



**MINUTES OF THE  
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**Held on**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**11 am**

**In**

**NEWA Meeting Room 2/129 Rusden Street Armidale**

**Present: - Interim Administrator – John Rayner (Chair)**

**Acting General Manager – Renee Irvine**

**MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL  
HELD IN COUNCIL'S RUSDEN STREET OFFICE ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Minute

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

*The Chair to advise that due to a technical issue the meeting is not being live-streamed and a video will not be available.*

1. **PRESENT: Interim Administrator – John Rayner  
Acting General Manager – Renee Irvine**
2. **APOLOGIES: N/A**
3. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST: N/A**
4. **ADMINISTRATORS MINUTES:**

**Administrator's Minute Extraordinary Council Meeting September 2024**

**1 Extension of Suspension and Administration.**

Under Sections 438M and 438O of the Local Government Act the Minister for Local government extended the period of suspension of New England County Council and extended the term of appointment of the Interim Administrator as follows.

By Order published in the Gazette on 17 May 2024 (the First Order) I, the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government, suspended the New England County Council (Council) for a period of three months. That period is due to expire on 17 August 2024.

By this Order, made under section 438(O)(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (Act), I extend the period that the Council is suspended by the First Order for a further period of three months, that is until 17 November 2024.

By this Order, made under section 438M(8) of the Act, I extend the period for which Mr John Rayner PSM is appointed as interim administrator of the Council to 17 November 2024.

This Order takes effect seven days after its publication in the Gazette.

Dated this 16 day of August 2024



The Hon. Ron Hoenig, MP

Minister for Local Government

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In his letter of appointment to the Administrator the Minister states,

*"This extension letter maintains the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the previous letter of appointment sent on 17 May 2024. A further report will be required to be submitted not less than 14 days before the end of the extension period of the Board's suspension."*

The 17<sup>th</sup> May Letter of Appointment from the Minister states the role will also include:

1. *Undertaking an urgent assessment of NEWA's current financial position and ensuring it is able to meet its immediate financial obligations.*
2. *Recommending and implementing a Strategic Improvement Plan or any other required interventions.*
3. *Ensuring compliance with accounting principles including as provided in the Local Government Act, Regulations and Code of Accounting Practice.*
4. *Restoring NEWA's compliance with its statutory responsibilities.*
5. *Developing strategies to improve its current financial circumstances, including the preparation of a Liquidity Plan.*
6. *Recommending and developing longer term strategies to assess NEWA's long-term financial sustainability.*

Given the dire financial position of NECC regular cash flow reviews are undertaken. These reviews underpin the additional contributions from constituent Councils.

This financial year NECC has received the following contributions from constituent Councils.

- Regular/Annual contribution \$ 339,474 (The contribution from Armidale Regional Council (280,695) was advanced in 2023/24)
- Additional contribution August 2024 \$700,000
- Further Contribution \$500,000 being negotiated with constituent Councils

NECC is receiving very limited grant income and only spasmodic funds from private works.

The additional contributions have enabled creditors to be paid and day to day operations maintained.

The support from constituent Councils is very much appreciated.

## **2. Statement of Accounts 2023/24.**

A contractor has been engaged to "Achieve an Audited Set of Financial Statements before the Statutory Deadline".

It is anticipated that draft Financial Statements for 2023/24 will be available for perusal by the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

## **3. Draft Budget 2024/25**

The draft Budget for the 2024/25 Financial Year was rejected at the Council Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024.

*"That the Budget and the 10-year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) be updated to take account of NEWA's current financial circumstances and the early payment of the annual contributions for 2024-2025 by ARC"*

A draft Budget is currently being prepared. This will be considered by the General Managers of the constituent Councils prior to resubmitting to Council.

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**4. Operational Review**

NECC and the constituent Councils engaged Mr Paul Quealey, Lambourne Partners, to undertake a review of the current operations of the NECC and make recommendations for a future service delivery model to meet the Council's responsibilities under the NSW Biosecurity Act.

Any change will need to be endorsed by the constituent Councils, the State Government and unions.

It is expected that recommendations will go to member council meetings in October.

**Motion.**

1. That the Minute be received and noted.
2. Appreciation be expressed to the constituent councils for their ongoing support.
3. Considering the dire financial position of New England County Council, the inability to finance its operating costs, and the fact that the constituent Councils are contributing significant funds to meet the continuing operations of the County Council, the Administrator be authorised to make changes to the organization structure as required
4. That the Acting General Manager be authorised to seek an extension of time to lodge the 2023/2024 Financial Statements if required

Moved – John Rayner Interim Administrator

Carried

**5. MATTERS OF URGENCY – ANY OTHER BUSINESS - No Other Business**

**6. NEXT MEETING – TBA**

**7. MEETING CLOSE:- 11:10am**