BORDER REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS MEETING MINUTES

1. MEETING DETAILS

Meeting Title: Border Regional Organisation of Councils Meeting Minutes

Date: 9 October 2026

Time: 9.00am

Location: Wallam/Mungallala Room, St George Cultural Centre

Meeting Chairperson: Councillor Rob Mackenzie, Goondiwindi Regional Council

Minutes Prepared by: Goondiwindi Regional Council

Attendance

Attendees: *Attended via Teams

Balonne Shire Council	Mayor Samantha O'Toole Cr Michaela Christensen Digby White Dave Burges
Goondiwindi Regional Council	Cr Rob Mackenzie Amanda Martin
Moree Plains Shire Council	Cr Peter Mailler
Inverell Shire Council	Mayor Kate Dight
Paroo Shire Council	Cr Suzette Beresford*
Southern Downs Regional Council	Cr Sheryl Windle
Bullo Shire Council	Donna Hobbs
Tenterfield Shire Council	Cr Greg Sauer*

Also in Attendance:

Qld Cross Border Commissioner	Bob Gee
Acting NSW Cross Border Commissioner	Karen Minto*
NSW Reconstruction Authority	Linda Whitworth
Regional Development Australia	Robyn Haig*
Toowoomba North Electorate Office	Trevor Watts MP*
LGAQ	Sarah Vogler

Apologies:

Northern Tablelands Electorate Office	Brendan Moylan MP
Bourke Shire Council	Leonie Brown
Gwydir Shire Council	Mayor Tiffany Galvin

Gwydir Shire Council	Cr Sean Coleman
Moree Plains Shire Council	Mayor Susannah Pearse
Moree Plains Shire Council	Ian Stoneman
Paroo Shire Council	Martin Leech
Walgett Shire Council	Mayor Jasen Ramien
Tenterfield Shire Council	Mayor Bronwyn Petrie
Bulloo Shire Council	Cr Stuart Moreton
Bourke Shire Council	Mayor Lachlan Ford
Inverell Shire Council	Brett McInnes

That the meeting apologies be accepted

Moved: *Cr Michaela Christenson*

Seconder**:** *Donna Hobbs*

Carried

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Border Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on Friday 24 July 2026 in Brewarrina (hosted by Brewarrina Shire Council) were distributed.

That the minutes of the Border Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on 24 July 2026 as circulated to members, be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.

Moved: *Cr Katie Dight*

Seconder: *Cr Pete Mailler*

Carried

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Nil

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

Balances period ending 30 September 2026

National Australia Bank Business Account

Opening balance: $7.21

Tfr from Savings Account: $782.82

Payment to Vanguard for auditing fees: $440

Payment to GRC for GoDaddy website fee reimbursement: $342.82

Closing balance: $7.21

National Australia Bank Savings Account

Opening balance: $40,833.23

Tfr to Business Account: $782.82

Interest: $41.87

Closing balance: $40,223.85

National Australia Bank – Term Deposit 42-388-8697

Matures 27 December 2026 - $12,056.28

Net position: $52,287.34

Moved:	*Amanda Martin*
Seconder:	*Cr Pete Mailler*
That, the Financial Report be accepted	
Carried	

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Inwards

- NEMA – Thank you for submission
- Update on the Joint Organisation Framework Review - Office of the Hon. Ron Hoenig, Leader of the House in the Legislative Assembly, Vice-President of the Executive Council, Minister for Local Government
- Audited Financial Statements – Vanguard Consulting
- Office of Cross Border Commissioner NSW – New Acting NSW Cross Border Commissioner Karen Minto
- Office of Cross Border Commissioner NSW – Possible deputation police representatives
- Walgett Shire Council – New logo
- Fabio Batista – TAFE Qld – possible deputation (via Mayor Suzette Beresford)
- DPHI NSW - LEP Making Guideline and Section 9.1 Ministerial Direction Information Sessions –

Frequently Asked Questions

Outwards

- DRFA video to LGAQ
- DRFA submission
- Financial Statements to Auditor

Matters arising from correspondence
Nil

Moved:	*Amanda Martin*
Seconder**:**	*Cr Dight*
The inward and outward correspondence be received and noted.	
Carried	

6. CROSS BORDER UPDATES

Karen Minto, acting NSW Cross Border Commissioner Update:

- Karen introduced herself as the new Acting NSW Cross Border Commissioner, emphasizing her 20-year background in state government and her focus on being a collaborator for border communities.
- Her team is currently engaged with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and working with Queensland colleagues on birth certificate accessibility to help young people access jobs and services.
- Work is also underway regarding ambulance cover for students on cross-border school excursions to address current coverage gaps.

Cr Kate Dight, Mayor of Inverell, questioned the stability of the commissioner's role within the Premier's Department. Karen stated the role is currently well-embedded and supported by senior executives, though she cannot predict future structural changes.

Bob Gee, Queensland Cross Border Commissioner update:

Bob presented his annual report, noting he has been in the role for seven months and is focused on achieving tangible results rather than just holding meetings.

- His recent activities included a joint fire exercise involving Stanthorpe and Tenterfield, as well as workshops with Job Skills Australia regarding tourism and licensing.
- Bob is working on refining triple-zero ambulance scripts to improve dispatch accuracy and trying to consolidate biosecurity forums into larger sessions to save farmers' time.
- Bob acknowledged the strong support from the LGAQ in facilitating cross-border initiatives.

- Bob discussed his work regarding fuel commissions, noting that fuel costs are a nationwide issue affecting farming, tourism, and general living costs in rural and regional areas.

7. Update Sarah Vogler – LGAQ

Sarah gave an update on how the campaign to restore Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements (DRFA) was progressing.

Rob praised Sarah and her team for their responsiveness and time management in handling council tasks.

8. Update – Robyn Haig - Regional Development Australia (RDA)

- Robyn Haig from the RDA reported that their jobs projects are working with Matt from Bob's office to address cross-border workforce issues.
- Phase one of the Future Drought Fund is currently focusing on early stress indicators and involving small and medium enterprises in preparedness planning.
- Phase two of the drought funding is expected to start early December, potentially offering quick response grants for community workshops and events like working dog clinics.
- Robyn mentioned that federal ministers claim they are not hearing enough from industry regarding skilled worker shortages, which the group found surprising given the level of local concern.

Modular Housing and Planning Regulations

- Robyn discussed regional workshops regarding modular and manufactured housing, noting that finance and production systems need to be better aligned.
- Karen and Robyn emphasized the need for cross-border collaboration to streamline planning regulations and provide more certainty for investors.

9. Deputation – Trevor Watts MP Member for Toowoomba North

Government Updates and Disaster Funding

- Trevor highlighted the importance of the recent $2.9 million award for enabling infrastructure for 100 homes in Goondiwindi and encouraged other communities to prepare for similar funding opportunities.

A major breakthrough was announced during the meeting via a message from Sarah and confirmation from Jim Chalmers that the federal government will maintain the 75/25 disaster funding split, a result credited to the collective pressure from regional councils.

- Bob noted that Trevor has a significant role reporting directly to the Premier regarding election commitments and manages a unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

10. Update – Linda Whitworth – NSW Reconstruction Authority

- Linda introduced herself and explained the recent restructure of the NSW Reconstruction Authority. Linda is the new Manger of New England North West Regional Coordination.

11. STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA FOR BROC (SPA)

SPA 1 – Economic Development and Tourism

Tourism –

- Cr Beresford (Paroo Shire Council) has compiled a list of major regional events and is requesting feedback before distribution.
- She advised that Stanthorpe won the award for the "Best little place in Australia".
- Cr Peter Mailler initiated a discussion around the high fuel prices causing travellers to go shorter distances and stay in an area for longer.

Industry/Renewables –

- Cr Kate Dight presented information that was discussed at a recent Country Mayors Association of NSW meeting. The group discussed the expansion of the New South Wales Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) to include all areas except the coast.
- Concerns were raised regarding the DAMA age concessions, with participants suggesting the age limit should be raised to 60 rather than 50 or 55 to help retain active workers like bakers and aged care staff.
- Robyn noted that the Queensland DAMA is still in development, following a consultation period that closed in July, and emphasized the need for local councils to ensure all essential roles are included in the approved jobs list.
- Cr Kate Dight advised that Inverell has been nominated for the best aquatic centre award. The aquatic centre is the biggest infrastructure investment in Inverell's history.

SPA 3 – Infrastructure – Moree Plains Shire Council

Road Network

- Cr Pete Mailler expressed frustration over the lack of coordination regarding road hierarchies and transport routes across the border, noting that councils often do not "speak the same language" when aligning investment priorities.
- Significant issues were raised regarding the Bruxner Way and the River Road, where heavy transport is diverting onto local roads because national highways have deteriorated.
- Linda Whitworth mentioned that the NSW Reconstruction Authority is conducting a gaps analysis for Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the New England North West region.

- Participants discussed the economic impact of road conditions, noting that every extra dollar cost at the production end due to transport inefficiency results in a five-fold loss to the local economy.

Moved: *Cr Kate Dight* Seconder**:** *Cr Christensen* That BROC have a strategic investigation into the regional road network for Border communities of Queensland and New South Wales and that the Queensland and New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioners facilitate this investigation. *Carried*

Housing and water security

- Several housing infrastructure funding updates were shared, including $1.9 million for a developer in Goondiwindi and $17 million for water treatment and infrastructure in the Southern Downs.
- Cr O'Toole provided an update on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and the SIDLAN report, noting a projected 300-gigalitre shortfall in projects.
- There is significant concern regarding the "What We Heard" report on the 450-gigalitre water recovery, specifically a 60-gigalitre Expression of Interest (EOI) in the Condamine-Balonne system which could severely impact local communities.

SPA 2 – Liveability – Moree Plains Shire Council

Policing/Crime

- The meeting discussed the effectiveness of drone trials in Moree; while there have been minor privacy complaints, the general consensus is that they have been effective in addressing crime.
- Tenterfield Shire Council has installed CCTV cameras as part of a 2-3 month trial.

SPA 4 – Disaster management – Balonne Shire Council

Disaster Management

- Cr O'Toole reported about a letter that was received regarding concerns over the lack of river gauges in the Dumaresq river tributaries.
- Bob Gee advised that through the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Program, QRA recently delivered three large-format maps to councils, covering the area from the South Australian border at Bulloo to Cunningham's Gap in the Southern Downs, including the NSW portion of the Border Rivers catchment.

- The maps capture and validate local knowledge for flood risk management and resilience planning, informing existing warning networks by identifying gaps and priorities for improvement in the current monitoring network.
- The Queensland Cross-Border Commissioner and the BROC will liaise with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) and relevant Commonwealth, Queensland and New South Wales Government agencies to facilitate a review of the flood warning network and investigate opportunities for improved information and data sharing for the Dumaresq River and other catchments in the region.

Biosecurity

- A Cross-Border disaster exercise will be held in August 2027 (making sure not to clash with the EKKA week) possibly in Goondiwindi or Moree, focusing on biosecurity risks like bird flu or foot-and-mouth disease.
- Linda Whitworth, the new Manager of New England North West Regional Coordination, offered to bring the NSW Reconstruction Authority's EPAR team to a future meeting to discuss nuances in disaster recovery funding.

12. GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil.

13. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of BROC will be held at Bourke hosted by Bourke Shire Council on Friday 5 February, 2027 at 9.00am (local time).

14. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.43pm

Councillor Rob Mackenzie

Chair