

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**RCA Board Meeting**

**Date:** Tuesday 14 July 2020  
**Time:** 12:00pm – 1:00pm AEST  
11.30am – 12.30pm ACST  
10:00am – 11:00pm AWST

**Location:** Teleconference

**Attendees**

**Board Members**

- Mayor Shane Van Styn – Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton (Chair)
- Mr Ross McKim – CEO, City of Greater Geraldton
- Cr George Seymour – Mayor, Fraser Coast Regional Council (Treasurer)
- Mr Ken Diehm – CEO, Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Mr Oliver Darby – Acting CEO, City of Busselton
- Cr Ben Taylor – Mayor, City of Ballarat
- Ms Janet Dore, CEO City of Ballarat
- Cr Greg Conkey – Mayor, City of Wagga Wagga
- Mr Damon Morrison – Executive Coordinator to the Mayor , Rockhampton Regional Council
- Ms Rachael Sweeney – RCA Project Manager and Secretariat (Managing Director, Collective Position)
- Ms Shannyn Peterson – RCA Secretariat

**Apologies**

- Cr Col Murray – Mayor, Tamworth Regional Council
- Mr Paul Bennett – GM, Tamworth Regional Council
- Cr Grant Henley – Mayor, City of Busselton
- Mr Mike Archer – CEO, City of Busselton
- Mr Peter Thompson – GM, City of Wagga Wagga
- Mr Robert Jennings – CEO, Alice Springs Town Council
- Cr Tony Herbert – Mayor, Warrnambool City Council (Deputy Chair)
- Mr Peter Schneider – CEO, Warrnambool City Council
- Cr Damien Ryan – Mayor, Alice Springs Town Council
- Cr Margaret Strelow – Mayor, Rockhampton Regional Council
- Mr Evan Pardon – CEO, Rockhampton Regional Council

**Guests**

- Cr Samantha McIntosh - City of Ballarat, RCA membership Engagement Lead
- Mr Tony Pasin MP- Member for Barker, South Australia, Chair of Select Committee on Regional Australia

The meeting was declared open at 12:07pm AEDT.

## 1. WELCOME

RCA Chair, Mayor Shane Van Styn – Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton, RCA members to the Board Meeting and noted the apologies.

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING MINUTES

Ms Rachael Sweeney – RCA Secretariat, tabled the draft minutes from the 23 June 2020 Board Meeting.

Members noted the minutes. Mayor Shane Van Styn – Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton moved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Mr Ken Diehm – CEO, Fraser Coast Regional Council seconded.

## 3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr Ken Diehm – RCA Treasurer, tabled the Treasurer's Report –2020 and End of Financial Year Statement and made motion to:

1. Note the Treasurer's Report and accompanying financial statements for the period ending 30th June 2020;
2. Authorise the write-off of the \$8,800 outstanding debt of the City of Greater Bendigo;
3. Direct the Treasurer to finalise and prepare the 2019/20 statements;
4. Direct the Treasurer to arrange for an independent audit to be undertaken of 2019/20 financial statements; and
5. Present the audited 2019/20 financial statements to the next practicable meeting of the Board.

Mayor Shane Van Styn – Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton moved to endorse the above actions. Cr Ben Taylor – Mayor, City of Ballarat seconded.

3.1 Mr Ken Diehm to direct accountant to write-off of the \$8,800 outstanding debt of the City of Greater Bendigo.

3.2 Mr Ken Diehm to finalise and prepare the 2019/20 statements.

3.3 Mr Ken Diehm to arrange for an independent audit to be undertaken of 2019/20 financial statements.

3.4 Mr Ken Diehm to present the audited 2019/20 financial statements to the next practicable meeting of the Board.

## 4. SECRETARIAT UPDATE

Ms Rachael Sweeney – RCA Secretariat, tabled the following reports and registers for discussion and noting:

- 1) Issues Register – July 2020;
- 2) Membership Status Grid – July 2020; and
- 3) Communications Report – June 2020.

*The following points relating to the **Issues Register** were discussed:*

#### National Farmers Federation (NFF)

- Delivering a press club address today (14 July 2020), which will call on the government to deliver 20 new region deals;
- Including a multi-million dollar investment pipeline into these deals; and
- NFF agree that regional cities should be at the centre of regional deals.

#### Regional Australia Inquiry

- RCA Chair Mayor Shane Van Styn will be presenting at an upcoming hearing on 31 July.

#### Government investment in the regions

- Federal Government funding schemes (BBRF etc.) require a level of maturity in the design and plan of a project for it to be selected for funding;
- Some Councils do not have the financial capacity to complete the required design and planning work for projects to be considered for funding, especially without confirmation that the final project will be funded; and
- The board directed the Secretariat to look to forming a position on a “Federal Government Strategic Planning Fund” that would assist councils in the development and planning process of projects that require federal government funding.

#### Regional Aviation

The board sought further clarification on the governments funding announced in April 2020, to underwrite the costs of a minimum domestic aviation network, including ensuring multiple regional routes. The secretariat provided the following:

- The funding was announced as part of the government’s response to COVID-19 impacts on the aviation industry; and
- In light of reductions in regional routes the government is providing support on targeted regional routes by underwriting the costs (guaranteeing passenger loads at 80% capacity).

Mr Ken Diehm – CEO, Fraser Coast Regional Council, moved a motion for Regional Capitals Australia to advocate that the Federal Government extend the scheme to underwrite all regional city routes. Mayor Shane Van Styn – Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton seconded.

Members received and noted all reports and registers.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- 4.1 Secretariat to circulate notes from the National Farmers Federation Press Club address, including their report once tabled.
- 4.2 Secretariat to look to forming a position on a “Federal Government Strategic Planning Fund” that would assist councils in the development and planning process of projects that require federal government funding.
- 4.3 Secretariat to work with Ken Diehm to develop a formal position on underwriting all regional air routes.

## 5. MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT LEAD UPDATE

*Due to time constraints this agenda item was postponed, to be revisited at the August board meeting.*

## 6. MEETING WITH MR TONY PASIN MP

The board met with Mr Tony Pasin MP, Chair, Select Committee on Regional Australia's Inquiry in regional Australia and Federal Member for Barker. The following was discussed:

### Purpose of the Inquiry

Mr Pasin provided an overview of the intended purpose of the inquiry, noting that the Prime Minister initiated the inquiry so that the government could get a better understanding of:

- Where the future of regional Australia is headed where the government would like it to head;
- What do those living in regional Australia need and expect from government to ensure and facilitate the ongoing livability and vibrancy of regional communities;
- The benefits and drawing cards of regional cities as places to live and work;
- To create a solid body of work that can guide government policy to better facilitate the growth of regional cities; and
- Bust the myths of regional, rural and remote Australia.

### Current findings/ areas of interest

Mr Pasin outlined the following areas of interest that have been raised in hearings so far:

- Drought, bushfires and COVID-19 has heavily impacted regional Australia;
- The importance of the delivery of services such as: health, government services, and education;
- Connectivity: both digital (mobile phone coverage and fast internet) and infrastructure (roads, rail and air);
- Supporting tourism, local business and industry (before COVID-19, but even more so now);
- Place based approach to decision making and risk – what architecture out of government can allow for place based autonomy;
- Need to ensure philanthropic capabilities can occur in regional communities for regional communities; and
- Gathering of big ideas.

### Regional Australian Survey

Mr Tony Pasin MP, as Chair of the Select Committee on Regional Australia, commissioned an interim survey on regional Australians. He outlined the below findings:

- The was over 3,000 respondents;
- 2/3 were over the age of 46;
- 82% had lived in regional Australia for more than 10 years;
- 2/3 of young respondents (under 25) cited work and education as the main reason to leave their community;
- Over half stated lifestyle is main reason for living in regional Australia;
- Key themes were mirrors of what was seen in submissions: transport, communications, population growth and work opportunities (for young people in particular); and

- The Committee is in the process of commissioning a second survey that will focus on metropolitan attitudes towards regional Australia.

#### Regional capital growth at expense of smaller surrounding towns

Wagga Wagga City Council confirmed the need for a hub and spoke approach, noting regional capitals growth should also benefit and support growth in the surrounding towns, noting:

- COVID-19, fires and drought will result in many businesses closing and population moving to the nearby regional cities;
- These smaller communities are unique and essential parts of regional Australia; and
- Tax incentives should be given to those who want to establish businesses in rural communities.

Mr Pasin provided the following response:

- Capital cities are becoming unlivable;
- Every additional 100,000 people who join a capital city population cost the Commonwealth government \$50 billion over their lifespan (because of congestion issues etc.);
- There needs to be a correction of the maldistribution of the Australian population; and
- This is happening naturally but Government policy can expedite this.

#### Decentralisation

The board spoke with Mr Pasin about decentralisation. The following points were discussed:

- Decentralisation has too often been about decentralising government departments;
- A much more powerful part of decentralisation that needs to be brought into focus is private sector investment;
- Government can't make this decision directly but can facilitate through incentives; and
- Example: Bowhill Engineering in South Australia.

The board thanked Mr Pasin for his time and overview of the Inquiry into Regional Australia.

## **7. GENERAL BUSINESS**

RCA Chair, Mayor Shane Van Styn – Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton, noted the following General Business item:

#### August meeting and delegation

- Confirm August meeting and delegation to be a teleconference rather than in person; and
- The board agreed to take this decision offline.

#### **ACTIONS:**

7.1 Secretariat to confirm offline, the interest of the board in holding a virtual delegation in lieu of in-person delegation planned for August.

The meeting was closed at 1:15pm.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Secretariat to direct accountant to write-off of the \$8,800 outstanding debt of the City of Greater Bendigo.	<b>Mr Ken Diehm</b>
Mr Ken Diehm to finalise and prepare the 2019/20 statements.	<b>Mr Ken Diehm</b>
Mr Ken Diehm to arrange for an independent audit to be undertaken of 2019/20 financial statements.	<b>Mr Ken Diehm</b>
Mr Ken Diehm to present the audited 2019/20 financial statements to the next practicable meeting of the Board.	<b>Mr Ken Diehm</b>
Secretariat to circulate notes from the National Farmers Federation Press Club address, including their report once tabled.	<b>Secretariat</b>
Secretariat to look to forming a position on a “Federal Government Strategic Planning Fund” that would assist councils in the development and planning process of projects that require federal government funding.	<b>Secretariat</b>
Secretariat to look work with Ken Diehm to develop a formal position on underwriting all regional air routes.	<b>Secretariat</b>
Secretariat to confirm offline, the interest of the board in holding a virtual delegation in lieu of in-person delegation planned for August.	<b>Secretariat</b>