

# Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Community Meeting Minutes

1pm on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Wurdi Youang

700-850 Little River-Ripley Rd, Little River



## Present:

James McKinnon, Bronwyn Stuart, Doreen Griffiths, Ammie Howell, Darren Martini, Mark Thompson, Nicole Kirby, Cass Surman, Eileen Woodford, Amber Thorne, Katie Woodford, Vicki Figg, J. Megee, Mia Reilly-Shea, Finn Reilly-Shea, Glenn Shea, Kylie Clarke, Craig Edwards, Hayley Couzens, Eb Hickey, Renee Owen, David Tournier, Andrea Tournier, Beth Davis, Jill McKinnon, Christine Couzens, Joseph Bangura, Sandra Brogden, May Owen, Phil Knox, Jo Chester, Renee Layton, Todd Fry, Richard Fry, Phillip King, Nellie Flagg, Jan McGilvray, Colleen Howell, Piper Knox, Kylie Evans-Knox, Phil Knox, Patrick Tanner, Joleen Ryan, Jessica Brody, Gina Chapman, Judith Dalton-Walsh, Alley Taylor, Linda Tanner, Nadia Albert, Kerry Edwards, Kay Edwards, Mackenzie Chapman, Shannon Secombe, Steve Verde, Simon Flagg, Megan Frazer

**Minute taker:** Megan Frazer

### 1. Welcome by Chairperson

Wendy Brabham stood down as Acting Chair at the AGM earlier in the day but still chaired this Community meeting.

### 2. Respect Protocol – one minute's silence

The Respect Protocol was followed at the morning's AGM.

### 3. Apologies

Rose De Jong, Layla Boseley, Emma Brown, Merrin Kelly, Jordyn Flagg, Kaitlyn Flagg, Mick Ryan, David Flagg, Fiona Ryan, Rhys Jeffs, Micael Thorne, Daniel Walters, Jackie Brown, Georgina Brown, Tahlia Dempsey, Megan Howell, Belinda Foley, Cohen Apma Hayes, Corey Baulch, Greg Cooper, Dale Owen, Laurie Ownen, Denise Charles, Jasmine Knox, Naomi Surtees, Jannalli Lilburne, Sharelle McGirk, Kerrie Black

### 4. Previous Minutes

#### a) Business arising from previous minutes

Nil

#### b) Acceptance of 17th October 2022

Wathaurong Acting Chairperson Wendy Brabham gave Members time to review the minutes and invited questions or comments, of which there were none.

**Motion:** Wathaurong Members accept the Community Meeting minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**Moved:** Joylene Walsh **Seconded:** Richard Fry

**Motion Carried**

## 5. Finance Report

The Finance Report was presented by Chief Financial Officer Yohan Kumaran and CEO Simon Flagg, noting:

- Based on current forecasts, this year will provide \$18 million in revenue, which is largely government funding in particular for Family Services, but also Not For Profit organisations
- The 2022-2023 financial year's financials may impact the Commonwealth government's \$15.6 million investment in the Morgan St redevelopment as the stages of payment is unknown
- GP funding is falling short of needs and not in keeping with inflation
- Congratulations to the mental health team have been successful in securing ongoing funding
- Back of house administration funding is still not being adequately provided for by funding bodies, not are cultural activities
- Our advocacy to government includes funding positive initiatives, not just negative-based ones
- \$1 million has been secured as a one-off for the Community Engagement team
- Yohan asked Members what they would like him to present at these meetings and one suggestion was Men's Groups funding.

**Motion:** Wathaurong Members accept the Finance Report.

**Moved:** Ebony Hickey      **Seconded:** Colleen Howell

**Motion Carried**

## 6. Presentations

### Voice to Parliament Discussion

A Voice to Parliament information session and discussion was held by Wendy Brabham (member of the national Referendum Engagement Group), Jordan Edwards (Treaty Assembly Member for the South West region) and Christine Couzens (state Member for Geelong). Each panellist gave personal accounts for why they wanted the Voice or what additional information they sought.

Comments from the panel included that the Voice would:

- Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the Constitution
- Fill the void left after ATSIC was disbanded
- Create a national platform for truth and justice
- Give us a seat at the table, which even if only advisory, is better than no seat

Concerns from the panel and Community included:

- Would the Voice impact on Sovereignty and Treaty
- The broader public are again deciding on the fate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- The timeline is too quick for adequate questioning, education and advocacy
- The unknown details might be undesirable, e.g. more government appointments
- There are no resources, e.g. fact sheets

All panellists stressed that this is an opportunity for people to educate themselves and vote how they see fit. Christine invited Community to attend a Wathaurong session with local federal MP and Deputy PM Richard Marles on 10 March 2023

### LAECG Geelong Discussion

Aunty May Owen spoke as Chairperson of the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG), announcing her retirement from the role in June and inviting other people to get involved as education is everyone's business. Aunty May highlighted the group's recent achievements such as having 300 Aboriginal students attend the Aspirations Day with its Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workshops. CEO Simon Flagg and others congratulated Aunty May for her commitment over the years to education and local children.

### Rulebook Refresh Progress Update

CEO Simon Flagg presented the progress of Wathaurong's Rulebook Refresh project. Phase 1 of the refresh covers four key areas that need to be pre-approved by Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) who oversee the governance of Co-operatives. They are:

- Item 5 – Objectives of the Co-operative
- Item 7 – Active Membership Provisions
- Item 8 – Qualifications required for Membership
- Appendix 1 – Boundary of Co-operative

Phase 1 was then opened for discussion, which included:

- Including Werribee in the boundary area for the Co-op, where Simon asked if Members were happy with this change and multiple voices said Yes, with no audible Noes.
- The original boundary was confusing but perhaps it represented songlines or funding
- Consideration of including a history into the new Rulebook

**Motion:** Wathaurong Members endorse the Rulebook items presented here today that require pre-approval for Consumer Affairs Victoria.

**Moved:** Jordan Edwards

**Seconded:** Doreen Griffiths

**Motion Carried**

### Commitment to Action Framework

CEO Simon Flagg presented the Commitment to Action Framework to Members.

### Infrastructure Update

CEO Simon Flagg presented the infrastructure update:

- **Morgan Street Redevelopment**  
The Rebuild has been in planning for 8-9 months and we are still working with City of Greater Geelong to secure the vacant land at Morgan St. Thirty percent of the funding has been secured and currently working with the state government for additional, with philanthropic donors also to be sought. The project has been informed by extensive Community consultation that includes open space, inside/outside GP rooms, and other features. The aim is to have it ready for the Commonwealth Games.
- **Forster Street Redevelopment**  
The new Youth Hub is expected to be finished by the end of the year and funding is being sought to try to provide out of hours access as well as business hours. It was developed with youth consultation. It will provide a safe space for youth that will include celebratory activities such as Year 12 graduation celebrations.

## **7. Other General Business**

CEO Simon Flagg presented the following points:

- Wathaurong website: the first stage of a newly designed website has been launched, still to come is online shop, a members section and more
- The new 22 seater bus funded by Viva Energy and the Department of Education should be delivered by this time next year, and will be available for Community excursions and events
- The fully funded RV mobile health clinic is in development in the hope of outreach within the region
- Koori night markets are coming back
- Lily Edwards introduced herself and acknowledged the 40 year partnership between Wathaurong and the Belmont Lions Club, while inviting Community to register for free
- At the 1 year anniversary of the tragic passing of Abe Knox, a foundation in his honour will be launching soon

## **8. Meeting Closed**

Wendy Brabham thanked Simon for his hard work throughout the year and congratulated the newly elected Board members.

Meeting closed 3:15pm