

MINUTES OF THE ZONE MEETING

held at the Dalwallinu Recreation Centre, Colin Anderson Way, Dalwallinu
Friday 21 June 2024 commencing at 10:08 am

1 OPENING & WELCOME

The Zone President and Chair of the meeting, Cr Chris Antonio, welcomed delegates and introduced Cr Keith Carter, President Shire of Dalwallinu. Cr Carter welcomed everyone to Dalwallinu and commented on –

- Meeting in the Dalwallinu Sport and Recreation Centre looking out over the well kept playing fields and swimming pool.
- If we had been meeting one month ago, I would not have been quite so positive. May was a very dry month and the previous 6 months all quite dry. In June most areas of the Shire received 30-70 mm which has set the season up well. This is important as farmers represent the bulk of our rate collection. The 2023 season was very poor and farm businesses cannot afford two low income years in row with input costs as they are.
- Other large businesses in the Shire (plastics, steel fabrication, and concrete) are in the Dalwallinu and Kalannie townships. They bring a dynamic to Council affairs which makes being a Councillor full of interest. The demands on Council staff are also continuous. A few of you were able to join us for a factory tour last Friday. Really impressive and their expansion plans are going to be interesting to watch.
- Some of the projects we have completed or planned:
 - Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Learning Centre - 12 months ago REED relocated to this new centre. It was apparent from the start that the planning and acoustics were going to make the days for the students and carers much better.
 - New executive residence - Our CEO was able to move into her new house about 6 weeks ago (a drawn out build).
 - Dalwallinu Hockey Pavilion - Opened in May and competed just in time for the hockey season.
 - Rapid Charging EV station - We weren't happy with the Government charging station plan with stations placed all along the coast and no recognition of inland tourist traffic so we decided to install a fast charging station.
 - Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program – Projects included Cemetery toilet, Town Hall floor, pool shades and playground upgrades.
- Our biggest current issue is land availability and accommodation:
 - An 8 lot industrial subdivision is being commenced by contractors and under the control of the Development WA. Our local concreting business has indicated that they intend to purchase 3 of these blocks so already we will be short of industrial blocks.
 - Development WA is also doing an 8 lot residential subdivision to the South of the hospital/medical centre. We have 25 expressions of interest for these 8 lots. This leads us to plan an 18 lot subdivision on unallocated crown land. At present we are working through native title and other issues related to requirements to acquire this land.

The President acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting is held and paid respect to Elders, past present and emerging.

2 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

2.1 Attendance

Delegates -

Cr Chris Antonio	Shire of Northam (President)
Cr Tracy Lefroy	Shire of Moora (Deputy President)
Cr Aaron King	Shire of Chittering (by video)
Cr Keith Carter	Shire of Dalwallinu
Cr Tony O'Gorman	Shire of Dandaragan (by video)
Cr Lincoln Stewart	Shire of Gingin (by video)
Cr Julie Chester	Shire of Goomalling (by video)
Cr Michael McKeown	Shire of Toodyay
Cr Suzanne Woods	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Elyssa Giedraitis	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu (by video)
Cr Kevin Trent	Shire of York (by video)

Observers –

Ms Melinda Prinsloo	Shire of Chittering (by video)
Ms Jean Knight	Shire of Dalwallinu
Mr Aaron Cook	Shire of Gingin (by video)
Mr Samuel Byrne	Shire of Goomalling (by video)
Cr Atilla Mencsheyi	Shire of Northam
Cr Julie Williams	Shire of Northam
Ms Debbie Terelinck	Shire of Northam
Cr Rosemary Madacsi	Shire of Toodyay (by video) (from 10:25 am)
Ms Tabitha Bateman	Shire of Toodyay
Ms Rebecca Brown	Manager Waste & Environment, WALGA
Ms Tracey Peacock	WALGA RoadWise
Ms Nicole Matthews	Executive Manager Policy, WALGA (from 11:09 am)
Mr Nick Sloan	CEO, WALGA (from 11:09 am)
Mr Grant Arthur	Director Regional Development, Wheatbelt Development Commission
Mr Josh Pomykala	Director Regional Development, RDA Wheatbelt Inc (by video)
Robert Dew	Zone Executive Officer

2.2 Apologies

Cr Mary Angus	Shire of Chittering
Cr Pauline Bantock	Shire of Victoria Plains
Mr Sean Fletcher	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Dwight Coad	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
Cr Denese Smythe	Shire of York
Mr Chris Linnell	Shire of York
Mr Suvrat Patel	Main Roads WA
Ms Kellie Todman	Manager Government & Industry Relations, CBH Group
Hon Shane Love MLA	Leader of the Opposition, Member for Moore
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Steve Martin MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Darren West MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Ms Mia Davies MLA	Member for Central Wheatbelt

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President drew attention to the Aboriginal Heritage Act information session being held immediately after the meeting.

5 MINUTES

5.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Zone Meeting held 19 April 2024 at Toodyay. Copies of these Minutes have been circulated to all member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 19 April 2024, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

RESOLUTION

**Cr M McKeown moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 19 April 2024, as printed and circulated, be
confirmed. CARRIED**

5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

(a) Northam Regional Hospital Upgrade (Item 5.2 (a))

As requested by the last meeting a letter of support has been requested from the Great Eastern Country Zone for the upgrade of services at the Northam Regional Hospital. The Executive Officer of the Great Eastern Country Zone has advised that our request will go to their Zone's August meeting for consideration.

The Shire of Northam has provided a copy of their letter to the new Director General of Health regarding the potential service expansion at Northam Regional Hospital.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

NOTED

(b) Aboriginal Heritage Act Information Session (Item 10.3)

As requested by the last meeting the WA Local Government Association has arranged an information session for the Zone to gain a greater understanding of the requirements of the amended Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972, how it intersects with local government operations and what is required of the sector. The session will commence 12:15 pm (immediately after this meeting) and conclude at 2:30 pm. Agenda for the session is attached.

The session will be led by Mr Nick Sloan, WALGA, and Mr Dan Oswald, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. The Department of Water and Environmental Protection is unable to attend but will take any questions on notice.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

NOTED

(c) Regional Telecommunications Review (Item 10.6)

As requested by the last meeting an invitation has been made to the Chair, or her representative, of the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee to attend a Zone meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

NOTED

Cr R Madacsi entered the meeting (by video) at 10:25 am.

(d) National General Assembly of Local Government (Item 11.3)

As authorised by the last meeting Cr Lincoln Stewart has been registered as the Zone's delegate to the 2024 National General Assembly in Canberra.

Cr Stewart has asked for any feedback on issues that the Zone would like him to follow up while he is in Canberra.

RECOMMENDATION

For comment

The meeting requested that members and delegates email Cr Stewart with any issues they wish him to raise while he is in Canberra.

(e) Other

No other matters were brought forward.

6 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

6.1 **WALGA State Council Agenda**

Review of the Agenda for the State Council meeting to be held Wednesday 10 July 2024. The Zone can provide comment or submit alternate recommendations to State Council for consideration.

Matters for Decision

8.1 Caravan Park and Camping Grounds Regulations (Page 7)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council endorse a new Caravan Park and Camping Grounds Regulations Advocacy Position:

Part 2 of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 should be amended to allow Local Governments to:

1. Consider camping on private property for a period of greater of three months.
2. Establish policy to guide approvals beyond 3 months to ensure that camping is locally appropriate and provide for circumstances where caravans, predominantly in the form of tiny homes on wheels, can be occupied on a more permanent basis.

WALGA Executive Summary

- Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOWs) are an emerging form of housing that offers an alternative and affordable housing option that can assist in addressing the current housing shortage.
- THOWs are classified as caravans under the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* (the Act) and the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997* (the Regulations).
- The Regulations restrict the length of occupation of THOWs.
- A new advocacy position proposes that the Regulations be amended to allow THOWs to be occupied for longer periods and for Local Governments to be able to establish policy to guide these longer approvals.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the draft advocacy position on 29 May 2024.

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

8.2 2024 Audit Experience Survey Results and Advocacy Position Page 12)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council:

1. Note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary; and
2. Amend Advocacy Position 2.2.2 *Local Government Audit Process* to remove point 7 as it has been achieved.

WALGA Executive Summary

- WALGA, in partnership with Local Government Professionals WA (LG Professionals), has recently conducted a survey of the Local Government sector to seek feedback on the annual audit process.
- The 2024 survey was based on the inaugural audit experience survey conducted last year, allowing for direct comparison of results over time.

- Five key emerging issues were identified following the 2023 survey, and these areas demonstrated varying levels of improvement this year:
 - timeframe and delays;
 - additional workload on Local Government staff;
 - cost;
 - inconsistent advice from contract Auditors and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG); and
 - asset valuation requirements.
- An outcome of advocacy efforts last year was the achievement of a review of the application of Fair Value principles, particularly as applied in audit related asset valuation.
- It is recommended that the WALGA Advocacy Position on Local Government Audit Process (position 2.2.2) be updated to reflect this achievement.
- An initial meeting with the OAG has recently been held to discuss the outcomes from the survey.
- WALGA and LG Professionals will continue to work with the OAG to reform the audit process in line with sector feedback, with a particular focus on those areas of concern identified in the 2024 survey results.
- This item was considered at the Governance Policy Team held on 15 May 2024, where the recommendation was supported.

The meeting recommended that the Zone support the recommendation to State Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

RESOLUTION

**Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr T O’Gorman seconded –
That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.**

CARRIED

Policy Team & Committee Reports

- 9.1 Environment Policy Team Report (Page 35)
- 9.2 Governance Policy Team Report (Page 36)
- 9.3 Infrastructure Policy Team Report (Page 38)
- 9.4 People and Place Policy Team Report (Page 39)
- 9.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council Report (Page 41)

RECOMMENDATION

That the above Policy Team & Committee Reports be noted.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Stewart moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the above Policy Team & Committee Reports be noted.**

CARRIED

Matters for Noting/Information

- 10.1 2024-25 State and Federal Budget Update (Page 42)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the 2024-25 State and Federal Budgets.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The 2024-25 State Budget was handed down on Thursday, 9 May 2024.
- The Government used the Budget to set out its priorities for the upcoming election, with a focus on addressing the high cost of living, new industry development and economic diversification.
- Limited funding was provided for initiatives in WALGA’s State Budget Submission, however a number of these may be considered for funding during the election campaign.

- The 2024-25 Federal Budget, handed down on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 also focussed on providing cost of living relief and investing in new industry development.
- While the Federal Budget retained the Government's commitment to a number of key funding programs for the Sector it missed the opportunity to invest in other priorities identified in WALGA's Federal Budget Submission.

10.2 Submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Priority Area Discussion Papers (Page 45)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People Priority Area Discussion Papers.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People requested that WALGA provide a submission to the Commissioner's policy area discussion papers.
- WALGA's submission aligns to Advocacy Position 3.6 Children and Young People and 3.10.2 Child Safeguarding. It provides a high-level overview of the interaction of Local Government with the identified priority areas, noting that the issues raised are predominantly within the remit of State Government or service delivery specific.
- The People and Place Policy Team noted the submission at its 29 April 2024 meeting.

10.3 Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy (Page 47)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the submission on the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) is seeking feedback to inform the State Government's development of an Urban Greening Strategy for the Perth and Peel Regions, to be finalised by December 2024.
- Local Government is a key stakeholder in the development of the Strategy.
- WALGA's submission aligns with WALGA's Urban Forest Advocacy Position, including the need for:
 - a lead State Government agency to be responsible for delivery of the strategy, and coordination across government,
 - the Strategy to be statewide,
 - a 30% canopy by 2040 target to be set for the Perth and Peel Region,
 - effective State level policy and regulation to protect trees on private land and retain more native vegetation as part of the development process, and
 - an expanded and sustained Urban Greening Grant program.

10.4 Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer Update (Page 50)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the Polyphagous shot-hole borer emergency and WALGA advocacy.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is leading the national response to eradicate Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), with tree removal the only effective treatment.
- More than 3,000 mature trees have been removed so far, many of which are in the most iconic and important areas of Perth, including Kings Park, Rottnest Island, Perth Zoo, Hyde Park and around Lake Claremont.
- WALGA has intensified its PSHB advocacy in recent months, including representations to the Premier and Environment Minister with our concerns regarding the adequacy of the response to date, the need for greater urgency and support from the State Government, and to commence recovery immediately, including funding for replanting and research into alternative treatment methods.

Ms R Brown gave an update on the Polyphagous Shothole Borer outbreak and WALGA advocacy and answered questions from delegates.

10.5 Flying Minute: Submission on Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (Page 54)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on WALGA's submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to the State Emergency Management Committee as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is developing an Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to embed climate change adaptation into the WA emergency management sector.
- WALGA was engaged by the SEMC to consult with the WA Local Government sector on the content, questions and actions presented in an EM-SAP Discussion Paper.
- 32 Local Governments participated in WALGA's EM-SAP consultation activities, and a consultation summary report was submitted to the SEMC as preliminary findings.
- WALGA prepared a formal submission on the EM-SAP to the SEMC. The submission supports the WA EM-SAP initiative as an important milestone in strengthening the consideration of climate change in emergency decision-making, however, provides 25 recommendations to inform the development of the final EM-SAP to ensure it is fit for purpose for Local Governments.
- WALGA's submission on the EM-SAP was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 18 April 2024 and submitted to the SEMC on 24 April.

10.6 Flying Minute: Submission on Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (Page 58)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on WALGA's submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to the State Emergency Management Committee as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is developing an Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to embed climate change adaptation into the WA emergency management sector.
- WALGA was engaged by the SEMC to consult with the WA Local Government sector on the content, questions and actions presented in an EM-SAP Discussion Paper.
- 32 Local Governments participated in WALGA's EM-SAP consultation activities, and a consultation summary report was submitted to the SEMC as preliminary findings.

- WALGA prepared a formal submission on the EM-SAP to the SEMC. The submission supports the WA EM-SAP initiative as an important milestone in strengthening the consideration of climate change in emergency decision-making, however, provides 25 recommendations to inform the development of the final EM-SAP to ensure it is fit for purpose for Local Governments.
- WALGA's submission on the EM-SAP was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 18 April 2024 and submitted to the SEMC on 24 April.

10.7 Flying Minute: Submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (Page 60)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport (The Committee) is conducting an inquiry into local government sustainability, with submissions due by 31 May 2024.
- WALGA's submission addresses current and future Local Government funding and expenditure challenges, as well as current labour market shortages with a focus on regional issues.
- The submission was informed by WALGA's advocacy positions, 2024-25 State and Federal Budget submissions and relevant data and statistics from a range of sources.
- The endorsed submission was provided to the sector and Local Governments were encouraged to prepare their own submission to the inquiry.
- At its meeting of 1 May 2024, State Council resolved the following:
 1. *That the submission on the inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport be endorsed in principle.*
 2. *A working party of State Councillors to be established by the President to work with the WALGA Economist to refine the submission and submit to State Council as a Flying Minute, for approval by the submission deadline.*
- A working party was created and met on 2 May 2025. The working party made minor changes to the submission. The submission as amended was provided to State Council by Flying Agenda for endorsement.
- State Council endorsed the submission via Flying Minute on 8 May 2024 and the submission was provided to the Committee on 31 May 2024.
- WALGA will appear before the Committee on 7 June 2024.

Ms R Brown gave an update.

10.8 Flying Minute: Standardised Meeting Procedures Submission (Page 63)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note WALGA's submission on Standardised Meeting Procedures to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

WALGA Executive Summary

- An element of the State Government's Local Government Reform Proposals is to introduce standardised meeting procedures as regulations, and thereby discontinue the making of local laws for this purpose.
- Sector consultation on the Reform Proposals indicated broad support for standardised meeting procedures.

- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) released a Consultation Paper in February 2024, seeking sector feedback on the proposed standardised meeting procedures with consultation closing on 29 May 2024.
- WALGA released a companion Discussion Paper raising matters for consideration to assist Local Governments with their assessment of the proposed meeting procedures and to assist WALGA develop a sector position on the proposals.
- Feedback on the Discussion Paper closed end of April to facilitate developing a Flying Minute to State Council by the consultation closing date of 29 May 2024.
- State Council endorsed the submission via Flying Minute on 27 May 2024.
- On 29 May 2024, the DLGSC extended the deadline to 7 June 2024.
- The submission was provided to DLGSC on 7 June 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That the above matters for noting/information be noted.

RESOLUTION

**Cr M McKeown moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the above matters for noting/information be noted.**

CARRIED

Key Activity Reports

- 11.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio (Page 66)
- 11.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio (Page 70)
- 11.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio (Page 75)
- 11.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio (Page 80)

RECOMMENDATION

That the above Key Activity Reports be noted.

Ms R Brown gave an update on the e-waste ban to landfill and recycling.

RESOLUTION

**Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr J Chester seconded –
That the above matters for noting/information be noted.**

CARRIED

6.2 WALGA President's Report

Presentation of the WALGA President's Report (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr S Woods moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the WALGA President's Report be received.**

CARRIED

6.3 State Councillor's Report

Report by Cr C Antonio (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the State Councillor's Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr T O'Gorman seconded –
That the State Councillor's Report be received.**

CARRIED

6.4 Zone Status Report

Report by WA Local Government Association on status of Zone resolutions for action by the Association – June 2024 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the June 2024 Status Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Stewart moved and Cr S Woods seconded –
That the June 2024 Status Report be received.**

CARRIED

7 ZONE REPORTS

7.1 Zone President's Report

Report by Cr C Antonio (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zone President's Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr M McKeown moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the Zone President's Report be received.**

CARRIED

7.2 Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee

Report by Zone delegate on activities of the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report on the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management be received.

Cr L Stewart reported that a meeting of the Committee had been held and that increasing the number of meetings was being considered.

Cr S Woods reported that the Mogumber shooting incident was raised.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Stewart moved and Cr S Woods seconded –
That the report on the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee be received.**

CARRIED

7.3 Wheatbelt District Leadership Group

Report by Zone Delegate Cr C Antonio on activities of the Wheatbelt District Leadership Group.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report on the Wheatbelt District Leadership Group be received.

There was no report.

7.4 Living Well in the Wheatbelt: Towards 2035 Strategy

Report by Zone Delegate Cr T Lefroy on the Living Well in the Wheatbelt: Towards 2035 Strategy (formally Wheatbelt Health & Wellbeing Plan: Towards 2035).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report on the Living Well in the Wheatbelt: Towards 2035 Strategy be received.

There was no report.

7.5 Wheatbelt Public Health & Local Government Planning Collaborative

Report by Zone Delegate Cr C Antonio on activities of the Wheatbelt Public Health & Local Government Planning Collaborative.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report on the Wheatbelt Public Health & Local Government Planning Collaborative be received.

Cr C Antonio commented that the Living Well in the Wheatbelt Strategy 2035 was being printed and that the Wheatbelt Development Commission had assisted with the cost of printing.

8 AGENCY REPORTS

8.1 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

- (a) Presentation of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries report (attached to Agenda).
- (b) Consideration of any topics or presentations the Zone would like the Department to give to the next Zone meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries report be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr M McKeown moved and Cr K Carter seconded –

That the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries report be received.

CARRIED

8.2 RDA Wheatbelt

Presentation of the RDA Wheatbelt report (attached to Agenda).

Recommendation

That the RDA Wheatbelt report be received.

Mr J Pomykala commented on –

- This was his first Avon-Midland Zone meeting.
- He had started in his role with RDA Wheatbelt in January.
- He was getting around the region to meet with each local government.

Cr C Antonio enquired if RDA Wheatbelt had a position on the phase out of live sheep exports by sea. Mr Pomykala replied that RDA Wheatbelt had to remain apolitical on the issue, however it's activities had a large emphasis on economic output, to date the only data on the economic effect of the live sheep export ban was the report by Econisis commissioned by NEWROC, letters have been written to the Regional Development and Agricultural Ministers, will support the community and economic development in the Wheatbelt, referred to the phase out of the coal industry.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr S Woods seconded –

That the RDA Wheatbelt report be received.

CARRIED

8.3 Transport Portfolio (Main Roads, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority)

Presentation of the Main Roads WA report (attached to meeting).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Main Roads WA report be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr M McKeown moved and Cr K Carter seconded –

That the Main Roads report be received.

CARRIED

8.4 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Presentation of Wheatbelt Development Commission report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission report be received.

Report was table and copies circulated to delegates.

Mr Grant Arthur commented on –

- Progress on housing availability, analysis of needs for local governments, advocating to Government for more flexibility of processes and local governments priority is for funding programs to support regional housing.
- The Wheatbelt has more small and medium-sized enterprises than other regions.
- Community preparedness for decarbonisation - Each State has a different approach. WA is at the start of the journey. An informal group of 5 local governments setup and is developing a framework. Community involvement is critical as is sharing of information.
- Telecommunications.

Mr N Sloan and Ms N Matthews entered the meeting at 11:09 am.

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr S Woods seconded –

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission report be received.

CARRIED

Mr G Arthur advised that the Mr Rob Cossart, Wheatbelt Development Commission CEO, has offered to present the Commission's Strategic Plan 2024-2026 at the Wheatbelt Forum.

8.5 RoadWise (Wheatbelt North)

Ms Tracey Peacock introduced herself as the new Road Safety Advisor for the Wheatbelt North Region. She had been in the role for 4 weeks. Would be coming out to meet with registered RoadWise local governments.

ADJOURNMENT: Due to an interruption to the video conferencing feed, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 am while efforts were made to restore the feed. Lunch was provided during the adjournment.

RESUMPTION: The meeting resumed at 11:44 am. All those present in person at the time of adjournment were present on resumption. Several of those who were participating by video conference did not rejoin the meeting.

9 FINANCE

9.1 Financial Reports

Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Report for the period ending 31 May 2024 are attached to the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

That the financial reports for the period ending 31 May 2024, as attached, be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr M McKeown moved and Cr J Chester seconded –

That the financial reports for the period ending 31 May 2024, as attached, be received.

CARRIED

9.2 Accounts for Payment

The following accounts are submitted for payment –

<u>Payee</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Amount</u>
R W & S Dew	Recoup Starlink Service Fee – June 2024	188.46
	TOTAL	<u>\$188.46</u>

RECOMMENDATION

That the accounts as listed totalling \$188.46 be approved for payment.

RESOLUTION

Cr S Woods moved and Cr K Carter seconded –

That the accounts as listed totalling \$188.46 be approved for payment.

CARRIED

Cr C Antonio declared a financial interest in Item 9.3 and left the meeting at 11:46 am.
Cr T Lefroy assumed the Chair.

9.3 Zone Honorariums

BACKGROUND

The Zone pays an honorarium to the Chair of Zone meetings on a pro rata basis in accordance with the number of meetings chaired. For 2023/2024 the amount was set at \$650.

COMMENT

For 2023/2024 there were 5 Zone meetings (including this meeting). Approval is sought to pay the honorarium to the respective Chairs of the Zone's 2023/2024 meetings. One meeting was chaired by Cr Ken Seymour and four meetings were chaired by Cr Chris Antonio.

RECOMMENDATION

That payment of the 2023/2024 honorarium to the Chairs of Zone meetings be approved.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr S Woods seconded –

That payment of the 2023/2024 honorarium to the Chairs of Zone meetings be approved.

CARRIED

Cr C Antonio returned to the meeting at 11:48 am and assumed the Chair.

10 ZONE BUSINESS

10.1 Really Awesome Regional Events (RARE) Company

From Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

BACKGROUND

At the Zone meeting held 23 February 2024, the Zone heard from guest speaker Ms Bourby Webster. Ms Webster gave a presentation on her newly founded company, The RARE Company (The Really Awesome Regional Events Company). Ms Webster explained the proposal being put forth was for The RARE Company to bring small, high quality art events on a regular basis to regional towns.

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu elected members have discussed this opportunity and have confirmed their in-principal support to contribute towards a feasibility study for Symphony Orchestra Events to be held in the region, on the condition that the Zone, and other member local governments were to also contribute.

The RARE Company are a newly established events company which “will take pocket-sized high-quality arts to bite-sized venues with gorgeous décor and be designed for country living”.

COMMENTS

The feasibility study is estimated to cost \$25,000 and the elected members of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu have agreed in principle to contributing towards the cost of this study on the proviso that the Zone contributes an initial \$10,000. The Council has proposed a request be put forth to the Zone to contribute \$10,000 and in turn, request the member local governments to the Avon-Midland Zone to each make an even contribution towards the remaining \$15,000. The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Council sees great value in bringing arts and culture to the regions with limited options for events in our towns. The model proposed by The RARE Company is scalable, repeatable, consistent with a central administration and a co-ordinator designated to each region/zone to ensure the success of the events.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Avon-Midland Zone contributes \$10,000 towards The RARE Company's feasibility study to bring high quality arts events to the region.
2. That all Avon-Midland Zone member local governments are requested by the Zone to each make an equal contribution towards the remaining \$15,000 for the feasibility study.

The meeting noted reports that Ms Bourby Webster had recently taken up a full-time position and that the future of the RARE Company project was unknown.

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr S Woods seconded –

That this matter lay on the table pending further information to a later meeting as to whether the RARE Company project will go ahead. CARRIED

10.2 Wheatbelt Conference

Last meeting resolved that the Zone's Wheatbelt Forum be held 23 August 2023 in Northam and appointed a Committee to organise the Event.

The Committee met on 19 June 2024. The following matters were discussed -

- August Zone Meeting
Recommended that the Zone meeting scheduled for the same day as the Wheatbelt Forum be held 8:30 am to 9:30 am with business limited to consideration of the State Council Agenda.
- Forum
 - Time - 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.
 - Preliminary Format
 - Introduction
 - Facilitated Panel discussion. 6 sessions of 45 minutes with opportunity for questions
 - Closure
 - Static Display - Each Zone to be invited to provide for display a brief outline of what they are doing (including key successes and key areas of concern) focussing on topics of the Forum. A white board or similar for noting of emerging issues.
 - Suggested topics –
 - Land use planning with a focus on agricultural land
 - Waste management
 - Housing availability
 - Attraction and retention of staff
 - Local government audit processes
 - Power:
 - Availability of reliable power
 - Renewable energy and lack of a State approach to planning and the impact on communities and benefits
 - Bush fire response: Support and funding for brigades and volunteers
 - Road infrastructure:
 - Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network and continuation of funding
 - Ineffective and inconsistent monitoring and enforcement of heavy haulage on rural roads.
 - Recommended that topics be presented to the Zone meeting for finalisation.
 - Catering –
 - Morning Tea – Shire of Northam offered to meet the cost.
 - Lunch – Zone to meet the cost.

- Invitations
It was noted that invitations to the Forum had been made to the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones and their member Councils and that to date expressions of interest in attending had been received from the Shires of Wandering, West Arthur and Williams.

It was agreed that the invitations be made to the Regional Managers of Main Roads WA, Water Corporation, Western Power, Wheatbelt Development Commission, RDA Wheatbelt and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

Members of the Committee may care to comment.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zone meeting to be held 23 August commence 8:30 am and conclude 9:30 am with business limited to consideration of State Council Agenda items.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zone endorse the topics for the Wheatbelt Forum as follows –

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Wheatbelt Forum Organising Committee be received.

Cr C Antonio issued an invitation to a pre-forum networking function being arranged by the Shire of Northam at the Farmers Hotel on the Thursday evening before the Forum.

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

That the Zone meeting to be held 23 August commence 8:30 am and conclude 9:30 am with business limited to consideration of the State Council Agenda items and the Zone's 2024/2025 budget. CARRIED

Mr Nick Sloan suggested that Mr Simon Beaumont, WALGA Media Manager, be invited to MC the Wheatbelt Forum.

To aid the Organising Committee, delegates were requested to review the suggested topics for the Wheatbelt Forum and to list their priorities.

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr K Carter seconded –

That the Report of the Wheatbelt Forum Organising Committee be received. CARRIED

10.3 WALGA's Efforts to Become an Employer Organisation

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA Executive Summary

- As previously detailed in an item to all Zones in April, WALGA has been considering amending the Association Constitution to enable WALGA to become a registered employer organisation under section 54 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA)* (IR Act).
- Despite advocacy efforts by WALGA since December 2022, the State Government has not agreed a pathway for WALGA to be provided with standing as an employer organisation by being named in the IR Act.
- Becoming an employer organisation would provide WALGA with more opportunity to modernise the Local Government State Awards, intervene in industrial matters concerning the Local Government sector, and generally better represent Members' views.

- Whilst the benefits of becoming an employer organisation are considerable, legal advice received by WALGA suggests that the constitutional amendments necessary for WALGA to comply with the requirements for registration are considerable and unachievable without wholesale changes to the governance structure of the Association.
- WALGA will continue to advocate to the State Government for WALGA to be named in the IR Act and given the status of an employer organisation, without needing to make constitutional amendments.

Policy Implications

The existing Advocacy Position on WALGA's registration as an Employee Organisation is contained in position 2.8.3:

That WALGA advocate for amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA) (IR Act) for WALGA to be named in the IR Act like the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Medical Association Incorporated (AMA) at s.72B and given the status of an employer organisation, including to the Minister for Industrial Relations, the Minister for Local Government and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.

Background

Currently, WALGA is a registered industrial agent under the Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA) (IR Act). This status allows WALGA to:

- appear as an agent for a WA Local Government or Regional Council in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) and Industrial Magistrate's Court or Industrial Appeal Court; and
- provide advice or other services to Local Governments in relation to 'industrial matters' as defined in section 7 of the IR Act.

Since the mandate for Local Governments¹ to operate in the State industrial relations system from 1 January 2023, unions have commenced various Local Government State awards variation claims in the WAIRC to amend industry employment conditions.

Currently, WALGA can intervene in award matters, but is unable to represent named employers and the broader Local Government sector in its own right.

WALGA has been advocating to the State Government since late 2022 to amend the IR Act and name WALGA as an employer organisation in the Act. These advocacy efforts have been unsuccessful to date.

Without being named in the IR Act, WALGA would need to comply with strict governance requirements to apply to become an employer organisation. This would require significant amendments to the Association Constitution, as well as endorsement by State Council and Members.

Even if these constitutional amendments were made and an application supported by State Council and the membership, the ultimate decision as to whether or not to register WALGA as an employer organisation rests with the WAIRC.

Comment

As foreshadowed in an Agenda item to Zones in April, WALGA has been looking to amend the Association Constitution to enable WALGA to apply to become a registered employer organisation under the IR Act.

WALGA has recently engaged lawyers, Jackson McDonald, to provide legal advice as to what constitutional amendments must be made to ensure WALGA is best placed to make a successful application for registration.

The advice received indicates that the changes required would be substantial, costly and potentially unwieldy, involving significant changes to the current governance structure and election processes of WALGA.

¹ with the exception of the Shires of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands

In particular, the following three changes required under the IR Act are considered to be untenable with the current structure of WALGA, and would therefore prohibit the Association from making a successful application for registration:

1. Secret Postal Ballot

Section 56 of the IR Act requires that elections for the holder of each office within the organisation must be conducted by way of secret postal ballot. Due to the broad definition of “office” and “officer” in the IR Act, WALGA office holders include every State Council representative, as well as the President and Deputy President.

Whilst conducting the elections for President and Deputy President via a secret postal ballot would be achievable, a postal voting system for the election of State Council representatives by Zone Delegates across 17 Zones would be unmanageable. As well as timing issues (see below), there would be significant costs involved in conducting elections in this manner, with no benefit to Members.

To accommodate an election of State Council representatives by secret postal ballot, the election cycle of WALGA would need to be changed. Currently, the terms of State Councillors run from the day of the first Ordinary State Council meeting immediately following the biennial Local Government elections (being the first week of December), to the day before the first Ordinary State Council meeting immediately following the next Local Government elections (2 years later). To allow for sufficient time for an election by postal ballot (an unavoidably slow process), the terms for State Councillors would need to be amended to commence at the next meeting (being March the year following the Local Government elections). In the meantime, the composition of State Council would be subject to the results of the Local Government elections (which may result in vacancies, with representatives needing to leave their State Council position due to no longer being on Council).

2. Independent Returning Officer

Section 56 of the IR Act requires that the rules of an employer organisation must provide for the conduct of every election to an office within the organisation by an independent returning officer, not being the holder of any other office in, and not being an employee of, the organisation. As described above, WALGA office holders include the President, Deputy President and State Councillors.

An independent returning officer could be engaged relatively easily for the election of President and Deputy President. However, engaging independent returning officers to conduct the election of State Council representatives at all 17 Zone meetings in the weeks following the biennial Local Government elections raises significant concerns in terms of cost, administrative burden and timing.

At present, the State Council elections are conducted in mid-November, about 4-5 weeks after the Local Government elections. In the interim, Councils are required to meet and elect or appoint their Zone Delegates. This leaves very little time for an independent returning officer to carry out a formal nomination and election process.

This difficulty would only be compounded if the postal voting requirement were also adopted for State Council elections.

The Commissioner must refuse an application for registration if they are not satisfied that the rules conform with the election requirements in section 56 (including secret postal ballot and independent returning officer).

3. Secretary

The IR Act requires the creation of a position of “Secretary”. Under the current governance structure of WALGA, the functions of Secretary are held by the CEO. However, under the IR Act, the Secretary is considered an “office”, meaning it is subject to the same election requirements as other offices. Therefore, on a strict view, the Secretary should be the President, Deputy President or a State Councillor, not the CEO.

Once again, this is a significant non-compliance risk that jeopardises the likelihood of WALGA’s application for registration being successful.

Next Steps

For the reasons described above, it is proposed that WALGA does not proceed with the original plan to amend the Association Constitution and apply for registration as an employer organisation under the IR Act.

Instead WALGA has the following options to seek standing to become a registered organisation of employers under the IR Act:

1. Option 1 – Advocate to the Minister for Industrial Relations to either:
 - a. name WALGA in the IR Act as an employer organisation similar to the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Medical Association Incorporated under s. 72B; or
 - b. amend the IR Act provision to permit WALGA to register as an employer organisation without making modifications to its Constitution or governance model. This might be achieved by amending the provisions to permit dual registration of organisations or making modifications to the election procedures of organisations.
2. Option 2 – Establish a new entity to apply for registration as an organisation of employers which will require separate management/committee, a motion approving an application for registration to the WAIRC under s. 54 of the IR Act and a Constitution which complies with all aspects of Part II, Division 4 of the IR Act.
3. Option 3 – In the event that neither Option 1 or 2 are achieved or considered appropriate, the final option will be for WALGA to establish protocols with Member Local Governments to notify WALGA when new union claims are made and to work with Members to bring award variations in the names of Local Governments.

WALGA met with the Minister for Industrial Relations, Hon Simone McGurk MLA, on 13 June to again advocate for WALGA to be named in the IR Act. The importance of WALGA becoming an employer organisation was discussed, alongside the complexities of amending the Association Constitution to adhere to IR Act registration requirements (as detailed above).

WALGA will keep the Zones updated on any progress on this item.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

Mr N Sloan provided background and gave an update.

NOTED

11 URGENT BUSINESS (as permitted by the Presiding Member)

11.1 Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports by Sea

Cr C Antonio referred to a possible Senate inquiry into the phase out of live sheep exports by sea and commented that if the inquiry goes ahead, it may be worth considering commissioning a report, like those undertaken by NEWROC and Shires in the Upper Great Southern Region, into the economic impact of the ban on this region.

12 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Brief comments by Members of Parliament.

Ms Melissa Price MP, Member for Durack, has indicated that she is hoping to attend the Zone meeting scheduled for 22 November 2024.

There were no Members of Parliament present.

13 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Future meetings of the Zone are scheduled for –

23 August 2024	Shire of Northam
22 November 2024	Shire of Dandaragan
21 February 2025	Shire of Victoria Plains
To be Determined *	Shire of York

* The April 2025 meeting date will need to be determined as the Zone’s normal date would be 25 April. Easter is also late in 2025 with Good Friday on 18 April.

RECOMMENDATION

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 23 August 2024 and be hosted by the Shire of Northam.

RESOLUTION

**Cr S Woods moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 23 August 2024, prior to the Wheatbelt Forum, and be hosted by the Shire of Northam. CARRIED**

14 CLOSURE

Cr J Chester apologised that she would not be able to stay for the Aboriginal Heritage Act Information session.

There being no further business the Chair thanked attendees and the Shire of Dalwallinu for hosting the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 12:11 pm.

CERTIFICATION

These Minutes were confirmed by the meeting held on

Signed:
(Chairman of meeting at which the Minutes were confirmed)