

nhulunbuy corporation

Guide for Nhulunbuy Town Board Members

Background

The Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited, a duly incorporated Company (limited by guarantee) in the Northern Territory, is by virtue of an Operating Agreement, an independent contractor of Pacific Aluminium Ltd operating subject to and in accordance with covenants and conditions to that Operating Agreement.

The Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited is constituted by a group of Members, all of whom may appoint Directors whose job it is to direct Corporation activities.

The Board of Directors appoint a Secretary / Manager (Chief Executive Officer) who in turn is responsible for the day to day management of the Corporation in conformity with its charter and the Directors' policy guidelines.

In particular, but without limiting the generality of the Corporation's areas of responsibility, the schedule lists:

- The management, upkeep, control and operation of swimming pools, sporting grounds and buildings and places of entertainment and recreation.
- The development, upkeep, management, control and operation to a high standard of parks, gardens and playgrounds.
- The upkeep, management and control of roads, footpaths, kerbs and gutters and drainage facilities.
- The provision of street cleaning, garbage clearance and garbage disposal services.
- The planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs and other flora in parks, gardens, recreation and other areas and roads.
- The organisation, provision and operation of a fire prevention and protection service.
- The promotion of cultural and educational activities and the development of and community participation in sporting and other clubs, charitable organisations, the provision of facilities and amenities for such clubs and organisations and promotion of the development of the community participation of civic pride.
- The provision of walkway and other public or community place lighting.
- The undertaking and carrying out of a vector control service.
- The collection of rates and charges of a civic nature.
- The determination and collection of fees for the entrance or use of sporting, recreational or entertainment grounds, buildings, amenities or facilities under the control or management of the Corporation.

Objectives of the Town Board

The Nhulunbuy Town Board Incorporated is an organisation formed to meet together to discuss issues / matters that impact on the welfare and well-being of the residents of the Town of Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory of Australia. It is an advisory body to the Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited in relation to community matters.

Membership

The Board consists of ten members and is constituted as follows:

- Chairman – Chief Executive Officer of Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited
- Gove Operations, Rio Tinto nominee
- NT Government nominee
- Rirratjingu nominee
- Gumatj Nominee

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- Galpu nominee
- Four elected members – The elected members hold office for a four-year period

Board meetings are held on a monthly basis, usually on the third Tuesday of the month.

Members' Role

When a community elects an advisory Board it does so in the knowledge that it will be the responsibility of the members they have chosen to make decisions and give advice which will assist with the daily life and smooth running of the whole community.

A Board member has no authority to act or make decisions as an individual. The Board is an incorporated association and a member may only make decisions and act through a resolution of the Board as a whole by democratic vote.

The primary functions of the members are to:

- **Represent the community as a whole**

The Corporation administers all aspect of municipal functions and as such many of its decisions affect residents' daily life.

The member has a duty and responsibility to present the views of the residents to the Corporation but must also take an overall approach to issues where the community is affected as a whole. In return the member is the board representative to the residents and should advise them of policies and explain the basis upon which such policy is decided.

- **Provide initiative for new policies and activities**

The needs and desires of the community are constantly changing and the member must be prepared to initiate new Board ideas and activities in the best interest of the community at large, but within the constraints of the Constitution of the Board.

- **Decide upon matters of community interest**

The Board member must consider Board suggestions and decide upon such matters which are to be recommended to the Corporation for evaluation and any subsequent action. This is done by resolution and democratic vote. Once a decision is made on the Board, that decision is to be upheld by every member of the Town Board in that capacity. This does not defer an individual's right to disagreement.

Practical ways of carrying out duties

There are many practical ways in which members may carry out their various duties successfully. The few covered here are by no means the only methods by which members may fulfil that role and should be treated as examples only.

- **Keeping in touch with residents**

To adequately represent residents, members must be aware of community requirements. It is helpful, in ascertaining these requirements to become involved in local activities and consult with various community groups. Some members already attend meetings of local organisations. Others may attend at local centres at appointed time when local residents are welcome to come and discuss any problem or ideas for the township. The member should be receptive to the individual concerns of members of the community in

an unemotional and open minded manner. He / she should be prepared to accept phone calls, letters and personal calls from residents.

The media may also be an excellent source of local knowledge and feelings. Similarly, a well-informed member will want to keep abreast of current affairs so that he / she will be able to take a broader view of issues affecting the community. A member may be asked to serve as board representative on a committee.

- **Preparation of meetings**

Preparation for meetings is essential if the member is to join in constructive debate. Reading agendas and reports thoroughly is vital. If a member is uncertain about some matter in an agenda or report, he / she may obtain information prior to the meeting by discussion with the Chief Executive Officer.

- **Attending meetings**

The member who attends each Board meeting can ensure that the residents are adequately represented. Taking an active part in debate will help in assessing the issues, putting forward residents' points of view and in exercising properly the right to vote on board decisions. The member may also wish to raise items of business.

- **Coordination of community groups and activities**

Within the community there are often many individuals or groups willing to carry out community projects but who require assistance. The member should obtain extensive knowledge of the area and access to information about all sorts of groups, activities and available resources, and thus be an ideal person to help coordinate local groups and activities. The member must be careful to carry out this duty in consultation with any NCL staff who have a responsibility for community liaison.

- **Relationship between Town Board members and Corporation staff**

The Town Board has powers of recommendation only to the Corporation and does not become involved in the administrative or operational processes of the Corporation. At no stage must a member wander down to the depot or works sites and interfere or interrupt operations. It is important that members view issues broadly having regard to the overall strategy which is adopted by the Corporation. To enable them to do so they must rely upon reports and information supplied by Corporation staff. If a member does not fully understand a report, he / she should feel free to ask for an explanation of difficult points. It is then up to the member to use that information correctly and decide upon policy issue recommendations without becoming bogged down in managerial details.

To help promote an effective relationship between the Town Board and the Corporation some guidelines are listed below:

Guidelines for Town Board members

- Become familiar with the Corporation staff and their areas of responsibility.
- Avoid public criticism of staff – if members have concerns over staff behaviour they should be raised officially at Board meetings or if confidentiality is preferred, with the CEO
- Seek advice from professional staff who have expertise in their specific fields.

Staff contribution to working relationship

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- Seriously considering all policy recommendations of the Board which acts as representatives of the residents and if appropriate implement these recommendations without undue delay
- Remaining loyal to Board members and not criticising them in public
- Assisting members and residents at all times by providing advice and information upon all matters, which concern them.