

EXTRAORDINARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

28 NOVEMBER 2025



MEETING	RAMJO Extraordinary Board Meeting		
DATE	Friday 28 November 2025		
TIME	9.00am -9.30am		
LOCATION	Microsoft Teams		
CHAIR	Cr. Ruth McRae		
ONLINE LINK	Microsoft Teams Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 454 614 424 654 9 Passcode: T5E6B9Ss		
INVITEES	Council / Organisation	Voting Member	Non-Voting Member
	Albury City Council	Cr. Kevin Mack	Mr. Frank Zaknich
	Balranald Shire Council	Cr. Louie Zaffina	Mr. Peter Bascomb
	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. Shari Blumer	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
	RAMJO Staff		
	Mr. Brett Stonestreet	Interim Executive Officer	
	Mrs. Susan Escott	Administration Officer	
	GUESTS		
	Ms Jennifer Lang	<i>Director</i> Jennifer Lang Australia	
Ms Sue Pritchard	<i>Director of Financial Audit</i> Auditor Generals Office		

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MEETING AGENDA

ITEM	TOPIC	TIME
MEETING OPEN		
1	WELCOME Acknowledgement on Country	9.00
2	Apologies and Leave of Absence	9.01
3	Declaration of Items of Pecuniary or Other Interest – Board Members / Designated Persons	9.02
4	Tabling of the 2024/2025 FY General Purpose Financial Statements (GPFS) 4.1 A copy of RAMJO's 2024/2025 Draft GPFS is provided at <i>Attachment 4.1</i> . 4.2 Q&A with Sue Pritchard 4.3 Nomination of a voting members to sign the 2024/2025 FY GPFS.	9.03
5	Tabling of the 2024/2025 Annual Performance Statement 5.1 A copy of RAMJO's 2024/2025 Draft Annual Performance Statement is provided at <i>Attachment 5.1</i> .	9.25
6	Correspondence 6.1 Letter to MRTB Chair – <i>Attachment 6.1</i>	9.29
7	MEETING CLOSE	9.30

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AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Chair welcomed attendees and provided acknowledgement of country.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cr Julia Cornwell McKean, Cr John Harvie, Cr Cheryl Cook, Cr Daniel Linklater, Cr Kevin Mack, Mr John Scarce, Mr Brett Stonestreet, Mr Frank Zaknich and Mr Scott Grant

Recommendation:

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

Moved Narrandera Shire / Seconded Edward River

Carried

AGENDA ITEM 3 – DECLARATION OF ITEMS OF PECUNIARY OR OTHER INTEREST

Attendees noted no declarations.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – TABLING OF THE 2024/2025 FY GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (GPFS)

- 4.1 *The 2024/2025 Financial Year General Purpose Financial Statements (Attachment 4.1) were presented by Ms Jennifer Lang of Jennifer Lang Australia. Ms Lang audited the financial documents provided by Candour Solutions, with ongoing engagement throughout the audit process between RAMJO, Candour Solutions, the Audit Office and RAMJO's Audit Risk Improvement Committee (ARIC).*

Recommendation:

That the RAMJO Board:

- **adopt** the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Moved Edward River / Seconded Leeton Shire

Carried

- 4.2 *Sue Pritchard discussed the outcomes of the Audit, noting the reassessment of interpretations of accounting standards and adjustments therefore processed. The final audit is fully consistent with the majority of JO's in terms of accounting treatment and the Audit Office is very happy with outcome.*

Jackie Kruger asked for clarification on why RAMJO's management and the Audit Office had different interpretations of the accounting standards relating to grants. She noted this wasn't about disputing the outcome, but about understanding the reasoning behind the differing views.

Sue Pritchard explained that two accounting standards apply to grants, AASB 15 – revenue standard and AASB 1058 – not-for-profit entities. Capital grants are straightforward, they are recorded on the balance sheet and recognised as revenue as the project work is completed.

Operational grants require judgement - you must determine whether the grant includes "significantly specific" performance obligations at the time the contract is entered. If specific milestones exist, the grant can be carried forward and recognised as revenue when milestones are met. If not, revenue must be recognised immediately (on receipt or when a receivable occurs).

The core disagreement was whether RAMJO's grant agreements *did* contain "significantly specific" milestones. The Audit Office determined they *did not* meet the required threshold for deferral under AASB 15. Some accounting firms interpret the standard differently. The issue was escalated to the Audit Office's technical and

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quality team, who confirmed RAMJO's final (adjusted) treatment is consistent with all NSW councils and JOs going forward.

Jennifer Lang added that this was fundamentally an interpretation difference. In her view, RAMJO's grants do have clear objectives, deliverables and milestones: Funding deeds, Project plans and Acquittal processes. These, she believed, met the definition of sufficiently specific obligations. The Audit Office took a different view, resulting in the required adjustments this year.

She emphasised the importance of applying accounting standards correctly so financial statements show a true and fair view and recognising large amounts of grant funding immediately can artificially inflate JOs' surpluses, even though the money is restricted and not available for general use. Going forward, she hopes RAMJO and the Audit Office can align early so the same debate does not recur every year.

4.3 ***Nomination of a voting members to sign the 2024/2025 FY General Purpose Financial Statement.***

Recommendation:

That the RAMJO Board:

- **authorise** the Chair and Deputy Chair, as nominated voting members and Executive Officers, to sign the General Purpose Financial Statement by Members of the Board and Management, pursuant to Section 413(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Moved Leeton Shire / Seconded Edward River

Carried

AGENDA ITEM 5 – TABLING OF THE 2024/2025 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

5.1 ***The Annual Performance Statement (Attachment 5.1) was presented for adopted by 30 November 2025.***

Ms Susan Escott advised the Annual Performance Statement adheres to OLG's annual reporting requirements and includes additional contextual content to provide a public-facing overview of RAMJO's activities.

Recommendation:

That the RAMJO Board:

- **adopt** the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation Annual Performance Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Moved Griffith City / Seconded Narrandera Shire

Carried

AGENDA ITEM 6 – CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 ***The Chair discussed the letter to MRTB Chair, as per Action Item from October Board Meeting, is attached for reference – Attachment 6.1***

Discussion between members present referred to the manner at which the MRTB meeting was conducted. Key points included:

- Significant concern that MRTB's position sets an inappropriate precedent for excluding elected members, who are the formal representatives of their communities.
- Multiple councils expressed dissatisfaction with the poorly run MRTB AGM and procedural issues.
- Councils are openly considering whether continuing MRTB membership is appropriate.

ACTION ITEM: Discuss issue of continuation as members of MRTB at next Board meeting

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AGENDA ITEM 7 – GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 Congratulations – Leeton Shire Council (Bluett Award)

Chair Cr Ruth McRae congratulated Leeton Shire Council on winning the prestigious AR Bluett Award for the regional and rural sector, the highest honour available to NSW councils. She noted:

- The award recognises councils that go “above and beyond” in service to their communities.
- It was uplifting to see Leeton acknowledged, especially as regional councils often feel overshadowed at statewide conferences.
- Leeton’s nomination brought positive attention not only to their council but to the whole RAMJO region.
- She commended Leeton for doing the hard work required to submit a nomination and for their leadership.

Jackie Kruger thanked the Chair and acknowledged:

- The achievement was due to the hard work of Leeton’s councillors, and community.
- RAMJO played a role in their application, specifically through two highlighted initiatives:
 - The FOGO rollout, and
 - The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) partnership with RAMJO and Hunter JO.
- She noted that while Leeton is not yet financially sustainable, the award shows strong progress.

7.2 Water Security & Basin Plan Review (Water Subcommittee Update)

Jackie Kruger and **Cr Shari Blumer** provided a detailed update:

- MDBA will commence a tight 12–14 week engagement process for Basin Plan Mark II mid February.
- MDBA’s own Regional Engagement Officers (REO) will now manage the process rather than external consultants.
- Local Government is the only tier of government not funded to participate.
- A coordinated regional approach is essential to ensure strong, unified advocacy.
- RAMJO, Region 9, Victorian councils, and commodity groups are being encouraged to work together.

Cr Ashley Hall reported on a recent meeting with MDBA CEO Andrew McConville:

- Buyback program is unlikely to be reversed.
- However, MDBA is signalling a potential “reset” following Basin Plan Review.
- A strong, unified RAMJO position will be critical.

Jackie Kruger reported positive discussions with the new Chair of the Victorian Murray Group of Councils, who expressed an interest in collaborative advocacy.

7.3 Narrandera Shire Council motion at LGNSW Conference

Cr Neville Kschenka informed the Board he raised a motion at LGNSW Conference calling for fairer daily electricity supply charges for rural areas stating Rural residents should not be paying disproportionately higher charges for an essential service with prices up to 50% higher than metropolitan regions.

Narrandera Council will continue working with LGNSW and regional partners to advocate for a more balanced pricing system and requested support for Narrandera’s motion on this matter.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – MEETING CLOSE

Meeting closed at 9.40am