



GRIFFITH BUSINESS CHAMBER INCORPORATED  
Annual General Meeting Minutes (70<sup>th</sup> AGM)  
Thursday 30th October 2023 | 5.30pm | Griffith Leagues Club – Southside

**Incorporation #** Y1358815

## **MINUTES OF AGM**

Meeting declared opened at 5.38pm

**Attendance:** Amanda Quarisa, Alycia McLean, Darryn Savage, Daniel Roller, Peter Schirripa, John Wadsworth, Michael Rowely, Manjit Lally

### **1: APOLOGIES**

John Collins, Sophie Sun, Court Sayer Roberts, Melina Ragusa

### **2: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM MEETING**

**Moved:** Alycia McLean

**Seconded:** Darryn Savage

Motion carried

### **3: AGM FINANCIALS**

Financials were made available to download on Griffith Business Chamber website prior to AGM. Representative from Roy Spagnolo & Associates- Peter Schirripa presented a summary of Financial Report.

**Moved:** Daniel Roller

**Seconded:** Michael Rowley

Motion carried

### **4. ELECTION OFFICER BEARERS**

John Wadsworth was invited to be Returning Officer & declare all positions vacant.

#### **Nominations for President:**

**Nominated:** John Nikolic. Self Nominated.

**Seconded:** Darryn Savage

Elected, congratulations!

#### **Nominations for Vice-President:**

**Nominated:** Darryn Savage. Declined.

**Nominated:** Daniel Roller. Accepted. Nominated by Darryn Savage.

**Seconded:** Michael Rowley

Elected, congratulations!

**Nominations for Treasurer:**

**Nominated:** Alycia McLean. Nominated by Amanda Quarisa

**Seconded:** John Nikolic

Elected, congratulations!

**Nominations for Secretary:**

**Nominated:** Amanda Quarisa

**Seconded:** Alycia McLean

No vote required. Elected, congratulations!

**Public Officer:** Remains unchanged. Michael Rowley.

**Additional General Committee Members.**

Called for further nominations from the floor.

**Nominated:** Dean Owen – received nomination in writing as he is an apology.

**Seconded:** Darryn Savage

Accepted. Motion carried.

**Nominated:** Manjit Lally – received nomination in writing

**Seconded:** John Nikolic

Accepted. Motion carried.

**Nominated: Darryn Savage– Alycia**

**Seconded:** Amanda Quarisa

Accepted. Motion carried.

**Nominated:** Michael Rowley nominated by John Nikolic

**Seconded:** Daniel Roller

Accepted. Motion carried.

Casual Vacancies remain open for general committee and welcome anyone to join.

**7. NEWLEY ELECTED PRESIDENTS WELCOME – John Nikolic**

As demonstrated in the financial report for FY 22/23, the Chamber has had a successful year.

Throughout 2023, the Chamber has worked hard to strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, including Griffith City Council, Regional Development Australia – Riverina, the Federal Member for Farrer and the State Member for Murray. The Chamber has also provided more opportunities to connect with members, and for members to connect, including by:

- instituting monthly member meetings;
- rebooting the Griffith Business Chamber Awards, being the most successful to date;
- implementing the Social Business Network, now rebranded as Griffith Connect, in conjunction with Regional Development Australia.

As a result, membership has increased over 2023.

The Chamber's mode of advocacy has changed - as far as possible we have striven to take a balanced approach to key policy issues, such as the Council's proposed special rate variation. This has enabled the Chamber to begin to build influence with decision makers. For example, although Council did not decrease

its proposed special rate variation as lobbied for by the Chamber, it did agree to implementing cost cutting and revenue raising measures that the Chamber had recommended. We may provide opportunities to lobby Council to not implement the full rate variation, if Council's budgetary position improves as a result of the cost cutting and revenue raising measures.

The Chamber's key policy priorities for 2023 have been the housing and worker shortage, and now water buy-backs.

In relation to the worker shortage, the Chamber has worked closely with Regional Development Australia to have a Designated Area Migration Agreement (**DAMA**) approved for Griffith. However, recent indications from the Government indicates that enthusiasm for DAMAs has cooled – in the Government's Migration Strategy (December 2023) it is stated that '*the Government will conduct an evaluation of regional migration settings, including... DAMAs*'. Other workforce initiatives of the Chamber have included the Employment Expo, now in its second year and again a success.

In relation to housing, the Chamber is pleased at the inauguration of the Griffith Worker and Housing Shortage Taskforce, being a joint venture of Council and the Chamber, with representatives from the Federal Member for Farrer and State Member for Murray. The Taskforce will prepare a report over the next nine months, with the aim of identifying and realising opportunities to increase housing in Griffith, including by accessing government funding and incentivising more private development.

With the passage of the *Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023* (Cth), Griffith now faces the threat of water buy-backs over the next two years. Chamber has been very vocal within the community and the media about the damaging impacts of water buy-backs on businesses and business confidence, which is currently at historic lows (similar to that seen during the pandemic during lockdowns). Over the next two years, in order to reduce the risk of buybacks occurring within the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, it will be critical for the Chamber to advocate:

- For State and Federal governments to implement sustainability projects, instead of water buy-backs; and
- In favour of established irrigation areas, such as the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (with outstanding levels of accountability, efficiency and sustainability) which should be excluded from buybacks.

In 2024, our priorities will remain the worker and housing shortage, and water advocacy. Chamber will need to rely on its reserves to promote its key policies.

With the election of the new executive committee, the Chamber is experiencing continuity and renewal, with six continuing members including a new Vice President, Danny Roller, and two new general members of the executive committee, being Dean Owen (previously a member of the executive committee) and Manjit Singh Lally, also a Councillor. It's good to see the executive expand its influence and industrial coverage. It's also reassuring to know that while the Chamber is capable of disagreement and robust debate, we are all focussed on the same goal: growing Griffith.

## **8. CLOSE**

There being no further business, meeting closed 6.33pm

Minute Secretary | Amanda Quarisa