



# Preliminary Program

## MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2019

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10.00am **TECHNICAL TOURS**

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1.00pm **LIGHT LUNCH**

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1.45pm **OPENING CEREMONY**

Welcome to Country

Mayor Ann Ferguson - Welcome to Mount Barker

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2.00pm **OPENING ADDRESS**

David O'Loughlin, President, Australian Local Government Association

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2.20pm **GOVERNMENT ADDRESS (invited)**

The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

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3.00pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

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3.30pm **The State of Australia's Infrastructure**

Romily Madew AO, CEO Infrastructure Australia

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4.00pm **UK Perspective on Funding Local Roads**

Matthew Lugg OBE, Head of Profession, Local Government, WSP, UK

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4.30pm **ARRB and its Work with Local Government**

Michael Caltabiano, CEO, Australian Road Research Board (ARRB)

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5.00pm **WELCOME RECEPTION & EXHIBITION OPENING**

*Adelaide Hills Convention Centre*

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Appendix "A"

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**TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2019**

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8.00am **LIGHT BREAKFAST**

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9.00am **The Future of Transport – How Local Government Can Benefit**

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9.30am **PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Preparing for the Transport Evolution**

Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor, Adelaide City Council

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11.00am **MORNING TEA**

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11.30am **Drones – A New Take on First Mile, Last Mile and Asset Management**

Andrew Chapman, Co-Director and Drone Operator, AUAV

Speaker TBC, Air Traffic Policy, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development

Wing Australia, Speaker TBC

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12.30pm **The Latest from Austroads**

Richard Delplace, Network Program Manager, Austroads

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1.00pm **LUNCH**

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2.00pm **Heavy Vehicle National Regulatory Review**

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2.30pm **Road Funding – What are We Asking for and Why**

Matthew Lugg OBE, Head of Profession, Local Government, WSP, UK

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3.00pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

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3.30pm **Circular Economy**

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4.30pm **ASSISTANT MINISTER ADDRESS (invited)**

The Hon Scott Buchholz MP, Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport

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5.00pm **DAY TWO CONCLUDES**

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6.30pm **CONGRESS DINNER**

*Adelaide Town Hall*

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7.30am **LIGHT BREAKFAST**

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8.30am **Elimination of Harm from Road Use**  
Jeremy Woolley, Associate Professor, UniSA

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9.00am **Making Our Roads Safer - The Big Picture**  
National Office of Road Safety Speaker TBC

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10.00am **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)**

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10.20am **OPPOSITION ADDRESS**  
The Hon Catherine King MP, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and  
Regional Development

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10.50am **CLOSING ADDRESS**  
David O'Loughlin, President, Australian Local Government Association

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11.00am **MORNING TEA**

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# **Test of Significance**

**For  
The upgrade  
Of**

**Sandhills Rd, Berrigan**

**Revision 1 (Sept 2019)**

## Executive Summary

The proposed works will consist of the upgrade to the Sandhills Road. This upgrade will widen the road to ensure trucks have the ability to utilise this road. The upgrade will include a 6m road footprint, 1.2m shoulders and table drains on either side with the pavement being crushed rock 100mm deep. The works footprint will cover the Sandhills Road for approximately 2km, located to the south west of Berrigan, NSW.

The 'Test of Significance' refers to the factors that must be considered by decision makers to assess whether a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on threatened biodiversity ("5 part test"). This report deals with the Factors of Assessment (5 Part Test) and makes an Assessment of Significance on the proposed works footprint ("the Site").

In short, 6.5hrs of survey time was conducted during 1 site visit during the day in the day/afternoon. Survey design was guided by the 'Field survey methods for environmental consultants and surveyors when assessing proposed development or other activities on sites containing threatened species' (OEH, 2018) a '4 step approach' the online tools including the Commonwealth Protected Matters Online Search Tool and NSW Bio Net Interactive Map were consulted.

After site assessment and consideration of the receiving environment, specific species considered in the Factors for consideration (EP&A and BC Act) included the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*), Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*), Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*) and the Corben's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*).

No threatened species were identified on site and no EEC's are likely to be impacted adversely by the proposed development. The proposal will require the removal of some native vegetation. Thirty-Nine (39) native non hollow bearing trees between 5cm Diameter at Breast Height DBH and 111cm DBH being, a mix of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Bulloak (*Allocasurina luehmannii*). Three retained larger trees will need branches overhanging the road lopped between 40cm DBH and 124cm DBH. A very limited amount of scattered Wallaby grass and Climbing Saltbush will be removed during the road works however this occupies less than 5% cover of the site. No native shrubs on site and all other groundcover species are exotic see **section 8.1** and **Appendix B**.

Further, after careful consideration of the potential physical, chemical and biological impacts of the proposed construction design and methodology, I am of the opinion that the activities as proposed will not have a significant effect on threatened species and ecological communities and their conservation.

Danielle Cleland, Ba.Environmental Science (Management), Cert 4 Landscape Restoration and Management  
Environmental Consultant  
DJC Environmental Consulting

**Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Background</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1.1	Purpose.....	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Construction method</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Assessment scope</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>9</b>
4.1	Field assessment.....	9
<b>5</b>	<b>The existing environment</b> .....	<b>11</b>
5.1	Meteorological data.....	11
5.2	Landform & Geology.....	11
5.3	Soil Types and Properties.....	11
5.4	Vegetation Pattern and Bioregion.....	11
5.5	Surrounding land uses.....	12
<b>6</b>	<b>Threatened species, populations &amp; ecological communities</b> .....	<b>12</b>
6.1	Description of the study area.....	12
6.2	Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Thresholds/ Declared Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value.....	14
6.3	Known threatened species, populations or ecological communities.....	15
6.3.1	Threatened Flora.....	15
6.3.2	Threatened Fauna.....	17
6.3.3	Threatened Fauna.....	22
<b>7</b>	<b>Physical &amp; chemical impacts</b> .....	<b>24</b>
7.1	Is the proposal likely to impact on soil quality or land stability?.....	24
7.2	Is the activity likely to affect a waterbody, watercourse or wetland or natural drainage system?...24	24
7.3	Is the activity likely to change flood or tidal regimes, or be affected by flooding?.....	24
7.4	Does the proposal involve the use, storage or transport of hazardous substances or the use or generation of chemicals which may build up residues in the environment?.....	24
7.5	Does the activity involve the generation or disposal of gaseous, liquid or solid wastes or emissions? 24	24
7.6	Will the activity involve the emission of dust, odours, noise, vibration, or radiation in the proximity of residential/urban areas or other sensitive locations?.....	24
<b>8</b>	<b>Biological impacts</b> .....	<b>25</b>
8.1	Is any vegetation to be cleared or modified?.....	25
8.2	Is the activity likely to have a significant effect on threatened flora or fauna species, populations, or their habitats, or critical habitat; or an endangered ecological community or its habitat?.....	25
8.3	Does the activity have the potential to endanger, displace or disturb fauna (including fauna of conservation significance) or create a barrier to their movement?.....	25
8.4	Is the activity likely to impact on an ecological community of conservation significance?.....	26

8.5 Is the activity likely to cause a threat to the biological diversity or ecological integrity of an ecological community? .....26

8.6 Is the activity likely to introduce noxious weeds, vermin, feral species or genetically modified organisms into an area? .....26

**9 Assessment of significance ..... 27**

9.1 Factors for consideration - Test of Significance (“5 part test”) BC Act sections 7 (1) (a),(b),(c), (d)&(e) and under s.111 of the EP&A Act. ....28

**10 Conclusion..... 30**

**11 References ..... 31**

**12 Appendix ..... 32**

Appendix A: Site Photos.....33

Appendix B: Tree Protection Zone Plans.....35

**List of Maps**

Map 1: Threatened Fauna and Flora – NSW Wildlife Atlas.....23

Map 2: Site Map 2 ..... 37

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Field assessment methods employed .....10

Table 2: Observed Flora directly on the alignment. ....13

Table 3: Fauna recorded during the field assessment .....13

Table 4: EPBC Protected Matters Database results - Flora .....15

Table 5: BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife – Flora .....16

Table 6: EPBC Protected Matters Database results - Fauna .....17

Table 7: BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife – Fauna.....22

**List of Figures**

Figure 1: Sites Locality .....5

Figure 2: Proposed Works.....6

Figure 3 Land use – Continuous vegetation within 50m adjacent to the site (Yellow line) (Imagery: SIX Maps, 2019).....12

## 1 Background

DJC Environmental and Red-Gum Environmental were commissioned by the Berrigan Shire Council to conduct a Test of Significance for the proposed upgrade to Sandhills rd for approximately 2km between the Boxwood Intersection and Piney Rd, located to the south-west of Berrigan (**Figure 1**).

The proposed works will consist of the complete upgrade of the road to ensure truck have the ability to utilise this road. The upgrade will include a 6m road footprint, 1.2m shoulders and table drains on either side with the pavement being crushed rock 100mm deep. The proposal will require the removal of some of the trees along the roadside, as well as the lopping of some branches and disturbance to the groundcovers (**Figure 2**).

The implementation of the Proposal requires the following related development:

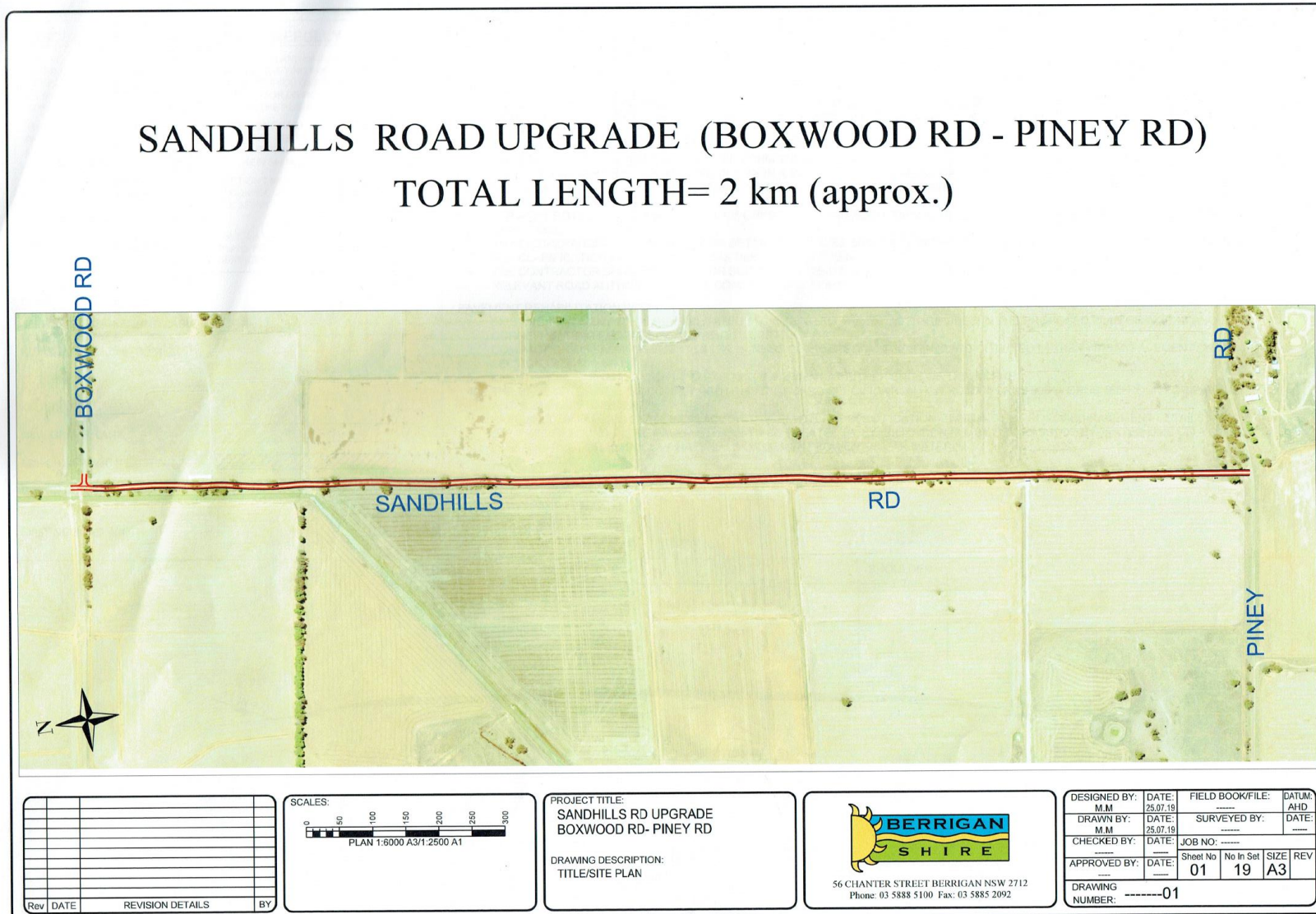
- Removal and lopping of some native trees,
- Disturbance of the groundcovers,
- Tacking and movement of machinery within the construction footprint; and
- Erosion and sedimentation controls, exclusion fencing ect.



**Figure 1: Sites Locality**



Figure 2: Proposed Works



## 1.1 Purpose

The 'Test of Significance' refers to the factors that must be considered by decision makers to assess whether a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on threatened biodiversity ("5 part test") as per section 7.3 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). The threatened species test of significance is used to determine if a development or activity is likely to significantly affect threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats. It is applied as part of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme entry requirements and for Part 4 activities under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (OEH, 2018).

Additionally Under Part 5 of the EP&A Act, it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure no harm to any threatened species therefore an Test of Significance (as required by Schedule 1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000) is a measure to be completed when impacts on threatened species or communities are a possibility. As part of this process the determination should be completed to determine if the development exceeds the biodiversity offsets scheme threshold.

In addition to fulfilling this statutory requirement, the aim of undertaking a Test of Significance is to improve the standard of consideration and protection afforded to threatened biodiversity in planning and decision-making processes (DECCW, 2004). The outcome of any threatened biodiversity assessment should be that developments, activities and actions are undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner and that appropriate measures are adopted to avoid or minimise adverse effects on threatened biodiversity (DECCW, 2004). While the 'Assessment of Significance' has been updated since this information was reflected by then Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (DECCW), now Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), it is still relevant.

This report addresses the Factors of Assessment (5 Part Test) and provides a Test of Significance on the proposal to complete an upgrade to Sandhills road between the Boxwood Rd intersection and the Piney Road intersection to the south-west of Berrigan which will require the removal and lopping of some native vegetation.

## 2 Construction method

Earthworks will be carried out in accordance with The Blue Book – Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction (Landcom, 2004) and AS2436:1981– Guide to noise control on construction, maintenance and demolition sites. Construction waste management will be in accordance with the Environmental Guidelines: Assessment, Classification and Management of Liquid and Non Liquid Wastes (EPA, 1999). Please refer to the attached plans for the location of the proposed works (**approximately 2km**).

The proposal will require the removal of some native vegetation. Thirty-Nine (39) native non hollow bearing trees between 5cm Diameter at Breast Hight DBH and 111cm DBH being, a mix of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Bulloak (*Allocasurina luehmannii*). Three retained larger trees will need branches overhanging the road lopped between 40cm DBH and 124cm DBH. A very limited amount of scattered Wallaby grass and Climbing Saltbush will be removed during the road works however this occupies less than 5% cover of the site. No other natives will be impacted, all other trees and groundcover species are exotic along the proposed road footprint (See **map 2 Appendix B**).

**Proposed Removal data – East to West – Natives only**

Waypoint	Tree DBH cm	Tree Species	Lop or Remove
107	70	Grey Box	Remove
108	90	Grey Box	Lop
117	28	Grey Box	Remove
116	19	Bulloak	Remove
123	5	Bulloak	Remove
122	15	Bulloak	Remove
121	15	Bulloak	Remove
128	105	Yellow Box	Remove
130	15	Yellow Box	Remove
131	22	Grey Box	Remove
137	111	Grey Box	Remove
145	85	Grey Box	Remove
149	57	Grey Box	Remove
150	90	Bulloak	Remove
155	67	Grey Box	Remove
154	25	Grey Box	Remove
156	30	Grey Box	Remove
157	19	Bulloak	Remove
158	19	Bulloak	Remove
159	19	Bulloak	Remove
160	76	Grey Box	Remove
162	89	Grey Box	Remove
163	100	Grey Box	Remove
165	98	Grey Box	Remove
169	57	Grey Box	Remove
172	105	Grey Box	Lop
173	83	Dead	Remove
173	20	Grey Box	Remove
174	4 x 30	Grey Box	Remove
174	100	Grey Box	Remove
180	70	Grey Box	Lop
183	83	Grey Box	Remove
184	70	Grey Box	Remove
187	89	Grey Box	Remove
191	64	Grey Box	Remove
192	70	Grey Box	Remove
194	70	Grey Box	Remove
200	67	Grey Box	Remove
197	89	Grey Box	Remove

Exclusion zones should be established prior to the beginning of the earth works phase and all stockpiles will need to be established at least 12 times the DBH of retained native vegetation and not under the drip line of any trees. The extent of works should be considered in an Erosion & Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) as part of the construction process (completed prior to construction).

Machinery to be used during construction may include bobcats, mini excavators, excavators, graders, trucks and various other light support vehicles.

### 3 Assessment scope

The field work was conducted to assess whether or not threatened species, and ecological communities, and their habitats are likely to occur in the proposed **upgrade for Sandhills Road (subject site) AND any areas in close proximity to this site (Study Area)**.

Subject site means the area directly affected by the proposal. Study area means the subject site and any additional areas which are likely to be affected by the proposal, either directly or indirectly (OEH, 2018). To this end – this assessment has considered all features within the works footprint and the surrounding lands as shown in **Figure 2**.

In particular, the assessment is to consider:

1. The extent of ground disturbance required to complete the proposed works;
2. The extent of likely impact(s) that the works will have on the movements of threatened species across the project site including potential foraging in close proximity to the site;
3. The extent of native vegetation removal required to facilitate the maintenance and
4. The potential for a Biodiversity development assessment report (BDAR) for the site.

### 4 Methodology

The review of the site and proposal has been guided by the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (OEH, 2018) and follows the objectives of section 7.3 of this Act. The Test of Significance ("5 part test") under section 7.3 (2) of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act) follows the Threatened Species Test of Significance Guidelines (State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage 2018).

The review of the site and proposal has been guided by the Field survey methods 'Field survey methods for environmental consultants and surveyors when assessing proposed development or other activities on sites containing threatened species' (OEH, 2018) a '4 step approach'.

Steps 1 -2 were conducted and managed by client in preparation for this report. Steps 3 -4 were used to guide the assessment overall and the final commentary under each of the headings mentioned by the assessment scope.

#### 4.1 Field assessment

A variety of methods were employed during the field assessment stage. The field assessment was completed over 1 day and 1 afternoon/night consisting of approximately 6.5 hrs of survey time. However, the nature of the proposal and construction methodology meant that some investigations were not warranted. **Table 1** provides a summary of methodologies used, those that were not and the reasons for both.

**Table 1: Field assessment methods employed**

Intended Target	Methodology	Conducted?	Survey Period Notes
Diurnal Birds	Area search, where the observer walked the length of the site twice in its entirety.	Yes – DJC Environmental	Conditions on the 13 <sup>th</sup> of August 19 were cool, clear sky and sunny. A small number of woodland were birds seen flying over and around the site.
	Point Count method, where observations were made from 1 point for 20 minutes each.	Yes – DJC Environmental	As above.
Nocturnal Birds	Day habitat search. Search habitat for pellets, and likely hollows.	Yes – DJC Environmental	Conditions on the 13th of August 19 were cool, clear sky and sunny.
	Stag-watching. Observing potential roost hollows for 30mins prior to sunset and 60mins following sunset.	Yes – DJC Environmental	A very limited number of smaller hollows less than 20cm circumference were observed within the works footprint.
Flying Mammals	Spotlighting on foot – 1hr on site on 1 night.	Yes – DJC Environmental	Yes a fox was seen onsite but no native fauna observed.
	Stag-watching. Observing potential roost hollows for 30mins prior to sunset and 60mins following sunset.	Yes – DJC Environmental	As above comments.
Non-Flying Mammals	Search for scats and signs - 30 minutes searching relevant habitat, including trees for scratch marks.	Yes - DJC Environmental	Nothing seen.
Bats	Spotlighting on foot – 1hrs hour walking the site on 1 night. (done at the same time as the flying mammals)	Yes - DJC Environmental	Some suitable habitat but nothing observed, potentially due to the breeze overnight.
Reptiles	Day habitat search.	Yes – DJC Environmental	Some suitable habitat but nothing observed.
Fish	Angling, Set lines, scoop and dip nets up and downstream from the site.	No – Not required	Not required
Invertebrates	Day habitat search.	No– Not Required	No known suitable habitat present or historical records to suggest threatened invertebrates may be present.
Amphibians	Day habitat search.	No– Not Required	None recorded as the site does not have suitable habitat.
Macro-invertebrates	Day habitat search using nets.	No– Not Required	No known suitable habitat present or historical records to suggest threatened Macro-invertebrates may be present.

## 5 The existing environment

### 5.1 Meteorological data

The climate is characterized as warm to hot summers and cool to cold winters with rainfall winter dominant. The prevailing winds are from the north-west in the summer months and south-south east in autumn and winter. The area has a mild sunny climate and is historically a winter rainfall district. The average rainfall is 444.2 mm per year as recorded at Station number 074009 (Berrigan Post Office) by the Bureau of Meteorology.

### 5.2 Landform & Geology

The site is situated within the Riverina Bioregion, and sits above the Murray River floodplain. The geology of the area is largely quaternary alluvial sediments. Clay and sand with source bordering dunes, lakes and swamps. Red brown earths, grey clays and deep sandy soils. Relatively confined alluvial fan constrained by sediments from northern Victorian rivers, the Murrumbidgee fan and the Cadell fault, with Meandering channels, floodplains, source bordering dunes, overflow lakes and swamps found within the region.

### 5.3 Soil Types and Properties

The soil type consists of sandy clay loam types with deep friable red and brown clay soils. The profile is well drained, with a moderate erosion hazard (NSW NRA, 2011).

### 5.4 Vegetation Pattern and Bioregion

The Berrigan Shire Council are proposing to complete an upgrade of the existing Sandhills Road between Boxwood Road and Piney Road intersection. The upgrade will see Sandhills road constructed to a consistent 6m wide pavement with 1.2m shoulders and table drains either side. The site is located to the south east of Berrigan. The site will require the clearing of some native vegetation to allow these upgrade works to ensure trucks can safely utilise this as transport road, where currently passage won't allow for heavy vehicles. The road alignment will be modified to ensure that the larger hollow bearing trees are retained within the road reserve.

The vegetation along the roadside is currently best described as a modified example of a woodland, with the understory lacking and heavily infested with pasture weeds. Both side of this roadside vegetation is surrounded by cropping fame lands. The remnant vegetation along the roadside is not continuous with large gaps in the canopy and section where these is entirely exotic species occupying the roadside.

The site has no shrub layer, with the overstory having three species present (scattered canopy) Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Bulloak (*Allocasurina luehmannii*). The ground covers for the works footprint (site) are almost entirely exotic, this a very small section of scattered Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia caespitosa*) and Climbing Saltbush (*Einadia nutans ssp. Nutans*) that will be removed during the works. The site is already highly disturbed with traffic and adjacent farm/cropping uses impacting sections of the vegetation. The site is too disturbed and lacking in correct native structured vegetation to be listed as part of an Endangered Ecological Vegetation Community. The site could be very loosely described as Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray Darling Depression Bioregions, although as mentioned highly disturbed/modified lacking the structure to be listed.

The works will not impact on any other vegetation surrounding the site.

### 5.5 Surrounding land uses

The site is located in a rural area on the south western side of Berrigan. Sandhills road is surrounded by cropping paddocks and farm lands in all directions. (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Land use – Continuous vegetation within 50m adjacent to the site (Yellow line) (Imagery: SIX Maps, 2019)

## 6 Threatened species, populations & ecological communities

The content of this section is guided by STEP 3 &4 in Field survey methods (OEH, 2018) and intends to determine the likelihood of the study area and subject site supporting threatened species.

### 6.1 Description of the study area

The area is located within the Riverina bio-region of NSW and can be defined as a modified example of Grey Box Woodland with no understory of herbs, sedges and very limited grasses. The site is not part of any Endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes (EEC) as mentioned before it is lacking in the required structure and diversity, as well as having a heavy exotic weed load. The following ecosystems were considered, Australian Government and NSW listed:

Description	Lithology and Soils	Area of Site
White Box-Yellow Box Blakely’s Red-Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland	Fertile soils along the western slopes and tablelands of the Great Dividing Range.	None – Site does not have the correct species composition to meet this EEC
Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression Bioregions		Part – Highly modified woodland lacking the well developed understory and groundcovers. The site is heavily invaded by a weedy ground layer.

The site has some of the ‘Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression Bioregions’ characteristics. However as required the ‘nominated woodland’s component communities are generally characterised as woodland or open woodland with a well-developed ground stratum that is usually grassy, but also includes many subshrubs and herbs; some component communities have understory’s that are predominantly shrubby or herbaceous’, this site is lacking the native groundcovers as it is heavily infested by weedy species and impacted by existing uses as well as being isolated with cropping either side of the road. There is a very limited shrub layer further away from the proposed road alignment and the tree cover is scattered and impacted by current road uses.

The extent of the assessment included the area directly affected by the proposal plus all of the immediate environs connecting to land. Table 2 is a record of all flora recorded during the field assessment conducted over one Day/ one Afternoon (13<sup>th</sup> August 2019) by DJC Environmental. Table 3 is a record of all fauna observed during the same period.

**Table 2: Observed Flora on the alignment or directly adjacent.**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Einadia nutans ssp. nutans</i>	Climbing Salt Bush		
<i>Eucalyptus microcarpa</i>	Grey Box	<i>Allocasuarina luehmannii</i>	Bulloak
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	<i>Austrodanthonia caespitosa</i>	White Top Wallaby Grass
<i>Plantago lanceolate*</i>	Plantain	<i>Taraxacum officinale *</i>	Dandelion
<i>Arctotheca calendula*</i>	Capeweed	<i>Soliva pterosperma*</i>	Bindi eye
<i>Digitaria sanguinalis (L.) Scop*</i>	Summer Grass	<i>Agrostis avenacea*</i>	Blown Grass
<i>Tribulus terrestris*</i>	Cats Head Burr	<i>Conyza spp*</i>	Fleabane
<i>Piper nigrum*</i>	Pepper Corn	<i>Marrubium vulgare*</i>	Horehound
<i>Elymus repens*</i>	Couch	<i>Phalaris aquatica*</i>	Phalaris
<i>Cortaderia selloana*</i>	Pampas Grass	<i>Echium plantagineum*</i>	Patersons Curse
<i>Nassella charruana*</i>	Lobed Needle Grass	<i>Atriplex</i>	Saltbush
<i>Malva parviflora*</i>	Marshmallow	<i>Romulea rosea*</i>	Onion Grass
<i>Eragrostis curvula*</i>	African Love Grass	<i>Nassella tenuissima</i>	Spear Grass
<i>Brassica napus*</i>	Canola	<i>Rumex obtusifolius*</i>	Dock
<i>Urtica dioica*</i>	Stinging Nettle	<i>Lolium*</i>	Rye Grass
<i>Hordeum glaucum*</i>	Barley Grass	<i>Hypochoeris radicata*</i>	Flat weed

\*Introduced species

**Table 3: Fauna recorded during the field assessment**

Scientific name	Common name
<b>Birds</b>	
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian magpie
<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Australian Wood Duck
<i>Passer domesticus *</i>	House sparrow
<i>Eolophus roseicapilla</i>	Galah
<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>	Little Corella
<i>Passeridae</i>	Sparrow
<i>Phalacrocoracidae</i>	Cormorant
<i>Egretta picata</i>	Pied Heron
<i>Cracticus</i>	Butcherbird
<i>Artamus personatus</i>	Masked Woodswallow

<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail
<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	Noisy Miner
<i>Corvus</i>	Crow
<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Sulphur-crested cockatoo
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Eastern Rosella
<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	Red-rumped Parrot
<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Laughing Kookaburra
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Fox



### 6.2 Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Thresholds/ Declared Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value

Section 7.2 of the BC Act provides that development under the EP&A Act is likely to significantly affect threatened species if:

- (a) it is likely to significantly affect threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats, according to the test in section 7.3, or
- (b) the development exceeds the biodiversity offsets scheme threshold if the biodiversity offsets scheme applies to the impacts of the development on biodiversity values, or
- (c) it is carried out in a declared area of outstanding biodiversity value.

For an activity under Part 5 of the EP&A Act clause (b) does not apply, so an activity will only be likely to significantly affect a threatened species if:

- (a) it is likely to significantly affect threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats, according to the test in section 7.3, or
- (b) it is carried out in a declared area of outstanding biodiversity value.

For this project (activity under Part 4) the proposed Sandhills Road upgrade works will not be significantly impacting any threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats. The site is also not mapped as an 'area of high biodiversity value' See **Figure 4** below biodiversity value map showing no mapped areas.



**Figure 4 Mapped Biodiversity Value – (Purple fill- Non on map) (Biodiversity Value Map, 2019)**

### 6.3 Known threatened species, populations or ecological communities

#### 6.3.1 Threatened Flora

Consultation with the EPBC Protected Matters Online Search Tool for the site (Berrigan Shire area) returned 4 Vulnerable species, 1 Critically Endangered and 5 Endangered species whose habitat may occur within that specified geographic range. Table 4 considers their likelihood of occurring in the proposed site.

**Table 4: EPBC Protected Matters Database results - Flora**

Species	Preferred Habitat	EPBC Act Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression Bioregions		Endangered	Unlikely –Missing some of the overstorey species and structure in the understorey and groundcovers. Current uses also have high impacts to the site.
Weeping Myall Woodlands		Endangered	No – No suitable habitat.
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland		Critically Endangered	Unlikely –Missing some of the overstorey species and structure in the understorey
<i>Amphibromus fluitans</i> River Swamp Wallaby-grass	Moderately fertile wetlands, some bare ground and seasonally-fluctuating water levels.	Vulnerable	No – No suitable habitat.
<i>Austrostipa wakoolica</i>	Grows on floodplains of the Murray River tributaries, in open woodland on grey, silty clay or sandy loam soils;	Endangered	Unlikely – Due to the disturbance of the site. None seen
<i>Brachyscome muelleroides</i> - Mueller Daisy	Grows in damp areas on the margins of claypans in moist grassland with <i>Pycnosorus globosus</i> , <i>Agrostis avenacea</i> and <i>Austrodanthonia duttoniana</i> .	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Due to the disturbance of the site. None seen
<i>Sclerolaena napiformis</i> - Turnip Copperburr	Confined to remnant grassland habitats on clay-loam soils. Grows on level plains in tussock grassland of <i>Austrostipa nodosa</i> and <i>Chloris truncata</i> , in grey cracking clay to red-brown loamy clay.	Endangered	Unlikely – Due to the disturbance of the site. None seen
<i>Swainsona murrayana</i> - Slender Darling-pea, Slender Swainson.	Often grows in heavy soils, especially depressions, and is also found on grey and red to brown clay and clay-loam soils.	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Due to the disturbance of the site. None seen
<i>Prasophyllum validum</i> – Sturdy Leek-orchid	Tends to grow in drier woodland habitats, generally with a low sparse understorey.	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Due to the disturbance of the site. None seen
<i>Swainsona recta</i> – Small Purple-Pea	Grows in association with understorey dominants that include Kangaroo Grass <i>Themeda australis</i> , poa tussocks <i>Poa</i> spp. and spear-grasses <i>Austrostipa</i> spp.	Endangered	Unlikely – Due to the disturbance of the site. None seen

<sup>1</sup> Five categories for the 'likelihood of occurrence' of species has been used. The categories are based on recorded sightings listed in credible databases, the presence or absence of suitable habitat, other features of the site, results of the field survey and professional judgement. The 5 categories are:

- 'Yes' The species/community was or has been observed on the site.  
'Likely' A medium to High probability that a species uses the site

<b>'Potential'</b>	A suitable habitat for a species occurs on the site, but there is insufficient information to categorise the species as 'likely' or 'unlikely' to occur.
<b>'Unlikely'</b>	A Very Low to Low probability that a species uses the site.
<b>'No'</b>	Habitat on the site and in the vicinity is unsuitable for the species.

Consultation with NSW BioNet: The website for the Atlas of NSW Wildlife for flora records returned 0 Critically Endangered, 0 Endangered and 0 vulnerable listed species previously recorded within 10km of the site. Table 5 considers their likelihood of occurring at the site.

**Table 5: BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife – Flora**

Species	Preferred Habitat	NSW Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
N/A			

<sup>1</sup> Five categories for the 'likelihood of occurrence' of species has been used. The categories are based on recorded sightings listed in credible databases, the presence or absence of suitable habitat, other features of the site, results of the field survey and professional judgement. The 5 categories are:

<b>'Yes'</b>	The species/community was or has been observed on the site.
<b>'Likely'</b>	A medium to High probability that a species uses the site
<b>'Potential'</b>	A suitable habitat for a species occurs on the site, but there is insufficient information to categorise the species as 'likely' or 'unlikely' to occur.
<b>'Unlikely'</b>	A Very Low to Low probability that a species uses the site.
<b>'No'</b>	Habitat on the site and in the vicinity is unsuitable for the species.

### 6.3.2 Threatened Fauna

Consultation with the EPBC Protected Matters Online Search Tool for 10km surrounding the site (Berrigan Shire area) area returned 10 Vulnerable, 22 Migratory, 7 Endangered and 5 Critically Endangered species whose habitat may occur within that specified geographic range. Table 6 considers their likelihood of occurring in the proposed site.

**Table 6: EPBC Protected Matters Database results - Fauna**

Species	Preferred Habitat	EPBC Act Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
<b>Birds</b>			
<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i> - Regent Honeyeater	Dry open forest and woodlands on inland slopes and valleys particularly Box Woodlands.	Endangered	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Grantiella picta</i> - Painted Honeyeater	Inhabits Boree/ Weeping Myall ( <i>Acacia pendula</i> ), Brigalow ( <i>A. harpophylla</i> ) and Box-Gum Woodlands and Box-Ironbark Forest.	Vulnerable	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Lathamus discolor</i> - Swift Parrot	Forests and woodlands dominated by winter flowering eucalypts	Endangered	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Rostratula australis</i> - Australian Painted Snipe	Margins of densely vegetated swamps and wetlands	Vulnerable	Unlikely – More suitable habitat close by.
<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i> - Australasian Bittern	Found in wetlands with tall, dense vegetation, favours permanent and seasonal freshwater habitats, particularly those dominated by sedges, rushes	Endangered	Unlikely – More suitable habitat close by.
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i> - Curlew Sandpiper	occur on intertidal mudflats in sheltered coastal areas, such as estuaries, bays, inlets and lagoons and also around non-tidal swamps, lakes and lagoons	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> - Eastern Curlew	Found in Australia in August (Migratory bird) to feed on crabs and molluscs in intertidal mudflats.	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i> - Plains-wanderer	Inhabit sparse native grasslands and are often absent from areas where grass becomes too dense or too sparse.	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i> - Superb Parrot	The Superb Parrot mainly inhabits forests and woodlands dominated by eucalypts.	Vulnerable	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i> – White-throated Needletail	Recorded most often above wooded areas, including open forest and rainforest, and may also fly between trees or in clearings, below the canopy	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Habitat not suitable on site.

Species	Preferred Habitat	EPBC Act Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
<b>Fish</b>			
<i>Galaxias rostratus</i> - Flathead Galaxias	Inhabitats including billabongs, lakes, swamps and rivers, with a preference for still or slow flowing waters.	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Craterocephalus fluviatilis</i> - Murray Hardyhead	Is endemic to the lowland reaches of the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers and their tributaries, floodplain billabongs and lakes.	Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Macquaria australasica</i> – Macquarie Perch	Widespread through the cooler upper reaches of the southern tributaries of the Murray-Darling river system in Victoria and New South Wales.	Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<b>Frogs</b>			
<i>Litoria raniformis</i> - Growling Grass Frog	Still or slow-flowing water bodies such as lagoons, amongst emergent vegetation.	Vulnerable	No – No suitable habitat for the species on site.
<i>Crinia sloanei</i> – Sloane's Froglet	Inundated areas in grassland, woodland and disturbed habitats.	Endangered	Unlikely – Habitat not suitable on site.
<b>Insects</b>			
<i>Synemon plana</i> – Golden Sun Moth	Habitat may contain several wallaby grass species, which are typically associated with other grasses particularly spear-grasses <i>Austrostipa</i> spp. or Kangaroo Grass <i>Themeda australis</i>	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species on site.
<b>Mammals</b>			
<i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i> - Corben's Long-eared Bat	Inhabits a variety of vegetation types, including mallee, bullock Allocasuarina leuhmanni and box eucalypt dominated communities, but it is distinctly more common in box/ironbark/cypress-pine.	Vulnerable	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i> - Grey-headed Flying-fox	Requires foraging resources and roosting sites.	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Habitat not suitable on site.
<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> - Koala	Temperate, sub-tropical and tropical forest, woodland and semi-arid communities dominated by Eucalyptus species	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Lack of suitable habitat, as the site has limited connectivity to better quality vegetation. Limited food sources on the site with a lack of food diversity.

Species	Preferred Habitat	EPBC Act Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
<b>Reptiles</b>			
<i>Aprasia parapulchella</i> - Pink-tailed Worm-lizard,	Most commonly found sheltering under small rocks (15–60 cm basal area) shallowly embedded in the soil.	Vulnerable	No - Not appropriate habitat
<i>Delma impar</i> - Striped Legless Lizard	Found where vegetation and rocks are able to provide protection.	Vulnerable	No - Not appropriate habitat
<b>Migratory Terrestrial Birds</b>			
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i> - White-throated Needletail	Feed, drink and rest on the wing in large groups. May rest at night in forested country.	Migratory	No - Not appropriate habitat as the site is not forested enough or connected to more densely forested areas.
<i>Motacilla flava</i> – Yellow Wagtail	Found in short grass, bare ground, swamp margins, sewage ponds and town lawns. Mostly coastal.	Migratory	Unlikely – area is outside this birds range.
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i> - Satin Flycatcher	Tall wet eucalypt forests of SE Australia.	Migratory	No – Not appropriate habitat
<b>Migratory Wetland Birds</b>			
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> - Eastern Curlew	Found in Australia in August (Migratory bird) to feed on crabs and molluscs in intertidal mudflats.	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species on the site.
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i> - Curlew Sandpiper	Occur on intertidal mudflats in sheltered coastal areas, such as estuaries, bays, inlets and lagoons and also around non-tidal swamps, lakes and lagoons	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i> - Latham's Snipe	Freshwater swamps and marshes as well as salt marshes and mud flats	Migratory	No – No shallow water environs on the site.
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> - Common Sandpiper	Found in coastal or inland wetlands, both saline or fresh.	Migratory	No – No shallow water environs on the site.
<i>Calidris acuminata</i> - Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Prefers the grassy edges of shallow inland freshwater wetlands. It is also found around swage farms, flooded fields, mudflats, mangroves, rocky shores and beaches.	Migratory	No – No shallow water environs on the site.
<i>Calidris melanotos</i> - Pectoral Sandpiper	Prefers the grassy edges of shallow inland freshwater wetlands. It is also found around swage farms, flooded fields, mudflats, mangroves, rocky shores and beaches.	Migratory	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.

Species	Preferred Habitat	EPBC Act Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> - Osprey	The breeding range of the Eastern Osprey extends around the northern coast of Australia (including many offshore islands) from Albany in Western Australia to Lake Macquarie in NSW	Migratory	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.
<b>Migratory Marine Birds</b>			
<i>Apus pacificus</i> - Fork-tailed Swift	Spend most their life airborne. Build their nests on cliffs.	Migratory	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.
<b>Listed Marine Birds</b>			
<i>Apus pacificus</i> - Fork-tailed Swift	Spend most their life airborne. Build their nests on cliffs.	Migratory	No – Not geologically suitable.
<i>Ardea ibis</i> - Cattle Egret	Shallow water and open dry grassy habitats	Migratory	No – No suitable habitat.
<i>Ardea alba</i> – Great Egret	Has been reported in a wide range of wetland habitats, (for example inland and coastal, freshwater and saline, permanent and ephemeral, open and vegetated, large and small, natural and artificial waterbodies.	Migratory	No – No shallow water environs.
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i> - White-throated Needletail	Feed, drink and rest on the wing in large groups. May rest at night in forested country.	Vulnerable	Unlikely – more suitable areas of better-quality vegetation further from the site.
<i>Motacilla flava</i> – Yellow Wagtail	Found in short grass, bare ground, swamp margins, sewage ponds and town lawns. Mostly coastal.	Migratory	Unlikely – more suitable areas of better-quality vegetation further from the site.
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i> - Curlew Sandpiper	Occur on intertidal mudflats in sheltered coastal areas, such as estuaries, bays, inlets and lagoons and also around non-tidal swamps, lakes and lagoons	Critically Endangered	No – No suitable habitat for the species
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i> - Latham's Snipe	Freshwater swamps and marshes as well as salt marshes and mud flats	Migratory	No – No shallow water environs.
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> - White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Surface waters along coasts, islands, inlets also along larger inland rivers and lakes.	Migratory	No – No shallow water environs.
<i>Merops ornatus</i> - Rainbow Bee-eater	Occurs in open woodlands, shrublands, grasslands and forests including riparian areas.	Migratory	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Preferred Habitat</b>	<b>EPBC Act Status</b>	<b>Likelihood<sup>1</sup></b>
<i>Lathamus discolor</i> - Swift Parrot	Forests and woodlands dominated by winter flowering eucalypts	Endangered	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> - Common Sandpiper	Found in coastal or inland wetlands, both saline or fresh.	Migratory	Unlikely – area is outside this birds range.
<i>Calidris acuminata</i> - Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Prefers the grassy edges of shallow inland freshwater wetlands. It is also found around swage farms, flooded fields, mudflats, mangroves, rocky shores and beaches.	Migratory	Unlikely – area is outside this birds range.
<i>Calidris melanotos</i> - Pectoral Sandpiper	Prefers shallow fresh to saline wetlands. The species is found at coastal lagoons, estuaries, bays, swamps, lakes, inundated grasslands, saltmarshes, river pools, creeks, floodplains and artificial wetlands.	Migratory	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.
<i>Chrysococcyx osculans</i> - Black-eared Cuckoo	Found in drier country where species such as mulga and mallee form open woodlands and shrublands. It is often found in vegetation along creek beds.	Migratory	Unlikely – Wrong woodland habitat around the site.
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> – Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew	It generally occupies coastal lakes, inlets, bays and estuarine habitats, and in New South Wales is mainly found in intertidal mudflats and sometimes saltmarsh of sheltered coasts.	Critically Endangered	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> – Osprey	Favour coastal areas, especially the mouths of large rivers, lagoons and lakes.	Migratory	Unlikely – area is outside this birds range
<i>Rostratula benghalensis (sensu lato)</i> – Painted Snipe	Prefers fringes of swamps, dams and nearby marshy areas where there is a cover of grasses, lignum, low scrub or open timber.	Endangered	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.
<i>Myiagra Cyanoleuca</i> – Satin Flycatcher	Mainly inhabit eucalypt forests, often near wetlands or watercourses. They also occur in eucalypt woodlands with open understorey and grass ground cover	Migratory	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.

<sup>1</sup> Five categories for the 'likelihood of occurrence' of species has been used. The categories are based on recorded sightings listed in credible databases, the presence or absence of suitable habitat, other features of the site, results of the field survey and professional judgement. The 5 categories are:

**'Yes'** The species/community was or has been observed on the site.



<b>'Likely'</b>	A medium to High probability that a species uses the site
<b>'Potential'</b>	A suitable habitat for a species occurs on the site, but there is insufficient information to categorise the species as 'likely' or 'unlikely' to occur.
<b>'Unlikely'</b>	A Very Low to Low probability that a species uses the site.
<b>'No'</b>	Habitat on the site and in the vicinity is unsuitable for the species.

### 6.3.3 Threatened Fauna

Consultation with NSW BioNet: The website for the Atlas of NSW Wildlife returned 2 Vulnerable, 1 Endangered and 0 Critically Endangered listed species previously recorded within 10km of the site. Table 7 considers their likelihood of occurring at the site. The data shown in Map 4, has been compiled over a period of 38 years with the earliest record entered in 1978 and the most recent being entered in 2017. The following table shows only species considered Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable and or with a Sensitivity Class rating. All native species are protected but have not been included in this table.

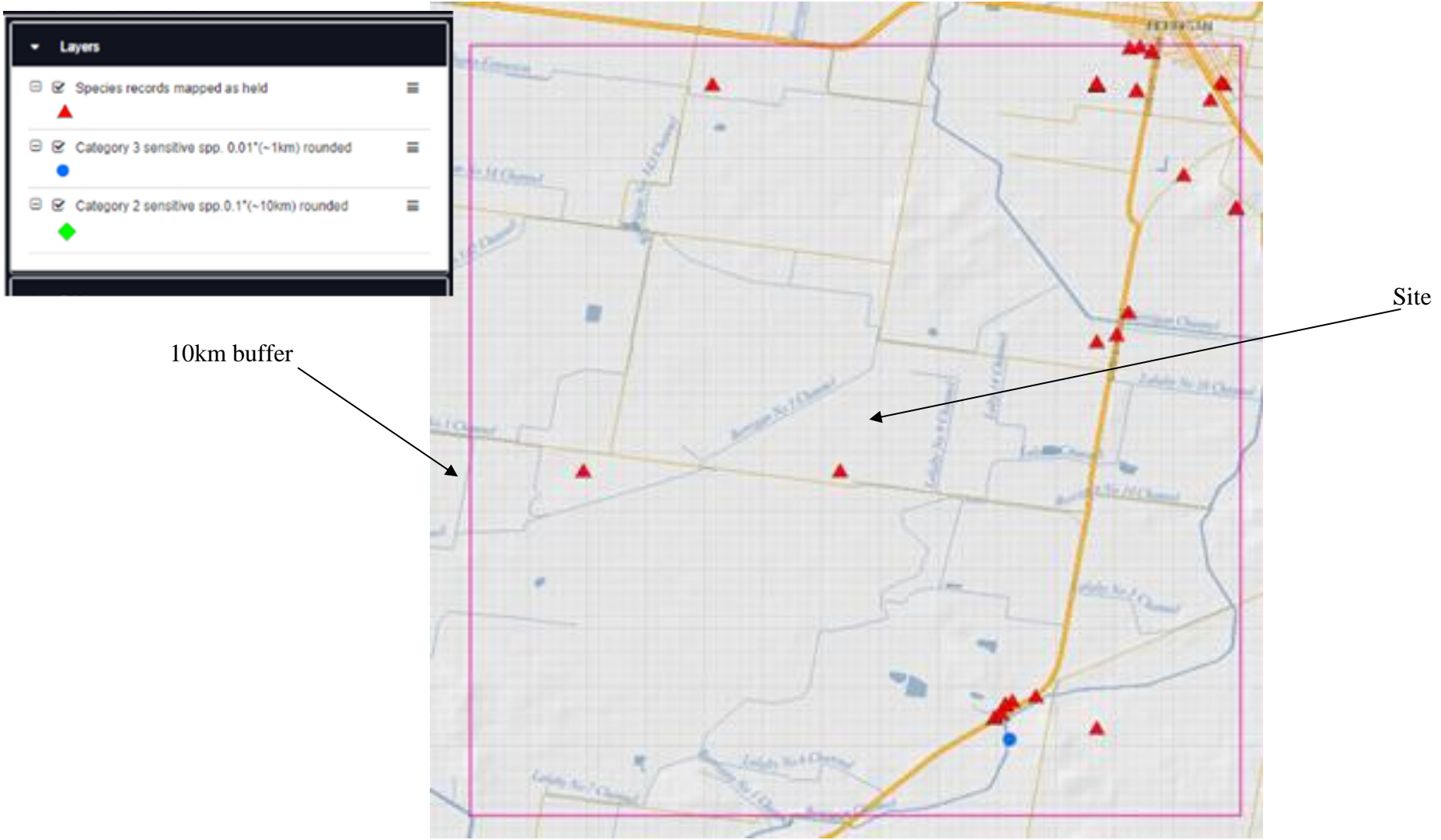
**Table 7: BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife – Fauna**

Species	Preferred Habitat	NSW Status	Likelihood <sup>1</sup>
<b>Mammalia</b>			
<i>Burhinus grallarius</i> – Bush Stone-curlew	Inhabits open forests and woodlands with a sparse grassy groundlayer and fallen timber.	Endangered	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.
<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i> – Superb Parrot	The Superb Parrot mainly inhabits forests and woodlands dominated by eucalypts.	Vulnerable	Potential – Site contains potential foraging area.
<i>Artamus cyanopterus cyanopterus</i> – Dusky Woodswallow	Primarily inhabit dry, open eucalypt forests and woodlands, including mallee associations, with an open or sparse understorey of eucalypt saplings, acacias and other shrubs, and ground-cover of grasses or sedges and fallen woody debris	Vulnerable	Unlikely – Site is lacking in suitable habitat.

<sup>1</sup> Five categories for the 'likelihood of occurrence' of species has been used. The categories are based on recorded sightings listed in credible databases, the presence or absence of suitable habitat, other features of the site, results of the field survey and professional judgement. The 5 categories are:

<b>'Yes'</b>	The species/community was or has been observed on the site.
<b>'Likely'</b>	A medium to High probability that a species uses the site
<b>'Potential'</b>	A suitable habitat for a species occurs on the site, but there is insufficient information to categorise the species as 'likely' or 'unlikely' to occur.
<b>'Unlikely'</b>	A Very Low to Low probability that a species uses the site.
<b>'No'</b>	Habitat on the site and in the vicinity is unsuitable for the species.

Map 1: Threatened Fauna and Flora – NSW Wildlife Atlas



Source: NSW Wildlife Atlas records as at 4/09/19

## 7 Physical & chemical impacts

### 7.1 *Is the proposal likely to impact on soil quality or land stability?*

Soil Quality – No.

Land Stability - Yes. There is likely to be mobilisation of some soil given the nature of the proposal (vegetation removal and construction of the site). The site is susceptible to compaction by traffic immediately after periods of heavy rainfall and is already highly disturbed. Mitigation measures are to extend (but not be limited to) the following:

- An Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan should be developed and progressively implemented.
- Vehicle movements around the site should be restricted to the proposed activity footprint and should not encroach into any of the surrounding areas. Flagging exclusion fencing should be installed along the extent of the works area to ensure no encroachment into surrounding areas or impacts to vegetation not identified for removal.
- Construction should be completed using light vehicles and excavators as required.
- When rain is predicted, an assessment should be made by the site manager prior to works beginning. If heavy rain is predicted, work should not commence
- No stockpiles will be established under native vegetation in any area on site.
- Maintenance and checking of the erosion and sedimentation controls will need to be undertaken on a regular basis. Sediment will be cleared from behind barriers on a regular basis and all controls will be managed in order to work effectively at all times.
- Weed management should also be completed to ensure no weeds are further spread over the site.

### 7.2 *Is the activity likely to affect a waterbody, watercourse or wetland or natural drainage system?*

No. The site does not have any of these features.

### 7.3 *Is the activity likely to change flood or tidal regimes, or be affected by flooding?*

No. The site does not have any of these features.

### 7.4 *Does the proposal involve the use, storage or transport of hazardous substances or the use or generation of chemicals which may build up residues in the environment?*

No. Some diesel will be stored in 'slip-on' tanks in the back of utility vehicles and they will not be left on-site outside of working hours.

### 7.5 *Does the activity involve the generation or disposal of gaseous, liquid or solid wastes or emissions?*

Yes. However only the operation of machinery should produce emissions, no further disposal of liquids, gases or solid wastes is expected.

### 7.6 *Will the activity involve the emission of dust, odours, noise, vibration, or radiation in the proximity of residential/urban areas or other sensitive locations?*

Yes. The project may emit some dust and noise but this is expected to be minimal and the time period short. Given the current level of disturbance and providing the recommendations contained within this report are adhered to, it is unlikely that the proposal will result in extensive or harmful outcomes regarding these activities.

## 8 Biological impacts

### 8.1 *Is any vegetation to be cleared or modified?*

Yes. The proposal will require the removal of some native vegetation. Thirty-Nine (39) native non hollow bearing trees between 5cm Diameter at Breast Hight DBH and 111cm DBH being, a mix of Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Bulloak (*Allocasurina luehmannii*). Three retained larger trees will need branches overhanging the road lopped between 40cm DBH and 124cm DBH. A very limited amount of scattered Wallaby grass and Climbing Saltbush will be removed during the road works however this occupies less than 5% cover of the site. No other natives will be impacted all other trees and groundcover species are exotic along the proposed road proposed works footprint (See **map 2 Appendix B**).

### 8.2 *Is the activity likely to have a significant effect on threatened flora or fauna species, or their habitats, or critical habitat; or an endangered ecological community or its habitat?*

No. The works are limited to the works footprint and while the trees will be removed and or lopped from this section of the site, they are all non-hollow bearing. No nests were seen on site during the time of the inspection (although outside the breeding season, no remnants of nests were seen). The proposed works will not endanger or have a **significant** effect on any threatened flora or fauna. Native vegetation is required for removal as outlined above **section 8.1**.

The site has some of the 'Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression Bioregions' characteristics. However as required the '*nominated woodland's component communities are generally characterised as woodland or open woodland with a well-developed ground stratum that is usually grassy, but also includes many subshrubs and herbs; some component communities have understory's that are predominantly shrubby or herbaceous*', this site is lacking the native groundcovers as it is heavily infested by weedy species and impacted by existing uses as well as being isolated with cropping either side of the road. There is a very limited shrub layer further away from the proposed road works alignment and the tree cover is scattered, as well as impacted by current uses. This vegetation is unlikely to be list as this EEC given it is lacking in the structure required to be listed as this woodland. Therefore, this vegetation is likely not part of a listed EEC nor is it significant enough to place any threatened fauna potentially using the site at risk of extinction.

The works will not impact on any other vegetation surrounding the site. As mentioned above no large hollow bearing tree removal is proposed, the proposed works onsite site will not displace any rare or threatened species.

### 8.3 *Does the activity have the potential to endanger, displace or disturb fauna (including fauna of conservation significance) or create a barrier to their movement?*

Endanger – No.

Displace – No.

Disturb – Yes. Threatened and declining woodland dependent birds may be using the area; hence the construction activities may prove to disturb foraging activities for a short period. The construction activities will see the removal of native vegetation; however, no trees proposed for removal are hollow bearing. As mentioned in **8.1** native vegetation is required for removal, however this is not going to endanger or displace any fauna as the vegetation required to be removed is not significant being younger in age, lacking structure and connectivity or will only be looped (the larger trees). Additionally, this vegetation is scattered and lacking in a significant food source or habitat for threatened species to be utilising over the longer term. Patches of vegetation further away from the site is of better quality and will continue to support any fauna potentially using the site, as well as the remaining vegetation along the roadside not required for removal.

**8.4 Is the activity likely to impact on an ecological community of conservation significance?**

No. The site is not part of an ecological community of conservation significance. As mentioned in **section 8.1** some native vegetation is required for removal however this is only limited to the proposed works site and as mentioned before is not a significant vegetation and does not include any large hollow bearing trees. These large hollow bearing trees have been avoided along the roadside and will be retained during the final design process. Some lopping will be required of overhanging branches however these branches are also no hollow bearing and their removal will not significantly impact the retained trees.

**8.5 Is the activity likely to cause a threat to the biological diversity or ecological integrity of an ecological community?**

No. As mentioned above in **section 8.4** most of the works footprint is already disturbed as the site is currently used as through road. The site is also heavily impacted by weeds as well as uses from the neighboring cropping/farmlands. Native vegetation is required for removal as per **section 8.1**, however this is limited to the proposed foot print and is not significant vegetation. The removal will not cause a threat to any biological diversity or integrity of an ecological community. No vegetation proposed for removal is listed as a threatened species.

**8.6 Is the activity likely to introduce weeds, vermin, feral species or genetically modified organisms into an area?**

Vermin – No.

Feral Species – No.

Priority Weeds - Possible.

The movement of vehicles, plant, equipment and people on and off the subject site/s has the potential to introduce noxious weeds to the area. The area is also impacted by pasture grass weed species. Wherever possible, removal of weeds should be undertaken prior to seed developing, which for most species occurs during the warmer months (i.e. summer).

Additionally, the following strategies are to apply to weed management within the site:

- Minimal impact techniques are to be used, ensuring no off target native species are damaged during weed control activities.
- Soil disturbance by vehicle and pedestrian access is to be kept to a minimum outside the construction footprint.
- Herbicide application is to be administered by authorised personnel only (e.g. ChemCert Accreditation– AQF 3), in accordance with the directions on the container (application rates, MSDS requirements) and any applicable Workcover requirements.
- All machinery used within the site is to be thoroughly cleaned by removing all plant material, dust or soil, and any accumulation of grease from the machine prior to the commencement of the construction.
- Any weeds removed (particularly those bearing seeds) are to be disposed of appropriately at the nearest waste management facility.
- If required, only topsoil from areas with no noxious or highly invasive weed species should be re-used in rehabilitation (it is generally assumed that if there is no evidence of noxious or invasive weeds in an area, the topsoil in this area is not contaminated with the seeds of such weeds).

## 9 Test of Significance

The following section assesses whether the proposal (as discussed and reviewed in this assessment) is likely to have a significant effect on threatened biodiversity<sup>1</sup> by addressing the Parts (a), (b) and (c) of the test of significance applied to species and ecological communities listed in Schedules 1 and 2 to the BC Act and under Part 5 of the EP&A Act.

*“The threatened species test of significance is used to determine if a development or activity is likely to significantly affect threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats. It is applied as part of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme entry requirements and for Part 5 activities under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.*

*The test of significance is set out in s.7.3 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.*

*If the activity is likely to have a significant impact, or will be carried out in a declared area of outstanding biodiversity value, the proponent must either apply the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme or prepare a species impact statement (SIS).*

*The environmental impact of activities that will not have a significant impact on threatened species will continue to be assessed under s.111 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979” (OEH 2018).*

When applying the Test of Significance, the following sections have considered all perceived likely direct and indirect impacts of the Proposal as outlined by previous sections of this document.

- *Direct impacts* are those that directly affect the habitat of species and ecological communities and of individuals using the study area. They include, but are not limited to, death through predation, trampling, poisoning of the animal/plant itself and the removal of suitable habitat. When applying each factor, consideration must be given to all of the likely direct impacts of the proposed activity or development. When applying each factor, both long-term and short-term impacts are to be considered
- *Indirect impacts* occur when project-related activities affect species or ecological communities in a manner other than direct loss within the subject site. Indirect impacts may sterilise or reduce the habitability of adjacent or connected habitats. Indirect impacts can include loss of individuals through starvation, exposure, predation by domestic and/or feral animals, loss of breeding opportunities, loss of shade/shelter, reduction in viability of adjacent habitat due to edge effects, deleterious hydrological changes, increased soil salinity, erosion, inhibition of nitrogen fixation, weed invasion, noise, light spill, fertiliser drift, or increased human activity within or directly adjacent to sensitive habitat areas. As with direct impacts, consideration must be given, when applying each factor, to all of the likely indirect impacts of the proposed activity or development. When applying each factor, both long-term and short-term impacts are to be considered.

---

<sup>1</sup> Species considered include Woodland Birds' which include the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*), Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*), Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*) and the Corben's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*) - the species recorded in the OEH managed NSW Wildlife Atlas for the period 5/10/1978 to 5/9/2019 and under the EPBC Act within 10km of the site and their likelihood of using the site was rated as 'Potential' in section 6.2.

**9.1 Factors for consideration - Test of Significance ("5 part test") BC Act sections 7 (1) (a),(b),(c), (d)&(e) and under part 5 of the EP&A Act.**

- (a)** in the case of a threatened species, whether the proposed development or activity is likely to have an adverse effect on the life cycle of the species such that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction.

**Woodland Birds**

No. The project requires no clearance of mature large hollow bearing trees. As mentioned in **section 8.1** native vegetation is required for removal however these removals will not place any woodland birds at risk as there are other better-quality foraging habitats within the area to this works footprint. The proposed activities are unlikely to have an adverse effect on the life-cycle of woodland birds that may be opportunistically using the site; as there will be no impacts to any surrounding land (Vegetation removal or encroachment). Woodland birds might be disrupted by noise and vehicle movements during construction, they are highly mobile and able to disperse into other areas of better-quality habitat further surrounding the site.

**Corben's Long-eared bat**

No. although the upgrade to the road will remove some trees and scattered ground covers these trees are lacking in hollows and loose bark that would be suitable habitat for this species. Better quality habitat trees are being retained on site. This species like the woodland birds above are highly mobile and can disperse into other areas surround the site or vegetation not proposed for removal. It is unlikely this species will be significantly impacted as no number story species are being removed and overall are lacking on site therefor the foraging habitat for this species is not impacted by the proposed road upgrade works.

- (b)** in the case of an endangered ecological community or critically endangered ecological community, whether the proposed development or activity:
- (i)** is likely to have an adverse effect on the extent of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction, or
  - (ii)** is likely to substantially and adversely modify the composition of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction

No. The works foot print is largely modified and while containing overstory native species it is lacking in the native understory species while being impacted by perennial pasture grasses maintenance and other weeds. Native species found on the site are shown in **map 2 Appendix B**. While there is some native vegetation (no large hollow bearing trees will be removed) within the works area, vegetation proposed for removal will be as discussed in **section 8.1** the site is not part of an endangered EEC as the native groundcovers are lacking and a shrub layer is missing from the site (works footprint). As part of the construction process there will be significant ground disturbance to remove the trees and complete the upgrade works. These works will not be prolonged and will not cause any species to be at risk of extinction or adversely modify the composition of an ecological community.

- (c)** in relation to the habitat of a threatened species or ecological community:
- (i)** the extent to which habitat is likely to be removed or modified as a result of the proposed development or activity, and
  - (ii)** whether an area of habitat is likely to become fragmented or isolated from other areas of habitat as a result of the proposed development or activity, and
  - (iii)** the importance of the habitat to be removed, modified, fragmented or isolated to the long-term survival of the species or ecological community in the locality

No. See (b) above. There are no critically endangered EECs on site, no removal of significant native vegetation as outlined in **section 8.1** and shown on **map 2**.

**Woodland Birds**

- (i) No large hollow bearing trees or other potential habitat trees are to be removed as part of the project and will not displace any of the species potentially utilising the site opportunistically for foraging or passing through the site. The vegetation required for removal is not significant habitat and its removal will not cause a significant threat to any threatened species or ecological communities.
- (ii) No fragmentation is therefore possible.
- (iii) Not relevant given (i) & (ii) no significant native vegetation is proposed to be removed as outlined in **section 8.1**. This that will not cause any of the identified species ‘potentially’ using the site to be pushed to the risk of extinction.

**Corben’s Long-eared Bat**

As per woodland birds above.

- (d)** whether the proposed development or activity is likely to have an adverse effect on any declared area of outstanding biodiversity value (either directly or indirectly)

No, no section of the site is mapped as an ‘area of outstanding biodiversity value’.

- (e)** whether the proposed development or activity is or is part of a key threatening process or is likely to increase the impact of a key threatening process

A threatening process is something that adversely affects threatened species, populations of a species, ecological communities or could cause species, populations of a species or ecological communities to become threatened. A threat can be listed under Schedule 4 of the BC Act as a 'Key Threatening Process' if it adversely affects threatened species, populations or ecological communities or if it could cause species, populations or ecological communities that are not threatened to become threatened. There are currently 38 listed threatening process recognized by the BC Act and a further 19 by the EPBC Act.

One (1) key threatening processes from the EPBC Act (Federal) is considered to be relevant to the proposal and the following other key threatening processes from the BC Act (NSW) are also considered relevant.

Key Threatening Process	Is the proposal of a class of activity that is recognised as a threatening process?		
	Likely	Possible	Unlikely
Land Clearing (EPBC Act)	✓		
Clearing of native vegetation	✓		
Invasion of native plant communities by exotic perennial grasses		✓	
Removal of dead wood and dead trees.		✓	



The proposal will require clearing of native vegetation as outlined in **section 8.1**, this removal will not cause a detrimental impact to the site or to the surrounding area. Works are only limited to the proposed footprint and will not further encroach into any other areas of native vegetation. The site is largely impacted by the existing uses and management, perennial pasture and exotic groundcovers/grasses also largely occupy the groundcover layer. No trees required for removal are hollow bearing or an important habitat tree for any threatened species. Some larger trees require lopping but will not remove important habitat features as part of this work. There is limited native grasses and herbs found on the site that will be removed during the works however these are limited and occupy a small percentage of the site as mentioned in **8.1**.

The proposal therefore is not likely to be part of (or increase the impact of) a key threatening process. Nor does the proposal as it stands require a Biodiversity development assessment report (BDAR) to be completed.

## **10 Conclusion**

I am of the opinion that the activities as proposed will not have a significant effect on any of the identified threatened species and ecological communities and their conservation as noted within this report.

## 11 References

Department of Planning and Environment Biodiversity Value Map  
<https://www.lmbc.nsw.gov.au/Maps/index.html?viewer=BVMap>

EPBC Protected Matters Search Tool, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/protected-matters-search-tool>

OEH, 2017, Threatened biodiversity profile search  
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/>

OEH, 2018, Threatened Species Test of Significance Guidelines. Office of Environment and Heritage, July 2018

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Threatened-species/threatened-species-test-significance-guidelines-170634.pdf>

OEH, 2018, Field survey methods, Field survey methods for environmental consultants and surveyors when assessing proposed developments or other activities on sites containing threatened species

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/about-threatened-species/surveys-and-assessments/field-survey-methods>

Office of Environment and Heritage

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifeatlas/about.htm>

## 12 Appendix

**Appendix A: Site Photos**

**Alignment Photos**



Disturbed edges of the road showing the heavy loads of pasture grasses.



Scattered trees along the roadside and no native ground layers or shrubs.



Overhanging branches may require removal non hollow bearing.



Disturbed edges of the road again lacking native vegetation and scattered overstory.

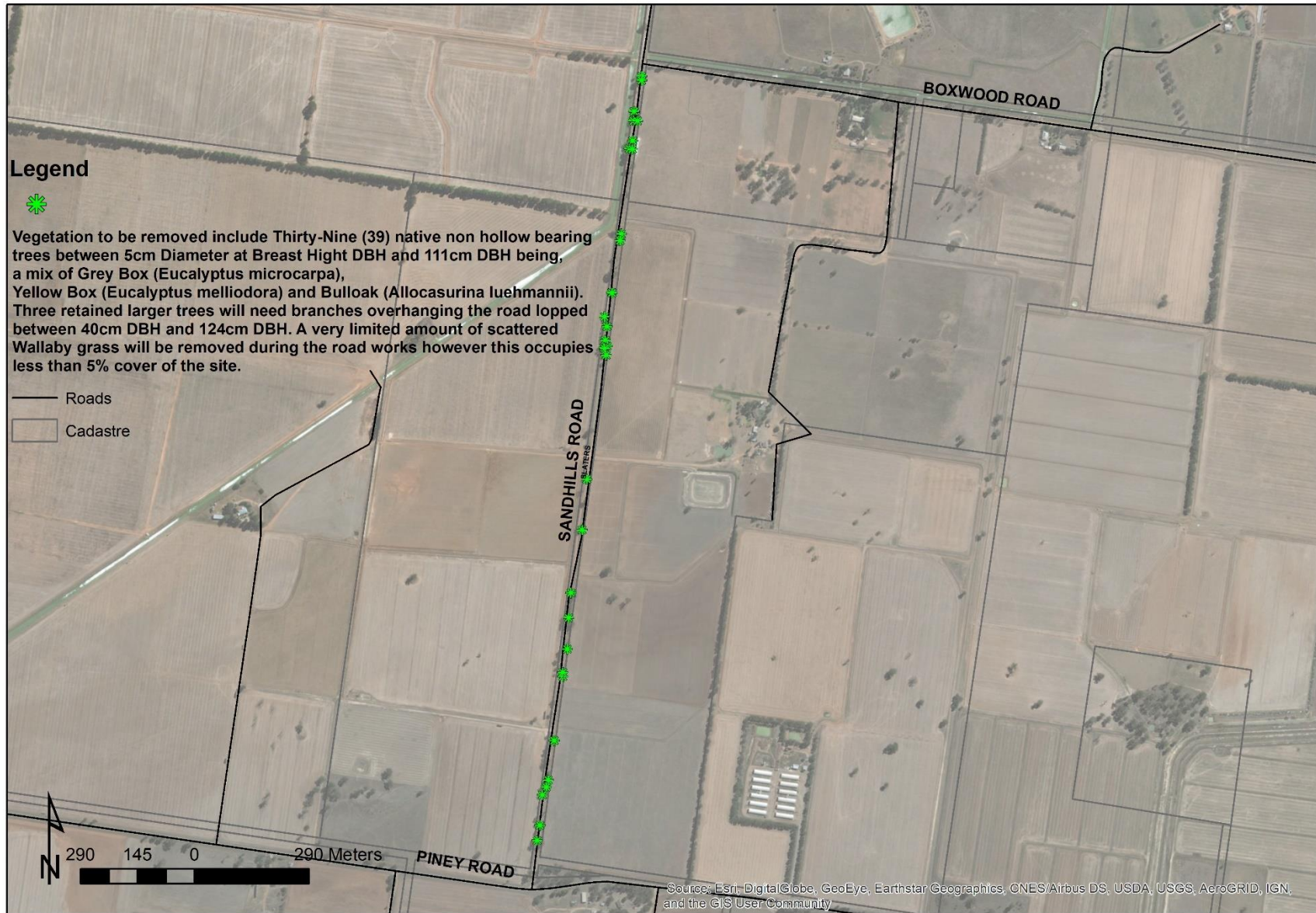


Lacking any native shrubs or groundcovers.



Very limited wallaby grass mostly covered by exotic groundcovers.

**Appendix B: Site Map 2 – Six Maps image**









Australian Government

Appendix "C"

# Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code



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# Contents

<b>Part 1: Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code</b>	<b>6</b>
Legal requirements	6
Authorised presiding officer	6
Reading the preamble	6
The pledge of commitment	6
The importance of Australian citizenship	7
Responsibilities	7
Privileges	7
What is a citizenship ceremony?	8
The nature of the ceremony	9
What is the pledge of commitment?	10
Pledge 1	10
Pledge 2	10
Roles and responsibilities	10
Minister	10
The Department of Home Affairs	11
Presiding officer	12
Official guests	12
Federal Members of Parliament	13
State and Territory Members of Parliament	13
Mayors	14
Organisers	14
Conferees	14
Australian Electoral Commission	15
Guests of conferees	15

Citizenship ceremonies during election periods	16
Local council elections	16
State and Federal elections	16
Federal elections	16
Overseas Australian citizenship ceremonies	17
Contact the Department of Home Affairs	17
Glossary	18
<b>Part 2: Before the ceremony</b>	<b>19</b>
Scheduling ceremonies	19
Events	20
Parliamentary sitting days	21
Planning report	22
Rescheduling ceremonies	22
Special purpose ceremonies	22
Organising the ceremony	23
Venue	23
Products	23
Symbols	24
Dress code	25
Seating plan	25
Gifts and entertainment	26
Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements	27
Invitations	28
Children	29
Children under 16 years of age	29
Children aged 16 years or over	29
Pledge verification list	30
Media, photos and consent forms	30
Media	30
Photographs	31
Consent forms	31
Suggested program for ceremony	32
Before the Ceremony Checklist	33

<b>Part 3: At the ceremony</b>	<b>34</b>
Registration	34
Identity verification	34
Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country	35
If the Minister attends	36
Speeches	36
The Minister/Minister's Representative	36
Inviting official guests to speak	36
Suggested length and content of speeches	37
Preamble	38
The Pledge of Commitment	38
Pledge 1	38
Pledge 2	38
Children	39
Holy books and scriptures	39
Australian citizenship certificates	39
Presenting Australian citizenship certificates to conferees	39
Altering citizenship certificates	40
If details are incorrect on Australian citizenship certificates	40
The Australian Citizenship Affirmation	41
Australian electoral enrolment	42
At the Ceremony Checklist	43
<b>Part 4: After the ceremony</b>	<b>44</b>
Returning the pledge verification list	44
Privacy	45
Disclosing names and addresses of new citizens	45
Returning Australian citizenship certificates	46
After the Ceremony Checklist	46

# PART 1

# Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code

The Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code (the Code) follows the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* (the Citizenship Act) and sets out the legal and other requirements for conducting citizenship ceremonies as well as the roles and responsibilities for those involved in citizenship ceremonies.

The Code provides guidance to organisations to help plan and conduct citizenship ceremonies.

The Code is structured in four parts, providing relevant responsibilities and advice for before, during and after the ceremony. This is prefaced with a quick guide, outlining the key ceremony information and background.

The resources in the Code are reviewed regularly to ensure that information is up to date. This version of the Code was published in August 2019.

## Legal requirements

There are three legal requirements under the Citizenship Act that must be strictly adhered to when conducting citizenship ceremonies:

1. an authorised presiding officer
2. reading the preamble
3. the pledge of commitment

### Authorised presiding officer

**It is a legal requirement** that the presiding officer is authorised by the Australian Government minister responsible for citizenship matters. Authorisation is given to Australian citizens only and is specific to a position or person. Further information on the role of the presiding officer is at page 12.

### Reading the preamble

**It is a legal requirement** that the presiding officer must read aloud to the conferees the preamble for citizenship ceremonies (found at Schedule 1 of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016*).

### The pledge of commitment

**It is a legal requirement** that most conferees 16 years of age and over (at the time of application) make the pledge aloud before an authorised presiding officer.

The presiding officer generally reads the pledge aloud line by line for the conferees to repeat. This is referred to as 'administering' the pledge.

Further information on the pledge of commitment is at page 10.

## The importance of Australian citizenship

Australian citizenship is an important common bond for all Australians, whether Australians by birth or by choice, and lies at the heart of a unified, cohesive and inclusive Australia.

It is a unique symbol of formally identifying with Australia, acknowledging responsibilities and conferring significant privileges that allow people to participate fully in the community.

### Responsibilities

As an Australian citizen you must:

- obey the laws and fulfil your duties as an Australian citizen
- vote in federal and state or territory government elections, and in a referendum
- serve on a jury if called to do so
- defend Australia should the need arise.

### Privileges

As an Australian citizen you have the right to:

- vote in federal, state or territory, and local government elections, and in a referendum
- apply for work in the Australian Public Service or in the Australian Defence Force
- seek election to parliament
- apply for an Australian passport
- receive help from Australian officials while overseas
- register children born to you overseas, after you become an Australian citizen, as Australian citizens by descent.

## What is a citizenship ceremony?

The final legal step in the acquisition of Australian citizenship, for most people, is to make the pledge of commitment at an Australian citizenship ceremony.

At the citizenship ceremony, conferees pledge that they share Australia's democratic beliefs and respect the rights and liberties of the people of Australia.

### **Our democratic beliefs:**

- parliamentary democracy
- the rule of law
- living peacefully
- respect for all individuals regardless of background
- compassion for those in need.

### **Our freedoms:**

- freedom of thought, speech and expression
- freedom of association
- freedom of religion and secular government.

### **Our equality standing:**

- equality before the law
- equality of genders
- equality of opportunity.

Citizenship ceremonies are public, ceremonial occasions, which fulfil legal requirements prescribed by the Citizenship Act and the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016*.

Citizenship ceremonies also provide an important opportunity to formally welcome new citizens as full members of the Australian community. Since the early 1950s, local government councils have conducted the majority of citizenship ceremonies on behalf of the Department responsible for citizenship. Local government councils are well placed for this welcoming role as the arm of government closest to new citizens and the communities to which they belong.

Representatives of all three levels of government (federal, state or territory and local), community leaders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, and guests of the conferees are invited to attend.

After the conferral, citizenship ceremonies often include the Australian Citizenship Affirmation, giving everyone present an opportunity to publicly affirm their loyalty to Australia in a similar way to the new citizens.





## The nature of the ceremony

To reflect the significance of the occasion, citizenship ceremonies should be formal and meaningful occasions conducted with dignity, respect and ceremony. They should be designed to impress upon conferees the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship.

They should warmly welcome new citizens as full members of the community. Conferees are the most important people at the ceremony and the focus of attention should be on them.

**Citizenship ceremonies must be non-commercial, apolitical, bipartisan and secular. They must not be used as forums for political, partisan or religious expression, for the distribution of political material or the sale of souvenirs.**

As conferees come from diverse cultures, it is important to be aware and respectful of cultural differences.

## What is the pledge of commitment?

The pledge of commitment made by conferees under Section 32AB of the Citizenship Act is the last step in becoming Australian citizens. It is a legal requirement for most conferees to make the pledge.

The pledge allows conferees to publicly state their loyalty to Australia and its values.

Conferees can choose between two versions of the pledge; one that refers to God and one that does not.

### Pledge 1

From this time forward, under God,  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,  
whose democratic beliefs I share,  
whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

### Pledge 2

From this time forward,  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,  
whose democratic beliefs I share,  
whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

## Roles and responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities for those involved in Australian citizenship ceremonies.

### Minister

The Australian Government Minister(s) responsible for citizenship matters has precedence to preside at any ceremony they choose to attend. The Minister is provided a report on ceremonies occurring nationally and does not require individual event invitations from organisers.

When attending a ceremony, the Minister should be invited to speak immediately after the opening address and Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country, before any other official speeches.

Where the Minister is not attending, the local Federal Member of Parliament (MP) or Senator should read the Minister's message (regardless of political party). Where both the MP and Senator are in attendance, precedence goes to the MP. When no Federal representative is present, the presiding officer should read the Minister's message.

A copy of the Minister's message is available on the Department of Home Affairs website.

## The Department of Home Affairs

The Department of Home Affairs manages the citizenship program including the policy around Australian citizenship ceremonies, and the list of conferees who have been approved for citizenship and are ready to attend a ceremony.

Generally, officers of the Department of Home Affairs will:

- liaise with local government councils or other community organisations undertaking ceremonies to ensure organisers are aware of, and abide by, the requirements set out in the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code
- provide advice on the authorised officer
- provide regular reports to councils on the number of people waiting for a ceremony in their local government area
- work with organisers to ensure that ceremonies are held regularly to facilitate timely conferral of prospective citizens
- ensure that pledge verification lists (PVL) are provided to ceremony organisers in a timely manner
- distribute citizenship certificates to the councils prior to the ceremony and ensure any unused certificates are returned to the Department of Home Affairs
- ensure citizenship certificates are treated as accountable documents and stored correctly
- provide advice and assistance on ceremonies for council staff.

Attendance by departmental staff to assist with the conduct of ceremonies may occur at the discretion of the Department of Home Affairs.

Where arrangements have been made for departmental officers to assist at a ceremony, this may include:

- assisting with registration and verification of the identity of candidates on arrival
- ensuring the legal and other requirements of the Code are adhered to, and/or
- assisting with enquiries and other issues as they arise.

The Department of Home Affairs may also provide assistance such as sending invitation letters to conferees and, if required, providing a presiding officer for ceremonies.

## Presiding officer

The presiding officer has the lead role in a citizenship ceremony. Their legal responsibilities involve:

- reading out the *Preamble for citizenship ceremonies* (Schedule 1 of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016*)
- administering the pledge.

Additionally, the presiding officer:

- reads the Minister's message in the Minister's absence where no Federal parliamentary representative is present
- signs the pledge verification list immediately at the completion of the citizenship ceremony after ensuring that it is accurate and any conferees who have attempted to present fraudulent identification documents or no identification have been immediately referred to the Department of Home Affairs.

It is a legal requirement that the presiding officer is authorised by the Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters. Authorisation is given to Australian citizens only and is specific to a position or person. These are outlined in the Instrument of Authorisation.

It is possible to apply for one-off authorisation to preside at a citizenship ceremony by writing to the Minister.

Presiding officers have no power to appoint a proxy. However, a person may perform the duties of the presiding officer when they are acting in place of an authorised person for a period of time.

To avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, presiding officers must not confer Australian citizenship on family members or close friends. Contact the Department of Home Affairs to manage potential conflict of interest matters in public ceremonies.

## Official guests

The presence of official guests serves to introduce new citizens to Australia's three-tiered, democratic system of government, as well as to formally welcome them into the local community.

As well as the Minister, organisers should also invite all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government, including:

- Local Federal MP and a Senator (of a different political party)
- Local state or territory MP
- A local government representative.

Invitations are to be extended to elected representatives. Invited elected representatives cannot send a delegate to act in an official capacity on their behalf. Delegates may attend in a private capacity. There will not be an opportunity for delegates to speak, nor will VIP seating be provided.

While an MP or Senator cannot be prevented from asking an individual to attend on their behalf, the nominated person should not be included in the official guest party and under no circumstances should that person be invited to speak.

Candidates for election, who currently do not hold elected office, may attend the ceremony in a private capacity, however they should not receive an official invitation and should not be included as an official guest.

It is particularly important that the above guidelines are adhered to in the period leading up to an election. The emphasis remains on elected representatives welcoming new citizens to the local community.

Official guests can also include:

- community leaders
- representatives of community organisations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders or leaders.

## Federal Members of Parliament

Ceremony hosts are required to invite all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government. This is to allow local representatives to introduce themselves and welcome new citizens as full members of the community. Where there are multiple MPs across local government boundaries, organisers should work with the MPs to arrange a rotation of responsibility.

Where a Federal MP or Senator attends a ceremony, they should read the Minister's message. MPs and Senators are reminded that, if invited to speak by the ceremony hosts, it must be in accordance with the nature of citizenship ceremonies which are apolitical, bipartisan and secular. For this reason, material which could be perceived to be political, commercial or religious must not be distributed.

All Federal MPs and Senators have standing authorisation to preside at Australian citizenship ceremonies. This allows ceremony hosts to approach their local MP or Senator if they wish to hold a ceremony and require a presiding officer. This usually happens on nationally significant days such as Australia Day and Australian Citizenship Day. MPs and Senators should not assume that an invitation to attend a ceremony is an invitation to preside. This will be specified in the invitation.

MPs and Senators make occasional requests to conduct citizenship ceremonies that may be accommodated on an exceptional basis. The Department of Home Affairs can provide advice regarding all aspects and requirements of a ceremony.

It is important that MPs and Senators do not seek to fulfil ceremony requests from constituents as the Department of Home Affairs manages ceremony attendance to ensure fair and equal treatment for all conferees. Additionally, to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, citizenship should not be conferred on family members, close friends or members of staff at private ceremonies.

## State and Territory Members of Parliament

If invited to a ceremony as an official guest, the same guidelines apply to State and Territory MPs as for Federal representatives. However, state and territory parliamentarians do not have standing authorisation to preside at citizenship ceremonies.

If invited to preside at a ceremony, requests may be made in writing to the Minister for one-off authorisation on each occasion they wish to preside. State and territory parliamentarians should include a signed letter of agreement with their request, indicating they will abide by the requirements for the conduct of citizenship ceremonies set out in the Code. A copy of this letter can be provided by the Department of Home Affairs.

## Mayors

Mayors play an important role in formally welcoming our nation's newest citizens into the Australian community by hosting the majority of Australian citizenship ceremonies. It is usual for them to fulfil the role of presiding officer. Unless specifically excluded, mayors have standing authorisation to preside.

Other positions authorised to preside over citizenship ceremonies are detailed in the [Instrument of Authorisation](#).

## Organisers

Organisers are usually staff from local government councils or other approved organisations whose role it is to organise the ceremony. An organiser is responsible for ensuring a citizenship ceremony is conducted in accordance with the Code.

Most citizenship ceremonies are conducted by local government councils. Community organisations may also conduct citizenship ceremonies, particularly on significant national days such as Australia Day or Australian Citizenship Day.

Community organisations that wish to conduct a citizenship ceremony should approach their local office of the Department of Home Affairs to discuss the possibility of hosting such a ceremony and securing a presiding officer. Community organisations may be asked to sign an agreement with the Department of Home Affairs on how ceremonies are to be conducted.

Responsibilities for organisers are to:

- ensure that ceremonies are conducted in accordance with the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code
- provide advice to those who have a role in the ceremony
- ensure that the ceremony is conducted in a meaningful, dignified, orderly and memorable way with proceedings designed to impress upon candidates the significance of the occasion
- ensure all candidates are informed about appropriate protocols for the citizenship ceremony
- include a Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country in the proceedings
- conduct identity verification of conferees.

Generally an officer of the Department of Home Affairs will attend ceremonies conducted by community organisations to assist with the ceremony.

Checklists are available for organisers for [Before the ceremony](#), [At the ceremony](#) and [After the ceremony](#).

## Conferees

A conferee is a person who has made an application for Australian citizenship which has been approved and whose details have been provided by the Department of Home Affairs to an organiser for attendance at a ceremony. The final legal step for the applicant to acquire citizenship is to make the Australian citizenship pledge of commitment before the presiding officer at the citizenship ceremony.



## Australian Electoral Commission

All organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies should notify the Australian Electoral Commission (the AEC) of forthcoming citizenship ceremonies to facilitate electoral enrolment of new citizens. Wherever possible, staff from AEC will attend ceremonies to assist the electoral enrolment process and to collect completed enrolment forms. See page 42 for further information about electoral enrolments.

If AEC representatives are not in attendance, conferees should be reminded to complete the AEC form and return it to the AEC according to information on the form, at their earliest convenience.

Organisers may choose to collect the forms at the ceremony and send to the AEC as a group.

Contact the AEC.

## Guests of conferees

Guests may include invited friends and relatives of the conferee. The number of guests may be limited according to the practicalities of organising a ceremony, for example, size of the venue, and should be outlined in the invitation to the ceremony.

## Citizenship ceremonies during election periods

At the Federal level, the caretaker period begins at the time the House of Representatives is dissolved and continues until the election result is clear or, if there is a change of government, until the new government is appointed.

Ceremonies can continue as usual during the caretaker period. Election periods should not cause unnecessary delays in conferees attending their ceremonies.

Citizenship ceremonies are apolitical and must not be used for political or partisan expression or for the distribution of political or election material.

### Local council elections

Citizenship ceremonies should not be held by local government councils after the election date until the results of the election become known.

### State and Federal elections

MPs should not be invited to ceremonies held after the election date until the results of the election are known.

An MP's status does not depend on the meeting of the parliament, nor on the MP taking their seat or making the oath or affirmation of allegiance before the Governor-General. An MP is technically regarded as an MP from the day of election—that is, when they are, in the words of the Constitution, 'chosen by the people'. A new MP is entitled to use the title MP once this status is officially confirmed by the declaration of the poll.

Candidates for election should not be included as part of the official party. The emphasis remains on elected representatives welcoming new citizens to the local community.

### Federal elections

The Minister's message can be read at ceremonies after the election date until it has been announced that there is a new minister. If there is a new minister, the new Minister's message will be provided.

Citizenship certificates with the incumbent Minister's signature can be issued up until a new minister is sworn in.

In the event there is a change of minister, there will be a period of time where certificates are not available. Once printing of certificates resumes, the Department of Home Affairs will commence distribution. Conferees who attended their ceremonies during this period will receive their certificate by registered mail.

In the event that official citizenship certificates cannot be provided on the day of ceremony, councils have the option of giving the client a commemorative citizenship certificate at the ceremony. The commemorative certificate has no legal standing but is purely for marking the occasion. This should be made clear at the ceremony.

Commemorative citizenship certificates can be ordered through the Department of Home Affairs website by using the order form.





## Overseas Australian citizenship ceremonies

All applicants are expected, as far as possible, to attend a citizenship ceremony in Australia. In limited circumstances, however, it may be possible to attend a ceremony at an agreed departmental post overseas. An application must be made to the Department of Home Affairs for consideration.

Organisers must ensure that the person who is to preside at the ceremony is listed in the Instrument of Authorisation, or request a one-off authorisation for the ceremony. Written requests for authorisation should be sent to the Minister.

## Contact the Department of Home Affairs

For all enquiries relating to Australian citizenship ceremonies, your first point of contact should be to email the departmental team for the relevant state or territory.

Enquiries from applicants relating to their citizenship application, including their ceremony, should be referred to the Department of Home Affairs website.

## Glossary

- **The Citizenship Act:** *The Australian Citizenship Act 2007* is the legal basis for all citizenship provisions.
- **Administrative officer:** A local government official or other person who assists the presiding officer in arranging and conducting citizenship ceremonies.
- **Australian Citizenship Affirmation:** The Australian Citizenship Affirmation offers an opportunity to those who wish to express their pride in being an Australian citizen and affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people.
- **Australian citizenship ceremony:** Fulfils the legal requirements prescribed by the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* and the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* that a person must make a pledge of commitment to become an Australian citizen.
- **Australian citizenship certificate:** Evidentiary notice given to a person stating that the person is an Australian citizen at a particular time.
- **Commemorative certificate:** A memento given to conferees when the official citizenship certificate is not available for the ceremony. The commemorative certificate has no legal status and cannot be used as evidence of Australian citizenship. Commemorative certificates can be ordered free of charge from the Department of Home Affairs.
- **Community organisation:** An organisation that is not-for-profit, whose activities are intended to benefit its members and the wider Australian community. Examples include Lions and Rotary Clubs, Scouts and Guides Associations and Surf Life Saving Associations.
- **Conferee:** A person who has applied for Australian citizenship by conferral whose final step to becoming a citizen is to attend a ceremony.
- **The Department of Home Affairs:** Australian Government department responsible for citizenship matters.
- **Minister:** Australian Government minister responsible for citizenship matters.
- **Non-attendee:** A conferee who has been invited to a particular ceremony but did not attend the ceremony to make the pledge of commitment.
- **Presiding officer:** A person who has been approved in writing by the Australian Government minister responsible for citizenship matters to confer Australian citizenship.
- **Pledge:** Most people are required to make the pledge of commitment at a citizenship ceremony. In doing so they are making a public commitment to Australia and accepting the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
- **PVL – Pledge verification list:** This is provided by the Department of Home Affairs to ceremony hosts and lists the details of people who are to attend a particular ceremony, their Australian citizenship certificate numbers, whether they are part of a family group and their pledge preference.
- **The Regulation:** The *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* is the subordinate legislation that sets out detailed requirements for some matters as provided for by the Citizenship Act.

## PART 2

# Before the ceremony

## Scheduling ceremonies

In keeping with government policy that ceremonies be held at regular intervals, most local government councils should arrange for ceremonies to be held at least every two to three months, regardless of the number of conferees available to attend, and more frequently if necessary. There is no maximum or minimum number of conferees prescribed for citizenship ceremonies.

Local government councils must provide their local office of the Department of Home Affairs with a schedule of their planned ceremony dates. This allows for the Department of Home Affairs to allocate conferees to particular ceremonies. In localities which confer more than 100 conferees per year the council should provide the ceremony schedule for the calendar year. Any changes to the schedule should be advised to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible.

Councils may schedule extra ceremonies throughout the year, in liaison with the Department of Home Affairs, if the numbers of people waiting to attend a ceremony have increased.

Community organisations holding approved/special ceremonies must give their local office of the Department of Home Affairs at least three months' notice before the proposed date of the ceremony. Community organisations should also work in partnership with local government councils to ensure a coordinated approach.

Community organisations should consider the availability of authorised presiding officers such as the local Federal MP or mayor when scheduling citizenship ceremonies.

## Events

The Government expects ceremony organisers to schedule citizenship ceremonies on days of significance, for example in the context of annual celebrations to mark Australia Day (26 January) and Australian Citizenship Day (17 September).

Organisations may also wish to hold citizenship ceremonies in conjunction with other community events or activities, such as Harmony Day or Refugee Week. Citizenship ceremonies may, for example, be incorporated into annual festivals or activities of community service organisations however these ceremonies must remain non-commercial, apolitical, bipartisan and secular.

It is important that ceremonies remain apolitical and that special event ceremonies not be used to promote a political or ideological agenda.

### Australia Day—26 January

Australia Day provides an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate our national day. Australia Day is marked by events across Australia, including special citizenship ceremonies.

Local government councils must hold a citizenship ceremony on 26 January as part of their Australia Day celebrations. Councils that conferred citizenship on less than 20 people in the previous year are exempt from this requirement.

More information about Australia Day celebrations can be found at [australiaday.org.au](http://australiaday.org.au).

### Australian Citizenship Day—17 September

Introduced in 2001, Australian Citizenship Day is a day for everyone in the community to reflect on and celebrate the meaning and importance of Australian citizenship and the role Australian citizens have played in shaping our nation.

It is an opportunity for all Australians, by birth or by pledge, to reflect on the common bond of citizenship in our diverse society. It is an opportunity to celebrate our democratic values, equality and respect for each other, and think about what unites us as Australians.

Local government councils should hold a citizenship ceremony on or around 17 September. Australian Citizenship Day is celebrated with special citizenship ceremonies, affirmations and other events around Australia. Local government councils, community organisations, schools and others in the community are encouraged to participate in Australian Citizenship Day.

For ideas on events and activities for celebrating Australian Citizenship Day visit the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).

**Note:** Australian Citizenship Day is an exception to the expectation that citizenship ceremonies be held outside of parliamentary sitting days, as 17 September generally falls on a federal sitting day.



## Parliamentary sitting days

It is important and appropriate that elected representatives have the opportunity to welcome new citizens as formal members of the Australian community.

When scheduling citizenship ceremonies organisers should:

- not schedule ceremonies on federal, or the relevant state or territory sitting days, unless impracticable
- engage with relevant federal and state or territory elected members to ascertain availability
- provide the schedule of ceremony dates to the offices of elected representatives along with the Department of Home Affairs.

Where a citizenship ceremony is scheduled on the same day as a local government council meeting, the citizenship ceremony may proceed but must be conducted with due ceremony and importance.

A sitting calendar for Federal parliamentary sittings can be obtained from the [Australian Parliament House website](#). The next parliamentary sitting calendar is generally released in the late months of the year.

## Planning report

The Department of Home Affairs will provide local government councils with a list of approved conferees, referred to as the planning report, who are waiting to attend a citizenship ceremony in their local area approximately four weeks before the scheduled date. Councils must use this list as the basis for planning the ceremony.

This list should not be provided to any official guests before the ceremony.

If a person approaches the council or other authorised presiding officer for a private ceremony, or inclusion in a planned public ceremony, refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs. Do not include additional people in the ceremony unless advised to do so by the Department of Home Affairs. Until a person has attended a ceremony, the Department of Home Affairs may still be assessing the person's application.

If the council sends an invitation to conferees, they should advise conferees of the date of the ceremony for which they are scheduled as soon as possible when they receive the planning report. The Department of Home Affairs will assist community organisations in inviting conferees.

## Rescheduling ceremonies

### Conferee request

A conferee who wishes to change the date of their allocated ceremony must contact the Department of Home Affairs. If a conferee approaches the council, organisers may refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs.

### Council request

The council must contact the Department of Home Affairs at the earliest possible opportunity if a ceremony is to be rescheduled. Rescheduling a ceremony may affect Australian citizenship certificates, the pledge verification list and invited conferees.

## Special purpose ceremonies

The majority of citizenship ceremonies are public occasions and conferees are encouraged to participate in a public citizenship ceremony wherever possible.

Special purpose ceremonies, or private ceremonies, may only be arranged in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a conferee has a significant disability preventing them from attending a public ceremony, or where the Department of Home Affairs has asked the organiser to provide urgent conferral for an applicant.

All special purpose ceremony requests are to be referred to the Department of Home Affairs for assessment.

# Organising the ceremony

## Venue

Citizenship ceremonies are significant occasions and care should be taken to ensure that the venue reflects the importance of the occasion.

In choosing a location for the ceremony, the council or organisation conducting the citizenship ceremony should ensure they undertake the necessary event planning and/or a risk assessment in line with their policies and procedures. Consideration should be given to accessibility such as ramps or elevators.

It is important to select a venue that is appropriate to the size of the ceremony. In the case of local government councils, the most suitable venue may be the town hall or council chambers. Many community organisations also have appropriate sized function rooms on their premises. If this is not the case, an appropriate venue could be hired for the occasion.

Citizenship ceremonies may be held outdoors, for example, in a park or in the same locality as a relevant community event (should there be no security concerns). An alternative venue in case of inclement weather should be considered. Organisers should also ensure an outdoor venue is conducive to conferees being present throughout the ceremony to make the pledge and receive their Australian citizenship certificate.

As citizenship ceremonies are apolitical and secular, they should not be held in a place of worship or in a venue which has political affiliation. A community hall adjacent to a place of worship is acceptable where there are no religious symbols in view.

It is not appropriate for a citizenship ceremony to be held at a venue for the purpose of promoting a commercial enterprise. Consideration should be given to avoid exposing conferees and guests to potentially inappropriate areas such as drinking and gaming areas. Conferees should not have to pay entry in order to attend the ceremony.

## Products

Free products and pledge cards which can be used at the ceremony may be ordered from the Department of Home Affairs website using the order form.



## Symbols

Citizenship ceremonies are conducted under the authority of the Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters. In keeping with other Commonwealth official occasions, the following national symbols should be present in a citizenship ceremony:

- the Australian national flag
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- the Commonwealth Coat of Arms
- an official portrait or photograph of The Queen of Australia, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
- the Australian national anthem (*Advance Australia Fair*) should be played.

These national symbols and the Australian national anthem are available free of charge through the local Federal MP under the Constituents Request Program.

Further guidance on displaying national symbols and [flag protocols](#) is available on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website at [Information on Australian Flags and Symbols](#).

### Portrait of the Queen

The portrait should be placed behind the presiding officer or in another prominent position at the same level and to the left (when facing) of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.



## Commonwealth Coat of Arms

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is to be displayed. The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the formal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia that signifies Commonwealth authority and ownership.

## The Australian national flag

The Australian national flag is to be displayed in one of the following ways:

- Flat against a surface, whether horizontally or vertically, with the top left (first) quarter placed uppermost on the observers' left as viewed from the front
- On a staff, with the top left quarter placed in the position nearest the top of the staff. When carried, the flag should be aloft and free
- On a flag rope (halyard) with the top left quarter placed uppermost, raised as close as possible to the top and the flag rope tight.

## Other Australian flags

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags should also be displayed at citizenship ceremonies. State flags or local government flags may also be displayed.

The Australian national flag should always have precedence over all flags.

## Australian national anthem

The Australian national anthem (*Advance Australia Fair*) should be played at the ceremony. This may be played as a live performance or a recording, and it is at the discretion of organisers whether only the first verse or both verses are played though verse two is appropriate to new citizens. All attendees at the ceremony should be invited to join in singing the Australian national anthem. The words of the [Australian national anthem](#) should be provided to all attendees.

## Dress Code

The attire of attendees at Citizenship Ceremonies should reflect the significance of the occasion.

A Dress Code is to be set by individual councils.

Councils must provide a current copy of their Dress Code to the Department of Home Affairs.

## Seating plan

Prior to the ceremony, the Department of Home Affairs will provide a Ceremony Planning Report which lists the people waiting to attend a ceremony. This report has a Linking Group section which can be used to identify groups or families who are having Australian citizenship conferred upon them and who wish to attend the same ceremony. This can be used to arrange seating so that the conferees remain with their group/family.

The PVL also provides the group detail to aid seating arrangements.

## Gifts and entertainment

In addition to observing the legal requirements and important elements of the ceremony, those conducting citizenship ceremonies may wish to consider incorporating other features which would significantly enhance the occasion.

The provision of gifts, entertainment and refreshments is entirely voluntary and at the discretion of organisations conducting ceremonies.

### Gifts

Local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies may choose to present gifts to new citizens to mark the acquisition of Australian citizenship.

Any gifts are to be appropriate to the occasion and cannot be of a political, commercial or religious nature.

Examples of appropriate gifts include:

- a native plant that could grow well in the local area (consider size)
- a genuine item reflecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- a book about the local region
- a commemorative coin or pin
- a free copy of a professional photograph of the occasion.

Additionally, information could be provided to conferees on local community services including volunteering opportunities and multicultural services.

### Entertainment

Entertainment befitting the occasion may be incorporated into a ceremony.

If music is being played organisers should ensure that the appropriate music licence is obtained by contacting [APRA AMCOS](#) (Australasian Performing Right Association Limited Australasian and Mechanical Copyright Owners Society Limited).

### Catering

Citizenship ceremonies may be followed by a social gathering that includes refreshments. The gathering provides an opportunity for officials and new citizens to become acquainted and enhances the welcoming atmosphere of the occasion.

The form of the gathering and the choice of refreshments are matters for local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies.

In making these arrangements, it is important to take into account any special dietary or religious requirements which people may have.

## Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements

There is great value in incorporating appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements into citizenship ceremonies and the Department of Home Affairs encourages all organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies to do so.

Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements into citizenship ceremonies enhances awareness and understanding by new citizens, as well as the wider community, of their histories and cultures and their status as the First Australians and traditional custodians of the land.

The presiding officer or other appropriate person should publicly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where the citizenship ceremony is taking place. An example of an acknowledgment could be as follows:

### General

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today.  
I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

### Specific

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today,  
the [people] of the [nation] and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The following are a range of ideas for incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements into or within citizenship ceremonies:

- Invite a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander leader or leaders to Acknowledge Country and/or perform a Welcome to Country ceremony
- Invite members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to perform other traditional ceremonies, for example a smoking ceremony
- Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to perform or a local leader or personality to address the citizenship ceremony.

Incorporating Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural considerations into a citizenship ceremony should be done in consultation with representatives of the local traditional peoples.

Further information is available at the [Reconciliation Australia website](#).

## Invitations

Only approved conferees as advised by the Department of Home Affairs may be invited to take the pledge at a ceremony. Conferees are invited to attend their ceremony by letter. Depending on local arrangements, invitation letters are sent to conferees either by the local government council or by an office of the Department of Home Affairs. For ceremonies conducted by community organisations, the Department of Home Affairs will generally send out invitations.

Invitation letters to conferees from the Department of Home Affairs include the following advice:

- Date, time and venue for the ceremony and expected arrival time
- Conferees 16 years of age and over should bring photographic identification to the ceremony such as driver license or passport, and letter of invitation
- Children under 16 years are not required to make a pledge of commitment or attend a ceremony although they are welcome and encouraged to do so if they wish
- Conferees who wish to make the pledge of commitment on a holy book or scripture of their choice should bring it to the ceremony.

Organisers may wish to add the following information as appropriate:

- Process for RSVPs (if relevant)
- Dress Code (attendee attire should reflect the significance of the occasion and venue, including national or cultural dress)
- A voluntary Australian Citizenship Affirmation (if included in the program) will take place after the citizenship ceremony
- Any special arrangements concerning seating and the taking of photographs or video during the ceremony
- The number of relatives and friends each conferee may invite to attend the ceremony and subsequent social gathering
- Conferees may be asked to sign a form giving their consent for photographs, video or film taken during the ceremony to be used for future citizenship promotional purposes
- Advice on venue accessibility or parking.

Additionally, information for conferees about attending ceremonies is available on the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).



## Children

### Children under 16 years of age

Children under the age of 16 years are not required to make the pledge of commitment or attend a citizenship ceremony although they are welcome and encouraged to do so with their parent(s) if they wish. Children who were under 16 on application, but have since turned 16 are not required to make the pledge. Children do not have to present identification at citizenship ceremonies.

Australia has a welcoming and inclusive citizenship policy. Encouraging dependents to attend the citizenship ceremony is in keeping with this policy. It is also important for children, particularly older children, to witness the occasion as part of their introduction to, and understanding of, civic life in Australia.

### Children aged 16 years or over

Most children aged 16 years or over must make the pledge of commitment and provide identity documents at the ceremony.

## Pledge verification list

The PVL is provided by the Department of Home Affairs to ceremony hosts and lists the people who are to attend a particular ceremony, their pledge preferences, Australian citizenship certificate numbers and groups who wish to sit together (e.g. families).

The signed PVL must be returned to the Department of Home Affairs immediately after the ceremony so the conferee's record can be updated to reflect their Australian citizenship. The PVL may be scanned and sent digitally, but any hard copies may be returned along with unused certificates.

## Media, photos and consent forms

### Media

Every effort should be made by organisers to publicise forthcoming ceremonies and to encourage local and even national media to attend and report on the event. Publicising citizenship ceremonies promotes to the wider community the contribution of new citizens to Australia.

Media coverage can be enhanced by providing local media, for example, newspapers, newsletters and magazines, with details of the ceremony as far in advance as possible. Details provided should include a list of speakers and important guests. Local community organisations could similarly be informed. Details of conferees should not be provided to media without their consent.

Where a ceremony could be of interest beyond the local district, consideration could be given to alerting the national media. Examples of such situations include:

- an unusually large ceremony
- where the ceremony is planned to coincide with a local or national event such as Australia Day or Australian Citizenship Day
- where conferees include prominent figures in local affairs, the arts, sport or other fields
- where there are particularly interesting features planned for the ceremony.

Conferees should be informed in advance that ceremonies may attract media attention and that departmental officers or representatives of the media may attend ceremonies to film, photograph or interview conferees for promotional purposes or for social media. While some new citizens may welcome publicity, others may not. Local government councils and community organisations should be aware of privacy obligations. For more information, refer to the [Privacy Act 1988](#).

When the Minister responsible for citizenship matters is in attendance, liaison with their media adviser is required for any press releases or media coverage. Public affairs officers of the Department of Home Affairs will liaise with the Minister's media adviser and can also assist with publicity arrangements.



## Photographs

There is no requirement to hire a professional photographer to take photos of the citizenship ceremony but having photographs is a great way of recording the occasion. The photos can also be used to present as a gift to the conferees as a memento of the ceremony.

It is important to be aware that images of individuals or Australian citizenship certificates in photographs or video (images) are treated as personal information under the *Privacy Act 1988* where the person's identity is clear or can reasonably be worked out from that image.

## Consent forms

If the picture is to be used for something that the conferee is unaware of, the conferee will likely be required to give consent, unless they would reasonably expect their image to be used for this other purpose.

If images are to be used in a publication, website or social media platform that your organisation puts out, consent forms must be signed and collected from the subjects. Personal details in these images (such as names on certificates) must not be visible.

It may be applicable to include information on media and promotional image use in the invitation.

## Suggested program for ceremony

The names of the presiding officer, administrative officer and official guests should be inserted.

<b>1:30 pm</b>	Conferees arrive, are registered and identity verified then are seated
<b>1:55 pm</b>	Official party enters (List names and titles of official guests)
<b>2:00 pm</b>	<i>(Administrative officer)</i> Welcomes all present
<b>2:02 pm</b>	Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country
<b>2:05 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> welcomes all present, introduces official guests, delivers the opening address, and foreshadows the Australian Citizenship Affirmation
<b>2:15 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding or administrative officer)</i> introduces each speaker in the following order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister or Minister's representative</li> <li>• If the Minister/Minister's representative is not in attendance, the presiding officer reads the Minister's message</li> <li>• Other speakers</li> </ul>
<b>2:30 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> reads the preamble for a citizenship ceremony to the conferees
<b>2:32 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> administers the pledge to conferees
<b>2:35 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding Officer, administrative officer or official guest)</i> presents Australian citizenship certificates to new citizens and congratulates them. Each conferee who has made the pledge is called forward to receive their Australian citizenship certificate  A gift may also be presented at this time
<b>2:50 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer or administrative officer)</i> advises that new citizens may enrol to vote by completing the electoral enrolment form given to them. If staff from the AEC are present, advise that those officers are available to assist
<b>2:52 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> introduces dignitary to conduct affirmation ceremony
<b>2:54 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer or other appropriate Australian citizen)</i> conducts affirmation ceremony
<b>2:57 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> asks all present to stand for the Australian national anthem
<b>3:00 pm</b>	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> concludes the ceremony; invites new citizens, official guests and all present to join him/her for light refreshments.



## Before the Ceremony Checklist

These checklists can be used to assist your organisation of the ceremony.

<b>Before the ceremony</b>	
<b>Annually (for councils with &gt;100 conferees per annum)</b>	
	Provide the Department of Home Affairs with an annual schedule of planned ceremonies
<b>3 6 months before</b>	
	Check Federal and State/Territory parliamentary sitting days
	Ensure scheduled ceremonies avoid parliamentary sitting days
	Advise Department of Home Affairs of date of ceremony to allow provision of certificates and pledge verification list
<b>1 2 months before</b>	
	Check venues for suitability (access, size, power, secular, wet weather contingencies)
	Prepare invitations for conferees with relevant ceremony details
<b>4 weeks before</b>	
	Invite conferees from list of approved applicants provided by the Department of Home Affairs (if applicable)
	Invite the Minister, elected government members and other official representatives. Include which officials are to present a speech.
	Advise the AEC of the time, date and venue of the ceremony
	Prepare a ceremony program
	Order products such as pledge cards and affirmation cards
<b>1 week before</b>	
	Confirm the Master of Ceremonies, and arrange lectern and sound system
	Ensure receipt of Australian citizenship certificates, PVL and Australian electoral enrolment forms
	Ensure portrait of The Queen, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and Australian flag are available for display
	Arrange for the Australian national anthem to be played/performed
	Arrange for Welcome to Country and/or Acknowledgement of Country
	Arrange who will deliver the Australian Citizenship Affirmation
	Arrange seating plan for VIPs, conferee guests, AEC staff, departmental staff
	Arrange seating plan for conferees with families/groups together
	Ensure certificate of currency for insurance purposes (if applicable)
<b>Additional considerations</b>	
	Arrange gifts and entertainment
	Arrange catering
	Arrange photography
	Notify media of ceremony
	Print media consent forms if images to be used on social media or publications
	Arrange speaking notes for the presiding officer

## PART 3

# At the ceremony

## Registration

The Department of Home Affairs provides a copy of the Australian citizenship PVL for each citizenship ceremony. The PVL lists invited conferees and includes personal details to assist ceremony organisers to verify their identities.

It is a requirement that each conferee making the pledge be formally registered at the ceremony. Use the PVL to mark non-attendance or failure to make the Pledge by marking a single line through the person's name.

Registration areas should be well lit to allow proper verification of conferee identity.

## Identity verification

The Minister cannot approve a person becoming an Australian citizen unless satisfied of a person's identity. All conferees aged 16 and over at the time of application must have their identity verified prior to making the pledge of commitment and receiving their Australian citizenship certificate.

Identity documents and verification are not required for children under the age of 16. The identity of the responsible parent on their application will need to be verified.

A form of photographic identification is preferred for each person aged 16 and over, which will allow facial comparison between the person and their identification. A driver's licence, passport or other official document with a photograph is acceptable. For candidates who cannot produce any form of photographic identification, at least three documents bearing their name, address and signature, for example, bank statements, credit cards or bills are required. ID documents should be current and original documents (not photographs or photocopies). Unofficial documents with a photo such as student cards are not acceptable. Conferees may bring their invitation letter to the ceremony to assist with registration but the letter is not an identity document.

If the conferee has attended without any identity documents they cannot proceed to the ceremony. Refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs.

Guidance on face-to-photo identification is available from the Department of Home Affairs.

If there are doubts about the identity of the person, or the person does not have sufficient identity documentation, they cannot proceed with the ceremony. Refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs.

Officers of the Department of Home Affairs will usually attend to assist in identifying the conferees for citizenship ceremonies arranged by community organisations.

## Welcome to Country/ Acknowledgement of Country

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to welcome visitors to their traditional land. It can take many forms, depending on the particular culture of the traditional owners. It can include singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English.

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of showing awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, and of recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their Country.

An Acknowledgment of Country can be informal or formal and involves visitors acknowledging the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land as well as the long and continuing relationship between First Nations and their Country.

Further information is available on Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country at the [Reconciliation Australia website](#).

Organisers should consult with their local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander elders or leaders about the most appropriate way to recognise their communities.

## If the Minister attends

If in attendance, the Minister will have precedence to assume the role of presiding officer, conduct the citizenship ceremony and confer Australian citizenship on conferees.

The Department of Home Affairs will advise organisers if the Minister is interested in attending a citizenship ceremony.

## Speeches

### The Minister/Minister's Representative

The Minister will be given the opportunity to speak at the citizenship ceremony. The Minister is not required to read their own message verbatim, as they may wish to deliver a speech specific to the event.

If the Minister does not attend, the local Federal MP or Senator (if present) should read the Minister's message. This must be read in its entirety and without amendment.

When neither the Minister nor a federal representative attends, the Minister's message must be read by the presiding officer in its entirety and without amendment.

### Inviting official guests to speak

Speeches by other official guests must immediately follow the Minister's speech/message.

All elected local representatives, at the federal, state/territory and local government level, should over time have an opportunity to provide a welcoming speech to citizenship conferees. It is preferable, however, that not all elected representatives speak at every ceremony. This will ensure that the number of speeches remains manageable, particularly where local areas cross a number of electorates.

Appropriate arrangements should be reached at the local level to meet the requirements of all concerned. For example, ceremony organisers may wish to reach early agreement with elected representatives on appropriate dates in the year for each representative to speak, for example in the context of setting up or reviewing the annual ceremony schedule.

The emphasis remains on elected representatives welcoming new citizens to the local community. Candidates for election must not be invited to speak. The apolitical nature of the ceremony must be maintained. People attending on behalf of elected representatives must not be included in the official party.

Other official guests do not have to be invited to speak, however, subject to the number of speeches by elected representatives, a few brief messages of welcome from any local community leaders and/or local clubs and associations may contribute to a feeling of welcome.



## Suggested length and content of speeches

Local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies should give speakers an idea of how long they are expected to speak. To manage the length of the ceremony, each speech would ideally be less than five minutes long.

Speeches must be relevant and appropriate to the occasion and must avoid issues that may be contentious from a political, racial or sectarian point of view. Speeches that have particular political or denominational overtones, for example, would not be appropriate. It is essential that the dignity and significance of citizenship ceremonies be maintained at all times.

Citizenship ceremonies must not be used as forums for political or partisan expression or for the distribution of political material.

Organisers should draw these matters to the attention of all speakers in their invitations.

Speakers may welcome conferees as new citizens and refer to the economic, social and cultural contribution that new citizens make to Australia. Speakers could refer, for example, to the development of their local district, emphasising the role of new citizens in industry, civic or cultural affairs, or sport. Speakers could also refer to the many benefits, such as the democratic way of life and economic opportunities, which Australia has to offer its new citizens.

Conferees come from a variety of circumstances and backgrounds. It is advisable to avoid assumptions and generalisations about their background and their reasons for coming to Australia.

## Preamble

It is a legal requirement under section 10 of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* that the presiding officer read aloud to the conferees the preamble for citizenship ceremonies. The words of the Preamble are found in Schedule 1 of the Regulation.

## The Pledge of Commitment

It is a legal requirement that most conferees 16 years of age and over make the pledge of commitment before the presiding officer.

The pledge must be made in English. It comes in two versions:

### Pledge 1

From this time forward, under God,  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,  
whose democratic beliefs I share,  
whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

### Pledge 2

From this time forward  
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,  
whose democratic beliefs I share,  
whose rights and liberties I respect, and  
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

The version of the pledge which each conferee has indicated they wish to make is specified on the Australian citizenship pledge verification list forwarded to local government councils by the Department of Home Affairs. Pledge cards may be placed on the conferees' seats or handed to conferees on arrival.

A person may elect to switch pledge group on the day or make one pledge with the other pledge group in order to stand with their family group. As long as one form of the pledge is made, their citizenship is conferred.

Only conferees on the PVL can take the pledge. A person who attends a ceremony but was not invited and is not on the PVL cannot be allowed to make the pledge before the presiding officer as their application may still be under review.

As a matter of practice, and to facilitate the making of the pledge, the presiding officer 'administers' (i.e. reads out and the conferees repeat) the pledge. The presiding officer, with the support of organising staff, should observe that each conferee makes the pledge.

If it is observed that a conferee has not said the pledge, they are considered not to have acquired citizenship and must not be presented with their citizenship certificate. The conferee should be taken aside respectfully at the end of the ceremony and given another opportunity to say the pledge before the presiding officer. Should they refuse, they should not be presented with their citizenship certificate and the Department of Home Affairs should be contacted immediately.

Generally conferees who have a permanent or enduring physical or mental incapacity will not be allocated to attend a ceremony. Councils will be made aware of conferees with other needs (e.g. an Auslan interpreter) to allow enough time to prepare the necessary support.

## Children

Children under 16 years of age are welcome to make the pledge if they wish. The conferral of their citizenship is dependent on the responsible parent making the pledge before the presiding officer.

If the responsible parent does not attend the ceremony or fails to make the pledge then the child does not receive their Australian citizenship, even if they are present at the ceremony. Contact the Department of Home Affairs if this occurs.

## Holy books and scriptures

It is not a requirement for conferees to use a holy book or scripture or hold up their hand/s when making the pledge however, conferees are permitted to do so if they wish.

Conferees who wish to use a holy book or scripture when making the pledge, should be invited to bring the holy book or scripture of their choice to the citizenship ceremony in the invitation to ceremony letter.

Organisations who wish to provide holy books are not permitted to place the books on the conferees' chairs. They should be placed in an area where conferees may choose to use one during the ceremony, but it must not be made to look like a requirement. For example, a small table at the back of the room may be appropriate.

Holy books must not be provided as gifts to conferees.

## Australian citizenship certificates

### Presenting Australian citizenship certificates to conferees

It is not a legal requirement that:

- Australian citizenship certificates be presented to conferees attending a ceremony
- Australian citizenship certificates be presented by the presiding officer or other authorised person.

However, both of these are common practices.

Usually, the Department of Home Affairs will provide Australian citizenship certificates to organisations in advance of citizenship ceremonies for distribution to conferees at the ceremony. On the rare occasion that certificates are not available, the ceremony should continue as scheduled. The certificates will be sent to the new citizens at a later date by the Department of Home Affairs.

It is recommended that ceremony organisers hold a quantity of commemorative certificates to present to conferees in this situation. Commemorative certificates are of no legal standing and are not official evidence of Australian citizenship.

It is the making of the pledge of commitment before an authorised person that is the final legal requirement for acquiring Australian citizenship by conferral. The citizenship certificate does not make a person an Australian citizen however it is legal evidence of Australian citizenship and should be treated as an accountable document. Citizenship certificates should be stored in a safe when not being used for the purpose of arranging the ceremony.

When family members are conferred Australian citizenship at the same ceremony, each family member should be presented with their own certificate. If children are not part of the ceremony, children's certificates may be handed to the parent.

## Altering citizenship certificates

The presiding officer may, if they wish, sign each certificate at the dotted line on the bottom right corner of the certificate. However, this is not compulsory. An ink stamp bearing the presiding officer's title is also appropriate for this purpose. No other amendments, additions, deletions or marks may be made to the certificate. Altering Australian citizenship certificates is an offence under the Citizenship Act and carries serious penalties.

The person who signs the certificates prior to the ceremony must then be the presiding officer on the day of the ceremony for those certificates to be valid.

Australian citizenship certificates are only valid if the conferee makes the pledge before the presiding officer on the date printed on them.

Where conferees fail to attend a scheduled ceremony or do not make the pledge, their certificates must be returned by registered mail immediately following the ceremony to the office of the Department of Home Affairs that provided the certificates. The dates on the certificate must not be amended if the conferee attends a ceremony at another date. A new certificate will be provided by the Department of Home Affairs.

## If details are incorrect on Australian citizenship certificates

If a conferee claims that information on their Australian citizenship certificate is incorrect, they should still be allowed to make the pledge and be presented with the certificate. They should be advised to contact an office of the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible. This should also be indicated by the presiding officer on the PVL returned to the Department of Home Affairs.



## The Australian Citizenship Affirmation

To further enhance the meaning and symbolism of citizenship ceremonies, local government councils and organisations are encouraged to conduct the Australian Citizenship Affirmation at the conclusion of the citizenship ceremony.

The Australian Citizenship Affirmation (the Affirmation) is a statement affirming loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people. It is based on the pledge made by conferees at citizenship ceremonies in order to become Australian citizens.

The Affirmation increases awareness of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship, promotes community involvement and participation, and helps people feel that they belong. It also helps to build pride in Australians about their citizenship.

Unlike the pledge, the Affirmation is entirely voluntary, has no status in law and has no legal effect.

The Affirmation may be incorporated at the end of the Australian citizenship ceremony and allows all present to join with the new citizens to publicly affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people. Non-citizens are able to participate by joining in at the second line.

The Affirmation reads:

As an Australian citizen

I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people,  
whose democratic beliefs I share,  
whose rights and liberties I respect,  
and whose laws I uphold and obey.

If the Affirmation is to be included, affirmation cards may either be placed on all seats at the venue, or handed to all members of the audience as they arrive. Affirmation cards are available from the Department of Home Affairs.

The Affirmation must be led by an Australian citizen.

They may be a person of some standing in the community, such as an official guest, a leader within the community, a federal or state/territory parliamentarian or other appropriate person.



## Australian electoral enrolment

Local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies are asked to facilitate electoral enrolment of new citizens, including through access to the citizenship ceremony for staff of the Australian Electoral Commission.

The Department of Home Affairs provides pre-printed, personalised electoral enrolment forms containing the personal details of each conferee over the age of 16 to those conducting citizenship ceremonies.

As enrolment and voting is compulsory for Australian citizens, new citizens should be encouraged to complete their enrolment forms once they have made the pledge and been presented with their Australian citizenship certificate.

Conferees should:

- check that their pre-printed details on the electoral enrolment form are correct and, if needed, correct any errors
- complete the evidence of identity section of the form
- sign the form (in some states this must be witnessed)
- hand the completed forms to staff from the AEC if present, or post to the AEC as soon as possible.

## At the Ceremony Checklist

On the day	
	Arrange table for registration and identity verification
	Verify identity of conferees against photographic identity document provided.
	Mark attendance or non-attendance on the PVL
	Collect written consent of conferees to use images if they are to be used for promotional purposes
	Arrange flags, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and official portrait/photo of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, according to protocols
	Issue pledge cards, program, electoral enrolment forms and affirmation cards to the conferees
	Ensure no political, commercial or religious material is available for distribution
	Assist with electoral roll form completion
During the ceremony	
	Welcome to Country and/or Acknowledgement of Country
	Reading the Minister's message
	Reading the Preamble
	Observe conferees making the pledge of commitment (Pledge 1 or Pledge 2)
	Present Australian citizenship certificates to conferees who have made the pledge
	Play the Australian National Anthem
	Conduct the Australian Citizenship Affirmation

## PART 4

# After the ceremony

## Returning the pledge verification list

The PVL is considered official evidence that an applicant has fulfilled the final legal obligation of making the pledge of commitment before a person authorised to receive the pledge (the presiding officer).

The Department of Home Affairs is required to retain completed PVLs as a record documenting acquisition of Australian citizenship on behalf of the National Archives of Australia. It is therefore important to return the signed PVL to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible after the ceremony.

The presiding officer must sign the PVL immediately after the conclusion of a ceremony, certifying that each person on the list has attended and been observed making the pledge.

The names of people who did not attend the ceremony, whose identity has not been verified or who have not made the pledge of commitment, must have a line ruled through them on the PVL. The PVL should not be altered in any other way.

A copy of the completed and signed PVL must immediately be forwarded to the Department of Home Affairs, typically by electronic means. Hard copies can be returned with any unused citizenship certificates.

**PVLs should be returned to the Department of Home Affairs within two working days following a ceremony.**

The Department of Home Affairs relies on ceremony organisers returning signed PVLs promptly. Delays can result in significant problems being encountered by new citizens, for example, when applying for an Australian passport.

A copy of the PVL should be given to staff of the AEC (if attending the ceremony) or forwarded to them by mail or email.

Ensure that any non-attendee names have been similarly marked.

## Privacy

The names and addresses of conferees on the PVL must be used by organisations only for the purpose of conducting citizenship ceremonies, for example, to identify the conferees, manage invitations and RSVPs.

Improper use or disclosure of personal information provided for the purpose of citizenship ceremonies may be in breach of the *Privacy Act 1988*. Inappropriate use of personal information could lead to revocation of authorisation to conduct citizenship ceremonies.

Authorised secondary use of conferees' personal details includes providing a PVL to the AEC and providing names and addresses to elected representatives for the purpose of a welcome.

### Disclosing names and addresses of new citizens

Whether local federal, state and territory MPs attend the ceremony or not, it is important and appropriate that they have the opportunity to welcome new citizens as formal members of the Australian community.

Where requested, local government councils should forward the names and addresses of new citizens to local federal, state and territory MPs and local government councillors.

New citizens are informed through the application form for conferral of Australian citizenship that their information may be disclosed to MPs and local government councillors for the purpose of welcoming new citizens as constituents.

Only names and addresses are forwarded to MPs, unless a justifiable reason for other information is provided. Copies of pledge verification lists containing other identity and personal information must not be sent to MPs.

Conferee details must not be provided before the ceremony. They will be provided only after the ceremony is completed and only upon request. This is to ensure that only conferees who attend the ceremony and become citizens receive a welcoming letter.

The information must be sent with advice that clearly states the names and addresses of new citizens are disclosed to local MPs solely for the purpose of welcoming new citizens into the community. This advice must be provided to be consistent with privacy legislation.

Advice to MPs should also clearly state that the names and addresses of new citizens should not be forwarded to other persons or organisations, or used by local MPs for any other purpose.

The PVL must not be used by local government councils for any purpose other than administering a ceremony. The list must not be shared with candidates for election.

**Ensure that any conferee who did not attend the ceremony, whose identity was not verified, or who did not make the pledge is removed from the list provided to MPs.**

## Returning Australian citizenship certificates

Australian citizenship certificates are only valid for the date printed on them and under the condition that the conferee makes the pledge on that same date.

Where conferees fail to attend a scheduled ceremony, their identity was not verified or they did not make the pledge, their certificates must be returned by hand or by registered mail immediately following the ceremony to the office of the Department of Home Affairs that provided the certificates.

## After the Ceremony Checklist

After the ceremony	
	Non-attendees have been ruled out on the PVL
	Any issues regarding identity or the pledge have been referred to the Department of Home Affairs
	The presiding officer has signed the PVL
	Completed PVL has been returned to the Department of Home Affairs (within two working days)
	All unused or void citizenship certificates have been returned to the Department of Home Affairs
	PVL given or forwarded to AEC
	Names and addresses forwarded to MPs (on request)

## Exemptions to the Code

In exceptional circumstances councils may apply for an exemption to the requirements of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code by writing to the Department of Home Affairs.









# RIVERINA AND MURRAY JOINT ORGANISATION

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation, held in the Ian Gilbert Room of the Murrumbidgee Council on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 10:00am.

### VOTING BOARD MEMBERS

<b>CHAIR: Cr Kevin Mack (Albury)</b>	<b>Cr Matthew Hannan (Berrigan)</b>	<b>Cr Darryl Jardine (Carrathool)</b>
<b>Cr Norm Brennan (Edward River)</b>	<b>Cr Patrick Bourke (Federation)</b>	<b>Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith)</b>
<b>Cr Paul Maytom (Leeton)</b>	<b>Cr Chris Bilkey (Murray River)</b>	<b>Cr Neville Kschenka (Narrandera)</b>
<b>Cr Bill Sheaffe (Hay)</b>	<b>Cr Ruth McCrae (Murrumbidgee)</b>	

### NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS

<b>Frank Zaknich (Albury)</b>	<b>Rowan Perkins (Berrigan)</b>	<b>Rick Warren (Carrathool)</b>	<b>Adam McSwain (Edward River)</b>
<b>Adrian Butler (Federation)</b>	<b>Brett Stonestreet (Griffith)</b>	<b>Kirstyn Thronder (Hay)</b>	<b>Jackie Kruger (Leeton)</b>
<b>Des Bilske (Murray River)</b>	<b>John Scarce (Murrumbidgee)</b>	<b>George Cowan (Narrandera)</b>	<b>Cameron Templeton (OLG, DPIE)</b>

### MEETING PRESENTERS

<b>Jillian Kilby</b>	<b>The Infrastructure Collaborative (via video link)</b>
<b>Ken Gillespie</b>	<b>Regional Infrastructure Coordinator (via video link)</b>
<b>Don Murray</b>	<b>John Holland (via video link)</b>

### GUESTS

<b>Peter Evans</b>	<b>Office of Local Government, DPIE</b>
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### EXECUTIVE OFFICER (NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBER)

<b>Bridgett Leopold</b>	<b>Executive Officer RAMJO</b>
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#### AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME

The Chairperson welcomed the Board Members and guests to the meeting.

#### AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES

**Voting Board Members:** Cr Matt Hannan (Berrigan Shire Council), Cr Peter Laird (Mayor Carrathool Shire Council), Cr Neville Kschenka (Narrandera Shire Council)

**Other Members:** Brett Stonestreet (Griffith), Rowan Perkins (Berrigan), Des Bilske (Murray River), James Bolton (DPIE)

**RESOLVED that the apologies be accepted and that leave of absence be granted.**

**(Moved Cr Brennan and seconded Cr McRae)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 3 – DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY OR OTHER INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests lodged at the meeting by Board Members or other Designated Persons.

#### AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019 BOARD MEETING

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the RAMJO Board Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019 are confirmed.**

**(Moved Cr Dal Broi and seconded Cr Maytom)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019

Executive Officer informed the Board that all outstanding actions from the previous meeting are now complete.

**RESOLVED that the Board Members noted the verbal update.**

#### AGENDA ITEM 6 – CAMERON TEMPLETON AND PETER EVANS, OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Far West Engagement Officer, Peter Evans, provided a background on his experience working with and in Local Government, including assisting with recent mergers from a Human Resources perspective.

The Engagement Officer for Riverina and Murray, Cameron Templeton, provided a briefing on the \$150,000 offer from Office of Local Government to Joint Organisations. The future direction of Office of Local Government and Joint Organisation cooperation is as follows:

- OLG to take a greater role in the governance of the Joint Organisations
- Optimistic that JOs across the state can use the opportunity to demonstrate ability to deliver on a strategic priority/priorities and demonstrate ability to becoming financially sustainable

Discussion from Board Members focussed on ongoing concerns relating to the (in)ability for the JO to function without appropriate resourcing to deliver on any projects, cooperation or collaboration. There was expression from Board Members that \$150,000 isn't sufficient to demonstrate ability to deliver any permanent outcomes or change, and that JOs who are performing, cooperating and moving forward shouldn't be penalised.

Questions were placed regarding what success looks like from the perspective of the OLG, and this was met with the suggestion that within one year the JO should be able to demonstrate that they can act collectively as a team on one priority to demonstrate progress and create an income stream.

The Chair raised the point that Southern Lights was an example of a strategic collaboration across more than 40 Councils, which was met with lack of support from a State Government perspective. Other RAMJO Board Members expressed that large regional funding opportunities need to be more flexible, or created in

consideration of JOs and their ability to apply. Furthermore, segmenting a parcel of regional grant funding for JOs only will create competition and collaboration. There needs to be an element of creating opportunity for JOs to leverage and thrive within current frameworks.

Uncertainty regarding the future sustainability was expressed from Board Members, and the question regarding what options are available to Member Councils should the JO model not be successful and not continue. This was met with further discussions regarding expectations from JOs, given resourcing for base costs are not being met.

Requests for OLG to consider that success from a JO perspective requires an ear from State Government, and genuine partnership. RAMJO can act as a think tank for State Government, with mutual understanding and commitment to a regional collaboration model. There was genuine agreement from Board Members that given the long standing partnerships in the room and aspiration to deliver on regional priorities which benefit our regional communities, our Member Councils would continue to collaborate on regional issues regardless of the model.

Board Members also requested transparency around the State Government's position on funding models and the space in which JOs can operate, as lack of clarity remains in this space.

**RESOLVED that the Board received and noted the update from Cameron Templeton, Council Engagement Officer in the Office of Local Government function in Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.**

#### AGENDA ITEM 7 – DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY SURVEY AND SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Officer provided a presentation on the outcome of the Digital Connectivity Survey and the trends in the data.

**RESOLVED that the RAMJO Board noted the update and endorsed the following actions of the Digital Connectivity Sub-Committee**

1. That the Digital Connectivity Sub-Committee commence discussions with telecommunication providers, NBN Local, Canberra JO and local / federal members regarding the finding of the survey. The Sub-Committee will also plan to reconvene to refine a set of policy positions on Digital Connectivity needs of our communities.
2. That the Digital Connectivity Sub-Committee prepare a regional submission to the design of the Federal Government's Regional Digital Connectivity Program (due 9<sup>th</sup> September), including the following:
  - a. Support Local government authorities being allowed to lead a bid for funding. Refer "Discussion Paper", page 6, Question 2.
  - b. Nominate RAMJO survey as a source of information to support applications by Local Government.
  - c. Possibly nominate the boosters for households as a realistic project to address the blacks opt issue at the grass roots level. Refer Question 6, Page 7.
  - d. Support case for very localised projects. I.e. this well under \$2m but have real benefits for local communities. Refer question 11, page 9.
3. Continue advocacy actions with local members and other relevant MPs
4. Prepare a scope and draft points for future funding opportunities, possibly:
  - a. Increasing reliability and capacity of Council internet connectivity to allow possible future internet hubs, public office spaces, study hubs for distance learners
  - b. Advocating for drought affected farmers: seeking access to drought assistance, mental health assistance via web, apps, etc, but without the connectivity (boosters, small cell, etc)
  - c. Supporting families with students who are studying or are home schooled
  - d. Home Businesses: offering support or improvements for those who are currently disadvantaged due to their lack of internet connectivity.

**Moved: Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith), Seconded: Cr Pat Bourke (Federation)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 8 – JILLIAN KILBY & DON MURRAY – JOHN HOLLAND

Jillian Kilby and Don Murray provided a presentation to the Board via Zoom on the future of the Country Regional Network, and John Holland's preparation for the maintenance contract which commences in 2021.

Discussion relating to non-operational lines and the future for Country Regional Rail Network included concerns that individual Councils have spent time before investing into these studies, with little outcome. Jillian expressed her understanding of this matter and provided Board members with contact details for Councils to reach out and discuss individual matters with the team preparing the bid.

**RESOLVED that the Board Members await the distribution of contact details of Jillian, Don and Ken, so that they may reach out and provide localised or regional input where desired.**

#### AGENDA ITEM 9 – JACKIE KRUGER - AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY RIVERINA AND MURRAY – RAMJO RESPONSE

Jackie Kruger represents RAMJO Member Councils on the Riverina and Murray Regional Plan Monitoring Committee. Jackie briefed the RAMJO Board on the Draft document "Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina and Murray" which has been released for comment.

Jackie has drafted a RAMJO submission on behalf of the committee, noting that the context of the response is the adopted vision for the Riverina Murray as espoused in the Riverina Murray Regional Plan:

*A diversified economy found on Australia's food bowl, iconic waterways and a network of vibrant connected communities.*

While RAMJO agrees with the implied intent of the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft outlined in the introduction of the document, the RAMJO summary recommendation is that the draft "Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray" document be put on hold for further review once the following is completed:

- Important agricultural land mapping (underway)
- ACCC review on water trading (underway)
- Currency of data update (by DPIE Planning)
- Economic analysis of the value of formed irrigation areas in the Riverina Murray for delivering water as efficiently as possible for agricultural production (yet to be commissioned – if required this could be driven by RAMJO in collaboration with a range of stakeholders)

The full submission is at [Attachment A](#).

RAMJO Member Councils have further concerns relating to the proliferation of solar farms, which the outcomes were agreed to move to agenda item 12 on Solar Farm RAMJO Paper.

**RESOLVED that the RAMJO Board:**

- **noted the update from RAMJO's representative on the Riverina Murray Regional Plan Monitoring Committee regarding the draft "Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina and Murray" strategy.**
- **agreed to provide a RAMJO response based on the feedback provided at the Board meeting, with the response prepared by our representative on the Riverina and Murray Regional Plan Monitoring Committee, Jackie Kruger. The RAMJO response includes the recommendation that that the draft "Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray" document be put on hold for further review once the processes listed in the bullet points above are completed.**

**Moved: Cr Paul Maytom (Leeton), Seconded: Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith)**

## AGENDA ITEM 10 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – RAMJO BUDGET FOR 2019 - 2020

The Executive Officer confirmed a RAMJO Extraordinary Meeting was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 in Berrigan, with the reconciliation for the 2018 – 2019 financial year noted, and the 2019 – 2020 budget adopted.

Of significance was the recognition that moving forward under the current funding structure and a draft forecast provided via a 4 year budget, RAMJO would not be financially sustainable in coming years under the current framework. This has prompted further options which will be pursued and investigated over the coming 6 months to provide clarity in the first quarter of 2020.

In addition, RAMJO Executive Officer presented a schedule of meetings with Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Government Departments and other Joint Organisations which have been underway to advocate for the future of Joint Organisations and share identified opportunities. RAMJO will apply for the additional \$150,000 being offered by the Office of Local Government, pending a decision from the presentation of options in agenda item 11.

### RESOLVED:

1. That the RAMJO Board **noted** the successful advocacy outcomes and the offering of an additional \$150,000 from the Office of Local Government via the Minister for a work stream approved by both the RAMJO Board and the Office of Local Government.
2. That the RAMJO Board **consider** the most efficient and practical application of this funding to meet requirements and achieve the greatest outcomes for RAMJO, in line with the identified work streams in agenda item 11.

**MOVED: Cr Pat Bourke (Federation), Seconded: Cr. Chris Bilkey (Murray River))**

## AGENDA ITEM 11 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE AND RECOMMENDED WORK STREAMS FOR PRIORITISING

The Executive Officer provided a presentation on the outcomes of the Sub-Committees and recommendations to the Board which have been further refined with the General Managers' Professional Officers group. These recommendations were provided with the condition that the Board consider RAMJO has limited resources and no further commitment from Member Councils or NSW Government for additional funding for staff. Therefore, a cautious and realistic approach to recommending projects was applied, with a lens that considers our ability to create change. Priority work streams were presented in each category, under the following categories:

- What can we control?
- Where can we influence?
- In which areas are we only able to advocate?

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### WATER

- **Control:** IWCMs and Water Quality (what are other JOs doing?)
- **Influence:** Social Media campaign and advocacy around "what the water situation is doing to us"
- **Advocacy:** continue to push NSW Government for clarity and commitment on future 'new water' infrastructure commitments.

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### ENERGY

- **Control:** RAMJO Energy Strategy
- **Influence:** Attracting Industry and Shaping the Region

- **Advocacy:** Solar Farm development regulation changes (Development Application process for State Significant Developments, Voluntary Payment Agreements, modelling for understanding net economic impacts for the 'life' of solar farms.

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## DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

- **Control:** Apply for grants to boost Council internet connectivity and offer community grant campaigns, such as in-house boosters, internet study hubs, rented office spaces, etc. Remain on track to identifying and acting on "SMART" opportunities.
- **Influence:** Meet with telecommunication providers, NBN Co and local members to demonstrate evidence collated and press for support.
- **Advocacy:** Use survey data to demonstrate systematic disadvantages in our region and impacts to small business, education facilities and health facilities. Request equity of access to reliable and sustainable infrastructure.

**NOTE:** During the discussion on this item, the General Manager of Murrumbidgee raised the option to create a RAMJO Internet Service Provider as a possible income stream, which also could bridge the digital connectivity gaps identified. This idea was added to the consideration relating to possible works streams which would fulfil

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## HEALTH

- **Control:** None. RAMJO identified that taking on management of health services is not helpful given the duplication and difficulty navigating in this space. However, the JO should act on funding opportunities where there are prospects to deliver small scale projects for our communities as they arise. (e.g. Empowering Our Communities).
- **Influence:** Create policy positions via the next Sub-Committee meeting for the following:
  - **GP postcode formulation**
  - **Attraction and retention of GPs and nurses**
  - **Mobile diagnostics**
  - **Expansion of school based programs**
- **Advocacy:** advocate for a reform of the visibility, marketing and online accessibility of all general health, mental health and specialist health services provided in our region to reduce the complexity and difficulty in navigating the health system. Advocate for 'low care' aged care reform of funded standards given the ageing population and employment opportunities in our region if the business case for low care beds is more attractive.

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## INDUSTRY

- **Control:** Local Government Industry – procurement and supplier development program
- **Influence:** Buy local, attract industry, regional economic development group (and possible prospectus)
- **Advocacy:** RAMJO Prospectus - Aerospace

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## TRANSPORT

- **N/A – awaiting completion of RAMJO Regional Transport Strategy which is in the final draft stages and being completed by the RAMJO Engineering Group.**

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## SUMMARY

### RESOLVED:

1. That the RAMJO Board members discussed and endorsed **three projects** which deliver on the following:
  - a. Can be undertaken with existing resources
  - b. Can be undertaken via the \$150,000 OLG grant within 1 year

- c. Increase the financial sustainability of the Joint Organisation
  - d. Remain in our ability to control
2. That with these parameters in mind, the RAMJO Board agreed to adopt the following work streams as priority in this order:
- a. Procurement Program Scoping – 2019 (areas to be included to be determined after data received on the ‘nucleus’ of what we all spend)
  - b. Regional Energy Strategy scope and draft with short, medium and long term deliverables including cost savings, efficiencies and long term security and affordability - 2019
  - c. Digital Connectivity – possibility of creating our own Internet Service Provider functionality – 2020 ongoing into 2021

All other work streams will remain relevant, but cannot be progress until such time that funding or resourcing opportunities become available. RAMJO, it’s Board Members and networks will continue to influence and advocate on priority areas, with each sub-committee creating an advocacy platform.

**Moved: Cr Chris Bilkey (Murray River), Seconded: Cr Norm Brennan (Edward River)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 12 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – SOLAR FARM RAMJO PAPER

The free water trading market and rapid change from cropping to horticulture (such as nut trees), along with the proliferation of solar farms is intensifying the agricultural economic impact on our region. A detailed analysis into the long term economic impacts of these rapid changes in this landscape to understand whether these impacts are likely to result in a net loss or a net gain for our region would define which action we should take. Discussion relating to commissioning such a study was had with the agreement that the Executive Officer should approach The Hon Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, regarding these matters.

**RESOLVED that the RAMJO Board support the Executive Officer to approach the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Rob Stokes, regarding the rapid changes in the use of land in our region, and a possible cooperative approach to commissioning a study on the full economic impact of long term changes in land use relating to solar farms and other rapid changes.**

**Moved: Cr Paul Maytom (Leeton), Seconded: Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 13 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – PROFESSIONAL OFFICER WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Board received an update and minutes relating to each Professional Officer Working Group.

**RESOLVED that the Board noted the updates from the Professional Officer Working Groups.**

**Moved: Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith), Seconded: Cr Pat Bourke (Federation)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 14 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – RAMJO WASTE UPDATE

The Board received an update from the Executive Officer regarding a strategic meeting with the Regional Waste Coordinators on future direction, vision and progress to date. The redirection of funding to a regional role to determine opportunities and create business cases was supported in principle by the Regional Waste Coordinators. A clear area of responsibility and reporting guidelines to ensure we maintain the integrity of the existing waste groups and the relationship with EPA was agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the RAMJO Board agreed to proceed with the recruitment of the Office Manager role and Regional Project Manager role under specified terms, and in line with the funding arrangements presented at the RAMJO Extraordinary Board Meeting in July relating to the budget and surplus RAMJO funds.

2. That the RAMJO Board noted the recruitment of the Project Officer will be suspended until such time that the Project Manager identifies projects for endorsement and progression to the Board and to the waste groups.
3. That the Board noted detailed financial workings will be drafted with RAMJO's financial administrator, HR support services and the Executive, once salaries and on-costs are determined.

**Moved: Cr. Pat Bourke (Federation), Seconded Cr. Paul Maytom (Leeton)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 15 – BRIDGETT LEOPOLD – FUTURE MEETING PROTOCOL

The Executive Officer proposed to lengthen every second Board Meeting due to the increased strategic focus and additional work streams

**RESOLVED that the RAMJO Board agree:**

1. That each (or every second) Board meeting be an overnight dinner with an early start the following morning to allow for a longer meeting and reducing travel time pressures. (e.g. 8am – midday).
2. That every second General Managers meeting be an overnight dinner with a longer meeting the following day.
3. That the location and time of each meeting be flexible and be determined on an order or methodology open for discussion. Suggestions include:
  - a. Alphabetical
  - b. Identification of other meetings in areas and align RAMJO Board meetings to align
  - c. Volunteering (or being volun-told)
4. The RAMJO budget has allocated funding to allow for this capacity building of the Board and General Managers Group, which can only be achieved with more detailed input or consideration of key topics (i.e. more time to do so).
5. That the Executive Officer will attempt to invite a local member or other distinguished guest to the RAMJO Board dinner to share the progress of RAMJO and build the RAMJO brand.
6. That the next Board meeting be held in Griffith a week earlier than planned, with a dinner on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November and the Board meeting on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>. Steph Cooke MP Cootamundra has agreed to attend the dinner to learn more about RAMJO.

**Moved: Cr John Dal Broi (Griffith), Seconded: Cr Pat Bourke (Federation)**

#### AGENDA ITEM 16 – GENERAL BUSINESS

##### GP REGISTERS

RAMJO should consider offering a letter of support to the Murrumbidgee Local Health District to employ rural GP trainees as NSW Health employees for the 4 years while they work across various rural hospitals and general practices. This continuity of employment would mean that GP registrars training to become rural specialists could benefit from entitlements such as accrued annual leave, long service leave, sick leave and access to paid parental leave. While this sounds inordinately sensible there is currently a barrier which prevents this from happening, and can be simply fixed via an adjustment to some limiting policy.

**RESOLVED that the Board agree that RAMJO draft a letter of support for the Murrumbidgee Local Health District to request the Commonwealth Department of Health to find an innovative way to enable District employed GP trainees to undertake MBS billing as they see their patients.**

**Moved: Cr Paul Maytom (Leeton), Seconded: Cr Pat Bourke (Federation)**



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#### SUCCESSFUL RAMJO PILOT PROJECT FUNDING

RAMJO was successful in being awarded a \$30,000 funding for delivering a community coaching project in Deniliquin. This project has been specifically developed with a private company specialising in coaching and resilience. RAMJO will report back into the Board with the outcomes of the pilot workshop.

**There being no further business, the RAMJO Board meeting concluded at 1:30 pm.**



Level 3, 553 Kiewa Street  
PO Box 3572  
ALBURY NSW 2640

Email: [admin@ramjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@ramjo.nsw.gov.au)  
Phone: (02) 6023 8791

20<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Regional Connectivity Section  
Department of Communications and the Arts  
[regionalconnectivity@communications.gov.au](mailto:regionalconnectivity@communications.gov.au)

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601  
GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT 2601

Dear Sir / Madam,

## **RE: Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO)**

### **Submission on the Regional Connectivity Program Discussion Paper**

Thank you for the opportunity for the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) to make a submission in response to the Discussion Paper on the Australian Government's Regional Connectivity Program.

#### **RAMJO Profile**

The Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation is a cooperation of eleven (11) Member Councils in southern NSW and operates under NSW *Local Government Act 1993*. Member Councils include Albury City, Berrigan Shire, Carrathool Shire, Edward River, Federation, Griffith City, Hay Shire, Leeton Shire, Murray River, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera Shire.

These Councils cover an area of nearly 75,000km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 150,000 people. The southern part of the region extends along the Murray River, from Albury City Council at the eastern end through to the Councils bordering on the far west, including Murray River and Edward River. The northern part of our region extends generally from Griffith City Council across to the regional Shires of Carrathool and Hay in the west. A regional map showing Member Councils boundaries is attached for your information ([Attachment A](#)).

The RAMROC region has a mix of large regional centres, medium sized irrigation based towns and urban shires, through to a number of predominantly dryland farming shire areas, large in size but with a low population base.

The major regional centres are Albury City (pop 53,767) and Griffith City (pop 26,882). There are many and varied small, medium and large scale business across the region, with most stemming from an agricultural base. The region is home to several university bases and tertiary institutions, while maintaining its role as an important food and fibre source for Australian consumption and for export purposes. The region produces a wide range of summer and winter grain crops, fruit, vegetables, horticulture, viticulture, dairy and livestock. Agriculture directly employs 30,000 in the region, which is 37% of the total regional employment.



## RAMJO's Purpose

With an overall goal to *"increase diverse population growth within RAMJO"* Member Councils are committed to collaborating effectively to enhance the economic, social, economic and environmental capabilities of member councils and communities, to ensure their long term sustainability, resilience and prosperity.

RAMJO has three integral functions including: intergovernmental collaboration, identifying strategic regional priorities and advocacy. The RAMJO Board, comprised of General Managers and Mayors of each Member Council, along with State Government representation from relevant Departments (namely Office of Local Government and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), has identified the Digital Connectivity as one of the six strategic regional priorities for our communities.

## RAMJO's Contribution to the Regional Connectivity Program Discussion Paper

### General Input

It was pleasing to see that the Discussion Paper identified areas of concern and opportunities for connectivity improvements which align with RAMJO's findings in this space. In particular, the need for the network to be complemented in some areas with bespoke, place-based solutions to deliver on a Universal Service Agreement for all Australians.

Several months ago, RAMJO undertook a community wide survey with the findings demonstrating a clear message from communities around feeling disadvantaged when compared to other Australian citizens. This survey was specifically designed to nominate locations of significance where connectivity was lacking. RAMJO would be more than happy to share the findings of this research with the Department of Communications and the Arts.

With ongoing water security and affordability issues, many businesses and farming operations in RAMJO are attempting to become as efficient as possible. This includes accessing programs and applications to assist in water management and day to day operations. The issue remains that with lack of significant coverage and reliability, many of our businesses cannot access these measures to assist with adaptation and innovation now and into the future.

In New South Wales, regional economic development is now a critical platform of the State Government through the NSW Regional Development Framework and associated Regional Growth Fund programs. As identified in the background of the discussion paper, and by the RAMJO Board, digital & mobile connectivity is now recognised as a critical enabler to accessing education, government services, online banking, etc. In line with attempting to grow our regions, attracting industry or strengthening the current economic base of these communities will require improvement and investment in the connectivity space.

Furthermore, with our areas suffering economically from drought, many health services have created interactive online services such as mental, financial and physical health apps, services and websites. Unfortunately for some of our residents, these services are not accessible, and even for those who have connectivity, common complaints around congestion from 3pm until 10pm remains a core frustration.



## Specific Input on Key Design Principles

### **Question 2, Page 6: Should other parties, for example local government authorities, business organisations or industry groups, be allowed to lead a bid for Regional Connectivity Program Funding?**

RAMJO supports the proposal for local government entities, including Joint Organisations, to be able to lead a bid for Regional Connectivity Program Funding. As per the background information in the discussion paper, RAMJO believes the most effective means to deal with the gaps in connectivity services and reliability are a range of bespoke, place-based solutions. These solutions could be best led by a local government entity, such as a Joint Organisation or an informal grouping of Councils, in collaboration with a licenced telecommunications carrier.

To this effect, RAMJO has a range of input provided by residents in our areas, including common routes travelled, cross roads, rural properties, etc. where service is not currently available. As identified in the discussion paper, the current national mobile network providers claim to provide mobile coverage to more than 99% of the population (i.e. premises), however in reality, this represents only 32% of the landmass. RAMJO believes there are critical transport routes, industry hubs and other enabling infrastructure which do not have sufficient access to connectivity to operate as effectively as competitors where connectivity is satisfactory.

### **Question 2, Page 6: Are there other organisations besides the local, state and territory governments that could be considered 'trusted sources of information' for the purposes of identifying local telecommunications priorities?**

Yes. Joint Organisations in NSW have been set up for this very purpose (map of Joint Organisations is also at Attachment A). To identify common strategic regional priorities for our populations and to represent a collective set of information and identified critical enablers for future regional success. RAMJO and other Joint Organisations could be nominated to act as a bid leader for a collective of local government authorities (as digital connectivity is broader than council boundaries), or possibly as a support to local government applications.

### **Question 5, Page 7: Are there any comments that you wish to make in relation to co-contributions?**

As per question 11, the Australian Government should consider a third category for highly localised solutions up to the value of \$2,000,000 which do not require co-contribution from the applicant, where they are a local government entity or a Joint Organisation. This is due to the existing budget constraints and the willingness to assist in creating and delivering solutions for the nation that would otherwise be unfeasible without the support of the Australian Government and national network providers.

### **Question 6, Page 7: What type of projects should be considered for funding through the Regional Connectivity Program?**

Projects which demonstrate improved reliability and capacity and are bespoke or place-based. An example identified by RAMJO is a set of criteria allowing individuals to apply for in-home boosters. Criteria could include whether they run a business, or whether they have children or others studying



at home, or where people are under care for a medical condition. These were some of the common areas of concern identified via the RAMJO community and business survey.

RAMJO sees this as a stop-gap measure to improve the connectivity of these isolated and/or disadvantaged individuals until such time that a larger network solution is established. RAMJO believes it could assist the Department of Communications and The Arts in administering and implementing such a program.

**Question 11, Page 9: Is there a case for a third category, for highly localised solutions for projects that, for example, are seeking funding of less than \$200,000 GST inclusive?**

Absolutely. RAMJO sees this third category as imperative to enabling an environment for creative, be-spoke solutions where a business case for large and wide-ranging infrastructure does not demonstrate value for money. Working with local governments and Joint Organisations will allow these highly localised solutions to be co-created with community needs in mind.

## Summary

RAMJO appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to this discussion paper and would certainly be pleased to provide more detailed information and comment if so required. RAMJO will continue to seek to improve the mobile and digital connectivity of our residents via cooperation with Commonwealth and State Governments, and with licenced telecommunication providers.

For all further comments and enquiries, please contact:

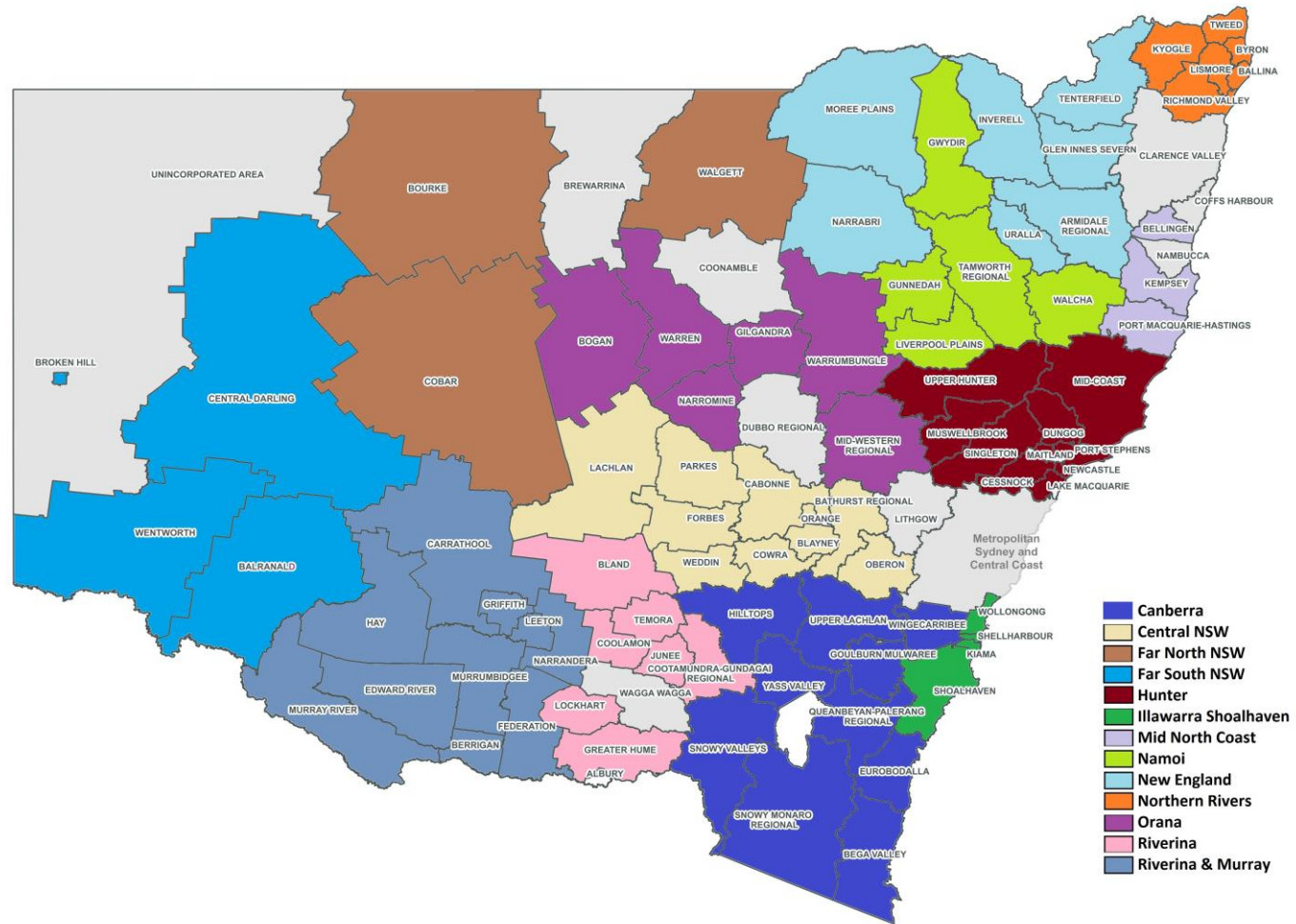
Ms Bridgett Leopold  
Executive Officer  
Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation  
Email: [admin@ramjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@ramjo.nsw.gov.au)  
Phone: 02 6023 8791

Yours faithfully,

Ms Bridgett Leopold  
RAMJO Executive Officer

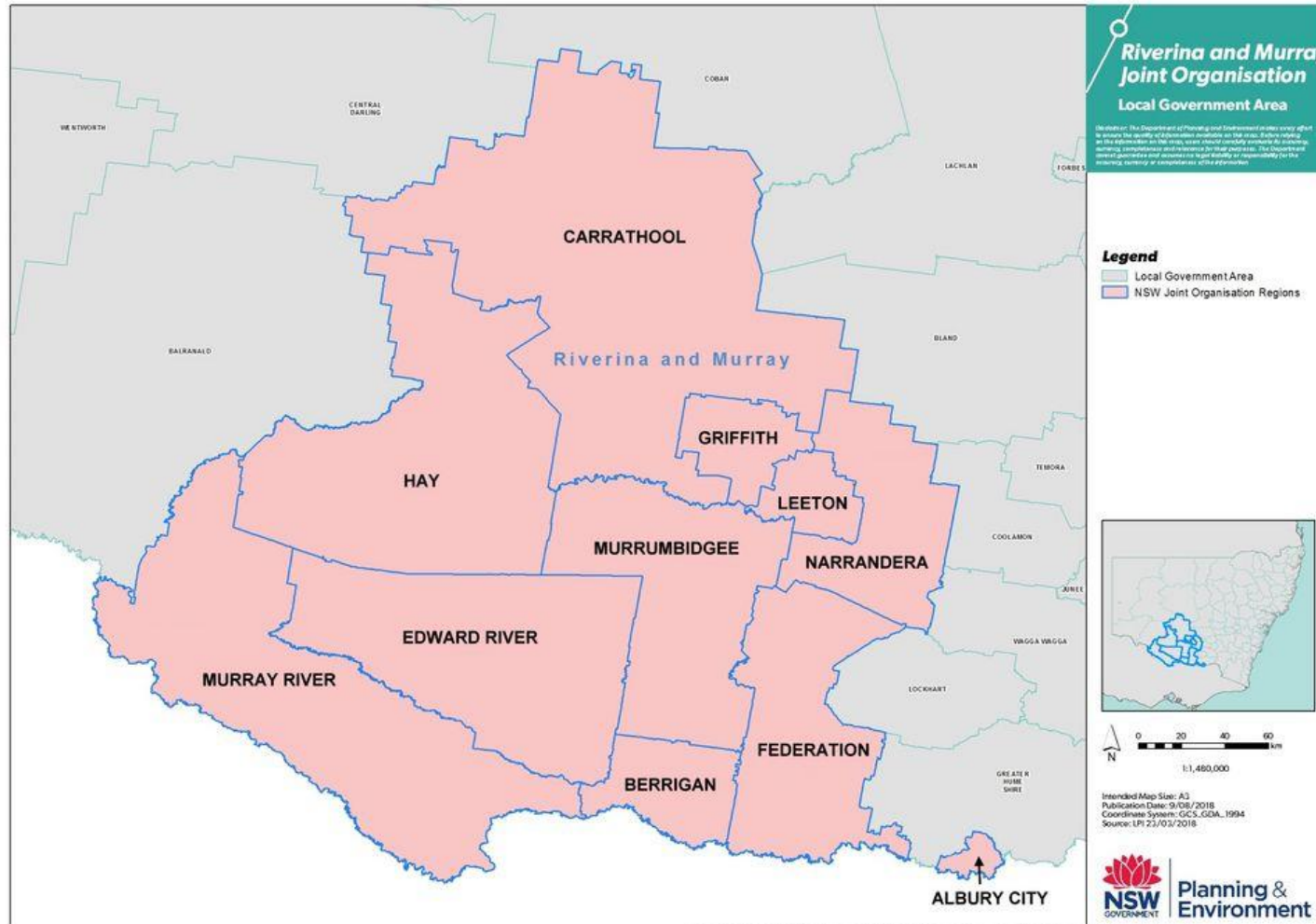


## Attachment A – Joint Organisation & RAMJO Maps





## Attachment A – Joint Organisation & RAMJO Maps





4 September 2019

Minister for Health, Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government, Hon Mark Coulton MP

Minister for the Environment and Member for Farrer, Hon Sussan Ley MP

Dear Ministers

**Ministerial assistance requested to implement a no-cost solution to address the rural GP / Hospital crisis**

I write on behalf of the eleven member Councils of RAMJO (Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation of Councils, NSW) whose communities are in crisis with a severe doctor shortage.

Like most rural communities across Australia, we are in desperate need of more rural specialist GPs to service our residents and the emergency departments, operating theatres and wards of our local hospitals.

One strategy towards closing this gap is to attract more doctors to become rural specialist GPs. To this end our region is pursuing a rural specialist GP training program however, to ensure success, it needs to be coupled with a new employment arrangement for GP registrars seeking to become rural specialists.

In 2018 the National Rural Generalist Taskforce identified that the short length of contracts currently available to GP trainees are a disincentive to participating in GP training programs. They recommended a duration of training contracts by a single employer, making rural generalist specialisation as attractive an option as most other lines of specialisation.

The Murrumbidgee Local Health District is agreeable to employ rural GP trainees as NSW Health employees for the 4 years while they work across various rural hospitals and general practices. This continuity of employment would mean that GP registrars training to become rural specialists could benefit from entitlements such as accrued annual leave, long service leave, sick leave and access to paid parental leave. While this sounds inordinately sensible there is currently a barrier which prevents this from happening.

Ministers, we need your help please to overcome the matter and impress on you that this does not require any increase in funding but simply an adjustment to some limiting policy. Currently, District employed GP trainees are prevented from MBS billing. To overcome this, **RAMJO requests that the Commonwealth Department of Health finds an innovative way to enable District employed GP trainees to undertake MBS billing as they see their patients.**

The Commonwealth Government has demonstrated its commitment to working with NSW to improve health outcomes in rural and regional NSW and we now seek your strong support to advance the Murrumbidgee Integrated Rural General Practice Training Pathway, most especially **the full employment of specialist rural GP registrars by the District**, to help build the local GP workforce for our region. With motivated political will, and given the scheme imposes no additional cost overall, we are certain it is possible to find a way forward.

Members of RAMJO would be very willing to meet with you to discuss this opportunity further, if that is useful.

Yours sincerely

Mayor Kevin Mack

**Chairman of the RAMJO Board**



## Feedback from Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation of Councils (RAMJO) on Draft document "Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina and Murray"

### Contact 1:

RAMJO Representative on the Riverina and Murray Regional Plan Monitoring Committee  
Jackie Kruger  
[jackiek@leeton.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jackiek@leeton.nsw.gov.au) / ph 0417256092

### Contact 2:

RAMJO Executive Officer  
Bridgett Leopold  
[bleopold@alburycity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bleopold@alburycity.nsw.gov.au) / ph 0408498534

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft documents. The RAMJO Board met in the last week of August to review the document and provides the following responses and recommendations.

It should be noted that the context for this response is the adopted vision for the Riverina Murray as espoused in the Riverina Murray Regional Plan:

*A diversified economy found on Australia's food bowl, iconic waterways and a network of vibrant connected communities.*

### Feedback on draft 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' document:

RAMJO agrees with the implied intent of the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft outlined in the introduction of the document. This includes leveraging the region's attributes and agricultural credentials as being central to diversifying the regional economy, protecting the region's productive agricultural land and growing its agribusiness sector. RAMJO would like to see a much stronger correlation between this intent and the content of the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft document.

RAMJO believes that the purpose of the draft document 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' should more clearly and strongly provide the strategic context within which future planning for agriculture needs to be considered. The draft should, specifically, pursue the same strategic vision as that of the adopted Riverina Murray Regional Plan (in blue, italicised text above). RAMJO considers the current draft to be 'light on' in regards affording clear strategic direction and how best to fully harness the three key opportunities identified :

- i) Harness the productive potential of irrigation land*
- ii) Value adding and processing*
- iii) Locating agricultural services, support infrastructure and value adding industries to access the freight network*

While it is useful for the 'Planning for Agricultural' draft to have analysed the agricultural and commodity trends in the Riverina Murray in order to identify regional competitive advantages and opportunities for growth, the statistics and data in the Planning document are significantly out of date (some going back to 2011 and 2013) and do not adequately reflect the agricultural picture that presents today. In the last three to five years there has been significant change in the farming sector in the Riverina Murray which is not captured in the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft which means that anyone relying on this document to support strategic / good decisions risks working with material that is out of date and unreliable.

This concern, coupled with the incomplete mapping program for important agricultural lands that is still underway, leaves RAMJO with serious reservations about the currency of the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft. RAMJO considers that the draft document, as presented for review, is not a reliable or useful framework for confidently planning our region's agricultural future, including fully leveraging our strengths or mitigating our biggest risks.

RAMJO is very pleased that the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft considers the importance of water given the large presence of irrigated agriculture in the region. The draft also highlights the risks associated with an unregulated water trading environment. However, the 'Planning for Agriculture' draft offers no mechanisms for managing the risks related to the commoditisation of water compared to its previous purpose as an input into farming endeavour. Achieving increased water security in a policy environment that continues to erode the full potential of existing (nation building) irrigated agricultural systems needs to be addressed if the success and future potential of the Riverina Murray as the food bowl for Australia is to continue. The region needs stronger, clearer and more cohesive direction in any forward planning document for sustaining and growing agriculture in the region.

RAMJO does not consider that the success of its agricultural future – and indeed that of Australia - can be left to market forces alone. This needs to be strengthened in the 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' draft document.

RAMJO considers that diversity of cropping is an important strategy to pursue as diversity optimises opportunity in higher water allocation years and can be 'turned off' in low allocation years without collapsing entire industries. This mix is important as it drives economic and community resilience which helps the region to survive droughts and volatility in water allocation from year to year. To assume that it is a good outcome for available water to always flow to the crops delivering the highest commodity value is both flawed and risky. Not only does this scenario add economic risk ('all eggs are in one basket') but it also artificially inflates the price of water as permanent plantings will increasingly be forced to make routine use of general security water allocations, decimating annual cropping that contributes diversity and resilience to the sector and to local communities.

RAMJO is of the view that it is in everyone's interest for the Riverina Murray to stay the food bowl of Australia and not become the nut bowl of Australia. RAMJO argues that diversity of cropping, including strategically valuing and encouraging annual cropping in the mix of what

is grown in irrigation areas, is the more responsible strategy for a dry continent seeking to achieve the best outcomes for local communities, for NSW and for the Nation.

RAMJO also considers that 'small farmers' are a valued component of our agricultural and community success and sustainability and that Planning documents that peg corporate farming over smaller family farms could unintentionally compromise crop diversity, wider community wellbeing and resilience overall. RAMJO values the mix of corporates, large family farms and smaller family farms and considers that agricultural policy and water policy should intentionally endeavour to maintain this mix.

The advice on climate change and the forecast reduction in rain and water allocation in the 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' draft, omits the importance of protecting the existing irrigation areas as sound actions to mitigate these affects. The Riverina Murray (nation building) irrigation systems are best placed to deliver available (scarce) water as efficiently as possible for production purposes and should be specifically identified as needing to be protected and optimised in any climate change adjustment strategy. Also, there needs to be stronger emphasis on R&D aimed at developing crop varieties that can better survive water stressed environments.

The 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' draft does not identify or address the 'silly' planning and building regulations that add cost but no real value. For example, fire compliance for shedding including chicken sheds warrants review and the relaxing of certain requirements. On the other hand, it may be prudent to have tighter planning controls on irrigated farmland vs dry land farming and to develop best practice guidelines for intensive horticulture development and for any development close to rivers, water courses and weirs. There is also a growing discussion on the need for increased land use planning considerations when farms are changed from annual cropping to permanent plantings, particularly in the light of water scarcity. This is absent in the draft document.

The interface between the draft document 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' and the (reviewed) 'NSW Right to Farm Policy' needs overt consideration in the context of the region. It is important to recognise and address policy positions or advice that may be in conflict, both to avoid confusion and limit opportunistic positioning from individuals or groups who are less inclined to think about the greater good of communities, the State and the Nation.

Another policy warranting greater consideration in the draft 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' is the NSW Energy Strategy, which sees vast tracks of land along transmission lines being potentially turned over to solar farms. In the case of the Riverina Murray region, this erodes valuable irrigation land from the system which is best placed to deliver precious water as efficiently as possible. This dilemma is missing altogether from the draft 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' document. Sterilising these farms from productive farming will impact their contribution to value adding industries leading to loss of jobs and negative impacts on local economies.

Further, in terms of freight and logistics, there is significant policy focus on inland rail but insufficient attention on the origin of products and how to get those to market (via inland

rail) as efficiently as possible. Government needs to consider where the greatest volumes of agricultural and agribusiness product are being generated and ensure freight and logistics planning starts there and not only when it reaches the planned inland rail corridor.

The need to strongly advocate to ensure these various policy challenges are addressed and their interrelationships understood, should be encompassed in more detail in the draft 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' document. Otherwise the Murray Riverina will be exposed to reductionist thinking were the Murray Darling Basin Plan is only understood in terms of net loss of water for productive farming use. In reality the issues are far more complex, including the Basin Plan's roll out in an unregulated water trading environment and under a 'right to farm (anywhere)' framework. Without wholistic, systems thinking, these Policies will be pursued in isolation of each other and the Riverina Murray region risks an outcome that will see the least efficient delivery of water to new release farming areas downstream (on cheaper land) undertaken at the expense of realising the full potential of genuinely sustainable farming where practices will realise the highest production overall using the least amount of water. Unless these difficult matters are raised and addressed in the 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' draft, the region could lose the opportunity to optimise the benefits of its nation building irrigation infrastructure to feed the nation while also growing national wealth through valuable export earnings.

If governments and Basin Plan communities are genuinely committed to a Murray Darling Basin Plan that will return a healthier river system without decimating communities and economies, then the 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' draft needs to more strongly state the region's potential for ensuring productive water is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to optimise Australia's agricultural yield. There is - most especially - an urgent need to better value and protect the region's nation building irrigation infrastructure as it is unlikely to be replicated elsewhere in today's day and age due to cost (including low ROI) and complex environmental considerations.

**In closing, RAMJO recommends that the draft 'Planning for Agriculture in the Riverina Murray' document be put on hold for further review once the following is completed:**

- **Important agricultural land mapping (underway)**
- **ACCC review on water trading (underway)**
- **Currency of data update (by DPIE Planning)**
- **Economic analysis of the value of formed irrigation areas in the Riverina Murray for delivering water as efficiently as possible for agricultural production (yet to be commissioned – if required this could be driven by RAMJO in collaboration with a range of stakeholders)**

End of Submission.

## IPART has set the 2020-21 rate peg for NSW councils at **2.6%**

The rate peg is based on the **change** in the **Local Government Cost Index (LGCI)**



We calculated the rate peg for 2020-21 by:

Taking the **increase** in the LGCI  
to June 2019 of **2.6%**



The rate peg sets the **maximum increase** in each council's general income for the 2020-21 financial year. For most councils, general income consists entirely of rates revenue.

Councils have discretion to determine how to allocate this increase between different ratepayer categories. Individual rates are also affected by other factors, such as land valuations.

Councils may apply to IPART for a special variation to increase general income above the rate peg.



**We have changed the way we account for Emergency Services Levy costs**

Previously, we included actual costs incurred by councils for the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) in the LGCI. However, due to timing constraints, actual ESL cost changes were included in the LGCI with a two year lag.

For the 2020-21 rate peg, we have used the forecast ESL contribution of councils for 2019-20. This has reduced the lag between when councils face changes in ESL costs and when these cost changes are reflected in the LGCI and hence the rate peg, from two years to one year.



**We will invite councils to complete a cost survey**

As part of maintaining the effectiveness of the LGCI, we will invite councils to complete a cost survey in November 2019. This cost survey will be used to update the expenditure weightings of the LGCI, to ensure they remain accurate. The updated LGCI would apply to the rate peg from 2021-22 onwards.



Councils **must not increase** their general income by more than the rate peg of 2.6% for 2020-21, unless IPART grants approval for a special variation.

Councils applying for a special variation **must satisfy the criteria** listed in the Office of Local Government's Guidelines.

## 1 What is the rate peg?

The rate peg is the **maximum percentage** amount by which a council may increase its general income for the year. For most councils, general income consists entirely of rates income. For a small number of councils, general income also includes some annual charges such as drainage levies. The rate peg does not apply to stormwater, waste collection, water and sewerage charges. The rate peg applies to general income in total, and not to individual ratepayers' rates.

The rate peg is based on the change in the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) and consideration of a productivity factor.



## 2 What is the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI)?

The LGCI is a price index for councils in NSW. It measures price changes over the past year for goods, materials and labour used by an average council. It is similar to the Local Government Price Index used in South Australia and, in principle, to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is used to measure changes in prices for a typical household.

The LGCI is designed to measure the average change in prices of a fixed 'basket' of goods and services that are purchased by councils, relative to the prices of the same basket in a base period.

- ▼ The index has **26 cost components**, such as employee benefits and on-costs (mainly salaries and wages), and building materials for roads, bridges and footpaths. The cost components represent the purchases made by an average council to undertake its typical activities. To measure changes in these cost components, we mainly use ABS price indexes for wages costs, producer and consumer prices.
- ▼ The ABS uses quality adjustments in its price measures to take into account improvements in labour and capital productivity.

To calculate the LGCI for 2020-21, we combined the 26 cost components using expenditure weightings based on NSW councils' expenditure in 2013-14 and 2014-15. The cost components measured cost changes over the four quarters to June 2019 compared to the four quarters to June 2018, with the exception of the Emergency Services Levy (ESL), where we have used forecast costs for 2019-20.

We will invite councils to complete a cost survey in November this year. Information collected through this cost survey will be used to update expenditure weightings in the LGCI to ensure they remain accurate. The updated LGCI will apply to the rate peg from 2021-22 onwards.

For more detail on the Local Government Cost Index, see our Fact Sheet, *Local Government Cost Index Survey 2015*, published in October 2015. This is available on our [website](#).

### 3 What price changes influenced the LGCI?

We used the change in the LGCI to June 2019 when setting the rate peg for 2020-21. This change in the LGCI was 2.6%.

**The main contributors to the change in the LGCI for the period ending June 2019 were:**

- ▼ An increase of 2.6% in employee benefits and on-costs, measured by the ABS wage price index for the NSW public sector
- ▼ An increase of 3.8% in construction works – roads, drains, footpaths, kerbing, bridges costs, measured by the ABS producer price index for roads and bridge construction – NSW
- ▼ An increase of 3.7% in building – non-dwelling costs, measured by the ABS producer price index for non-residential building construction – NSW.

Most components of the LGCI experienced moderate price inflation over the period to June 2019 (see Section 3 below for a table showing the price changes in cost items for all components of the LGCI).



## 4 Our approach to the Emergency Services Levy



The Emergency Services Levy (ESL) component of the LGCI measures changes in funding contributions by NSW councils for Fire and Rescue NSW, the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service. This component accounted for a 1.4% expenditure weighting in the LGCI as at June 2018.

Previously, to compensate councils for the cost of the ESL, we included the actual amount paid by councils each year. However, due to the delay in obtaining an audited figure, there was a two year lag between when councils paid these costs and when they were reflected in the LGCI and hence the rate peg.

The cost of the ESL has increased from \$123.9 million in 2018-19 to \$142.5 million in 2019-20. Given the increase in ESL costs, we have modified our approach to measure this cost component in the LGCI.

For the 2020-21 rate peg, we have included the forecast 2019-20 ESL costs that will be faced by councils as we are confident this is a robust estimate and it reduces the lag – between when councils face changes in ESL costs and when these cost changes are reflected in the rate peg – from two years to one year.

As the Government has announced it will fund \$13.6 million of councils' contribution to the ESL for 2019-20, we have applied an adjustment to include only the cost of the ESL forecast to be actually paid by councils. This means that for the 2020-21 rate peg, we have incorporated the change in councils' ESL costs from 2017-18 to 2019-20, adjusted for the Government's contribution.

We are aware that the Government has announced that it is consulting with local councils to better manage the impacts of the ESL on their annual budgeting cycles. This may assist councils in developing their financial plans, including consideration of a special variation if necessary.

For the 2021-22 rate peg and thereafter, changes in ESL costs will be reflected in the rate peg in the year after costs are incurred.





## 5 Change in the LGCI for the year ended June 2019

Cost items	Effective weight as at end-Jun 2018 (%)	Price change to end-Jun 2019 (% annual average)	Contribution to index change (percentage points)
<b>Operating cost items</b>			
Employee benefits and on-costs <sup>a</sup>	41.6	2.6	1.09
Plant & equipment leasing	0.3	2.0	0.01
Operating contracts	1.0	1.1	0.01
Legal & accounting services	0.8	2.7	0.02
Office & building cleaning services	0.3	3.6	0.01
Other business services	6.0	0.8	0.05
Insurance	1.7	0.6	0.01
Telecommunications, telephone & internet services	0.4	-4.8	-0.02
Printing publishing & advertising	0.5	12.8	0.06
Motor vehicle parts	0.3	1.1	0.00
Motor vehicle repairs & servicing	0.6	2.0	0.01
Automotive fuel	0.8	5.5	0.04
Electricity	3.1	-0.9	-0.03
Gas	0.1	-0.9	0.00
Water & Sewerage	0.3	1.1	0.00
Road, footpath, kerbing, bridge & drain building materials	2.4	3.8	0.09
Other building & construction materials	0.5	3.7	0.02
Office supplies	0.2	2.0	0.00
Emergency services levies	1.4	1.4	0.02
Other expenses <sup>b</sup>	8.8	1.7	0.15
<b>Capital cost items</b>			
Buildings – non-dwelling	4.1	3.7	0.15
Construction works – road, drains, footpaths, kerbing, bridges	19.1	3.8	0.72
Construction works – other	1.9	3.8	0.07
Plant & equipment – machinery, etc	3.4	2.7	0.09
Plant & equipment – furniture, etc	0.1	2.3	0.00
Information technology & software	0.4	-4.4	-0.02
<b>Total change in LGCI</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>2.6</b>

Note: Figures may not add due to rounding. Percentage changes are calculated from unrounded numbers.

<sup>a</sup> Employee benefits and on-costs includes salaries and wages.

<sup>b</sup> Includes miscellaneous expenses with low weights in the Index, eg, councillor and mayoral fees.

## 6 We will be conducting a cost survey



When we developed the LGCI in 2010, we said that we intend to revise the cost index weights every four years. The index was last reweighted in 2016, using cost data for 2013-14 and 2014-15.

We will be conducting a cost survey of councils this year. The results of this survey will be used to reweight the LGCI in 2020. The reweighted LGCI would then be used to calculate the rate peg for 2021-22 onwards.

# Berrigan Shire Council

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Berrigan Shire is located to the north of the Murray River, halfway between Albury and Echuca.

The Shire is situated in the Southern Riverina and consists predominately of irrigated rural land, with its main income is derived from the agriculture industry.

Data for this website has been sourced from Council's financial statements, Council's annual report and Council's data returns. The website also refers to data from a number of agencies and entities. Please refer to the data page of this website for links to definitions, information on performance measures, benchmarks, OLG Groups and the data sources that have been used.

Please contact Council if you would like any further details or explanations regarding individual results and any differences between your Council's performance and that of another council.

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## Contacting Council

**Address:**  
56 Chanter Street  
Berrigan NSW 2712

**Postal Address:**  
56 Chanter Street, Berrigan NSW 2712  
Phone: 03 5888 5100  
Fax: 03 5885 2092

**Email:**  
[mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au)

**Web:**  
[www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au)

## AT-A-GLANCE

## Your Local Government Area

## Result

Population (No.)	8,664
Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )	2,065.80
Council Classification	Large Rural
OLG Group	10
State Planning Region	Riverina Murray
JO Region	Riverina And Murray

## Your Council

## Result

## Group Avg. \*

Councillors (No.)	8	9
Population Per Councillor (No.)	1,083	828
Equivalent Full Time Staff (EFT) (No.)	90	110
2017/18 Revenue (\$'000)	22,546	25,472
2017/18 Expenses (\$'000)	18,433	24,649
Residential Pensioner Rebates (%)	28.8	25.1
Population Density (Residents Per Km <sup>2</sup> )	4	2

\* A NSW council group is determined firstly by whether they are Urban or Rural in nature, and then by population size and density. Please refer to OLG Groups in data tab on website for more information on how individual councils are classified. An OLG group average is then calculated by the average of the same group number eg. All Group 5 Regional Towns/City or all Group 8 Rural.

## Your Public Facilities

## Result

## Group Avg.

Public Swimming Pool Complexes (Inc Rock Pools) (No.)	3	2
Public Halls (No.)	7	6
Public Libraries (No.)	4	2
Open Public Space (Ha)	138	201.2
Total Road Length (Km)	1,431.40	1,729.10

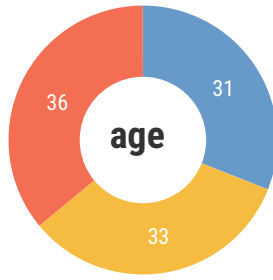
## Demographics of Population



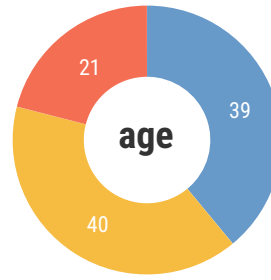
under 30 years



 31 - 60 years  
 over 60 years



Council Population (%)



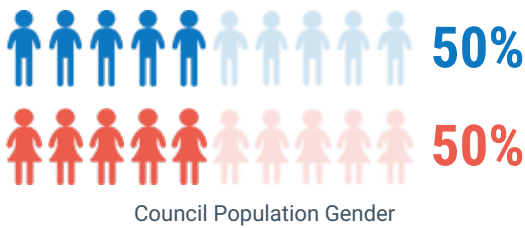
State Population (%)

Appendix "I"  
 **3.9%**

Population Change Last 5 Years

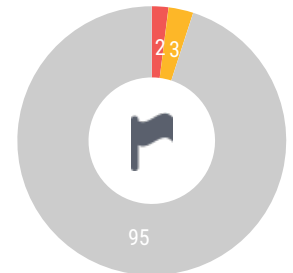
## Your Local Population

	Result	Group Avg.
Five Year Population Change (%)	3.9	-0.2
Population Aged 19 Or Less (%)	22.1	25.1
Population Aged Between 20 & 59 (%)	41.8	46
Population Aged Above 60 (%)	36	28.9
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders (%)	2.3	8.6
Language Spoken Other Than English (%)	3.1	2.4
Socio-Economic Index Rank (1 Low, 128 High)	36	41



 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

 Non English Speaking Background



Your Local Population (%)

## Your Local Economy

	Result	Group Avg.
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.6	5.9
Avg Taxable Income (\$)	44,545	46,967
Avg Household Size (No.)	2.2	2.4
Value Of DA's Determined (\$'000)	N/A	N/A
Active Businesses In LGA (No.)	858	842

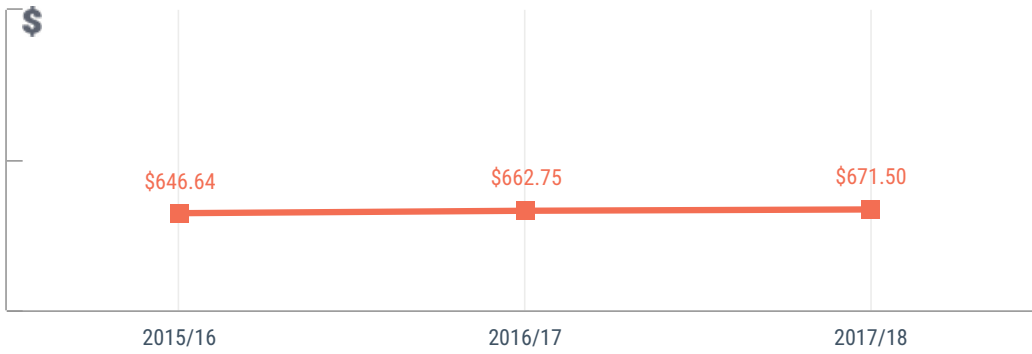
## Largest Industry Employer



Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

**FINANCES**

**Average Residential Ordinary Rates**



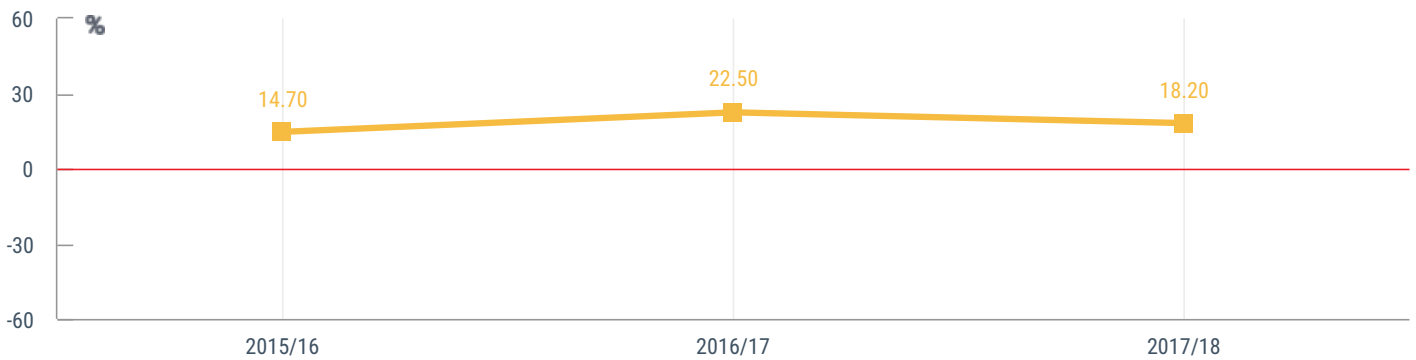
↑ 1.3%

Change from 2016/17 to 2017/18

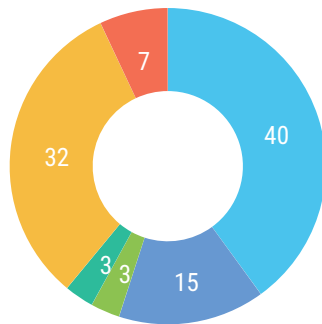
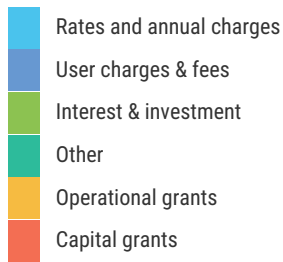
### Your Council's Rates & Charges

	Result	Group Avg.
Avg Ordinary Residential Rate (\$)	671.5	644.45
Avg Ordinary Business Rate (\$)	1,217.18	1,485.10
Avg Ordinary Farmland Rate (\$)	2,036.67	2,761.47
Avg Ordinary Mining Rate (\$)	N/A	404,779.15
Total Land Value / Total Rate Revenue (\$)	115	164
Typical Residential Water & Sewer Bill (\$)	N/A	N/A
Avg Domestic Waste Charge (\$)	228.31	349.76

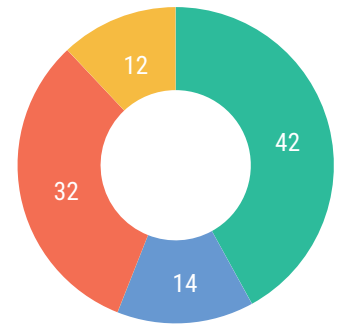
### Operating Performance Ratio



## Your Councils Income Sources 2017-18 (%)



## Your Councils Expenditure 2017-18 (%)




## Your Council's Financial Performance

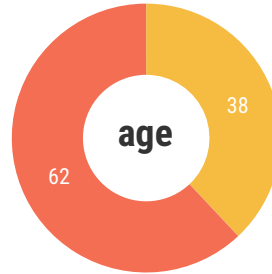
	Result	Group Avg.
Own Source Revenue (%)	61.2	55
Grant & Contributions Revenue (%)	38.8	45
Operating Performance Ratio (%)	18.2	2.6
Unrestricted Current Ratio	7.2	5.8
Outstanding Rates & Charges (%)	3.3	6.8
Debt Service Cover Ratio	48.7	14.3
Cash Expense Cover Ratio (Mths)	28	14.4
Debt Service Ratio	0.9	2.7

\* See [NSW Overview - Finances](#) for definitions

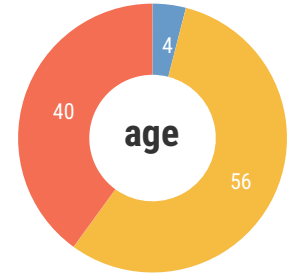
COMMUNITY-LEADERSHIP

Demographics of Councillors

-  under 30 years
-  31 - 59 years
-  over 60 years



Councillors (%)



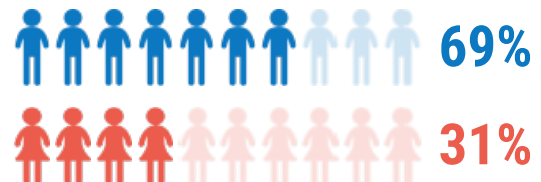
Councillors State Avg. (%)

Your Council's Community Leadership

	Result	Group Avg.
# Of Councillors	8	9
Population Per Councillor	1,083	828
Development Applications Determined By Councillors (No.)	N/A	N/A
Audited Financial Reports Submitted By Due Date (Y/N)	Y	Y
Code Of Conduct Complaints (No.)	0	1
Complaints Investigated Requiring Action (No.)	0	0
Cost Of Dealing With Code Of Conduct Complaints (\$)	0	2,759
Population Per EFT Staff (No.)	96	71
Councillor Expenses	86,000	36,130
Total Mayoral And Councillor Fees (\$)	115,000	121,652
Mayoral And Councillor Overseas Travel (\$)	0	174
Mayoral And Councillor Conference Expenses (\$)	11,000	12,246
Mayoral And Councillor Interstate Travel (\$)	3,000	1502
General Manager Remuneration	230,866	248,375




Councillors



Councillors State Avg.

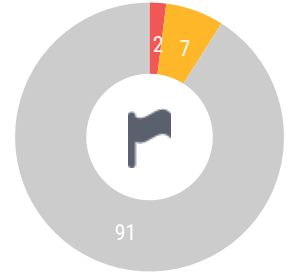


 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

 Non English Speaking Background

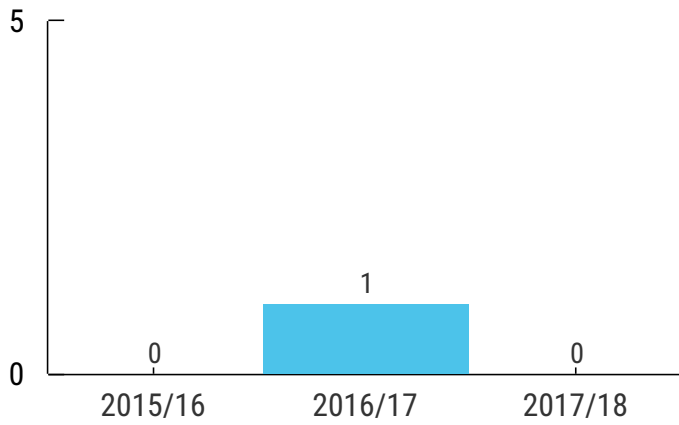


Councillors (%)

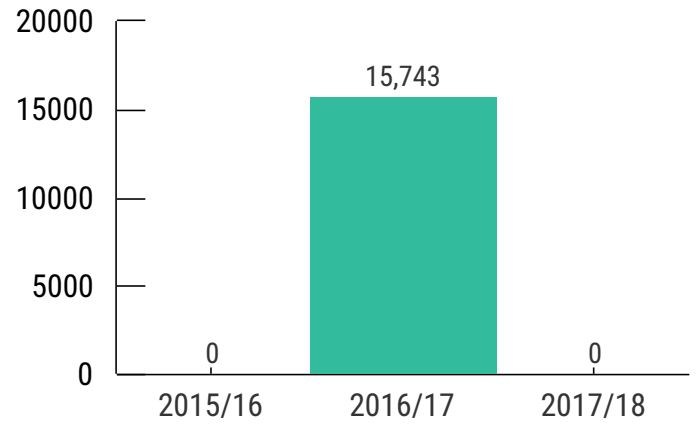


Councillors State Avg (%)

### Number of Code of Conduct Complaints

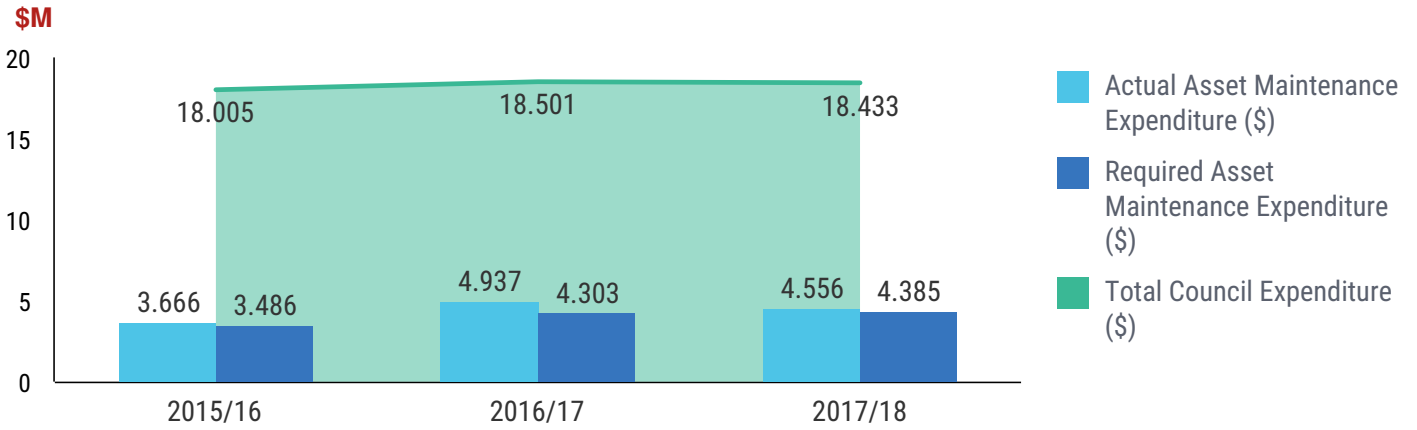


### Cost of Code of Conduct Complaints (\$)



ASSETS

### Council's Spending on Assets



\* For source data, select Time Series Data in [Data tab](#).

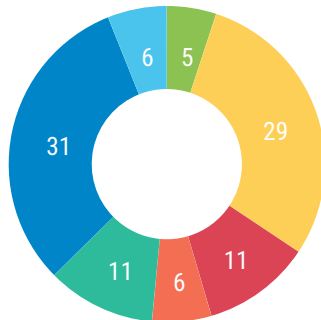
### Your Council's Assets

	Result	Group Avg.
Roads, Bridges And Footpath Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	664	931
Building & Infrastructure Renewal Ratio (%)	67	102.1
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio	0	4.4
Road Length Per Capita (Metre)	165.2	254.7
Asset Maintenance Ratio	103.9	101.8

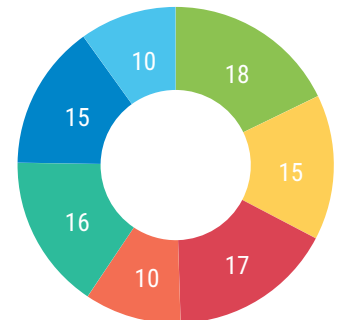
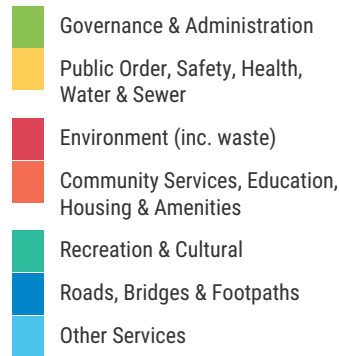
\* See [NSW Overview - Assets](#) - Infrastructure Results for definition

SERVICES

Council Expenditure on Services (%)



State Average Expenditure on Services (%)



Your Council's Services

	Result	Group Avg.
Governance & Administration Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	101.11	531.64
Public Order, Safety & Health Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	39.13	137.92
Water & Sewer Services Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	567.64	476.74
Environmental Expenditure (Including Waste ) Per Capita (\$)	244.58	248.21
Community Services, Education, Housing, Amenities Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	136.2	362.67
Recreation & Culture Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	172.78	307.74
Roads, Bridges & Footpaths Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	664	931
Other Services Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	136.31	610.98
Library Services Expenditure Per Capita (\$)	65.67	55.67
Library Circulation Per Capita (No.)	3.6	3.98
Recycling Rate (%)	N/A	N/A
Development Applications (Mean Gross Days)	N/A	N/A
Development Application Determined (No.)	N/A	N/A
Companion Animals Microchipped (No.)	4,033	5,050
Companion Animals Microchipped & Registered (%)	53.1	47.3