



## **BORDER REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS MEETING MINUTES**

### **1. MEETING DETAILS**

**Meeting Title:** Border Regional Organisation of Councils Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 13 February 2026

**Time:** 9.00am

**Location:** Tenterfield Shire Council Koreelah Room - 247 Rouse Street, Tenterfield

**Meeting Chairperson:** Councillor Rob Mackenzie, Goondiwindi Regional Council

**Minutes Prepared by:** Sharon Stafford, Inverell Shire Council

**Welcome by:** Councillor Bronwyn Petrie, Mayor, Tenterfield Shire Council

#### **Attendance**

#### **Attendees:**

\*Attended via Teams

|                                 |                                           |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Balonne Shire Council           | Cr Sam O'Toole<br>Cr Michaela Christensen |
| Bourke Shire Council            | -                                         |
| Brewarrina Shire Council        | Cr Tommy Stanton<br>David Kirby           |
| Bulloo Shire Council            | Donna Hobbs*                              |
| Goondiwindi Regional Council    | Cr Rob Mackenzie (Chairperson)            |
| Gwydir Shire Council            | Cr Tiffany Galvin<br>Cr Sean Coleman      |
| Inverell Shire Council          | Cr Kate Dight<br>Sharon Stafford          |
| Moree Plains Shire Council      | Cr Peter Mailler                          |
| Paroo Shire Council             | Cr Suzette Beresford                      |
| Southern Downs Regional Council | Cr Sheryl Windle*                         |
| Tenterfield Shire Council       | Cr Bronwyn Petrie<br>Cr Greg Sauer        |
| Walgett Shire Council           | Donna Ausling*                            |

#### **Also in Attendance:**

|                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Qld Cross Border Commissioner | Bob Gee       |
| NSW Cross Border Commissioner | Kalina Koloff |



|                                                           |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Regional Development Australia                            | Robyn Haig      |
| NSW Reconstruction Authority                              | Mitchell Parker |
| Queensland Fire Department – Rural Fire Service           | Chris Mitchell  |
| Queensland Fire Department                                | Jason Lawler    |
| Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers, QLD | Katelyn Burey*  |
| NSW Premiers Department                                   | Sarah Barton*   |

### Apologies:

|                                                                                                 |                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Balonne Shire Council                                                                           | Michelle Clarke                      |
| Bourke Shire Council                                                                            | Cr Lachlan Ford<br>Leonie Brown      |
| Moree Plains Shire Council                                                                      | Cr Susannah Pearse<br>Natalia Cowley |
| Paroo Shire Council                                                                             | Martin Leech                         |
| Southern Downs Regional Council                                                                 | Cr Melissa Hamilton                  |
| Walgett Shire Council                                                                           | Cr Jasen Ramien                      |
| Northern Tablelands Electorate Office                                                           | Brendan Moylan MP                    |
| Southern Downs Electorate Office                                                                | James Lister MP                      |
| Member for Lismore                                                                              | Janelle Saffin MP                    |
| Northern Tablelands Local Land Services                                                         | Paul Hutchins                        |
| Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers | Hon. Ann Leahy MP                    |
| Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development     | Cassandra White                      |
| Queensland Department of Primary Industries                                                     | Astrid Hughes                        |
| Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development     | Wanita Judge                         |
| NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES)                                                           | Craig Ronan                          |
| Inland Rail                                                                                     | Naomi Tonscheck                      |

Moved: *Cr Kate Dight*

Seconded: *Cr Tiffany Galvin*

*That the meeting apologies be accepted*

*Carried*



### Condolence:

Cr Mackenzie acknowledged the passing of Ian Leavers APM, the inaugural Queensland Cross-Border Commissioner. A minute of silence was held in his honour.

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Border Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on Friday 10 October 2025 in Moree (hosted by Moree Plains Shire Council).

*That the minutes of the Border Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on 10 October 2025 as circulated to members, be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting, with the following exceptions:*

- *Delegates were welcomed by Councillor Susannah Pearce, Mayor, Moree Plains Shire Council.*
- *Cr Michaela Christensen, Balonne Shire Council and Natalia Cowley, Moree Plains Shire Council had been omitted from the list of attendees at the meeting.*

Moved: Cr Peter Mailler

Seconded: Cr Sam O'Toole

Carried

## 3. FINANCIAL REPORT

### National Australia Bank Business Account

|                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Balance as at 29 January 2026 | \$7.21 |
|-------------------------------|--------|

### National Australia Bank Savings Account

|                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Balance as at 29 January 2026 | \$25,499.29 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|

### National Australia Bank – Term Deposit 42-388-8697

|                                                   |             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Rolled over 27 December 2026 for 12 months @ 4.1% | \$12,056.28 |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|

### Warwick Credit Union – Fixed Term Deposit 100005924

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Matures on 22 April 2026 @ 4.25% |             |
| Balance as at 31 December 2025   | \$12,510.27 |

Moved: Cr Kate Dight

Seconded: Cr Sean Coleman

That:

4. i) That: the Financial Report be accepted; and
- ii) the Fixed Term Deposits be rationalised into one institution on maturity.

Carried



Update from Balonne Shire Council - The border bubble was suggested at the exercise completed in Inverell on Disaster Management to allow emergency services and disaster management response across borders. The Roma District Disaster Group is planning a border exercise on evacuation of a cross border community in September 2026 that will further identify and test the systems / gaps we have. Cr O'Toole to circulate further information to member Councils.

Wild Dog Management sub-committee - Led by Bourke Shire Council. Letter received from Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development advising that due to escalating costs and declining benefits, the NSW Government will not extend the current NSW Border Wild Dog Fence along the QLD border as was initially proposed through the NSW Wild Dog Fence Extension Project, and the project has been closed. It was noted that Cr Lachlan Ford, Bourke Shire Council is currently preparing a response in relation to the matter.

## **5. CROSS BORDER UPDATES**

### **Kalina Koloff NSW Cross-Border Commissioner Update:**

- New South Wales Commissioner reported structural changes, greater alignment with the Premier's Department, and formal MOUs now signed with all neighbouring states.
- Emphasis on mutual recognition of skills, qualifications, and addressing issues with dispensing prescriptions and sharing of electronic health records.
- Ongoing work on integrated transport plans that include cross-border considerations, and an invitation for councils to participate in consultations.
- Issues raised around vehicle inspection logistics for border residents and lack of reciprocal recognition for heavy vehicle inspections.
- Update on progress and ongoing barriers in mutual recognition frameworks for trades and professional licensing between states.
- New protocols developing for sport/youth volunteering and voucher usage across borders, with successful workarounds in place but staff turnover sometimes causing confusion.

### **Mr Bob Gee APM, Queensland Cross Border Commissioner Update:**

- Recognition of previous advocacy efforts and optimism for further progress.
- Commitment to projects addressing mutual recognition of skills, particularly in construction, with intentions to scale to other sectors.
- Focus on embedding cross-border issues in both state and national disaster management doctrine.
- Interest in initiating biosecurity and multi-threat exercises, with willingness to involve national-level biosecurity officials.
- Support for direct problem-solving and maintaining open lines of communication.
- **Health and community Issues** - Ongoing problems for residents accessing health and ambulance services across borders, especially for oncology and palliative patients.
- Challenges with ambulance transport and restrictions on carrying certain medications and patients across state lines.
- State-based nuances around allied health record access - progressing toward more unified electronic health records, but some barriers remain.
- Updates to youth sport voucher arrangements and the need for mutual policy adoption across states.
- **Crime and Policing** - Queensland reported a significant drop in border region crime following recent law changes and funding increases but acknowledged persistent challenges and the need for continued focus.
- Discussion of special constable arrangements and the need for a register and improved induction processes for those assigned to border areas.



- Highlighted the complexity of judicial harmonisation and legislative reforms, advocating short-term focus on increased police resources in border communities.
- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DFRA) Funding – Cr Mackenzie to recirculate options report for a BROCC Executive Officer to all councils and Cross Border Commissioners.

Moved: Cr Sam O'Toole

Seconded: Cr Bronwyn Petrie

*That BROC send a letter to police ministers highlighting the need for better police resourcing and streamlined appointment processes for vacancies in small communities.*

Carried

## 6. STREAMLINE COMMUNICATIONS LIST

Communications list discussed. Emphasis on streamlining meetings and allowing flexibility in attendance for members who may not have significant updates, while encouraging key roles, cross-border commissioners, disaster management, Inland Rail and RDA to attend regularly.

## 7. AGENCY UPDATES

**a) Robyn Haig, RDA Darling Down and South West**

- Discussion on challenges and learnings from the Local Jobs Program, particularly around ID access for job seekers in cross-border communities (eg, Goondiwindi, St George).
- Difficulties for residents in acquiring documents like birth certificates, tax file numbers, and licenses, impacting employment and schooling.
- Services NSW praised for their mobile van approach, contrasting with Queensland's more complex, multi-agency model via QGAP offices.
- Noted barriers to accessing services located in courthouses, which some community members avoid.
- Interest in Queensland developing a services model similar to Services NSW; potential for shared learnings and joint events.
- Need for ongoing dialogue between QLD and NSW agencies and Cross Border Commissioners for smoother cross-border service delivery.

b) **Disaster Management Update – Mitchell Parker NSW Reconstruction Authority, Chris Mitchell and Jason Lawler Queensland Fire Department**

- Update on cross-border emergency exercise planned for September, focusing on full evacuation and collaboration between Queensland and New South Wales agencies. An invitation will be extended to all BROCC delegates to the exercise being held in St George 1/2 September 2026.
- Call for feedback loops to ensure lessons from previous exercises (e.g., St. George, Inverell floods) are tracked and acted upon.
- Discussion on maintaining cross-border relationships and capturing institutional knowledge despite staff turnover.
- Evaluation from St George Disaster Exercise could be fed into BROCC Biohazard/Border Restriction Exercise proposed for 2027.
- Advocacy for disaster management representation at all meetings.



- Discussion on the AUSALERT disaster alert system, with concerns about the lack of a cross-border test site and agreement to lobby for one.
- Explanation of differences between state and national alerting systems, and the need for consistent cross-border communication, especially as the national system comes online.

### 8. STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA FOR BROC (SPA)

#### SPA 1 – Economic Development and Tourism – Inverell Shire Council

##### Industry/Renewable – Southern Downs

- Ongoing efforts to attract industry, focus on affordable housing projects, and newly adopted renewable energy community benefit policy.
- Wind farm development: historic lack of local government input; potential new developments discussed.
- Water access remains a constraint for industrial growth, pipeline from Toowoomba still in negotiation.

##### Digital Connectivity – Goondiwindi

- Widespread frustration with Telstra after 3G shutdown; 4G coverage is inadequate and boosters ineffective.
- Many rural communities resorting to Starlink for internet, with concern about affordability and equitable access.
- Suggestion to push for federal subsidies for satellite internet and for motions at ALGA to address rural connectivity issues.
- Discussion of mobile blackspots, inability to contact 000 during outages, and lack of reliable backup solutions.

Moved: Cr Kate Dight

Seconded: Cr Tiffany Galvin

##### Motion for the 2026 National General Assembly

*“The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to subsidise satellite data service networks for rural and remote communities to enable telecommunications connectivity.”*

Carried

##### Tourism – Paroo/Tenterfield

- Cr Suzette Beresford – **Tourism report tabled;**
- Tourism Officers asked to reply re Priorities for 2026;
- Outback Queensland Tourism Association launching post-disaster campaign ‘Outback is Open’;
- Identified need for more cohesive online presence for local drive routes (Cellar Doors to Sunsets).
- New mountain bike trails and tourism infrastructure opening in Tenterfield, with cross-border tourism collaboration opportunities. NSW Cross Border Commissioner advised of a mountain bike toolkit – Kalina offered to share this resource.





Moved: Cr Suzette Beresford

Seconded: Cr Kate Dight

That:

- i) the Cellar Doors to Sunsets border tourist drive route feature on the BROC website;
- ii) the Cellar Doors to sunsets border tourist drive be listed on ATDW, and shared on regional and council Facebook pages/websites.

Carried

## SPA 2 –Liveability – Moree Plains Shire Council

### Health – Tenterfield

- Notable difference in ED service provision between Moree (NSW) and Goondiwindi (QLD), leading patients to cross the border for care.
- Interest in health hub kiosks for remote community health checks; questions about viability and existing use. Discussion highlighted difficulty in providing the services from a workforce perspective. Agreed not to pursue,

### Housing – Goondiwindi/Bulloo

- Goondiwindi Council supports innovative compact housing developments; Town planners have never been busier, however, developers need a 'sugar hit' with trunk infrastructure. Currently 116 lot development for low cost housing for \$600k turn key developments. Trunk infrastructure funding is facilitating new estates in Thargomindah and elsewhere. There is currently another round of HAFF funding open.
- Regional migration (DAMA) remains in flux; slow state response, with concerns about equitable zoning and effectiveness of state vs local DAMAs.
- Links below provided by Kate Burey, QLD Dept Local Government, Water and Volunteers re grant funding available

### Funding under the Housing Australia Future Fund

#### (QLD) Residential Activation Fund | State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

- Round 2 opening soon
- Announcements from July 2026

### Secure Communities Partnership Program – Local Council Small Business Grant Round 2

- Applications open on **Wednesday 18 February 2026** and close at **5pm, Tuesday 31 March 2026**.

### Education – Gwydir

- Noted issues with underutilised state-owned (Education Dept) housing stock needing repurposing.



### Policing/Crime – Goondiwindi/Moree

- Brief coverage of policing (noting Land Cruiser thefts).
- Moree Service Mapping Report to be shared with Balonne and Goondiwindi.

### **SPA 3 – Infrastructure - Gwydir Shire Council**

#### Road Network – Gwydir/Balonne

- Roads - infrastructure updates (major road sealing projects – \$7million Buckie Road Project in Gwydir for bitumen sealing is about to start)

#### Transport – Moree

- No update available on Qantas service.

#### Water Security, Urban and Wastewater – Inverell

- Water Wastewater - water security (Murray-Darling Basin Plan review and advocacy for submissions). Circulate and coordinate council responses to the Murray-Darling Plan review discussion paper. Agreed BROC would make a submission by the deadline, 1 May 2026.
- GRC building a hydrogen plant to extract the oxygen and put back into the waste facility.

### **SPA 4 – Disaster Management – Balonne Shire Council**

#### Agency Coordination – Balonne

Previously discussed.

#### Bio Security – Balonne

- Advocacy for disaster management representation at all meetings.
- Update on cross-border emergency exercise planned for September, focusing on full evacuation and collaboration between Queensland and New South Wales agencies.
- Discussion on the AUSALERT disaster alert system, with concerns about the lack of a cross-border test site and agreement to lobby for one.
- Explanation of differences between state and national alerting systems, and the need for consistent cross-border communication, especially as the national system comes online.

## **9. CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Inwards**

- Statement Summary's, Fixed Term Deposit - Warwick Credit Union
- Statement Summary – NAB
- Response to Wild Dog Fence Letter – Dr Peter Adams on behalf of The Hon Tara Moriarty, MLC
- Request for Sponsorship – Quick Shears – Shearer Shindig 2026 – Tourism Bulloo
- Request to meet re responding to unattended or trespassing stock on public and private land – Mr Rob Kelly Local Land Services (Dates of future meetings sent to Mr Kelly, awaiting response).



**Outwards**

- Nil

*That:*

- the inward and outward correspondence be received and noted;*
- it be noted that Bourke Shire Council will be responding in the first instance to the Wild Dog Fence letter;*
- the request for sponsorship be noted and the organisers be thanked for advising BROC of the event; and*
- the correspondence from Local Land Services re: Responding to unattended or trespassing stock on public and private land be forwarded to NSW Councils for their attention.*

Moved: Cr Kate Dight

Seconded: Cr Sean Coleman

Carried

*NB: Local Land Services letter is available on the BROC website attached to the 13 Feb 2026 Agenda*

**10. MATTERS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil

**11. ACTION ITEM LOG**

Water Buybacks – expressed need for all councils to be on board with water buybacks. Cr O'Toole to draft a further letter to go out under the hand of BROC.

Border Bubble/Exemption Letter – Cr Mackenzie to recirculate letter.

Moved: Cr Kate Dight

Seconded: Cr Tiffany Galvin

*That:*

- the report be received and noted; and*
- the following items be removed from the Action Item Log:*
  - Bushfire Management Group Letter*
  - Border Bubble /Exemptions Letter*
  - National Park Letter*

Carried

**12. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- Report - Cross Border Police Roundtable



- Ongoing issues navigating firearm and animal control laws across state borders. The National Firearms Register poses issues for border communities and the Commissioners will actively work to resolve state differences in this firearm legislation.

Moved: Cr Kate Dight

Seconded: Cr Tiffany Galvin

*That the report be received and noted.*

Carried

### 13. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of BROC will be held at Cunnamulla hosted by Paroo Shire Council on Friday, 10 April 2026 at 9.00am (local time).

### 14. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.11pm

**Councillor Rob Mackenzie**  
Chair