Minutes

Lord Howe Island Board

Meeting	Board Meeting August 2025
Location	Lord Howe Island Public Hall (Open Session)
Date/Time	Tuesday 26th August 11:00am – In-Camera Session Tuesday 26th August 1:00pm - Closed Session Wednesday 27th August 9:00am to 12:00pm – Open Session
Chairperson	**Naomi Stephens**, Executive Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service
Deputy Chair	**Robert Jeremy**, Elected Member
Board Members	**Margaret Osmond,** Appointed Member **James Lonergan**, Elected Member **Matthew Retmock**, Elected Member **Therese Turner**, Elected Member
Attendees (All)	**Suzie Christensen**, Chief Executive Officer
Attendees (Open Session Only)	**Michael Chalmers**, Senior Manager, Business and Corporate Services **Bradley Josephs**, Senior Manager, Infrastructure and Engineering Services **Krissy Ward**, Senior Manager, Environment
Invited	**Michael Vader**, Executive Director Business Development, National Parks and Wildlife Service **Oriana Senese**, Program Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service
Apologies	**Nathan Rees**, Appointed Member
Minutes	**Anna Connor**, A/Executive Assistant

26th August Agenda Items – Closed Session
Location – Lord Howe Island Museum Board Room

In-Camera Session

LUNCH- Coral Cafe

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Board Member	Agenda Item
Therese Turner	13.01
Robert Jeremy	13.01
Matthew Retmock	13.01

The Board noted the conflict-of-interest declarations for TT and RJ as they hold special leases. MR is executor of his late father's estate, and a special will be transferred to Ginny Retmock when finalised.

2. WH&S AND RISK MANAGEMENT

2.1. WH&S and Risk Management Update

Closed Session

3. OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

3.1. FY26 Draft Operational Plan

Closed Session

4. FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

4.1. Finance Report (and revised budget)

Closed Session

4.2. Request for Targeted Exemption to Alcohol Supply Condition – Island House Management Pty Ltd

Closed Session

4.3. Rental on Nurses Accommodation

Closed Session

5. LAND ADMINISTRATION

5.1. Application to suspend condition of residency attaching to PL2016.07 for Christine Daggar

Closed Session

5.2. Application to suspend condition of residency attaching to PL1996.01 Christopher and Rosalind Wade

Closed Session

5.3. Application to suspend condition of residency attaching to PL1993.03 for Tanya Brcina

Closed Session

5.4. Progress on LEP amendment SEPP – verbal

Closed Session

6. GOVERNANCE

6.1. Terms of Reference Elected Board Members Committee

Closed Session

3:34pm **Closed Session Concluded**

27th August Agenda Items – Open Session - Location – Lord Howe Island Public Hall

Board Introductions and Membership Updates

Naomi Stephens commenced the meeting as the newly appointed Chair. The Board noted upcoming in person introductions of new members, Margy Osmond and Nathan Rees, scheduled for the next board meeting. Robert Dwyer, local state representative was present in the audience and was welcomed by the chair.

6.2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – Notice of Adoption

The Board **endorsed** the minutes from the June 2025 Board Meeting

6.3. Actions from Previous Meeting

The Board **noted** the information provided in this report and agreed not to progress outstanding action '*A future paper will accompany a draft contribution plan, outlining contributions accordingly*'.

6.4. Future Meeting dates, Agenda management and Scheduling

The Board discussed scheduling two additional two-hour Teams meetings to address gaps between quarterly sessions, noting the need to align with member availability and travel logistics, with early planning essential to mitigate accommodation and weather risks.

Question on Notice: Audience member Judy Riddle suggested board members arrive the day before closed sessions to connect with the island and community. NS acknowledged the suggestion, noting implementation will depend on member availability and will be considered in future scheduling discussions.

Action: *Table proposed dates at the October closed session meeting (with Margy and Nathan present) for confirmation, then issue calendar invites.*

7. STATUS AND COMPLIANCE REPORTING

7.1. Compliance and Status Report

The Board **noted** the Compliance and Status Report, including updates on out-of-session matters, biosecurity, owners' consent and development applications approved under delegated authority, motor vehicle importation or transfer status, feedback, and complaints.

Actions:

- *Prepare business paper for November meeting proposing new method of delivery for biosecurity surveillance and monitoring.*
- *Review administration process for acknowledging community enquiries. MC to generate CM9 outstanding actions report detailing traffic/response time for review at Senior Management meetings.*
- *Update word cloud to be relevant to previous 3 months versus 3 years.*

8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Attachment A: Infrastructure & Engineering Services

Attachment B: Environment & Community Services

Attachment C: Projects

The CEO's report highlighted progress across the Critical Infrastructure Program, including vessel and main works contractor tenders under evaluation, with confidentiality maintained to comply with NSW Government procurement guidelines. Cybersecurity policies are being implemented, and fixed costs are being managed with a plan in place. Financial statements have been submitted to the auditor, with timelines being managed to meet legislative requirements. The transition of planning functions to Midcoast Council is progressing, with contract finalisation expected shortly.

Operational updates included minor weather impacts, staffing constraints, and infrastructure works such as the jetty, roads, and building repairs. Site remediation at the Waste Management Facility is planned, involving screening compost mounds, managing asbestos- and rubble-containing waste, and coordinating with EPA and contractors to mitigate hazards. Environmental and community activities continue, including tree planting, wildlife monitoring, invasive species management, and foreshore clean-up.

The Board **noted** the report and acknowledged the administration team's efforts during this intensive period.

9. FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

9.1. Financial Overview – Verbal

The Board was briefed by MC on adjustments to the approved budget, reflecting an increase in operating expenses of $900,000 to $29.4 million and capital expenditure by $1.3 million to $26.2 million, largely funded internally and externally, with a minor $65,000 gap. A comprehensive financial review, including balance sheet and cash position, was provided on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee.

9.2. Proposal for Kentia Seed Exportation

The Board considered Kentia Fresh's request to directly export Kentia seeds. The Board **refused** the request for Kentia Seed Exportation.

10. OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

10.1. Critical Infrastructure Program Update

The Critical Infrastructure Program has finalised draft master plans and DA approvals, with the EIS nearing completion and scheduled for public exhibition in October–November. Tenders for main infrastructure works and the new marine vessel have closed and are under evaluation, with contractor shortlisting in progress. Early works, including Waste Management Facility remediation, the fixed-pile vessel ramp, and dog kennels, are planned ahead of detailed design completion by June -July 2026, with construction targeted to commence shortly thereafter and continue through to November 2027.

The Board **noted** the CIP update, and NS acknowledged the CIP team's professionalism, dedication, and progress on the program

11. POLICY AND STRATEGY

11.1. Progress on LEP amendment SEPP - Verbal

The Chair NS provided a verbal update on behalf of MV, following his discussions with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Feedback confirmed the proposal does not meet the department's criticality criteria and would not be advanced to the Minister. Similar past attempts, even on major projects, faced significant resistance.

While the intent was to address infrastructure issues more efficiently than through the current LEP, the board acknowledged that prospects for a SEPP are slim. The Board **noted** and agreed to discontinue pursuit of a SEPP and instead proceed with the review and amendment of the LEP, ensuring priorities are addressed methodically and with community consultation.

12. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

12.1. Middle Beach Stairs Project

The Board **noted** the additional information provided on the Middle Beach Stairs project, expressed appreciation for the clarification, and acknowledged the timing constraints due to seasonal bird activity. The Board **approved** Development Application DA2025.3.1 and Owners Consent OC2025.4.1 for the Middle Beach Stairs, with works to proceed in 2026 when bird activity is minimal.

12.1. OC2025.5.1 and DA2024.2.1 - Assessment Report - Karen Taaffe

The Board **noted** the assessment report lodged by Karen Taaffe and agreed to take a staged approach to the development application. While the DA is generally in order, one outstanding matter requires expedited legal advice. The Board resolved to seek this advice and make a final determination out of session once the advice is received, anticipated within approximately four weeks.

13. LEASING AND LAND ADMINISTRATION

13.1. Extension of Term of Special Leases

The Chair, NS, acknowledged conflicts for TT and RJ, who will abstain from voting, and an extended family connection for MR. All members remained for discussion, with quorum based on eligible voters. Special leases have been repeatedly extended for short periods awaiting action on Handley recommendations. The Board noted tenure certainty encourages investment. Under the act, special leases can be redirected for public purposes, and the decision aligns with expected LEP amendments. The revised recommendation is a direct 20-year extension rather than the proposed 10 plus 10 approach.

The Board **approved** recommending to the Minister to approve special leases be extended for a 20-year term.

TT and RJ abstained from voting.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

GENERAL BUSINESS AND QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Actions: *Review expressions of interest submitted for vehicles with EBM for assessment and decision.*

11:38am **Meeting Closed**

NEXT MEETING: 22nd October 2025 (Special Meeting – Closed Session)