

LACHLAN REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Held at Katoomba

8th Feb 2014 at 10am

President Maurice Simpson opened the meeting, and welcomed those in attendance.

Apologies

Cr Anthony, K Lingabala, J Toohey, J Smith, Cr P Best,
R Lewis, B Williamson, G Schurr, A Taylor MP,
Cr S Freudenstein (Mayor of Young Shire,) M Foster, H Holmes,
R Lewis, H Mansfield, A Gee MP, Cr J McMahon, M Veitch MP,
D Palmer, T Sullivan, M Paag, Assoc Prof P Laird, L Ryan.

Acceptance of apologies moved Bill West, seconded Dom Figliomeni, carried.

Minutes

The report of the meeting held at Wollongong on 9 November 2013 was circulated. Cr Judy Hannan raised an error – she is a former Mayor, not a former Deputy Mayor. Confirmation of the minutes with that change moved Judy Hannan, seconded Noelene Milliken, carried.

Matters arising from the minutes

Judy Hannan referred to the proposed new residential development in the vicinity of the Maldon-Dombarton line, mentioning that the developer has reported leaving a corridor with sufficient space for a passenger railway station on the line.

Secretary's report

The secretary circulated correspondence. He also read a letter sent in August 2013 to politicians. He reported that no reply had been received to that letter.

Dom Figliomeni suggested we should follow up with politicians either in person or by way of the media. Discussion followed resulting in the following motion:

That the executive harden its approach, if necessary adding a consequence such as issuing a press release, and report to the next meeting.

Moved Dom Figliomeni, seconded Bill West, carried

Gordon Bradbery suggested approaching the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, Warren Truss to arrange either a face to face meeting with the LRTC executive or to address the next meeting. Bill West said that we should be specific about issues like the Maldon-Dombarton and Cowra Lines railways, and increasing freight on rail into Port

Kembla. Bill added that we need targets and a business case including the range of impacts of road freight. Discussion resulted in the following motion:

That the executive write to Federal Minister Truss inviting him to meet with LRTC to discuss the Maldon-Dombarton and Cowra Lines against a background of specific issues related to increasing freight on rail from the western NSW.

Moved Gordon Bradbery, seconded Judy Hannan, carried.

Acceptance of the Secretary's report was moved Paul Trevaskis, seconded Juliette Palmer-Frederick, carried.

Treasurer's report

The treasurer circulated a report showing a credit balance of \$5573.77. The treasurer also reported that some members had not paid their membership dues. Bill West suggested that invoices be sent to Councils. So moved by Bill, seconded Judy Hannan, carried.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report was moved by Dennis Hughes, seconded by Juliette Palmer-Frederick, carried.

Reports from Organisations

Lachlan Valley Rail: No Report

Port Kembla

Dom Figliomeni reported on a statement by the chairman of Infrastructure Australia in which the chairman commented that freight volumes would likely increase threefold, but the statement contained no affirmation of the importance of rail freight. There appears to be a mismatch – an opportunity to expand rail freight is being missed. Dom reported on developments at Port Kembla involving discussions with the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the operation of a rail freight coordinating committee, the extension of rail sidings at a cost \$300m to upgrade to the coal port and to facilitate the movement of longer trains and new freight volumes to be moved through the port. Also another upgrade to the port of \$110m to start later this year.

Paul Trevaskis asked if the Federal Government is still supporting the Maldon-Dombarton line completion. Gordon Bradbery replied that a \$20m study was underway which should bring the project to 'shovel ready' stage mid June, but we should remind the Federal Government that the Maldon-Dombarton line is part of the national freight system. Paul offered to raise the issue at a meeting of the Blue Mountains Transport Users forum.

Reports from Member Councils

Wollongong City

Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery reported that the Federal Government appears to be focused on roads. Progress for rail, including completion of the Maldon-Dombarton line, will need political will, which can only be obtained when backed by robust evidence.

Cowra Shire

Bill West confirmed support for Maldon-Dombarton. He reported that registrations of interest in the Cowra Lines had been received last year and the process was continuing into the tendering stage. He also indicated that potential operators want to know where the State Government stands with respect to the line - they need firm and clear direction. From the CENTROC perspective, regional transport issues also include the Bell's Road - how to get freight across the mountains and into/out of ports, noting that the funnelling of traffic will bring congestion and chaos.

Gordon Bradbery commented that it is good that we are concentrating on key areas of concern.

Dubbo City

Garry Braithwaite offered some background information on a rail issue confronting the Dubbo community: the proposed revival of the Dubbo-Molong line from Dubbo south to Toongi. Garry explained that the Dubbo-Molong line (serving Toongi) formerly provided an alternative connection between Dubbo and the main western line, and the main southern line through Blayney-Demondrille. Congestion resulted from the cessation of traffic on the Dubbo-Molong line.

Garry also explained that a mine is to start operating shortly at Toongi. A public meeting was held recently at Toongi. Alkane, the company developing the mine, attended. The view of the meeting was that a rail service was preferable to the likely increase in road traffic. Moreover, there are other mineral deposits near the railway line and if the line could be opened as far as Toongi, the rest of the line to Molong could follow. There are some varying costs to be investigated.

Some discussion followed regarding concern expressed by Dubbo residents about the operation of the railway. Maurice Simpson commented that the problem is that there is no plan. Ian Gray added that it is like the 'chicken and egg' problem – until there is a railway operator available to explain how the line would be operated, no discussions could be held to ensure that the trains do not affect local residents. In these circumstances it is very easy for people to assume that a problem would exist.

(Cr Mark Greenhill, Mayor of the Blue Mountains City, entered the meeting and apologised for his inability to attend the whole meeting due to bushfire recovery issues, which remain the

focus of his council. He thanked LRTC for the work it has done and expressed continuing strong support for the committee.)

Dubbo City Council Mark Stacey reported that, with regard to the Toongi development, the Council has taken the line's revival into account. It has required the necessary assessments and notations for new developments. Council has supported the rail proposal. It has been a protracted process involving an Environmental Impact Statement. Three options have been raised: reviving the railway, a combination of road and rail, and road transport alone. The road option may involve 158 heavy vehicle movements per day. The costs of a necessary road upgrade may have been underestimated and the rail option inadequately addressed.

Cr Tina Reynolds, Dubbo City Council, commented that council, while supporting the rail proposal, has to respond to any public concerns.

Maurice Simpson agreed that public concern is a real issue and suggested to Garry Braithwaite that he discuss the issues with Dubbo City Council and the LRTC Secretary, with a view to LRTC communicating with Dubbo City Council. Also advising of a 149 notation.

Wollondilly Shire

Cr Judy Hannan reported that Wollondilly Council is to be addressed by the Sydney Airport Corporation about a future airport. Major issues surrounding the movement of people, with effects on freight transport, are anticipated. This presents an additional argument for the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton railway. She suggested that photos of the LRTC group taken at the railway site be offered to the media.

Blue Mountains

Paul Trevaskis, representing the Blue Mountains Transport Users forum, reported that a new timetable for Blue Mountains services was being implemented without consultation. There were hints about interurban train services being terminated at Mt Victoria in the future. Refurbishment of interurban trains has been announced. Paul added that several State Government reports were now available. Warwick Erwin suggested that links to those reports be placed on the LRTC website. Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery suggested that particular note be taken of transport plans for Lithgow and the Central West in those reports. Warwick Erwin added that bigger trucks are likely to use the Mt Ouseley road. Comments are coming from concerned residents.

General Business

Maurice Simpson reported that he has had discussions about administrative assistance for the LRTC executive but has not been able to appoint a suitable person.

The Secretary reported his expenses for six months - \$980.81. Authorisation of payment moved Max Duffey, seconded Juliette Palmer-Frederick, carried. Maurice Simpson requested an itemised written report for the next meeting.

Heavy vehicles

Maurice Simpson mentioned new heavy vehicle regulations in force, with fines which will have impacts. Dom Figliomeni commented that heavy vehicles will have to improve but rail will become more competitive. There is no sense raising the cost of road transport without provision of an alternative. Paul Trevaskis commented on the effectiveness of heavy vehicle checking stations. Maurice Simpson proposed that we wait to see the effects of the recent changes to regulations and consider raising these issues with the State Government.

Melbourne-Brisbane railway

There was some discussion about the Melbourne-Brisbane inland railway proposal. Bill West suggested that we invite the mayor of Parkes to the next meeting. Ian Gray mentioned that Moree Plains Shire Council is hosting a public symposium on the inland railway in Moree on 7 March.

Air services

Bill West raised the importance of retaining slots into Sydney airport for regional airlines.

Wheat containers to Bathurst

Max Duffey commented on containers coming to Bathurst by road from grain belt areas. Maurice Simpson commented that underutilisation of the railway system demonstrates a lack of coordination from the State Government.

Oberon railway

Oberon Delegatereported that revival of the line to Tarana is proceeding well with the work being done by volunteers. Max Duffey added that there is a proposal to use rail from Oberon to Tarana for movement of containers to the main western line.

Badgery's Creek airport proposal

Judy Hannan commented that there are many questions to be answered regarding movement of passengers, fuel etc to and from the proposed airport. Gordon Bradbery added that there are many issues regarding connectivity at Badgery's Creek. We should act after the 19th Feb announcement is made.

Graham Dun reported that there is no road user organisation representing the people of the Central West. NRMA doesn't have a public forum. The current proposal or upgrading the Great Western Highway through Hartley is flawed as the cost of the upgrade is \$250m, as a better route is available across the Darling Causeway and on through Newnes Junction. A fast and reliable route is needed, especially for the transport of perishable freight. The planning authority is not sufficiently involved in road planning and construction.

Dom Figliomeni commented that some groups have identified strategic corridors. Some road projects were supported in the State's Freight and Ports Strategy. It is important to identify specific corridors when seeking support.

Bill West reported that the five councils working on the Cowra Lines project are seeking integrated road/rail transport and the development of strategic corridors like the Lachlan Valley Way and the Bell's Line of Road. These are issues of regional development. Bill also mentioned concern for pedestrian safety.

Gordon Bradbery commented that road projects have always been the default response of governments. But the issue now is how to take pressure off roads. Reviving rail is therefore important. Road issues are being handled by Regional Organisations of Councils. He suggested *that we invite a representative of the NRMA to speak at the next meeting*. So moved by Gordon Bradbery, seconded Graham Dun, carried.

Juliette Palmer-Frederick reported that concern had been expressed to her about the standard of training available for railway maintenance workers. Some discussion ensued about how training had changed since privatisation.

Judy Hannan commented that LRTC needs a media officer to draft press releases and organise media attendance at meetings.

That we ask member councils to help find a suitable media person

Moved Judy Hannan, seconded Bill West, carried.

Dom Figliomeni added that an executive assistant was also needed.

Next meeting to be held at Dubbo on the 24th May 2014: moved Max Duffey, seconded

Meg Ryan

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Chairman.....

Secretary.....

Action Sheet under current arrangements

Action		By	Status as at ...
Letters	To politicians who have not replied to previous correspondence	M Simpson to draft and despatch	
	To Deputy Prime Minister/Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development	I Gray to draft and forward to President and Secretary for signature and despatch	
	Dubbo City Council re Toongi railway	G Braithwaite to discuss with Dubbo City and M Duffey. I Gray to assist if necessary.	
	To mayor of Parkes inviting to next meeting to discuss heavy vehicles and Melbourne-Brisbane railway	M Duffey to make initial approach, I Gray to assist drafting letter	
	To NRMA inviting a speaker on the subject of road safety to next meeting	M Duffey to make initial approach, I Gray to assist drafting letter	
Invoices	To member councils who have not paid dues enclosing an invoice with each and cc to representatives.	D Hughes	
Media support person	Contact possible candidate and report to President	Cr Tina Reynolds	
Reports to next meeting	Re replies to correspondence	M Simpson verbal report	
	Re hardening approach to dealing with politicians	M Simpson verbal report	
	Secretary's expenses	M Duffey written report	
	Treasurer's report	D Hughes written report	
Links for website	Re government publications etc	I Gray to email to D Hughes, M Simpson	Done
Next meeting	Confirmation with Dubbo City	M Duffey	
	Agenda listing usual reports etc and items 'for information and discussion'	M Duffey	