Minutes

Lord Howe Island Board

Meeting	Lord Howe Island Board Meeting
Location	Community Hall, Lord Howe Island
Date/Time	Tuesday 10th February 11:15am – In-Camera Session Tuesday 10th February 1:00pm - Closed Session Wednesday 11th February 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	**Hon. 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	**Suzie Christensen**, SC, Chief Executive Officer (All) **Michael Vader, MV,** ED Business Delivery, NPWS (3.1, 11.1) **Bradley Josephs**, BJ, Senior Manager, Infrastructure and Engineering Services (Day 2) **Krissy Ward**, KW, Senior Manager, Environment (Day 2) **Michael Chalmers**, MC, Senior Manager, Business and Corporate Services (All) **Oriana Senese**, OS, Principal Project Officer (NPWS) (11.1)
Minutes	**Tamiyka Abbott**, TA, Executive Assistant

On Tuesday 10th February, an in-camera session was held with Board Members only in attendance from 11:15 am-12.30pm. The closed session commenced at 1:00pm and closed at 3:18pm. On Wednesday 11th of February, the open session commenced at 9:00am and closed at 11:57am.

Unless otherwise specified, all Board decisions were unanimous.

CLOSED SESSION

1 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Closed Session

2 WH&S AND RISK MANAGEMENT

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

Closed Session

2.2 Privacy Governance and Procedural Improvements

Closed Session

3 OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

3.1. Marine Freight Service

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Closed Session

4 FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

4.1 Finance Report as of 31st of December 2025.

Closed Session

5 LEASING AND LAND ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Application for consent to transfer PL1966.02 – Estate Leslie Allen King to Executor of the Estate of Dulcie King

Closed Session

6 COMMITTEE

Closed Session

OPEN SESSION

7 GOVERNANCE

7.1 Minutes of Previous Minutes – Notice of Adoption

The Board considered the Minutes of the November 2025 Board Meeting as circulated with the Board papers. No amendments were proposed.

The Board:

1. **Endorsed** the Board meeting of November 2025.

7.2 Actions from Previous Minutes

The Board considered the Action List, including completed and outstanding actions arising from the November 2025 meeting and earlier meetings.

- It was noted that:
  - Most completed actions were routine in nature (including lease transfers).
  - Several actions remain in progress or are not yet due (including trial outcomes and LEP-related matters).
  - Reporting formats continue to be refined.
- The Board discussed:
  - Follow-up of the dedicated Community Services position, noting it was originally established as a temporary role and may require review as part of future budget and establishment considerations.
  - Longstanding actions on the register, including matters dating back to 2017 and 2023.
- CEO advised that some older actions are being progressed through broader strategic work (including asset management planning and the LEP review), while others may require agreed retirement.
- The Board supported refining the Action List to ensure it reflects current and relevant matters.

The Board:

1. **Noted** the information provided in this report.

8 STATUS AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

8.1 Compliance and Status Reporting

- Board considered the compliance and status report and agreed to take the attachment as read.
- Discussed the importance of continued biosecurity vigilance, including detections occurring on the mainland.
- Adjustments to the biosecurity surveillance plan were noted to be discussed later in the meeting.
- Development projects noted as progressing and some required further consultation from the community.
- Reporting format was agreed as clear and useful, may be adopted as the agreed upon template going forward.

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.

Action – include status of all tenure and property matters

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT

9.1 Chief Executive Officer's Report

- The Board considered the CEO's report.
- Policy review has been delayed. Recruitment of additional resources is planned to progress the review.
- Upgrades to the Hall (including IT and audiovisual systems) are expected to be completed prior to the next Board meeting (May), improving meeting functionality and community use.
- Discussion was held about grant-funded beach wheelchair and access mat arising from audience question. The Board advised:
    - Extensive investigations have been undertaken to identify a compliant and suitable installation site.
    - No feasible long-term location has been confirmed.
    - Administration resources are currently constrained due to multiple funded projects.
    - The equipment remains available for use.
- A community member suggested reinstating the original interim location. The Chair advised the matter would be taken offline for further consideration and reported back.
- The Board discussed the resident fare scheme under the Transport for NSW aviation contract.
- The resident rate is currently available.
- Proof of Lord Howe Island residency (e.g. driver's licence or equivalent documentation) is required.
- The contract is managed by Transport for NSW; the Board continues to advocate but is not the contracting authority.
- A community meeting with SkyTrans (facilitated by the local Member) is scheduled prior to month-end.
- It was noted that previous fare flexibility under the former operator (Qantas) may not be replicable under current commercial arrangements with SkyTrans.

The Board:

1. **Noted** the December 2025 / January 2026 CEO Report

10 FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

10.1 Finance Report (Verbal Update Only)

- Minor grant adjustments are being finalised, noting additional income will be included.
- Scaling back on some projects to ensure coverage moving into next financial year.

The Board:

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

11 POLICY AND STRATEGY

11.1 Critical Infrastructure Program

- Serco Australia was announced as the preferred tenderer on 20 November 2025.
- The design and construct contract was signed on 5 February 2026.

- A Project Control Group to review Detailed Design has been established, including elected Board members and nominated community representatives. Meetings have been scheduled.
- With contract execution complete, vessel plans will be released.
- The vessel Operations and Maintenance Tender documentation is being finalised for release.
- Tender assessment has been completed by NSW Public Works.
- Discussion acknowledged strong community expectations that the new freight operation will improve on the current model.
- A simulation model (including seasonal scenarios) has been developed as a proof of concept of the Island side unloading and loading
- The model provides a visual and operational baseline but allows flexibility for tenderers to propose improved or more efficient solutions.
- Final freight costs will be determined through the competitive tender process and are not yet known.
- Continued input from the Board and the community will remain as the program progresses.

The Board:

1. **Noted t**he critical infrastructure program and projects status for February 2026

11.2 Drone use on Lord Howe Island

- Drones are regulated and controlled by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
- Lord Howe Island Board is adhering to the Act and endorsing all its policies and procedures relating to drone use on the island.

The Board:

1. **Noted** that the use of drones is regulated through the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* via the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
2. **Noted** that Lord Howe Island Board should continue its promotion and support of responsible drone use in accordance with the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998*.

12 POLICY AND STRATEGY

12.1 Biosecurity Surveillance Plan Update

- Advised that the existing surveillance framework was established following the rodent eradication program and remains primarily rodent focused. It does not fully reflect the current biosecurity risk profile, including broader threats and the need for strengthened pre-border surveillance (sea and air pathways).
- Expanding surveillance beyond rodents to multiple species.
- Discussed strengthening pre-border and border controls to reduce incursion risk.
- Noted the need to reduce reliance on searches of private leasehold land.
- Refocusing surveillance across Crown land and road networks, supported by detection dog capability assessment and scientific grid-search methodology.
- It was noted:
    - Contract detection dogs will longer be engaged.
    - Surveillance is currently being undertaken by in-house staff and dogs.
    - The January search round has been completed.
    - One further quarterly search round is due before the next Board meeting.

- A revised surveillance approach will be presented to the next Board meeting, including a proposal to formally cease routine searches of private leasehold properties and instead focus on Crown land and public areas, with targeted follow-up where detection warrants further investigation.
- It was clarified that authorised officers retain entry powers under the Biosecurity Act, however surveillance activities are undertaken cooperatively with residents wherever possible.

The Board:

1. **Approved** a review and update of the Lord Howe Island Biosecurity Surveillance Plan 2022
2. **Noted** the seven areas for consideration in the update (below).
3. **Noted** that the new plan will cover the construction and early operational phases of the LHIB Critical Infrastructure Project (CIP) (2026 – 2028).

12.2 PPP Plan of Management

- The Plan had been circulated to Board members following the previous meeting.
- No substantial changes have been made to the version previously circulated and considered.
- Consultation has continued, including engagement with the environmental advisory group.
- A Board member advised they had undertaken a detailed review and identified comments and questions to discuss further with staff. However, it was noted that these matters should not delay public exhibition and that broader community feedback would be valuable at this stage.
- It was requested that, during public consultation, staff continue to work closely with relevant stakeholder groups to ensure comprehensive review of the document.

The Board:

1. **Approved** a public exhibition of the Draft Permanent Park Preserve Plan of Management 2025 (PPP PoM).

13 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

13.1 Lord Howe Island Local Strategic Planning Statement Update

- Workshops have been held with the Committee to identify priority issues, including:
  - Significant native vegetation (SNV).
  - Commercial activity considerations.
- Three meetings were held over the Christmas period to progress strategic discussions.
- Supporting studies are underway, including:
  - Capacity analysis (population, utilities, infrastructure).
  - Environmental constraints.
  - Social and service delivery considerations.
- A draft LSPS is expected to be finalised for internal review in March.
- Following planning feedback, the LSPS will be presented to the Board for endorsement to proceed to public exhibition.
- The LSPS must undergo Departmental review and community consultation prior to finalisation.
- It was noted that the LSPS will articulate the Island's long-term vision (20 years) and set the framework for detailed LEP review. The overall LEP review process is expected to take up to two years, given legislative and Ministerial approval requirements.

The Board:

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

13.2 Limit On Number of Dwellings to Which Consent May Be Given

- The existing LEP specified a maximum of 25 additional dwellings by June 2025.
- Timeframe has now expired.
- The LEP requires a maximum number to be specified, subject to approval by the Secretary of the Department of Planning.
- To provide clarity during the LEP review period, the paper recommended:
    - Rolling over the balance of the original allocation (25 dwellings).
    - 12 dwellings have been allocated; a cap of 13 additional dwellings be recommended to the Secretary until the new LEP is adopted.
- It was noted:
    - Previous allocations have not been fully realised.
    - Development remains constrained by land availability, infrastructure, wastewater capacity, freight, cost, and statutory requirements.
    - Future applications will continue to be assessed on their merits.

The Board:

1. **Resolves** in accordance with Option B that the numerical limit for new dwellings under Clause 26(1) be 13 between now and the date a new LEP is adopted.
2. **Recommended** amendment of the number of dwellings that can be approved to the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to 13.
3. **Noted** that further constraints to the number of dwellings exist through the controls in the LEP, land tenure and development willingness and the current environmental constraints.

14 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Nil

15 GENERAL BUSINESS AND QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

- Will any proposed changes to the Biosecurity Surveillance Plan alter reporting obligations or compliance policies?
- What specific compliance or feasibility barriers prevent installation of the access mat at the original or alternative location?
- Can an interim solution (for the beach accessibility mat) be implemented pending identification of a permanent site?
- Is the Board satisfied that current resident fare eligibility settings meet community expectations?
- What further advocacy is being undertaken with Transport for NSW regarding communication and eligibility settings?
- What progress has been made to the potholes on the Island? How much has been completed thus far?
- Question regarding the wastewater system DA for Lot 44 was raised and RJ noted the board required further information.

16 NEXT MEETING

26th & 27th May 2026