



**NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL CATCHMENTS
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 27 October 2020

14.37pm to 15.48pm

**Venue: Conference Room, Level 1, Lotteries House,
114 Sandford Street, Geraldton**

MINUTES

Signed as a true and correct record of proceedings

Chair

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NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL CATCHMENTS COUNCIL

27 October 2020

14.37pm to 15.48pm

AGM AGENDA

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|------------|----------------|---|--|
| 1.0 | 14.30pm | Open Meeting | |
| | | 1.1 | Attendance & Apologies |
| | | 1.2 | Public questions and deputations |
| 2.0 | 14.35pm | Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes | (for Decision) |
| | | 2.1 | Amendments to previous minutes |
| | | 2.2 | Matters arising from previous minutes |
| 3.0 | 14.45pm | NACC Annual Reports | (for Decision) |
| | | 3.1 | Chair's Report |
| | | 3.2 | CEO's Report |
| | | 3.3 | Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statements
(2019/2020) |
| 4.0 | 15.25pm | Appointment of Auditor | (for Decision) |
| 5.0 | 15.30pm | Open Question Time | (for Discussion) |
| 6.0 | 16.00pm | Close Meeting | |

1.0 Open Meeting (14.37pm)

Author: Rob Keogh
Position: Chair
Date: 27 October 2020

The Chair invited Derek Councillor to conduct a Welcome to Country and acknowledged the Southern Yamaji peoples who are the Traditional Owners of the land we stand on today.

The Chair paid respects to all Yamaji and Noongar peoples who are the original natural resource managers of the Northern Agricultural Region.

The Chair acknowledged the presence of all the members and staff and thanked them for taking the time to attend the AGM.

1.1 Attendance & Apologies

Author: Ella Neethling
Position: Administration Officer
Date: 27 October 2020

Present

NACC Board Members R Keogh; M Stanborough; S Levett; A Sentance; J Bailey

Executive Support K Allen; T Maina; E Neethling

NACC Members K Jefferies; P Wittwer; J Sorgiovanni; P Findlater;
Shane Love MLA; A Bourne; A Garratt; T Bradford;
B McNear

Observers K Watson; P Royce; D Councillor

Apologies I Asmussen; J Wilson; T Knowles; M Payne; Y Marsden;
L King; L Bayley

1.2 Public Questions and Deputations

The attendees raised no questions.

2.0 Previous Meeting Minutes

(for Decision)

Author Ella Neethling
Position: Administration Officer
Date: 27 October 2020

2.1 Amendments to previous Minutes

Please refer to **Appendix 2.1.1** for a copy of the Annual General Meeting's unconfirmed minutes on 5 November 2019.

2.2 Matters arising from previous Minutes

No matters were arising from the AGM Minutes of 5 November 2019.

Resolution 1/NACCAGM/11/20

The meeting accepts the Annual General Meeting Minutes of 5 November 2019 as presented.

MOVED: J Sorgiovanni

CARRIED: All

3.0 NACC Annual Reports

(for /Decision)

Introduction

- Chair's Report presented by Chair Dr. Rob Keogh.
- Chief Executive Officer's Report presented by Katherine Allen.
- Treasurer's Report presented by Treasurer Susanne Levett.

The Annual Report can be found here: https://www.nacc.com.au/2020_report/

3.1 Chair's Report

The Chair, Dr. Rob Keogh, presented the following verbal report.

- Acknowledgments and Introduction
 - The Chair acknowledged and introduced two Directors appointed under the pro tempore arrangements as Allison Sentance and Joel Bailey.
 - The Chair noted that Director Dean Revell resigned since the last AGM. The Chair also noted that Director Asmussen is currently working in Victoria and that Director Miriam Stanborough was joining the meeting remotely.
 - The Chair introduced and welcomed Mr. Kane Watson and Dr. Amanda Bourne to NACC NRM team.
- Disruptions and Resilience
 - The Chair reiterated that NACC NRM has dealt with two significant disruptions, one being the reduction of 40% of funds due to NLP2 two years ago and the recent disruption resulting from COVID-19.
 - The Chair also acknowledged the significant interruption and impacts of climate change on natural resources and agriculture.
 - The Chair summarised a view that each organisation should have the following characteristics of resilience, all of which have been displayed by NACC NRM:
 - A worthwhile purpose being
 - Protecting, preserving the natural resources of an area and that it is essential today was important yesterday and will continue to be important in the future.
 - Flexibility and adaptability
 - NACC NRM accommodated the NLP 2 interruption, changed how we worked, focused on our purpose, continued to deliver value, adapted to circumstances, and started to recover by re-establishing Coastal and Marine capability.
 - Robust, proven systems and performance
 - The current measure successfully gets additional funding from Common Wealth and other resources and therefore meets this criterion.
 - Networks and alliances
 - NACC NRM has strong networks and alliances inside and outside of our region.
 - The Chair reiterated that NACC NRM is doing well with these characteristics but that there is room for improvement and is hopeful that the work being done on NARvis will assist this further.
- NACC's performance – Resilience in action
 - The Chair confirmed that NACC NRM is currently in a very strong financial position and that all programs are on track to deliver contracted outcomes. The organisation is currently in the process of being awarded new contracts. The organisation has been able

to re-establish Coastal and Marine capabilities within the team which is a significant NAR outcome.

- Building Resilience
 - NACC NRM appointed new Board members and Employees with the view of broadening our skills and capability.
 - The Chair acknowledged the CEO, Katherine Allen's, active participation and positive contribution to NRM WA through the CEO's group.
 - The Chair advised that he is now a Director of NRM Regions Australia Ltd. There is a lot of potential for NRM's on that basis, particularly with NRM conversing with the Australian Government and large national organisations for better alignment and effect.
 - The Chair reiterated that a significant challenge for NACC NRM is to diversify income to pursue all of the identified NARvis projects/initiatives.
- Conclusion
 - The Chair thanked the CEO for her leadership and fellow Directors, Staff, and NACC NRM's management team for their contributions over the past twelve months and thanked the membership for their support. The Chair asked for the patience of members while NACC NRM continues to rebuild our capability while at the same time looking for a broader and more resilient funding base.
- The attendees raised no questions.

3.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report

The CEO, Katherine Allen, presented the following verbal report.

- Funding
 - The CEO advised that NACC NRM has two primary revenue sources: the Regional Landcare Partnership (RLP) Program under the National Landcare Program Phase 2. The RLP Program is funded through the Department of Agriculture, Water, and Environment. The other primary funding stream is through the National Indigenous Australians Agency within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. This funding supports NACC NRM to deliver the Mid-West Aboriginal Ranger Program. Together these programs equate to approximately 95% of NACC NRM's funding.
 - NACC NRM experienced a slight increase in revenue for the 2019-20 financial year. Some new opportunities have arisen due to direct approaches from the Federal and State governments, which is a positive reflection on NACC NRM's track record of delivery. NACC NRM is also pursuing several fee-for-service opportunities that will support our purpose in collaboration with different industries.
 - The CEO reiterated that NACC NRM is also working on improving operating efficiencies. The organisations operating expenses represent approximately 4% of total expenditure. Employee Expenses increased slightly to 30% due to the increasing employment during 2019 to deliver on specific projects. The governance and operating expenses equate to 6%, and project expenditure equates to 62% of the organisation's operating expenses.
As a result of COVID-19, the project delivery expenditure was slightly lower due to a number of workshops/events being moved to online platforms, resulting in cost savings. Online events were quite successful and had a large participation rate and were used in conjunction with face-to-face delivery when appropriate in the future.
 - The organisation delivered over \$200K on-ground works and committed \$40K to additional on-ground activities. NACC NRM has already committed \$100K to on-ground works to be completed in the new financial year, with funds from 2019-20.
- 2019-20 Achievements
 - The CEO advised of the re-establishment of the Coastcare Support Team during March 2020. Five funding applications were submitted by this team alone between March and June 2020. Two of these applications were successful, and one of these projects has already been delivered. The team has also commenced some fee-for-service work

undertaking photo monitoring for the City of Greater Geraldton. This model will be used to engage with more Local Governments in the region.

- The CEO confirmed the following achievements across new and continuing projects:
 - Cross-regional partnership project to protect Carnaby's Cockatoo habitat.
 - Setting seed - a small Threatened Flora Project which commenced during the new financial year.
 - Gnow or Never Project achieved 175 hectares of revegetation, 437.5 hectares protected area and 200 hectares of strategic feral predator control in partnership with the Northern Biosecurity Group.
 - During March, NACC NRM welcomed some new team members, the Women's Aboriginal Conservation Team, who completed biodiversity training and participated in engagement activities. Unfortunately, the team recruited just COVID-19 restrictions that impacted the group's ability to participate in on-ground activities. NACC NRM is working hard on re-establishing the team and currently waiting on approval from NIAA to use some unexpended funds.
- The CEO advised that another area of significant achievement has been in the Sustainable Agriculture Team:
 - Established a new RLP project called Growing Great Ground.
 - Established a number of new partnerships with organisations, including Elders Rural Services and Yuna Farm Improvement Group, to trial the use of legumes as a summer ground cover. This project aims to help landholders reduce wind erosion risk and improve drought resilience. An application has been submitted to continue work during 2021 to extend this work to more landholders.
 - Submitted a project through the Community Stewardship Grants (State NRM) for a three-year foundational project to regenerate the Chapman Catchment. This is a long-term project in partnership with landholders in the Chapman Catchment. One of the long-term aims of this project is to develop a model of catchment scale regeneration which can be replicated in other catchments across the region.
 - The first year of Growing Great Ground achieved commitments from landholders to undertake 81 hectares of project works. A further 100 hectares of improvements have been submitted for consideration through expressions of interest.
 - Continued delivery of Getting Smarter with our Data which is an opportunity to provide landholders with additional information about using different technology options.
- NACC NRM Strategy
 - The NACC NRM Board met twice between March 2019 and June 2020 to discuss the 2020-24 NACC NRM strategy.
 - One of the strategy's key features is a clear linkage to NARvis, the NRM Strategy for the region.
 - The strategy has been structured into four key focus areas, each with a goal and at least two strategies to achieve the goal. The focus areas are:
 - On-ground Impact;
 - Community Engagement;
 - Aboriginal Participation and Engagement and
 - Organisation Capability
- Summary
 - An underlying strategy is to rebuild our scope of projects. Inevitably this will likely result in organisational growth, increased revenue, and ideally diversified funding streams through new projects. We are also working on a number of efficiency improvements. During 2019-20 we implemented Clockify – an online time tracking tool - to better understand the time devoted to particular activities. This will provide operational and capability evidence to prepare funding applications and support costings for the fee-for-service work.
 - NACC NRM has had some very positive outcomes during 2019 due to our participation, partnerships, and collaborations. For example, the Chapman Catchment Project will

yield a very positive outcome for the region if approved. Unfortunately, our Fish Habitat Restoration application was unsuccessful and could have resulted in a great partnership and collaboration. NACC NRM has utilised considerable resources to support several organisations across the region to submit NRM project applications. I have personally expended considerable energy reiterating that NACC NRM is here to partner and support the delivery of NRM outcomes for the NAR.

- The attendees raised no questions.

3.3 Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statements (2019/2020)

The Treasurer, Susanne Levett, presented the following verbal report.

- Overview / State of Affairs
 - The Treasurer confirmed that the organisation continues to submit project applications as opportunities arise. NACC NRM has successfully secured another \$727K for the Foote's Grevillea and Protecting WA Black Cockatoos projects. The organisation continues to seek funding opportunities for the benefit of the region.
 - The Treasurer advised that the Mid West Aboriginal Program is proposed to be extended for another seven years. However, these arrangements still need to be formalised. The commencement of the Aboriginal Women's Conservation Team also provides further opportunities for working on country activities in the foreseeable future.
- Statement of Financial Position
 - The Treasurer confirmed that William Buck Auditors conducted the 2019-2020 Audit, which affirms that NACC NRM has a strong Balance Sheet.
 - The Treasurer reiterated that non-for-profit organisations must be underpinned by financial stability and sustainability to remain strong and contribute to their mandate. The NACC NRM Board is working on an operational model that allows for the maximisation of on-ground investment. Simultaneously, maintain adequate resources for any unexpected funding shortfall, cash flow needs, or matching funds.
- Operating Statement
 - The Treasurer confirmed that NACC NRM recognises income for the year of \$3,856,543 against the expenditure of \$2,834,470, leaving a surplus of \$1,022,073. The surplus is a function of several changes in NACC NRM's operating environment over the past two years. The first is the shift to a procurement model for NRM services delivery under the Regional Land Partnerships program. This has, in turn, resulted in a change to the treatment of income and expenditure by our auditors.
 - NACC NRM was not immune to the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Several project activities were deferred and eventually shifted into the new financial year with approval from the Australian Government. The COVID-19 travel restrictions severely impacted events, stakeholder consultation, and workshops. NACC NRM is committed to delivering these events and project activities in the future.
- Opportunities
 - The Treasurer reiterated that the Board and Management are aware of the gap that has existed with the absence of funding for the Coastal and Marine program. NACC NRM has many stakeholders along the NAR coastline. We are happy to report that in December 2019, the NACC NRM Board approved the investment of discretionary funds to re-establish the Coastal and Marine program during 2019-20. The Coastal and Marine team will continue to seek funds for coastal project activities. The Board is keen to work with NACC NRM's stakeholders to formulate and fund projects critical to the NAR community. The Treasurer invites all members to view www.narvis.com.au - our Regional NRM Plan - and share their project ideas.
 - The Treasurer advised that the board decided to use some discretionary funds to invest in projects that cannot be funded from currently funded projects. In addition, the Board approved the budget to update the regional NRM Strategy. Some budget has also

been allocated to enhance the organisation's capacity and capability, including IT asset renewal.

- **Acknowledgements**

- The Treasurer thanked the NACC NRM team as the organisation demonstrated its agility and moved quickly to mitigate the challenges presented by COVID-19. Considerable thought was put into ways of doing things differently. The team has been innovative in delivering project activities, including developing and delivering some content through online platforms.
- The Treasurer thanked the Directors for their dedication to NACC NRM, especially through this challenging year, for the Chair's leadership, and Tom Maina for his support.
- The Treasurer acknowledged all the organisations and individuals that have supported NACC NRM throughout the year.
- The Treasurer confirmed that the Annual Report and Audit Financial Statements could be found on www.nacc.com.au/annual-reports/.

Resolution 2/NACCAGM/11/20

The meeting approves the 2019/2020 Annual Report, including the 2019/2020 Audited Financial Statements for the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council.

MOVED: P Findlater

CARRIED: All

4.0 Appointment of an Auditor

(for Decision)

Author Rob Keogh
Position: Chair
Date: 27 October 2020

The NACC Audit and Risk Committee resolved at its meeting held on 22 September 2020 to re-appoint William Buck Auditors for another 12 months.

The NACC Board resolved at its Board Meeting held on 12 October 2020 to appoint William Buck as the independent auditors of NACC for a further 12-month period.

Resolution 3/NACCAGM/11/20

William Buck Pty Ltd is to be re-appointed as the independent Auditors of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council for a further term of one year.

MOVED: J Sorgiovanni

CARRIED: All

Discussion

- The Chair advised that NACC NRM engaged William Buck for the 2019-19 audit and that the Board is recommending reappointment for 2020-21. The Board intends to retender the Audit function for the 2021-2022 financial year. The Chair reiterated that this is not an indication of dissatisfaction with the services provided; rather, it reflects good governance for a small organisation.

5.0 Open Question Time

(for Discussion)

Question 1 by Jim Sorgiovanni

How many people here, who NACC does not employ, are community members and farmers? Over the years, I talked to farmers and advised them to approach NACC with their views. Whenever I asked them what they thought of NACC, they responded that NACC is not much use to them as they don't do what we want them to do. Farmers should take responsibility as NACC cannot assist farmers if they do not know what farmers want.

Response 1 from Rob Keogh and Katherine Allen

9 attendees of the AGM self-reported as community members, and 4 attendees self-report as farmers.

Rob: The Board received confirmation at today's Board meeting that the Sustainable Agricultural program actively engages with farmer groups, including Mingenew Irwin Group, West Midlands Group, Yarra Yarra Catchment Group, etc. NACC NRM is recognised and appreciated on this level, and our RALF's are doing a fantastic job of engaging at this group level and with individual landholders as appropriate. This is not to say that NACC NRM can't improve, but the Board has comfort that the organisation is doing meaningful things for farmers in the region. Amanda Bourne has also been engaging with farmers through the community consultation process in redefining NARvis. The Board will review and reflect with interest on the outcomes of these consultations. I am satisfied that we are not passive. We are seeking input and contributions and assisting where we can.

Katherine: NACC NRM, through the NARvis community consultation process, is actively looking for landholders to participate in that process. To date, we haven't received the level of engagement we would like. To combat this, we are working on a targeted process in the next round of community consultation. The aim of this is to ensure that agricultural landholders' views are heard and incorporated. Although there are not many farmers in the room today, a lot is going on day-to-day to have landholder engagement in project delivery.

Question 2 by Paul Findlater

For a long time, part of the issue has been that NACC NRM funding is prescribed by whoever the funding body is, and those priorities are often different from farmers' priorities. The trick is to marry the two together, but that is easier said than done.

Response 2 from Rob Keogh

Under Federal Drought funding, some funds were exclusively available for the NRM groups to bid for, for which NACC NRM applied. Some other funds were made available openly to any organisation. NACC NRM made a deliberate decision not to bid for these funds but rather to support farmer groups in the region extensively to bid for this funding. This has been a positive basis for engagement, and the outcomes are yet to be revealed, but I am satisfied that NACC NRM has made the best use of the opportunity.

Question 3 by Jim Sorgiovanni

With the NRM WA and NRM Regions networks, are they connected with the WA Landcare network?

Response 3 from Rob Keogh and Katherine Allen

Rob: Informally, yes. They are not part of the Landcare network but do engage on a national and state level with the equivalent organisations at both levels. In some regions, the various Landcare groups are formal NRM members, but they have a different structure. On a national level, Kate Andrews regularly talks to her equivalent in the Landcare movement. During December 2019, together with WALN, the various Chairs of NRM WA and NRM Region met with Minister Alannah McTiernan to discuss NRM matters.

Katherine: At an organisational level, NACC NRM is a WALN member, and so are all of the NRM groups within WA. NACC NRM actively engages with WALN as an organisation and as a member, and we participate in their fortnightly webinars. NACC NRM has also provided some information on our Aboriginal Women's Conservation team to develop Aboriginal Engagement case studies. WALN has requested NACC NRM to present at their upcoming AGM during November.

Question 2 by Dr. Amanda Bourne

What is the funding model for the National NRM Regions?

Response 2 from Rob Keogh

It is yet to be finalised. However, each of the NRMs in the past contributed about \$2.5K. The funding structure is being revised, and the Board of NRM Regions Australia is working on a funding structure that reflects the capacity to pay.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.

6.0 Closed meeting (15.48pm)