

# **Central Country Zone Minutes**

**Friday, 24 June 2022**

**Shire of Williams**

# Central Country Zone

Hosted by Shire of Williams,  
Williams Recreation Pavilion, Cnr Pinjarra & Williams Roads, Williams  
Meeting commenced at 9.33 am on Friday, 24 June 2022

## Minutes

### 1. **OPENING AND WELCOME**

#### 1.1 **Announcements**

##### 1.1.1 **Housekeeping – Zone Chair**

1. Welcome:  
The Zone Chair welcomed Zone members and provided OSH/bathroom/exit information to those in attendance.
2. Share your name and Local Government:  
Delegates were reminded to ensure that they call their name and Local Government when taking the floor to allow for accurate Minutes to be recorded.

##### 1.1.2 **Resignation of Zone Preside Cr Brett McGuinness**

Cr Brett McGuinness resigned as President effective from Wednesday, 15 June 2022. He is moving out of the Shire of Quairading due to the sale of his property.

Cr McGuinness advised that during his time as the Central Zone President, it has been a privilege for him to be involved with all the Zone Delegates and the Executive Committee who have displayed commitment and passion for their respective Shires and the regional areas.

An election for a new Zone President will be conducted at the August 2022 Zone meeting and the nomination process will be communicated to all Zone Delegates and Local Governments.

The Deputy Zone President, President Leigh Ballard will be acting President until the August meeting.

### **RESOLUTION**

Moved: Cr Phil Blight  
Seconded: Cr Neil Walker

**The Zone recognises Cr Brett McGuinness' contribution as Zone President and record a vote of thanks.**

**CARRIED**

### 1.1.3 Shire of Wickepin, Mark Hook CEO

The Zone acknowledged Mark Hook's last meeting as he retires as CEO. The Chair noted Mark's contribution to Local Government as follows:

- Started as Vehicle Licence Clerk then Junior Finance Officer at Shire of Plantagenet 1981 - 1988
- Senior Finance Office then Deputy CEO at Gnowangerup 1988 - 1993
- CEO Shire of Woodanilling 1993 (Ministerial Appointment) - 1997
- CEO Shire of Pingelly 1997 - 2001
- CEO Shire of Shark Bay 2001- 2006
- WALGA Transport Manager 2006 2008
- CEO Shire of Coorow 2008 - 2012
- CEO Shire of Wickepin 2012 to 2022
- Been in Local Government around 41 years
- Was the TAFE Most Outstanding Student Diploma Local Government in 1994
- Has been a Member of IMM now LGPRO since 1992

### 1.2 Host Welcome – Shire of Williams

The Shire of Williams President Cr Jarrad Logie extended a welcome to delegates and guests and provided a brief presentation about the Shire.

## 2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

### Attendance

<b>Shire of Beverley</b>	President Cr David White Mr Steve Gollan, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Brookton</b>	President Cr Katrina Crute Deputy President Cr Neil Walker
<b>Shire of Corrigin</b>	President Cr Des Hickey Ms Natalie Manton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Cuballing</b>	President Cr Eliza Dowling Deputy President Cr Rob Harris Mr Stan Scott, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Dumbleyung</b>	President Cr Julie Ramm Mr Gavin Treasure, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Kulin</b>	Deputy President Cr Brad Smoker Cr Robbie Bowey
<b>Shire of Lake Grace</b>	President Cr Len Armstrong Deputy President Cr Ross Chappell Mr Alan George, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Narrogin</b>	President Leigh Ballard Mr Dale Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate

<b>Shire of Pingelly</b>	President Cr Bill Mulroney (arrived at 9:47) Deputy President Cr Jackie McBurney (arrived at 9:47) Mr Andrew Dover, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate (arrived at 9:47)
<b>Shire of Quairading</b>	President Cr Peter Smith Mr Dean Martin, Executive Manager, Works and Services
<b>Shire of Wagin</b>	President Cr Phillip Blight Cr Bryan Kilpatrick Mr Bill Atkinson, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Wandering</b>	President Cr Ian Turton Mr Alan Hart Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of West Arthur</b>	President Cr Neil Morrell Cr Karen Harrington Mr Vin Fordham Lamont, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Wickepin</b>	President Cr Julie Russell Mr Mark Hook, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Shire of Williams</b>	President Cr Jarrad Logie Mr Geoff McKeown, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
<b>Guests</b>	Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development, RDA Wheatbelt Brad Pearce, Operations Manager Narrogin, Main Roads Steve Edwell, Economic Regulation Authority Danielle Asarpota, Economic Regulation Authority
<b>WALGA</b>	Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer Tony Brown, Executive Manager Governance & Organisational Services Kathy Robertson, Executive Officer Governance & Organisational Services Rodney Thornton, RoadWise
<b><u>Apologies</u></b>	Deputy President Cr Chris Lawlor, Shire of Beverley Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Brookton Deputy President Cr Mike Weguelin, Shire of Corrigin Cr Julie Christensen, Shire of Cuballing Deputy President Cr Amy Knight, Shire of Dumbleyung President Cr Grant Robins, Shire of Kulin Cr Barry West, Shire of Kulin Mr Garrick Yandle, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Kulin Cr Graham Broad, Shire of Narrogin Deputy President Cr Gregory Ball, Shire of Wagin Deputy President Cr Paul Treasure, Shire of Wandering Deputy President Cr Wes Astbury, Shire of Wickepin Cr Moya Carne, Shire of Williams Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe Kathleen Brown, Electorate Officer, Office of Hon Mia Davies MLA Kate Pryce, Research Officer, Office of Hon Steve Martin MLC Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon Darren West MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Steve Martin MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer, Wheatbelt Development Commission  
Samantha Cornthwaite, A/Regional Manager, Wheatbelt  
Tom Axton, A/Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Main Roads  
Elizabeth Davies, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Wheatbelt Main Roads  
Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt, Main Roads  
Tim Fraser, Executive Director Local Government, DLGSC  
Clare Atkins, Regional Development Officer, Wheatbelt Development Commission

### **Attachments**

The following are provided as attachments to the minutes:

1. Item No. 4.1 ERAWA Presentation
2. Item No. 10.1 RDAW Report

State Council Agenda – via link: [State Council Agenda - 6 July 2022](#)

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

NIL

### **4. GUEST SPEAKERS / DEPUTATIONS**

#### **4.1 Steve Edwell – Economic Regulation Authority**

The Economic Regulation Authority (ERA), Chair, Steve Edwell presented to the Zone on the power supply security and reliability and the ERA's processes in assisting with supply issues.

A copy of the presentation is attached – **Attachment 1**.

#### **4.2 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

- Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor presented at the Zone.

### **5. MINUTES**

#### **5.1 Confirmation of Minutes from the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 22 April 2022**

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on Thursday, 22 April 2022 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

### **RESOLUTION**

Moved: Cr Katrina Crute  
Seconded: Cr Ross Chappell

That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 22 April 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, subject to the following correction that Shire of Kulin, President Cr Grant Robins was an apology for this Zone meeting.

**CARRIED**

## 5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Meeting on Friday, 22 April 2022

NIL

## 5.3 Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee held Wednesday, 15 June 2022

The recommendations from the Executive Committee Meeting that require Zone consideration have been extracted for the Zones consideration.

### 5.3.1 Budget 2022-23

#### Background

Presenting the Budget Profit and Loss statement for 2022-23.

#### Central Country Zone WALGA ABN 12 975 113 390 Budget Profit and Loss Statement

	Annual Budget 2021/2022	Annual Budget 2022/2023	Change in Budget
<b>Income</b>			
501 General Subscriptions	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -
521 Reimbursements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
575 Interest Earned	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ -
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 30,030.00</b>	<b>\$ 30,030.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
1511 Executive Officer - Other	\$ 100.00	\$ -	-\$ 100.00
Executive Officer - Office			
1512 Expenses, Phone, Internet	\$ 200.00	\$ -	-\$ 200.00
Executive Officer - Professional			
1513 Services	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -	-\$ 8,000.00
Executive Officer - Travel and			
1514 Accommodation	\$ 750.00	\$ -	-\$ 750.00
Executive Officer Review			
1515 Process	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	-\$ 3,000.00
1535 Zone Expenses - Audit Costs	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 200.00
1538 Zone Expenses - Bank Fees	\$ 100.00	\$ -	-\$ 100.00
Zone Expenses - In-Person			
1546 Meetings	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 8,800.00	\$ -
Zone Expenses -			
Teleconference and Video			
1549 Conference Meetings	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	-\$ 2,000.00
Zone Expenses - Agricultural			
1555 Freight Group	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ -
Zone Expenses - Financial			
1558 Management	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ -
1572 Zone Expenses - Other	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -
1574 Zone Expenses - Advocacy	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	-\$ 10,000.00
Zone Representative -			
1580 Honoraria	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 2,600.00	\$ -
Zone Representative - Meeting			
1605 Fees	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
Zone Representative - Travel			
1610 Costs	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ 45,550.00</b>	<b>\$ 21,600.00</b>	<b>-\$ 23,950.00</b>
<b>Profit/Loss</b>	<b>-\$ 15,520.00</b>	<b>\$ 8,430.00</b>	<b>\$ 23,950.00</b>

## RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Phil Blight  
Seconded: Cr Des Hickey

That the 2022-23 Budget be endorsed.

CARRIED

### 5.3.2 Remaining Items from the Executive Committee Minutes

## RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Katrina Crute  
Seconded: Cr Phil Blight

That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 15 June 2022 be endorsed.

CARRIED

## 6 ZONE BUSINESS

### 6.1 Proposed Advocacy Position on Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades

*Shire of Pingelly*

#### Executive Summary

- In March 2022 the provisions of the new Work Health and Safety Act 2020 were fully transitioned. They clearly detail the standard of duty of care that entities responsible for volunteers now carry.
- This standard has brought into focus the fact that local government is no longer the right entity to be discharging the duty of care and the duty of provision of extreme risk bush fire management services in Western Australia. Western Australia, while its health and safety legislation is now in alignment with the rest of Australia, is now at odds with the rest of Australia in terms of State Government responsibility for volunteer bush fire brigades.
- The new Work, Health and Safety Act 2020 exposes the gap between the extreme risk of bush fires and the capabilities of local governments to meet this risk. It has set up local government for failure if nothing is done to fix the fundamental question - what entity is best able to meet the responsibility for supporting volunteer bush fire brigades. This responsibility should be placed in the hands of a rural fire service separate to DFES as recommended by the "Reframing Rural Fire Management" report.
- Cabinet has agreed on a review of the three emergency services Acts, the Fire Brigades Act 1942, the Bush Fires Act 1954 and the Fire and Emergency Services Act of 1998, to create a single comprehensive Emergency Services Act which will improve community safety and better support all of our emergency services workers into the future. This work is being undertaken by DFES.  
<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/site/about-us/corporate-information/legislation/legislation.html>
- This review represents a once in a generation opportunity have this matter addressed and give volunteer bush fire brigades the level of overarching support they need, through a State Government agency or department with new legislation designed to take over this role from local governments.
- It is not appropriate that the current hybrid responsibility sharing arrangement continue between Local Government and the State Government, for either historic or power sharing reasons. This will perpetuate the current mixed message and unclear lines of responsibility that comes from a legislative underpinning of volunteer bush fire brigades as local government entities, while

training, funding and operational support are provided through DFES. This will not ultimately be in the best interests of the volunteers and their ability to be supported in the important role they undertake in managing bush fire risk.

- It is not appropriate that DFES have responsibility, a significant role in the determination of the future of the VBFBs, or the future rural fire service as they do not have the confidence of many of these volunteers and consequently it is considered likely that a DFES led or involved rural fire service would result in the loss of many of these volunteers.
- WALGA has issued a Proposed Advocacy Position and Info Page which proposes a hybrid model allowing local governments to opt in or out of management of volunteer bush fire brigade models. A 6-week consultation is underway with the matter to be presented to WALGA State Council in September 2022. However, none of the options reflect the work that has been completed to date on this issue.

### **Attachments**

A – “Reframing Rural Fire Management” Report of the Special Inquiry Into the January 2016 Waroona Fire, Volume 1, by E. Ferguson (Ferguson Report)

B – Overview of Western Australia’s Work Health and Safety Act 2020, by Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and Worksafe Western Australia

C - Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position May 2022, WALGA.

D – INFOPAGE, Proposed Advocacy Position on Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades, 20 May 2022, WALGA

### **Policy Implications**

The adoption of advocacy positions will inform WALGA policy positions and will be incorporated in WALGA’s Advocacy Positions Manual.

### **Budgetary Implications**

#### Insurance

Up to \$10M in uninsurable organisational maximum penalties for the most serious failures to comply with the new WHS Act 2020.

WALGA Local Governments are responsible for providing compensation for injury caused to present and former BFB volunteers as a result of their duties. The commercial insurance market ceased writing injury insurance for volunteers in 2012, therefore a self-insurance mutual scheme was implemented to ensure that Local Governments continue to meet this obligation.

Since 2012, due to the high cost of claims, the aggregate limit of liability has increased from \$250,000 to \$750,000. In addition, the annual cost of insurance has nearly doubled (92%) from \$47.50 to \$91.20 per volunteer, and it is expected that this trend will continue (Data provided by LGIS, 17 May 2022 in pg. 7, Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position - May 2022).

#### Volunteer Bush Fire Services Funding

The State Government has in place an Emergency Services Levy. This is a pre-existing and suitable funding mechanism for volunteer bush fire brigades’ services via an entity, under direct management of the State Government.

#### WALGA Advocacy Position

Nil.

### **Background**

#### History

The Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades have been a vital part of the regional Western Australian emergency services fabric since 1954 in a formal legislated system, but before that in heart of the community unsupported volunteer service groups. The continuation of this service by the volunteers, ensuring the



continuity of the brigades along with the safety of the members, remain as the key priorities. How this is best achieved given findings of the 2016 Ferguson Report and the new safety mandates of the Work Health & Safety Act 2020 (WHS Act) for volunteers, is a primary issue.

Volunteer bush fire brigades have been formed to support farmers and supplement their firefighting capacity in 1954, through the commencement of the Bush Fires Act with local governments being given responsibility to establish and run the brigades. Over time the State Government has increasingly mandated duty of care requirements to the members and those charged with their management, to the point where the duty of care now extends to the volunteers themselves.

2016 “Reframing Rural Fire Management” Report of the Special Inquiry Into the January 2016 Waroona Fire (Ferguson Report)

Following the 2016 Waroona Yarloop bush fires the Public Sector Commission tasked a special inquiry led by Mr. Euan Ferguson AFSM into the matter. His report (Pg. 18) summarises the losses of these fires as follows:

*“Tragically, during the fire, two residents of Yarloop lost their lives. The fire burned a total area of 69,165 hectares comprising 31,180 hectares of private property and 37,985 hectares of public land. One hundred and eighty one properties were destroyed. At time of writing, it is estimated that the cost of the fire, including the costs of suppression, losses, damage and recovery (including estimated insurance losses) totals approximately \$155 million.”*

In his report prologue (pg.12) he summarises his findings thus:

*“It is my view that there exists a need to effect fundamental changes to the system of rural fire management in Western Australia. My conclusion, which has been very carefully considered, is that the current system for managing bushfire in Western Australia is failing citizens and the government.”*

The recommendations for change were provided in two categories: Strategic and Agency opportunities for improvement. 17 Recommendations and 23 Opportunity statements were made. Critical to the context of this Council Report, is Recommendation 15, which is about rural fire management and its recommends:

*“The State Government to create a Rural Fire Service to enhance the capability for rural fire management and bushfire risk management at a State, regional and local level. The proposed Rural Fire Service will:*

- be established as a separate entity from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or, alternatively, be established as a sub-department of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services;*
- have an independent budget;*
- be able to employ staff;*
- have a leadership structure which, to the greatest degree possible, is regionally based and runs the entity;*
- be led by a Chief Officer who reports to the responsible Minister on policy and administrative matters; and to the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services during operational and emergency response;*
- have responsibilities and powers relating to bushfire prevention, preparedness, and response; and*
- operate collaboratively with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Local Government, and volunteer Bush Fire Brigades.*

*In creating the Rural Fire Service, the State Government to consider whether back office and corporate support services could be effectively provided by an existing Department, such as the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the Department of Parks and Wildlife.”*

*The State Government to review the creation of the Rural Fire Service two years after its establishment, to assess whether its structure and operations are achieving the intended outcome.”*

This recommendation has only been partially implemented and the independent entity with the capabilities and resourcing described in the recommendation is far from realization. This is in part because this requires legislative change, one that removes local government as the head of power

body establishing and underpinning this entity. The opportunity for this change is now available with the review of the emergency services legislation.

### Bush Fire Fighting Risk

The prologue to the Ferguson Report provides an excellent description of the complexities of fighting bush fires and making judgment following the event (pg. 11):

*“Hindsight is a wonderful thing. But we must act with disciplined caution when exercising this hindsight. It must always be remembered that those who were key players in this fire emergency were not afforded such luxury. Many individuals, be they citizens or members of agencies or in community teams, worked in extreme and challenging conditions. Many were hot, hungry, dehydrated and sometimes sick with worry and exhaustion. Dangers were ever present. Fast decisions had to be made with information that was incomplete and sometimes conflicting. There were many unknowns. People made decisions. Assumptions changed. Best laid plans failed. Teams used their initiative and adjusted. Even the most straightforward of tasks became complex. Emergency and essential services worked to create order out of chaos. Everyone worked against time and the progression of the fire.*

*It would be easy to look at any shortcomings and be tempted to fall into the trap of finding fault and allocating blame. This must be resisted. In striving for excellence in bushfire emergency management, it must be recognised that there are many parts of the system: the fire, the weather, the terrain and the actions and reactions of people that are subject to sudden and unpredictable change. Under these conditions, much is unknown. Almost everything is shrouded by uncertainty. People make judgements and those judgements are not infallible. Errors can and do occur, despite the best intentions and best efforts of people.”*

While the Ferguson Report wasn't written with the aim of “finding fault and allocating blame”, the new Work Health and Safety Act 2020 is. It is specifically designed and written to provide standards and responsibilities for health and safety, in order to provide a path for finding fault, allocating blame and then punishing those who are at fault.

### Work Health and Safety Act 2020

Key features of the WHS Act are provided in the following extract from the “Overview of Western Australia's Work Health and Safety Act 2020” put out by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, and Worksafe (pg. 2):

- *“The primary duty holder is the ‘person conducting a business or undertaking’ (PCBU) which is intended to capture a broader range of contemporary workplace relationships.*
- *A primary duty of care requiring PCBUs to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health and safety of workers and others who may be affected by the carrying out of work.*
- *Duties of care for persons who influence the way work is carried out, as well as the integrity of products used for work, including the providers of WHS services.*
- *A requirement that ‘officers’ exercise ‘due diligence’ to ensure compliance.*
- *The new offence of industrial manslaughter, which provides substantial penalties for PCBUs where a failure to comply with a WHS duty causes the death of an individual, in circumstances where the PCBU knew the conduct could cause death or serious harm.*
- *The voiding of insurance coverage for WHS penalties, and imposition of penalties for providing or purchasing this insurance.*
- *The introduction of WHS undertakings, which are enforceable, as an alternative to prosecution.*
- *Reporting requirements for ‘notifiable incidents’ such as the serious illness, injury or death of persons and dangerous incidents arising out of the conduct of a business or undertaking.*
- *A framework to establish a general scheme for authorisations such as licenses, permits and registrations (for example, for persons engaged in high-risk work or users of certain plant or substances), including provisions for automated authorisations.”*

Importantly, the WHS Act captures the duty of care requirements for bush fire brigades and volunteers.

### Work Health and Safety Act 2020 Duty of Care Failure and Penalties

Hefty fines now apply to local governments and criminal charges may be imposed on executive staff should they fail in their duty of care under the new Work Health and Safety Act 2020. A sevenfold

increase in the maximum fine is now applicable to executives along with a 20 year jail term. The local government body is now subject to an uninsurable fine up to \$10M, up 2.85 times from \$3.5M.

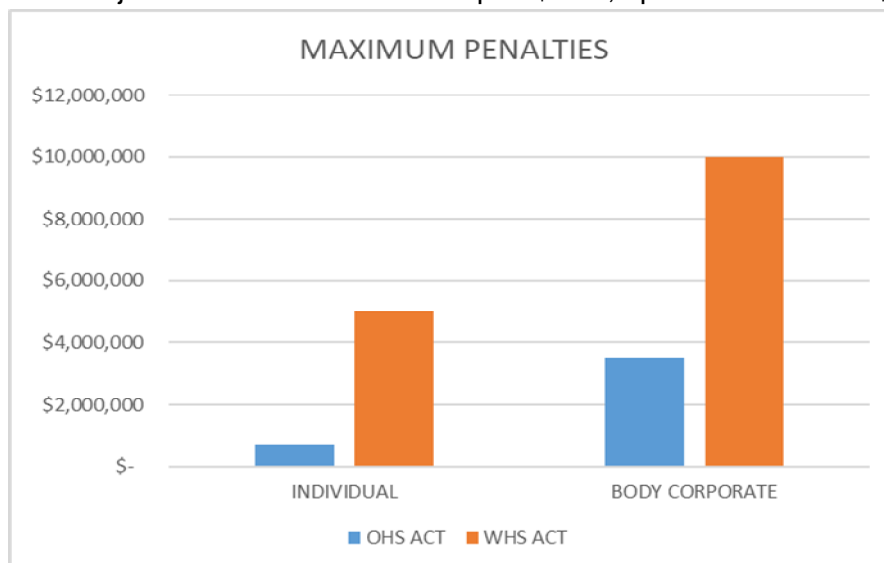


Figure 1. Maximum Individual and Body Corporate Penalties Comparison Between the Previous OHS Act (blue) and the WHS Act (orange)

#### Maximum penalties for breach of health and safety duty offences

Offence	Duty holder		
	Body corporate	Individual as a PCBU or officer	Individual as worker or other
Industrial manslaughter	\$10 000 000	\$5 000 000, 20 years in jail	Not applicable
Category 1	\$3 500 000	\$680 000, 5 years in jail	\$340 000, 5 years in jail
Category 2	\$1 800 000	\$350 000	\$170 000
Category 3	\$570 000	\$120 000	\$55 000

Note: Where a penalty provides for a fine or term of imprisonment, the Court may impose a sentence that includes either or both penalties.

#### Exceptions (section 34)

Volunteers are not liable for a failure to comply with a health and safety duty except in their capacity as a worker (section 28) or other person at a workplace (section 29).

An unincorporated association is not liable for prosecution although its officers (except volunteers) may be prosecuted for a failure to comply with an officer's duty (section 27). Its members may owe duties in their capacities as workers (section 28) or other persons at a workplace (section 29).

Table 1. Maximum Penalties. Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, and Worksafe, "Overview of Western Australia's Work Health and Safety Act 2020", pg.36.

LEVEL	INDIVIDUAL 1ST OFFENCE	INDIVIDUAL SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE	BODY CORPORATE 1ST OFFENCE	BODY CORPORATE SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE
1	\$ 100,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 450,000	\$ 570,000
2	\$ 250,000	\$ 350,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,800,000
3	\$ 400,000	\$ 500,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000
4	\$ 550,000	\$ 680,000	\$2,700,000	\$3,500,000

Table 2. Maximum Penalties Under the Previous Occupational, Health and Safety Act 1984", pg.36.

The State Government has made crystal clear its overarching expectations regarding duty of care, including to volunteers. In doing so, however, it has raised a fundamental question about the appropriate provision of leadership and support for volunteer bush fire brigades in the extreme risk environment in which they operate.

## **Comment**

### **Risk and WHS Act Implications**

The new WHS Act safety mandate has brought into focus two related questions, and these questions must be rigorously and independently assessed and addressed, ahead of preference and historically affiliation, if a best practice, safe and compliant outcome is to be achieved. **Who is best placed to manage bush fire brigades, given the systems, expertise and control hierarchy needed to operate within the new WHS Act requirements? Secondly, is the current legislation, which provides for local governments to establish and run bush fire brigades, still appropriate, given these mandated safety management requirements?** Recommendation 15 of the Ferguson Report answers these questions.

Local governments, and particularly those in executive level management, see a chasm between their risk management capabilities, expertise, control, financial support, and the standards mandated in the new WHS Act for the extremely high-risk and complex activity of fighting bushfires. They also see that the State Government, through a rural fire service, completely separate to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), would be much more capable in fighting fires than local government.

The disparate, disjointed management by individual local governments, provides tailored local focus, but is lacking in regional coordination and resources with the ESL funding subsidised to a large extent by ratepayers. The requirements for training, equipment and policy are significant for particularly smaller rural and regional local governments – who are mostly responsible for the VBFB. These local governments now also carry safety expectations well above local government primary expertise and risk management capabilities. With a new focus on health and safety it is no longer appropriate that local government be required to operate in a highly specialized extreme risk area, when suitable alternatives exist, or should exist, as stated in the Ferguson Report.

### **Australian Models for Management of Bush Fire Brigades**

The WHS Act was ostensibly enacted, in part, to bring Western Australia in line with the rest of the Australian states, including responsibility for volunteers. Perhaps as an unintended consequence, this has highlighted a significant disparity across Australia, with every other state having their volunteer bushfire brigades run by State Government agencies rather than local governments. Many in local government charged with management oversight of the VBFBs, believe that a rural fire service is the necessary next step for Western Australia, if coming into line with the rest of Australia.

### **Bush Fire Brigade Volunteers**

The Ferguson Report (pp. 237 – 245) details the public response to the question of DFES involvement in fighting bush fires:

- DFES staff do not have sufficient expertise in rural fire management and don't understand our needs; and
- Inappropriate training is provided.

There is some skepticism and reluctance among some VBFB members regarding leaving the local governments, where they believe there is often more autonomy, local knowledge, and a local focus.

A review of the emergency legislation needs to ensure that bush fire brigades are at the table in terms of consultation and that their legitimate concerns are aired and resolved.

Due to DFES's insufficient expertise in rural fire management and lack of understanding of volunteers or their needs, it would be inappropriate for DFES to have significant input into the makeup of a rural fire service.

## Statutory Environment

In light of, *the Local Government Act of 1995: Division 3 — Executive functions of local governments, Subdivision 1 — Performing executive functions, s3.18. Performing executive functions: 3(b)*; as the WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), is already providing a rural fire division (ref. 2), it could be considered that the further provision of Local Government controlled Fire & Emergency Services Brigades is an inappropriate duplication of “*services or facilities provided by the ... State*”.

Work Health and Safety Act 2022, mandates the duty of care to volunteers by the person conducting a business undertaking. Senior Local Government officers with decision making and budget allocation control, have a duty of care to volunteer bush fire brigade members.

Bush Fires Act 1954, s36 and s41. provides for local governments to establish, maintain, and equip bush fire brigades.

### Emergency Services Review of Legislation

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is currently reviewing the three emergency services Acts. This represents a one in a generation opportunity to consider the best and most competent delivery of volunteer bush fire brigade services. Ensuring that WALGA is at the table in this review is critical to good outcomes for local government.

## Consultation

### Special Inquiry into the Waroona bush fires

The Special Inquiry into the Waroona bush fires was conducted by Euan Ferguson AFSM. In a letter dated 26 April 2016, to Mr. Wauchope, the Public Sector Commissioner, Mr. Ferguson described the consultation process as follows:

*“The Special Inquiry started in early February, ran for 13 weeks and held formal hearings on 22 days. The Special Inquiry has evoked a significant response. One hundred and sixty five written submissions have been received. One hundred people appeared at formal hearings and five people gave evidence via telephone. We have met and interacted with 42 organisations and interest groups.”*

The report prologue further describes the consultation and the outcomes sought by the witnesses and submissions:

*“All of the people the Special Inquiry met with citizens, landowners, farmers, business owners, personnel from agencies, essential services and from emergency services, were genuine in their commitment to do the best they could during this crisis. The Special Inquiry noted a strong urge from all the witnesses and submissions to understand the failings in the current systems of work, to learn from this tragic experience, and to change the future.”*

### WALGA's Proposed Advocacy Position

WALGA identified four options for the future management of BFBs:

1. Status quo - continue with the current arrangements for management of BFBs whereby the majority are managed by Local Government and transfer arrangements are negotiated on an ad hoc basis between DFES and Local Governments (or their BFBs).
2. Improvements - continue with the current arrangements for Local Government management of BFBs with additional support provided by the State Government with respect to increased funding and better access to training resources and other support.
3. Hybrid Model - Local Government continues to manage BFBs where they have the capacity, capability, and resources to do so; however, where they do not have the capacity, capability and resources, responsibility for management of BFBs is transferred to DFES.
4. Transfer - Responsibility for management of all BFBs is transferred to the State Government, consistent with the arrangements in other States and Territories.

However, these options ignore the recommendation on this matter from Special Inquiry into the Waroona bush fires in the ‘Reframing Rural Fire Management’ report (quoted as part of the

recommendation of this report). This recommendation has been reached through extensive consultation (as above) and expert analysis.

## **Conclusion**

There is an urgent need for Local Governments and the State Government to review the suitability of local governments role in delivery of volunteer bush fire brigades, given the spotlight on volunteer management raised by the new Work Health and Safety Act 2020. The Ferguson Report, in 2016, provides a pathway for a new entity to do this, with a State Government core business emergency services entity tailored to bush firefighting and meeting the needs of volunteers. The current review of the three emergency services Acts represents a once in a generation opportunity to modernise the legislation underpinning volunteer bush firefighting in Western Australia to align under a suitable agency.

**Moved:** Cr Bill Mulroney  
**Seconded:** Cr Jackie McBurney

**That:**

1. **WA Local Government Association (WALGA) to advocate for the:**
  - a. **Modernisation of Western Australian emergency services legislation, including alignment of the WA Bush Fires Act 1954 with the rest of Australia by removing the legislative requirement for WA Local Governments to manage Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (VBFB);**
  - b. **Provision of a legislated State Government department or agency to do so, fully implementing recommendation 15 of the “Reframing Rural Fire Management” Report of the Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire (Ferguson Report), which states;**

***“The State Government to create a Rural Fire Service to enhance the capability for rural fire management and bushfire risk management at a State, regional and local level. The proposed Rural Fire Service will:***

- be established as a separate entity from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or, alternatively, be established as a sub-department of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services;***
- have an independent budget;***
- be able to employ staff;***
- have a leadership structure which, to the greatest degree possible, is regionally based and runs the entity;***
- be led by a Chief Officer who reports to the responsible Minister on policy and administrative matters; and to the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services during operational and emergency response;***
- have responsibilities and powers relating to bushfire prevention, preparedness, and response; and***
- operate collaboratively with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Local Government, and volunteer Bush Fire Brigades.***

***In creating the Rural Fire Service, the State Government to consider whether back office and corporate support services could be effectively provided by an existing Department, such as the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the Department of Parks and Wildlife.***

***The State Government to review the creation of the Rural Fire Service two years after its establishment, to assess whether its structure and operations are achieving the intended outcome.”***

2. **WALGA to support, in the review of the emergency services legislation and formation of a Rural Fire Service, a comprehensive plan developed by local government representatives; volunteer bush fire representatives; a VFRS volunteer representative; the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and former professionals from Rural Fire Services in other states for:**

- a. Full engagement with the VBFBs and local governments to understand their successes, challenges, ideas and hopes for this service;
- b. Inclusion of a review of the history and past performance of the volunteer bush fire brigades in Western Australia, including all previous studies and findings, with volunteer safety as a key theme;
- c. A best practice assessment of volunteer bush fire brigades departmental/agency structures and legislative underpinnings across Australia; and
- d. A legislative outcome goal that ensures that organisational structures, expertise, strategy, management, and control, best meet the health and safety mandates of the WHS Act 2020 while retaining volunteers and their interests at the centre of the organisation;

and that this comprehensive plan is presented to local governments and state government in full for a final decision prior to proceeding; and

3. Not support any of the 4 options in its “Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position” paper in favour of the creation of a Rural Fire Service.

## PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Bill Mulroney  
Seconded: Cr Jackie McBurney

That the Motion be left on the table for discussion at the next Zone meeting.

**CARRIED**

## 6.2 WALGA Best Practice Governance Review Update

*By Tony Brown, Executive Manager Governance and Organisational Services and Tim Lane, Manager Strategy and Association Governance*

### Background

WALGA has embarked on a significant project to review WALGA's governance model to ensure the organisation is governed by a contemporary, sound, and agile governance model that:

- Facilitates meaningful engagement with Local Government members,
- Enhances WALGA's legitimacy among members and stakeholders, and
- Enables sound and focused decision making to guide advocacy, policy, and service delivery.

WALGA's [Corporate Strategy 2020-25](#) identifies “contemporary governance and engagement models” as a key strategic priority leading to State Council's commissioning of the Best Practice Governance Review project.

A further goal of the project is to fundamentally review, and subsequently amend, WALGA's governance documentation – Constitution, Corporate Governance Charter, State Council Code of Conduct, and Standing Orders – to ensure consistency and alignment.

To oversee the project, State Council appointed a Steering Committee with the following membership:

President Cr Karen Chappel JP	WALGA President (Chair)
Cr Paul Kelly	WALGA Deputy President
President Cr Phil Blight	Country State Councillor
Mayor Carol Adams OAM	Metropolitan State Councillor
President Cr David Menzel	Country Elected Member
Mayor Albert Jacob	Metropolitan Elected Member

Andrew Sharpe  
David MacLennan  
Nick Sloan

Country Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Chief Executive Officer  
WALGA Chief Executive Officer

Senior WALGA staff are providing executive support and PwC has been appointed to facilitate meetings of the Steering Committee and to produce an Options Paper and a Final Report.

The Steering Committee has met twice. At the first meeting, held on 5 May 2022, the Committee:

- Adopted Terms of Reference
- Reviewed the Project Plan
- Considered existing governance documentation
- Discussed the project methodology, and
- Agreed five comparator organisations whose governance models would be reviewed:
  - i. Australian Hotels Association (AHA)
  - ii. Australian Medical Association (AMA)
  - iii. Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA (CCIWA)
  - iv. Chamber of Minerals and Energy (CME), and
  - v. Pharmacy Guild of WA

The comparator organisations were selected for their similarity to WALGA as membership organisations (with organisations as members) and their perceived effectiveness as advocacy peak bodies.

At the Steering Committee's second meeting, held on 8 June 2022, the Committee reviewed the governance models of comparator organisations presented by PwC and identified initial performance assessment criteria that will guide the evaluation of alternative governance model options.

The Steering Committee will be meeting again in late June to consider an Options Paper which will present alternative governance model options. The Options paper will be presented to State Council at the 6 July Strategic Forum. Member feedback will then be sought on the Options Paper during July and August.

Following member feedback, the Steering Committee will direct the development of an agenda item outlining high level principles and non-negotiables of a future governance model for the 2022 Annual General Meeting. This agenda item and debate will gauge members' views on the direction of the project.

The final report due to be completed by mid-October 2022 will be the subject of further consultation with members, including through a full round of Zone meetings in November in the lead-up to the December State Council meeting.

Substantive structural changes to WALGA's governance model will require amendments to the Constitution, which must be approved by a special (75 percent) majority at both a meeting of State Council and an Annual General Meeting. As such, any proposed changes will need to have strong support of members for Constitutional change to be ratified. The aim of the project is to put forward constitutional amendments to members at the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

### **Comment**

The Best Practice Governance Review Project represents a significant opportunity to improve WALGA's governance model to improve decision making effectiveness while ensuring meaningful member representation and participation.

Past reviews since the formation of WALGA as the single Local Government sector peak body over 20 years ago have led to significant process and other improvements while the structure and composition of State Council has remained broadly unchanged. WALGA receives mixed feedback on its governance model through member surveys and other mechanisms suggesting there is room for improvement.

Any future governance model will need to balance member representation and participation in decision making processes with efficiency and strategic focus. The forthcoming Options Paper will present potential options that aim to balance competing objectives identified by the Steering Committee.



Member engagement and consultation will be crucial to the success of the project and very high levels of member support will be required for constitutional amendments to be ratified, as outlined above. Consequently, members should anticipate opportunities to contribute to the project and provide insight in relation to options put forward over coming months.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Phil Blight  
**Seconded:** Cr Katrina Crute

**That the update on the WALGA Best Practice Governance Review Project be noted.**

**CARRIED**

### **6.3 Meeting Attendance Protocols - Online Attendance**

Tony Brown, Zone Executive Officer

#### **Background**

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, attendance at meetings and forums via video conference has been widely adopted as a standard practice and is, in many cases, an expectation of attendees.

While Zone meetings have historically been conducted in-person, there have been occasions when Zone meetings have been held as a fully virtual meeting due to Covid restrictions or Covid risk.

Recently, as the technical capacity to host virtual meetings (with a mix of in-person and online attendance) has developed, there has been an increase in requests from Zone Delegates to attend otherwise in-person Zone meetings via a video-conferencing platform.

The WALGA secretariat is seeking Zone guidance on this matter to put in place Zone protocols going forward.

#### **Comment**

There are several considerations regarding the suitability of hybrid meetings.

Firstly, there is an argument that in-person Zone meetings are preferable, as has been past practice, as in-person meetings (including sharing a meal and refreshments) facilitate relationship building, information sharing, networking opportunities and engagement between member Local Governments and between Local Governments and the WALGA secretariat including office bearers and senior staff.

Secondly, while there may be circumstances that prevent a Council Delegate from attending in-person, each Council has one or more Deputy Delegates who may be available to attend in-person and contribute to the meeting. For instance, it is unclear which is preferable: in-person attendance by a Deputy Delegate or online attendance by a Delegate.

Thirdly, from a meeting management perspective, there are challenges for the chairperson facilitating participation and managing a hybrid meeting, particularly given the chair may not be familiar with the technical arrangements at the host Local Government for any given meeting.

Fourthly, there are technical considerations for the host Local Government. While many Local Governments now have suitable facilities, it would be expected that the host Local Government would provide the necessary technical support (potentially outside of business hours) to ensure the meeting can transpire smoothly.

Finally, the Zone's direction in relation to guest speakers is also sought. From the secretariat's point of view, in-person attendance by guest speakers is preferable, however there may be instances when a guest speaker is unable to attend in-person but is able to attend virtually.

From the perspective of the secretariat, there are significant benefits to continue holding Zone meetings primarily in-person – relationship building, information sharing and engagement – and there are technical and meeting management challenges associated with hybrid meetings.

On balance, it is recommended that, restrictions notwithstanding, Zone meetings continue to be held primarily in-person.

Accordingly, and given Councils appoint Deputy Delegates to ensure representation when a Delegate is unable to attend, it is recommended that preference is given to Deputy Delegate attendance in-person ahead of online Delegate attendance and the hybridisation of the meeting. If Deputy Delegate attendance is not possible, the secretariat will liaise with the host Local Government to facilitate online attendance.

If Zone meetings are to be held in a hybrid format, the secretariat will liaise with the host Local Government to check whether a hybrid meeting can be facilitated, to ensure technical setup is undertaken and to confirm technical support will be provided.

It is also recommended that the secretariat continue to liaise with the Zone Chair in relation to guest speakers, as is current practice.

#### Central Country Zone Executive Committee Comment

Due to concerns regarding the ability to provide for electronic meetings at all Local Government venues for Zone meetings, the Executive Committee recommended that the Zone meetings either be (a) all in person or (b) all online via MS Teams and to be determined by the Executive Committee.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Jackie McBurney

**Seconded:** Cr Phil Blight

**That the Zone adopt to have either all in-person meetings or all on-line meetings, with the Executive Committee determining the format.**

**CARRIED**

#### **6.4 Increased State Government Departments Red Tape**

At the Executive Committee meeting on 15 June 2022, it was noted that an increase in State Government agencies imposing additional red tape on the Local Government Sector.

Recent developments from the WHS legislation, the Child Safety Officer requirements and now DLPH with the ACH act to name a few.

#### **Action:**

Zone Local Governments are requested to consider additional red tape items that have been introduced recently and provide examples direct to the Zone Executive Officer.

## **7.0 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (WALGA) BUSINESS**

<b>7.1 State Councillor Report</b>
------------------------------------

Cr Phillip Blight

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Katrina Crute  
**Seconded:** Cr Jackie Mc Burney

**That the State Councillor Report be received.**

**CARRIED**

## 7.2 WALGA Status Report

By Tony Brown, Executive Officer



### BACKGROUND

Presenting the Status Report for June 2022 which contains WALGA's responses to the resolutions of previous Zone Meetings.

## CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE STATUS REPORT

### June 2022

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Central C	4 May 2022 State Council Agenda Item 5.3 Draft Active Travel to School Roadmap	<p>That the Zone supports the recommendation subject to inserting additional point 3 as follows:</p> <p>3. Roadmap development to consider any regional service delivery improvement recommendations coming out of the 2021 initiated Public Accounts Committee Student Transport Assistance Policy Enquiry.</p>	<p>In regional areas the Student Transport Assistance policy provides support for students outside of walkable / cycling distance to the local school. For students in urban areas needing to attend special schools transport is provided on a "door to door" basis. Consequently, while this can be monitored when the Public Accounts Committee Inquiry publishes its findings, it is unlikely to be closely connected with any of the proposed actions.</p> <p><b>State Council Resolution</b></p> <p>That WALGA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Endorses the Draft Active Travel to School Roadmap, subject to amending Urban Environment Initiative No 1 to "Consult local governments to identify sub-regional school transport challenges and amend existing planning guidelines and develop new guidelines where gaps exist"; and</li><li>2. Works with the Department of Transport to finalise the Roadmap and encourage Local Government participation in the initiatives identified where these offer solutions to the local issues encountered in each area.</li><li>3. Uses the Draft Active Travel to School Roadmap to strengthen advocacy for increased funding for walking and cycling infrastructure in Western Australia by the State and Federal Government.</li></ol> <p>RESOLUTION 337.4/2022</p>	June 2022	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031

<b>Central C</b>	<b>2022, 18 February Zone Agenda Item 11.1</b>	That the Central Country Zone recommend that the Local Government Agricultural Freight Group be disbanded and request WALGA to consider establishing a policy forum to encompass all Freight issues.	<p>The Infrastructure Policy Team noted that a decision to disband the Agricultural Freight Group is a matter for the participating Zones.</p> <p>To assist developing a recommendation, the Infrastructure Policy Team requested that the Terms of Reference for a possible Agricultural Freight Policy Forum be developed for consideration at the next meeting. The infrastructure Policy Team will meet to on Wednesday 6 July to consider this matter and the Zone will be advised accordingly.</p>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>Ian Duncan</b> <b>Executive Manager</b> <b>Infrastructure</b> <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> <b>9213 2031</b>
<b>Central C</b>	<b>2019 Nov 29 Zone Agenda Item 10.8 Western Australia's Share of Fuel Excise</b>	That WALGA prepares and endorses a strategy to obtain transparency of the distribution of the fuel excise with the intent to maximise the return to Western Australia for road maintenance.	<p>The resolution has been referred to the Infrastructure Policy Team and based on direction provided further research to support an advocacy position is being carried out.</p> <p>The Association met with the RAC and received access to a 2020 revision of a report commissioned by the RAC quantifying motorist taxation and Federal Government investment in WA transport infrastructure.</p>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Ian Duncan</b> <b>Executive Manager</b> <b>Infrastructure</b> <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> <b>9213 2031</b>
<b>Central C</b>	<b>2021 20 August Zone Agenda Item 8.4 Social Housing Economic Recovery Package Grant Funding</b>	<p>1. That the Zone notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Governments are eligible for grants to support the construction, refurbishment, and maintenance of community housing properties as part of the State Government's Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) Program.</li> <li>The next round of SHERP grants open on Wednesday 1 September 2021.</li> <li>The Department of Communities will provide further information on the SHERP grants at a WALGA webinar to be held at 1:30pm on Wednesday 1 September.</li> </ul> <p>2. Request WALGA to advocate for more State funding for housing in the regions.</p>	<p>A total of \$57 million in SHERP refurbishment grants were announced on 25 January 2022. Three of the 8 Local Governments that applied for SHERP refurbishment grants were successful: Shires of Donnybrook-Balingup, Williams and Boyup Brook.</p> <p>An announcement of funding for new builds has been delayed until April 2022.</p> <p>WALGA is continuing its advocacy on this issue with the Department of Communities and Minister for Housing.</p> <p>Requested Minister speak to unsuccessful Local Governments. In progress</p>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>Kelly McManus, Principal Policy and Advocacy</b> <a href="mailto:kmcmanus@walga.asn.au">kmcmanus@walga.asn.au</a> <b>9213 2096</b>
<b>Central C</b>	<b>4 May 2022 State Council Agenda Item 5.2 Local Government Grant Scheme Funding</b>	<p>That the Zone supports the recommendation subject to amending point 5 as follows:</p> <p>5. Support for an increase in overall Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) funding pool to future capital grants that align with the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan (as updated from time to time).</p>	<p><b>State Council Resolution</b></p> <p>That WALGA advocates to the Minister for Emergency Services and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An allocation of Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) funding to undertake an audit of existing facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for both Local Government Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES).</li> <li>Following the completion of the audit, an allocation of funding through the Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) to prepare a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan that:</li> </ol>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> <b>A/Executive Manager,</b> <b>Strategy, Policy and</b> <b>Planning</b> <a href="mailto:nmatthews@walga.asn.au">nmatthews@walga.asn.au</a> <b>9213 2039</b>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns with the principles in the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' (DLGSC) Asset Management National Framework and Guidelines, and the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.</li> <li>Forecasts the emergency response needs of communities across Western Australia over the next 10 years, to estimate the quantum of the facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment that will be needed.</li> <li>Outlines a 10 year forward plan of modifications, replacements and additions required.</li> <li>Investigates the extent to which future BFB facilities can be co-located with other emergency services facilities.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The establishment of a Working Group involving WALGA, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and LGIS to oversee the preparation of the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan.</li> <li>Support for the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan to be reviewed every five years</li> <li>Support for an increase in overall Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) funding pool to future capital grants that align with the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan (as updated from time to time).</li> </ol> <p>RESOLUTION 336.4/2022</p> <p>A letter was sent to the Minister for Emergency Services and Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner advising of the State Council resolution on 25 May 2022.</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>		
Central C	2022, 18 February Zone Agenda Item 11.1 Regional Telecommunications	That WALGA partner with Telstra and Western Power to scope, design and cost a solution to enable full mobile and internet connectivity through the Central Country Zone area, including suitable back up power generation to ensure continued mobile connectivity during emergency outage events.	<p>The Infrastructure Policy Team addressed this Zone resolution on 2 March noting the recently initiated project to bring together telecommunications and power providers to identify those parts of the telecommunications network that are most vulnerable to power supply interruptions.</p> <p>Delegates noted the inclusion of Automatic Transfer Switches (ATS) in projects proposed by Telstra for funding under Round 2 of the Mobile Network Hardening Program. These negate the need to enter the hut and deal with the telecommunications equipment in order to change to back-up power generation. The successful projects under this round have not yet been announced.</p> <p>Policy Team requested an update on the Disaster Risk Reduction project be provided to the Central Country Zone in June.</p>	June 2022	Nicole Matthews A/Executive Manager, Strategy, Policy and Planning <a href="mailto:nmatthews@walga.asn.au">nmatthews@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2039

<b>Central C</b>	<b>2020 February 21 Zone Agenda Item 12.1 General Practitioner Services in Rural Areas - Shire of Corrigin</b>	That WALGA be requested to investigate tendering issues around General Practitioner Services in Rural Areas with consideration given to including an exemption from tendering for such services under the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996.	<p>WALGA has included this item in the draft submission on Local Government legislative reform proposals.</p> <p>WALGA's policy position is as per below:</p> <p><i>WALGA advocates for the inclusion of a tender exemption for General Practitioner (GP) services under Part 4, Division 2 of the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996, to support Local Governments retain necessary primary health care services for their communities; and</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake additional research in support of the Advocacy Position with the following aims: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify State and Federal Government policy settings and other factors contributing to gaps in primary health care services in regional communities; and</li> <li>Quantify the number of regional Local Governments that have current contracts, or are proposing to enter into contracts, for General Practitioner services and the associated costs to Local Government incurred.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>The Office of the Minister for Local Government has advised that they are interested in establishing a Roundtable on the issue of GP services for Rural Local Governments. Further information will be provided when available.</p> <p>The Minister for Local Government hosted a roundtable on this issue with effected Local Governments. The Ministers office and the Department are now researching possible solutions.</p> <p>The Minister for Local Government hosted a roundtable on this issue with effected Local Governments. The Ministers office and the Department are now researching possible solutions.</p>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>Tony Brown</b> <b>Executive Manager</b> <b>Governance and</b> <b>Organisational Services</b> <b>9213 2051</b> <a href="mailto:tbrown@walga.asn.au">tbrown@walga.asn.au</a>
<b>Central C</b>	<b>2021 19 November Zone Agenda Item 12.1 Sector ICT solution</b>	That the Zone request WALGA to research providers and the viability of an in-house IT system.	<p>The idea of an all-of-sector model ICT solution is not viable for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different size Local Governments – no one size fits all;</li> <li>Local Government's being at different levels of need and maturity in the ICT requirements,</li> <li>We are unlikely to get the requisite LG buy-in to warrant the investment; and</li> <li>The inherent complexity of a custom-built system is time and cost-prohibitive.</li> </ul> <p>A more workable suggestion is for a group of similar size/maturity level Local Governments to engage a consultant to define a model set that meets their needs. Any recommendations could be reviewed by a</p>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>Tony Brown</b> <b>Executive Manager</b> <b>Governance and</b> <b>Organisational Services</b> <b>9213 2051</b> <a href="mailto:tbrown@walga.asn.au">tbrown@walga.asn.au</a>

			<p>representative of the LG ICT Managers Network to ensure it is appropriate.</p> <p>It would be expected that the following range of recommendations are achievable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable hardware requirements (including remote options where appropriate)</li> <li>• Suggested lightweight accounting software</li> <li>• Baseline model directory structure</li> <li>• Security options</li> <li>• Backup software and procedures</li> <li>• Suitable internet options</li> </ul> <p>WALGA is looking to assist in facilitating discussions on a shared service model to research this with a group of Local Governments further.</p>		
--	--	--	---	--	--



## Zone Comment

This is an opportunity for Member Councils to consider the response from WALGA in respect to the matters that were submitted at the previous Zone Meeting.

## RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Bill Mulroney  
**Seconded:** Cr Julie Russell

**That the Central Country Zone WALGA May 2022 Status Report be noted.**

**CARRIED**

### 7.3 State Council Agenda Items – 6 July 2022

#### Background

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure.

The full State Council Agenda can be found via link: [State Council Agenda 6 July 2022](#)

The Zone is able to provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation that is then presented to the State Council for consideration.

#### Matters for Decision

#### 5.1 Review of advocacy positions relating to Emergency Management

##### Executive Summary

1. It is proposed to remove the three existing Emergency Management Advocacy Policy Positions and replace them with a series of more comprehensive policy positions (Appendix 1
2. The new [Advocacy Positions](#) are based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.

##### Recommendation

That State Council:

1. Endorse the removal of the following Emergency Management Advocacy Positions
  - 8.1 Community Resilience
  - 8.2 Disaster Mitigation
  - 8.3 Emergency Services Levy
2. Endorse the following Emergency Management Advocacy Positions:
  - 8.1 Emergency Management Principles
  - 8.2 State Emergency Management Framework
  - 8.3 Sustainable Grant Funding Model for Emergency Management
  - 8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act
  - 8.5 Resource Sharing
  - 8.6 Lessons Learnt Management
  - 8.7 Emergency Services Levy
  - 8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS)

## **5.2 New Emergency Management Advocacy Position – Community Emergency Service Manager Program**

### **Executive Summary**

The Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program was established to provide Local Governments with additional support to undertake their emergency management functions.

Following consultation with the sector in 2021, it is proposed to endorse an Advocacy Position for the expansion of the CESM Program.

### **Recommendation**

That the following WALGA Advocacy Position relating to the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program be endorsed:

#### **8.9 Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program**

That the Association advocates for an expansion of the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program, as follows:

1. All Local Governments should have the option of participating in the CESM Program.
2. The full cost of the CESM Program should be funded through the Emergency Services Levy.

## **5.3 Draft WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 and Updated Advocacy Position**

### **Executive Summary**

1. The Public Libraries Working Group (PLWG) has been overseeing the development of a new WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 (Strategy) with a focus on strengthening communities, digital inclusion and the value placed on public libraries.
2. Consultation was undertaken between February 2021 and April 2022 through workshops with public library professionals; stakeholder interviews with a targeted selection of metropolitan, regional, and remote Local Government public libraries; and public consultation via an online survey.
3. The new Strategy will support the work of 232 public libraries operated by Local Government around Western Australia.
4. Endorsement of the Strategy is being sought from WALGA State Council and the Library Board of Western Australia, prior to submission to the Minister for Culture and the Arts for final approval.
5. An updated advocacy position is proposed to reflect current governance arrangements, the outcomes being sought under the new Strategy and the achievement of elements of the existing position under the *2016-2021 WA Public Libraries Strategy*.

### **Recommendation**

That:

1. the draft WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 be endorsed.
2. WALGA's existing Advocacy Position on Public Libraries be deleted and replaced as follows:

#### **3.8 Public Libraries**

1. Western Australian Local Government public libraries provide valuable local cultural infrastructure, creating social and community hubs for community capacity building, recreation, education and literacy, digital inclusion, and social connection, cohesion, and inclusion.

2. WALGA supports the provision of Public Library services in Western Australia through a formal partnership between Local Government and the State Government of Western Australia, governed by the Library Board Act 1951, namely the State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia (2020).
3. The WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 provides a framework for a shared vision, strategic direction, and collaborative action in the provision of a vibrant and sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century public library network.
4. It is essential that a sustainable funding model enables Local Governments to continue to deliver library services to support continued growth and adaptation to changing community needs.

### **Matters for Noting / Information**

- 6.1 2020/21 Local Government Performance Monitoring Project (05-047-01-0011 CH)
- 6.2 Proposed Advocacy Position on Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (05-024-02-0059 SM)
- 6.3 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 Co-design Process, Phase 1 Submission
- 6.4 Western Power Access Arrangement Review Submission (05-001-03-0019 ID)
- 6.5 Economic Development Research (05-088-03-0004 DM)
- 6.6 Development of Child Safe Policy for Local Government (05-065-03-0006 BW)
- 6.7 National Reconciliation Week Local Government Activation Program (05-032-03-0011 VB)
- 6.8 WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027 – Draft for Comment (05-053-03-0007 BW)
- 6.9 Issues Paper: Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention (05-036-03-0020 RP)
- 6.10 Report Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) (01-006-03-0008 RNB)

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Julie Ramm  
**Seconded:** Cr Katrina Crute

**That the Central Country Zone**

1. **Supports Matters for Decision, item 5.1 to 5.3 as listed above in the July 2022 State Council Agenda, and**
2. **Notes all Matters for Noting and Organisational Reports as listed in the July 2022 State Council Agenda.**

**CARRIED**

### **7.4 WALGA President's Report**

The WALGA President's Report was attached to the Agenda.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Phil Blight  
**Seconded:** Cr Neil Walker

**That the Central Country Zone notes the WALGA President's Report.**

**CARRIED**

## **8. ZONE REPORTS**

### **8.1 Zone Chair Report**

By President Leigh Ballard

Chair, President Leigh Ballard provided a report to the Zone.

**NOTED**

### **8.2 Local Government Agricultural Freight Group (LGAFG)**

By Cr Katrina Crute

Cr Katrina Crute advised that the group had not met since the last Zone meeting.

**NOTED**

### **8.3 Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC)**

By President Leigh Ballard

President Leigh Ballard advised that the Committee had not met since the last Zone meeting and the next meeting is to be held on 29 June 2022.

**NOTED**

### **8.4 Regional Health Advocacy Representative**

By Ms. Natalie Manton

Ms. Natalie Manton advised that there was nothing new to report to the Zone.

**NOTED**

## **9. ZONE BUSINESS – EMERGING ISSUES**

**NIL**

## **10. AGENCY REPORTS**

### **10.1 Wheatbelt RDA**

Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development RDA Wheatbelt provided an update to the Zone. A copy of the report is attached – **Attachment 2**.

**NOTED**

## **10.2 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries**

Earlier this year, the Zone resolved to request the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to advise on how the department plans to benchmark and record progress towards meeting the matters listed in the Office of the Auditors General performance audit report carried out last year. Attachment 4 in the Agenda was the response from the Department.

**NOTED**

## **10.3 Wheatbelt Development Commission**

Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer, Wheatbelt Development Commission was an apology.

**NOTED**

## **10.4 Main Roads Western Australia**

Brad Pearce, Operations Manager Narrogin, Main Roads, provided an update to the Zone.

**NOTED**

## **10.5 RoadWise**

Rodney Thornton, RoadWise, provided an update to the Zone.

**NOTED**

## **11. DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The Executive Committee will next meet on Wednesday, 10 August 2022 via MS Teams.

The next meeting of the Central Country Zone will be held on Friday, 19 August 2022, commencing at 9.30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Beverley.

## **12. CLOSURE**

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:19.