



SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Purpose: Review of Membership Policy and Processes

12 July 2025 9am Camp Kitchen

Chairperson: Jac Larsen

Minute Taker: Denise Cobourn

Commenced: 9:10am

Acknowledgement of Country - Ben

Housekeeping: Reminder regarding meeting etiquette (Rule 50 Standing Orders at GMs)

Voting: Inactive members are not permitted to vote at a GM either in person or via a proxy (Rule 42 Voting).

Attendance:

Members: Anthony Griffin, Jenny & Wayne Skinner, Alexandra Gonzalez, Alicia Fox, Ben Adams, Erica Kuesler, Russell Childs, Rose Mahar, Mark Green, Rebekah Gorline, Belinda Ball, Elizabeth Locke, Marty Cole, Bronwyn Little, Justine Shaw

Directors: Denise Cobourn, Jac Larsen, Kevin Harper, Lee Albert, Craig Singleman (Julica's alternate), Mark Doonan

Apologies: Annu Du Chesne, Ishbel Keenan, James Galletly

Tabled Documents: Drafts: Membership Policy July 2025, Goolawah Co-op Expression of Interest, Questionnaire for Prospective Members; Prospective Member Reviews / Questionnaires: Nathan and Wynona Cosford, Terese Hope, Alvaro Gomez and Saray Barba, Helen and Mia Groombridge.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – overview

Membership Portfolio director – Anna, Committee – Elizabeth, Lexie, Marty, Ishbel

Membership Portfolio director attends MC meetings but is not a Guide for PMs.

Elizabeth and Lexie set the scene providing background and proposed improvements based on experience as guides. The Questionnaire is now a stand alone document i.e. not part of the Membership Application.

MEMBERSHIP POLICY – draft MP July 2025

Discussion points – Co-op committees are appointed, not elected. Seeking 7 members to join MC.

Changes:

- Addition of EOI into the process
- Requirement for two working bees (not one)
- Paragraph on maintaining membership eligibility
- 24-month timeframe to complete the process
- More detail under Selling Sites.

The overall content remains unchanged – rewording and reformatting aims to provide more detail and to clarify points in the current policy.

ACTION: Based on today's meeting, aim to finalise draft Membership Policy for posting by 19 July for voting at the AGM on 9 August.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - a new step in the membership process that has been trialed over recent months.

MC provided reasons for proposing the additional step of an EOI – there has been an increase in applicants presenting with “red flags” (examples provided and discussed). EOI was trialed as a means of vetting clear “red flags” before too much time was invested in applicants deemed unsuitable for the community. It is important to note that most people submitting an EOI are invited to the community. Prior to completing the EOI and visiting the Co-op, it is expected they would have learned about co-ops by visiting the recommended websites and doing their own research.

MC is seeking community feedback and support in best how to deal with “red flags”.

Comments:

- Post EOI on the website as is done with the Questionnaire and let the members decide, not the MC – this could potentially increase the process from 8 to 10 months.
- Privacy concerns could be overcome by de-identifying the form.
- Many intentional communities have a far more onerous process taking more than a year, with the PM required to live on the co-op. Our co-op currently has no accommodation for this. Why rush?
- Conversations are important because written responses on forms may fail to capture an accurate picture of the person.
- Must always be mindful not to discriminate.
- Should make it easier for people in the lower socio-economic group, not harder.
- More pressure should be put on the member who is selling – two of the four currently selling have said they are in no rush as they expect a higher price once MRR is sealed.
- Merge the EOI and the Questionnaire – repetition in the drafts.
- Process is getting too corporate.

Proposal:

To introduce the additional step of an Expression of Interest into the Membership Process for joining Goolawah Co-op, with the details of the draft EOI to be finalized.

Proposer: Elizabeth

Seconder: Marty

Unanimous

Request for MC to notify the community of meetings with preferably at least one week's notice. Could members please let the MC know asap if you have any concerns about a PM. It was noted that member attendance at Progress Meetings is very low.

REVIEW OF RECENT APPLICATIONS

It was always the intention for a GM to review Questionnaires posted on the website and conduct a vote if deemed necessary. PM were advised by the Board in writing that a SGM was being held to review recent applications.

ACTION: Questionnaires must be posted at least 7 days prior to a GM and reviewed by members at the meeting.

Alvaro Gomez and Sary Barba – guides Ish and Marty

Although the questionnaires are limited in detail, members have provided only positive feedback, since they have been staying at Clint and Noemi's. They are engaging with working bees, community events and getting to know members.

No concerns raised.

Proposal:

Saray and Alvaro should proceed with the Membership Process to join Goolawah Co-operative.

Proposer: Elizabeth

Seconder: Lexie

For: 19 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Passed

Helen and Mia Groombridge – guides Elizabeth and Lexie Completed EOI

The questionnaires read well. Completed Identity Check. Attended two working bees, one social event, one GM.

Changed plans at the last minute, failed to get back to message to connect.

No other concerns raised.

Proposal:

Helen and Mia should proceed with the Membership Process to join Goolawah Co-operative.

Proposer: Elizabeth

Seconder: Lexie

For: 19 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Passed

Terese Hope – guides Ish and Marty Completed EOI

Questionnaire reads well, completed Identity Check and provided character referees. Attended one social event.

Home recently flooded – will re-engage when ready. Understands the process, and has the events calendar.

No concerns raised.

Proposal:

Terese should proceed with the Membership Process to join Goolawah Co-operative.

Proposer: Marty

Seconder: Lexie

For: 13 Against: 0 Abstain: 6

Passed

Nathan and Winona Cosford – guide Lexie Elizabeth stood down due to conflict

Concerns raised prior to the SGM:

- The questionnaire states it is a shame they can't have a dog to protect children from snakes, but in conversation, they say they will bring a dog - denied saying this.
- Fencing nearby dams – despite an at length conversation with a member about community decisions and fencing, Nathan said he would be seeking direction from Council to ensure the dam or property was fenced. He said he wouldn't buy if fencing is not permitted.
- When told the process involved a 2/3 majority vote to become a member, they replied, "Who would not vote for a nice Christian family with young kids".

- Guide gave the member feedback, sent the newsletter article on fencing, suggested they meet more members with young children. They denied saying some of what members had reported.

Meeting concerns:

Several members reported they were generally dismissive of the membership process, by-laws, Code of Conduct and Rules during conversation.

Intent on buying Ralph's share, wanting to take measurements and start work.

Members showed compassion for their situation, but overall felt they were not suitable members, as they demonstrated a lack of awareness of the Co-op's values, and seem unwilling to accept the Co-op's governance and community decisions.

Proposal:

Nathan and Winona should proceed with the Membership Process to join Goolawah Co-operative.

Proposer: Elizabeth

Seconder: Lexie

Poll conducted:

For: 1

Against: 16

Abstain: 2

Not passed

ACTION: *The Board sends a letter to Winona and Nathan to thank them for their interest in joining the Co-op. They did not get a 2/3 majority to proceed with the membership application process.*

Thank you for your attendance and valuable contributions today.

A special thank you to those members, who worked hard to organise this special meeting, particularly the MC.

Meeting closed: 11:30am

Interesting fact:

We had approximately 30% of residents voting at this SGM.