



SNOWY MONARO
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes

Audit Risk And Improvement Committee Meeting

12 September 2022

**AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN COOMA HEAD OFFICE, 81 COMMISSIONER STREET, COOMA NSW 2630 AND
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

ON MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

MINUTES

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**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN COOMA HEAD OFFICE, 81 COMMISSIONER STREET, COOMA NSW 2630 AND
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**ON MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2022
COMMENCING AT 10.05AM**

PRESENT:

Voting Attendees: Michael Quirk, Independent Member (Chair)
Miles Pearson, Independent Member
John Barbeler, Independent Member
Andrew Cox, Independent Member
Councillor Lynda Summers, Council Member

Non-Voting Attendees: Peter Bascomb, Chief Executive Officer

Guests: David Rawlings, Chief Strategy Officer
Councillor Tricia Hopkins, Council Member (Alternate)
Tracy Sligar, Chief Financial Officer
Patrick Dunn, Manager Finance
Stephanie Sellar-Peam, Manager Workforce Strategy
Paul Edwards, Manager Workforce Operations
Stephen Prowse, Director National Audits Group
Craig Richardson, National Audits Group
Sandra McEwan, Executive Assistant (Strategy) (Secretariat)

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.05AM with Acknowledgement of Country and showing respect to the elders past, present and emerging of the lands upon which the meeting took place.

2. APOLOGIES

Nil.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil.

Presentations 6.1 and 6.2 were moved to this section of the meeting.

Attendance of National Audits Group

Stephen Prowse, Director and Craig Richardson joined the meeting at 10.05am.

6.1 NATIONAL AUDITS GROUP - CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Stephen Prowse and Craig Richardson:

- Both Stephen and Craig were involved in the internal audit. Started in May 2022 onsite. Met with a number of staff that deal with contract management. Staff were very cooperative and transparent.
- Four main jobs – Bobeyan Road, Weeds, Highdale Park and Adaminaby Sewer Treatment Plant.
- No centralised contract management framework in place which puts Council and its reputation at risk. Conflict of interest not consistently applied. Best outcome, lessons considered and taken into account for awarding future contracts.
- Contract Register works effectively.
- Recommendation – council responses well considered and addressing high level risks.

Comments from Committee Members:

- Efficiency in establishing a tender panel has risks in itself. Are models referred to?
 - Stephen Prowse - will take this on notice and discuss with other team members. Come back to the Committee with ideas from other councils.
- Do local suppliers have a fair go.
 - Stephen Prowse – frustrating for local suppliers, only to be consistently not successful. Need for a panel of approved suppliers.
- Management accepted the risks but keen to see a set of risks based evidence.
- GIPA register is concerning.
- Good people in place in the organisation but no control system.
- Maturity assessment would add value to the organisation.
- Policy and management framework to come to ARIC for observation.
- Big commitment in terms of timeframes. Are they achievable?
 - David Rawlings – getting a procurement resource in. Have pushed out to a later timeframe.
- Are probity plans in place?
 - Peter Bascomb – only one for the implementation of the corporate information system.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC27/22

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the information in the presentation on the National Audits Group – Internal Audit on Contract Management.

Moved Mr Pearson

Seconded Mr Cox

CARRIED

Stephen Prowse and Craig Richardson left the meeting at 10.30am.

Attendance of Chief Financial Officer and Manager Finance

Tracy Sligar, Chief Financial Officer and Patrick Dunn, Manager Finance joined the meeting at 10.30am.

6.2 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Tracy Sligar introduced herself and Patrick Dunn. They commenced at Council at the end of June 2022.

- Audit scheduled for next week, working on Financial Statements.
- Auditors on Friday - projection of 4.2m deficit.
- Setting up processes and controls including new systems, reconciling, talking to staff and upskilling the finance team.
- Going forward with monthly review statements and financial management reviews. Improving information and the way we report our actual financials to council.
- Monthly Budget Review meetings with Managers. Using a business partnering model for finance support.

Comments from Committee Members:

- Finance audits are still outstanding?
 - Tracy Sligar – work in progress, closing out recommendations. Have not received the final audit letter yet. The process was a vast improvement and the audit was more efficient. Everything passed on in a timely manner.
- Unrestricted cash – nil in previous years. Positive or nil this year?
 - Tracy Sligar – aiming for positive unrestricted cash.
- Revaluations.
 - Tracy Sligar – Confirmation it will be done early in the cycle for this financial year.
- Culture change with the managers.
 - Tracy Sligar – Controls being identified and implemented.
- All the finance staffing in place that you need?
 - Tracy Sligar – interviewing for one more member for a full complement in the finance team. The audit will take 4 weeks up to late October in time to lodge 31 October.
 - Patrick Dunn – Financial Statements will be presented on 19 October for ARIC review and 20 October for councillors to sign.
- How is the IT system in Civica working to bring the asset register together. Any issues?
 - Tracy Sligar – issues in reporting from BIS. Update to audit on a regular basis. Not sufficient knowledge on how to use the BIS system from managers. Issues in Civica must get resolved. Having to double check figures takes us longer. Have to work with managers and Civica.
 - Patrick Dunn – actual balance out. Different modules were not talking to each other. Need to build confidence with the audit. We don't want to extend the deadline.
- ARIC requested Finance to take a systematic risk assessment. Landfill remediation – is this a significant contingent liability?
 - Tracy Sligar – provision recognised last financial year. No contingent liability. EPA adjustment in the 21/22 FY.
- Agree with the process of keeping the Audit Office happy. RFS?
 - Peter Bascomb – meeting with LGNSW, Treasurer and Minister for Emergency Services. The State Government level is pushing ahead insisting on RFS being included in the Financial Statements. Council has resolved twice not to record the RFS assets in the Financial Statements.
- Pleased to see Tracy Sligar and Patrick Dunn in the finance team.

Tracy Sligar and Patrick Dunn left the meeting at 10.58am.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 20 JUNE 2022

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC28/22
<p>THAT the minutes of the Audit Risk And Improvement Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.</p>	
Moved Mr Pearson	Seconded Mr Quirk
CARRIED	

RECOMMENDATION
<p>THAT the minutes of the Audit Risk And Improvement Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, pending the following amendments:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Page 7 Item 6.3 Building Security</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Replace Comments from Committee Members (2nd dot point) with:</p> <p>Audit recommendations hang around for 3-5 years – onus on management to do something and address these risks.</p>

5. BUSINESS ARISING

5.1 AUDIT RECOMMENDATION UPDATES

Record No: 122/545

<p>Comments from Committee Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in the way report is presented – thank you to David Rawlings. • Old recommendations not updated. • Suspicious vendor transactions, waste issues and recruitment of vacant roles are a problem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peter Bascomb advised that we were unable to recruit two positions - Risk Officer and Procurement Officer. • Aim to make this report as short as possible. Complete or permit alternative actions - movement to cleaning this up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ David Rawlings – managers have commented updates on some things. Workforce Management do not have enough resources. Will continue to do monthly reports. Work in progress. • Request for updated comments on what is being done, difficulties, realistic dates and is the issue still relevant for the next meeting. Responsible managers to come to the meeting to explain.
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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC29/22
<p>That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information in the ARIC Audit Recommendation updates report.</p>	
Moved Mr Quirk	Seconded Mr Pearson
CARRIED	

5.2 ARIC RESOLUTION UPDATES

Record No: I22/544

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC30/22
That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information in the ARIC Resolution Updates report.	
Moved Mr Cox	Seconded Mr Barbeler
	CARRIED

5.3 BUSINESS ARISING

Record No: I22/663

Comments from Committee Members:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Happy to get this report. It allows follow up on actions – support it being retained.• ARIC has to be more succinct about what we want. The third report is good to have with all actions from the discussions captured in the recommendations.	
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC31/22
That where ARIC require actions to be taken that these are captured in the recommendations.	
Moved Mr Quirk	Seconded Mr Cox
	CARRIED

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1 and 6.2 were moved to another section of the meeting.

7. SPECIAL AGENDA ITEMS

Nil.

8. REPORTS

8.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Record No: I22/547

Peter Bascomb:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter from Minister of Police and Minister of Emergency Services quoting Government legislation Section 1192 Red Fleet Act - Red Fleet Assets are Council's and should be captured in the Financial Statements. This is a conflict with Accounting Standards.• Internal loan for the Jindabyne Library – approval from the Minister. Approach developer contribution funds from there. Cash reserves towards some projects. We will submit a modified

request for a loan, reduced from the original one. Internal loans are better than commercial loans and community perception is better.

- Ongoing reviews of council including two assessments from OLG:
 - Monitors Financial Statements of all councils.
 - Working capital - evidence that staff and councillors were aware of the financial situation. Councillors will have to make hard decisions to rectify the position. We will be receiving a draft interim letter of their observations later this week.
- Council can't survive without an SRV. Exposed to a risk with tight timeframes. Deadline date for the Financial Sustainability Review (FSR) is the end of October 2022. This report needs to be considered at the November 2022 council meeting. Expression of Interest for an SRV due in November 2022.
- Council has appointed AEC to undertake the FSR. OLG agreed to AEC seeing the interim letter. AEC group have commenced work and will be onsite this week. Michael Quirk is on the FSR project advisory committee and was also involved in the selection of AEC.
- In the process of seeking new ARIC members – EOI advertisement gone out.
- Undertaking service reviews. Expectation of service and efficiencies. Implementation will touch everyone in the organisation. Major change management exercise. FieldForce4 will undertake this. External source to assist us over a two year period. Organisational redesign Stage 1 – streamline the management team. Made significant change to the pre-merger management structure. Stage 2 – service reviews delayed due to Covid. Interesting challenge.
 - Andrew Cox asked about the scope of work and if a project manager is in place?
 - Peter Bascomb - The role will need comprehensive Civica skills to manage the project. Someone who has done this before. We have a project management framework that has not been followed in the past. Bigger change management aspect needs to be captured better.
- Issue with recruitment and retention of staff. Managers are taking risks with recruitment. Trouble with new staff getting through their probation period. Positions have been advertised multiple times.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC32/22

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information provided by the Chief Executive Officer.

Moved Mr Cox

Seconded Mr Pearson

CARRIED

Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting adjourned for a break at 11.50am.

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting resumed at 12.05am.

8.2 CONSIDERATION OF JOINT ARIC

Record No: I22/656

David Rawlings:

- CRJO proposal. Guidelines from OLG not issued as yet. Not a lot of value and admin burden off site with limited benefits. We would have to travel for meetings. Needs to be reviewed by ARIC then considered by council.

Comments from Committee members:

- Will a joint ARIC result in longer meetings?
- Savings to council of \$4,000 but extra costs might exceed that amount.
- Can't under estimate the value of an ARIC that knows the council. They can challenge and support the organisation.
- Support David Rawlings' observations and retain an individual ARIC.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC33/22

That Council retain an individual ARIC.

Moved Mr Barbeler

Seconded Mr Quirk

CARRIED

8.3 INTERNAL AUDIT - CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Record No: I22/635

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC34/22

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the internal audit report and the management response.

Moved Mr Pearson

Seconded Mr Cox

CARRIED

8.4 SERVICE REVIEW - ROAD TRANSPORT/ OPEN SPACES/ WATER/ WASTEWATER/ TOWN PLANNING/ BUILDING CONTROL

Record No: I22/666

David Rawlings:

- Core issues that were apparent are our service delivery. Ties in with what areas of audit we wish to consider. Primary risks are the improvement area, putting considerable resources into systems and processes. Core weaknesses, resolving those issues is exposing us to our core risks of finance and reputation. ARIC oversight in the improvement areas – fundamental change being suggested

out of the service review. No audit will give me recommendations that I don't have. Need resources to take care of it.

Comments from Committee members:

- Commend the organisation to take on such a task. Concerns around on how to resource the service reviews. Overriding concern whether those deadlines are realistic and potential for internal audit to dove tail how the project goes. All the service reviews will lead to a lot of work. Will the organisation fatigue with all the deadlines. Culture may lead to some failings.
- Very difficult to digest the information in the report with graphs, tables, information, and consultant specs. So much information, not fit for purpose. Don't take into consideration context of SMRC. Risk management and organisational maturity, need to have foundations in place. Not sure where it might head.
- Road map within a tender process. How many years and cost?
 - Peter Bascomb - cost in staff time will be significant. Will impact every staff member. No costing or project manager, where we have identified change elements. Intend to market by the end of the month.
- What is the cost benefit – qualitative and quantitative?
 - Peter Bascomb – some cost savings.
 - David Rawlings – Potentially \$400,000 in efficiency savings. Difference between reactive and planned work. Roads ongoing maintenance costs – accept most value in the known dollar area. Community have a clear idea of what our services are. Pay back period in 3 years. Fundamental issues we need to have resolved. Heavily focussed on working with our current systems. We will still be under funded. Big outcome. Not a whole solution. Core thing unable to work on issues.
- Will this leave council exposed?
- Inconsistencies of systems and processes. Promapp – culture boost.
- Constraints of skill, potential cost and disreputation. Have to have the right resources. Turnover of staff. Does council understand what is involved. Produce open ended risks. Not acceptable to ARIC. Risk management, internal audit, concerns about the approach. Pilot before you go big time.
- Share CEO's concerns. This work should have been done pre-merger. Outcome and values – culture aspects need to be addressed. One chance at making it right.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC35/22

- A. That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the report on the Service Reviews.
- B. That Council:
 - 1) Provide an update once the project is further developed including a business case showing a cost benefit analysis and that Council has identified the risks to deliver this project.
 - 2) Provide feedback in relation to the asset management service review.
 - 3) Ensure Internal Audit plan is integrated into the outcome of the service reviews.
 - 4) When appointed, Council's Risk Officer identify strategic risks in relation to the outcomes of the service reviews.

Moved Mr Quirk

Seconded Mr Cox

CARRIED

8.5 AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT RESOURCING

Record No: I22/665

David Rawlings:

Update on where we are at:

- Risk Management Officer, confident good options to fill that role.
- Committee member roles EOI in progress.

Comments from Committee Members:

- Is CRJO to conduct an Internal audit or do we have other quotes for this?
 - Peter Bascomb - we would benchmark rather than go to quotes.
- The door is still open - type of program that CRJO would develop?
 - Peter Bascomb - savings and potential benefits.
- A full time internal auditor has the ability to do reviews and provide ad hoc advice. Share positive learnings and knowledge sharing. Build relationships in the organisation. Not available with an external audit function.
- CRJO proposal - how many audits, costs and travelling requirements were covered in the last proposal?
 - Peter Bascomb - new CFO, proposal will be reworked.
 - David Rawlings:
 - CRJO insight of pre council type model. Robustness around the governance. No bias towards one council.
 - Costs done on the approach, model will be a plan supplemented by NAG. Need to put external resources in there.
- Andrew Cox sent out a shared audit report – good fact sheet.
- Miles Pearson advised he would not be available for meetings in November/December 2022.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC36/22
That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information in the Audit Risk and Improvement Resourcing report.	
Moved Mr Cox	Seconded Mr Pearson
	CARRIED

8.6 REVIEW OF ARIC CHARTER

Record No: I22/655

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC37/22
That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee:	
A. Defer the review of the Charter until such time as the Office of Local Government Guidelines have been finalised.	

B. Review the Charter within 6 months of the Office of Local Government Guidelines being finalised or 12 months from today's date, 12 September 2022, whatever is the soonest.

Moved Mr Pearson

Seconded Mr Quirk

CARRIED

8.7 ARIC ANNUAL PLAN AND AUDIT PLAN

Record No: I22/667

Comments from Committee members:

- Keep two items separate if we can. Annual Plan – ARIC business. Audit Plan relates to internal audit.
- Created an ARIC annual plan and it was put in place two years ago. Consider adopting it now as a guideline.
- Service reviews offer a balance.
- Do service reviews replace internal audit?

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC38/22

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee develop an annual plan:

- A. Focused around improvement within the Council on service delivery and the identification of the risks faced by the organisation.
- B. That includes consideration of the ARIC responsibilities in its Charter.

Moved Mr Pearson

Seconded Mr Barbeler

CARRIED

Attendance of Chief Workforce Officer

Richard Doolan, Chief Workforce Officer joined the meeting at 1.15pm.

8.8 WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Record No: I22/548

Comments from Committee Members:

- Workplace inspections are done. Are ELT and SMT receiving reports?
 - Richard Doolan - numbers in August improved from July. Not significant enough. The second report will get some momentum during this month. HR audit to ELT provide comparative data on a month by month basis.
- Drug and alcohol testing ongoing. How do staff react to this?
 - Richard Doolan – testing at the Cooma depot involved the selection of a colour ball to see if you are tested (green – yes and red- no). This method was accepted by staff.
- Lead indicators – delegate one per quarter, did 12 in the quarter exceed that target?.
 - Richard Doolan – target one per quarter. Take on notice. Will send response to the committee.

- Just update the table for clarity on what one per quarter means.
- Fire warden training?
 - Richard Doolan – needs some attention and improve the signage. Focussed on that. Due to hold training in the next quarter.
- WHS committee – does Council have Health and Safety Representatives?
 - Richard Doolan – WHS committee has allocated members on it but can't always get a quorum. Time to reinvigorate the committee and get it more active. Improved our Health and Safety business. Get regular reports on Health & Safety.
- MP – Health & Safety representatives in the workplace?
 - David Rawlings - locality based in the LG areas, indoor and outdoor.
- Near misses are concerning, some potentially fatal.
 - Richard Doolan - improving the accuracy of the report and ensure incidents are reported when they happen. Moving on rectifying errors and fine tuning our processes. The Vault system is not being fully utilised.
- Great report, keep up the good work. Near misses – keep focussing on that. Emphasise the capabilities and accountabilities of supervisors and managers – message across to the staff.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee:

- A. Receive and note the information in the Work Health & Safety Report June – August 2022.
- B. Receive a copy of the StateCover Self-Audit report.

Moved Mr Pearson

Seconded Mr Quirk

8.9 MONTHLY FUNDS MANAGEMENT REPORT - JULY 2022

Record No: I22/650

Comments from Committee members:

- Negative cash flow September to December this year. Not achieving the benchmark.
 - Peter Bascomb – income in quarterly chunks with a sequencing problem. Grant funding out of sync too.
- Investment portfolios – what has happened, turn around in this source of income.
 - Peter Bascomb – conservative approach to uses of investment funds.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ARIC39/22

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the Monthly Funds Management Report indicating Council's cash and investments position as at 31 July 2022.

Moved Mr Quirk

Seconded Mr Cox

CARRIED

Tracy Sligar joined the meeting to address questions on Item 8.10 at 1.40pm.

8.10 MONTHLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENT (MBRS) TO 31 JULY 2022

Record No: I22/652

Comments from Committee members:

- Report for information? Purpose of providing this report?
- Michael Quirk:
 - ARIC can see a red light or red flag. Councillors would not generally be across all the information that goes up. Down drill down into detail. We have the expertise.
 - Recheck the processes after the Financial Statements.
 - Lynda Summers – Council requested a monthly report, was originally a quarterly report.
- Budget deficit reduces by sale of land, what land is being referred to?
 - Tracy Sligar - council report, land at Leesville Industrial Estate, Jindabyne.
- Are there many more of these assets available?
 - Tracy Sligar – hold monthly meetings with managers and will identify if there are any assets for sale, and build them into the LTFP.
 - Peter Bascomb:
 - Leesville Industrial Estate - financial contract of road into 3 lots, contemplating another six lots. Sale in construction of the roadwork. One developer is frustrated as they are looking to expand their business.
 - Sold five residential lots in Cooma.
 - Sold land in Bombala, currently exploring other options in addition to the Caretaker cottage.
 - Three residential houses in Berridale - housing for incoming staff.
- Many business units will have a negative budget. Need to cut costs? Have you had a meeting with business units on this? Financial management is everyone’s responsibility.
 - Tracy Sligar – not just business units, services will be cross subsidised. Our focus is around the educational aspect, use of the system and what does the figures mean. Holistic view, not just what ever to cut costs.
- Capital budget review statement – substantially replacing capital, major expenditure. Any work done for this?
 - Tracy Sligar – I have noticed that too. In conversations with Strategy and Operations – need to readjust that. Capital works budget is spread over the delivery program. Assets to be disposed of are built into the budget as well.
- How much capital expenditure for FY22?
 - Tracy Sligar - take on notice.
- Previous reports on funds management had restricted internal and external funds, update for 22/23. Make those reserves save quality.
 - Tracy Sligar - budget adjustments and whether those reserves will last.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION	ARIC40/22
That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the Monthly Budget Review Statement for the month ended 31 July 2022.	
Moved Mr Cox	Seconded Mr Pearson
CARRIED	

Tracy Sligar left the meeting at 1.50pm.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

9.1 FUTURE MEETINGS

Comments from Committee members:

- Previous ARIC meetings stopped for a lunch break.
- Permit meetings that are not too long, aim to shorten future meetings.
- Confirmed all members are available for the next meeting on 19 October 2022.

10. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 19 October 2022 commencing at 10.00am in the Committee Room and via Microsoft Teams.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.00pm

CHAIRPERSON

The above minutes of the Audit Risk And Improvement Committee Meeting of Snowy Monaro Regional Council held on 12 September 2022 were confirmed by Committee at a duly convened meeting on 19 October 2022 at which meeting the signature hereon was subscribed.