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MEDIA RELEASE

CEDUNA COUNCIL AND ALRM MEET OVER SAFETY AND SECURITY PATROLS USE OF DOGS

The Ceduna Council and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement met in Ceduna on 16 July to discuss concerns raised by ALRM over Ceduna Council's decision to introduce safety and security patrols using dogs in the town.

The Mayor of Ceduna Council Mr Allan Suter and his full Council met with ALRM Board members Sandra Miller and Faith Thomas, CEO Neil Gillespie and General Council Christopher Charles in Council chambers. This was an historic occasion where both organisations were keen to discuss their respective positions on the introduction of the safety and security patrols in Ceduna.

Mayor Suter detailed the background to the introduction of the security patrol and refuted allegations canvassed in the media that the use of patrols was an initiative to move Aboriginal people on from the foreshores of Ceduna. He detailed examples of the problems faced by Council of illegal camping on the foreshores by tourists and misuse of the boat ramp. He assured the ALRM that the dogs were only intended for the personal security of the operators.

ALRM has repeatedly expressed concern that the safety and security patrol was specifically introduced to address problems associated with Aboriginal people. Mr Gillespie expressed concern that the use of dogs sent the wrong message about Ceduna, which in his opinion seriously affected the image of Ceduna, SA and indeed Australia.

Both Mayor Suter and CEO Gillespie agreed that each understood and respected the others views and opinions. They both also agreed to pursuing a future partnership and opportunities for the Ceduna community by committing to developing a suitable Memorandum of Understanding with a view to working cooperatively together to address concerns and service delivery issues for the benefit in the Ceduna Council area for the whole community including Aboriginal people.

Both organisations expressed concern that other levels of Government continue to deny support to both organisations to the detriment of the whole community. It was agreed that increased levels of funding should be provided for the betterment of the lives of Aboriginal people.

At the meeting, Mr Suter detailed examples of where security personnel had assisted the local Aboriginal community by delivering kangaroo tails and blankets to a number of Anangu and taking people to hospital and similar generous activities. Mr Gillespie confirmed that security staff had

undertaken these activities and other services reported to him by local Aboriginal community members that rightly should be provided by other levels of Government.

As a sign of good intent Mayor Suter asked ALRM to join Council in its endeavours to address past racist behaviour in Ceduna by asking ALRM to partner Council in its reward on racist graffiti. Mr Gillespie indicated ALRM's support which is the first exercise in partnering between Council and ALRM.

Mr Gillespie detailed to Council ALRM's plans for the future of its operations in Ceduna which included the reinstatement of its solicitor following some increased funding received from the Federal Government, redevelopment of its Ceduna premises and the purchase of staff accommodation – again thanks to the Federal Government.

One initiative by ALRM is to allow its solicitor to provide legal services to the wider community and not just to Aboriginal people. Whilst ALRM has some reservations regarding potential conflict of interest in providing legal services, both Mr Suter and Mr Gillespie agreed this is an example of what can be achieved through an MOU.

Both parties agreed that it would be a major step forward if the State Government would provide additional funding to assist the ALRM to deliver enhanced services to Aboriginal people.

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