

Annual Business Plan

2026-2027

Being a unified local government sector working in the best interest of the region and our communities.

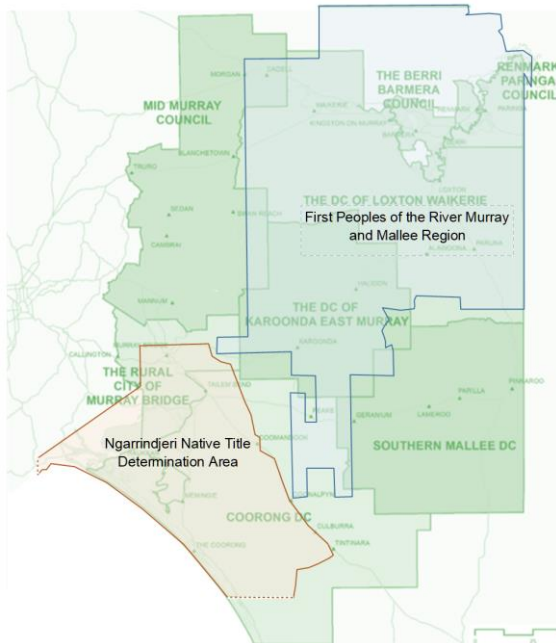
Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association



VISION, MISSION AND CHARTER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

"We would like to acknowledge the traditional land and waters of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge that their cultural and heritage beliefs are important to the Ngarrindjeri, Ngaiawang (Nigh-uh-won), Ngawait (Nar-wait), Nganguruku (Nun-guh-rah-ku), Erawirung (Era-wirung), Ngintait (Nin-tait), Ngaralte (Nar-alte), and Ngarkat (Nar-kat) people. We also pay respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship to country."



VISION

Attractive, Liveable Region, Prosperous Communities.

MISSION

Being a unified local government sector working in the best interest of the region and our communities.

LINKS WITH OUR CHARTER

- Speaking with one voice
- Building partnerships
- Working with the LGA
- Planning for and with the region
- Coordinating resources and representation
- Enhancing efficiencies

VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

Integrity, Leadership, Collaboration, Credibility, Unity

ROLE

Working to the MRLGA Charter, the Association motivates, advocates and represents its eight constituent Councils to advance cooperation, strategic partnerships and governance arrangements that oversee programs and projects in the region.

Through its coordination of effort, the Association leads and assists its councils with evidence-based approaches to high level planning, communication and representation.

The MRLGA works closely with its major regional partners including Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland (RDA MR), the Murraylands & Riverland Landscape Board, the Local Government Association SA and Australian and State Governments.

The MRLGA selects the most efficient role on key issues that is; Support (**S**) other lead agencies, Partner (**P**) or take the Lead (**L**) – to deliver the region the greatest return with limited resources.

MRLGA BOARD AND CEO NETWORK

BOARD

President

**Berri Barmera
Council**



Mayor Ella
Winnall

+8 Councillors

**Coorong District
Council**



Mayor Paul
Simmons

+7 Councillors

**District Council
of Karoonda
East Murray**



Mayor Caroline
Phillips

+6 Councillors
SAROC Rep

**District Council
of Loxton
Waikerie**



Mayor Trevor
Norton

+10 Councillors

Vice President

**Mid Murray
Council**



Mayor Simone
Bailey

+8 Councillors
SAROC Rep

**Renmark
Paringa Council**



Mayor Peter
Hunter

+8 Councillors

**Rural City of
Murray Bridge**



Mayor Wayne
Thorley

+9 Councillors

**Southern Mallee
District Council**



Mayor Ron
Valentine

+6 Councillors

CEO NETWORK

CEO



Tim Pfeiffer

CEO



Scott Reardon

CEO



TBC

CEO



David Beaton

CEO



Andrew Johnson

CEO



Tony Siviour

CEO



Heather Barclay

CEO



Jason Beaton

MRLGA CEO

**Murraylands
and Riverland
LGA**

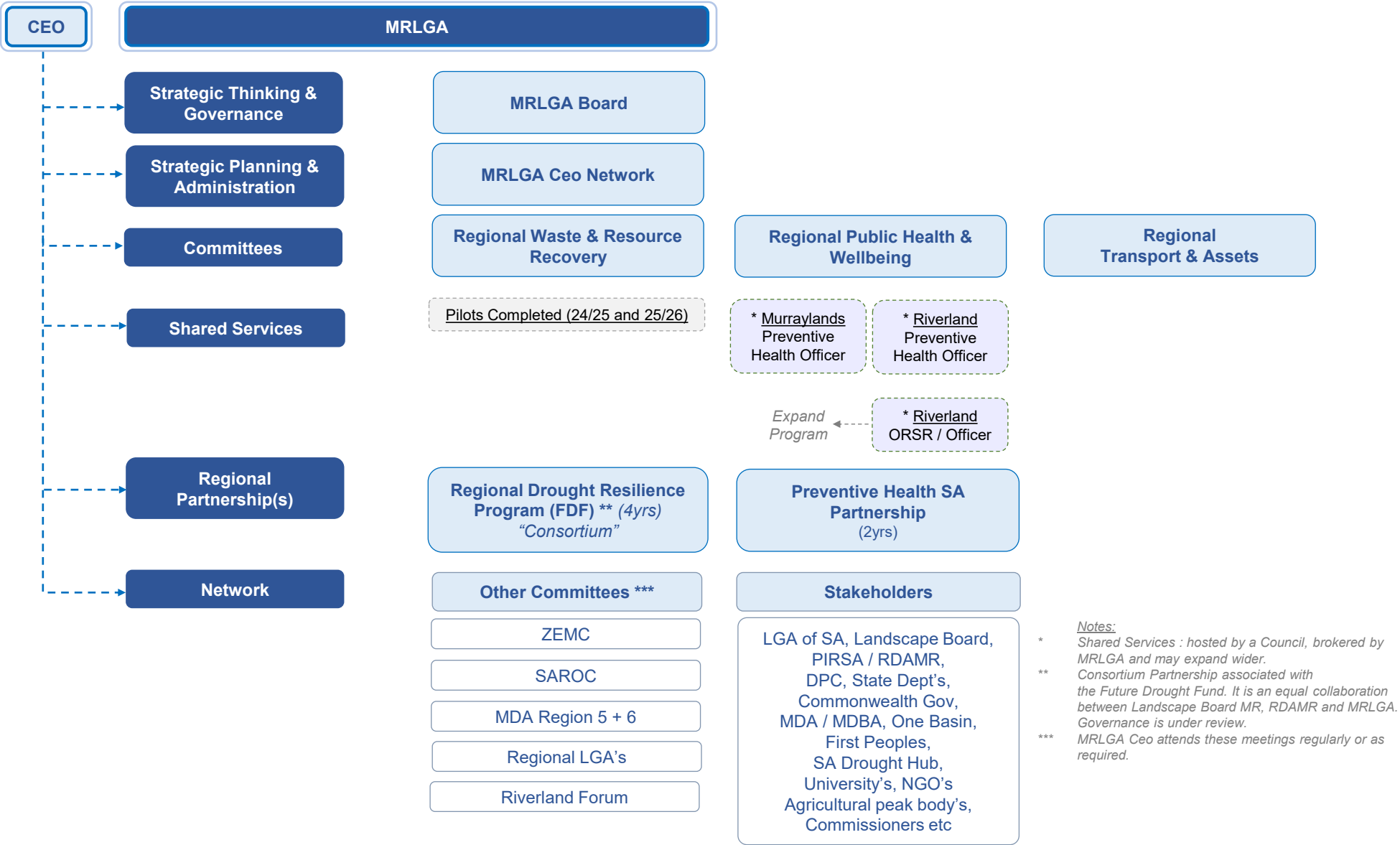


Carron McLeod

Note:

- President and Vice President roles are voted by the Board at each AGM (July '26).
- Current LGA SAROC Representatives are a two-year appointment from Dec '24 to Dec '26.
- Future LGA SAROC Representatives will be a two-year appointment from Dec '26 to Dec '28 and will be determined in Dec '26.
- Interim and Acting roles have not been listed.
- Scott Reardon and Dr Andrew Johnson will commence in the respective Ceo' roles Q3 '26.

ORGANISATIONAL & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Annual Business Plan 2026-2027



2026 / 27 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Significant resource will go towards updating 4 strategic documents for the region this year, while transitioning to a new term with the Board post Local Government Elections. Whilst several initiatives will fall out of the future strategic work, we are keeping progress with several live projects as listed below for continuity.

		Description of the Activity	
Ceo	Advocacy	Feedback in 2022 from incoming Mayors said Advocacy training opportunities were helpful as they commenced in the role and during the River Murray Flood event. Formal training will be offered for new and returning members as an initial step to induction post lg elections.	
		Co-design the regions advocacy needs with the new Board (post local government elections) including strategies, delivery, framework and papers.	
		Allowance for responsive or unplanned advocacy that may arise and warrants MRLGA resourcing.	
	Regional Strategy's	Update the MRLGA Strategic Plan, improving awareness about its value proposition and together design its focus areas to support targeted collaboration with Councils through 2026 to 2031. Further consultation with the Board, Committees, Constituent Councils and regional stakeholders will be undertaken.	
		Review and update the MRLGA Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2026 to 2031, including further consultation with the Board, Committees, Constituent Councils and regional stakeholders, as well as advocating for State funding to support this additional legislative task placed on Councils.	
		Continue liaison with GISA towards a joint update of the regions Circular Economy Strategy, encompassing the update will be to meet the needs of the Regional Waste & Resource Recovery Strategy (targets and initiatives). Further consultation with the Board, Committees, Constituent Councils and regional stakeholders will be undertaken in a manner that builds shared investment and partnership for regional solutions.	
		Continue the review and schedule an update of the Regional Transport Plan, including further consultation with Board, Committees, Councils and LCLGA.	
	Research & Feasibility	Research Projects: Kerbside (Waste Services) Review – complete the kerbside (waste services) review project with Councils. Riverland Composting – continue progress towards the feasibility of a Riverland Composting facility. Energy from Waste – continue work towards energy from waste opportunities and use it to inform strategic targets and initiatives	
		Future Drought Fund - MR Drought Resilience Plan: MRLGA achieved \$100k in grant funding for small-pilot projects under RDRP : (1) Managing sand drift on rural roads (2) Community Foundation Trial and (3) BioChar Pathways for Ag and green waste. Projects (1) and (2) are being done in consultation with LB and other key regional stakeholders.	
	Network, Coordinate + Share	Continue to convene, plan, prepare, chair and/or facilitate Board Meetings, support SAROC Reps, liaise with LGA, CEO Network, Committees, Regional LGA's, and all other working relationships (as identified in the governance structure).	
		MRLGA is a partner in the FDF / RDRP 'Consortium' providing in-kind resource and will continue its role to attract funding from this program into the region.	
		Special Local Roads Program. Continue work with 8 Councils to prepare, coordinate, scope and prioritise roads packages for SLRP.	
		New Initiatives: Organise LGA Procurement and 8 Council Ceo's for a review of ABP to scope shared procurement opportunities for 26/27 that could yield efficiencies, savings or improved outcomes.	
	Shared Resources	1 x Partnership with 3 Councils and Office of Recreation, Sport & Racing. MRLGA to advocate for the continuation and expansion of the program.	
		2 x Partnerships across 6 Councils and Preventive Health SA. Continue as a working group member and support the partnership reach the desired benefits, with a view to advocating for its continuation and regional investment.	
		Regional Capacity Building – apply for grant funding to support a pilot for regional capacity building models (ie similar to train the trainer). Grant TBC	
		Support transition of shared services for Waste Services Contract Admin support (+ Waste Education) following MRLGA trial and expand from 5 to 6 Councils.	
EFT	(1) Ceo		

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATING

The Association will continue to operate in accordance with the MRLGA Charter and Act as it continues its mission to *‘being a unified local government sector working in the best interest of the region and our communities’*. It will operate, promote and grow a culture that supports - Integrity, Leadership, Collaboration, Credibility, Unity. And it will continue the Associations objectives that seek to - Speak with one voice, plan for and with the region, build partnerships, coordinate resources and representation and work with the LGA.

Description of the Activity		
Ceo	MRLGA Charter	Review the Charter and carry out any changes approved by the Board where necessary (including a legal review if changes are made).
	Strategic Plan (2031)	In consultation with the Board and Ceo Network, develop a project plan and carry out an update to the MRLGA Strategic Plan for 2026-2031. The program will include a method for constituent Councils to review a draft and submit feedback and input.
	Advocacy Training	As part of transitioning a board through an election cycle, we will offer new and returning board member advocacy training and planning strategies
	Audit	Liaise with appointed consultants to undertake an annual audit and incorporate the audit into the Annual Report.
	Annual Report	Prepare an Annual Report for the previous financial year.
	Board / Committees	Convene Quarterly Board Meetings and Chair Committees (RPH&WC, RT&AC, RW&RRC).
	Ceo Network	Convene online and in person meetings for presentations on emerging issues / opportunities relevant to a Ceo of a regional Council.
	Conferences	President and Ceo (and possibly VP) to attend relevant local government forums and conferences where appropriate and able
	Insurances	Keep insurances active and paid.
	Fleet	Prepare a feasibility assessment to compare the cost of purchasing/leasing a fleet car (inclusive of on road costs and insurance) versus car allowance(s) and present it to the Ceo Network and Board for consideration.
	Policies	Updates scheduled for July 2026.
	Records Management	Secure professional support to transition archives to electronic copies and identify an appropriate long term solution for archive items
	Regional LGA	Attend Regional LGA meetings to stay connected with projects/initiatives/challenges in other regions.
	Staff Management	Undertake all Management and Human Resource related matters to employed staff under contract.
	Subscriptions	Monitor inflation as it relates to subscriptions.
	Webpage review	Maintain a webpage (with operating costs of <\$1,000 p.a).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Background

In 2019/20 the MRLGA Business Plan set a new direction for setting subscriptions for the Association.

The plan followed a decision of the Board and consultation with constituent councils to align subscriptions to those charged by LGA SA. The decision of the Board endorsed the method for a 3 year subscription period, which then expired in 2021/22.

In light of dwindling income from other sources, including the ceased Rubble Royalty Scheme and LGA SA Outreach Program, a further review of MRLGA subscriptions then was overseen by the Association's CEO Network in April 2022. The review considered the longer term sustainability of the following options:

1. Raising subscriptions using annual Local Government Price Indexes,
2. Aligning to the LGA SA subscriptions paid in the previous 12 months by constituent councils and reviewing the model within 3 years
3. Using the model (20% flat rate and 80% weighting against population and revenue) employed by LGA to set subscriptions (establishing budgeted total operating expenses as the cost recovery baseline) and using a three year period to phase in the new system.

On 6 May 2022 at the General Meeting, the Board supported the recommendation of the CEO Network and endorsed Option 2. This was applied in 22/23 and 23/24.

2024 / 2025

In preparing the 24/25 budget, the subscriptions charged by LGA to its Councils was reviewed and would (on average) be a 6.2% increase to MRLGA constituent Councils. MRLGA has been reducing its operational costs over time, and as part of running a more efficient model it was able to offer its constituent Council's a 1.9% increase, thus creating a 4.3% savings and the 24/25 budget was adjusted accordingly.

2025 / 2026

In preparing the 25/26 budget, the subscriptions charged by LGA to its Councils was reviewed and would (on average) be a 7.58% increase to MRLGA constituent Councils. MRLGA has been reducing its operational costs over time, and as part of running a more efficient model it was able to offer its constituent Council's a 1.9% increase, thus creating a 5.68% savings and the draft 25/26 budget is adjusted accordingly.

The combined costs from 24/25 and 25/26 (of 4.3% and 5.68%) offers a 9.98% savings back to Councils over the two financial years.

2025 Annual General Meeting

At the General Meeting on 10 April 2025, the Board advised a subscription review will not be required every three years if annual increases remain under inflation.

2026 / 2027

In preparing the 26/27 budget, the subscriptions charged by LGA to its constituent Councils was reviewed and, on average would be a 4.04% increase (the highest being 7.6% and the lowest being -0.5%). Pursuant to the above, MRLGA can provide constituent Council's a 2.5% increase, thus creating a 1.54% overall savings and the draft 26/27 budget is adjusted accordingly.

The combined savings from 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27 (of 4.3% and 5.68% and 1.54%) offers a cumulative savings of 11.52% back to Councils over the three financial years.

APPENDIX 1 : REGIONAL LGA HISTORY

EARLY BEGINNINGS

From its earliest beginnings, local government has pursued a shared commitment to collaboration and serving community to the best of its abilities as required under legislation. Through bringing community leaders together to champion regional interests, unite on common challenges, and seize collective opportunities for the greater good.

THE LEGACY

For nearly a century, since before 1927, Councils have stood strongest not in isolation but in partnership, proving that co-operation contributes to a continuing foundation of effective governance and a principle that must be upheld to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is our commitment to continuity, ensuring the next generation sustains a collaborative, unified local government sector that acts decisively in the best interests of our region and communities. As we approach an election cycle, this years draft Annual Business Plan allows for continuity and transition.

Murray Land District Councils Association

Halfyearly Meeting. 6th Feb 1929.

Chairmans Report.

Gentlemen.

 This being the occasion of the usual Halfyearly meeting I do not desire to take up the time of the meeting in a lengthy report. On making a review of the operations of this Association over the past six months, I find that the Association has dealt with many matters of vital importance in regard to Local Government.

The most important amendments dealt with over the period under review are as follows—

Early Notification of Births Act- of which application was made to the Court for an amendment, making provision against the inclusion of the operation of the Act in Country Centres where there is no Baby Welfare or School for Mothers in existence. This is a most stupid piece of legislation, as no benefit is derived in the country by such a measure, and Councils are at a loss not only financially, but at a loss as to the reason of the measure.

Weights & Measures. In reference to the Certification of Weights & Measures by the Standards Office, an amendment has been obtained reducing the proposed fee to 5/- for any standard weight or measure so verified.

Uniform Crossfall of Roads. This matter was discussed at length at the last meeting and it was finally decided that no action be taken, and the matter be left in the hands of the Local Govt Dept who had already issued plans showing varying crossfalls for different widths of roads, and if Councils would adhere to this schedule it would tend to make all roads uniform.

Crown & Noxious Weeds Act- The matter of the Crown being included in the provisions of the Noxious Weeds Act has been sent on, but nothing definite on the matter has been received.

Ward Nominations. No amendment has been provided to the D C Act whereby a person can be excluded from nomination who is not a ratepayer in the Ward.

Residential & Business Leases. An amendment has been obtained to the Irrigation Act making it possible for lessees to make their leases freehold in the Residential & Business portion of the Irrigation Area, and I am pleased to report that at Waikerie many applications are now being presented with this end in view.

Police Moiety- The Local Govt Association emphatically opposed the suggested amendment to the Police Act in regard to moiety & so far this has proved effective.

Sale of Bread- This matter has been forwarded to the Local Govt and been shelved, as the Association have had no reply to the suggested amendment.

Loans for Fencing- In regard to the administration of this Act I personally feel it is high time the govt took over this administration, and I would advise approaching all the D C Associations for a combined effort to make an emphatic protest in regard to this piece of inquisition on District Councils by the Government. This matter should be thoroughly discussed at this meeting.

Sand Drift Act- The time has more than arrived when representation should be made to the Govt praying for financial assistance for Councils in whose area the persistent nuisance occurs, & I would suggest that the Association lay itself out to thoroughly go into this matter with the hope of devising a scheme to cope with the nuisance.

Yours faithfully.

Chairman.

Feb' 1929 Chairmans Report

WASH. LAKE DISTRICT COUNCIL ASSOCIATION.

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure.

Halfyear to February 28th 1923.

Receipts.

12/7/21	Bank Balance	35-14-6
1/7/22	P.J. Deming	1- 1-0
7/7/22	Karavala	1- 1-0
	Humma	1- 1-0
	Wright	2- 2-0
	Lawson	1- 1-0
	Letter	1- 1-0
	Courtsmith	1- 1-0
	Shel Murray	1- 1-0
	Deen Beach	1- 1-0
		<u>49- 4- 6</u>

Expenditure.

5th Aug 22	Kapunda Herkila	1-15- 6
	Secretary Stipend	5- 5-0
	Bank Charge	3- 0
	Bank Balance	41-19- 0
		<u>49- 4- 6</u>

1929 Financials

MURRAY LANDS DISTRICT COUNCILS ASSOCIATION.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at Council Chamber Murray Bridge August 31st 1927.

Present Representatives from Karonda, Maccles, Sand Murray, Walpole, Cammarnant, Lenton, Laurence, Seaville, Brown Hill, Peake, Hobbs, Belmont, also the Highway & Local Self Supply Scheme represented by Inspector Mills and Chairman, and the Secretary Mr J J Jones Clerk Walpole, elected.

General Matter of Chairman. C 3 & Walpole. (Walpole). *Annual Report, Resolved and adopted.*

Minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, and confirmed.

Financial Statement. Received and adopted.

Election of Officers. Chairman. C 3 & Maccles. re-elected.
Vice President. C 3 & Bruce and C 3 Cammarnant elected.
Executive Committee. C 3 Peake, Hacking and Ruby, elected.
Secretary & Treasurer. Mr J J Jones District Clerk Walpole, elected.
Auditor. Mr H Mill District Clerk Karonda, elected.

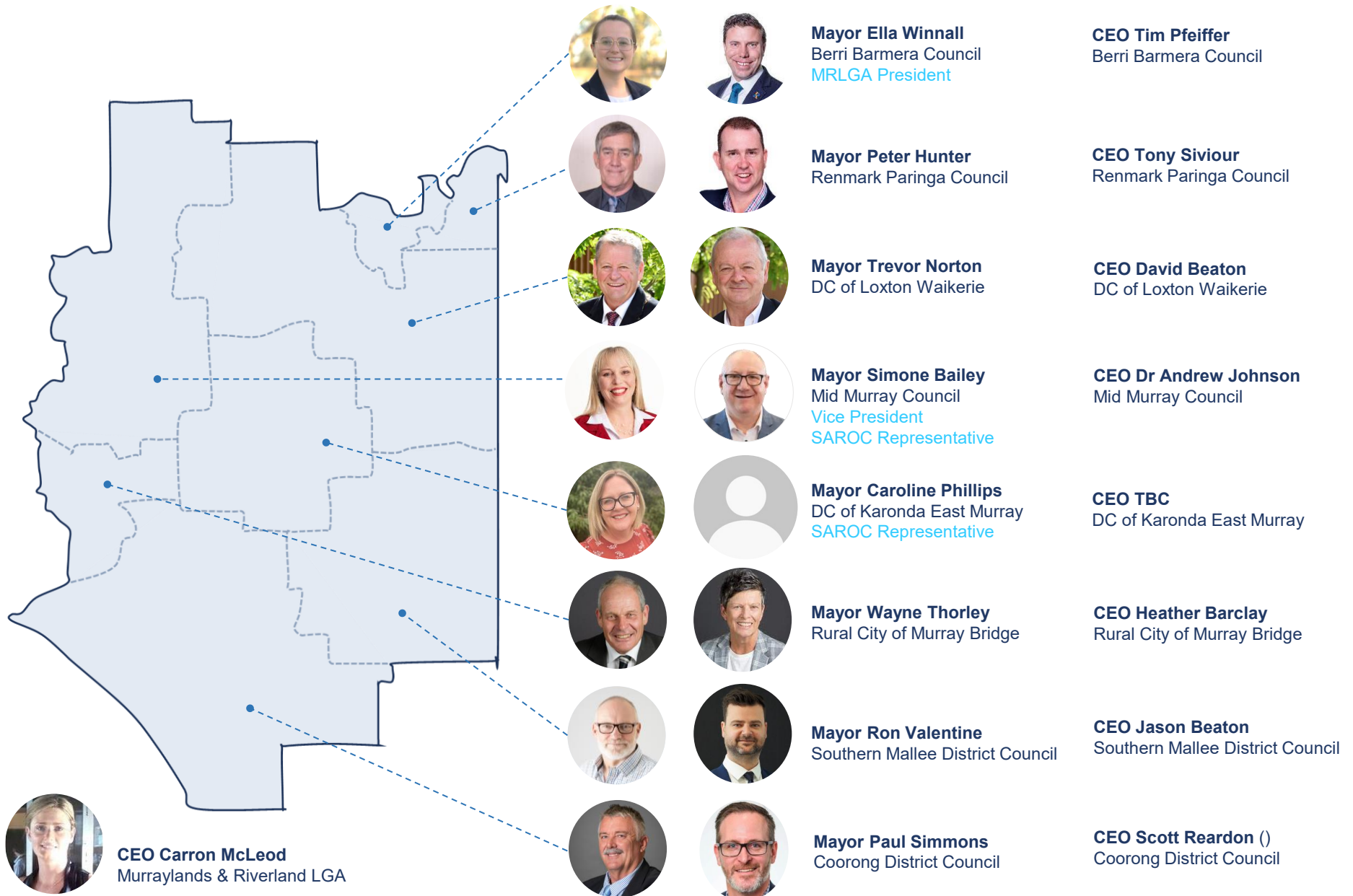
Correspondence. Letter from Mr J J Penland designation as Secretary accepted.
Local Council re levying of New Crown Lands resolved.
Department Lands & Survey re Keeping of New Crown Lands was resolved.
Commissioners of Stamp re Amendment Stamp Duty Act, Pending. Same no exemption from duty on receipt was received.
Highways & Local Self Supply re Amendment Stamp Duty Act 1923 resolved.
Minister of Agriculture re Clause "Gason for Junks was received."
Types Murray & Association re Amendment Government Lands Printing Act Minister of Agriculture re Albert Division closing under Sheep Dipping was received.

Amendment Sand Drift Act. Notice of Motion from Sand Murray, Hobbs, Karonda & Walpole District Councils requesting more stringent legislation in regard to the Sand Drift Act.
Inspector Mills drew attention to the fact that a new draft of the Act was being prepared and should come before Parliament this session.
The representatives of the above mentioned Councils referred to the difficulties experienced in the administration of the Act in its present form.
The Secretary suggested that the amendment to the Act be submitted in the following form.
"That whosoever it appears to any Council that any land has drifted on to any Public Road within the district from any cause, whether such land is within or outside the district, the Council may, by notice in writing given to the owner or occupier, require him or them, within a reasonable time, to remove all such sand from such public road, and further, if the owner or occupier fails to remove within the time specified, the Council may remove same and the cost of the work be charged on the property and collected as rates are collectable from such owners or occupiers.
That the amendment to the said draft Act as framed be forwarded on to the Minister of Local Government."
Carried.

Amendment of By-Law No 26 Licensing Vehicles Drift for Hire. Notice of Motion from Walpole that some uniformity of regulations and the charges for license be adopted in regard to this By-Law.
It was resolved that every Council that has such regulations were now before Parliament that the matter be referred for the present.

3 August 1927 - Annual General Meeting Agenda

APPENDIX 2 : REGIONAL AREA



APPENDIX 3 – ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

The Local First Nations Voice
Region 4
Murraylands Riverlands and South East



Federal Electoral Division
Barker



State Election Boundaries

