

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held in Picton 1.

Saturday 15th February 2020

At 10am

Chairman: Vicki Etheridge opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present and thanked Wollondilly Shire for having us here today.

Vicki introduced our host Judith Hannan from Wollondilly Council who welcomed everyone present and added how important it was to have visitors in the shire with the floods and fires that have occurred.

ATTENDANCE: As per attendance sheet **Total 14**

APOLOGIES: Dom Figliomeni, Lawrence Ryan, Steph Cooke MP, Craig Bembrick. Pascale Stendell, John Hamblin, John O’Leary, John Hetherington, Dale Wiencke, Rob Fisher, Bede Ryan and Ken McGrath **TOTAL 12** **MOVED:** Maurice Simpson That apologies be accepted. **SECONDED:** Ray Morris **CARRIED.**

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING WERE READ:

MOVED: John Horton **SECONDED:** Garry Brathwate **CARRIED.**

CORRESPONDENCE IN:

19/12/19 Submission Acknowledgement Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee for the Inland Rail

Request from Michael Paag Requested to join the LRTC as he is part of the Blackheath Highway Action Group and has submitted a submissions to the State Government about the Mid Western Highway

CORRESPONDENCE OUT:

Letters from Phillip Laird to State and Federal Governments

12/11/19 Steph Cooke re: Harden Railway Station

13/11/19 Membership Invoices to all individual members

15/11/19 Inland Rail submission to inquiry

15/11/19 Maurice Simpson Inland Rail submission to inquiry

15/11/19 Jody McKay NSW Opposition leader & Greg Warren Shadow Minister for Local Government **MOVED:** Ray Morris **SECONDED:** John Faulks **CARRIED**

TREASURER’S REPORT

Opening Balance as at 1/11/2019	\$17391.44
Income	\$ 2312.70
Expenses	\$ 150.00
Closing Balance as at 31/1/2020	\$19554.14

Questions arising from Treasurer’s report

Judith Hannan asked if Wollondilly had paid their dues and Treasurer Dennis replied that they had not been paid. It was suggested that ones that had not been paid were advised of this and she advised that she would rectify this.

Michael Paag: asked if Blue Mountains City Council had paid their Membership.

Dennis Hughes: Member Councils, life members and individual members who have paid are listed on the bottom of the report.

MOVED Stephen O'Byrne that the Treasurer's report be accepted and accounts be paid.

SECONDED Maurice Simpson **CARRIED**

REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, ORGANISATIONS, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Garry Brathwate has been speaking with Mike Sullivan the Managing Director of Alcan and he has said that the company will be working under two different identities so you can now invest in either precious metals or gold. The Maryvale to Sandy Hollow railway line, a company has been invited to do a feasibility study from Maryvale to Gulgong railway. There has been no news on the River Street Bridge.

Ray Morris from The Lachlan Valley Railway: We are still processing the move to run tourist trains from Cowra to Woodstock. We have carried out an engineering feasibility study on the line from Cowra to Woodstock and I think it has been submitted to John Holland and we are waiting to hear a reply. I think the Mayor of Cowra may have more information. We are tidying up the depot a little more and making the place very visitor friendly and with the help of the Council, who have helped us a lot, we are just hopeful the future will be brighter. We have had to go a little slower because of the drought conditions affecting the Cowra Council and the entire area and other people here will understand they have the same problem and some also have the added problem of bushfires. We all wait and hope for the future.

Eddy Wilkinson Everybody else probably knows when we got the supposed cheque for reopening to Maimuru but the ARTC have pulled out the interlocking at Demondrille so you can't get in and they have now disconnected the other end at Blayney. They have cut it to run a line into a pet food factory which very quickly folded. So if you want to get a work train into there or do anything at all, you are now faced with a bill to connect it from either or both ends.

Steven O'Byrne Weddin Shire Council: Our Henry Lawson Festival won't be going this year as a festival with the construction of the main street upgrade. We will be ripping it up in 2 months. We will do something so that we can keep the date. Our Ambulance Station is up and running. Fully operational and running well. Henry Lawson Oval has a new Grand Stand and canteen facilities. We received a grant for that and it is being bricked but won't be finished for the start of the season. Our sewerage treatment works will start this year.

Bill West Cowra Shire Council: Our festival is on the first few days of April, usually late March. Council is still working closely with LVR. Cowra Shire Council received \$1,000,000 drought money and they will be putting in an application for \$140,000 to help them do a little bit of work to open up that line area. Those applications are still being assessed by council and I would hope by another week to 10 days they will be able to be approached for more details. The main street redevelopment still taking place, the footpath is looking quite good. The low level bridge, still making enquiries about that it a very important thing for freight and transport, same as the CBD bypass but until the state government comes up with some money it won't go anywhere and it is obviously impacting on our CBD. Blayney to Demondrille rail line. We were given the impression that we would have had a report on this but so far we have got nothing and we are about to kick the can and make a noise. We are hoping this organisation will come along and support us and get that report leaked out

into the public and the other one resignating now is that our region is transport and freight restrained and getting across the Blue Mountains is really difficult and the western rail line is being limited severely and road transport is being severely impacted and the community in the Blue Mountains are not happy with the upgrade of the Great Western Highway. Some real issues about freight that this group needs to start to turn our mind to and I will make the comment at a presentation at Canberra Airport, they pointed out that Dubbo is as close to Canberra as it is to Sydney. If the rail line at Demondrille was opened they would be running freight back down into Port Kembla and Sydney without a drama. At the moment it is very much restricted and putting pressure on the Blue Mountains. It is a golden opportunity to take the events of mother nature. Hopefully we can find some support when talking to our politicians

Michael Paage from Upper Blue Mountains: Been hit by bush fires and the Mount Victoria to Lithgow rail line is very badly damaged. They are still trying to get it up and running. Up until 2 weeks ago all trains could use that line except for electric passenger trains. Buses are replacing trains between Lithgow and Katoomba. There is a very significant washaway between Leura and Katoomba. There are no trains going across that western line as it is too dangerous. Buses are replacing trains between Lawson and Lithgow. XPT is no longer running. The two Bathurst bullets are no longer running and everyone is back to bus. No freight is running because the washaway has impacted 2 lines. The safety upgrade of the highway through Blackheath has significantly been delayed because of bushfires and bad weather. They are in the final stage of asphaltting at the moment. No work has been done on Medlow Bath. It was expected to be finished by the end of March but will have to be extended. Some parts have been finished and have had a positive impact on traffic flow through the village and also for people getting in and out of the village onto the highway. Our biggest issue is back in November 2019 the government announced a commitment of 2.5 billion dollars to duplicate the highway between Katoomba and Lithgow. There is only \$268,000,000 allocated in the budget. \$2.5 billion is all in their brochures but they do not have that money. The project involves reinstating the old plan for the Mount Victoria bypass, looking at some way to get around Blackheath and duplicating the highway between Katoomba Medlow Bath and Blackheath. The speed limit through the upper blue Mountains will only be 80, then 100km an hour through a new 4 lane road. We do understand the significant freight and transport restraints for the Central West. This project realistically will cost upwards of 10 billion dollars and will take 10 years to complete and will save 10 minutes. There is also a push for 3 traffic lights to be installed which will eliminate that 10 minute saving. By 2033 it is forecast that freight growth will be 80% and by then there will need to be a 3rd route through the Blue Mountains and it would be better to go with this option now rather than destroy us in the Blue Mountains. A highway through the Blue Mountains will never be a suitable freight transport route. We need to work together to find a long term solution for this problem. We believe freight on rail is an important part of this puzzle. If this project goes ahead it will put an end to any future investment in rail freight in the Central West. As you know all bushfires that attack the Blue Mountains come from the north of the Bell and they always cross at the Grosse and rip up the valley into the towns. There is a view, even from the Greens, that it is time to rethink the view of the Bell Road. Our economy has been decimated our businesses' turnover is down. In Blackheath alone business turnover is down 60 to 80%. A more effective Bells Road would act as a more secure firebreak to protect the National Park and protect the Blue Mountains. The time is right now to have a more long term strategic practical review of what we do with the transport needs of the central west and how we can all work together to put this to bed once and for all.

Bill West made a number of comments on the importance of the Road and Rail crossings of the Blue Mountains to the Central West.

Phillip Laird: We call on the NSW Government for a strategic review of Road and Rail Freight needs of the Central West and Blue Mountains

Judith Hannan: It is time for the Blue Mountains to get together with the Councils and sit down and work out a strategic plan which they can all agree on and bring it back to the next meeting and then we as a group support whatever they come up with.

Phillip Laird: Given the recent bushfires and floods cutting the Blue Mountains Railway in 2 places. The LRTC calls for the New South Wales Government for an update on the reopening of the Demondrille to Blayney Railway and connections at Demondrille main south line and Blayney to the main western line. **Moved** Phillip Laird **Seconded:** Eddy Wilkinson **Carried**

Maurice Simpson: I will be going to a Central Council meeting of the National Party in Sydney on 21st March and I am prepared to speak on it.

John Horton Hilltops Council: We are 100% for the Blayney to Demondrille line. Thank you for the letter to the government to clean the Harden Railway Station. There have been no complaints over the last 6 weeks. The Cunningar Wheat Terminal is working well. The new hospital is 50% completed. The new Rural Fire Service Headquarters in Harden is 60% completed. A new Country Club for \$8,000,000 should commence this year. A new General Manager commences duty in March. The amenities block at the Racecourse has commenced. A new amenities stand at the Rugby Park has started and a swimming pool upgrade in Young. A new Library complex with a hall, an art and photography gallery and café which will be worked in conjunction with the NSW Department of Education and Hilltops Council and will be open year round. It will be affiliated with a university. The library will be located on the Young High School grounds.

A letter of thanks for cleaning the railway station at Harden be sent to Steph Cooke

Moved: John Horton **Seconded:** Stephen O'Byrne **Carried**

John Faulks LRTC: The Government is saying people need to buy from the bush but the Government have done nothing to help achieve this. Where are our legal rights. Talking to Governments who don't know where we are. Perhaps a rail forum at Goulburn which is Central to the Federal Government and Central to the State Government. With bushfires, drought and now flooding and the Governments don't care. Sydney is the only place where things get done.

Philip Laird Stated that an informal meeting was held at Goulburn last year and perhaps if another one is held our group could be involved as well. More thought to go into this and a proposal brought back to the next meeting. Ian Gray has been included in some of these meetings and that LRTC may be invited to a meeting in the future.

Judith Hannan: Can we come back to Ian. He is talking about a group who are doing things and we should write and say that we are really interested in partnering with them or hearing from them or supporting them

Ian Gray: I could ask the chairman of that group to send everything to Dennis

Maurice Simpson: To Bill, is Centrock still working on the lines on the Bells Line of roads?

Bill West: Yes the number one priority is the fast link through the Blue Mountains and pushing to get that Eastern End corridor preserved but at the moment the councils have shied away a little bit.

Letter on table to Premier to be referred to the appropriate minister

MOVED: Ian Gray That the LRTC Write to the Minister for transport seeking conformation that the corridor for the Maldon Dombarton rail link be preserved on a potential location for a new station at Wilton **SECONDED:** Bill West **CARRIED.**

MAURICE SIMPSON: That we accept Blue Mountains Group into the LRTC with a \$300 membership fee

MOVED: Maurice Simpson **SECONDED:** Ray Morris **CARRIED.**

BUSINESS ARISING

IAN GRAY: The website is using outdated technology and is not raising much interest. The people who we pay on a monthly basis to help us update it are retiring and won't be able to do it after the end of this year. In the past we have been paying a monthly fee for assistance with that process. After discussion with Pascale and others I decided to rewrite the programme myself but after thought I decided it would take me too long and a web designer could do it much quicker. The other reason is a bit of succession planning and I don't think it is a good idea to have it all wrapped up by one member. With a designer it would be much easier to hand it onto somebody else. I propose we hire somebody to do the redesign and find a host which would be an ongoing cost of around \$120 per year. We need an information strategy to keep the corporate mind of this body and documents held. We will separate the issues of data retention and web design. We will ask Pascale to further define what she is doing now regarding data retention.

MOVED: Judith Hannan: Ian be invited to get 3 quotes for a website design and send them to the Executive who will make a decision. **SECONDED** John Horton **CARRIED.**

A subcommittee of Dom Figliomeni, Ian Gray, Pascale Stendell, Vicki Etheridge and Dennis Hughes. To report to the next meeting

Garry Brathwate: MOVED: That the hosting town and local press be forwarded news items and meeting dates to create more interest for the public to attend meeting.

SECONDED: Maurice Simpson **CARRIED.**

Eddie Wilkinson We need a Publicity Officer Open up our facebook page. We need to be current. All members to forward to Eddie e-mail addresses of local media.

Moved: Maurice Simpson Nominated Eddie for Publicity Officer. **Secoded:** Judith Hannan **CARRIED.** Eddie requested to open the Face Book page.

Judith Hannan Report on Airport. Massive amounts of dirt being moved around on the new airport site. People are talking about industry and freight they are starting to talk about not freighting stuff in but shifting businesses and even agri-businesses into the area. For Wollondilly it has been a difficult time with the fires with losses of houses and there has been some discussion with Wingecarribee about how as councils we allow people to build in certain areas and that needs to be looked at. With the floods, in the Richmond Hawkesbury area they keep saying they need to raise the wall at Warragamba to protect them from floods, I personally realise it is for them to develop down there. The water didn't get anywhere near the dam wall but it still flooded down there. It is simply so they can change the zone and build there. We have lost sections of road and there are huge sections of road that need to be rebuilt. While evacuating people we realised we do need a better transport system. One of the things put on the table was the electrification of the train further south

and the Maldon Dombarton. We continue to work with Swirl which is the Woollongong group. I suggest you invite SWIRL to come and present as they have a lot of information on the Malden Non Barton line. We need to keep an eye on the new airport as it will affect all of you. With the complaints about the roadways and rail corridors as yet no action has happened. We are interested in watching the Government talking about straightening lines and if they will take Picton out of the loop. There is a lot of talk and money promised but nothing is changing. We would still like to see a station at Wilton.

Moved: Eddy Wilkinson That the LRTC writes to the NSW Premier seeking confirmation that the land for the Maldon Dombarton rail corridor remains protected and for advice as to potential location of a new station at Wilton. **Seconded:** Maurice Simpson **CARRIED.**

Moved Judith Hannan that we write to SWIRL and invite them to present a presentation at the next meeting **Seconded:** Eddie Wilkinson **CARRIED.**

Dennis Hughes: After the last meeting I wrote to the Shadow Minister for Transport Jody McKay and Greg Warren Shadow Minister for Local Government and I haven't heard a thing.

Moved: Maurice Simpson That a letter be sent to the NSW Minister for Transport expressing our support for a budget allocation for the great separation at the foot of Mount Ousley in the 20/21 budget **Seconded:** John Faulks **CARRIED.**

Steven O'Byrne: Requested that the last 4 meeting places be listed somewhere for future reference. It was suggested to do it on the web page.

Next meeting at Canowindra CWA Hall to be confirmed

9th May, 2020

Meeting Closed

11.55am

CHAIRPERSON:

Previous Meeting Venues

Picton 15/2/20,	Cowra 9/11/19,	Greenethorpe 7/9/19,	Dubbo 11/5/19,
Blayney 9/2/19,	Temora 3/11/18,	Murrumburrah 11/8/18.	Grenfell 19/5/18
Picton 17/2/18	AIW Wollongong 4/11/17	Parkes 5/8/17	Canowindra 6/5/17
Temora 25/2/17	Lithgow 5/11/16	Boorowa 13/8/16	Wollongong 14/5/16
Cowra 6/2/16	Thirlmere 7/11/15		