

THE NATIONALS - MURRAY PLAINS AEDC AND NICOLLS FEDC JOINT MEETING

President

Elaine Lees
"Glenelso",
596 Black Culvert Rd,
DIGGORA 3561
Phone: 0417143 686

Treasurer

Damian Kelly
P O Box 1590
SWAN HILL 3585
Phone: 03 50332097

Secretary

Rob Amos
P O Box 2068
ECHUCA SOUTH 3564
Phone: 0413040199

Tuesday 31st 2021, 7.30pm - Held over ZOOM

WELCOME: BY PRESIDENT ELAINE LEES

Elaine welcomed Damian Drum, Peter Walsh, former MPs & Nicolls members to meeting.

PRESENT: As per the attendance sheet

APOLOGIES: As per the attendance sheet

Moved: Rob Amos Seconded: Paul Weller That the apologies be accepted. *Carried*

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MURRAY PLAINS MEETING HELD 2ND MAY 2021

The Minutes of the previous meeting are moved as true and correct

Moved: Douglas Amos Seconded: Neil Pankhurst *Carried*

Business arising from the previous meeting: Nil

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS NICHOLLS MEETING HELD 20TH JUNE 2021

The Minutes of the previous meeting are moved as true and correct

Moved: Bill Baxter Seconded: Peter Walsh *Carried*

Business arising from the previous meeting: Nil

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Inwards: - Nil

2. Outwards:

Previous meeting minutes
Notice of meeting

That the correspondence received accepted and sent endorsed.

Moved: Rob Amos Seconded: Paul Weller *Carried*

REPORTS:

Nicholls FEDC President – Lindsay Dann.

- It has been a very rugged time for members of our community lately.
- Priority is to raise more funds to support next years elections.
- The priority needs to be to win back the seat of Shepparton.

Murray Plains AEDC President - Elaine Lees – see attached.

Treasurer's Report The treasurer presented the financial reports for approval.

That Treasurers report be received. Moved: Damian Kelly, Seconded: Karen Kelly
Carried

Fundraising Report – Leigh Wilson

- The fundraising dinner held at Frank and Claire Miller's place on Friday 6th May 2021 was a great success with vital funds raised. It was a wonderful venue with wonderful hosts. Damian Drum, Peter Walsh and Bridget McKenzie's attendance added to the success of the night.
- Damian Drum commented that it was an amazing night.
- Bruce Lloyd said it brought back some good memories.
- Peter Walsh said great night and great selection of wines. Well done to all involved.

State President – Neil Pankhurst

- Neil commented it was a shame that they had to meet on Zoom rather than in person.
- Neil has been away for a period and the new State Vice President, Jo Armstrong, filled in and did a great job.
- We all need to be a united voice over the next 18 months to ensure success at elections. We work as one.
- The Wonthaggi Conference was very successful and great that we could meet in person.
- Fund raising is very important although very challenging in the current conditions.
- Neil acknowledged the hard work the federal and state politician were doing.

State Council: Elaine Lees – See attached.

Local State Member – Peter Walsh MP, Leader of The Nationals, State Member for Murray Plains

- Peter thanked Elaine for her very informative reports as usual.
- Draft election boundary changes have been announced. It looks pretty good for the Nationals.
- Corruption is still a problem with the Labor government. He gave the example of "slug gate" in Dandenong ruining a business.

- The “Dan has no Plan” post COVID campaign has been started. Everyone needs to push it.
- Peter office has had great success with the \$250 Power Saver program. The office has assisted over 500 pensioners to claim it.
- During the COVID period all MPs have been working very hard in their communities on a range of issues including try to get the Grey Nomads back from NSW and Qld.
- Swan Hill, money has now been announced for the new hospital. The new bridge plans are progressing. The local Council are doing works along the riverfront areas including purchasing the silos.
- Cohuna, there is a childcare centre being set up.
- Echuca, the bridge construction is progressing well and will be completed in the first half of next year. Johnno’s Run charity are hoping to be the first people to cross the bridge. Helping St Joseph’s College with problems at the new school site.

Questions for Peter Walsh:

- Amanda McClaren, the state government are making it very hard for boarding students to make it back across the border. (Yanco Ag College)
- Bruce Lloyd, the Premier has announced a reduction in quarantine numbers, will this affect the number of migrate workers being brought to Victoria. Peter, migrant workers are not being quarantined in Victoria so no effect.
- Brett Hosking, the latest infrastructure report shows road and rail right across Victoria are in a terrible state. How will the Nationals deal with this? Peter, the state needs to build great infrastructure to bring more people to the regions. Is the seat of Mildura a seat the Nationals want to win back? Peter, yes.
- Wendy Watters , where is the scientific evidence that playgrounds are contributing to the spread of the virus? Why don’t we have rapid testing. Peter, there is no evidence, and we should be implementing rapid testing which the Nationals have been advocating for.

Local Federal Member – Damian Drum MP, Federal Member for Nicholls

- Tallygaroopna and dinner at the Millers were great events.
- There has been a change of leaders at the federal level.
- Some federals National have been locked in Canberra for the last five weeks due to COVID.
- New Agriculture Visa coming soon. Trade off with Ag Visa changes from UK Trade agreement no longer mandating UK backpackers to work in Ag.
- Afghanistan crisis, many families from the Shepparton area have been affected.
- COVID has hit Shepparton very hard over the last few weeks. Near one third of the population in lockdown.
- The Zero Net Emissions by 2050 target has divided some of the Nationals at a federal level.

Questions for Damian Drum:

- Bruce Lloyd, will George Christianson cause problems for the Nationals at the next election, Damian, unknown.

- Brett Hosking, The Zero Net Emissions by 2050 target has created lots of discussions in the Ag industry. More data is required.
- Janette Powell, are we getting our message out there, particularly by social media. Damian, more work to be done.
- James Brooks, social media is a great way to go. How are things going with the Shepparton COVID outbreak? Damian, it looks like it is getting under control.
- Wendy, Has the ABC been taken to account over tax payer money paying for legal cost. Damian, we need to be very careful about alienating the ABC.
- David Hackett, Can the Swn Hill community be included in the correspondence regarding Afghan refugees. Damian, yes.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Peter Walsh showed the meeting the new video from the Nationals are the “no Plan Dan” campaign. Members were generally impressed.

Photos shown from the State conference and the fund-raising dinner at the Millers.

1. Leigh Wilson, is there going to be more land released. Builders will need to be incentivised due to increasing costs. Peter, Nationals have committed to five million dollars to “Flying Planning Squads” to assist local councils.

2. Paul Weller, is there going to be a focus on apprentices and trainees, it is very hard to get young people to join the agriculture industry, particularly the dairy industry. Peter, more work needs to be done here.

Peter Walsh thanked Noel and Dorothy Maughan for there service and dedication to the Nationals over many decades and the wished them well for their future. It is very unfortunate we can not give them the send-off they deserve.

Date and Venue for Next meeting, AGM Gunbower Tavern, Gunbower
31st October 2021

MEETING CLOSED: 9.23pm

Attendance List

Peter Walsh	Bruce Lloyd	James Brook
Wendy Watters	Chrissy Weller	Leigh Wilson
Elaine & David Lees	Rachael McAsey	Phillip DeAth
Damian Drum	Paul Weller	Rita & Bill Bloomfield
Lindsay Dann	Ron Hooper	Ruby Telford
Robert Amos	Brett Hosking	Barry & Brenda Bishop
Douglas Amos	Dorothy & Noel	Amanda McClaren
Bill Baxter	Maughan	David Hackett
Frank Dean	Damien & Karen Kelly	Claire Ewart-Kennedy
John Brereton	Neil Pankhurst	Elizabeth Spicer
Ian & Jeanette Powell	Jack Norris	

Apologies - Frank and Claire Miller

Murray Plains AEDC Presidents Report Quarterly Meeting – Aug 31st, 2021- 7.30pm
Zoom/Phone.

After the pleasure of being able to catch up with face-to-face meetings since last November, we are again having to utilise technology to maintain communication with our local Members of Parliament and each other. Our mindset is changing as we are acknowledging the reality of accepting Covid-19 as an ongoing part of our lives, & consequently the effective use of masks, QR codes, vaccination certificates etc., whilst also encouraging the hesitant amongst us to be vaccinated.

We have been blessed with another promising season, although now looking for more rain especially in the mallee, the countryside generally looks magnificent.

Our Murray Plains fundraising dinner held on May 7th at Frank & Claire Millers in Echuca was a great social & financial success. A special thanks to you all for your support, & especially the Millers, & Fund-Raising coordinator Leigh Wilson.

The Victorian State Conference held on May 21st & 22nd, was relocated from Inverloch to Wonthaggi to a venue able to meet Covid restrictions. Murray Plains was very well represented, with over 20 members attending & participating in the conference debates. The Victorian Nationals Outlook magazine delivered this week has a complete report on the determinations., including the following five from Murray Plains, all of which were carried.

- 1 Adequate funding for Public Land Management including roadside clearing
2. Adequate funding for Road Maintenance in lieu of unplanned speed restrictions to delay roadworks.
3. Immediate review of Murray Darling Basin Authority policy allowing massive discharges of precious Murray River Water into the Southern Ocean,
4. Support for the transition of long-term refugees living & working in rural areas to permanent visas with agreement to remain in rural workforce.
5. Rejection of proposed new camping regulations relating to Crown Land Reserves due to start in Sept.

Ten resolutions resulting from the Women's Conference held at Trawool in Feb, which was well attended by Murray Plains & Nicholls members, were also carried at State Conference. They related to support in rural areas for Agriculture, Disability Services, Housing, Industry, Employment, Mental Health, Family Violence, Transport, & Telecommunication.

Lindsay Dann president of Nicholls FEDC was presented with the Volunteer of the year award, congratulations Lindsay on a well-deserved recognition of your commitment to the Nationals. In retrospect, we were very lucky to have participated in a real live conference before restrictions again. Other National Party activities I participated in recently included the Nicholls FEDC Sunday Roast lunch on June 20th at Tallygaroopna Football Ground. It was a beautiful sunny interesting day, with Sam Birrell "Committee for Greater Shepparton", Damian, Bridget & Peter all attending & addressing the meeting.

The John McEwan Discussion Group hosted an online forum on Wed July 28th., with Senator Matt Canavan from Queensland as guest speaker. Although some of his political actions may not align with our priorities in Victoria, he is an articulate, knowledgeable & interesting speaker.

On Wednesday August 25th, Liberal State Leaders Michael O'Brien & Cindy McLeish, supported by our Nationals Leaders, Peter & Steph, held an online webinar, Getting Victoria Back to the Top. Our Murray Plains AEDC committee with Peter, Rob & Paul, are currently working towards updating our membership contacts list to include mobile numbers & email details where possible.

Thanks, Rob, for organising tonight's Zoom meeting.

Murray Plains AEDC Quarterly Meeting –August 31st, 2021, State Councillors report.

June State Council Meeting was held on Saturday 26th via Zoom, commencing with MP's reports which I always find interesting as they give firsthand accounts of issues across the state.

Danny O'Brien member for Sth Gippsland reported on the Storms & Floods which impacted his electorate in June with the Thompson River flood and phenomenal Storm damage especially in the Strzelecki's, north of Dunbalk, with trees down everywhere, a huge clean-up effort with the ADF providing great assistance. About 600 subscribers were still without power, Danny asked minister to review AUSNET contracts, as it was a big issue for those without power for more than few days, especially the dairy farmers. Danny thanked Melina, Peter and Darren for their support. He said the ABC coverage was disgraceful, with no recognition of the work the Nationals were doing to support the impacted communities, whereas they gave coverage to the ALP, despite them not making an appearance in the affected areas. Covid has impacted the electorate office in Sth Gippsland with a huge increase in constituent case numbers, from 100 to 500/month last year, and currently still a lot higher than 2019. A huge increase in workload on Danny and staff. (I'm sure that is replicated with our local members, especially dealing with the ongoing border issues. Can you imagine a nationals members relocating away from their electorate to a holiday home in the current shutdown as an ALP member was reported to have done?)

Melina Bath reported on the Yallourn mine flood damage concern with the Morwell River diverted around the power stations. It is a long-term concern; riverbanks need fortifying. Yallourn has 7 years left Delayed Government Response took Lily Ambrosio 5 days to respond to potential crack in Yallourn mine

Tim McCurdy – Thanks to everyone in Nationals for support to the McCurdy family over past 7 years. Corruption in this government breathtaking, with a classic example locally.

Damian Drum – Spoke on attempt to get Amendments to Murray Darling Basin Plan through parliament. Huge amount of legal work being done. Adelaide, Independents & Greens are against.

Darren Chester – Federal Member for Gippsland - expressed concern re' actions which led to leadership spill in Canberra, however he has committed to contest the next election to try and unite. Government grants from Covid for local roads & road safety has a use or loose time frame. Pressure on local councils & Vic Roads to keep money circulating in community, sometimes problem of councils competing to get same contractors. Time limit of 28 days for community consultation to study council budget, now 8 days, maybe a change in local government act. Huge variation across councils in Victoria.

Matt Harris - State Director, reported ready for Federal Election. Recent Polling shows ALP vote slipping. Working closely with Liberal colleagues. A huge effort with Peter's steady leadership and guidance to Lib/Coalition. Fundraising ongoing challenge with opponents all cashed up as always. Michael McCormick's attendance in Vic has helped fundraising. A lot of ground for fundraising lost due to Covid. We need to do Fundraising every year. State Boundary changes consultation rarely changes. **Neil Pankhurst-** Congratulated Jo Armstrong & Chris Nixon being appointed State Senior & Junior Vice Presidents, Jacinta Price is NT senator elect

State Leaders Report – Peter commends Maree – Women's section lots of motions to conference

Young Nat's - \$3000 raised on Friday night auction at Conf, great to see so many young nats there

Federal Leadership - Two motions, one to congratulate Barnaby, and one to Thank Michael.