

MINUTES OF THE ZONE MEETING

held at the Community Pavilion, Toodyay Recreation Centre, Drummond Street, Toodyay
Monday 23 August 2021 commencing at 10:47 am

1 OPENING & WELCOME

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Shire of Toodyay look delegates on a short tour of the town to showcase issues and outcomes.

The Zone President and Chair of the meeting, Cr Ken Seymour, welcomed delegates and observers and introduced Cr Rosemary Madacsi, President, Shire of Toodyay. Cr Madacsi welcomed delegates to Toodyay, gave a welcome to country and commented on –

- Community Ethos - Value the rural lifestyle and retain the natural environment and heritage of the Shire.
- Toodyay Statistics
 - Area 1,694 km². Population 4,439 which equates to 2.6 persons/km².
 - In real terms rates expenditure = \$3,870/km². A metropolitan comparison Cambridge = \$1.2m/km².
 - Road and drainage network = 657 km: 347 km sealed, 310 km unsealed. The network is old, narrow and not adequate for modern traffic volumes and weights.
 - Topography is hilly with steep slopes and shallow soils over rocky substrate. Soil saturation is quickly achieved, ground and surface drainage at velocity, overwhelms the drainage systems and degrades the road infrastructure.
 - 2020 storms resulted in 400 works orders, damage to 40 culverts and causeways. Disaster Relief Funding is only to pre-storm condition. Toodyay has an 8 man works crew.
 - Biggest local government asset pressure. Water and Drainage Plan alone is upward of \$100,000.
- Toodyay Road Upgrades (\$80m)
 - Infrastructure Australia contributed \$64m (Investment Road & Rail Program); State Government contributed \$16m.
 - Core arterial road to Perth, essential to transport and tourism. Traffic volumes 2,800 vpd, 11.6% being heavy vehicle.
- Roads, Flora, Fire Mitigation
 - Clearing permits, fire mitigation and retaining floral assets (diversity and tourism revenue) have conflicting priorities. Successful evaluation requires innovation.
 - Shire Environmental Advisory Committee - Verge Identification Project. A citizen science concept to catalogue roadside values for use in funding, tourism promotion, roadworks and clearing permits. Looking towards a reduced and speedier solution to clearing permits by recognition of the Project database.
- Reconciliation
 - Toodyay is the confluence of the Yued, Whadjuk and Balladong peoples
 - In recent years the Shire and Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation have worked together to restore our indigenous history into contemporary terms.
 - Shire endorsed a Reconciliation Action Plan 31 May 2021.
 - Interpretative works have occurred at Red Bank Pool, the Showground aboriginal graves sites and is planned for the Pelham Reserve lookout.
- Heritage
 - Toodyay was the first inland settlement and has a rich colonial history.
 - Preservation is a high community priority recognised in planning.
 - The Central Heritage Area incorporates the town and three heritage precincts, Central Heritage Precinct, the Old Gaol Precinct and the Catholic Church Precinct.
 - Conservation has a significant budgetary pressure. Recently the Catholic Precinct buildings have been subdivided by the Catholic Diocese and are currently on the market.
- Recreation Centre
 - Sporting facilities were declining by 2007. The oval dipped by 1m and was too short for AFL. The hockey field had been built above an old indigenous burial site. Basketball courts were degraded and consumed by the IGA carpark and the town was actively campaigning for a pool.
 - A consultant report, CCS Strategic Management & Recreation Report in 2008 (known as Option 7) to redevelop the showgrounds was rejected as the 10 ha proposed extension would resume 18 residential properties.
 - In 2009 Council reconsidered - Showgrounds or greenfield land.
 - in 2013 a greenfield site was purchased for \$1.625m.
 - Funding was finalised and construction began in 2019 and completed in 2020.

2 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

2.1 Attendance

Delegates -

Cr Kylie Hughes	Shire of Chittering
Cr Barry Haywood	Shire of Goomalling
Cr Ken Seymour	Shire of Moora (President)
Cr Chris Antonio	Shire of Northam
Cr Rosemary Madacsi	Shire of Toodyay
Cr Pauline Bantock	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Denese Smythe	Shire of York

Observers –

Cr Carmell Ross	Shire of Chittering
Mr Matthew Gilfellow	Shire of Chittering
Mr Aaron Cook	Shire of Gingin (via Video)
Mr Peter Bentley	Shire of Goomalling
Cr Julie Williams	Shire of Northam
Mr Jason Whiteaker	Shire of Northam
Cr Beth Ruthven	Shire of Toodyay
Cr Phil Hart	Shire of Toodyay
Ms Suzie Haslehurst	Shire of Toodyay
Mr Chris Linnell	Shire of York
Mr Yogesh Shinde	A/Network Manager Wheatbelt, Main Roads WA
Ms Felicity Morris	Governance Advisor, WALGA
Mr Max Bushell	Project Officer Road Safety, WALGA
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Steve Martin MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Darren West MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Robert Dew	Zone Executive Officer

2.2 Apologies

Cr Carmel Ross	Shire of Chittering
Cr Steven Carter	Shire of Dalwallinu
Cr Leslee Holmes	Shire of Dandaragan
Cr Darren Slynis	Shire of Dandaragan
Cr Jan Court	Shire of Gingin (Deputy President)
Ms Jenifer Collins	Regional Manager Wheatbelt, Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries
Ms Mandy Walker	Director Regional Development, RDA Wheatbelt
Mr Cliff Simpson	RoadWise (Wheatbelt North)
Hon Mia Davies MLA	Member Central Wheatbelt
Hon Colin de Grussa MLC	Member for Agricultural Region
Mr Shane Love MLA	Member for Moore

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President welcomed Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Hon Steve Martin MLC and Hon Darren West MLC.

5 MINUTES

5.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Zone Meeting held 25 June 2021 at Goomalling. Copies of these Minutes have been circulated to all member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 25 June 2021, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

RESOLUTION

Cr D Smythe moved and Cr C Antonio seconded –

That the Minutes of the Zone Meeting held on 25 June 2021, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

CARRIED

5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

(a) Zone Meeting Format (Item 5.2(a))

Enquiries into the suitability and costs of audio/visual equipment which will meet the Zone's requirements for hybrid meetings is ongoing.

RECOMMENDATION

For noting

NOTED

(b) Wheatbelt Conference (Item 10.1)

Last meeting considered a request from the Great Eastern Country Zone to meet with the Central and Avon-Midland Country Zones to discuss whether there was an appetite to host a future Wheatbelt Conference. This Zone resolved to that its was happy to meet with representatives of the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones to discuss the holding of a future Wheatbelt Conference; that the Zone supported the holding of the meeting at the 2021 WA Local Government Association Convention and that the Zone representatives be the President, Deputy President and Executive Officer.

The Central Country Zone has advised that at its June 2021 meeting the Zone reaffirmed its decision from 21 February 2020 that it does not support the conducting of a Wheatbelt Conference.

In light of the Central Country Zone's decision, the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive has recommended that the meeting to discuss a future Wheatbelt Conference be deferred until after the October 2021 local government elections.

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 State Council meeting to be held Friday 3 September July 2021. The Zone is able to provide comment or submit alternate recommendations to State Council for consideration.

Matters for Decision

5.1 External Oversight of Local Level Complaints (Page 5)

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.

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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.

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

5.2 Tender Exemption Provisions – General Practitioner Services (Page 8)

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.*

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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.

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

5.3 Phase 2 Planning Reform Submission (Page 10)

WALGA Recommendation

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

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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.

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

RESOLUTION

Cr D Smythe moved and Cr R Madacsi seconded –

That the above recommendations and comments be endorsed.

CARRIED

Matters for Noting/information

6.1 Stop Puppy Farming Legislation (Page 42)

WALGA Recommendation

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

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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.

Cr R Madacsi asked if there had been any progress on new fees and charges to enable cost recovery. Ms F Morris replied that cost recovery was the most significant concern still outstanding as current fees are not adequate to cover local governments costs in administering the Act. There were encouraging signs from the Minister during the debate on the legislation around working with local government.

Hon S Martin commented that he was keen to receive feedback from local governments on their costs in administering the Act.

6.2 Regional Telecommunications Resilience (Page 44)

WALGA Recommendation

That the update on Regional Telecommunications Resilience be noted.

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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.

Ms F Morris draw attention to the closing date for feedback to WALGA – 16 September 2021.

Cr B Haywood asked if there had been any feedback from Mr Richard Burrell, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, after his presentation to the Zone's April meeting. The Executive Officer replied Mr Burrell's office had enquired as to future Zone meeting dates but no other feedback had been received; he would follow up.

Cr R Madacsi commented that in the hilly terrain around Toodyay problems were still being experienced, generally in valley floors, with mobile phone dead spots. This is despite towers having been upgraded.

6.3 Report Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) (Page 46)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the resolutions of the Municipal Waste Advisory Council at its 30 June meeting.

WALGA Executive Summary

- This item summaries the outcomes of the MWAC meeting held on 30 June 2021.

6.4 2021-22 State Budget Submission (Page 47)

WALGA Recommendation

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

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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).

6.5 WALGA Submission: Inquiry into the Delivery of Ambulance Services in WA (Page 50)

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.

WALGA Executive Summary

- 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).

Mr C Linnell draw attention to the problem associated with hospital transfers from country areas and ramping at metropolitan hospitals. He pointed out that a hospital transfer from the country took an ambulance out of the country district for up to a day and the time taken was exacerbated when the ambulance had to wait at a metropolitan hospital before the patient could be admitted. He asked if this issue was being addressed in advocacy by WALGA. Ms F Morris replied that she would follow up.

RECOMMENDATION

That the above matters for noting/information be noted.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Smythe moved and Cr R Madacsi seconded –
That the above matters for noting/information be noted.**

CARRIED

Organisational Reports

7.1 Key Activity Reports

- 7.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Commercial and Communications (Page 52)
- 7.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Governance and Organisational Services (Page 54)
- 7.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure (Page 56)
- 7.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Strategy, Policy and Planning (Page 58)

7.2 Policy Forum Reports (Page 61)

RECOMMENDATION

That the above organisational reports be noted.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Smythe moved and Cr R Madacsi seconded –
That the above organisational reports be noted.**

CARRIED

6.2 WALGA President's Report

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr C Antonio moved and Cr D Smythe seconded –
That the WALGA President's Report be received.**

CARRIED

6.3 State Councillor's Report

Report by Cr Ken Seymour.

Cr K Seymour reported –

It is encouraging to hear of the successful rollout of COVID vaccines throughout the zone and regional areas. As leaders in our communities, it is paramount that we encourage the rollout as soon as possible. Western Australia and in particular the rural regions have been able to continue on with our lives and businesses relatively unscathed compared to our Eastern States counterparts.

Our reliable and well-funded health network is up to the task of the vaccine rollout. It is now up to our communities to complete the process of vaccination to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone. It is inevitable that this State must be prepared for further outbreaks and a high vaccination rate is one of our best forms of defence. As discussed in today's meeting, our GP network across our regions is a vital link in controlling this pandemic. Councillors, council staff and public officers need to lead the way in promoting a vaccination rate above the eighty percent mark.

Once again, I'd like to comment on the road improvements throughout the region. With Members of Parliament here today can I pass on our appreciation of the funding made available for this important infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION

That the State Councillor's Reports be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr C Antonio moved and Cr D Smythe 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 – August 2021 (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the August 2021 Status Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr C Antonio moved and Cr D Smythe seconded –
That the August 2021 Status Report be received.**

CARRIED

7 ZONE REPORTS

7.1 Local Government Agricultural Freight Group

No meeting of the Local Government Agricultural Freight Group has been held since the last Zone meeting. A meeting of the Group was scheduled for 9 July 2020 however due to a COVID-19 lockdown at that time and uncertainty around when restrictions would be eased it was decided to reschedule the meeting to a later date. A new date has yet to be set.

Cr B Haywood reported –

- He had not been able to attend any of the Agricultural Supply Chain Improvement Forums held by the Department of Transport in July. He was looking to catch up with the Local Government Agricultural Freight Group Chair to discuss the information provided.
- He suggested that the next meeting of the Local Government Agricultural Freight Group be held during the Local Government Convention to be held 20-21 September 2021.

NOTED

7.2 Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee

Report by Zone Delegate Cr C Antonio on activities of the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Cr C Antonio reported –

- There had been no meeting of the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee since the last Zone meeting.
- He will be following up the COVID-19 vaccination rates for the Wheatbelt district to see whether there are any local government areas which are lagging and to make sure that there are sufficient doses available for the Wheatbelt.

RESOLUTION

Cr B Haywood moved and Cr D Smythe seconded –

That the Report on the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee 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.

The Department has advised that it will be providing a webinar one week prior to each Zone round to provide an update on key initiatives. This has been sent out to elected members and CEO's. DLGSC will also work with WALGA to attend a number of Zone meetings each round. A recording of the webinar held 11 August 2021 can be found at - <https://youtu.be/6vBUwwEZFX8>

(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.

Cr R Madacsi commented that the webinar wasn't productive in that too much time had been spent on the overview. She hoped that future webinars were meatier. Ms F Morris replied that she would pass the comment back and the need for the webinars to have a tighter and more focussed agenda.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Smythe moved and Cr C Antonio seconded –
That the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries Report be received.**
CARRIED

8.2 RDA Wheatbelt

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the RDA Wheatbelt Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Smythe moved and Cr R Madacsi 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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transport Portfolio report be received.

Mr Y Sinda tabled a written report (circulated to delegates following the meeting) and commented on –

- Mr Craig Manton has moved to the Main Office in Perth. Mr Ammar Mohammed is acting Regional Manager
- Expenditure for 2020/2021
- Stimulus funding for 2021/2022
- Shoulder sealing failures
- Potholes
- 2021/2022 works within the Zone.

Cr C Antonio referred to the bridge works on the Northam-Pithara Road listed for 2021/2022 and asked if the work included the bridge closest to Northam. Mr Sinda replied that the bridge was included but only for design work.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Smythe moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –
That the Transport Portfolio report be received.**
CARRIED

8.4 RoadWise (Wheatbelt North)

Presentation of report from RoadWise (Wheatbelt North) (attached to Agenda).

RECOMMENDATION

That the RoadWise (Wheatbelt North) Report be received.

RESOLUTION

**Cr D Smythe moved and Cr C Antonio seconded –
That the RoadWise (Wheatbelt North) Report be received.**
CARRIED

8.5 Other

There were no other reports.

9 FINANCE

9.1 Financial Reports

Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Report and Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ending 30 June 2021 are attached to the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

That the financial reports for the year ending 30 June 2021, as attached, be received.

Cr C Antonio enquired as to the difference in the total equity figure on the Balance Sheet and the closing balance of the Statement of Receipts and Payment and the reason for the increased cash surplus for the year. The Executive Officer replied that the Balance Sheet was drawn up on an accrual basis while the Statement of Receipts and Payments was a cash statement. The principal difference between the two was an outstanding membership subscription for the Shire of Dalwallinu. The increased surplus was due to a budget allocation for representatives of the Zone to attend the National General Assembly not being used.

RESOLUTION

Cr C Antonio moved and Cr D Smythe seconded –

That the financial reports for the year ending 30 June 2021, 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 – September 2021 Quarter	3,721.00
	TOTAL (no GST)	<u><u>\$3,721.00</u></u>

RECOMMENDATION

That the accounts as listed totalling \$3,721.00 be approved for payment.

RESOLUTION

Cr D Smythe moved and Cr B Haywood seconded –

That the accounts as listed totalling \$3,721.00 be approved for payment.

CARRIED

9.3 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 2021 increased by 1.0%. The current rates for the Executive Officer services are –

- Ordinary Zone Business \$14,737 per annum (plus GST);
- Special Activities - \$61.32 per hour (plus GST)

In line with the increase in the Consumer Price Index the rates, effective from 1 July 2020 will be -

- Ordinary Zone Business \$14,884 per annum (plus GST);
- Special Activities - \$61.93 per hour (plus 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 C Antonio moved and Cr B Haywood 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

9.4 Budget 2021/2022

Consideration of the Zone's budget and membership subscriptions for 2021/2022. Draft 2021/2022 budget is attached to the agenda.

Notes on the draft budget –

Receipts

- Due to increase in cash on hand, it is proposed that the general subscription be reduced to \$1,500 (last year \$2,000).
- Local Government Agricultural Freight Group receipts include payments for 2020/2021 invoices received in 2021/2022.

Payments

- A notional allocation has been made for purchase of equipment required to enable Zone meetings to incorporate video conferencing.
- An allocation has been made for attendance by the Executive Officer to the 2021 WA Local Government Convention.
- An allocation (\$7,000) has been made for representatives of the Zone to attend the 2022 National General Assembly of Local Government.
- No allocation has been made for a future Wheatbelt Conference.
- No allocation has been made for any special projects or specific advocacy.
- No change has been made to the allocation for honorariums.

RECOMMENDATION

- That the Zone Budget for 2021/2022, as attached, be adopted.
- That the membership subscription for 2021/2022 be \$1,500.

RESOLUTION

Cr B Haywood moved and Cr D Smythe seconded –

- **That the Zone Budget for 2021/2022, as attached, be adopted.**
- **That the membership subscription for 2021/2022 be \$1,500.**

CARRIED

10 ZONE BUSINESS

10.1 Regional Telecommunications Review

By Jo Burges, Senior Advisor Intergovernmental Relations and Risk, WALGA

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. <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 Avon-Midland Country Zone –

- 1) Note the Regional Telecommunication Review 2021; and
- 2) Provides the following input to the WALGA submission:
 -
 -

RESOLUTION

**Cr C Antonio moved and Cr B Haywood seconded –
That the Avon-Midland Country Zone –**

- 1) Note the Regional Telecommunication Review 2021; and**
- 2) Provides the following input to the WALGA submission:**
 - Highlight the disparity between rural and city in costs and data limits for internet services and the need for equity in pricing for similar data limits.**
 - The need for telephone exchanges and mobile phone towers to have emergency generators or solar panels for backup power supply.**
 - Highlight the on-going issue, despite tower upgrades, with dead spots in mobile phone coverage in rural areas.**

CARRIED

The President commented that he understood that Cr Steven Strange, Shire of Bruce Rock, had undertaken some enquiries into this issue and advised that he would contact Cr Strange for more information.

10.2 2021 Local Government Elections – Zone Office Bearer Elections

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

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

COMMENT

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.*

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zone note the process for election of Zone Representative and Deputy Representative to the WALGA State Council.

RESOLUTION

Cr D Smythe moved and Cr C Antonio Haywood seconded –

That the Zone note the process for election of Zone Representative and Deputy Representative to the WALGA State Council. CARRIED

The Executive Officer highlighted the need for each member local government to advise their delegates to the Zone by no later than 5 November 2021.

10.3 Social Housing Economic Recovery Package Grant Funding

By Kelly McManus, Principal Policy and Advocacy WALGA

BACKGROUND

The \$319 million Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) is part of the State Government's COVID-19 Recovery Plan announced in June 2021.

The Program aims to provide safe and secure housing outcomes for vulnerable Western Australians by supporting the construction of new community housing properties and the refurbishment of existing properties to extend their useful life or increase their capacity. Grants are also available to fund maintenance works within remote Aboriginal communities.

Local Governments are eligible to apply for SHERP grants and partner with existing social housing providers and community groups within their communities.

The next round of SHERP funding opens on Monday 1 September 2021.

COMMENT

Further information on the eligibility requirements and application process for the SHERP grants will be provided by the Department of Communities at a webinar to be hosted by WALGA on Monday 1 September from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm.

Local Government officers wishing to attend the register for the Webinar here or through the WALGA events page.

The Livestream presentation from 11 August is available to view on the Department of Communities website and provides valuable information about the grant process.

In preparation for the session, we encourage local governments to:

- Visit the Department of Communities website on 1 September to familiarise yourself with the grant guidelines, application process and frequently asked questions.
- Submit any questions you have in advance through the registration form. There will also be the opportunity to ask additional questions on the day.

Further information on the SHERP program is available on the Department of Communities website or by contacting Kelly McManus, Principal Policy and Advocacy, WALGA on 0429 483 273 or kmcmanus@walga.asn.au.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zone notes:

- Local Governments are eligible for grants to support the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of community housing properties as part of the State Government's Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) Program.
- The next round of SHERP grants open on Monday 1 September 2021.
- The Department of Communities will provide further information on the SHERP grants at a WALGA webinar to be held at 1:30 pm on Monday 1 September.

The President commented that the Shire of Dalwallinu owned 41 houses in Dalwallinu and had spent approximately \$850,000 over recent years in purchasing land for housing.

RESOLUTION

Cr D Smythe moved and Cr C Antonio seconded –

That the Zone notes:

- **Local Governments are eligible for grants to support the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of community housing properties as part of the State Government's Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) Program.**
- **The next round of SHERP grants open on Monday 1 September 2021.**
- **The Department of Communities will provide further information on the SHERP grants at a WALGA webinar to be held at 1:30 pm on Monday 1 September.**

CARRIED

10.4 **Drought Advocacy Update**

Nicole Mathews, Acting Executive Manager, Strategy, Policy and Planning

COMMENT

The following is an update on drought and WALGA's advocacy.

WALGA has made representations on this issue including 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'.

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, I've had initial discussions with DPIRD regarding the need for Local Governments to be involved in the process. I understand that DPIRD was meeting with the Regional Development Commissions last week and I expect to have further information in the next week or so.

RECOMMENDATION

For noting

NOTED

10.5 Local Government Audits

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Amendment (Auditing) Act 2017* gave the mandate to the Auditor General to audit the annual financial reports of local governments and regional councils, to conduct performance audits of these entities, to perform supplementary audits requested by the Minister for Local Government and to report to Parliament on the results of financial and performance audits.

Performance audits started from October 2017 while there was a 4 year staged transition for financial audits as Local governments' existing audit contracts expired. From the 2020/2021 financial year all local governments and regional councils are to be audited by the Auditor General, regardless of whether or not their existing audit contracts have expired.

COMMENT

The Office of the Auditor General has advised that there are any questions about their financial audit process or performance audit program/reports, they would be happy to provide a presentation at one of the Zone's future meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Office of the Auditor General be invited to give a presentation to the Zone at its _____ meeting.

RESOLUTION

Cr R Madacsi moved and Cr B Haywood seconded –

That the Office of the Auditor General be invited to give a presentation to the Zone at its next meeting.

CARRIED

10.6 Association of Mining and Exploration Companies - Presentation

BACKGROUND

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC) represents nearly 400 companies across Australia, with the majority with mining and exploration interests in WA. This includes a number of exploration companies now exploring in WA's wheatbelt region. More information on AMEC can be found at www.amec.org.au

COMMENT

AMEC is wanting to make sure that local governments (as well as other key stakeholders – MPs, Wheatbelt Development Commission, WA Farmers etc) are aware of the increased activity, the companies involved, and how they are approaching their exploration programs and surrounding communities.

AMEC has enquired if the Zone would like a presentation on -

- Why there is increased mineral exploration now taking place across the Wheatbelt – and what that means for the region.
- The basics around mineral exploration, land access, and how it interacts with other land users / landholders.
- The companies that are taking up tenure and where and what they are exploring for.
- Take any questions.

Attached to the Agenda are fact sheets to explain the process for AMEC member companies to use with landholders and local communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies be invited to give a presentation to the Zone at its _____ meeting.

RESOLUTION

Cr R Madacsi moved and Cr P Bantock seconded –

That the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies be invited to give a presentation to the Zone at its next meeting.

CARRIED

11 URGENT BUSINESS (as permitted by the Presiding Member)

11.1 Change of August Meeting Date

Cr B Haywood thanked delegates for agreeing to change the date of 'Zone meeting to today to accommodate the LGIS Golf Tournament held in Goomalling on 21 August 2021. He expressed disappointment that only two local governments from the Zone were represented and commented that next year the tournament will be held in Westonia.

12 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon D West MLC commented on –

- Interesting to learn that Toodyay was the confluence of the Yued, Whadjuk and Balladong peoples.
- It has been a great season so far even with the challenges caused by wet weather.
- General Practitioners are a Federal Government responsibility. Good information provided by Rural Health West. There are currently more GPs in the Wheatbelt than in 2016.
- Acknowledged health workers and their efforts during COVID-19.
- Urged people to get the COVID-19 vaccination. If possible don't use the public system.
- Has had no contact from local governments regarding costs associated with the Stop Puppy Farming legislation. He requested local governments to contact him.
- Confident that there will be good news around the opening of Tier 3 rail lines.
- Some submissions have been received from local governments to the Inquiry into the Delivery of Ambulance Services in WA. Noted that in other States the ambulance service is run by the State.
- Credit to all for compliance with the COVID-19 restrictions.
- Telstra upgrading batteries at mobile phone towers to provide 1-2 hours backup power. He has been developing a good relationship with Telstra.
- Wished those standing at the forthcoming local government elections all the best.

Hon M Aldridge MLC commented on –

- Noted that three Zones were meeting today.
- It has been a difficult year to get around to meet people.
- Parliament has had a busy year.
- This year's Local Government Convention is being held during a non-sitting week for Parliament.
- Great to see the number of Agricultural Shows and Field Days up and running this year.
- Telecommunications Review – important that local governments make submissions. An on-line consultation is being held on the 1 September; expected to take around 2 hours.
- Cyclone Seroja - Showed how valuable local governments and mobile phone networks are in the response to natural disasters. Mobile phone tower battery life an issue and believe a better solution for backup can be found.
- State Budget - Being handed down on 9 September. The increased surplus has been achieved on the back of increases in iron ore prices, however it is expected that these prices will back off. Believe that the biggest issue for the Budget will be around the workforce.
- Health – Believe that the Wheatbelt is doing well on a regional comparison. Proportionally current COVID-19 vaccination rates are outstripping the USA and Europe. Western Australia is the only State that hasn't had an independent inquiry into the State's response to COVID-19.
- Housing - Availability of housing an area most talked about. Homelessness of big interest in all areas and is linked to housing availability.
- Ambulance – Ambulance ramping at hospitals a concern, but it should be noted that this is not an ambulance problem.
- Legislative Council Electoral Reform – The bill to introduce changes to the electoral system for the Legislative Council is due any day. Believe it will not be good for regional representation. Urged contact with Members of Parliament to express any concerns.
- Puppy Farming – Keen to hear from local governments on costs associated with the Stop Puppy Farming legislation.

- State Budget:
 - Need to watch Black Spot funding.
 - Development WA has to make a profit from housing and this doesn't work in regional areas.
 - Hope funding is provided for Tier 3 rail line.
- Drought Funding – A problem in the name. Eastern States believe that WA does not have droughts just dry seasons. We have to be clever around how drought funding is spent.

Hon S Martin commented that Opposition members do not see that Government members see.

13 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING
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Future meetings of the Zone are scheduled for –

19 November 2021	Shire of Gingin
18 February 2022	Shire of Northam
22 April 2022 (Good Friday 15 April 2022)	Shire of Dalwallinu
24 June 2022 (National General Assembly 19-22 June 2022?)	Shire of Dandaragan

RECOMMENDATION

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 19 November 2021 and be hosted by the Shire of Gingin.

RESOLUTION

Cr C Antonio moved and Cr D Smythe seconded –

That the next ordinary meeting of the Zone be held Friday 19 November 2021 and be hosted by the Shire of Gingin **CARRIED**

14 CLOSURE

There being no further business the President thanked attendees and the Shire of Toodyay for hosting the meeting and wished all elected members re-standing at the forthcoming local government elections all the best and declared the meeting closed at 12:20 pm.

CERTIFICATION

These Minutes were confirmed by the meeting held on

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