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Please Quote:

Your Ref:

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 2014 COMMENCING AT 5.00PM.

20 March 2014

Dear Councillor

NOTICE is hereby given that an **EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SHIRE OF WEDDIN** will be held in the Council Chambers, Grenfell on **THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 2014**, commencing at **5.00 PM** and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully

GLENN CARROLL
GENERAL MANAGER

BUSINESS:

To review the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's final report and review the Local Government Act report.

Please see reference material for these documents.

To consider an alternative solution for Weddin Shire Council – Regional Alliance of Council's (RAC's)

AGENDA:

1. Apologies
2. Correspondence
3. Report - General Manager
4. Review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's final report
5. Review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's report into the Local Government Act.
6. Alternative solution – Regional Alliance of Council's (RAC's)
7. Closure

PRESENT: The Mayor Clr M J Liebich in the Chair, Crs J C Niven, G B Halls, G McClelland, N W Hughes, A C Griffiths, P H Best, C Brown and J E Parlett.
General Manager (G Carroll), Director Corporate Services (L Gibson) and Director Environmental Services (B Hayes)

APOLOGIES: Nil

**CORRESPONDENCE TO BE PRESENTED TO THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF
THE WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL HELD, 27 MARCH 2014**

SECTION C - Matters for consideration

1. Final report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel.

Previously forwarded to Councillors – see Reference Material

Noted

2. A report to the Minister for Local Government – A New Local Government Act for NSW

Previously forwarded to Councillors – see Reference Material.

Noted

RESOLVED: Cr Brown and Cr Niven that the Correspondence be noted except where otherwise resolved.

20 March 2014

The Mayor and Councillors
Weddin Shire Council
GRENFELL NSW 2810

Dear Councillors

I wish to report as follows:

1. Introduction

The NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's final report has been released and received by Council together with the Local Government Act Review report. In regards to the Local Government Review the panel has made 65 recommendations and unanimously agreed that wide ranging and concerted action is required to make NSW Local Government sustainable and fit-for-purpose into the 21st Century.

The key recommendations for Weddin Shire Council are that we be a Rural Council in the Central West Regional Joint Organisation (RJO) or merge with Forbes or Cowra.

Explanations of the new proposals or concepts are explained below with Council no doubt aware of the detrimental and disastrous consequences an amalgamation of our Shire would have:

- **Regional Joint Organisation (RJO's)** - would be formed whereby there would be 17 RJO's statewide. The RJO would be a statutory grouping of Councils established under the Local Government Act, 1993 that undertake a range of high level functions on behalf of their members.
- **Rural Councils** – would work as part of the RJO with reduced legislative and compliance responsibilities as well as having a lower cost base which would be more appropriate for rural areas. Rural Councils would also have a maximum of five Councillors including the Mayor and no more than 6 Council meetings a year.

It is important to realise that this report has been prepared by an independent review panel and the Minister for Local Government the Hon Don Page has not as yet responded to the report. Minister Page has however reiterated the government's policy of no forced amalgamations during this term of government which is very encouraging and reassuring.

In the review of the report amalgamations, RJO's and Rural Councils have all not been supported. As Weddin Shire Council vehemently opposes amalgamations we have to develop an alternative solution to present to Minister Page by way of a submission.

In this regard an alternative solution is proposed and presented for Council's consideration to enable Weddin Shire Council to become financially sustainable in the long term and stand alone as an independent Council.

For Information

Noted

At this point the Director Engineering Mr Bill Twohill entered the meeting 5.29pm.

4. Review of the Independent Local Government Review Panel's Final Report

The review has been forwarded separately for Councillors information and comment.

As part of the review Councillors are certainly able to amend any part of the review prior to it being submitted to the Division of Local Government by Friday 4 April, 2014.

RECOMMENDATION: that Council adopt the review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's final report. Further, that it be submitted to the Division of Local Government by Friday 4 April, 2014 with a copy forwarded to LGNSW and the Member for Burrinjuck the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson.

RESOLVED: Cr Parlett and Cr Griffiths that Council adopt the review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's final report. Further, that it be submitted to the Division of Local Government by Friday 4 April, 2014 with a copy forwarded to LGNSW and the Member for Burrinjuck the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson.

5. Review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's report into the NSW Local Government Act

The review has been forwarded separately for Councillors information and comment.

As part of the review Councillors are certainly able to amend any part of the review prior to it being submitted to the Division of Local Government by Friday 4 April, 2014.

RECOMMENDATION: that Council adopt the review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's report into the NSW Local Government Act. Further, that it be submitted to the Division of Local Government by Friday 4 April, 2014 with a copy forwarded to LGNSW and the Member for Burrinjuck the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson.

RESOLVED: Cr Hughes and Cr Parlett that Council adopt the review of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel's report into the NSW Local Government Act. Further, that it be submitted to the Division of Local Government by Friday 4 April, 2014 with a copy forwarded to LGNSW and the Member for Burrinjuck the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson.

6. Alternative Solution – Regional Alliance of Councils (RAC's)

As previously indicated amalgamations, RJO's and Rural Councils are not the solution for Weddin Shire Council.

However, it will be very difficult to say we reject these proposals if we do not have an alternative solution we can present to the Minister.

The solution I believe is to revamp ROC's and existing alliances and form Regional Alliances of Councils (RAC's) to be administered by the new Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Association. This would give the new Association more relevance and allow Councils to deal with one organisation to gain efficiencies and economies of scale.

These RAC's would also have the following features:-

- need to be formalised by the Minister with formal reporting requirements to be undertaken by the CEO and reported on a six month basis.

- utilise Local Government NSW staff and processes ie procurement process and be driven by a CEO who would be contracted by Local Government NSW and may oversee 2-3 different RAC's.(ie Jenny Bennett or Julie Briggs). The current ROC's staff could also be utilised and transferred to Local Government NSW if so desired.
- the Local Government NSW annual conference could then focus on Statewide regional issues such as:
 - Roads and Infrastructure (RMS)
 - Health
 - Education
 - Emergency Services in RFS and SES

As the conference would be attended by the bigger Sydney Councils, Rural Councils would be represented by their RAC and not as individual Councils.

- would need to be called by the name of the dominant town (ie Young Regional Alliance of Councils (YRAC)) and not for example South West Slopes Councils as we need to promote and build these Regional towns into strong Regional Centres which would benefit towns such as Grenfell.
- would allow the Councils within the RAC's to resource share, bulk purchase through the Local Government NSW procurement programme (which should see massive savings) and organise their training utilising Local Government NSW training providers and staff.
- allow Councils to continue to operate independently as they currently are while gaining economies of scale and greater efficiencies through resource sharing, bulk purchasing and training.
- allow Councils to work together on a regional basis on a smaller scale than those proposed in the RJO's and promote towns such as Parkes and Young as strong regional centres which would then benefit towns such as Grenfell.
- the Council where the RAC is based could appoint specialist staff to be shared with smaller councils on a fee for service basis.

Examples of possible RAC's in Rural and Regional NSW are listed below:

Armidale Regional Alliance of Councils (ARRAC) – Armidale, Uralla, Walcha, Guyra, Tenterfield, Glenn Innes.

Tamworth Regional Alliance of Councils (TRAC) – Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains.

Dubbo Regional Alliance of Councils (DRAC) – Dubbo, Narromine, Gilgandra, Wellington, Warren, Bogan, Warrumbungle.

Parkes Regional Alliance of Councils (PRAC) – Parkes, **Weddin**, Forbes, Lachlan.

Orange Regional Alliance of Councils (ORAC) – Orange, Cabonne, Cowra.

Bathurst Regional Alliance of Councils (BRAC) – Bathurst, Blayney, Oberon, Lithgow, Mid-Western Regional.

Young Regional Alliance of Councils (YRAC) – Young, Temora, Yass, Boorowa, Harden, Cootamundra.

Wagga Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC) – Wagga, Junee, Coolamon, Tumbarumba, Bland, Lockhart, Tumut, Gundagai.

Griffith Regional Alliance of Councils (GRAC) – Griffith, Leeton, Narrandera, Carrathool, Hay, Murrumbidgee.

Albury Regional Alliance of Councils (ARAC) – Albury, Greater Hume, Corowa, Berrigan, Deniliquin, Jerilderie, Urana, Murray, Conargo, Wakool.

As can be seen above Weddin has been placed in the Parkes RAC. As we are deemed to be a Central West Council and have affiliations with the Central West in areas such as Health, RMS, RFS it seemed logical and more appropriate than placing us in the Young RAC.

The development of these RAC's would also assist in developing and promoting these towns as strong regional centres as well as enabling Council in the RAC's to gain efficiencies and economies of scale through resource sharing, bulk purchasing and training which could all be administered by LGNSW.

RECOMMENDATION: that Council adopt the formation of Regional Alliance of Councils (RAC's) as a viable solution to:

- i) gaining efficiencies and economies of scale
- ii) allowing Weddin Shire Council to stand alone as an independent Council in the long term.

RESOLVED: Cr Brown and Cr Hughes that Council adopt the formation of Regional Alliance of Councils (RAC's) as a viable solution to:

- i) gaining efficiencies and economies of scale
- ii) allowing Weddin Shire Council to stand alone as an independent Council in the long term.

GLENN CARROLL
GENERAL MANAGER

RESOLVED: Cr Niven and Cr Halls that except where otherwise dealt with the General Managers Report be adopted.

CLOSURE: There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.58 pm.

Taken as read and confirmed as a true record this day 17 April 2014.

..... General Manager.....Mayor