



## AGENDA

NOTICE is hereby given that a meeting of the **BOARD OF NAMOI JOINT ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS TRADING AS NAMOI UNLIMITED** will be held on **WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2019** commencing at 2.30pm via teleconference.

|   |    |
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**Rebel Thomson**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**27 September 2019**

# **BUSINESS PAPER**

## 1. WELCOME, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND/OR PRAYER

Councillor Jamie Chaffey, Chairperson of Namoi Unlimited will welcome Members to the meeting.

| MEMBERS                    |                                       | PRESENT | APOLOGY |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Cr Jamie Chaffey           | Gunnedah Shire Council                | ✓       |         |
| Cr Catherine Egan          | Gwydir Shire Council                  | ✓       |         |
| Cr Andrew Hope             | Liverpool Plains Shire Council        | ✓       |         |
| Cr Col Murray              | Tamworth Regional Council             | ✓       |         |
| Cr Eric Noakes             | Walcha Council                        | ✓       |         |
| Craig Jenkins              | NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet | ✓       |         |
| NON-VOTING REPRESENTATIVES |                                       |         |         |
| Eric Groth                 | Gunnedah Shire Council                | ✓       |         |
| Max Eastcott               | Gwydir Shire Council                  | ✓       |         |
| Ron Van Katwyk             | Liverpool Plains Shire Council        | ✓       |         |
| Peter Resch                | Tamworth Regional Council             | ✓       |         |
| Jack O'Hara                | Walcha Council                        | ✓       |         |
| Rebel Thomson              | Namoi Unlimited                       | ✓       |         |
| BY INVITATION              |                                       |         |         |
| Jodie Healy                | NSW Office of Local Government        |         |         |
| Elle Rixon                 | Media Contractor                      |         |         |

## 2. APOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Author         | Executive Officer   |
| Policy         | Code of Meeting Practice Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils |
| Legal          | -   |
| Financial      | -   |
| Strategic Link | -   |
| Attachments    | -   |

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD:** THAT, applications for a leave of absence and apologies for the Extraordinary meeting are accepted.

AMENDED/ENDORSED

MOVED:

SECONDED:

REJECTED/CARRIED

PURPOSE: -

BACKGROUND: -

**COMMENTARY:** Applications for a leave of absence for this meeting from Members have been received from:

- Councillor John Coulton, Gwydir Shire Council

Apologies for the meeting have also been received from;

- Paul Bennett, Tamworth Regional Council
-

### 3. PUBLIC FORUM AND/OR PRESENTATIONS

Nil requested at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

### 4. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Nil requested at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

In accordance with Council’s Code of Meeting Practice and specifically Section 451 of the Local Government Act, 1993 declarations of interest are required by Councillors and designated staff attending the meeting.

| MEMBER | ITEM | REPORT | Type of Interest Declared (P, SNP, LSNP, RC) | REASON |
|--------|------|--------|--|--------|
|        |      |        |  |        |
| STAFF  | ITEM | REPORT | Type of Interest Declared (P, SNP, LSNP, RC) | REASON |
|        |      |        |  |        |

P – Pecuniary, SNP – Significant Non Pecuniary, LSNP – Less than Significant Non Pecuniary, RC – Remain in Chamber during consideration/discussion of item.

### 6. CHAIRPERSON MINUTES

Nil provided at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

### 7. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Nil provided at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

### 8. NOTICE OF MOTION OF RESCISSION

Nil provided at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

## 9. STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITIES REPORTS

### 9.1 Water for the Future – Drought Advocacy and Leadership

|                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Author         | Executive Officer    |
| Policy         | -                    |
| Legal          | -                    |
| Financial      | \$10,350             |
| Strategic Link | Water for the Future |
| Attachments    | ATTACHMENT A         |

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD:** THAT the Board;  
 i) Considers the proposal and briefing paper for the Canberra and Drought advocacy.

AMENDED/ENDORSED

MOVED:

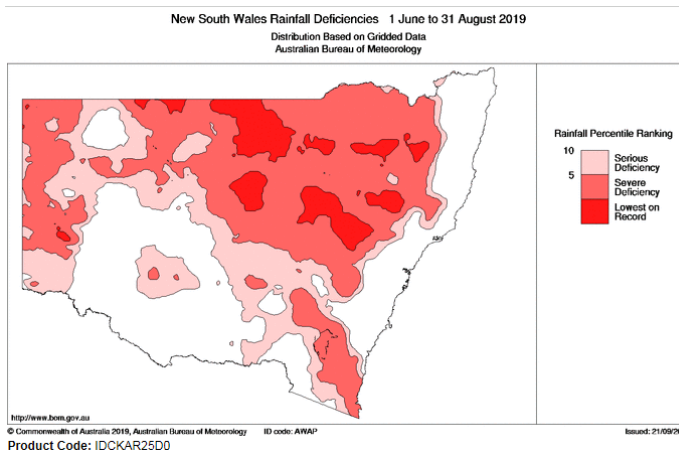
SECONDED:

REJECTED/CARRIED

**PURPOSE:** To provide the Board with an outline of a Drought Advocacy strategy.

**BACKGROUND:** At the September Board meeting, members agreed to undertake an advocacy activity and campaign to raise the impact of drought on Local Government Areas in the Namoi region, and to provide an opportunity for the Joint Organisation and its members to contribute to the discussions.

**COMMENTARY:** Drought is a complex issue; drought in Australia is defined by the Bureau of Metrology<sup>1</sup>.  
 Drought in general means acute water shortage. The Bureau's drought maps highlight areas considered to be suffering from a serious or severe rainfall deficiency.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/glossary/drought.shtml>

These classes are assigned by first examining rainfall periods of three months or more for selected places.

Drought declaration is the responsibility of State and Federal Governments which must consider other factors apart from rainfall; however the Bureau of Meteorology's Drought Statement assists by providing rainfall information to all interested parties.

### ***History of Drought Policy and Programs<sup>2</sup>***

*Drought policy in the middle of the 20th century focused on attempts to 'drought proof' agriculture through the expansion of irrigation. In 1971, government policy shifted to recognise drought as a natural disaster, enabling support for those affected to be provided under the joint Commonwealth-state Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.*

*In 1989, drought was removed from these arrangements and a review undertaken, which determined that previous drought policy was poorly targeted, distorted farm input prices and worked as a disincentive for farmers to prepare for drought. The response to this review was the National Drought Policy, announced in 1992. The objectives of the National Drought Policy were to:*

- *encourage primary producers and other sections of rural Australia to adopt self-reliant approaches to managing for climate variability*
- *facilitate the maintenance and protection of Australia's agricultural and environmental resources base during periods of climatic stress*
- *facilitate the early recovery of agricultural and rural industries, consistent with long-term sustainable levels.*

*Under the National Drought Policy, a number of assistance programs were introduced. The Rural Adjustment Scheme offered grants and interest rate subsidies and the Drought Relief Payment provided income support for farmers within declared Exceptional Circumstances (EC) areas. In 1997 these programs became the EC Interest Rate Subsidy and the EC Relief Payment.*

*Between 1997 and 2012, EC arrangements were the primary mechanism for supporting farmers under the National Drought Policy. For an event, such as drought, to be declared an exceptional circumstance, it had to:*

- *be rare and severe, that is it must not have occurred more than once on average in every 20 to 25 years and must have been of a significant scale*
- *have resulted in a rare and severe downturn in farm income over a prolonged period of time (that is, greater than 12 months)*
- *not be predictable or part of a process of structural adjustment.*

*Over time, the EC arrangements were shown to be inequitable, particularly because eligibility was determined by 'lines on a map'. The decision to close the EC programs was based on successive reviews of drought policy which found that EC assistance was ineffective and could result in farm businesses being less responsive to drought conditions. On 30 April 2012, the last EC declarations lapsed. There have been no EC declarations since.*

*Other programs were also established under the National Drought Policy between 1996 and 2000, including the Farm Management Deposits scheme, the Rural Financial Counselling Service, FarmBis and FarmHelp. FarmBis and FarmHelp were discontinued in 2008.*

Current drought programs for the Commonwealth provided here in this link <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance>.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/drought-policy/history>

### **The National Review of Drought Policy**

In 2008, Australian, state and territory primary industries ministers agreed that drought support based on EC was no longer appropriate in the face of a variable climate. In the same year, the Australian Government commissioned a national review of drought policy to help inform decisions on how it could better support farmers.

- An economic assessment of drought support measures was undertaken by the Productivity Commission. The report was publicly released on 12 May 2009; for further information please refer to the Productivity Commission.
- An Expert Social Panel was appointed to examine the social impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities. The seven member panel prepared A Report to Government, *It's About People: Changing Perspectives on Dryness* in September 2008.
- A climatic assessment was undertaken by the Bureau of Meteorology and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The assessment looked at the likely future climate patterns and the EC standard of a one-in-20-to-25-year-event.

The review found that drought conditions in Australia were likely to occur more often and be more severe. It also recommended that drought assistance programs be restructured to help farmers prepare for drought rather than waiting until they are in crisis to offer assistance.

### **The WA Drought Pilot**

From 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2012 the Australian Government, in partnership with the Western Australian Government, conducted a pilot of drought reform measures in parts of Western Australia. The pilot tested a package of new measures developed in response to the national review of drought policy.

At the conclusion of the pilot, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture along with other members of the Pilot of Drought Reform Measures Working Group compiled the 'Pilot of Drought Reform Measures in Western Australia'.

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/ag-food/drought/drought-policy/history/pilot-drought-reform-measures-wa.pdf>

### **The Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform (IGA)**

In May 2013 the Australian, state and territory primary industries ministers agreed the Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform (IGA). The IGA outlines the roles and responsibilities for implementing the new approach. The IGA recognises that farm businesses need to prepare for drought, rather than rely on governments' response as an exceptional circumstance.

The agreement between the members is included here

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/drought-policy/drought-program-reform/iga-national-drought-program-reform>

The communique from the last meeting in April is provided here

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/about/media-centre/communiques/ag-ministers-forum-april-2018>.

### **The Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper**

The White Paper, released on 4 July 2015, sets out the Australian Government's roadmap of practical actions to grow the agriculture sector. The white paper aims to help farmers prepare for drought, not only from a business perspective but through better social and community support. A number of initiatives were announced in the White Paper including improved seasonal forecasting, tax measures and farm insurance advice and risk assessment grants. Funding was also announced for



*continued access to concessional loans, Farm Household Allowance, the Rural Financial Counselling Service and Farm Management Deposits Scheme. More information on the White Paper can be found on the Agriculture Competitiveness White Paper website.*

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## 9.2 Water for the Future/Enabled and Connected Infrastructure – Increasing Resilience to Climate Change – ATTACHMENT B

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Author                       | Executive Officer/JOLT  |
| Policy                       | -   |
| Legal                        | -   |
| Financial                    | Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Grant \$285,000   |
| Strategic Link               | Engaged people and skills   |
| Attachments                  | ATTACHMENT B  |
| RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD: | <p>THAT the Board,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Endorses the appointment of GeoLINK Consulting for the project.</li> <li>ii) The Executive Officer moves to appoint and contract GeoLINK Consulting for the works.</li> </ul>  |
| AMENDED/ENDORSED             |   |
| MOVED:                       |   |
| SECONDED:                    |   |
| REJECTED/CARRIED             |   |
| PURPOSE:                     | To seek the approval of the members to the appointment of a consultant to undertake a consultancy in the Increasing Resilience to Climate Change project.   |
| BACKGROUND:                  | <p>Namoi Unlimited was successful in seeking a consultant to assist with stages of the Increasing Resilience to Climate Change project.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited engaged Hunter Regional Procurement to conduct the tender process.</p> <p>That process is now complete and the recommendations from that process are provided in ATTACHMENT B.</p> |
| COMMENTARY:                  | -   |

### 9.3 Strategic Regional Priorities – Capacity and Capability Funding (NSW Office of Local Government) – ATTACHMENT C

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Author                       | Executive Officer/JOLT   |
| Policy                       | -  |
| Legal                        | -  |
| Financial                    | Application for \$150,000 in funding   |
| Strategic Link               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Water for the Future</li> <li>2. Enabled and Connected Infrastructure</li> <li>3. Engaged People and Skills</li> </ol>   |
| Attachments                  | ATTACHMENT C   |
| RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD: | THAT, the Board endorses the four identified projects for funding under the NSW Office of Local Government – Capacity and Capability Funding program.  |
| AMENDED/ENDORSED             |  |
| MOVED:                       |  |
| SECONDED:                    |  |
| REJECTED/CARRIED             |  |
| PURPOSE:                     | To provide advice to the Board on the projects identified as priorities for funding under the NSW Office of Local Government – Capacity and Capability Funding Program.  |
| BACKGROUND:                  | <p>The Minister for Local Government has provided Namoi Unlimited and all other Joint Organisations in NSW the opportunity to apply for up to \$150,000 in funding.</p> <p>The criteria for the funding are provided ATTACHMENT C.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited has added an income generating criteria to the table; this is a priority for future actions.</p> |
| COMMENTARY:                  | JOLT considered the projects and has endorsed pursuing an application for four projects that total \$150,000.  |

## 10. QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

Nil provided at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

## 11. CLOSED REPORTS

Nil provided at time of distribution of this Notice of Meeting.

## 12. CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING