



WEROC Inc. Board Meeting MINUTES

Wednesday 7 May 2025

Shire of Westonia
Wanderers Stadium

CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 1. | OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS..... | 3 |
| 2. | RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES..... | 3 |
| 2.1 | Attendance | 3 |
| 2.2 | Apologies | 3 |
| 2.3 | Guests..... | 3 |
| 3. | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | 3 |
| 4. | PRESENTATIONS | 4 |
| 4.1 | Ben Redman and Brendon Riley, Wheatbelt Connect, 11.00am | 4 |
| 5. | MINUTES OF MEETINGS | 5 |
| 5.1 | Minutes of the WEROC Inc. Board Meeting held on Monday 17 March 2025 | 5 |
| 5.2 | Minutes of the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 April 2025 | 5 |
| 5.3 | Business Arising – Status Reports | 5 |
| 5.3.1 | Actions Arising from the WEROC Inc. Board Meeting held on 17 March 2025 | 5 |
| 5.3.2 | Actions Arising from the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2025 .. | 6 |
| 6. | WEROC INC. FINANCE | 7 |
| 6.1 | WEROC Inc. Financial Report as of 30 April 2025 | 7 |
| 6.2 | Income, Expenditure & Balance Sheet | 9 |
| 7. | MATTERS FOR DECISION | 10 |
| 7.1 | WEROC Inc. Budget 2025-26..... | 10 |
| 7.2 | Water Audits | 14 |
| 7.3 | Proposal to host Eastern Wheatbelt Projects Update | 16 |
| 7.4 | Governance Services Proposal | 17 |
| 8. | PROJECT UPDATES | 18 |
| 8.1 | Marketing/Promotion..... | 18 |
| 8.2 | Housing..... | 19 |
| 9. | EMERGING ISSUES..... | 19 |
| 9.1 | Turf Contractor..... | 19 |
| 9.2 | Member for the Central Wheatbelt..... | 19 |
| 9.3 | Wheatbelt Minister | 20 |
| 10. | OTHER MATTERS (FOR NOTING OR DISCUSSION) | 20 |
| 10.1 | Shared Services..... | 20 |
| 10.2 | Strategic Artificial Intelligence Support for Local Governments | 20 |
| 11. | FUTURE MEETINGS | 20 |
| 12. | CLOSURE | 21 |

WEROC Inc.

Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc.

Shires of Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Tammin, Westonia, Yilgarn

MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held in Westonia on Wednesday 7 May 2025.

1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Lisa O'Neill as Chair of WEROC Inc. welcomed guests and Members of the Board and opened the meeting at 9.34am.

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

2.1 Attendance

Mr. Mark Crees

Mr. Wayne Della Bosca

Mr. Mark Furr

Mr. Raymond Griffiths

Mr. Andrew Malone

Ms. Lisa O'Neill (Chair)

Mr. Bill Price

Mr. Ramesh Rajagopalan

Ms. Emily Ryan

Ms. Charmaine Thomson (Deputy Chair)

Mr. Nic Warren

Mr. Craig Watts

Ms. Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer

2.2 Apologies

Nil

2.3 Guests

Mr. Stuart Hobley, CEO Shire of Cunderdin

Ms. Alison Harris, President Shire of Cunderdin

Mr. Ben Redman and Mr. Brendon Riley, Wheatbelt Connect (joined the meeting at 11.22am and left the meeting at 12.20pm)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NIL

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Ben Redman and Brendon Riley, Wheatbelt Connect, 11.00am

Wheatbelt Connect is a project that partners QANTAS, INPEX and ANZ and aims to deliver land restoration and diversified income opportunities for landholders. Additional information is available on the [Wheatbelt Connect](#) website.

Wheatbelt Connect have requested an opportunity to present to the WEROC Board to provide an overview of their objectives and activities.

Comments from the meeting:

- Mr. Ben Redman and Mr. Brendon Riley provided an overview of the foundations of Wheatbelt Connect, benefits to land owners and some examples of projects they have undertaken.
- In response to a comment regarding Wheatbelt Connects focus on tree plantings on marginal/less productive land, it was noted that what they consider to be “marginal” is still productive agricultural land and there are concerns that the market for carbon will outweigh considerations around preserving farmland for food production.
- Wheatbelt Connected discussed the concept of integrated farming practices (essentially tree planting alongside cropping) but it was argued that while the concept of integrated farming sounds good, it is not a reality because agricultural products do not grow in tree plantings.
- Mr. Nic Warren noted that community benefit from renewable projects is very topical at the moment and there are plenty of examples to follow in terms of policies and formulas to work out a fair and reasonable return. Mr. Warren questioned if there is a way that they could work this out and incorporate it into a policy for tree planting. For example could it be based on the value of carbon credit units generated or the anticipated profit from the planting?
- Mr. Riley responded to say that there isn’t really an established method of determining return of benefit to a community, and at the moment it comes down to an individual negotiation with Shires. Mr. Riley noted that the cost of generating carbon credits is more expensive than what they can buy in the market, so they are essentially operating at a loss and therefore a percentage of profits would not be a suitable model.
- Mr. Riley advised that all projects are listed on the [Clean Energy Regulator](#) website. For each project, detail is provided on the anticipated carbon credits that will be issued. The value of each credit can be calculated through an online search of the market value at the time and from this it would be possible to determine the anticipated return and make a determination about what might be fair to contribute back to the community.
- It was questioned when project information is made available on the Clean Energy Regulator website. Mr. Riley advised that it is generally posted at the same time they are going through the development application process.
- Mr. Riley advised that there are not enough credits being created to meet demand and they anticipate that there will be a supply pinch around 2028 which will drive the price considerably higher than the \$30-\$35 that units are currently being traded at.
- Ms. Charmaine Thomson asked how long a carbon credit lasts and at what point they can claim credits. Mr. Riley responded that there is no clear answer on how long a credit can be held before it needs to be sold, but the permanence period for a planting is 25 years. It was noted that if a fire goes through and the trees are lost, the credit issuance will stop. In relation to when they can claim credits, Mr. Riley indicated that there is an establishment period and in-fill process to replace trees lost in planting that has to be completed before they can claim credits. Typically they claim from government within three to five years.

- Ms Alison Harris asked if they know how much land is required to meet the governments requirement for carbon credits. Mr. Riley's response was that there isn't enough land to meet the government requirement.

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

5.1 Minutes of the WEROC Inc. Board Meeting held on Monday 17 March 2025

Minutes of the WEROC Inc. Board Meeting held in Merredin on Monday 17 March 2025 have previously been circulated.

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the WEROC Inc. Meeting held in Merredin on Monday 17 March 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Ram Rajagopalan

Seconded: Mr. Mark Furr

That the Minutes of the WEROC Inc. Meeting held in Merredin on Monday 17 March 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

5.2 Minutes of the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 April 2025

Attachment 1: WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting Minutes 14 April 2025

Minutes of the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held in Kellerberrin and via videoconference, on Monday 14 April 2025 are provided as Attachment 1.

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held in Kellerberrin and via videoconference on Monday 14 April 2025 be noted.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Raymond Griffiths

Seconded: Mr. Craig Watts

That the Minutes of the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held in Kellerberrin and via videoconference on Monday 14 April 2025 be noted.

CARRIED

5.3 Business Arising – Status Reports

5.3.1 Actions Arising from the WEROC Inc. Board Meeting held on 17 March 2025

| Agenda Item | Action(s) | Status |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 5.3 Business Arising | Invite Member for the Central Wheatbelt, Lachlan Hunter to a future WEROC meeting to discuss cultural intricacies/challenges and to seek clarity on requirements and points of contact. | The Member for the Central Wheatbelt will join the meeting to discuss cultural and other matters. |
| 7.2 WEROC Priorities | 1) Contact James McGovern to request assistance with a compliance audit for WEROC Councils. 2) Contact Department of Communities and request a meeting to discuss the Local Government call for submissions. | James McGovern and Anthoy Quahe from Civic Legal, joined the WEROC CEO Committee meeting on 14 April 2025 and discussed options for a compliance audit. The Department of Communities was contacted with a request to |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | 3) Contact the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) and request a meeting to discuss water supply issues and funding opportunities. | meet with the WEROC CEOs. This request was declined. A representative from DWER joined the WEROC CEO Committee meeting on 14 April. |
|--|--|--|

5.3.2 Actions Arising from the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2025

| Agenda Item | Action(s) | Status |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 5.1 Water | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Source a quote for water audits. 2) Investigate eligibility to apply for Community Water Supply Program funding to enable water audits. 3) Contact the Wheatbelt Development Commission to ascertain if they have capacity to assist WEROC with water audits. | Please refer to agenda item 7.2 for further detail. |
| 5.3 Compliance Audit | Request a quote from Civic Legal to deliver Project AWARE across the seven WEROC Shires. | A quote has been submitted. Please refer to agenda item 7.4 for further detail. |
| 6.1 Community Benefits Fund | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Each Shire to adapt the Narrogin Policy for their own local policy and present to individual Councils for endorsement. 2) Once policies have been approved, look at the option of having a presentation on the establishment of a community benefit fund or trust. | It may be appropriate for WEROC CEOs to provide an update on how they are progressing with their local policies. |

Recommendation:

That the status reports be received.

Comments from the meeting:

- WEROC CEOs were invited to provide an update on their progress in developing local policies for community benefit funds. The Shires of Yilgarn, Kellerberrin, and Merredin have adapted the Shire of Narrogin's policy and are nearly ready to present their versions to their respective Councils. It was noted that the Shire of Narrogin's policy did not include provisions for tree farms.
- Mr. Bill Price commented that INPEX (aka Wheatbelt Connect) are a proponent in the Shire of Westonia, and they have been fairly accommodating in terms of the community benefit aspect. The Shire have been able to negotiate a return based on capital input costs not long term return.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Wayne Della Bosca

Seconded: Mr. Craig Watts

That the status reports be received.

CARRIED

6. WEROC INC. FINANCE

6.1 WEROC Inc. Financial Report as of 30 April 2025

Author: Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer

Disclosure of Interest: No interest to disclose.

Date: 30 April 2025

Attachments: Nil

Voting Requirement: Simple Majority

At the WEROC Inc. Board Meeting held on 9 May 2024 the budget for the financial year commencing 1 July 2024 and ending 30 June 2025 was adopted. The approved Budget 2024-25 is used as the basis for the financial report.

An explanation for each of the notations on the financial report is provided below.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Note 1 | Annual Financial contributions paid by Member Local Governments. |
| Note 2 | Interest paid on term deposit |
| Note 3 | GST received |
| Note 4 | GST refund for Q4 BAS 2023-24 |
| Note 5 | Executive Officer services |
| Note 6 | Executive Officer travel to Board and CEO meetings. This is higher than budgeted due to additional CEO meetings. |
| Note 7 | Monthly subscription fee for Xero accounting software |
| Note 8 | Payment to Audit Partners Australia for the 2023-24 financial year audit |
| Note 9 | Payments to Vanessa King for Town Team Builder services, HR Cornerstone for IR/HR consultancy services, Carol Taylor for social media marketing campaign, Lauren Clarke for the branding guide and logo refresh, JE Planning and Econosis for the WEROC housing investigation, Australia's Golden Outback for cooperative marketing activities, Shire of Merredin for an advertisement in the Eastern Wheatbelt Visitors Guide and the two WEROC interns' meal allowance. |
| Note 10 | Payments to PWD for website domain name renewal, website security upgrade and audit, and 12-months website hosting. This is higher than budgeted because only the website hosting was accounted for. The domain name renewal and website upgrade were unknown expenses. |
| Note 11 | Catering expenses for WEROC CEO farewell in Kellerberrin on 9 May and ERP demonstrations in Kellerberrin on 6 August |
| Note 12 | Personal accident, workers compensation, associations liability, public & products liability and cyber insurance renewals |
| Note 13 | GST paid |

WEROC Inc.
ABN 28 416 957 824
1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

| | | Budget 2024/2025 | Actual to 30/04/2025 | Notes |
|---------|--|---------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | INCOME | | | |
| 0501 | General Subscriptions | \$72,000.00 | \$72,000.00 | 1 |
| 504.01 | Consultancy & Project Reserve | \$0.00 | | |
| 0575 | Interest received | \$4,863.29 | \$4,863.29 | 2 |
| 584 | Other Income | \$0.00 | | |
| | GST Output Tax | \$7,200.00 | \$7,200.00 | 3 |
| | GST Refunds | \$6,184.00 | \$5,143.00 | 4 |
| | Total Receipts | \$90,247.29 | \$89,206.29 | |
| | EXPENSES | | | |
| 1545 | Bank Fees & Charges | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| 1661.01 | WEROC Inc. Executive Services | \$35,383.84 | \$29,463.62 | 5 |
| 1661.02 | Executive Officer Travel and Accommodation | \$1,400.00 | \$2,252.50 | 6 |
| 1661.03 | WEROC Executive Officer Recruitment | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| 1687 | WEROC Financial Services Accounting | \$1,000.00 | \$681.80 | 7 |
| 1687.03 | WEROC Financial Services Audit | \$1,050.00 | \$984.00 | 8 |
| 1585 | WEROC Consultant Expenses | \$60,000.00 | \$57,774.88 | 9 |
| 1850 | WEROC Management of WEROC App & Website | \$420.00 | \$844.50 | 10 |
| 1801 | WEROC Meeting Expenses | \$500.00 | \$829.09 | 11 |
| 1851 | WEROC Insurance | \$6,300.00 | \$6,020.79 | 12 |
| 1852 | WEROC Legal Expenses | \$2,000.00 | | |
| 1853 | WEROC Incorporation Expenses | \$0.00 | | |
| 1854 | Transfer to Term Deposit | \$4,863.29 | \$0.00 | |
| 1930 | WEROC Sundry | \$300.00 | | |
| 3384 | GST Input Tax | \$10,835.39 | \$8,949.87 | 13 |
| | ATO Payments | \$3,464.57 | \$4,960.00 | |
| | Total Payments | \$127,517.09 | \$112,761.05 | |
| | Net Position | -\$37,269.79 | -\$23,554.76 | |
| | OPENING CASH 1 July | \$64,270.72 | \$69,784.64 | |
| | CASH BALANCE | \$27,000.93 | \$46,229.88 | |

Recommendation:

That the WEROC Inc. financial report for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025, be received.

Comments from the meeting:

- Mr. Craig Watts noted that there was an error in the report, with the expenses being cut and paste into the wrong line items and the Executive Services expenses being duplicated. It was questioned if changed, would this alter the net position. The Executive Officer advised that it was just a formatting error and would not alter the net position.
- The correction has been made and is reflected in the report shown in these minutes.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Craig Watts

Seconded: Mr. Ram Rajagopalan

That the WEROC Inc. financial report for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025, be received with the corrections to the expenses against budget line items being made.

CARRIED

6.2 Income, Expenditure & Balance Sheet

Author: Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer

Disclosure of Interest: No interest to disclose.

Date: 30 April 2025

Attachments: Nil

Voting Requirement: Simple Majority

A summary of income and expenditure for the period 1 March to 30 April 2025 is provided below.

| Date | Description | Credit | Debit | Running Balance |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Opening Balance | | 65,016.88 | | |
| 07 Mar 2025 | 150 Square Pty Ltd | 0.00 | 3,516.00 | 61,500.88 |
| 17 Mar 2025 | Australia's Golden Outback | 0.00 | 3,300.00 | 58,200.88 |
| 07 Apr 2025 | 150 Square Pty Ltd | 0.00 | 5,371.00 | 52,829.88 |
| 24 Apr 2025 | Payment: JE Planning | 0.00 | 6,600.00 | 46,229.88 |
| TOTAL | | 0.00 | 18,787.00 | |
| Closing balance | | 46,229.88 | | |

Balance Sheet

Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc
As at 30 April 2025

| | 30 APR 2025 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Assets | |
| Bank | |
| Term Deposit | 100,000.00 |
| Westpac Community Solution One | 46,229.88 |
| Total Bank | 146,229.88 |
| Current Assets | |
| Accounts Receivable | 66,960.00 |
| Total Current Assets | 66,960.00 |
| Total Assets | 213,189.88 |
| Liabilities | |
| Current Liabilities | |
| GST | 2,112.35 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 2,112.35 |
| Non-current Liabilities | |
| GST Clearing | 244.00 |
| Total Non-current Liabilities | 244.00 |
| Total Liabilities | 2,356.35 |
| Net Assets | 210,833.53 |
| Equity | |
| Current Year Earnings | 38,884.81 |
| Retained Earnings | 171,948.72 |
| Total Equity | 210,833.53 |

Recommendation:

That the WEROC Inc. summary of income and expenditure for the period 1 March 2025 to 30 April 2025 be received.

That the Accounts Paid by WEROC Inc. for the period 1 March 2025 to 30 April 2025 totalling \$18,787 be approved.

That the Balance Sheet as of 30 April 2025 be noted.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Raymond Griffiths

Seconded: Mr. Nic Warren

That the WEROC Inc. summary of income and expenditure for the period 1 March 2025 to 30 April 2025 be received.

That the Accounts Paid by WEROC Inc. for the period 1 March 2025 to 30 April 2025 totalling \$18,787 be approved.

That the Balance Sheet as of 30 April 2025 be noted.

CARRIED

7. MATTERS FOR DECISION

7.1 WEROC Inc. Budget 2025-26

Author: Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer

Disclosure of Interest: No interest to disclose.

Date: 30 April 2025

Attachments: Nil

Consultation: Nil

Financial Implications: As per budget

Voting Requirement: Simple Majority

Background:

The WEROC Inc. Constitution states that:

17.3 The Board will prepare and approve the annual budget at least 1 month before the end of the financial year.

As there are no further scheduled meetings of the WEROC Inc. Board before the end of the financial year, to adhere to the rules of our Association, a draft budget for WEROC Inc. for the financial year commencing 1 July 2025 and ending 30 June 2026 has been prepared and is presented for the Board's consideration.

The proposed budget assumes that the \$12,000 (Ex. GST) annual subscription per Member Council will remain consistent with previous years. On the matter of subscriptions, the WEROC Inc. Constitution does not specify the amount of the annual subscription rather it states:

10.1 Annual Subscriptions: Members are not required to pay a membership fee or annual subscription but may be required to pay an annual financial contribution as determined by the Association with such contributions to be in equal shares.

Under the proposed budget, it is anticipated that WEROC Inc. will have a cash balance of \$50,716.74 on 30 June 2026. This assumes that the \$100,000 in the term deposit will be reinvested at maturity.

BUDGET NOTES

Income

- A. The draft budget assumes that the annual subscription amount will be retained at \$12,000 (Ex. GST) per Member Council.
- B. The estimated income in the Consultancy and Project Reserve to 30 June, is Shire contributions toward the WEROC workforce housing analysis.
- C. Budgeted interest is based on the current rate on the Westpac Term Deposit of 4.80%.
- D. GST on General Subscriptions.
- E. GST refunds have been calculated based on estimates of GST Input and Output Tax for each quarter.

Expenditure

- 1. The Westpac Community Solution One Account does not incur any fees and therefore no fees have been budgeted for.
- 2. Proposed budget is based on the Executive Officer's estimated hours (38 hours per month standard plus additional hours for attending meetings and WMSIP) and a rate of pay of \$70 Ex. GST per hour.
- 3. Budget based on anticipated travel for the Executive Officer to attend 10 meetings (CEO and Board) averaged at 350km for a return trip at the current ATO rate of 0.88c per km.
- 4. Current contract expires on 1 March 2026 therefore a provision has been made for recruitment of an Executive Officer.
- 5. The proposed budget for Financial Services includes the monthly subscription fee for Xero accounting software (\$81.82 Ex. GST).
- 6. The financial services audit allocation is based on the accepted quote of Audit Partners Australia for \$1,000 Ex. GST and an allowance for disbursements.
- 7. This allocation enables WEROC Inc. to engage consultants and to undertake special projects. Co-operative marketing initiatives are also allocated to this budget line item. The budgeted amount includes \$7,000 for tourism/marketing initiatives, \$11,000 for the final payment to JE Planning for the workforce housing analysis (it is assumed that the second payment will be made in the 2024/25 financial year), \$20,160 for Econosis to complete the cost benefit analysis and \$3,000 for WDC to complete the feasibility testing for the housing project. The remaining allocation is an allowance for new projects.
- 8. The allocation for the management of the WEROC Inc. website is based on the hosting fee of \$40 (Ex. GST) per month. The hosting fee is currently paid up until October 2025. An allowance is also included for renewal of the WEROC domain names, security upgrades and SSL certificate.
- 9. Host Council's will generally cover all meeting expenses. A small allocation is provided for any unforeseen meeting costs.
- 10. The proposed budget allocation for insurance is based on the current financial years actual expenditure, with an allowance for premium increases for the following forms of insurance cover:
 - Public & Products Liability
 - Associations and Officials Liability
 - Workers Compensation
 - Personal Accident – Volunteers
 - Cyber Insurance
- 11. A small allocation is made for legal expenses to cover any eventuality.
- 12. The estimated expenditure to June 30 for WEROC Incorporation Expenses is the cost to submit a change to the WEROC Constitution.
- 13. A small allocation is made for any miscellaneous items.
- 14. GST Input Tax is calculated on budgeted expenditure items subject to GST.
- 15. ATO payments have been calculated based on estimates of GST Input and Output Tax for each quarter.

WEROC Inc.
DRAFT BUDGET 2025-2026

| | | Budget 2024/2025 | Actual to 30/04/2025 | Estimated Income/ Expenditure to 30 June 25 | Proposed Budget 2025-2026 | Notes |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------|
| INCOME | | | | | | |
| 0501 | General Subscriptions | \$72,000.00 | \$72,000.00 | \$102,000.00 | \$84,000.00 | A |
| 504.01 | Consultancy & Project Reserve | \$0.00 | | \$30,872.70 | \$0.00 | B |
| 0575 | Interest received | \$4,863.29 | \$4,863.29 | \$4,863.29 | \$4,392.33 | C |
| 584 | Other Income | \$0.00 | | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| | GST Output Tax | \$7,200.00 | \$7,200.00 | \$13,287.30 | \$8,400.00 | D |
| | GST Refunds | \$6,184.00 | \$5,143.00 | \$5,143.00 | \$6,399.00 | E |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | | \$90,247.29 | \$89,206.29 | \$156,166.29 | \$103,191.33 | |
| EXPENSES | | | | | | |
| 1545 | Bank Fees & Charges | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | 1 |
| 1661.01 | WEROC Inc. Executive Services | \$35,383.84 | \$29,463.62 | \$34,936.66 | \$38,920.00 | 2 |
| 1661.02 | Executive Officer Travel and Accommodation | \$1,400.00 | \$2,252.50 | \$2,704.70 | \$3,080.00 | 3 |
| 1661.03 | WEROC Executive Officer Recruitment | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$1,000.00 | 4 |
| 1687 | WEROC Financial Services Accounting | \$1,000.00 | \$681.80 | \$818.16 | \$1,080.00 | 5 |
| 1687.03 | WEROC Financial Services Audit | \$1,050.00 | \$984.00 | \$984.00 | \$1,100.00 | 6 |
| 1585 | WEROC Consultant Expenses | \$60,000.00 | \$57,774.88 | \$68,774.88 | \$70,000.00 | 7 |
| 1850 | Management of WEROC Website | \$420.00 | \$844.50 | \$894.50 | \$900.00 | 8 |
| 1801 | WEROC Meeting Expenses | \$500.00 | \$829.09 | \$829.09 | \$500.00 | 9 |

WEROC Inc. Board Meeting Wednesday 7 May 2025 - Minutes

| | | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----|
| 1851 | WEROC Insurance | \$6,300.00 | \$6,020.79 | \$6,020.79 | \$6,300.00 | 10 |
| 1852 | WEROC Legal Expenses | \$2,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$2,000.00 | 11 |
| 1853 | WEROC Incorporation Expenses | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$50.00 | \$0.00 | 12 |
| 1854 | Transfer to Term Deposit | \$4,863.29 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| 1930 | WEROC Sundry | \$300.00 | | \$0.00 | \$300.00 | 13 |
| 3384 | GST Input Tax | \$10,835.39 | \$8,949.87 | \$10,666.03 | \$12,518.00 | 14 |
| | ATO Payments | \$3,464.57 | \$4,960.00 | \$4,960.00 | \$9,088.71 | 15 |
| | TOTAL PAYMENTS | \$127,517.09 | \$112,761.05 | \$131,638.81 | \$146,786.71 | |
| | Net Position | -\$37,269.79 | -\$23,554.76 | \$24,527.48 | -\$43,595.38 | |
| | OPENING CASH 1 July | \$64,270.72 | \$69,784.64 | \$69,784.64 | \$94,312.12 | |
| | CASH BALANCE | \$27,000.93 | \$46,229.88 | \$94,312.12 | \$50,716.74 | |

Recommendation:

That the WEROC Inc. draft budget for the year ending 30 June 2026, as presented, with a general subscription for each Member Council set at \$12,000 (Ex. GST), be adopted.

Comments from the meeting:

- There was discussion over the need to increase subscription fees in light of the budget operating in deficit year on year and the eventuality that the carry over funds will run out at some point.
- It was noted that with the \$100,000 in the term deposit and the anticipated closing balance of approximately \$50,000 at the end of the next financial year, there is no immediate need to increase subscriptions. This will be reviewed again next year.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Ms. Lisa O'Neill

Seconded: Mr. Mark Crees

That the WEROC Inc. draft budget for the year ending 30 June 2026, as presented, with a general subscription for each Member Council set at \$12,000 (Ex. GST), be adopted.

CARRIED

7.2 Water Audits

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Author: | Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer |
| Disclosure of Interest: | No interest to disclose. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 2. Shire of West Arthur Water Security Strategy |
| Consultation: | WEROC CEO's, Wheatbelt Development Commission |
| Financial Implications: | Unknown |
| Voting Requirement: | Simple Majority |

Background:

Ms. Sandy Turton-Parkinson, Senior Natural Resource Management Officer – Rural Water Planning, joined the WEROC CEO Committee meeting on 14 April 2025 and discussed the Community Water Supplies Partnership (CWSP) program and opportunities for Councils to apply for funding for water infrastructure projects.

A question was raised over the value in developing a water plan for the WEROC Local Governments to enable targeted investment in water infrastructure over the short, medium and long term. Ms. Turton-Parkinson indicated that a water audit would be valuable and noted that Development Commissions are completing water planning in other regions and the Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) are being encouraged to do the same. Ms. Turton-Parkinson recommended that WEROC contact WDC and request assistance in completing water audits for each of the seven WEROC local governments.

Subsequent to the discussions with Ms. Turton-Parkinson, the WEROC CEOs discussed the possibility of applying for funding through the CWSP program to cover the cost of water audits.

Executive Officer Comment:

The Executive Officer emailed Mr. Grant Arthur and Ms. Renee Manning from the Wheatbelt Development Commission on 16 April 2025, requesting clarification on what, if any, work the Commission was doing in regard to a regional water plan or audit.

Ms. Manning replied on 16 April 2025, and advised as follows:

Hi Bek

I reached out to my GSDC colleague, and Sandy is referring to a piece of work being undertaken through the Inland Great Southern Regional Drought Resilience Plan implementation funding. It is like the work WEROC is looking to do and is across 8 Shires.

WDC were going to fund a similar project for the 5 Southern Wheatbelt Shires, though given there 3 of the Shires have undertaken similar work (including the Shire of Wagin), that funding will be allocated towards feasibility and planning work for specific infrastructure projects.

WDC would encourage WEROC to pursue the Community Water Supply Planning funding option for a water supply, demand and opportunities assessment project.

It would be a good use of the funding as it builds the evidence base to support future investment by the Shires, and also for applications to grant programs such as the CWSP.

I have advised Sandy (and will discuss with Renae Thorpe, the A/Rural Water Planning manager) to reiterate our support of the use of CWSP funding for this work.

The WEROC approach could serve as a model for other sub-regional groups.

As discussed, West Arthur and Wagin's recently completed water plans (Wagin is due for completion May) could be a useful guide.

GSDC has a list of potential consultants that could be of interest to WEROC for this work. They are in the process of developing a detailed scope of works. I can introduce you if you like.

Unsurprisingly, water is emerging as the key challenge to build regional drought resilience and in supporting ongoing growth and development of the Wheatbelt economy and communities.

WDC would be keen to stay across the WEROC project as it progresses. I can get back to you on the possibility of direct funding support. We can also discuss any in-kind support – eg scope development and review, collation of existing water planning work.

Let's stay in touch. Might be worth us having a chat with the DWER team on this.

Regards

Renee

The Executive Officer requested quotes from the consultants who completed the West Arthur Water Security Strategy (Water Technology) and a Hydrology company (JDA Consultant Hydrologists) recommended by the Great Southern Development Commission. Water Technology have indicated an interest in working with WEROC but as yet have not supplied a quote and JDA advised that they were not in a position to assist WEROC.

The Executive Officer emailed Ms. Turton-Parkinson on 21 April 2025 to seek clarification on whether water audits are eligible for funding under the CWSP program. Ms. Turton-Parkinson is on leave until 1 May 2025 and so no response had been received at the time of preparing this agenda.

Recommendation:

That:

- 1) The Board provide in-principal support for WEROC to pursue funding for water audits for each of the seven member Councils.
- 2) If a water audit is confirmed as an eligible project under the CWSP program and a quote is provided by Water Technology, the Executive Officer to forward this information to members of the Board and seek endorsement of an application via flying email.
- 3) WEROC make a financial co-contribution of up to 30% of the total project cost, as is a requirement of the CWSP program.

Comments from the meeting:

- The value in undertaking a project to develop water audits or strategies was questioned. It was noted that a piece of work like this will be essential to establish the case for bigger scale projects (e.g., desalination) and to prevent changes to water allocations.
- The Executive Officer advised that two consultants had now provided indicative pricing. The estimated price for all seven strategies is between \$140,000 and \$175,000 (\$20,000 - \$25,000 per Shire).
- Discussion was had over the key requirements for the strategies. It was agreed that the primary purpose of this work is to ensure a sustainable supply of water (for all uses and purposes) to WEROC communities in the future. It is an expectation that from of this work the Shires will get a better understanding of:
 - The capacity of existing potable and non-potable water supply and how well this is equipped to meet current and future demand.
 - How existing water infrastructure and resources can be better utilised.
 - How water capture and storage can be increased to reduce reliance on the scheme supply
 - What alternative water sources exist that are not currently being utilising.
- It is also an expectation that from this work, each Shire will be provided with a clear list of projects/recommendations (both small scale quick wins and big picture) that they can undertake to achieve the goal of a sustainable water supply.

- The consultants engaged to quote on this work advised that they have capacity to undertake a couple of strategies concurrently. For logistical reasons it was recommended that the Shires be grouped and the work undertaken in stages as per the below:
 - Yilgarn and Westonia
 - Bruce Rock and Merredin
 - Kellerberrin, Tammin and Cunderdin
- The amount being requested from DWER was discussed. It was agreed that the full cash amount would be applied for, and the WEROC/Shire contribution would be in-kind. If required, further discussion will be had at a later time to resolve a financial contribution.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Mark Furr

Seconded: Mr. Andrew Malone

That WEROC Inc. proceed with an application to the Community Water Supply Partnerships Program for the full cash component of the water strategy project and each Shire will contribute in-kind to cover the 30% co-contribution requirement.

CARRIED

7.3 Proposal to host Eastern Wheatbelt Projects Update

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Author: | Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer |
| Disclosure of Interest: | No interest to disclose. |
| Attachments: | Nil |
| Consultation: | NEWROC Executive Officer, RoeROC Executive Officer |
| Financial Implications: | Unknown |
| Voting Requirement: | Simple Majority |

Background:

The Wheatbelt Development Commission recently presented at the Great Eastern Country Zone Conference. Key takeaways from the presentation were that economic development projects and priorities in the region should align with the Federal Government's Future Made in Australia Policy, and the State Government's policies; Diversify WA and Made in WA.

The Wheatbelt Futures Forum, which is taking place in Northam on 2 May 2025, is focused on bringing Wheatbelt businesses, local government, and government representatives together to focus on business opportunities in the coming year and beyond. The event is industry focused, with brief presentations from delegates representing a range of Wheatbelt industries.

The Dowerin Down Town event held in July each year focuses on promoting agriculture to government, private and community stakeholders as well as promoting the Dowerin Machinery Field Days.

What is missing from these events is an opportunity for local governments to pitch investment and partnership opportunities to government and industry and to discuss ambitions for growth in our region.

Executive Officer Comment:

The [Midwest & Gascoyne Major Projects Update](#) event, held on April 8-9, 2025, at Novotel Perth Langley, focused on investment, project development, and collaboration across the region. Key topics included economic growth, diversification, renewable energy, and infrastructure development. The attendees of the event are predominantly Federal and State Government representatives, members of Parliament and major industry.

The Executive Officers of NEWROC, RoeROC and WEROC have had an initial discussion about hosting a similar event. The aim of this event would be to:

Showcase Regional Projects: Highlight ongoing and upcoming projects within the Eastern Wheatbelt (across all three ROCs and a pipeline of projects that the Wheatbelt Development Commission has)

Attract Investment: Provide a platform for attracting investment and partnership opportunities.

Promote Collaboration: Foster collaboration between local government, industry, and community stakeholders through networking time.

Discuss Key Topics: Address critical issues such as renewable energy, infrastructure development, housing and economic diversification.

Key Benefits include:

Networking Opportunities: Facilitate connections between regional leaders of the ROCs, investors, and industry experts.

Economic Growth: Stimulate economic growth by promoting what we have, and not what we don't have.

Knowledge Sharing: Share insights and best practices on regional development and evidence of our collaboration already.

It is proposed that the costs of the event would be jointly shared by the three ROCs. RDA Wheatbelt and the Wheatbelt Development Commission could be approached to support the event.

Recommendation:

That the WEROC Board:

- 1) Discuss the interest in, and feasibility of hosting a major project update event in conjunction with NEWROC and RoerOC in the second half of 2025.
- 2) Discuss a potential theme and topics for the event (assuming there is support for the concept).
- 3) Approve the WEROC Executive Officer working in collaboration with the NEWROC Executive Officer and RoerOC Executive Officer to develop a proposal and budget for the event.

Comments from the meeting:

- The Executive Officer advised that both RoerOC and NEWROC have approved to concept.
- General support for hosting this event, was given from the Board.
- It was suggested that to minimise costs, consideration be given to using the conference facilities at WALGA.
- Topics WEROC would like to see included are protection of agricultural land, funding for Local Governments, land development and housing, and roads (particularly in the context of escalating construction costs and no contribution from the State).
- It was noted that to have impact, both Federal and State Government representatives need to be around the table.
- It was suggested that a component of the event be a discussion around how the ROCs can work better together.
- It was suggested that WALGA be consulted on key advocacy pieces to make sure we are aligned.
- The Executive Officer will work with the RoerOC and NEWROC Executive Officers on a proposal and email it to Board members for review and approval.

7.4 Governance Services Proposal

Author: Rebekah Burges, Executive Officer

Disclosure of Interest: No interest to disclose.

Attachments: Attachment 3: Project AWARE cover letter
Attachment 4: Project AWARE Proposal

Consultation: Civic Legal
Financial Implications: \$94,500 ex. GST
Voting Requirement: Simple Majority

Background:

At the WEROC Inc. Board meeting held on 17 March 2025, priorities for WEROC in 2025 were discussed and in relation to the challenges being faced by Local Governments in meeting escalating compliance requirements, it was recommended that governance consultant Mr. James McGovern be contacted with a request to facilitate a compliance audit for each of the WEROC Shires.

Executive Officer Comment:

Mr. James McGovern, Governance Consultant and Mr. Anthony Quahe, Managing Principal at Civic Legal, joined (via videoconference) the WEROC Inc. CEO Committee meeting held on 14 April 2025, to discuss the requirements of the audit. It was advised that Civic Legal have a governance support and improvement service – Project AWARE - that would deliver the outcomes being sought by the WEROC Shires. Civic Legal were requested to provide a proposal to deliver Project AWARE to the seven WEROC Councils.

As per the proposal, which is provided as Attachment 4, Civic Legal can provide 12-months governance support to the seven WEROC Councils at a rate of \$13,500 ex. GST per Shire (total of \$94,500 ex. GST). This is a discount on the regular rate of \$16,250 ex. GST per Shire.

Recommendation:

That the proposal be discussed and, if supported, consideration be given to whether WEROC should contribute financially or if the cost should be covered by individual Councils.

Comments from the meeting:

- The Shires of Bruce Rock and Merredin have discussed the proposal and feel that they do not stand to gain any value from this program. The Shire of Westonia concurred and indicated that, given the size of their operations, this level of support is not required.
- Mr. Andrew Malone noted a concern that through this process, they will just be told what they are missing now and not what they need to do to prepare for future requirements. This defeats the initial intent of the audit, which was to ensure that Shires are prepared to accommodate new regulations.
- It was questioned whether the discounted price would be offered if only a smaller number of Councils decide to proceed with the project. The Executive Officer will query this with Civic Legal.
- It was also questioned whether a revised proposal could be prepared, which offers a one off audit rather than a 12 month service. The Executive Officer will contact James McGovern with this query.

8. PROJECT UPDATES

8.1 Marketing/Promotion

WEROC as a partner organisation to the Wheatbelt Co-operative Marketing Group, committed \$3,000 + GST in the 2024-25 financial year to cooperative marketing initiatives in conjunction with Roe Tourism, NEW Travel, Pioneers Pathway and Australia's Golden Outback. Part of this funding was used toward a Wheatbelt Weekends autumn campaign which ran from 22 March to 28 April 2025. The campaign used a variety of media targeting the Perth metro audience. This campaign included the development of a road trip reel which featured on Australia's Golden Outback social media platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1364775284835504>

And sponsored Perth Now articles:

[Pack the car: Four weekend road trips the whole fam will love | PerthNow](#)

[A weekend holiday to remember | PerthNow](#)

Comments from the meeting:

- It was noted that now that the Shire of Cunderdin are a member of WEROC, they should be included in the Eastern Wheatbelt self-drive trail.
- A quote to revise the map will be sourced and the Executive Officer will work with the Shire of Cunderdin on the content.

8.2 Housing

Attachment 5: WEROC Housing Investigation Stakeholder Engagement & Communication Plan

The Shire of Cunderdin have now been included in the scope of works for the WEROC housing investigation. JE Planning have revised the timeline for delivery of the worker housing needs analysis report and we are now looking at completion in July/August 2025 (refer to Attachment 5).

Once the Workforce Housing Needs Analysis Report is completed the next stage of the project involves a housing options analysis and feasibility testing. The Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) will prepare workforce housing models for two locations. The intention is that these models can then be adapted to the priority development sites identified for each town. The adaption of the housing models for additional sites is not included in the costed scope of works.

Given previous discussions indicating that some Shires will be ready to proceed with housing developments sooner than others, it may be worthwhile the Board considering whether WEROC should advise WDC on where to prioritise the initial two housing models.

Comments from the meeting:

- The Executive Officer suggested that rather than prioritising the two housing models, the additional amount required to have all six completed, should be considered.
- The two included in the scope of works are being done at a cost of \$3,000 so it is assumed that the cost for an additional four will be \$6,000.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mr. Ram Rajagopalan

Seconded: Mr. Wayne Della Bosca

That:

- 1) The Executive Officer contact the Wheatbelt Development Commission to confirm that cost of having the additional four housing models completed will be \$6,000.
- 2) If the cost is no greater than \$6,000 WEROC will cover the expense to have these completed.

CARRIED

9. EMERGING ISSUES

9.1 Turf Contractor

Mr. Raymond Griffiths advised that he had been contacted by a local contractor looking at setting up a turf management business and was wanting to get an idea of the level of interest from Local Government. The business would provide comprehensive care of turf surfaces including conducting soil testing, spraying, coring, etc.

Mr. Griffiths will provide contact details for each of the WEROC CEOs to the turf contractor so that they can discuss their individual requirements for this type of service.

9.2 Member for the Central Wheatbelt

Mr. Lachlan Hunter, Member for the Central Wheatbelt, was invited to attend this meeting and was a late cancellation. It was suggested that Mr. Hunter's office be contacted and asked to advise a time and place where members of the WEROC board can meet with him.

9.3 Wheatbelt Minister

In light of the recent appointment of a new Minister for the Wheatbelt, it was discussed that rather than individual approaches from 42 Local Governments, there should be consensus across the region about the best avenue for communicating with the Minister. It was agreed that advancing matters through the Zones would likely yield the greatest influence and impact.

10. OTHER MATTERS (FOR NOTING OR DISCUSSION)

10.1 Shared Services

Attachment 6: Legal and Governance Models for Shared Resources in Local Government

The option of formalising shared resources across the WEROC Shires has been discussed several times. Over the past five years we have looked at the option of a shared ranger, Environmental Health Officer, compliance officer, regional waste coordinator, emergency services coordinator (for those Shires without a CESM) and a tourism development officer. More recently there was discussion around a shared resource for town planning/building approvals. To date no shared resource arrangements have been entered into, with the exception of the visitor servicing provided by the Shire of Merredin through the Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre.

It is recommended that the Board consider the value in developing a shared services framework or plan for WEROC, to provide a formal structure that can support shared service arrangements should the need arise.

Comments from the meeting:

- It was suggested that a cost analysis be conducted to get a better understanding of what Shires are paying for outsourced services and the potential for cost savings through a shared resource arrangement.
- This will be included on the agenda for discussion at the next WEROC CEO Committee meeting.

10.2 Strategic Artificial Intelligence Support for Local Governments

LG Professionals WA has entered into a new partnership with Component6 to provide Local Government Subscribers discounts on a range of Artificial Intelligence (AI) service offerings. Options are available to band 3 and 4 local governments to join as a group to minimize costs. An option that may be of interest to WEROC Shires is:

AI Readiness assessment - *Assessment across your organisation of your readiness to adopt AI. A dynamic report will be produced, providing scoring and highlighting the likelihood of AI adoption in different parts of your organisation along with areas that may drive significant benefit.*

Comments from the meeting:

- It was generally agreed that something of this nature will be worthwhile given the increasing use of AI across all sectors, but the timing is not right.

11. FUTURE MEETINGS

The approved schedule of meeting dates and locations for 2025 is as follows:

WEROC Inc. Board Meetings

| Date | Host Council |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Wednesday 17 March 2025 | Merredin |
| Wednesday 7 May 2025 | Westonia |
| Wednesday 31 July 2025 | Kellerberrin |

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Wednesday 24 September 2024 | Southern Cross |
| Thursday 27 November 2024 | Bruce Rock |

Given that the Shire of Cunderdin have now joined WEROC, the Board might like to consider an adjustment to the host council rotation for the rest of the year.

Comments from the meeting:

- Mr. Raymond Griffiths requested that the meeting scheduled to take place in Kellerberrin on 31 July, be moved to Wednesday 13 August to align with the LGISWA Inter-municipal Golf Tournament. The meeting will be held in the morning, followed by lunch and enable those who are participating, to then carry on to the golf tournament.
- The Shire of Bruce Rock offered the Shire of Cunderdin the opportunity to host the November meeting. The Shire of Cunderdin accepted the offer. The November meeting will therefore now be held in Cunderdin.
- The September meeting date clashes with the WALGA convention. The date or the location for this meeting will need to be moved. The Executive Officer will provide options once the proposal for the joint ROC event is finalised.

12. CLOSURE

Ms. Alison Harris thanked the WEROC Board for their acceptance of the Shire of Cunderdin's application. Ms. Lisa O'Neill formally welcomed the Shire of Cunderdin on behalf of the WEROC Board.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 12.27pm.

DECLARATION

These minutes were confirmed by the WEROC Inc. Board at the meeting held _____

Signed _____

Person presiding at the meeting at which these minutes were confirmed