

**ORDINARY MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
COUNCIL'S RUSDEN STREET OFFICE ON 12 MARCH 2025**



NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
ABN 35 514 070 354

**MINUTES OF THE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

An Ordinary Meeting of the New England County Council, is to be held in the offices of the New England Weeds Authority, 1/129 Rusden Street, Armidale NSW 2350 on:

Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 11 am

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ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

The Interim Administrator advised that due to a technical issue the meeting is not being live-streamed and a video will not be available.

**PRESENT: Interim Administrator – John Rayner
Renee Irvine – Acting General Manager**

APOLOGIES: None

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: None

MATTERS OF URGENCY: None

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NEW ENGLAND
COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2025**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the New England County Council held on the 10th of February 2025 are taken as a true and accurate record.

Moved – Interim Administrator John Rayner

Carried

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NEW
ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2025**

None

ADMINISTRATORS MINUTE MARCH 2025

1 Notice of Intention to Suspend the Board of the New England County Council

The Board of the New England County Council was further suspended by the Minister for Local Government for three months from 16th December 2024.
By letter dated 10th March 2025 the Minister for Local Government advised

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In accordance with section 4380 of the *Local Government Act 1993* I hereby give notice of my intention to amend the order that currently suspends the New England County Council (Council), which took effect on 17 December 2024 by extending the period during which Council is suspended for a further period of 3 months, that is until 17 June 2025.

It is also my intention to extend your appointment as Interim Administrator of Council for this further period during which Council is to be suspended.

I have considered your report of 17 February 2025 about your administration of Council. Based on your observations and advice, I have formed the view that the extension of the period of suspension is necessary to allow you to continue your work to restore the proper and effective functioning of Council before its proposed dissolution.

I thank you for the work that you have done to date and for your ongoing commitment to the important role of Interim Administrator.

Resolved 11/25

1. That the report be received and noted.
2. That, in the circumstances with the constituent Councils supporting the dissolution of the New England County Council, the Minister's proposed actions be supported

Moved – Interim Administrator John Rayner

Carried

2 Cash Flow

Due to the dire financial position of the NECC, and the fact that it is almost entirely dependent on the constituent Councils for income regular Cash Flow Projections (CFP) are prepared and shared with the four Councils.

The most recent CFP was prepared on 3rd March 2025. The CFP does not include further contributions from the constituent Councils and projects that the NECC can survive financially until early April.

As the proposal to dissolve the NECC is currently being advertised with submissions closing on 1st April 2025, it is expected that the dissolution of the Council will not be in place until late April or sometime in May.

Assets which are surplus to the needs of NECC and the constituent Councils are being sold with a view to increasing NECC income.

The Weed Action Program (WAP) grant is also unlikely to be received until May.

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The constituent councils have so far contributed \$1.6m to keep the NECC operating.

The Office of Local Government has been informed of the possibility that the NECC may be unable to operate by April 2025.

RESOLVED 12/25

1. That the report be received and noted.
2. That the sale of surplus assets be endorsed.
3. A request be made to the Department of Primary Industries to make an early advance of the 2024/25 Grant

Moved Interim Administrator – John Rayner

Carried

3 Sales of Assets

In order to improve the cash position of NECC sales of surplus small plant and vehicles has commenced.

To date a DMAX Dual cab has been sold yielding \$23,485 net. Other assets which are not required by NECC or, in the future, the constituent Councils.

RESOLVED 13/25

1. That the report be received and noted.
2. That the sale of surplus assets is endorsed.

Moved Interim Administrator – John Rayner

Carried

4 Proposal to Dissolve New England County Council

Through July 2024 each of the constituent Councils resolved unanimously that the NECC be dissolved.

In October 2024 each Council resolved to submit a proposal under Sec 383 (1) of the Local Government Act to the Minister for Local Government to dissolve the NECC and transfer the responsibilities under the NSW Biosecurity Act to the constituent Councils. The decisions taken by each Council was unanimous.

On 12th December 2024 Armidale Regional Council submitted a formal Proposal to the Minister under Section 383(1) of the Local Government Act to dissolve the New England County Council.

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The Minister has advertised the proposal with submissions closing on 1st April 2024.

Submissions will be considered by the Minister who will also consult with the Minister for Agriculture prior to making a determination.

RESOLVED 14/25

1. That the report be received and noted.

Moved Interim Administrator – John Rayner

Carried

5 21 Waller Ave Armidale

The new/unoccupied depot/office building at 21 Waller Avenue has been on the market for sale for a number of months.

Whilst offers have been made to purchase the property, these have been rejected on the basis that the offers were well below the expected sale price and the book value of the property.

Following consultation with Mayors and General Managers of the constituent Councils it has been agreed to lease the building should satisfactory agreement be reached with a prospective tenant.

John Rayner
Interim Administrator 11th March 2025

RESOLVED 15/25

1. That the report be received and noted
2. That Council endorse the leasing of the property if a satisfactory offer to purchase is not received.
3. That the Interim Administrator and the Acting General Manager be authorised to execute all documents associated with the lease or sale of 21 Waller Avenue Armidale.

Moved Interim Administrator – John Rayner

Carried

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Other Business

Some assets are being auctioned at Pickles in Tamworth this month which will help with the cashflow.

Next Meeting

Due to the circumstances of New England County Council, it is difficult to predict when a meeting will need to be called; therefore, a date for the next meeting cannot be set at this time.

Meeting Closed:- 11:14 am

