



**Hunter Councils Inc Board Meeting
Thursday 27 May 2010
Local Government Training Institute, Thornton**

MINUTES

Item 1 Welcomes and Apologies

Attendees

Alison Davey	Cessnock City Council	Bernie Mortomore	Cessnock City Council
Cr Glenn Wall	Dungog Shire Council	Craig Deasey	Dungog Shire Council
Cr Geoff Slack	Gloucester Shire Council	Allan Young	Gloucester Shire Council
Cr Jan McWilliams	Great Lakes Council	Keith O'Leary	Great Lakes Council
Cr Peter Blackmore	Maitland City Council	David Evans	Maitland City Council
Cr Martin Rush	Muswellbrook Shire Council	Steve McDonald	Muswellbrook Shire Council
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Cr Bruce McKenzie	Port Stephens Council	Peter Gesling	Port Stephens Council
Cr Sue Moore	Singleton Council	Scott Greensill	Singleton Council
Cr Lee Watts	Upper Hunter Shire Council	Daryl Dutton	Upper Hunter Shire Council

Apologies

Cr John Tate	Newcastle City Council	Lindy Hyam	Newcastle City Council
Cr Sue Moore	Singleton Council

Staff in attendance

Roger Stephan CEO

Item 1 Welcomes and Apologies

The Chairman, Cr Wall, Mayor, Dungog Shire Council welcomed the Mayors and General Managers to the meeting. The apologies of Cr Tate, Mayor, Newcastle City Council, Cr Moore, Mayor, Singleton Council and Lindy Hyam, General Manager, Newcastle City Council were noted.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the apologies be accepted.

Moved: Cr Greg Piper

Seconded: Cr Jan McWilliams

Carried.

Item 2 Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting 25 March 2010 were accepted as true and correct.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the minutes of the Board Meeting of 25 March 2010 be accepted as true and correct.

Moved: Cr Peter Blackmore

Seconded: Cr Geoff Slack

Carried.

Item 3 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

3.1 Board Advisory Groups – Key Focus Areas

The CEO advised the Board that the key focus areas for the Board Advisory Groups have been discussed with the groups and advised he would send out summary of the deliberations of the groups to councils in the form of a draft report that may be reported to councils if required. The key focus areas have been very helpful and have given each group a greater focus. The groups should come up with useful information for the Board.

3.2 Standing Orders – Local Government Conference

The document developed by Cr Rush was distributed to the

Local Government Practitioners that were identified and has been distributed to the LGSA. Associations have developed committees to fast track the creation of one association and constitution. Cr Rush's document has been given to all members of the committee and it will form the agenda for their next meeting.

3.2 Coal Royalties Update

The CEO advised that the sub-committee for Coal Royalties was unable to meet as other events overtook the group's potential discussion. The CEO made a suggestion that the Board ask the Minister for the Hunter her opinion on the recent State Government developments and what the Commonwealth Government is proposing and the group could then meet to discuss the appropriate way forward.

3.3 Potential letter to the State Government re the Value of Environment Grants

It was suggested as a result of discussion that the Hunter Councils Inc Board not write a letter to the State Government regarding the value of environment grants because some of those grants are heavily funded by the waste levy.

Item 4 Presentations

4.1 National Broadband Network Presentation

The first presentation to the Board was provided by Mike Kaiser, Principal – Government Relations and External Affairs, for NBN Co. Mr Kaiser was accompanied by James Vidler, RDA – Hunter.

Mr Kaiser provided an overview of the purpose, scope and potential benefits of the rollout of the National Broadband Network. Key messages in his presentation included the size of the initiative, its potential ability to take Australia to the forefront of national economies in terms of access to communications resources and the critical role that local government would play both in terms of decision-making in regard to the selection of regions to be targeted as well as in the rollout of the Network itself.

4.2 Presidents and Senior Staff, Local Government and Shires Associations

The Board had requested a meeting with the Presidents in

relation to communication processes and the progress of discussions in relation to constitutional and structural change within the Associations.

The Presidents were accompanied by Cr Paul Braybrooks, Chair of Local Government Procurement. Bill Gillooly, General Manager of the LGSA and Peter Coulton, Director Corporate Services. The Presidents provided an update on the progress of the LGSA's business units and the relationship of those units with other businesses including those operated by Hunter Councils.

Progress towards a major overhaul of the structure of Local Government advocacy in the State was also discussed, with an indication that a Constitutional Convention involving members of both the Local Government and Shires Associations will be held in August of this year.

4.3 Update from Minister McKay MP and Jennifer Collison

The Minister for the Hunter met with the Board as part of her ongoing commitment to facilitate communication between the State Government and Local Government in the Hunter. The Minister was accompanied by the Regional Coordinator of the State Department of Premier and Cabinet.

A range of topics was addressed including the progress of tourism strategy at a State level (in the Minister's capacity as Minister for Tourism) and the recent review of Hunter Tourism.

Item 5 Business Arising from Presentations

Nil

Item 6 CEO Reports

6.1 Public Access to Hunter Councils Board and GMAC Agendas and Minutes

The purpose of the report was to seek endorsement of a policy position on access to meetings of the Board of Hunter Councils, to the meetings of the General Managers Advisory Committee and to documentation prepared for and arising from both these meetings.

The CEO gave a brief summary of the draft policy.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the draft policy be adopted.

Moved: Cr Greg Piper
Seconded: Cr Geoff Slack

Carried.

6.2 International Leading Practices Symposium

The CEO provided the Board with an overview of the outcomes of the International Leading Practices Symposium held in Rotorua, New Zealand, from 22 and 23 April 2010.

The Hunter Councils presentation was well received.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the information report be received and noted.

Moved: Cr Lee Watts
Seconded: Cr Greg Piper

Carried.

6.3 Proposed Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority Regulation 2010

A report was provided on the pending repeal of the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority Regulation 2005 and the request by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) for written submissions on the Regulatory Impact Statement and proposed regulation.

It was noted in the discussion that the timeframe provided by DECCW for feedback on the documents (9 June 2010) made it difficult, if not impossible, to respond given that they had only been made available a few days earlier. It was therefore determined to investigate opportunities for an extension of time with individual Councils to determine their position on the matter.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT:

- 1. An extension of time be sought for submissions**
- 2. Individual Councils determine their position on the matter.**

Moved: Cr Bruce McKenzie
Seconded: Cr Peter Blackmore

Carried.

Item 7 Financial Statements

7.1 April 2010

The CEO spoke to the report. Key items discussed included:

- At the end of April 2010 the surplus for the organisation was standing at \$253,435
- Regional Procurement achieved a higher than expected level of income for the six months ended 31 December. There are more Regional Procurement management invoices to come
- The surplus for the organisation should reach \$350,000 plus. The budget will go to the next GMAC Meeting as it has yet to be finalised. It was possible that further reductions over and above those already indicated would be made to Council contributions to Hunter Councils
- Expenditure until year end will be carefully monitored to ensure the best result possible is achieved.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the revised income and expenditure statement for Hunter Councils Inc for the 2009 / 2010 financial year to date (30 April 2010) be noted and endorsed.

Moved: Cr Peter Blackmore
Seconded: Cr Bruce McKenzie

Carried.

Item 8 General Business

8.1 Waste Levy

The Board held a discussion regarding the Waste Levy. It was suggested that the issue be placed on the July Board Meeting agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

Moved: Cr Greg Piper
Seconded: Cr Jan McWilliams

Carried.

8.3 Tillegra Dam

A discussion was held regarding the Tillegra Dam.

Item 9 Next Meeting

9.1 29 July 2010
Lake Macquarie City Council
9:30am