



## RURAL WATER COUNCIL OF WA (INC)

Meeting held by Zoom  
Friday 27 September 2024 commencing at 9:03 am

# Minutes

## 1 OPENING & WELCOME

The President and Chair of the meeting, Cr T Sachse, welcomed attendees and commented on the difficulties in finding a date for this meeting due to the number of other functions being held in September . Due to the tight timeframe, it had not been possible for the Executive Committee to meet prior to this meeting.

## 2 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

### 2.1 Attendance

Cr Tony Sachse	Shire of Mount Marshall (President)
Mr Gavin Treasure	Shire of Dumbleyung
Cr Jannah Stratford	Shire of Koorda
Cr Tanya Gibson	Shire of Mount Marshall
Cr Chris Bray	Shire of Narembeen
Cr Eileen O'Connell	Shire of Nungarin
Ms Sarah Caporn	Shire of Quairading
Mr Aaron Bowman	Shire of Toodyay
Mr Charles Sullivan	Shire of Toodyay
Cr Mark Crees	Shire of Westonia
Cr Dwight Coad	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
Cr Denis Warnick	Shire of York
Mr Lawrie Short	
Mrs Rosemary Madacsi	
Ms Kathy Balt	Water Corporation
Robert Dew	Executive Officer

### 2.2 Apologies

Mr Zac Donovan	Shire of Koorda
Cr Donna Crook	Shire of Merredin
Cr Gary Coumbe	Shire of Nungarin
Cr Rebecca Johnson	Shire of Victoria Plains
Mr Sean Fletcher	Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr Ross Della Bosca	Shire of Westonia
Cr Kevin Trent	Shire of York
Mr Lindon Mellor	Shire of York
Ms Renae Thorpe	Department of Water & Environmental Regulation
Mr Joe Mills	Water Corporation

## 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 meeting held by at Cranmore Farm, Bindi Bindi on 22 July 2024 are submitted for confirmation. Copies of these Minutes have been circulated to all members and delegates.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Minutes of the meeting held 22 July 2024, as printed and circulated, be confirmed.

The Executive Officer reported that in the copy of the Minutes circulated to delegates Mr Charles Sullivan, Shire of Toodyay, had inadvertently been listed as attending the meeting when he had submitted his apologies. Correction had been made to the Minutes.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Dwight Coad moved and Eileen O'Connell seconded –**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held 22 July 2024, as printed and circulated and incorporating the above correction, be confirmed.** **CARRIED**

### **5.2 Business Arising from the Minutes**

#### **(a) Matters Referred to Executive Committee**

Last meeting referred a number of matters to the Executive Committee for follow up –

- WaterSmart Farms Desalination Project (Item 6.2 (a)) - Dr Richard George indicated that he would be pleased to attend a future meeting and suggested that the Group may care to consider an on-site meeting looking at different aspects of the project. Suitable sites suggested included those at Dumbleyung, York, Merredin, Katanning.
- Non-Standard Water Services (Item 7.1) - Advocacy by the Rural Water Council on funding for local water treatments for non-standard water services and the requirements to treat non-standard water services.
- Backflow Prevention Devices (Item 7.2)
- Farm Water Grants (Item 7.3) - Future advocacy by the Rural Water Council.

Since the last meeting the Executive Committee has not met.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

For Noting

Mr G Treasure commented that there was a trial desalination site at Esperance. The meeting noted Dr George's suggestion for an on-site meeting to look at different aspects of the WaterSmart Farms Desalination Project and recommended that this be looked at for 2025.

Cr D Coad commented that not all properties had backflow prevention devices installed, expressed the view that there was a need for a clearer demarcation between the Water Corporation and the property owner as to responsibility for backflow prevention devices and the issue of costs (installation, maintenance and replacement).

#### **RESOLUTION**

##### **By Consensus**

**That the Water Corporation be requested to provide more information on the requirements to install backflow prevention devices and who is responsible for the devices including on-going maintenance and replacement.** **CARRIED**

Mr Aaron Bowman entered the meeting at 9:30 am.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Lawrie Short moved and Mark Crees seconded –**

**That the Rural Water Council advocate to the State Government for the reinstatement, as soon as possible, of the on-farm water grants.** **CARRIED**

(b) Other

No other matters were brought forward.

## **6 REPORTS**

### **6.1 Water Corporation Report**

Presentation of the Water Corporation report.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Water Corporation report be received.

Ms Kathy Bolt gave a verbal report.

Mr L Short requested more information on the bore being developed on the Dandaragan-Moora Road and in particular what is proposed and can water be made available to adjoining landowners.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**By Consensus –**

**That the Water Corporation report be received.**

**CARRIED**

### **6.2 Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Report**

No Report

The meeting requested that Ms R Thorpe be asked if, on return from leave, she could provide a report to be circulated to delegates.

Mr Lawrie Short referred to the application by Caravel Minerals to establish a bore field in the Gillingarra area to supply water for its copper mining project at Wongan Hills. He raised the following –

- Believe that 48 conditions have been imposed by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.
- Will the extraction of 14 GL of water deplete the water supply available to landowners in the area?
- Have the conditions imposed been met?
- Is the total 14 GL allocation going to be extracted from this area or are other areas being utilised?

The meeting requested –

- that more information on the proposal by Caravel Minerals be sought from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation; and
- that the Executive Committee consider the impact of mining on water availability to local communities.

### **6.3 Region Reports**

Presentation by delegates of region reports.

#### **Dandaragan & North Miling (Lawrie Short)**

Given the quick cessation of rainfall in our areas there appears to be sufficient groundwater available for stock and domestic purposes in dams and wells. One additional tank was required at Miling. Total rainfall for the year at Dandaragan has exceeded that for last year by about 30 mm with some 375 mm so far. Miling is considerably less with particularly no Summer rain. Accordingly crops of Canola have been good in Dandaragan but not planted on the North Miling property due to the lack of early rains. As a consequence, harvest should begin late October. Cutting for hay in Dandaragan has just commenced with Miling nearly finished.

An interesting drilling program on the North side of the road reserve, about 6 km along from Dandaragan on the Dandaragan-Moora Road, striking what appears to be an artesian system with the water rising above ground level from a bore 269 m deep. The drilling operators told me the system could be a contained System in the Parmelia Aquifer with a large say 900 m clay horizon underlaying it. The surface topography resembles a large swale with high country about 2 km North, East and South rising some 60 -80 m above ground level at the bore sight. I seek Water Corporation explanation, if known for further details.

Mount Marshall (Tony Sachse)

As of 25 July 2024, year-to-date rainfall has been 200 mm (Bencubbin) and 250 mm (Beacon) so quite a bit of variation. Growing season rainfall has been between 150 mm (Bencubbin) to 175 mm (Beacon) although some locations have received more or less than these figures. Decile figures range from 3-5 through the Shire. Certainly, the North has been wetter although September rainfall has been very low so far. Although there were some surface water flows filling farm dams (which were at very low levels) in June a lot of farm dam levels remain quite low. This will mean increased demand for Water Corporation water for the purpose of watering stock over the upcoming summer, unless significant spring rainfall occurs.

There do not appear to have been any significant supply outages involving Water Corporation meter delivery since our last meeting.

The Wheatbelt Regional Drought Reliance Plan Steering Committee has been meeting regarding delivering a plan for the Wheatbelt region that aims to build the preparedness of the regions to drought or prolonged dry periods. The plan will identify key actions or interventions to target investment that support the building of economic and community resilience to drought. The WDC is delivering the Wheatbelt RDRP on behalf of the State and Federal government and is jointly funded by the State's Royalties for Regions program and the Commonwealth Government's Future Drought Fund. Of course, water remains a key focus of the plan. Other Local Government groups, agencies and consultants are also having input into the plan.

Toodyay (Rosemary Madacsi)

Mrs R Madacsi advised that since writing the report circulated with the Agenda the submeters at the Toodyay Recreation Centre had been installed. With the approval of the Meeting the update has been included in the report.

Community

Overall community use of town water has halved since summer, due to regular rainfall. Shire bore levels, mostly used for municipal irrigation, are believed to have recovered since the winter rain, but as bore water levels are checked in early October, this is not confirmed. Bores at the Morangup co-location centre and at Julimar fire shed are performing well (meeting demand/tanks full) - but demand has been low in the off season.

The community standpipe has been relocated off road into the information bay and covered to mitigate summer heat on the electronics. Issues with card reader failure causing erratic billing has continued, we are waiting upon an Eastern States technician. Use has slowed but regular drawdown is still occurring. Installation of the Toodyay Recreation Centre submeters, delayed by supply delays, have now been installed.

Agricultural

Consistent winter rain, in well distributed 10-15 mm events (July 77 mm and August 85.3 mm) has recharged spring fed dams and soaks, but runoff dependent dams are below average. Overall, the last two years 280 mm (2023 and 2024), have been well below the annual rainfall which has declined from 600 mm (1970s) to 400 mm in the last 15 years, except for 645.13 mm in the 2021 storm event.

Agriculturally, another rain event should take the district to harvest, although concern is rising at the large presence of moths and early warming with Heliothis (budworm) and diamond back moth on predicted good yields.

Fire Emergency Water

Good winter rain has substantially improved the KBDI (35 mm 24/09/2024) from three months ago. Conditions, however, are expected to dry rapidly as sub-root zone moisture (below that measured in the KBDI) is still consider dryer than average.

At the Morangup co-located Emergency Facility, final plumbing of the two additional 47 kL concrete tanks is still to occur. All tanks are full, new tanks via transfer pumping prior to August rains which then refilled existing plumbed tanks. New plumbing will allow for up to four appliances to fill simultaneously, enhancing operational efficiency.

Water tanks at the (community) Depot, are at 50% capacity following reconnection to rain harvesting and the issues experienced with initial replumbing design. Remaining Fire Emergency Water tanks are undergoing final pre-season level checks with 'top-up' water from one of five non-potable hubs (rain collection or bore source).

The previously advised \$100k DWER Community Water Supply Scheme Grant 'Fire Emergency Water Accessibility Project Stage III' application is still pending with DWER.

#### Victoria Plains (Sean Fletcher)

Under the Shire's Strategic Community Plan, it has continued with two key strategic actions:

- Securing consistent supply of water across the Shire;
- Develop & implement Water Strategy.

#### Water Projects Undertaken in 2023/24

The Shire, due to CWSP funding, was finally able to complete the improvements to the Piawaning water supply on 1 August 2024. This has seen:

- Relocation of the bore into Shire road verge just to the north of Piawaning. The new source of water is of a good quality;
- Upgrading of the water filtration system that has enhanced automatic filter cleansing capability;
- Tidying up of plant and pumps in the water supply shed;
- Securing of the new bore and pump with quality headworks in an enclosed compound.

#### Consistent Supply of Water

For 2024/25, the focus is on four key water projects:

- i. Future proofing the Calingiri emergency water supply and town oval water supply, consisting of two projects:
  - Replacement of the Gouge Rd tanks;
  - Installation of a secondary bore at Parker Rd. This will ensure sufficient redundancy in the advent of failure regarding the primary bore;
- Developing a design for water cells to be part of Shire trucks, thus ensuring a water supply for fire mitigation instead of carting a water tank etc;
- Replacing and installing new water infrastructure and bore at Gillingarra. The emergency water supply failed several months ago when one of the 250,000 litre tanks collapsed. The new water system will be on Crown reserve managed by the Shire. Previously, this supply was managed by a community group.

The first three projects are possible due to successful applications through the CWSP.

In addition to the above, the Shire has agreed to take over the Wyening Reserve from the Water Corporation. This is a 248 ha site located at Wyening that contains the dam originally used for steam trains and then became the Calingiri townsite water source until the 1960s. The dam will provide further emergency water supplies and the wider site can be used for vegetation offsets regarding clearing permits.

#### Water Strategy

The development of the Shire's new non-potable water strategy is well underway, with the draft due in one month's time. This strategy is much wider in scope than the existing Non-Potable Strategic Water Supplies Plan as it is aimed at not only recognising current water sources (both Water Corporation and non-potable), but the location of new water sources and strategic actions to future proof the Shire going forward.

#### Monitoring Bore – Bolgart Refuse Site

The Shire is now required by DWER to install a second monitoring bore at the Bolgart Refuse Site. Although the Shire challenged this due to the Water Corporation exclusion zone being increased in 2016 that subsequently included the Bolgart Refuse Site, DWER has insisted that the bore is installed. This should occur sometime within the next three to six months.

#### Caravel Copper Mine

The Caravel Copper Mine, which is due to begin construction in 2025/26, will receive its water supply from 25 bores at Gillingarra and will be piped over 60 km through the north of the Shire to the mine site. The bulk of the mine site is at Lake Ninan in Wongan Hills; however, the mine site area has now been expanded into the eastern part of Victoria Plains, with tenements allocated for mine infrastructure, water management and carbon offsets.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Region Reports be received.

**RESOLUTION**

**Mark Crees moved and Eileen O'Connell seconded –  
That Region Reports be received.**

**CARRIED**

**6.4 Other**

Mrs R Madacsi commented on general water use and suggested that consideration be given to lobbying for overall water management, particularly waste audits for communities and smaller local governments. When considering water management, she believed that drainage, catchment and all water use should be included. She commented that at present communities were reactive to individual issues.

The meeting requested that these matters be referred to the Executive Committee for consideration.

<b>7 FINANCE</b>
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**7.1 Financial Reports**

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2024 (attached). The Group's current cash balance is \$3,829.42.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the financial report for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2024 be received.

**RESOLUTION**

**Eileen O'Connell moved and Lawrie Short seconded –  
That the financial report for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2024 be received.**

**CARRIED**

**7.2 Accounts for Payment**

The following accounts are presented for payment –

<u>Payee</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<u>Accounts to be Paid</u>		
R W & S Dew	Secretarial Service July 2024 to September 2024	1,017.07
	TOTAL	<u>\$1,017.07</u>

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the accounts as listed above, totalling \$1,017.07 be passed for payment.

**RESOLUTION**

**Dwight Coad moved and Mark Crees seconded –  
That the accounts as listed above, totalling \$1,017.07 be passed for payment**

**CARRIED**

## **8 BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Moulyinning Non-Standard Water Service (Update)**

The Shire of Dumbleyung has previously provided advice between the Shire and Water Corporation in relation to the Moulyinning Non-Standard Water Service declaration by Water Corporation.

#### **Background**

- Water Corporation has never provided a standard water service to Moulyinning residents since the scheme was established, circa early 1970s.
- It has therefore taken Water Corporation approximately 50 years to identify this standard water service shortcoming (lucky no one has been impacted by consuming poor quality water).
- The first that the Shire (and residents) became aware of this situation was when Water Corporation contacted the Shire mid-2023.
- To comply with health requirements, Water Corporation either have to resolve the matter ie install chlorinated water treatment system or withdraw from standard water servicing. Water Corporation has chosen the latter option (for economic reasons).
- The withdrawal position mitigates risk to Water Corporation but transfers this risk to others ie Shire and local residents.
- Water Corporation has offered to fund the once off installation of localised water treatment solutions to offset some of this risk ie rainwater tanks, water filtration systems, etc (30 June 2024 deadline set for Shire and local residents to respond).
- Water Corporation will not contribute to ongoing maintenance or eventual replacement costs of these local water treatment systems.

#### **Footnote**

Decision by Water Corporation has potential major ramifications for communities with low population ie doesn't appear to matter whether you are scheme supplied, if Water Corporation determine that it is cost prohibitive to provide standard water servicing, they may not opt to supply.

#### **Update**

- Water Corporation sent a draft Deed of Settlement to the Shire of Dumbleyung to formalise the supply of Water Corporation funding for the Shire to purchase and install local water treatment solutions.
- The Deed the Shire is being asked to sign not only recognises the financial assistance on offer, it also seeks to hold Water Corporation harmless from any future actions that may arise linked to the non-supply of standard water services.
- The Shire has always tried to hold Water Corporation to account for this change, one that Water Corporation continually claims is due to delayed (non) communication, not performance related (despite scheme services being supplied for around 50 years).
- Water Corporation had two choices to make once it discovered this standard water service shortcoming (1) to install a treatment system to resolve the matter (2) walk away and mitigate/transfer the water quality risk to others. It chose the latter.
- The Shire will do what it has to do to try and protect its residents from poor scheme water quality supply and will do so without releasing claims against Water Corporation for any future issues that are encountered (if needed).

Mr G Treasure commented that the Shire of Dumbleyung had declined the Water Corporation's funding offer due to the risk under the Deed of Settlement transferring to the Shire, the main issue relates to the Moulyinning Hall – non-standard water signs have been put up, lost the fight but believe it is important to share information with other local governments.

Mr L Short commented that the Shire of Moora appears to have received funding for their town water scheme; upgrade to filtration at the bore. Mr Treasure replied that the Shire of Dumbleyung's issue related to non-standard water service.

The meeting requested that local government members keep the Rural Water Council informed of issues with non-standard water services.

Mr Charles Sullivan left the meeting at 10:17 am.

## **8.2 Western Wheatbelt**

Discussion on water issues specific to the Western Wheatbelt (comprising, but not limited to, the Shires of Gingin, Dandaragan, Chittering, Toodyay) including water allocations and usage.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

For consideration

The meeting requested that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Water Corporation provide an update to the next meeting on supply and quality of water in the Western Wheatbelt region and of any proposed developments along coastal areas.

The meeting requested that representatives of the Shires of Beverly and Brookton be invited to the next meeting to discuss any water issues specific to their areas.

## **9 URGENT BUSINESS (as permitted by the Presiding Member)**

### **9.1 Letter of Thanks**

#### **RESOLUTION**

**By Consensus –**

**That a letter of thanks be sent to Kristen and Tracy Lefroy for hosting the Rural Water Council's July meeting and for the inspection and information on their on-farm desalination plant.**

**CARRIED**

## **10 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

Future meetings are scheduled for –

- Friday 21 March 2025 (Note: Date adjusted due to State Election on 8 March 2025)
- Friday 11 July 2025
- Friday 10 October 2025

At the April 2024 meeting the Shire of Westonia indicated a tentative interest in hosting a meeting in 2025 following completion of their water projects.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the next meeting of the Rural Water Council be held Friday 21 March 2025 at the Water Corporation's Depot in Cunderdin.

Cr M Crees confirmed that the Shire of Westonia is still interested in hosting a meeting in 2025.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Mark Crees moved and Dwight Coad seconded –**

**That the next meeting of the Rural Water Council be held Friday 21 March 2025 at the Water Corporation's Depot in Cunderdin.**

**CARRIED**



## 11 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair thanked delegates for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 10:34 pm.

### CERTIFICATION

These Minutes were confirmed by the meeting held on .....

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

**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS  
FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2024 TO 31 AUGUST 2024**

		<b>Actual For Year</b>	<b>Estimate For Year</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Membership			
Associations			
Current Year	0.00		3,400
Previous Year	1,500.00		1,800
Individuals	<u>0.00</u>	1,500.00	200
Interest Earned		<u>0.00</u>	0
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		<u><u>\$1,500.00</u></u>	<u><u>5,400</u></u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
Meeting Expenses		220.00	200
Secretarial Service		<u>3,735.10</u>	5,200
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		<u><u>\$3,955.10</u></u>	<u><u>5,400</u></u>
<b>CASH SUMMARY</b>			
Opening Balance		6,284.52	6,250
Plus Receipts		<u>1,500.00</u>	5,400
		7,784.52	11,650
Less Payments		<u>3,955.10</u>	5,400
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<u><u>\$3,829.42</u></u>	<u><u>6,250</u></u>
<b>BANK RECONCILIATION</b>			
Cheque Account Balance (as at 30/8/2024) (Westpac)		3,829.42	
Plus Deposits made but not shown on Statement		<u>0.00</u>	
		3,829.42	
Less Cheques issued but not shown on Statement		<u>0.00</u>	
<b>Balance as per Cash Book</b>		<u><u>\$3,829.42</u></u>	



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Robert Dew  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER