

MINUTES OF THE NEW ENGLAND JOINT ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (NEJO) MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE ON 6 APRIL 2020 COMMENCING AT 10.07AM

Present:

Cr Michael Pearce (Chairperson), Cr Peter Petty (Deputy Chairperson), Cr Simon Murray (Armidale Regional Council), Cr Carol Sparks (Glen Innes Severn Council) and Cr Cathy Redding (Narrabri Shire Council).

In attendance:

Ms Susan Law (Armidale Regional Council), Mr Scott Phillips (Uralla Shire Council), Mr Craig Bennett (Glen Innes Severn Council), Mr Terry Dodds (Tenterfield Shire Council), Mr Stewart Todd (Narrabri Shire Council), Mr Angus Witherby (Moree Plains Shire Council) and Mr Paul Henry (Interim Executive Officer).

Presenters:

Mr Darren Keegan, A/Director, New England & Northwest NSW, Regional NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Ms Jodie Healy, Council Engagement Manager, New England/North West and Sydney North Shore and Northern Beaches, Office of Local Government.

Invitees:

David Aber and Brooke Southwell

1. WELCOME

The Chairperson opened the meeting at 10.07am.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Lester Rogers (Moree Plains Shire Council), Cr Katrina Humphries (Moree Plains Shire Council) and Cr Paul Harmon (Inverell Shire Council).

**1/20 RESOLUTION:**

*That the apologies be received and noted.*

Moved: Narrabri Shire Council                      Seconded: Armidale Regional Council

CARRIED

3. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST/PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No disclosures were made by members.

Cr Sparks referred to Item 9 'waiving of rates' for fire affected properties.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 25 NOVEMBER, 2020

**2/20 RESOLUTION:**

*That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November, 2019 be adopted as a true and accurate record.*

Moved: Tenterfield

Seconded: Narrabri

CARRIED

5. REPORTS

5.1 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

**3/20 RESOLUTION:**

- a) *That Gwydir Shire Council be advised that NEJO is prepared to accept an application for associate membership.*

Moved: Uralla

Seconded: Narrabri

CARRIED

Note: The Associate Member fee will be determined in conjunction with the report on membership contributions.

5.2 NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

Cr Pearce informed the meeting on a number of matters:

- LGNSW pledged support for Councils recovering from bushfires
- LGNSW will be organising a summit to consider Local Governments response to the Government Waste Strategy and the Plastics Reduction Plan.
- Minister Constance spoke of the impact of fires in NSW. He urged Councils to work with their communities to rebuild after these events.
- Minister Toole spoke of the importance of the road network to economic activity. The importance of the State and Local Government working together on strategic planning of the network was stressed.
- Minister Hancock spoke of the joint impact of fires and drought on local communities. Also, spoke of support for the JO's in the form of a \$150K capacity building fund.

**4/20 RESOLUTION:**

*That the information be noted.*

Moved: Tenterfield

Seconded: Armidale

CARRIED

### 5.3 MEETINGS WITH FEDERAL MINISTERS

#### **5/20 RESOLUTION:**

- a) *That the cancellation of the 2020 National General Assembly be noted;*
- b) *That a meeting of the Board in Canberra be deferred until a suitable opportunity is identified; and*
- c) *That GMAC be requested to identify specific 'state issues' for the Board to discuss with state members of Parliament when this meeting is arranged.*

Moved: Armidale

Seconded: Narrabri

CARRIED

### 5.4 2020/21 OPERATIONAL PLAN

#### **6/20 RESOLUTION:**

- a) *That the 2020/2021 membership contribution be as follows:*

*A flat fee for 50% plus a 50% per capita fee*

|             | 2016 Census | Flat Fee | Per Capital Contribution | Total   | 2.7% Rate Peg | Total   |
|-------------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Armidale    | 31,500      | 8,500    | 19,080                   | 27,580  | 740           | 28,320  |
| Glen Innes  | 8,800       | 8,500    | 5,330                    | 13,830  | 370           | 14,200  |
| Inverell    | 17,300      | 8,500    | 10,480                   | 18,980  | 510           | 19,490  |
| Moree       | 13,750      | 8,500    | 8,330                    | 16,830  | 450           | 17,280  |
| Narrabri    | 13,400      | 8,500    | 8,120                    | 16,620  | 450           | 17,070  |
| Tenterfield | 7,150       | 8,500    | 4,330                    | 12,830  | 350           | 13,180  |
| Uralla      | 6,350       | 8,500    | 3,850                    | 12,350  | 330           | 12,680  |
|             | 98,250      | 59,500   | 59,520                   | 119,020 | 3200          | 122,220 |

- b) *That the Associate Membership fee be set at \$8500,*
- c) *That the draft Operational Plan be adopted,*
- d) *That member Councils be provided with a copy of the document and be permitted 28 days to comment on the document,*
- e) *That member Councils place the NEJO Draft Operational Plan on their Council websites for 28 days exhibition, and*
- f) *The Board meet by 'teleconference' to adopt the Operational Plan 2020/21.*

Moved: Tenterfield

Seconded: Narrabri

CARRIED

5.5 WASTE ISSUES

**7/20 RESOLUTION:**

1. *The NEJO liaise with the NIRW and write to the NSW EPA to ascertain the position on the on-going operation of the Community Recycling Centres within the region. Further, in relation to the costs for operating those facilities, it is the NEJO view that the state should continue to meet those costs. Still further, that this issue be drawn to the attention of LGNSW together with a request that they support the view of NEJO.*
2. *The NEJO request additional information from NIRW as to the issues associated with State Significant Development – Renewable Energy Projects and writes to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to request a meeting to discuss the issue.*
3. *That NEJO writes to NIRW supporting the development of a Strategic Recycling Plan for the region similar to that of NetWaste.*

Moved: Tenterfield

Seconded: Narrabri

CARRIED

5.6 ROADS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (ROSI)

**8/20 RESOLUTION**

- a) *That individual member Councils be encouraged to submit projects for enhancement of the Newell and New England Highways direct to the Federal Department of Infrastructure,*
- b) *That the Federal Department of Infrastructure be advised that NEJO is not in a position at this stage, to determine a priority for road projects, as the Board has not been provided with the final version of 'Regional Road Strategy Report'.*
- c) *The Department also be advised that the projects proposed by members Councils for the upgrade of the Newell and New England Highways are of merit and the Board deems them worthy of financial support.*

Moved: Tenterfield

Seconded: Glen Innes

CARRIED

5.7 FINANCIAL REPORT

**9/20 RESOLUTION**

*That the Income and Expenditure Statement be received and noted.*

Moved: Armidale

Seconded: Glen Innes

CARRIED

## 5.8 TRANSPORT STUDY

Cardno will have a draft report available for the Working Group this week. The Working Group will form their views and provide feedback to the Consultant. An update will be communicated to the Board at a later time.

### **10/20 RESOLUTION**

*That the report be received and noted.*

Moved: Tenterfield                      Seconded: Narrabri

CARRIED

## 6. PRESENTATIONS

### Darren Keegan

- Advised of his recent appointment as A/Director, New England & Northwest NSW, Regional NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. He will be liaising with NEJO.
- Darren spoke of funding programs being under review and that successful applications under the Stronger Country Communities Program were recently announced.
- Darren spoke of COVID-19 related matters including the impacts of the closure of the NSW/QLD border.

### Jodie Healy

- Jodie mentioned the Chairperson position of NEJO is required to be considered at the next meeting of the Board.
- COVID-19 responses have been the focus of the OLG. If Councils have specific issues/questions please raise them with OLG.
- Jodie stressed the importance of completing the daily survey on how Councils are responding to the crisis.
- Noted the concerns that Tenterfield has been omitted from “Loans Scheme for Small Businesses”. Will investigate.
- OLG working on the many requests for ‘rulings’ on COVID-19 matters.

## 7. GENERAL BUSINESS

The recent Institution Redress Forum on Child Sexual Abuse was discussed and members were encouraged to familiarise themselves with this issue.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 12.13pm.

CR MICK PEARCE

CHAIRPERSON