



# GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items

## Unconfirmed Minutes

Friday 20 August 2021  
Zoom Videoconference, commencing at 9.00am

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# GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (GVROC)

**Videoconference meeting of the GVROC Council to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items was held Friday 20 August 2021 9.00am**

## AGENDA

### 1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The purpose of the meeting is to provide advice to the WALGA State Council Representative, Cr Mal Cullen on the Agenda for the WALGA State Council Meeting to be held on 2-3 September 2021.

### 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Code of Conduct, Councillors and CEOs must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they may have in a matter before the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors, CEOs and Deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

### 3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

#### 3.1 Attendance

Cr Mal Cullen (Chair)	President, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Tracey Rathbone	Councillor, Shire of Coolgardie
Mr James Trail	CEO, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Laurene Bonza	President, Shire of Dundas
Mr Peter Fitchat	CEO, Shire of Dundas
Cr Ian Mickel	President Shire of Esperance
Cr Ron Chambers	Councillor, Shire of Esperance
Ms Felicity Baxter	A/CEO, Shire of Esperance
Mr Jim Epis	CEO, Shire of Leonora
Mr Brian Joiner	CEO, Shire of Menzies
Mr Cary Green	Director Governance & Corporate, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
Mr Andrew Mann	Executive Officer, GVROC

#### 3.2 Apologies

Cr John Bowler	Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Mr John Walker	CEO, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr David Grills	Councillor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Sharon Warner	Councillor, Shire of Dundas
Mr Shane Burge	CEO, Shire of Esperance
Cr Patrick Hill	President, Shire of Laverton
Mr Peter Naylor	CEO, Shire of Laverton
Cr Shaneane Weldon	Councillor, Shire of Laverton
Cr Peter Craig	President, Shire of Leonora
Cr Jill Dwyer	Councillor, Shire of Menzies
Cr Keith Mader	Councillor, Shire of Menzies
Mr Kevin Hannagan	CEO, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
Cr Damian McLean	President, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
Cr Jim Quadrio	President, Shire of Wiluna
Cr Timothy Carmody	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna
Mr Gary Gaffney	A/CEO, Shire of Wiluna

**3.3 Guests**

Nil

**3.4 WALGA Representatives**

Zac Donovan                      Executive Manager Commercial and Communications  
Cassandra Mora                  Policy Officer – Emergency Management

**3.5 DLGSC Representatives**

Nil attendees

<b>4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS</b>
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**4.1 Minutes of a Meeting of GVROC to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items held 25 June 2021**

Minutes of the GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council held Friday 25 June 2021 are presented for adoption (**Attachment 1**).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council held Friday 25 June 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

**RESOLUTION:**                      **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**  
   **Seconded: Cr Ian Mickel, Shire of Esperance**

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**Carried**

## **5. EMERGING ITEMS**

**From:** Chair GVROC

**Background:**

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure. The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternate recommendation that is then presented to the State Council for consideration.

A full copy of the State Council Agenda for the 2-3 September 2021 can be found at **Attachment 2**.

Notification of emerging items must be provided to the Chair no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

## 5.1 2021 Local Government Elections – Zone Office Bearer Elections

### IN BRIEF:

WALGA is requesting all WALGA Regional Zones note the process for election of Zone Representative and Deputy Representative to the WALGA State Council.

### BACKGROUND:

With the bi annual Local Government elections being held Saturday, 16 October 2021, Zones will also be required to hold an election process for State Council representatives.

A chronological overview of the process is detailed below:

- Local Government elections occur on Saturday, 16 October 2021.
- Member Councils to elect/appoint their Zone Delegates and to advise the Zone Executive Officer, as soon as possible but preferably by 5 November 2021.
- For the purpose of electing their representatives and deputy representatives to the WALGA State Council, the zones are required to hold these elections at their November 2021 meeting.
- Zones to advise WALGA, in writing, of their elected State Council representative and deputy representative immediately following the 2021 November Zone meeting.
- State Councillor Induction Session – morning of **1 December 2021**.
- New State Council will take office at the Ordinary Meeting of State Council on **1 December 2021**.
- The position of President and Deputy President of WALGA, will be elected at the March 2022 State Council Meeting.
- In relation to the nominations and election process to be followed by each Zone in electing a representative and deputy representative to the WALGA State Council, the below process has been instituted by State Council:
  - 1. *Zone Executive Officer to write to all Member Councils no later than 1 month prior to the Zone meeting at which the election is to be held calling for nominations from delegates to the Zone for the positions of representative and deputy representative to State Council. The correspondence is to state that all nominations are to be made in writing to the Zone Executive Officer, and only Elected Members who are a nominated Zone delegates are eligible to nominate. The time period for the receipt of nominations is to be **one week prior** to the Zone meeting at which the election will be held.*
    2. *Zone Executive Officer to receive written nominations from Zone delegates for the positions of representative and deputy representative to State Council and then provide written confirmation to Member Councils of the nominations received.*
    3. *Elections are to be held at the next Zone meeting as the first item of business. Where there is more than one nomination for each vacant position, an election will be conducted using a secret ballot, with the Zone Executive Officer to represent WALGA as the returning officer for the election. Prior to the ballot, nominees for each position are to be extended the opportunity to provide a 2 minute election bid to delegates.*
    4. *All voting delegates to the Zone are entitled to cast one (1) vote in the ballot process. The candidate with the greater or greatest number of votes is elected to the office.*
    5. **Tied vote** – *in the event of a tied vote, election will be determined by drawing names from a box. The Secretariat will put the names of the candidates concerned in a box and the first name drawn is the Elected Member.*
    6. *Zone Executive Officer to advise WALGA in writing immediately following the Zone meeting of the outcome of their elections.*

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

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the GVROC representing the Goldfields Esperance WALGA Zone note the process for election of Zone Representative and Deputy Representative to the WALGA State Council.**

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: *Mr Jim Epis, Shire of Leonora*  
Seconded: *Cr Ian Mickel, Shire of Esperance***

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**Carried**

## **5.2 Regional Telecommunications Review**

### **IN BRIEF:**

WALGA is seeking input from all WALGA Regional Zones for its submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review.

### **BACKGROUND:**

A Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (the Committee) is established every three years under Part 9B of the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999* to conduct a review into telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.

The Committee for the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review (the Review) was appointed on 1 June 2021.

The 2021 Committee is comprised of the Hon Luke Hartsuyker (Chair); Ms Kristy Sparrow; Professor Hugh Bradlow; Mr Michael Cosgrave; and Ms Sue Middleton.

The Committee is also conducting consultation sessions and as the dates for these are announced via their website Local Governments within the area being consulted are being advised via email of the upcoming process and encouraged to participate.

As part of the Review, the Committee will consider:

- the impact of Government policies and programs to improve regional connectivity and digital inclusion;
- insights from COVID-19 on the changing digital needs of regional, rural and remote areas;
- service reliability issues which impact regional communities and options for mitigating them;
- the role of emerging technologies in delivering telecommunications services in regional Australia;
- ways of encouraging further investment in regional telecommunications;
- the role of telecommunications in supporting broader regional development goals;
- ways to improve co-ordination between government and industry in telecommunications investment; and
- consumer awareness and education regarding telecommunications options in regional areas.

The full Terms of Reference for the Review are at Appendix B of the Issues Paper.

The Consultation Period runs from 6 July, 2021 09:00 to September 30, 2021 with WALGA receiving submissions until COB Thursday 16 September 2021.

### **WALGA Engagement Process**

Local Governments were advised in mid-July, via Councillor Direct, of the appointment of the Committee and the release of the Issues Paper, and that WALGA would be developing a sector wide submission.

WALGA, in developing a submission to this important review is seeking the views of members to address the wide range of telecommunications issues outlined by the Committee in the Regional Telecommunications Review 2021 – Issues Paper (the Issues Paper)

<https://www.communications.gov.au/>

Local Governments have been requested to provide their submissions or information to inform the sector wide submission to the Association to ensure all matters are addressed.

This agenda item provides a Zone level opportunity to provide feedback to the WALGA submission to assist in ensuring all Local Governments have had a chance for input.



**COMMENT:**

Zones are requested, however not limited to, consider the items outlined at the dot points and /or the individual questions outlined at the end of each section or at Appendix A of the Issues Paper or provide input on any related matter for inclusion in the submission.

By way of example the WALGA Submission will include, in part, commentary on Question 12 that asks:

*'How can different levels of Government, the telecommunications industry and regional communities better co-ordinate their efforts to improve telecommunications in regional Australia?'*

The Association response will include an example of the Regional Telecommunications Resilience Working Group established in May comprising key planning/technical staff from Telstra, Optus, Western Power, Horizon Power, WALGA, DFES and DPIRD. This working group will share data more openly to allow robust and coordinated planning which results in better overall service delivery and value for money for all concerned. The working group began its work in June 2021 and have scheduled monthly meetings that increase as Funding programs or issues emerge.

WALGA advocates on specific issues identified by its members at the Working Group, in particular to explore opportunities for sustainable solutions e.g. Stand Alone Power provision, utilising a combination of solar, batteries and generators.

The Association is keen to provide a comprehensive submission on this important matter and welcomes Zone input.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the GVROC representing the Goldfields Esperance WALGA Zone**

- 1. Note the Regional Telecommunication Review 2021; and**
- 2. will provide a copy of its GVROC submission to WALGA for reference in its submission, once it has been completed.**

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**  
**Seconded: Mr Brian Joiner, Shire of Menzies**

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**Carried**

## 6. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Decision

### 6.1 External Oversight of Local Level Complaints (05-034-01-0001 JM)

#### WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA advocate for an external oversight model for local level behavioural complaints made under Council Member, Committee Member and Candidate Codes of Conduct, that is closely aligned to the Victorian Councillor Complaints Framework.

#### IN BRIEF

- The Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021 were Gazetted on 3 February, with a requirement that all Local Governments adopt Code of Conduct based on the Model within three months;
- Division 3 of the Model Code introduced new provisions for behavioural complaints to be made and managed at the local level, with the Model Code requiring Local Government to deal with complaints and arrive at findings;
- The Local Government sector has expressed concern that the new system of local level complaints will give rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest, particularly where Councillors who are the complainant or respondent are involved in dealing with the complaint.
- WALGA's Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team considered this matter on 6 July, resolving:

*That the Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team SUPPORT the preparation of an agenda item to the next State Council meeting in September 2021, summarising the external oversight models in other jurisdictions and make recommendation for the adoption of a model closely aligned to the Victorian Councillor Complaints Framework.*

#### BACKGROUND:

The Local Government sector is concerned that the regulated local level complaints management system directly involves Local Governments in the assessment, findings and determining actions arising from complaints. This is exemplified in the State Council resolution of December 2020:

*That WALGA:*

- *Does not support the inclusion of local level complaints about alleged behavioural breaches and Local Governments dealing with complaints provisions in Division 3, Clauses 10 and 11; and*
- *Supports an external oversight body to manage local level complaints involving council members as prefaced in the Local Government Review Panel Report, City of Perth Inquiry Report and Select Committee into Local Government Report, to be considered in a future Local Government Act.*

At the same State Council meeting, the following WALGA advocacy position was adopted in relation to the Local Government Act Review Panel Report:

#### 2.6.7 External Oversight

*Position Statement*

*The Local Government sector supports:*

1. *Establishing an Office of the Independent Assessor to replace the Standards Panel to provide an independent body to receive, investigate and assess complaints against Elected Members and undertake inquiries.*
2. *Remove the CEO from being involved in processing complaints.*

3. *That an early intervention framework of monitoring to support Local Governments be provided with any associated costs to be the responsibility of the State Government.*

Research undertaken into the approach of other jurisdictions identifies similar legislation dealing with local level complaints but incorporating an independent assessment mechanism. The following information provides a summary of the independent assessment of council member complaints:

#### Victoria

A Councillor Conduct Framework was established under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) which provides a hierarchy for the management of Councillor conduct issues. Under the Councillor Conduct Framework:

- complaints of misconduct by a Councillor are heard and determined under the Council's internal arbitration process by an independent arbiter;
- complaints of serious misconduct by a Councillor are heard and determined by independently established Councillor Conduct Panels; and
- allegations of gross misconduct are dealt with by Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) provided comment indicating support for the Councillor Conduct Framework, albeit the legislation is relatively new. MAV are confident that the consultation leading to the adoption of the *Local Government Act 2020* will provide for a fair, timely and independent resolution of Councillor Complaints. A detailed summary can be found [here](#).

#### Queensland

The *Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and other Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (Qld) established the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA) to investigate and assess Councillor complaints, and provided the OIA with jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute claims against Councillors from all Local Governments in Queensland. The Independent Assessor reports directly to the Minister for Local Government.

The Independent Assessor investigates and assesses complaints about Councillor conduct involving inappropriate conduct and misconduct; corruption allegations received by the OIA are referred to the Queensland CCC. The Independent Assessor also:

- provides advice, training and information about dealing with alleged or suspected inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct to Councillors, Local Government employees and the public.
- prosecutes misconduct offences via the Councillor Conduct Tribunal.

The Local Government Association of Queensland provided comment that there are some concerns with the operation of the OIA due to the interpretive nature of the '*inappropriate conduct*' and '*misconduct*' definitions within the legislation. This is resulting in a growing number of seemingly trivial matters being dealt with by the OIA and the LGAQ is currently seeking a review of the *Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and other Legislation Amendment Act 2018*. A detailed summary can be found [here](#).

#### Tasmania

In 2016 Tasmania established a Code of Conduct Framework, replacing a former model where complaints dealt with by individual Councils was regarded as lacking consistency and credibility.

Key aspects of the current framework, which is currently under review, include:

- A Model Code of Conduct (made by order of the Minister for Planning and Local Government) which prescribes the standard of behaviour that all Tasmanian Councillors are required to meet when performing their role;
- The Minister's independent Local Government Code of Conduct Panel which is responsible for the investigation and determination of code of conduct complaints; and
- The availability of new sanctions to the Panel in relation to breaches and an ability to dismiss frivolous and vexatious complaints.

The Local Government Association of Tasmania provided comment that the Code of Conduct Framework was being used for unintended purposes and resulting in high legal costs, for example; a Council raised concern that the Code provisions were being used to threaten Councillors on the basis of how they vote on matters; and Member Councils provided information that dealing with the Code is

leading to the accumulation of legal costs from between \$40,000 and \$100,000. Having identified the unintended consequences of the Code of Conduct Framework, the Association has been lobbying for a review of the Code and this remains in the consultation phase. A detailed summary can be found [here](#).

### South Australia

Legislation currently before the State's Parliament will soon be proclaimed and introduce behavioural standards to be managed by an independent Behavioural Standards Panel. Concurrently, the legislation will require that Local Governments develop a Behavioural Management Policy based on statewide behavioural standards given effect by the Minister for Local Government with alleged breaches of the policy to be referred to the Standards Panel, which will have powers ranging from censure to three month suspension. Local Governments will have the ability to manage behavioural issues by arranging for mediation or arbitration depending on the behavioural issue arising and the willingness of involved parties to participate.

The Local Government Association of South Australia provided comment that the new legislation is reflective of feedback from the SA Local Government sector and the Association is confident the legislated process meets expectations.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team members requested that the Secretariat ensure that advocacy includes considering flexibility in how matters might be dealt with locally and to ensure that any future complaints process did not detract from the leadership role of the Mayors and Presidents to guide Council Members. There remains a role for Mayors and Presidents to play a leadership role by encouraging behavioural concerns or inter-personal disputes between Elected Members to be conciliated to a satisfactory conclusion between the parties, without necessarily requiring recourse to a local level complaints process.

The Minister for Local Government, Hon John Carey addressed WALGA State Council in May 2021 and has expressed tacit support for an independent approach to managing local level complaints. WALGA's assessment of the separate jurisdictional approaches to external oversight models favours the Victorian model as it most closely meets the WALGA advocacy positions relating to independent complaints management frameworks.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**GVROC support the WALGA advocating for an external oversight model for local level behavioural complaints made under Council Member, Committee Member and Candidate Codes of Conduct, that is closely aligned to the Victorian Councillor Complaints Framework. recommendation as stated.**

### **RESOLUTION:**

***Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie***

***Seconded: Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance***

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**Carried**

## **6.2 Tender Exemption Provisions – General Practitioner Services (05-034-01-0005 TB)**

### **WALGA Recommendation**

#### **That WALGA:**

- 1. Adopt a new Advocacy Position Statement under ‘Local Government Legislation - Tender Exemption General Practitioner Services’:**

*WALGA advocates for the inclusion of a tender exemption for General Practitioner (GP) services under Part 4, Division 2 of the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996, to support Local Governments to secure and retain necessary primary health care services for their communities; and*

- 2. Undertake additional research in support of the Advocacy Position with the following aims:**
  - a. Identify State and Federal Government policy settings and other factors contributing to gaps in primary health care services in regional communities; and**
  - b. Quantify the number of regional Local Governments that have current contracts, or are proposing to enter into contracts, for General Practitioner services and the associated costs to Local Government incurred.**

### **IN BRIEF**

- Local Governments advise that:
  - There is a limited pool of General Practitioners (GPs) willing to relocate to regional areas, let alone remain long term as a part of the community;
  - Communities place high value on local GP services and therefore, value Local Government exercising general competence powers to attract and retain GP services;
  - GP services are acquired by either directly engaging a GP as an employee of the Local Government, or by tendering for services;
  - Community expectations are inconsistent with Local Government tender obligations where a community expects the Local Government to retain a well-regarded GP that is willing to continue in the role, but compliance requires Local Government to re-market GP services initially acquired by a tender process with potential risk that the current service provider may not engage in the new tender process.
- WALGA advocacy for a ‘*size and scale*’ regional tender exemption for GP services will support regional Local Governments and their communities to secure necessary primary health care.
- Further research is proposed to support WALGA’s proposed advocacy.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report proposed WALGA’s adoption of a new Advocacy Position for Tender Exemption – Regional General Practitioner Services.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Central Country Zone at its meeting held 21 February 2020 requested WALGA investigate tendering issues for General Practitioner (GP) services in rural areas and consider a tender exemption for GP services under the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996*.

At the March 2020 State Council meeting, the matter was referred to the Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team which resolved on 29 June 2020, to include this issue as part of WALGA’s Phase 2 Local Government Act Review advocacy. The Policy Team revisited the issue in July 2021 and support the proposed advocacy recommendation.

It is noted that in February 2000, a related issue led to the amendment of Regulation 30(2) of the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* to provide for an exemption from the disposal of property provisions under s.3.58 of the *Local Government Act 1995* where a Local Government is ‘*leasing of land to a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Western Australia) in the medical profession to be used for carrying on his or her medical practice*’.

### **COMMENT**

Advocacy proposed in this report aligns with WALGA’s existing advocacy position in relation to Regional Health Services, adopted in 2018:

*The Association supports continuing to work with affected Local Governments and key stakeholders to identify and develop collaborative strategies. The Association supports continuing to advocate to the State Government to prioritise regional health and the regional health workforce. The Association supports developing a policy connection with the Australian Local Government Association as a pathway for advocating for stronger specialised regional health workforces.*

(State Council Resolution September 2018 – 105.5/2018)

Robust advocacy will require research and consideration of a range of matters, including:

- The proposal for a tender exemption for procurement of GP services. This may be an opportunity for 'size and scale' innovation, but should also consider probity and best value principles.
- The implications of State and Federal Government policy settings and other factors contributing to reduced primary health care services in regional communities and the consequential cost shifting to Local Government. This may require separate advocacy considerations.
- The number of regional Local Governments and the quantum of costs incurred through contracting GP services, to evidence the costs that have been shifted to the Local Government sector.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**GVROC support the WALGA recommendation as stated above.**

**RESOLUTION:**                      **Moved: Mr Jim Epis, Shire of Leonora**  
   **Seconded: Cr Ian Mickel, Shire of Esperance**

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**Carried**

### **6.3 Phase 2 Planning Reform Submission (05-047-02-0015 CH/RP)**

#### **WALGA Recommendation**

**That the submission to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on Phase 2 Planning Reform be endorsed.**

#### **IN BRIEF:**

- Phase 2 of the *Action Plan for Planning Reform* has been released for comment by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). Phase 2 builds upon the reforms initiated through the Independent Planning Reform Team's Green Paper (2018) and the State Government's Action Plan for Planning Reform.
- Phase 2 proposes 28 reform initiatives under three overarching goals, while also requesting community and stakeholders submit their own ideas for additional reforms of the planning system.
- WALGA's submission provides a response to all relevant reform initiatives as well as detailed commentary on suggested further areas for reform. Broadly the Association's suggested reforms aim to enhance liveability and sustainability, as well as improve efficiency and role definition within the planning system.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- [Planning Reform Phase 2 – Action Plan for Planning Reform](#)
- WALGA Planning Reform Phase 2 Submission

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

Relevant WALGA Advocacy Position Statements:

*6.1 Planning Principles – All legislation and policy that deals with planning and development must:*

- *ensure role clarity and consistency across all legislation controlling development, to avoid confusion of powers and responsibilities,*
- *be easily interpreted by, understood by, and accessible to all sections of the community, and*
- *be amended only with WALGA involvement and/or consultation/involvement with Local Government.*

*6.2 Planning Reform – The Local Government sector supports the underlying principles of planning reform and the continuing focus of streamlining the planning system.*

*6.5 Development Assessment Panels – the Association does not support Development Assessment Panels, in their current structure.*

The Recommendations in the submission are consistent with WALGA's previous submissions on Phase 1 Planning Reform, the Independent Planning Reform Green Paper and the Planning Makes it Happen reform process.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The current planning reform process was initiated as a result of the Independent Reviewer's Green Paper (2018), which proposed five key areas of reform: strategically-led, legible, transparent, efficient and delivering smart growth. In 2019, an Action Plan for reform of the planning system was released by the Minister for Planning. The first phase of planning reform was introduced through amendments to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* and amendments to the *Planning and Development Amendment Act* in 2020, with the intent to create a more flexible, responsive and contemporary planning system to drive Western Australia's economic recovery through the COVID-19 pandemic. This included creation of a State Development Assessment Unit (SDAU) to assess State Significant development, the creation of a head of power to establish a Special Matters Development Assessment Panel, and a reduction in the number of Development Assessment Panels from nine to five.

Phase 2 builds on these earlier reforms of the Action Plan, proposing reforms across three key themes: planning creates great places for people; planning is easier to understand and navigate; and planning systems are consistent and efficient. It is intended that feedback on Phase Two will inform drafting of amendments to the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

In addition to a number of potential reforms, Phase 2 consultation seeks additional suggestions for further areas of reform across the planning system. For this reason, the submission prepared by WALGA has been structured in two parts – part one providing comment on the Department’s proposed reforms, and part two suggesting further areas of reform.

**COMMENT:**

The release of Phase 2 Planning Reform is generally welcomed, as there has been a clear commitment to date from the State Government to work alongside the Local Government sector prior to implementing proposed reforms. The opportunity for Local Government officers and elected members to be engaged early in these processes has been a positive and constructive approach. Further, WALGA has a demonstrated, long-held commitment to planning reform, in particular the aim to refocus strategic priorities, address design and operational problems in the planning approval process and clarify and streamline institutional arrangements.

WALGA in its submission has provided a response to all relevant reform initiatives as well as detailed commentary on suggested further areas for reform. The majority of reforms proposed by the Department are supported by the Association, noting however that further detail is required on a number of proposals in order to provide meaningful comment on their implications for the sector. The submission also grants the Association a unique opportunity to outline further reforms of the planning system.

As the reforms progress, it is anticipated the Association will have further opportunities to provide comment and engage the Local Government sector on reforms, including through the establishment of working groups. The Minister for Local Government is undertaking complimentary consultation with the sector through both a Red Tape Reduction and Crossover Working Group. WALGA and Local Government representatives are participating in both groups.

The public comment period closed on Tuesday, 31 August, with an extension granted to the Association to provide its comment by Friday, 3 September.

WALGA provided a draft submission to the sector on 9 July for a four-week comment period. WALGA identified three Council endorsed submission (Bayswater, Fremantle and Serpentine Jarrahdale) on the Phase 2 reforms and officer comments were received from seven Local Governments (Vincent, Gosnells, Rockingham, Harvey, Bassendean, Serpentine Jarrahdale and Busselton). These submissions were overwhelmingly supportive of both WALGA’s positions on the proposed reforms and suggested improvements. Two additional suggested reforms have been incorporated into the submission following proposals from Local Governments.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**GVROC support the WALGA submission to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on Phase 2 Planning Reform.**

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*  
Seconded: *Mr Jim Epis, Shire of Leonora***

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**Carried**



## 7. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Noting/Information

### 7.1 Stop Puppy Farming Legislation (05-034-01-0001 FM)

#### WALGA Recommendation

**That the update on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 be noted**

#### IN BRIEF:

- State Council adopted a detailed position in relation to the Stop Puppy Farming Initiative, and subsequently sought the withdrawal of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020 (the 2020 Bill).
- The Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 (the 2021 Bill) was introduced on 2 June 2021. The 2021 Bill is substantially similar to the 2020 Bill but provides an exemption from sterilisation for livestock working dogs.
- There may be an opportunity to engage with DLGSC on remaining issues of significance to the sector, primarily cost recovery through fees and charges.

#### BACKGROUND:

- At its September 2018 meeting, State Council adopted a detailed position in relation to the Stop Puppy Farming Initiative (*Advocacy Position 2.11, Resolution 103.6/2018*).
- The Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020 (the 2020 Bill) was introduced to Parliament on 19 February 2020.
- At its March 2020 meeting, State Council resolved:
 

*“That WALGA write to the Minister and request that he withdraw the Stop Puppy Farming Bill and more appropriately consult with the sector, traditional custodians and the wider community, or failing that, that he remove any reference to Local Government in the bill as the sector does not endorse it in its current form.”*

*Advocacy Position 2.11, Resolution 13.1/2020*
- The 2020 Bill was not passed by the Legislative Council, and lapsed when Parliament was prorogued on 7 December 2020. The Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 (the 2021 Bill) was introduced on 2 June 2021.
- On 6 July 2021, the Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team supported:
  1. That WALGA continue to engage with DLGSC to advocate for the outstanding points of Advocacy Position 2.11, and in particular to ensure that fees and charges are set at levels that achieve cost recovery for Local Governments.
  2. That an Item for Noting be prepared for the September 2021 State Council meeting.

#### COMMENT:

The 2021 Bill has been introduced without the further consultation requested in Resolution 13.1/2020. However, given the State Government’s control of both Houses of Parliament, it may be more effective to engage with the State Government in relation to key points from WALGA’s original advocacy position (Resolution 103.6/2018), rather than seeking the Bill’s withdrawal. The details of that Resolution are considered below.

Resolution 103.6/2018	2021 Bill
1. Welcomes a cost modelling review of the financial impact on Local Governments to ensure that Local Government is able to fully recover costs and not be disadvantaged in ensuring compliance of any new legislation to Stop Puppy Farming.	Fees and charges to be prescribed based on 2018 cost modelling. WALGA seeking further information from DLGSC to ensure cost recovery.
2. Acknowledges the benefit of de-sexing of dogs not used for approved breeding purposes, and request further information on the complexities associated with desexing of dogs prior to considering supporting the proposal.	Requires sterilisation of all dogs by 2 years of age unless exempt. Exemptions apply if dogs already registered, vet provides a certificate stating that sterilisation would adversely affect health, dog owned by person with approval to breed, dog is primarily kept for droving or tending of stock, the dog is sterile, or belongs to a class of dogs to be prescribed.

3. Supports a centralised dog registration system that is developed, operated and maintained by State Government.	DLGSC will be responsible for the establishment of the centralised registration system. Local Governments and DLGSC will be responsible for recording information, keeping it up to date, and correcting any errors.
4. Supports appropriate legislative exemptions for livestock working dogs in recognition of their special breeding requirements.	Provides for a dog to be exempt from sterilisation if it is primarily kept to be used in the droving or tending of stock. This will allow the owners of livestock working dogs to assess the suitability of each animal for breeding, before making a decision to apply for an approval to breed.
5. Does not support the transition of pet shops to adoption centres.	The transition of pet shops to adoption centres is a key feature of the 2021 Bill, as in the 2020 Bill.
6. Requests there be a Local Government-specific consultation process in relation to the proposed amendments to the Animal Welfare Act to introduce Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Animals including dogs.	It is proposed that standards and regulations under the <i>Animal Welfare Act 2002</i> will relate to the keeping and housing of dogs. WALGA has not been advised of the process for developing these standards but will continue to advocate for Local Government consultation.
7. Supports a State Government-led education initiative whereby the community is encouraged to purchase puppies from professional registered breeders.	Not provided for in the 2021 Bill.
8. Requests the State Government discontinue the use of the term 'Farming' due to the negative connotation that may be associated with other regulated industries, and consider re-naming the initiative 'Stop Puppy Mills'.	The term 'Puppy Farming' has been used consistently by the Government since consultation on the subject began in 2018. This is unlikely to change.

Unlike the 2020 Bill, the 2021 Bill has addressed point 4 of the advocacy position, as clause 23 provides for a dog to be exempt from sterilisation if it is primarily kept to be used in the droving or tending of stock. This will allow the owners of livestock working dogs to assess the suitability of each animal for breeding, before making a decision to apply for an approval to breed.

A key remaining concern is the introduction of significant additional Local Government responsibilities, without an assurance that fees and charges will be set at a level that achieves full cost recovery. Local Governments will be responsible for the assessment and grant or refusal of approvals to breed and pet shop approvals, as well as associated investigation and enforcement functions. WALGA is continuing to liaise with DLGSC to advocate for fees and charges to be set at levels to achieve full cost recovery.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**GVROC note the WALGA update on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021.**

**RESOLUTION:**                      **Moved: Cr Ian Mickel, Shire of Esperance**  
    **Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**

**Carried**

## **7.2 Regional Telecommunications Resilience (05-059-03-003 JB)**

### **WALGA Recommendation**

**That the update on Regional Telecommunications Resilience be noted.**

#### **IN BRIEF:**

- At the National level, WALGA continues to access the knowledge and influence of key parliamentarians to ensure all Western Australians can access equitable, affordable and reliable telecommunication that is appropriate for emergencies.
- The Association is contributing to a Working Group established at the request of the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, consisting of the State Government agencies of the Departments of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and Power and Telecommunication providers seeking a collaborative approach to telecommunication resilience.
- Regional Telecommunications Review Issues Paper released 16 July 2021 with the Committee accepting submissions until 30 September 2021.
- Each WALGA Zone requested to consider the Regional Telecommunications Review as part of the Agenda for their August round of meetings.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- [Regional Telecommunications Review Issues Paper:](#)

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Late in 2019, Local Governments generously provided examples of their experience of Telecommunication issues. The initial focus of the examples provided centered on:

- Blackspots
- Battery Back Up Failures
- Outages (Planned and Unplanned)
- Telstra Notification Systems

These issues were presented by WALGA to the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) on Friday, 13 December 2019, and further to Senator Dean Smith on 22 July 2020.

Significant natural events across the nation have resulted in the following progress:

The Commonwealth Government announcement of \$37.1 million through the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) package developed in response to the Black Summer Bushfires, to strengthen telecommunications resilience in bushfire and disaster-prone areas so that communities can stay connected during emergencies.

The package contains four elements:

- 1) Improving the resilience of regional and remote mobile phone base stations
- 2) Portable communications facilities to allow quicker service restoration
- 3) Program to deliver improved communications
- 4) Enhanced telecommunications for rural fire authorities and evacuation centres

Stage 1 of the program announced in December 2020 provided \$13.2 million in Commonwealth Government funding to Optus, Telstra and TPG to improve network resilience by upgrading battery backup power at 467 base stations. Western Australia was successful in receiving funding for 108 sites under Round 1 of the Government's Mobile Black Spot Program. These upgrades will increase backup operation to at least 12 hours. Telstra have advised that all of the upgrades to Telstra base stations was completed in early July 2021.

At the State Government level, DFES were able to provide the Commonwealth with data based on Bushfire and Community Resilience Risk Rating to assist in prioritising sites. Although Telco's were funded directly, DFES continues to ensure close contact with the Commonwealth on progress of this project.

In line with the second and third element, NBN Co has confirmed with DFES that a 'Road Muster' satellite truck has been based at Belmont from early January 2021, and that two (2) portable satellite communications systems have been provided to NBN WA.

Element four progressed through the DFES working with NBN Co and Local Governments resulted in the installation of satellite communications services to 19 pilot sites. A further application process in March 2021 resulted in 79 Local Governments applying for 141 NBN fixed satellite services to facilities such as community evacuation centres, community halls or Local Government offices. The Commonwealth has endorsed all applications which are now being assessed by NBN for installation suitability based on the data provided by Local Governments.

Building telecommunication resilience during emergencies for both the community and emergency responders is at the core of the Working Groups focus and is resulting in positive outcomes for Local Governments and their communities.

Further, every three years a Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (the Committee) is established to conduct a review into telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.

Committee reports are important in setting the regional communications policy agenda in the following years.

With the Consultation Period running from 6 July 2021 to 30 September 2021, the Committee is inviting regional communities, businesses and governments to engage directly through face to face consultations, written submissions and online forums. The Association encourages Local Government to make a submission and take the opportunity to be involved in a consultation forum.

WALGA will be coordinating a whole of sector response and welcomes Local Government contributions on this important issue to our rural, regional and remote members and those who live, work or visit your communities.

**COMMENT:**

The Association will continue to advocate for equitable provision of telecommunication in regional WA, particularly to ensure resilient solutions for telecommunications during and after disaster events.

Further, the Association will provide a submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review, incorporating the views of member Local Governments and will seek to ensure that the views of the sector are heard via the consultation process including providing prompt advice to members on locations and/or timing, particularly if these are being held virtually.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**GVROC note the WALGA update on Regional Telecommunications Resilience.**

**RESOLUTION:**            **Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**  
   **Seconded: Mr Cary Green, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku**

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**Carried**



## 7.4 2021-22 State Budget Submission (05-001-03-0006 DM)

### WALGA Recommendation

**That the Immediate Priorities for State Government policy platform, which was endorsed via Flying Minute, be noted.**

#### IN BRIEF:

- Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming budget.
- The proposed approach to the 2021-22 Submission and priorities were endorsed by State Council in May via Flying Minute (Resolution 201.FM/2021).
- Since then, WALGA has received further information from the State Government about its focus for the budget and timeframes for the 2022-23 State Budget. As a result of this new information, WALGA has adjusted its approach to the State Budget Submission to ensure the initiatives have the best chance for success.
- While there has been no fundamental change to the priority initiatives, the context has been reframed. Instead of focusing just on the 2021-22 Budget, the document has shifted to a more strategic policy platform identifying the immediate spending priorities for the McGowan Government in its second term. It is intended that this submission would cover the next two budget periods, 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- The final submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute (Resolution 205.FM/2021).

#### ATTACHMENT:

- [Flying Minute – 2021-22 State Budget Submission](#)

#### BACKGROUND:

Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming budget. Given the recent State Election and delays to the 2020-21 Budget, this year's budget will now be handed down in September.

In May 2021, WALGA circulated a proposed submission approach and list of priorities to the State Council, which was endorsed. It asserted that to provide the best chance of success and standing out from the crowd, WALGA's submission would be:

- Targeted and succinct – An extended list of priorities is not likely to be considered by Government given they already have a full agenda of election commitments and other emerging priorities.
- Aligned to Government priorities – The Government is more likely to fund requests that align with their agenda or that address a pressing or emerging issue.
- Infrastructure-focussed – The windfall nature of the surplus means that there is a better chance of receiving funding for capital, rather than recurrent programs.
- Return for the State and the Community – A strong evidence base is needed to demonstrate the value that the initiatives will deliver for the community. Those which already have a demonstrated track record, or where there is a co-funding arrangement are likely to have a greater chance of success.

The priorities proposed for the submission included:

- Funding to fill existing gaps in **FOGO processing infrastructure** needed to turn the collected FOGO into high quality compost.
- Evolution of the **State Underground Power Program**, with State Government funding prioritized to project areas where the benefits to the households are less (lower property values) and the financial capacity to contribute is less.
- 
- Investment in **climate change adaptation**, including funding for managing urgent **coastal erosion** hotspots, and enhancing the **urban tree canopy**.
- Funding to repurpose, upgrade and build new **cultural and social infrastructure** at a local level and as part of joint initiatives between the State and Local Governments and community organisations.
- Additional investment in **telecommunications infrastructure**, to unlock further opportunities to work in partnership with the Commonwealth and other key players to reduce communications gaps in regional areas.

- Extending the election commitment for funding for **homelessness outreach services** for an additional financial year.
- Extending funding for the **Small Business Friendly Approvals Program** to allow a greater number of Local Governments to participate.
- **Support for the Local Government sector to transition to the State Industrial Relations System.**
- Funding to WALGA for a service level agreement with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to provide **capacity building support to assist Local Governments with good governance, financial management and process.**

Since WALGA put the proposed priorities to State Council, it has received feedback from the State Government regarding the focus of the 2021-22 Budget and the timing for the 2022-23 Budget. Specifically:

- The 2021-22 Budget will be focused on the delivery of election commitments, and as a result, there is limited scope for any other initiatives. This means that any submission put forward by WALGA for this Budget would have minimal impact.
- The 2022-23 Budget will be handed down in May 2022. This means that the timeframe for the next budget process would commence almost immediately after the 2021-22 Budget is handed down in September.

As a result, WALGA has adjusted the context for the final submission. The broad principles that underpin the submission and the priority initiatives remain largely unchanged.

Given the close timeframes for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Budget, the Submission is now intended to cover both Budget periods and has been framed in terms of the immediate spending priorities for the McGowan Government in its second term.

This approach is considered appropriate given that the priority initiatives are not expected to fundamentally change in coming months. It also mitigates potential perceptions that WALGA is out of touch with State Government processes and priorities.

Two initiatives have been removed from the submission, as it was deemed that there was greater chance of achieving funding for these initiatives through other advocacy channels. Although these issues have been removed from the submission, they remain priority issues for the sector and will be pursued through other avenues, and in future budget submissions.

- **Local Government Capacity Building** - The new Minister for Local Government and Director General of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries have advised of their commitment to strengthen the Department of Local Government. In light of this, it is considered that WALGA should continue to support its existing advocacy position: *“WALGA supports the continuance of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as a direct service provider of compliance and recommend the Department fund its capacity building role through the utilisation of third party service providers. In addition, WALGA calls on the State Government to ensure there is proper resourcing of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to conduct timely inquiries and interventions when instigated under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1995.”*
- **Social and Cultural Infrastructure** – It was considered that inclusion of this item was premature, given that further information on the Government’s infrastructure priorities will become available once the State Infrastructure Strategy is released in coming months. Given the breadth and importance of this initiative, a more specific funding request will be developed to support this initiative once further information becomes available.

**COMMENT:**

The State Election and the delay to the State Budget has meant that there is a condensed timeframe to prepare the 2021-22 State Budget submission. The Government’s decision to hand down the 2022 23 Budget in May 2022 has exacerbated this issue.

It is considered that the revised approach will provide the best opportunity to represent the sector’s interests without duplicating activities or risking reputational damage by being viewed as out of touch with State Government priorities and processes. Once the Submission has been provided to the State Government, WALGA will seek to meet with Government officials and Members of Parliament to discuss the key initiatives.

Putting forward this document does not preclude WALGA from undertaking additional advocacy on these initiatives, or from putting forward other spending priorities to the State Government as they arise. The State Budget Submission is just one opportunity to represent the sector's interests, and the Association continues to advocate for the initiatives contained in the submission through other channels.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**GVROC note the Immediate Priorities for State Government policy platform, which were endorsed via Flying Minute.**

**RESOLUTION:**                      **Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas***  
   **Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie***

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**Carried**



## **7.5 WALGA Submission: Inquiry into the Delivery of Ambulance Services in Western Australia (05-030-03-0001 BW)**

### **WALGA Recommendation**

**That the submission to the Standing Committee on Public Administration on the Inquiry into the Delivery of Ambulance Services in Western Australia, which was endorsed via Flying Minute, be noted.**

### **IN BRIEF:**

- The Standing Committee on Public Administration commenced an inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia on 23 June with submissions due by 23 July.
- Given the short time frame WALGA emailed all CEOs directly and put an article in LG News encouraging submissions and that WALGA would also make a submission if there was sufficient sector interest.
- Three regional Local Governments provided feedback to WALGA that expressed support for the current volunteer-based ambulance system in regional Western Australia and highlighted the potential risk to service levels if it is taken over by the State Government.
- The submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute (Resolution 206.FM/2021).

### **ATTACHMENT:**

- [Flying Minute: WALGA Submission - Inquiry into the Delivery of Ambulance Services in Western Australia](#)

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Standing Committee on Public Administration commenced an inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia on 23 June 2021 with submissions due by 23 July 2021.

The Terms of Reference sought submissions on the following matters:

- how 000 ambulance calls are received, assessed, prioritised and despatched in the metro area and in the regions;
- the efficiency and adequacy of the service delivery model of ambulance services in metro and regional areas of WA; and
- whether alternative service delivery models in other jurisdictions would better meet the needs of the community.

Given the short timeframe WALGA emailed all CEOs directly and put an article in LG News encouraging submissions, indicating that WALGA would also make a submission if there was sufficient sector interest. Three Local Governments; the Shire of Lake Grace, Shire of Carnamah and Shire of Mt Marshall provided comment to WALGA.

### **COMMENT:**

When announcing the Inquiry the Chair of the Standing Committee, Hon Pierre Yang MLC said:

*'Ambulance services constitute a vital part of our health system, directly impacting hundreds of Western Australians every single day. For this reason, ambulance services are always topical for the community.'*

This is particularly the case in regional Western Australia. The three responses received all emphasised the importance of the ambulance service in their regions, expressed support for the current volunteer based ambulance system in regional Western Australia and highlighted the risk to service levels through the potential loss of volunteers if the service were taken over by the State Government.

WALGA's submission highlights that any changes recommended to the operation or ownership of the service must not negatively impact on regional areas where the current ambulance system provides an important contribution to community connectedness through volunteering and accessibility to health services at the local level.

The submission also acknowledges that changing demographic patterns and an aging population means that in some areas there may be difficulty attracting ambulance volunteers in the future and a hybrid model of volunteers and career ambulance personnel may be appropriate, and that some Local Governments are partners in the provision of regional health services through the operation of airports which support patient transfer between ambulance and Royal Flying Doctor Service.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**GVROC note the submission to the Standing Committee on Public Administration on the Inquiry into the Delivery of Ambulance Services in Western Australia, which was endorsed via Flying Minute.**

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas***

**Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie***

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**Carried**

## **8. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Organisational Key Activity Reports**

- 8.1 Report on Key Activities, Commercial and Communications (01-006-03-0017 ZD)
- 8.2 Report on Key Activities, Governance and Organisational Services (01-006-03-0007 TB)
- 8.3 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure (05-001-02-0003 ID)
- 8.4 Report on Key Activities, Strategy, Policy and Planning (01-006-03-0017 NC)

### **GVROC COMMENT:**

GVROC note the Organisation Key Activity Reports as provided.

### **RESOLUTION:**

Moved: *Mr Brian Joiner, Shire of Menzies*  
Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

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Carried

## **9. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Policy Forum Reports**

The following provides an outline of the key activities of the Association's Policy Forums that have met since the last State Council meeting.

### **Recommendation**

**That the report on the key activities of the Association's Policy Forums to the September 2021 State Council Meeting be noted.**

### **Policy Forums**

The following Policy Forums have been established

- Mayors / Presidents Policy Forum (refer to WALGA Presidents September 2021 Report and Addendum (**Attachments 3 and 3.1**))
- Mining Communities Policy Forum
- Economic Development Policy Forum

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

GVROC notes the Policy Forum Reports update

### **RESOLUTION:**

Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*  
Seconded: *Cr Ian Mickel, Shire of Esperance*

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Carried

<b>10. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda – State Council Status Report</b>
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**10.1 Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions - To the September 2021 State Council Meeting**

**GVROC COMMENT:**

Additional to the Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions, **Attachment 4** provides the relevant Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

GVROC notes the Complete State Council Status Report to the September 2021 State Council meeting and the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

**RESOLUTION:**

Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*  
Seconded: *Mr Jim Epis, Shire of Leonora*

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Carried



**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the GVROC representing the Goldfields Esperance WALGA Zone notes the above WALGA recommendation**

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: *Cr Ian Mickel, Shire of Esperance***

**Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie***

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**Carried**

## 11.2 Drought advocacy update

### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

**That the Zone notes the update on drought and WALGA's advocacy.**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

WALGA has made representations on this issue of drought in Western Australia to both State and Federal Governments. This includes representations to the Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture, and Northern Australia; the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC, Minister for Regional Development and Food, Hydrogen Industry; and WA Federal Government members, including meetings between the WALGA Deputy President and Senators Dean Smith and Slade Brockman. WALGA has also met with Minister MacTiernan's Chief of Staff and WA Government officials.

Correspondence from Minister Littleproud received in October 2020 indicated that details of the Commonwealth's Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program were still being worked through with the WA Government, which was yet to commit to co-funding the program. WALGA subsequently sought an assurance that Minister MacTiernan remained committed to 'working with the Minister for Water to ensure WA local government optimally benefit from the Future Drought Fund'.

#### **COMMENT:**

On 4 July 2021 it was announced that the WA Government had secured \$1.33 million of the \$9.85 million available under the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program for 2021-22 to undertake planning for the Northern Midwest, Southern Wheatbelt and Great Southern Inland regions. This work will be led by Regional Development Commissions working with Local Governments and is due for completion by 30 June 2022. The WA Government has not provided a cash contribution towards this program.

On 3 February 2021 the WA Government announced a \$7.3 million infrastructure plan to upgrade and refurbish 70 community dams in the State's Wheatbelt and Great Southern regions with half to be funded from the National Water Grid Fund, however the State's application for funding was unsuccessful.

The WA Government has also made a request for funding as part of the National Water Grid Connections funding round, which will provide \$20 million for each state and territory to deliver projects with a Commonwealth contribution of up to \$5 million per project. A decision on this funding is expected by end August.

On 15 April 2021, the Commonwealth announced that an additional \$2.8 million would be provided to pay rebates for eligible water infrastructure installed on-farm to all WA farmers who submitted their application prior to 20 January 2021.

In addition, WALGA was advised on 11 August 2021 that the State Government has been successful in securing National Water Grid Connections funding for 9 projects (spanning Water Corporation, DPIRD and DWER):

- Cave Springs Road Tail Water Return System  
Two water recycling systems will be constructed in the Ord River Irrigation Area resulting in 2400 megalitres per annum of water savings.
- Agricultural Area Dams and Strategic Community Water Supplies  
Infrastructure facilities will be constructed including pipework, tanks, solar pumps and standpipes at 70 dam sites. This will increase resilience and water security in farming communities in the region.
- Katanning to Kojonup Pipeline Enhancement  
A number of sections of the existing pipeline between Katanning and Kojonup will be replaced, increasing water reliability and supply to all farmland customers.
- Jerramungup Dam Catchment Improvement  
Degraded bitumen will be replaced with plastic liner enabling increased runoff and water storage, and improving reliability to almost 100 per cent of water users in the Jerramungup catchment.

- **Gascoyne Irrigation Scheme Augmentation and Modernisation**  
Essential infrastructure in the Gascoyne region will be upgraded, including additional production bores and modernisation of irrigation systems. This will increase horticultural production capability in the region.
- **Community Water Supplies Partnership Program with Local Government**  
Up to 40 new and improved non-potable water supplies will be developed in priority areas for farming communities to access.
- **Ravensthorpe Dam Catchment Extension**  
The catchment area of the Ravensthorpe dam will be increased by 5 hectares, increasing the volume of water in the dam by approximately 7 megalitres per annum.
- **Cranbrook Dam Catchment Improvement**  
Degraded bitumen will be replaced in Cranbrook Dam 1 catchment, increasing the volume of water in the dam by 15 megalitres per annum, for agricultural and primary industry use.
- **Wongutha Independent Water Security Pilot**  
A small-scale, solar powered water reverse osmosis desalination system pilot will be installed, producing an additional 7.3 megalitres per annum of fresh water.

Total funding for these projects is \$43.8 million, \$23.8 million State Government and other partners, \$20 million Commonwealth.

In addition, with assistance from ALGA, WALGA has secured a seat on the Commonwealth Agriculture Minister's Meeting Working Group on Drought which has representatives from the Commonwealth, all State/Territory Jurisdictions, National Farmers Federation and ALGA.

Finally, on the Drought Resilience Planning Program, given Minister MacTiernan's decision to direct this funding to Regional Development Commissions rather than Local Governments, Nicole Mathews, Acting Executive Manager, Strategy, Policy and Planning at WALGA, has had initial discussions with DPIRD regarding the need for Local Governments to be involved in the process. DPIRD was meeting with the Regional Development Commissions last week to discuss this and Nicole expects to have further information in the next week or so.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the GVROC representing the Goldfields Esperance WALGA Zone notes the update on drought and WALGA's advocacy**

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**  
**Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**

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**Carried**



## **12. FUTURE MEETINGS**

With the continuing and evolving situation of the COVID-19 “Corona Virus” scheduling of future meetings as in person is a watching brief. This will be reviewed at each meeting by GVROC and decisions made on whether the meetings are held as in person meetings or conducted through Zoom video conferencing.

In noting the above, the following dates in 2021 have been set for the remaining GVROC meetings.

- September 2021 meeting cancelled. If any urgent business requires decisions will be conducted either out of session by email or via a special Zoom Teleconference on 1 October 2021.
- 26 November 2021 (Hosted by the Shire of Coolgardie)

The following are the remaining WALGA State Council meeting dates in 2021 with suggested GVROC Zoom video conference meeting dates prior to these to inform the GVROC’s representatives attending the meetings with relevant input for State Council Agenda Items:

- 1 December 2021 – **(GVROC Video Conference on 19 November 2021)**

## **13. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:45am.