

LOWER LAKES AND COORONG INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2009



Minutes of the meeting of the Lower Lakes and Coorong Infrastructure Committee held at the Meningie Bowling Club, on Monday 7 September 2009, commencing at 7.42pm.

PRESENT: Neil Shillabeer, Clem Mason, Cr. Roger Strother, Cr. Sharon Bland, Lesley Fischer, Michelle Ousley, Andrew Dawes and Dr. Michael Kerrigan.

IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Drew (CEO, The Coorong District Council).

1. **WELCOME**

Chairperson welcomed all present.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cr. Paul Simmons, Tracy Hill, Lou Sanders, Cr. Peter Wright and Judi King.

3. **SHORT TERM SUSPENSION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

Not required.

4. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM 17 JUNE 2009**

Moved Dr. Michael Kerrigan Sec. Clem Mason that the minutes from the 17 June 2009 meeting be adopted as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Andrew Dawes spoke of work going on around the lake – information received from Lesley Fischer. Andrew also spoke about tourism initiatives in the area.

6. **RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS AND REPORTS**

Tim Drew read a list of items provided to the Committee for information.

Discussion took place regarding the stand at the Adelaide Show, which was attended by Lesley Fischer on 6 September 2009. Neil Shillabeer to attend on 8 September. Lesley reported on the attendance at the stand and the feedback received. Some people want seawater. Most people visiting the stand have some association with the river.

The public meeting at Goolwa on Wednesday night was mentioned.

Neil Shillabeer spoke about being contacted by Lucille Keen from the 'Murray Valley Standard' for a story on the impact of the weir on the community. The story will go to print week beginning 13 September 2009 and will cover all communities along the river.

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Neil then raised the issue of the EIS approvals, which have been delayed until October 12 2009. No explanation has been provided as to the reason for the delay. The Murray Darling Basin Authority is pushing for a virtual weir. Cr. Sharon Bland queried the location of this proposed virtual weir, to which Neil responded that it would be where the river channel opens up and deepens. Clem Mason advised that this point is 3.4km south of the Wellington ferry, near Brinkley Station.

Neil spoke of a wind event that took place on the long weekend in June, whereby a large amount of salt moved north of Pomanda and got stuck. Andrew Dawes asked questions regarding the weir and the embankment at Narrung. Neil to raise issues at the meeting of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Long Term Plan Reference Group meeting on Tuesday 8 September 2009.

Discussion took place regarding the pumping to/from the Coorong and Lake Albert. Neil Shillabeer advised that the long-term goals of the CLLMM Reference Group are not explicit enough about freshwater being the ultimate goal. Discussion then took place regarding freshwater and seawater options. Andrew Dawes noted that saltwater was not given much of a mention in the Long Term Plan document that was distributed at the DEH meeting on 25 August 2009.

The issue of fencing on the lake shore was raised and discussion took place.

The dust problem was raised by Cr. Sharon Bland. Clem Mason expressed his concern about the aesthetic impacts of a dust storm.

7. **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

To follow.

8. **FUTURE OF COMMITTEE – REPORT FROM CHAIRPERSON**

Memo sent out by the Chairperson to Committee members as a discussion point. Neil pointed out that the Committee doesn't have the same role it had up until about 3-4 months ago.

Cr. Sharon Bland expressed concern about the possibility of losing the Committee at this point in time, when changes are taking place within Council and only the Committee is dealing with water issues.

Cr. Roger Strother noted that the Committee is the only connection between Council and the community on water issues. Council needs to continue to stay focussed on water and continue to support the community. Cr. Strother told members that there is still a desperate need for the Committee.

The name and Terms of Reference for the Committee were discussed at length.

Dr. Michael Kerrigan expressed concern that the Committee is focussing on the wrong thing. There are ramifications on the health of the community should the

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lake be allowed to dry out. Dr. Kerrigan is raising this issue in other forums. Neil Shillabeer noted that the Earth Systems report needs to be released – the community needs to see the results.

Lesley Fischer raised the issue of Council's Working Group – who does it represent? Cr. Sharon Bland responded that the Working Group had a lot of ideas and energy and suggested that it be linked to the LLCIC in some way. The Working Group is identifying a lot of small projects that can be undertaken by the community. Neil Shillabeer expressed concern about the number of groups in the community and the lack of co-ordination, action and follow-up. Lesley Fischer noted that there is a need for better communication, as well as feedback from the Long Term Plan Reference Group meetings.

Discussion took place regarding information flow. Michelle Ousley raised the point that the main focus of the Committee had been to stop the weir and also to relay information to the community. Solidarity within the community won't happen unless people are receiving the relevant information. Cr. Sharon Bland suggested that there was a need for clarification in relation to communication protocols.

Clem Mason told the Committee that he was pleased with Council's support for the Committee and noted Neil Shillabeer's huge workload. Clem, Neil and Henry Jones are going to Renmark on 21 October 2009 for a LAP gathering and will speak about the Lower Lakes and their experiences.

Neil Shillabeer spoke about problems with the wine industry.

The issue of the Riverland Futures Project was raised by Neil Shillabeer. Five Riverland Councils are involved in the Project and the focus is on tourism, although this may not be the solution.

Neil Shillabeer told the Committee that one of its roles was also to look at Economic Development. Lesley Fischer raised the issue of accessing discounted water from the pipeline, as the community is suffering and people want compensation. There is a need to push harder for things for the community.

The issue of communication was again raised by Neil Shillabeer. Neil advised that he is happy to stay in the role as Chairperson, but needs a greater rapport with the Mayor and Council's CEO - needs to be kept in the loop. Dr. Michael Kerrigan noted that the role of the Committee is to filter information. A failing of the Committee is that it is not working out its communication method. Council's website could have been better set up, with the minutes uploaded automatically and emailed out directly to members.

Discussion took place regarding the notice of meeting and the ability to sit in the gallery. Andrew Dawes suggested that people should be more pro-active in seeking out information. Neil Shillabeer suggested that the best news outlet was the 'Lakelander' – a yellow insert for LLCIC information.

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The issue of an Economic Development Officer was discussed. The future of the Committee was again raised by Neil Shillabeer. He advised that Cr. Paul Simmons was of the opinion that the Committee should continue. Membership of the Committee was discussed and it was suggested that an open forum would generate more interest. Dr. Michael Kerrigan suggested that there be an opportunity for Committee members to address the meeting for 5 minutes, with a 30 minute public forum before each meeting so that people can come along and have their say. The meeting time needs to be advertised in the 'Lakelander'. Tim Drew agreed that the meeting could be opened up for more public participation. Tim suggested that a secretary be responsible for agendas and minutes, but that there is a lack of resources available to Council in support of the Committee

Cr. Sharon Bland raised the issue of membership of the Committee. It was suggested that the Committee advertise for Expressions of Interest for nominations. A voluntary secretary would be included. Neil Shillabeer agreed that these changes formed a sensible revamp of the Committee and would be put to Council.

9. REPORTS / ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cr. Roger Strother gave a report on last week's Murray Darling Association National Conference and Council's meeting with Senator Sarah Hanson-Young regarding the Coorong and Lower Lakes. Cr. Strother also advised the Committee that the next community meeting with DEH is scheduled for 22 September 2009 at 5.00pm. This will be a full public meeting.

Cr. Strother also spoke of the Working Group's meetings. Cr. Sharon Bland noted that people were chosen from different sectors to match the Working Group's areas of interest. Lesley Fischer expressed disappointment that no one from the rural sector was chosen – Lesley had indicated her willingness to be involved.

Cr. Strother updated the Committee on the recruitment of a Chief Executive Officer for Council. Lesley Fischer told the Committee that she was disappointed with Council's decision as she thought it was short-sighted. Neil Shillabeer agreed with Lesley.

Moved Dr. Michael Kerrigan Sec. Lesley Fischer that the Lower Lakes and Coorong Infrastructure Committee register its disappointment with Council's decision to seek to appoint a new Chief Executive Officer and express its vote of confidence in the current Chief Executive Officer.

CARRIED

10. COORONG, LOWER LAKES AND MURRAY MOUTH LONG TERM PLANNING

Nil.

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11. BIO-REMEDIATION / REVEGETATION ACTIVITIES / PLANNING

Neil Shillabeer noted that there was a grey area about the management of Lake Albert and the DEH / Council role. Tim Drew noted that the lake was under DEH control and not in the Council's area. Bioremediation and revegetation activities will come up at the public meeting to be held on 22 September.

12. MEDIA CAMPAIGN / COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Nil.

13. CURRENT STATUS OF THE WEIR / INFRASTRUCTURE

As previous.

14. TREASURER'S REPORT

Cr. Sharon Bland advised that the Committee's I.Saver account is in credit by \$11 259.11 and the Commonwealth account is in credit by \$2080.82.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

Nil.

16. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on Monday 28 September 2009 at 7.30pm – venue to be advised.

17. CLOSURE

The meeting was declared closed at 10.19pm.