



**Hunter Councils Inc Extraordinary Board Meeting
Thursday 24 June 2010
Local Government Training Institute, Thornton**

MINUTES

Item 1 Welcomes and Apologies

Attendees

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 John Tate	Newcastle City Council	Lindy Hyam	Newcastle City 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 Alison Davey	Cessnock City Council	Bernie Mortomore	Cessnock City Council
Cr Martin Rush	Muswellbrook Shire Council	Steve McDonald	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Cr Bruce McKenzie	Port Stephens Council		

Staff in attendance

Roger Stephan CEO

Item 1 Welcomes and Apologies

The Chairman, Cr Wall, Mayor of Dungog Shire Council welcomed the Mayors and General Managers to the meeting. The apologies of Cr Davey, Mayor of Cessnock City Council, Cr Rush, Mayor of Muswellbrook Shire Council, Cr McKenzie, Mayor of Port Stephens Council, Bernie Mortomore,

General Manager of Cessnock City Council and Steve McDonald, General Manager of Muswellbrook Shire Council were noted.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the apologies be accepted.

Moved: Cr Jan McWilliams
Seconded: Cr Geoff Slack

Carried.

Item 2 Notified Business

2.1 Changes to s.94 Contributions Plan Provisions

A discussion was held regarding the NSW Government's recently announced major changes s.94 Contributions Plan provisions.

A number of concerns were raised. These included:

- The use of the term "essential infrastructure" and the lack of a clear definition as to what this includes and, importantly, does not include
- The absence of consultation in regard to the changes and the lack of appreciation on the part of the State Government of the critical importance of social and community infrastructure such as libraries, child care centres and recreational facilities on community development and viability
- The profound implications of the changes on future infrastructure provision and financial planning and on Community Strategic Plans predicated – or soon to be predicated – within financial parameters that no longer exist.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT:

- 1. Councils provide to the CEO the information recently requested by the LGSA in regard to the impact of the changes**
- 2. The CEO seek an opinion piece page in the Newcastle Herald regarding to enhance awareness of the potential impact of the measure on the communities of the Hunter Region.**

Moved: Cr Sue Moore
Seconded: Cr Jan McWilliams

Carried.

Action arising:

Councils provide information to CEO

CEO seek opinion piece space in Newcastle Herald

2.2 Hunter Tourism Strategic Proposal

At the last GMAC meeting the General Managers supported, subject to Board endorsement, the Hunter Tourism (HRTO) strategic proposal in regard to a changed model of strategy and funding.

Considerable discussion was had in regard to this matter and to a number of concerns including a perceived lack of value in relation to the funds invested by the Hunter's Councils in the HRTO.

The Board ultimately supported the recommendation to endorse the new model subject to a preliminary review in nine months' time (March 2011) and formal review in June 2011.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT:

- 1. The June 2010 resolution of the Hunter Councils General Managers Advisory Committee in relation to the matter be noted.**
- 2. The Board endorse Hunter Councils being the conduit for local government funding to the new regional tourism entity.**
- 3. The General Managers Advisory Committee be asked to determine the size of individual Council contributions within the overall allocation by Hunter Councils to the new regional organisation.**

Action arising:

CEO to prepare a report for GMAC seeking confirmation of funding allocations

Moved:

Cr Sue Moore

Seconded:

Cr Peter Blackmore

Carried.

2.3 National Broadband Network Update

At its 27 May 2010 meeting the Board was provided with an overview, by Mike Kaiser of NBN Co., in relation to the scope ambitions and implications of the rollout of the National Broadband Network.

One of the principal messages in the overview was the critical role that local government would play in the selection of priority regions for the rollout and in the rollout process itself. This message was reiterated in a presentation on the National Broadband Rollout provided to the National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra, where it was made clear that proactive local support – and implied development facilitation – would be a key determining factor in deciding which regions would be given priority access to the network.

A contribution of \$50,000 to support the National Broadband Network was requested of and agreed by the Board.

RECOMENDATION:

THAT:

1. **Hunter Councils partner with RDA Hunter to promote the Hunter's position in relation to the rollout of the National Broadband Network**
2. **Hunter Councils seek information from Energy Australia regarding smart meters and how they may facilitate and support the rollout process.**
3. **The funding of \$50,000 be provided to RDA Hunter to further its capacity for the process. The funding to be calculated using the Hunter Councils funding formula.**
4. **A letter be provided to RDA Hunter offering Hunter Councils support for the NBN Rollout.**

Action arising:

CEO to provide letter

Moved:

Cr John Tate

Seconded:

Cr Lee Watts

Carried.

Item 3 General Business

3.1

A discussion was held regarding a presentation that was made recently to the National General Assembly of Local Government by the Constitution Education Fund of Australia. (CEFA).

CEFA believes that all Australians should have a broad understanding of the system of government that has made our country one of the most successful democracies in the world and from July on will be running the "AusCivics" Festival to educate Australians, and most especially young Australians, about their constitution.

The AusCivics project identifies local government as being an essential link between the people of Australia and their national system of democracy. A number of Councils have expressed interest in supporting the project both in regard to its overall aims and, more specifically, the ambition to obtain constitutional recognition of local government. The Board therefore resolved to seek a significant presence of the AusCivics project in the Hunter.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Hunter Councils Inc applies for "AusCivics" to be rolled out across the Hunter Region.

Action arising:

CEO to make contact with CEFA in relation to regional

Moved:

Cr Geoff Slack

Seconded:

Cr Sue Moore

Carried.

possibilities

MEETING CLOSED