

Board Meeting Minutes

Friday 13 February 2026



MEETING	RAMJO Board Meeting		
DATE	Friday 13 February 2026		
TIME	9:00am – 1:30pm		
LOCATION	Wentworth Council Chambers & Visitor Information Centre		
CHAIR	Cr. Ruth McRae		
ONLINE LINK	<p>Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Join the meeting now</p> <p>Meeting ID: 496 091 367 854 5</p> <p>Passcode: yE986BW2</p>		
INVITEES	Council / Organisation	Voting Member	Non-Voting Member
	Albury City Council	Cr. Kevin Mack	Ms Gael Evans-Barr
	Balranald Shire Council	Cr. Louie Zaffina	Mr. Terry Dodds
	Berrigan Shire Council	Cr. Julia Cornwell-McKean	Mr. Mark Dupe
	Edward River Council	Cr. Ashley Hall	Mr. Jack Bond
	Federation Council	Cr. Cheryl Cook	Mr. Adrian Butler
	Griffith City Council	Cr. Doug Curran	Mr. Scott Grant
	Leeton Shire Council	Cr. George Weston	Mrs. Jackie Kruger
	Murray River Council	Cr. John Harvie	Mrs. Stacy Williams
	Murrumbidgee Council	Cr. Ruth McRae	Mr. John Scarce
	Narrandera Shire Council	Cr. Neville Kschenka	Mr. Timothy Coote
	Wentworth Shire Council	Cr. Daniel Linklater	Mr. Ken Ross
	Associate Members (non-voting)		
	Wagga Wagga City Council	Cr. Dallas Tout	Mr. Peter Thompson
	RAMJO Staff		
	Mr. Brett Stonestreet	Interim Executive Officer	
Mrs. Susan Escott	Administration Officer		

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MEETING	RAMJO Board Meeting	
	Presenters	
	Mr. Giles Butler	<i>Director, Regional Coordination - South, Delivery & Engagement, NSW Premier's Department</i>
	Ms Kalina Koloff	Cross Border Commissioner, NSW Premier's Department
	Mr. Cameron Templeton	<i>Council Engagement Manager - Riverina and Far South-West, NSW Office of Local Government</i>
	Ms Louise Taylor	<i>Council Engagement Manager – Southern NSW and Southern/Western Sydney, NSW Office of Local Government</i>
	Ms Erica van den Honert	<i>Executive Director, Sector Development, NSW Office of Local Government</i>
	Ms Matilda Hartwig	<i>Policy Manager, South West REZ, EnergyCo</i>
	Ms Josie Howard	<i>Director of Regional Coordination, SW, EnergyCo</i>
	Mr Michael Opperman	<i>Project Director for SW REZ, EnergyCo</i>
	Dr Madeleine Hartly	<i>Chief Executive Officer, NSW Irrigators Council</i>
	Tom O'Malley	<i>Policy Officer, NSW Irrigators Council</i>
	Mr Sam Campi	<i>Regional Engagement Officer – Mid Murray Catchment, Murray Darling Basin Authority</i>
	Ms Kosha Shanahan	<i>Regional Engagement Officer – Lower Darling and Sunraysia, Murray Darling Basin Authority</i>
	Attendees	
	Cr Shari Blumer	Griffith City Council
	Ms Sarimah Hellyer	Chief Executive Officer, RDA-Murray
	Ms Rachel Whiting	Chief Executive Officer, RDA-Riverina
	Ms Jill Ludford	<i>Chief Executive Officer, Murrumbidgee Local Health District</i>

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MEETING MINUTES	
ITEM	TOPIC
1	WELCOME Acknowledgement of Country
2	Apologies and Leave of Absence
3	Declaration of Items of Pecuniary or Other Interest – Board Members / Designated Persons
4	MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS 4.1 29 October 2025 Board Meeting – Attachment 4.1 4.2 28 November 2025 Extraordinary Board Meeting – Attachment 4.2
5	Matters and action items arising from previous board meetings
6	PRESENTATIONS 6.2 Murray Darling Basin Authority. Murray Darling Basin Plan Review – Mr Sam Campi & Ms Kosha Shanahan Cr Shari Blumer, Chair Murray Darling Association 6.3 Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed (SWIOID) - Dr Madeleine Hartly, NSW Irrigators Council 6.1 South West REZ Local Supply Chain Study and Social Risk and Opportunity Study – Josie Howard, Director of Regional Coordination SW and CWO REZ and Michael Opperman, Project Director for SW REZ, EnergyCo
MORNING TEA	
7	UPDATE FROM OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 7.1 Ms Louise Taylor, <i>Council Engagement Manager</i> – Southern NSW and Southern/Western Sydney 7.2 Ms Erica van den Honert, <i>Executive Director, Sector Development</i>
	10.7a General Managers Advisory Committee 16 January 2026 – Attachment 10.7- Position of Executive Officer
8	UPDATE FROM NSW PREMIERS DEPARTMENT 8.1 Mr. Giles Butler, <i>Director Regional Coordination</i> 8.2 Ms Kalina Koloff, <i>Cross Border Commissioner</i>
9	FOR DISCUSSION: GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS 9.1 Update to RAMJO charter – Attachments 9.1a & b 9.2 Letter from Murray Regional Tourism – Attachments 9.2a and b 9.3 RAMJO Office Space – Attachments 9.3a-c 9.4 25/26 Q2 FY operational budget review – Attachments 9.4a-c 9.5 Update from Interim Executive Officer - Attachment 9.5a-c

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MEETING MINUTES	
ITEM	TOPIC
	9.6 Draft Policy – Flexible Working Arrangements Policy – Attachment 9.6
	REPORTS FOR NOTING: GENERAL UPDATES
	10.1 Disaster Ready Fund Update: Dr. Emily Sharp – Attachment 10.1
	10.2 Regional Resource Recovery Projects Update: Emma Avery– Attachment 10.2
	10.3 JONZA Project Update: Tamara Cummins – Attachments 10.3a & b
10	10.4 Procurement Project Update: Jason Schneider-Fuller – Attachment 10.4
	10.5 Water Loss Management and Efficiencies Program: Sami Campbell
	10.6 Draft Minutes of ARIC meeting 22 October 2025 – Attachment 10.6
	10.7b Draft Minutes of General Managers Advisory Committee 16 January 2026 – Attachment 10.7
11	GENERAL BUSINESS Call for general business by the Chair
12	MEETING CLOSE

ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Cr Daniel Linklater welcomed all and provided the acknowledgement of country. Cr Ruth welcomed all.

ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apologies have been received from Cr Kevin Mack, Ms Gael Evans-Barr, Cr Julia Cornwell-McKean, Mr Mark Dupe, Cr Dallas Tout, Mr Peter Thompson, Ms Kalina Koloff, Mr Cameron Templeton Ms Jill Ludford and Ms Rachel Whiting

Resolved:

That apologies be **accepted** and that leave of absence be granted.

Moved Leeton / Seconded Griffith

Carried

ITEM 3 – DECLARATION OF ITEMS OF PECUNIARY OR OTHER INTEREST

Jackie Kluger noted her standing conflict of interest with husband working for Ricegrowers Association

Brett Stonestreet noted with regard to item 10.7- Position of Executive Officer that he has a conflict of interest and will be leaving the room

Resolved:

That declarations of items of pecuniary or other interest be **accepted**.

Moved Federation / Seconded Murray

Carried

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ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 29 October 2025 Board Meeting

The Draft minutes of Board Meeting of 29 October 2025– *Attachment 4.1 were tabled*

4.2 28 November 2025 Extraordinary Board Meeting

The Draft minutes of Extraordinary Board Meeting of 28 November 2025 – *Attachment 4.2 were tabled*

Resolved:

That the minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held 29 October 2025 be **adopted** as a true and correct record, and

That the minutes of the RAMJO Extraordinary Board Meeting held 28 November 2025 be **adopted** as a true and correct record.

Moved Griffith / Seconded Balranald

Carried

ITEM 5 – MATTERS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS

ACTIONS IN PROGRESS

MEETING	ITEM	ACTION	STATUS
OCT 25	7.4 Progress and status of sub-committee's and working groups	New Chairs for Housing and Energy Committee to be voted on at next Board meeting, members sought for all committees.	COMPLETED
OCT 25		Gerard Simms presentation to GMAC to be distributed to all Board members.	COMPLETED
OCT 25	8.4 Update on Associate Membership Status	Associate Member status to be an item of discussion in next Board meeting.	IN PROGRESS Item 9.1
OCT 25		interim EO to follow up with RDA Riverina on MOU	COMPLETED
OCT 25	8.5 Updates to RAMJO Charter	RAMJO Charter to be an item of discussion in next Board meeting	COMPLETED
OCT 25	10.1 NSW Premiers Department Update	Invite Jill Ludford, Chief Executive of Murrumbidgee Local Health District to attend the next Board Meeting	COMPLETED Invited to this meeting
OCT 25		Invite Kalina Koloff, NSW Cross Border Commissioner, to attend future meetings as per OLG and Premiers Department representatives	COMPLETED Invited to this and future meetings.

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OCT 25	12.1 Murray Regional Tourism Board (MRTB) – RAMJO Representative Nomination	Report to this meeting 13 February 2026.	COMPLETED
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Resolved:

That the Board note the status of matters arising from previous Board meetings.

Moved Leeton / Seconded Federation

Carried

ITEM 6 – PRESENTATIONS

6.2 Murray Darling Basin Authority – Basin Plan Review

Mr Sam Campi and Mr Kosha Shanahan presented on the Murray Darling Basin Plan Review and answered questions from the Board. Mr Campi discussed the consultation process regarding the review. Extensive discussion was undertaken covering:

- Data gaps, socioeconomic impacts, environmental outcomes, water recovery concerns.
- Councils pressed for:
 - Robust data
 - True local government representation
 - Transparency in modelling and consultation
- **MDBA meeting confirmed: 5 March, Jerilderie, 11am**

Matilda Hartwig, Michael Opperman and Josie Howard joined the meeting at 9.30am

Sam Campi and Kosha Shanahan left the meeting at 10.30am

Cr Shari Blumer, Chair Murray Darling Association

Cr Shari Blumer provided context regarding the Murray Darling Association.

Resolved:

That a **Stakeholder Executive Group** be formed for Basin Plan advocacy consisting of the following members: Chair, Deputy Chair, Water Subcommittee Chair, EO, Stacy Williams, Cr Louie Zaffina and the consultant. Jackie Kruger (Water Subcommittee Chair) to be spokesperson)

Moved Leeton / Seconded Murray River

Carried

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6.1 South West REZ Local Supply Chain Study

EnergyCo representatives Josie Howard, Director of Regional Coordination SW, Matilda Hartwig, Policy Manager, South West REZ, and CWO REZ and Michael Opperman, Project Director for SW REZ, presented on the current status of the South West Regional Energy Zone (SWREZ) Local Supply Chain Study, the Social Risk and Opportunity Study and answered questions regarding the roll out of SWREZ

Key issues raised:

- Transport impacts from oversized loads; councils calling for road upgrades & long-term maintenance obligations.
- Councils requested:
 - Clear conditions of consent ensuring road protection.
 - Ongoing updates & inclusion of RAMJO in engagement processes.
- RAMJO concerns: equitable community benefit payments; lifecycle responsibility; consistency across REZ processes.

Matilda Hartwig, Michael Opperman and Josie Howard left the meeting at 11.28am

MORNING TEA BREAK – 15 Mins

The meeting paused for morning tea at 11.30am

The meeting resumed at 11.42am

6.3 Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed (SWIOID)

Dr Madeleine Hartly and Tom O'Malley from the NSW Irrigators Council presented on the Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed (SWIOID)

The Australian Government has released a discussion paper, with submissions due 13 February. NSWIC is advising its southern members to make submissions, as the terms of inquiry extend beyond the usual 'environmental versus irrigation' use of water and into securing water for Canberra's future population growth – that is, using NSW's water to prop up Canberra's future population. It was acknowledged that submissions close 13 February 2026, however it was deemed important that Mayors are aware of the NSW Irrigators Council regarding this issue and RAMJO should make a submission. Jackie Kruger has written a submission in anticipation and the EO and AO will upload the application at the conclusion of the meeting.

ACTION ITEM: RAMJO to lodge a submission immediately (13 Feb) and EO to circulate the submission to members.

Resolved:

That RAMJO **lodges** a submission today, Friday 13 February, in response to the Australian Government Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed (SWIOID) consultation paper.

Moved Leeton/ Seconded Murray River

Carried

Madeleine Hartley and Tom O'Malley left the meeting at 12.10pm

ITEM 7 – OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE

7.1 Office of Local Government Council Engagement Manager Update

Ms Louise Taylor, *Council Engagement Manager* – Southern NSW and Southern/Western Sydney deferred to Ms van den Honert in the absence of Mr Cameron Templeton, Council Engagement Manager - Riverina and Far South-West.

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7.2 Office of Local Government Update

Ms Erica van den Honert, Executive Director - Sector Development, Office of Local Government provided an update from the Deputy Secretary, Local Government and answered questions from the Board – explained tiers of OLG – sector development – and sector performance

Question about timing of change to JO's to recognise the addition of Wentworth and Balranald Councils as Members of RAMJO

ACTION ITEMS Louise to arrange for name of Chair to change from Cr Pat Bourke to Cr Ruth McRae OAM

Erica to seek advice from Minister as to whether there is an option to cut regulatory costs if RAMJO were to step away from JO to ROC?

Louise to investigate whether ROCs are required to have an ARIC

OLG to seek clarification to identify who should pay rates when developers lease farmland and land is rezoned

Resolved:

That the Board note the update provided by Ms Erica van den Honert of Office of Local Government

Moved Balranald / Seconded Edward River

Carried

10.7 Draft Minutes of General Managers Advisory Committee 16 January 2026 – Executive Officer Appointment

Discussion regarding the Executive Officer position from the draft minutes of the General Managers Advisory Committee meeting held 16 January 2026 - Attachment 10.7 was moved forward to ensure members could be present for the discussion.

Brett Stonestreet left the meeting at 12.49pm

The Board noted the success to date of the move to 0.5FTE with Brett Stonestreet in the position. It was recognised that it would be best case scenario to be able to employ a full time EO but at the lower rate of pay of 1.0FTE at \$150,000 the JO would not draw the same expertise and experience level as funding the position at 0.5FTE of \$200,000.

Board agreed with GMAC discussion on the proviso that the EO would not have days set in stone to be flexible to attend meetings and maintain level of contact required of the role.

ACTION ITEM: That RAMJO Chair to make request to OLG to veto advertising the Executive Officer role and approve appointment of Brett Stonestreet as Executive Officer having been successful candidate from advertising for Interim Executive Officer.

Resolved:

That, if approved by OLG, the Board recommend immediate appointment of Brett Stonestreet as Executive Officer at 0.5FTE having previously advertised for the role of Interim Executive Officer

That, If unable to immediately employ current Interim Executive Officer, the Board approve advertising the position of Executive Officer at 0.5FTE at pro-rata rate of \$200,000pa with Griffith City Council HR to oversee the hiring process and the panel of interviewers to include Chair, Deputy Chair and past previous GMAC Chair

Moved Leeton / Seconded Federation

Carried

Brett Stonestreet returned to the meeting at 12.57pm

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ITEM 8 – NSW PREMIERS DEPARTMENT UPDATE

8.1 NSW Premiers Department Update

Mr Giles Butler, Director - Regional Coordination South, Delivery & Engagement, provided a presentation and an update regarding current focuses of the NSW Premiers Department. Giles suggested to reach out to him with any questions with regard to his presentation.

ACTION ITEM AO to disseminate Giles presentation to members.

8.2 NSW Cross Border Commissioner Update

Ms Kalina Koloff, Cross Border Commissioner, is an apology as she is meeting with the Governor in Albury, alongside Albury City Council Members.

Giles Butler, Cr John Harvie, Stacey Williams, Cr Louie Zaffina and Terry Dodds left the meeting at 1.04pm

ITEM 9 – GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

9.1 Updates to RAMJO Charter

Mr. John Scarce, General Manager - Murrumbidgee Council and Interim Executive Officer Brett Stonestreet explained the revised Draft RAMJO Charter as per *Attachment 9.1b* and report *Attachment 9.1a* regarding the potential amendments to accommodate Associate Membership of the organisation and following discussion the Board agreed to the amendments in full.

ACTION ITEM: AO to update numbering and formatting on the amended Charter.

Resolved:

That the Board **adopt** the attached proposed amended Draft RAMJO Charter.

Moved Griffith / Seconded Federation

Carried

9.2 Letter from Murray Regional Tourism

Discussion was entered into regarding *Attachment 9.2a* and *9.2b* being letters sent to and from Murray Regional Tourism, Mr. Paul Geyer expressing the concern of RAMJO delegate Cr. John Harvie who attended the Annual General Meeting of Murray Regional Tourism 23 October 2025. RAMJO concern relates to a resolution adopted at the Annual General which essentially elected councillors from serving as members of the organisation.

Noted that Riverina Tourism Body does not have RAMJO representation so this is not something that RAMJO really needs to be involved.

It was noted that MRTB are holding their line and option suggested to lobby members of board to call special meeting to change the charter. Some Councils voiced that they would be willing to withdraw from the MRTB if this issue cannot be resolved as if RAMJO are represented it should be by a voting Board member which is a Mayor.

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Resolved:

That the Chair, Executive Officer and Cr John Harvey, as a representative Mayor directly impacted, request a face-to-face meeting with the Chair of MRT Mr. Paul Geyer, to discuss a practical way forward to address this issue and

That RAMJO members garner support from individual Board members to call a Special Meeting of the MRT Board early 2026 to consider RAMJOs position.

Moved Federation / Seconded Leeton

Carried

9.3 RAMJO Office Space

Attachment 9.3a, 9.3b and 9.3c referred to report regarding RAMJO Office Space. The existing lease of space in Albury City premises expires 30 June 2026, extract of lease contract included – *Attachment 9.3b*. The lease provides for an option to extend the lease for two (2) years to 30 June 2028. An initial investigation was undertaken in 2025 to consider other options and is attached for reference - *Attachment 9.3c*

Discussion was conducted regarding the viability of retaining the office, moving to a work from home arrangement with regular (fortnightly) face to face meetings. Questionable as to whether the monetary savings of relinquish lease would be negated by transport and other logistics. It was noted that Albury City Council are now charging RAMJO staff over \$100 a day to hire a meeting room where this was previously included under the lease.

Noted that with the EO now allowed to live anywhere in the footprint, with provision of an office at the closest council office, the same arrangements should be expanded to all staff with a fortnightly or monthly in person meetings to be arranged.

RAMJO staff to further explore options and provide a report to the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. That RAMJO **note** the report by the Interim Executive Officer regarding the lease of office space from Albury City Council.
2. That the Interim Executive Officer provide a supplementary report to the next Board Meeting, 15 May 2026, identifying savings and additional costs associated with renewing the existing lease with ACC v relinquishing the office lease with staff working remotely and/or from other Councils.

Moved Leeton / Seconded Wentworth

Carried

9.4 Q2 25/26FY Operational Budget Review

The Executive Officer provided a brief summary to support *Attachment 9.4a* Q2 25-26 Balance Sheet, *Attachment 9.4b* Q2 25-26 RAMJO Operational financials and *Attachment 9.4c* Q2 25-26 Project Profit and Loss as update of the Q2 FY operational budget.

Noted that LG Procurement at \$40,000 is below \$50,000 budgeted. Councils requested to consider transferring rebate to RAMJO in future years to allow cost neutrality to councils and JO.

Salary component with EO reduction of hours has allowed savings as have a few other areas providing a better than Budgeted result of \$6,000 surplus

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Resolved:

That the Board note the Q2 25/26 FY operational budget review update.

Moved Griffith / Seconded Leeton

Carried

9.5 Executive Officers Update

Interim Executive Officer, Mr Brett Stonestreet, expanded on his written update, *Attachment 9.5a*, and noted that the Audit cannot be conducted until October, when it has to be submitted, therefore an extension may again be required.

Resolved:

That the Board note the Executive Officers Update.

Moved Wentworth / Seconded Federation

Carried

9.6 Draft Policy - Flexible Work Arrangements Policy

The Executive Officer presented the Flexible Work Arrangements Policy 2026, *Attachment 9.6*, for adoption, noting the policy contains a sunset clause to apply to 30 June which can be reviewed after EO appointment and office space retention decision. It was noted that the policy stipulates that to meet requirements on an operational level the arrangement is required to be approved by the EO and is not an automatic right but by agreement.

Resolved:

That the Board adopt the Flexible Work Arrangements Policy

Moved Leeton / Seconded Griffith

Carried

ITEM 10 – REPORTS FOR NOTING

10.1 Disaster Ready Fund Update:

Dr. Emily Sharp - *Attachment 10.1*

10.2 Regional Resource Recovery Projects Update:

Emma Avery – *Attachment 10.2*

10.3 JONZA Project Update:

Tamara Cummins – *Attachment 10.3a*

Southern Lights and Network Group Update - *Attachment 10.3b*

10.4 Procurement Project Update:

Cybersecurity SOC & SIEM Service Tender Report, Jason Schneider-Fuller – *Attachment 10.4*

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10.5 Water Loss Management and Efficiencies Program Update:

The Water Loss Management and Efficiencies Program is now underway with Project Officer Sami Campbell attending training and planning meetings in consultation with member Councils.

Resolved:

That the Board **note** the reports provided items 10.1 – 10.5.

Moved Federation / Seconded Griffith

Carried

Cr Neville Kshenka, left the meeting at 1.23pm

10.6 Draft Minutes of the ARIC Committee Meeting 22 October 2025

Please refer to the draft minutes of the Audit Risk Improvement Committee held 22 October 2025 - Attachment 10.6

Resolved:

That the Board **endorse** the Minutes of the ARIC Committee Meeting 22 October 2025.

Moved Federation / Seconded Edward River

Carried

10.7 Draft Minutes of General Managers Advisory Committee 16 January 2026

The draft minutes of the General Managers Advisory Committee meeting held 16 January 2026 - Attachment 10.7 were discussed briefly.

Resolved:

That the Board **endorse** the Minutes of General Managers Advisory Committee 16 January 2026

Moved Griffith / Seconded Federation

Carried

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ITEM 11 – GENERAL BUSINESS

11.1 Call for General Business by the Chair.

- Letters to OLG by 31 March regarding ROC / JO – recommend Councils thoroughly investigate option prior to responding bearing in mind risks associated
 - IEO requested to provide members with a comparison on the JO model vs ROC model.
 - Minister expectation required regarding preference of model (ie JO or ROC) of funding State Government programs.
 - OLG confirmed JO's provide confidence to Government agencies due to regulatory rigour
 - Question whether Minister will allow new ROCs
 - OLG response is no answer available – none have been approved for long time
 - Question once again as to whether ROCs require ARICs? If not required would save over \$12k
 - OLG confirmed as per action item raised earlier that ROCs don't require ARICs
 - Noted that membership cost should only be for overarching and advocacy purposes with ARIC costs to be paid by projects.
- RAMJO submission to reflect the collective view of councils
- Thank you to Wentworth Council for hosting us in this wonderful town and venue

ACTION ITEM: GMs to advise EO of response to OLG correspondence regarding JO and ROC.

ITEM 12 – MEETING CLOSE

The meeting was declared closed at 1.38pm

The next meeting of the RAMJO Board is proposed for 9am 15 May 2026 at Albury. Venue to be confirmed.