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Dear Friends,

1. WHAT PLan HAS BEEN DOING IN 2012, SO FAR

It has been a busy year with planning issues.

It is not always possible to keep members up to date with what we do, but rest assured our committee and immediate supporters have been working very hard to promote well planned living spaces for the community. You can guess that this is consistently difficult when the NT Government's thrust has been for development, particularly for homes, and facilitating industrial development.

This year we have fought for the natural environment, as in the Mitchell Creek Catchment at Palmerston, and the mangroves in Darwin Harbour; for public facilities, and useable green open spaces in new suburbs like Muirhead, developed under the non compliant Specific Use (SU) provisions of the Northern Territory Planning Scheme. We responded technically to the Planning Notices which appear each Friday in the NT News, and on the pink and yellow notices on sites.

We have analysed the Greater Darwin PLan, and the Country Liberals new Strategy Plan for Greater Darwin. By listening to the community, we know that we are on the right track. The community seeks in every possible way to protect its green open spaces, both parks and natural areas, like foreshores and escarpments.

2. COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTATION

A special endeavour this year was the PLan Forum Series, 'Let's Ask Our Community'. Such public meetings are dependent on special purpose grants, like the one from the Darwin City Council. Suburban groups are contacting us for help, and/or coming in as groups to our shop front to discuss their planning concerns. We attend their on site meetings, and have email and telephone exchanges to give support.

Naturally we seek support from the new NT Government for our environmental and community work, emphasising that the community must be involved in any broad planning issues, before the decisions are made.

Our information centre and small meeting place at Shop 23 is a valuable resource. However, the hours it can be open by volunteers is limited. We are currently limited to one half day a week. Please ring 89271999 if you want to make contact or help, and we will take it from there. Our committee meets monthly if you wish meet it or contribute directly.

Make sure you take a look at our website 'planinc.org.au', or search by 'planning action network, NT' every now and then. It is full of information, and links to relevant other sources. It was paid for by a special purpose grant and is maintained by a volunteer expert.

3. FUNDING EMERGENCY SITUATION

We want to share with you that we now have a serious and unexpected funding crisis, and seek help from you.

About five years ago, NRETAS (former Department of the Environment) set PAn up as one of four environmental groups in the Environment Hub shop front in the Rapid Creek shops. When the other groups did not wish to share an extension of the three year lease, NRETAS provided bridging funding to PAn for the lease and related costs of Shop 23. This was specifically until such time as the three year round of NRETAS Operating Grants became due mid 2012. We submitted a modest application of \$30,000 for each of three years.

However the outgoing NRETAS unexpectedly refused to consider us for an operating grant, saying that we are not an 'environmental' organisation. This of course is incorrect in terms of the scope of the work we actually cover, and NRETAS' own definition of groups qualifying to share the Environmental Hub lease.

We submitted the application, with detailed budget in March, 2012, and only found out in August, 2012 only through an NRETAS Media Release, that we had not been included on the list to receive an operating grant. As the groups funded each received the same amount as in the last round, we do not believe that our application was even considered during those five or so months. We have been left abandoned.

4. HOW CAN YOU HELP

Over the last five years we have extended ourselves to operate at an information service/ shop front level. We cannot drop back five years. We are all volunteers. No one is paid, and often money is put in by volunteers to cover various essential expenses.

PAn needs an Operational Grant to maintain its activities, as listed in its incorporation documents. as a registered NT Association. It also needs a coverage of three years like the other environmental organisations.

Special Purpose Grants are intended for particular one of events or equipment needs not for running a service.

4.1 Please lobby your local member and any other decision makers for the provision of the three year Operational Grant to PAn.

4.2 We ask for your support . You may know of an office available. We currently lease 55.8 square metres of space. It consists of reception/office/display'; records/ reference material storage; meeting and discussion room; tea and coffee facilities, and toilet; and equipment and outside event storage.

If you know of a similar, or slightly smaller space available, or have ideas, please let us know.

4.3 This current email is being sent to current members of PAn who, in accordance with our records, have not renewed their \$20 subscription, since the PAn AGM in December 2011.

Please pay your subscription now, and certainly by the end of September, 2012, if you wish to continue as a member. Our website shows a variety of ways to do this.

For PAn this completeness is important financially, but also to establish a certain and documented membership for any grant requests.

If you do not wish to renew, please advise us, so we may stop sending you further information on how PAn can help in better planning for the Northern Territory community.

Thank your interest and your past support.

Margaret Clinch
ph 89271999
Convener, PAn: the Planning Action Network, Inc.