

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4. JULY 2020

Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

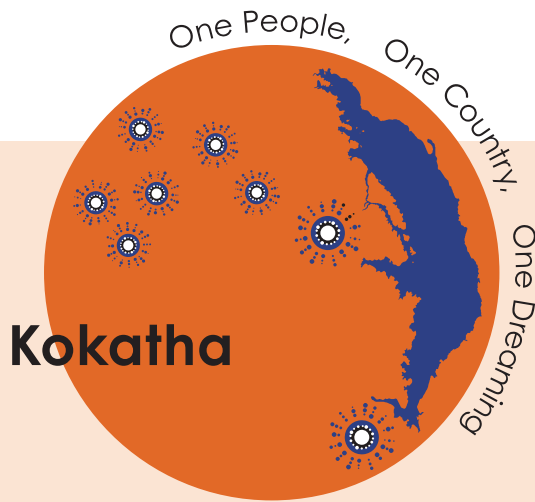
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Dear members, traditional owners and other interested people,

This is my fourth newsletter as the special administrator for Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (KAC). While I am in this role I'll send regular newsletters to let you know what I'm doing to help get your corporation back on track.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since my last newsletter in February the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the corporation and the special administration. Where possible, staff are working from home and big changes have been made to how work is done, to protect the health and safety of all staff.

The KAC website has been used extensively to inform members and the general public of details of COVID-19-related changes and other matters of interest. An SMS alert service was introduced in order to quickly advise registered members and common law holders of important announcements.

If you have not done so already please email, call or write to Melinda Forrest with your mobile phone number, email and postal address. Melinda will then keep you up-to-date with what is happening.

ADVISORY GROUPS

The corporation advisory group (CAG) has been meeting via Zoom during the last week of each month. CAG members have been assisting me with making decisions over the past four months.

It is important to note that each member of the CAG is required to represent all Kokatha people in the decision-making process. This is a big change from what has happened prior to the special administration. CAG members have been selected from people nominated as part of the voting process conducted last year.

The CAG is a temporary body that works with me on governance, business, financial and structural change as we prepare for the corporation's hand-back to members at the end of the special administration. It is not a board and its members are not directors. The initial CAG members were selected based on their skills, experience and ability to contribute to discussions on the commercial oversight of the corporation's group of companies and trusts.

SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION STATUS

1

Take control of the assets, including land. Find out if the corporation can recover financially.

2

Restore good operational order.

3

Prepare the corporation for return to members' control as soon as possible.

After feedback from the CAG and other people we decided to change the name of the Lore and Culture Committee to the Culture and Heritage Committee (CHC). Members of the CHC have been nominated by their family groups and are very much representing their family in culture and heritage matters taken to the committee. The CHC has also been meeting via Zoom, although there has been some difficulty for some of the family representatives to meet using this technology.

Both the CAG and the CHC are due to meet in person in Port Augusta during the last week of July. Having these meetings in person will help greatly with getting decisions made and business done.

Details of the members of the CAG and the CHC are on the KAC website at kokatha.com.au. If you do not have access to the internet please call the office on (08) 8642 2068 to have the details posted to you.

More information on the work of the CAG is on the last page of this newsletter.

KOKATHA COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Consultation with the Kokatha community regarding the future of the corporation is central to the special administration. Each month, I meet with the CAG so we can discuss and consider changes to the structure, leadership and corporate governance of the KAC group of entities.

A meeting of KAC members and interested people was planned for late March/early April. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on holding face-to-face meetings, the plan is now to hold a meeting of members and common law holders in September. At this meeting common law holders will be asked to vote on several important proposed changes to KAC and its subsidiaries. The proposed changes will involve the Kokatha Charitable Trust and the Kokatha General Trust. It will also be an opportunity for a decision to be considered on the distribution of interest income from the Kokatha People Native Title Compensation Trust.

Planning for this important meeting is in progress now and we will advise on the date and venue soon. In advance of the meeting, information will be sent to all KAC members and any other Kokatha common law holders for whom we have a postal address. We will also place advertisements in newspapers and set up a helpline to respond to any queries common law holders may have.

SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION EXTENSION

The special administration is progressing well but there have been significant delays caused by the pandemic lockdown. Recruitment of directors for Kokatha Pastoral Pty Ltd and Kokatha Mining Services Pty Ltd is in progress but as yet incomplete. Before the special administration ends, decisions need to be made by Kokatha common law holders and members of KAC. To make these decisions we need to have a meeting.

The Registrar has agreed to my request to extend the special administration to Friday 9 October 2020.

KOKATHA MINING SERVICES AND KOKATHA PASTORAL

I am currently recruiting directors for both Kokatha Mining Services (KMS) and Kokatha Pastoral (KP). These are paid positions and will require attendance at directors meetings every two or three months. The majority of people on the recruitment panel will be KAC members. I have extended the time for Kokatha people to apply for these positions. COVID-19 restrictions have also diverted people's attention, so the extension of time to apply will ensure all suitably qualified Kokatha people will have an opportunity to apply.

If you would like further information please contact Keith Mackay, KM Search on 0428 430 199.

SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Thanks to funding from the Kokatha General Trust and Kokatha Mining Services, 492 Kokatha members have now received grocery support in the form of a grocery card or purchase order. Members over the age of 50 years who registered for the support received \$480 of grocery support and members under the age of 50 who registered received \$200 support. This support was part of the KAC 'Stay home, stay healthy' initiative to help Kokatha people stay well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Apart from heritage services, all KAC services continued during COVID-19 restrictions. Now that we have implemented a COVID-safe plan across the organisation, our office has reopened and heritage services have resumed. The Flinders Street office will be open to the community from 12 to 4pm until further restrictions are lifted. The Yon Street depot is currently open to staff only, until a manager can be on-site regularly. Kokatha Mining staff have returned to the site after three months of driving in and out

daily due to restrictions. The Kokatha Pastoral staff roster has changed to ensure someone is always on-site and contactable.

The COVID-19 social isolation housing project—known as the ‘protect our people’ project, or POP) is running Camp Willochra at full capacity, enabling participants to isolate before returning to biosecurity zones. Staffed by two paid volunteers, this project is funded through the BHP ‘vital resources funds’ program and is a collaboration facilitated by KAC that brings together Kokatha, Barngala and Kuyani people to provide and access the support. Participants have reported positive experiences, and the program is currently over-subscribed. The project team is currently evaluating options to extend the program beyond 12 August. The photos here are published with permission.



CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Following requests from KAC regarding Kokatha heritage concerns, Department of Defence has advised in writing that the Woomera golf course has been closed. Woomera Golf Club removed the transportable toilet block and have now been advised by Defence that nothing more is to be removed. In addition, a star dropper and barrier mesh fence will be erected to further restrict access to the site. KAC will be consulted prior to any works,

and the consultations will include KAC's culture and heritage manager, appropriate Kokatha women and site card-holders. The KAC culture and heritage manager met with Defence in June on this and other matters.

As you probably know, Kelaray has applied to the South Australian government to undertake mineral exploration activities at Lake Torrens, South Australia, using its exploration licences 5945 and 5937. KAC has requested an extension of time—to 21 August—to respond to the application, to allow for consultation with Kokatha elders, as well as members of the CAG and CHC. Given the significance of this site to Kokatha and other Aboriginal people, it is vital that the government be made aware of how this proposal may effect Kokatha heritage. More information, including the Kelaray proposal and how Kokatha people can submit an individual response, is available on the Kokatha website.

KAC has received various requests from community members and stakeholder representatives for access to heritage surveys. Now, KAC managers are preparing a draft policy on access to heritage surveys. It will be tabled at the next CAG meeting and will introduce three broad levels of access to reports:

1. available for public viewing;
2. distribution to be restricted to certain Kokatha people;
3. not be released to any party without consent of the relevant holders of Kokatha lore.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Following the casual employment during the special administration of John Ramsay as KAC's principal advisor to the CEO on significant corporate services matters, the 2020–21 budget and KAC's financial services have been reviewed. The budget has been approved, and Mr Ramsay will deliver a finance workshop at the next CAG meeting. KAC has also invited seven South Australian financial firms to tender for our financial services in 2020–21, including current financial providers Rowe Partners. This tender outlines a 60% reduction in currently contracted financial services. These services will transition to delivery by KAC staff working to a corporate services manager. This position is currently advertised on our website at kokatha.com.au/kac-recruitment-corporate-services-manager and other employment sites and publications.

KOKATHA MINING SERVICES

The KAC CEO recently visited Carrapateena mine site to meet with the Kokatha Mining Services crew as well as the OZ Minerals (OZM) engineering and maintenance management team and the commercial team manager. OZ management advised that the lab courier service contract has been an outstanding success with 100% completion of service since commencing in February. Despite the unexpected challenges of COVID and some crew changes, the road maintenance contract is already achieving its monthly key performance indicators, and the rigid water truck service staff were also singled out for providing excellent operations. KAC and OZM also shared some



productive ideas for further improvements and opportunities. KMS is now negotiating an additional three commercial opportunities at Carrapateena. Following the departure of the KMS operations manager, Giac Consalvo is now acting in this position.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORT

KAC is currently recruiting a new employment and training support officer to support and mentor Kokatha people seeking employment opportunities. Once appointed, the officer will assist interested Kokatha people to apply for three KMS positions currently being filled by casuals. They will be advertised later this month and candidates will be selected in accordance with our recruitment policy—available at kokatha.com.au/policies-procedures).

KAC's recruitment policy affirms the intention to build capacity of Kokatha people. In time, all corporation employees will be Kokatha people. With that goal in mind, KAC has established a new position—on a trial basis—for a manager-in-training to work across divisions and gain experience. Until a community member is appointed, Carly Chamberlain will act in the role for three to six months.

KOKATHA PASTORAL PTY LTD

Kokatha Pastoral has recorded a 23% increase in sustainable long-term carrying capacity measured against recent infrastructure works undertaken between 1 July 2019 and May 2020 at Roxby Downs, Purple Downs and Andamooka stations. This excellent result reflects the land management priority identified by the former KP board and supported by Tony Freshwater, the Indigenous Land and Sea Council (ILSC) project officer. This priority and actions to support it are outlined in the Kokatha Pastoral 2020–25 Business Plan. The 180-day action plan for the business plan identified 12 priority actions. Ten of those are now complete; the other two were postponed due to COVID restrictions:

- Recruit and induct a land manager.
- Create an operations manual.
- Visit Martu in Western Australia—postponed due to COVID-19.
- Host a Back to Country Day—postponed due to COVID-19.

- Investigate the prospects of forming an Indigenous protected area (IPA) and demonstrating significant environmental benefit (SEB) (under the South Australian *Native Vegetation Act 1991*).
- Investigate the possibility of a tourism enterprise.
- Finalise the agistment agreement review/renewal; investigate additional pastoral opportunities; and prepare a report with recommendations for KP directors. (The current agistment agreement with Saltbush Ag/Arcoona Station will continue until March 2021.)
- Apply for a grant under BHP's Social Impact 2020–21 program, to refurbish Andamooka Homestead and Roxby Downs House.
- Decide where water to Roxby Downs House will come from.
- Improve accommodation at Roxby Downs—and obtain three quotes to refurbish old Roxby house.
- Scope works for Andamooka—a three-stage refurbishment.
- Oversee the infrastructure program to maintain dams, fences and water points.



CORPORATION ADVISORY GROUP

CAG has been meeting online each month since March. Assuming COVID-19 restrictions ease as forecast, the next meeting will be in person in Port Augusta and include a finance workshop.

The August CAG meeting will take place at Roxby Down Station over three days and include:

- governance training
- a KAC operational briefing
- a Kokatha culture and heritage workshop
- a strategic planning workshop; and
- a tour of Kokatha Pastoral stations.

Recent key activities of the CAG include:

- approval of 2019–20 and 2020–21 budgets
- approval of a report on KAC’s strategic position and staffing realignments—within existing budgets and staffing levels
- nomination of five member candidates to represent KAC at regular meetings with OZ Minerals
- consultation on various strategic documents including:
 - policy on access to heritage surveys
 - funding proposal for the Back to Country program—for feedback and development by the CHC
 - a structured training program for employees of Kokatha Heritage Services—and a plan to support and promote it widely so KAC can engage a broader range of Kokatha people in KHS opportunities
 - draft guidelines for awarding education scholarships—for consideration by the partnering management committee (PMC).



MORE INFORMATION

See ORIC’s fact sheet ‘Special administrations: what members and directors need to know’, and other fact sheets on corporate governance at oric.gov.au.

Many thanks, Peter

SPECIAL ADMINISTRATOR

Peter McQuoid

PDM Consultancy

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For more about special administrations
see oric.gov.au/special-admins
or call **1800 622 431** (not free from mobiles).