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**BUNDABERG HEALTH SERVICE DISTRICT  
RECORD OF SPECIAL MEETING**

Meeting of: District Health Council

Meeting No: 05-06/05

Date: Wednesday 15 June 2005

Start Time: 1710

Present: Councillor Josie Meng; Councillor Sonja Cleary; Councillor Denise Powell ; Councillor Jim Mullett; Councillor Lorraine Pyefinch; Councillor Joy Jensen,  
Councillor William (Bill) Trevor; Councillor Cheri Yavu-Kama-Harathunian; Monica Seth (ADistrict Manager)

Attendees: Apologies: Councillor Viv Chase (Chairman);

Confirmation of Minutes:

Minute Taker: Joan Dooley

1. Special Business:					
Item No	Equip Function	Topic	Discussion	Agreed Action & Outcome, Person Responsible, and Time Frames	Open/Closed
05-06/05 1.1	L & M	Dr Patel Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monica Seth read the letter from Mr Viv Chase to the Minister for Health, and the Minister's response to Mr Chase. Councillor Mullett noted that Councillor Chase is suffering ill health</li> <li>Councillor Cleary expressed concern with the content of the letter, and the fact that another Councillor will need to take over as Chair during this difficult time</li> <li>Councillor Mullett and Councillor Trevor advised they have approached Councillor Chase with a view to standing aside, however he was not accepting of this proposal</li> </ul>		

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- Councillor Mullett advised that he is prepared to take on the role of A/Chairperson for the next four months, and will take the opportunity to move the Council forward

- Moved Councillor Pyefinch, seconded Councillor Meng, all in favour, "That Councillor Mullett be A/Chairperson for the next 4 months"
- Moved Councillor Yavu-Kama-Harathunian, seconded Councillor Pyefinch, all in favour "That the District Health Council forward a letter to the Minister for Health seeking his urgent advice regarding issues articulated in the letter."
- Moved Councillor Powell, seconded Councillor Pyefinch that item number 02-03/05 from the Minutes of 23/03/2005 be corrected to reflect "That the local Medical Community expressed regret at the media exposure of the Dr Patel issue(s), and they considered it denied the opportunity of natural justice given that an investigation was already occurring".

- On behalf of the current and previous Council, Councillor Mullett noted that the Council needs to be confident that they are being kept informed of Health Service issues. Councillor Cleary noted that sharing of information may not have occurred due to confidentiality concerns
- Councillor Powell expressed concern that Executive Directors have indicated that they have felt intimidated and bullied by the Council, and noted the Council therefore needs to approach business differently, however noted that "blame" will not help the situation
- Councillor Mullett said that from discussions with high ranking Queensland Health officials, he does not



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- believe, to his knowledge, that Councillors have been guilty of harassment and bullying
- Councillor Mullett offered Councillors the opportunity to raise any concerns regarding the Chair and the Council:
  - Councillor Jensen – There is a perception that the Council has been ineffectual, therefore the group needs to have a Chair and a Council that is effectual and seen to be so within the community
  - Councillor Meng – Supports Councillor Jensen's comments. Expressed concern that since her appointment and the initial meeting in February 2005, she has wondered why the Council exists, however said her purpose is to be a voice for the community, not a political figure. She also expressed concern that the Chair and the Council do not have credibility within the community.
  - Councillor Trevor – Noted he was not present at the meeting, however he has made it clear to Councillor Chase that he does not support the content of the letter. He also expressed concern with the set up of the Council, resulting in them having no real core within the community, and an inability to influence budgets. Councillor Trevor said that if the Council is to gain credibility, it needs a structured set of recommendations regarding its role in the community. He acknowledged that there has been a lot of pressure within Queensland Health, and particularly Bundaberg Base Hospital, where the situation has become political with the hospital being a ~~point~~ <sup>point</sup> in the middle. He acknowledged that to some degree this has built a

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culture within Queensland Health and this organisation of keeping a lid on things. This culture reflects the Council's structure and how they interact. He noted that the person who signed the letter has to accept responsibility for the content. He also acknowledged that he would be disappointed if one person is sacrificed for the sake of the Council, as the motion was moved and seconded by other Councillors.

- Councillor Yavu-Kama-Harathunian – The Chair has certain responsibilities, particularly relating to information that is broadcast regarding issues that come to the table. She gave an overview of processes she follows for other Committees that she is involved in, and said that if she has not consulted with the relevant Council or Board, she does not have the authority to make any comment, either verbally or in writing, without at least the knowledge of one or two of the Councillors. She expressed concern that as Chair, there has been a breach of function or role, therefore action needs to be taken, so that the Council can move forward with strategic and communication planning
- Councillor Powell acknowledged that she had moved the motion for the letter. She expressed concern with leadership in the formation of the letter, and thought the letter was representative of the Council at that time, however the Chair should have realised that this was a politically sensitive issue, therefore should have given careful consideration to what happened with the letter between the meeting of 23 March 2005

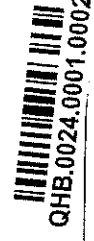


and when the letter was signed on 5 April 2005. Councillor Powell expressed concern with Councillor Chase's leadership, and noted that she is distressed with the perception that the Executive were unable to provide constructive feedback. She also expressed concern that if Executive were feeling bullied, it is a reflection on the Council's leadership, therefore things are more distressing than previously realised. Councillor Powell also indicated that she would not be comfortable at the end of 4 months to say that things will be OK. As The Council is now aware that they are perceived to be bullying in their relationships, the issue needs to be dealt with as part of Council responsibilities.

- Councillor Pyefinch supported the previous comments, and said the process for appointment of the Chairs needs to be re-considered. She advised that concerns have been expressed that medical staff do not have a process to submit complaints. She also noted that there should be a process for the Councils to submit complaints.
- Councillor Pyefinch said that she does not support the content of the letter, however acknowledged that she seconded the motion. She also said that she would like to see some direction from the Minister.
- Councillor Cleary – As a new Councillor she has had concerns from the beginning. She advised that she had received advice from the Chair at the end of the first meeting that to avoid lengthy meetings, she should address

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			<p>any concerns directly with himself or Peter Leck. She noted that the Council needs effective communication strategies to ensure issues can be dealt with in a timely manner. Councillor Cleary also expressed concern that she has requested a strategic plan, which has not been provided by the Chair. The Council needs to identify the negative and the positive aspects of the Council. Monica Seth distributed copies of Hazel Harden discussion, key actions at Council meetings on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2004, and 26 May 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monica Seth encouraged the Council to submit a submission for the Forster Review, which will be in the District in July. Councillor Mullett said that the Council needs to make it clear to the enquiry that they wish to meet with the Review team. Councillor Powell noted that the invitation may be sent to Councillor Chase as Chair.</li> <li>• Councillor Yavu-Kama-Harathunian noted that a team from the Inquiry will be attending an Indigenous Community meeting tomorrow to inform them how they need to interact appropriately</li> <li>• Discussion took place regarding media attention during the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry local hearings, and it was acknowledged there is a need for positive press. Monica Seth advised that a Public Affairs Officer position will be advertised in the near future, and their role will include preparation of positive media coverage.</li> </ul>		
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Closed: 7.10pm  
 Next meeting: 22 June 2005

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