

NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION (NRJO) BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING HELD FRIDAY 19 MAY 2023 AT BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL

The meeting commenced 10:08am

In attendance:

Mayors:

- Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Council (Chair)
- Cr Kylie Thomas, Kyogle Council (Deputy Chair) *(online)*
- Cr Chris Cherry, Tweed Shire Council
- Cr Steve Krieg, Lismore City Council
- Cr Michael Lyon, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Robert Mustow, Richmond Valley Council
- Cr Ian Tiley, Clarence Valley Council *(online)*

General Managers:

- Mark Arnold, Byron Shire Council
- Troy Green, Tweed Shire Council
- Jon Gibbons, Lismore City Council
- Vaughan McDonald, Richmond Valley Council
- Graham Kennett, Kyogle Shire Council
- Laura Black, Clarence Valley Council *(on-line)*
- Kelly Brown, Acting General Manager, Ballina Shire Council

Other Attendees:

- Louise McMeeking, Director Regional NSW North Coast
- Anita Gambhir, Office of Local Government
- Phillip Rudd, Executive Officer NRJO
- Vicky Scott, NRJO
- Michael Thurston, General Manager Destination North Coast
- Tamara Smith, State Member for Ballina
- Richie Williamson, State Member for Clarence
- Robyn Waldron, Minute Taker

Address by official visitors:

- Minister Rose Jackson
- Kieron Hendicott, Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC)

1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

Chair extended a welcome to everyone to today's meeting.

NOTED that Cr Kylie Thomas, Cr Ian Tiley and Laura Black join the meeting via Teams link.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that this meeting is held upon the land of the Bundjalung people who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

3 APOLOGIES

190523/1 RESOLVED (*Cherry/Lyon*) that apologies be received and accepted on behalf of Mr Jeff McConnell (Scenic Rim), Mr Paul Hickey (Ballina Shire Council), Nathan McGrath, Director (Regional Development Australia).

(CARRIED)

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

5 ADDRESS BY OFFICIAL VISITORS

5.1 The Hon. Rose Jackson – Minister for Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth, North Coast and Member of the Legislative Council.

5.2 Mr Kieron Hendicott – Executive Director, Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation

NOTED: Meeting paused 10:45am and resumed at 11:15am – Minister and Distinguished Guests departed.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES AND BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

190523/2 RESOLVED (*Mustow/Lyon*) that the Minutes of the meeting held 17 February 2023 and business arising be approved as presented.

(CARRIED)

7 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

8 NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 Chair's Minute – Withdrawal of Emergency Services Levy Subsidy for NSW Councils

190523/3 RESOLVED (*Cadwallader*) that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board request the Chair and Executive Officer seek an urgent meeting with the NSW Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Local Government to:

1. raise its significant concerns about the NSW Government's decision to withdraw the subsidy for increases to council contributions to the Emergency Services Levy in 2023–24 and the detrimental impact this will have for member councils and their services; and
2. advocate for:

- a. the Emergency Services Levy subsidy for increases to council contributions to be restored;
- b. councils to be given the means to recover the cost of their Emergency Services Levy contributions outside of the rate peg; and
- c. a fairer, more transparent and financially sustainable method of funding critically important emergency services to be developed for councils and the community.

(CARRIED)

NOTED: that figures on the subsidy table to be updated for Tweed and Lismore.

8.2 Requesting assistance from DRFA – Cr Chris Cherry, Tweed Shire Council

190523/4 RESOLVED (Cherry/Mustow) that NRJO Board write to the NSW Treasurer, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Local Government and Minister for the North Coast and request urgent help with the administration of the DRFA funding for Northern Rivers Councils.

(CARRIED)

9 REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

9.1 Executive Officer Report

190523/5 RESOLVED (Lyon/Cherry) that the NRJO Board receive and note the Executive Officer report.

(CARRIED)

9.2 Improved preparedness for and ability to respond to and recover from flooding events

190523/6 RESOLVED (Cherry/Mustow) that the NRJO Board:

1. receive this report;
2. write to relevant federal and state government ministers and local members of parliament calling upon all levels of government to implement the recommendations from the 2022 Independent Flood Inquiry and the 2022 Parliamentary Inquiry into the Northern Rivers floods; and
3. write to the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to request that a 6 monthly report card be provided by the NSW Government to the community to report and track progress in implementing the different recommendations of both inquiries.

(CARRIED)

NOTED: Laura Black, General Manager Clarence Valley Council left meeting 11:57am.

9.3 Blackspot project finalisation and outcomes

190523/7 RESOLVED (Cherry/Tiley) that the NRJO Board :

1. receive and note this report;
2. request the Executive Officer:

- a. take the necessary steps to finalise the project related to an issues and opportunities report on the region's mobile network coverage and service quality, including reporting its completion to the NSW Office of Local Government as and when required as part of the funding agreement for the Joint Organisation Capacity Building Fund (Round 2);
- b. update the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's Strategic Regional Priorities Advocacy Brief regarding 'a physically and digitally connected region' to incorporate and align with the findings of the final *Mobile coverage issues, opportunities and advocacy: Priorities Report*; and
- c. write to the federal Minister for Communications, federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, state Minister for the North Coast, state Minister for Regional NSW and local federal and state members of parliament seeking increased funding for improved telecommunications infrastructure and services across the Northern Rivers.
- d. Write to each of the telecommunication organisations that had their networks independent tested and advocate for improvements in their mobile networks as defined in the report.

(CARRIED)

NOTED: Mayor Mustow, Richmond Valley Council and Mayor Thomas, Kyogle Shire Council and Vaughan McDonald, Richmond Valley Council left meeting 12:00am

9.4 Business Case – Establishment and operation of specialist employee pool within the Northern Rivers' Councils

190523/8 RESOLVED (Cherry/Krieg) that the NRJO Board:

1. receive and note this report.
2. request the Executive Officer take the necessary steps to finalise the project related to a business case for the establishment and operation of a specialist employee pool for the Northern Rivers region's councils, including reporting its completion to the NSW Office of Local government as and when required as part of the funding agreement for the Joint Organisation Capacity Building Fund (Round 2).

(CARRIED)

9.5 Financial Report

190523/09 RESOLVED (Lyon/Krieg) that the NRJO Board receive and note the financial reports for period ending 30 April 2023

(CARRIED)

9.6 MoU – Council of Mayors South East Queensland (CoMSEQ)

An AMENDMENT was MOVED (Cherry/Krieg) that the NRJO Board:

1. receive this report;
2. duly execute the draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of Mayors South East Queensland as presented in the document with amendments:-

Background – number of councils to change to seven and Clarence Valley Council is to be included; and

4.1.3 wording *‘for the betterment of their regions and local communities’* to “**advance** the betterment of their regions and local communities”.

On being put to the meeting the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

190523/10 RESOLVED (Cherry/Krieg) that the NRJO Board:

1. receive this report;
2. duly execute the draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of Mayors South East Queensland as presented in the document with amendments:-

Background – number of councils to change to seven and Clarence Valley Council is to be included; and

4.1.3 wording *‘for the betterment of their regions and local communities’* to “**advance** the betterment of their regions and local communities”.

(CARRIED)

9.7 Draft Contract for the Supply of Corporate Services and Draft Covering Board report - Service Agreement

190523/11 RESOLVED (Lyon/Krieg) that the NRJO Board

1. receive and note the Executive Officer’s Report.
2. Authorise the Chairperson on behalf of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) to execute the contract attached to this report for the provision of corporate and executive officer services by Rous County Council to the NRJO receive and note the report from Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers.
3. The term of the contract will be to May 2026
4. The Chairperson will be noted as the NRJO’s Representative (Clause 10).

(CARRIED)

10 INFORMATION REPORTS

190523/12 RESOLVED (Tiley/Cherry) that the NRJO Board receive and note the reports from

- 10.1 Flood recovery update from the Chair – verbal
- 10.2 Delegate Report – Clarence Valley regional update
- 10.3 Associate member report – Scenic Rim Regional Council
- 10.4 Associate member report – Destination North Coast NSW
- 10.5 Associate member report – Office of Local Government
- 10.6 Associate member report – Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers NSW

(CARRIED)

11 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

Nil

12 CORRESPONDENCE

190523/13 RESOLVED (Cherry/Lyon) that the Board receive and note correspondence.
(CARRIED)

13 GENERAL BUSINESS

13.1 Change of day for NRJO Ordinary Board Meetings

AGREED that the NRJO Ordinary Board Meetings be changed to the second Friday of the quarterly month.

(CARRIED)

13.2 Workshop for NRJO Board Members

AGREED that the NRJO Board members be invited to a workshop with agenda items such as:-

- *Affordable Housing*
- *Value for Scenic Rim to be an associate member*

14 CLOSE OF BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:48pm

Next scheduled meeting Friday 11 August 2023 - Byron Shire Council, 70 Station Street Mullumbimby

ACTION LOG

No Outstanding items from previous meetings

19 May 2023

Agenda Item	Description	Responsibility	Current Status
5.1	Letter Minister Rose Jackson to request a 40% rebate for holding 2024 NSW local government elections in natural disaster impacted councils; and reducing the number of polling booths on election days and pre-polling to commence the Saturday prior to election day.	Executive Officer	Completed
8.2	A letter to the NSW Treasurer, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Local Government and Minister for the North Coast and request urgent help with the administration of the DRFA funding for Northern Rivers Councils. Draft to be sent to the General Managers to review prior to sending.	Executive Officer	Completed
9.1	Add to fortnightly Executive Officer meeting agenda re: Compliance Levy and Funding Review.	Executive Officer	Current
9.2	<p>Letters to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant federal and state government ministers and local members of parliament calling upon all levels of government to implement the recommendations from the 2022 Independent Flood Inquiry and the 2022 Parliamentary Inquiry into the Northern Rivers floods; and the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to request that a 6 monthly report card be provided by the NSW Government to the community to report and track progress in implementing the different recommendations of both inquiries. 	Executive Officer	Current

9.3	<p>Write to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • federal Minister for Communications, federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, state Minister for the North Coast, state Minister for Regional NSW and local federal and state members of parliament seeking increased funding for improved telecommunications infrastructure and services across the Northern Rivers • each telecommunication networks and expand information from the road map on resilience and reliability 	Executive Officer	Completed
13.1	Change the NRJO Board Meeting dates to the 2 nd Friday of each quarterly month and resend invites	Executive Officer & Admin	Completed
13.2	Arrange a workshop for the NRJO Board members and appropriate staff	Executive Officer & Admin	Completed

