



MINUTES OF THE BORDER REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS MEETING HELD AT THE TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 247 ROUSE STREET, TENTERFIELD (TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL) ON FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 9.30AM (LOCAL TIME).

Attendees:

Balonne Shire Council	Cr Samantha O'Toole
	Matt Magin
Bourke Shire Council	Cr Barry Holman
	Leonie Brown
Brewarrina Shire Council	Cr Vivian Slack-Smith *
	David Kirby *
Bulloo Shire Council	Donna Hobbs *
Goondiwindi Regional Council	Cr Rob McKenzie
Gwydir Shire Council	Cr John Coulton
	Cr David Coulton
Inverell Shire Council	Cr Kate Dight (Chairperson)
	Sharon Stafford
Moree Plains Shire Council	Cr Lisa Orchin
	Kelvin Tytherleigh
Paroo Shire Council	Cr Suzette Beresford
	Tony Koch
Southern Downs Regional Council	Cr Vic Pennisi
	Cr Andrew Gale
	Dave Burges
Tenterfield Shire Council	Cr Bronwyn Petrie
	Cr John Macnish
	Glenn Wilcox

Also in Attendance:

QLD Police Service	Chris Mitchell
Member for Warrego	Hon Ann Leahy MP *
Cross Border Commission	Kalina Koloff *
	Kellie Urquardt *
RDA Darling Downs/South West QLD	Robyn Haig
RDA Northern Inland NSW	Nathan Axelsson *
LGNSW	Cr Darriea Turley *
	David Reynolds *
LGAQ	Sarah Vogler *
ARTC	Jo Tait *
ARTC / Inland Rail	Naomi Tonscheck *
Department Transport QLD	Peter Trim *
Telstra	Scott Mullally
	Ian George
NHVR NSW	Bethany Magill *
NHVR QLD	Jose Arredondo *
	Angela Slagter *
	Cristian Pardo *

Regional NSW
The Real Time Initiative
SWQROC

Tegan Hinchey-Gerard *
Graeme Brittenden
Simone Talbot *

* denotes attendance via Zoom

1 MEETING OPEN

2 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY & WELCOME

Cr Bronwyn Petrie, Mayor, Tenterfield Shire Council performed an Acknowledgement of Country and extended a warm welcome to delegates and invited guests.

3 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi Regional/Balonne) that the following apologies be accepted:

<i>Bulloo Shire Council</i>	<i>Cr Tractor Ferguson</i>
<i>Goondiwindi Regional Council</i>	<i>Cr Lawrence Springborg & Carl Manton</i>
<i>Walgett Shire Council</i>	<i>Megan Dixon</i>
<i>Paroo Shire Council</i>	<i>Cassandra White</i>
<i>Moree Plains</i>	<i>Cr Mark Johnson</i>
<i>Member for Northern Tablelands</i>	<i>Hon Adam Marshall MP</i>
<i>RDANI</i>	<i>Russell Stewart</i>
<i>Member for Lismore</i>	<i>Hon Janelle Saffin MP</i>
<i>QLD Dept Premier & Cabinet</i>	<i>Matthew Gregg</i>

CARRIED

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MEETING MINUTES – 19 MAY 2023

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi Regional/Paroo) that the minutes of the Border Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held in Cunnamulla (Paroo Shire Council) on 11 August, 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.

CARRIED

5 GUEST SPEAKER

Graeme Brittenden, The Real Time Initiative (RTI)

- The Real Time Initiative advocates for 3 time zones across Australia all year.
- Currently during the summer months, there are 5 time zones because NSW, VIC & TAS go into Day light saving time, moving clocks forward by 1 hour.
- Graeme’s proposal puts a stop to Day light saving time for the southern states and instead advocates to move clocks in all eastern states and SA, forward by half an hour, on a permanent basis.

- This would mean huge savings for all economic activity which is disrupted by the time difference between NSW & QLD.
- Steve Toms who was the first Cross Border Commissioner, was a strong supporter of the proposal
- See presentation attached.

RESOLVED (Goondiwindi Regional/Balonne) that delegates canvass their respective Councils regarding the initiative to 'fix the time' and provide feedback at the next BROC meeting.

6 CROSS BORDER COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Kalina Koloff – Acting NSW Cross Border Commissioner

- Kalina is the new Acting Commissioner in this role and is based in the ACT. She has many years of experience with Local Government and has worked with Joint Organisations of Councils. The Commission has been under review with the change in NSW government and cost saving measures have been implemented. However, the organisation still has 15 full-time ongoing staff and is very active in tackling cross border issues.
- The MOU between NSW & QLD has been reviewed and updated and there is refreshed collaboration between the states to develop a strong framework with a work plan and other initiatives. A part of that is the implementation of the QLD Cross Border Commissioner which has progressed. Announcements for this are imminent and Kalina welcomes any appointment if it was to be made.
- The NSW Minister of Health Advisory Panel has held an enquiry into rural health and access to services with a number of outcomes that are being assessed. There is now a much skinnier budget with many changes and advocacy here is required.
- The second round of The Commission Infrastructure Fund has been scrapped following the strategic review. However, the Government is implementing a Trust Fund to the value of \$350M to support regional areas and investment. Cross border projects are likely to be eligible for investment from this Trust.
- The Commission is now working much closer with Service NSW and is requiring them to ask the 'border questions'. It is asking that the agencies, such as Service NSW, think strategically in their functionality and consideration of these communities.

7 STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR BROC

7.1 BROC STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS (SPA) FOCUS GROUP UPDATES

There are four (4) areas of strategic priority for BROC and all member Councils have 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 Strategic Priority Areas (SPA)

1) Economic Development & Industry – Inverell

a. Industry – DAMA Agreements (Balonne)

- Existing DAMA (Designated Area Migration Agreements) prioritise health and education. The 30 day visas have accredited status. There are 3 visa categories; 494 skilled workers, 482 temporary skilled workers and the 186 employee nominated scheme. They target areas such as truck drivers, childcare, tourism, abattoir labour. But there is some

flexibility with these employee types. The minimum wage for skilled migrant workers is \$70K.

- The advice is to wait before establishing new DAMAs. A new business case has not been built as yet to establish a new DAMA and therefore the cost to Councils is unknown. However, it will be a minimum \$30K which can be shared equally or solely with industry.

b. Tourism (Paroo)

- The western BROC Councils are particularly interested in a Border Tourist Trail. Tenterfield has already completed a tourist trail project in conjunction with Southern Downs which could be capitalised on to take further west and incorporate the border Council areas. Paroo Shire asked for interest for this 'Summit to Big Sky' proposal and all member Councils indicated this was worth pursuing. Paroo will initiate this with the respective Council Tourism officers and report back at the next meeting.

c. Connectivity (Goondiwindi) – Telstra; Ian George (NSW) & Scott Mullaly (QLD)

- The 3G network is being turned off in June 2024 and is being replaced with the 4G network. Telstra is committed to providing a 4G equivalent network and is working very hard to ensure this happens. They are wanting to hear from all communities across Councils for feedback and on-ground intelligence as to where the connectivity problematic areas will be.
- The growth in data demand has been extraordinary, up 30%/year. The network is congested and the 5G network capabilities is much better for data transmission. The intention is to provide the 850mhz spectrum band width of the 5G network to the 4G network.
- Backhaul data transmission is being reviewed because it has capabilities that can be made more efficient, enabling the 5G network to have better functionality. The use of low orbit satellites for backhaul can allow more capacity on the tower network and could be a game changer for Telstra.
- To deliver this connectivity, Telstra are needing to partner with other telecommunication operators such as Starlink and WaveConn and we will see packages roll out with Telstra branding but with these partner organisation mechanics.
- Areas are broken into clusters and each cluster will need to be signed off for transmission equivalence. This requires detailed feedback to Telstra and they are reaching out to Councils to facilitate this. They are asking to partner with Councils to develop connectivity area plans. They need the number, name, location and time of the transmission. Users of Eftpos machines need to check their machine compatibility. Yagi antennas can either be 3G or 4G – if the bars are standard length they are 3G and if different lengths, they are 4G. All this information needs to be fed back to Telstra so that connectivity is the absolute priority.
- Presentation is attached.

2) Liveability – Moree Plains

a. Housing (GRC)

- Goondiwindi Regional Council is developing multi-dwelling proposals. There are new development areas being opened and they are waiting to see the uptake of these new blocks.

- All Councils are looking for housing opportunities. Empty houses could be better utilised and incentives to do this are being explored.

b. Health (Tenterfield)

- NSW Health has a funding commitment to safer staffing levels and it is hoped that this will impact local health areas and the staffing of hospitals.

c. Policing / Crime Prevention (GRC & Moree)

- Danny Lester was unable to attend but this topic was discussed at length at the meeting in Moree on the 9th Nov 2023. The presentation from Red Earth on Agency Service Providers commissioned by Moree Plains Shire Council was particularly thought provoking and MPSC has agreed to ask Red Earth to deliver these findings to the next meeting of BROCC in Brewarrina.
- The prospects of a judicial bubble for crime and policing was brought up with the Commissioner and it was asked that this item be included in any high-level strategic MOU discussion with QLD.
- While crime statistics have improved for the GRC & MPSC regions, over the October long weekend there was a terrible wave of incidents involving 10 offenders. All of these individuals have been caught and the Police need to be commended for their actions. Very encouragingly, the judiciary system is supporting the Police and delivering outcomes that is hindering further crime incidents. Consequently, these matters have most recently improved significantly.

3) Infrastructure – Gwydir

a. Road Network (Gwydir)

- The NHVR Bethany Magil & Cristian Pardo were on Zoom to respond to road network items. They are aware they need to renew & develop new notices for cross border logistics, ie, they need truck combinations to suit both state requirements.
- There is a safety & productivity focus for NHVR and there is opportunity for industry to contribute to the investigation and provide insights for cross border issues.
- Gwydir will detail the road network issues and forward to NHVR for the next meeting so they can respond.

b. Transport (Southern Downs)

- Nil

c. Water (Balonne & Inverell)

- The MDA meeting was in early November and encouragingly Region 11 which covers Northern NSW has welcomed Inverell, Armidale, Moree & Gwydir as new members. This strengthens the advocacy of Region 11. As well, the national MDA conference for 2024 has been awarded to Tamworth in July. This gives an opportunity to BROCC to collaborate with MDA and promote issues of shared

relevance. BROC will consider how to contribute to the conference for the next meeting.

- Balonne is a part of region 12 of the MDA and is particularly concerned for the changes in legislation being considered by the Federal Government. The 'Restoring the Rivers Bill' is expected to pass through the Senate in Dec 2023 which will mean 450GL water will be legislated to be reclaimed from the productive pool of the Murray Darling Basin for environmental benefits. Balonne experienced huge economic impacts after the last round of water buybacks which is why there is great concern for the impacts of this next round. Both the Mayor of Balonne and Gunnedah attended the Senate Estimates Inquiry and felt very despondent with the relevant ministers leaving the room during their presentation. Particularly concerning for Balonne was the notification that the myriad of water saving projects proposed by their region, were knocked back by the review meaning that water will have to be recovered from their productive pool. Balonne will come back to BROC with some suggestions as to how BROC can assist to advocate for water policy change and understanding. Ensuring the water is available for critical human needs is a priority.

4) Disaster Management – Balonne

a. Agency Co-ordination (Balonne)

- Mr Chris Mitchell promoted another cross border disaster management exercise for 2024.
- The LEMO and REMO groups need to provide better ways to share data and information and there needs to be improved mapping for cross border regions so that disaster management can function more effectively.

b. Bio-security (Balonne)

- There are a number of biosecurity threats that need greater investigation particularly fire ants and the wild dog barrier fence.
- These 2 issues will be brought back to the next meeting and the environmental officers for Biosecurity from both QLD & NSW will be invited to address BROC at a future meeting and assess these issues in depth.

8 AGENCY UPDATES

LG NSW – Darriea Turley, President and David Reynolds, Chief Executive

- The annual conference is in November and we are all looking forward to it.
- There are constant challenges with rate pegging in NSW which QLD LG is not subject to. In NSW the percentage with which Councils can increase their rates is capped and is making it very difficult for Councils to cover the huge increases in operation costs that they are experiencing.
- Cost shifting from the State Government to Local Government is constant and is something we are always pushing back on.
- The Country Mayors Association is working very hard to address the high rates of crime being experienced in regional and rural communities and have a motion for debate at the annual conference.

- Health issues are a top priority. Independent MP Dr Joe McGirr is chairing the inquiry into NSW Health and how they can deliver health services to the regions better. There have been some excellent submissions received and Councils are commended for their efforts in responding.
- Housing opportunities are always being assessed.
- Alternatives to fund the road network is always strongly advocated for.
- The ownership of water assets has been on the table but Minister Rose Jackson has stated that these will remain in the hands of local government.

Jo Tait and Naomi Tonscheck, Inland Rail

- The review has been completed and Inland Rail has new board members.
- South of Parkes has been prioritised and is due for completion.
- North of Parkes is at the approvals stage and acquisitions are in the final stages.
- North Star to the Border has some approvals however remains unfunded.
- North of this into QLD is still having environmental analysis being completed and has not progressed.

Robyn Haig – RDA DDSW

- The Regional Partnership Fund worth \$500K-\$5M is a new funding source available for projects.
- Delivery is for projects between \$5M-\$50M and projects that reach beyond their own local government areas and collaborations will be prioritised. Balonne brought the funding of aerodromes to attention and asked for this to be addressed. Renewable energy projects are applicable and GRC are investigating this.

Nathan Axleson – RDANI NSW

- There has been a change with how the NSW government works with the RDA. The fast tracking of 491 visa applications used to be in the hands of the RDA but has been taken back by the Dept of Immigration and are being done in-house.
- The numbers of skilled migration has been shrunk considerably. There used to be 5,000-6,000 skilled migrants entering Australia and this is now 1000 mainly because the processing system is so slow and cumbersome.
- RDA has done its own DAMA and has been bringing in migrants via this channel successfully.
- They are currently working on a blackspot and mobile report for government.

Ann Leahy MP – QLD Shadow Minister

- QLD fortunately doesn't have rate capping.
- Voting data bases are not up to scratch and need to be assessed.
- The Councillor complaints system has been under investigation and has been improved.
- The community of Tara has been decimated by fire and lost 50 homes. This has had a huge impact on community and her offices are trying to address this and provide support where possible. The Reconstruction Authority is working very well.
- The spread of Fire Ants is a risk to biosecurity and needs to be addressed. BROCC has agreed to investigate.

9 CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 INWARDS

- ARTC Inland Rail – acknowledgment letter re Narrabri to North Star (N2NS) Project
- Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm – Mungindi Community Preschool

- Bank Statements and Fixed Term Certificate – National Australia Bank & Warwick Credit Union

9.2 OUTWARDS

- LGAQ – Extending Standing Invitation to address BROC meetings
- LGNSW - Extending Standing Invitation to address BROC meetings
- Cross Border Commissioner – Extending Standing Invitation for alternate officer to address BROC meetings
- Minister Home Affairs – Support for DAMA Agreements
- The Hon Grace MP – Occupational Licenses (request to sign National Agreement)
- The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government – Inland Rail (Completion of the Narrabri to North Star Project – Section 2C of N2NS Phase 1 and N2NS Phase 2)

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

CARRIED

9.3 MATTERS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE

Nil.

10 FINANCIAL REPORT

10.1 TRANSACTIONS

National Australia Bank – 69-022-2187

Opening Balance as at 12 July 2023	\$20,954.38
Interest	\$0.52
23/24 Membership – Bourke Shire Council	\$500.00
Balance as at 11 July 2023	\$21,454.90

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

Reinvested 22 April 2023 for 12 months @ 3.75%	\$ 11,559.83
Maturity Date – 22 April 2024	

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

CARRIED

10.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL REPORT

Nil.

Draft Memorandum of Agreement

At this juncture, the time being 1.30pm the Chairperson invited Simone Talbot, SWROC to address BROC on a draft Memorandum of Agreement that encompasses all BROC Councils.

Ms Talbot advised that this draft document seeks to strengthen the collaboration that already exists. It summarises short term priorities and outlines a number of activities to progress.

Cr Dight thanked Simone for preparing the draft agreement.

11 ITEMS LISTED

11.1 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNING

RESOLVED (Moree Plains/Goondiwindi Regional) that:

i) *BROC note the signing of Memorandums of Understanding at today’s meeting between the following Councils:*

- *Bourke Shire Council & Paroo Shire Council; and*
- *Paroo Shire Council & Brewarrina Shire Council.*

i) *BROC note that Memorandums of Understanding were signed prior to today’s meeting between the following Councils:*

- *Balonne Shire Council & Brewarrina Shire Council; and*
- *Moree Plains Shire Council & Goondiwindi Regional Council.*

CARRIED

11.2 BROC CONSTITUTION / TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED (Moree Plains/Goondiwindi Regional) that the BROC Constitution be amended as follows:

i) *Clause 3*

Strategic Priority Areas (SPA) - the Strategic Priority Areas for the organisation include:

Strategic Priority Area		Encompassing
1	<i>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM</i>	<i>Industry</i>
		<i>Digital Connectivity</i>
		<i>Tourism</i>
2	<i>LIVEABILITY</i>	<i>Health</i>
		<i>Housing</i>
		<i>Education</i>

		<i>Policing / Crime Prevention</i>
3	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	<i>Road Network</i>
		<i>Transport</i>
		<i>Water Security, Urban & Waste Water</i>
4	<i>DISASTER MANAGEMENT</i>	<i>Agency Coordination</i>
		<i>Biosecurity</i>

ii) *Clause 5*

Members

Membership of the organisation be amended to include Bourke Shire Council as a member council.

CARRIED

12 ACTION ITEM LOG

RESOLVED (Moree Plains/Goondiwindi Regional) that:

- i) the Action Item Log be received and noted: and*
- ii) the following items be removed from the Action Log:*
 - i) Memorandums of Understanding*
 - ii) Telstra Invitation to Address BROCC*
 - iii) Transport Networks – Invitation for NHVR to Address BROCC*
 - iv) Telecommunications Connectivity – Invitation for Telstra/Field Solutions to Address BROCC*
 - v) Strategic Priority Areas – Amendment to Constitution*
 - vi) LGAQ/LGNSW/Cross Border Commissioner*

CARRIED

15 NEXT MEETING

Cr Dight thanked Tenterfield Shire Council for hosting this meeting and confirmed that the next Ordinary meeting will be held in Brewarrina (hosted by Brewarrina Shire Council) on Friday 9 February, 2024 commencing at 9am local time.

16 MEETING CLOSED

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.50pm.