

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

17 May 2024 – Corowa



MEETING:	RAMJO Board Meeting		
DATE:	Friday 17 May 2024		
TIME:	9:30am – 1:00pm		
LOCATION:	Club Corowa – Ms. Birdie Room, 30 Betterment Parade, Corowa NSW		
CHAIR:	Cr. Patrick Bourke		
MICROSOFT TEAMS	Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 491 662 059 049 Passcode: B5oAY6		
ATTENDEES:	Council / Organisation	Voting Member	Non-Voting Member
	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	Mr. Adrian Butler
	Griffith City Council	Cr. Doug Curran	Mr. Brett Stonestreet
	Hay Shire Council	Cr. Carol Oataway (online)	Mr. David Webb (online)
	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
	Wentworth Shire Council		Cr. Daniel Linklater Mr. Ken Ross
	Office of Local Government		Ms. Louise Taylor for Mr. Cameron Templeton
	Dept. of Regional NSW		Mr. Giles Butler
RAMJO STAFF	Ms. Yvonne Lingua - Executive Officer		
	Ms. Carolyn Clancy - Office Manager		
OTHER ATTENDEES	Name	Role	
	Ms. Kalina Koloff	NSW Cross Border Commissioner	

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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: 23 February 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 Kalina Koloff – NSW Cross Border Commissioner	9:35
7	GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS 7.1 2023/2024 Q3 Budget Review – <i>Attachment B</i> 7.2 Draft 2024/2025 Operational Budget 7.2.1 <i>Attachment C</i> – Written report 7.2.2 <i>Attachment D</i> - Membership Fee scenarios 7.2.3 <i>Attachment E</i> - Budgeted Income v Expenditure 7.3 Audit Risk and Improvement Committee 7.3.1 <i>Attachment F</i> - Internal Audit Requirements 7.3.2 <i>Attachment G</i> – Agenda and minutes from recent meeting 7.4 Tabling of Draft Policies Round Two – <i>Attachment H</i> 7.5 Renewal of RAMJO Office Lease – <i>Attachment I</i> 7.6 Draft Minutes - <i>General Managers Advisory Committee</i> 19 April - <i>Attachment J</i>	10:15
	BREAK	11:30
8	UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 8.1 Progress and status of Sub-Committee's and working groups - <i>Attachment K</i> 8.2 Digital Connectivity Project – <i>Attachment L</i>	11:45
9	OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 9.1 Mr. Cameron Templeton: Office of Local Government Update	12:00
10	REGIONAL NSW 10.1 Mr. Giles Butler: Department of Regional NSW Update	12:10
11	PROJECT UPDATES 11.1 Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration – <i>Attachment M</i> 11.2 Disaster Risk Reduction Fund – <i>Attachment N</i> 11.3 Regional Resource Recovery – <i>Attachment O</i>	12:20

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Item	Topic	Time
12	ADVOCACY 12.1 Updated primary water position paper – Attachment P 12.2 Living document – water advocacy priorities paper - <i>Attachment Q</i>	12:30
13	GENERAL BUSINESS 13.1 Call for general business by the Chair.	12:40
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. Cameron Templeton, Office of Local Government (represented by Ms. Louise Taylor), Cr. Daniel Linklater, Wentworth Shire Council.

Recommendation: That apologies be accepted and that leave of absence be granted.

Moved: Murrumbidgee / Seconded: Berrigan
Carried

AGENDA ITEM 3 – DECLARATION OF ITEMS OF PECUNIARY OR OTHER INTEREST – BOARD MEMBERS / DESIGNATED PERSONS

AlburyCity declared an interest in Item 7.5 – Lease Renewal for RAMJO Office.

Recommendation: That Albury's interest in Item 7.5 be noted.

Moved: Albury / Seconded: Edward River
Carried

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Tabling of Draft minutes of 23 February Board Meeting – *Attachment A*

Recommendation: That the minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held 23 February received and the recommendations therein adopted.

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Murrumbidgee
Carried

AGENDA ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS RAMJO BOARD MEETINGS

ACTIONS FROM 23 FEBRUARY MEETING

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	STATUS
6.1 Presentations	Executive Officer to correspond with Rose Jackson's office regarding inclusion in critical stakeholder meetings regarding water buy-backs	COMPLETED Additional meeting had with Minister Jackson by Water sub-committee representatives
6.1 Presentations	RAMJO Councils to assess interest in reviewing ACC's MOU with Homes NSW	COMPLETED Raised with Housing sub-committee chair and relevant details sought from AlburyCity
8.1 Update on Strategic Priorities	RAMJO to prepare a submission to the IPART review of Councils financial model in NSW	COMPLETED IPART review ceased, replaced with parliamentary inquiry. A Submission has been made by RAMJO to the parliamentary inquiry. A federal inquiry is also being had.
12.1 Advocacy	Amend tabled buybacks press release per boards feedback	COMPLETED Press release amended and distributed. Final release included on May Agenda

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12.1 Advocacy	Liaise with Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) on water buy-back advocacy matters	COMPLETED / ONGOING Contact made. RAMJO representatives (Berrigan and Murray River) attended a MRGC meeting. Collaboration may continue via digital connectivity project.
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FROM EARLIER BOARD MEETINGS	
ITEM	STATUS
Invite Water NSW Director to RAMJO Water Security Sub Committee meeting to seek clarity on planned infrastructure changes. Update: This action will be advanced by the Water sub-committee under a new committee chair.	NOT COMPLETED May be more suited to the LWU Working Group
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.	IN PROGRESS
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.	IN PROGRESS

Recommendation: That the RAMJO Board <u>note</u> the status of matters arising from previous Board meetings. Moved: Griffith / Seconded: Albury Carried
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AGENDA ITEM 6 – PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Ms Kalina Koloff – NSW Cross Border Commissioner

NSW Cross border commissioner Kalina Koloff gave a presentation on the office of the NSW Cross Border Commissioner functions and current focus areas. Cr. Ruth McRae noted that local government is one of the primary stakeholders in ensuring disaster preparedness and resilience for communities, and encouraged ongoing collaboration between the Cross Border Commissioners office and RAMJO member councils.

Recommendation: That the Board <u>note</u> the presentation by the NSW Cross Border Commissioner Moved: Murrumbidgee / Seconded: Albury Carried
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AGENDA ITEM 7 – GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

7.1 2023/2024 Q3 Budget Review

Attachment B was tabled and contained the 2023/2024 FY Q3 budget review. Key points were:

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Budgeted income for the quarter = \$13,248; Actual income for the quarter = \$14,931.19
Budgeted expenses for the quarter = \$106,578; Actual expenses for the quarter = \$97,624.12

Recommendation: That the Board **note** the Q3 budget review update.

Moved: Murrumbidgee / Seconded: Berrigan
Carried

7.2 Draft 2024/2025 Operational Budget

Attachments C, D and E were tabled with the intention of helping to inform discussions around the 2024/2025 draft operational budget, which will need to be lodged with the Office of Local Government as endorsed by the Board, by 30 June 2024.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the board **endorse:**

- An increase to the base funding amount from \$3,100 from the previous year, to \$5,000
- The application of the 4.5% rate peg, an increase of 0.8% from the previous year's 3.7% rate peg application
- The removal of the \$10,000 'flat rate fee' for member councils with populations below 5,000 people

Furthermore, it is recommended that the board **endorse:**

- Through the GMAC and Executive Officer, a continued focus on and commitment to addressing RAMJO's long-term financial sustainability challenges, including revenue diversification.

Moved: Griffith / Seconded: Murrumbidgee
Carried

7.3 Audit Risk and Improvement Committee

Attachment F was tabled and provides a written report on developments pertaining to internal audit requirements and a copy of the current Assurance Map. *Attachment G* provides a copy of the agenda for the May ARIC meeting and minutes from the 14 February meeting.

A verbal update was also be provided by the Executive Officer, highlighting:

- Advice received from the RAMJO ARIC chair regarding the Internal Audit function; and
- Broader Joint Organisation (JO) network collaboration with Brett Whitworth of the Office of Local Government (OLG) on making ARIC for JO's more fit for purpose.

Recommendation:

- That the Board **note** the update provided on ARIC operations; and
- **Endorse** the Executive Officer pursuing the ARIC chairs advice in not conducting an Internal Audit in 2024/2025 FY, per an exemption provided in the regulations.

Moved: Murrumbidgee / Seconded: Berrigan
Carried

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7.4 Tabling of Draft Policies - Round Two

Attachment H was tabled and notes three (3) policies for the Boards endorsement and adoption, which have been reviewed by the GMAC. Going forward, more required policies that will help ensure RAMJO's overall compliance will be developed and shared with the GMAC for their review and input, prior to a request for adoption by the RAMJO board.

Round two of required policies are as follows, and are intended to:

1. *Credit Card Use Policy:* Provide a clear framework to enable the appropriate use of corporate credit cards issued to RAMJO staff, and where relevant and appropriately approved, other parties such as selected sub-contractors.
2. *Budgeting, Financial Reporting and Purchasing Policy:* Set out the approved guidelines for purchasing, budgeting and financial reporting by RAMJO staff.
3. *Privacy Management Plan:* The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA) provides for the protection of personal information and for the protection of the privacy of individuals. Section 33 of the PPIPA requires all councils to prepare a Privacy Management Plan. This plan has been prepared for the purpose of ensuring compliance under section 33 of the PIPPA.

Action Item: Update of the Credit Card Use Policy as instructed and per below:

Page 1, section 4 (a)

Credit Limits

Corporate credit cards will have a limit determined by the Executive Officer *and agreed to by the RAMJO Board*.

Page 2, Section 6 (d)

Credit Card Holder Responsibility

Lost or stolen cards to be cancelled immediately and reported the RAMJO Finance Manager, *Executive Officer and RAMJO Chair*.

Recommendation: That the Board **endorse** and **adopt** the second round of proposed RAMJO policies and plans.

Moved: Carrathool / **Seconded:** Murrumbidgee

Carried

Cr. Kylie King and Frank Zaknich of AlburyCity left the meeting following a declaration of non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item.

7.5 Lease Renewal for RAMJO Office

Attachment I was tabled and noted provides further information on RAMJO's current office lease agreement with AlburyCity.

Recommendation: That the Board **endorse** the execution of clause 7 of the current lease agreement, accepting the option to renew the lease for a further two (2) years, with the cost subject to a current market review by AlburyCity.

Moved: Murrumbidgee / **Seconded:** Narrandera

Carried

Kylie King and Frank Zaknich of AlburyCity rejoined the meeting.

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7.6 Draft Minutes – General Managers Advisory Committee Meeting – 19 April 2024

Attachment J was tabled and notes the meeting minutes from the GMAC meeting held 19 April 2024.

Recommendation: That the Board **note** the draft minutes from General Managers Advisory Committee Meeting held 19 April.

Moved: Edward River / Seconded: Griffith
Carried

AGENDA ITEM 8 – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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

Attachment K was tabled and notes progress made and the current position of RAMJO's sub-committees, which directly link to RAMJO's *Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities*.

The Executive Officer gave a verbal update on the status of sub-committees and working groups.

Recommendation: at the Board **note** the update provided on RAMJO sub-committees and working groups.

Moved: Hay / Seconded: Murray River
Carried

8.2 Digital Connectivity Project

Attachment L was tabled and shares preliminary ideas and developments had on a proposed major Digital Connectivity project, aiming to leverage off-of programs aimed at mitigating and managing anticipated negative socio-economic impacts as a result of voluntary water buy-back purchases. The attachment also includes a draft advocacy position paper between the Murray River Group of Councils, Berrigan Shire and Murray River Shire councils around the *Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Act 2024*.

Karina Ewer gave a verbal update on the status of the Digital Connect Project and further to the tabled written report.

Recommendation: That the Board take **note** of and **endorse** the pursual of preliminary project scoping for a major Digital Connectivity project, funded fully or in part by proposed *Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023* programs, aimed at mitigating and managing anticipated negative socio-economic impacts, as a result of voluntary water buy-back purchases.

Moved: Berrigan / Seconded: Leeton
Carried

AGENDA ITEM 9 – OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE

9.1 Ms. Louise Taylor gave an update on behalf of Mr. Cameron Templeton, Council Engagement Manager - Riverina and Far South-West on the work of the Office of Local Government.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – REGIONAL NSW UPDATE

10.1 Mr Giles Butler Director - Riverina Murray, Regional Development provided an update on the work of the Department of Regional NSW.

Recommendation: That the Board **note** the briefing from the Office of Local Government and the Dept. of Regional NSW.

Moved: Murrumbidgee / Seconded: Albury
Carried

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AGENDA ITEM 11 – PROJECT UPDATES

11.1 Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA)

Attachment M was tabled and provides an update on the current status of the JONZA project, which is also the vehicle for advancing RAMJO's broader Energy Security and Affordability priorities.

The Executive Officer gave a verbal update on the JONZA project and the Energy Security and Affordability priorities.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the board **note** this report.
- **Endorse** RAMJO applying for the second round of funding from JONZA program; and
- **Endorse** a review and update of the RAMJO Regional Energy Strategic Plan to ensure alignment with JONZA 2.0.

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Narrandera

Carried

11.2 Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) Project

Attachment N provides an update on the current position of the DRRF project.

11.3 Regional Resource Recovery Projects

Attachment O provides an update on the current position of the Regional Resource Recovery Projects, run by AlburyCity's Regional Resource Recovery team.

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

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Griffith

Carried

AGENDA ITEM 12 – ADVOCACY

12.1 Updated primary water position paper

Attachment P was tabled and notes the final, updated version of the primary water position paper, seeking the boards endorsement to adopt the paper, including recent amendments to the Executive Summary and inclusion of point 3e, per tracked changes.

The Executive Officer verbally updated the board on the outcome of the previous days' Water Committee meeting.

Recommendation: That the board **endorse** and **adopt** the updated position paper, aiding RAMJO's advocacy pursuits in this space.

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Narrandera

Carried

12.2 Live advocacy document – Up-to-date water priorities paper

Attachment Q was tabled and notes the most up-to-date water priorities paper, reflecting advocacy priorities around the Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Act 2023 and water buy-backs.

Cr. Julia Cornwell-McKean stated that Berrigan Council categorically rejects water buy-backs and requests were made to ensure that Berrigan Councils position was appropriately reflected within RAMJO advocacy material.

Recommendation: That the board **note** the most recent and up-to-date, water priorities paper.

Moved: Leeton / Seconded: Narrandera

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Carried

AGENDA ITEM 13 – GENERAL BUSINESS

A call for General Business items will be made by the Chair.

13.1 Murray Regional Tourism – Board Vacancy

As at 13 May, no nominations have been received by RAMJO representative to sit on the Murray Regional Tourism Board. RAMJO will continue to liaise with the MRT Board to seek a member.

MEETING CLOSE

The meeting closed at 12.30pm