

MINUTES OF THE ZONE MEETING

held at the Toodyay Recreation Centre, Community Pavilion
Burt Parkway, Off Jarratt Pass and Drummond Street East, Toodyay
Friday 19 April 2024 commencing at 10:04 am

1 OPENING & WELCOME

The Zone President and Chair of the meeting, Cr Chris Antonio, welcomed delegates and in particular WALGA Deputy President Cr Paul Kelly and Hon Steve Martin MLC and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

He introduced Cr Mick McKeown, President Shire of Toodyay. Cr McKeown welcomed everyone to the Shire of Toodyay the traditional home of Ballardong, Yued and Whadjuk people and acknowledged their Elders past present and emerging. He commented on –

- The Shire has an area of 1,683 km² which is a bit larger than the Shire of Northam and considerably smaller than the Shire of Goomalling.
- At the last census there were 4,601 residents. 26% of the Shire's population is aged 65 years or older – Toodyay is a popular choice for retirees.
- The Shire's population is geographically dispersed with one major town and four large rural "subdivision" localities, two of which are closer to towns outside the Shire than they are to Toodyay - Morangup which is closer to Gidgegannup and Bejoording which is closer to Bolgart.
- Newest subdivision is a town style subdivision and so far about sixty houses have been built. Another similar subdivision of 115 blocks is under consideration by the WAPC.
- A large commuting workforce with top employers including agriculture, construction, education and other services, and mining. Mining workers are mainly FIFO.
- The Shire has challenges related to a multitude of characteristics. In no particular order, these include:
 1. Aboriginal heritage - welcome but needs to be dealt with appropriately.
 2. Settlement heritage – including many heritage listed precincts and buildings
 3. National parks
 4. State forest
 5. The town is a road hub – all roads lead to Toodyay
 6. The transcontinental railway
 7. The Avon River - requires major bridges
 8. An army training range
 9. Potential for a large mining project - Chalice Mining
 10. Many community facilities - including the Recreation Centre and pool, showgrounds with an oval for football and cricket, a racecourse, and Memorial Hall.
- Advantages of the town include two pubs, a bowls club, good shops such as the Christmas Shop, bakery, specialty shops, two hardware stores and an IGA supermarket, doctor, pathologist, physiotherapist, dentist, chemist, ambulance, library, post office, Bendigo Bank, District School, fire brigades and proximity to Northam where there are a hospital and many government services.
- Popular annual events: Moondyne Festival in May, Agricultural Show in October, Avon Descent and International Food Festival in August, and the Toodyay Races to return late September/early October this year.
- Priorities that the community considered the most important were included in the Council Plan adopted late last year: health and community services, local roads, seniors' services and care, Council leadership, sustainable practices, and conservation. There were few surprises there except for the omission of Corella control!

Cr McKeown apologised that he and Deputy President Cr Shelly Dival would need to leave the meeting for a period to attend the local CWA Branches centenary celebrations. Cr McKeown and Cr Dival left the meeting at 10:14 am.

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 |
| Cr Keith Carter | Shire of Dalwallinu (by Video) |
| Cr Lincoln Stewart | Shire of Gingin (by Video) |
| Cr Rolly van Gelderen | Shire of Goomalling |
| Cr Michael McKeown | Shire of Toodyay |
| Cr Pauline Bantock | Shire of Victoria Plains |
| Cr Dwight Coad | Shire of Wongan-Ballidu |
| Cr Kevin Trent | Shire of York |

Observers –

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Cr Mary Angus | Shire of Chittering |
| Mr Aaron Cook | Shire of Gingin (by Video) |
| Mr Samuel Byrne | Shire of Goomalling |
| Cr Julie Williams | Shire of Northam |
| Ms Debbie Terelinck | Shire of Northam |
| Cr Shelly Dival | Shire of Toodyay |
| Cr Rosemary Madacsi | Shire of Toodyay |
| Ms Tabitha Bateman | Shire of Toodyay |
| Mr Sean Fletcher | Shire of Victoria Plains |
| Mr Chris Linnell | Shire of York |
| Cr Paul Kelly | Deputy President WALGA |
| Ms Rebecca Brown | Manager Waste & Environment, WALGA |
| Mr Kieran McGovern | Policy Officer, Planning, WALGA |
| Mr Mark Toomath | Senior Project Manager – Infrastructure, Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries |
| Mr Grant Arthur | Director Regional Development, Wheatbelt Development Commission |
| Hon Steve Martin MLC | Member for Agricultural Region |
| Robert Dew | Zone Executive Officer |

2.2 Apologies

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Cr Julie Chester | Shire of Goomalling |
| Cr Atilla Mencsheyi | Shire of Northam |
| Cr Denese Smythe | Shire of York |
| Cr Elyssa Giedraitis | Shire of Wongan-Ballidu |
| Mr Josh Pomykala | Director Regional Development, RDA Wheatbelt Inc |
| Mr Mohammad Siddiqui | Regional Manager, Wheatbelt Region, MRWA |
| Hon Shane Love MLA | Leader of Opposition/Member for Moore |
| Hon Martin Aldridge MLC | Member for Agricultural Region |
| Hon Colin de Grussa MLC | Member for Agricultural Region |
| Hon Shelley Payne 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

There were no announcements.

5 MINUTES

5.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Zone Meeting held 23 February 2024 at Gingin. Copies of these Minutes have been circulated to all member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 23 February 2024, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr A King seconded –

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 23 February 2024, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

CARRIED

5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

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

The August meeting resolved that arrangements be made for a delegation comprising the Zone President and Zone representative, Cr C Antonio, to meet with the Minister for Health to advocate for the Northam Regional Hospital being upgraded to a larger Regional Hospital. At the last meeting Cr Antonio reported that a letter had been written to the Minister for Health but at that time no response had been received and that he had spoken informally with WA Country Health Service Board members. Cr Antonio may care to provide an update.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

Cr Antonio commented –

- He and the Shire of Northam CEO had met with Hon Darren West MLC and the Parliamentary Secretary for Health.
- Query that if more health services are provided in Northam will others get jealous.
- Trying to get more services and information upgrades.

Mr D Terelinck commented that it was timely to raise this issue as the Department of Health is reviewing health planning.

Cr T Lefroy enquired if the recent appointment of a new Director General of Health would make any difference. She suggested that request for support from local governments in the region and the Great Eastern Country Zone be considered.

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

That the Avon-Midland Country Zone requests the support of the Great Eastern Country Zone for upgrade to the Northam Regional Hospital and requests that the Zone provides a letter of support.

CARRIED

(b) Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (Item 8.1(b))

Last meeting requested an update on the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund. Mr Mark Toomath, Senior Project Senior Manager – Infrastructure, Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries will provide an update later in the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

NOTED

(c) 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 meeting of State Council to be held Wednesday 1 May 2024. The Zone is able to provide comment or submit alternate recommendations to State Council for consideration.

Matters for Decision

7.1 Waste Levy Advocacy Position (Page 5)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council:

1. Replace the existing WALGA *Waste Levy Policy Statement* and *Advocacy Position 7.4 Waste Management Funding*:

Local Government considers that:

1. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy funds should be hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy and strongly opposes the application of the Levy to non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities; and
2. The Levy should not be applied to licensed landfills outside the metropolitan area.

2. Endorse a new Waste Levy Advocacy Position as follows:

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) was established in WA to fund programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste and administering the fund. The current Levy is applied to waste generated, or landfilled, in the Perth metropolitan area.

Currently, only 25% of the collected funds are retained for strategic waste management activities, 75% are allocated to the ongoing operations of the Department responsible for administration of the Levy.

Local Government considers that:

1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy funds must be fully hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy and not be used for non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities.
2. Strategic waste management activities funded by the State Government should:
 - a. Provide adequate funding and support for Regional Councils, non-metropolitan and metropolitan Local Governments;
 - b. Reflect the targets and priorities within the Waste Strategy;
 - c. Fully fund and acknowledge the life cycle costs of infrastructure and services; and
 - d. Facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes.
3. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change.
4. The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licensed activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery.
5. The Levy must be supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale to demonstrate the suitability of how charges are set, how and where funds are allocated, and the extent to which it is delivering on its objectives.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The Waste Levy and Strategic Waste Funding Policy Statement was first endorsed in 2008 and was amended in 2018.
- The Statement outlines the Local Government position on levies charged on the weight or volume of waste received at licensed premises and the application of those funds to waste management activities.
- In 2023, the WA Government published the findings of a Review of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Levy. The consultation summary report and supporting consultant report can be accessed on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) website.
- Key outcomes of the Levy Review included a five-year schedule of increases and a commitment to investigate extending the levy boundary to regional areas.
- The new Waste Levy Advocacy Position uses contemporary language emphasises:
 - Full hypothecation of the Levy;
 - The key areas of expenditure for the Levy;
 - Opposition to the expansion of the Levy's geographic application;
 - Opposition to the application of the Levy to resource recovery activities; and
 - The need for a clear evidence-based rationale for setting and expending the Levy.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the new Advocacy Position in February 2024.

Ms R Brown commented on the waste levy, the waste levy proposal included in WALGA's State Budget submission and answered questions from delegates.

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr T Lefroy seconded –

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

CARRIED

Policy Team & Committee Reports

- 8.1 Environment Policy Team Report (Page 13)
- 8.2 Governance Policy Team Report (Page 14)
- 8.3 Infrastructure Policy Team Report (Page 15)
- 8.4 People and Place Policy Team Report (Page 16)
- 8.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council Report (Page 19)

RECOMMENDATION

That the above Policy Team & Committee Reports be noted.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Bantock moved and Cr L Stewart seconded –

That the above Policy Team Reports be noted.

CARRIED

Matters for Noting/Information

10.1 9.1 WALGA 2023 Emergency Management Survey (Page 20)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the results of the 2023 Local Government Emergency Management Survey.

WALGA Executive Summary

- 102 (75%) of the 137 mainland WA Local Governments responded to WALGA's 2023 Emergency Management Survey.
- Key issues raised by Local Governments included: community preparedness and resilience; capacity to respond to and manage recovery; management of Bush Fire Brigades; inadequate LGGS funding; lack of emergency management resources; and challenges accessing grant funding.
- The survey demonstrates the importance of Community Emergency Services Managers (CESMs) to Local Governments that have one and that many regional Local Governments without a CESM would like one.
- The survey identified several issues with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* that Local Governments would like to see resolved in the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Legislation.
- The survey results will inform WALGA's policy development and advocacy on behalf of the sector, including the WALGA 2024-25 State Budget Submission, and in the lead up to the next State and Federal elections.
- A summary of the survey results was presented at the State Council Information Forum on 3 April, and in a Sector webinar held on 11 April 2024.

9.2 Tree Retention Model Local Planning Policy (Page 22)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the Tree Retention Model Local Planning Policy.

WALGA Executive Summary

- WALGA's model Tree Retention Local Planning Policy (LPP) was released in March 2024.
- The LPP aims to create a consistent regulatory framework for tree protection across WA.
- The LPP stipulates the circumstances in which a development approval is required to remove a tree and guides the assessment of these applications and other planning proposals.

Ms R Brown and Cr P Kelly gave an update on the Polyphagous shot-hole borer outbreak in Western Australia and answered questions from delegates.

9.3 Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan Implementation (Page 25)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the Local Emergency Management Arrangement Improvement Project update.

WALGA Executive Summary

- In December 2023, the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) endorsed a Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan, including funding to deliver the first phase of the Plan.
- The LEMA Improvement Plan aims to progress the local emergency management reforms recommended by Local Governments in the LEMA Review and will be delivered as a partnership between WALGA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).

- WALGA has been allocated \$356,000 to employ a LEMA Project Lead to work directly with Local Governments to develop and pilot new LEMA approaches over an 18-month period.

9.4 Planning and Building Performance Monitoring Project (Page 27)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the results of the 2022-23 Local Government Performance Monitoring Project.

WALGA Executive Summary

- WALGA's Local Government Performance Monitoring Project has been undertaken annually since 2017.
- WALGA uses the findings of the project to support advocacy and policy development, particularly around planning and building regulation reform.
- 42 Local Governments participated in the 2022-23 Project, representing approximately 90% of Western Australia's population and 94% of the State's total population growth between 2021 and 2022.
- The 2022-23 data shows that Local Governments have maintained high levels of performance in undertaking their strategic and statutory planning and building functions.
- The findings of the Project are incorporated into an online interactive dashboard publicly available through the WALGA website.

9.5 2024 WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum (Page 30)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the report on the 2024 Aboriginal Engagement Forum.

WALGA Executive Summary

- The WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum was held on 20 March 2024 at the State Reception Centre in Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park).
- The Forum provides an opportunity for the WA Local Government sector and partners to embrace the principles of reconciliation, through respectful Aboriginal and community engagement.
- Feedback from speakers, attendees, WALGA Executive and State Councillors has been overwhelmingly positive, with 93 per cent of survey respondents saying they would attend future Forums.

RECOMMENDATION

That the above matters for noting/information be noted.

RESOLUTION

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

CARRIED

Key Activity Reports

- 10.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio (Page 32)
- 10.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio (Page 36)
- 10.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio (Page 40)
- 10.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio (Page 44)

RECOMMENDATION

That the above Key Activity Reports be noted.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr P Bantock 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.

Cr P Kelly presented the WALGA President's Report and commented on the WA Canberra Hub, planning, national enquiry into local government sustainability and standardised meeting procedures.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr L Stewart seconded –
That the WALGA President's Report be received.**

CARRIED

Hon Steve Martin MLC advised that he would have to leave the meeting for a period and commented on –

- Dry Season Taskforce - Announced by the Minister.
- State Budget – An election budget.
- Firearms legislation – Introduced into the Legislative Council. Will endeavour to send to Committee.
- Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Agreement – Signed off but an issue with funding. 2 years funding to be provided over 3 years. Don't believe WALGA went hard enough.
- Regional Telecommunications Review – Encouraged submissions.
- Land Use Policy – Suggested look at the Shire of Narrogin Policy for setbacks for wind farms. Wind and solar farms need careful planning.

Hon S Martin left the meeting at 11:01 am.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned for morning tea at 11:02 am.

RESUMPTION: The meeting resumed at 11:20 am. All those present at the time of adjournment were present on resumption as was Cr M McKeown, Cr S Dival and Hon S Martin MLC.

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 L Stewart moved and Cr K Carter 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 – April 2024 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the April 2024 Status Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr L Stewart seconded –
That the April 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 L Stewart moved and Cr T Lefroy 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 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

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

RESOLUTION

**Cr P Bantock moved and Cr L Stewart seconded –
That the Report on the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management 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.

Cr C Antonio commented on –

- Bushfire MoU.
- Shire of Narrogin has negotiated a TransWA Service for the town. Esperance and Carnarvon have a similar service.
- Living Well in the Wheatbelt.
- Election Budget – Major issues housing, transport and health.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Stewart moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –
That the Report on the Wheatbelt District Leadership Group be received.**

CARRIED

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.

Cr T Lefroy commented –

- Not a lot happening with the Strategy so far.
- Aiming to develop a template for use by local government.
- Stakeholder engagement – April and May meetings cancelled while working on the template.

RESOLUTION

**Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr D Coad seconded –
That the Report on the Living Well in the Wheatbelt: Towards 2035 Strategy. be received.**

CARRIED

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.

Overview and calendar for the 2024 collaborative series attached to Agenda. Four meetings are scheduled –

- 30 April 2024 – Healthy eating and living to halt the rise in overweight and obesity; Making smoking and vaping history.
- 27 June – Prevention and control of communicable diseases; Environment health risks; Public health emergencies.
- 22 August – Public health planning.
- 24 October – Optimising mental health and wellbeing.

RECOMMENDATION

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

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr T Lefroy Stewart seconded –

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

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.

Mr Mark Toomath, Senior Project Manager – Infrastructure, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries gave an update on the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund –

- The CSRFF established 50 years ago. He has been involved with the Fund for 20 years.
- \$12m annual capital works program for community sport and recreation infrastructure. For each of the last 2 years \$7.5m has been added to the Fund.
- 3 funding rounds each year.
- Funding is always over-subscribed.
- 3 things looked for in applications are – justification, planning and financial viability.
- Ms Samantha Cornthwaite the regional contact; based in Northam.
- Assessment process – Applications through local government, applications assessed internally, summary prepared and presented to independent panel, independent panel assess applications and makes recommendations to Minister.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr D Coad 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.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Stewart moved and Cr K Trent seconded –
That the RDA Wheatbelt report be received.**

CARRIED

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

Presentation of the Transport Portfolio report (attached to meeting).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transport Portfolio report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr T Lefroy seconded –
That the Main Roads report be received.**

CARRIED

8.4 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Update by the Working Group looking at community preparedness for new industry.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission report be received.

Mr Grant Arthur commented on –

- Renewable energy, long term tree planting, wind farms, mining.
- South-west Drought Hub.
- There is a need to get everyone together to talk to each other, but different processes involved.
- Housing – different funds available, basic work required as first step, no funding yet for Wheatbelt proposals, CEO Shire of Lake Grace looking at different ways to progress.
- Regional Economic Development grants to be announced in next couple of months.
- Northern Growth Alliance.

Mr K McGovern commented on land use planning, WALGA discussion paper on agricultural land and prioritisation of use and local government planning and answered questions from delegates.

RESOLUTION

**Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr D Coad seconded –
That the Wheatbelt Development Commission report be received.**

CARRIED

8.5 WA Country Health Service

Ms Nancy Bineham, Director Strategy & Service Development, WA Country Health Service, Wheatbelt has drawn attention to the following regarding the stage 5 implementation of the Public Health Act -

It looks like the Department of Health will prepare a new State Public Health Plan, by 4 June 2025 and Local Governments will need to create their public health plans (local Health & Wellbeing Plans) and have them published by 4 June 2026.

We look forward to hearing more, especially in relation to potential tools and resources to help support Local Governments in their Public Health Planning.

The '*Living Well in the Wheatbelt: Towards 2035*' Strategy that we are progressing on behalf of the Wheatbelt District Leadership Group (formerly the Wheatbelt Health & Wellbeing Plan: Towards 2035) should be an overarching strategy available in the 1st half of 2024/25, that local governments can use to guide local initiatives and priorities to improve wellbeing and health in partnership with other providers, particularly around the built and recreational/leisure environment, social connectedness activities, environmental health, health promoting messages, smoke free events etc.

Recommendation

For Noting

NOTED

8.6 Other

There were no other reports.

9 FINANCE

9.1 Financial Reports

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr M McKeown seconded –

That the financial reports for the period ending 31 March 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 | Secretarial Services to Zone – June 2024 Quarter | 4,236.00 |
| | TOTAL | <u>\$4,236.00</u> |

RECOMMENDATION

That the accounts as listed totalling \$4,236.00 be approved for payment.

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –

That the accounts as listed totalling \$4,236.00 be approved for payment.

CARRIED

10 ZONE BUSINESS

10.1 SMS Service – Request for LGGs to Cover Costs

From Shire of Northam

BACKGROUND

The Shire of Northam (and a number of other Local Governments), utilise a Short Message Service (SMS) to notify residents, businesses and community members of important information relating to Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Bans (HVMB) as well as the imposition of Total Fire Bans (TFB). HVMB's are imposed by the Local Government for a number of reasons including adverse weather conditions, an incident that involves a number of resources from within the local government area or an adjoining one. TFB's imposed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) due to predicted weather conditions.

The use of the SMS service is administered by the Shire of Northam with landowners, businesses and community members registering to receive the notification which are sent when a HVMB is imposed, extended or removed. Similarly, when the Shire of Northam is notified a TFB for the area is to be imposed, a SMS is sent to the same group advising of same.

The messaging is done in conjunction with social media and website updates as appropriate. The use of the SMS service is seen as the most effective communication tool for the imposition of HVMB as it provides the most up-to-date information to the public.

The cost of the HVMB and TFB SMS is currently not covered by the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGs) and is hence a cost borne by the local government. The 2024-25 LGGs Manual specifically states in Appendix III – List of Ineligible Expenditure - SMS messaging (eg harvest bans, non-emergency management messages).

Historically, ABC radio was the preferred, and at times only means of communicating planned HVMB and Hot Works bans to the community. This however was considered to be the least favourable method of communication. This position has further been reinforced since the ABC communicated to local governments on 28 September 2023 the intention to communicate HVMB's once daily.

With the introduction of the Australian Fire Danger Rating system, evidence suggests HVMB's are being imposed more frequently. Anecdotal evidence suggests the new AFDRS system calculates a higher Fire Behaviour Index when compared to the older system resulting in a more frequent requirement for a HVMB and Hot Works ban.

In a changing landscape with longer, drier conditions the need to communicate the imposition of HVMB's in the later part of the day is consistently evident. As one of the primary risk management tools in risk reduction and in the absence of state-based communication methods, funding for this medium through the Emergency Services Levy is substantiated.

COMMENT

The Shire of Northam believes that due to the important role that the HVMB and TFB SMS process provides in ensuring the community safety that the costs should be covered by the LGGs. The Shire of Northam also suggests that should funding be approved under the LGGs for the service, that it be restricted to essential messaging only, with criteria established within the LGGs manual as to what is deemed essential.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Avon-Midland County Zone requests that WALGA advocates for the cost of Short Messaging Services operated by Local Governments for community messaging relating to Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Bans and Total Fire Bans be included as an eligible item of expenditure under the Local Government Grant Scheme.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Bantock moved and Cr T Lefroy seconded –

That the Avon-Midland County Zone requests that WALGA advocates for the cost of Short Messaging Services operated by Local Governments for community messaging relating to Harvest, Vehicle Movement and Hot Works Bans and Total Fire Bans be included as an eligible item of expenditure under the Local Government Grant Scheme and the Emergency Services Levy scheme.

CARRIED

10.2 Aboriginal Heritage Approvals Process

From Shire of Moora

BACKGROUND

There is a proposal to erect a large sculpture in Apex Park in Moora. The park has significance as an aboriginal site and the proponents of the project have been advised that they will need to obtain consent from the Minister under section 18 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972.

Council is seeking a deeper understanding of the approvals process and the different types of approvals, including section 18 consents, to ensure local government compliance with the Act and alleviate any impact on ongoing interactions with aboriginal peoples.

COMMENT

In February 2024 the Gascoyne Country Zone with assistance from the WA Local Government Association held a half day workshop with Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage officers to gain an understanding of the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the approvals process. Feedback from the Workshop indicated that it was informative and useful.

The Shire is proposing that the WA Local Government Association be requested to facilitate a similar Workshop for the Zone.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Avon-Midland Country Zone request the WA Local Government Association to facilitate for local governments within the Zone a workshop with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on the approvals process and associated requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972.

If the Zone supports the proposed Workshop, the meeting may care to suggest a suitable date and time (eg as part of a normal meeting or as a standalone Workshop).

RESOLUTION

Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr D Coad seconded –

- (a) That the Avon-Midland Country Zone request the WA Local Government Association to facilitate for local governments within the Zone a workshop with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on the approvals process and associated requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972.**
- (b) That, subject to the availability of presenters, the Workshop be a half day held following the Zone's meeting scheduled for 21 June 2024.**

CARRIED

10.3 Enhanced and Alternative Education Opportunities for Regional WA *Report by Great Southern Country Zone*

BACKGROUND

The Great Southern Country Zone has written to the Minister for Education, Hon Tony Buti MLA seeking support to prioritise increased State Government investment to improve regional education, including:

- Increased access to alternative programs for students disaffected by main-stream education, those at risk or who have specific learning needs, who may be disruptive, falling behind and at risk of failing to learn; providing these students with intensive support, active, empathic, and practical instruction, combined with health and other services to enable their success.
- Increased secondary education distance ATAR, VET and other WACE subject courses, if necessary supplemented by private providers, with qualified teacher mentoring and support provided in schools closest to students, supplemented with online access to subject specialist teachers to enable student success.
- Implement strategies to attract and retain quality teachers and subject specialists in remote communities, including:
 - Subsidised high standard GROH housing.
 - Increased financial bonuses, for remote locations and to encourage longer term retention.
- Providing sufficient GROH housing for State Government employees to reduce pressure on regional private rental availability and improve housing security for teachers and all Government service staff when transferring to regional locations.

The Great Southern Country Zone's call to action from State Government, seeks to reduce disadvantage for students living in regional Western Australia, so they can access the same quality educational opportunities available in metropolitan and regional centres, without need to attend boarding schools. In addition, these strategies will also deliver substantial economic and social benefit for regional communities.

COMMENT

If your region also experiences disadvantage in educational opportunities, the Great Southern Country Zone now seeks your consideration of the below recommendations and if the Avon-Midland Country Zone accepts the recommendations below, then your Zone may use the above content to assist in developing your submissions.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Avon-Midland Country Zone:

1. Supports the call to action to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities,
2. Agrees to write to the Minister for Education requesting action; and
3. Requests the WALGA Secretariat to advocate to State Government on this matter.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
 That the Avon-Midland Country Zone:**

- 1. Supports the call to action to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities,**
- 2. Agrees to write to the Minister for Education requesting action; and**
- 3. Requests the WALGA Secretariat to advocate to State Government on this matter.**

CARRIED

10.4 Adoption of Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance, WALGA

BACKGROUND

State Council uses a Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework to guide discussion and decision-making on policy and advocacy issues. The Framework was developed in 2020 on the request of State Council to assist State Councillors in determining the priority of a particular issue relative to existing (and competing) policy and advocacy priorities.

The Framework (included below) utilises 11 criteria to sharpen thinking (eg the impact on the Local Government sector, the number of Member Local Governments affected, the level of support amongst the public or other stakeholders, etc.), and encourage decision-makers to consider the wider context and impacts of the issue before settling on a pathway forward.

The Great Southern Country Zone also adopted the Prioritisation Framework not long after it was developed in 2020.

COMMENT

It is proposed that all Zones consider adopting the Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework as included below.

If the Zone were to adopt the Prioritisation Framework, Zone Delegates could use it to guide their decision-making when determining whether or not to request action or advocacy from WALGA on a particular issue (that is, sector-wide issues). Issues that are not sufficiently prioritised (that is, regional issues) could instead be dealt with at the Zone level (eg through direct advocacy efforts on behalf of the Zone).

The Prioritisation Framework could also be used by Zone Delegates when drafting Agenda items and motions on policy or advocacy issues, using the criteria as prompts for what kind of information to include. The Prioritisation Framework does not remove the need for judgements to be made and is intended to *guide*, not replace, decision-making.

How to use the Framework:

- If the majority of the factors are towards the left column, the issue is a high priority.
- If the majority of the factors are towards the middle, the issue requires action, but is not a high priority.
- If the majority of the factors are towards the right column, the issue is a low priority.

Following prioritisation, an appropriate and proportionate policy and advocacy approach can be determined.

| | | | |
|--|-------------|--|-----|
| Impact on Local Government Sector Impact on Local Government sector without intervention | High | Medium | Low |
| Reach Number of member Local Governments affected | Sector-wide | Significant (multiple regions, Zones, or bands) | Few |
| Influence Capacity to influence decision makers | High | Medium | Low |

| | | | |
|--|----------|----------------|------------|
| Principles Alignment to core principles such as autonomy, funding, general competence | Strong | Partial | Peripheral |
| Clarity Policy change needed is clear and well-defined | Clear | Partial | Unclear |
| Decision-maker support Level of support among decision-makers (political and administrative) | High | Medium | Low |
| Public support Level of support among the public or other stakeholders | High | Medium | Low |
| Positive consequences for WALGA Prospect of positive consequences for WALGA. E.g. enhanced standing among members or leverage for other issues. | High | Medium | Low |
| Negative consequences for WALGA Prospect of negative consequences for WALGA for not undertaking the advocacy effort. E.g. diminished standing among members or other stakeholders. | High | Medium | Low |
| Partnerships Potential for partnerships with other stakeholders | Yes (3+) | Possibly (1-2) | No (0) |

RECOMMENDATION

That the Avon-Midland Country Zone adopt the Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework to determine the priority of a particular policy or advocacy issue, and guide future decision-making.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr M McKeown seconded –

That the Avon-Midland Country Zone note the Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework to determine the priority of a particular policy or advocacy issue, and guide future decision-making.

CARRIED

10.5 Importance of WALGA Becoming a Registered Employer Organisation

By Tony Brown, Executive Director, Member Services, WALGA

BACKGROUND

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

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

Since the mandate for Local Governments^[1] to operate in the State industrial relations (IR) system from 1 January 2023, unions^[2] have commenced various Local Government State awards^[3] (LG State Awards) variation claims in the WAIRC to amend industry employment conditions including to:

- increase minimum wages for outside workers;
- introduce Fair Work standards in the State system (increase casual loading from 20 to 25%; insert casual conversion; and insert flexible working arrangements) and other conditions (insert employment equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons; insert cultural and ceremonial leave; and amend severance pay for regional redundancies); and
- increase industry allowance for compensation for disabilities on construction and maintenance work.

In addition the WASU, LGRCEU and other unions (such as the Construction, Forestry, and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) as 'employee organisations' can make industrial agreements with Local Government employers under the IR Act.

A recent decision of the WAIRC has outlined that although WALGA may intervene in award matters they are unable to represent named LG State Award employers and the broader Local Government sector in their own right.

Despite WALGA's advocacy since December 2022, the State Government has not agreed a pathway for WALGA to be provided with standing as an employer organisation under the IR Act.

For WALGA to represent Local Governments' views and have the same standing as the unions under the IR Act it has become vital for WALGA to seek to amend its constitution to apply to become an employer organisation.

If WALGA was to become an employer organisation it would provide more opportunity for WALGA to modernise the LG State Awards and intervene in industrial matters concerning the Local Government sector. In addition, the WAIRC is more likely to notify WALGA of award applications or variations and industrial agreement changes reducing the risk of unions being able to change the terms and conditions of the sector, with limited to no input from Local Governments or WALGA.

Notes

- [1] With the exception of the Shires of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
- [2] The Western Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union of Employees (WASU) and the Local Government, Racing and Cemeteries Employees Union (WA) (LGRCEU).
- [3] The Local Government Officers' (Western Australia) Award 2021 and the Municipal Employees (Western Australia) Award 2021. These awards have not been updated significantly since prior to the introduction of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth). They were old 1999 Federal awards which were registered without amendment as interim awards in 2011 in the State system. They then became State awards in 2021. No significant amendments have been made to these awards over 23 years.

COMMENT

WALGA will be looking to amend its constitution to enable WALGA to become a registered employer organisation at the 2024 AGM in October 2024.

An agenda item will be prepared for the June/July round of Zone/State Council meetings detailing the proposed amendments.

This item is for the Zone's awareness of the need for WALGA to become an employer organisation and to note that constitutional amendments will be required.

For any questions about the constitutional amendment process, please contact Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services, tbrown@walga.asn.au or (08) 9213 2051.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

NOTED

Cr J Williams left the meeting at 12:33 pm.

10.6 Regional Telecommunications Review

The WA Local Government Association has drawn attention to the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review. The Review occurs every 3 years and is an opportunity to examine the existing and future telecommunication needs in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia.

The Minister for Communications has announced the appointment of the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee: Hon Alannah MacTiernan (Chair), Mr Ian Kelly, Hon Fiona Nash, Dr Jessa Rogers and Ms Kristy Sparrow.

The Committee has been asked to examine the adequacy of regional Australia's telecommunications, including hearing from people in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia. The Committee will present its findings to the government by 31 December 2024.

Does the Zone wish to invite the Chair or member of the Committee to a Zone meeting?

RECOMMENDATION

For consideration

RESOLUTION

**Cr T Lefroy moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –
That the Chair, or their representative, of the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Independent
Review Committee be invited to a Zone meeting. CARRIED**

10.7 Wheatbelt Conference

The November 2021 meeting noted that the proposal for a future Wheatbelt Conference had not progressed and requested that this item remain on the agenda until further notice. It was noted that any consideration of a future Wheatbelt Conference will need to take into account the prevailing COVID-19 situation and any restrictions that may be in place for gatherings.

The February 2024 meeting requested members and delegates to advise topics and outcomes for a Wheatbelt Forum. These to be considered at the June 2024 Zone meeting. Land Use Policy and Waste Management were suggested as topics.

The Shire of York has put forward the following as potential topics –

- Housing availability
- Attraction and retention of staff
- Local government audit processes
- Availability of reliable power
- Bush Fire Brigades.

RECOMMENDATION

That members and delegates be reminded to provide for the June 2024 Zone meeting potential topics and outcomes for a Wheatbelt Forum.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Coad moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –
That the Zone's Wheatbelt Forum be held Friday 23 August 2024 in Northam. CARRIED**

The meeting agreed that a Committee comprising Cr T Lefroy, Cr D Coad, Ms D Terelinck and the Executive Officer be appointed to organise the Wheatbelt Forum.

Secretarial Note: Following the meeting Cr R Madacsi offered to participate in the Wheatbelt Forum organising Committee.

| |
|--|
| 11 URGENT BUSINESS (as permitted by the Presiding Member) |
|--|

11.1 Really Awesome Regional Events (RARE) Company

Cr D Coad foreshadowed an item from the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu for consideration at the next meeting regarding financial support from the Zone for the proposal presented at the February meeting to bring high quality art events on a regular basis to regional towns. **NOTED**

11.2 Dry Season Taskforce

The meeting noted the role of the WA Local Government Association on the recently appointed Dry Season Taskforce. Mr Nick Sloan had been invited to participate on the Taskforce and it had been made clear that the invitation was for him and not an elected member representing WALGA. It was noted that the Pastoralists and Graziers Association and WA Farmers had not been invited to participate on the Taskforce. **NOTED**

11.3 National General Assembly of Local Government

The Zone's 2023/2024 Budget provides for 2 representatives of the Zone to attend the 2024 National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra. The Assembly comprises the Regional Cooperation & Development Forum (Tuesday 2 July 2024) National General Assembly (Wednesday 3 July and Thursday 4 July 2024) and the Australian Council of Local Government (Friday 5 July 2024). The Zone meets the costs of –

- Registration fees (Regional Forum and General Assembly),
- General Assembly Dinner,
- Airfares, and
- Accommodation.

There is no cost to attend the Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG) Forum or the ACLG Gala Dinner. Numbers for the dinner are limited.

The Chair invited expressions of interest from delegates to attend the National General Assembly. Cr L Stewart expressed interest.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr T Lefroy seconded –

- (a) That Zone appoints Cr Lincoln Stewart as its delegate to attend the 2024 National General Assembly in Canberra to be held 2-5 July 2024.**
- (b) That payment be authorised for Regional Cooperation & Development Forum and General Assembly registration fees, General Assembly dinner, accommodation and airfares.**

CARRIED

Cr P Kelly advised that the WA Local Government Association will again be organising a get together of WA delegates.

11.4 National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress

Cr P Kelly advised that the 2024 National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress will be held in Margaret River 3-4 December 2024.

NOTED

12 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Brief comments by Members of Parliament. Dealt with earlier.

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

The Chair drew attention to Hon Martin Aldridge's decision not to stand for the 2025 election and acknowledged his service to the region.

13 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Future meetings of the Zone are scheduled for –

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 21 June 2024 | Shire of Northam |
| 23 August 2024 | Shire of Dalwallinu |
| 22 November 2024 | Shire of Dandaragan |

RECOMMENDATION

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 21 June 2024 and be hosted by the Shire of Northam.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr T Lefroy seconded –
That the host Councils for the Zone’s June and August 2024 meetings be swapped and that the
next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 21 June 2024 and be hosted by the Shire of
Dalwallinu. **CARRIED****

14 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair thanked attendees and the Shire of Toodyay for hosting the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 1:03 pm.

CERTIFICATION

These Minutes were confirmed by the meeting held on

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