

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

16 August 2024 – Griffith

MEETING	RAMJO Board Meeting			
DATE	Friday 16 August 2024			
TIME	9:30am – 1:00pm			
LOCATION	Griffith Regional Theatre, Burley Griffin Room - 1 Neville Place. Griffith NSW			
CHAIR	Cr. Kylie King (Deputy Chair)			
MICROSOFT TEAMS LINK	Microsoft Teams Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 485 235 964 822 Passcode: 2YQMPe			
ATTENDEES	Council / Agency	Voting Member (Mayor)	Non-Voting Member (GM)	
	Albury City Council	Cr. Kylie King	Mr. Frank Zaknich	
	Berrigan Shire Council	Cr. Julia Cornwell-McKean	Mrs. Karina Ewer	
	Carrathool Shire Council	Cr. Darryl Jardine	Mr. Rick Warren	
	Edward River Council	Cr. Peta Betts	Mr. Gary Arnold	
	Federation Council	Cr. Pat Bourke (apology)	Mr. Adrian Butler	
	Griffith City Council	Cr. Doug Curran	Mr. Brett Stonestreet	
	Hay Shire Council	Cr. Carol Oataway	Ms. Kirstyn Thronder	
	Leeton Shire Council	Cr. Tony Reneker	Mrs. Jackie Kruger	
	Murray River Council	Cr. Frank Crawley	Mr. Terry Dodds	
	Murrumbidgee Council	Cr. Ruth McRae	Mr. John Scarce	
	Narrandera Shire Council	Cr. Neville Kschenka	Mr. George Cowan	
	Associate Members			
	Balranald Shire Council	Mr. Glen Carroll (Acting General Manager) (apology)		
	Wagga Wagga City Council	Cr. Dallas Tout Mr. Peter Thompson		
	Wentworth Shire Council	Cr. Daniel Linklater (apology) Mr. Ken Ross (apology)		
	State Agency Representatives			
Office of Local Government	Mr. Cameron Templeton			
Dept. of Primary Industries & Regional Development	Mr. Giles Butler			
RAMJO STAFF	Ms. Yvonne Lingua - Executive Officer			
	Mrs. Susan Escott – Administration Officer			
OTHER ATTENDEES	Name	Role		
	Mr. Bola Oyetunji	NSW Auditor-General – NSW Audit Office		

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MEETING MINUTES

Item	Topic	Time
	OPENING	9:30
1	WELCOME Acknowledgement on Country	9:30
2	Apologies and Leave of Absence	9:31
3	Declaration of Items of Pecuniary or Other Interest – Board Members / Designated Persons	9:32
4	MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 17 May 2024 Board meeting – <i>Attachment A</i>	9:33
5	Matters and action items arising from previous Board meeting	9:34
6	GUEST SPEAKERS 6.1 Mr. Bola Oyetunji – NSW Auditor-General 6.2 Mr. Steve Tinkler and Mr. Chris Taylor – Telstra	9:35
7	GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS 7.1 Executive Officer’s Report – <i>Attachment B</i> 7.2 2023/2024 Q4 Budget Review and Contract Liabilities as at 30 June 2024 – <i>Attachment C</i> 7.3 Tabling of Draft RAMJO Policies - Round Three – <i>Attachment D</i> 7.4 Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – <i>Attachment E</i> 7.5 Draft Minutes - General Managers Advisory Committee 19 July - <i>Attachment F</i> 7.6 Service Level Agreement for Regional Resource Recovery Services - <i>Attachment G</i>	10:45
BREAK		11:30
8	UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ADVOCACY 8.1 Progress and status of Sub-Committee’s and working groups - <i>Attachment H</i> 8.2 Advocacy Activities – <i>Attachment I</i> 8.3 Regional Express in Voluntary Administration 8.4 Advocacy on NSW GST Distribution – <i>Attachment J</i>	11:45
9	DEPT. OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 9.1 Mr. Giles Butler – General Update	12:10
10	OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 10.1 Mr. Cameron Templeton – General Update	12:20
11	PROJECT UPDATES 11.1 Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement Program – Attachment K 11.2 Housing Support Program – Stream 1 11.3 Disaster Ready Fund – Round 2 11.4 Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration – <i>Attachment L</i> 11.5 Regional Resource Recovery – <i>Attachment M</i>	12:30
12	GENERAL BUSINESS 12.1 Call for general business by the Chair. 12.2 MRT Board – Murray River	12:45
Meeting Close		1:00pm

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AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Chair to welcome attendees and acknowledgement of country.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Patrick Bourke, Mr. David Webb, represented by Mrs. Krystyn Thronder, Mr. Glen Carroll, Cr. Daniel Linklater and Mr. Ken Ross.

Wagga Wagga City Council welcomed as Associates. Incoming RAMJO Administration Officer, Susan Escott welcomed.

Recommendation:

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

Moved: Narrandera / Seconded: Murrumbidgee

Carried

A warm welcome also to our Associate Members from Balranald Shire, Wentworth Shire and Wagga Wagga City Councils.

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

- None noted.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Tabling of Draft minutes of 17 May Board Meeting – *Attachment A*

Recommendation:

- That the minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held 17 May be **received** and the recommendations therein **adopted**.

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Griffith

Carried

AGENDA ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS RAMJO BOARD MEETINGS

ACTION ITEMS FROM 17 MAY BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	STATUS
7.2 2024/2025 Operational budget	Continue with a focus on improving RAMJO's long-term Financial Sustainability- workshop summary to be tabled later.	ONGOING
7.4 Tabling of Draft Policies – Round Two	Credit Card Use Policy – Amendments	COMPLETE

ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS

ITEM	STATUS
Invite Water NSW Director to RAMJO Water Security Sub Committee meeting to seek clarity on planned infrastructure changes. Update: Two meetings have been had to date between Jane Sheppard (NSW Water Director) and RAMJO i.e. the LWU Working Group.	COMPLETE

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Board to consider coordinating a regional list of events so councils are not competing with each other for attendances. Update: Events will be noted in the RAMJO E-Bulletin. Councils Events and Communications teams are being liaised with here.	IN PROGRESS
Circulate for the boards review, the final draft of the updated Water Position Paper Update: This Action was discussed at the last Water sub-committee meeting held in December 2023, with required tweaks discussed and drafted.	COMPLETE
Item 10.1 - Invite Wentworth, Balranald and Wagga Councils to join RAMJO as Associate Members Update: Balranald are tabling the invite at their May council meeting. Wagga have been invited to join as Associate members.	COMPLETE

Recommendation:

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

Moved: Leeton / **Seconded:** Griffith

Carried

AGENDA ITEM 6 – PRESENTATIONS

6.1 NSW Auditor General Mr. Bola Oyetunji addressed the RAMJO board.

The Auditor General noted key areas for focus for himself and his team under his leadership and fielded questions from member councils.

6.2 Telstra: Mr Steve Tinkler – General Manager Telstra Country Wider and Mr Chris Taylor Regional General Manager ACT and Southern NSW addressed the RAMJO Board.

Senior Telstra representatives addressed the board. Discussion had around preliminary plans for pursual of a major digital connectivity project within the RAMJO footprint and spanning south into the Murray Region Group of Councils. Telstra noted currently known coverage black spot areas within the RAMJO region, but advised additional work would be conducted and member councils engaged to verify known black-spot areas.

Candour Solutions: Ms Margie Wiseman addressed the RAMJO Board.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **note** the presentation by the NSW Auditor General, Telstra & Candour Solutions.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

7.1 Executive Officers Report

Attachment B notes the Executive Officers report, providing a written update on operations and focus areas.

7.2 2023/2024 Q4 Budget Review and Contract Liabilities as at 30 June 2024

Attachment C contains two (2) attachments as follows:

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- The 2023/2024 FY Q4 budget review with YTD Actuals; and
- Contract Liabilities Review i.e. RAMJO run programs and projects as at 30 June 2024, in preparation for the Annual Audit.

End of year figures for the 2023/2024 Financial Year ended better than the projected \$80,000 deficit forecast, due to:

- Sale of RAMJO owned vehicle not originally included in the 2023/2024FY Budget
- Ensuring that Project/Program Administration and Management fees were charged where possible, and that rental assistance and other costs were claimed where a straight Administration Fee of Management fee was not allowed i.e. DRRF
- The adjustment of an aged creditor figure from previous years that had been carried forward in the financials.
- Generous EO and then Officer Manager forecast on-costs.

This improved outcome is welcome, however is not an indication of longer-term financial sustainability, as the sale of asset and aged creditor adjustment were one off income streams.

Senior Partner Ms. Margaret Wiseman also addressed the RAMJO board and provided detail in support of *Attachment C, part 2* on work undertaken in preparation for the 23/24FY audit, pertaining to RAMJO's contract liabilities or grants received, including detail on the need for some prior year adjustments.

7.3 Tabling of Draft Policies - Round Three

Attachment D notes three (3) policies for the Boards endorsement and adoption, which have been reviewed by the General Managers Advisory Committee (**GMAC**). All policies that will help ensure RAMJO's overall compliance and improved operations will be developed and shared with the GMAC for their review and input, prior to a request for adoption by the RAMJO board.

Round three of required policies are as follows:

1. *Budget and Statement of Review Policy*: Provides structure on how Membership Fee's are to be calculated and used for operational budgeting.
2. *Cyber Security Policy*: Defines how Cyber Security is managed and is to be prevented, alongside RAMJO's current IT service provider AlburyCity.
3. *Fraud and Corruption Prevention*: Outlines the high standards of ethical behaviour expected by RAMJO and introduces a Fraud and Corruption Control Framework to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to prevent, deter, detect and respond to fraud and corruption.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **endorse** and **adopt** the third round of RAMJO policies.

**Moved: Narrandera / Seconded Edward River
Carried**

7.4 Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC)

Attachment E provides a copy of the Minutes from the last ARIC meeting held in May and notes the agenda for the August ARIC meeting held on Wednesday 14 August. A verbal update will also be provided by the Executive Officer.

7.5 Draft Minutes – General Managers Advisory Committee Meeting – 19 July 2024

Attachment F notes the meeting minutes from the GMAC meeting held 19 July 2024.

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7.6 Service Level Agreement for Regional Resource Recovery Services

Attachment G notes a draft version of the Service Level Agreement currently being finalised for the delivery of Regional Resource Recovery Services per recommendations adopted at the February 2024 board meeting, intended to provide structure and clarity on the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

As at 12 August, the final legal reviewed version with final costs for service delivery have not yet been received by RAMJO, thus the draft version tabled for the GMAC is shared here.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **note**
 - the Executive Officers report
 - the Q4 budget review with YTD actuals and Contract Liabilities for the 2023/2024 FY
 - the update provided on ARIC operations
 - the draft minutes from General Managers Advisory Committee Meeting held 19 July
- That the Board **endorse** the draft tabled Service Level Agreement for Regional Resource Recovery Services

Moved: Murrumbidgee / Seconded: Narrandera
Carried

AGENDA ITEM 8 – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

8.1 Progress and status of sub-committee's and working groups

Attachment H notes progress made and the current position of RAMJO's sub-committee's, which directly link to RAMJO's *Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities*. Verbal updates were also provided by the following sub-committee chairpersons:

Water sub-committee

Cr. Tony Reneker and Mrs. Jackie Kruger provided a verbal overview of the Water Sub-Committee meeting held the day prior on 15 August 2024. Key points noted were:

- Opposition and adaptability to water buy-backs continues to dominate the committee's focus
- The committee have adopted a three-pronged approach to advocacy and adaptability to buy-backs, as follows:
 1. Continue to oppose and advocate against buy-backs, at the Federal level
 2. Work to ensure the Region and those LGA's most impacted by buy-backs can be ready for structural adjustments, by actively seeking support from the NSW State Government (Dept. of Primary Industries and Regional Development) to assist in benchmarking of current economies and planning for replacement industries
 3. Provide a counter narrative to the Federal Government campaign currently in circulation, that highlights our regions willingness and desire to protect natural waterways, whilst also protecting the economic livelihood of our communities and by extension, consumers of our regions food-bowl.
- Water sub-committee sought the boards approval for Mrs. Jackie Kruger to step-in as interim chair following the departure of current sub-committee chair Cr. Reneker, per the September 2024 elections – this is a temporary arrangement until a new chair for the sub-committee can be elected
- Discussion had surrounding securing of funds for development of an impact statement to measure the impacts of buy-backs on each RAMJO LGA, to be developed by an external consultant
- Idea is to capture data, conduct baseline benchmarking and modelling, and develop the impact statement, which can then be used to make a stronger case against buy-backs, call for continued investment for structural adjustments and help direct (part of) the \$300m Sustainable Communities funds (and others) in the right direction and where most needed

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- Initial costing for development of such a statement is marked at \$10,000 to \$15,000
- Following discussion, Murrumbidgee Shire noted they would be willing to provide the funds up-front for development of the statement and re-coup costs from interested and participating councils at a later date
- Carrathool noted they would be willing to participate, to prevent water re-direction attempts
- Noted that key industries would also likely be willing to contribute and participate

Housing sub-committee

Mr. Brett Stonestreet provided an overview of the most recent Housing Sub-Committee meeting, held on 30 April 2024. Key points raised included:

- Current priority is for the development of a RAMJO Regional Housing Strategy
- Continue to understand the State Governments plan for securing and funding Regional Housing

Recommendation:

- Funded by participating member councils but through RAMJO, that the Board seek to engage Aither (or other suitable consultant) to produce an impact statement to understand the economic impacts of water buy-backs on individual RAMJO LGA's.

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Murrumbidgee
Carried

8.2 Advocacy Activities

Attachment I provides an update on recent Advocacy Activities pursued by RAMJO.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **note** the update provided on Advocacy Activities.

8.3 Regional Express in Voluntary Administration

Mr. George Cowan provided a verbal update regarding Regional Express Airlines going into voluntary administration. Member Councils were encouraged members to use Regional Express Airlines where possible, to ensure tickets continue to be sold.

8.4 Advocacy on NSW GST Distribution

Attachment J notes a letter prepared by the *Canberra Region Joint Organisation* calling for a fairer distribution of GST for NSW. Cr. Kylie King to speak further to this point and sought endorsement from the board for RAMJO to write its own letter on this matter.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **endorse** RAMJO writing a letter to the NSW Premier on this matter.

Moved: Albury / Seconded: Murray
Carried

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AGENDA ITEM 9 – REGIONAL COORDINATION – SOUTH / DELIVERY AND ENGAGEMENT GROUP, NSW PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT UPDATE

9.1 Mr Giles Butler Director – Director, Regional Coordination - South | Delivery and Engagement Group, NSW Premier's Department

Mr. Giles Butler addressed the RAMJO board, noting the following key points:

- As of 1 July 2024, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has re-structured and rebranded
- As a result, Mr. Giles Butler has returned to the NSW Premiers Department and now covers 33 LGA's via three Joint Organisations and one ROC, including RAMJO LGA's
- Economic development, grants and funding remains with Debbie Lane of the Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development, however Giles notes his ability to triage requests as the transition unfolds
- Discussion surrounding Water Security and buy-backs – Federal Government is going ahead with recovery of 450GL's of water, despite the State Government proposing and calling for alternatives to buy backs
- Noted that the Federal Government has now announced the \$300m allocated for delivery of the *Sustainable Communities Program* will be managed by the NSW Dept. of Primary Industries and Regional Development (**DPIRD**)
- No formal agreement yet in place between the Commonwealth and State to deliver sustainable Community program – progressing – when done communications about next step including NSW State Government engagement re developing program
- Minister Jackson - Advocacy around water recovery program
- Minister Moriarty – sustainability program
- Will know where most water recovery is to occur once the funding design is announced but must assume that majority of water recovery will be coming from Murray and Murrumbidgee region
- Noted engagement opportunities and reiterated he is keen to continue as JO representative to Department of Premier

Recommendation:

- That the Board **note** the briefing by the Dept. of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE

10.1 Mr Cameron Templeton, Council Engagement Manager - Riverina and Far South-West

An update was provided by the Office of Local Government on current matters.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **note** the briefing from the Office of Local Government.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – PROJECT UPDATES

11.1 Best practice in Aggregated Procurement Program

Attachment K noted a proposal for the pursual of a *Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement (BPAP)* Program for RAMJO member councils, intended to provide cost savings for participants and allow the Joint Organisation to further build its capacity. A verbal run-down was provided by the Executive Officer in support of a written proposal, and the board endorsement sought for pursual of the BPAP program.

It was queried by a member council that given the organisations financial position, if the JO had capacity to run such a program. Noted that the funds are available and being held by RAMJO, and that the funds need to be expended as soon as possible.

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Recommendations:

- **Note** the proposal provided by the EO;
- **Endorse** the recruitment a RAMJO employed *Regional Procurement Project Manager*, paid for by utilising the remainder of the afore mentioned OLG's capacity building funds i.e. \$150,000 to cover wages and oncosts once contracts have been identified; and
- **Endorse** that the EO and RAMJO Shared Services Working Group pursue a RAMJO led BPAP program, for pursual ASAP.

Moved Leeton / Seconded Griffith

Carried

11.2 Housing Support Program – Stream 1

The Executive Officer provided a verbal update on the status of an application made to this Commonwealth funded program by the Joint Organisation (**JO**) network. Noted that the broader JO network was unsuccessful in seeking said funds, due to the JO's allegedly not meeting the criteria of a Local Government entity, which is being challenged by the broader JO network.

11.3 Disaster Ready Fund – Round 2

RAMJO awaits a response to its formal application to Round Two of the *Disaster Ready Fund*, which has progressed to the final stages of assessment. Applicants have been advised they can expect to know the outcome of their applications by August. RAMJO's application sought funds to conduct for all full-member councils:

- Critical infrastructure assessments with supporting action plans; and
- Land use planning maturity assessments and supporting action plans for use in strategic land-use planning updates and forthcoming Disaster Adaption Plans.

11.4 Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program

Attachment L provides an update on the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program (**JONZA**) which is the vehicle for pursuing RAMJO's broader Energy Security and Affordability objectives per the Regional Energy Strategy.

11.5 Regional Resource Recovery Projects

Attachment M provides an update on activities pursued by the Regional Resource Recovery team.

Recommendations:

- That the Board **note** the updates provided on current RAMJO projects.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – GENERAL BUSINESS

12.1 Murray Regional Tourism – Board Vacancy

Item not discussed.

12.2 Call from chair for any General Business.

All mayors were thanked for their participation in and commitment to RAMJO.

MEETING CLOSE

The meeting was declared closed at 1.45pm