



RIVERINA AND MURRAY JOINT ORGANISATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

BOARD MEETING INFORMATION

The Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Board meeting was held on Wednesday February 12 2020 at the Murrumbidgee Council Chambers, Jerilderie at 10.00am.

MEMBER COUNCILS

- Albury City Council
- Berrigan Shire Council
- Carrathool Shire Council
- Edward River Council
- Federation Council
- Griffith City Council
- Hay Shire Council
- Leeton Shire Council
- Murray River Council
- Murrumbidgee Council
- Narrandera Shire

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 Bill Sheaffe (Hay)
- Cr Paul Maytom (Leeton)
- Cr Chris Bilkey (Murray River)
- Cr Ruth McCrae (Murrumbidgee)
- Cr David Fahey (Narrandera)

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)

NSW STATE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS)

- James Bolton (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment)
- Cameron Templeton (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment)

RAMJO STAFF (NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS)

- Bridgett Leopold – Executive Officer
- Bridget De La Haye – Office Manager

GUESTS

- N/A

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 6 th November 2019 Board Meeting	9:05
5	Matters Arising from Minutes of 6 th November 2019 Board Meeting	9:10
6	Cameron Templeton: Council Engagement Manager - update from OLG	9:15
7	Office Manager: RAMJO Quarterly Budget Reporting: report with variances and YTD spend	9:25
8	Executive Officer: Regional Asset Map: Sprint mapping exercise with Infrastructure Collaborative	9:30
9	Executive Officer: JO Chairs Meeting: Financial Sustainability definition	9:40
10	Executive Officer: RAMJO Contaminated Lands Management Project: Combining with REROC	9:45
11	Executive Officer: Discussion regarding practical workplan and resourcing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JO purpose and change in mission • Workplan split – Service delivery, grant programs and advocacy • Resourcing – 3 year plan 	10:00
12	Executive Officer: RAMJO Water Position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCC Submission • Drought Paper • Draft Water Paper • ADVOCACY: Agreed water position – What do we want now? • ADVOCACY: Future vision – Where do we want to go? 	10:30
	15 MINUTE TEA BREAK	11:00
13	Sub-Committee Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr. Chris Bilkey: Water (addressed above) • George Cowan: Energy • Brett Stonestreet: Industry, Jobs and Workforce • John Scarce: Digital Connectivity • Adam McSwain: Transport (RAMJO Regional Freight Transport Plan) & Regional Roads 	11:15
14	Executive Officer / Brett Stonestreet: Roads Maintenance Council Contract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level summary of negotiations to date and outlook 	11:30
15	Executive Officer: Sydney Trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion of Ministers RAMJO would like to engage with & on which platform 	11:45
16	Executive Officer: Professional Officer Groups Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Managers Meeting Minutes – 31st January 2020 	12:00
17	General Business Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid • Water restrictions 	12:05
	Meeting Close	12:30

LUNCH

AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME

The Chairperson welcomed the Board Members and guests to the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES

- Cr. Neville Kschenka Mayor Narrandera Council
- Cr. Ruth McRae, Mayor Murrumbidgee Council
- Cr. Patrick Bourke, Mayor Federation Council
- Cr. Bill Sheaffe, Mayor Hay Council
- Frank Zaknich, Albury City Council
- Rowan Perkins, General Manager Berrigan Council
- James Bolton, DPIE
- Cameron Templeton, DPIE

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

(Moved by Griffith, Seconded by Narrandera).

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 WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2019 BOARD MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held on Wednesday 6 November are endorsed.

(Moved Berrigan, Seconded Griffith).

AGENDA ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 6TH NOVEMBER 2019 BOARD MEETING

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 – VERBAL UPDATE FROM CAMERON TEMPLETON – OLG ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Cameron Templeton, OLG Council Engagement Manager, was an apology for the meeting. Cameron has been working on regional bushfire recovery and OLG has been affected by recent storm damage to their building. The Executive Officer circulated a written update from OLG for Board Members.

RESOLVED that the Board received and noted the written update from Cameron Templeton, OLG Engagement Manager, Department of Industry, Planning and Environment.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – BRIDGET DE LA HAYE – RAMJO QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORTING (Q22019-2020)

The newly appointed Office Manager, Bridget De La Haye, presented the Q2 2019-2020 budget report with a breakdown of anticipated spend, variances and Year-To-Date balances.

RESOLVED that the Board received the Q2 2019-2020 budget report.

(Moved Federation, Seconded Murray River).

AGENDA ITEM 8 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – REGIONAL ASSET MAP

The General Managers undertook a sprint mapping session with Jillian Kilby from the Infrastructure Collaborative at the last General Managers' meeting on 31st January to create a regional document which provides an overview of RAMJO's most significant infrastructure requiring investment in the coming 1 – 5, or 5 – 10 years. This is a scaling down of the original, more detailed proposal from the Infrastructure Collaborative in May 2019 which was presented to the RAMJO Board, along with the Canberra JO who demonstrated the success they had using this tool. The summary documents (still in draft form) are at [Attachment D](#) and [Attachment E](#), with a website visual here: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1eEZwHlIQmZGhf7VmXVrZvQYCaRE_qdU-&ll=-34.660107221199446%2C145.30532491646773&z=7

Once complete, the maps and summary documents will be loaded to the RAMJO website and can be used for any consultation with relevant Ministers or Government departments.

Jackie Kruger (Leeton) commented that the ownership of assets should also be included on the website. Adrian Butler (Federation) acknowledged that the sprint mapping session was a useful process to undertake and a good resource to now have.

RESOLVED that RAMJO Member Councils endorse the publication of the summary RAMJO Infrastructure priorities on the RAMJO website.

(Moved Griffith, Seconded Berrigan).

AGENDA ITEM 9 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – JO CHAIRS MEETING – FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY DEFINITION

At the last JO meeting in Sydney in November, a taskforce was established to work between the Minister for Local Government, Office of Local Government and the JOs. The taskforce brought forward an outline of work, and a suggestion that all JOs agree on a definition of financial sustainability. RAMJO was represented by Cr. Chris Bilkey and the following statement was agreed to by all Chairs. It was agreed that this statement would be taken to the Boards of each JO for formal endorsement:

The definition of Financial Sustainability, for the purpose of the taskforce, be determined as "A Joint Organisation will be financially sustainable over the long term when it is able to generate sufficient funds and deliver on the Strategic Regional Priorities agreed with its members and stakeholders."

RESOLVED that the RAMJO Board Members endorse the JO definition of financial sustainability.

(Moved Murray River, Seconded Federation).

AGENDA ITEM 10 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – CONTAMINATED LANDS MANAGEMENT

In early 2019, RAMJO (in conjunction with Wagga) applied for, and was successful in being awarded \$419,460 in grant funding to deliver round two of the: Council Regional Capacity Building – Contaminated Lands Management – Underground Petroleum Storage Systems.

A Project Officer was recruited and undertook the role for a period of six months, after which point the Project Officer left for a permanent opportunity in State Government. Since that time, a review of the project plan and its intended outcomes was undertaken, along with a review of previously interviewed candidates. Feedback from those candidates included the pay band being too little for the skillset, no relocation or training costs. Those who were contacted suggested the salary band was not relative to the role (specialist environmental and water contamination knowledge and experience, along with project management).

REROC was also awarded grant funding of \$277,920 and has experienced considerable difficulty attracting a suitable candidate, with several potential candidates from Sydney requesting assistance in relocation costs, which the grant funding simply does not allow for.

Therefore, RAMJO approached REROC with the suggestion to combine the remaining grant funding and undertake the project with a more senior Project Manager role and a supporting part time Project Officer. This would allow for the workload of 20 Councils to be managed and for the project to be delivered in the 3-year timeframe. This is exactly the same model as was delivered in the First Round of Council Regional Capacity Building – Contaminated Lands Management from 2015 – 2018. The REROC Board has formally endorsed this suggestion.

RAMJO and REROC have been undertaking intense discussions with EPA to allow this amendment to the grant conditions to ensure the implementation of the project creates an opportunity for a highly qualified and skilled person to fill the role, while reducing administrative burden via one JO taking the lead.

DISCUSSION: The Board discussed that the main outcome for the project is to develop a framework for training councils on the new legislation for the UPSS. George Cowan (Narrandera) sought confirmation of progress to date. The Executive Officer confirmed that progress included establishment of a committee and project mapping that encompassed timeframes, risk and outcomes, and a register format suitable to EPA and Member Councils.

Darryl Jardine (Carrathool) questioned what alternatives were there if the Joint Organisations didn't combine resources. The Executive Officer noted that the options were likely to be; engage consultants, give funding back to the EPA or seek secondments from existing Council staff. George Cowan (Narrandera) questions if tender should be considered, with the Executive Officer confirming that a joint tender could also be an option.

RESOLVED that the Board endorse the proposal for RAMJO and REROC to combine grant funding to allow for the practical and suitable implementation of the Council Regional Capacity Building – Contaminated Lands Management – Underground Petroleum Storage Systems across our Member Councils.

Moved Griffith, Seconded Leeton.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – RAMJO PRACTICAL WORKPLAN AND RESOURCING

At the adoption of the 2019 – 2020 RAMJO Budget, it was noted by the Board that RAMJO would need additional income streams within the coming years, pending lack of ongoing financial commitment from State Government. All meetings and negotiations since that time have demonstrated that future (ongoing) funding from State Government does not appear to be forthcoming, rather only in the form of short term grant funding/

Therefore, as the 2020-2021 budget will be due to be adopted at the next RAMJO meeting, a discussion is required at this Board meeting regarding the outlook of the Joint Organisation.

The independent online survey showed some clear trends, particularly around where stakeholders see value for money, the improvement in the JO over the last year (and expected outcomes), and concerns around future value. These observations are valid and require forward planning and commitment.

According to the survey, Member Councils would like to see a balanced model which delivers value to Councils in the following areas:

- **Advocacy:** water, digital connectivity, energy, State Government consultation, representation on State Government Boards, etc
- **Project Management:** Contaminated Lands Management, Murray Waste Group, Riverina Waste Group, Community Coaching Program
- **Service Delivery:** Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC), Roads Maintenance Council Contract (RMCC), Regional Procurement

These three areas are all critical to the continuing success of this region and potential opportunities for improvement. Some areas deliver cost savings, create efficiencies and build skills capability. Others are created from a need to be heard as a 'western' region of NSW. Each work stream should be recognised for the outcomes it delivers. But we need a balanced model and resourcing to deliver.

DISCUSSION: concerns that most JOs are not currently sustainable under the current arrangements, and that they are working towards creating some certainty together relating to future viability.

The Board Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of resigning from the JO and re-establishing the ROC. With the change in scope from the original intention: intergovernmental collaboration, advocacy and strategic priorities, to an urgent requirement to change focus to identify incomes streams and deliver on a regional strategic priority, a level of volatility has been created.

The new workstream focus which would deliver value for the Councils and potentially reduce future financial burdens include service provision in common regulatory and operational areas which must be delivered by each Council, or could be delivered as a region.

The Executive Officer proposed a 3-year commitment from the Member Councils, with an intention to become somewhat financially independent by that point. Member Councils agreed that ongoing support for the JO is most likely required and independence may not be accomplished. A base operating value of \$350,000 - \$400,000 was discussed to be “effective” in terms of delivering against the JO functions.

The Executive Officer continues to work with the General Manager Executive (Federation, Murrumbidgee, Griffith and Edward River) to develop robust service delivery models for options such as RMCC, ARIC and Procurement. These options need to include Return On Investment (ROI) calculations to demonstrate value.

It was also noted that the delivery of outcomes by RAMJO is more than a dollar value, with the recent work on the Regional Water Position commended as a success which cannot be measured monetarily.

RESOLVED that the Board agree to be presented with multiple (three) refined work-plan options and corresponding budget at the next Board meeting, with several resourcing options to deliver tangible outcomes over a three-year timeframe.

(Moved Edward River, Seconded Federation).

AGENDA ITEM 12 – CHRIS BILKEY/BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – RAMJO WATER POSITION

The Water Sub-Committee continues to make significant progress in the scope, planning and advocacy refinement of a united RAMJO position. The following papers have been submitted on behalf of RAMJO since the last meeting

- NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development inquiry into support for drought affected communities in NSW: **Attachment F**
- ACCC inquiry into markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin. **Attachment G**

Finally, a draft Water Paper is almost complete. The final draft is at **Attachment H**. (to be circulated prior to the meeting)

Cr. Chris Bilkey has been called upon at a political level to bring forward the united RAMJO water position, and while the paper clearly summarises the sub-optimal conditions creating the water crisis, we also offer a range of solutions. In order to be clear about what we want, our position needs to be able to be summarised into two points:

1. What do we want now?
2. What do we want for the future of our communities?

Suggested positions on both of these points will be presented at the meeting. At the time of preparing agenda papers the Water Security Sub-Committee was still negotiating the details of these points.

The Water Security Sub-Committee has also agreed that a supporting **Communications and Engagement Plan** should accompany any release of the RAMJO Water Paper, including media releases, FAQs, key facts and summary points to assist those speaking on behalf of RAMJO regarding water.

To date, all meetings with politicians and interested bodies has been incredibly supportive and encouraging of our approach to create a regional position and vision for our communities.

DISCUSSION: Chris Bilkey (Murray River) thanked the Water Sub-Committee and the Executive Officer for the considerable amount of work undertaken to date. Chris summarised the Sub-Committee has sought to develop a moderate position that can be advocated by all of RAMJO's eleven Councils.

The approach the Water Sub-Committee took to the water paper included listing those elements that relate to water which are not working optimally. The paper then lists a range of options to positively impact or change those conditions which are having unforeseen impacts or which require addressing.

Next steps include producing the Communications and Engagement Strategy, along with supporting materials and tools for Mayors and General Managers. The Chair of the Committee, Cr Chris Bilkey, and the Executive Officer have met with the Federal Member for Farrer and will continue to communicate closely and inform relevant Commonwealth and State Ministers as required.

Several Member Councils emphasised the success in finding a common position that RAMJO can work on together now and into the future for our communities.

Member Councils agreed that opportunities relating to working with Commonwealth and State strategies which refer to irrigated infrastructure, industry and water security should be undertaken.

The Executive Officer noted the plan from here is; 1) finalise the summary document, 2) finalise Water Position Paper, 3) develop the communications and engagement plan.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- **endorse the RAMJO positions as recommended by the Water Security Sub-Committee.**
- **adopt the Final Draft of the RAMJO Water Paper. (amendments suggested)**
- **agree to a supporting Communication and Engagement Plan as a method for managing the roll out of communications relating to the Water Paper**

(Moved Griffith, Seconded Leeton).

AGENDA ITEM 13 – VERBAL SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

The The Chairs of the RAMJO Sub-Committees will provide verbal updates:

- Cr. Chris Bilkey: Water (addressed above)
- George Cowan: Energy – An update will follow the meeting held on Friday 14 February at Narrandera.
- Brett Stonestreet: Industry, Jobs and Workforce – Progress towards a Regional Prospectus to attract certain industries via a RAMJO economic development group (made up of Economic Development Officers) is underway. There are constraints to be addressed and mapping procurement options to be undertaken.
- John Scarce: Digital Connectivity – A sub-committee meeting was held in Albury on Friday 7 February. Presentations were given by Imogen Schiffle (Albury – Wodonga Two Cities, One Community Coordinator) and Teletrac Navman (GPS tracking for plant and equipment). Members of the Sub-Committee have also met with Telstra for discussions involving the Internet of Things (IOT), installation

of digital water meters, and movements from 3, to 4G and 5G networks in the region. The Sub-Committee will strengthen RAMJO position for advocacy to bring to the next Board meeting.

- Adam McSwain: Transport (Regional Freight Transport Plan) & Regional Roads (Attachment I & J) – The Transport Sub-Committee haven’t yet met, however are close to finalising the Regional Freight Transport Plan. Adam noted that he will be meeting with three other General Managers to make a sub-mission to the Terms of Reference for Regional Roads (due 21 February).

RESOLVED that the Board note the verbal update of the RAMJO Sub-Committees.

AGENDA ITEM 14 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD / BRETT STONESTREET – ROADS MAINTENANCE COUNCIL CONTRACTS

Griffith City Council (Brett Stonestreet) presented an opportunity to all RAMJO GMs late last year to investigate the merit of a regional approach in response to the consultation on the newly released draft RMCC. (RAMJO’s response can be found at [Attachment K](#)).

Since this time, RAMJO and Griffith City developed a regional proposal and shared it with RMS. This resulted in a meeting in Wagga between the three bodies to discuss a vision for a regional model. Since that meeting, RAMJO and Griffith City Council have developed a proposal with a structure, including administration, decision making, cost and risk. Further negotiations, costings and modelling is required before any further progress can be made.

DISCUSSION: Brett Stonestreet (Griffith) explained the structure and resources required for the collaborative model proposed that would see RAMJO contract directly to RMS, with Councils bidding to RAMJO with a re-work margin for road contracts. Brett noted that the benefit for the State Government will be that they will only have to consult with RAMJO instead of the seven Councils that they currently contract with, however funding from the State Government above the current level would be a challenge. The proposed model would see RAMJO award the Councils road working contracts in their own regions and engage auditors to enforce the RMS requirements. Board members raised concerns around mechanisms that would be in place to ensure accreditation and fair contract bidding would occur. The Chair Kevin Mack noted that firstly the Board would need to define a Terms of Reference for resources and contracting.

RESOLVED that the Board note the progress in working towards a potential regional model for RMCC.

AGENDA ITEM 15 – CHAIR – RAMJO SYDNEY MEETING

The Chair would like to open the floor for suggestions as to which Ministers should be engaged at our Sydney Board meeting?

Recommendation:

That the Board nominate advocacy opportunities via discussions with Ministers at the next Board meeting in Sydney.

RESOLVED that the Board nominated the following Ministers be invited to attend discussions/presentations at the next Board meeting in Sydney.

Position	Minister	Items to discuss
NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads	The Hon. Paul Toole	RMCC Contracts & Regional Roads
NSW Minister for Local Government	The Hon. Shelley Hancock	Internal Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
NSW Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales	The Hon. Adam Marshall	Agricultural and water security joint discussion

NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing	The Hon. Melinda Pavey	Agricultural and water security joint discussion
Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade	The Hon. John Barilaro	Specific items to be confirmed
Minister for Health and Medical Research	The Hon. Brad Hazzard	Health
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces	The Hon. Robert Stokes	Planning, solar farms, Snowy Hydro 2.0

AGENDA ITEM 16 – PROFESSIONAL OFFICER UPDATE

Since the last RAMJO meeting, only one Professional Officer Working Group has met, the General Managers' Group. Minutes are at [Attachment L](#).

AGENDA ITEM 17 – GENERAL BUSINESS MATTERS

- Transgrid (Attachment M & N) Noted that the approval for the lines is confirmed and any submissions should be made now.
- Email Correspondence to RAMJO (Attachment O)
- Latest of Minister Colton – Minister is not attending Newell Highway consultation meeting; however, his advisors will be there on Friday in Narrandera. RAMJO will present a map of the regions key roads for discussion.
- Kevin Mack (RAMJO Chair) has approached LG NSW regarding Health and Safety insurance cover for elected members as currently there is no existing coverage in place for physical and mental health for elected members.
- Paul Mayton (Leeton) has recently attended meetings on weed eradication, specifically Flea Bane. John Dal Broi (Griffith) noted the weed is emerging in their region and will collaborate with Leeton on this matter.

MEETING CLOSE

There being no further business, the RAMJO Board meeting concluded at 12:50 pm.