



Councillor Information Bulletin

For the Ordinary Council Meeting
held on Thursday 17th August 2023

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SHIRE OF WESTONIA

August/September 23

Date & Time	What	Where	Who
Thursday 17 August	Council Meeting	Chambers	Councillors, Senior Staff
Thursday – Friday 24 – 25 August	LGIS Gold Tournament	Cuballing	Golfers
Monday 4 September	CEACA Board Meeting 10.00am	Merredin Recreation Centre	Louis Geier & CEO
Monday 4 September	WEROC Board Meeting 1.30pm	Merredin Recreation Centre	President & CEO
Sunday – Tuesday 17 – 19 Sept	Local Government Week	Crown Perth	Crs Crees, DellaBosca Huxtable & Day, CEO & DCEO
Thursday 21 September	Council Meeting	Chambers	Councillors, Senior Staff

CEO'S REPORT

- **GENERAL MATTERS**

- A large portion of the month has been focused on the coordination of the green installation project. The project is two weeks in with the installation of the limestone blocks, reticulation, concrete ditch plinths, drainage and the commencement of the basecourse material.



- The Westonia Progress Association Fuel Station is also nearing completion with just the power connection from Western Power and a bit of fencing to finish off.
- During the month I completed the Club Restricted Liquor License for the Westonia Bowling Club.
- Finally, some tidy up works are being carried out on the Old Garage/Post Office property located in Wolfram Street.
- Rate Notices and budget information were sent out on the 1st August 2023.
- The 24/25 MCA for Warralakin Road and 5 Year Program has been sent to the WNESRRG.
- Council's 23/24 R2R road program has been submitted for endorsement.
- Participated in a CEACA Executive Committee Zoom meeting held on Monday 24th July.
- I conducted staff reviews for both Jasmine & Stacey Geier who have both exceeded expectations ratings for the year under review.
- Provided numerous information and conducted review for Rebekah Burgess (consultant) who has completed the EOI to the Federal Governments Growing Regions Program and for the State Governments Sport & Recreations CSRFF program for the Pool bowl and Plant Room project.
- Tenders have been called for the Pool Kiosk/Changerooms project and the Annual Bitumen Program with details being presented to the September meeting for consideration.
- Meetings have been held with representatives from both Bankwest and Bendigo Banks to discuss future banking arrangements for the Council and Westonia Progress Association with the take-over of Bankwest by Commonwealth.
- Trip to Perth to inspect transportable options provided by TD Transportables and drop off Old Fuel Bowser for refurbishment.
- Hosted 40+ members from the Nangeenan Progress Association (Hall Restoration Committee) on Saturday 5th August providing information and tours of Hood Penn Museum, Bowling Stadium, Old Miners Hall and the shires recent Home Care Services program.
- Work is currently being carries out on the Nurse Practitioner Pilot Service Provider submission which closes 21 August 23.
- Met with the Managing Director of TD Transportables who visited Westonia to look at the land sales options available.

- - **DELEGATED AUTHORITY ACTIONS**
- Nil.
 - **ROADCREW**
 - Winter grading conditions have improved a bit with roads in the South and central portions of the Shire having had a winter grade with both graders now in the northern part of the shire. (Refer Attached Map).
 - Gravel push up has been completed for the Masefield, Rabbit Proof Fence and RPF North, Echo Valley road projects with the trucks to commence carting in this week.
 - Trucks carted 350T basecourse material from Doodlakine Quarry for the Bowling Green project.
 - **TOWN**
 - Shed pads have been completed for Dave Lord and Hilary Stephens properties. House Pad sand for the Stephens property has also been carted in preparation for works.
 - Town crew have been assisting with the installation of reticulation at the bowling green. Quotes for external suppliers to do the job were both between \$50 - \$60,000. We will be completing the project for @ \$20,000.
 - Scott Huggett has completed his Lifeguard and Pool Managers Course in readiness for the Pool Season. Ashton spent one day with Scott to go over the pool operations.
 - Home Care Services provision for various clients.
 - **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & BUILDING MATTERS**
Nil

- **PLANT HOURS**

The following is a list of plant and vehicle kilometre and hour readings for the period ending 1.7.23

Item		1.7.23	1.8.23
P1	<i>CAT 140 GRADER</i>	1,647hrs	1,734hrs
P2	<i>CAT 12M GRADER</i>	7,863hrs	8,032hrs
P3	<i>PRIME MOVER (OLD FREIGHTLINER)</i>	220,929kms	221,148kms
P4	<i>ROAD TRAIN (NEW FREIGHTLINER)</i>	100,460kms	102,185kms
P5	<i>JOHN DEERE LOADER</i>	4,541hrs	4,555hrs
P6	<i>CAT ROLLER (SKIP)</i>	1,034hrs	1,121hrs
P7	<i>MINI-EXCAVATOR</i>	1,047hrs	1,064hrs
P8	<i>TELEHANDLER JCB</i>	2,560hrs	2,597hrs
P9	<i>TOYOTA (GRADER UTE)</i>	24,532kms	25,971kms
P10	<i>mitsubishi CANTER</i>	8,310kms	10,218kms
P11	<i>TOYOTA HILUX (GARDENER) WT 35</i>	99,857kms	100,066kms
P12	<i>JOHN DEERE (5100)</i>	2,529hrs	2,532hrs
P14	<i>TOYOTA LANDCRUISER GXL (CEO)</i>	22,001ms	24,111kms
P15	<i>TOYOTA HILUX D/CAB (W/SUPER)</i>	11,316kms	14,031kms
P16	<i>TOYOTA RAV4 (ADMIN)</i>	89,444kms	89,623kms
P17	<i>TOYOTA HILUX DUAL CAB</i>	21,794kms	22,453kms
P19	<i>FAST ATTACK</i>	16,721kms	16,735kms
P20	<i>FIRE TRUCK</i>	6,727kms	6,795kms
P18	<i>WESSY BUS</i>	140,307kms	140,808kms
P22	<i>KUBOTA RIDE ON MOWER (OVAL)</i>	2,033hrs	2,033hrs
P23	<i>TOYOTA MINI-BUS (WT COM V)</i>	36,956kms	37,444kms
P24	<i>CAT ROLLER (LOLA)</i>	1,407hrs	1,568hrs
P25	<i>MICK's BEAUT UTE</i>	162,433kms	163,333kms
P27	<i>TOYOTA PRADO GXL (DCEO)</i>	9,785kms	11,278kms

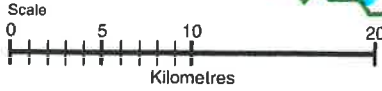
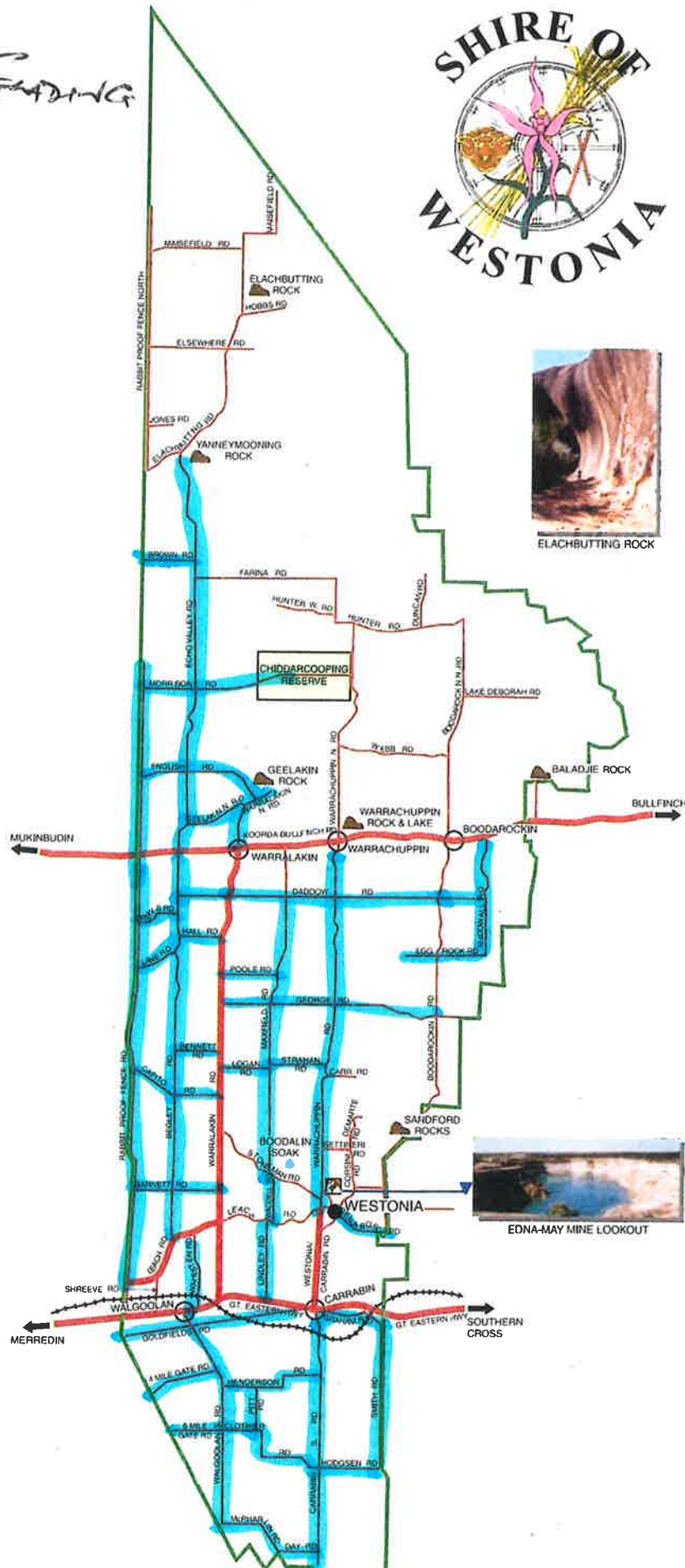
Winter Grading
2023.



ELACHBUTTING ROCK



EDNA-MAY MINE LOOKOUT



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING REPORT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Registrations are in and we have begun advertising for the evening Auction and Entertainment. For the 40 Year anniversary Walk for Warralakin to Westonia fundraiser which will be held on the 16th of September 2023. We will have teams of one to ten members Warralakin Wheatbin along Warralakin rd, Stoneman rd, Boundary rd on to Boodarockin rd then take Wolfram st to the finish line on the Oval. T-shirts, Logo's, meal and activities along the trail are well underway.

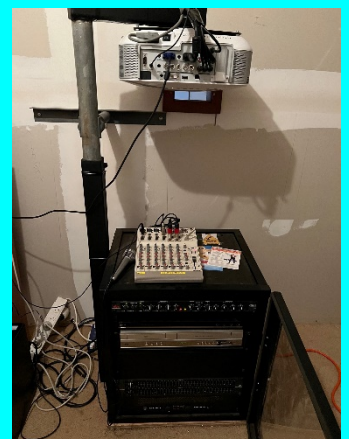
The Westonia Christmas Markets and afternoon Sundowner Sunday the 15th of October – plenty of stall holders are booked in already and we are beginning to start the advertising campaign. Check out wessyxmasmarkets on Instagram courtesy of Sophie Jane Crees.

Grant applications & award nominations submitted:

- Rural Health West Outreach program – we have applied for a continuation of funding for Nurse Practitioner Services in Westonia. WAPHA funding is finishing in June this year. We were successful which will pay for Clinic costs for Nurse Practitioner \$4,000/year for a 2 year period.
- 2023-25 Regional Airports Development Scheme funding. To provide a water supply for the airport terminal (1x 32000L Poly tank). We have received a Funding Deed which has been signed and returned to the RADS team for the grant of \$5343.00 along with the Shire's agreed payment of \$5343.00 to cover the total cost of the project. Work has begun, the Tank purchased and delivered, tank pad built and plumbing works to begin. The Acquittal for this project has been finalised and payment from the Rads team is due to come in.



- Collgar Wind farm Community fund Application – Level 2 Sponsorship application has been submitted in March 2023. (Being for local initiatives, educational programs and scholarships). The application to upgrade the Westonia picture theatre projector system was successful, and we will receive \$10,000 ex GST towards the project. System has been ordered and has now been installed in the Old miners hall. Acquittal to begin
- Blue Tree Project Grant opened in September last year. We have asked for funding in upcoming Wellbeing initiatives including the Walk from Warralakin. BTP are also offering



Mental Health first Aid courses aimed at regional areas and we have asked for more information on how we can get on board with this initiative.

- Age-friendly Communities Connectivity Grants Program 2022-2023 (Department of Communities). Our Wellbeing officer is writing a grant that if successful will allow a program to run that aims to challenge Ageism and a reduce loneliness and improve older people's connections within their local community and more.

Future grant opportunities & award nominations:

- Department of LG, Sport & Cultural Industries – Active Regional Communities Grants (up to \$5000) categories; Capacity building, Event hosting and Participation. Applications open all year.

WELLBEING REPORT

Age Care

Alchemy Technology has installed the bridging software to aid us with our billing, budgeting scheduling for the client, staff and provider. We have signed seven clients and three more to sign on by next month. We are continuing to work on practices in the workplace, staffing and scheduling works to be completed. Administration requirements are growing therefore more staff are needing to get involved with the process in their prospective areas. an idea of what the Staff Jasmine & Heather -finance & reporting, Lani – administration & medical, Stacey - co-ordination, Emilie day to day personal care/social support/health activities, Kerry wellbeing/social support/activities/client follow up, Greta – support worker, Scott – gardening & maintenance. Cleaners will be getting on board shortly upon client request we have Kerrylyne French and Jodie Peterson lined up to begin taking on this role.

Continuing to deliver Meals on Wheels thanks to Ramelius Resources, Northern Rise for catering services and Lani Hale Emilie Menze, Liz Richter for donating their time to deliver three days a week.



Community activities and resources

July Activities:

4th Scrabble 4pax

5th Bus to Mobile Breast Screen Van Merredin – 6 pax

6th Hydrotherapy Pool – 2 attendees & Bingo 5 x attendees

7th Dot Painting – 4 pax

10th Kay's craft group every Monday 9am – 12pm

11th Book Club Meeting EOI – 4Pax, Scrabble – 4x pax

12th Carpet Bowls – NIL Pax

13th Hydrotherapy Pool – 4 attendees & Bingo 7 x attendees

14th Gopher Training – 3 Pax

17th Kay's craft group

18th Scrabble - 4 attendees

19th Croppy and Lunch @ Chinese – 9 attendees

20th Hydrotherapy Pool – 2 attendees & Bingo 4 x attendees



- 25th Scrabble - 4 attendees
- 26th Christmas in July – 20 attendees
- 27th Hydrotherapy Pool – Cancelled bus in for repairs
- Bingo – 8 Attendees
- 28th Movies (Seniors Moment) - 13 attendees
- 31st First Book Club – 5 attendees

Upcoming events and projects

Various workshops, Activities and outings for the boys, Car boot sale, Walk from Warralakin to Westonia Raise money for Mens health, Movies & Wandering Tours.



WESTONIA TOURIST PARK

The park has been unusually quiet for this period, the wildflowers have been very slow to come out this year unfortunately which more than likely is a factor in the decline in visitors

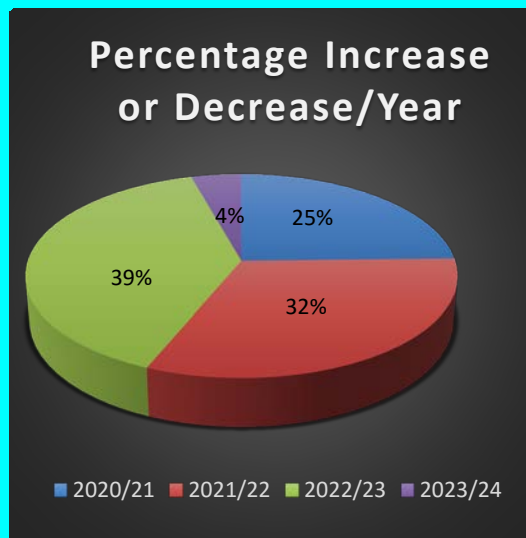
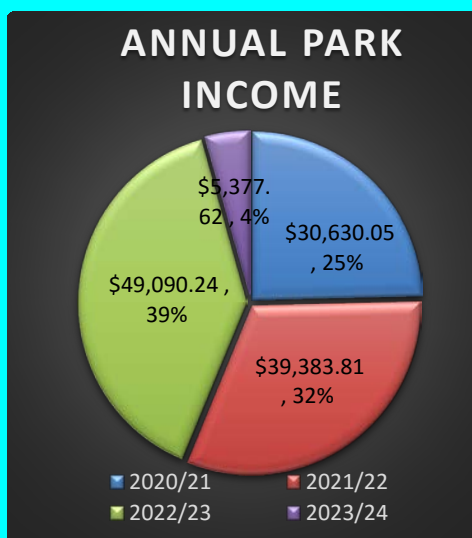
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

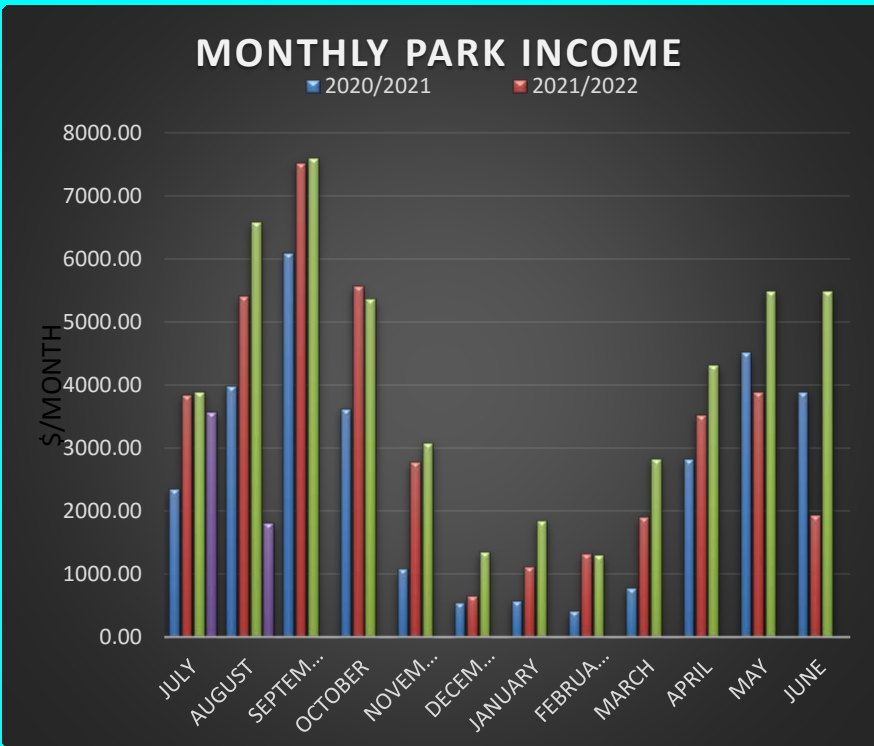
- Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing. Focal area being bathroom maintenance (fixtures and disabled bathroom upgrade)
- Disabled toilet drainage will need some major work as tree roots have made their way into the pipes.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- Permanent signage required to say “If office is unattended, please ring the caretakers phone or Shire office alternatively you can visit the Shire office during business hours Monday to Friday to complete your booking”.
- Overflow – new signs needed for sites and information sign needed to describe who to ring or see to book in and outline that you must un-hook. Defined bays might be a good idea for this area.

STATISTICS





HOOD-PENN MUSEUM

There has been a steady flow of visitors over the school holidays both parent and children were equally impressed at the displays, the farm scene is still a work in progress, small additions are being done when there is spare time.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

- Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing

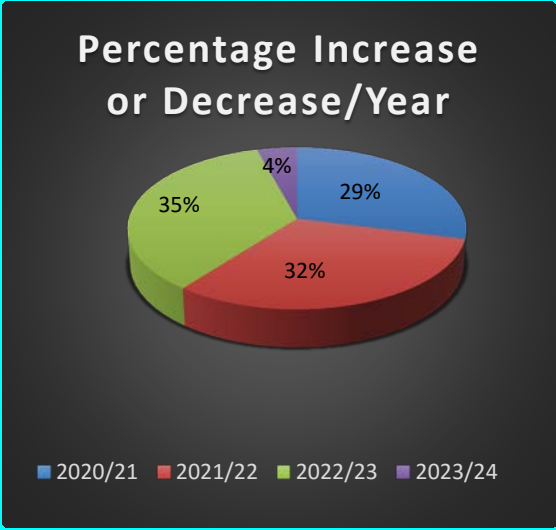
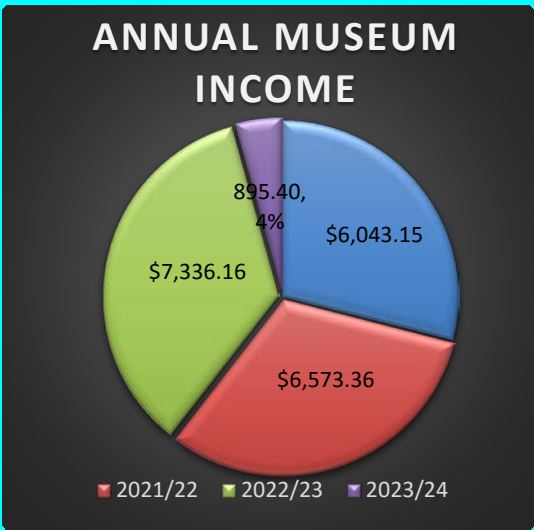
RECENT PROJECTS

- Old Truck modification for farming scene and Back drop in-place.

FUTURE PROJECTS

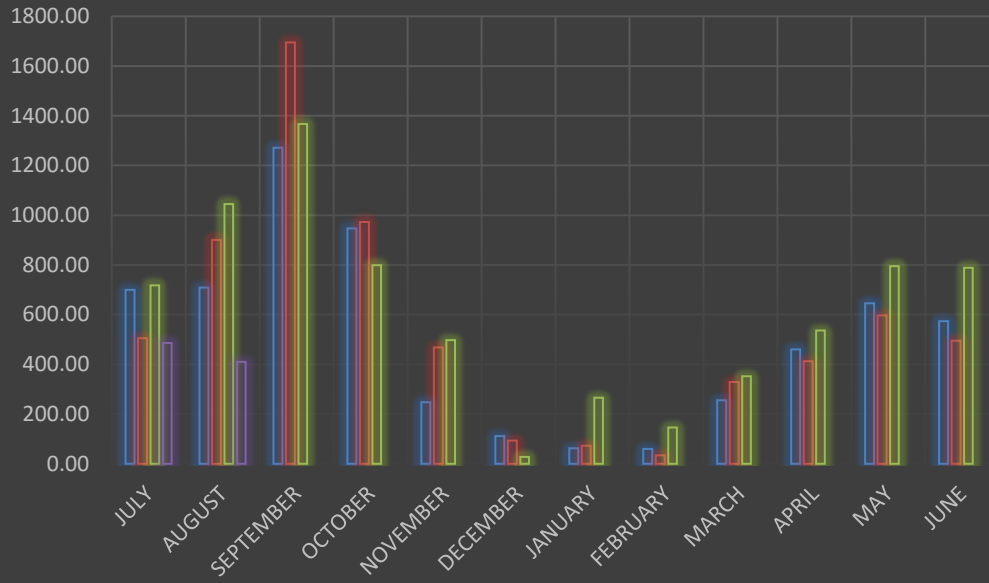
- New scenes to be created in the existing space of the old storage room to tell the stories of our primary industries of which Westonia was founded on.

STATISTICS



MONTHLY MUSEUM INCOME

2020/21 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24





Hon. Roger Cook MLA
Premier



Hon. Dr. Tony Buti MLA
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



Hon. John Quigley MLA
Attorney General

Laws overturned: Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation replaced

- Cook Government listens to community feedback and reverses decision
- Original *Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972* to be restored, with simple amendments
- The new legislation went too far, was too prescriptive and complicated
- Common sense to drive Aboriginal cultural heritage protection
- All additional obligations placed on landowners in 2021 Act to be removed

After serious consideration and consultation, the Cook Government will repeal Aboriginal cultural heritage laws and restore the original *Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972*, with simple and effective amendments to help prevent another Juukan Gorge incident.

Following public workshops, education sessions, and consultation with key stakeholders and the implementation group, important amendments to the original *Aboriginal Heritage Act* will be introduced to Parliament, to strike the right balance and end confusion.

The decision to revert to the original laws – which had been in place for 50 years – draws on legal advice from the Solicitor-General, with the addition of vital amendments to deliver a common sense approach and help prevent another incident like Juukan Gorge.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2023* will provide confidence to all WA property owners that they can continue to operate on their property, just like they have for the past 50 years, without any fear of committing an offence by unknowingly disrupting cultural heritage.

The exemptions which were introduced as part of the 2021 laws will no longer be required under the restored 1972 legislation, as every landowner is equal, and the changes announced impose no new burden on landowners before undertaking activities on their land.

The critical amendments to the restored legislation from 1972 include:

- The newly formed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council will take on the role of the Committee established under the 1972 Act to make recommendations to the Minister;
- Proponents and Native Title parties will have the same right of review for Section 18 decisions, with clear timelines and an ability for the Premier to call-in a decision of 'State significance', to act in the interests of all Western Australians; and
- When a Section 18 has been approved, making it a requirement for the owner to notify the Minister of any new information about an Aboriginal site – an important reform to help prevent another Juukan Gorge.

There will be no requirement on everyday landowners to conduct their own heritage survey.

The State Government will commence a long-term plan over the next ten years to undertake heritage surveys of unsurveyed areas in high priority areas of the State, with the consent of

landowners. Surveys will be centrally held and published by Government, and available to view by all land users.

The cost recovery model introduced for proponents who need to submit a management plan to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council, will also be replaced with a fairer and simpler model, to be established with industry in coming weeks.

The concept of Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services will not continue, instead support will be provided to existing relevant Native Title groups, including the relevant prescribed body corporate, registered claimants or native title representative bodies, to improve capacity.

The work of the implementation group – consisting of representatives from industries such as mining, property, farming and agriculture, as well as local government, Aboriginal corporations and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council – will continue to ensure a smooth transition back to the renewed 1972 legislation.

Comments attributed to Premier Roger Cook:

“The Juukan Gorge tragedy was a global embarrassment, but our response was wrong, we took it too far, unintentionally causing stress, confusion and division in our community.

“I’ve been the Premier for eight weeks now, and it’s obvious that we need to make changes, restore confidence in our cultural heritage system and get the balance right.

“The complicated regulations, the burden on landowners and the poor rollout of the new laws have been unworkable for all members of our community – and for that, I am sorry.

“The original intent of the legislative change nearly two years ago, was to prevent another Juukan Gorge – and my Government will deliver on that commitment.

“As Premier, I will always lead a Government that listens, and governs in the interests of all Western Australians – we are here to help and to deliver responsible government.

“WA is home to some of the world’s oldest known Aboriginal cultural heritage, we want to preserve this into the future, and ensure Western Australians can continue to live their lives and reach their full potential.

“We got the balance wrong, what we did hasn’t worked – it’s vital we manage cultural heritage in a common sense manner, so we can move forward together as a community.”

Comments attributed to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Tony Buti:

“We’ve listened to the concerns raised and taken the time to assess its impact and find a way forward that is fair, reasonable and responsible.

“The Juukan Gorge tragedy occurred because new information about the caves was not disclosed and with our important amendments to the 1972 legislation, we will ensure it can never happen again.

“The Section 18 process will be strengthened – with these changes mainly impacting miners and Government, whose work most impacts cultural heritage.

“As Aboriginal Affairs Minister, it is pleasing that our amendments to Section 18 provide Traditional Owners with the same rights of appeal as those afforded to proponents.

“Also, our amendments to the 1972 Act, will expressly make it clear that ‘gag orders’ which constrain Traditional Owners will be unlawful.

“Australian Aboriginal culture is one of the world’s oldest continuing cultures dating back at least 60,000 years – cultural heritage is central to the health and vitality of Aboriginal communities – and these amendments to our existing laws will protect it forever.”

Comments attributed to Attorney General John Quigley:

“For more than fifty years the *Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972* performed an important role to protect cultural heritage and with some simple amendments, we can be sure that heritage will be protected into the future and provide clarity and certainty for the whole community.

“By repealing the 2021 legislation it means all the extra burdens and obligations placed on landowners have now been removed.

“This means that all landowners, be they freehold, leasehold, licensee, invitee or citizen, at large have one simple obligation: that is to not knowingly damage an Aboriginal cultural heritage site, which has been the law since 1972.

“For the first time ever, Traditional Owners will have a right of appeal under Aboriginal cultural heritage laws in Western Australia.”

Media contact: David Cooper 0448 324 980

Flying Agenda: Objection to 2023 WA Electoral Distribution Commission Proposed Boundaries

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the objection to the 2023 Western Australian Distribution Commission's proposed boundaries be endorsed.

Executive Summary

- The WA Electoral Commission recently published their proposed electoral boundaries to be used at the next State election in 2025.
- A key proposal from the Commissioners is to amalgamate two non-metropolitan districts.
- Objections to the proposed boundaries can be submitted to the Commissioners by Monday, 21 August.
- Based on existing advocacy positions as well as discussions with State Council at the August Information Forum, the Association has drafted an objection on behalf of Local Government Members.
- The objection primarily focuses on the impact of reduced political representation for non-metropolitan communities, and asks for increased resourcing for regional electorate offices, particularly those in districts of large geographical size.

Attachment

- Draft objection to the 2023 WA Electoral Distribution Commission Proposed Boundaries

Policy Implications

The objection aligns with relevant WALGA [Advocacy Positions](#), namely:

2.4.7 Regional, Rural and Remote Representation

The Local Government sector recognises the importance of political representation for rural and regional Western Australia.

2.7 Whole State Electorate

In relation to electing members of the Legislative Council, the Local Government sector:

1. *supports the retention of a regional system; and*
2. *opposes the introduction of a whole state electorate option.*

2.4.5 Legislative Council Member Allowances – Regional Representation

Additional allowances should be provided to Members of the Legislative Council provided they have a staffed office in a non-metropolitan location to ensure a regional presence of Parliamentarians.

Background

The WA Electoral Commission recently published their proposed electoral boundaries to be used at the next State election in 2025. The [Electoral Distribution Commissioners' Explanatory Statement](#) lays out the proposed boundaries and explains the approach taken by the Commissioners.

The *Constitutional and Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Equality) Act 2021* requires the Commissioners to calculate the appropriate number of electors in each of the 59 Legislative Assembly districts. The proposed boundaries are based primarily on the distribution of electors within the state.



The Commissioners may consider other factors, including community of interest, land use patterns and existing Local Government boundaries, however elector numbers is the paramount consideration.

The key proposal from the Commissioners is to amalgamate two non-metropolitan districts to allow the creation of a new metropolitan district. This was based on a number of factors, including:

- a high rate of population growth in the expanding northern, eastern and southern areas of the greater Perth region;
- an ongoing trend of elector population within the metropolitan area growing at a significantly faster rate than the elector population located outside the metropolitan area; and
- population reports forecasting the continuation of the above growth trends.

Objections to the proposed boundaries can be submitted to the Commissioners by Monday, 21 August.

Comment

WALGA President Cr Karen Chappel discussed the possibility of submitting an objection with State Council at the most recent Information Forum on Wednesday, 2 August. There was general support from State Councillors for the Association to prepare an objection on behalf of Members, with regards to the proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan Legislative Assembly districts by one.

The draft objection has been shaped by WALGA's existing advocacy positions, the Association's previous submission to the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform back in 2021, and comments from State Councillors at the August Information Forum.

The focus of the objection is the proposal to amalgamate two non-metropolitan districts and thereby reduce the political representation for regional communities in WA at the State level.

The objection also calls for increased resourcing for regional electorate offices, particularly those located in districts covering vast distances.

Objection
Proposed Boundaries
for the 2025 State General
Election

August 2023

About WALGA

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA or 'the Association') is the peak organisation for Local Government in Western Australia. The Association is an independent, membership-based group representing and supporting the work and interests of 137 mainland Local Governments in Western Australia, plus the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

The Association provides an essential voice for more than 1,200 Elected Members, more than 22,000 Local Government employees, and the 2.6 million constituents that they serve and represent. The Association also provides professional advice and offers services that provide financial benefits to Local Governments.

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Overview

WALGA and its Members object to the proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan districts by one as the reduction in political representation will negatively impact rural and regional communities.

Basis of Objection

Diminished political representation

As an Association representing Local Government across the breadth of the vast state of Western Australia, WALGA recognises the importance of political representation. With demographic and other forces pulling people and resources away from some regions towards the metropolitan area, political representation becomes increasingly important.

The Commissioners' proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan districts by one, will significantly reduce the political representation of regional communities. This reduction in representation is compounded by the 2021 change to the Legislative Council regions to create a whole of state electorate. WALGA also made a submission at the time of the 2021 review opposing the 'one vote, one value' reform on the basis that the voice of regional, rural, and remote communities would be overwhelmed by the relative number of voters in metropolitan Perth and more populous towns.

The perspective of many regional communities is that, without sufficient political representation, their concerns will be “out of sight, out of mind”, swamped by the sheer weight of voters in metropolitan Perth and large regional centres. Regional communities need effective representation to ensure that the unique needs and challenges of people living outside the metropolitan area are adequately addressed at a State level.

Increased pressure on regional Local Governments

As political representation of non-metropolitan communities at the State level is diminished, the political representation provided by Local Governments will become even more important. This additional responsibility will be challenging for many non-metropolitan Local Governments, already stretched beyond their current capacity and resourcing.

The service provision expectations and requirements of Local Governments have increased considerably, rarely with commensurate increases in funding and resourcing. This has led to Local Governments, particularly in rural and remote parts of Western Australia, providing services previously the responsibility of other spheres of government. Contemporary examples include the provision of primary health care; aged care; housing; and economic development. Diminished political representation, requiring Local Government to fill another gap, will further stretch capacity and resources.

The contributions of non-metropolitan regions

In considering political representation it is important to acknowledge the economic contribution of non-metropolitan districts to the wealth and standard of living in Western Australia.

Regional Western Australia makes a significant contribution to the WA economy. As of July 2023, the regions accounted for 35 percent of Gross State Product. Regional WA is also a significant employer, with more than 300,000 jobs located in regional WA – around 25% of the state’s total workforce. Many of these jobs are located in the agriculture and mining industries.¹

Regional WA is home to many of the state’s key export industries, including the mining and agriculture sectors. WA is an exports-based economy, and accounts for around half of the national goods exports total each year. Goods exports currently account for 61 percent (\$247 billion) of Western Australia’s gross state product. As the prevalence of fly-in-fly-out has increased, it is crucial that the permanent residents of communities that host the bulk of WA’s export industries remain politically represented.

Resourcing of electorate offices in the regions

Even before the proposed reduction of non-metropolitan Legislative Assembly districts, there was a need for additional resourcing in the regions to improve the capacity of State representatives to service their electorate. This is particularly true for those electorates that cover a large geographical area. Any reduction in overall regional representation will only exacerbate this problem.

Resourcing for electorate offices in the regions needs to be significantly increased to improve the capacity of representatives to engage with communities within their electorate. The ability for a State Member to effectively represent the interests of their electorate is reliant upon

¹ WA Economic Profile – July 2023, [Western Australia's economy and international trade \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)

their ability to effectively communicate with and hear from their constituents. An increase in resources, including staff, is needed for electorate offices in non-metropolitan districts, particularly those covering vast distances.

Conclusion

WALGA acknowledges the challenges and limited scope inherent to the Commissioners' task to propose electoral boundary changes. Nevertheless, as an Association representing communities all over the state through Local Government, WALGA supports strong and effective political representation for the non-metropolitan districts to ensure that regional WA is supported to continue to generate export and employment opportunities that benefit us all.

Any further reduction in political representation at the State level will necessarily lead to an expectation that regional Local Governments will expand to fill this gap, a role that may stretch Local Governments beyond their capacity and resources.

Representation for non-metropolitan districts (especially those covering large geographical areas) also needs bolstering by increased resources for electorate offices.

WALGA's objection to the proposed boundaries are on the basis that the reduction of non-metropolitan districts will:

- 1. Further diminish political representation for regional communities;**
- 2. Increase pressure on regional Local Governments; and**
- 3. Fail to recognise the contributions of non-metropolitan districts to the WA economy.**

WALGA and its Members support increased resourcing for electorate offices in non-metropolitan districts, particularly those that cover a large geographical area, to ensure effective political representation at the State level.



Our Ref: 8390

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

7th Floor, Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street, Perth

Mail to: Perth BC
PO Box 8489
PERTH WA 6849

Tel: 08 6557 7500
Email: info@audit.wa.gov.au

Email: ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Price

AUDIT FEE 2023

Firstly, we acknowledge that this fee communication is later than desired. Regrettably resourcing constraints necessitated the late tendering of audits, which needed to be finalised before we could complete our fee analysis.

Our indicative fee for the audit of your 2022-23 annual financial report is \$29,000 (excl GST). The indicative fee represents an increase compared to the prior year audit fee (2021-22 audit fee: \$24,100).

This fee is calculated to cost-recover the OAG's expenses in audit delivery across our entire audit portfolio and includes OAG staff hours on the audit plus any directly related costs such as contract fees and travel expenses, if applicable.

Recently, we have seen significant increases in audit fees when retendering or extending contracts with our approved contract audit firms (in the range of 15 – 40% (average of 35%)). This is reflective of the market generally and specifically for the auditing profession who, as with the OAG, are experiencing significant resource constraints. As we operate on a cost recovery basis, any increases from our contract audit firms result in an increase to audit fees.

Fee increases across our audit portfolio of Local Government entities has generally been contained within a range of 4 – 12%. This incorporates:

- the inflationary aspects across the economy, and
- the impact of the new Auditing Standard ASA 315 *Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement through Understanding the Entity and its Environment* which is in effect for the current financial year. This requires significant additional audit work in every entity in covering increased requirements for IS audit work to identify controls risks in entities' cyber security environments.

The exceptions to the above fee range increases are where:

- we have not been fully recovering our contract audit firm fee in recent years (conscious decision resulting from the LG sector transitioning to our Office) – in such instances we have adjusted so as to fully recovery such and a reasonable proportion of our own time and costs, or
- we have recently contracted out the audit or retendered the audit we have adopted a full cost recovery of both the contract audit firms fee and our time and costs.

In addition to giving assurance on your local government's annual financial report, the audit will also provide transparency surrounding legislative compliance, financial controls, probity, and governance matters, and enables our whole-of-sector parliamentary reporting and stakeholder liaison across the sector.

We continue our endeavours to identify ways to improve efficiency and minimise audit costs within the constraints of legislative requirements and auditing standards. Your entity can also contribute to this through maintaining a sound control environment and providing your audit team with timely and well-prepared financial statements, working papers etc. that dovetail well with the work we are required to perform. To assist public entities, and support improved audit preparedness and efficiency, we will shortly be publishing a toolkit that may assist your finance teams in making sure they are audit ready. Please make sure you are subscribed to receive notifications of new publications from our Office.

<https://audit.wa.gov.au/subscribe/>

Our costs for your audit will be re-assessed closer to completion of the audit, and we will keep you informed as we progress, should we consider a revision is necessary, such as for issues emerging during the current years audit process. Any such revision will only occur after relevant consultation with you.

We acknowledge that in general audit fees have increased since our involvement in the local government sector. However, with the fee increase comes a number of benefits. We provide a quality financial audit, that is enhanced from our oversight of the sector as a whole and conduct performance and information systems audits that the sector does not pay for but does receive the benefit of. In addition, through our reporting to Parliament and stakeholder liaison we advocate for the sector and recommend improvements that benefit both the community and the sector, this has resulted in streamlined reporting and changes to regulations.

We look forward to working with you to promote accountability and transparency in the local government sector for the benefit of the community we jointly serve.

Please contact me on 6557 7616 if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Tim Sanya
Senior Director
Financial Audit
26 July 2023

From: [Bill Price](#)
To: [Chantelle Pedrotti](#)
Subject: FW: Shire of Westonia | Procedural Fairness for the Auditor General's LG Audit Results Report 2021-22 | for response by 2 August 2023
Date: Thursday, 10 August 2023 10:06:07 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Bulletin

From: Bill Price
Sent: Thursday, August 3, 2023 7:57 AM
To: Lisa Swann <Lisa.Swann@audit.wa.gov.au>; Mark Crees <cr.crees@westonia.wa.gov.au>
Cc: Grant Robinson <Grant.Robinson@audit.wa.gov.au>; Lisa Lilley <Lisa.Lilley@audit.wa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Shire of Westonia | Procedural Fairness for the Auditor General's LG Audit Results Report 2021-22 | for response by 2 August 2023

Good morning Lisa,

Please find below Council's official response to AOG's Audit Opinion in relation to the Shire of Westonia's 21/22 Audit.

In relation to the timeliness statutory deadline not being met the Council wish to strongly refute that this was in anyway the fault of the Council.

All blame lays with the AOG's Auditor process as the initial appointed Auditors (Audit Partners Australia) withdrew their services after conducting an initial interim audit and then new Auditors were appointed (Dry Kirkness) who undertook both the initial and final onsite Audit in the third week of August.

These Auditors then did not follow up on any queries from the Audit until late October with many being duplication of documents and information already supplied.

Council believe that we made our best efforts in providing the completed Annual Financial Statements both in the required format and within the timeframes required to have it audited by the prescribed date.

If you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

regards

From: Lisa Swann <Lisa.Swann@audit.wa.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 8:05 PM
To: Bill Price <ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au>; Mark Crees <cr.crees@westonia.wa.gov.au>
Cc: Grant Robinson <Grant.Robinson@audit.wa.gov.au>; Lisa Lilley <Lisa.Lilley@audit.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Shire of Westonia | Procedural Fairness for the Auditor General's LG Audit Results Report 2021-22 | for response by 2 August 2023
Importance: High

Dear President Mark Crees and Chief Executive Officer Arthur (Bill) Price
Shire of Westonia







The Auditor General will shortly table in Parliament our Office's 2021-22 audit results report on the annual financial audits of local government entities.

Below is text from this report which refers to your entity:

Audit opinions issued to 146 of 148 entities for 2021-22 by 30 June 2023 are listed below.

The table lists each entity in alphabetical order, as well as the type of opinion they received, when the opinion was issued and the timeliness of providing their financial statements to us for audit.

Key

Type of audit opinion	Audit readiness		
Clear		Received by the statutory deadline of 30 September 2022	
Clear opinion with emphasis of matter or matter of significance paragraph		Extension to the statutory deadline was granted and met	
Material uncertainty related to going concern		Extension or statutory deadline was not met	
Qualified or a disclaimer of opinion			

Entity	Type of opinion	Opinion issued	FS timeliness
126 Shire of Westonia		14/04/2023	

Appendix 5: Certifications issued

Entity	Date certification issued	
	Roads to Recovery Funding under the <i>National Land Transport Act 2014</i>	Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
Shire of Westonia	1/11/2022	23/06/2023

Our procedural fairness process requires that we seek your entity's comments on the draft text from the report.

Please note that this draft text is provided to you in strict confidence and must not be copied, reproduced, or disclosed to any other person within or outside your entity, except to the extent necessary to enable you to provide a response to the Office of the Auditor General or to obtain advice. Should you wish to or be required to disclose the draft text for any other reason, please contact me.

For completeness of our Office's procedural fairness process please provide your confirmation by email to the Report Coordinator by COB on Wednesday 2 August 2023 at Lisa.Swann@audit.wa.gov.au.

For all other queries concerning the text, before providing a response, please get in touch with your OAG contact.

Yours sincerely
Lisa Swann
On behalf of

Grant Robinson
Assistant Auditor General
Financial Audit
Office of the Auditor General for Western Australia
Tel: (08) 6557 7526
Mob: 0456 632 709
www.audit.wa.gov.au

Local Government Matters

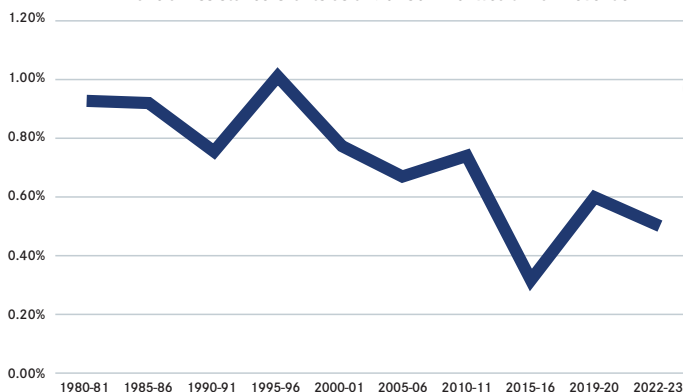


Support quality local services and secure local jobs in your community

The impact of local government can be felt in every community across Australia. Whether it's providing accessible early childhood education and care, aged care, maternal and child health services, garbage collection, garden maintenance, road construction and maintenance, water and sewerage, libraries, recycling services, swimming & leisure centres, playgrounds, sporting facilities, homelessness services, or playing an integral role in responding to climate change and natural disaster reconstruction and recovery, or maintaining and improving local infrastructure, communities are relying on local government services more than ever before.

Despite this, Commonwealth Government investment in local government, services has declined from around 1 percent of Commonwealth Tax Revenue to around 0.55%.

Financial Assistance Grants as a % of Commonwealth Tax Revenue



That's why the ASU/USU is calling for an increase to Commonwealth funding for local services: so that communities and workers get what they deserve.

The Commonwealth provides funding to local government for fundamental ongoing staff costs and maintenance through Financial Assistance Grants. The ASU/USU are moving an amendment to the ALP National Platform that this funding should return to 1% of Commonwealth Tax Revenue. This

could be partnered with a fair jobs code for local government that ensures the investment delivers

excellent services with union won conditions (under state or federal collective instruments) and well paid secure jobs.

The ALP National Platform aspires to deliver a modern Australia. You can't deliver a modern Australia if you don't appropriately fund and modernise local government.

We hope we can count on your solidarity.

Local government employs more than 200,000 Australians across the country. Local government jobs are good, union jobs. It is unacceptable that the extreme financial pressure caused by reductions in funding have caused local governments to reduce services, try to drive down wages and conditions, outsource jobs to labour hire providers, and in some instances privatise or shut down services altogether. Over time the quality of the



Graeme Kelly OAM
General Secretary
United Services Union (NSW)
0417 420 919

Abbie Spencer
Secretary
ASU South Australia and
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Lisa Darmanin
Secretary
ASU Victoria and Tasmania
Authorities and Services Branch
0407 308 503

Wayne Wood
Secretary
ASU Western Australian Branch
0412 947 052

Neil Henderson
Secretary
The Services Union (QLD)
0418 753 054

Emeline Gaske
Assistant National Secretary
Australian Services Union
0402 291 960



Reducing ratepayer burden for country communities

Local government spending on primary healthcare will be the focus of a new advocacy push for Rural Health West and the Western Australian Local Government Authority (WALGA).

Under the partnership, a comprehensive survey has been distributed to 139 local government authorities.

The study will provide a detailed understanding of the financial and resource commitments that local governments feel compelled to make to ensure their communities receive basic primary healthcare.

Rural Health West Chief Executive Officer Tim Shackleton emphasised the need to address the increasing financial and resource burden that local government authorities are facing.

“This situation has been normalised over time, however it is unreasonable for local councils and ratepayers to bear this financial impost without proper support or compensation,” Tim said.

“Australia has a universal healthcare system built on the principle of equity, with responsibility primarily lying with federal and state governments.

“However, it appears that support for local government has fallen through the cracks, leaving councils to fend for themselves.

“The increasing costs associated with this responsibility makes the situation unsustainable.”

The research underscores the interplay between local, state, and federal governments in delivering public health services in Western Australia.

While local government plays a vital role in public health and wellbeing, providing social infrastructure, public services, and environmental health services, it is apparent that the burden of funding primary healthcare services has also fallen on their shoulders.

WALGA Chief Executive Officer Nick Sloan said that improving access to regional, rural and remote primary healthcare services was a strategic priority for WALGA.

“A lack of access to healthcare services is impacting many regional, rural and remote local governments and their communities across WA. In many cases local governments are stepping in to financially support healthcare services for their communities. This survey will provide further understanding around the extent and cost of this support and provide a powerful evidence-base for ongoing advocacy to improve regional health services,” Nick said.

The survey will assess the current contributions made by local councils and determine their future intentions in supporting general practice and other primary healthcare services. This evaluation will include direct financial contributions such as GP wages, as well as



The Shire of Dundas (top and right) and Shire of Lake Grace (opposite) are just two of the country local governments who provide incentives to attract and retain GP services in their communities.

in-kind support like motor vehicles, housing, and other incentives.

This data, combined with Rural Health West's experience in rural workforce planning and WALGA's policy expertise, will be used to inform potential solutions to present to both the federal and state governments later this year.

Rural Health West has a strong history of collaborating with local government authorities in recruiting doctors and developing sustainable private practice business models.

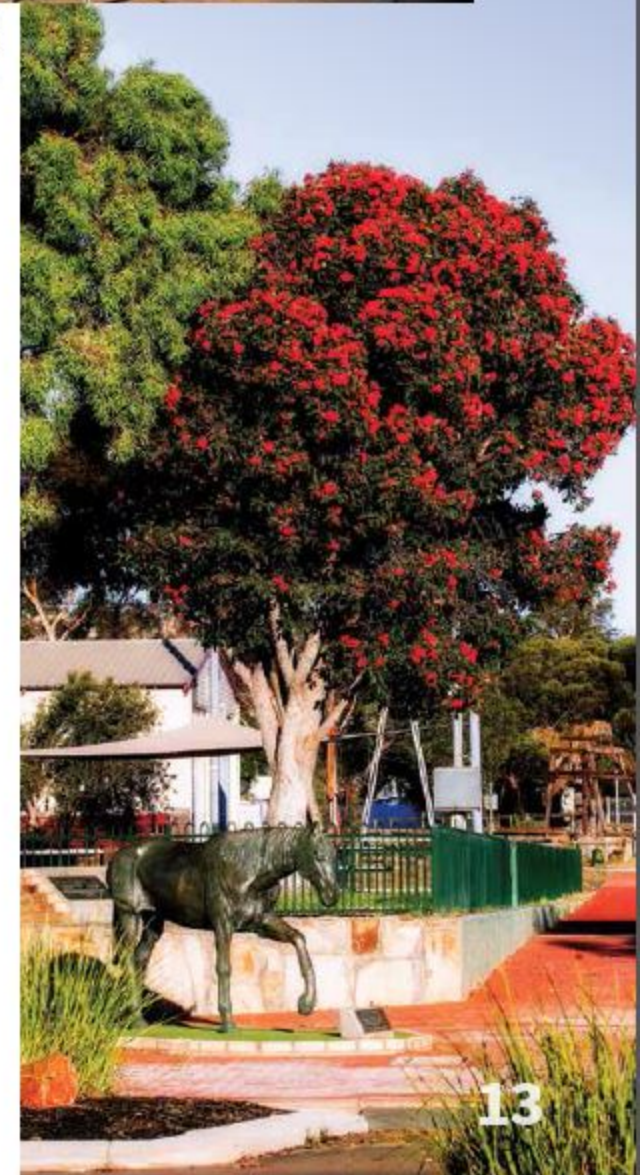
However, there is increasing concern about the critical state of the current approach, particularly for smaller local councils committed to supporting general practice.

Across country WA, many local governments are directly procuring the services of doctors and nurses for their communities. Those who do not provide direct wages often offer financial incentives or facilities to support healthcare professionals.

Despite this investment, gaps in service delivery and levels of service remain a concern, particularly in smaller towns and more remote communities.

“There is significant work to be done to ensure adequate health service coverage in local communities,” Tim said.

“The collaboration between Rural Health West and WALGA aims to address these challenges and find sustainable solutions that meet the healthcare needs for many rural West Australians.”



Credit: Lynn Webb, Gallery of Splendid Isolation

Former physiotherapist-turned medical student aims to fly high in new career

From physiotherapy to medicine, University of Notre Dame student Jeanette Gordon has found a way to combine her great passions.

Originally from South Africa, Jeanette's family moved to Australia as a child where she grew up in Mount Barker.

Developing a love for sports, Jeanette represented WA in both netball and soccer, which led to her deciding to combine her passion for health and sport and pursue a career in physiotherapy.

"I undertook my physiotherapy degree at Curtin University from 2017 to 2020 and played soccer in the Women's National Premier League (WNPL) while studying," Jeanette said.

"After graduating I worked as a physiotherapist in the Wheatbelt and Perth."

It was during this year that Jeanette yearned to do more for rural communities, and decided to change career paths.

"I went into medicine as I wanted to be more involved in patient care and develop a wider scope of practice.

"I always knew I'd end up working in the country and I think I can have more impact on someone's health as a doctor.

"Growing up in such a supportive community made me the person I am today and in return it's my life mission to serve rural communities."

Currently in her second year of medicine, Jeanette's highlights so far include visiting the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) base and the Wheatbelt Medical Student Immersion Program.

"I've been granted these amazing opportunities through the medicine program at Notre Dame."

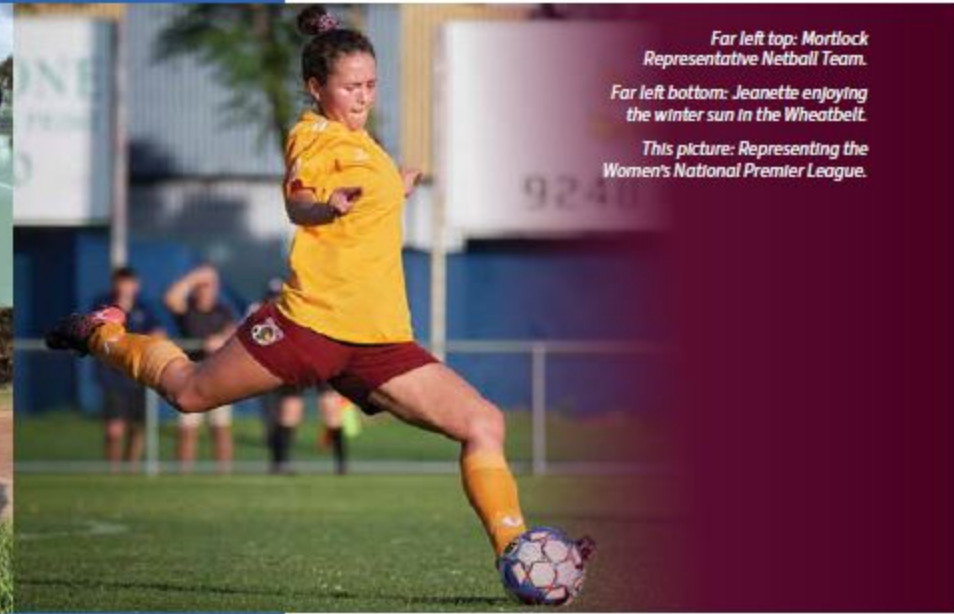
"Soon I will head to Broome for the Broome Learning on Country (BLOC) and later in the year we have the Kimberley Immersion Program.

"I loved visiting RFDS; I have a passion for planes and flying. You can see it's a challenging job, but also incredibly rewarding."

Jeanette aspires to become a rural generalist serving the Wheatbelt community, much like her mentor Dr Olga Ward.

"Olga really inspired me to support rural communities. You can help more people and you are truly appreciated and that's what has stuck with me."

"That and the fact she has her own plane and goes to these different towns and looks after the community – that is my dream."



Far left top: Mortlock Representative Netball Team.

Far left bottom: Jeanette enjoying the winter sun in the Wheatbelt.

This picture: Representing the Women's National Premier League.



Jeanette visiting the RFDS base earlier this year with fellow medical students.

In the meantime, Jeanette will juggle her time between her medical studies, spending time with her family in the Great Southern and her farmer partner Tim in Wongan Hills, look after some of her physiotherapy patients, holding the odd Pilates class, playing sport and mentoring high school students.

"I enjoy community involvement, not just as a health professional, but participating in sport and through volunteer work, such as student rural health club SPINRPHX and Wheatbelt Beyond Youth Mentoring."

"Currently I am playing netball in the Wheatbelt and I'm a sports trainer/ physiotherapist for Wongan Ballidu Football Club.

"Although my life is a constant chaotic race against time and involves many hours of driving between Mt Barker, Perth and Wongan Hills, I have a very supportive family and partner. I wouldn't have it any other way.

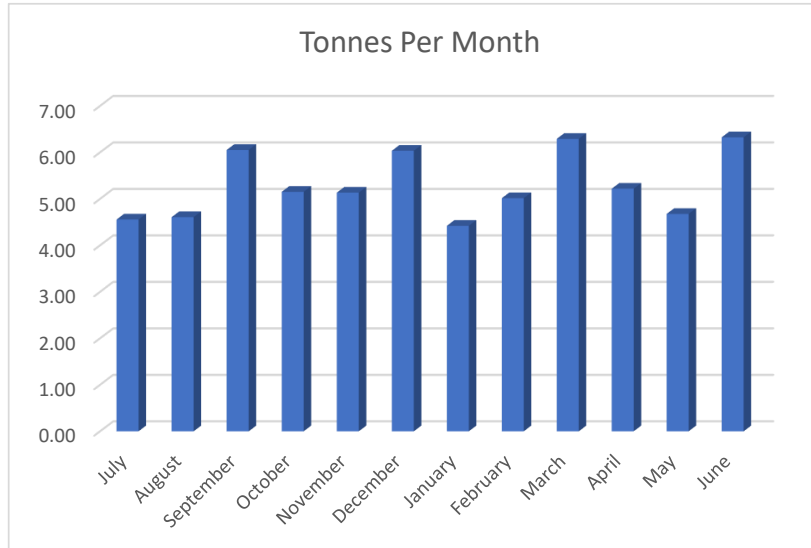
"I believe if you're passionate about what you're doing, you will always be able to make time for it."



Shire of Westonia Waste Report 2022/2023

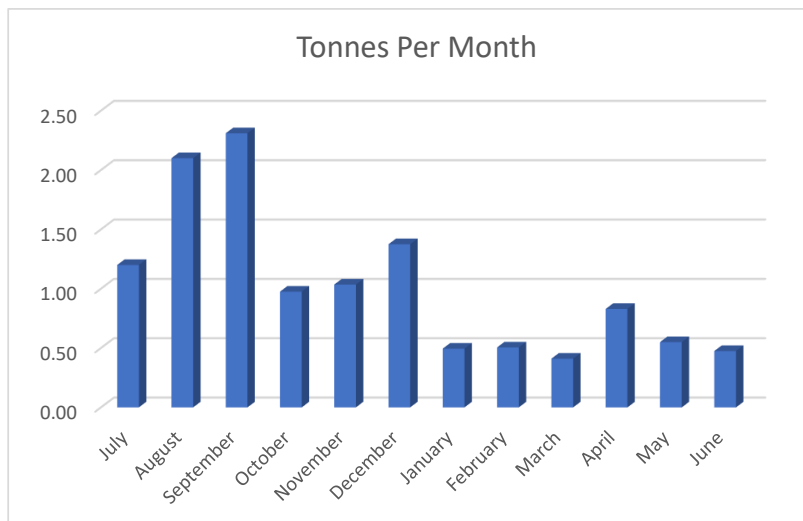
Shire of Westonia - Kerbside Rubbish Weights

Month	Tonnes Per Month
July	4.56
August	4.61
September	6.05
October	5.15
November	5.13
December	6.04
January	4.42
February	5.02
March	6.29
April	5.22
May	4.68
June	6.32
Total	63.48



Shire of Westonia Bulk Recycle Weights

Month	Tonnes Per Month
July	1.20
August	2.10
September	2.31
October	0.98
November	1.04
December	1.38
January	0.50
February	0.51
March	0.41
April	0.83
May	0.55
June	0.48
Total	12.26



Please Note: These figures are Bulk Recycling.



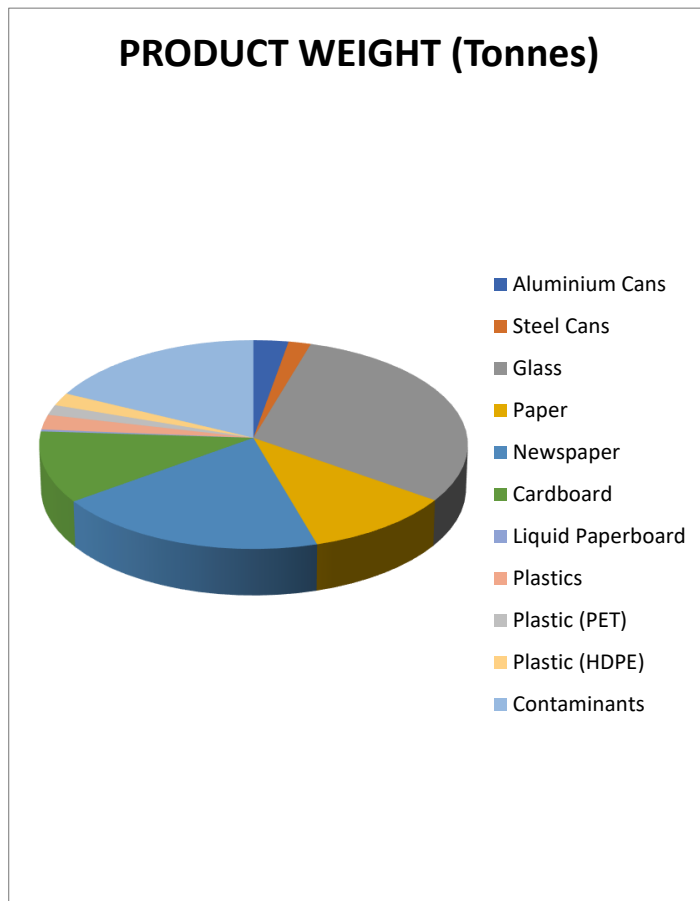
Shire of Westonia Waste Report 2022/2023

Cardboard Only Bulk Bin estimated at 0.33 Tonnes per month (annual amount 3.9t)

Shire of Westonia - Recycling Product Breakdown

* Figures below exclude CBO Bulk bin Weights

PRODUCT	PRODUCT WEIGHT (Tonnes)
Aluminium Cans	0.34
Steel Cans	0.22
Glass	3.70
Paper	1.31
Newspaper	2.39
Cardboard	1.35
Liquid Paperboard	0.04
Plastics	0.28
Plastic (PET)	0.20
Plastic (HDPE)	0.25
Contaminants	2.18
TOTAL	12.26



Please Note:

Recycling loads are not delivered individually to SMRC. Loads are co-mingled with other Shires to minimise collection and travel expenses. The Recycling Product Breakdown has been provided by WALGA as the result of recycling product audits, and is to be used as an estimate for the volume of each product.

Tuesday, August 1, 2023 | Today's Paper | Mind Games

Labor factions join to push for \$6bn local government increase

EXCLUSIVE

By **TROY BRAMSTON**

SENIOR WRITER

Follow [@TroyBramston](#)

7:12PM JULY 31, 2023 •  15 COMMENTS

The Albanese government will be urged to commit at least 1 per cent of taxation revenue, about \$6bn a year, for local government infrastructure and program spending by senior figures from the Right and Left factions at Labor's national conference.

An amendment to the policy platform to be moved by United Services Union secretary Graeme Kelly, from the Right, and Sydney City councillor Linda Scott, from the Left, has been lodged for [debate at the national conference in Brisbane on August 17-19](#).

The motion, obtained by The Australian, commits the party to striking a new “working partnership with local government” and requires the Albanese government to “provide funding through the ongoing Financial Assistance Grants to at least one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue”.

This would increase spending from about \$3bn to \$6bn each year.

The amendment further stipulates that the Albanese government must continue to “support funding for local government-maintained roads and participate in a range of programs to provide fair funding increases to local government” to ensure the third tier of government has “a secure economic base” in the years ahead.

“Local government is increasingly reliant on untied grant programs such as the Financial Assistance Grants to ensure we can employ staff and carry out important community services such as run our libraries, pools and maintain our local roads to a safe standard,” Ms Scott told The Australian.

“We know that in some cases councils are almost universally reliant on Financial Assistance Grants to fund their operations and without them would be insolvent. This is particularly the case in remote areas with very small ratepayer communities.”

The amendment is problematic for Labor because it has the support of key figures in both Right and Left factions yet Albanese government ministers have not yet agreed to support it despite it being lodged for debate. There is also cross-factional support for a local government representative to be made “a full member of national cabinet” and “relevant ministerial committees”.

Ms Scott has attended one meeting of the national cabinet as an observer in her capacity as president of the Australian Local Government Association.

The Albanese government has restored the Australian Council of Local Government and committed \$100m for energy transition projects at a local level, \$500m in Roads to Recovery funding and \$750m to the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. Treasurer Jim Chalmers has announced bringing forward the 2023-24 allocation of Financial Assistance Grants as a prepayment.

Mr Kelly and Ms Scott also argue that local government – made up of 537 councils and about 200,000 employees – needs to be elevated in the national policymaking process and given a bigger say in regional development policy.

“Without these increases to Financial Assistance Grants, councils will be faced with stark choices about which services to continue and which assets are allowed to fall into disrepair and, in a small number of cases, whether they can sustain their operations,” Ms Scott said.

TROY BRAMSTON, SENIOR WRITER

Troy Bramston is a senior writer and columnist with The Australian. He has interviewed politicians, presidents and prime ministers from multiple countries along with writers, actors, directors, producers and severa... [Read more](#)



17 July 2023

Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
c/o senator.watt@aph.gov.au



Dear Minister,

RE: PHASE OUT OF LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS BY SEA

The Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc. (WEROC) is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation whose members include representatives from the Shires of Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Tammin, Westonia and Yilgarn. WEROC exists to support the growth and development of the Eastern Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, and we believe that that phasing out of live sheep exports will be detrimental to the economic and social wellbeing of the communities in our region.

The export of live sheep is a key element on which the Western Australian sheep industry is based. For the producer, live export is a necessary process to control livestock numbers, use pastures in a sustainable manner, and provide resilience in difficult seasons particularly in times of drought. The industry also supports a range of large and small contributors including livestock agents, transport operators, shearers, feed suppliers and manufacturers, rural merchandise stores, consultants, and veterinarians.

The sheep industry is an important economic contributor to the WEROC region. In Western Australia the agri-food and fibre production sector was worth \$14 billion in 2021-22 of which the sheep industry (sheep and wool) contributed \$1,347. million¹. In the same period the agricultural output from the WEROC region was \$379million² with the sheep industry contributing \$53million³ (4% of the total value of the sheep industry in the state).

In 2021-22 there were 579,135 sheep and lambs in the WEROC area and 243 sheep and lamb producers⁴. With a total of 840 businesses in the region, sheep production businesses account for approximately 30% of all businesses. As stated previously, there are a range of large and small businesses that exist to support the sheep industry so the number of local businesses that stand to be impacted by the decision to phase out live sheep export by sea, will be considerably higher than the 243 directly involved in sheep/lamb production.

¹ ABS (2023), Agricultural Commodities

² REMPLAN, Wheatbelt Economy Profile

³ Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced by Local Government Areas 2020-21, Australian Bureau of Statistics, July 2022

⁴ Agricultural Commodities by Local Government Areas 2020-21, Australian Bureau of Statistics, July 2022

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) commissioned a report on the impact of the self-imposed live sheep trade moratorium in 2019. The report⁵ examined how the 3-to-4-month halt in exports affected people and businesses involved in the trade and provides an invaluable insight into what can be expected when live sheep export is discontinued permanently. The report found that:

- The live export market provides a stable price floor in the sheep market. Because there are fewer buyers in WA sheep markets compared to eastern markets, competition is heavily reliant on the live export trade to improve competitiveness and prices. During the shipping suspension, the normal price discount in WA compared to eastern markets, widened further due to lack of competition.
- Sheep producers have some ability to adjust their management and sell into domestic markets. However, many support industries and services are highly reliant on livestock exports and experienced negative mental health as well as financial impacts as a result of the moratorium.
- While many industries undoubtedly evolve in response to changed conditions, the isolation of the WA sheep industry and its reliance on live export makes it unique. Without a sustainable live export industry, the WA sheep flock is under threat.

In addition to this research, two recent reports, one by ACIL Allen⁶ and the other by Mercado⁷ highlight the potential negative impacts for Western Australian sheep producers if live export is no longer a disposal option, because excess lamb supplies and persistent processing constraints/limited slaughter capacity in the State are already driving domestic prices down. In the face of reduced markets and lower prices, livestock producers will likely adapt their farming operations by destocking and increasing cropping. As the state's sheep flock declines, so too will the revenue that is generated by the industry throughout the supply chain and for the ancillary support and service industries that have no viable alternative avenues of revenue, the impact will be catastrophic. For our region, this translates to job losses and further population decline in regional communities that are already suffering greatly from outmigration and the flow on impact this has to maintaining vital services and amenities.

We are aware that there was a public consultation period which has now closed and that the independent panel appointed to consult with stakeholders received a considerable number of written submissions and survey responses as well as undertaking face to face consultations. Our understanding is that this feedback will be considered by the independent panel in preparing recommendations that will inform how and when the government will phase out live sheep exports by sea. We are also aware that our counterparts in the North Eastern Wheatbelt (NEWROC) have written to you requesting that the independent panel produce an interim report prior to the final report being submitted in September and that this interim report be shared publicly. We would like to support and reiterate this request.

Yours Sincerely



Rebekah Burges

Executive Officer, Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc.

⁵ Mercado 2020. Impact of the live sheep export trades self-imposed moratorium and regulatory changes.

⁶ ACIL Allen, Performance and value of the live sheep export trade, June 2023.

⁷ The Mercado Market Insight Report for Q1 2023

WEROC | Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc.

Incorporating the Shires of Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Tammin, Westonia and Yilgarn

A PO Box 5, MECKERING WA 6405 E rebekah@150square.com.au M 0428 871 202