Minutes

Lord Howe Island Board

Meeting	Lord Howe Island Board Meeting
Location	Community Hall, Lord Howe Island
Date/Time	Tuesday 25th November 11:00am – In-Camera Session Tuesday 25th November 1:00pm - Closed Session Wednesday 26th November 9:00am to 12:00pm – Open Session
Chairperson	**Naomi Stephens**, NS, ED Park Operations Coastal, NPWS
Deputy Chair	**Robert Jeremy**, RJ, Elected Member
Board Members	**Nathan Rees, NR, Appointed Member** **Margaret Osmond, MO, Appointed Member** **James Lonergan, JL, Elected Member** **Matthew Retmock, MR, Elected Member** **Therese Turner, TT, Elected Member**
Attendees (All)	**Suzie Christensen**, SC, Chief Executive Officer
Attendees (Open Session Only)	**Michael Vader**, MV, ED Business Delivery, NPWS **Bradley Josephs**, BJ, Senior Manager, Infrastructure and Engineering Services **Darcelle Matassoni,** DM, Senior Project Officer **Krissy Ward**, KW, Senior Manager, Environment **Michael Chalmers**, MC, Senior Manager, Business and Corporate Services **Darcelle Matassoni,** DM, Senior Project Officer **Oriana Senese**, OS, Principal Project Officer (NPWS)
Minutes	**Tamiyka Abbott**, TA, Executive Assistant

On Tuesday 25th of November, an in-camera session was held with Board Members only in attendance from 11:30am-1:30pm. The closed session commenced at 1:40pm and closed at 4:30pm. On Wednesday 26th of November, the open session commenced at 9:00am and closed at 12:45pm.

Unless otherwise specified, all Board decisions were unanimous.

CLOSED SESSION

1 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

The Committee discussed the declaration and noted that JL would remain within the meeting during the time of discussion. It was noted that once the declaration was declared, they can remain within the room due to the nature of the island and family relationships present within the Board, but this may change during the discussion.

Board member	Agenda item
James Lonergan	5.1

2 WH&S AND RISK MANAGEMENT

2.1 Work Health and Safety (WH&S) and Risk Management Update

Closed Session

2.2 WHS Action Plan

Closed Session

3 OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

3.1. Planning for Implementation of the CIP - Verbal

Closed Session

4 FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

4.1 Finance Report as of 31st of October 2025.

Closed Session

4.2 Aviation Update

Closed Session

5 LEASING AND LAND ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Application to suspend condition of residency attaching to PL2007.02 for Audrey Ball

Closed Session

6 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

6.1 Committee Minutes and Recommendations

Closed Session

6.2 Review Board Decision – Jetty Use

Closed Session

13 - DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

13.1 DA – 20204.2.1 – Taaffe

Closed Session

OPEN SESSION

7 GOVERNANCE

7.1 Minutes of Previous Minutes – Notice of Adoption

The Board:

1. **Endorsed** the Board meeting of August 2025.
2. **Endorsed** the Board meeting of October 2025.

7.2 Actions from Previous Minutes

- Actions in green are completed and will not be available at the next Board meeting. Items that are still in progress will be available at the next session.

The Board:

1. **Noted** the information provided in this report.
2. **Endorsed** the August 2025 Board meeting previous actions.
3. **Endorsed** the October 2025 Board meeting previous actions.

8 STATUS AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

8.1 Status and Compliance Report

- The Board noted that the only out-of-session DA approval related to hospital wastewater.
- Biosecurity interceptions on ships and planes were reported; surveillance remains a priority.
- The standard motor-vehicle compliance report was provided, including approval of a Board vehicle.
- Complaint reporting has been amended; the previous word-cloud was removed as it relied on outdated data and no longer reflected current issues.

The Board:

1. **Noted** the information contained in the Status Report for out of session matters, biosecurity update, owners' consent and development applications approved under delegated authority, motor vehicle importation or transfer status, feedback and complaints.

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT

9.1 Chief Executive Officer's Report

- Contract for the marine vessel design and construction is nearing finalisation.
- Tender for the main infrastructure works contractor has closed and is under evaluation.
- EPA inspection of the waste facility was completed, with significant progress reported.
- CASA report identified two safety findings and five observations, noted as a significant improvement; all findings were administrative.
- Heliops currently underway have supported foreshore clean-up and enabled aerial access to difficult terrain on Mt. Gower.
- Wheelchair beach access was queried; several sites were assessed but found unsuitable due to erosion or unstable foundations.
- Questions regarding HN51 were addressed: some endemic birds may require off-island relocation to aviaries to ensure species survival, as the virus spreads rapidly through airborne transmission.
- Possible HN51 detections on Norfolk Island were noted, though bird deaths may also relate to fatigue. Awaiting confirmation of cause of death.
- Fuel cleaning at the powerhouse was completed following water contamination in diesel; testing will determine whether it is salt or fresh water but may not determine source.
- Awaiting EPA EIS submission on the CIP. Ongoing collaboration will guide new contamination reduction programs and required site-remediation works.
- New equipment for WMF site remediation has arrived on the island.

- Pothole maintenance was discussed; BJ noted an ongoing program is in place, weather has limited progress, materials are being secured, and the community is invited to submit photos for maintenance requests.
- KPMG project management contract is concluding. Planning components originally in the KPMG project scope are ongoing at this stage, awaiting transition to Mid Coast Council

The Board:

1. **Noted** The Q2 2026 CEO Report

The Board noted the Chief Executive Officer's report including attachments.

10 FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

10.1 Finance Report (Verbal Update Only)

- Budget adjustments based on the completion of the financial statements were agreed in closed session. Most adjustments were zero cash movements between financial statement categories. There was increased carry forward income due to underspends in grant projects which improved the P&L result by $894k.Future predictions are we will be underspending on capital however that is due to the Critical Infrastructure Project (CIP), with no feasible way to resolve this financial year
- Noted positive revenue so far into the quarter from the airport and liquor store, probably due to higher visitor levels and impact of disrupted shipping services.

The Board:

1. **Noted** the verbal Finance update.

10.2 Dark Sky Festival Lord Howe Island Incorporated - Request for Ongoing Hall Hire Fee Waiver

- Noted the community benefit of the events and part of its purpose is to promote tourism during the shoulder season.
- Noted that the approval would only be for a period and then would need to be reconsidered by the Board.
- NR raised questions about a NFP being used but an individual profiting off the events and policies we have regarding this situation. SC noted there was not specific policies however an individual would be taking a wage out of the profit, and it would not be a substantial figure.

The Board:

1. **Approved** the Dark Sky Festival Lord Howe Island Incorporated Committee request for free of charge use for the Community Hall for **2 years:**
    a. 7 days as a wet weather backup for event, and
    b. 8 days of free use for lead-up events (if required) that cannot be consecutive with the event subject to 8 weeks forward notice and availability of the Hall.
2. **Review** of decision will be conducted at the November 2027 Board Meeting.

Action: Draft a review process and policy regarding granting Free of charge use where an individual is receiving a wage from an NFP.

Action: Policy creation for bond and payment of use of facilities.

11 POLICY AND STRATEGY

11.1 Critical Infrastructure Program

- Cleanup of the contamination and waste-management site is underway, with Board-owned machinery now on island.
- The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was lodged with the Department of Planning on 3 October 2025 and completed for release by the Department on 7 October.
- Public exhibition was extended, with DPHI attending community drop-in and consultation group sessions.
- Thirty-three submissions were received for the main infrastructure works tender by 14 November.
- Evaluation of the New Marine Vessel Design Tender is complete; Serco Australia was announced as the preferred tenderer.
- Construction contractors are expected to be onboard by early January 2026.
- Project management has transferred from APP Group to NSW Public Works who are now managing design and construction delivery.
- Investigations continue regarding required works on the North and South sides of the island, including appropriate signage.
- A community information session will be held early 2026 to meet the main works contractors and the principal contractor, Serco Australia.
- Main infrastructure works and ship design are currently 20–30% complete.
- The project is transitioning into detailed design and establishing a new Project Control Group, which will include an elected Board member and a community representative through 50% design, 80% design and IFC stages.
- All submissions and feedback have been received; responses are being prepared.
- A submissions report will be provided to the NSW Planning Portal by the end of February 2026.
- The new ship will be designed and built to class, with a bulbous bow for improved seakeeping and transit speed and will include a ship's crane for afloat and grounded operations.
- Lagoon passage is expected to improve with a fully loaded draught of 2.3m, shallower than the current Island Trader.
- Mooring arrangements are yet to be confirmed; fixed ramp design depends on the size and capacity of mooring dolphins.
- Questions were raised regarding the roll-on/roll-off approach, ramp viability, and use of the jetty for simultaneous vessel berthing.

The Board:

1. **Noted** The critical infrastructure program and projects status for November 2025

11.2 LHIB Community Environment Advisory Committee Report – Q3 November 2025

- The report provided advice on several matters raised with the committee.
- African big-headed ant management is currently being addressed.
- Meeting roster will be aligned to occur before Board meetings to allow CEAC to provide timely reports and updates.
- Drone-use questions were raised; supported for approved use in visitor education and signage, with guidelines to be included in the Preserve Plan of Management.
- Enforcement challenges were noted where individuals stand outside the Permanent Park Preserve to fly drones.

The Board:

1. **Noted** This Quarter 3 Lord Howe Island Board Community Environment Advisory Committee report.

Action: Paper for the February Board meeting outlining drone usage and situation on LHI. Includes legislation and guidelines in place and where there may be opportunity to amend proposed use guidelines.

Action: Educational material regarding use of drones on LHI for tourists.

11.3 Preparedness for H5N1 Avian Influenza

- A question was raised regarding the potential impact of H5N1 on tourism.
- Lessons learned from the Rodent Eradication Project were referenced, highlighting the importance of community awareness, education, and preparedness.
- Identified risks include the zoonotic potential of the disease.
- Need for adequate PPE and other precautionary measures has been acknowledged and addressed in preparation for any response that may be required.
- Legislative requirements include notifying the government and the community if and when an outbreak occurs.

The Board:

1. **Noted** Lord Howe Island Board has undertaken preparedness for H5N1 Avian Influenza (H5 bird flu) and is ready to respond to an on-island outbreak.
2. **Noted** a Scientific Advisory Panel has been convened to support the LHIB assess risks from H5 bird flu to endemic Woodhens and Currawongs and to consider feasible response options, including emergency capture of a small number of birds for ex-situ conservation.

11.4 Phasmid Translocation Proposal

- RJ queried how Phasmid numbers were determined for successful relocation; KW advised 1,000 individuals are ready for reintroduction across multiple sites and life stages.
- RJ asked about potential impacts on residences; KW noted the matter was raised at CEAC but remains unclear at this stage.
- The zoo is preparing and researching FAQs on Phasmid diet, including vegetable and fruit preferences.
- MR moved the motion for approval.

The Board:

1. **Approved** submission of phasmid translocation proposal to NSW DCCEEW wildlife licensing team.
2. **Approved** LHIB World Heritage team proceeding with detailed project planning and implementation, in partnership with Melbourne Zoo and NSW DCCEEW.

11.5 Skatepark Proposal Future

- Option 1 requires re-evaluation due to environmental changes affecting shipping costs and materials since the project was last priced.
- Option 2 proposes a variation assessing alternate sites that would reduce load on the concrete-dependent location.
- Option 3 considers reallocating the funding to a more child-friendly project, noting this would require approval to redirect funds.
- The Skate Park Committee, involved for eight years, prefers retaining the bowl, though redesign may be required due to concrete cost and site constraints.

- Soil contamination exists beneath the original Option 1 site, and there is reluctance to pour substantial concrete near the foreshore.
- Governance pathways for varying or revisiting previous decisions were discussed.
- The funding was originally redirected from the Stevens Reserve walking track.
- An above-ground bowl or track was noted as a possible alternative.
- Concern was raised that further consultation may be reputationally problematic and costly, given the number of current projects and length of time the skate park project has been active.

The Board:

1. **Approved** undertaking further community consultation and seeking further clarification on options 1-3 and funding hurdles.

11.6 Shared Zone Implementation

- The Traffic Committee recommended addressing crowding and limited parking in the area.
- Trees were noted as being too close to the roadway between Diamonds and Thompsons store, and that there were safety issues when vehicles park in front of the Crooked Post.
- Proposal to approve a shared zone, further reduce the speed limit, and allow use of yellow lines or loading zones permitting 5–10 minutes of idling.
- Further community consultation will be undertaken, with input from several Traffic Committee members to be incorporated into the consultation summary.
- A high-level map of signage options was discussed, with emphasis on minimising visual pollution.
- RJ moved, JL seconded the proposal.

The Board resolved:

That the Lord Howe Island Board **approve** public exhibition inviting comment for a period of 20 days on:

1. **The establishment of a Shared Zone** within the town centre (as per attached diagram) with an enforceable 15 km/h speed limit.
2. **Retention** of existing straight-stall parking configuration on the Abemama frontage.
3. **Marking** of the proposed Loading Zone adjacent to the Public Hall or as an alternative measure, community education to discourage parking.

11.7 VHF Radio Repeater Installation

- Consultation with Mt Gower operations has occurred to identify a suitable and preferred spot and extensive exercises have been conducted regarding the practicality of the location.
- Mover JL

The Board:

1. **Approved** the installation of a VHF radio repeater aerial nearby the Get Up Place on Mt Gower.

12 POLICY AND STRATEGY

12.1 PPP Plan of Management

- The Board noted the Permanent Park Preserve (PPP) Plan of Management (2010) requires updating.
- A review has been undertaken over several years; the work has been synthesised into the updated 2025 Plan of Management format.
- New considerations for 2025, including drone use, have been incorporated for Board review prior to public exhibition.

- The Board agreed the document should undergo further internal review, including a meeting with the Elected Board members and additional input from NR and MO before being released for the required 60-day public exhibition period.
- Concerns were raised regarding Appendix C drone-use guidelines, specifically the requirement to contact the Board before flying; this will be reconsidered prior to exhibition.
- Anecdotal issues with drone use during helicopter operations were noted, including a recent incident at Salmon Beach. Notifications and temporary extended no-fly zones are in place during heliops.
- The Board confirmed the paper will proceed subject to noted amendments and return for further consideration after consultation.

The Board:

1. **Approved** deferral of public exhibition of the Draft Permanent Park Preserve Plan of Management 2025 (PPP PoM) pending further internal review.

13 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

13.1 DA – 20204.2.1 – Taaffe

The Board:

1. Approved: i. OC2025.5.1 for the Carport Attached to the Existing Garage and a new Aerated Wastewater Management System at Lot 167 DP 757515, Neds Beach Road, Lord Howe Island be issued AND

ii. Considers that legal and practical access to the subject development site is achieved based upon the historic agreement and records on file and continuing use of the existing driveway access to Lot 167 DP 757515 as per its considerations and Resolution for the Taaffe Matter (Item 6.1) at the June 2025 meeting, AND

iii. DA2024.2.1 (Construction New (Category A) Single Storey, Dual Occupancy Dwelling, Carport Attached to Existing Garage and Aerated Wastewater Management System, at Lot 167 DP 757515, Neds Beach Road, Lord Howe Island), be approved subject to conditions to be prepared under delegation.

14 LEASING AND LAND ADMINISTRATION

14.1 Application for consent to transfer PL1954.32 - Estate Leslie King to Hayden Leslie King

- RJ moved for approval.

The Board:

1. **Recommend to the Minister to grant approval** to transfer by way of Will of PL1954.32, being Lot 343 DP 1017179, from the Estate of Leslie Allen King to Hayden Leslie King as sole tenant.

14.2 Application to transfer two perpetual leases - Estate of John Francis Green

- The Board noted the transfer of leases from John Francis Green to Allana and James Green, including the suspension of residency.
- There are two perpetual leases held; the Board confirmed that holding more than one lease requires Ministerial permission, common in cases of inheritance.
- Suspension of residency to be granted for two years to allow the leaseholders to determine in which lease they will reside.
- A follow-up paper is expected in February to address outstanding residency and lease matters.

The Board:

1. **Recommend the Minister approve** the transfer by way of Will of PL1958.04, being Portion 70 and Portion 71 of LHI 18 and PL1954.45, being Portion 91 of LHI 43 from the Estate of John Francis Green to Alanna Jean Green and James Martin Green as equal shares Tenants in Common.
2. **Noted Commonwealth Banks intention to discharge** the mortgage over PL1958.04 and PL1954.45 for the late John Francis Green.
3. **Recommend the Minister approve** the transfer by way of mortgage over PL1958.04, being Portion 70 and Portion 71 and PL1954.45, being Portion 91 from Alanna Jean Green and James Martin Green to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia once confirmation of approval to refinance the leases is received from the bank.
4. **Approved to** suspend the condition of residency over PL1958.04 under other adverse circumstances for Alanna Jean Green and James Martin Green under Section 21(7) of the Lord Howe Island Act 1953 for a period of 2 years.
5. **Recommend the Minister approve** to suspend the condition of residency over PL1954.45 for Alanna Jean Green and James Martin Green under Section 23(12) of the Lord Howe Island Act 1953 for a period of 2 years.

14.3 LSPS and Land Capacity Study Update

- The Board received an update on the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and Local Environmental Plan (LEP).
- Foundational work for the LSPS is underway, using information from the Community Strategic Plan and an evidence base.
- Six technical memos covering topics such as water, ecology, and wastewater have been completed and provided to Board members; 20 years of data and gap analyses inform potential further investigation.
- An electricity study is complete; community consultation on future energy options will form part of the LSPS evidence base.
- All work is on schedule and being reviewed with the EBM Committee to address key planning limitations.
- Collaboration with the Department of Planning is ongoing; a framework has been provided to guide LSPS development.
- A capacity-led LSPS approach is being applied due to geographic limitations and extensive Permanent Park Preserve coverage, focusing on innovative land use and growth limitations.
- The capacity-led approach assesses what outcomes are achievable within existing constraints and evaluates expectations versus practical capacity.
- Questions were raised regarding whether a capacity-led LSPS is the most suitable planning mechanism for the island; research and consultation with the Department of Planning is ongoing.
- Legislation requires the island to have an LSPS; this is the first formal LSPS for the island.
- Board members noted the unique context of the island and the need to balance legal obligations with practical limitations.
- NR asked whether soft infrastructure (social services, etc.) is included in the capacity analysis.
- DM confirmed a review of social services is part of one of the technical papers, forming part of the evidence base for decision-making.
- Papers feed into the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) alongside technical memos, electricity study, and communications study.

The Board:

1. **Noted** the LSPS, LEP Review process, timeline, and update.

15 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Nil

16 GENERAL BUSINESS AND QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

16.1 Department of Ageing Visit & Ageing-in-Place Initiatives

TT reported that

- Two representatives from the Department of Ageing visited the island.
- Positive feedback received; suggestions included supporting community members to age well at home and remain on the island.
- Proposed initiatives: staff quarters, small day respite centre, Meals on Wheels, and additional community services.
- The Board confirmed support for ongoing work and for administrative assistance, noting DM's workload would accommodate continued support.
- Noted that there is no dedicated community services position in the administration currently; follow-up on the role will be clarified.
- Acknowledged importance of the work and the Board's commitment to supporting future decisions in this area.

16.2 Residency & SmartLynx Update

- Discussion of residency requirements: a photo ID is currently needed due to ongoing transition to the Smart Links system.
- Administration is working with Smart Links to clarify future residency processes under the Residency Fare Scheme.

16.3 Wastewater System & Development Application (DA)

- Update requested on wastewater system for Lot 44; not included in this meeting but ready for review.
- DA for wastewater is with Peter Chapman; hospital wastewater was prioritized first.
- The Board agreed to consider the DA out-of-session if needed.
- The prior fact sheet addressed community concerns; no additional exhibition required.

17 NEXT MEETING

10 & 11 February 2025