



RIVERINA AND MURRAY JOINT ORGANISATION

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation, held in the Mirrool Room, Griffith Exies Club, Jondaryan Avenue Griffith NSW on Wednesday 6th November 2019 at 9:00am.

VOTING BOARD MEMBERS

CHAIR: Cr Kevin Mack (Albury)	Cr Matthew Hannan (Berrigan)	Cr Darryl Jardine (Carrathool)
Cr Norm Brennan (Edward River)	Cr Patrick Bourke (Federation)	Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith)
Cr Paul Maytom (Leeton)	Cr Chris Bilkey (Murray River)	Cr David Fahey (Narrandera)
Cr Bill Sheaffe (Hay)	Cr Ruth McCrae (Murrumbidgee)	

NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS

Frank Zaknich (Albury)	Rowan Perkins (Berrigan)	Rick Warren (Carrathool)	Adam McSwain (Edward River)
Adrian Butler (Federation)	Brett Stonestreet (Griffith)	David Webb (Hay)	Jackie Kruger (Leeton)
Des Bilske (Murray River)	John Scarce (Murrumbidgee)	George Cowan (Narrandera)	

MEETING GUESTS

Cameron Templeton	Office of Local Government, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
James Bolton	Regional NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Nicola James	AusIndustry
Karl Rodrigues	Australian Space Agency

EXECUTIVE OFFICER (NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBER)

Bridgett Leopold	Executive Officer RAMJO
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AGENDA

1	Chairpersons Welcome	9:00
2	Apologies	9:00
3	Declaration of Items of Pecuniary or Other Interest – Board Members / Designated Persons	9:05
4	Minutes of 28 th August 2019 Board Meeting	9:05
5	Matters Arising from Minutes of 28 th August 2019 Board Meeting	9:10
6	James Bolton: Director Regional NSW – update from DPIE / Regional Leadership Executive	9:15
7	Cameron Templeton: Council Engagement Manager - update from OLG	9:25
8	Jahla Gato – Assistant Director, Strategy and Policy, Australian Space Agency The Australian Space Agency will provide an overview of developments in this area for RAMJO to consider as a future.	9:30
9	Nicola James – Regional Manager SWNSW, AUSINDUSTRY Update on upcoming grant funding opportunities.	9:50
10	Executive Officer: 2018-2019 Audit Financial Statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit 2018-2019 Financial Statements 	10:00
11	Executive Officer: Quarterly Financial Update 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial results 1 July – 30 September 2019 Community ID Economic profile funding Budget Amendment 	10:10
	15 MINUTE TEA BREAK	10:30
12	Executive Officer: Strategic Priorities for OLG Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Framework progress 	10:45
13	Executive Officer: Water Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional response to upcoming enquiries 	11:00
14	Executive Officer: Meeting Dates 2020	11:15
15	Executive Officer: Professional Officer Groups Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Managers Meeting Minutes – 25 October 2019 Engineers Working Group Property Working Group LSPS Working Group Development Professionals Working Group Procurement Group Contaminated Land Steering Committee 	11:30
16	General Business Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response from refugee matter 	11:45
17	Meeting Close	12:30

LUNCH

AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME

The Chairperson welcomed the Board Members and guests to the meeting and provided an update from the RAMJO meeting with Member for Cootamundra, and Parliamentary Secretary Steph Cooke. This included an agreement between RAMJO and the Parliamentary Secretary that the two parties would work together on matters of common interest.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES

Voting Board Members: Cr. Neville Kschenka (Narrandera Shire Council), Cr. Darryl Jardine (Carrathool), Cr. Norm Brennan (Edward River)

Other Members: Rowan Perkins (Berrigan)

RESOLVED that the apologies be accepted and that leave of absence be granted.

(Moved Cr. McRae and seconded Cr. Bourke)

AGENDA ITEM 3 – DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY OR OTHER INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests lodged at the meeting by Board Members or other Designated Persons.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF 28TH AUGUST 2019 BOARD MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held on 28th August 2019 are endorsed.

(Moved Cr. Maytom and seconded Cr. Bourke)

AGENDA ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 28TH AUGUST 2019

Executive Officer informed the Board that all outstanding actions from the previous meeting are now complete.

RESOLVED that the Board Members noted the verbal update and notes in the agenda papers.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – JAMES BOLTON, REGIONAL NSW, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Director of Regional NSW, James Bolton, provided a verbal update including the following items:

- The Stronger Country Communities grant funding opportunity received 268 applications in this area, of which 118 are youth related. Not-For-Profit (NFP) organisations were able to apply this time allowing for non-Government organisations to apply. Feedback from the General Manager of Griffith was that when not managed correctly, offering grants to NFPs can create duplication and overlap with existing Council programs. Information from the Director of Regional NSW was that this is an opportunity to see if there are NFPs who can provide a business case for service delivery around youth in a more efficient and effective manner than those services currently being contracted by State Government. Input from Cr McRae and the General Manager of Murray Bridge suggested that Councils should be notified or potentially consulted before a decision is made on NFP successful grants for service delivery. Regional NSW said that there is an existing probity process, of which “duplication” is part of the assessment process which would be considered. Finally, Cr Bilkey informed Mr Bolton that when NFPs are awarded time-limited funding to create a service, and this funding ends, Local Government is often left to fill; the gap which is left by this NFP service or program concluding.
- The Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund identifies Digital Connectivity as a key priority and consultation in regional communities by NSW Government is now underway. The Executive Officer requested that when State Government consultation processes are undertaken, JOs are considered as a stakeholder as it has been noted that JOs are often overlooked in these processes.

- Local Decision Making Accord – Aboriginal Riverina Murray Regional Alliance is a key priority of Regional NSW for building capacity for Aboriginal decision making across significant policy areas and agencies including Housing, Law and Justice, and Health, Healing and Wellbeing.
- Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) review – is about to be launched and the State Government Economic Development Officers will commence discussions with the regions around an audit of commitments or recommendations under the REDS. The local Economic Development engagement officer will be in touch with Councils in the coming weeks.

RESOLVED that the Board received and noted the update from James Bolton, Director Regional NSW, Department of Industry, Planning and Environment.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – CAMERON TEMPLETON, OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Council Engagement Manager, Cameron Templeton, provided a verbal update on the following:

- The Minister for Local Government, The Hon Shelley Hancock, is very engaged and is seeking to meet, talk and engage with Joint Organisations.
- “Your Council” website is now up and running.
- The \$150,000 for JOs to demonstrate the ability to deliver a project which demonstrates capacity building is now open, and the RAMJO Executive Officer has submitted a draft proposal.
- OLG has reported very strong feedback on election costs across the State and via the LGNSW conference.
- Internal Audit, Risk and Improvement Framework feedback is open until the 31st December 2019.
- In 2020 a review of compliance requirements across Local Government to try and review duplication and look to streamline reporting.
- The establishment of a National Redress Scheme was recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The Scheme started on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years. The State Government has agreed to be liable for any Redress which results from any Local Government institution. Redress payments are up to \$150,000 and the State Government will be liable for this cost, with Local Government potentially required to offer an apology from a Senior Executive (either Mayor or General Manager).
- The General Manager of Albury, Mr Zaknich, asked whether OLG will be hosting sessions or training for candidates around “what it takes to be a Councillor” and other requirements. Mr Templeton will provide an update to the Executive Officer to circulate to the Board.
- The General Manager of Leeton, Ms Kruger, asked whether OLG had any solutions to offer to Councils where election costs are exceptionally high, or whether any advocacy will be undertaken on behalf of Councils. Ms Kruger was advised that the Minister is aware of the issue and is looking into it.
- All RAMJO Councils confirmed they were unhappy with the cost increase, and that they agree to move a motion to write to the Minister for Local Government regarding this matter.

RESOLVED that the Board received and noted the update from Cameron Templeton, Council Engagement Officer Riverina Murray at DPC.

RESOLVED that RAMJO will write a letter on behalf of Member Councils regarding the serious concerns relating to the cost implications.

Moved Cr. Maytom (Leeton), Seconded Mr. McRae (Murrumbidgee)

AGENDA ITEM 8 – KARL RODRIGUES FOR JAHLA GATO, AUSTRALIAN SPACE AGENCY

The Australian Space Agency is only 15 months old and is a civil space advisory body for the government and working closely with the Department of Defence. The Agency provided an overview on this sector, with a summary as follows and the presentation at Attachment A:

- This industry is developing quickly and associated business sectors are growing quickly and there are great opportunities developing in this space
- The Agency has a target of tripling the space economy and create 20,000 new jobs in areas such as manufacturing, digital technologies, data usage and eventually working with humans and the supply chains that maintain them. Space industry is larger than satellites and rockets, it's a whole new supply chain.
- The Space Agency is looking for opportunities in areas where there is a lot of flat land minimal air traffic, which could relate to Councils that may wish to position themselves to attract some of the future investment in the industry.
- The presentation is attached for reference of the Board Members.

RESOLVED that Board Members received and noted the presentation from the Australian Space Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – NICOLA JAMES – AUSINDUSTRY

AusIndustry is a Commonwealth Agency under the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science in a collective with Geoscience Australia, Questacon and the Australia Space Agency. Their role is to feed business information intelligence up to executives to model grant frameworks that best encourage growth in focus sectors.

AusIndustry play a role in connecting people and agencies to drive outcomes, along with providing funding opportunities. The presentation is at [Attachment B](#) with the following key opportunities:

- Building Better Regions Fund (\$200m available for Round 4 with 2 streams available – Infrastructure Projects and Community Investments). A third stream has been announced in the budget although details are yet to be released. Applications close 10 December 2019.
- Safer Communities Fund – aimed at crime prevention and reducing anti-social behaviour
- Regional and Remote Communities Reliability Microgrid Fund – closes 21st November 2019.
- International Space Investment Fund – Closes 17th December 2019.

RESOLVED that the RAMJO Board Members considered the presentation provided by AusIndustry and any opportunities which may relate to their Councils.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD 2018 – 2019 AUDIT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As per the new audit and reporting guidelines, the Executive Officer is notified Board Members of the completion of the audit process and provided a copy of the 2018-2019 Financial Statements. The Financial Statements are required to be endorsed via a Board resolution and a signature from the Chair, Mayor of Murray River and RAMJO Executive Officer. The Financial Statements were prepared with the following qualification:

The General Purpose Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (as amended) and the regulations made thereunder,
- the Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and other pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board
- the Joint Organisations Supplement to the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, these financial statements:

- present fairly Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation's operating result and financial position for the year,

- accord with Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation's accounting and other records.

We are not aware of any matter that would render these statements false or misleading in any way.

RESOLVED that the Board endorse the 2018-2019 Financial Statements.

Moved Cr. Mack (Albury), Seconded Cr. McRae (Murrumbidgee)

AGENDA ITEM 11 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – QUARTERLY FINANCIAL UPDATE 2019 – 2020

A report on the quarterly financial position against the 2019 – 2020 budget was due to be prepared for the Board, but due to staffing matters they are not available today and will be circulated out of session.

Matters for consideration include that in 2018, Board Members agreed to invest in a Community Profile ID program, to provide an evidence base for ongoing RAMJO grant submissions and to guide policy and program investment. To date, this decision has not been progressed. The options provided were as follows:

- **Option 1:** cost of a Community demographic profile is \$16,700 p.a. + GST (Albury and Griffith already have these)
- **Option 2:** cost of an Economic profile is \$12,500 p.a. + GST (with drill downs on Griffith, Murrumbidgee, Federation and Berrigan Councils, who already have this profile information. Other Councils can be added for \$2,000 each)
- **Option 3:** cost of Community demographic AND Economic profile together for \$17,500 p.a. (with additional costs for breakdown of those Councils who don't currently have an Economic profile)

RESOLVED that the Executive Officer will progress with Option 3 (\$17,500 p.a.) paid for via the Establishment Funds for 1 year with consideration to be given again at the end of 2020.

RESOLVED that the Executive Officer would circulate the Q1 2019-2020 report ASAP or with the minutes.

Moved Cr. Maytom (Leeton), Seconded Cr. McRae (Murrumbidgee)

AGENDA ITEM 12 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR OLG FUNDING

The Executive Officer provided a summary of the RAMJO strategic priorities for funding to OLG, as agreed at the RAMJO Board meeting in August. In particular, an update on the analysis and scope around procurement was provided with steps to progress the work.

Moving forward, RAMJO is a working partner in a group of 4 JOs representing 40 Councils, working through some intricacies of collective or aggregated procurement. At this stage, further scoping is required and Member Councils were in agreement to share information and work collaboratively.

Input from the General Manager of Griffith, Mr Stonestreet, is that with the impact of drought and other economic stresses, developing the capacity of local businesses will allow them to participate more in Local Government spend. Proposals regarding a panel or preferred supplier approach as a way to commence local engagement and develop suppliers were offered,

RESOLVED:

- **That the Board agreed to the next steps to be undertaken within existing resources in procurement project mapping and outcomes, including mapping of existing Council Procurement Policies.**
- **That Member Councils agreed to share their procurement information where possible.**
- **That the Board noted any further expansion of procurement responsibilities will require successful grant funding proposal from OLG in the first instance.**

Moved Cr. Hannan (Berrigan), Seconded Cr. Maytom (Leeton)

AGENDA ITEM 13 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – WATER SECURITY SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair of the Water Sub-Committee, Cr. Chris Bilkey of Murray Bridge, provided a verbal update of the significant progress in the scope, planning and advocacy of the Committee. The Committee has decided to focus from a broad, strategic point of view and not to become involved in the minutiae of the moving parts in the water space.

Therefore, the Sub-Committee has worked through several pieces of critical work regarding the water trading market, infrastructure constraints, carry-overs, drought and inter-valley transfers. Several workshops have allowed the Committee to progress with identifying the key issues in these areas and offer options to address the matters.

The Sub-Committee is in the process of preparing several submissions and correspondence to the following proceedings:

- NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development inquiry into support for drought affected communities in NSW: **due 29th November**
- ACCC inquiry into markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin. The ACCC will be asked to recommend options to enhance markets for tradeable water rights, including options to enhance their operations, transparency, regulation, competitiveness and efficiency: **due late November**

The Mayor of Griffith, Cr. Dal Broi, raised a proposal that RAMJO support the Deputy Premier in his stance regarding the current situation on water. Discussions followed regarding a draft RAMJO Water Position Paper which is comprised of several key components and a RAMJO recommendation for each regional matter. Several comments were made regarding RAMJO's ability to act now, given the majority of the work is complete.

RESOLVED that the Water Sub-Committee will quickly work to bring together the RAMJO positions and recommendations on each identified issue with an aim to be proactive and diplomatic, and circulate to the Water Sub-Committee for approval, after such point it will be emailed to the Board for endorsement.

The RAMJO Water Position Paper will then be used as a basis to advocate across several platforms, including:

- NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development inquiry into support for drought affected communities in NSW: **due 29th November**
- ACCC inquiry into markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin: **due late November**
- Meetings with Ministers and Departments as the opportunities arise

RESOLVED that the Executive Officer will work with James Bolton to inform departments and agencies of the RAMJO Water Position once the paper is drafted.

RESOLVED that the Mayor of Griffith, Cr. Dal Broi, will contact the Deputy Premier to arrange a meeting with RAMJO by the end of November (if possible), including the RAMJO Chair and Deputy Chair, and the Chair of the Water Sub-Committee and the Executive Officer.

Moved Cr. Bilkey (Murray River), Seconded Cr. Bourke (Federation)

AGENDA ITEM 14 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – MEETINGS DATES FOR 2020

RESOLVED that the Board agreed to the following dates and locations for RAMJO Board Meetings in 2020:

- **12 February – Jerilderie**
- **13 May – Sydney**
- **12 August – Jerilderie**
- **27 October – Nominations**

AGENDA ITEM 15 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – PROFESSIONAL OFFICER GROUP UPDATES

RESOLVED that the Board noted the updates from the RAMJO Professional Officer Group meetings and that the General Managers (Attachment C) meeting minutes be circulated with the Board meeting minutes.

AGENDA ITEM 16 – GENERAL BUSINESS MATTERS

The Executive Officer provided an update on matters from previous meetings including:

- A response was received by the Member for Albury, who took up a RAMJO concern earlier in 2019 relating to refugees. RAMJO has been provided with a contact to progress any individual Council matters further.
- The GP letter which was circulated to requested Ministers in September. Cr. McRae suggested that we invite the Chief Executive of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Jill Ludford, to the next RAMJO Health Sub-Committee. The Chair Cr. Mack informed the Board that the Parliamentary Secretary, Steph Cooke, agreed to work with RAMJO and the Member for Albury, Justin Clancy on the GP concerns.

Discussions informed the Board that the following matters were also being pursued by the General Managers Group:

- Internal Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee – RAMJO collating a regional submission listing common concerns and issues relating to the suggested changes, along with a potential regional solution
- Roads Maintenance Council Contract – a proposal for a Joint Organisation approach

The General Manager of Federation, Mr Butler, raised the query as to which Councils were interested in pursuing the opportunity from Jillian Kilby. It was agreed the Executive Officer would circulate the proposal and the email again to gauge interest and progress if there is more than 50% of RAMJO Councils interested.

There being no further business, the RAMJO Board meeting concluded at 12:30 pm.