



GLADSTONE
REGIONAL COUNCIL

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CIVIC CENTRE
101 GOONDOON STREET, GLADSTONE**

On Tuesday 4 March 2025

Commencing at 9.00am

**Leisa Dowling
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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Elected Members

Councillor - Mayor M Burnett
Councillor G Churchill
Councillor K Goodluck
Councillor K Davis
Councillor M Wagner
Councillor M Holzheimer
Councillor N Muszkat
Councillor S McClintock
Councillor L Patrick

Officers

L Dowling (Chief Executive Officer)
R Millett (Executive Secretary)
T Whalley (Manager Governance and Risk)
M Holmes (General Manager Finance Governance and Risk)
C Quinn (General Manager People and Strategy)
K Lee (General Manager Community and Lifestyle)
M Francis (General Manager Assets and Environment)
K Marxsen (Manager Strategy and Improvement)

G/0.3.2. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

G/0.3.3. MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE

Nil

G/0.3.4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mayor Burnett

Mayor Matt Burnett declared a declarable conflict of interest in Agenda Item G/4.3. 2025 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY - MOTIONS AND ATTENDANCE, relating to attendance at the conference, as he is the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

Mayor Burnett advised that although he has a declarable conflict of interest, he believes it would be in the public interest for him to participate in the decision.

GM/25/5403 Council Resolution:

Moved Cr Goodluck
Seconded Cr Churchill

That notwithstanding Mayor Burnett's declarable conflict of interest, it is in the public interest for Mayor Burnett to remain in the room and participated in the decision without restriction.

CARRIED

G/1. MAYORAL STATEMENT OF CURRENT ISSUES

I'd like to congratulate the team at the Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce and all the volunteers organising the Agnes Blues Roots and Rock Festival, which was another resounding success and thank you to the Deputy Mayor, Natalia Muszkat, for being there to open the event on the Friday night and for Councillors for attending across the weekend. Another successful event.

Parks Week is well underway in the Gladstone Region and we have had a number of events happening already and upcoming we have the Moonlight Movies in Miriam Vale with the screening of 'Rio' at Alf Larsen Park on Friday 7 March 2025 at 7pm. We have Pickle Ball in the Park at Anzac Park, Gladstone on Saturday 8 March 2025 from 8am to 10am. There is Mum's on the Move at Millennium Esplanade, Tannum Sands on Saturday 8 March 2025 at 9am and Yoga in the Park at the Air Sea Rescue Park, Seventeen Seventy on Sunday 9 March 2025 commencing 8am. I'd like to acknowledge and thank our Parks Program Delivery crews for the work they do in managing and maintaining our extensive network of parks and recreational areas across the Gladstone Region, they do an amazing job.

Community Forums are continuing and the next Community Forum is in Gladstone on Thursday 13 March 2025 at the Central Queensland University. And make sure you get your tickets to the community musical, Mamma Mia which is on from Thursday 6 March 2025 to Sunday 16 March 2025. There are still some tickets available so jump on to the Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre (GECC) website to get your tickets.

It is Councillor Kahn Goodluck's final Council meeting today and we say thank you Kahn and we will have more to say just before we close the meeting.

G/2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

G/2.1. CONFIRMATION OF GENERAL MEETING MINUTES FOR 18 FEBRUARY 2025

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Prepared By: Executive Secretary

Council Meeting Date: 4 March 2025

File Ref: CM7.2

Purpose:

Confirmation of the minutes of the General Meeting held on 18 February 2025.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the minutes of the General Meeting of Council held on 18 February 2025 be confirmed.

GM/25/5404 Council Resolution:

Moved Cr Davis

Seconded Cr Patrick

That the Officer's Recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

G/3. DEPUTATIONS

Nil

G/4. OFFICERS' REPORTS

G/4.1. REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY POLICY AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY POLICY

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Prepared By: Governance Business Partner, Acting

Council Meeting Date: 4 March 2025

File Ref: CM28.2

Purpose:

To propose the repeal of the Fire Safety Policy and the Electrical Safety Policy.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council repeal P-2017-31 Fire Safety and P-2017-32 Electrical Safety Policy.

GM/25/5405 Council Resolution:

Moved Cr Holzheimer
Seconded Cr McClintock

That the Officer's Recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

G/4.2. POLICIES RELATING TO STREET LIGHTS

Responsible Officer: General Manager Finance Governance and Risk

Prepared By: Governance Business Partner

Council Meeting Date: 4 March 2025

File Ref: CM28.2

Purpose:

To propose the repeal of the Rural Residential Street Lighting Policy and the Solar Street Lights Policy.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Repeal P-2014/32 Rural Residential Street Lighting Policy; and
2. Repeal P-2014/45 Solar Street Lights Policy.

GM/25/5406 Council Resolution:

Moved Cr McClintock

Seconded Cr Churchill

That the Officer's Recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

G/4.3. 2025 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY- MOTIONS AND ATTENDANCE

Responsible Officer: General Manager People and Strategy

Prepared By: Manager Strategy and Improvement

Council Meeting Date: 4 March 2025

File Ref: CM7.2 / GR3.1

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the opportunity to consider motions to the 2025 Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) annual National General Assembly (NGA) and to nominate Councillors to attend the event.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Submit the following conference motions to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) for consideration:
 - a. This National General Assembly urgently calls on the Australian Government to address the risks of battery disposal.
 - b. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to create dedicated funding programs (full funding or 80:20) to support local governments to upgrade critical electrical infrastructure to ensure compatibility with renewable energy and carbon neutral technologies so renewable energy and emission reduction targets can be achieved.
2. Appoint and authorise the following councillors to attend the National General Assembly, 24–27 June 2025 in Canberra; _____, _____.

GM/25/5407 Council Resolution:

Moved Cr Davis

Seconded Cr McClintock

That Council:

1. Submit the following conference motions to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) for consideration:
 - a. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to address the risks of battery disposal.
 - b. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to create dedicated funding programs (full funding or 80:20) to support local governments to upgrade critical electrical infrastructure to ensure compatibility with renewable energy and carbon neutral technologies so renewable energy and emission reduction targets can be achieved.
2. Appoint and authorise the following councillors to attend the National General Assembly, 24–27 June 2025 in Canberra; Cr Holzheimer and Cr Patrick.

CARRIED

G/5. COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor Leanne Patrick stated the following:

On behalf of Councillor Mellissa Holzheimer and myself, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those residents who attended the recent Community Forum at Lowmead. We had really engaging and respectful discussions with community members from various areas of the southern region, and we truly appreciate the valuable feedback we received. Their insights are instrumental in helping us work towards better outcomes for our community, and we will continue to advocate for improvements where possible.

For more information on upcoming forums and to stay connected, please visit Council's webpage. We look forward to seeing you at our next Community Forum on Thursday 13 March 2025, from 5.00pm to 7.00pm at CQ University Gladstone Campus, Leo Zussino Building, Bryan Jordan Drive, Callemondah.

Last week, along with some of my fellow councillors, I had the privilege of attending the AICD Company Directors Course. For me, it was a truly positive and enriching learning experience that has significantly broadened my understanding of corporate governance, leadership and the essential responsibilities of a director. The course provided valuable, practical insights into establishing effective governance frameworks, managing financial oversight and the importance of strategic leadership and risk management.

Additionally, the emphasis on ethical decision-making was particularly impactful, resonating deeply with my role as a Councillor.

I have continued to build on my skill set as a Councillor, and I now feel even more confident and capable in making thoughtful, strategic decisions that prioritise the best interests of our community. This experience has further enhanced my ability to contribute to local government, with a focus on transparency, accountability and creating lasting impact. It has not only strengthened my leadership skills but has also deepened my commitment to serving our community with integrity, thoughtfulness, and a renewed dedication to continuous growth and improvement.

Cr Holzheimer extended on Cr Patrick's comments regarding the Community Forums and acknowledged and thanked the efforts of Council's officers and management team, as Councillors wouldn't be able to show up in the community in that manner without the support of the officers.

Councillor Kahn Goodluck stated the following:

I'd like to paint a picture: it's the year 2051, due to indecisive and ineffective policy certainty around energy over the last 3 decades, power prices have surged. Rio Tinto have just announced they're closing their Gladstone operations due to being uncompetitive in the global market demand for cleaner, greener products. In a region with approximately 21,000 employees, approximately 8,000 jobs, are forecast to be lost over the coming months. The cascading impact of further industry closures is unknown, but every day there are more announcements for closing small businesses. The property market has collapsed as people look to sell their homes and leave and seek opportunities elsewhere. Many are trapped, owing mortgages much more than their homes are now worth, a fate former generations of Gladstone-ites remember well. There is palpable anger in the community as crime rates soar, businesses close, people lose their jobs, and the community look for leadership in a time of despair. The local council is dealing with drastic budget restraints as a high percentage of people are unable to pay their rates. Drastic measures have been taken to cut services leaving the region in spiralling decline. The Gladstone Region, a once powerful industrial warhorse of the Australian economy, has failed to adapt to the changing global economic demands, and now joins a list of numerous other localities across the ages that dream of better times now lost.

This is not the vision I have for our future, but it is a possible reality. The decisions we make today will determine whether this hypothetical becomes a sad reality for our people.

While politicians at high levels of government will play politics and political point score, the burden of truth, facts and fearless conversations will fall to you who sit around this table. As the level of government closest to the people and most trusted, you are the gatekeepers of our community's future. It will fall to you to have the keenest interest and the greatest understanding of what is necessary for the Gladstone Region's success. To have the toughest conversations with those who make decisions that impact us, and also those who call our region home. And be fearless in your advocacy for the right decisions to be made of state and federal governments.

In a time where there is no shortage of leaders who choose to drive division, greed and selfishness, you can choose to be a leader that inspires compassion, empathy, and a positive vision for our future. You can choose to be a leader that listens to facts, proven science and economics, and be fearless in your approach. There are so many leaders who take the path of popularism today. This is not fearless or courageous, it is just more of the same and no one will remember their names. Great leaders do not bow to public opinion. Great leaders forge public opinion. They do this by articulating a positive vision of a future that people want to be a part of, by inspiring people to care for one another, and by storytelling that resonates with the hearts and minds of those in our community. And this will be your task, and I want you to know that I believe in you.

I was elected at 27 years of age, a boilermaker with a fiery passion for representing ordinary working people and a keen, but a little bizarre, interest in public policy. In 2016, I just scraped into the last position as the eighth elected councillor. A little-known fact, but I set myself one goal, and that was to be Deputy Mayor at the next election. Knowing the only thing I could do to influence that outcome was to be the hardest working councillor for 4 years and hope that our community would reward my efforts at the ballot box, I set about working hard. It was a great honour to have topped the poll in 2020 and serve as Deputy Mayor. And I haven't checked the electoral history books, but I suspect I may have been the first person to go from the lowest polling position to the highest polling position in one single election cycle. Perhaps I'll be the last, or perhaps there might be more in the future, Councillor Simon McClintock.

12 months later, my children's mother and I decided to amicably separate. And I will never forget the day we sat and explained that to our young children. The anger and sadness in my kids' eyes, my eldest daughter begging me not to go, promising me, "I'll promise I'll be good daddy", and telling me that I could sleep in her bed. The words "please don't go daddy" as she locked her arms around me tighter than I've ever felt before. Those words will forever haunt me. And I was not equipped with the words to explain to an 8-year-old that it was not her fault, and it was all I could do just to hold her and tell her it would be all okay. And while I acknowledged the many nuances, complex nuances, in the breakdown of a relationship, the irony was not lost on me, that for all the glory and triumph in my hard work and success, I had paid a heavy price and sacrificed the very thing that I thought I was fighting for.

Fast forward to today, and I have met the most amazing woman who I'm honoured to call my finance, Danielle, after a rather epic world first proposal at an LGAQ conference here in Gladstone, a woman who fills my heart and soul with such love and joy, and I can't wait to start the rest of my life with her. The mother of my children, also happily engaged to a bloke who is a wonderful guy and great to my kids. And my kids now have 2 loving homes and a happy life. I am many things and have many flaws, but I'm determined with absolute resolve not to make the same mistakes of the past. I'm blessed to have learnt many valuable lessons at an early stage in life, and I'm smart enough to take heed of them.

I've been privileged to represent our community in many capacities, on the national news, national tv, on the floor of state and national conferences, in Senate and select committee hearings of the federal government, in the halls of parliament, at local Anzac Day events and local community events all across our region. I can honestly say I have always aimed to seize every opportunity gifted to me, to speak in front of a group of people, to try and inspire just 1 person. Just 1 person I always thought, if I can inspire just 1 person in this crowd, then I have made this moment in time worthwhile. And there is no doubt in my mind that there are moments I have failed in that endeavour, but I'd like to think there is at least a few where I succeeded. And I encourage you all to do the same. No one remembers boring politician speeches that are written by someone else and read word for word with no meaning or feeling. Aim to inspire just 1 person.

I recall when I first ran for Council, there was no shortage of people who told me I would never make it. One gentleman proclaimed, I remember, that I needed to work for at least 30 more years before I could run for Council. The countless number of times I'd heard that I'd never run a business, so what would I know. The truth is, when I first came to this place in this role, I felt very much like an imposter, like I wasn't supposed to be here. I didn't care though, as you could probably tell.

As I reflect on my time over the last 9 years and think about my regrets and my legacy, I do have 1 big regret. The 1 regret I have is that I never truly learned who actually loved Hannah, and I owe them a beer because the amount of publicity I got out of that 1 thing, and I offered them a free meal too, and they never came to take it.

But the truth is, I have zero regrets. As for what I hope my legacy might be, it's not in projects I've supported or ribbons I've stood next to the Mayor while he's cut, but it's in the many people I've helped over 9 years. Some with small insignificant things in the grand scheme of things, but they were big things to them. It's in the amazing people I've met and conversed with and heard their stories. It's in the many people who have reached out to me over recent weeks to say thank you, to send a message, called my phone and some who even embraced me in their arms with a hug on the street, which is very much appreciated. It's through those people I am entirely satiated with my time here in this place. It is in the hope that I've shown that you can be a young person with a passion, you can be a tradesman or a nurse or a teacher or a labourer or any other ordinary normal person and you can represent our community with integrity, honour and competency. Because being a councillor and representing your community is not about business, it's not about degrees, it's not about experience, it's not about how much money you have, or how long you've lived in a place you've chosen to call your home. It's about people, it's about relating to people, listening to people, bringing people on a journey, fighting for people and empathising with people. It's all about people. And if I can, you can.

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I'd like to thank all of my friends and family who've supported me over the years. My mum and dad and my brothers, my sister, all of the people have taken the time out of their day to help me on polling booths and sign waving and door knocking, for many of my family, that was a first time experience, one that they did not enjoy, so thank you to all of you who helped me many many times. The people who backed me in rooms I wasn't in to back myself.

I want to say thank you to all my colleagues past and present, all of you played a part in shaping me into the man I am today. In particular, I want to say thank you to Matt, you have been a great boss, not perfect but pretty good, but you supported me from day one to be my own leader, to pursue my ideas and dreams and more importantly than any of that, a great mate, so thank you. I also want to thank Shelly, there are few people who have done more for me in my time here than you have Shelly, so thank you very much.

I want to thank my beautiful fiancé, who supported me for the last 3 years who's tolerated the mind-numbing abuse on social media and the endless conversations with strangers on the street and at community events and in the shops, I love you. I want to thank my kids for being patient and so well behaved at all the late-night meetings and weekend events and with all the babysitting. And I want to thank Kate, the mother of my children, who also supported me for many years and is an amazing mum to our kids.

And I'd like to thank every staff member of the Gladstone Regional Council. All of you, whether I've worked with you closely or whether we've only bumped into each other every now and then, keep doing great things and ignore the haters. You guys deserve to be proud of the work you do every single day and know that there are so many people out there who appreciate you.

And finally, Mr Mayor, a quote that I read, and I've had it on my Facebook page since the first day I started in this place, in the words of Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said; they will forget what you did; but they will never forget how you made them feel". Thank you very much.

Mayor Burnett stated the following in acknowledgement of Cr Goodluck:

You came here as a Councillor, you're right, barely scraped in, I remember watching the votes. A Councillor who thought he knew it all, to the Deputy Mayor and a Councillor who always had my back, who always put the best interest of the community to heart every single time and always was on open discussion to answer the questions I was too busy to. Thank you, Kahn.

I know you said it's not about the infrastructure and the ribbons and all the rest of it, but in your time you have supported millions of dollars' worth of investment in our community. Projects like Lions Park in Gladstone, which was inspirational at the time and still is a great place for families to go, and many other projects including the Boyne Tannum Aquatic Recreation Centre, which we have a photo of the vacant block of land we'll give you later, and then one day you'll be able to look back on that and see the facility that is going to be there for our community, because you pushed it so hard to make sure it happened and it will happen because of your advocacy.

I also remember when you welcomed me into the harbour when I crossed the finish line for the 75h Brisbane to Gladstone yacht race, it was pretty special. As the Mayor, that's something I take very seriously, that race is so important to our history and our community and I wanted you to see firsthand, to be there to welcome the yachts as they come in, because it's such an important event and it was really great, I can tell you, after spending 2 days on a yacht, just to see the carton of beer and the Acting Mayor at the time, or the Deputy Mayor at the time, welcoming to the harbour, it was very special.

I'll certainly, along with many of the councils in Queensland and in Australia, miss your debates on the floor of conference, whether it's the National General Assembly or the Local Government Association Queensland. There's only 1 time you lost a debate on the motion floor and that was when you tried to debate me, which will always go down in history of LGAQ as the only time a Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the same Council voted against each other.

You talked about when you first started, about the transition our community is going through and realistically, yourself and Councillor Natalia Muszkat really lead that way. Chris Trevor, if he's watching online won't mind me saying, we're big fans of the coal industry and we still are. But you, through the way you articulate and the way you put it before, makes us realise that as much as Chris and I have been in this community all our lives, and for many generations, if we want to see our community grow and develop and expand and everything else we have aspirations for it, we need to be part of this transition road map journey. Which is what we've done, we've signed up and council's around the nation are looking at us as leading the way. And we will continue to transition, it will happen, so that the likes of the Rio Tinto's of the world will be able to get green energy and produce green aluminium and green alumina. And Cement Australia will be able to do the same, and Orica will be able to do the same and industries, like Alpha HPA and for Acciona and so many more will continue to invest in our community because of the foresight and the vision that yourself and the Deputy Mayor had at the time. It was probably one of the best decisions we've ever made as a council and I've been here 25 years and I know you've been here for 9 but that still goes down to one of the smartest things we've done because we've set our community up for great things.

You've said you aim to inspire 1 person, well I know that you've inspired many many people, not just in this chamber, not just in Gladstone, but right around the country. I remember some of your debates on the conference floor of the National General Assembly and I'm talking about inspiring Mayors and Councillors right across Australia on some of the things you've had to say and won those debates on. I want to say thanks mate, you've been a great mate to me too and all the best.

A video of a photo montage of Cr Goodluck's time at Council was presented.

G/6. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

G/7. NOTICE OF MOTION

Nil

G/8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil

There being no further business the Mayor formally closed the meeting.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.40am.