

Minutes of General Election Meeting

The General Election Meeting of the Mid North Coast Regional Advisory Council

**will be held on 8:30 am on the 28th September 2023
at Suite 2, Level 1 146-148 Gordon Street or via zoom
[Zoom Link](#)**

Agenda

Ordinary Business

1 Welcome

Regional Director Kellon Beard welcomed Councillors Kate Wood-Foye, Graham Morgan, Grahame Nash, Melissa Bartlett, and Strategic Partnership Manager Linda Taylor to the meeting.

2 Apologies

No apologies were received.

3 Previous Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the General Election Meeting held on **Thursday, 16th September 2021.**

Kellon read the minutes of the previous meeting of the 16th September 2021. The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting moved by Graham Morgan and seconded Gary Scott.

4 Regional President's Report

To receive and consider a report on the proceedings of the Region for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Grahame read a summary of his report to the meeting. Special mention was made of Maree McEntyre (Regional Coordinator) who retired in February after 21 years of service. Grahame's report is attached to these minutes.

5 Regional Director's Report

To receive and consider a report on the operations of the Region for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Kellon read his report and highlighted the work done by the staff Maree McEntyre (now retired) Linda Taylor, Strategic Partnership Manager and Helen Mansfield Regional Coordinator. Kellon also mention that work that is been conducted across the Region to recruit and work with Regional Leaders and the great effect that this is have across the Region. Kellon's full report is attached to the minutes of the meeting.

Kellon thanked the following Regional Councillors who are not standing again for their service over many years:

- Roy Wilkinson
- Graham Morgan
- Neville Parsons
- Terry Goodall

6 Election of Regional Councillors

Declaration of the result of the election of Members to the Regional Advisory Council.

The following nomination were received for the positions of Regional Councillors;

- Grahame Nash
- Gary Scott
- Kate Wood Foye

All of the above Councillors were elected unopposed. Kellon noted that further Councillors would be approached and appointed to fill causal vacancies.

7 Other Business

Linda Taylor spoke about the upcoming The Evolving Future of Skills, Training and Education Summit on the 1st November, 2023 at Charles Sturt University. Linda encouraged all those attending the meeting to attend and invite any of their networks to attend.

Linda spoke about the recent visit by David Harding and Paula Martin where Linda took them to Bale Defence Engineering and had a tour of the factory and both of them were very impressed with what they saw.

The question of why the Infrastructure committee of Business NSW has been dissolved was raised and the Councillors asked Kellon to look into the reasons behind this committees demise. Kellon mentioned that he was looking into Australian Business Industrial (ABI) as well. ABI has been very quiet for some time now.

Future Meeting Dates

All meeting will have the option of in person or online, and will be held from 8:00 am to 9:30 am, proposed dates are

- 1. 19 October 2023**
- 2. 2 November 2023**
- 3. 1 February 2024**
- 4. 4 April 2024**
- 5. 6 June 2024**
- 6. 1 August 2024**
- 7. 3 October 2024**

Regional President's Report by Grahame Nash 28th September 2023

The Regional Team have been very busy since our last AGM with the launch of the Regional Leaders program being one of many things they have focused on. Maree McEntyre (Regional Coordinator) left us after 21 years of outstanding service to the members and the 3 Regional Managers that she reported to on the 22nd February 2023. Maree was a rock for these managers and worked tirelessly to support the members of the Region.

I am pleased to see with the addition of Linda Taylor as Strategic Partnership Manager, and the difference Linda has made to the Region in a relatively short time, with the growth of Regional Leaders across the Region.

Helen Mansfield is the new Regional Coordinator and is growing into the role which at times is very challenging. As we go forward the Regional Office will be running more events than we have done in the past so Helen will be an intricate part of the team.

Kellon as our Regional Manager (Director) is in his 17 years in the role and is doing his best to steer the Region and is working with me to reinvigorate the Regional Advisory Council.

The following are the issues that I have been pushing at the Presidents Meetings in Sydney and at State Council on behalf of the members on the Mid North Coast.

We have pushed to get more response by members to the Business Conditions Survey. This benefits of this were highlighted recently by our Chief Economist Sherman Chan as she briefed Regional Leaders at a Lunch at Charles Sturt University and then at a business breakfast in Coffs Harbour. With great responses we can get statistical relevant information for the Region, and I strongly encourage all members to complete the survey.

An agreed definition of the Mid North Coast is something that we should continue to work on going forward, but the path to getting this sorted will not be easy. To achieve a common definition the first step is to get all the Councils to agree on the boundaries. This may be the hardest part of the project.

The Staff submitted a response to the Regional Growth Fund for funding to build a pipeline of investment-ready projects for future funding opportunities, was unsuccessful. Further opportunities will be pursued when they become available.

The Region has hosted a number of events including Breakfast with the Premier at the time Dominic Perrottet and the local member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams in January. Kellon approached Leslie about bringing a Minister to Port Macquarie to launch the Regional Leaders program and this event was used to do this.

In April a Health and Aged Care Summit was held in Port Macquarie and included distinguished guest speakers including Stewart Dowrick, Chief Executive, Mid North

Coast Local Health District, Prof Megan Smith, Executive Dean of Science and Health Charles Sturt University, Duncan Ellis, Director of Commercial Advisory, Deloitte, and several panel discussions with industry experts. Over 65 people from across the Mid North Coast attended the event and the feedback from those that attended was very positive.

We developed our State Election campaign which included our five major priorities.

1. Regional Growth. Prioritise regional business and industry, building a sound economic future for all.
2. Training and Development. Advocate the misconception that access to training is equal across the state and address how the MNC workforce can access the same opportunities now and for the emerging industries of the future.
3. Workers Compensation. The Workers' Compensation model has regional business at breaking point.
4. Arterial Road Infrastructure. Ensure adequate funding for the expansion of arterial roads across the Mid North Coast.
5. Digital Connectivity. Investment into Connectivity and Mobile Blackspot resolution. Inconsistency in communication impacts growth.

These were launched at events in Port Macquarie, Kempsey and Coffs Harbour.

Whilst we have had some success across the Mid North Coast, we have had some challenging times as well. There has been a number of prominent businesses on the Mid North Coast that have closed or gone into liquidation recently. Infracraft was placed into liquidation on 17th July 2023, Dolphin Marine Conservation Park has gone into voluntary administration, Cassegrain Winery is up for sale after entering voluntary administration and the Wicked Elf brewery has closed its doors on the 24th June 2023.

In Coffs Harbour, three long-standing Coffs Harbour restaurants, Hoggs Breath, Lime Mexican, and Marias each trading for more than a decade – have shut their doors at the Jetty Strip in Coffs Harbour. With low unemployment and a low participation rate businesses are finding it increasingly hard to find staff to fill roles. The increasing cost faced by business including insurance and higher interest rates are having a detrimental effect on businesses across the Region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their support of me in my role as President. I look forward to continuing to service the Regional Council and representing you at the Presidents Meetings and State Council going forward. I commend my report.

Regional Director Report Regional Advisory Council AGM September 2023

I would like to commence my report by thanking my staff for their dedication and work ethic. It has been a very busy time for all of us for some time now. We had Maree McEntyre leave after 17 years and this really shook my world, when you work so closely and for so long it has an effect. Maree's role has been filled by Helen Mansfield who is doing a great job in very challenging circumstances.

Linda Taylor has grown into her role as Strategic Partnership Manager and is progressing well in recruiting Regional Leaders to our new membership, in other words Linda is a star. This program is making a real difference to the Region and give us the opportunity to engage with members at a different level and do some great initiatives across the Region.

Some examples of these are the Health and Aged Care Forum in April this year. This forum is being replicated in the Central Coast and the Hunter. We have also been able to deliver an Economic update with our Chief Economist Sherman Chan at both Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour.

Grahame Nash has covered a lot of what we have been working on behind the scenes and put to the Presidents and State Council and this is important as your input assists me in pushing your views to ensure they are taken into consideration by the rest of the Policy and Advocacy team.

A lot of what I do is attend events across the Region, these include the following;

- Regional Economic Development Strategies Update Project – Hastings Macleay FER Workshop
- Mid North Coast Local Jobs Program Taskforce
- CSU Graduation
- Mid Coast Connect Board Governance Training
- Roundtable with Daniel Mookhey, Newcastle
- Investment NSW Trade and Investment Directors Dinner Newcastle
- Meet the Candidates across the Region
- President Obama Lunch
- Domestic Violence Legislation Luncheon
- Luminosity Youth Summit
- Meeting with Leslie Williams and Mark Speakman
- Breakfast with Chris Minns Sydney Regional Leaders 2023
- Dundaloo Platinum Ball
- Emotional Intelligence workshop
- State Tourism Awards
- State Business Awards

The reason that I take the time to attend these is to represent Business NSW and the Region and make sure that Businesses know we are here, that we are here to represent them, and their needs to Politician's and influences.

We also run a large number of events across the Region, and these have included:

- Breakfast with Pat Conaghan member for Cowper, David Littleproud Federal Leader of the Nationals and National Senator Perin Davey
- Breakfast with Dominic Perrottet, Premier of NSW
- Election campaign launch Port Macquarie, Kempsey, and Coffs Harbour
- Regional Leaders lunch and planning
- Workplace updates Taree, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour
- Regional Leaders lunch and factory tour at Akubra
- Regional Council planning workshop, Port Macquarie
- Regional Business Awards
- Regional Leaders lunch Port with Sherman Chan at CSU
- Regional Leaders breakfast at The Shoreline

We have had a number of previous Regional Councilors that for a variety of reasons have chosen not to renominate for the Council. I am not concerned about this as I believe that we lost our way a bit, over the past 24 months. It is my intention to work with you to rebuild the Council with your assistance to make it more of a force for progressing the Region and the issues of members across the Region.

The Charter outlines the role of the Council and I have summarised this as:

- Regional Councils act as an advisory body to the NSWBC Council, Board of Directors and Management of NSWBC, on policy issues in the Region, matters relating to membership and in relation to the promotion and development of the Objects of NSWBC
- Regional Councils initiate and facilitate innovative projects and programs that will have direct application to the business community and to business improvement for members.
- The Regional Councils act as a sounding board for ideas, concepts, policies and programs presented by NSWBC management
- Regional Councils and Regional Managers meet regularly to determine priorities and communicate ideas

The Charter that governs the Regional Council allows us to fill casual vacancies and outlines the process for filling these roles. It is my intention to work to recruit new members to grow the Council. I also propose to have more regular meetings to ensure that Councilors are aware of what is happening across the Region and the State.

I look forward to working with you and other Councilors as we rebuild to ensure that the Region is well represented at all levels of Government.

Finally, I would like to thank Roy Wilkinson, Graham Morgan, Neville Parsons and Terry Goodall for their service to the Region over a number of years.