



# RIVERINA AND MURRAY JOINT ORGANISATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## BOARD MEETING INFORMATION

The Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Board meeting was held on Wednesday May 13 2020 on the secure online platform Zoom.

## 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 Neville Kschenka (Narrandera)

## NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS

- Frank Zaknich (Albury)
- Rowan Perkins (Berrigan)
- Rick Warren (Carrathool)
- John Rayner (A/g) (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 (Regional NSW)
- Cameron Templeton - Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (Office of Local Government)

## RAMJO STAFF (NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS)

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

## GUESTS

- N/A

## AGENDA

1	Chairpersons Welcome	10:00
2	Apologies	10:00
3	Declaration of Items of Pecuniary or Other Interest – Board Members / Designated Persons	10:05
4	Minutes of 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2020 Board Meeting	10:05
5	Matters Arising from Minutes from 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2020 Board Meeting	10:10
6	<b>SPECIAL ITEM: COVID-19 – Chair to facilitate check-in for each Member Council</b>	10:15
7	<b>James Bolton:</b> Director, Regional NSW - update	10:45
8	<b>Cameron Templeton:</b> Council Engagement Manager - update from OLG	11:00
9	<b>Cr. Chris Bilkey: Chair RAMJO Water Sub-Committee</b> – Final Draft RAMJO Water Position Paper (& logo review)	11:10
10	<b>George Cowan: Chair RAMJO Energy Sub-Committee</b> – Regional Energy Audit	11:30
11	<b>Executive Officer: Procurement Update:</b> Progress in cooperative JO approach	11:40
	<b>10 MINUTE BREAK</b>	11:50
12	<b>Executive Officer: Proposed RAMJO Budget 2020 – 2021 &amp; Workplan</b>	12:00
13	<p><b>Sub-Committee Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brett Stonestreet: Chair Industry, Jobs and Workforce Sub-Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Economic Development Officer Working Group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>David Webb: Chair Transport Sub-Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Priority listing from RAMJO Regional Freight Plan &amp; Infrastructure Mapping</li> <li>○ Possible change in scope to respond to COVID-19 recovery and stimulus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>John Scarce: Chair Digital Connectivity Sub-Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Update regarding draft position on RAMJO agreed minimum standard level of service</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	12:20
14	<p><b>Other Working Group Updates / Advocacy Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Frank Zaknich: Chair General Managers Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Workplan and identified potential workstreams: Adverse Event Management Plans, Procurement, Payroll, RMCC</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Des Bilske: Chair Health Sub-Committee</b> will remain advocacy only</li> <li>• <b>Exec Off: Murray and Riverina Waste Groups</b> – written updates provided</li> <li>• <b>Exec Off: Southern Lights:</b> LED replacement &amp; SMART Sensors</li> <li>• <b>Exec Off:</b> no update from other RAMJO groups (Engineers, Planners)</li> </ul>	12:40
15	<p><b>Executive Officer: Staffing Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Office Manager:</b> will take on half time Project Management role in 2020-2021</li> <li>• <b>Contaminated Lands Management:</b> Contract (6-month) Project Manager</li> <li>• <b>Waste Regional Manager:</b> will be appointed for 2-year term</li> <li>• <b>Digital Connectivity / Grants Officer:</b> to be recruited (12-month role)</li> </ul>	12:50
16	<b>General Business</b>	1:00
	<b>MEETING CLOSE</b>	1:30

#### AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME

The Chairperson welcomed the Board Members to the meeting.

#### AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES

- John Rayner, A/g General Manager Edward River
- Darryl Jardine, Mayor Carrathool

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

**(Moved by Griffith, Seconded by Berrigan).**

#### 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 12 FEBRUARY 2020 BOARD MEETING

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2020 are endorsed.**

**(Moved by Griffith, Seconded by Berrigan).**

#### AGENDA ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 12 FEBRUARY 2020 BOARD MEETING

##### RAMJO WORK PLAN

At the last meeting, the Board resolved 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. This item will be addressed in agenda item 12.

Executive Officer informed the Board that all other 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 – SPECIAL ITEM: COVID-19 ROUNDTABLE CHECK IN

Each Council provided a short summary of the challenges of Covid-19 restrictions have presented and how normal business operations were faring.

**RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board noted updates from each Member Council and Local Government information relating to recent natural disaster events (drought, bushfire, COVID-19).**

#### AGENDA ITEM 7 – VERBAL UPDATE FROM JAMES BOLTON: DEPT OF REGIONAL NSW

James Bolton provided a verbal update relating to the newly established Department of Regional NSW.

- The Hon. John Barilaro MP recently announced the new Department of Regional NSW. The new framework doesn't change the primary tasks the cluster undertakes however it does provide senior staff with better access to the NSW Cabinet. Led by Gary Barnes as Secretary and Rebecca Fox as Deputy Secretary, the Departments key leaders are Brendan Nelson, Scott Hansen, David Witherton, David Wright, Chris Hanger and Steve Hall.
- Engagement has been underway with large business support packages including discussions with the aviation industry to ensure access from regional areas to the cities are maintained.
- Priority bushfire recovery work and packages are progressing however there is a lot more work to do.

Federation General Manager Adrian Butler sought assurance that funding for road safety and freight projects would continue or if the majority of road funding will now be targeted to bushfire areas. James noted funding for safety and freight projects in the region would continue. Narrandera General Manager requested an update on the Fixing Local Roads program announcements. James stated announcements would be made soon following completion of the review process.

Leeton General Manager Jackie Kruger noted that no return correspondence had been received by the Council following letters sent to State and Federal Ministers regarding clarification on exemptions for harvest accommodation for backpackers. Council was currently relying on employment agencies to be self-compliant with ensuring self-isolation of employees coming into the region from major cities prior to commencing employment. Griffith Mayor also noted community concern regarding incoming workers however had observed strict social distancing measures in place in pack-houses and food manufacturing businesses. Griffith Council have also approved a Covid-19 testing clinic.

**RESOLVED: Leeton GM to forward James the letters for follow up. Griffith and Leeton GM's to discuss this with James and the Executive Officer at a later date.**

**RESOLVED: Executive Officer to engage with James Bolton to follow up to ensure Health webpage has been updated.**

**RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board noted the verbal update from Director of Riverina Murray, Department of Regional NSW.**

#### AGENDA ITEM 8 – VERBAL UPDATE FROM CAMERON TEMPLETON – OLG ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Cameron Templeton provided a verbal updates relating to the \$395m Local Government Economic Stimulus Package and other Office of Local Government business.

- The Local Government Economic Stimulus Package guidelines will be out today 13 May 2020. All Councils should qualify and any concerns or clarification required should be directed to Cameron.
- The Covid-19 legislation amendments went through on 12 May 2020. Details will be in the Local Government Circular announcement due out today 13 May 2020.
- Reminder: Enrolment to the next Planning Webinar is due today 13 May 2020.
- NSW Premier is driving the health orders. Please refer to the NSW Health website for what facilities can and cannot be reopened.
- Note: Regarding ESL funding model. OLG have requested clarification (and a webinar) to explain the breakdown done by OEM and treasury.

Griffith General Manager Brett Stonestreet sought clarification from Cameron whether or not new council valuations have to be implemented or if the can be postponed to 2021 due to the variations being as much 30-40%.

**RESOLVED: The Executive Officer will engage with Cameron to seek an update on valuations and report back to the RAMJO Board.**

**RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board noted the verbal update from OLG's Council Engagement Manager for the Riverina and Murray.**

RAMJO Chair Kevin Mack thanked both James Bolton and Cameron Templeton for the support provided to Councils from them and their teams at this challenging time.

## AGENDA ITEM 9 - CR. BILKEY: RAMJO FINAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & WATER POSITION PAPER

The Water Security Sub-Committee has finalised the RAMJO Water Position Paper which is currently with graphic designers to create a proof with a professional outlay and matching photographs for a total cost of \$9000. This cost is being covered by an underspend of funds from the RAMJO Strategic Priority Committees and travel expenses. The Committees also developed an Executive Summary, to assist in simplifying the key intent, messages and actions recommended by the Committee.

Consultation with Councillors and other identified stakeholders has also commenced. The marketing agency has suggested that RAMJO reconsider their logo and identify meaningful elements to include in the logo.

RAMJO Chair Kevin Mack expressed thank you to the Water Security Sub-Committee on the work to date on the documents and collaboration. Griffith Mayor John Dal Broi also thanked Mayor Chris Bilkey and noted approval for the documents whole region approach.

Mayor Chris Bilkey noted that the recent CSIRO Lower Lakes report reinforces the requirement for regional advocacy and subsequent adaptation for mechanisms to ensure greater inflows into the basin.

The Executive Officer noted that the Murray Darling Association (MDA) had been given a draft copy of the draft water position paper for review. The MDA approved of RAMJO's approach and have informally endorsed the document. The final version of the document will go to their Board meeting in June.

**RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board endorsed the attached Executive Summary (A3 foldout) of the RAMJO Water Position Paper. RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board agree to updating the logo under the guidance of Stanford Marketing for \$1000 under the guidance of the Executive Officer.**

## AGENDA ITEM 10 – GEORGE COWAN: ENERGY SUB-COMMITTEE PROGRESS

As tasked by the Board, the Energy Sub-Committee has met several times this year and agreed to address a regional approach to energy via the following manner:

### WHAT?

- **Map common goals and targets**
- **Undertake an audit of each Council to date**, including existing achievements, Council facilities and community infrastructure, the operations and usage patterns of these facilities, along with future aspirations. With this, a regional profile of each Council's assets, as well as current and future energy requirements could be mapped.
- Using the information from the audit and the aspirations of each Council (mostly financial), RAMJO Energy Sub-Committee planned to **create a regional energy strategy**, commencing with a focus on energy cost savings for each Council and progressing to potentially community savings and future generation options. Ideally, RAMJO would then use the directions of this strategy to focus on attracting funding and demonstrating cost and emissions savings, in line with the *NSW Government's Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030*:
  - *The Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 is the foundation for NSW's action on climate change and goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050. It outlines the NSW Government's plan to grow the economy, create jobs and reduce emissions over the next decade.*
  - *The plan aims to enhance the prosperity and quality of life of the people of NSW, while helping the state to deliver a 35% cut in emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. The plan will support a range of initiatives targeting electricity and energy efficiency, electric vehicles, hydrogen, primary industries, coal innovation, organic waste and carbon financing.*

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## HOW?

- **RAMJO received \$150k from Office of Local Government for further developing and delivering on identified strategic priorities. \$98,000 of this was allocated to energy, and in addition to this, we have been fortunate enough to be able to form a relationship with the Department of Planning and Industry's Sustainable Council and Communities Team (DPIE SCC). The DPIE SCC team has been tasked to work with regional Councils to assist them in saving energy and cut power bills. RAMJO's participation in this project will be resource intensive for the first 6 months and will require 50% of RAMJO's Office / Project Manager time.**
- The outcome of this first stage will be a full audit and an action plan for each Council to deliver on savings in the short, medium and longer term. RAMJO is working with DPIE to build a dashboard which will demonstrate cost savings and emissions savings as a region with breakdown to individual Council level.

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## WHEN?

- The estimated time frame is 6-10 months, allowing significant project work from RAMJO to continue in the background while COVID-19 arrangements are in place.

The Executive Officer summarised the above points and noted that the short term goal from the project is to assess each Council to identify opportunities including solar assessments and energy plan updates or reviews. In the longer term, business cases for collaborative energy procurement could be addressed alongside opportunities to integrate into the new Transgrid infrastructure. Chair Mayor Kevin Mack noted that this regional project was exciting for RAMJO to get underway.

**RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board endorsed the Energy Security Sub-Committee project plan and note the energy work-plan for the next 6-10 months.**

## AGENDA ITEM 11 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – PROCUREMENT UPDATE

As part of the \$150k awarded by the Office of Local Government for RAMJO to pursue delivering on strategic priorities, RAMJO has teamed up with 3 other Joint Organisations (representing over 40 Councils) to progress building a JO framework for developing a range of procurement tools, templates and procedures. From this, we anticipate that each JO will have a framework with which to pursue identified procurement opportunities using various forms of purchasing models.

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*Councils involved in the combined JO procurement approach.*

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Alongside this, the RAMJO Executive Officer has been working with Albury City Procurement Team to further understand the complexities of procurement at the Council level. It is believed that the needs of each Council will differ as to how a JO approach to procurement may assist member Councils. Therefore, the RAMJO Executive Officer has developed a survey to gauge the preference of each Council as to how the JO may make the procurement process more streamlined, and potentially drive out efficiency or purchasing savings.

Leeton Shire Council has offered to work with RAMJO to scope a potential pilot project based on the outcomes of the survey, for the presentation to the General Managers at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED: The RAMJO Board noted the progress of the strategic priority procurement project.**

## AGENDA ITEM 12 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD: PROPOSED RAMJO BUDGET 2020-2021

At the last meeting, the RAMJO Board tasked the Executive Officer and the General Managers Executive Group with three proposed workstreams and matching resources to shape a budget and workplan for 2020-2021. With much deliberation and limited resourcing, there is one main budget proposal with some minimal flexibility in the workplan. Other than day to day operations, board and committee meetings and other legislative and operational requirements, the main items for the RAMJO workplan are as follows:

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### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Using the \$150k from OLG to deliver on the following:

- Energy Audit and development of a regional energy strategy
- Regional procurement framework, templates best practice guides and a pilot scoping project
- Grants officer: 1 day per week
- Digital Connectivity: ongoing refinement of regional position and advocacy or funding opportunities

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### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other items of activity which are of strategic or operational importance:

- Completion of the Water Position Paper, Executive Summary, Communications and Engagement Plan and the advocacy meetings which relate to this priority
- Delivery of the Adverse Event Management Plans for 8 Member Councils
- Infrastructure priorities: build on the high level mapping undertaken of RAMJO roads, bridges, water and waste water treatment facilities to create clear regional priority lists and shovel ready projects for stimulus funding (could extend to recreational facilities, arts and tourism Council owned assets)
- Maintenance of advocacy-focussed sub-committees groups and building those committees see opportunity in the current environment (e.g. Jobs, Industry and Workforce, and Transport).
- Management of various projects and allocated funding: Contaminated Land Management project, Murray Waste Group, Riverina Waste Group, Southern Lights
- Ongoing advocacy and RAMJO representation at State and Commonwealth Government meetings

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### POINTS TO NOTE

The budget maintains a minimalistic or 'bare bones' approach, and will provide for all RAMJO necessities over the coming year with the workplan above. Any additional activities, projects or costs, other than those already allocated for, will need to be considered and funded separately.

**Southern Lights:** With this in mind, Southern Lights participation and investment via RAMJO came close to \$30,000 for the year of 2019-2020. Councils are now at the stage where they have a LED replacement timeframe and several financing options to proceed, and savings in SLUOS (Street Lighting Use of System) is estimated to be \$815,000 across RAMJO.

The RAMJO members need to consider whether the second stage of the project, the smart sensor component, is something they wish to continue to pursue. If so, approximately \$30,000 will need to be added to the budget to cover RAMJO's participation in this project on behalf of Member Councils, or invoiced separately biannually.

**State Government Funding:** RAMJO has received \$150k from OLG to deliver on its strategic priorities. There is no 'foundation' funding forthcoming from State Government however the \$150k will allow RAMJO to continue pursuing outcomes as identified via our Committee workshops and endorsed at the RAMJO meeting of August 2019.

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## APPROACH

RAMJO is proposing to position itself as an organisation which can drive out not only advocacy and strategic priorities, but also one which can demonstrate efficiencies for its Member Councils. Therefore, the 2020-2021 workplan and budget proposes **trialling a 'service delivery' element**. This would include coordinating resources across Councils where a common activity or outcome is required. For the year of 2020-2021, RAMJO has identified the coordination, drafting and delivery of the 'Adverse Event Management Plans' on behalf of each of its Member Councils as a task which would create efficiency and deliver on a desired outcome for those Councils requiring it. The same can be said about coordinating the energy audits on behalf of each Council, and therefore an additional 'service delivery' project has been added for energy.

With this model, Councils can opt in and out of certain projects where a common request is presented for RAMJO to undertake a project on behalf of Member Councils. RAMJO Executive Officer will continue to work with a group of General Managers who have volunteered to assist RAMJO in refining a workplan which would benefit Member Councils of all sizes in the JO and make service delivery options a viable outcome.

Additionally, a minimum membership fee of \$10,000 per Member Councils is proposed to be a reasonable amount. While all other Member Councils fees have remained approximately the same, this has resulted in a \$2,000 to \$2,500 increase for both Hay and Carrathool shires.

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## AUDIT

RAMJO has already commenced the Audit Engagement Plan with both Albury City and the NSW Audit Office. Audit plans and timeframes are on track.

## SUMMARY

In summary:

- Despite no further 'foundation' funding contributions from State Government for this year, **the budget proposes no great increase in base membership fees across Member Councils**.
- For the FY 2020-2021, RAMJO is trialling a 'service delivery model' in an attempt to bridge the reduction in foundation funding by not only delivering on advocacy and strategic priorities, but moving to undertake projects or tasks that would benefit a majority of the Member Councils.
- Working with a small group of General Managers, RAMJO will continue to refine and deliver on both strategic priorities and scoping and potentially piloting opportunities including procurement.
- RAMJO's delivery of the 2020-2021 workplan and the outcomes achieved will be presented at the quarterly Board meetings.
- The Audit Engagement Plan is available to all Mayors and General Managers at their request.

The next phase of the Southern Lights project was discussed and each Council noted their position going forward with the project.

**Albury:** Yes

**Carrathool:** No

**Leeton:** Yes

**Berrigan:** Yes

**Murray River:** Yes

**Griffith:** No

**Hay:** Yes

**Narrandera:** To be decided

**Federation:** Yes

**Murrumbidgee:** To be decided

**RESOLVED: the RAMJO Board:**

- a. **considered funding the Southern Lights project into 2020-2021 and deferred this to an opt in/opt out basis for each Council as noted above for the next phase of the project rollout.**

**Moved by Federation. Seconded by Griffith.**

The General Managers Chair Frank Zaknich summarised service delivery will now be RAMJO's budget model moving forward. Each Council will opt into the services (as noted in the budget) they would like to and fund RAMJO accordingly for that service.

**RESOLVED: the RAMJO Board:**

- b. **adopted the draft RAMJO budget for 2020-2021**
- c. **noted that the audit engagement plan for RAMJO in the FY 2019-2020 is on track**

#### AGENDA ITEM 13 – SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Verbal updates were provided as below:

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#### BRETT STONESTREET: INDUSTRY, JOBS AND WORKFORCE SUB-COMMITTEE

- The Industry, Jobs and Workforce Sub-Committee last met on 3 February 2020 and resolved to develop a regional development committee with the Community or Economic Development Managers of each Council to be involved.
- The initial focus of this group will include:
  - Scoping whether a regional prospectus (or several) would benefit Member Councils and discussion common potential investors. The scoping will also include a detailed review into the REDS comparison RAMJO undertook in 2019. The group will then report back to the Sub-Committee on any identified opportunities or scope.
  - Forming a relationship with RDA and understanding common outcomes and opportunities to collaborate.
  - As with infrastructure, potentially create a list of 'arts' and 'recreational' Council assets in preparation for any stimulus funding in these categories.

Brett Stonestreet noted that the Sub-Committee was activating the Councils Economic Development Officers to pull together a list of 'shovel ready' community projects (not only roads).

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#### DAVID WEBB: TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

- The Transport Sub-Committee will meet on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May to review the RAMJO Regional Freight Transport Plan and create a set of criteria to develop lists of priority projects, which can be sorted depending on potential funding criteria.
- In addition, the Sub-Committee will discuss whether expanding the scope of the Committee to include wider infrastructure (e.g. water and wastewater) could be beneficial for the Member Councils.

Hay General Manager David Webb requested Councils provide the Executive Officer with a list of the top three shovel ready projects by the end of this week. Noting that these should already be included in the lists provided by Councils a few weeks ago to the Federal Government. The Sub-Committee plan to finalise the Regional Freight Plan as soon as possible and also have the Engineering group up and running again – however this time not only focussed on road but also other infrastructure. David noted that there could be a future opportunity to have a regional project office.

**RESOLVED: All Councils to provide the Executive Officer with a list of the top three shovel ready projects by 15 May 2020.**

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#### JOHN SCARCE: DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

- The Sub-Committee was contacted by the NBN Board and Executive when they held their first meeting in a non-capital city (Wagga Wagga) and offered for RAMJO representatives to attend.
- The Board were keen to hear about concerns, anecdotal or with data. RAMJO representatives offered the findings of the RAMJO Digital Connectivity Survey and noted that our regional services were well below industry standards.
- The committee continues to work towards confirming a regional position for digital connectivity.

The Executive Officer attended the NBN meeting in Wagga Wagga with a representative from Leeton Council. The NBN Board noted that the roll out of the NBN is almost complete. The Executive Officer noted that RAMJO is ready to host NBN representatives for a meeting when the Sub-Committee has confirmed a regional position.

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#### 14. OTHER WORKING GROUPS

Verbal updates will be provided as below:

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#### FRANK ZAKNICH – GENERAL MANAGERS

- The General Managers met on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and have been working closely with RAMJO to develop a workplan and an accompanying budget.
- Adverse Event Management Plans and Energy have been identified as a workstream which will demonstrate benefit and efficiency for the Member Councils.
- RAMJO and GMs will continue to work towards providing regional advocacy positions in the face of potential stimulus funding opportunities.
- Other options will continue to be reviewed and scoped further as per the budget discussion.

The General Managers Chair Frank Zalnich summarised the above update points. No questions followed.

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#### DES BILSKE - HEALTH

- On 18<sup>th</sup> March the RAMJO Health Sub-Committee held a meeting at Jerilderie, chaired by Adam McSwain. This meeting focussed on information sharing between MHLD (Jill Ludford) and RAMJO's outcomes from the original scoping workshops. A detailed briefing on COVID-19 was provided directly to Committee members. Jill is happy to engage with the RAMJO Committee and any members on a regular basis into the future.
- RAMJO Sub-Committee members agreed that the Health Sub-Committee will maintain an advocacy only position and meet biannually.

The updates were noted by the Board.

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#### MURRAY WASTE GROUP (MWG) AND RIVERINA WASTE GROUP (RWG)

Written updates for both Committees were provided. Key points include:

- Understanding and managing COVID-19 impacts (social distancing, cash handling, increased waste traffic at facilities and home kerbside due to home clean-ups occurring).
- Regional waste programs, such as 'Environmentors' (a school based program rolled out annually via RAMJO waste groups) is being deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- NSW EPA are developing a 20 Year Waste Strategy and each waste group has developed a detailed submission on behalf of Member Councils.

The updates were noted by the Board.

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## SOUTHERN LIGHTS

As detailed in the budget discussion, Southern Lights has completed the LED replacement stage and is moving to the smart sensor component of the project. RAMJO continues to be represented by Albury City Council and the Executive Officer. The uptake of smart sensors including identified benefits will be an individual decision of each Council. RAMJO has participated in the smart sensor tender and has financially contributed to consultants employed on behalf of all Councils involved in the Southern Lights project. Meetings are on a monthly basis and it is expected this component of the project will continue for at least another year.

As above further discussion. Moved by Edward River Second by Federation

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## OTHER WORKING GROUPS: ENGINEERS, PLANNERS, PROPERTY

All other RAMJO working groups have not convened this year.

## AGENDA ITEM 15 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – STAFFING UPDATE

- **Office Manager:** The role of Office Manager will move to 50% Project Manager, as this resource has undertaken an extensive amount of work moving the Joint Organisation into a position where all financial records, management and processes are of a high standard and compliant with Local Government requirements. The role continues to require a level of maintenance, however there is some capacity to assist in the delivery of projects and therefore the Office Manager will take on the Energy Audit workplan.
- **Contaminated Lands Management:** the Board agreed to allow REROC and RAMJO to combine resources to drive out the best resourcing and project planning model to deliver on Contaminated Lands Management: Underground Petroleum Storage Systems project and grant funding requirements. A 6 month contractor has been brought on board to revise the project plan, recover the 'project slip' and prepare the position for more permanent recruitment moving forward. The deliverables of the grant agreements are now being met, with reporting to EPA and project milestones now all up to date.

A 2 year contract recruitment process will be undertaken after this initial six month appointment.

- **Regional Waste Manager:** as endorsed by the Board, RAMJO has progressed with recruiting a Regional Waste, Innovation and Sustainability Manager, using excess funds from the Waste Groups. The selection process is almost complete with a contract offer being made to the preferred candidate. The focus of this role in the first instance is:
  - Undertake a regional situational analysis of both waste streams incoming to Council facilities, as well as other waste streams currently heading out of the region. This includes many previous studies and reports which have already been undertaken in the region.
  - Using the analysis to select several detailed feasibility studies and work to develop them into business cases considering RAMJO's unique situation (distance, volume, transport, industry).
  - Proceed with the business cases to advocate for additional funding in either: onsite waste processing, transport to several regional facilities, or investment in new infrastructure.

The Executive Officer summarised the above points. No questions followed.

- **Grant Officer Role:** under the \$150k provided by OLG, one of the requested priorities relating to employing (or sharing an existing Council employee) to work on RAMJO Grants via developing a range of material and identifying grant options and being prepared to submit these applications. RAMJO Executive Officer will continue to work with the General Managers on this matter.

Looking to offer this to offer this to a candidate for the waste manager position.

The updates were noted and endorsed by all.

## AGENDA ITEM 16 – GENERAL BUSINESS

Items of general business are invited for discussion.

- 1) Mayor Paul Maytom (Leeton) spoke to letter he wrote to RAMJO Board seeking endorsement by the Board for RAMJO Chairman and Executive Officer to make representations to the Federal and NSW Governments to guarantee water to grow rice in 2020-21.

The Board discussed the letter and the Chair sought the voting member's positions on the recommendation;

<b>Carried</b> Supported the recommendation	<b>Lost</b> Did no support the recommendation
Hay	Berrigan
Leeton	Griffith
Federation	Carrathool
Narrandera	Murray River
	Edward River
	Murrumbidgee

The Chair deferred the motion to the Water Sub-Committee for discussion. Seconded by Murrumbidgee.

**RESOLVED: That the motion be reviewed and discussed at a Water Sub-Committee meeting next week.**

- 2) Murrumbidgee General Manager John Scarce noted that Transport NSW has been segregated into three divisions (west, south and east) (noting that the Newell to Goondiwindi Highway is now all in the same region). It was also reported that the State Government has a position that road and rail separation should be mandatory, however the Inland Rail project was not necessarily of the same position,
- 3) Murrumbidgee Mayor Ruth McRae requested RAMJO to send a thank you letter to Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) to thank the Department for enabling mobile testing clinic for COVID-19 in regional and rural areas. Seconded by Neville Kschenka.

**RESOLVED: That RAMJO will send a letter of appreciation to Murrumbidgee Health for their work in the community during the Covid-19 Pandemic.**

- 4) Des Bilske will replace Adam Mc Swain as the RAMJO representative on the Murray Regional Tourism Board.

## MEETING CLOSE

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