



MINUTES OF THE BORDER REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS MEETING HELD AT THE CULTURAL CENTRE, VICTORIA STREET, ST GEORGE ON FRIDAY 19 MAY 2023 COMMENCING AT 9AM (QLD TIME).

Attendees:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Balonne Shire Council | Cr Samantha O'Toole |
| | Matt Magin |
| Brewarrina Shire Council | David Kirby (Zoom) |
| Goondiwindi Regional Council | Cr Rob McKenzie |
| Gwydir Shire Council | Cr John Coulton |
| Inverell Shire Council | Cr Kate Dight (Chairperson) |
| | Sharon Stafford |
| Moree Plains Shire Council | Cr Lisa Orchin |
| | Nick Tobin |
| Paroo Shire Council | Cr Suzette Beresford |
| | Cassandra White |
| Southern Downs Regional Council | Cr Andrew Gale |
| Tenterfield Shire Council | Cr Bronwyn Petrie |
| | Cr John Macnish (Zoom) |
| | Daryl Buckingham (Zoom) |

Also in Attendance:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| QLD Police | Chris Mitchell |
| NSW Reconstruction Authority | Mitch Parker |
| RDA Darling Downs/South West | Jenny Rix |
| SES | Matthew Kirby |
| | Brigid Rice |
| | Karen Cho |
| Bureau of Meteorology | Ailsa Schofield (Zoom) |
| | Hilary Wilson (Zoom) |
| | Jack Dawes (Zoom) |
| Inland Rail (Dept Infrastructure) | Laura Colley (Zoom) |
| ARTC | Jo Tait (Zoom) |
| Mark Ogston | Leading Roles |

1 MEETING OPEN

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Matthew Magin, Chief Executive Officer, Balonne Shire Council acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of this land and paid respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

3 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi/Southern Downs) that the following apologies be accepted:

Brewarrina Shire Council Cr Vivian Slack-Smith

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bulloo Shire Council | Cr Tractor Ferguson Donna Hobbs |
| Goondiwindi Regional Council | Cr Lawrence Springborg |
| Gwydir Shire Council | Cr David Coulton |
| Southern Downs Regional Council | Cr Vic Pennisi |
| Walgett Shire Council | Cr Jane Keir |
| RDANI | Nathan Axelsson Russell Stewart |
| Member for Lismore | Janelle Saffin MP |
| Member for Warrego | Ann Leahy MP |
| NSW Cross Border Commissioner | James McTavish |
| QLD Department Main Roads | Bill Lansbury |
| QLD Dept Premier & Cabinet | Matthew Gregg |
| SES | Tammy Shepley |

CARRIED

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MEETING MINUTES – 23 FEBRUARY 2023

RESOLVED (Paroo/Goondiwindi) that the minutes of the Border Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held in Inverell on 23 February, 2023, as circulated to members, be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.

CARRIED

4.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nil.

5 CROSS BORDER COMMISSIONER UPDATE

James McTavish, NSW Cross Border Commissioner was an apology for the meeting however committed to providing a written update post the meeting.

(Copy of update to be distributed with minutes if available).

6 DISASTER MANAGEMENT UPDATE

A/Senior Sergeant Chris Mitchell, District Disaster Management Coordinator – Cross Border Disaster Management briefed BROC on the following:

- The QLD/NSW Cross Border arrangements are being worked towards to establish an operational response.
- The Cross Border Forum scheduled for 13th July 2023 in St George, is in planning. As previously explained it will be focused on recovery and the afternoon will be an exercise scenario for the management of cross border disaster. Mr Mitchell encouraged BROC Members to attend.

Ailsa Schofield – Bureau of Meteorology briefed BROCC on the following:

- The Bureau gave an update on the flood warning service for both river and rain gauges that they manage throughout the network.
- The Federal Government has announced a funding package of \$237M to take ownership of the gauge network which will mean that the Bureau will work with Councils to take over these assets under a program called ROBUST. The maintenance of these gauges is still up for consideration and the details of this project are still to be fleshed out.
- The gauges they will be acquiring are for data collation rather than for forecasting and QLD gauges will be prioritised. There will be opportunity to upgrade automated gauges and it is an opt-in system for Councils, ie, many NSW Councils may not choose to opt-in given the upgrade isn't for flood warning. Also there are no additional gauges at this stage. The new acquisition will identify where the holes in the network are, so that there could be opportunity for new gauges in the future. It has been recognised that the gauge network doesn't work as well in a disaster event (ie misses readings because rain falling so quickly) so extra gauges are needed to cross check the network.
- Ailsa's report went on to detail the Bureau's flood warning procedure and explained the flood information documents that are generated by the Bureau. Please see presentation attached.

(Copy of presentation to be distributed with minutes).

Matthew Kirby and Brigid Rice, NSW SES, Western & Tablelands Divisions briefed BROCC on the following:

- The SES in NSW has been restructured and there are now 3 zones that cover the QLD/NSW border regions; Western, Tablelands and North Eastern Zones. Within these zones, other areas have been created to service communities in a more effective manner. See presentation attached for greater detail.
- The SES is currently on a volunteer drive to engage new servicemen & women and are working on strategies to keep these recruits for the long term.

(Copy of presentation to be distributed with minutes).

Mitch Parker - NSW Reconstruction Authority, North Western Region briefed BROCC on the following:

- The NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) is a newly established organisation created to reorganise and reframe Resilience NSW. RA intends to work very closely with Local Government Councils in the recovery phase of Disaster Management. The new model is similar to that of QLD. It aims to fund grants and stream line processes throughout the recovery phase. It is also about preparedness and calls itself the book-ends of a disaster, leaving the middle phase for the SES. It is focused on long term strategic planning for recovery including mitigation adaptation planning. It intends to work with the Cross Border Commission and the QLD RA.

RESOLVED (Balonne/Moree) that BROCC encourage Reconstruction Authorities either side of the border to engage in high level interactions.

CARRIED

- The issue of rapidly increasing insurance premiums was raised and Mitch informed the group that the RA was working with the Insurance Council of Australia to address insurance issues specific to another couple of communities and that he was happy to work with Local Councils on this issue.

RESOLVED (Tenterfield/Goondiwindi) that BROC advocate to the Insurance Council of Australia concerning postcode driven insurance policy premium price increases.

CARRIED

7 GUEST SPEAKER

- Keiran Mau, Lonergan Projects Pty Ltd Keiran Mau has had extensive experience in delivery flood damaged programs on behalf of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Department of Transport and Main Roads and numerous Local Government Agencies. He has been involved in delivery of \$100 plus million-dollar programs from their inception phase through to the finalisation stages.
- Keiran has delivered in excess of \$2B of Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and \$300M of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) projects. He is one of the most experienced and distinguished disaster recovery professionals in Queensland having delivered 35 natural disaster events in the past 15 years.
- Lonergan's has been working very closely with Balonne Shire Council on the delivery of Road Reconstruction Programs. They are specialists in getting funding for road asset management and their skill is in collating highly detailed analysis for road assets. This includes betterment data and mapping with extensive access to historical data, stake holder dependency data and a regular monthly reporting structure.

(Copy of presentation to be distributed with minutes).

8 STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR BROC

There are seven (7) areas of strategic importance for BROC and all member Councils agreed to promote and support a restructure of BROC operations so that these areas could be individually addressed and tailored to meet outcomes relevant to BROC. Each area has one member Council electing to lead and drive the advocacy. The outcome of deliberations to date are detailed below.

BROC Areas of Strategic Importance (BASI)

1. Attracting Population and Industry (Lead Council – Paroo, Associated Councils - Inverell, Moree)

Cr Beresford presented findings to date which centred around the following:

- Attracting Skilled Migrants
- Liveability
- Attracting Industry.

RESOLVED (Paroo/Gwydir) that BROC investigate updating the BROC website further to 'push' the region by:

- Establishing links from the BROC website to individual Council websites and vice versa
- Develop the BROC website to include more information
- Establish a 'members only tab' on the BROC website.

CARRIED

2. Transport Networks (Lead Council – Gwydir, Associated Councils - Southern Downs, Tenterfield, Inverell, Bulloo)

Cr Coulton provided a verbal report of findings to date which centred around the following:

- Restrictions for Heavy Vehicles
- Loading – Cross Border issues
- Livestock Loading Scheme
- Grain Harvest Management Scheme
- Heavy Vehicle Registration

RESOLVED (Gwydir/Goondiwindi) that following further investigation a report be prepared for the Cross Border Commissioner seeking his advice on which agencies or departments would be best placed to deal with the particular issues identified.

CARRIED

3. Disaster Recovery, Management & Betterment (Lead Council – Balonne, Associated Councils - Goondiwindi, Moree, Tenterfield, Inverell)

RESOLVED (Balonne/Paroo) that a survey be conducted of member councils in order to gain a better understanding of disaster management issues which impact cross border communities.

CARRIED

4. Health Services (Lead Council – Tenterfield, Associated Councils - Moree, Inverell, Goondiwindi, Paroo)

Cr Petrie provided a verbal update. Issues identified to date centred around the following:

- Kilometres based emergency services system needs to be addressed in order that people can access the closest service regardless of it being over the border
- Need to facilitate GP's getting Visiting Medical Officer status in hospitals
- Some states offering significant nursing incentives
- Need to advocate for fast tracking of visas in rural & regional areas

RESOLVED (Inverell/Tenterfield) that the working group meet again to further investigate and formulate a position on this matter.

CARRIED

5. Housing (Lead Council – Walgett, Associated Councils - Bulloo, Moree)

Walgett not in attendance. No report provided.

6. Education & Childcare (Lead Council – Moree, Associated Councils - Bulloo, Balonne, Walgett)

Cr Orchin provided a verbal update. Issues identified to date centred around the following:

- Students unable to access closest TAFE if it is located over the border
- Movement of boarding school students when borders are closed
- Mungindi Community Preschool no longer able to cater for 3 year olds / daycare kids

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi/Southern Downs) that:

- i) BROC forward a copy of the response which was received from the Hon Grace Grace MP to the Regional Education Minister, the Hon Fiona Nash; the Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP asking for assistance in respect of the situation present at Mungindi, highlighting in particular the governments promise of 'No one held back, and no one left behind' cc James

McTavish, Cross Border Commissioner & the Assistant Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm,

- ii) Neighbouring QLD/NSW Councils be encouraged to explore and investigate Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for Cross Border Collaborative Working Arrangements, noting alignment with but not limited to the seven (7) BROCC Areas of Strategic Importance (BASI).

CARRIED

(Note: Balonne & Moree Plains Shire Council, and Tenterfield & Southern Downs Regional Council both have such collaborative working arrangements in place. A copy of the Balonne/Moree Plains MOU will be distributed with the minutes as an example of an existing working arrangement).

7. Telecommunication Connectivity (Lead Council – Goondiwindi, Associated Councils - Moree, Balonne, Inverell)

Cr McKenzie provided a verbal update. Issues identified to date centred around the following:

- Issues with less signal and/or strength with the rollout of 4G/5G
- Availability of funding through programs such as the Regional Connectivity Program (RCP) and Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) to improve connectivity in the region
- Telstra happy to work with BROCC re their Connectivity Plan
- The Cross Border Commissioner funded tower/internet connection is underway in the Balonne/Moree area
- Regional Connectivity (grants) Program
- The Growing Regions Program Round 1 is out and open to August 2023 for EOIs. It is \$15M and may part replace Building Better Regions. It is for community infrastructure that may include telco infrastructure/NBN.

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi/Tenterfield) that:

- i) BROCC invite May Boisen or a representative from Telstra to address the next BROCC meeting
- ii) Councils continue to feed their connectivity issues and concerns back through to Cr McKenzie.

CARRIED

BASI Focus Groups encouraged to continue investigating and exploring their respective area and report on again at the next meeting.

9 AGENCY UPDATES

- Laura Colley, Inland Rail (Department Infrastructure)
 - Laura updated us as to where Inland Rail is at with the construction of the line past North Star. The brief update is that at this point, all progress has come to a halt as the 18 investigation outcomes are analysed and the Federal Government evaluates how to go forward with funding, construction, environmental, route and delivery/approval constraints.
 - Gwydir and Moree Councils reiterated how frustrating this is for their communities with major infrastructure projects in motion, dependent on the construction and operation of the Inland Rail and that if there can be any clarity established on future timelines, that would be appreciated.

RESOLVED (Tenterfield/Gwydir) that BROC write to the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government concerning the suspension of activity on the Inland Rail project and respectfully seek clarity on a timeframe for the recommencement of activity.

CARRIED

- Jo Tait, Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)
 - Jo also spoke on the progress of the Inland Rail project. There is nothing that can be done at this stage but changes are being made to focus on delivery of the project rather than on operations. A new subsidiary body is being instated and Jo will keep us abreast of these changes.
- Jenny Rix, Regional Development Australia (Darling Downs & South West)
 - Jenny updated the group as to how to best approach grant applications for Councils considering the new Federal Government and the announcements made at the 2023/24 budget. Attracting regional investment needs to take a strategic approach. The Regional Investment Fund provides the best opportunity for funds for Councils. The government wants to work with Councils to deliver these funds and the Regional Infrastructure Framework details this Fund.
 - The Building Better Region Fund has become the Growing Regions Fund and has \$500 - \$15M available for projects. The application process is altered whereby applicants make an expression of interest after which they will progress to the next stage requiring greater project detail, or not. Councils need to be aware of their mapping status (ie regional, remote or very remote) and is co-contribution dependent.
 - There is also the Regional Precincts Partnerships Program for programs that transform a space to be more sustainable and meet net zero emissions. It favours private and public partnership arrangements.
 - The SEGRA conference is on in Toowoomba on the 26-27 July and is an excellent opportunity for Councils to come together to find opportunities for regional economic development. The Minister for Regional Development Local Government & Territories, Minister Kristy McBain, will be in attendance.
 - Jenny advised that she was her last BROC meeting. Cr Dight thanked Jenny for her valuable contribution to BROC and wished her well with her future endeavours.

(Copy of 23/24 Budget - Regional Investment Framework details to be circulated with minutes)

10 CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 INWARDS

- Letter from the Hon Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education re: Viability of Kindergartens in Border Communities – Mungindi Community Preschool
- Bank Statements and Fixed Term Certificate – National Australia Bank & Credit Union
- Drought Resilience Community Co- Design – Information provided by Jenny Rix, Director, Regional Development Australia

10.2 OUTWARDS

- Letter to Assistant Commissioner Southern Region QLD Police welcoming continued support and future involvement of A/Senior Sergeant Chris Mitchell at BROC meetings
- Letter to Brewarrina Shire Council confirming their BROC membership
- Letter to the Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs requesting fast tracking of visas for people entering fields of health, education and industry development in regional and rural areas

RESOLVED (Southern Downs/Goondiwindi) that the Inwards and Outwards correspondence be received and noted.

CARRIED

10.3 MATTERS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE

Nil.

11 FINANCIAL REPORT

11.1 TRANSACTIONS

National Australia Bank – 69-022-2187

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Opening Balance as at 12 January 2023 | \$15,453.47 |
| Interest | \$0.40 |
| Membership – Inverell Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Gwydir Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Tenterfield Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Paroo Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Brewarrina Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Walgett Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Goondiwindi Regional Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Bulloo Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Balonne Shire Council | \$500.00 |
| Membership – Southern Downs Regional Council | \$500.00 |
| Balance as at 11 April 2023 | \$20,453.87 |

National Australia Bank – Term Deposit 42-388-8697

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Lodged 27 December 2022 for 12 months @ 3.75% | \$10,583.97 |
| Maturity Date – 27 December 2023 | |

Warwick Credit Union – Fixed Term Deposit 100005924

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Opening Balance as at 31 March 2023 | \$ 11,504.51 |
| Interest Rate 1.95% | \$ 55.32 |
| Reinvested 22 January 2023 @ 3.75% | \$ 11,559.83 |
| Maturity Date – 22 April 2024 | |

RESOLVED (Moree/Gwydir) that the Financial Report be accepted.

CARRIED

11.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL REPORT

Nil.

12 ITEMS LISTED

Nil.

13 ACTION ITEM LOG

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi/Tenterfield) that:

- i) the Action Item Log be received and noted: and
- ii) the following items be removed from the Action Log:
 - Road Classification Review and Regional Road Transfer – Bruxner Way

14 GENERAL BUSINESS

Community Safety

Cr Coulton informed the meeting of the concerns which have been raised about the escalation of rural crime being perpetrated by young offenders in the northern part of Gwydir Shire.

In an effort to address the issue, Cr Coulton advised that he would be seeking to meet with the appropriate Federal Minister during the National General Assembly in June 2023 and indicated that he would be asking other Councils that held similar fears, to be part of a delegation of approximately 20 mayors from across the country to meet with the Minister.

Gravel Roads

Cr Coulton suggested that some thought be given to an advertising campaign encouraging users of gravel roads to utilise both sides of the road so as not to create a single set of wheel tracks.

Farewell

Cr Dight thanked Nick Tobin, General Manager, Moree Plains Shire Council for his contributions to BROCC and wished him well with his future endeavours.

15 NEXT MEETING

Cr Dight thanked Balonne Shire Council for hosting this meeting in St George and confirmed that the next meeting will be hosted by Paroo Shire Council (in Cunnamulla) on Friday 11 August 2023 commencing at 9am local time.

16 MEETING CLOSED

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.50pm.