

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NORTHERN SYDNEY REGIONAL
ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS HELD AT HUNTER'S HILL COUNCIL
22 ALEXANDRA STREET, HUNTERS HILL, ON THURSDAY,
13TH NOVEMBER 2008**
The meeting commenced at 8.30 pm

QUORUM

The Chairman referred to Article 13.i) of the Constitution that provides:

A quorum at a meeting of the Organisation shall consist of a number being half of the number of Councils plus one.

Member Councils of NSROC include:

Hornsby	Hunter's Hill	Ku-ring-gai	
Lane Cove	North Sydney	Ryde	Willoughby

Councils represented on the evening included:

Hornsby	Hunter's Hill	Ku-ring-gai	
Lane Cove	North Sydney	Ryde	Willoughby

Accordingly, a quorum was present.

ATTENDANCE

Clr N Berman	Hornsby Council
Clr R Browne	Hornsby Council
Clr S Hoopmann	Hunter's Hill Council
Clr R Quinn	Hunter's Hill Council
Mr B Smith	General Manager, Hunter's Hill Council
Clr E Malicki	Ku-ring-gai Council
Clr I Cross	Ku-ring-gai Council
Clr I Longbottom	Lane Cove Council
Clr A Smith	Lane Cove Council
Clr R Tudge	Lane Cove Council (non voting Councillor)
Clr S Forrest	Lane Cove Council (non voting Councillor)
Mr P Brown	General Manager, Lane Cove Council
Clr G McCaffery	North Sydney Council
Clr Z Baker	North Sydney Council (non voting Councillor)
Clr V Marchandeanu	North Sydney Council
Ms P Holloway	General Manager, North Sydney Council
Clr V Tagg	Ryde Council
Clr I Petch	Ryde Council
Clr S Yedelian	Ryde Council (non voting Councillor)
Mr M Whittaker	General Manager, Ryde Council
Clr P Reilly	Willoughby Council (chair)
Clr T Fogarty	Willoughby Council
Mr S Head	Willoughby Council
Mr D Johnson	NSROC Executive Director
Ms L Ridley	NSROC Executive Assistant

APOLOGIES

Mr N Tobin	General Manager, Willoughby Council
Mr J McKee	General Manager, Ku-ring-gai Council
Mr Robert Ball	General Manager, Hornsby Council

737/08 **RESOLVED** Moved: Clr G McCaffery Seconded: Clr R Quinn
That the Apologies be received.

CARRIED

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2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

738/08 **RESOLVED:** Moved: Clr G McCaffery Seconded: Clr I Petch **CARRIED**
That the Minutes of Annual General Meeting held 8th November 2007, held at North Sydney Council, a copy of which were circulated to all parties and member Councils, were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. PRESIDENTS REPORT ON NSROC FOR 2007/2008

This is our final meeting for the year and first of all I want to thank all of you for contributing to the ongoing work of both NSROC and local government in what are proving to be challenging times.

The recent local government elections have brought considerable change to the composition of elected members in councils across the state - and the recent ministerial shuffling in the state government has also necessitated a fresh look at our relationships with state departments and our current approach to issues within the region.

The new Premier and his ministers have made some welcome overtures to state government including the promise to build a new relationship with local government that is not as adversarial and divisive as the previous one.

However despite this promise, the initial signs are not good – the new Planning Minister Keneally, for example, has already indicated an intent to keep the unpopular reform process going albeit at a slowed pace, including the decision to install Joint Regional Planning Panels to determine major development projects with a value over \$10 million dollars by July of next year.

This is a significant decrease in the financial threshold which was determined without consultation and threatens to marginalise the role of elected local government officials from all major decisions in the planning process.

We also remain concerned about the proposed introduction of housing codes which are proving almost unworkable in their council trials and remain dissatisfied with the expanded role for private certifiers, the pressure on our Section 94 funds and the continual 'calling in' of development by the Minister.

In addition to our planning woes, the mini-budget released on Tuesday contains plenty of unexpected and unwelcome bad news for our councils and our communities.

We already knew that the key piece of transport infrastructure that was to be built to accommodate growth in the region will not proceed.

Both the North West Metro and the North West Heavy Rail projects have been scrapped so that the state government can keep its current triple A credit rating. This is despite the long standing promise that one or other of these projects would be built to match our commitment in the Metropolitan Strategy to significant housing targets.

Without the promise of infrastructure delivery the Metropolitan Strategy is essentially dead. We can not, and should not, be held to our side of the bargain if the government can not deliver its side. Growth in a region can not be sustained when it means shoving more high rise into suburbs and town centres but providing no public transport, no parks, no hospitals, no childcare centres and no schools.

But to add insult to injury, our residents will now be slugged with higher bridge tolls, an increased parking levy, the loss of the Manly JetCats and cuts to the pacific highway upgrade program. Our residents are facing these increased costs while commuters from Labors heartland can use the M4 and the M5 for free.

Another worrying development in the mini-budget is the proposed sale of WSN Solutions, the state government's waste arm. This entity collects waste for many of our councils and operates a virtual duopoly with Collex for waste disposal. You can guarantee waste charges will dramatically increase once it is sold off at a rock bottom price to a private buyer.

In terms of our financial sustainability and that of the local government sector, we are battling on a number of fronts. To the list of challenges which includes rate pegging and cost shifting, we can now add

- significantly increased electoral costs
- massive anticipated increases in public lighting costs
- possible introductions payroll tax
- likely increases in waste disposal through privatisation and carbon trading; and

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- Increases in rural fire service levies.

Looking at the picture for the region, it is clear that we are bereft of leadership at the state level. Yet the challenges we face are profound and pressing.

While the drought may have eased, we are now mired in what is a sustained economic downturn bought on by the current global credit crisis. This means there will be less money to go round, and that there will be a greater demand for our services. Already the collapse of ABC Learning has put increased pressure on the child care sector in our region.

In addition, our economic viability and high employment is being hindered by transport issues. The loss of future infrastructure and the current capacity constraints on existing infrastructure paint a bleak picture indeed.

For this reason I believe developing a regional integrated transport plan to be a top priority for NSROC and I have instructed Dominic to give it prominence in the draft NSROC strategy we will consider early in the New Year. Many of the NSROC councils are already running their own community buses – maybe it is time for us to consider a regional approach to delivering the services the state government has failed to provide.

Population growth and long term sustainability are related issues which we also have to address. As I mentioned earlier, the disintegration of the Metropolitan Strategy means we have to develop our own tools for sustainable growth in the region. Our recently completed Sustainability Plan is the first step in this direction but now we have to embed that into our long term land use planning.

We also have to turn our mind to economic development. Many of the NSROC councils have economic development officers and work closely with their chambers and business forums. But we still lack a regional business vision and regional business voice.

Another key area is waste. As I mentioned we are likely to be paying more for waste in the near future. With the introduction of carbon trading the cost of waste disposal is only going in one direction – up!

I believe it is time we consider a regional approach to waste collection and disposal, as we did in 2004, but this time we don't rely on the two providers who currently dominate the market. This time I think we should identify some sites in the region and talk directly to companies able to partner us in providing a waste solution that uses new technologies and avoids landfill.

Again it has been a busy time for NSROC over the last 12 months. We lobbied hard on Frank's planning reforms – and had some successes there. We have also been lobbying hard on transport infrastructure and looking at closely at the future of Sydney Airport, but as I said, there is more work to be done.

We've moved towards a regional code of conduct panel and have provided training on the new code, whatever our personal reservations about it and our views on the state government's hypocrisy might be.

Some excellent work has been done through NSROC, creating efficiencies, setting strategic directions, and putting the focus back on government to deliver on its promises. Tonight we heard a presentation on the NSROC State of Environment Report – which may be the last as the State Government will soon bring in significant reporting changes - another process which I believe would benefit from a regional approach.

The NSROC sportsfields officers group, the waste group, the community services directors, the finance Managers Group, the media group, the Northern Planners - they have also done excellent collaborative work.

In fact we are awaiting a study produced by the HR Managers group on staff attraction and retention – an important issue for councils. This project is a joint NSROC and SHOROC initiative and is being conducted by Macquarie University. We hope to put the results before you soon.

Our procurement staff continues to manage over \$10 million in regional contracts, and as mentioned at our Annual Conference, this provides a combined savings of approximately \$1 million, as well as greater efficiencies and better coordination. These contracts include

regional contracts for hardware, stationary, turf, traffic and street signs, tree services, line-marking, herbicides and asphalt.

We have also lobbied the state and federal government on important regional issues, to try and influence planning, funding and legislative outcomes.

And lastly, the work of our General Managers group and this Board, along with all the other working groups, in setting policy, responding to criticism and identifying and delivering regional outcomes should not be forgotten. I want to thank you all for your work over the past 12 months, thank our staff and I look forward to working with you all in the testing times to come.

739/08 **RESOLVED** Moved: Clr I Petch Seconded: Clr G McCaffery **CARRIED**

1. That the Report be received and noted.
2. That a vote of thanks be given to Clr Reilly, Dominic Johnson and Lesley Ridley for the work they have undertaken on behalf NSROC.

4. ANNUAL REPORTS – 2007/2008

740/08 **RESOLVED**: Moved: Clr I Petch Seconded: Clr G McCaffery **CARRIED**
That the Annual Reports for 2007/2008 be received and noted.

Clr Reilly vacated the Chair and the Executive Director, NSROC, Dominic Johnson took the Chair

5. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2008/2009

The Chair called for nominations for the position of President for 2008/2009.

1. PRESIDENT

Clr Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby Council, was nominated for the office of President.

Moved: Clr I Petch Seconded: Clr T Fogarty

Clr Ian Longbottom, Mayor of Lane Cove Council, was nominated for the office of President.

Moved: Clr N Berman Seconded: Clr R Browne

It was agreed that a show of hands be used for counting purposes.

Clr Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby City Council, received 9 votes, therefore he was declared elected as President of NSROC for 2008/2009.

The Chair called for nominations for the position of 2 Vice Presidents for 2008/2009.

2. ELECTION OF TWO VICE PRESIDENTS

Clr Ian Longbottom, Mayor of Lane Cove Council, was nominated for the office of Vice President.

Moved: Clr I Petch Seconded: Clr S Hoopmann

Clr Susan Hoopmann, Mayor of Hunter's Hill Council, was nominated for the office of Vice President.

Moved: Clr G McCaffery Seconded: Clr I Petch

That Clr Ian Longbottom, Mayor of Lane Cove Council and Clr Susan Hoopmann, Mayor of Hunter's Hill Council, as the only nominees, were then declared elected as Vice Presidents for 2008/2009.

6. SECRETARY/TREASURER

741/08 **RESOLVED**: Moved: Clr G McCaffery Seconded: Clr I Petch **CARRIED**

1. That the Mr Barry Smith, Chair of the General Managers Advisory Committee is appointed Secretary/Treasurer.

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2. That the General Manager, of Lane Cove Council, is appointed Assistant Treasurer.

Dominic Johnson vacated the Chair and Clr Pat Reilly resumed the Chair

7. NSROC 2007/2008 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

742/08 **RESOLVED:** Moved: Clr G McCaffery Seconded: Clr I Cross **CARRIED**
That the Financial Statements for 2007/2008 be received and noted.

8. NSROC MEETING DATES AND VENUES FOR 2009

743/08 **RESOLVED:** Moved: Clr G McCaffery Seconded: Clr I Petch **CARRIED**

That the Meeting Dates and Venues for 2009 be received and noted.

Ordinary Meeting No. 125	12 th February 2009	Hornsby Council
Ordinary Meeting No. 126	14 th May 2009	North Sydney Council
NSROC Annual Conference	6 th August 2009	T.B.C. Mandalay
Ordinary Meeting No. 127	10 th September 2009	Ryde Council
Ordinary Meeting No. 128 & Annual General Meeting	12 th November 2009	Willoughby Council

The Meeting concluded at 8.50 p.m.