



CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE

Minutes

**Friday 21 February 2020
Stubbs Park Sports Ground
Bahrs Rd
Dumbleyung WA**

Commencing at 9.31am

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Minutes

Central Country Zone of WALGA

**Friday 21 February 2020, commencing at 9.30am
(Morning tea at 10.30am)**

1.0 OPENING AND WELCOME

1.1 Welcome – Cr Julie Ramm, President Shire of Dumbleyung

Cr McGuinness opened the meeting at 9.31am and invited Cr Julie Ramm, President Shire of Dumbleyung to extend a welcome to Central Country Zone delegates.

2.0 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attendance

Cr Brett McGuinness (Chair)
Cr Katrina Crute
Mr Ian D'Arcy
Cr Des Hickey
Ms Natalie Manton
Cr Mark Conley
Cr Deb Hopper
Mr Gary Sherry
Cr Julie Ramm
Mr Peter Crispin
Cr Barry West
Mr Garrick Yandle
Cr Jeanette De Landgraft
Cr Peter Stoffberg
Mr Alan George
President Leigh Ballard
Cr Tim Wiese
Mr Dale Stewart
Cr Bill Mulroney
Cr Jackie McBurney
Cr Jo Haythornthwaite
Mr Graeme Fardon
Cr Phillip Blight
Cr Greg Ball
Mr Brian Roderick
Ms Belinda Knight
Cr Kevin King
Ms Nicole Wasmann
Mr Mark Hook
Mr Geoff McKeown

Councillor, Shire of Quairading
President, Shire of Brookton
CEO, Shire of Brookton
President, Shire of Corrigin
CEO, Shire of Corrigin
President, Shire of Cuballing
Councillor, Shire of Cuballing
CEO, Shire of Cuballing
President, Shire of Dumbleyung
CEO, Shire of Dumbleyung
President, Shire of Kulin
CEO, Shire of Kulin
President, Shire of Lake Grace
Deputy President, Shire of Lake Grace
A/CEO, Shire of Lake Grace
President, Shire of Narrogin
Deputy President, Shire of Narrogin
CEO, Shire of Narrogin
President, Shire of Pingelly
Deputy President, Shire of Pingelly
Deputy President, Shire of Quairading
CEO, Shire of Quairading
President, Shire of Wagin
Deputy President, Shire of Wagin
A/CEO, Shire of Wagin
CEO Shire of Wandering
President, Shire of West Arthur
CEO, Shire of West Arthur
CEO, Shire of Wickepin
CEO, Shire of Williams

Mr Bruce Wittber, Joint Executive Officer
Ms Helen Westcott, Joint Executive Officer

WALGA Representatives

Mr Nick Sloan	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Mark Batty	Executive Manager Environment and Waste
Mr Rodney Thornton	Road Safety Advisor

Guests

Mr Rick Wilson MP	Member for O'Connor
Hon Darren West MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Ms Jenifer Collins	Regional Manager Wheatbelt, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
Mr Gordon MacMile	Director Strategic Coordination and Delivery, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Apologies

Cr Don Davis	President, Shire of Beverley
Cr Chris Pepper	Deputy President, Shire of Beverley
Mr Stephen Gollan	CEO, Shire of Beverley
Cr Neil Walker	Deputy President, Shire of Brookton
Cr Marilyn Hasleby	Councillor, Shire of Dumbleyung
Cr Grant Robins	Deputy President, Shire of Kulin
Cr Jarrod Logie	President, Shire of Narrogin
Cr Moya Carne	Councillor, Shire of Narrogin
Ms Julie Barton	CEO, Shire of Pingelly
Cr Ian Turton	President, Shire of Wandering
Cr Julie Russell	President, Shire of Wickepin
Hon Mia Davies MLA	Member for Central Wheatbelt
Mr Peter Rundle MLA	Member for Roe
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Laurie Graham MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Rick Mazza MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Ms Mandy Walker	Director Regional Development, RDA Wheatbelt Inc
Ms Ana Farla	Account Manager, Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation Synergy

3.0 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cr Brett McGuinness declared a financial interest in Agenda item 10.3.

4.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nil

5.0 GUEST SPEAKERS

5.1 Key Projects and National Redress - Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries - Jenifer Collins and Gordon MacMile (9.45am)

At the last Zone Meeting a request from the Director General Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries seeking an opportunity to address the Zone on key projects being undertaken by the DLGSC was endorsed.

Since the Zone Meeting the State Government has determined to include the participation of Local Governments in the National Redress Scheme as part of the State's declaration (see WALGA State Council Agenda Item 5.1).

Both Jenifer and Gordon will address key projects and National Redress as part of the presentation.

10.17am meeting adjourned for morning tea

10.43am meeting resumed following morning tea

5.2 Mitigating Power Costs - Synergy – Ana Farla (12.15pm)

The Executive Officer was approached last year by Synergy seeking to attend and present at a Central Country Zone Meeting to explain opportunities that it may have to assist local governments in mitigating power costs.

The Zone Executive Committee agreed to invite Synergy to present and conduct a workshop at the February 2020 Zone Meeting.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances this presentation was unable to proceed and an invitation will be extended to Synergy to attend and present at the next in-person meeting.

6.0 MINUTES

6.1 Confirmation of Minutes – Friday 29 November 2019 (Attachment)

Presenting the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Meeting held Friday 29 November 2019

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Country Zone held Friday 29 November 2019 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Mulroney** **Seconded: Cr Blight**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Country Zone held Friday 29 November 2019 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

6.2 Business Arising from Minutes of Previous Zone Meetings

6.2.1 Item 10.3 Zone Meeting 29 November 2019 - Partnering Agreement for the Provision of Mutual Aid for Recovery during Emergencies

It was resolved at the Zone Meeting on Friday 29 November 2019 in relation to Partnering Agreement for the Provision of Mutual Aid for Recovery during Emergencies as follows:

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Blight** **Seconded: Cr Ball**

That, subject to any amendment, the Memorandum of Understanding for the Provision of Mutual Aid during Emergencies and Post Incident Recovery be adopted for a period of three years from the date of signing.

CARRIED

The agreement is available today for signing by the President and CEO of each Member Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Business Arising from Minutes of Previous Zone Meetings be noted.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Crute** **Seconded: Cr De Landgraft**

That the Business Arising from Minutes of Previous Zone Meetings be noted.

CARRIED

6.3 Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting – Thursday 13 February 2020 (Attachment)

Presenting the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held Thursday 13 February 2020.

Executive Officer Comment:

Any recommendations from the meeting are included as separate agenda items.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee held Thursday 13 February 2020 be received.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Crute** **Seconded: Cr Ball**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee held Thursday 13 February 2020 be received.

CARRIED

7.0 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (WALGA) BUSINESS

Zone delegates to consider the Matters for Decision contained in the WA Local Government Association State Council Agenda and put forward resolutions to Zone Representatives on State Council

7.1 State Councillor Report

Cr Phillip Blight

Central Country Zone State Councillor Report WALGA State Council Meeting December 2019

The following comments/notes are provided on the WALGA State Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3 December 2019

4.1 EMERGING ISSUE

At the Shire of Esperance October 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting, the Esperance Shire Council resolved the following:

That Council:

1. *Receive the unconfirmed minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee (BFAC) Meeting held 24 September 2019;*
2. *Request the CEO to write to the DFES Commissioner and the Minister for Emergency Services:*
 - a. *Requesting that specific purpose built all terrain 4x4, 6x6 and 8x8 cab chassis based vehicles be included in the existing fleet for rural brigades; and*
 - b. *Advising of the inadequacies of the current fleet, which may increase the risks to Volunteer Firefighter safety, due to:*
 - i. *limited 4x4 capability;*
 - ii. *the vehicle sensor systems; and*
 - iii. *pollution controls;*
3. *Request that the CEO have this correspondence tabled at the next WALGA Zone meeting and request them to lobby on behalf of the Shire of Esperance to implement changes to the current fleet;*
4. *Acknowledges and supports the ongoing lobbying of the Association of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades for the improvement of Firefighting Appliances.*
5. *Following a presentation from DFES regarding its pending "Operational Fleet Project" program, seeks clarification from representatives of BFAC and DFES to establish what constitutes "fit for purpose vehicles" for firefighting purposes.*

This resolution was the result of concerns raised by SoE Bushfire Brigades and Volunteers regarding current vehicles that have been supplied over the last few years. The concerns relate to the following issues associated with the current fleet:

- *limited 4x4 capability*
- *vehicle sensor systems*
- *pollution controls.*

Also, the Shire of Esperance brigades would like to see future consideration of larger appliances (6x6 and 8x8) for extreme circumstances and terrain, and as forward support vehicles. The Shire of Esperance acknowledges work is being done to develop and provide better suited. (Extract State Council Minutes December 2019)

Moved: President Cr Malcolm Cullen
Seconded President Cr Philip Blight

That WALGA State Council:

1. **Note this issue and support the concerns raised.**
2. **Commit to working collectively with Local Governments to resolve this issue with the State Government and Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) as a matter of urgency.**

RESOLUTION 141.7/2019 CARRIED

5.6 Local Government Audits (05-034-01-0001 TB)

By Tony Brown, Executive Manager Governance and Organisational Services

Dot points 3 and 4 added

Moved: Cr Les Price

Seconded: President Cr Malcolm Cullen

That WALGA:

1. **Write to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) advising of the cost increases to the Local Government sector in respect to financial audits over the first 2 years of the OAG audits and request:**
 - a) **Constraint on the audit cost increases in the future;**
 - b) **Information in relation to the additional scope, testing and review requirements under the OAG in order for local governments to understand the increase in costs.**
2. **Write to the Office of the Auditor General seeking a formal commitment that audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.**
3. **Write to the Office of the Auditor General seeking to include in the “Audit Results Report” for each financial year, a report on the effectiveness and additional value to Local Governments that the responsibility of Financial Audits being assigned to the Office of the Auditor General has provided.**
4. **Write to the Minister for Local Government seeking formal commitment that Performance Audits carried out by the Office of the Auditor General are the financial responsibility of the State Government.**

RESOLUTION 147.7/2019 CARRIED

5.13 Wheatbelt Regional Health Services 05-030-03-0006 MM)

By Marissa MacDonald, Senior Policy Advisor Community

Moved: Cr Ronnie Fleay

Seconded: President Cr Malcolm Cullen

That WALGA:

1. **Re-establishes a working group to progress a Memorandum of Understanding with Local Governments in the Wheatbelt region and the WA Country Health Service, based on the previous work by the former Wheatbelt Health MOU Group, which outlines communication, responsibilities and strategic priorities unique to the region; and**
2. **Work with key service providers and stakeholders to engage with Local Government to further discuss the issues and develop solutions in the aged care services sector.**

RESOLUTION 154.7/2019 CARRIED

Most zones accepted the remaining recommendations as proposed by the secretariat and they were passed without debate.

7.2 WALGA Status Report

From *Executive Officer*

BACKGROUND:

Presenting the status report for February 2020.

At the time of distributing the Zone Meeting Agenda the Status Report had not been received.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Central Country Zone notes the:

- State Councillor Report; and
- WALGA Status Report.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Mulroney** **Seconded: Cr Crute**

That the Central Country Zone notes the:

- **State Councillor Report; and**
- **WALGA Status Report.**

CARRIED

7.3 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Decision

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

5.1 National Redress Scheme – Future Participation of WA Local Governments (05-086-03-0004 KD)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council:

1. Acknowledge the State Government's decision to include the participation of Local Governments in the National Redress Scheme as part of the State's declaration;
2. Endorse the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding and Template Service Agreement with the State Government, and
3. Endorse by Flying Minute the Memorandum of Understanding prior to execution, in order to uphold requirements to respond within legislative timeframes.

Executive Officer Comment:

The following is the Executive Summary from the State Council Agenda:

Executive Summary

- *The National Redress Scheme (the Scheme) commenced on 1 July 2018.*
- *The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has led an information and consultation process with the WA Local Government sector about the Scheme since January 2019.*
- *In July 2019 State Council endorsed, in principle, to participation by WA Local Government in the State's National Redress Scheme declaration emphasising the need for full financial coverage by the State Government.*
- *A significant advocacy outcome has been achieved with the State Government considering the sector's position and reaching a final position in December 2019 to endorse State Council's position, including the commitment to cover costs relating to redress payments to survivors.*
- *State Government agencies will again engage with Local Governments in early 2020, to inform of the:*

1. *State Government's decision and the implications for the sector*
 2. *support to Local Government (financial and administrative) to be provided by the State, and*
 3. *considerations and actions needed to prepare for participation in the Scheme.*
- *State Government agencies will work with WALGA and all Local Governments over upcoming months to ensure that the necessary agreements, decisions, delegations, actions and preparations are in place to commence participation in the Scheme from 1 July 2020.*

It is understood that an Information Paper (refer to the link below) has been distributed to all local governments earlier this month.

[Timeline / Critical Actions \(WA Local Government Participation in the National Redress Scheme\).](#)
[Information Paper: 3 February 2020.](#)

Mr Gordon MacMile from the DLGSC will also be present for this discussion.

ZONE COMMENT:

Zone supports the WALGA recommendation

5.2 Submission on Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy (05-032-03-0011 SM)

WALGA Recommendation

That the submission to the Department of Premier and Cabinet in response to the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy be endorsed.

Executive Officer Comment:

The following is the Executive Summary from the State Council Agenda:

Executive Summary

- *WALGA has prepared a submission to the Department of Premier and Cabinet in response to the Discussion Paper 'A Path Forward: Developing the Western Australian Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.*
- *The Submission supports the development of an Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy to deliver a strategic foundation that enables the State Government to work more coherently as a whole, to work better with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations, Commonwealth and Local Governments, the private and philanthropic sectors and broader society, and which ensures transparency and accountability to the Western Australian community.*
- *The Submission advocates for:*
 1. *The inclusion of principles that specifically recognise the central importance of:*
 - *Acknowledging the impact of intergenerational trauma and shame and supporting Aboriginal peoples healing and wellbeing.*
 - *Fostering young Aboriginal peoples' positive aspirations for their future.*
 - *Education about Aboriginal culture for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.*
 - *Truth telling.*
 2. *Involving Local Government in the design, development and implementation of State, regional and local action and implementation plans under the Strategy, recognising that the capacity, resources, staff levels and strategic priorities of all Local Governments are different.*
 3. *The clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including Local Government, in the State, regional and local action and implementation plans.*
 4. *Alignment of the measurement and evaluation of the outcomes of the Strategy to a recognised outcomes measurement framework.*
 5. *Alignment of the Strategy with the Reconciliation Action Planning framework to support Local Governments to deliver outcomes that empower Aboriginal people.*

ZONE COMMENT:

Zone supports the WALGA recommendation.

5.3 WALGA Submission on Independent Review of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

WALGA Recommendation

That the submission on the Independent Review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) be endorsed.

Executive Officer Comment:

The following is the Executive Summary from the State Council Agenda:

Executive Summary

- *The EPBC Act is Australia's central piece of national environmental law, focusing on matters of national environmental significance (MNES).*
- *The EPBC Act must be independently reviewed every 10 years. Professor Graeme Samuel AC, has been appointed to undertake the second review of the Act which will report in October 2020.*
- *A Discussion Paper seeking comment on the operation of the EPBC Act was released in November 2019, closing on 17 April 2020. It is intended that responses to the discussion paper will help inform the next steps in the review.*
- *The WALGA submission recognises the significant interaction that WA Local Governments have with environmental legislation at both the State and Commonwealth level and highlights and makes recommendations on matters of concern to the sector.*
- *The submission notes that many Local Governments find the Commonwealth assessment process both confusing and cumbersome, strongly supports the need for a bilateral agreement between the State and Commonwealth to facilitate a single environmental assessment and approval process and recommends an increased emphasis on strategic assessments and bioregional planning rather than assessments of individual actions, better engagement with Local Government and other improvements to the EPBC Act.*

ZONE COMMENT:

Zone supports the WALGA recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Central Country Zone endorses all recommendations being matters contained in the WALGA State Council Agenda other than those recommendations separately considered.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr De Landgraft** **Seconded: Cr Ball**

That the Central Country Zone endorses all recommendations being matters contained in the WALGA State Council Agenda other than those recommendations separately considered.

CARRIED

7.4 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Noting/Information

- 6.1 Draft Position Statement: Residential Aged Care – Submission (05-036-03-0053 AR)**
- 6.2 Managing Housing Health Risks in WA (05-031-01-0001 BW)**
- 6.3 Submission on Modernising the Environmental Protection Act (1986)**
- 6.4 Submission to the Productivity Commission on the National Transport Regulatory Reform (05-006-03-0013 ID)**
- 6.5 Submission to Joint Select Committee on Road Safety (05-009-03-0050 MS)**

6.6 WALGA Submission on Native Vegetation in Western Australia Issues Paper

Executive Officer Comment:

When the dates of the Consultation were announced the Executive Officer wrote to Hon Darren West MLC to seek some additional workshops as both the Mid-West and Great Southern did not have reasonable access to the workshops.

As a result of this intervention from Darren West further workshops were programmed.

6.7 Proposed Amendments to the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 for Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure (05-036-03-0064 VJ)

6.8 Report Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) (01-006-03-0008 RNB)

6.9 2019 Annual General Meeting Status Update (01-003-02-0003 TL)

7.5 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Organisational Reports

7.1 Key Activity Reports

7.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Environment and Waste Unit (01-006-03-0017 MJB)

7.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Governance and Organisational Services (01-006-03-0007 TB)

7.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure (05-001-02-0003 ID)

7.1.4 Report on Key Activities, People and Places (01-006-03-0014 JB)

7.6 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Policy Forum Reports

7.2 Policy Forum Reports

7.2.1 Mayors/Presidents Policy Forum

7.2.2 Mining Community Policy Forum

7.2.3 Container Deposit Legislation Policy Forum

7.2.4 Economic Development Policy Forum

7.7 WALGA President's Report

Presenting the WALGA President's Report

At the time of distributing the Zone Meeting Agenda the WALGA President's Report had not been received.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Central Country Zone notes the following reports contained in the WALGA State Council Agenda:

- Matters for Noting/Information;
- Organisational reports;
- Policy Forum reports; and
- WALGA President's Report.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Blight** **Seconded: Cr Hopper**

That the Central Country Zone notes the following reports contained in the WALGA State Council Agenda:

- **Matters for Noting/Information;**
- **Organisational reports;**
- **Policy Forum reports; and**
- **WALGA President's Report.**

CARRIED

8.0 FINANCE

Nil

9.0 ZONE REPORTS

9.1 Zone President's Report

Cr Brett McGuinness

9.2 Local Government Agricultural Freight Group

As there has been no meeting since the last Central Country Zone Meeting there is no report.

9.3 Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC)

President Leigh Ballard

9.4 Wheatbelt South Regional Road Group

As there has been no meeting since the last Central Country Zone Meeting there is no report.

Meeting Comment:

Cr Crute raised her concern that she considered this report to the Zone was not necessary as the Wheatbelt South Regional Road Group was not a committee of the Zone and had no direct relationship to the Zone.

She requested for it to be discontinued.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Crute** **Seconded: Cr Mulroney**

That the Wheatbelt South Regional Road Group Report be removed from the Agenda.

CARRIED

10.0 ZONE BUSINESS - MEMBER COUNCIL MATTERS

10.1 Matters for Noting

- **WALGA Aboriginal Affairs News Update February 2020 and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Media Release - South West Native Settlement (Attachment)**

Presenting the Aboriginal Affairs News Update which has been prepared WALGA Community Team.

The Minister's media release can be found at [Media Release](#).

- **Drought Communities Programme (Attachment)**

Copy of WALGA advertorial in West Australian Newspaper relating to Drought Communities Programme

Executive Officer Comment:

Mark Batty, WALGA's Executive Manager, Environment and Waste provided the Executive Officer with some briefing notes on the current status of Commonwealth drought funding issues.

Drought Funding Update

*There are a number of funding streams relevant to Local Government under the **Commonwealth Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan 2019**. These can be accessed by following the link shown below:*

https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/aust-govt-drought-response-plan_0.pdf

The Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan 2019 identifies the establishment and operating of a Future Drought Fund (still in preparation and due to be presented to the Australian Parliament in February 2020).

The Australian Government's initial \$3.9 billion upfront contribution will be invested by the Future Fund with earnings to be reinvested until the balance reaches \$5 billion. It will provide a sustainable and ongoing source of funding to make agriculture more productive and profitable and enhance the wellbeing of our farming communities and the sustainability of our farming landscapes.

The Fund will provide support to assist primary producers and regional communities to prepare for the impact of drought, as well as to encourage them to adopt self-reliant approaches to manage exposure to drought. The Fund will support initiatives that enhance the public good (that is benefits that are not solely for individual farm entities), including:

- invest in research, innovation, extension and adoption;*
- assist in the adoption of new and existing technology;*
- improved environmental and natural resource management; and*
- infrastructure and community initiatives.*

From 2020–21, \$100 million will be available for drought-resilience initiatives. A Consultative Committee has been established to advise on the Drought Resilience Funding Plan, which will be developed in consultation with farmers and regional communities. The Funding Plan will guide the selection and prioritisation of drought-resilience projects. There was only limited public consultation in the development of the draft plan by the Consultative Committee (Merredin, Perth - state agencies only – and Geraldton).

The Drought Communities Programme Extension programme has been designed as a rapid economic stimulus package to the current drought conditions being experienced nationally. 128 Local Governments were initially identified (all eastern states Local Governments), plus the recent addition of 35 Local Governments in Western Australia. Up to \$1 million per announcement for local community infrastructure and other drought relief projects.

This is the program that is causing the consternation across the sector with regard to eligibility criteria. Significant portions of the SWLD and pastoral regions are ineligible due to the narrow scope

and interpretation of the three primary selection criteria - based on rainfall deficiency data from the Bureau of Meteorology and population and industry data from the 2016 census.

WALGA has been working with ALGA in order to gain some greater clarity on the rationale for selection criteria, which is by default creating a sense of 'winners and losers', with over twenty additional Local Governments in WA now seeking inclusion into the Drought Communities Programme Extension. WALGA will be seeking a review of the eligibility criteria, as both the criteria used, and the interpretation of it in determining Local Government eligibility is entirely unsatisfactory in the WA context of ongoing drought conditions.

President Craigie gave public voice to the emerging concerns across the sector in her column in the West Australian on Tuesday 11 February.

State Government assistance across the south west land division is largely focussed on the Water Deficient Declared Areas (e.g. parts of Shires of Esperance, Lake Grace, Jerramungup, Ravensthorpe), and is also focussed on carting water to Denmark, Cranbrook, Grass Patch, Hyden, Lake King, Rocky Gully, Wellsted, Salmon Gums, Ravensthorpe and Walpole. At this stage there is little apparent coordination between the State and Commonwealth drought assistance processes.

The information provided above will also form an Infopage to the sector, to be issued next week.

Member Councils will have the opportunity to ask questions of Mark Batty on this issue as he will be attending the Zone meeting with the WALGA CEO Nick Sloan.

Member Councils may also wish to formalise their concerns around this matter by way of resolution for consideration at the next State Council Meeting.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Conley** **Seconded: Cr Hopper**

That the Central Country Zone request the State Councillor, Cr Blight to raise the issue of the criteria for the funding allocation, under the Drought Communities Programme as an emerging issue at the WALGA State Council Meeting on Wednesday 4 March 2020.

CARRIED

➤ **Telecommunications during Emergencies (Attachment)**

WALGA attended the State Emergency Management Committee meeting on Friday, 13 December to discuss issues that have been raised from the local government sector regarding power outages effecting telecommunications during emergencies.

An email has been provided by WALGA CEO relating to the outcome of the meeting and forms an attachment to this agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the matters listed for noting be received.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Crute** **Seconded: Cr Mulroney**

That the matters listed for noting, other than those dealt with separately, be received.

CARRIED

10.2 Future Wheatbelt Conference

Reporting Officer: Bruce Wittber, Executive Officer

Disclosure of Interest: No interest to disclose

Date: 14 February 2020

Attachments: Nil

Background:

With the last conference held in 2018, consideration has been given to the potential for holding another conference in 2020.

First discussed at the Central Country Zone Executive Meeting held Wednesday 8 May 2019 it was resolved as follows:

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr McGuinness* *Seconded: Cr De Landgraft*

That the matter be deferred until the Zone Meeting on 24 May 2019 and in the interim the Executive Officer contact the Avon Midland and Great Eastern Country Zones with respect to their intentions in relation to the conduct of a Wheatbelt Conference in 2020.

CARRIED

At the Zone Meeting on 24 May 2019 the matter of future Wheatbelt Conferences was considered, with the meeting resolving as shown below:

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr Ridgway* *Seconded: President Ballard*

That the Central Country Zone does not support the holding of a Wheatbelt Conference in 2020 however the Zone will review the decision in relation to future Wheatbelt Conferences in May 2020.

CARRIED

In coming to this decision, a number of points were highlighted, including:

- The increasing difficulty in developing new and interesting topics to form the basis of a conference's theme; and
- Finding suitable keynote speakers at an affordable cost to attendees.

Following the advice by the Zone to both the Executive Officer for Avon Midland Country Zone and Great Eastern Country Zone, the Great Eastern Country Zone resolved in respect to the Wheatbelt Conference as follows:

That the Great Eastern Country Zone position on the Wheatbelt Conference be;

- 1. There is value in holding Wheatbelt Conferences;*
- 2. Not hold a Wheatbelt Conference in 2020 and look to hold a conference in 2021;*
- 3. Request the three (3) Wheatbelt Zone Executive Committees to meet and discuss the future of Wheatbelt conferences during the 2019 Local Government convention*

A joint meeting of the three Executive Committees was held on Thursday 8 August 2019, during Local Government Week. The meeting was attended by Cr Conley, Cr McGuinness, Cr Blight, Cr Crute and Cr De Landgraft together with the Joint Executive Officers, on behalf of the Central Country Zone.

The outcome of that meeting was that the issue of organising a Wheatbelt Conference in 2021 be referred to each Zone to consider following the 2019 Local Government Elections. It was felt in doing this any newly elected Councillors could participate in the discussions at which time the type and scope of any future conference could be considered.

The potential to include elected member training into future conferences was also considered.

The Central Country Zone subsequently resolved as its Zone Meeting on Friday 30 August 2019 as follows:

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr Mulroney* *Seconded: Cr Davies*

That the Central Country Zone reaffirms its decision not to support holding a Wheatbelt Conference in 2020, however will review the decision in relation to future Wheatbelt Conferences in February 2020 instead of May 2020.

CARRIED

Executive Officer Comment:

In reviewing its August 2019 decision the following information and comment about previous conference is provided to Zone Delegates.

The first joint Zone Wheatbelt Conference was held in York in 2012.

The timeline for all conferences since that time is shown below:

2012	York	held over 2 days
2013	Merredin	held over 2 days
2014	York	held over 2 days
2015	Kellerberrin	1-day conference
2016	Narrogin	held over 2 days
2017	No conference held	
2018	Jurien Bay	held over 2 days

All conferences have been a collaborative arrangement between the Avon Midland, Central Country and Great Eastern Country Zones, with conferences being managed from both an administrative and financial point of view by the Executive Officer for the Great Eastern Country Zone.

The Central Country Zone, as with the other Wheatbelt Zones, has previously contributed \$3,000 (excl GST) as sponsorship to each conference. Corporate sponsorship was also obtained to assist in funding the conferences.

The Zones also received a one-off grant of around \$35,000 through the Royalties for Regions Program that helped fund the conferences in 2012 and 2013. In-kind assistance was also provided by both the Wheatbelt Development Commission and RDA Wheatbelt in the early conferences. Latter conferences have been solely undertaken and funded by the three Zones. With the grant funding being available for the earlier conferences this enabled the registration cost for delegates to be kept to a minimum.

Following the 2015 conference in Kellerberrin it was agreed that a single day format was not a suitable format for the Wheatbelt Conference because for those delegates travelling long distances to the conference venue the conference became longer than a single day as they had to overnight for at least one night. For the organisers there was little difference in time required to organise a single a day conference over a longer 2 day conference, meaning that a greater “bang for buck” was gained from the longer format.

Following the 2016 Conference it was agreed that future conferences be held every two years rather than annually as had been the case up until that year. The reason for this was the increasing amount of work involved in obtaining sponsorship, attracting suitable speakers and other work associated with organising a successful conference.

There is no doubt successive Wheatbelt Conferences have been of significant value to members of each of the three Zones. This value must, however, be weighed against the potential costs and burden on the Zones in ensuring the high standard and value for money the conferences have offered are continued.

In addition to the issues raised at the May 2019 Zone Meeting below are a number of factors which the Executive Committee also took into account at the joint meeting of the three Executive Committees:

- Cost is major consideration in deciding the future of the Wheatbelt Conference, as is sufficient accommodation for delegates. These have always been major issues confronting the Executive Officers as they put programs and budgets together for consideration by the three Zones.
- The ability to attract ongoing and significant grant funding/sponsorship. Without external funding support it is unlikely that the Wheatbelt Conference can be financially sustainable.
- Change in Government policy allowing public servants to attend conference such as the Wheatbelt Conference has reduced the potential non-sector attendees by 25-30%.
- The opportunity to hold conferences in a wider range of locations due to travel time for attendees and insufficient accommodation, especially when other events are happening in the same location.

- The capacity for the Zone's Executive Officers to undertake work required to plan and deliver a successful conference.

The matter is listed for discussion and decision of the Zone.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Crute** **Seconded: President Ballard**

That the Central Country Zone does not support the conduct of a Wheatbelt Conference.

CARRIED

10.3 Wheatbelt Regional Health Services (Wheatbelt Health MOU)

Reporting Officer: Bruce Wittber, Executive Officer

Disclosure of Interest: Cr Brett McGuinness has declared a financial interest as he is an employee of the WA Country Health Service

Date: 14 February 2020

Attachments: Letter from WALGA dated 19 December 2019

Background:

At the Central Country Zone Meeting on Friday 29 November 2019 consideration was given to a recommendation included in the State Council agenda relating to Wheatbelt Regional Health Services.

The recommendation read as follows:

That WALGA:

- 1. Re-establishes a working group to progress a Memorandum of Understanding with Local Governments in the Wheatbelt region and the WA Country Health Service, based on the previous work by the former Wheatbelt Health MOU Group, which outlines communication, responsibilities and strategic priorities unique to the region; and*
- 2. Work with key service providers and stakeholders to engage with Local Government to further discuss the issues and develop solutions in the aged care services sector.*

In consideration of the above recommendation the Zone resolved as follows:

RESOLUTION: Moved: Cr Blight Seconded: Cr Mulroney

That the Central Country Zone advise WALGA that it does not support the re-establishment of the "Health MOU Group".

CARRIED

The WALGA State Council in considering the matter adopted the recommendation.

Executive Officer Comment:

On 24 December 2019 the Executive Officer received the attached letter seeking a response by 24 January.

The Executive Officer advised WALGA that given the Zone *"opposed the re-establishment of the MOU Group, at its meeting on 29 November, it will be necessary for the Zone (or its Executive Committee), to consider how it wishes to progress (or not) the appointment of a representative to participate on a working group"*.

WALGA was also advised that the Zone President, Cr Brett McGuinness, was away overseas.

The Executive Officer also advised WALGA:

that Friday 24 January is too short a time in which to make a decision on the Zone's participation and then in turn arrange the appointment of a representative given that many CEOs and Zone Delegates are away on leave during January. This may limit the scope of the delegates that express an interest in being appointed the representative, which is not desirable. If it was felt that the matter should be considered by the Zone the next meeting is not until Friday 21 February 2020 when it would normally make a decision and appointment on such representation.

WALGA advised that it was happy for the Zone to consider the matter.

The Executive Committee resolved to recommend to the Central Country Zone Meeting as follows:

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr Crute* *Seconded: Cr West*

That the Central Country Zone Executive Committee recommends to the Central Country Zone Meeting on Friday 21 February 2020:

- 1. That the Central Country Zone agree to be involved in the Wheatbelt Health Working Party considering the re-establishment of a Wheatbelt Health "MOU" Group, with the work of the Wheatbelt Health Working Party being to progress the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Local Governments in the Wheatbelt region and the WA Country Health Service;*
- 2. That Cr Phillip Blight be the Central Country Zone delegate on the Wheatbelt Health Working Party; and*
- 3. That the Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference for the Wheatbelt Health "MOU" Group once developed be submitted to the Central Country Zone for endorsement.*

CARRIED

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The Central Country Zone agree to be involved in the Wheatbelt Health Working Party considering the re-establishment of a Wheatbelt Health "MOU" Group with the work of the Wheatbelt Health Working Party being to progress the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Local Governments in the Wheatbelt region and the WA Country Health Service;
2. Cr Phillip Blight be the Zone delegate on the Wheatbelt Health Working Party; and
3. The Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference for the Wheatbelt Health "MOU" once developed be submitted to the Central Country Zone for endorsement.

11.49am Cr McGuinness having declared a financial interest vacated the Chair and left the meeting

Deputy President Cr De Landgraft assumed the Chair

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr West** **Seconded: Cr Mulroney**

That:

- 1. The Central Country Zone agree to be involved in the Wheatbelt Health Working Party considering the re-establishment of a Wheatbelt Health "MOU" Group with the work of the Wheatbelt Health Working Party being to progress the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Local Governments in the Wheatbelt region and the WA Country Health Service;**
- 2. Cr Phillip Blight be the Zone delegate on the Wheatbelt Health Working Party; and**
- 3. The Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference for the Wheatbelt Health "MOU" once developed be submitted to the Central Country Zone for endorsement.**

CARRIED

11.55am Cr McGuinness returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair

11.0 ZONE BUSINESS - OTHER BUSINESS/URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

12.0 ZONE BUSINESS - EMERGING ISSUES

(The intent of the item is to enable Member Councils to bring to the attention of the delegates a matter that is developing. It is proposed that the matter will be tabled for discussion but not decision and then enable Member Councils to take the information away and consider an outcome for possible consideration at the next Zone meeting.)

12.1 General Practitioner Services in Rural Areas - Shire of Corrigin

Natalie Manton, CEO Shire of Corrigin raised an issue related to the need for local governments that support General Practitioner Services in Rural Areas to call tenders, under the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* for the provision of this service.

Some background information is outlined below.

BACKGROUND

There are a number of local governments in rural WA that have entered into contracts for general practitioner (GP) medical services and/or general practice support services. Many rural local governments provide incentives to GP's to encourage them to live and work in rural communities including:

- cash incentive*
- free use of a medical centre,*
- house,*
- utilities,*
- telephone and internet services,*
- vehicle,*
- furniture and equipment, and*
- ongoing maintenance.*

Local governments are under increasing pressure from auditors, as well as the Office of the Auditor General and ratepayers, to demonstrate that all contracts with service providers are providing value for money and are well managed.

The Shire of Corrigin has been fortunate to have a stable GP for the past five years who provides an excellent service. The GP expressed a willingness to stay for at least another five years which was very acceptable to both the shire and community. Over the past few months the CEO has sought governance and legal advice on options to enable the local government to renegotiate a contract directly with the current GP and avoid the need to tender for the medical services. The WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries have identified some concerns with the existing financial arrangements.

Some local governments employ the doctor and medical centre staff directly, however this is not the preferred option for local governments where the GP runs the medical service independently.

The purchasing policies of many local governments and associated Local Government Act 1995 (section 3.57 – Tenders for providing goods or services) as well as the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996 (section 3.57 Part 4 – Provisions of Goods and Services, Division 2 – Tenders for Providing Goods and Services) require tenders to be called for any goods or services valued at over \$150,000 over the life of the contract.

Both WALGA and the Department of Local Government have provided advice that the payment of financial incentives, together with the payment of costs associated with the house, medical centre, utilities and vehicle, are deemed to be payments by the local government for the provision of services. As the total value of the financial contribution to the GP services is often substantially greater than the prescribed tender threshold of \$150,000 over the life of the contract there is a requirement to tender for these services.

While the tender process provides an efficient and effective method of mitigating risk, determining value for money and ensuring openness, fairness, transparency and equity, it is extremely impractical and difficult process to secure the services of a GP to a rural town.

Previously agreements for medical services may have characterised the rural GP's as a sole supplier and therefore deemed them to be exempt from the tender regulations under Functions and General Regulations Reg.11(2)(f). However there is generally no evidence that the market for GP's or general practice support services have been previously tested. The 2017 Corruption and Crime Commission - Shire of Exmouth Report highlighted that local governments must evidence that they have reasonably and sufficiently tested the market before determining a sole supplier status.

The 2015 amendments to the Local Government Functions and General Regulations, prescribe that renewal or extension of a contract term can only be undertaken where the original contract (entered into after a public tender) included specific and defined options for contract extension. Some earlier agreements with rural GP's do not contain any provision for contract extensions and therefore any decision to renew the agreement for a further period may breach Functions and General Reg. 21A.

COMMENT

The challenges of recruiting and retaining general practitioners in rural areas are well documented and some shires have been fortunate to secure a long term doctor while others have not, or face on ongoing rotation of short term placements or locums. The tender process is a significant additional barrier to securing a doctor, and combined with the exiting challenges of attracting and retaining GP's in rural areas, there is a very real risk that many rural communities will not be able to attract a doctor at all.

The services provided by both the GP's and medical support service providers are highly valued by rural local government and their community members. Having a doctor in town enables residents to feel safe and stay healthy so that they can continue to live in Corrigin and contribute to the local community and economy. The medical services in rural towns are generally well used and provide an excellent service.

The Shire of Corrigin obtained independent advice from WALGA and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries confirming the need to tender for medical services for the following reasons:

- The unique purchase provisions (sole supplier) cannot be applied to the existing GP as other doctors in the market may wish to bid for the opportunity although this is highly unlikely with the current shortage of rural GP's that is well documented.*
- If local government do not comply with the tender regulations they risk the non-compliance being identified in an audit or through community or a regulator scrutiny.*
- The need for any continuing payment of financial incentives using local government funds has not been substantiated to demonstrate that the incentive is necessary for the financial sustainability of the practice.*
- There is a reputational risk for the Shire (and for the doctor) if the non-compliance continues and becomes a matter of public interest, audit or inquiry.*

The Shires of Corrigin, Jerramungup and Pingelly have recently completed a tender process for rural GP's and medical support services. The tender responses were evaluated against pre-determined selection criteria that favoured relevant experience in providing medical services in rural area.

Although the tender process was made as simple as possible the medical service providers found it extremely difficult to comply with the tender requirements.

The need to investigate a possible exemption to the tender regulations for rural general practitioners and medical support services is required to remove the significant barrier to attracting and retaining rural GP's.

There is a very real risk that rural communities will not be able to secure a doctor if local governments are required to call tenders for the financial incentives that they provide before engaging a medical service provider.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Ms Manton** **Seconded: Cr Mulroney**

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*.

CARRIED

12.2 Road Clearing Permits - Shire of Narrogin

President Leigh Ballard, Shire of Narrogin raised an issue, on behalf of the Regional Road Group, relating to clearing permits and in particular the time required for approvals to enable infrastructure works such as road widening and maintenance to be undertaken. It was particularly critical where grants, with time limits to be acquitted, require a permit before works can be undertaken.

Mark Batty (WALGA) advised that the issue had been included in the WALGA submission on Native Vegetation in Western Australia Issues Paper with the suggestion being *that a dedicated resource is established within DWER to deal with Local Government permit applications to provide both a timely service and a consistent application of policy*.

The matter was noted.

13.0 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon Darren West MLC, Member for Agricultural Region

Mr Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor

14.0 OTHER REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

14.1 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Presenting the November 2019 WALGA Zone Update

The Department's update can be accessed by following the following link:

[DLGSC Zone Update February – March 2020](#)

Ms Jenifer Collins, Regional Manager Wheatbelt, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Mr Gordon MacMile, Director Strategic Coordination and Delivery, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

14.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Nil report

14.3 Regional Development Australia (RDA) Wheatbelt (Attachment)

Presenting the Wheatbelt RDA Update Report

14.4 Main Roads WA

Nil

15.0 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 1 May 2020 - Central Country Zone Meeting – Teleconference

Tuesday 5 May 2020 – Executive Committee Meeting via Teleconference

Friday 22 May 2020 - Central Country Zone in-person meeting – Shire of Kulin

16.0 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.30pm

DECLARATION

These minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Central Country Zone held on Friday 1 May 2020

Signed _____
Person presiding at the meeting at which these minutes were confirmed