

# DRAFT

## Minutes of Lachlan Regional Transport Committee Wollondilly Shire Council Chambers, Picton 29 November 2014

Meeting opened 1000. Cr Judith Hannan (Wollondilly) welcomed members and Mr Angus Taylor MP, Federal Member for Hume.

**Attendance as per list:** (25 Members)

**Apologies as per list:** M. Stacey, P. Stendell, Mayor K. Keith (Parkes), W. Erwin, M. Dowd P. Nunn, K. McGrath, D. Palmer, Cr S. Freudenstein, L. Ryan, P. Kelly. G. Standen, B. Ryan, B. Williamson, J. Ridley.

Minutes of the last meeting: accepted moved Kevin Thrupp, seconded Maurice Simpson. Carried

**Matters arising** from the Minutes – Nil

**Secretary's report:** The secretary reported that he had received positive comment re the Blayney-Demondrille line reopening proposal, but negative comment about silo closures from farmers.

Cr Bill West (Cowra) explained the present situation with regard to the Blayney-Demondrille line and delay to its revival. Moved: M. Duffey Seconded: D. Figliomeni Carried

<b>Treasurers Report:</b>	Opening Balance 1/8/14	\$6348.36
	Income	\$3255.10
	Expenses	\$ 488.88
	Closing Balance 31/10/14	\$9603.46

**A/C for payment:** Secretary's Expenses \$591.32 D.A.Yates Web Hosting \$55.00/ Month  
Moved: D. Hughes That the treasurer's report be accepted and expenses paid.  
Seconded: B. West Carried

**Correspondence was circulated.**

**Mr Angus Taylor MP, Federal Member for Hume**

Angus outlined his extensive professional experience in transport industries. He explained that transport is very important in his electorate, as it spans the Hume Highway, the main Sydney-Melbourne railway and also part of the future Melbourne-Brisbane inland railway. He pointed out that freight costs can determine whether an industry is competitive or not.

He observed that rail is winning around the world in bulk freight, and trucking is becoming less competitive. Bulk rail is very competitive even over short distances. Angus wants to help people see what can be done with rail, especially bulk grain. Non-bulk traffic is seen to be difficult due to transshipment costs, and is particularly difficult with the infrastructure on the East Coast. East-West traffic has a vast majority on rail. He sees a need to

1. Keep investing in infrastructure for double stacking containers on trains
2. Establish efficient intermodal terminals,
3. Eliminate conflict with urban passenger trains.
4. Build the Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail line.

Work on the Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail line is going on.

Angus also identified a need for innovation on spur/branch lines. This can only be done by

private enterprise. He said that the Blayney-Demondrille reinstatement looks to be a good proposition, and in light of what has been achieved by a small group of people working in the region, there may be potential for rethinking regional railways. He would like to see farmer organisations thinking progressively about rail.

**Maurice Simpson** commented that farmers had lost momentum over the failed sale to ADM (Archer Daniels Midland).

**Bill West (Cowra)** acknowledged Angus's support for the Blayney-Demondrille and Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail projects, and agrees regarding grain; commenting that councils also would like to see progress with rail.

**Dom Figliomeni (NSW Ports)** mentioned that, as well as GrainCorp, Quattro rail is developing grain transport. Grain storage and transport is becoming more competitive with a 500 000 tonne grain container facility to be built at Cooks River and another at Enfield. Government planning tends to take a project based approach. Nobody looks at the transport network strategically. Angus commented that NSW Roads and Maritime Services is starting to look this way. Dom noted problems with coordination of the many agencies involved in rail and the supply of information through them.

Angus added that road user charging is an issue but a difficult one for governments. Heavy vehicles have had good deal compared with rail. With heavy vehicle user charges, the Melbourne-Inland rail project would be an attractive investment for the private sector.

**Philip Laird** commented that USA container rail transport is much better than ours and asked – can the Melbourne-Brisbane inland line be built to North American standards? Angus Taylor replied that the private sector should become more involved and tell us what's needed.

**Max Duffey** raised the issue of city and port congestion as a problem for the Blayney-Demondrille line as well as the cities. Angus Taylor and Dom Figliomeni cited the Maldon-Dombarton line as a potential means to ease congestion and related costs.

**Judith Hannan** spoke of the role of planning organisations but warned of outcomes being predetermined. Angus Taylor responded that we have many such organisations and should not seek new ones. Judy Hannan said that the issue is about resourcing community based groups. Angus agreed.

With regard to innovation on regional railways, Ian Gray mentioned the experience of Western Australia where the transport of grain by rail has become very complex, and asked if a vertical integration model for regional lines would be considered. Angus Taylor replied that he expected that it could be and there may be no impediments placed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

Angus commented on the proposed High Speed rail development for the Eastern States, arguing that consideration could be given to funding it through regional development and consequent growth in land values. There may be more support for this proposition now than there was for the initial proposal in the 1980s.

The Chair thanked Mr Taylor for his very informative presentation and participation in discussion.

### **Council Reports**

**Cowra** – Bill West reported that the Blayney-Demondrille line revival could suffer ‘death by delay’ if the State Government persists with its intention not to announce a preferred tenderer until after the election in March 2015. He hopes that the Government is working constructively with a preferred tenderer. Bill also reported that work on the refurbishment of the highway through Cowra will commence shortly and that a bypass for the town is on the agenda for consideration.

**Weddin** – Cr Graham Halls. There is concern about absence of a rail service to Greenethorpe, and no extra funding available for the extra cost of road maintenance.

**Wollondilly** – Judith Hannan reported that there is strong pressure for additional housing but coexistence with mining and transport facilities, including airports, is a problem.

### **Corporation Reports**

**NSW Ports** – Dom Figliomeni reported that the Quattro Grain development at Port Kembla is going ahead, to be ready for next year’s harvest as will a facility at Port Botany. Importation of bulk liquids, including fuel, is being developed. Discussion continued regarding the Maldon-Dombarton line revival – expressions of interest have been invited and close in February. Dom commented that the line should be seen as part of a network.

**Ray Morris** – Lachlan Valley Railway supports and applauds the councils’ efforts with respect to the Blayney-Demondrille line revival project. A lot of work has been done at the LVR base at Cowra Roundhouse

### **LRTC sub-committee reports**

**Judith Hannan** outlined three options for the development of the website, as proposed by Pascale Stendell and the website manager. Judith recommended option 3.

Moved Kevin Thrupp, seconded Ray Morris that we adopt option 3, ask Pascale to take on the role of editor at least initially, and ask Dom and Ian to draft initial trial entries. Carried

### **General Business**

#### **Blayney-Demondrille railway**

Moved Maurice Simpson seconded John Faulks that LRTC writes to Roads and Freight Minister Duncan Gay and Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian, with copies to the Director General of Transport for New South Wales David Stewart and The Hon Angus Taylor, expressing concern that progress on the reinstatement of rail services on the Blayney-Demondrille line has stalled and seeking an assurance that constructive discussions are taking place with a preferred tenderer, so that development of the railway and related industries can proceed as soon as possible.

Carried

#### **Seminar in Albury and Rail Freight Alliance conference in Melbourne**

Ian Gray reported that 30 people attended a seminar held at Charles Sturt University’s Thurgoona campus on 17 September. Ian and the Rail Freight Alliance chairman, Reid Mather, spoke on the prospects for regional rail freight. Among the audience were representatives of local government and the rail industry including Ettamogah Rail Hub. Discussion focused on the issues confronting rail

freight development and took a positive tone, with indications of interest in regional operations among industry and government.

A highlight of the Rail Freight Alliance conference in Melbourne on 10 October was the apparently positive approach to rail being taken by the Victorian Government, involving a \$220 million dollar commitment to line upgrades, the reopening of two rural lines (as reported to the CSU/LRTC seminar in Blayney in 2013 by Frank Lander) and the Modal Shift Incentive Scheme which uses road and other funding saved by rail freight development to fund more rail freight development.

Moved Philip Laird, seconded Dom Figliomeni that LRTC writes to Minister Gay with a copy to Mike Baird, Minister for Infrastructure, asking that the State Government consider introducing a scheme similar to the Victorian Government’s Modal Shift Incentive Scheme and arguing that this could be boosted with funding allocated from the proposed sale of the electricity ‘poles and wires’.

Carried

**Orange City Council** seeking support for faster train services

Moved Philip Laird, seconded Maurice Simpson that LRTC write to Orange City Council supporting its call for the track to be straightened between Blayney and Lithgow, where possible by taking advantage of the original railway formation. Carried

**Closure of Newcastle Railway**

Moved Philip Laird, seconded Garnet Jones that LRTC notes with concern a continuing trend to close railway lines as exemplified by the Newcastle case. Carried

**Broken-Hill Parkes railway**

Max Duffey reported that he had received information that the track was very rough where timber sleepers had not been replaced with concrete.

**Separation of housing from transport corridors**

Judith moved, Kevin Thrupp seconded that LRTC writes to the State Planning Minister asking that adequate buffers be provided between housing and transportation. Carried

Max Duffey moved, Judith Hannan seconded that our sympathy be extended to members John Faulks on the passing of his mother and Brian Williamson at the loss of his wife. Carried

**Next meeting**

Dom Figliomeni moved, M Simpson seconded that LRTC invites NSW Roads and Freight Minister to the next meeting to explain and discuss priorities for funding from the proceeds of the sale of the electricity ‘poles and wires’. Carried

Some discussion ensued regarding the possibility of also inviting departmental representatives, possibly after the March 2015 State election.

Next meeting – Harden on 14 February 2015 was proposed  
The meeting closed at 1240.

Chairperson:  
Judith Hannan

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Secretary:  
Max Duffey

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