



NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

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24 November 2022

Dear Councillors,

You are requested to attend an Ordinary Meeting of the New England County Council, to be held in the offices of the New England Weeds Authority, 2/129 Rusden Street, Armidale NSW 2350 on,

Tuesday 29th November 2022 at 1:00pm

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Weeks".

Tim Weeks
GENERAL MANAGER

ORDINARY MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2022 in NEWA OFFICES AT 01:00pm

AGENDA

**Ordinary Meeting of Council commencing at 01:00pm on
Tuesday 29th November 2022**

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BUSINESS PAPER

**Ordinary Meeting of Council commencing at 01:00pm on
Tuesday 29th^t November 2022**

Statement in relation to Video Recording of Council Meetings

- 1.0 PRESENT**
- 2.0 APOLOGIES**
- 3.0 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**
- 4.0 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE NEW ENGLAND
COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2022**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the New England County Council held on 4 October, and having been distributed to the Members, be adopted as a true and correct record of events.

A copy of the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 4th October are an [attachment to this Business Paper](#).

- 5.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2022**
- 6.0 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE NEW
ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2022**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of the New England County Council held on 1 November 2022, and having been distributed to the Members, be adopted as a true and correct record of events.

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A copy of the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 1st November 2022 are an [attachment to this Business Paper](#).

**7.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER
2022**

**8.0 ADOPTION OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2021 to 2022
FINANCIAL YEAR**

For Information of Councillors:

While NEWA has finalized its draft financial statements and has substantially completed its part in the audit process, our Auditors, Forsyths, have strongly recommended that NEWA apply to the OLG for a further extension for lodgment of our 30 June 2022 financial statements.

The rationale for their conclusion is as follows:

1. NEWA has been severely impacted by staff shortages and lack of accounting support during the year.
2. The scope, range and number of sampling tests have been significantly increased from those of prior years.
3. The audit team will be required to investigate and report on NEWA's compliance with the Local Government Act. Under section 94 of the Local Government Act (the Act), a budget for each subsequent financial year must be prepared and adopted by 30 June each year. We note that NEWA's budget was not approved until 1 November 2022. We also note that NEWA did not prepare a quarterly budget review for the month of June 2022, which is a breach of the Act. The investigative and reporting procedures required will likely delay the audit process.
4. The draft financial statements will need to be updated to reflect the outcomes of the procedures outlined above. This will require additional time from the audit team to review the changes in the financial statements and audit updated balances and disclosures.

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5. Our audit team will be impacted in December and January as staff are taking a well-earned break, particularly during these months, therefore, we have limited capacity to pivot for any delays that may eventuate attributed to the above.

Audit's generally need at least four weeks from when draft financial statements and supporting workpapers are available. This provides us with very little room to account for contingencies with issues raised above.

Forsyths are suggesting NEWA applies for an extension until **28 February 2023**, as they have no capacity in December/January to complete the audit.

A letter has been prepared for forwarding to the Office of Local Government.

9.0 GENERAL MANAGERS REPORTS

9.1 QUARTERLY BUSINESS REVIEW – SEPTEMBER 2022

Recommendation:

1. That Council endorse the changes detailed in the QBR report, and
2. That Council adopt the September 2022 Quarterly Budget Review.

The Quarterly Budget Review is set out in the attached documents:

- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 - September Summary](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 – Income and expense detail](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 – Budget Review Summary](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 – Capital Summary](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 –Cash and Investments](#)

9.2 WEED CONTROL MATTERS

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Weeds Action Plan summarising outcomes and activities to date, including the 2022-2023 Weeds Action Program, be received and noted.

The Weeds Action Plan Report is set out in an [attached document](#).

10.0 COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION

Recommendation:

That Councillors consider the findings of the Local Government Review Tribunal to determine the level at which the Chairperson's additional fee should be set.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

In accordance with the findings of the Local Government Review Tribunal (April 2022), to revise the Chairperson's remuneration in accordance with the LGRT recommendations.

REPORT

The Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act) requires the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal ("the Tribunal") to report to the Minister for Local Government by 1 May each year on its determination of categories of councils and the maximum and minimum amounts of fees to be paid to mayors, councillors, and chairpersons and members of county councils.

Section 239 of the LG Act provides that the Tribunal determine the **categories of councils and mayoral offices** and to place each council and mayoral office into one of those categories. The Tribunal found the allocation of councils into the current categories appropriate. Criteria for each category is published in Appendix 1 of the report. These categories have not changed further to the extensive review undertaken as part of the 2020 review.

Section 241 of the LG Act provides that the Tribunal determine the maximum and minimum amount of fees to be paid to mayors and councillors of councils, as well as chairpersons and members of **county councils** for each of the categories determined under section 239. The Tribunal determined a **2%** per annum increase in the **minimum** and **maximum** fees applicable to each category to be appropriate and take effect from 1 July each year.

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Councillor's remuneration for Q4 2021 – 2022, was as follows:

Role	Chairperson Qrtly Allowance	Councillor Qrtly Allowance	Total Councillor Annual Salary	Average Travel Allowance
Chairman	1,591.71	636.74	8,913.80	
Councillor	-	636.74	2,546.96	
		Annual Totals	21,648.60	5,624.64

LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATION

Remuneration changes are made in accordance with the recommendations of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (LGRT) findings.

POLICY IMPLICATION - Nil

RISK RATING - Nil

ATTACHMENTS – Local Government Review Tribunal Annual Report
and Determination

11.0 END OF PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF OPERATIONAL PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2022-2023

Recommendation:

1. That the New England Weeds Authority Annual Operational Plan 2022 2023 be adopted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993.
2. That the constituent member Councils of Armidale Regional, Glen Innes Severn, Walcha and Uralla be provided with a copy of the final New England Weeds Authority Annual Operational Plan 2022-2023 and that the plan be available on Council's website.

Purpose

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 following Council's exhibition of the Operational Plan for the community to consider and comment upon.

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Background

Council at its June 2017 meeting adopted its 10 Year Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP) 2017-2027 as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

The Business Activity Strategic Plan details the activities Council will undertake over the Four-Year Delivery Plan from 2022-2026, together with the actions to be undertaken through the Annual Operational Plan to implement weed management and control of scheduled priority and invasive weed species, identified in the Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2022-2027, for our constituent member Councils.

Report

Council has placed on Public exhibition a copy of its 2022-2023 Operational Plan and Budget in order to seek community and stakeholder feedback. The plan has been on exhibition for a period exceeding 28 days.

Exhibition of the Draft Annual Operation Plan provides the public with the opportunity to make submissions to Council at any time during the exhibition period.

During the period of exhibition, NO submissions were received by the New England County Council.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council is required to prepare an Operational Plan annually that establishes its budgets, fees and charges and other financial information that allows the public and the member Councils to understand the resource allocations in that year.

Legal Implications

Under Clause 405 Local Government Act 1993 as amended, Council is required to prepare an Annual Operations Plan and place the draft plan on public display in order to seek comment.

Before adopting the Annual Operational Plan, Council must consider any submissions that have been made concerning the draft Plan. NO submissions were received enabling Council to adopt the draft policy.

Risk Implications

If Council follows the provisions of the Local Government Act and Regulations, there is no risk identified.

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Stakeholder Consultation

The Draft Operational Plan 2022/2023 has been displayed on Council's website and copies have been provided to our member Councils and those organisations or Councils that may have an interest in the NEWA operations. Printed copies have been freely available to landholders and other stakeholders if requested.

Options

No option exists to the requirements under the Act and Regulations.

Conclusions

Council has prepared and exhibited its draft Annual Operations Plan, without receipt of any submissions.

Link to Policy and/or the Business Activity Strategic Plan

Council is to be informed of changes to legislation that impact on the business of Council.

Supporting Information and/or Attachments

New England Weeds Authority [Annual - Operational Plan 2022-2023 – FINAL](#).

13.0 MATTERS OF URGENCY

14.0 NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 7th February 2023 at 01:00pm

15.0 ATTACHMENTS:

- [Ordinary Meeting of Council 4 October 2022](#)
- [Extraordinary Meeting of Council 1 November 2022](#)
- [Weed Control Matters – Year to Date](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 – September Review](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 – Income and expense detail](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Review – 2022 – 2023 Q1 – Budget Review Summary](#)
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