



Councillor Information Bulletin

For the Ordinary Council Meeting
held on Thursday 23rd June 2022

INDEX

1. **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

2. **TABLED CORRESPONDENCE**

- **OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

Tender Outcome- Contract Audit Services.

- **LGIS**

CEO Update 24th May 2022.

- **WALGA**

WALGA Membership and subscriptions for 2022/23.

- **AUSTRALIAN ROAD RESEARCH BOARD (ARRB)**

Road Network Survey for WALGA roads.

3. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

4. **TOURISM REPORT**

5. **OTHER**

- **WALGA**

Media Release 15th June 2022.

- **DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Australian Fire Danger Rating System implementation.

- **CEACA**

Information Session held in Merredin 18th August 2022.

- **FIFTY ACRES**

Prime Minister Albanese announcement of Ministerial Appointments



SHIRE OF WESTONIA

June/July 2022

Date & Time	What	Where	Who
Thursday 23 June	Council Meeting	Chambers	Councillors, Senior Staff
Monday 27 June	Great Eastern Zone Meeting	Merredin Recreation Centre	President, Deputy CEO
Monday 27 June	WEROC Board Meeting	Merredin Recreation Centre	President, Deputy CEO
Wednesday 20 July	WALGA Representatives Meeting	CEO Office	CEO
Thursday 21 July	Council Meeting	Chambers	Councillors, Senior Staff



Our Ref: 7816

Mr Arthur Price
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Westonia
41 Wolfram Street
WESTONIA WA 6423

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Dear Mr Price

TENDER OUTCOME – CONTRACT AUDIT SERVICES

Recently, the Office of the Auditor General invited proposals from the private sector for the provision of professional services to audit the Shire of Westonia.

I am pleased to advise we have appointed Butler Settineri to conduct the external audit for your entity on behalf of this Office for a three-year period commencing with the audit for the year ending 30 June 2022.

The contracted auditor will report to Mikey Fiorucci, OAG Assistant Director.

Please note that under the contract between the Auditor General and the contractor, Butler Settineri may not seek or undertake any other work for your agency during the term of the contract without the prior written consent of the Auditor General.

Should you require any further information regarding the above please contact me on 6557 7526.

Yours sincerely

Grant Robinson
Assistant Auditor General
Financial Audit
2 June 2022



MEMBER ALERT

CEO Update

24 May 2022

Hello Bill

LGIS Mutual Update

2021/22 has been one of the toughest years in the Scheme's history. Against a backdrop of an ongoing pandemic, global upheaval and natural catastrophes LGIS continues to deliver sustainable ongoing protection to the Western Australian local government sector.

The LGIS Board of Directors met on Thursday 12 May 2022 to consider the 2022/23 Scheme budget and the capital of your Scheme.

On current projections LGIS will report a financial deficit of over \$4 million for 2021/22. Given the current financial position the Board has decided to retain \$3 million which was set aside from 2020/21 surplus to offset the 2021/22 deficit. This means that members will not receive a surplus distribution or contribution credits for 2022/23.

Managing your scheme

Recent years have seen positive results for your Scheme. Over the past decade, despite always budgeting close to break even, we've achieved surplus results in eight of the ten years, and two deficit results. On average, there has been an annual surplus of slightly over \$6 M, with these surpluses returned to our members.

In early 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the LGIS Board made an additional one off special distribution payment of \$7 million to support members. This payment to members emptied our (then) reserves.

When making financial decisions the Board always ensures that we maintain available capital at a ratio of 1.5 times the Minimum Capital Requirements (MCR). Our MCR is independently assessed and recommended by specialist consultants PwC.

This decision means LGIS will remain within our target capital range, ensuring that your Scheme remains strong and ready to respond when needed.

2021/22 An extraordinary and volatile year.

LGIS' financial position has experienced income and expenditure pressure in 2021/22. It's important to remember that the very nature of our business – protection for loss events – is volatile.

A large part of our income comes from our investments. They have been hit by the ongoing pandemic, economic impacts of the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the USA Federal Reserve decisions on interest rates. Whilst our longer term investment performance remains sound, these circumstances have driven reduced returns on funds under investment in 2021/22.

Against this backdrop the WA local government sector has also had a poor claims year. Claims costs across all LGIS portfolios have escalated; we're anticipating that claims costs will be nearly \$7 million over budget at the close of financial year.

Fire damage has accounted for over \$4.5 M in property damage claims costs. The bushfires over summer in the Wheatbelt, South West and Great Southern, also significantly impacted our liability, motor, and bushfire volunteers portfolios.

WorkCare claims have seen an unprecedented jump, which is in-line with all-industry trends. COVID restrictions were a contributor to this result with elective surgery postponed on and off for months throughout the year. This meant that many claimants were on workers' compensation payments for longer than usual while they waited for treatment.

Membership renewal

It's times like these that the strength of a mutual approach comes to the fore. We leave behind one of the toughest periods your scheme has faced in recent years and the global insurance market remains difficult.

The WA local government sector's claims experience will see an adjustment in risk profile and appetite from LGIS' indemnity providers. The change in the claims experience coupled with increasing economic pressures create a challenging environment.

Against this backdrop we're working to achieve the best outcome for the protection of WA local governments to contain contribution increases.

Now more than ever LGIS members, WA local governments, need to work together - supporting each other, sharing knowledge and each doing their part to manage risks and reduce claims.

LGIS plays a key role in leading the sector on risk management. In the coming months you'll hear about some exciting new projects which aim to help all of our members manage their risks across cyber exposures, motor fleet management and ageing workforce, amongst others.

LGIS Account managers will be contacting members over the next few months. This will be an excellent opportunity to discuss any of your questions.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Seth
Chief Executive Officer

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West Leederville WA 6007

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Fax: (08) 9483 8898
Web: www.lgiswa.com.au



8 June 2022

Via email: ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au

Mr Bill Price
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Westonia
41 Wolfram Street
Westonia WA 6423

Dear Mr Price

WALGA MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2022/23

WALGA exists to represent and support Local Governments in Western Australia and leverage the collective strength and influence of the sector for the benefit of our members and their communities. The Association's ability to do this is enhanced by having all 139 Councils as members and I thank you for that ongoing support.

To assist you in planning for the new financial year, I have provided your preliminary forecast subscription/s overleaf, including the membership subscription price, the price for renewal of the services to which you currently subscribe and the quoted price for optional subscription activities to which you may wish to consider subscribing. Please note, all amounts are excluding GST. Also enclosed is a brief outline of the subscription services available to WALGA members.

The basis for calculating membership subscriptions is an assessment model that includes a fixed component (40%) and two variable components (30% each). The two variable components are each Local Government's share of total sector revenue and each Local Government's share of total State population.

For the past five years, there has been no increase in subscription levels. However, due to increasing cost pressures, WALGA has applied a 2.5% increase on membership subscriptions and a 2.5% to 2.75% increase on service subscriptions for 2022-23. WALGA values your membership and will continue to strive to provide you with the highest levels of service and value for money from your subscription/s.

We ask that you provide a purchase order number for your membership subscription and for all current subscriptions you wish to renew or those you would like to commence.

(Continued on next page)

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Shire of Westonia	Current Subscription excl GST	*Potential Subscription excl GST	Purchase Order
Membership	\$8,079.01		
Procurement Services		\$2,600.00	
Tax Services	\$1,560.00		
Council Connect	\$11,500.00		
Employee Relations	\$4,280.00		
Local Laws Service	\$660.00		
Governance Service	\$355.00		

**Not currently subscribed*

Please email purchase order numbers to ar@walga.asn.au or mark the above table and return via email. If you have any queries in relation to your subscriptions, please contact the Accounts Receivable Officer on 9213 2022 or by email at ar@walga.asn.au .

I look forward to working closely with you in the coming year.

Yours sincerely



Nick Sloan
Chief Executive Officer

Employee Relations Service

2022-23

The Employee Relations (ER) service delivers professional industrial relations (IR) and human resource (HR) advisory, industrial advocacy and consultancy services to Local Governments and Regional Councils in Western Australia through an annual subscription. The ER service represents great value for money and will provide you with access to IR specialists with specific Local Government experience and knowledge.

Subscribers to the ER service can:

- receive unlimited phone and email advice and support to assist your HR team, line managers and executive team to navigate all HR and IR issues;
- access an abundance of template policies, procedures and letters, and comprehensive ER Guides on a subscriber only section of the WALGA website;
- access updates, templates, webinars and advice to assist your Local Government to navigate the proposed transition from the Federal to the State IR system;
- utilise up to 70 hours of industrial advocacy representation at conciliation/mediation/conference in the employment and discrimination tribunals;
- access the WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey online portal and report for free if your Local Government completes the survey for that reporting period;
- attend our annual HR Forum and regular webinars to explore HR/IR topics, trends and updates relevant to the Local Government sector; and
- receive our ER Alerts (email updates) where we keep subscribers informed about key issues impacting employment, including steps to comply with amended employment legislation, state and federal awards and court decisions.

Our team

The WALGA ER team is comprised of eight IR specialists with significant IR and HR experience across a range of industries. Our team also has a dedicated position responsible for preparing resources to assist Local Governments with the proposed State IR transition.

Consultancy services

ER subscribers can access ER consultancy services on a fee-for-service basis, subject to capacity, as set out in the Service Summary 2022-23 overleaf. Consultancy services will be quoted and charged at a rate of \$180 per hour (ex GST).

New consultancy service offerings include a hands-on position description classification workshop delivered onsite to upskill your teams and enterprise bargaining workshops for those that require in-depth guidance on process and strategy.

Annual subscription fee

The annual fee to subscribe to the WALGA ER service is contained within the letter from the WALGA CEO inviting your Local Government to subscribe to all WALGA services.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about subscribing to the WALGA ER service please contact the WALGA ER team on 1300 366 956 or by email on employeerelations@walga.asn.au.

Optional WALGA Subscriptions

2022

In addition to the policy advice and advocacy provided to all Members, WALGA offers a number of subscription activities to assist Local Governments to perform their duties.

Council Connect

CouncilConnect is a WALGA cloud-based subscription service for Local Government website management and hosting. Delivered on behalf of WALGA by Market Creations, a leading Western Australian ICT and Web Design company, the solution model was designed specifically for WA Local Governments. The CouncilConnect subscription service is currently being used for over 70 Local Government websites in WA.

Governance/Local Laws Service

Subscribers to the Governance Service are able to access electronic, searchable versions of WALGA's Councillors Manual, Practice Notes and Proformas Manuals, plus an editable Decision Making in Practice Toolkit and a range of other templates and guidelines to assist Local Governments in delivering good governance. In addition, the Local Laws service includes guidelines on the Local Law making process, template Local Laws in downloadable format, NCP/public benefit tests and information on role of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation.

Procurement Services

Subscription services include access to the WA Local Government Procurement Toolkit, an essential resource for all LG officers that outlines the steps in the procurement process and provides templates to assist along the way. Additional benefits include a help line for procurement advice and support, membership of the Procurement Network, a library of resources, template procurement policy and access to advice on statutory requirements for procuring goods and services.

Tax Services

Delivered by tax specialists Moore, subscribers access information and advisory services to support Local Government indirect taxation compliance. The service maintains regular communications, training, an enquiry hotline and produces reference resources including the Elected Member Taxation Guide and Officer Tax Guide.

Email Subscriptions

2022

Anyone working in the Western Australian Local Government sector is encouraged to subscribe to one of our many email newsletter publications, listed below.

- **Local Government News**

A weekly newsletter providing staff with relevant news, events and opportunities for consultation. All Local Government inboxes are subscribed to the newsletter, and we encourage you to share the newsletter with all staff in the organisation. If your organisation is not currently receiving Local Government News, please contact communications@walga.asn.au

- **Councillor Direct**

WALGA's weekly newsletter tailored to WA Local Government Elected Members, Mayors, residents and CEOs. All current Elected Members and CEOs are subscribed to the list, but may opt out at any time.

- **EnviroNews**

WALGA's monthly newsletter providing environmental, climate change and sustainability news, views and updates from WA Local Governments, including funding opportunities. To subscribe, [click here](#).

- **Planning and Building News**

WALGA's monthly planning and built environment newsletter showcases planning updates from across the sector for those working in this area. To subscribe to this newsletter, [click here](#).

- **WasteNews**

WALGA's fortnightly waste and recycling newsletter. To subscribe to this newsletter, [click here](#).

- **Community and Place News**

A monthly newsletter providing Local Government Community Development staff with news, funding opportunities and opportunities for consultation. To subscribe, [click here](#).

- **Emergency Management News**

This newsletter provides Local Government Emergency Management staff with relevant news, updates and information. To subscribe to this newsletter, [click here](#).

- **RoadWise Road Safety News**

WALGA's bi-monthly newsletter showcasing road safety news, initiatives and funding opportunities from across the State. To subscribe, [click here](#).

- **Procurement News**

Provides updates on procurement issues within Local Government, the Procurement Network and eQuotes. To subscribe to this newsletter, [click here](#).

- **Training News**

This newsletter keeps subscribers updated on upcoming WALGA Training courses, offered both in-house, online and via eLearning. To subscribe, [click here](#).

- **Tax News**

This newsletter is made available to paid subscribers in conjunction with the WALGA Tax Service. To find out more, email ablitz@walga.asn.au.

- **Employee Relations Alerts**

Made available to Human Resources staff who are paid subscribers in conjunction with the WALGA Employee Relations Service. To find out more, email employeerelations@walga.asn.au.



To find out more, visit walga.asn.au/publications or email communications@walga.asn.au

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Good afternoon Bill and Kevin;

My name is Catherine LeGrand, and I'm with the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB). WALGA has commissioned us to conduct a road condition survey of designated sealed and unsealed roads in your Shire over the next two months as part of the *Roads 2040: Regional Strategies for Significant Local Government Roads* initiative.

I wanted to contact you to ensure you were aware of our presence and what we are doing, as I am sure you may get some queries from local residents.

The **ARRB Network Survey Vehicle (NSV)** (as shown below) is a fully integrated mobile data collection system that can measure multiple pavement condition parameters such as roughness (longitudinal profile), rutting (transverse profile) and macro-texture, simultaneously in a single pass. The data is collected and reported according to current Austroads data collection test methods. At the same time, the NSV also collects digital video imaging from multiple cameras, which can be used to identify pavement surface defects, monitor the condition of roadside assets, and undertake road safety audits from the safety of the office.

This data collection occurs at normal driving speeds, so there will be no disruption to other road users.



Once the data is collected Council can use the data to:

- Inform pavement asset decisions and update asset databases,
- assist in the preparation of project proposals to the Regional Road Groups,
- demonstrate the before event condition of assets should there be a natural disaster.

The collection of this type of data also assists WALGA in reporting on the state of the road network and advocating for funding.

ARRB has been commissioned to survey roads across the Wheatbelt, and I will give you a further courtesy call before the survey commences in your Shire to ensure you are aware of progress.

WALGA has identified that some Shires may wish to take advantage of our survey team being on your network and has advised us that they are happy to accommodate additional surveys in their program subject to Shires funding the additional roads. This may be attractive as any costs would represent good value given mobilisation does not need to be considered.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of additional surveys or require clarity over any aspect of this survey, please get in touch with me at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

Catherine LeGrand

Senior Professional, Safer Smarter Infrastructure

[Click here to join our mailing list >](#)



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CEO'S REPORT

1. GENERAL MATTERS

- Advertised Community Development Officer (CDO) and Community Wellbeing Officer (CWO) positions vacancies with applications closing 20th June 2022.
- Several onsite meetings were held with potential Stadium builders over bowling greens.
- Completed tenancy agreement with B & J Parker for the vacant CEO house.
- Participated in monthly OH&S meeting with LGIS Risk Coordinator and staff.
- Attended a CEACA meeting held in Kellerberrin on Monday 30th May 2022.
- Conducted Performance Reviews and introduced revised Position Descriptions PD's for administration staff.
- Attended Golf Club meeting held on Wednesday 1st June 2022 to discuss updates and progress of LGIS Golf Day arrangements.
- A large percentage of time this month has been concentrated on the drafting of the 2022/23 budget.
- Met with Dr Olga Ward and Laura Black about the logistics and possible relocation of the surgery to the CRC building.
- Warralakin Hall has been broken into recently with damage to the back wooden door which has since been repaired.
- A Honda motor and pump has been stolen off the old Water Tanker which has been parked down in the lay down area for several months. Unaware of when this may have happened.
- 4 x large timber beams have been provided to Mr Murray for the restoration work on the old cart.
- Have been collating and providing a variety of documentation as part of the defense against legal claim from Roberts – Boodarockin Rd incident.

2. DELEGATED AUTHORITY ACTIONS

- Nil

3. ROADCREW

- Winter grading program has commenced with the following roads being completed (refer Attached Map)
- Rehabilitation works have commenced on the Stoneman Road Gravel pit which will be a work in progress over a number of years.
- Spraying of roadsides has been carried out focusing on major roads.
- Kevin Paust will be taking leave from Thursday 16th June until 1st July.
- Airstrip has been winter graded.
- Golf club driveway has been graded.

4. TOWN

- The 4 x accommodation dongas have been installed onsite at the School ready for installation of septic's, electrical connection, verandahs and finishing off.
- Brownley's Plumbing have all but completed the plumbing works at the Dongas.



- Move round tables and sort chairs at Old Miners Hall for big breakfast function. Council donated a trailer load of wood as a raffle for the fundraising function.
- Block slashing has commenced around the townsite.
- New pathways have been installed at the Cemetery.



5. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & BUILDING MATTERS

On-Site Effluent Disposal System Approvals to Construct

- Lot 311 Warrachuppin Road, Warrachuppin for Morgan Price.

Building Permits since March 2022

- 6/2021-22 – Shed for Louis Geier 3 Quartz Street, Westonia.
- 7/2021-22 – Carport for Graeme & Sharon Bright, 1 Quartz Street, Westonia
- 8/2021-22 – 4x2 Dwelling for Morgan Price Lot 311 Warrachuppin Road, Warrachuppin.
- 9/2021-22 – Shed for Ross Della Bosca 26 Sheeli6te Street, Westonia.
- 10/2021-22 – Accommodations units at the Old School site for the Shire of Westonia.
- 11/2021-22 – 4x2 dwelling for Ross Della Bosca 26 Scheelite Street, Westonia (A separate Building permits is required for the future alfresco, carport and veranda).

6. PLANT HOURS

The following is a list of plant and vehicle kilometre and hour readings for the period ending 1.6.22

Item		1.5.22	1.6.22
P1	CAT 140 GRADER	656hrs	754hrs
P2	CAT 12M GRADER	6,731hrs	6,814hrs
P3	PRIME MOVER (OLD FREIGHTLINER)	195,110kms	197,594kms
P4	ROAD TRAIN (NEW FREIGHTLINER)	68,710kms	71,723kms
P5	JOHN DEERE LOADER	3,898hrs	3,961hrs
P6	CAT ROLLER (SKIP)	295hrs	378hrs
P7	MINI-EXCAVATOR	744hrs	792hrs
P8	TELEHANDLER JCB	2,186hrs	2,208hrs
P9	TOYOTA (GRADER UTE)	1,058kms	1,960kms
P10	mitsubishi CANTER	74,633kms	75,337kms
P11	TOYOTA HILUX (GARDENER) WT 35	89,521kms	89,759kms
P12	JOHN DEERE (5100)	2,310hrs	2,324hrs
P14	TOYOTA LANDCRUISER GXL (CEO)	2,118kms	7,099kms
P15	TOYOTA PRADO GXL (W/SUPER)	8,544kms	12,786kms
P16	TOYOTA RAV4 (ADMIN)	51,234kms	54,317kms
P17	TOYOTA HILUX DUAL CAB	111,880kms	87kms
P19	FAST ATTACK	12,481kms	12,481kms
P20	FIRE TRUCK	6,515kms	6,515kms
P18	WESSY BUS	127,532kms	128,372kms
P22	KUBOTA RIDE ON MOWER (OVAL)	1,961hrs	1,961hrs
P23	TOYOTA MINI BUS (WT COM V)	29,639kms	29,854kms
P24	CAT ROLLER (LOLA)	319hrs	397hrs
P25	MICK's BEAUT UTE	152,122kms	153,202kms
P26	GO-GO MOBILE SWEEPER		

1000mm

Winter Grading 2022

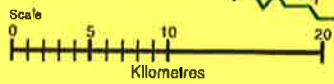
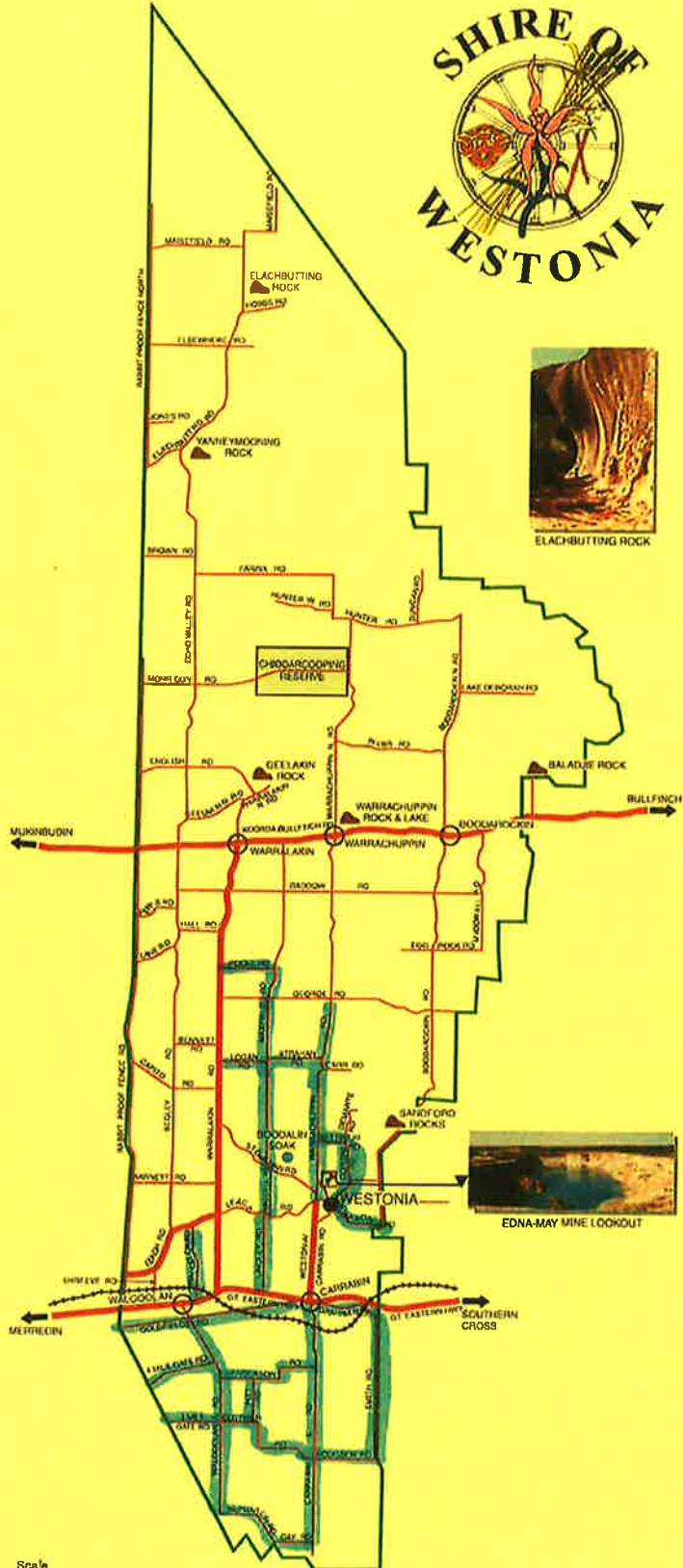


ELACHBUTTING ROCK



EDNA-MAY MINE LOOKOUT

2400mm



TOURISM REPORT

WESTONIA TOURIST PARK

We were full and overflowing for the June WA day long weekend. This was a trend over weekends throughout June. Sunset Coast Caravan Club and ACC Wait A While Nomads club booked out the caravan park over the last two weekends in June. It is great to see we are able to cater for the larger groups since increasing the number of bays in the Park. Our stats are reflecting this increase. If this is the beginning of our tourism season I think it is going to be a busy one in 2022. At the end of May our caretaker came down with Covid and had to isolate in her donga. We did what we could in terms of directing visitors to the office or booking over the phone. Greta Gejas had to take on the extra cleaning duties and she did a great job keeping up with that on top of her regular cleaning schedule. Sam had to use the Schools disabled bathroom as this was the only toilet and shower facilities available (with no disruption to others).

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

- Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing. Focal area being bathroom maintenance (fixtures and disabled bathroom upgrade)
- Grassed/Synthetic Lawn area for Tents. The shade cloth areas are not lasting as long as first thought. They are breaking down within a year then look a mess until they are able to be replaced.

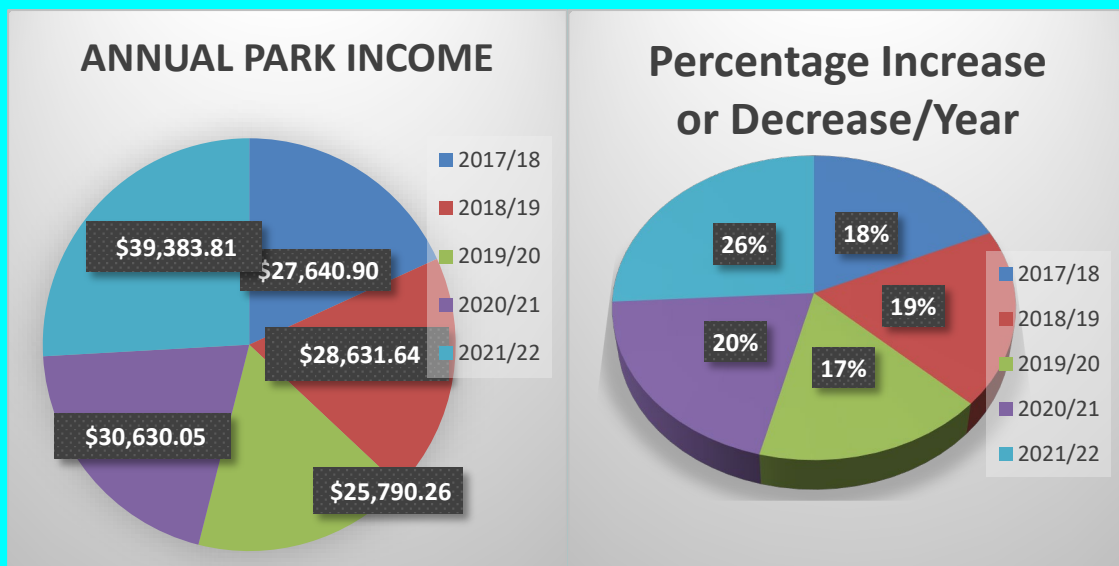
FUTURE PROJECTS

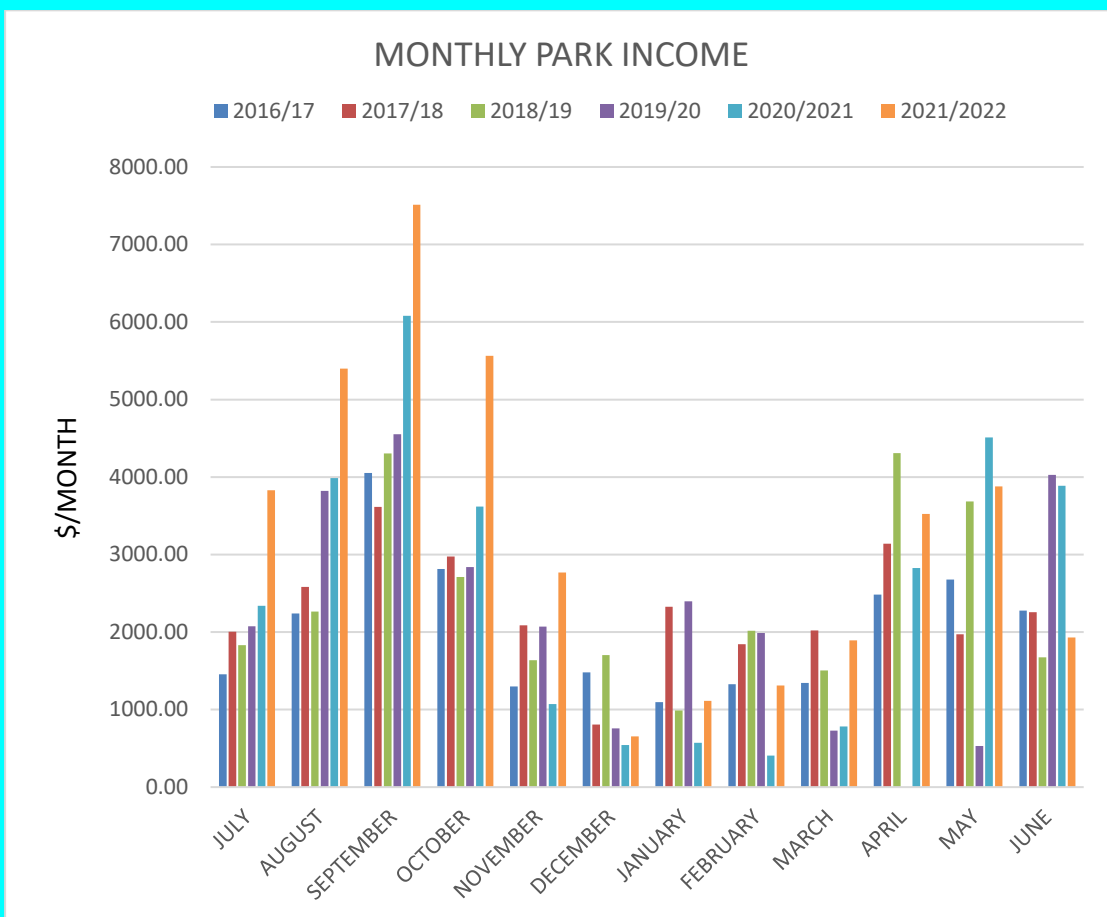
- Unpowered Overflow/ Tent area – Weed matting and out lined sites

VISITOR FEEDBACK

- Great Facilities!
- Love the new look and it's great to see more bays.
- Caretaker is fantastic and an asset to the park.

STATISTICS





HOOD-PENN MUSEUM:

John Simmonds has recently donated a royal flying doctor radio, antenna and cables, this will be added to the Drs scene shortly. The back drop photograph for the farm scene has been ordered through Thompson Signs there is a waitlist hopefully it wont be too much longer before it arrives.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

- Side door handle has been switched with the back door handle, volunteers will now enter through the back door facing the car park area.
- Padlocks installed on medicine cabinets in Drs Scene

RECENT PROJECTS

- Lighting solutions.
- Storage area restructure

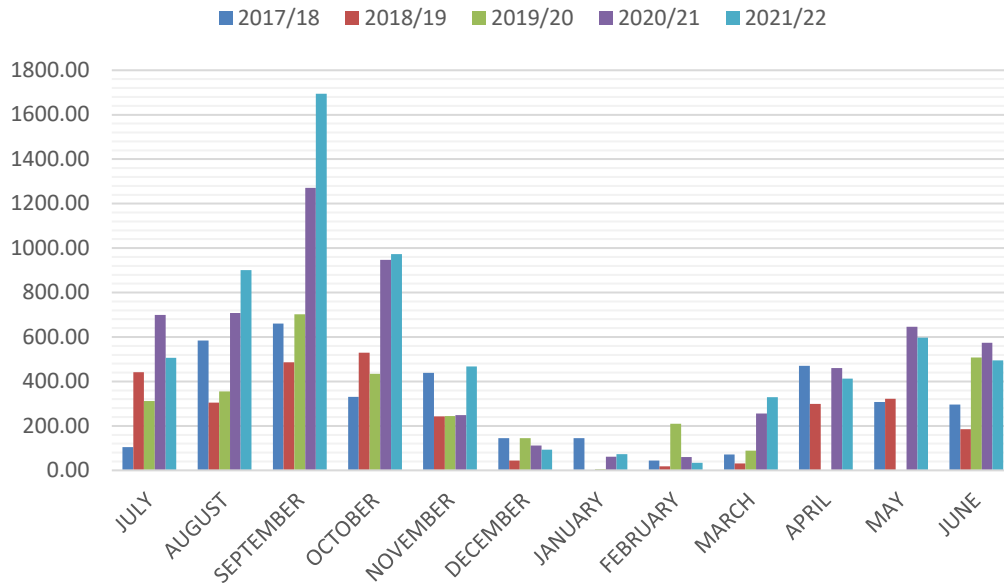
FUTURE PROJECTS

- New scenes to be created in the existing space of the old storage room to tell the stories of our primary industries of which Westonia was founded on.

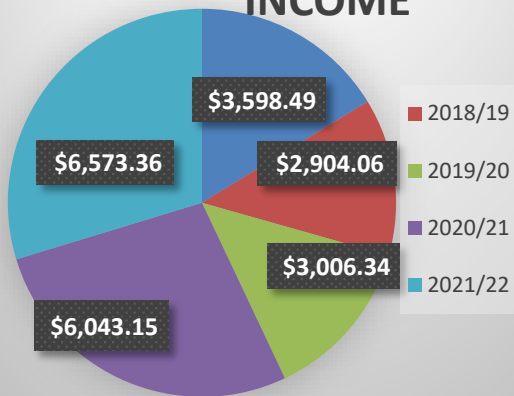
VISITOR FEEDBACK (Verbal and Visitor register)

- Clean No dust!
- Not cluttered
- The best Museum they have visited on their travels.
- Not over the top with things to read.
- Visitor's hearing about museum in Merredin, specifically the Visitor's Centre, railway & military museums.
- Wheatbelt way and word of mouth still a big performer for us (getting quite more and more of the highway drop-ins)

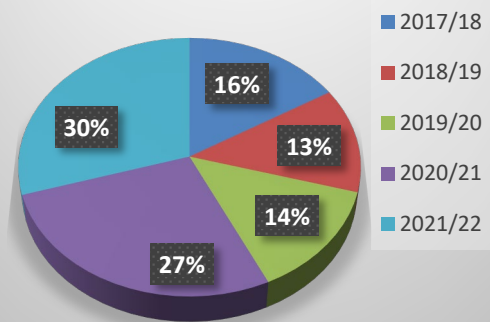
MONTHLY MUSEUM INCOME



ANNUAL MUSEUM INCOME



Percentage Increase or Decrease/Year



WALGA Welcomes Announcement on Simplified Financial Reporting



WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2022

Media Release

The WA Local Government Association (WALGA) has welcomed Local Government Minister, John Carey's announcement, on Monday, **13 June** regarding more simplified financial reporting processes for Local Governments, which will be phased in from July 1 this year.

WALGA has long been advocating for a more streamlined system on behalf of its member Councils to ease the administrative time commitment and costs of financial reporting.

While the new process will be streamlined, all financial statements will still be audited by the Office of the Auditor General to ensure that there is transparency and accountability for all ratepayers regarding their Councils' finances.

WALGA President Cr Karen Chappel said that the Association had been advocating for the required level of detail in annual financial reports to be re-assessed, especially for small and medium sized Councils.

"The new requirements will reflect the individual Council's scale of operations so that it will not only make it easier for them to produce their financial reports, but it will be easier for residents and ratepayers to understand them." President Chappel said.

"The fact that the new reports will be quicker and easier to produce should also cost less, further benefiting ratepayers."

Ends

FOR COMMENT PLEASE CONTACT:

Good afternoon,

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) will be implemented on 1 September 2022 across Australia. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has the following key updates requiring action from all local governments across the State.

Signage

As part of Western Australia's implementation of the AFDRS, the current network of roadside Fire Danger Rating signs, managed and maintained by local governments, needs to be replaced or removed by 1 September 2022. There is currently a range of emergency management communication methods/products available to the community, and roadside signage is only one method of community messaging for preparedness.

The AFDRS project team, led in WA by DFES, has secured funding from the Commonwealth to facilitate the procurement and replacement of existing analogue and digital signage. Local governments are asked to assess the optimal number and locations of current signage. To submit your signage requirements, refer to **Attachment A**. It outlines the process, funding arrangements, guidelines, timelines and contact details. Local governments have until close of business on Thursday 30 June 2022 to submit their signage requirements.

Legislation

As local governments are preparing for issuing of rates notices; **Attachment B** can be inserted or referenced to provide your communities with an update on the AFDRS project. Of significance is the status of legislative changes in Western Australia. Changes are coming and local governments are urged to include this information in their upcoming rates notice and/or fire break notice.

For more information [subscribe to our AFDRS Newsletter](#). To request high-resolution images for fire break and rates notices, please email AFDRS@dfes.wa.gov.au.

Kind regards,

The DFES AFDRS Project Team

Department of Fire and Emergency Services / 20 Stockton Bend, Cockburn Central WA 6164

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FOR A SAFER STATE

Australian Fire Danger Rating System

What is the Australian Fire Danger Rating System?

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) Program is redesigning the forecasting of fire danger in Australia. The AFDRS is a project of national significance being developed collaboratively by each state and territory, and the Commonwealth government. It aims to improve public safety, reduce the impacts of bushfires and better support the community with nationally consistent ratings and messaging. The AFDRS will be implemented on 1 September 2022 across Australia.

What are Fire Danger Ratings?

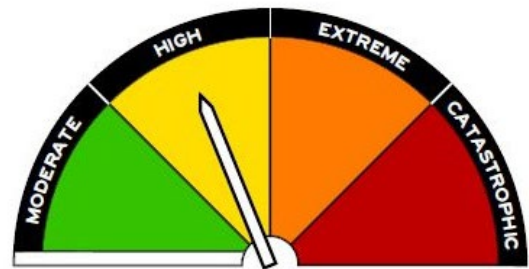
Fire Danger Ratings describe the potential level of danger should a bushfire start. They provide people with information so that they can take action to protect themselves and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires. Ratings are calculated using a combination of weather forecasting and vegetation information. They do not indicate the chance of a fire occurring.

How is the AFDRS different from our current system?

The current Fire Danger Rating System is largely based on 60-year-old science applied on a large scale. New technology and research have greatly improved our ability to more accurately predict fire behaviour and the potential threat to the community.

The AFDRS will have four levels with action-oriented messages to encourage people to take action. The ratings and high-level messages are:

1. **Moderate:** Plan and prepare.
2. **High:** Be ready to act.
3. **Extreme:** Take action now to protect life and property.
4. **Catastrophic:** For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas.



Supporting messages, including localised information, will clearly explain what community response is required at each level. The AFDRS also introduces an 'off' or 'no rating' level (white strip under Moderate) for days where no proactive action is required. This does not mean that fires cannot happen, but that they are not likely to move or act in a threatening way.

What are the benefits of the AFDRS?

Currently, there are inconsistencies in how jurisdictions determine and communicate Fire Danger Ratings. By implementing a national system, wherever people are in Australia they will see and be able to access consistent fire danger advice, maximising their ability to understand and appropriately respond to conditions. The AFDRS will also apply eight of the most contemporary fire behaviour models. This will see us move to a Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) that provides a much more accurate scale of potential fire behaviour based on weather conditions and the applicable model. The following table lists the agreed FBI thresholds for each rating:



Name/Colour	Fire Behaviour Index Range	Suppression difficulty
MODERATE (Green)	12-23	Most bushfires in this category. Fires typically suppressed with direct, parallel or indirect attack.
HIGH (Yellow)	24-49	Initial attack success critical to prevent large fire development. Defensive suppression strategies.
EXTREME (Orange)	50-99	Defensive suppression strategies. High levels of threat to life/property. Safety of firefighters and community paramount.
CATASTROPHIC (Red)	100+	Unsafe for firefighters and community. Without initial attack success, likelihood of very large fire development is very high. High probability of loss of life and property.

What do Local Governments need to know?

The move from six to four ratings, new names and thresholds, will change how Fire Danger Ratings are referenced within the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, *Bush Fires Regulations 1954* and *Bush Fires (Infringements) Regulations 1978*. DFES has been consulting with representatives across state and local government, agriculture and industry to identify and progress the required changes ahead of the nationally agreed 1 September 2022 implementation date.

Total Fire Ban

The primary justification for recommending the declaration of a Total Fire Ban (TFB) is based on the forecast Fire Danger Index (FDI) and resultant Fire Danger Rating (FDR). The State of WA is currently divided into the three TFB FDI indicator zones (Zone 1: FDI 50+, Zone 2: FDI 60+ and Zone 3: FDI 75+).

As the AFDRS will provide a Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) as a scale of fire danger that produces fine-scale information across a range of fuel types (compared to the existing two fuel types), there will not be a requirement for TFBs to be declared across separate zones. As the transition between the High and Extreme rating (50 FBI) is associated with erratic fire behaviour and an increased likelihood of community loss and significant consequences, it has been nationally recognised as the most appropriate threshold for a TFB declaration.

Harvest Vehicle Movement Ban

Currently during a TFB a Bushfire Control Officer MUST impose a ban, commonly referred to as a Harvest Vehicle Movement Ban (HVMB), on off-road activity for business, industry and agriculture if the FDI exceeds 35. However, as the AFDRS is based on the FBI rather than Grassland FDI (GFDI) and a new grassland model, an appropriate FBI/FDR threshold must be determined. Analysis was conducted to determine the range of weather combinations (temperature, relative humidity and wind speed) and fuel inputs (4.5 t/ha fuel load and 100% curing) that equate to a GFDI of 32. These same weather conditions when applied to the FBI algorithm, resulted in producing an average FBI of 40 which will become the new trigger under the AFDRS.

WA is currently leading the way in producing a tool that will allow for calculating an FBI to inform the requirement for a HVMB based on the new grassland model. The tool will be available on smart devices when either on or offline and will allow for the input of observed weather and grass curing conditions.



Burning under a Permit

Under the current system, burning during the restricted burning period is not permitted under a burn permit when the fire danger forecast reaches 'Very High' or above. Following detailed analysis work and understanding of the new science behind the AFDRS, the new 'High' rating has been identified as the most appropriate upper-level threshold for authorisation of burn permits under s.18 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, notwithstanding the requirements on a permit holder as set out in:

1. Section 38(17) of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*; and / or
2. Regulation.15B(7) of the *Bush Fires Regulations 1954*.

This is based on national recognition that planned burning is generally not recommended at the High rating (FBI 24 – 49) due to the potential that fire line intensity, spotting activity and rapidly spreading fires will pose a serious risk of burn escapes. A Fire Weather Officer will still be able to authorise the use of a permit at a rating of 'High' and above (i.e. an FBI of 24 or more) during the restricted burning period s.38(17).

Fire break and rates notices

Changes to legislation and new thresholds for restricted activities will not be finalised in time for information to be released with 2022 fire break and rates notices. Local governments are advised that thresholds are being finalised and the outcomes will be communicated as soon as practical.

DFES suggests the above information be included in your rates notice and fire break notice to inform your communities that changes are coming, with a note that the electronic version will be updated when the information becomes available.

Signage

A replacement program in direct consultation with local governments is proposed to replace the current network of analogue and digital roadside fire danger rating signage ahead of 1 September 2022. Local governments will need to submit their signage requirements and priorities to DFES, who will coordinate the procurement of new signage. Local governments will be required to oversee the removal of existing, and installation of the new, Fire Danger Rating signs. **See Attachment A in the email for information and guidance.**

Tools

The AFDRS will provide tools including the Fire Danger Viewer, and BOM registered user products, that display forecast and current FDRs. This will allow stakeholders that have part of their activity regulated by fire danger (e.g. harvesting operations, permit to burn cancellations, school closures) to obtain customised weather, fuel and fire history data that is precise to the location and the time of day of the activity. This will significantly reduce over-regulation and over-warning, avoiding the need to unnecessarily restrict activities. There will also be an upgrade to the Aurora Fire Behaviour Calculator that will enable users to input local weather conditions to determine the FBI, supporting sound decision making.

Education products

Updates are being worked on for public information sources (e.g. Emergency WA) and a suite of education and training products will be made available to local governments, volunteers and other key stakeholders. A national awareness campaign is also under development, which will launch with the new system to help embed understanding of the new levels and actions.



Training

Training has been developed in a digital modular format and includes eLearning, videos, PowerPoints and guides. Each module will be targeted to the different stakeholders' training requirements, split into three levels:

1. **Introductory:** Introduction to AFDRS concepts and changes. The target audience includes career and volunteer firefighters, government staff and private industries.
2. **Intermediate:** Designed for fire and land management agency staff, and bushfire practitioners for a practical and applied level of training.
3. **Advanced:** Technical training by BoM for Fire Behaviour Analysts (FBANs), planners and researchers.

Once user testing is complete, training packages will be released. In the meantime, we encourage you to [subscribe to our AFDRS Newsletter](#) and review resources at the [AFAC website](#).

Fire Weather Districts

The AFDRS project presented an opportunity for WA to review the [current Fire Weather Districts](#) to improve how FDRs are communicated. The review commenced in January 2021 facilitated by DFES and BoM, involving agency staff and key stakeholders. Following consultation across each region and detailed analysis work, the revised Fire Weather Districts have now been finalised and will be introduced with the release of the AFDRS. The new Fire Weather Districts can be accessed from the [interactive map viewer](#).

Effective from 1 September 2022, BoM will cease using the old model and only forecast using the AFDRS. Given the volume of data associated with forecasting, there will not be an overlap period.

Want to know more or stay in touch?

To learn more about AFDRS Program, visit afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs. For information about the AFDRS WA implementation project, email AFDRS@dfes.wa.gov.au or [subscribe to our AFDRS Newsletter](#).



Good Morning

We are very pleased to advise that CEACA will be hosting an information session in the Merredin Community Regional Community and Leisure Centre on the 18 August 2022. The main purpose of this information session is to ensure that people can ask questions, collect information and leave at the end of the day equipped with enough information to make an informed decision in relation to their current and future care needs. This session is not only for the elderly, but also for those who are struggling with disabilities or health concerns and need to find out what funded or private care services are available to them locally or in their own home. Although Catholic Homes and Therapy Focus will be the main speakers on the day, we have also invited representatives from ACAT, Mental Health, Aboriginal Health, CRC, Shires and other local organisations who will hopefully be on hand to speak to people and answer any questions that they may have. The two presentations will be followed by an opportunity to ask questions. We recognise that not everyone feels comfortable asking questions in a public forum and have therefore arranged an informal morning tea to give those people the opportunity of approaching individual organisations or representatives directly to discuss their concerns and ask questions.

We would be delighted if representatives from the shire could attend this important event and be on hand to answer any questions that community members or their family members may have in relation to their current and future care needs and advise them of what is available to them locally or within the region. We have extended an invitation to various organisations and individuals including ACAT, Mental Health, Aboriginal Health, CRC and Senior Citizens and it would be appreciated if the shire could assist with encouraging attendance. The more people we can have on hand to answer questions the better and community members and their families can walk away with useful information. This will be the first session of its kind held by CEACA and if we receive positive feedback from the day, we will consider holding further sessions in other shires.

We have sent a copy of the poster to the CEACA member shires to print and distribute around town and thank you in advance for your assistance with this. We will also be placing an advertisement in the local newspapers and the Farmers Weekly Health and Wellbeing feature to be printed in July.

We look forward to seeing you there and hopefully meeting many of you for the first time! We will need an indication of numbers attending for catering purposes, so if you could RSVP to my email address it would be very much appreciated.

Aged and Home Care Services – I am too young for all of that!

THE BEST TIME TO PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE IS NOW

Join us to learn more about the government funded Home Care Package program, NDIS or other health services that could benefit you.

We would like to invite you to attend our free information session.

Special Guest Speakers:
Catholic Homes and Therapy Focus

Other health providers will also be in attendance.

Date: Thursday, 18th August 2022 10.00am-1.00pm.

**Merredin Community Regional Community & Leisure Centre,
Bates Street, Merredin.**

Morning Tea will be provided.

Please contact us on **0414 136 687** or **info@ceaca.org.au** if you would like to join us.



*Ageing & Health Services in the
Wheatbelt Information Session*

*We look forward
to seeing you there!*

 **CEACA**
Supporting Age Friendly Communities

 **Catholic Homes**

 **Therapy Focus**



Cabinet	
Name	Title
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP	Prime Minister
The Hon. Richard Marles MP	Deputy Prime Minister Minister for Defence
Senator the Hon. Penny Wong	Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Dr Jim Chalmers MP	Treasurer
Senator the Hon. Katy Gallagher	Minister for Finance Minister for the Public Service Minister for Women
Senator the Hon. Don Farrell	Minister for Trade and Tourism Special Minister of State
The Hon. Tony Burke MP	Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations Minister for the Arts
The Hon. Mark Butler MP	Minister for Health and Aged Care
The Hon. Chris Bowen MP	Minister for Climate Change and Energy
The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP	Minister for the Environment and Water
The Hon. Catherine King MP	Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
The Hon. Linda Burney MP	Minister for Indigenous Australians



The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP	Minister for Social Services
The Hon. Bill Shorten MP	Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Minister for Government Services
The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP	Attorney-General Cabinet Secretary
The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP	Minister for Skills and Training
The Hon. Jason Clare MP	Minister for Education
The Hon. Julie Collins MP	Minister for Housing Minister for Homelessness Minister for Small Business
Michelle Rowland MP	Minister for Communications
Madeleine King MP	Minister for Resources Minister for Northern Australia
Senator Murray Watt	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister for Emergency Management
Ed Husic MP	Minister for Industry and Science
Clare O'Neil MP	Minister for Home Affairs Minister for Cyber Security

Outer Ministry	
Name	Title
Matt Keogh MP	Minister for Veterans' Affairs Minister for Defence Personnel
Pat Conroy MP	Minister for Defence Industry Minister for International Development and the Pacific



Stephen Jones MP	Assistant Treasurer Minister for Financial Services
Andrew Giles MP	Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
Anne Aly MP	Minister for Early Childhood Education Minister for Youth
Anika Wells MP	Minister for Aged Care Minister for Sport
Kristy McBain MP	Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

Assistant Ministers	
Name	Title
The Hon. Justine Elliot MP	Assistant Minister for Social Services Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP	Assistant Minister for Defence Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs Assistant Minister for the Republic
The Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP	Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury
Patrick Gorman MP	Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister
Senator Jenny McAllister	Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy
Senator Carol Brown	Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Ged Kearney MP	Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care
Emma McBride MP	Assistant Minister for Mental Health Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health
Senator Malarndirri McCarthy	Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health



Senator Tim Ayres	Assistant Minister for Trade Assistant Minister for Manufacturing
Senator Anthony Chisholm	Assistant Minister for Education Assistant Minister for Regional Development
Tim Watts MP	Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs