

2022 - 2023

# Annual Report



# REROC

RIVERINA EASTERN REGIONAL  
ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

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*Cr Rick Firman OAM, Chairman of REROC, addresses the students at the Take Charge Leadership Forum in March 2023*

## REROC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am delighted to present my eighth annual report as Chairman of the REROC Board.

We've had, as usual, another exciting, full-on and productive 12 months. It is always pleasing to reflect on just some of the countless activities and projects our REROC Board, CEO & Staff have immersed ourselves in over the last 12 months.

Following extensive consultation, the Riverina JO was placed in hiatus, which means that the advocacy role for the Member Councils reverts to REROC, as things were prior to October 2018. There remains JO capacity building projects to complete which should be finalised by the end of 2023. While the JO structure has been successful for some groups of country councils it has not been the case for all. We are pleased to see that the new Minister for Local Government, Hon Ron Hoenig MP, has supported a position whereby councils choose what collaboration structure best suits their needs.

The NSW Election and subsequent change of Government meant that we have had to establish new, networks for our advocacy. In June 2023 the Board resolved to join the Country Mayors Association of NSW, as Associate Members.

We have continued to advocate for the issues that are of importance to our Member Councils and the communities we proudly represent. This year has been significant because IPART launched a review of its Rate Pegging Methodology, and also resolved not to move forward with a proposal to introduce a Domestic Rate Peg.

REROC together with the JO embraced the opportunity to provide feedback to IPART on both issues and was active in consultations held by IPART. The Rate Peg Methodology is an issue that REROC has been lobbying about for almost 10 years, and to finally have the opportunity to contribute to a new approach on its calculation was good news.

IPART released its final discussion paper in June 2023, and REROC (in the main) agreed with the majority of the recommendations that were made. A special thank you to our Chief Executive, Mrs Julie Briggs, for her extra efforts in this space.

We have advocated for the NSW Government to address the anomaly that results in the vesting of Rural Fire Services' Fire Fighting Equipment with local councils rather than the RFS. The arrangement, which is the result of s119 of the 1997 Rural Fires Act, reflects a time when the RFS was volunteer-driven, rather than the multi-million dollar, professional firefighting organisation it is today. In 1997, councils actually had a substantive role in determining what equipment would be purchased, what would be sold and where it would be deployed in their LGA. In addition, councils entered into meaningful Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that determined what occurred in their LGAs.

Today, with the RFS' global approach to asset management, these arrangements no longer exist. Our Member Councils have not entered into meaningful SLAs with the RFS in years, and arguing that Councils "own and control" these assets is a convenient legal fiction that cost shifts the burden of depreciation from the State to Local Government

We have stepped up our advocacy in this area. In late 2022 the Board asked then NSW Minister for Emergency Services, Steph Cooke MP and Minister for Local Government, Wendy Tuckerman MP, to amend the Rural Fires Act legislation to reflect the actual management of the assets. Further we expressed our concern about the legal exposure that councils could face in relation to assets they "owned" but had no control over.

The Board will continue to advocate on the issue with the new State Government, in the hope that commonsense prevails. We were able to raise the matter with our new Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Jihad Dib MP, in June, again explaining to him that while the equipment found its way onto councils' asset registers, councils had literally no control over it.

This year saw the finalisation of the latest iteration of the NSW Public Lighting

Code, REROC has been involved in all the updates of the Code since 2009 and we were instrumental in lobbying for the Code to be mandated. The latest iteration came into effect on 1 July 2023, the Code acts as the Service Level Agreement between the providers of public lighting, Essential Energy, Endeavour Energy and Ausgrid and road authorities (which are Councils and Transport for NSW).

As part of the Southern Lights Group, we have advocated tirelessly in relation to the latest Australian Energy Regulator's Determination on Street Lighting pricing. The AER's Determinations occur every 5 years and set the prices that councils will pay for street lighting maintenance and replacement. REROC was very concerned that initial pricing from Essential Energy flagged an up to 50% increase in costs. This was a complete shock given that all our Councils have converted to energy efficient LED lighting, where it is usual for maintenance costs to fall.

Southern Lights has engaged in a series of consultations with Essential Energy about its pricing, and also attempted to independently review the pricing. Submissions were prepared for the AER and Southern Lights will continue to vigorously review and respond to any significant increases in lighting costs proposed by Essential Energy.

We were able to extend our work in energy efficiency substantially this year, after receiving funding, through the NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change, to run an Energy Efficiency and Net Zero project. Dr Will Adlong started in the Project Officer role in February 2023. The funding is for one year and we are hoping that it will continue. One of the outcomes will be the REROC Region Energy Efficiency and Net Zero Plan, which will guide decision-making for the organisation into the future. Other activities we are looking at is EV charging stations, EV fleet transitions, tariff reviews and energy from waste projects. The project will work closely with the REROC Waste Forum activities.

How Councils prepare, respond and recover from disasters is now the subject of our Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) project, after we received funding from

the NSW Reconstruction Authority. This substantial project will look at the gaps in our preparedness, develop training and community education resources and embed approaches into IP&R planning. The project is being delivered in collaboration with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Central NSW Joint Organisation, Hunter Joint Organisation, Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation, Mid North Coast Joint Organisation, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation and Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation. We will need to work fast as the funding is only for 12 months and there is much to be done.

Our annual Take Charge Forum attracted more students than ever. We have moved the event to The Range in Wagga, as a larger venue was required. The event (now held in late March to capture the newly appointed school leaders) attracted 145 students and 20 teachers drawn from 21 schools representing every Member LGA.

Wagga Wagga Schools also attended as a result of financial support provided to the event by Wagga Wagga City Council, as the Council is currently not a REROC member.

Conferences and workshops are a very effective way for our fellow Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Councillors and Council staff to keep up with the latest policies, projects and innovations in our council operational areas. The REROC Conferences are very reasonably priced to ensure they are accessible to us all.

Our Energy and Innovation Conference was held in September 2022 and was a great success. We received a great deal of positive feedback with Lockhart Shire Mayor, Cr Greg Verdon stating it was one of the best conferences he had ever attended. The Conference received sponsorship from Essential Energy and Iberdrola.

The Mapped Out Conference was held in November 2022, and again attracted participants from far and wide. The Conference first ran as a Forum in 2006 and has been delivered every year since, with the exception of the COVID years. It provides a unique platform for professional development of those working in the spatial data area but also showcases the ways that spatial data can be used to support and inform decision making. The Conference was sponsored by the NSW Government through Spatial Services NSW, and we are very grateful for that support.

Our Contaminated Land Management (CLM) Project, which was run in collaboration with RAMJO, came to an end this year. The project aimed to improve the capacity of council staff to manage contaminated land issues with the current project focussing on the management of Underground Petroleum Storage Systems (UPSS). CLM Project Officer, Mr Matthew Dudley, did a great job in delivering the project and we were able to develop legacy resource materials that will continue to inform council decision making, including a web-based resource.

Our REROC Waste Forum continues to deliver regional projects in waste management, resource recovery and increasingly looking at ways that we can support circular economy outcomes. The Waste Forum's work is partially funded through a grant from the EPA for



Ms Dianna Somerville, Chairperson of the RDA Riverina Board meets with Cr Rick Firman OAM

Voluntary Regional Waste Groups and our collaborative work with the EPA is highly valued.

This year saw the Waste Forum arrange for the delivery of over 1700 Kindy Kits to new Kindergarten students in the Region, the kits contain information on reducing waste. We again secured the services of theatre in education providers Eaton Gorge who delivered waste education shows in Bland, Temora and Cootamundra-Gundagai LGAs. The Forum is very successful in group procurement activities for waste collections, including waste metal and now Used lead Acid Batteries, which raise income for the councils and for Waste Forum's work. Currently, we are very focused on reducing contamination rates in both kerbside recycling and FOGO collections. In continuous operation for over 20 years, we remain very proud of the work done by the Forum.

This is a very brief overview, however, I encourage you to read the body of our REROC Annual report, to see further innovative projects we have immersed ourselves in. The REROC Board takes enormous pride in our organisation, which has been in existence since 1994. There have been many who have

served in Executive and Board positions during that time, and I acknowledge every single individual – past and present – who have served to enhance our Member Councils and communities.

The Board, Chief Executive, Staff and I wish to express our warm thanks to our State Members of Parliament, who cover our REROC footprint. To Ms Steph Cooke MP (Member for Cootamundra), Mr Justin Clancy MP (Member for Albury) and Dr Joe McGirr MP (Member for Wagga Wagga), we warmly thank them for their commitment to REROC – which is appreciated.

We also take this opportunity to thank our Federal Member for Riverina, the Hon. Michael McCormack MP. His support of REROC is also strong and true, and the Board know how crucial it is to form genuine relationships with our Federal & State Members of Parliament.

To Regional NSW Director of Riverina/Murray, Mr Giles Butler, the Board and I extend our thanks for his assistance in many ways. We also extend our thanks to Ms Rachel Whiting, the CEO of RDA-Riverina for her commitment and involvement with the REROC Board and staff.

*Dr Joe McGirr discusses regional issues at a REROC board meeting*



I extend my warm appreciation to Members of the Executive Committee. Those members include;

#### **CHAIRMAN**

- Mayor Rick Firman OAM (Temora Shire)

#### **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

- Mayor Neil Smith (Junee Shire)

#### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

- Mrs Julie Briggs

#### **TREASURER**

Mr Tony Donoghue PSM (Coolamon Shire)

#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

- Mr Grant Baker (Bland Shire)
- Mayor David McCann OAM (Coolamon Shire)
- Mayor Charlie Sheahan (Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council)
- Mrs Evelyn Arnold (Greater Hume Shire)
- Mr Peter Veneris (Lockhart Shire)

This added commitment means a great deal to our Board and Member Councils.

A special mention goes to our REROC Treasurer, Mr Tony Donoghue PSM. Mr Donoghue does a very good job and, together with his Assistant Treasurer, Mrs Courtney Armstrong, the REROC finances could not be in safer hands. The Board and I thank them and Coolamon Shire, most sincerely. At this time, it is most appropriate to extend our sincere thanks to our Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Julie Briggs. Whether its REROC,

her various Regional, State and National organisational roles, Mrs Briggs gives nothing short of 100% in all she chooses to immerse herself in. The commitment and dedication given to the REROC Board, together with our Member Councils and communities, is something very special. Mrs Briggs' efforts are never, ever taken for granted and we remain grateful to her and her support staff in Leah Gain, Jenny Pideski, Helen Mundy, Will Adlong and Andrew Trenaman.

I extend my sincere thanks to each and every Board Member of REROC. I consider it a genuine privilege to serve you as your Chairman. It's an honour to work beside each and everyone of you, and I thank you for your service to this tremendous organisation.

In conclusion, to our Member Councils the Board and I say a special thank you. To all our Deputy Mayors, Councillors, General Managers and Staff Members – we thank them for their loyalty and support of REROC. We all have much more to achieve together, to ensure our cherished Riverina region thrives and prospers, long into the future.

Thank you very much.



Cr R B Firman OAM  
CHAIRMAN

*Attendees of the 2022 Mapped Out Conference held annually in November.*



Advocating for the views and positions of our Member Councils and the communities we represent is a key role that REROC performs. We work together to harvest the knowledge, thoughts and opinions of our Members to determine the positions that we take on everything from rate pegging to the delivery of waste management.

REROC prides itself on the robust submissions it makes and our commitment to finding and advocating viable solutions that will meet the challenges we face.

In addition, REROC produces Strategic Plans which inform both our lobbying activities as well as operational activities including funding submissions.

REROC draws on the vast knowledge and experience of our councillors and the staff of our Member Councils to inform, respond and design solutions and develop positions. This last year, which was the final year of the Riverina Joint Organisation's activities in this area, REROC has worked collaboratively with the JO to respond to a wide variety of issues.

## IPART RATE PEG METHODOLOGY REVIEW

This much needed Review was announced in October 2022, and both REROC and the Riverina JO responded to the Issues Paper. REROC assisted IPART in hosting a consultation in Wagga Wagga in November 2022 which was attended by councils from across southern NSW.

IPART was asked to investigate and make recommendations on:

- options to set the rate peg methodology to ensure it is reflective of inflation and costs of providing local government goods and services.
- options to stabilise volatility in the rate peg, and options for capturing more timely changes in council costs and inflation.
- alternate data sources to measure changes in councils' costs.
- the effectiveness of our current Local Government Cost Index (LGCI)
- options for capturing changes in councils' costs caused by external factors.
- the effectiveness of the population growth factor in achieving its intended purpose.

The Rate Peg Methodology is an issue that REROC has been lobbying on for almost 10 years and to finally have the opportunity to contribute to a new approach on its calculation was good news. In the past we have strongly advocated for IPART to use indices that realistically reflect councils' costs. For example, IPART has consistently used the NSW Public Service Wages Index to determine the rate peg rather than the Local Government Award which has gazetted, fixed wage increases each year. This has resulted in IPART constantly underestimating the impact of wages on council budgets.

In addition, IPART has spread the cost of the total ESL across all NSW councils even though the RFS component falls disproportionately on rural and regional councils. Again, this results in rate pegs that do not allow councils to undertake Business As Usual which is the goal that IPART has set for the rate peg.

If councils are to be financially sustainable then a methodology that accurately reflects the cost of doing business must be applied. At the outset our Members were clear, as has always been the case that they do not support the rate peg. Local Government is government at the grassroots, it is the government that is held to the highest accountability because of its daily front-facing interactions with its constituency. Councillors are held to account at the ballot box just as State and Federal politicians are, REROC maintains that this is where councils should be held to account for the decisions made in relation to the rates they charge and the services and facilities they provide.

IPART released its final Discussion Paper in June 2023 and REROC, in the main, agreed with the majority of the recommendations that were made. REROC was particularly pleased to see a recommendation that the ESL Levy be added to residential rates as a separate line item as this would allow much greater transparency and encourage assessments in relation to value for money.

We are hopeful that the new Labor Government will adopt the sweeping recommendations that IPART has made that will allow the rate peg methodology to better reflect the real costs of running a financially viable council.

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## IPART REVIEW OF DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGES

REROC together with the Riverina JO submitted a robust response to the IPART's Draft Report proposing the introduction of a peg that highlighted the reasons why a Benchmark Rate Peg would be almost impossible to achieve. This approach was supported by submissions from LGNSW and other members of the RENEW group.

We participated in consultations with IPART in August and September 2022 about the introduction of the Benchmark Peg, strongly opposing it. We did not believe that a peg could be set that would adequately reflect the diversity of service provision across councils in NSW. We also questioned the need for the Review given that IPART only received 33 responses from the public to its Issues Paper, with 5 of those complaining that they did not receive free tip vouchers. There seemed to be no demand for the Review given the millions of kerbside waste services that are delivered by councils each week with only 33 complaints received by IPART.

In late 2022 IPART announced that it would not move forward with the proposal. We were very pleased that IPART recognised the concerns the Local Government sector expressed about the proposal in making the decision not to implement the Benchmark but rather revert to a process whereby the Office of Local Government was charged with the responsibility to monitor charges in the context of its regulatory role.

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## GOING CIRCULAR IN CLEAN ENERGY DISCUSSION PAPER

REROC made a joint submission with the Riverina JO on the Discussion Paper. This review focused on ways to achieve circular outcomes in relation to waste management for large solar farms.

REROC sees the greatest challenge to achieving circular outcomes in clean energy is finding viable processing solutions close to developments that will minimise transport costs by maximising first-stage processing. We believe the State Government has a role to play in providing resourcing that will assist in the establishment of first-stage processing facilities.

REROC believes that circular solutions need to address the entire life cycle of clean energy facilities: the establishment, the operations and finally decommissioning. We believe that the current arrangements with regard to the Consent Conditions in relation to the developments do little to force developers to adopt circularity as a goal at any point in the lifecycle. The adage "start as you mean to end" absolutely applies to achieving circular outcomes in relation to clean energy developments. We will continue to advocate for better waste management and resource recovery solutions to be applied to clean energy developments.

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## EASTERN RIVERINA REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

The Strategy was released in early 2022, it contained a wide variety of actions aimed at tackling

the housing shortage in the Region.

Our approach encompassed three broad themes:



This year following discussions with the REROC Planners we agreed to pursue three actions contained in the Plan:

### 1. IDENTIFICATION OF CROWN LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT

Based on what is known as the “Cooma Project” which identified unused Crown Land then fast-tracked the Native Title issues in order to open the land for residential development. We looked at developing a similar project that addressed the whole eastern Riverina Region. A review of land was undertaken by the Member Councils, however there was not sufficient land identified across the Member Councils to warrant progressing a regional project.

### 2. IDENTIFICATION OF LAND ZONED RESIDENTIAL THAT IS UNLIKELY TO BE DEVELOPED

This project would use data generated through REROC’s Land Monitor Project to identify the residentially zoned land that is available for development. The Land Monitor Project identified over a thousand parcels of land zoned residential in the REROC Region that were not being made available for development. The project aims to validate the actual land supply pipeline in the Region in order to inform re-zoning decisions.

### 3. POCKET PARK REZONING

This project to run in partnership in the Department of Planning aims to develop a suite of materials to support rezoning for residential use. While REROC Planners were keen to progress the project, lack of time and resources resulted in the project being put on hold.

In addition, REROC has been lobbying for the review of the Manufactured Homes Regulation to be finalised. Manufactured homes are an important part of the housing mix and provide short to medium term solutions in times of housing shortages. The Regulations have been under review since 2016. REROC was concerned to ensure that the Regulation encompassed tiny homes and foldable homes. We received advice from the Department of Planning that it would encompass these new housing solutions and we are awaiting its public exhibition.

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## VESTING OF RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSETS IN COUNCILS

Together with the Riverina JO, REROC has advocated strongly for an amendment to s119 of the *Rural Fires Act (NSW)* which automatically vests fire fighting equipment brought through the Rural Fire Fighting Fund with local councils.

While s119 of the Act was pertinent and represented the practices between councils and the RFS 23 years ago, it is no longer representative of today's practices where the RFS determines what equipment is purchased, when it is sold and what equipment goes where. Once the equipment is purchased by the RFS, as a result of the Act the equipment automatically vests with the local councils and must be listed on their assets register and depreciated.

The NSW Auditor General has recently taken exception to councils electing to refuse to include the equipment on their assets registers because the council has no control over their use or sale. As a result, the Auditor-General has adopted a practice of issuing financial management letters to councils who have refused to include the assets on the Registers.

Along with the Management Letters came a demand that councils undertake a condition assessment of the RFS equipment on their asset registers. A difficult task because councils do not hold the keys to the equipment nor do their staff have direct access to the equipment.

We will continue to advocate on the issue with the new Government, in the hope that commonsense prevails. We were able to raise the matter with the new Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Jihad Dib in June again explaining to him that while the equipment found its way onto council asset registers, councils had no control over it.

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## REVIEW OF THE NSW PUBLIC LIGHTING CODE

REROC again participated in the review of the NSW Public Lighting Code. This was a major review of the Code where we attempted to address concerns in relation to the integration of smart technology into the Code.

The differing approaches by each of the DNSPs, Endeavour Energy, Ausgrid and Essential Energy, to the delivery of smart-enabled street lighting impacted on our ability to find a solution that applied across the board this delayed the code's finalisation. The Review was completed in February 2023.

The Public Lighting Code mandates minimum service requirements and benchmarks that must be met by DNSPs in the delivery of what is a monopoly service – public lighting. It is the only way by which councils can hold the DNSPs to account for the services they provide as they are required to report regularly in relation to meeting the Code's requirements to IPART. The requirement to meet the Code is part of the DNSPs' licence conditions.

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## AUSTRALIAN ENERGY REGULATOR (AER) DETERMINATION FOR STREET LIGHTING

The 2024-2029 pricing review Framework & Approach is currently underway. Southern Lights has been very active in this area with the goal of ensuring that councils who are serviced by Essential Energy are not overcharged for the maintenance of their streetlights. This is a very challenging task, the importance of which cannot be overstated following Essential Energy's initial approach which proposed a 50% increase in charges for the regulatory period. Given the widespread adoption of low maintenance LED lighting Southern Lights was shocked by the proposed increase and has advocated strongly for a close review of Essential Energy costings.

Southern Lights has engaged in a series of consultations with Essential Energy about its pricing and attempted to independently review the pricing. Submissions were prepared for IPART on the proposals and Southern Lights will continue to vigorously review and respond to any significant increases in lighting costs proposed by Essential Energy.

## ROAD RAIL INTERFACE AGREEMENTS

REROC and our Member Councils were able to negotiate a final version of the Road Rail Interface Agreement (RRIA) with UGL Regional Linx the new Country Rail Network Manager. In the final version of the RRIA we were able to include requirements for UGL to meet its obligations under the *NSW Roads Act*, including advising council when it is intending to access the road network or work on the road verge.

This has been a long process and we remain concerned about the unrealistic, long-winded administrative process required for Third Party Works Access, where comprehensive submissions are required in order to fill a pothole on the interface – the area where the road meets the rail. We are continuing work on this issues in collaboration with CNSWJO.

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## NSW PLANNING PORTAL

Our Members have had on-going concerns about the Portal, which is managed by NSW Planning. All development applications in NSW must be lodged through the Portal however our Members are consistently reporting that they must provide one-on-one assistance for “mum and dad” developers who are having trouble engaging with it.

We have asked that the Department work on making the site more accessible for new and one-time users. Our Planners would also like the Portal to better reflect the unique Development Conditions that are imposed in each LGA, currently the Portal is not accommodating these easily.

In addition, County Councils are not recognised as an Approval Authority in the Planning Portal. REROC is supporting advocacy activities by the County Councils to address the issue.

These matters will be raised with the new Planning Minister, Hon Paul Scully MP.

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## INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS CHARGES

REROC has continued to advocate for the application of s7.12 contributions to be imposed on State Significant Developments. Advocacy on the issues will need to start again with the new Labor Government however REROC remains committed to removing the “may” from the legislation and having it changed to “must”. A solution that was first proposed by previous Planning Minister, the Hon Rob Stokes.

The adoption of the industry concept of “shared benefit” arrangements in lieu of the contribution is not acceptable as it ignores the fact that councils have already undertaken consultations, budgets and planning to commit to community infrastructure that will be funded by the s7.12 contributions. The imposition of a “shared benefit” directed by the developer is not acceptable to our Member Councils.

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## EPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVISORY GROUP

This Group was formed by the EPA in 2021 to provide input into the work that the EPA does that impacts on Local Government operations. Tony Donoghue and CEO, Julie Briggs are part of this Group which is scheduled to meet every 3 months. The membership includes LGNSW CEO, the OLG CEO as well as senior staff of the EPA and representatives from the other VRWGs (including JOs that are VRWGs) and RENEW NSW.

With the change in CEO at the EPA this Group only met occasionally in 2022-23 however consultations on the structure and function of the Group are currently underway.

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## ENGAGEMENT WITH STATE AND FEDERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

We aim to meet regularly with our local State and Federal members and have managed to meet with most of them during the last year.

The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that we keep relevant Ministers, our local members and other stakeholders up to date with our stance on issues for which we are advocating. Therefore, we ensure that copies of any correspondence or submissions that REROC makes that relate to State or Federal activities are sent to all our local MPs and MLCs, the Deputy Premier, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier, the Shadow Minister for Local Government, LGNSW and the Country Mayors Association.

The new Labor Government of course means new ministers to meet and bring up to speed with our activities. We are planning a day of meetings in Sydney with the ministers that are most relevant to Member Councils in order to have a swift introduction to REROC and its activities. We have already met with Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Jihad Dib MP and the new Minister for Local Government, the Hon Ron Hoenig MP has expressed strong interest in attending a REROC Board meeting.

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## CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY (CSU) COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REROC has served on this Committee and its predecessor committees for over 15 years. The Committee's work focuses on activities at the Wagga Wagga Campus of CSU. The University is a key provider of training in the Region and a major employer, our engagement is very important to our Member Councils.

*Dr Joe McGirr MP participating in workshops at Take Charge 2022 held at the Range Function Centre, Wagga Wagga in August*





*Hon Ben Franklin MLC and Hon Wes Fang MLC meet with REROC's Youth and Community Development Group in August 2022*

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

REROC's role in workforce development is delivered in two ways. The first is a commitment to "growing our own" by running activities that encourage people to consider a career in local government. The second, is supporting staff and councillors through professional development activities that include conferences, workshops, professional presentations and regular meetings of our technical groups that allow staff working in specific operational areas to meet regularly to address common issues and share their ideas.

Skills shortages in Local Government are expected to worsen over the next decade, with baby boomer employees retiring, large infrastructure projects in the Region getting underway that will require thousands of workers, many likely to come from councils and a growing demand by communities for more services and better facilities creating an additional demand for workers.

REROC has strongly supported the Skills Shortage project that the JO delivered, with REROC's Workforce Development Technical

Group acting as the project's Steering Committee. The Skills Shortage project has allowed us to test a number of activities aimed at encouraging school students and university students to consider working in Local Government. The Workforce Development Technical Group meets every second month to discuss human resource issues such as recruitment, retention, training and Award issues.

We need to make working in regional and rural council attractive, we need to effectively compete for labour and we need to retain the workers that our Member Councils have. REROC plays an important role in this through the delivery of workforce development initiatives.

We were able to return to almost regular programming for our Conferences, however the delay of the 2021 No Time to Waste Conference to March 2022 because of COVID resulted in the scheduled October Conference not going ahead.

# ENERGY AND INNOVATION CONFERENCE

REROC joined the Sustainable Councils initiative funded by the NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change in 2022 and this resulted in the delivery of the Energy and Innovation Conference in September 2022.

The Conference aims to showcase innovation in the energy sector across as many platforms as possible. The 2022 Conference opened with a Keynote from Dean Lynch, Relations Manager with Snowy Hydro 2.0. Dean provided the delegates with an update on progress with the project. Chris Dalitz from Riverina Electric Vehicle Owners Likers and Testers (REVOLT) spoke about the Good, the Bad and the Ugly when it comes to EV ownership the address was both enlightening and amusing, while Dr Scott Dwyer from UTS's Institute of Sustainable Futures spoke about Local Government Investment in EV Infrastructure.

Solar Energy generation was focus with Mike Young from the NSW Energy Corporation talking out Renewable Energy Hubs, Dr Anna Bruce from SunSPoT speaking about the benefits and costs of solar and Kim Malle from the Community Power Agency speaking about the Hay Solar Garden Project.

Josh Ellison from Re-Wiring Australia opened the second day of the Conference with a video address from France, speaking about Australia's Electric Future. Funding was in focus with addresses from Gerard Arends of KOMO Energy about Crowd Funding the Grong Grong Solar Farm and Leon Chanter from ARENA speaking about funding opportunities. Graham Mawer from Next Energy talked about Multi-Function Poles and Smart City Sensors while Ben Waters from Presync address on Understanding Energy Bills was very well received.

The Conference was sponsored by Essential Energy and Iberdrola.

## MAPPED OUT CONFERENCE

Our Mapped Out Conference returned in November 2022 after a COVID enforced hiatus. The Conference first ran in 2006 and has run every year since then. Starting as a very small event it has grown to attract speakers and attendees from across NSW and northern Victoria.

The Conference was held across 2 days and showcased a wide range of spatial data initiatives that can be applied to assist decision-making in government and business. The Conference again delivered a



Attendees of the 2022 Energy and Innovation Conference held annually in September

balance between the practical and emerging technologies as well as demonstrating how spatial data can be applied to a diversity of projects.

Wendy Menz and Leisl Grant from NSW Parks and Wildlife spoke about how spatial data was used to Accelerate Hawkweed Eradication, Wayne Patterson spoke about the Live NSW project that is being delivered by NSW Spatial Services while Lyn Terret from Rapid Maps gave an overview of Victoria's Emergency Markers' project which assists in directing ambulances to accident sites.

Charles Fransen from Albury City Council spoke about their Native Title Project while Melissa Daley and Craig Ronan from SES Mapping spoke about the NSW Flood Data Portal. Digital Twinning was in the spotlight with presentations from NSW Spatial and Jon Medway who spoke about CSU's Digital Twin Farm project.

The Conference was supported by NSW Government, through Spatial Services NSW.

## BUILD A BRIDGE... AND GET OVER IT!

Run in partnership with the Compact, the 3-day Camp which was first held in 2006, aims to encourage students in years 10 to 12 to consider a career in civil engineering. Over the 3 days students participated in practical, hands-on activities that allowed them to experience the work that a civil engineer does.

This year's Camp was run in the first week of May with 19 students from Years 10-12 participating. The 2023 participants came from schools across Wagga Wagga, Bland, Cootamundra-Gundagai and Greater Hume LGAs.

The Camp is held under the direction of facilitator, Nigel Worne, a highly experienced Construction Project Engineer, who has been with the Camp since it began 16 years ago. Students gain Engineering concepts from bridge design and development stage to completion of bridge construction.

The Camp combines hands-on practical work with theory to build an understanding

of engineering. The first day has students allocated into teams which participate in practical activities, working alongside REROC Engineer mentors, teaching Engineering basics such as: Laser levels, Feature Survey and spatial coordinates, Surveying and Forces in equilibrium.

The second day involves each team receiving their project brief, to design a bridge that spans a 11m body of water (creek) in the grounds of the Borambola Sport and Recreation camp facility. At the completion of the design phase, students present and market their designs to Engineers and their peers who choose the winning design, using a selection matrix. On the final day, the winning bridge is constructed over the creek at Borambola, with the winning team taking on the role of Project Manager while the remaining students make up the construction team.

On Day Three, Local Government, school, Industry and State Government representatives, parents and friends attend a short presentation and the unveiling of the completed bridge. Students walk over the bridge they built to collect their participation certificates.

In 2018, a survey was undertaken by COMPACT of past participants. Outcomes showed that of the 123 alumni who undertook the survey, 56 of these students have gone on to study Engineering in a range of specialisations. Many respondents have confirmed that Build a Bridge...& get over it! made a positive influence in their Engineering career choice.



Students putting the finishing touches on their bridge

## SKILLS SHORTAGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Workforce Development Group is the Steering Committee for this Riverina JO-lead project that aims to address skills gaps in councils. Mr Paul Worsfold is the Project Manager. The project aims to encourage high school students, TAFE and university students to consider a career in Local Government through experiential learning experiences in the sector.

The project encompasses the following activities:

**START YOUR CAREER HERE DAYS** for high school students to visit their local council and learn more about careers in local government.

**COME AND TRY DAYS** target high school students providing them with a taste of what a career in their chosen field would be like through directed activities and events, like Build A Bridge. During 2022 we trialled a new program in Planning where students designed precincts to a prescribed description using Lego. The hands-on approach was well-received by the students and we want to expand it across the Region.

**PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENTS PROGRAM** we have directed our efforts at CSU and Wollongong University students and are continuing to look at ways to engage TAFE students.



Cr Rick Firman OAM greets Aunty Kath Withers before Take Charge Youth Forum

Our Student Ambassador, Samantha Tout from the University of Wollongong continued her great work in promoting professional placements directly with students and lecturers.

Sam's work was pivotal in the delivery of the first of our Engineering for Communities event, which was held in early July 2022. Engineering students from UoW visited councils in our Region to spend time with engineering staff talking about the depth and breadth of work available in rural councils. The feedback we received from the event was outstanding, with students following up after the event to enquire about engineering jobs post-graduation.

**GRADUATE PLACEMENT PROGRAM** while the uptake for the Placement Program has been slow, we believe this is an important part of the package of offerings that we provide to address Skills Shortages.

## TECHNICAL GROUP GUEST SPEAKERS AND SITE VISITS

REROC has 8 Technical Groups in waste, planning, engineering, youth and community, energy management, water and wastewater, spatial data and workforce development. Throughout the year we have sought opportunities to engage guest speakers who can provide in-depth information on specific issues that the staff are dealing with, many of the guest speakers come from State agencies.

Guest speakers are invited to attend at the request of the members of the Technical Group or will often approach REROC looking for the opportunity to speak with a specific Technical Group.

This year our Infrastructure and Engineering Group paid a site visit to Bland Shire to look at their sustainable roadworks program which won a LGNSW Award. While NSW Planning and NSW DPI have consistently provided information and updates to the Planning Technical Committee through their permanent membership of the Group. The Water Directorate is a permanent member of the Water and Wastewater Technical Committee and provides regular updates on water issues.



The Hon Kirsty McBain MP, Minister for Local Government, meets with the REROC Board via Zoom during the August 2022 Board Meeting

## BUILDING STRATEGIC CAPACITY

Building strategic capacity is key to REROC's work, we actively seek ways that Members can support each other through collaboration to improve, enhance and extend the services that are delivered by councils. The activities that are undertaken cover every facet of council operations and range from strategic planning and the creation of generic policy documents to the aggregated procurement of everything from bitumen emulsion to legal advice.

REROC and its Member Councils have a strong commitment to working collaboratively to achieve direct costs savings but also to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts, when we work together, we inevitably produce better results whether it be in operations or through our advocacy work.

We have continued with our very successful Southern Lights collaboration and this year two new projects have resulted in statewide collaborations. Southern Lights Group comprises of RAMJO, REROC and Broken Hill City Councils, unfortunately CRJO no longer contributes financially towards the project.

Our two new projects are the Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA)

project which has been funded by the Office of Energy and Climate Change and the Disaster Risk Reduction program which has been funded by Reconstruction NSW. Both projects include active collaboration with CNSWJO, RAMJO, CRJO, Illawarra JO, Hunter JO, NRJO and MNCJO.

Southern Lights NSW initiated deployment of 75,000 energy efficient, LED streetlights has been completed. However, the Group continues to work together on other street lighting projects including the review of the NSW Public Lighting Policy and the AER Determination on street lighting pricing. We are also continuing to push for Smart Lighting to be enabled on street lighting which would allow councils to generate more savings through dimming and trimming the lights as well as support the operation of Smart City devices.

We have worked with CNSWJO on the aggregated purchase of retail energy through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for renewable energy for our large sites. We also worked with CNSWJO to identify the most cost-effective retail agreement for our small sites. The pooling together of the purchasing

to create one PPA was one of the largest in the State and was a direct outcome of the funding both organisations received through the Sustainable Councils program funded by the OECC. That program has now been encompassed by the JONZA initiative, which has been funded for 12 months.

An important facet of REROC's collaborative approach is the work we do with the State agencies that operate within our region. Strong ties have been forged through the delivery of common projects with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, the EPA and the Department of Primary Industries.

We continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with Eastern Riverina Arts and the

Regional Development Australia – Riverina, who share similar footprints provides both strategic and operational outcomes. We work closely with Eastern Riverina Arts who are active participants in our Youth and Community Network meetings and provide support for the Take Charge Youth Leadership Forum. RDA Riverina is an important strategic partner as we share similar goals in relation to issues such as housing, economic development and skilled employment.

Our work with Compact as our “go to” schools’ liaison is important to the success of programs like *Build a Bridge....and get over it!*

Our work with the community and building capacity and resilience continues to be an important aspect of our work.

## COLLABORATING STRATEGICALLY

### DISASTER RISK REDUCTION FUNDING

In late 2022 we signed a grant agreement with NSW Reconstruction Authority for Disaster Risk Reduction Funding (DRRF). The DRRF is being run collaboratively with Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Central NSW Joint Organisation, Hunter Joint Organisation, Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation, Mid North Coast Joint Organisation, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation and Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation

The project aims to identify gaps and needs, build resources and capacity and embed disaster preparedness in Member Councils and the communities they represent. The projects objectives are to:

1. Effectively identify the gaps and needs in regions to reduce and mitigate vulnerabilities across the built, social, natural and economic environments
2. Build the capacity and share resources for evidence-based decision making and enable locally led and owned place-based disaster risk reduction efforts at both local and regional levels.
3. Build networks leading to a systems approach to disaster preparedness enabling greater consistency, efficiency, leading practice and lessons learned.

4. Provide improved capacity for Councils to deliver strategic disaster risk reduction outcomes for their communities with inputs to their IP&R structures through a regional framework, collaborative workshops and supporting tools.
5. Scope preparedness for cuts in supply chains with TfNSW through the identification and mapping of alternative routes

The project will run for 12 months and the project objectives will be achieved through five work streams:

1. Local and regional gap/needs analysis and opportunities reports.
2. Community workshops and training leveraging using spatial data capabilities/ initiatives and the work of other JOs and ROCs including sharing of resources and lessons learned.
3. Embed disaster risk preparedness in Councils’ IP&R framework.
4. Collaboration across JOs and ROCs and with key State partners - a collaborative approach
5. The development of legacy resources that ensure project learnings continue post-completion.

The program has resulted in significant collaborations across the board including the aggregated procurement of a consultant to undertake the Gap Analysis work. REROC's contacts with Spatial NSW have also

provided significant input into the project with councils committing to support the use of the Emergency Services Spatial Information Library (ESSIL) as the “one source of truth” spatial platform.

In addition, REROC has formed a strong relationship with Charles Sturt University’s Extended Reality Centre (XRC) with a view to using the Centre’s amazing capabilities in 3D software to create community education tools.

## **JONZA PROGRAM**

We entered an MoU with the NSW DPIE’s Sustainable Councils and Communities (SCC) project in early 2021. The success of this program resulted in the State deciding to invest in an extension to allow more councils to participate, the result was the JONZA program. While originally targeting Joint Organisations the program has also embraced the work of ROCs.

Through the next 12 months, REROC intends to accelerate net zero outcomes through targeted projects such as:

- The development of a Regional Energy Efficiency and Net Zero Plan, positioning Member Councils as potential participants in the offsetting arena.
- Completing business cases and cost benefit analyses support Member Councils to support decision-making about the transfer of their fleets to electric vehicles.
- Source the most appropriate design, and cost out the construction, of solar electric vehicle charging stations to charge Member Council electric vehicles, using battery storage.
- Providing Member Councils with business case, cost benefit analysis, and information on the feasibility of an aggregated procurement project to support their decisions on energy saving with LEDs at their sporting fields.
- Identifying projects in waste, resource recovery and the circular economy with the potential to deliver net zero outcomes.
- Supporting Member Councils to apply for grants to support the implementation of their Energy Plans.
- Developing a model of Revolving Energy Funds for individual Member Councils and the REROC region as a whole.
- Enable tariff reviews of energy accounts, to ensure that councils are receiving the

best price value, particularly through building capacity in member councils.

- increasing awareness and use of SunSpot by households to inform solar purchases.

We have been very fortunate to recruit Dr William Adlong into the Project Officer role, Dr Adlong has an extensive background and experience in net zero projects at community and enterprise levels.

## **SOUTHERN LIGHTS NSW**

While the deployment of over 75,000 LED energy efficient lights across the Southern Lights footprint of 41 LGAs is completed the work of the Group continues. In the last 12 months this has focused on four areas:

### **1. *Reviewing Essential Energy Performance Reports to IPART***

As part of its licence obligations Essential Energy must report to IPART on how effectively it is meeting the service benchmarks contained in the NSW Public Lighting Code. Southern Lights reviews these reports to ensure that Essential Energy’s performance and reporting is accurate. This is important work as it holds Essential Energy to account in relation to how it is performing in what is a monopoly service provision.

### **2. *NSW Public Lighting Code Review***

The Code is the Service Level Agreement that councils have with the DNSPs (Essential Energy, Endeavour Energy and Ausgrid). The DNSPs performance is benchmarked by the Code and reported to IPART therefore it is very important that the Code accurately reflects Local Government’s expectations in relation to performance. The Code is updated each year and a full review is undertaken every 3 years. This year there has been a full review undertaken. The new Code came into effect on 1 July 2023.

### **3. *Australian Energy Regulator Street lighting Pricing Review***

The 2024-2029 pricing review Framework & Approach is currently underway. Southern Lights has been very active in this area with the goal of ensuring that councils who are serviced by Essential Energy are not overcharged for the maintenance of their streetlights. This is a very challenging task, the importance of which cannot be overstated following Essential Energy’s initial approach

which proposed a 50% increase in charges for the regulatory period. Given the widespread adoption of low maintenance LED lighting Southern Lights was shocked by the proposed increase and as advocated strongly for a close review of Essential Energy costings as well as consulted constantly with Essential Energy over the last year about the costings.

#### **4. AEMC Submission on Minor Energy Flow Metering**

Southern Lights has supported an IPWEA submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) on this issue.

This issue relates to metering on smart street lights, the changes advocated would allow the lights to meter electricity use instead of the deemed usage that is now the default arrangement. REROC also supported an approach that does not require the physical display of metering on the lights or physical inspections and an arrangement whereby a virtual NMI aggregates the energy data obtained directly from the lights for each lighting owner. These changes will be integral to maximizing the savings that can be achieved through activating smart lighting that has been installed.

It is somewhat frustrating that the costs of undertaking the above works is borne by the Southern Lights Group, however every council in the Essential Energy footprint is advantaged by the work. We have attempted over recent years to have more councils join the Group to offset costs and also approached LGNSW about taking greater ownership of the issue, to date our efforts have not met with success.

Our consultants Graham Mawer and Paul Gowans from Next Energy have been integral to the success of the project and to our ensuring that we have the technical information required to provide sound input into both the review of the Code and the AER Determination.

### **EASTERN RIVERINA REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY**

We have continued to seek opportunities to promote the strategies contained in the Eastern Riverina Regional Housing Strategy which was released at the beginning of February 2022.

The Board, on the recommendation of our Planning Technical Group agreed to pursue three projects:

- **Identification of Crown Land for Development** – a project similar to the Cooma Housing Project which identified unused Crown land then fast-tracked the Native Title issues opening the land for residential development. Planners looked at identifying unused Crown Land in each Member LGA with a view to undertaking a regional project, however there was no sufficient land identified to support a regional approach.
- **Identification of land zoned residential that is unlikely to be developed** – using the data generated through our Land Monitor project undertaken by RDA-Riverina the goal of this is to identify the residentially zoned land that is available for development in order to validate the Region's residential land pipeline.
- **Pocket park rezoning** – working with DPE to develop a suite of materials to assist councils with rezoning applications.

In addition, the REROC Executive started some initial work on a regional Community Housing project. We believe that by operating at a regional level REROC may be able to generate economies of scale and scope that would make community housing projects viable for small communities.

### **REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY PROJECT**

We are continuing to provide information on the Biodiversity Conservation legislation and its impacts on planning through the REROC website.

We are supported in keeping the information up-to-date by NSW Department of Environment, who allow Marcus Wright, our former Project Officer, to monitor the site's information and provide us with updates. It is an important resource to support the capacity of our Member Councils to deal with planning issues and the Biodiversity legislation. The web-based resource provides a decision-making pathway and includes flowcharts, information sheets and hyperlinks that provide guidance to both the public and councils.

## CONTAMINATED LAND REGIONAL PROJECT OFFICER

This project, which covers eighteen councils across the Riverina-Murray region was delivered in collaboration with RAMJO. It was due to end on 30 June 2023 but was extended for a further two months to allow the finalisation of the legacy resource materials and the supporting website materials. The website is hosted by RAMJO and can be accessed at:

[www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/contaminated-land/](http://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/contaminated-land/)

The main focus for the REROC Member Councils has been around managing the regulatory processes associated with Underground Petroleum Storage Systems (UPSS). The responsibility for managing these Storage Systems was held by the State but devolved to councils in 2019 meaning there has been a lot of work required to bring systems, procedures and the capacity of council staff to deal with the issue up to speed.

## REROC REGIONAL FREIGHT TRANSPORT PLAN

REROC first released its Regional Freight Transport Plan in 2014, with the last update occurring in 2019.

The Plan identifies the major freight routes in the Region and the constraints that impact

on the effective movement of freight within and through the Region. Member Councils and REROC use the information to advocate and lobby for road funding and to identify opportunities to expand freight-based opportunities in the Region.

We started work on updating the Plan this year and incorporating data from the CSIRO TranSIT project which was completed by the JO in 2020 within it, that work is on-going. The Plan can currently be downloaded from the REROC website and has also been mapped at [www.reroc.giscloud.com](http://www.reroc.giscloud.com). We thank Dan Smith and Coolamon Shire Council for providing the mapping services for this project.

## NATIVE TITLE EXPERT PANEL

The Native Title Expert Panel was created in late 2020 to address concerns Members had in relation to their capacity to deal with native title issues. The Panel can be accessed through the REROC Members Portal where all the details of panel members can be accessed.

## CODE OF CONDUCT PANEL

REROC manages a regional Code of Conduct Panel, which can be accessed through the REROC Members' Portal. The Panel saves Members time and resources as it is procured and managed on a regional basis.



The Hon Jihad Dib MP and Dr Joe McGirr MP meeting with the REROC Executive

## COLLABORATING OPERATIONALLY

One of the key platforms for collaboration for council staff are the REROC Technical Groups that operate as sub-committees. Most of the Groups meet every second month, however some meet every 3 months. The committees draw their membership from Member Councils' operational staff and in some cases State Government agencies. We have encouraged State agency involvement in the Groups as it significantly improves the collaborative opportunities and information sharing.

The Groups provide the staff of the Member Councils with invaluable professional development opportunities because they are a platform for participants to learn from each other, share information and hear from experts in their field through the attendance of guest speakers.

### REROC WASTE FORUM

The Waste Forum is our longest running technical group, it was first established in 1998. The Waste Forum is partially funded through the EPA as one of NSW's 8 Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWG). The EPA's funding comes through the Waste Less Recycle More initiative, the funding enables the Forum to deliver a wide variety of programs in waste management and resource recovery.

The Waste Forum's focus is on waste management, resource recovery and the circular economy. The Forum is chaired by Coolamon Shire Council General Manager, Tony Donoghue. The Group meets on a bi-monthly basis and its activities are highlighted in the section Managing Waste, Promoting Resource Recovery and Environmental Sustainability. The Forum is also a member of RENEW NSW.

### RIVERINA SPATIAL INFORMATION GROUP (RIVSIG)

RivSIG supports staff who work in the spatial data field. It draws its membership from local government and state agencies. The Group is chaired this year by Narelle Johnson from Junee Shire. The Group's membership encompasses not only Member Councils

but non-member councils as well as State agencies and other stakeholders who have an interest spatial data and mapping.

RivSIG takes the lead role in the organisation of the Mapped Out Conference and provides staff working in spatial data with much needed networking and professional development opportunities. The Group decided to meet in different locations around the Riverina-Murray region this year to reflect its diverse membership.

### INFRASTRUCTURE/ENGINEERS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee considers major infrastructure and engineering issues in the Region. The sub-committee deals with issues that impact on road use and maintenance and is primarily responsible for the delivery of the Regional Freight Transport Plan. The sub-committee also addresses specific issues that arise from the engineering functions within our Member Councils.

The Committee considers issues relating to freight transport, roads, access arrangements the potential for collaborative projects as well as other infrastructure issues like mobile phone connectivity.

The Committee meets in Coolamon, once every three months and is chaired by Coolamon Shire Council's General Manager, Tony Donoghue.

### PLANNING TECHNICAL GROUP

This Group is made up of staff involved in the planning area and meets every second month. The Committee looks at ways to solve common planning issues through the development of regional policies that can be applied in individual LGAs.

The Group also provides responses to draft planning documentation and draft SEPPs and regional plans prepared by the State.

The Group has permanent representation from the Department of Planning and from the Department of Primary Industries and we are very grateful for that participation as it considerably strengthens the information sharing that occurs and provides a base from which to inform the planners about the implementation of State initiatives. We would

like to particularly thank Lilian Parker from DPI and Meredith McIntyre and Haydon Murdoch from Planning for their regular attendance and contributions to the meetings which are really appreciated.

The Group was the catalyst for the Regional Housing Strategy, reviewing all the work that went into it and providing on-going advice in relation to the actions to be implemented.

## **YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK**

The REROC Youth & Community Development Network brings together all the council staff working with youth and community development in the REROC region. The Network meets bi-monthly and aims to assist member councils by working together to enhance youth and community development services in the region. Tim Kurylowicz, the Executive Director of Eastern Riverina Arts, is also a regular participant in the Network and we are thankful for ERA's participation.

A key activity on the calendar for the Network is the Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum.

## **WATER AND WASTEWATER TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

This Committee is comprised of council staff from the Member Councils that are working in water and wastewater and from both county councils.

The Committee comes together to discuss issues that specifically relate to delivering water and wastewater services. Members share knowledge about their activities and share ways in which they have addressed and resolved issues.

Brendon Guiney, CEO of the NSW Water Directorate regularly attends meetings and his input has been invaluable.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

This Committee meets on a quarterly basis to address issues that relate to Member Councils' human resource and workforce development issues. Peter Veneris General Manager of Lockhart Shire chairs the Committee.

The Committee also acts as the Steering Committee for the Riverina JO's Skills Shortages' project. The project is developing pathways for students at high school, TAFE and university to experience careers in local government. The Member Councils have a strong commitment to "growing their own" workforce and this project will be a key to developing this approach.

## **ENERGY MANAGEMENT GROUP**

This Group is now the Steering Committee for the JONZA projects and meets every two months.

The Group's focus is the development of the Regional Energy Efficiency and Net Zero Plan as well as implementation of the projects identified in the JONZA Implementation Plan.

## **COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT**

Collaborative procurement is an important way that REROC supports its Member Council activities. REROC Member Councils continue to place high value on the procurement activities undertaken by REROC. Regional procurements not only create resourcing efficiencies they also generate savings and provide increased value through larger collection volumes and increased buying power.

## **RETAIL ELECTRICITY TENDER**

This was our largest and most complex procurement activity in some time, covering sixteen councils' large and small retail sites. The major component was the REROC/CNSWJO large site PPA tender where we worked on in collaboration with the Sustainable Councils and Communities program and with advice from consultant Presync.

The tender commenced in December 2022.

## **WASTE METAL COLLECTIONS**

REROC has arranged the collection of waste metal for its Member Councils for over 17 years with this procurement now generating hundreds of thousands of dollars in income for participating councils. The procurement and collection of waste metal in the Region has turned this waste material into a valuable

resource that can assist councils to offset the costs associated with operating landfills.

## LIQUID ALUM TENDER

We released a tender for the bulk supply and delivery of Liquid Alum for the REROC Participating Councils of Cootamundra-Gundagai and Goldenfields Water as well as Riverina Water and Hay Shire Council. The non-REROC Member councils paid a fee to be part of the tender process. This tender was finalised in September 2022.

## COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITIES

An important role for REROC is to work collaboratively within the Member Council communities to assist in providing programs where appropriate. We achieve this by working closely with our Youth and Community Development Network primarily to deliver activities to engage Youth within their communities.

This year once again our major activity was the Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum.

## TAKE CHARGE RIVERINA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM 2023

REROC's Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum was held on Wednesday 23 March at CSU in Wagga Wagga with 140 students and 20 teachers from 19 schools registered to attend the Forum, our biggest year yet.

The Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum focuses on providing young people with the tools required to have a stronger voice in society, take leadership roles in their community as well as inspiring them to be involved in their local community.

The day started off with a Welcome to Country by local Wiradjuri Elder, Auntie Kath Withers. We were also very grateful to have Cr Rick Firman attend to welcome the students and teachers and officially open the Forum. Our MC for the day, Emily Jones from Greater Hume Council did her usual and outstanding job.

Keynote speaker at this year's Forum was Cr Logan Collins. Cr Collins is the youngest person to ever be elected to a council in NSW. Cr Collins was elected to the Cootamundra-

Gundagai Regional Council at the 2021 Local Government elections not long after his 18th birthday. Prior to his election Cr Collins led the Cootamundra-Gundagai Youth Council as well as playing active roles in several volunteer organisation including the SES. Cr Collins' demonstrated his active involvement in the SES when he experienced a slight delay in arrival after taking on traffic management tasks when he noted that level crossing lights had failed on his journey to Wagga.

Also speaking at the event was the team from THE END FM a youth radio station based in Deniliquin. THE END FM is a youth run and led community radio station created by Southwest Arts Inc to engage young people in terms of both entertainment and in creative industries training opportunities. The station itself is located in Deniliquin but aims to cater for the Southwest region of New South Wales via its mobile outside broadcast van and youth project initiatives. THE END FM also conducted workshops on creating podcasts as well as providing attendees with an opportunity to spend time in their outside broadcast van.

Other workshops that the students participated in were "Making an Elevator Pitch" with Freeroam Theatre, Mindfulness with Anna Gannon and "The Leadership Ladder" with David Mould from Second Strike.

The 2024 Take Charge Leadership Forum will be held on 21 March at The Range Function Centre.



The Cootamundra Community Recycling Centre at Turners Lane, Cootamundra NSW

## REROC WASTE MANAGEMENT, RESOURCE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Waste Forum was the first Technical Group established by REROC and it has operated continuously for over 20 years. Waste management and resource recovery are significant activities for councils, with services running into millions of dollars a year. The Waste Forum seeks ways to assist councils in the delivery of those services whether it is through education programs that raise awareness, group procurements to support resource recovery, trials to test new processes or advocacy that addresses issues that impact on council operations.

The Forum's focus is on implementing solutions that work for rural and regional communities and to that end we have had great success with programs like regional procurements in waste, the establishment of local e-waste collections and Community Recycling Centres and supporting Members to introduce kerbside Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) collections.

This year a major focus has been the completion and adoption of our new Regional Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy. The Strategy will set the strategic direction for the Waste Forum for the next 5 years across four themes: Avoid and Reduce Waste Generation, Recover Resources, Protect the Environment and Strategic Collaboration.

The REROC Waste Forum is partially funded as a Voluntary Regional Waste Group (VRWG) by the NSW EPA and is one of eight Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWGs) operating in NSW. We work collaboratively with the VRWGs through RENEW NSW looking for ways that we can increase efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of programs and advocacy.

The No Time to Waste Conference is an important part of the delivery of professional development activities. Unfortunately due to COVID we were forced to cancel the Conference that was scheduled to be

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The No Time to Waste Conference is an important part of the delivery of professional development activities. Unfortunately due to COVID we were forced to cancel the Conference that was scheduled to be delivered in October 2022. We were however successful in receiving a \$10,000 grant from Destination NSW that will enable REROC to extend the 2023 Conference by a day which will result in tours to enterprises involved in circular economy activities.

## REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE RECOVERY STRATEGY 2022-2027

The new Regional Strategy was finalised and adopted by the REROC Board in February 2023. The Strategy will set the strategic direction for the Waste Forum for the next 5 years. A new vision and mission were agreed on:

### VISION:

Building a resilient and sustainable region through developing and encouraging initiatives in waste management, resource recovery and the circular economy.

### MISSION:

Achieve efficiencies in waste management, resource recovery and the circular economy by working collaboratively with all levels of government, our communities and business for sustainable outcomes.

As part of the planning process, we contracted Talis Consulting to undertake a review of Waste and Resource Recovery in our Region which shone a light on some of our problem areas that we will need to address over the next 5 years. This included that 51% of the waste collected in kerbside is going straight to landfill. As we lose landfill space and it becomes increasingly difficult to establish new landfills this will become a critical problem over the next decade. Our council and communities must lift diversion rates for landfilling to remain viable.

On a positive, however organics have had a continued and notable increase across the examined period by more than quadrupling the 2017-2018 values in 2020-2021. The Waste Forum has made substantial efforts to support councils with their kerbside organics' collections including launching the Food and Green Keep it Clean! Education campaign.

## IPART REVIEW OF DOMESTIC WASTE CHARGES

EROC together with the Riverina JO submitted a robust response to the IPART's Draft Report proposing the introduction of a peg that highlighted the reasons why a Benchmark Rate Peg would be almost impossible to achieve. This approach was supported by

submissions from LGNSW and other members of the RENEW group.

We participated in consultations with IPART in August and September 2022 about the introduction of the Benchmark Peg and in late 2022 IPART announced that it would not move forward with the proposal. We were very pleased that IPART recognised the concerns the Local Government sector expressed about the proposal in making the decision not to implement the Benchmark but rather revert to a process whereby the Office of Local Government was charged with the responsibility to monitor charges in the context of its regulatory role.

## E-WASTE COLLECTIONS

REROC organises the logistical arrangements that ensure that every LGA in our Region has access to a free e-waste collection at their local landfill. Our Region is unique in establishing its own regional response to e-waste collections with the goal of ensuring that there is equity of access for all.

This year there have been difficulties with the collection as Kurrajong Recyclers struggle to find businesses able to take end products. It is disappointing that the Federal Government was so focused on ensuring that the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme (NTRCS) collected e-waste it failed to put safeguards in place that ensured Liability

Parties invested in finding uses for the recycled materials.

It is important that Extended Producer Responsibility schemes like the NTRCS deliver end-to-end outcomes, whereby the recycled product is put to use. Simply counting how much product is collected does not make an EPR successful.

## REGIONAL COLLECTION CONTRACTS

We have continued to provide regional collection opportunities for REROC Member Councils throughout the 2022/23 period with councils invited to participate in a regional metal waste contract and we also put in place a panel arrangement for the collection of Used Lead Acid Batteries.

## RECYCLE NIGHT? RECYCLE RIGHT!

Our Recycle Night? Recycle Right! Campaign continues to run on television and local cinema. This year we looked to increase the use of community cinemas where possible to extend the reach of the campaign.

The aim of the campaign is to reduce contamination in kerbside household recycling bins through raising awareness that the waste is sorted by hand. The response to the



Community Recycling Centres across the REROC Region provide free drop-off of low toxic hazardous waste

advertisements is always very positive. In the coming year we will need to look at a refresh of the campaign.

## KING AND QUEEN OF GREEN (EATON GORGE THEATRE COMPANY)

Theatre in Education continues to be one of our mainstays in community education. The King and Queen of Green this year visited Bland, Temora Shires and Cootamundra-Gundagai Shires talking to students about recycling and composting.

In Bland Shire the focus was on small schools with the team visiting Barmedman, Naradhan, Tallimba and Weethalle Primary Schools. In Temora they visited Temora West Public and in Cootamundra-Gundagai they were at Gundagai South Public.

## KINDY KITS

This year we again asked schools if they wanted to participate in the program and as a consequence just over 1700 Kindy kits were distributed to students across the REROC Waste Forum region to schools in the following LGAs: Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Greater Hume, Junee, Lockhart, Temora and Wagga Wagga.

The Kindy Kits are library bags made from a sturdy cotton material, they contain materials that aim to promote classroom discussions on waste management, resource recovery and students and parents to think about ways that they can reduce waste in their lunchbox. Schools were encouraged to use the information to discuss ways to reduce waste and manage recycling at home and within the school environment.

## FOOD AND GREEN. KEEP IT CLEAN!

The State Government has committed to mandating the provision of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside collection service for all households by 2030. In our Region many of our members have already committed to the service and they are well established.

The Forum agreed last year that raising community awareness about contamination in the food organics and green lidded bins should be a focus. Contamination in the FOGO collection damages the product and its ultimate usability, particularly as the EPA requires that the compost that councils produce must be tested prior to use.

We are continuing to work on the television and cinema advertising for the campaign to ensure that the messaging is going to reach our audience. The website is full of useful information and we will be directing households to the site for information.

## SAFE SHARPS

Unfortunately, the site remained “down” for the entirety of 2022-23 as we were unable to find funding for a much-needed overhaul. Site analytics show that for 2020/2021 year there were 21,000 site users and 29,000 sessions on the site. These figures show that people not only used the site once but were coming back again to look up locations.

REROC continues to work with the site’s developer Anomaly Software to find a solution to the issue, we are now looking at launching a “lite” site which will have reduced functionality but still provide the basic information on the location of disposal sites.

## BIN TRIM

The Waste Forum submitted an application for funding under the EPA’s Bin Trim program and were fortunate to be one of the 14 successful applicants. Bin Trim aims to reduce the waste produced by businesses and to increase diversion from landfills.

The REROC project *Circular Organics in the Eastern Riverina* will target pubs, clubs, cafes and other food venues to increase the diversion of food waste from landfill by sending the waste for composting. The LGAs participating in the project are Coolamon, Junee, Lockhart and Cootamundra-Gundagai all of which have FOGO processing at their landfills.

The project will commence towards the end of 2023.

## COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES (CRC)

CRCs are operating in Coolamon, Cootamundra, Culcairn, Gundagai, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, West Wyalong and Wagga Wagga. We also have a CRC mobile trailer service which is hosted by Greater Hume Shire Council and available for all Member Councils. The trailer was moth-balled during COVID but is back on the road providing an additional service to people living in small communities.

The focus of the REROc Waste Forum CRC Campaign over the 2022/23 period was to continue reinforcing the locations of the CRCs with a strong focus on highlighting the materials that CRCs will accept. This achieved by using several advertising platforms as well as through the completion of our annual Community and Landfill surveys for each of the CRC locations.

The REROc Waste Forum 2022-23 CRC education campaign communicated with residents through a variety of platforms.

These included:

- Media: Television; Community Radio stations; Newspapers
- Cinema
- Council newsletters and websites
- REROc Waste Forum Facebook page
- CRC Riverina Murray Website
- CRC branded coasters with QR codes linking to the CRC Riverina Murray website

This year we also organised training sessions for council staff working in the CRCs. Training was held in May in Wagga Wagga

## SOLAR FARM WASTE

This has been an on-going concern for the Waste Forum Members and in December we held a workshop to identify the types of waste that the Farms generated during constructions and viable disposal methods.

The solar panels arrive on double-sized pallets wrapped in cardboard and plastic and often use strapping made from plastic and metal. Councils will not accept the waste at landfills because the volume is overwhelming and we were looking to provide direction to other end-users. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure end-users willing to take the waste and

it is now a matter for the developers to resolve as the waste is their responsibility.

## RENEW

RENEW is the umbrella organisation for the Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWGs) that operate in regional NSW. It provides an effective and efficient platform for the VRWGs to meet and discuss common issues, problems and solutions.

RENEW is scheduled to meet every four months, and it offers the REROc Waste Forum the prospect of working collaboratively with the other VRWGs and the opportunity to hear directly from the EPA about the latest issues. These meetings allow the Waste Forum to provide feedback from a regional perspective on EPA initiatives.

We regularly seek out opportunities to work collaboratively with other VRWGs, such as our joint approach to advertising for the CRCs exemplifies the value of the VRWGs working together across the state to provide consistent messaging.

EPA Local Government Advisory Group Tony Donoghue and CEO, Julie Briggs are part of this Group which is scheduled to meet every 3 months. The membership includes LGNSW CEO, the OLG CEO as well as senior staff of the EPA and representatives from the other VRWGs (including JOs that are VRWGs) and RENEW NSW.

With the change in CEO at the EPA this Group only met occasionally in 2022-23 however consultations on the structure and function of the Group are currently underway.

# WORKING WITH OTHERS



The Riverina JO is one of 13 Joint Organisations that were proclaimed in 2018. The Riverina JO's Member Councils are: Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Greater Hume, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, Wagga Wagga and Goldenfields Water and Riverina Water County Councils.

The principal functions of the Riverina JO are to:

- establish regional strategic priorities and develop strategies and plans to deliver those priorities;
- promote regional leadership and be an advocate for our regional strategic priorities; and
- identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental co-operation on matters relating to the Joint Organisation are

The majority of the REROC Member Councils are also members of the Riverina JO. REROC works with the JO to develop regional strategic plans and to inform the JO's advocacy and lobbying activities. These activities are facilitated by General Managers from the JO being members of the REROC Technical Groups.

Riverina JO went into hiatus as at 30 June 2023.



Compact and REROC have worked collaboratively for almost 20 years. Compact is REROC's conduit into high schools across the Region where we promote careers in local government. Increasingly, Member Councils are embracing the opportunity to grow their own staff and critical to this is engaging with young people about to embark on their future careers. The Compact's role in engaging with schools is vital to Member Councils' success in bringing young people a greater understanding of the potential careers in local government. The Compact is our primary partner for the delivery of the Build a Bridge... and Get Over It! project, and is a key collaborator in the Skills Shortage Project.

## Eastern Riverina Arts

Eastern Riverina Arts and REROC share a similar footprint which facilitates collaboration between the two organisations. Tim Kurylowicz, the Eastern Riverina Arts Executive Director attends REROC's Youth and Community Development Network meetings providing invaluable advice and assistance to Member Councils as well as working with them to develop joint projects. Eastern Riverina Arts actively supports the delivery of the Take Charge Youth Leadership Forum. REROC is supporting ERA's project to redevelop the old Ambulance Station in Wagga into a regional arts hub.



REROC maintains a strong and on-going relationship with RDA-Riverina. The RDA has an important role in furthering the economic development of the Region, a goal that is important to our Member Councils. RDA delivers the Country Change project to which most of the REROC members support. We believe that it is important that the Region puts forward a cohesive voice on these issues in order to have a chance to attract much needed funding. RDA Executive Officer, Rachel Whiting regularly attends REROC meetings where she provides an update on RDA activities. The RDA has been actively involved in the development of the Regional Housing strategy. We are looking to further our partnership in this area in the future.



We seek opportunities to partner with Department of Regional NSW to further projects such as the Freight Transport Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy. Julie Briggs, in her role as CEO of RivJO, attends the Regional Leadership Executive meetings which are convened by the Department for the Riverina-Murray region. The DPC Regional Manager, Giles Butler is an Associate Member of the RivJO Board and is also invited to attend REROC Board meetings and events in order to provide updates on activities at a State level.



The REROC Waste Forum is one of eight Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWG) operating in regional NSW. RENEW NSW is the banner organisation for the VRWGs which are partially funded by the NSW EPA. RENEW members usually meet on a quarterly basis generally alternating between a Sydney location and a regional location, this year saw a return to face-to-face meetings. RENEW is convened by NSW EPA, Kate Hardy was REROC's representative on RENEW and she was regularly joined at meetings by Waste Forum Chair Tony Donoghue and REROC Chief Executive Officer Julie Briggs. RENEW is an important and influential group as it is often first in line to receive information and advice from the EPA about directions, funding and issues relating to waste management and resource recovery. REROC's involvement in RENEW is invaluable in ensuring that we are at the forefront of developments in the environmental sector.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

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Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

SPECIAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2023

Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

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**Overview**

These financial statements are Special Purpose Financial Statements and cover the operations for the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC).

All figures presented in these financial statements are presented in Australian currency.

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the Executive.

REROC has the power to amend and reissue these financial statements.

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## Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Statement by Executive

**The attached Special Purpose Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with:**

applicable Australian Accounting Standards and professional pronouncements

**To the best of our knowledge and belief, these financial statements:**

- present fairly REROC's operating result and financial position for the year, and
- accord with REROC's accounting and other records.

**We are not aware of any matter that would render these statements false or misleading in any way.**



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Rick Firman  
Chairman



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Tony Donoghue  
Treasurer

# Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2023

Unaudited Budget 2023		Notes	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>Income from Continuing Operations</b>				
<b>Revenue:</b>				
79,500	User Charges & Fees	2a	103,676	96,977
3,000	Interest & Investment Revenue	2b	13,890	3,397
53,171	Other Revenues	2c	169,323	167,533
-	Grants provided for Operating Purposes	2d	264,760	463,491
196,637	Contributions provided for Operating Purposes	2e	196,637	195,271
<b>332,308</b>	<b>Total Income from Continuing Operations</b>		<b>748,286</b>	<b>926,669</b>
<b>Expenses from Continuing Operations</b>				
243,272	Materials & Contracts	3a	800,529	678,409
-	Depreciation & Amortisation	3b	-	5,194
59,718	Other Expenses	3c	67,915	61,350
<b>302,990</b>	<b>Total Expenses from Continuing Operations</b>		<b>868,444</b>	<b>744,953</b>
<b>29,319</b>	<b>Net Operating Profit/(Loss) for the Year</b>		<b>(120,158)</b>	<b>181,716</b>

The above Income Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

## Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2023

	Notes	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash & Cash Equivalents	4a	1,210,647	843,067
Receivables	4b	100,296	97,064
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>1,310,943</b>	<b>940,131</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	5	1	1
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,310,944</b>	<b>940,132</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Payables	6	558,093	67,123
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>558,093</b>	<b>67,123</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>558,093</b>	<b>67,123</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>752,851</b>	<b>873,009</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained Earnings	7	752,851	873,009
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>752,851</b>	<b>873,009</b>

The above Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2023

Unaudited Budget 2023		Notes	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>				
<b>Receipts</b>				
158,806	User Charges & Fees		99,034	57,871
5,445	Interest & Investment Revenue		3,154	2,677
196,637	Grants & Contributions		924,143	658,762
53,171	Other		169,322	167,533
<b>Payments:</b>				
(295,082)	Material & Contracts		(757,004)	(607,856)
(59,718)	Other		(67,915)	(61,349)
<b>59,260</b>	<b>Net Cash provided (or used in) Operating Activities</b>		<b>370,734</b>	<b>217,638</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>				
<b>Payments:</b>				
-	Purchase of Investments		(3,154)	(2,678)
<b>-</b>	<b>Net Cash provided (or used in) Investing Activities</b>		<b>(3,154)</b>	<b>(2,678)</b>
<b>59,260</b>	<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>367,580</b>	<b>214,960</b>
628,107	plus: Cash & Cash Equivalents - beginning of year		843,067	628,107
<b>687,367</b>	<b>Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents - end of the year</b>		<b>1,210,647</b>	<b>843,067</b>

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity  
for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Actual 2023		Actual 2022	
	Accumulated Surplus	Total Equity	Accumulated Surplus	Total Equity
Opening Balance	873,009	873,009	691,293	691,293
Net operating result for the year	(120,158)	(120,158)	181,716	181,716
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>(120,158)</b>	<b>(120,158)</b>	<b>181,716</b>	<b>181,716</b>
<b>Equity - balance at end of reporting period</b>	<b>752,851</b>	<b>752,851</b>	<b>873,009</b>	<b>873,009</b>

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Contents of the notes accompanying the financial statements

Note	Details	Page
1	Summary of significant accounting policies	39 - 41
2	Income from continuing operations	42
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4(a)	Cash and cash equivalent assets	45
4(b)	Receivables	45
5	Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	46
6	Payables	47
7	Retained earnings	48

## Notes to the Special Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 1. Significant accounting policies

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This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial report preparation requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*. The board have determined that the organisation is not a reporting entity.

The financial report was approved by the Executive.

The financial report is for the entity Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils as an individual entity. Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils Inc is an Association, incorporated and domiciled in New South Wales, Australia. Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing the financial statements.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*. The financial report complies with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards but does not comply with the disclosure requirements of these standards.

#### (a) Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements specified by the Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 'Presentation of Financial Statements', AASB 107 'Statement of Cash Flows', AASB 108 'Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors', AASB 1048 'Interpretation of Standards' and AASB 1054 'Australian Additional Disclosures', as appropriate for not-for-profit oriented entities.

#### *Historical Cost Convention*

The financial report has been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by revaluations to fair value for certain classes of assets as described in the accounting policies.

#### (b) Revenue

Revenue from the rendering of services is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the customers.

Membership fees are recognised as revenue when no significant uncertainty as to its collectability exists, if the fee relates only to membership and all other services or products are paid for separately, or if there is a separate annual subscription. Membership fees are recognised on a basis that reflects the timing, nature and value of the benefit provided if the fee entitles the member to services or publications to be provided during the membership period, or to purchase goods or services at prices lower than those charged to non-members.

Interest revenue is recognised when it becomes receivable on a proportional basis taking in to account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

## Notes to the Special Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

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#### (c) Contributions - Government Grants and Donations

A non-reciprocal contribution or grant is recognised when the entity obtains control of the contribution or grant and it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the entity, and the amount of the contribution or grant can be measured reliably.

If conditions attached to the contribution or grant that must be satisfied before the entity is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of contribution or income is deferred until those conditions are met.

A non-reciprocal donation is recognised when the right to receive a donation has been established. When the entity receives grants but is obliged to give directly approximately equal value to the contributor, recognition of grant income will be deferred until the delivery of service.

#### (d) Income tax

No provision for income tax has been raised as the organisation is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

#### (e) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and at banks, short-term deposits with an original maturity of three months or less held at call with financial institutions, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

#### (f) Property, plant and equipment

Each class of plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

##### *Plant and equipment*

Plant and equipment is measured at cost. Where plant and equipment was acquired at no cost or for a nominal amount, cost is deemed to be the fair value as at the acquisition date.

##### *Depreciation*

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated over their estimated useful lives commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Land and the land component of any class of fixed asset is not depreciated.

#### (g) Trade and Other Receivables

Trade debtors are carried at their nominal amount. Collectability of debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Debts known to be uncollectable are written off. A provision for doubtful debts is raised when some doubts as to collection of the debt exists.

#### (h) Trade and Other Payables

Trade and other payables represent the liabilities for goods and services received by the entity that remain unpaid at the end of the reporting period. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within normal trading terms.

## Notes to the Special Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

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#### (i) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

#### (j) Going concern basis of preparation

REROC reported a net loss for the period of \$120,158 (30 June 2022: profit of \$181,716).

REROC reports net cash flow provided by operating activities of \$370,734 (30 June 2022: used by \$217,638). REROC has a surplus of working capital (being the amount the current assets exceed current liabilities) of \$752,851 as at 30 June 2023 (30 June 2022: \$873,009).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business. The value attributed to REROC's assets represent true and fair values on the basis that REROC is a going concern.

The Association has ongoing financial support from the member Councils and is satisfied that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

#### (k) Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified and repositioned for consistency with current year disclosures.

# Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

## Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 2. Income from Continuing Operations

	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>(a) User Charges &amp; Fees</b>		
"Build a Bridge" Project	12,000	7,500
Energy & Innovation Conference	10,340	-
Mapped Out Income	16,872	3,000
No Time to Waste Conference	-	24,180
Scrap Metal	64,464	62,297
<b>TOTAL USER CHARGES &amp; FEES</b>	<b>103,676</b>	<b>96,977</b>
<b>(b) Interest &amp; Investment Revenue</b>		
Interest on REROC Account	13,890	3,397
<b>TOTAL INTEREST &amp; INVESTMENT REVENUE</b>	<b>13,890</b>	<b>3,397</b>
<b>(c) Other Revenues</b>		
Bitumen Emulsion Rebate	6,214	8,255
Joint Organisation Contribution	20,609	20,372
Meetings & Catering	1,303	688
Procurement	15,000	-
Strategic Collaboration	43,229	81,579
Sundry Income	25,126	23,839
Waste Management	39,042	32,800
Youth Network	18,800	-
<b>TOTAL OTHER REVENUES</b>	<b>169,323</b>	<b>167,533</b>
<b>(d) Grants</b>		
Community Recycling Centres Education	68,277	60,000
EPA Waste	137,025	191,733
Contaminated Land Management Officer	21,836	211,758
Net Zero	28,717	-
Disaster Risk Reduction	8,905	-
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>	<b>264,760</b>	<b>463,491</b>
<b>(e) Contributions</b>		
Council Contributions	196,637	195,271
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>196,637</b>	<b>195,271</b>

# Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

## Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 3. Expenses from Continuing Operations

	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>(a) Materials &amp; Contracts</b>		
Executive Services	187,272	183,600
- "Build a Bridge" Project	26,856	12,489
- "No Time to Waste" Conference	59	18,213
- "Mapped Out" Expenditure	9,043	2,184
- "Energy & Innovation" Conference	12,896	6,626
- "Careers in Local Government" Conference	2,955	-
- CRC Education	68,277	60,133
- Contaminated Land Management Project	167,789	54,728
- Disaster Risk Reduction	8,905	-
- EPA Household Hazardous Waste	18,384	-
- EPA Waste	137,025	229,007
- e-Waste	3,596	34,930
- GIS	2,090	-
- Net Zero	28,717	-
- Procurement Officer	6,149	6,730
- Scrap Metal	15,000	-
- Strategic Collaboration	46,480	68,525
- Sustainability Project	11,139	-
- Waste Management	24,181	-
- Youth Project	23,716	1,244
<b>TOTAL MATERIALS &amp; CONTRACTS</b>	<b>800,529</b>	<b>678,409</b>
<b>(b) Depreciation</b>		
- Plant & Equipment Depreciation	-	5,194
<b>TOTAL DEPRECIATION COSTS EXPENSED</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,194</b>

## Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 3. Expenses from Continuing Operations cont.

	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>(c) Other Expenses</b>		
Advertising	-	340
Conference Expenses	4,236	-
Insurance	5,321	5,369
IT & Computer Expenses	1,618	4,494
Legal/Accounting/Audit	5,573	5,254
Meetings/Catering	8,013	7,022
Phone	3,415	3,144
Printing/Stationery/Postage	9,921	6,648
Rent	24,592	23,699
Representations	662	695
Subscriptions	3,014	-
Sundry	329	1,011
Training	-	1,500
Travel	285	1,363
Web Site	936	811
<b>TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b>67,915</b>	<b>61,350</b>

## Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils

### Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

#### Note 4 - Cash & Cash Equivalents & Receivables

	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>(a) Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		
Cash on Hand and at Bank		
- REROC Account	681,864	317,438
- CRC Account	1	1
- Beyond Bank	29	29
Investments		
- Beyond Bank	528,753	525,599
<b>TOTAL CASH &amp; CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>1,210,647</b>	<b>843,067</b>
<b>(b) Receivables</b>		
User Charges & Fees	83,948	79,306
Accrued Interest	13,181	2,445
GST Receivable	3,167	15,313
<b>TOTAL RECEIVABLES</b>	<b>100,296</b>	<b>97,064</b>

Special Purpose Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2023

**Note 5 - Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment**

	as at 30/06/2022		Carrying Value	WDV of Disposals		Dep'n Expense	as at 30/06/2023		
	At Cost	Acc Dep'n					At Cost	Acc Dep'n	Carrying Value
Plant & Equipment	36,962	(36,961)	1	-	-	-	36,962	(36,961)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>									
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE, PROPERTY, PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>36,962</b>	<b>(36,961)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,962</b>	<b>(36,961)</b>	<b>1</b>

## Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 6 - Payables

	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>(a) Payables</b>		
Goods & Services Operating Expenditure		
- Materials & Contracts	95,016	67,123
PAYG	332	-
Other Liabilities - Disaster Risk Reduction	233,470	-
Other Liabilities - Net Zero	64,283	-
Other Liabilities - Bin Trim	42,500	-
Other Liabilities - Contaminated Land	68,538	-
Other Liabilities - Voluntary Regional Waste Group	53,954	-
<b>TOTAL PAYABLES</b>	<b>558,093</b>	<b>67,123</b>

## Special Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

### Note 7 - Retained earnings

	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
<b>(a) Retained Earnings</b>		
Movements in Retained Earning were as follows:		
Balance at beginning of Year	873,009	691,293
Net Operating Profit/(Loss) for the Year	(120,158)	181,716
<b>Balance at End of the Reporting Period</b>	<b>752,851</b>	<b>873,009</b>

# REROC DELEGATES AS AT 30 JUNE 2023



*The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Dr Joe McGirr MP, and the Hon Wes Fang MLC meet with the REROC Board*

## **Bland Shire Council**

Cr Brian Monaghan  
Mr Grant Baker

## **Coolamon Shire Council**

Cr David McCann OAM  
Mr Tony Donoghue PSM

## **Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council**

Cr Charlie Sheahan  
Mr Steve McGrath (Acting GM)

## **Goldenfields Water County Council**

Cr Matthew Stadtmiller  
Mr Aaron Drenovski

## **Greater Hume Shire Council**

Cr Tony Quinn  
Ms Evelyn Arnold

## **Junee Shire Council**

Cr Neil Smith  
Mr James Davis

## **Lockhart Shire Council**

Cr Greg Verdon  
Mr Peter Veneris

## **Temora Shire Council**

Cr Rick Firman OAM  
Mr Gary Lavelle PSM

## **Regional Development Australia**

Ms Rachel Whiting

## **Department of Regional NSW**

Mr Giles Butler

# REROC MEMBER CONTACT DETAILS

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## **Greater Hume Shire Council**

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**Website:** [www.junee.nsw.gov.au](http://www.junee.nsw.gov.au)

## **Lockhart Shire Council**

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## **Temora Shire Council**

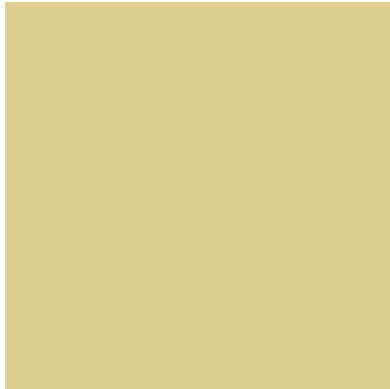
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ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS