

Special General Meeting

Minutes

Date: 09/08/2021
Scheduled Start: 7.30 PM
Venue: On line Only
Audio: <http://dte.org.au/audiominutes>
Register on line: <https://dte.coop/live.meeting>
Zoom Connect: <https://dte.coop/to/zoom>
Phone Connect: (02) 8015 2088 Meeting ID Number 2362803611

#	Item	
1	Acknowledge, and pay respect, to the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of the land	
	<p>As we all know - First Nation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation are part of the oldest continuous surviving culture on this planet today. I pay my respects the Ngaro Peoples, who are the traditional custodians of the islands and coastal regions of the Whitsundays, where I currently reside. We join this meeting from many different places around the country tonight.</p> <p>We acknowledge the genocide and dispossession of these peoples, which is a part of white fellas' disgraceful colonial legacy.</p> <p>We abhor the ongoing atrocities perpetrated by both state and federal authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the continued involuntary removal of children from their families,• the disproportionate overrepresentation of incarcerated aboriginal juveniles in our prisons• and the appalling number of aboriginal deaths in custody. <p>This country Always was Always IS and Always Will Be Aboriginal Land.</p>	
2	<u>Meeting Started</u>	<i>Procedural</i>
	7:37pm	
3	<u>Election of Chair, Minute Taker and Host</u>	<i>Procedural</i>
	<p>Chairperson: Tania Morseman Minute Keeper: Trevor Pitt Host: Skye Fitzpatrick</p>	

4	<u>Attendance</u>	<i>Procedural</i>			
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 210 528 981"> Aaron Shipperlee Andrew Wilkinson Angela Neal Brian Denham Bruce Pinney Bryan Isaacs Bryce Wentworth Caryn Kettle Chris Wilson Coral Larke Craig Newcombe Dan Smith Darrell Reid Darren Geraghty Darrylle Ryan David Cruise, David Ramin McDonald Deb Moerkerken Denise Banville Don Royal Elisa Brock </td> <td data-bbox="528 210 922 981"> Elizabeth Bell Ellen Brogan Fraser Karhunkynsi Gary Lasky Geoff Howes Graham Fleming Grant Waldram Ian Hales Jack Wells Jenni Tarr John Magor John Reid Jude Murray Kate Sarah, Kathy Ernst Kevin Garber Kevin Taylor Lance Nash Lars Nissen Lindy Hunt Malcolm Matthews </td> <td data-bbox="922 210 1326 981"> Mark Helson Mark Rasmussen Marte Kinder Martin Schwarz Matthew Peers Melody Braithwaite Peter Tippett Ray Higgins Richard Woodgate Rick Gill Robin Macpherson Rohan Levy Skye Fitzpatrick Steve Poynton Suzie Helson Tania Morsman Trevor Pitt Troy Reid Vanessa Ernst Walter Padovani </td> </tr> </table>	Aaron Shipperlee Andrew Wilkinson Angela Neal Brian Denham Bruce Pinney Bryan Isaacs Bryce Wentworth Caryn Kettle Chris Wilson Coral Larke Craig Newcombe Dan Smith Darrell Reid Darren Geraghty Darrylle Ryan David Cruise, David Ramin McDonald Deb Moerkerken Denise Banville Don Royal Elisa Brock	Elizabeth Bell Ellen Brogan Fraser Karhunkynsi Gary Lasky Geoff Howes Graham Fleming Grant Waldram Ian Hales Jack Wells Jenni Tarr John Magor John Reid Jude Murray Kate Sarah, Kathy Ernst Kevin Garber Kevin Taylor Lance Nash Lars Nissen Lindy Hunt Malcolm Matthews	Mark Helson Mark Rasmussen Marte Kinder Martin Schwarz Matthew Peers Melody Braithwaite Peter Tippett Ray Higgins Richard Woodgate Rick Gill Robin Macpherson Rohan Levy Skye Fitzpatrick Steve Poynton Suzie Helson Tania Morsman Trevor Pitt Troy Reid Vanessa Ernst Walter Padovani	
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5	<u>Confirmation of previous minutes</u>	<i>Procedural</i>			
	<p>Date (09/07/2020) Moved:(Mark Rasmussen) Seconded: (John Magor) PBC Date (16/07/2020) Moved:(John Magor) Seconded: (Denise Banville) PBC Date (29/11/2020) Moved:((-) Seconded: (-) Minutes Missing (Tania to follow up / complete) Date (06/12/2020) Moved:(John Magor) Seconded: (Martin Schwarz) PBC Date (17/06/2021) Moved:(Bryan Isaacs) Seconded: (John Magor) PBC Date (24/06/2021) Moved:(Aaron Shipperlee) Seconded: (John Magor) PBC Date (01/07/2021) Moved:(Bryan Isaacs) Seconded: (Bruce Pinney) PBC</p>				
6	<u>Matters Arising</u>	<i>Procedural</i>			
	Nil				
7	<u>Correspondence and Reports</u>				
	<p>Richard presented a property report including photos of the recent Bylands cottage renovation – attached at the end of the minutes.</p> <p>Report on Status of, or Declaration regarding Casual Vacancy</p> <p>7.1 Gary Lasky – Returning officer – reported verbally to the meeting. One nomination received for the (disputed) casual vacancy for the director’s position.</p> <p>7.2 Gary Lasky – Director – reported to the meeting Legal advice obtained by the Board Meeting with Mark Williams (4 directors attended) Recommended - Position to be suspended. Until dispute resolution completed Once resolved... we can discuss the suspension further.</p> <p>Troy’s position is suspended. If his position is declared vacant John Magor will be appointed. Gary Lasky advised there will be 6 Acting Directors (1 position suspended)</p> <p>Gary amended his comment to “the casual vacancy has been suspended”.</p>				

Discussion comments:

Dan Smith to Everyone: 09:34 PM
Monday, 9 August 2021

Dear Members,

The DTE Board of Directors has obtained legal advice regarding the status of a casual vacancy on the board. The advice received is that declaring Troy Reid's director position vacant and proceeding with an election in the current circumstances would expose the co-operative to legal action.

The Board is recommended to continue with a dispute resolution process before declaring a casual board vacancy.

Accordingly, the Board advises that any casual vacancy is suspended until such time as all avenues have been exhausted in resolving the dispute.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors

Down to Earth (Victoria) Co-operative Society Limited

From Graham F to Everyone: 10:02 PM

Gary Lasky – Director – reported to the meeting

Legal advice obtained by the Board

Position is not vacant and that the election to be suspended.

7 Directors remaining

From Kathy to Everyone: 10:08 PM

I did not receive the advice

From Kate Shapiro to Everyone: 10:17 PM

Gary stated that Troy's position had been suspended, Coral stated that was incorrect, that any casual vacancy had been suspended, and then we've confirmed Graham's summary

Copy of Board advice to members attached.

	<p>Monday, 9 August 2021</p> <p>Dear Members,</p> <p>The DTE Board of Directors has obtained legal advice regarding the status of a casual vacancy on the board. The advice received is that declaring Troy Reid's director position vacant and proceeding with an election in the current circumstances would expose the co-operative to legal action.</p> <p>The Board is recommended to continue with a dispute resolution process before declaring a casual board vacancy.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Board advises that any casual vacancy is suspended until such time as all avenues have been exhausted in resolving the dispute.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Board of Directors Down to Earth (Victoria) Co-operative Society Limited</p>	
21	<u>Carried Resolutions</u>	<i>Procedural</i>
22	<u>Next Meeting Date & Time Confirmation</u>	<i>Procedural</i>
	Meeting adjourned to 7:30pm Monday 16 th August 2021.	
23	<u>Meeting Adjourned</u>	<i>Procedural</i>
	10:35	

Property Report

Prepared by Richard Woodgate

Greetings All,

I just wanted to share a few thoughts and facts around maintaining a rural property. I realise many people are from the city and may not know very much around this particular topic. I think it's important that people understand a few things. Also just keeping people in the loop so that they know what's going on. This is where it happens, this is the asset that allows Confest to occur and brings in the income. Without this nothing would be possible. I'll just start with a bit of history for those that don't know. DTE owns two properties. One is called Bylands, it's 471 acres in size and is 17 kms south of Deniliquin. The other property is called Woorooma, I've forgotten exactly how big it is but I think it's just under 1000 acres. It's 14 kms south of Moulamein. If I remember correctly Woorooma was purchased around mid/late 2006 and the first confest here was summer 2006/7. Before that Confest was held at Bylands for a number of years.

Back in those days there were 2 Confests per year, a summer (new year) and the Easter one. So it would work something like this. A few weeks before the start of a Confest people would come on up, do a bit of work, prepare a few things, when I started with the vehicles I'd go out in the fields, find the vehicles where they'd broken down the festival before, tow them in, buy new batteries for them and get them going. After pack down everybody would leave the property and it would remain deserted until a few weeks before the next Confest. Then the cycle would repeat itself. Sometimes in June and September there would be working bees where a certain amount of work on the property would be done. But for a large part of the year the property would be unoccupied. This has been the pattern for nearly 15 years now, although last year was a bit different as there were people here for a long period. So I'm coming to my point here. Rural properties need constant maintenance. If you ask any farmer or landowner about this, the one thing they'll all agree on is that they have to put resources into maintaining their land. So when we talk about maintenance these are some of the areas that are addressed. As I mention each one, I'll give an example of how it impacts on Woorooma.

If we start with fences, Woorooma has fences that need to be maintained. We are fortunate that, as we don't carry stock on the land, most of the fences do not have to be in perfect condition, boundary or internal. But there is one fence that needs to be in perfect condition and it's our legal responsibility to make sure that it is. We share a boundary with a stock route paddock, it's crown land where drovers can put their animals so they can access the river. If that fence is not maintained one of two things could happen. DTE is liable for a fine that will be significantly higher than the cost of fixing the fence. Or Woorooma will have sheep / cattle / goats roaming around it. Believe me, drovers won't care, if they see feed for their animals they'll let them go. So we need to check that fence regularly and put the necessary resources into it if needed. There has been a fair bit of pressure on it recently as the drovers have been busy.

The next area of maintenance is roads. In Woorooma's case, because of constant rainfall over the last weeks / month, some of the roads have started to wash away in certain areas. I've also noticed that a number of water pipes, that run under the roads, have become visible because of the erosion. If a vehicle runs over these they will be damaged. When it dries up we have to get a truckload of limestone in, and I will use the Cat to repair the roads. The limestone will cost. Kevin Taylor has said he will pay for this out of his budget. If he can't do that then we will need money for that.

The next area needing attention is the weeds, the never ending weeds. At this time of the year the weeds start to take off. Three weeks ago they were ankle high, today they are waist high and in 3 weeks time they will be the same height as me. Now there are a number of issues associated with the weeds when it comes to weed control. Because of the nature of the organisation and the differing opinions some of the options are not available to us. If you ask any farmer in the area, they'll all say just use Roundup, it's been vastly improved in recent years. But it seems like that option is not available to us. So what do we do. The ride on mower has finally died after years of abuse and doing a job it was never intended to do. I have repaired it so many times in years gone by but it is beyond redemption now. For around \$1000 I could buy a good second hand Greenfield ride on that would do the job. But that would cost money. So the other option has been push mowers. But we don't have any working mowers, so I've collected the 6 broken mowers from the junkyard and managed to make 2 working mowers from them. It took me

nearly 3 weeks to mow around the house and surrounding areas at Bylands, a job that could have been done in a day with the right equipment. It's extremely frustrating. So now we are trying to tackle the weeds around the woolshed and sheep yards with a gas burner and a dodgy lawnmower. We cannot get even the small tractor and slasher into the area as they are too big for the confined spaces. People might ask why do we even concern ourselves with the weeds. Well for a number of reasons. Firstly they significantly increase the fire danger if they are up against buildings. The woolshed will go up in an instant if the dried up weeds around its' base catch alight. Secondly there are classified noxious weeds that DTE can be fined for if we don't take steps towards trying to control. Even facts like the warranty on the Rhino tanks will be voided if we allow weeds to grow within a certain distance of the tanks , I forget what it is , 1.5 / 2 meters, something like that. So we have to be on top of the weeds. That will take resources. The next area is buildings and infrastructure. This is probably the area that has had the most attention and on the whole is looking good. Fortunately we don't have many buildings to maintain. I was very happy to see that DTE spent money on fixing the roof of the stone cottage. So well done to whoever organised that and well done to Trevor Smith for doing the work. The only other building really is the woolshed. Andrew keeps it immaculate, I remember a number of years ago Coral organised for the roof to be repaired, so now if we can prevent it from burning down we'll be right.

And lastly vehicles, machinery, engines etc . This is a complex area and over the last 15 years there's never really been a satisfactory or consistent approach. Nothing has really worked. So basically all machinery needs maintenance. You cannot leave a machine unattended for lengthy periods and expect it to be ok at the end. These are some of the things that happen when vehicles are not given attention. Firstly batteries slowly go flat until they reach a level of discharge from which they can't be revived. Secondly fuel goes stale and jellifies inside carburettors and injectors. Everything then needs to be taken apart and cleaned and all the fuel drained and replaced. Thirdly fuel pumps seem to have a habit of dying when they are not used for a while . Tyres go flat and if left for long enough will rot on the underside, needing the tyres to be replaced. The sun will also cause plastic and rubber components to perish, rot etc .

So what is the solution here . I don't know what the long term solution is but I can suggest a solution for this year. Andrew and myself are here. We cannot go anywhere. Andrew cannot go back to the Philippines where he lives and I can't go to Victoria or Queensland. It looks like we might be stuck here for some time. DTE can benefit from this. And it won't cost them a cent. I'll explain. Between the both of us we have considerable knowledge in different areas. We are prepared to work, we enjoy it, we have good values, morals and ethics. I think we both understand that there's more to life than just taking. We buy everything we need ourselves, gone are the days when DTE fed whoever was on site. We use minimal wifi and the gas for shower and cooking is minute. One thing that will increase is the electricity bill and I have an answer for that as well. We have worked out exactly how much electricity each component here uses. Through the use of meters we are able to determine how many amps each appliance uses and for how long it was used for . How many people were here over that billing period and for how long. I know the billing period and the rate at which electricity is charged. I'm prepared to pay our share of electricity usage into a DTE account. So DTE can benefit enormously from this. Free maintenance and caretaking of the property's and it doesn't cost a cent. How good is that?

But we do need some support. Some resources need to be provided so that we are not working in ridiculous conditions. Having one part for three vehicles and taking that part and installing it in one vehicle, getting it running and then taking that part out of that vehicle and into the next so I can get that one running is just plain stupidity. That's how I did it last week. Luckily all three vehicles took the same part. We will maintain the vehicles. We will spend as little as possible on fixing them. But we will need to spend something. I have a key to the local mechanics workshop. I can take DTE vehicles there anytime on the trailer and use his tools and hoist to fix them. And I do. And if I don't know how to do something he is more than willing to share his considerable knowledge with me. He is a decent genuine country dude. And it probably saves DTE thousands.

There is a lot of fixing to be done here. Everything has been neglected for a long time. We won't be able to fix everything but we can fix a lot. But we will need some help. It makes sense to me to do it this way. Invest a tiny bit into the properties and it will have a worthwhile return. Give us the resources we need and it will be beneficial to DTE in the long run.

In regards to the SGM tonight and the report on Bylands I can say this. During March, April , May a fair bit of work was done there by Peter and Richard Cruise , Andrew Wilkinson and myself (Richard Woodgate) . Peter painted the whole interior of the house, fixed windows and doors ,other fittings , built kitchen cupboards and benches and installed a new ceiling in the large besser brick building . Andrew fitted two new showers and got on top of the

mouse plague. The house has gone from an abandoned, derelict mess to a very comfy place to stay. The wood heater heats up the whole house and the bath is in a league of its own. Myself and Andrew mowed around the house and surrounds, collected all the rubbish in many trailer loads from around the site and disposed of it. We gathered all the scrap metal from across the property, about 7 tons we were told, and made contact with a scrap metal dealer in Deniliquin who came out to look at it and who will take it for free.

There is still more work to do at Bylands, we have started some plumbing work and other jobs but we haven't been back to Bylands for a while so we are hoping to get there soon but Covid and lockdowns are making it unpredictable. So, basically, this is a bit of a rundown on what is happening on the properties at the moment. Hopefully the madness will end soon and people will be able to come on up here again in the near future. You will arrive to well-manicured lawns, good roads, a warm fire and no mice running over your face as you try to sleep (my experience). I know this is a long read and jumps a bit all over the place. But I hope it helps to inform anyone who is interested in what goes on here on the ground.

I'd also like to acknowledge and thank a few people for their support and help. John Reid for patiently spending hours on the phone with me, guiding and teaching me how to use the new water treatment system. Without his help we would be out of water now, but instead water restrictions are lifted and I'm in the process of making 200 000+ litres of drinking water so that when the next Confest happens, the water will be there. I'd also like to thank Kathy for her support, help and encouragement. And finally, Troy, who whenever I have a problem with the technology, I can ring and he will persevere until he sorts it. Thank you.

Ok that's enough, take it easy people.

There's much more to be gained in life by being loving, nurturing and giving than promoting toxic interaction and tearing each other to shreds.

Please see below for a few photos of the Bylands Cottage Renovation.



