



Northern Country Zone MINUTES

14 FEBRUARY 2022

Hosted by the Shire of Mingenew
Mingenew Sports Pavilion
commencing at 10:05 am



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ATTACHMENTS TO THE AGENDA

- Item 3.1 NACC RDR Presentation
- Item 6.1.1 Minutes Northern Country Zone Meeting 22 November 2021
- Item 6.1.2 Minutes Northern Country Zone Flying Minute 211209
- Item 7/8 State Council Agenda 2 March 2022
- Item 9.0 State Council Agenda Special Meeting 23 February 2022
WALGA LG Reform Proposal Submission – February 2022
NCZ Collated Responses to WALGA November 2021 Discussion Paper
- Item 10.2 WALGA President's Report
- Item 10.3 Zone Status Report February 2022
- Item 11.1.2 Correspondence In:
 - a. State Council Minutes 1 December 2021
 - b. Dr Amanda Bourne – Developing a Regional Drought Resilience Plan; and
FAQ re Regional Drought Resilience Planning
- Item 11.2 Bank Statement 30 November 2021
Bank Statement 31 December 2021
Bank Statement 31 January 2022
- Item 11.3 Ambulance Services Human Resources

1. OPENING, WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1.1 Opening

The Meeting was declared open at 10:05 am.

1.1.2 Acknowledgment of Country

The Northern Country Zone of WALGA acknowledges the Yamatji people, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today and pays its respects to their Elders past and present.

1.1.3 Welcome

The Chair welcomed the three new CEOs – Mr Paul Sheedy, Shire of Carnamah; Mr Jamie Criddle, Shire of Chapman Valley; and Mr Paul Anderson, Shire of Perenjori, along with invited guests.

1.1.4 Announcements

COVID-19 Information

At the time of writing, WA has no gathering size limits. Attendees who have been in Perth, Peel, the South West, Wheatbelt or Great Southern in the fourteen days prior to the meeting will be required to wear a mask. Please note that social distancing and good hygiene still apply. People displaying any cold or flu symptoms should not attend the meeting. Please ensure that you sign the attendance register that will be circulated at the meeting.

2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

MEMBERS

NB: One Voting Delegate from each Member Council

Shire of Carnamah

Cr Merle Isbister - President
Mr Paul Sheedy – Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)

Shire of Chapman Valley	Cr Kirrilee Warr – President Mr Jamie Criddle - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
Shire of Coorow	Cr Moira Girando - President Ms Mia Maxfield - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
City of Greater Geraldton	Mr Ross McKim - Chief Executive Officer (Appointed Proxy)
Shire of Irwin	Cr Isabelle Scott – Deputy President Mr Shane Ivers - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
Shire of Mingenew	Cr Gary Cosgrove, President Cr Hellene Mctaggart Mr Nils Hay - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
Shire of Morawa	Cr Karen Chappel – President Mr Scott Wildgoose - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
Shire of Northampton	Cr Elizabeth (Liz) Sudlow - President Mr Garry Keeffe - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
Shire of Perenjori	Cr Chris King – President Mr Paul Anderson – Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
Shire of Three Springs	Cr Chris Lane – President Mr Keith Woodward - Chief Executive Officer (non-voting)
EXECUTIVE	Ms Dianne Daniels – Executive Officer Ms Vanessa Jackson – Senior Policy Advisor Emergency Management Mr Ashley Robb – Senior Policy Advisor Planning
INVITED GUESTS	
Member for Agricultural Region	Hon. Steve Martin MLC
Mid West Development Commission	Ms Anne Finlay - Acting Chief Executive Officer Mr Rob Houwen – Chair Mr Alex MacKenzie – Senior Regional Development Officer Mr Michael Bowley – Director Regional Development
Regional Development Midwest Gascoyne	Mr Mark Holdsworth – Director of Regional Development/Executive Officer Ms Karin Grima – Project Manager
Dept of Local Government Sport & Cultural Ind	Ms Angele Gray - Regional Manager Mid West Gascoyne
Main Roads WA	Ms Janet Hartley-West – Regional Manager Mid West-Gascoyne
NACC NRM	Dr Amanda Bourne – Senior Conservation Planning Officer
WA Country Health Services	Ms Melissa Vernon.PSM - Executive Director Service and Operations Hub Development and EOC Ms Wendy Newman – Deputy Board Chair Ms Rachele Ferrari – Regional Director

APOLOGIES

Member for Agricultural Region	Hon. Darren West MLC
Member For Agricultural Region	Hon. Colin de Grussa MLC
Member for Moore	Mr Shane Love MLA
Member for Agricultural Region	Ms Lara Dalton MLA
Member for Agricultural Region	Hon. Sandra Carr MLC
Member for Agricultural Region	Hon. Martin Aldridge MLC
Member for Agricultural Region	Hon. Shelley Payne MLC
Regional Development Midwest Gascoyne	Ms Yvonne Messina – Chair
WACHS	Mr Jeff Moffet
Shire of Coorow	Mr Bruce Jack
City of Greater Geraldton	Cr Jerry Clune – Deputy Mayor Mayor Shane Van Styn
Shire of Northampton	Cr Robert Horstman – Deputy President
Shire of Perenjori	Cr Jude Sutherland – Deputy President
Shire of Three Springs	Cr Chris Connaughton - Deputy President

3. DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

3.1 NACC NRM/Mid West Development Commission

*Attachments: Power Point Presentation; and
refer 11.1.2b - Dr Amanda Bourne - Developing a Regional Drought Resilience Plan and
refer 11.1.2b - FAQ re Regional Drought Resilience Planning*

Dr Amanda Bourne Senior Conservation Planning Officer – NACC NRM
Mr Michael Bowley Director Regional Development – Mid West Development Commission

A presentation on a Regional Drought Resilience Plan being developed for the City of Geraldton and Shires of Chapman Valley and Northampton under the Future Drought Fund. While the current planning process only runs until mid-year 2022, the overall program is funded by the Future Drought Fund until 2024 and there are very likely to be opportunities to conduct similar planning processes in other local government areas within the Zone.

A Power Point Presentation was delivered and is attached to the Minutes.

3.2 WA Country Health Service

Ms Melissa Vernon	Executive Director Service and Operations Hub Development and EOC
Ms Wendy Newman	Deputy Board Chair
Ms Rachele Ferrari	Regional Director

An update on COVID-19 preparedness throughout the country health regions managed by WACHS and a brief overview of the situation at the North Midlands Hospital was delivered.

WACHS had been working on COVID preparedness for two years and their already established Command Centre (a 24/7 virtual clinical and operational hub) will provide oversight of what is happening across the entire organisation, statewide, allowing WACHs to rapidly respond to situations and provide advice, no matter the time of day.

WACHS are keen to partner with Local Government to help fill any gaps in their system during a COVID wave – for example, if one of their gardeners is called on to act as a Patient Transfer Officer, then perhaps the LG could provide gardening support. Members were concerned that as their resources are already stretched they wouldn't be able to offer much support and queried the insurance implications if anything went wrong.

Further to this partnership, Oximeters are currently being delivered to local governments by the Department of Health, to dispense to COVID positive people. This will enable vulnerable people who contract COVID-19 to measure their oxygen levels from the safety of their home, allowing them to be monitored remotely rather than from hospital. Unfortunately, there was little or no consultation with local government and they have been taken by surprise by this initiative – some local governments have not accepted the Oximeters and for those that have, there is concern for the safety of their staff, should close contacts of COVID positive people come into the office to pick up one of the devices. Ms Vernon asked members to refrain from distributing the Oximeters at this stage while she looked into the circumstances surrounding their distribution.

In relation to member's concern over the North Midlands Hospital, Ms Vernon assured them that there was no plan to close or reduce services anywhere. However, flexibility would be required during a COVID-19 wave should a facility be left with a staff shortage after every other avenue had been exhausted, including WACH's own rapid deployment team and support from metropolitan counterparts.

Members were assured that WACHs weren't closing country hospitals, but on the contrary, had invested heavily in them over the last decade.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cr Isabelle Scott – Shire of Irwin – Interest declared in Item 11.3 Country Ambulance Services due to Cr Scott's role as a volunteer Ambulance Officer with St John Ambulance.

5. ADJOURNED BUSINESS

Nil

6. MINUTES

6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

6.1.1 Confirmation of Minutes of Northern Country Zone of WALGA Meeting 22 November 2021

Attachment: Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern Country Zone of WALGA 22 November 2021

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Northern Country Zone of WALGA held on 22 November 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Cosgrove

Seconded: Cr Sudlow

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Northern Country Zone of WALGA held on 22 November 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Carried

6.1.2 Confirmation of Flying Minute 211209 – Change to February 2022 Meeting Date

Attachment: Flying Minute 211209 - Change to February 2022 Meeting Date

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of Flying Minute 211209 – Change to February 2022 Meeting Date, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Warr

Seconded: Cr Girando

That the Minutes of Flying Minute 211209 – Change to February 2022 Meeting Date, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

6.2 Business Arising from Minutes

Nil

7. STATE COUNCIL AGENDA - MATTERS FOR DECISION

The following item has been taken directly from the WALGA State Council Agenda for 2 March 2022.

The Matter for Decision in the State Council agenda is numbered 5.1

The Recommendation and Brief only have been included. Please refer to the attached PDF version of the State Council Agenda for more detail.

7.1 (5.1) Short-Term Accommodation Regulatory Scheme (05-036-03-0016 CH)

Prepared By: Chris Hossen, Policy Manager, Planning and Building

Recommendation:

That the draft Short-Term Accommodation Regulatory Reform submission be endorsed.

Executive Summary:

- In December 2021, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) released [Draft Position Statement: Planning for Tourism and Guidelines](#) (the position statement) for public consultation.
- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGCS) simultaneously [sought comment](#) on the implementation of a new state-wide registration system for short-term accommodation.

- The proposal is in response to the State Government's acceptance of the recommendations of the Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation by the Legislative Assembly's Economics and Industry Standing Committee in 2019.
- The proposals are broadly consistent with the Inquiry's findings that Local Governments are best placed to plan for tourism within their communities and WALGA's existing Advocacy Position on short-term accommodation.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Cosgrove

Seconded: Cr King

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA endorses the WALGA Officers' recommendation for State Council Agenda Item 5.1.

Carried

8. STATE COUNCIL AGENDA - MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

The following items have been taken directly from the WALGA State Council Agenda for 2 March 2022.

The Matters for Noting/Information in the State Council agenda are numbered 6.1 to 6.5.

The Recommendation and Brief only have been included. Please refer to the attached PDF version of the State Council Agenda for more detail.

8.1 (6.1) COVID-19 – Update

Prepared By: Nicole Matthews, Acting Executive Manager, Strategy, Policy and Planning / COVID-19 Response

Please note: The information in this report is current as of 31 January 2022. Supplementary information will be provided at Zone and State Council meetings, as well as through other channels, including regular COVID-19 Updates from the WALGA President and CEO.

Recommendation:

That the COVID-19 Update report be noted.

Executive Summary:

- At the time of writing the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is circulating Western Australia with community cases reported in many regions of the State.
- The reopening of Western Australia's borders that was scheduled for February 5 has been delayed, with further reviews of border controls to be considered over the next 2-3 weeks.
- State of Emergency Directions, particularly in relation to mandatory vaccination, proof of vaccination and mask wearing have had significant implications for Local Governments.
- WALGA has continued to provide dedicated COVID-19 support and advocacy for Members, including regular updates, webinars, guidance and analysis.

8.2 (6.2) 2022-23 Federal Budget Submission (05-088-03-0004 DM)

Prepared By: Dana Mason, Manager Economics and Strategic Projects

Recommendation:

That the 2022 WALGA Federal Budget Submission be noted.

Executive Summary:

- The WALGA President has written to the Federal Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to support the initiatives identified in ALGA's 2022-23 Federal Budget Submission.
- WALGA's submission also seeks a commitment to address additional issues of particular importance for WA Local Governments:
 1. funding to build the capacity, reliability and resilience of telecommunications infrastructure across remote, regional and peri-urban areas;
 2. additional funding for road programs, including Local Government road priorities across the agricultural region; and
 3. the creation of a funding model for managing coastal erosion hot spots and additional funding from the Commonwealth to support the implementation of coastal hazard risk planning;
- The submission was provided to Commonwealth Treasury, the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer in January 2022, and will be sent to all WA Members of Federal Parliament in coming weeks.

8.3 (6.3) Detection of Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer and Implications for Local Government (05-046-03-0017 RZ)

Prepared By: Renata Zelinova, Policy Officer, Biodiversity and Natural Area Management

Recommendation:

That State Council note:

1. The emerging biosecurity threat following the detection of the polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) in the metropolitan area.
2. That PSHB has the potential to significantly impact on Local Governments' street trees and public open space.
3. The response activities being coordinated by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, including the imposition of a Quarantine Area Notice covering 17 Local Government areas and expanded surveillance program.

Executive Summary:

- Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), an exotic wood-boring beetle not previously found in Australia, was detected in Perth in September 2021.
- Establishment of this pest would have significant impact on amenity trees, native vegetation and the fruit and nut industries.
- There is currently no known effective eradication treatment for PSHB. Early detection, removal and advanced treatment of infested trees/branches and tree stumps are the best control methods.
- A PSHB Quarantine Area (QA) has been imposed across 17 metropolitan Local Government areas that restricts the movement of wood and plant material from properties within the QA and requires machinery used to process green waste to be cleaned before leaving the QA.
- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has expanded PSHB surveillance to selected regional towns by distributing pest specific traps (which will remain in place for up to six months).
- DPIRD is continuing to work with Local Governments, other government agencies and residents to control PSHB populations while the incursion is fully considered as part of the nationally coordinated response to pest incursions.
- WALGA has facilitated DPIRD briefing sessions for the sector, is providing updates to the sector and has established a dedicated [webpage](#) for downloadable resources for Local Government to support communications to residents.
- WALGA will continue to work with DPIRD to ensure the implications of the incursion for Local Governments are considered in the ongoing response to PSHB.

8.4 (6.4) State Planning Policy 2.9: Planning for Water - Submission (05-036-03-0070 AR)

Prepared By: Ashley Robb, Senior Policy Advisor, Planning

Recommendation:

That the endorsed Draft State Planning Policy 2.9: Planning for Water submission be noted.

Executive Summary:

- In August 2021, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) released *Draft State Planning Policy 2.9: Planning for Water* (the policy) and policy guidelines for public consultation.
- The draft policy is an amalgamation of six different state planning policies related to water, and the Government Sewerage Policy.
- WALGA provided extensive input on the draft policy's formulation as a member of the stakeholder reference group.
- Many of WALGA's recommendations were included in the draft policy and guidelines. Consequently, WALGA's submission proposed mostly minor amendments to strengthen existing provisions and support the policy's implementation.
- State Council endorsed the submission by Flying Minute on 8 November 2021. The submission was provided to the DPLH on 8 November 2021.

8.5 (6.5) Submission to Salaries and Allowances Tribunal – Local Government Remuneration Inquiry (05-034-01-0102 TL)

Prepared By: Tim Lane, Manager Strategy and Association Governance

Recommendation:

That the endorsed Submission to the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected member be noted.

Executive Summary:

- The Salaries and Allowance Tribunal (SAT) are undertaking their annual Inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member Remuneration, with submissions sought by Friday, 28 January 2022.
- Due to the timeframes involved, the submission was endorsed by State Council by Flying Minute following consideration by the State Council Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team.
- The submission makes three recommendations relating to Elected Member remuneration and the Regional/Isolation Allowance that may be payable to Chief Executive Officers as follows:
 - That Elected Member Fees and Allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) are increased by up to four percent.
 - That the maximum payable Regional/Isolation Allowance be increased for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres with low amenity.
 - That the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal publish the methodology, criteria, and weightings for the Regional/Isolation Allowance.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Sudlow

Seconded: CEO McKim

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA notes State Council Agenda Items 6.1 to 6.5.

Carried

9.0 STATE COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA - LG REFORM PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

*Attachments: State Council Special Meeting Agenda 23 February 2022
WALGA Local Government Reform Proposal Submission – Feb 2022
NCZ Members Collated Responses to Reform Proposals Discussion Paper*

The following item has been taken directly from the WALGA State Council Special Meeting Agenda for 23 February 2022.

9.1 (3.1) Local Government Reform Proposal Submission

Prepared By: Tony Brown, Executive Manager, Governance and Organisational Services & James McGovern, Manager Governance and Procurement

Recommendation:

1. That the recommendations contained in the 'Local Government Reform Proposal Submission' be endorsed.
2. That WALGA:
 - a. seek assurance from the Minister for Local Government that further detail on the proposed reforms will be provided to the sector for comment prior to the formulation of a draft Local Government Act Amendment Bill; and
 - b. seek a formal commitment from the Minister for Local Government that WALGA actively participates in the legislative drafting process necessary to formulate a draft Local Government Act Amendment Bill.

Executive Summary:

- The Minister for Local Government, Hon. John Carey MLA, commenced the consultation period for the Local Government Reform Proposals on 10 November 2021.
- WALGA distributed a Discussion Paper to the sector on 24 November 2021, including commentary on the sector's current positions contained in the reform proposals together with recommendations on new positions required on matters not canvassed in the reforms.
- Feedback from Local Governments was initially requested by 5pm on Wednesday, 12 January 2022, however this was adjusted following the Minister's extension to the consultation period.
- WALGA received 65 submissions by close of response on Friday, 28 January 2022

Attachment:

- Local Government Reform Proposal Submission

Policy Implications

The adoption of advocacy positions will inform WALGA policy positions and will be incorporated in WALGA's [Advocacy Positions Manual](#).

Budgetary Implications:

Nil

Background:

The proposed Local Government Reforms are based on six themes:

1. Earlier intervention, effective regulation and stronger penalties
2. Reducing red tape, increasing consistency and simplicity
3. Greater transparency and accountability
4. Stronger local democracy and community engagement
5. Clear roles and responsibilities
6. Improved financial management and reporting.

Information is available on the [Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries](#) website.

Comment:

65 Local Governments responded by 28 January 2022, categorized by band as follows:

- Band 1 – 17%
- Band 2 – 15%
- Band 3 – 22%
- Band 4 – 46%

The overall response indicates majority support for many of the proposed reforms, most commonly where reforms align with current sector advocacy positions.

There was strong commentary from the sector on the following proposed reforms that were not supported:

Item 6.6 Audit Committees – 89% Opposed

The proposed reform to require a majority of independent members on Audit Committees, and mandate that the Audit Committee chair be an independent person, was strongly challenged. The fundamental purpose of an Audit Committee is to provide the vehicle for governance of a Local Government's affairs, a primary role of Council under Section 2.7(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act 1995* ('the Act'). For this reason, the sector supports a Council Member majority on Audit Committees and acknowledges the role of the Office of the Auditor General as the independent auditor of Local Governments. The sector confirmed that appointing independent members to Audit Committees is supported and practiced, and that Audit Committees can elect an independent member as Chair under provisions of s.5.12 of the Act. The sector supports the concept of shared regional Audit Committees on proviso there be a majority of Council Members, and the payment of meeting fees or defined reimbursements to independent Audit Committee members be legislatively authorised (State Council resolution no. 293.7/2021).

Item 4.3 Introduction of Preferential Voting – 85% Opposed

The sector remains in favour of the first past the post method of vote counting. Risk of the infiltration of party politics, and that preference swapping leading to alliances among candidates has potential for factionalisation of Councils were pre-eminent in the response. First past the post voting remains favoured on the grounds of its simplicity, efficiency, ease of voter understanding, transparency and candidates campaigning based on the merits of the individual. However, if 'first past the post' is not retained then optional preferential voting is preferred.

Item 4.4 Public Vote to Elect Mayor or President of Band 1 and 2 Local Governments – 66% Opposed

Retaining the discretion to choose between popularly-elected Mayors and Presidents of Band 1 and 2 Local Governments remains the favoured option. Respondents queried the lack of detailed benefit of the proposal to enshrine one system of election over another, commenting that the alternate method of election provided under s.2.11 and s.2.12 of the Act permits both a Local Government and electors of the district to exercise agency for change.

Item 4.5 Tiered Limits on the Number of Councillors – 67% Opposed

There is broad support for WALGA's proposed option that Local Governments with populations up to 5,000 be represented by between 5 and 7 Council Members. The remaining categories of representation are supported.

Item 3.5 Chief Executive Officer Key Performance Indicators – 62% Opposed

There is support for the reporting of CEO KPI's that reflect the strategic direction and operational function of the Local Government, to the exclusion of reporting KPI's of a confidential nature (i.e workplace or risk-based matters). There is also support for the exclusion of reporting performance review results which is regarded as a private matter between employer and employee to be maintained as a confidential record of the Local Government.

Local Governments were requested to provide comment on the reform proposal under Item 5.7 'Remove WALGA from the Act'.

The basis of the reform proposal is a recommendation from the Local Government Review Panel that WALGA not be constituted under the Act, with the following comment:

The Panel deliberated the merits of WALGA being constituted under the Local Government Act and determined that it was not appropriate to incorporate a member body under this legislation. This created confusion as to the extent of the Minister's powers over the organisation and WALGA's level of independence.¹

¹ Local Government Review Panel - Final Report 'Recommendations for a new Local Government Act for Western Australia' May 2020, page 46

WALGA has concerns that unforeseen negative consequences might arise should the reform proposal proceed in the absence of surety for the protection of the preferred supplier program and mutual insurance scheme provisions that are currently embedded in the Act, the merits of which are supported by the Review Panel. WALGA will continue with the due diligence review of the broader implications of the proposal and will consult further with member Local Governments.

There is significant commentary throughout the sector response that the proposed reforms lack necessary detail in terms of how they will be operationalized, and the associated implications to Local Government in terms of implementation cost and resourcing. WALGA supports the view that additional information is required and that it should be part of future consultation. It is recommended the Minister for Local Government provide assurance that the detail of each proposed reform be the subject of further consultation with the sector.

It is also recommended that once a comprehensive and detailed consultation process has concluded, that WALGA participates in the legislative drafting process to provide an operational perspective necessary to the development of a workable Local Government Act Amendment Bill.

Northern Country Zone Resolution

Moved: Cr Girando

Seconded: Cr Isbister

1. That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA's position on WALGA's recommendations in the Local Government Reform Proposal Submission is as shown in the table below; and
2. That WALGA:
 - a. seek assurance from the Minister for Local Government that further detail on the proposed reforms will be provided to the sector for comment prior to the formulation of a draft Local Government Act Amendment Bill; and
 - b. seek a formal commitment from the Minister for Local Government that WALGA actively participates in the legislative drafting process necessary to formulate a draft Local Government Act Amendment Bill.

Carried

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
Theme 1: Early Intervention, Effective Regulation and Stronger Penalties				
1.1	Early Intervention Powers	1. Support the proposed reforms as they align with the sectors position on external oversight and support. 2. Request the Minister to explore alternate mechanisms for resolving local level complaints.	Member Response: 95% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	1. Support the proposed reforms as they align with the sectors position on external oversight and support. 2. Request the Minister to explore alternate mechanisms for resolving local level complaints.
1.2	Local Government Monitors	As per 1.1	Member Response: 97% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	As per 1.1

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
1.3	Conduct Panel	As per 1.1	Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform No Change to the Recommendation	As per 1.1
1.4	Review of Penalties	Support	Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
1.5	Rapid Red Card Resolutions	Support	Member Response: 94% support the proposed reform. <u>Updated Recommendation</u> Supported subject to a provision permitting council members to call a point of order to overrule the presiding member by absolute majority.	Supported subject to a provision permitting council members to call a point of order to overrule the presiding member by absolute majority.
1.6	Vexatious Complaints Referral	Support	Member Response: 95% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
1.7	Minor Other Reforms	Support	Member Response: 97% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
Theme 2: Reducing Red Tape, Increasing Consistency and Simplicity				
2.1	Resource Sharing	Support	Member Response: 97% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
2.2	Standardisation of Crossovers	Support	Member Response: 94% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
2.3	Introduce Innovative Provisions	Support	<p>Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
2.4	Streamline Local Laws	Support	<p>Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
2.5	Simplify Approvals for Small Business and Community Events	Support	<p>Member Response: 97% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
2.6	Standardised meeting Procedures, including Public Question Time	Support	<p>Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
2.7	Regional Subsidiaries	Support	<p>Member Response: 97% support the proposed reform.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u> Supported subject to the use of a charter as the primary governance and regulatory instrument.</p>	Supported subject to the use of a charter as the primary governance and regulatory instrument.
Theme 3: Greater Transparency & Accountability				
3.1	Recordings and Live Streaming of All Council Meetings	Support	<p>Member Response: 66% support the proposed reform. 32% oppose the proposed reform.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u> 1. Support live streaming the ordinary and special council meetings of Band 1 and 2 Local Governments and audio recording the</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support live streaming the ordinary and special council meetings of Band 1 and 2 Local Governments and audio recording the ordinary and special council meetings of Band 3 and 4 Local Governments. Do not support archiving the recordings of confidential matters by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
			<p>ordinary and special council meetings of Band 3 and 4 Local Governments.</p> <p>2. Do not support archiving the recordings of confidential matters by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.</p>	
3.2	Recording All Votes in Council Minutes	Support	<p>Member Response: 90% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
3.3	Clearer Guidance for Meeting Items that may be Confidential	Support	<p>Member Response: 93% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
3.4	Additional Online Registers	Support	<p>Member Response: 87% support the proposed reform. 13% oppose the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
3.5	CEO KPIs to be Published	<p>WALGA Recommendation</p> <p>1. Conditionally Support the reporting of CEO KPIs that are consistent with the strategic direction and operational function of the Local Government, subject to exemptions for publishing KPI's of a confidential nature;</p> <p>2. Do not support the results of</p>	<p>Member Response: 30% support the proposed reform. 66% oppose the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Not Supported

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
		performance reviews being published.		
Theme 4: Stronger Local Democracy and Community Engagement				
4.1	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Charters	Support	<p>Member Response: 87% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	<p>Conditional Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Depending upon nature/scope of charter this may simply form an additional compliance requirement with no practical benefit – particularly in smaller shires where there is often strong and regular community engagement by virtue of community size - optional for Tier 3 &4 LGs. Agree with Model Charter, but not mandated
4.2	Ratepayer Satisfaction Surveys (Bands 1 and 2 LGs Only)	Support	<p>Member Response: 85% support the proposed reform.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u> Support the conduct of community, rather than ratepayer, satisfaction surveys.</p>	<p>Support the conduct of community, rather than ratepayer, satisfaction surveys.</p>
4.3	Introduction of Preferential Voting	Not Currently Supported – LG Feedback requested	<p>Member Response: 14% support the proposed reform. 81% oppose the proposed reform.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u> 1. Support first past the post method of counting votes. 2. However, if 'first past the post' is not retained then optional preferential voting is preferred.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support first past the post method of counting votes. However, if 'first past the post' is not retained then optional preferential voting is preferred.
4.4	Public Vote to Elect the Mayor and President	Not currently supported - Local Government feedback requested	<p>Member Response: 21% support the proposed reform. 67% oppose the proposed reform.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u> Support retaining the current provision, that</p>	<p>Support retaining the current provision, that the election of Mayors and Presidents be at the discretion of each Local Government.</p>

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
			the election of Mayors and Presidents be at the discretion of each Local Government.	
4.5	Tiered Limits on the Number of Councillors	Recommend 5 to 7 Council Members for populations up to 5,000 and support the remaining proposed reforms.	Member Response: 30% support the proposed reform. 65% oppose the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Recommend 5 to 7 Council Members for populations up to 5,000 and support the remaining proposed reforms.
4.6	No Wards for Small Councils (Bands 3 and 4 only)	Support	Member Response: 77% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
4.7	Electoral Reform – Clear Lease Requirements for Candidates and Voter Eligibility	Support	Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
4.8	Reform of Candidate Profiles	Support	Member Response: 95% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
4.9	Minor Other Electoral Reforms	Support	Member Response: 88% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
Theme 5: Clear Roles and Responsibilities				
5.1	Introduce Principles in the Act	Support	Member Response: 95% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
5.2	Greater Role Clarity	Support	Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
5.2.1	Mayor or President Role	Support	Member Response: 100% support the proposed reform No Change to the Recommendation	Support
5.2.2	Council Role	Support	Member Response: 100% support the proposed reform No Change to the Recommendation	Support
5.2.3	Elected Member (Councillor) Role	Support	Member Response: 100% support the proposed reform No Change to the Recommendation	Support
5.2.4	CEO Role	Support	Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support
5.3	Council Communication Agreement	Support consistent, regulated Communications Agreement. a	Member Response: 92% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support a consistent, regulated Communications Agreement.
5.4	Local Governments May Pay Superannuation Contributions for Elected Members	Support	Member Response: 63% support the reform. 30% oppose the reform No Change to the Recommendation	Not Supported
5.5	Local Governments May Establish Education Allowances	Support	Member Response: 97% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation	Support

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
5.6	Standardised Election Caretaker Period	Support	<p>Member Response: 78% support the proposed reform.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Not Supported
5.7	Remove WALGA from the Act	WALGA to undertake its due diligence on this proposal and advise the sector accordingly.	<p>Member Response: 57% support the proposed reform. 25% conditionally support the proposed reform. 18% oppose the reform proposal.</p> <p>Updated Recommendation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for this proposal is subject to WALGA undertaking further due diligence on the broader implications of the proposal and subsequent consultation with the sector. 2. Any proposed reforms ensure that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Local Government Act retain statutory provisions permitting WALGA to provide the sector with the mutual self-insurance scheme and preferred supplier program tender exemptions; and b) There be no disadvantages to WALGA's capacity to provide services and represent the 	<p>Support for this proposal is subject to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WALGA undertaking further due diligence on the broader implications of the proposal and subsequent consultation with the sector. 2. Any proposed reforms ensure that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Local Government Act retain statutory provisions permitting WALGA to provide the sector with the mutual self-insurance scheme and preferred supplier program tender exemptions; and b) There be no disadvantages to WALGA's capacity to provide services and represent the interests of the sector.

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
			interests of the sector.	
5.8	CEO Recruitment	Supported	<p>Member Response: 68% support the reform. 26% oppose the reform.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u> Supported on the proviso that no cost is associated with the use of the panel approved.</p>	Supported on the proviso that no cost is associated with the use of the panel approved.
Theme 6: Improved Financial Management and Reporting				
6.1	Model Financial Statements and Tiered Financial Reporting	Support	<p>Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform. Note: Currently a work in progress and subject to future sector consultation.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
6.2	Simplify Strategic and Financial Planning	Support	<p>Member Response: 93% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
6.3	Rates & Revenue Policy	Support	<p>Member Response: 90% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
6.4	Monthly Reporting of Credit Card Statements	Support	<p>Member Response: 98% support the proposed reform. No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support
6.5	Amended Financial Ratios	Support	<p>Member Response: 95% support the proposed reform. Note: Currently a work in progress and subject to future sector consultation.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	Support

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
6.6	Audit Committees	<p>1. Do not support majority independent members of the Audit Committee</p> <p>2. Support Audit Committees of Local Government with an Elected Member majority including independent members, and to consider proactive risk management issues</p>	<p>Member Response: 9% support the reform proposal. 89% oppose the reform proposal.</p> <p><u>Updated Recommendation</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the role of the Office of the Auditor General as the responsible entity for independent oversight of Local Government audits. 2. Support Audit Committees of Local Government with an Elected Member majority including independent members and to consider proactive risk management issues. 3. Support the proposal to establish shared regional Audit Committees 4. Support the appointment of an independent member as chair of the Audit Committee to remain at the discretion of each Local Government. 5. Support the payment of meeting fees or defined reimbursements to independent Audit Committee members. 	Not Supported
6.7	Building Upgrade Finance	Support	<p>Member Response: 69% support the current Sector</p>	No Zone Position could be Reached

Proposed Initiative		WALGA's Original Recommendation	WALGA's Updated Recommendation	NCZ Position on Proposed Initiatives
			<p>position.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	<p>There is a range of member positions on this Initiative:</p> <p>Support Carnamah, Perenjori, Three Springs</p> <p>Conditionally Support Chapman Valley, Coorow, Northampton</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dependent on this being at the discretion of the LG and not mandated; 2. Limits and checks would need to be very clear to prevent abuse; <p>Do Not Support Geraldton, Irwin, Mingenew, Morawa</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lending of funds is a specialised industry and beyond the capacity of many smaller local governments. This measure would potentially create an unreasonable expectation on smaller LGs to provide this facility; 2. Small Shires can't afford to weather loan defaults; 3. More info would be needed on the risks, costs, limits, and checks to reduce and risk of abuse or failure to repay.
6.8	Cost of Waste Service to be Specified on Rates Notice		<p>Member Response: 95% support the current Sector position.</p> <p>No Change to the Recommendation</p>	<p>Support</p>

10. REPORTS

10.1 Zone President/State Councillor's February 2022 Report

Northern Country Zone of WALGA
Presidents Report February 2022

We were all hopeful that 2022 would bring normality to our lives but alas it doesn't appear that way currently.

It was great to see all of our communities celebrate Australia Day in our own way, it is a day that is becoming highly regarded and respected. I would love one day to be able to offer fireworks in Morawa but I think it could be a little risky (and cost prohibitive).

We were fortunate that the Minister of Local Govt agreed to the request from WALGA to extend the closing date for submissions to Local Govt Reform. This allowed a large number of Local Governments to take the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes. There seems to be some consistency in responses to a majority of the changes.

The other extensions was given to the WHS legislation; this was very much appreciated from the sector. This legislation has caused a significant amount of confusion and the extensions has allowed Local Government to express its view.

I have attended both a State Road Funds to Local Govt Advisory Committee and a National Black Spot Consultative Panel meeting since we last met. I am pleased to say the Mid West is performing well . It is apparent across the State that escalating costs for projects is impacting on delivery and this is unlikely to change in the short term.

Business Continuity is paramount as we move forward and deal with COVID in our communities, it will not only affect our Local Governments, our communities and our local businesses will be under some pressure. WALGA/ LGIS hosted a Webinar around this recently, I am sure you will be able to see the video if you wish. There was some valuable information shared.

As you are probably aware I am currently acting as the President of WALGA and thank each of the member Councils of the Northern Country Zone for their support. The election for the new President and Deputy President will take place on March 2, I will be nominating for the role of President and hope to continue to represent you all with the support of Cr Girando.

Karen Chappel

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Lane

Seconded: Cr Sudlow

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA notes the February 2022 report from the Zone President/State Councillor.

Carried

10.2 WALGA President's Report

Attachment: WALGA President's Report for March 2022

The WALGA President's Report to the Zone for March 2022 was emailed to members Sunday 13 February 2022.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Isbister

Seconded: CEO McKim

The Northern Country Zone of WALGA notes the March 2022 WALGA President's Report to the Zone.

Carried

10.3 Zone Status Report

A Status Report outlining the actions taken on the Zone's resolutions is attached.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Lane

Seconded: Cr King

The Northern Country Zone of WALGA notes the February 2022 Status Report outlining actions taken on the Zone's resolutions.

Carried

11. ZONE MATTERS FOR NOTING/DECISION

11.1 Correspondence

11.1.1 Correspondence Out

Nil

11.1.2 Correspondence In

11.1.2 (a) 15/12/2021 WALGA

Attachment: State Council 1 Dec 2021 Meeting Minutes (Emailed to Members 16/12/2021)

11.1.2 (b) 21/12/2021 Dr Amanda Bourne

*Attachment: Letter from Dr Bourne re Developing a Regional Drought Resilience Plan
Flyer - Frequently Asked Questions Regional Drought Resistance Planning Project*

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Sudlow

Seconded: Cr Girando

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA receives Correspondence In at Items 10.1.2 (a) and 10.1.2 (b).

Carried

11.2 Detailed Income and Expenditure Statement and Bank Reconciliation at 31 January 2022

Prepared by: Dianne Daniels, Executive Officer

Attachments: Bank Statements Nov 21; Dec 21; Jan 22

Recommendation:

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA receives the Detailed Income Statement and Bank Reconciliation for the period ending 31 January 2022.

Comments:

The Detailed Income Statement shown below represents the cash position of NCZ at 31 January 2022, as reconciled to the Bank Statement.

NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE OF WALGA

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

For the period ending

31-Jan-22

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Description</i>
Statement Balance B/F	01-07-21		16,104.12	
Deposits			10,000.00	2021-22 Membership Subscriptions x 10
			0.90	Interest received
TOTAL RECEIPTS			10,000.90	
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE			26,105.02	
Payments Made	29-07-21		-2,600.00	Internet Tsf - Dianne Daniels - Inv 212201 - EO Services 29/04/2021-30/06/2021
	26-08-21		-275.00	Internet Tsf - North Midlands Accounting - Inv 2022-000134 - 20-21 Audit
	26-08-21		-2,805.66	Internet Tsf - Dianne Daniels - Inv 212202 - EO Services 01/07/2021-25/08/2021; Travel
	14-09-21		-513.48	Internet Bpay - Shire of Mingenew - Inv 9595; 9322; 9427 - Reimburse Catering August and November 20 Meetings
	25-11-21		-2,805.66	Internet Tsf - Dianne Daniels - Inv 212203 - EO Services 26/08/2021 - 24/11/2021; Travel
	12-01-22		-309.55	Chq 375 - Shire of Mingenew - Inv 9754 - Reimburse catering for November 2021 meeting.
TOTAL PAYMENTS MADE			-9,309.35	
Closing Cash Balance	31-01-22		16,795.67	

NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE OF WALGA

BANK RECONCILIATION SUMMARY

For the period ending

31-Jan-22

Statement Balance B/F	01-07-21		16,104.12
Deposits and Credits			10,000.90
Cheques and Payments			-9,309.35
Total Cleared Transactions	31-01-22		16,795.67
Add back o/s			0.00
Reconciled Balance			16,795.67
Bank Statement	31-01-22		16,795.67
Difference I&E to Bank Statement			0.00

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr King

Seconded: Cr Isbister

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA receives the Detailed Income Statement and Bank Reconciliation for the period ending 31 January 2022.

Carried

11.3 Country Ambulance Services

Prepared by: Shire of Mingenew

Attachment: Table - Ambulance Services Human Resources

Recommendation:

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA request that WALGA call for:

- The expedited release of the WA Parliament's Inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia; and
- Greater allocation of resources to regional ambulance services to address an unsustainable over-reliance upon volunteer officers.

Issue Summary:

Mingenew's ambulance service, like all those in the WA's North Midlands – except Geraldton – is fully reliant upon a shrinking volunteer pool. This is placing additional pressure on an already-stretched volunteer workforce

and causing concerns that the current model is failing. Given the critical importance of ambulance services to Mingenew – and other small communities in the North Midlands, we are asking for an urgent review of these services by St John Ambulance (SJA) and the State Government.

Key Points:

- w Lack of volunteer capacity in small communities/Shires
 - o Many volunteers have very limited availability, which is exacerbated during peak times of the agricultural calendar
 - o Given the limited numbers and significant duties, volunteer burnout is a very real concern
- w Lack of resourcing from SJA (primarily on-ground/in-region paid human resources) for the country ambulance model in small rural communities of the North Midlands
- w Reliance upon volunteers for on-ground Ambulance response in areas outside of Geraldton
 - o Geraldton runs a hybrid volunteer model where crews are staffed by a career paramedic and 1-2 volunteer officers
- w Many Ambulance sub-centres in the North Midlands are now at critically low on-road volunteer numbers
 - o Mingenew has 4 currently active; 1 Emergency Medical Technical (EMT), 2 Emergency Medical Assistants (EMA) and 1 Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
 - o Despite concerted local volunteer drives in past three years, on-road volunteer numbers in Mingenew have not increased. This is indicative of other small sub-centres and community crews in the region
 - o Some communities in our region, such as Perenjori, are without an on-road crew at all. This in turn puts pressure on neighbouring volunteer crews who now have additional area to cover
- w The Shire of Mingenew is deeply concerned about the sustainability of the SJA Country Ambulance model currently in operation in the region, specifically the overreliance on volunteers. If more on-ground resourcing (particularly human resourcing at a local level) is not forthcoming the concern is that volunteer numbers will get to critically low points and leave more communities without a local ambulance crew. This in turn will no doubt increase ambulance response times, put extra pressure on small rural hospitals and SJA paramedic-crewed ambulance services out of Geraldton, and increase risks to remaining volunteer crews.

Perceived Causes:

Over-reliance on Volunteers

In the North Midlands, outside of Geraldton, ambulance on-road response (attendance at priority call outs) is completely staffed by volunteers. Each SJA region has 1-2 Community Paramedics (CP) who support multiple sub-centres.

Mingenew's CP is based in Dongara and their service area includes the Shires of Mingenew, Irwin, Morawa, Three Springs, Carnamah, Perenjori and Coorow. The CP is responsible for volunteer training and compliance and can also support volunteer officers as a paramedic, however they are one person covering a vast area. Understandably they are not on-call 24/7 and so for majority of cases a CP is not present. This is not a new concern and has been communicated to State Government before. The [Country Ambulance Strategy](#), developed by Ernst and Young and endorsed by the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Board in 2019 (draft endorsed in 2018) states that "many Sub Centres and local Governments had concerns about the long term sustainability of a reliance on volunteers for front line services, citing aging and transient populations, as well as a general decline in volunteerism" (pg 57).

Under-resourcing of Country Ambulance Services by WA State Government

The *Country Ambulance Strategy* also states the following (pg 31):

- w "The WA ambulance services receives the lowest funding amount from government per capita out of all the states
- w The funding received per capita from charges to patients by the WA ambulance service is the second highest of all the States
- w The WA ambulance service spends the least per capita of all the states/ territories
- w SJA spends \$9 less per person in country WA than it does per person in metropolitan WA.
- w SJA spends on average \$100 less to complete one ambulance incident (Primary Response or IHPT) in country WA, compared to one ambulance incident in metropolitan WA"

There is a clear disparity between the WA Government's investment in Ambulance services when compared to all other states and territories. This is highlighted the [Report on Government Services 2021, Part E, Section 11 Ambulance Services](#) (released 28 Jan 2021) which shows clear ambulance workforce differences between WA and the rest of Australia – see table overleaf. Although WA's geography is challenging, it is often compared to Queensland which experiences similar vastness and remoteness. If this comparison is used in the context of the ambulance workforce it clearly highlights a significant under resourcing of salaried ambulance officers in WA (677 FTE qualified ambulance officer, compared to QLD's 3,585 FTE) and an excessive over-reliance on Volunteer ambulance operatives (4,287 in WA compared to QLD's 139). Refer attached Table.

Limited Understanding of Regional Context

Decision makers appear to have a limited practical understanding of community pressures and their impact on ambulance operations in Mingenew and the small communities of the North Midlands region. The expectation appears to be that there are latent volunteer resources in our communities. Anyone familiar with our communities would understand that this is not the case. SJA Head Office (and the State Government, who fund them) need to understand that there is no latent voluntary capacity in small communities like Mingenew to provide an ambulance service, which is an essential service

For example, SJA has announced their 'Looking for Legends' campaign, stating that they are endeavouring to recruit 800 new volunteers in anticipation of WA opening its borders. This equates to 5-6 new volunteers for each of the 160 ambulance locations (120 of these – including all in the North Midlands, except Geraldton – are volunteer operated). Given previous challenges attracting new volunteers to the Mingenew service, this appears wildly unrealistic for our local area.

Required Time Commitments

Volunteering requires a significant commitment of time. The actual time commitments for callouts are significant in small rural communities like Mingenew (which does not have a local hospital or A&E facility). For example, a volunteer crew in a community without a local hospital would be spending anywhere from 1.5 to 3 hrs with a patient from scene to handover at an A&E. This is a long time for volunteer officers to be responsible for a patient. Crews also have return travel, maintenance and administrative compliance requirements to complete as part of a callout. For a typical callout from Mingenew volunteers are required for between 3 and 7+ hours.

In addition to callouts, on-road volunteers have continued practice training (in addition to initial training), recruitment and compliance activities such as cleaning (ambulance and subcentre), re-stocking and ordering. Sub-centres are also administered through voluntary committees.

Again, this occurs in an environment where a lack of childcare, labour shortages and competing community and voluntary commitments make it hard to recruit.

Volunteer Pressures

The section of our community that is willing to volunteer is already beyond its capacity, and the current situation is not sustainable. Volunteer burnout is real, and the pressures are varied and complex. For many volunteers, SJA is one of several (or many) voluntary roles they are undertaking. In addition, many volunteers in small regional communities are experiencing significant work, business, family (caring) and domestic workloads which contribute to levels of fatigue.

Macro pressures, such as COVID, labour shortages and the recovery from Tropical Cyclone Seroja have also increased workload, stress and fatigue in small regional communities like Mingenew, and across the North Midlands. This has decreased the availability of current volunteer ambulance officers and made it difficult to recruit new volunteers.

Due to the nature of the work, on-road volunteer ambulance officers can be exposed to high levels of trauma, stress and responsibility. Most of the time ambulance officers in small communities know the patient and, through no fault of their own, interaction continues beyond the ambulance callout. Volunteers are often on the receiving end of unsolicited updates, information, complaints and confidences from past patients or their

family and friends. Often it is not malicious, but it is still unsolicited, has a mental impact and adds an additional level of responsibility for volunteer officers in a small regional community.

Ultimately, our communities are small, and people are acutely aware of the burden of responsibility and scrutiny associated with being an on-road volunteer ambulance officer and obviously very few people are willing to take this on.

Potential Solutions:

- Significantly increase resources to country ambulance services, specifically on-ground human resources in our small rural communities of the North Midlands.
 - Increase the number of career paramedics servicing small regional areas to support and work with volunteers.
- One suggestion has been to extend the existing hybrid paramedic/volunteer model which operates out of Geraldton into smaller regional areas. This could potentially be based out of smaller hospitals such as Morawa, Three Springs and Dongara.
 - Regarding the trial of paid Transfer Team model: The Shire of Mingenew understands that WACHS and SJA are developing a casual paid patient transfer service as a trial, for up to two locations in the region. We have not received formal notification of the model or timeframes for rollout but understand that paid volunteers of EMT level will be able to service priority 3 and 4 inter-hospital transfers (i.e. from Dongara A&E, Morawa Hospital or Three Springs Hospital to Geraldton Regional Hospital). This will certainly be of assistance to smaller hospitals and Dongara A&E, however it is unlikely to help with the priority 1 and 2 workload which anecdotally make up the majority of cases for small communities like Mingenew. This is certainly part of the solution but its benefit is limited largely to those communities with hospitals and residential aged care facilities. It should be noted that there is a requirement to find EMT level officers to staff the model, a risk of which is that those EMT officers are then less available for volunteer duties.

CONTACT:

Nils Hay, CEO Shire of Mingenew
Phone: 08 9928 1102
Mobile: 0419 647 661
Email: ceo@mingenew.wa.gov.au

Cr Isabelle Scott declared an Interest in this Item, as a volunteer Ambulance officer for St John Ambulance.

Cr Cosgrove spoke to the Item, noting that the system needs to change as populations in country towns are declining, making it harder to recruit volunteers.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved: Cr Cosgrove

Seconded: Cr King

That the Northern Country Zone of WALGA request that WALGA call for:

- The expedited release of the WA Parliament's Inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia; and
- Greater allocation of resources to regional ambulance services to address an unsustainable over-reliance upon volunteer officers.

Carried

12. GENERAL BUSINESS

As per Item 35 of the Zone Standing Orders, a Delegate may under General Business introduce a motion relating to any item of interest to Local Government, but not otherwise.

12.1 Regional Issues

Background:

As per the resolution at Item 9.1 of the February 2018 minutes, Regional Issues were opened for discussion.

The Zone President invited guests to address the meeting.

The Hon. Steve Martin MLC, Mr Rob Houen, Ms Anne Finlay, Mr Alex MacKenzie, Mr Mark Holdsworth, Ms Janet Hartley West and Ms Angele Gray updated members on matters relevant to the Zone.

12.2 Regional Tourism Initiatives

Background:

As per the resolution at Item 10.1 of the April 2019 minutes, Regional Tourism Initiatives were opened for discussion.

Nil

12.3 Other General Business

Cr Cosgrove brought to the table a request that Western Power be granted an exception from DFES to attend to power outages during times of Total Fire Ban and/or Harvest Vehicle Movement Bans.

The Zone President asked that the request be brought to the next meeting as a report. CEO McKim suggested that a representative from Western Power be invited to present at our next Zone meeting.

The Shires of Chapman Valley and Northampton are currently in discussions with Western Power regarding regular power outages leading to telecommunications problems in their regions and will pass on the best contact to the Executive Officer.

13. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Recommendation:

That the next ordinary meeting of the Northern Country Zone of WALGA be held on Tuesday 26 April 2022.

Yet to be confirmed if this will be In Person or by Flying Minute.

No vote was taken on this Item. It will be forwarded to Members at a later date for resolution.

Northern Country Zone Resolution:

Moved:

Seconded:

That the next ordinary meeting of the Northern Country Zone of WALGA be held on Tuesday 26 April 2022.

Carried/Lost

14. MEETING CLOSURE

Meeting declared closed at 12:35 pm.