the importance of reinforcing multiculturalism in an anti-racism strategy and that incidents like hate-speech needed to be confronted and called out.

Cr Gordon THOMSON referred to the body of work the WA Equal Opportunity Commission officer Stephen Goodall has completed on Christmas Island over the years. An opportunity for outside facilitation and collaboration would be welcomed. Council agreed.

12.2 Resolution on Community Solidarity BBQ for Saturday 20th Sept 2025

Council Resolution				
Moved: Cr MASLI		Seconded: Cr YON		Res. No: 78/25
That the Shire support the CCC’s resolution and facilitate the community solidarity bbq for Saturday 20 th September 2025.				
Carried:	9/0			
For:	Cr THOMSON	Cr YON	Cr FOO	Cr MASLI
	Cr WOO	Cr TUNG	Cr PEREIRA	Cr LEE
	Cr SAW			
Against				

12.3 Resolution to add new business regarding the Clean Energy Development

Council Resolution				
Moved: Cr MASLI		Seconded: Cr YON		Res. No: 79/25
That a new item of business regarding clean energy development be added.				
Carried: 9/0				
For:	Cr THOMSON	Cr YON	Cr FOO	Cr MASLI
	Cr WOO	Cr TUNG	Cr PEREIRA	Cr LEE
	Cr SAW			
Against				

12.3.1 President Gordon THOMSON distributed and read the '*Report to Ordinary Monthly Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Christmas Island 16 September 2025.*'

In November 2022 the Shire of Christmas Island resolved to collaborate with the Commonwealth to develop a decarbonisation policy for the island – *the Christmas Island Clean Energies Strategy*.

Throughout our advocacy for the Clean Energies Strategy, the Shire has maintained key principles to all decision-making about transitioning to renewable energy for power supply.

Principle 1 – Public Goods like the Indian Ocean Territories Power Service (IOTPS) must be owned and operated by the democratically elected government for the benefit of the community. Essential services like out energy supply should not be privatised for the profit of companies.

Principle 2 – There must be deliberative public consultation about the Clean Energies Strategy and any associated decisions pursuant to it. Like the making of the Fisheries Management Ordinance and the creation of the Christmas Island Marine Park, we expect consultation will mean the community will be engaged in accordance with the principles of co-design.

The Commonwealth's actions to date have been consistent with the principles adopted by the Shire. For example the tender document *Feasibility Study on Decarbonising the Electricity Supply in the Indian Ocean Territories 2025 ADDENDUM No.2 Supplementary Information*, provides for the Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island to be consulted as the key stakeholders in the feasibility study. The successful tenderer has yet to be announced.

However during the same period Google has been talking to the mine about PRL setting up a business as a supplier of renewable energy to the Google project. If that is allowed to happen, it would mean the Commonwealth releasing land to PRL to supply power to the proposed Google Data Centre. This would be most detrimental to the interests of Christmas Islanders, although no doubt profitable for PRL.

12.3.2 Cr TUNG requested additional background.

Cr THOMSON advised that services such as power, water, education and health are provided by the Commonwealth Government. The Albanese Government was elected in 2022 with a platform of decarbonising energy. Council welcomed this in 2022 and sought to align its planning instruments in accordance with this goal which has an impact on other matters such as climate change and in turn its impact on housing planning and development.

On Christmas Island this involved the transition from diesel fossil fuels to solar and wind options.

Cr THOMSON summarised put that if this transition involved the privatisation of energy with prices to be dictated by a private company, it would be to the long-term detriment of the community. Governments are elected to provide services to the people that elect them; Cr THOMSON put that as a local council we have to ensure that the community is looked after in this respect.

Cr THOMSON put that the principle is that the necessary services to life are best managed for the people and not for profit. Cr THOMSON referred again to the *Feasibility Study on Decarbonising the Electricity Supply in the Indian Ocean Territories 2025 ADDENDUM No.2 Supplementary Information* which requires feedback contribution from the two local governments.

Cr TUNG requested to know if Shire knew of a position from the Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands?

Cr THOMSON responded that Shire has yet to speak to SOCKI; an opportunity will arise when the *Feasibility Study* begins. Cr THOMSON put that the SOCKI would be understandably interested in the climate change aspect of the *Feasibility Study* and the impacts that has on CKI.

Cr PEREIRA noted that Defence had interests on Cocos (Keeling) Island around climate change and overall operational logistics on CKI.

Cr Kelvin LEE noted the overall alignment of the Australian Government's Net Zero 2050 plans and the United Nation's goals in this area. Cr LEE noted at one stage service delivery at the Immigration Detention Centre was undertaken by the public service. With the privatisation of human services in the immigration sector, it has seemingly come out to a larger bill for the tax payer than had it been kept in the civil service. Cr LEE put that privatisation doesn't necessarily mean more efficient service delivery.

Cr PEREIRA put forward that reportedly Google had not been able to make inroads with IOTPS on the energy requirements that it needed, hence reached out to PRL to seek to develop an arrangement. Cr PEREIRA stated that he understood a company's need to seek alternative solutions in its development hurdles.

Cr THOMSON advises that SOCI has been engaged with Google since 2023, has discussed the matter at the Minister for Territories’ office and noted the Prime Minister’s Office interest in the matter. Cr THOMSON put that not all reporting on matters like this on Christmas Island can be accepted at face value to be factual or timely. A consistent narrative is rare.

Cr PEREIRA put that it is a complex matter that presented a possibility for LGA and Commonwealth to work with Google to leverage an outcome for the benefit of Islanders? Cr THOMSON put that the motion is for council to maintain its position on considering the continuation of public goods for the public by the public service, not to consider a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP).

Cr LEE recalled that Public-Private-Partnerships in energy in South Australia resulted in the collapse of their electrical grid.

12.3 Resolution on Clean Energy Development

Council Resolution				
Moved: Cr MASLI		Seconded: Cr SAW		Res. No: 80/25
That the Shire of Christmas Island Council remains resolutely opposed to the privatization of energy supply on Christmas Island at any stage of generation and distribution. The Council reiterates our opposition to the privatization of any services currently provided to our community by the Commonwealth. We call on the Minister for Territories to provide the assurance that the Commonwealth will protect the community's interests in public goods, assure us that the Commonwealth will not release land to, or permit in any form, any private sector entity to operate renewable energy facilities in the Territory of Christmas Island, and commit to continue the feasibility study of decarbonising the electricity supply in the IOTs.				
Carried: 7/0				
For:	Cr THOMSON	Cr YON	Cr FOO	Cr MASLI
	Cr WOO	Cr LEE	Cr SAW	
Against	Cr PEREIRA	Cr TUNG		

13 BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

14 CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Shire President closed the meeting at 8.25 pm

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 21 October 2025