



Great Eastern Country Zone

Minutes

Monday, 27 June 2022

Shire of Merredin

Great Eastern Country Zone

Hosted by Shire of Merredin

Merredin Regional & Community Centre, Bates Street

Meeting commenced at 9.32am on Monday, 27 June 2022

Minutes

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attendance

Shire of Bruce Rock	President Cr Stephen Strange Deputy President Cr Anthony Cook Mr Darren Mollenoyux, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Cunderdin	President Cr Alison Harris Deputy President Cr Tony Smith Mr Stuart Hobley, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Dowerin	President Cr Robert Trepp Cr Darrel Hudson Ms Rebecca McCall, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Kellerberrin	President Cr Scott O' Neill Deputy President Cr Emily Ryan Mr Raymond Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Kondinin	President Kent Mouritz Deputy President Cr Beverley Gangell Mr David Burton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Koorda	President Cr Jannah Stratford Deputy President Cr Buster Cooper
Shire of Merredin	President Cr Mark McKenzie Cr Donna Crook
Shire of Mount Marshall	President Cr Tony Sachse (Chair) Deputy President Cr Nick Gillett Mr John Nuttall, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate

Shire of Narembeen	President Cr Kellie Mortimore Deputy President Cr Scott Stirrat Mr David Blurton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Nungarin	President Cr Pippa de Lacy Deputy President Cr Gary Coumbe Mr Leonard Long, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Tammin	President Cr Glenice Batchelor Ms Joanne Soderlund, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Trayning	President Cr Melanie Brown Deputy President Cr Geoff Waters Ms Leanne Parola, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Westonia	President Cr Karin Day Mr Bill Price, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Wyalkatchem	President Cr Quentin Davies Deputy President Cr Owen Garner Mr Peter Klein, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Yilgarn	President Cr Wayne Della Bosca Mr Nic Warren, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Guests	Hon. Steve Martin MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development, RDA Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt, Main Roads Dave Paton, Chief External Relationships Officer, CBH Rob Dickie, Manager, Government & Industry Relations, CBH Mark Holland, Hub Director & Program Manager, Grower Group Alliance Andrew Ducas, A/Regional Manager, Goldfields & Agricultural Region, Water Corporation
WALGA	Tony Brown, Executive Manager Governance & Organisational Services Janine Neugebauer, Governance & Organisational Services Officer Dale Ballantyne, Contract Manager Commercial Management
<u>Apologies</u>	Hon. Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt Hon. Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Hon. Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Renee Manning, Wheatbelt Development Commission - Principal Regional Development Officer Cliff Simpson, Road Safety Advisor, WALGA Tom Axton, A/Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Main Roads Brad Pearce, Operations Manager Narrogin, Main Roads Elizabeth Davies, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Wheatbelt Main Roads Samantha Cornthwaite, A/Regional Manager, (DLGSC) Mr Darren Simmons, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Koorda Deputy President Cr Bryan Close, Shire of Yilgarn

Ms Lisa Clack, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Merredin
Deputy President Cr Mark Crees, Shire of Westonia
Deputy President Cr Tanya Nicholls, Shire of Tammin
President Cr Gary Shadbolt, Shire of Mukinbudin
Deputy President Romina Nicoletti, Shire of Mukinbudin
Mr Dirk Sellenger, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Mukinbudin
Kathleen Brown, Electorate Officer, Office of Hon Mia Davies
MLA
Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer, Wheatbelt Development
Commission
Hon. Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt
Hon. Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Hon. Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Renee Manning, Wheatbelt Development Commission -
Principal Regional Development Officer
Cliff Simpson, Road Safety Advisor, WALGA
Tom Axton, A/Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Main Roads
Brad Pearce, Operations Manager Narrogin, Main Roads
Elizabeth Davies, Stakeholder Engagement Manager,
Wheatbelt Main Roads
Samantha Cornthwaite, A/Regional Manager, (DLGSC)
Mr Darren Simmons, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Koorda
Deputy President Cr Bryan Close, Shire of Yilgarn
Ms Lisa Clack, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Merredin
Deputy President Cr Mark Crees, Shire of Westonia
Deputy President Cr Tanya Nicholls, Shire of Tammin
President Cr Gary Shadbolt, Shire of Mukinbudin
Deputy President Romina Nicoletti, Shire of Mukinbudin
Mr Dirk Sellenger, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Mukinbudin
Kathleen Brown, Electorate Officer, Office of Hon Mia Davies
MLA
Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer, Wheatbelt Development
Commission

Attachments

The following are provided as attachments to the minutes:

1. Item No. 4.1 SWWA Drought Hub Presentation
2. Item No. 4.2 Water Corporation Presentation
3. Item No. 4.6 CBH, ASCI Presentation
4. Item No. 6.4 RDAW Report-June 2022
5. Item No. 11.2 CEACA Flyer

State Council Agenda – via link: [State Council Agenda 6 July 2022](#)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NIL

4. GUEST SPEAKERS / DEPUTATIONS

- 4.1 Mark Holland from South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub provided an update on the activities of the hub. **Attachment 1**
- 4.2 Andrew Ducas from the Water Corporation presented to the Zone on the Water Corporation's operations in the region. **Attachment 2**
- 4.3 Rob Dickie and David Paton from CBH Grain presented to the Zone and outlined the supply chain improvements and the ASCI projects that support it. **Attachment 3**

5. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

- Hon. Steve Martin MLC, Member for Agricultural Region, presented to the Zone.

6. AGENCY REPORTS

6.1 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Samantha Cornthwaite, A/Regional Manager, (DLGSC) Wheatbelt, was an apology.

NOTED

6.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Rob Cossart, CEO, Wheatbelt Development Commission, was an apology.

NOTED

6.3 Main Roads Western Australia

Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt, Main Roads, presented an update to the Zone as per the attachment to the Agenda.

NOTED

Meeting break: 11:07

Meeting resumed: 11:18

6.4 Wheatbelt RDA

Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development RDA Wheatbelt, presented an update to the Zone. Written report is provided, **Attachment 4.**

NOTED

7. MINUTES

7.1 Confirmation of Minutes from the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Tuesday, 26 April 2022

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Tuesday, 26 April 2022 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem
Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Tuesday, 26 April 2022 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

7.2 Business Arising from the Minutes from the Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting held on Tuesday, 26 April 2022

NIL

7.2.1 Roadworks During a Total Fire Ban

Shire of Westonia

At the previous Zone meeting this item was considered.

The issue of restrictions on carrying out any grading or bitumen works within 5m of flammable material has been raised by Zone Local Governments. Local Governments can keep working if you have a qualified bush fire brigade officer and a fire fighting vehicle with 2000 litres of water following the grader. Please refer to attached information sheet. Local Governments are querying if there are further changes to the exemption permitted?

Secretariat Comment

The 5,000-litre water cart referred to would qualify as the source of water if there is not a reticulated supply close by. We would expect that the operational issue is that there is a requirement for there to be the capacity to apply a large amount of water quickly, either using a fire truck or similar (truck mounted pump etc.).

The information sheet, attached to the agenda stated that is provided is effectively the exemption from the requirements of a Total Fire Ban. Local Governments may want to seek a change to the conditions associated with an exemption, as they already have an exemption. There would need to be a proposal coming forward that offers arguably equal or better fire risk mitigation than the requirements in the exemption?

There would need to be some discussion about the liability and risk that remains with the Local Government should they undertake road works that result in a fire.

Action: The Executive Officer is to obtain further information for the next meeting.

LGIS has provided the following information;

LIABILITY RISK: ROADWORKS UNDER TOTAL FIRE BAN

We have also reviewed the provided information sheet Road Work – Prescribed activity and conditions produced by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, based on the Bush Fire Regulations 1954 (regulations 24Y-24ZG), the Guide.

For ease of reference, LGIS have laid out what we see are the two main areas of concern highlighted within the agenda item along with our comments, then a summary of our view. This information **should not** be construed as legal advice; but rather risk advice focussed on the issues raised for discussion.

1. Grading and bitumen works

“The issue of restrictions on carrying out any grading or bitumen works within 5m of flammable material has been raised by Zone Local Governments. Local Governments can keep working if you have a qualified bush fire brigade officer and a fire fighting vehicle with 2000 litres of water following the grader. Please refer to attached information sheet. Local Governments are querying if there are further changes to the exemption permitted?”

LGIS are of the view that under the current exemption, the carrying out of grading or bitumen works is not permissible where that equipment is within 5m of any inflammable/flammable material. This is from both reading of the Guide and the Bush Fires Regulations 1954, Part VA, Division r.24ZC (1), which states:

24ZC. Fire prevention measures for road work

(1) At any time when the bituminising equipment or grading equipment involved in the road work is being used, the ground within a 5 m radius of the equipment must be clear of inflammable material.

If the local government is intending to carry out grading or bitumen works where there is inflammable/flammable material within 5m of that equipment, that material would need to be cleared or else the local government would need to seek a modification to the current exemption, if possible.

The following of moving grading or bituminising equipment by a road site firefighting vehicle(s), manned by a fire detection officer (per the definition of the regulations), does not appear to be a condition that permits the operation of that equipment where there is inflammable/flammable material within 5m of that equipment. Rather, this appears to be a general requirement for this type of moving equipment when operating under the exemption in total fire ban conditions.

2. Road-site water supply

“The 5,000-litre water cart referred to would qualify as the source of water if there is not a reticulated supply close by. We would expect that the operational issue is that there is a requirement for there to be the capacity to apply a large amount of water quickly, either using a fire truck or similar (truck mounted pump etc).”

The bulk water supply tanker of 5000l (minimum) is an additional requirement to the volume of water specified to be carried by road site fire fighting vehicle(s). The Guide is not prescriptive in relation to the method of accessing and distributing the bulk water supply when required. However, we agree this is an operational issue and one that should be considered by the local government carrying out the road works at the time.

It would be prudent for the local government to ensure there is appropriate equipment and procedures in place to manage the water supply in the event of an emergency.

Summary

It is important to note that not complying with the exemptions and indeed the relevant legislation could amount to a breach of statutory duty, including liability for any applicable fines or penalties. However, it is also worth highlighting the exemption to conduct road works during a fire ban does not necessarily provide blanket protection from liability to the local government carrying out the road works.

From a civil liability perspective, if a fire were to result from works and cause a loss, there is nothing stopping the aggrieved party from taking action against the local government. Whether the local

government would be found liable to that party would depend on the facts of the incident at the time. Such a decision by the courts would also factor whether the local government's actions, or their response to the risk was considered reasonable (e.g., the taking of reasonable precautions to prevent or mitigate the risk). A reasonable response to the risk would also include following the requirements of the legislative exemption. In general, a local government is entitled to rely on compliance with: legislation; their general procedures; and applicable standards, as evidence of the proper exercise of their functions in regard to management and control of activities such as road works.

Determination of reasonable response to the risk would also include the consideration of other factors such as: the probability of harm if action was not taken (e.g., the likelihood of fire spread); the seriousness of harm (e.g., the extent of damage or injury that could occur); the burden on the local government of taking precautions to avoid or mitigate the risk; and the social utility of the activity that underpins that risk (e.g., the importance of conducting road works for the community and the wider economic benefit this brings).

If it is the intention to seek a modification to the current exemption in order to permit bituminising equipment or grading equipment operating during a total fire ban within a 5 m radius of the inflammable/flammable material, we agree such a proposal would need to offer equal if not better fire risk mitigation requirements than the current exemption. Whether there are techniques or measures that are able to provide satisfactory management of what may be an increased risk of fire would likely require expert input and advice

It may also be beneficial to seek legal advice including on the interpretation of the exemption and liability associated with increased measures to mitigate risk (e.g., that suggested by experts).

This advice could possibly introduce some common scenarios where liability and loss could occur.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Westonia
Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Great Eastern Country Zone request WALGA to advocate for modifications to the current exemptions, to provide for a harvest and movement ban, not a total fire ban.

CARRIED

7.2.2 Emergency Management – Shared Resources

Shire of Mt Marshall

Background

At a previous Wheatbelt OASG Shackleton Fire Debrief meeting, one of the actions was to see if Local Governments were able to share resources in Emergency Management with regard to such things as accommodation and staff. This could perhaps be done through an MOU. It was suggested that WALGA may be preparing a template to accommodate this so that all on the same page.

Comment

Many Local Governments have resource sharing agreements. WALGA carried out an Emergency Management survey in 2021 where 55 Local Governments indicated that they have an agreement in place.

At present WALGA does not have the resources to develop a template MOU. However, WALGA has engaged with members to gather examples of MOUs for resource sharing and provided them to the Zone.

Strong local relationships, particularly at the Chief Executive Officer level, are also a powerful mechanism for facilitating resource sharing arrangements.

There are 5 example MOU's attached (**Attachment 3 – MOU Examples**) being:

1. MOU between Shires of Beverley, Brookton, Pingelly and Wandering for Emergency Support Agreement, March 2021
2. Local Government MOU between 15 Shires, February 2020
3. Draft Partnering Agreement North East Recovery Group
4. City of Mandurah MOU
5. Shire of York Policy, Local Government Resource Sharing

WALGA developed a report into Local Government Cooperation and Shared Services in 2009, was attached to the agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the Great Eastern Country Zone request the Executive Officer to prepare a Zone MOU for resource sharing in emergencies and present to the Zone at the next meeting.

CARRIED

7.3 Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Thursday, 16 June 2022

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Thursday, 16 June 2022 are attached.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Westonia

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee Meeting held on Thursday, 16 June 2022 be endorsed.

CARRIED

7.3.1 Budget 2022-23 – Subscriptions and Expenditure

At the April Executive Committee meeting the Committee noted that any unexpended funds from the elected member training program will be carried over for the 2022-23 Budget. Discussion ensued on an appropriate member subscription fee and likely expenditure requirements in the new financial year. Relevant to this is that the Committee has no strategic need to grow cash reserves which are \$216,140 at 31 May 2022.

Five scenarios of the Budget are provided with forward estimates to show the impact of subscription rates and service levels. The attachment in the Agenda provided four budget scenarios

The budget tabled below provides a summary:

Scenario	Subscription Rate	Training Rebate Expense	Scope for Discretionary Projects	Cash Reserves 30 June 2026
Scenario A Nil sub Min service	\$0	Carry forward \$54k into 2023-24	No	\$98,000
Scenario B Minimal sub Min service Maintain cash	\$,1500	Carry forward \$54k into 2023-24	No	\$203,000
Scenario B Modified & Extended to June 2030 Minimal sub Training rebate support + Zone Event Reduce cash Reserves	\$,1500	Repeat every two years	No	\$39,000
Scenario C Moderate Sub Training rebate support Maintain cash	\$2,500	Repeat in two years	No	\$216,000
Scenario D Resume normal sub Discretionary project pool Maintain cash	\$3,500 (Current rate)	Carry forward \$54k into 2023-24	Average \$33,000 per annum commencing 2022-23	\$203,000

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Koorda

That the Profit and Loss Budget for the year ending 30 June 2023 be adopted based on Scenario B modified with the inclusion of the training rebate every 2 years.

CARRIED

7.3.2 Zone Conference

President Tony Sachse raised the option of the Zone considering holding a 1 Day Conference in 2023. The conference would have local speakers discussing local issues and providing a networking opportunity for all elected members and senior staff from the 16 Local Governments.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

1. That the Great Eastern Country Zone look to hold a 1-day conference in 2023.
2. Request the Executive Officer to prepare a draft program for the next Zone meeting.

CARRIED

8. ZONE BUSINESS

8.1 Proposed Advocacy Position for Management of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades

Background

WALGA is seeking the views of the sector on a new Advocacy Position on the management of Bushfire Brigades, as per the Discussion Paper, [Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position](#).

Western Australian Local Governments have extensive roles and responsibilities prescribed in the State Emergency Management Framework (State Framework) across the emergency management activities of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Relevantly, pursuant to the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, Local Governments have responsibility for bushfire and the management of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFBs).

The Paper proposes a new Advocacy Position on the management of BFBs to guide the Association's emergency management advocacy on behalf of Local Government, and in particular its engagement with the State Government on the development of the Consolidated Emergency Services Act which is expected to be released for stakeholder consultation in early 2023.

Four options are identified for the future management of BFBs:

1. Status quo – continue with the current arrangements for management of BFBs whereby the majority are managed by Local Government and transfer arrangements are negotiated on an ad hoc basis between DFES and Local Governments (or their BFBs).
2. Improvements – continue with the current arrangements for Local Government management of BFBs with additional support provided by the State Government with respect to increased funding and better access to training resources and other support.
3. Hybrid Model – Local Government continues to manage BFBs where they have the capacity, capability, and resources to do so; however, where they do not have the capacity, capability and resources, responsibility for management of BFBs is transferred to DFES.
4. Transfer – Responsibility for management of all BFBs is transferred to the State Government, consistent with the arrangements in other States and Territories.

Comment

Based on the feedback received from Local Governments in the WALGA Emergency Management Survey and the other considerations outlined in the paper, it is considered appropriate for the Association to support a hybrid model for the management of BFBs.

A hybrid model would enable the continued management of BFBs by those Local Governments with capacity, capability, and resources to do so, while providing a framework for the transfer of the management of BFBs to the State Government where a Local Government does not.

Whatever the arrangements for future management of BFBs, it is apparent that Local Governments with responsibility for management of BFBs require additional support and resourcing which should be provided by the State Government, including:

- Development of a suite of guidelines and resources to assist Local Governments in their management of BFBs, particularly with respect to the discharge of obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2021*.
- Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program (CESM) so that every Local Government with responsibility for managing BFBs has access to the Program if they wish to participate.
- Universal access to DFES training for BFBs; and
- Development of mandatory and minimum training requirements including recognition of competency for volunteers.

Local Governments are encouraged to provide a written response to this Paper or to complete the survey. Formal Council resolutions will assist the Association understand the sentiment of the sector on this important issue.

Questions are provided at the end of the Paper to guide feedback.

Feedback should be provided in response to the questions via email to em@walga.asn.au by 5:00 pm Friday 8 July 2022.

Nicole Matthews, A/Executive Manager, Strategy, Policy and Planning joined the meeting to discuss to discuss this item.

RESOLUTION

Moved **Shire of Tammin**
Seconded **Shire of Yilgarn**

That the Zone encourage individual Local Governments to provide a submission to WALGA and the Zone consider this item at the August 2022 Zone meeting.

CARRIED

8.2 WALGA Best Practice Governance Review Update

By Tony Brown, Executive Manager Governance and Organisational Services and Tim Lane, Manager Strategy and Association Governance

Background

WALGA has embarked on a significant project to review WALGA's governance model to ensure the organisation is governed by a contemporary, sound, and agile governance model that:

- Facilitates meaningful engagement with Local Government members,
- Enhances WALGA's legitimacy among members and stakeholders, and
- Enables sound and focused decision making to guide advocacy, policy, and service delivery.

WALGA's [Corporate Strategy 2020-25](#) identifies "contemporary governance and engagement models" as a key strategic priority leading to State Council's commissioning of the Best Practice Governance Review project.

A further goal of the project is to fundamentally review, and subsequently amend, WALGA's governance documentation – Constitution, Corporate Governance Charter, State Council Code of Conduct, and Standing Orders – to ensure consistency and alignment.

To oversee the project, State Council appointed a Steering Committee with the following membership:

President Cr Karen Chappel JP	WALGA President (Chair)
Cr Paul Kelly	WALGA Deputy President
President Cr Phil Blight	Country State Councillor
Mayor Carol Adams OAM	Metropolitan State Councillor
President Cr David Menzel	Country Elected Member
Mayor Albert Jacob	Metropolitan Elected Member
Andrew Sharpe	Country Chief Executive Officer
David MacLennan	Metropolitan Chief Executive Officer
Nick Sloan	WALGA Chief Executive Officer

Senior WALGA staff are providing executive support and PwC has been appointed to facilitate meetings of the Steering Committee and to produce an Options Paper and a Final Report.

The Steering Committee has met twice. At the first meeting, held on 5 May 2022, the Committee:

- Adopted Terms of Reference
- Reviewed the Project Plan
- Considered existing governance documentation
- Discussed the project methodology, and
- Agreed five comparator organisations whose governance models would be reviewed:
 - i. Australian Hotels Association (AHA)
 - ii. Australian Medical Association (AMA)
 - iii. Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA (CCIWA)
 - iv. Chamber of Minerals and Energy (CME), and
 - v. Pharmacy Guild of WA

The comparator organisations were selected for their similarity to WALGA as membership organisations (with organisations as members) and their perceived effectiveness as advocacy peak bodies.

At the Steering Committee's second meeting, held on 8 June 2022, the Committee reviewed the governance models of comparator organisations presented by PwC and identified initial performance assessment criteria that will guide the evaluation of alternative governance model options.

The Steering Committee will be meeting again in late June to consider an Options Paper which will present alternative governance model options. The Options paper will be presented to State Council at the 6 July Strategic Forum. Member feedback will then be sought on the Options Paper during July and August.

Following member feedback, the Steering Committee will direct the development of an agenda item outlining high level principles and non-negotiables of a future governance model for the 2022 Annual General Meeting. This agenda item and debate will gauge members' views on the direction of the project.

The final report due to be completed by mid-October 2022 will be the subject of further consultation with members, including through a full round of Zone meetings in November in the lead-up to the December State Council meeting.

Substantive structural changes to WALGA's governance model will require amendments to the Constitution, which must be approved by a special (75 percent) majority at both a meeting of State Council and an Annual General Meeting. As such, any proposed changes will need to have strong support of members for Constitutional change to be ratified. The aim of the project is to put forward constitutional amendments to members at the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

Comment

The Best Practice Governance Review Project represents a significant opportunity to improve WALGA's governance model to improve decision making effectiveness while ensuring meaningful member representation and participation.

Past reviews since the formation of WALGA as the single Local Government sector peak body over 20 years ago have led to significant process and other improvements while the structure and composition of State Council has remained broadly unchanged. WALGA receives mixed feedback on its governance model through member surveys and other mechanisms suggesting there is room for improvement.

Any future governance model will need to balance member representation and participation in decision making processes with efficiency and strategic focus. The forthcoming Options Paper will present potential options that aim to balance competing objectives identified by the Steering Committee.

Member engagement and consultation will be crucial to the success of the project and very high levels of member support will be required for constitutional amendments to be ratified, as outlined above. Consequently, members should anticipate opportunities to contribute to the project and provide insight in relation to options put forward over coming months.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Tammin

Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the update on the WALGA Best Practice Governance Review Project be noted.

CARRIED

8.3 Meeting Attendance Protocols - Online Attendance

Tony Brown, Zone Executive Officer

Background

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, attendance at meetings and forums via video conference has been widely adopted as a standard practice and is, in many cases, an expectation of attendees.

While Zone meetings have historically been conducted in-person, there have been occasions when Zone meetings have been held as a fully virtual meeting due to Covid restrictions or Covid risk.

Recently, as the technical capacity to host virtual meetings (with a mix of in-person and online attendance) has developed, there has been an increase in requests from Zone Delegates to attend otherwise in-person Zone meetings via a video-conferencing platform.

The WALGA secretariat is seeking Zone guidance on this matter to put in place Zone protocols going forward.

Comment

There are several considerations regarding the suitability of hybrid meetings.

Firstly, there is an argument that in-person Zone meetings are preferable, as has been past practice, as in-person meetings (including sharing a meal and refreshments) facilitate relationship building, information sharing, networking opportunities and engagement between member Local Governments and between Local Governments and the WALGA secretariat including office bearers and senior staff.

Secondly, while there may be circumstances that prevent a Council Delegate from attending in-person, each Council has one or more Deputy Delegates who may be available to attend in-person and contribute to the meeting. For instance, it is unclear which is preferable: in-person attendance by a Deputy Delegate or online attendance by a Delegate.

Thirdly, from a meeting management perspective, there are challenges for the chairperson facilitating participation and managing a hybrid meeting, particularly given the chair may not be familiar with the technical arrangements at the host Local Government for any given meeting.

Fourthly, there are technical considerations for the host Local Government. While many Local Governments now have suitable facilities, it would be expected that the host Local Government would

provide the necessary technical support (potentially outside of business hours) to ensure the meeting can transpire smoothly.

Finally, the Zone's direction in relation to guest speakers is also sought. From the secretariat's point of view, in-person attendance by guest speakers is preferable, however there may be instances when a guest speaker is unable to attend in-person but is able to attend virtually.

From the perspective of the secretariat, there are significant benefits to continue holding Zone meetings primarily in-person – relationship building, information sharing and engagement – and there are technical and meeting management challenges associated with hybrid meetings.

On balance, it is recommended that, restrictions notwithstanding, Zone meetings continue to be held primarily in-person.

Accordingly, and given Councils appoint Deputy Delegates to ensure representation when a Delegate is unable to attend, it is recommended that preference is given to Deputy Delegate attendance in-person ahead of online Delegate attendance and the hybridisation of the meeting. If Deputy Delegate attendance is not possible, the secretariat will liaise with the host Local Government to facilitate online attendance.

If Zone meetings are to be held in a hybrid format, the secretariat will liaise with the host Local Government to check whether a hybrid meeting can be facilitated, to ensure technical setup is undertaken and to confirm technical support will be provided.

It is also recommended that the secretariat continue to liaise with the Zone Chair in relation to guest speakers, as is current practice.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen
Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Zone adopt the following protocols:

- 1. That, Covid-19 or other restrictions notwithstanding, Zone meetings continue to be held primarily in-person;**
- 2. That, given Zone meetings are to be held primarily in-person:**
 - a. first preference will be for in-person Deputy Delegate attendance, before online attendance of Delegates is considered, and**
 - b. If Deputy Delegates are unable to attend in-person, the secretariat will liaise with the host Local Government with the aim of facilitating online attendance in a hybrid meeting format;**
- 3. That, if Zone meetings are to be held in a hybrid format, the host Local Government will provide technical setup and support in liaison with the WALGA secretariat; and,**
- 4. That the WALGA secretariat liaise with the Zone Chair in relation to attendance and arrangements for guest speakers, and if online attendance of a guest speaker is to be facilitated, the secretariat will liaise with the host Local Government to make the necessary arrangements.**

CARRIED

8.4 Office of Auditor General

Cr Sachse advised that a number of Zone Local Governments have been faced with a situation where their contract auditor has been unable to complete the audit. The interim audit had been carried out and then the contract auditor exited the contract. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) is in the process of appointing another contract auditor.

The Local Governments are concerned that they will be up for additional costs as the new contract auditor will have to carry out an interim audit and work that the Local Governments have already provided.

Discussion ensued around advocating to the Office of the Auditor General, that the Office of the Auditor General should be responsible for any additional costs incurred and not the individual Local Governments.

RESOLUTION

Move: Shire of Westonia
Seconded: Shire of Kellerberrin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone request WALGA to advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) that:

- 1. The OAG should be responsible for any additional costs incurred and not the individual Local Governments when a contract auditor cannot complete their contract.**
- 2. The OAG should consider removing the duplicity in the current audit process and look to provide a more efficient service.**

CARRIED

9. ZONE REPORTS

9.1 Zone President Report

Zone President Tony Sachse provided a report to the Zone.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the Zone President's Report be received.

CARRIED

9.2 Local Government Agricultural Freight Group

President Tony Sachse provided a report to the Zone on the Local Government Agricultural Freight Groups activities.

NOTED

9.3 Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee

President Tony Sachse provided a report to the Zone.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Yilgarn
Seconded: Shire of Koorda

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report and attachments be received.

CARRIED

9.4 Regional Health Advocacy Group

Cr Alison Harris was an apology.

NOTED

9.5 WALGA RoadWise

Cliff Simpson, Road Safety Advisor (Wheatbelt North), Infrastructure, was an apology. His report was attached to the Agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen

Seconded: Shire of Merredin

That the WALGA RoadWise Report be received.

CARRIED

10. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (WALGA) BUSINESS

10.1 State Councillor Report

Cr Stephen Strange advised that at the May State council Strategic forum, the State Council heard presentations and discussed the following key issues:

- Overview of Nudge – A for-purpose charity focussing on getting young people into jobs and training opportunities in various industries, including Local Government.
- Local Government Legislative Reform – State Council were briefed on the Minister for Local Government’s Legislative Reform process following the first meeting of the working group.
- WALGA Best Practice Governance Review – State Council were briefed on the project.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock

Seconded: Shire of Nungarin

That the State Councillor Report be received.

CARRIED

10.2 WALGA Status Report

Tony Brown, Executive Officer

There are no item updates for the Great Eastern Zone Status Report for June 2022.

NOTED

10.3 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda’s – Matters for Decision

10.3.1 State Council Agenda Items – 6 July 2022

Background

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure.

The full State Council Agenda can be found via link: [State Council Agenda 6 July 2022](#)

The Zone is able to provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation that is then presented to the State Council for consideration.

Matters for Decision

5.1 Review of advocacy positions relating to Emergency Management

Executive Summary

1. It is proposed to remove the three existing Emergency Management Advocacy Policy Positions and replace them with a series of more comprehensive policy positions (Appendix 1
2. The new [Advocacy Positions](#) are based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.

Recommendation

That State Council:

1. Endorse the removal of the following Emergency Management Advocacy Positions
 - 8.1 Community Resilience
 - 8.2 Disaster Mitigation
 - 8.3 Emergency Services Levy
2. Endorse the following Emergency Management Advocacy Positions:
 - 8.1 Emergency Management Principles
 - 8.2 State Emergency Management Framework
 - 8.3 Sustainable Grant Funding Model for Emergency Management
 - 8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act
 - 8.5 Resource Sharing
 - 8.6 Lessons Learnt Management
 - 8.7 Emergency Services Levy
 - 8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS)

5.2 New Emergency Management Advocacy Position – Community Emergency Service Manager Program

Executive Summary

The Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program was established to provide Local Governments with additional support to undertake their emergency management functions.

Following consultation with the sector in 2021, it is proposed to endorse an Advocacy Position for the expansion of the CESM Program.

Recommendation

That the following WALGA Advocacy Position relating to the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program be endorsed:

- 8.9 Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program

That the Association advocates for an expansion of the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program, as follows:

1. All Local Governments should have the option of participating in the CESM Program.
2. The full cost of the CESM Program should be funded through the Emergency Services Levy.

5.3 Draft WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 and Updated Advocacy Position

Executive Summary

1. The Public Libraries Working Group (PLWG) has been overseeing the development of a new WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 (Strategy) with a focus on strengthening communities, digital inclusion and the value placed on public libraries.
2. Consultation was undertaken between February 2021 and April 2022 through workshops with public library professionals; stakeholder interviews with a targeted selection of metropolitan, regional, and remote Local Government public libraries; and public consultation via an online survey.
3. The new Strategy will support the work of 232 public libraries operated by Local Government around Western Australia.
4. Endorsement of the Strategy is being sought from WALGA State Council and the Library Board of Western Australia, prior to submission to the Minister for Culture and the Arts for final approval.
5. An updated advocacy position is proposed to reflect current governance arrangements, the outcomes being sought under the new Strategy and the achievement of elements of the existing position under the *2016-2021 WA Public Libraries Strategy*.

Recommendation

That:

1. the draft *WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026* be endorsed.
2. WALGA's existing Advocacy Position on Public Libraries be deleted and replaced as follows:

3.8 Public Libraries

1. Western Australian Local Government public libraries provide valuable local cultural infrastructure, creating social and community hubs for community capacity building, recreation, education and literacy, digital inclusion, and social connection, cohesion, and inclusion.
2. WALGA supports the provision of Public Library services in Western Australia through a formal partnership between Local Government and the State Government of Western Australia, governed by the Library Board Act 1951, namely the State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia (2020).
3. The *WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026* provides a framework for a shared vision, strategic direction, and collaborative action in the provision of a vibrant and sustainable 21st century public library network.
4. It is essential that a sustainable funding model enables Local Governments to continue to deliver library services to support continued growth and adaptation to changing community needs.

Matters for Noting / Information

- 6.1 2020/21 Local Government Performance Monitoring Project (05-047-01-0011 CH)
- 6.2 Proposed Advocacy Position on Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (05-024-02-0059 SM)
- 6.3 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 Co-design Process, Phase 1 Submission
- 6.4 Western Power Access Arrangement Review Submission (05-001-03-0019 ID)
- 6.5 Economic Development Research (05-088-03-0004 DM)
- 6.6 Development of Child Safe Policy for Local Government (05-065-03-006 BW)
- 6.7 National Reconciliation Week Local Government Activation Program (05-032-03-0011 VB)
- 6.8 WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027 – Draft for Comment (05-053-03-007 BW)
- 6.9 Issues Paper: Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention (05-036-03-0020 RP)
- 6.10 Report Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) (01-006-03-0008 RNB)

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone

1. Supports Matters for Decision, item 5.1 to 5.3 as listed above in the July 2022 State Council Agenda, and
2. Notes all Matters for Noting and Organisational Reports as listed in the July 2022 State Council Agenda.

CARRIED

10.4 WALGA President's Report

The WALGA President's Report provided in the Agenda as an attachment.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Tammin
Seconded: Shire of Nungarin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone notes the WALGA President's Report.

CARRIED

11. EMERGING ISSUES

11.1 Biosecurity Management in WA

Cr Batchelor raised the issue of Biosecurity, and the recent WALGA information page as follows:

Biosecurity is the management of risk from pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading in Australia. Local Governments are a key stakeholder under the shared responsibility model between government, industry, and community to address biosecurity matters.

In March 2022, the State Government appointed an [independent panel](#) to undertake the statutory review of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM Act). The panel has been tasked with assessing the BAM Act's operation and effectiveness. The Panel has designed a three stage engagement process over the course of 2022-23, with [Stage 1 of public consultation on the BAM Act Review](#) now open.

Stage 1 will identify the major themes and issues for the panel to consider. Feedback received will inform Stage 2, which will be a participatory process for all stakeholders to further explore the themes and issues. Stage 3 will include broader engagement to get feedback on the findings and potential solutions.

WALGA has prepared a [Discussion Paper](#) with 11 key themes and recommendations to provide context on relevant matters for Local Government and assist the sector in providing input to Stage 1 of the BAM Act Review consultation process.

*Given the short timeframe of Stage 1, WALGA encourages Local Governments to provide feedback directly to the Review by **Wednesday, 27 July 2022** through the [submission and survey portal](#) or by downloading the submission template and sending to:*

BAMA Review Panel
c/-Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
PO Box 483
NORTHAM WA 6401
BAMAreview@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Local Governments are also asked to provide WALGA with a copy of their response/submission to the review and any additional feedback on WALGA's Discussion Paper. Responses can be provided to environment@walga.asn.au by **Wednesday, 27 July 2022**.

Feedback received from Local Governments will inform WALGA's ongoing biosecurity advocacy on behalf of the sector, the development of a draft submission to the BAM Act Review later in 2022 and an update of [WALGA's Biosecurity Management Policy Position \(2017\)](#) if required.

For further information, please contact [Melanie Davies](#), WALGA's Biodiversity and Sustainability Project Officer, or call 9213 2065.

Cr Batchelor encouraged Local Governments to respond to the Discussion Paper.

NOTED

11.2 CEACA Information Session (Attachment 5)

An information session is being held on Thursday, 18 August 2022, at 10.00am in Merredin.

Action:

The Executive Officer to circulate the promotional flyer on the CEACA information day to all Zone Local Governments.

Zone Local Governments and Community Members are encouraged to attend.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

NIL

13. DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 August 2022 via Teleconference.

The next Great Eastern Country Zone meeting will be held on Monday, 22 August 2022, commencing at 9.30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Kellerberrin.

14. CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 1.02pm.