

MINUTES OF THE ZONE MEETING

at the Shire of Chittering Council Chambers, 6177 Great Northern Highway, Bindoon
Friday 22 August 2025 commencing at 10:03 am

1 OPENING & WELCOME

The Zone President and Chair of the meeting, Cr Chris Antonio, opened the meeting, welcomed delegates and introduced Cr Aaron King, President Shire of Chittering. Cr King welcomed everyone to Bindoon and commented that the hosting of Zone meetings by member Councils allowed delegates to see different areas of the Zone. Cr King introduced the Shire CEO, Ms Melinda Prinsloo. Ms Prinsloo commented on –

- Population Growth – From 2023 to 2024 the Shire's population has grown by 3.64% compared to population growth in Regional WA of 1.50%, Projected growth for the Shire is 18%.

.Mr Samuel Bryce entered the meeting at 10:07 am.

- Community Projects and Developments
 - Wildflower Ridge – Open Space Development
 - Lower Chittering Youth and Community Hub
- Events and Tourism
 - Wear Ya Wellies
 - Taste of Chittering
 - Northern Valleys Tourism Collaboration
 - Bindoon Mountain Bike Path
- Community and Regional Partnerships
 - Community Development and Events Officers Collaboration
- Future Focus – Enabling Infrastructure.

Cr A King commented –

- Over a third of the Shire's population live in the southern part of the Shire. The northern part is broadacre farming.
- Challenged by lack of services particularly given the development in the northern part of the Shire of Swan
- Muchea Industrial Park –
 - Being developed by private enterprise but needs Government intervention with regards to services.
 - Strategically important node as it is at the intersection of the Brand Highway, Great Northern Highway and Tonkin Highway.
 - Would like to see the Park developed quicker but no overarching State Government planning.

Cr M McKeown asked as to the main difference between the northern part of the Shire and the industrial developments in the southern part. Cr King replied; population. Cr Antonio commented that the industrial park is being developed privately.

Cr K Trent asked if there were many fly-in, fly-out workers living in the area. Cr King replied that there were significant numbers and this created a challenge with shopping locally. They travelled south to the airport and shopped in Ellenbrook on the way through. Year 12 schooling was needed in the Shire to keep people in the area.

Cr K Trent enquired if completion of the Bindoon Bypass any closer. Cr A King replied unsure of progress. Route selection and planning competed, land acquisition and heritage surveys in progress. Believe the Bypass will be an advantage to Bindoon and provide connectivity for the area.

2 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

2.1 Attendance

Delegates -

Cr Chris Antonio	Shire of Northam (President)
Cr Tracy Lefroy	Shire of Moora (Zone Deputy President) (by Video)
Cr Aaron King	Shire of Chittering
Cr Keith Carter	Shire of Dalwallinu
Cr Lincoln Stewart	Shire of Gingin
Cr Michael McKeown	Shire of Toodyay
Cr Pauline Bantock	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Kevin Trent	Shire of York

Observers –

Cr Mary Angus	Shire of Chittering
Ms Melinda Prinsloo	Shire of Chittering
Mr Samuel Bryce	CEO, Shire of Goomalling (from 10:07 am)
Mr Sean Fletcher	CEO, Shire of Victoria Plains
Mr Paul Kelly	Deputy President, WA Local Government Association
Ms Rebecca Brown	Policy Manager, Environment & Waste, WALGA
Mr Chris Evans	Research Evaluation Project Support Officer, RDA Wheatbelt (by Video)
Mr Rob Cossart	CEO, Wheatbelt Development Commission
Mr Sanjeev Gupta	Manager Project Development and Delivery, Wheatbelt Region, Main Roads WA
Mr Joe Mills	Regional Manager Goldfields & Agricultural Region, Water Corporation
Ms Eva Colic	Regional Engagement Manager WA, Telstra
Ms Jenny Thomas	Regional Development and Engagement Manager – Northern Region WA, NBN (from 10:50 am)
Robert Dew	Zone Executive Officer

2.2 Apologies

Cr Linda Balcombe	Shire of Gingin
Cr Julie Chester	Shire of Goomalling
Cr Attila Menchelyi	Shire of Northam
Cr Julie Williams	Shire of Northam
Ms Debbie Terelinck	CEO, Shire of Northam
Cr Dwight Coad	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
Mr Sam Dolzadelli	CEO, Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
Cr Denese Smythe	Shire of York
Ms Alina Behan	Executive Manager Corporate & Community Services, Shire of York
Mr Chris Linnell	CEO, Shire of York
Ms Tracey Peacock	Road Safety Advisor, WALGA Roadwise
Ms Kellie Todman	Manager Government & Industry Relations, CBH Group
Hon Rob Horstman MLC	Member of Legislative Council
Hon Steve Martin MLC	Member of Legislative Council
Mr Shane Love MLA	Member for Mid-West
Mr Lachlan Hunter MLA	Member for Central Wheatbelt

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

5 GUEST SPEAKERS

5.1 Telstra

Presentation by Ms Eva Colic, Regional Engagement Manager WA. Ms Colic commented on -

- Co-investment programs.
- Mobile networks.
- Satellite to mobile.
- Community event wi-fi.

Ms Jenny Thomas entered the meeting at 10:50 am

Cr Tracy Lefroy left the meeting at 11:02 am

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned for morning tea at 11:04 am.

Resumption: The meeting resumed at 11:12 am. All those present at the time of adjournment were present on resumption.

5.2 NBN

Presentation by Ms Jenny Thomas, Regional Development and Engagement Manager – Northern Region WA. Ms Thomas commented on –

- NBN's purpose.
- Increasing need for speed – more data on more devices.
- Why connectivity matters for regional WA.
- Wheatbelt technology mix and data usage.
- Fixed wireless tower upgrades.
- Fibre upgrade program.
- Low earth orbit satellite service – Amazon Kuiper
- Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND).

9.5 Wheatbelt Development Commission Report was brought forward.

Mr Rob Cossart commented on –

- Wheatbelt Regional Housing Development.
- Telecommunications Redundancy – 120 Automatic Transfer Units (ATU) across the Wheatbelt. Located at key locations (eg Northam, Jurien Bay, Narrogin) for deployment where needed.
- Freight Logistics – Recommend inviting Procon Developments to give a presentation to the Zone on its plans to construct AvonWest: an integrated logistics and enterprise hub at the Yilgarn Avenue (Northam) road train assembly area.
- Avon Industrial Park Stage 3 Development.
- Bindoon Bypass – Top priority for advocacy.
- European Space Agency New Norcia Ground Station – Second dish installed.
- Northern Growth Alliance – Highest regional growth area in WA. Subregional planning requirement.

- Renewable Energy Transition – State Transition Plan due in September will hopefully provide clarity on transmission lines and connection strategy.
- Living Well in the Wheatbelt – Wheatbelt first region to develop a strategy.
- State Governor will spend five days in the Wheatbelt in September.
- Bringing Dowerin Downtown Lunch – 2025 the fourth year. Attended by 650 business leaders of which 210 were new attendees. A new format is being assessed.
- Inaugural edition of Business News' Wheatbelt publication.

RESOLUTION

By Consensus –

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission Report be received.

CARRIED

6 MINUTES

6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Zone Meeting held 20 June 2025 at York. Copies of these Minutes have been circulated to all member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 20 June 2025, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 20 June 2025, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

CARRIED

6.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

(a) Wheatbelt Forum 2026 (Item 5.2(b))

Last meeting appointed a Committee comprising the Zone President, Zone Deputy President, President Shire of Chittering, CEO Shire of Chittering, Ms Rebecca Brown WA Local Government Association, Cr Dwight Coad or representative from the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu and the Zone Executive Officer to organise the Wheatbelt Forum to be hosted by the Shire of Chittering in 2026.

A meeting of the Committee will be held following the Zone meeting. Points for discussion to include –
Feedback from the 2024 Forum held in Northam
Venue and logistics (AV, catering etc)
Program development
Timeline
Registration process.

RECOMMENDATION

For noting

NOTED

(b) Other

No other matters were brought forward.

Mr Rob Cossart left the meeting at 12:00 noon.

7 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

7.1 WALGA State Council Agenda

Review of the Agenda for the State Council meeting to be held Friday 5 September 2025. The Zone can provide comment or submit alternate recommendations to State Council for consideration.

(a) Matters for Decision

8.1 Rating of Renewable Energy Facilities (Page 5)

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government for:

1. Legislative amendments to enable WA Local Governments to rate large-scale renewable energy facilities using current rating mechanisms (differential rating based on UV, differential rating based on GRV, or GRV alone) with certainty.
2. A commitment to implement a Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLoR) framework in Western Australia.

WALGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA Members have expressed uncertainty in the rating of large-scale renewable energy facilities across the State which was confirmed through a resolution of the Peel Country Zone Meeting in April 2025.
- In response to the uncertainty, WALGA engaged Paxon Consulting Group to review the rating mechanisms available for Local Governments to recover costs associated with large scale renewable energy projects.
- The purpose of the review was to examine the current legislative framework, undertake a review across other Australian jurisdictions in respect to who rating for such facilities is managed, and provide recommendations for the rating of these facilities in Western Australia, including any required amendments to legislation.
- The Final Report outlined seven Key Findings which confirmed that legislative change would be required to enable Local Governments to rate renewable energy facilities with certainty.

8.2 Rating of Miscellaneous Licences (Page 9)

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

1. Advocate for Local Governments to continue to have the ability to rate miscellaneous licences under the Mining Act 1978; and
2. Oppose legislative amendments that seek to exempt occupied miscellaneous licence land from rating.
3. Continue to advocate for a broad review to be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under section 6.26 of the Local Government Act 1995.

WALGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, all land is rateable unless specifically exempted.
- In a State Administrative Tribunal decision of 2024, it was determined that Crown land the subject of an occupied miscellaneous licence was non-rateable.
- Subsequently, the Shire of Mt Magnet appealed this decision to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that Crown land subject to a miscellaneous licence and occupied is rateable, overturning the State Administrative Tribunal decision.

- This ruling affirmed the principle that Local Governments may levy rates on such land, recognising the significant infrastructure and occupation associated with these licences.
- On 2 August 2025, the WA State Government announced its intention to legislate amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* to exempt land under miscellaneous licences from rating.
- WALGA has been advocating for Local Governments to have the ability to rate these licences and a formal advocacy position is required.
- WALGA is seeking support from the WA Parliament for the appropriate committee to review the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

8.3 Community Infrastructure and Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund Advocacy Positions (Page 12)

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

1. *Replace Advocacy Position 3.7.1 Community Infrastructure with the following:*

Local Governments own, lease, and maintain vital community infrastructure across Western Australia that delivers essential benefits to local communities. Local Governments face significant funding pressures to ensure this infrastructure is effectively planned, developed, maintained, and enhanced to meet evolving community needs and population growth.

1. WALGA calls on the Australian Government to provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.
2. WALGA calls on the State Government to:
 - a. Provide \$30 million per annum for the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund,
 - b. Provide \$30 million per annum for community arts and cultural infrastructure,
 - c. Provide funding for retrofitting accessible design features to community infrastructure,
 - d. Align all community infrastructure funding with existing State co-contribution of at least two-thirds.

2. Retire Advocacy Position 3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund.

WALGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Following a review of WALGA's Investing in Communities advocacy positions it is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.7.1 Community Infrastructure be updated, and that Advocacy Position 3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund be retired.
- The proposed revisions intend to align the positions with current advocacy approaches and combine them into one position.
- The proposed changes were noted by the Infrastructure Policy Team and endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team in July 2025.

8.4 Rural and Remote Health Services Advocacy Position (Page 16)

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA replace Advocacy Position 3.2.2 Regional Health Services with the following:

The Western Australian and Australian Governments are responsible for ensuring that all West Australians have equitable access to primary healthcare services, regardless of their location. Local Governments should not have to step in to support the provision of these services for their communities.

1. *WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to address the systemic failures in the provision of rural and remote primary healthcare services, including through:*
 - a. *the development and implementation of adequate, appropriate and sustainable funding models*
 - b. *incentivising rural and remote healthcare workforce recruitment and retention.*
2. *Local Governments should be reimbursed for costs incurred to support the provision of primary healthcare services until sustainable funding and workforce models are in place.*

WALGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The provision of healthcare services is both an Australian and State responsibility.
- The WALGA Local Government Primary Healthcare Services Survey provides a comprehensive dataset of the cost, nature and geographical location of Local Government support predominantly focused on General Practice services.
- The recommended revisions update the Advocacy Position to align with the data and recommendations of the Survey Report and provide a framework for further advocacy.
 - The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed the proposed changes at its meeting on 9 July.

8.5 Health Advocacy Position (Page 19)

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA retire Advocacy Position 3.2 Health.

WALGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Advocacy Position 3.2 relates to public health and predates the *Public Health Act 2016* and the commencement of Stage 5 of the Act in June 2024.
- The position is superseded by Advocacy Position 3.2.1 *Local Public Health Plans*, which was revised in September 2024 to align to the 2016 Act and specifically the implementation of Local Public Health Plans.
- The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed the retirement of Advocacy Position 3.2 Health at its meeting on 9 July.

8.6 Advocacy Positions for Active Transport and Micromobility (Page 21)

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA endorse the proposed advocacy positions on Active Transport and micromobility.

WALGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Six new advocacy positions are proposed, with the aim of providing a clear and unified framework to support Local Governments in planning, delivering, and advocating for walking, cycling, and other forms of Active Transport (AT).
- The new advocacy positions are intended to strengthen WALGA's voice in state and national forums, guide responses to legislative or policy changes, and ensure the sector is well-represented in cross-government initiatives related to AT.
- These positions reflect the growing role of AT in addressing key policy areas including health, sustainability, road safety, and urban liveability. The policy statements cover six key areas:
 - Active Transport Vision and Strategy
 - Funding
 - Safety
 - Education, Encouragement, and Community Engagement
 - eRideables
 - Active Travel to School
- The Infrastructure Policy Team considered and recommended the proposed AT advocacy positions for endorsement by State Council at its meeting on 4 August.

RECOMMENDATION

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Bantock moved and Cr M McKeown seconded –

That the Zone supports the WALGA recommendations for State Council Agenda items 8.1 to 8.6 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above. **CARRIED**

(b) Other State Council Agenda Items

Delegates are invited to raise for discussion, questions or decision any of the items in the State Council Agenda including for Policy Team and Committee Reports, Matters for Noting / Information and Key Activity Reports

Policy Team & Committee Reports

- 9.1 Infrastructure Policy Team Report (Page 31)
- 9.2 People and Place Policy Team Report (Page 32)
- 9.3 Governance Policy Team Report (Page 34)
- 9.4 Environment Policy Team Report (Page 35)
- 9.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council Report (Page 36)

Matters for Noting/Information

- 10.1 Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB): Transition to Management (Page 37)
- 10.2 2025 Local Government Emergency Management Survey (Page 41)
- 10.3 WALGA 2025 Local Government Emergency Management Forum (Page 42)

Key Activity Reports

- 11.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio (Page 43)
- 11.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio (Page 48)
- 11.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio (Page 51)
- 11.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio (Page 56)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Policy Team and Committee Reports, Matters for Noting/Information and Key Activity Reports be noted.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr L Stewart seconded –

That the Policy Team and Committee Reports, Matters for Noting/Information and Key Activity Reports be noted **CARRIED**

7.2 WALGA President's Report

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

Cr Paul Kelly presented the WALGA President's Report.

RESOLUTION

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

CARRIED

7.3 Zone State Councillor's Report

Report by Cr C Antonio (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the State Councillor's Report be received.

Item 8.1 was brought forward for consideration.

The Executive Officer drew attention to Cr Antonio's report on the 2025 National General Assembly included with the Zone's President's Report.

RESOLUTION

**Cr P Bantock moved and Cr K Carter seconded –
That the State Councillor's and Zone President's Reports be received.**

CARRIED

7.4 Zone Status Report

Report by WA Local Government Association on status of Zone resolutions for action by the Association – August 2025 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the August 2025 Status Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr L Stewart moved and Cr K Trent seconded –
That the August 2025 Status Report be received.**

CARRIED

8 ZONE REPORTS

8.1 Zone President

Report by Cr C Antonio (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zone President's Report be received.

Dealt with earlier – see Item 7.3.

8.2 Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee

Presentation of Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report be received.

Cr P Bantock tabled her report and commented on –

- District Emergency Management Advisor Wheatbelt and Goldfields-Esperance Regions invited to participate in Zone meetings as an observer.

- Wheatbelt Emergency Management Newsletter.
- Meeting of the District Emergency Management Committee 18 June 2025.
- Emergency Management Webinars.
- Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning Forums.
- Upcoming District Emergency Management Annual Forum - 1 September 2025 in Bruce Rock.

RESOLUTION

Cr P Bantock moved and Cr M McKeown seconded –

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

8.3 Other

There were no other reports.

9 AGENCY REPORTS

9.1 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

- (a) Presentation of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries report.
No report.
- (b) Consideration of any topics or presentations the Zone would like the Department to give to the next Zone meeting.

9.2 RoadWise (Wheatbelt North)

Presentation of RoadWise report (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the RoadWise report be received.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

That the RoadWise Report be received. CARRIED

9.3 RDA Wheatbelt

Presentation of RDA Wheatbelt report.

Recommendation

That the RDA Wheatbelt report be received.

Mr Chris Evans presented the RDA Wheatbelt report.

RESOLUTION

By Consensus –

That the RDA Wheatbelt Report be received. CARRIED

Mr Chris Evans left the meeting at 12:21 pm.

9.4 Transport Portfolio (Main Roads WA, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority)

No report.

Mr Sanjeev Gupta confirmed that there was no written report from Main Roads WA.

Cr C Antonio asked if Main Roads sets the speed limits for new subdivisions and that the Shire of Northam was seeking clarity around ensuring that speed signs were installed in new subdivisions. Mr S Gupta advised that he would take the questions on notice. Mr S Bryce commented on his understanding of speed limits and signage within subdivisions.

Cr K Trent referred to a development approved in York which was on a local road leading off a main road. The intersection needed to be upgraded and he enquired as to who was responsible for this work, the developer or the Council.

9.5 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Presentation of Wheatbelt Development Commission report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Wheatbelt Development Commission report be received.

Dealt with earlier following item 5.2.

9.6 Water Corporation

Mr Joe Mills commented on –

- Contact Centre – Some angst being expressed regarding longer than usual wait times when calling the Corporation's Contact Centre. It is expected that wait times are no more than 10 minutes. Measures are being put in place for regional customers: provide account number and if regional will be directed to a dedicated team.
- Encourage customers not to directly call Corporation staff but to use the Contact Centre.
- Greenhills water supply – Unauthorised removal of dole flow control valves to services on this supply resulted in the tank running dry. Dole valves have been reinstalled and antitamper proof measures taken.
- After hours response – Water Corporation has not changed its response protocols.
- Dowerin Machinery Field Day – Water Corporation will have a stand at this year's Field Day

RESOLUTION

**Cr P Bantock moved and Cr L Stewart seconded –
That the Water Corporation Report be received.**

CARRIED

10 FINANCE

10.1 Financial Reports

Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Report for the year ending 30 June 2025 are attached to the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

That the financial reports for the year ending 30 June 2025, as attached, be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr K Trent moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –
That the financial reports for the period ending 30 June 2025, as attached, be received.**

CARRIED

10.2 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 – September 2025 Quarter	4,502.50
	TOTAL	\$4,502.00

RECOMMENDATION

That the accounts as listed totalling \$4,502.50 be approved for payment.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Carter moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

That the accounts as listed totalling \$4,502.50 be approved for payment.

CARRIED

10.3 Executive Officer Services - Fees

BACKGROUND

The 2009 Annual General Meeting resolved that the annual and hourly rates for Executive Officer services to the Zone be adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index with any change effective from 1 July.

COMMENT

The Consumer Price Index for the 12 month period ending 31 March 2025 increased by 2.8%. The current rates for the Executive Officer services are –

- Ordinary Zone Business \$17,520 per annum (no GST);
- Special Activities - \$72.90 per hour (no GST).

In line with the increase in the Consumer Price Index the rates, effective from 1 July 2025 will be -

- Ordinary Zone Business \$18,010 per annum (no GST);
- Special Activities - \$74.94 per hour (no GST).

RECOMMENDATION

That the adjustment to the Executive Officer annual and hourly rates for services to the Zone, in line with the Consumer Price Index, be noted.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Carter moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

That the adjustment to the Executive Officer annual and hourly rates for services to the Zone, in line with the Consumer Price Index, be noted.

CARRIED

10.4 Budget 2025/2026

Consideration of the Zone's budget and membership subscriptions for 2024/2025. Draft 2024/2025 budget is attached to the agenda.

Notes on the draft budget –

Receipts

- It is proposed that the general subscription remain the same as last year (\$2,200).

Payments

- An allocation has been made for attendance by the Executive Officer to the 2025 WA Local Government Convention.
- An allocation (\$5,000) has been made for one representative of the Zone to attend the 2026 National General Assembly of Local Government.
- No allocation has been made for any special projects or specific advocacy.
- No change has been made to the allocation for honorariums.

As pointed out in previous years, it should be noted that if the Zone wishes to continue to have representatives attend the National General Assembly of Local Government without significantly impacting the Zone's cash reserves, membership subscriptions will need to be progressively increased to around \$2,500. No representative attended the 2025 National General Assembly and the saving is reflected in the proposal that the general subscription not be increased this year.

RECOMMENDATION

- That the Zone Budget for 2025/2026, as attached, be adopted.
- That the membership subscription for 2025/2026 be \$2,200.

The Executive Officer referred to the Zone's Starlink Roam Service and reported that Starlink had on 21 August 2025 advised of changes to the services pause feature. The Zone currently pauses its service between Zone meetings. The current pause feature has been discontinued and transferred to a Standby Mode at a cost of \$8.50 per month. When not using the regular service plan (ie paused) Standby Mode stays connected with unlimited low-speed data for calls and texts and allows instant resumption of the full

service. If Standby Mode is not opted-into before 13 September the paused service will be cancelled. If cancelled the Roam service must be reactivated for each use. Currently there is no reactivation fee. If opted-into the Standby Mode fee can be accommodated in the draft Budget.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr K Trent seconded –

- **That the Zone approve opting-into Standby Mode for its Starlink Roam service.**
- **That the Zone Budget for 2025/2026, as attached, be adopted.**
- **That the membership subscription for 2025/2026 be \$2,200.**

CARRIED

11 ZONE BUSINESS

11.1 Attendance by Minister for the Wheatbelt

BACKGROUND

Following the 2025 State Election specific Ministers were assigned to represent different regions of the State. Hon Sabine Winton MLA was appointed as the Minister for the Wheatbelt.

COMMENT

The Manager Commercial Services, WA Local Government Association, advised that he had been engaging with Minister Winton's office about Wheatbelt Zone meetings and their request for confirmation of Zone meeting dates. We supplied our meeting dates to Minister Winton's office together with an invitation for the Minister to attend an upcoming meeting.

Minister Winton's office has advised that the Minister is please to accept the Zone's invitation and is available to attend our meeting on 21 November 2026 by video link from 10:00 am to 11:00 am.

Members may care put forward matters to be raised with the Minister.

RECOMMENDATION

For noting

NOTED

11.2 Joint Venue Preparation of Local Planning Policy (Renewable Energy – Wind Farm)

Author – Shire of Gingin

PURPOSE

To gauge interest from member local governments to enter a joint venture for the preparation of a Renewable Energy (Wind) Local Planning Policy.

BACKGROUND

The Shire of Gingin, and many other rural local governments, are experiencing increasing pressure from renewable energy developments.

The introduction of renewable energy projects has outpaced planning frameworks at a Federal and State Government level. Local Governments (LGs), generally those in regional areas that experience resourcing and financial constraints, are left to create their own Local Planning Policies (LPPs) to address the many complex challenges that arise from such developments.

The Shire understands that the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) is currently drafting a 'Renewable Energy Planning Code' to provide consistent standards for the planning, assessment and delivery of renewable energy developments across Western Australia. While LPPs are an important tool to guide planning assessments, it is emphasised that they cannot contradict or challenge state planning codes. The precise timing of the delivering of such a LPP will therefore need to be carefully considered on the timing of the abovementioned planning code becoming publicly available.

The typical process for drafting and adopting a Local Planning Policy under the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 includes:

- Scoping brief for consultant and subsequent engagement;
- Drafting of policy;
- Council Briefing/discussion – customising LPP to suit local circumstances;
- Council endorsement to advertise via resolution;
- Stakeholder and state agency consultation;
- Consideration of submissions;
- Amendments in response to submissions (if required); and
- Final adoption by Council.

ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME

Approximately 12 months depending on complexity, resourcing and the number/extent of submissions received.

It is anticipated that the cost to engage an external consultant to prepare a model Renewable Energy Policy would range between \$20,000 – \$30,000. This cost shared between multiple LGs is a sensible approach. Each member LG can then customise on an as needs basis to reflect their local context.

The Shire of Gingin intends to commission the preparation of a LPP within the 2025/2026 financial year, pending the release of the States Planning Code, and is seeking likeminded member LGs to form a joint venture arrangement to mitigate the financial burden.

RECOMMENDATION

For noting, and for interested LGs to contact the Shire of Gingin within 6 weeks (ie by 15 September 2025).

The meeting noted the Shire of Gingin's request for interested local governments to contact the Shire by 15 September 2025.

12 URGENT BUSINESS (as permitted by the Presiding Member)

12.1 Advocacy for Better Understanding by Hire Car Users of Road Rules

Cr L Stewart drew attention to the increasing number of accidents involving hire cars. The Shire of Gingin's President had asked him to enquire if advocacy could be undertaken to ensure a better understanding by users of hire cars (particularly international drivers) of traffic regulations and driving conditions in WA.

Cr P Kelly commented that hire cars in New Zealand had stickers on their dashboards reminding drivers to keep left.

Cr M McKeown commented that a person's driving habits were ingrained for their local region (eg keep left) and automatic responses were made in line with these ingrained behaviours.

RESOLUTION

Cr L Stewart moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –

That the Zone support the Shire of Gingin approaching the WA Local Government Association seeking advocacy to ensure a better understanding by users of hire cars (particularly international drivers) of traffic regulations and driving conditions in WA. **CARRIED**

Ms R Brown advised that she would take the matter to the WA Local Government Association's Manager Infrastructure.

Secretarial Note: This item was raised immediately prior to the meeting closure. It is recorded here for consistency.

13 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Brief comments by Members of Parliament. There were no Members of Parliament present.

14 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Future meetings of the Zone are scheduled for –

21 November 2025	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
20 February 2026	Shire of Moora
24 April 2026	Shire of Goomalling
19 June 2026	Shire of Gingin
21 August 2026	Shire of Chittering (Wheatbelt Forum)
20 November 2026	Shire of Toodyay

Consideration will need to be given to the arrangements for the following meetings -

- (1) April 2026 - This meeting is scheduled for 24 April. The Executive Officer will be on leave from 15 April to 6 May.
- (2) August 2026 – Is this meeting to be held in conjunction with the Wheatbelt Forum?

RECOMMENDATION

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 21 November 2025 and be hosted by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.

The Zone President advised that the Shire of Victoria Plains had indicated that when it is next hosting a Zone meeting it proposes to hold the meeting at New Norcia and hopefully arrange a tour of the European Space Agency's New Norcia Ground Station.

The meeting requested that consideration of the arrangements for the Zone's April and August 2026 meetings be listed for the next meeting.

RESOLUTION

Cr K Trent moved and Cr K Carter seconded –

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 21 November 2025 and be hosted by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. **CARRIED**

The Zone President requested that the 21 November 2025 meeting be a face-to-face (not hybrid) meeting due to new delegates being appointed and the election of Zone officers and representatives. The meeting concurred.

The Zone President thanked all those elected members who were not renominating at the forthcoming Local Government elections for their service.

15 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair thanked attendees for their participation, the Shire of Chittering for hosting the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 12:47 pm.

CERTIFICATION

These Minutes were confirmed by the meeting held on

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