

# Central Country Zone

## MINUTES

Friday, 25 August 2023

Strategic Session - Commenced at 9:00am  
Zone Meeting – Commenced at 10:35am

### Venue

**Shire of Kulin**

**Freebairn Recreation Centre**

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## 1. Opening and Welcome

*The Chair declared the meeting open at 10:35am.*

### 1.1 Housekeeping – Zone Chair

#### 1. Welcome:

The Deputy Zone Chair, President Cr Des Hickey, 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.

### 1.2 Host Council Presentation

Cr Grant Robins, President of the Shire of Kulin, extended a welcome to Delegates and guests and provided a presentation on Local Government issues.

## 2. Attendance and Apologies

### Attendance

<b>Shire of Brookton</b>	President Cr Katrina Crute Deputy President Cr Neil Walker Mr Gary Sherry Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Corrigin</b>	President Cr Des Hickey (Deputy Chair) Cr Sharon Jacobs Ms Natalie Manton Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Dumbleyung</b>	Deputy President Cr Amy Knight Mr Gavin Treasure Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Kulin</b>	President Cr Grant Robins Cr Barry West Cr Robbie Bowey (observer)
<b>Shire of Lake Grace</b>	President Cr Len Armstrong Deputy President Cr Ross Chappell
<b>Shire of Pingelly</b>	President Cr Bill Mulrone Deputy President Cr Jackie McBurney Mr Andrew Dover Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Quairading</b>	President Cr Peter Smith Cr Jonathan Hippisley
<b>Shire of Wagin</b>	President Cr Phillip Blight

	Deputy President Cr Gregory Ball Mr Mark Hook, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Wandering</b>	President Cr Ian Turton Mr Alan Hart Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of West Arthur</b>	Cr Karen Harrington Mr Vin Fordham Lamont, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Shire of Wickepin</b>	President Cr Julie Russell Mr Nathan Cain Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Williams</b>	Cr Moya Carne Mr Geoff McKeown Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Guests</b> NBNco	Ms Naomi Evans, Head of nbn Local WA Ms Emma Lane, Community Ambassador
Regional Development Australia WA	Ms Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development
<b>Members of Parliament</b>	Hon Steve Martin, Member for the Agricultural Region
<b>WALGA</b>	Mr Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services Ms Kathy Robertson, Executive Officer Governance

## Apologies

Shire of Beverley	President Cr David White Deputy President Cr Chris Lawlor Mr Steve Gollan Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Cuballing	President Cr Eliza Dowling Deputy President Cr Rob Harris Mr Stan Scott Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Corrigin	Deputy President Cr Scott Coppen
Shire of Dumbleyung	President Cr Julie Ramm
Shire of Kulin	Deputy President Cr Brad Smoker Mr Alan Leeson Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Lake Grace	Mr Alan George Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Narrogin	President Leigh Ballard (Chair) Cr Graham Broad Mr Dale Stewart Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Quairading	Ms Nicole Gibbs Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Wandering	Deputy President Cr Paul Treasure
Shire of West Arthur	President Cr Neil Morrell
Shire of Wickepin	Deputy President Cr Wes Astbury
Shire of Williams	President Cr Jarrad Logie
Members of Parliament	Hon Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Darren West MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Wheatbelt Development Commission	Ms Susan Hall, Chief Executive Officer Ms Pip Gooding, Regional Development Officer – Wheatbelt South
Department of Local Government, Sport, & Cultural Industries	Ms Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Manager Wheatbelt

Main Roads WA	Mr Mohammad Siddiqui, Director Wheatbelt Region
Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care	Ms Rebecca McIlroy, Director WA Country Stewardship
	Ms Roslyn Smith, Assistant Director WA Country Stewardship
Water Corporation	Michael Roberts, Regional Manager Goldfields & Agricultural Region
WALGA	Mr Rodney Thornton, Regional Road Safety Advisor

### **Attachments to the Minutes**

The following are provided as attachments to the Minutes:

- Attachment 1 Item 5.2, NBN Presentation
- Attachment 2 8.3.2, Proposed Boundaries for the 2025 Election
- 

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Nil

### **4. Announcements**

Nil

### **5. Guest Speakers / Deputations**

#### **5.1 Department of Health and Aged Care**

The Department of Health and Aged Care regrettably had to reschedule their presentation to the November meeting.

**Noted**

#### **5.2 Naomi Evans, Head of NBN Local WA**

**NBNco**

Naomi Evans from NBNco presented on emergency preparedness. Presentation attached – **Attachment 1**

**Noted**

### **6. Members of Parliament**

*Members of Federal and State Government, representing the Zone Member Local Government Districts, are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to Zone Members.*

State Members:

Hon Steve Martin MLC, Member for Central Wheatbelt

- Update on the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act* –

- The new *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* lasted only about 5 weeks before the State Government announced plans to repeal it.
- In a new Bill to be presented to Parliament, the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* will be repealed and an amended version of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* will be revived.
- The changes to the revived 1972 Act will be:
  - Greater representation of Aboriginal people in the key body that provides advice and recommendations to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, to be called the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee (Committee). It does this by maintaining the membership of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council created under the 2021 Act and transferring it to the Committee;
  - Proponents and Native Title parties having the same right of review for section 18 decisions via the State Administrative Tribunal, with clear timeframes and an ability for the Premier to call-in a decision of 'State significance';
  - When a section 18 has been approved, a new requirement for the land owner to notify the Minister of any new information arising about any Aboriginal heritage site:
  - When new information is provided to the Minister, either by the landowner in compliance with their obligations or through other means, the Minister can amend the section 18 consent, including by imposing new conditions or changing the specification of the land to which it relates, revoke the consent, revoke the consent and give a new consent or confirm the consent; and
  - Provisions in a contract or agreement which prohibit a native title party from seeking to be heard in relation to an application for a section 18 consent, including making submissions, or exercising any right to review or to commence proceedings, will have no effect.
- The WA Electoral Commission have announced the proposed boundaries for the next State election
  - The Commissioners are currently accepting and considering objections.
  - The boundaries proposed are unlikely to be changed substantially.
  - There is likely to be one less non-metropolitan seat in the lower house, and unfortunately resources to the regions probably won't be increased.
- Housing
  - The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) have put an offer out asking if Local Governments could build some accommodation for country health staff.
  - This is just a further example of the State Government relying on Local Governments to fix problems and stretch already strained budgets.
- *Local Government Act* tranche two reforms
  - The tranche two reforms likely won't be on the agenda for this year.
  - The opposition is concerned about how these reforms would continue a trend of shifting costs to Local Governments.

## Noted

## 7. Agency Reports

### 7.1 Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)

Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Manager Wheatbelt, was an apology. A report was provided with the Agenda.



**Noted**

### **7.2 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt (RDAW)**

Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development, provided a report to the meeting as attached in the agenda.

**Noted**

### **7.3 Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC)**

Pip Gooding, Regional Development Officer Wheatbelt South, was an apology.

**Noted**

### **7.4 Main Roads Western Australia**

Brad Pearce, Operations Manager Narrogin, was an apology

**Noted**

## **8. Minutes**

### **8.1 Confirmation of Minutes from the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 23 June 2023**

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 23 June 2023 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Ross Chappel  
**Seconded:** Cr Jackie McBurney

That the minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 23 June 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

**CARRIED**

### **8.2 Business Arising from the Minutes from the Central Country Zone Meeting held on Friday, 23 June 2023**

#### **8.2.1 (Item 9.3) Waste Management Funding**

## *RESOLUTION*

*Moved:* President Cr Leigh Ballard  
*Seconded:* President Cr Phil Blight

*That the Central Country Zone:*

1. *further endorse that the Levy should not be applied to licensed landfills which receive waste from the metropolitan area; and*
2. *organise a deputation to the Minister for Environment on this matter.*

**CARRIED**

*ACTION: the deputation to the Minister will include Cr Leigh Ballard, Cr Des Hickey, Cr Phil Blight, and Rebecca Brown*

Comment:

The Executive Officer has written to Hon Reece Whitby MLA, Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Racing and Gaming, requesting a meeting with the deputation as named in the above resolution. We await a response.

**Noted**

### **8.3 Minutes of the Central Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 9 August 2023**

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

#### **8.3.1 (Item 5.5.3) Speakers for the November Zone Meeting**

The Executive Committee wish to extend an open invite to the Minister for Local Government to attend a future meeting of the Zone. An Invite will be issued for the November meeting and again once the 2024 dates have been confirmed.

**Noted**

#### **8.3.2 (Item 7.2) Proposed Boundaries for the 2025 Election**

**Background:**

The Commissioners' proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan districts by one is open for objections until Monday 21 August. WALGA are submitting an objection paper on behalf of the sector. In addition, a submission has been prepared on behalf of the Zone. The Central Country Zone and its Members object to the proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan districts by one as the reduction in political representation will negatively impact rural and regional communities.

At the time of finalising this agenda, the Zones objection had not been finalised. A copy of the final Zone objection will be provided prior to the meeting.

State Councillor Comment:

Having consulted within my zone I share that there is support for the submission.

This restructuring shifts the balance of power even further away from the economic power house of Australia.

The economic benefit derived from the regions is vastly underestimated in this report as most mining companies have their registered office in a city, not where the mining activity takes place.

No amount of additional resources will substitute for the loss of voices at the table when and where political decisions are made.

One vote one value is only reasonable if services are equally delivered to all people. When regional WA gets tertiary hospitals, universities, public infrastructure, police, public transport, and the vast array of commercial services within same the easy access demanded by metropolitan WA, then vote equally is rational.

What is most concerning is the loss of volunteers in regional WA. These volunteers are the people that hundreds of thousands of metropolitan tourists expect to call upon should they be unfortunate to have an incident when exploring the regions beyond the scarp.

Cr Price's points re FIFO also accentuates this problem as these workers contribute little to regional communities but consume similar volunteer resources provided by the few live in locals.

### Secretariat Comment

Local Governments provided responses to the draft submission. All responses were supportive of a submission.

Local Governments provided some good feedback to add to the submission. The following comments have been included:

- Impacts of FIFO and DIDO

The impacts of Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) and Drive-in Drive-out (DIDO) workers within the regions need to be considered.

There are some 300,000 workers within the regions which represents some 25% of the State's workforce however no consideration is given to including these numbers in the statistical data when defining boundaries. FIFO and DIDO workers essentially 'reside' within the Local Government boundaries and town centers and, in most cases, spend more time living and working in the regions than they do in the electorate in which they are registered.

If the analysis were to include these numbers within the current electoral boundaries we would see a completely different picture of how our population is dispersed, particularly within the electorates of Moore and North West Central.

It is therefore important that the State Government is aware of the need to consider all aspects of an electorate and not just focus on numbers of registered voters. Representation should be available to all and in light of the size of our State and its diversity both economically and geographically, special consideration should be made when casting the net to capture population numbers.

- Population Dispersement

Western Australia has an uneven dispersment of the State's population. Unlike most other States, Western Australia has always been capital city and broader metropolitan area populous, particularly compared to its regions. This historical and factual situation results in a very unbalanced, almost inverse relationship between Perth and all other parts of the State. This is made even more complex given the large geographical size and remoteness of WA. So a 'one vote, one value' approach around State-wide electoral representation doesn't create a balanced situation where whole of State needs are met. The economic and social requirements of people living in WA are as diverse as the State geography and its landscape.

Basing electoral distribution solely on population numbers only exacerbates the current imbalance. A State as unique and diverse as WA requires a more flexible and rounded electoral distribution system that recognises the challenges and needs of all Western Australians, no matter where they live. A multi-faceted basis and approach for establishing electoral boundaries should be established which also recognises broader socio-economic criteria (& need).

- Matters to consider when dividing the State

The proposed amalgamation of North West Central and Moore does not give due consideration to the factors in section 16I of the *Electoral Act 1907* (WA). The proposed new Mid West district will cover an

estimated 70 townsites and a broad spectrum of land use patterns, from urban fringe development, remote communities, livestock farming, broad acre cropping, and pastoral and mining operations. Factors such as community of interest and land use patterns do not seem to have been taken into account in this proposal to amalgamate urban fringes (peri urban) with regional and remote communities. It is essential that all aspects of an electorate be considered when determining boundaries, not just the number of registered voters.

The attached updated submission (**Attachment 2**) was submitted to the Commissioners prior to the closing date.

**Noted**

#### **8.4 Minutes of the Central Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 9 August 2023**

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 9 August 2023 were attached.

The remainder of the items are for the Zones consideration.

#### **RESOLUTION**

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

**That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 9 August 2023 be noted, and the items not considered above be endorsed.**

**CARRIED**

### **9. Zone Business**

#### **9.1 State Government Changes to Gun Laws**

##### **Background:**

The Executive Officer wrote to the Hon. Paul Papalia CSC MLA Minister for Police; Road Safety; Defence Industry; Veterans Issues. The Minister was invited to the June meeting to speak to;

*'... further outline how the proposed changes to the way firearms legislation is to be implemented, as well as the defined process that led to these proposed changes.'*

The Ministers office was unable to accept the invitation however did state they would supply a written response to the Zone. The Executive Officer is still following up on this response and will include in the next Agenda.

**Noted**

#### **9.2 Water Corporation – Non-Standard Water Services**

*Gavin Treasure CEO, Shire President Julie Ramm, Shire of Dumbleyung*

##### **Background:**

Water Corporation has formally contacted the Shire of Dumbleyung to advise that it intends to classify a number of Shire locations as a 'Non-Standard Water Service' (NSWS). This means that Water Corp can no longer meet the required level of service and conditions under Water Corp's operating licence.

Conditions can relate to water quality, water pressure, flow rate and/or continuity of supply. Water Corp has provided the following options for Shire consideration:-

1. Install a water treatment option, (WC to install, Shire to manage ongoing costs for maintenance)
2. Install signage at tap 'Water not for consumption'
3. Disconnect service
4. EHO could conduct regular water sampling, if water quality is within an acceptable range, no treatment is required

Comment:

Specific Shire of Dumbleyung owned sites earmarked for reclassification include Moulyinning Hall, Nippering Cemetery and Kukerin Cemetery. In relation to the Moulyinning Hall, Water Corp has offered to provide free bottled water to users/hirers of the hire until a satisfactory treatment option is identified and established. There is also a CBH property and five residential properties all based in Moulyinning. Water Corp has indicated that it will make direct contact with local residences and property owners impacted by this decision.

Water Corp is seeking Shire feedback on preferred options moving forward. If water treatment is the preferred option, Water Corp has indicated that it would fund the purchase and installation of the agreed solution, but the Shire would then be responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance, including eventual replacement. Water treatment would appear to be the most optimal solution (of the options provided) to safeguard and maintain a consistent quality product.

This Water Corp advice has serious implications for one of our smaller communities (Moulyinning) in which the entire town (community) is potentially slated for standard water services withdrawal (including town hall). This advice raises a number of pertinent issues that need to be better understood and resolved prior to the Shire confirming its preferred position, namely:-

1. The Shire being asked to take on responsibility for provision of potable drinking water that was previously the responsibility of Water Corp
2. The public health and risk implications to the Shire in relation to 1 above
3. The cost implications to the Shire in relation to 1 above

Water Corp has been contacted to seek feedback and comment in relation to the above matters. With these known risks and concerns, the Shire's immediate response should be to 'push back' against this Water Corp initiative and insist that they maintain previous water provision licensing arrangements to all sites and customers.

This matter would appear to have cross LGA implications.

Financial Implications:

As mentioned above, this matter has significant (unknown) risk and cost implications to the Shire of Dumbleyung. It also has cost shifting impacts on the entire Local Government sector.

**RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: President Cr Phillip Blight**

**That the Central Country Zone:**

1. **Rejects Water Corporation attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service' (unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority);**
2. **Formally writes to Water Corporation and the Minister for Water confirming this position;**

3. Requests that WALGA supports the position of the Central Country Zone and rejects the Water Corporation's attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service'; and
4. Requests WALGA to engage with the Minister for Water to retain the current services, unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority.

**CARRIED**

### **9.3 Heavy Vehicles - Accredited Mass Management Scheme**

*Grant Robins, President, Shire of Kulin*

#### **Background:**

There is currently a lack of enforcement by Main Roads Heavy Vehicles Services in relation to AMMS movements across the wheatbelt. Non compliant AMMS movements relate in the main part to;

- Non-compliant loading by contractors with HVS AMMS permit conditions which requires contractors to load correctly to axle group weightings;
- Contractors going off route and not abiding by HVS/AMMS permit conditions.

To facilitate a greater level of compliance with respect to AMMS it is recommended;

- vehicle tracking is introduced as an AMMS permit condition with data being available to Main Roads WA Heavy Vehicle Services compliance unit upon request;
- Permit holders operating under the AMMS permit system must have a method to validate that loaded produce is done so in a manner which meets AMMS permit conditions (e.g) weigh bridge certificates, or on board weighing system, before entering the road system.

#### Proposed recommendation:

That the Central Country Zone:

request WALGA to establish an Industry Working Group associated with Main Roads WA Accredited Mass Management Scheme across the Restricted Access Vehicle Network, with a view to reducing accelerated degradation and damage to rural and regional road networks as well as improving road safety for all users. Working Group membership shall be representative of relevant industry stakeholders but not necessarily be limited to (WALGA, Local Government, Main Roads WA, Dept of Transport, CBH, relevant Heavy Vehicle Operators Association)

#### Secretariat comment:

Main Roads has the sole authority for AMMS and RAV access. Suggest in the first instance these issues need to be raised with Main Roads Heavy Vehicle Services. WALGA can facilitate a meeting with Main Roads and Shire representatives to work through the issues.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Grant Robins**  
**Seconded: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to investigate the establishment of an Industry Working Group associated with Main Roads WA Accredited Mass Management Scheme across the Restricted Access Vehicle Network, with a view to reducing accelerated degradation and damage to rural and regional road networks as well as improving road safety for all users. Working Group membership shall be representative of relevant industry stakeholders but not necessarily be limited to (WALGA, Local Government, Main Roads WA, Department of Transport, CBH, relevant Heavy Vehicle Operators Association).**

**CARRIED**

## 9.4 2023 Local Government Elections – Zone Office Bearer Elections

By Chantelle O'Brien, Governance Support Officer

### BACKGROUND

With the bi annual Local Government elections being held on Saturday, 21 October 2023, Zones will also be required to hold an election process for State Council representatives.

A chronological overview of the process is detailed below:

- Local Government elections occur on Saturday, 21 October 2023.
- Member Councils to elect/appoint their Zone Delegates and to advise the Zone Executive Officer, as soon as possible but preferably by 3 November 2023.
- For the purpose of electing their representatives and deputy representatives to the WALGA State Council, the Zones are required to hold these elections at their November 2023 meeting.
- Zones to advise WALGA, in writing, of their elected State Council representative and deputy representative immediately following the 2023 November Zone meeting.
- A State Councillor Induction Session will be held for all State Council representatives and deputy representatives before the first meeting in December.
- The new State Council will take office at the Ordinary Meeting of State Council on **6 December 2023**.

In relation to the nominations and election process to be followed by each Zone in electing a representative and deputy representative to the WALGA State Council, the below process has been instituted by State Council:

1. *Zone Executive Officer to write to all Member Councils no later than 1 month prior to the Zone meeting at which the election is to be held calling for nominations from Delegates to the Zone for the positions of representative and deputy representative to State Council. The correspondence is to state that all nominations are to be made in writing to the Zone Executive Officer, and only Elected Members who are a nominated Zone Delegates are eligible to nominate. The time period for the receipt of nominations is preferably to be **one week prior** to the Zone meeting at which the election will be held. However, nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Zone meeting.*
2. *Zone Executive Officer to receive written nominations from Zone Delegates for the positions of representative and deputy representative to State Council and then provide written confirmation to Member Councils of the nominations received.*
3. *Elections are to be held at the next Zone meeting as the first item of business. Nominations will be permitted from the floor at the Zone meeting. Where there is more than one nomination for each vacant position, an election will be conducted using a secret ballot, with the Zone Executive Officer to represent WALGA as the returning officer for the election. Prior to the ballot, nominees for each position are to be extended the opportunity to provide a 2 minute election bid to Delegates.*
4. *All voting Delegates to the Zone are entitled to cast one (1) vote in the ballot process. The candidate with the greater or greatest number of votes is elected to the office.*
5. **Tied vote** – *in the event of a tied vote, election will be determined by drawing names from a box. The Secretariat will put the names of the candidates concerned in a box and the first name drawn is the Elected Member.*
6. *Zone Executive Officer to advise WALGA in writing immediately following the Zone meeting of the outcome of their elections.*

If you have any questions or require further information in relation to the above mentioned process, please contact Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services on 9213 2051 or email [tbrown@walga.asn.au](mailto:tbrown@walga.asn.au).

## RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Neil Walker

Seconded: President Cr Bill Mulroney

**That the Central Country Zone note the process for election of Zone Representative and Deputy Representative to the WALGA State Council.**

**CARRIED**

### 9.5 Commonwealth Disaster Ready Fund – Round Two

*By Rachel Armstrong, Senior Policy Advisor Emergency Management*

#### Executive Summary

- The [Disaster Ready Fund](#) (DRF) is a \$200 million Commonwealth Government fund that provides grants to government and non-government organisations to help them reduce disaster risk.
- Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for DRF Round 2 are open now and applications for Round 2 will open in early 2024.
- Benefits to Local Governments in applying for the DRF include building partnerships with other organisations and receiving financial assistance for projects that reduce community vulnerability to disasters.
- The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) is actively engaging with organisations in preparation for Round 2 of the DRF, to identify projects that are most likely to be successful, as well as providing support and advice to develop strong applications.
- DFES is encouraging Local Governments interested in applying for DRF Round 2 to start planning now.
- DFES is holding a [grants webinar](#) on **Monday 4 September**, 10am to 12pm, which will provide more detail on how to submit a successful grant application, and the support available.

#### Background

The first round of the DRF opened on 10 January and closed 6 March 2023. 19 out of 23 successful Western Australian projects involved Local Governments. Although many WA Local Governments that applied to Round One of the DRF were successful, WA were only allocated just over \$8 million of the total \$200 million available. Successful projects from the first round are listed [here](#).

EOIs for DRF Round 2 are open now and applications for Round 2 will open in early 2024.

#### Comment

Examples of the types of projects that were successful across Australia, and may be of interest to Local Governments considering applying for a DRF grant in Round Two include:

- Evacuation centre upgrades
- Coastal erosion mitigation
- Flood resilience
- Community disaster risk reduction and resilience projects
- Green canopy initiatives
- Community engagement, education, and preparedness
- Improving natural environments to build resilience.

The extra support being provided by DFES through the early EOI process may help increase DRF funding to Local Governments in Round Two. A key factor in funding success is a well substantiated application, which can be resource intensive to develop.



DFES will hold a grants webinar 10am - 12pm, **Monday 4 September**, with information on how to submit a successful grant application, and what support is available. Register your interest [here](#).

Further information is available on the [SEMC website](#) or [semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:semc.grants@dfes.wa.gov.au).

## RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Barry West  
Seconded: President Cr Julie Russel

That the Central Country Zone notes that Expressions of Interest for Round 2 of the Disaster Ready Fund are now open, and that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is providing support to Local Governments to assist with the development of high-quality applications.

**CARRIED**

### 10. Zone Reports

#### **10.1 Zone President Report**

Zone Chair, President Leigh Ballard was an apology.

**Noted**

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

The Local Government Agriculture Group have not hosted a meeting since prior to November 2022.

The Executive recommend the Central Country Zone withdraw from the group, however welcome contact from the group should it be re-established.

## RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute  
Seconded: President Cr Bill Mulroney

1. That the Central Country Zone withdraw from the Local Government Agricultural Freight Group; and
2. If the Group is re-established, the Zone can provide feedback on any issue.

**CARRIED**

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

President Leigh Ballard was an apology.

**Noted**

#### **10.4 Regional Health Advocacy Group**

Ms Natalie Manton is the Central Country Zone representative for this group. The group has not met since 2021.

**Noted**

### **10.5 Wheatbelt Interagency Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Group**

Cr Jackie McBurney provided an update to the Zone.

**Noted**

### **10.6 WALGA RoadWise**

Rodney Thornton, Regional Road Safety Advisor was an apology.

**Noted**

## **11. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) Business**

### **11.1 State Councillor Report**

Cr Phillip Blight

State Councillor Phillip Blight endorsed the previously attached 2023 September State Councillor report.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: Cr Barry West**

**Seconded: Cr Karen Harrington**

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

**CARRIED**

## 11.2 WALGA Status Report

By Tony Brown, Executive Officer

### BACKGROUND

Presenting the Status Report for August 2023 which contains WALGA’s responses to the resolutions of previous Zone Meetings.

## August 2023

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Central C	23 June 2023 Zone Agenda Item 9.4 - Line Marking and Road Safety	That WALGA be requested to engage with Main Roads WA with a view to providing Local Government with greater flexibility and autonomy in relation to line marking thresholds and approval guidelines for rural and regional roads, consistent with the body of the report presented to the Central Country Zone meeting on 23 June 2023.	<p>The Infrastructure Policy Team considered the matter on 5 July and resolved that WALGA develop an advocacy position that will provide Local Governments with greater flexibility and autonomy in providing line markings and to review the criteria for eligibility to provide and fund line marking, including audible markings, on roads to improve road safety for consideration by State Council.</p> <p>A key consideration is the acceptance of (financial) maintenance responsibility for some road markings and the obligations this places on future Councils.</p>	Dec 2023	Ian Duncan Executive Infrastructure Manager <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031
Central C	2022, 18 February Zone Agenda Item 11.1	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.	The Infrastructure Policy Team determined not to propose the establishment of a Policy Forum to consider Agricultural Freight. Any decision to disband the Agricultural Freight Group is a matter for the participating Zones.	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Infrastructure Manager <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031
Central C	23 June 2023 Zone Agenda Item 9.1 - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	That the Central Country Zone request: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage to provide information on the cost to Local Governments of implementing the regulations;</li> <li>WALGA to collate the information from the Local Governments feedback on the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the implementation of the Regulations; and</li> <li>the State Government to underwrite any potential costs of Local Government complying with the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department of Planning Lands and Heritage (DPLH) has published information on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage application fees and fees associated with services provided by Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services (LACHS). The costs to Local Government will vary according to the tier and extent of activities planned, their location and whether Aboriginal cultural heritage exists or not. <a href="#">More information can be found here.</a></li> <li>WALGA is collating feedback from Local Governments on implementation issues to inform ongoing advocacy</li> </ol>	August 2023	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy <a href="mailto:nmatthews@walga.asn.au">nmatthews@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2039

			<p>and additional support for the sector. WALGA has established an online ACH Act Network and monthly question and answer sessions with DPLH to support provision of timely advice to the sector. More information on the WALGA activities can be <a href="#">found here</a>.</p> <p>3. Recommendation 18 of WALGA's <a href="#">submission to Phase three consultation</a> on the ACH Act stated "The State Government to subsidise Local Government for the increased costs that Local Governments will be required to bear as a result of the new legislative ACH regime". While this recommendation has not been supported by State Government to date, WALGA continues to advocate for additional support for Local Government to assist in the implementation of the ACH Act. WALGA President, Karen Chappel JP wrote to the Hon Mr Toni Buti Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, on 1 June 2023 setting out key actions for DPLH including to support Local Government implement the ACH Act through the provision of training, guidance materials, additional regional officers and extension of grant funding project timeframes. In addition, WALGA will escalate issues via its membership of the ACH Act Implementation Group.</p>		
<p><b>Central C</b></p>	<p>5 July 2023 State Council Agenda Item 7.5 - <b>Audit Experience Survey Results Summary and Advocacy Position</b></p>	<p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. State Council note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary; and</li> <li>2. WALGA advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to reform the audit process for Local Governments by seeking:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 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.</li> <li>b. That the OAG review the requirements for pre-audit information with a view to reducing the need for additional information where possible;</li> <li>c. That the OAG review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit cost increases;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>The issue of fair value reporting was a major concern to the sector from the survey findings. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries have written to WALGA advising that they will be reviewing the Fair Value requirements. The Central Country Zone's position is acknowledged; however, the Australian Accounting Standards require the revaluing of all assets including non-financial assets.</p> <p>State Council Resolution</p> <p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. State Council note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary; and</li> <li>2. WALGA advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to reform the audit process for Local Governments by seeking:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p><b>August 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Tony Brown</b>  <b>Executive Director member Services</b>  <b>tbrown@walga.asn.au</b>  <b>9213 2051</b></p>

		<p>d. That the OAG provide a breakdown on the cost of the audit and justification for any variance to the estimate to the Local Government as part of the final billing process;</p> <p>e. That auditors be required to improve their communication and information management and avoid repeated requests for information that has already been provided;</p> <p>f. That Local Governments only be required to communicate with contract Auditors (<i>unless the OAG is directly auditing the Local Government</i>) and the onus be placed on the contract Auditors to confirm their advice with the OAG before instructing the Local Government; and</p> <p>g. In-conjunction with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, review the application of Fair Value principles in the context of the audit <u>including considering removing the impost of revaluing non-financial assets (roads and footpaths) from financial reporting requirements for Local Governments.</u></p>	<p>the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.</p> <p>b. That the OAG review the requirements for pre-audit information with a view to reducing the need for additional information where possible;</p> <p>c. That the OAG review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit cost increases;</p> <p>d. That the OAG provide a breakdown on the cost of the audit and justification for any variance to the estimate to the Local Government as part of the final billing process;</p> <p>e. That auditors be required to improve their communication and information management and avoid repeated requests for information that has already been provided <u>or that is publicly available;</u></p> <p>f. That Local Governments only be required to communicate with contract Auditors (<i>unless the OAG is directly auditing the Local Government</i>) and the onus be placed on the contract Auditors to confirm their advice with the OAG before instructing the Local Government;</p> <p>g. In-conjunction with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, review the application of Fair Value principles in the context of the audit; and</p> <p>h. <u>Seek an opportunity for Local Government to make representations in relation to any adverse findings prior to the publication of the report.</u></p> <p><u>RESOLUTION 464.3/2023</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>CARRIED</u></p>		
<p><b>Central C</b></p>	<p>14 April 2023 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.1 Financial Burden to Local Governments of Optional Preferential Voting</b></p>	<p>That WALGA forms a policy position and advocates that:</p> <p>1. any Western Australian Electoral Commission fee increases for the 2023 Local Government elections are capped at 10% when compared with the 2021 rates; and</p>	<p>This item has been referred to the Governance &amp; Organisational Services Policy Team who will recommend an item to State Council. The Zone will be kept informed as this item progresses.</p>	<p><b>August 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Tony Brown</b> Executive Director, Member Services 9213 2051 tbrown@walga.asn.au</p>



		2. the CountWA software from Western Australian Electoral Commission is provided to Local Governments free of charge for the 2023 and subsequent Local Government elections.			
<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 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. Due to work priorities this work was not carried out in 2022, however work is scheduled this year.</p>	<b>August 2023</b>	<b>Tony Brown</b> <b>Executive Director,</b> <b>Member Services</b> <b>9213 2051</b> <b>tbrown@walga.asn.au</b>

## 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.

## Noted

### 11.3 WALGA President's Report

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

## RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Phillip Blight  
Seconded: President Cr Grant Robbins

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

**CARRIED**

### 11.4 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda – Matters for Decision

#### 11.4.1 State Council Agenda Items – 13 September 2023

##### 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 13 September 2023](#)

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

#### 7.1 Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Advocacy Position

That WALGA endorse the following position on Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA):

1. *The State Government should fund the implementation of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).*
2. *A reformed LEMA system should:*
  - a) *Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of Local Governments in emergency management;*
  - b) *Simplify the reporting processes and reduce the administrative burden of maintaining compliance;*
  - c) *Provide a suite of scalable tools and guidance materials that are accessible through an online knowledge hub;*
  - d) *Build the emergency management capacity and capability of Local Governments through the provision of targeted training, exercising support, human resources and sustainable funding;*
  - e) *Assist Local Governments to continue to deliver their core business activities and provide public information during an emergency event;*

- f) *Improve the connectivity of Local Governments' various risk management and hazard planning processes through an integrated approach; and*
- g) *Enable resource sharing and collaboration across the Local Government sector.*

## **7.2 Advocacy Position on Road Works during Total Fire Ban**

That WALGA endorse the following principles in relation to the exemptions and conditions under which road works may be undertaken during a Total Fire Ban:

1. Road Activity Tiers: That there be a tiered risk approach for road work activities and associated controls, based on the proposed activities and fire danger forecast.
2. Local Government operations: That any controls specified in regulations to provide effective risk mitigation and response be able to be implemented within the works crew deployed for the task.
3. Reduce Red Tape: That the processes where repeated notification to DFES for the same task at the same location is required be streamlined.

## **Policy Team And Committee Reports**

- 8.1 Environment and Waste Policy Team Report
- 8.2 Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team Report
- 8.3 Infrastructure Policy Team Report
- 8.4 People and Place Policy Team Report
- 8.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: President Cr Bill Mulroney**

**That the Central Country Zone:**

1. **Supports all Matters for Decision as listed above in the September 2023 State Council Agenda; and**
2. **Notes all Matters for Noting, Policy Team and Committee Reports and Organisational Reports as listed in the September 2023 State Council Agenda.**

**CARRIED**



## 12. Emerging Issues

### 12.1 Retiring members

There are several Central Country Zone Delegates who will be retiring from Local Government as of this year's election. This will be their final Zone meeting.

The retiring Delegates are:

- Neil Walker
- Bill Mulroney
- Barry West
- Julie Ramm

The Chair thanked the contributions of the retiring Delegates for both their service to the Central Country Zone, and to their respective Local Governments.

## RESOLUTION

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: Cr Jackie McBurney**

**The Central Country Zone thanks the retiring Councillors as well as those outgoing Zone Delegates who are up for election at the October Local Government elections.**

**CARRIED**

### 12.2 Contaminated Sites

*Shire of West Arthur*

The Shire of West Arthur has received notification, from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, regarding the Darkan Landfill sites' proposed classification under *the Contaminated Sites Act of 2003*. The notification indicated that the landfill had classified "potentially contaminated, investigation required" with a number of site assessment requirements and actions associated with that classification.

Shire CEO, Mr Vin Fordham Lamont, investigated the cost of the assessments outlined in the Departments correspondence and found them to be significant (approximately 10% of the Shire's annual rates revenue).

The Darkan Landfill, due to the low amounts of waste deposited, and risk associated, is a Registered, rather than licenced, landfill complying with the [Environmental Protection \(Rural Landfill\) Regulations \(2002\)](#).

Mr Fordham Lamont has engaged with WALGA to provide assistance and is investigating the best option to ensure the Shire is not required to undertake such costly assessments which are disproportioned to the risk associated with the landfill.

The Shire of West Arthur is concerned that other Local Governments with Registered Landfill Sites may also be receiving similar correspondence and being faced with potentially significant and unnecessary site investigation costs. There are at least 25 regional Local Governments with active Registered Landfill sites.

The Shire is raising this at the Zone, to request:

- WALGA investigate the extent that this issue is impacting regional Local Governments with registered landfill sites.
- Engage with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, on behalf of the sector, to ensure that the Departments requirements are proportionate to the risk associated with a particular site.

## RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Karen Harrington  
**Seconded:** President Cr Katrina Crute

That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to:

1. investigate the extent that this issue is impacting regional Local Governments with registered landfill sites; and
2. engage with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, on behalf of the sector, to ensure that the Department's requirements are proportionate to the risk associated with a particular site.

**CARRIED**

### **12.3 Cost of Optional Preferential Voting to Local Governments**

*Cr Jackie McBurney, Shire of Pingelly*

With the new optional preferential voting system, the cost to small Local Governments for this upcoming LG election is going to be significant and onerous.

Is there something the Zone can do to remedy this cost?

#### **Secretariat Comment**

An item will be considered by WALGA's Governance and Organisational Services Committee, where it is proposed that a comprehensive review and analysis of previous election cycles up to and including the 2023 Local Government election be carried out.

The purpose of this approach is to find evidence of the reported rising cost of conducting Local Government elections, with a focus on postal elections conducted exclusively by the WA Electoral Commission. The analysis will also ascertain elector engagement as candidates and as voters.

Upon completion of the analysis, an alternative advocacy approach should be considered as a means of gaining greater traction for WALGA's adopted election-related advocacy.

WALGA will consider the systems in place in other states that have optional preferential voting at LG elections. WALGA will encourage the State Government to investigate what can be done to mitigate costs.

It is unlikely that anything can be done for this year's election, but WALGA will be strongly advocating for change before the 2025 LG Elections.

**Noted**

### **13. Date, Time, and Place of Next Meetings**

The next Central Country Zone meeting will be held on Friday, 17 November 2023 commencing at 9:30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Lake Grace.

### **14. Closure**

***The Chair thanked the Shire of Kulin for hosting today's meeting, and all Delegates for participating in the Strategic Forum and meeting.***

***There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:34pm***