



Great Eastern Country Zone

MINUTES

Thursday, 22 February 2024
Commenced at 9:34am

Shire of Merredin

Merredin Regional Community & Leisure Centre
Bates Street, Merredin Western Australia 6415

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Opening and Welcome	3
1.1 Acknowledgement of Country.....	3
2. Attendance and Apologies.....	3
3. Attachments.....	5
4. Declarations of Interest.....	5
5. Announcements.....	6
6. Guest Speakers / Deputations	6
6.1 Speakers for the February Zone Meeting	6
7. Members of Parliament	6
8. Agency Reports	6
8.1 Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries	6
8.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission.....	6
8.3 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt.....	6
8.4 Main Roads Western Australia	7
8.5 Water Corporation.....	7
9. Minutes.....	7
9.1 Confirmation of Minutes from the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Monday 20 November 2023.....	7
9.2 Business Arising from the Minutes from the Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting held on Monday, 20 November 2023	7
9.2.1 Carriage Lighting/Train Visibility – Rail Network (Item 13.1)	7
9.2.2 Zone Council Member Training Rebate (Item 13.4).....	8
9.3 Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2024	8
9.4 Business arising from the Great Eastern Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024	8
9.4.1 Prioritisation of Strategic Zone Issues	8
9.4.2 Medicare Rebate.....	10
10. Zone Business	11
10.2 Great Eastern Country Zone Conference 2025	12
10.3 Road Works during a Total Fire Ban Regulatory Review Update.....	12
10.4 Consultation Opportunities	13
10.5 2024 Local Government Honours Program	14
11. Zone Reports	15
11.1 Zone Chair President Report.....	15
11.2 Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC)	15
11.3 Regional Health Advocacy Group.....	16
11.4 WALGA RoadWise.....	16
12. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) Business.....	16
12.1 State Councillor Report	16

12.2	State Council Agenda Items – 6 March 2024.....	17
12.3	WALGA President’s Report.....	20
13.	Emerging Issues.....	20
14.	Date, Time, and Place of Next Meetings.....	20
15.	Closure.....	20

1. Opening and Welcome

The Chair declared the meeting open at 9.34am.

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

We, the Great Eastern Country Zone of WALGA acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

2. Attendance and Apologies

Shire of Bruce Rock	President Cr Ram Rajagopalan Cr Stephen Strange (State Council Representative) Mr Darren Mollenoyux, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Cunderdin	Deputy President Cr Tony Smith Mr Stuart Hobley, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Dowerin	President Cr Robert Trepp Mr David Singe, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Kellerberrin	Cr Dennis Reid Ms Morgan Ware, Manager of Governance
Shire of Koorda	President Cr Jannah Stratford Mr Zac Donovan, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Merredin	Cr Megan Simmonds
Shire of Mount Marshall	Cr Tony Sachse (Zone Chairperson) Mr Gary Martin, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Mukinbudin	President Cr Gary Shadbolt Mr Dirk Sellenger, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Narembeen	President Cr Scott Stirrat Deputy President Cr Holly Cusack
Shire of Nungarin	Deputy President Cr Gary Coumbe Mr Ric Halse, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Tammin	Deputy President Cr Tanya Nicholls

	Ms Joanne Soderlund, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Trayning	President Cr Melanie Brown Ms Leanne Parola, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Westonia	President Cr Mark Crees Mr Bill Price, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Wyalkatchem	Deputy President Cr Christy Petchell Cr Ross Lawson Kerr Cr Misha Stratford (Observer) Ms Sabine Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Yilgarn	President Cr Wayne Della Bosca Mr Nic Warren, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Guests	
Telstra	Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager WA
Main Roads WA	Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt
Water Corporation	Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer & Stakeholder – Goldfields & Agricultural Region
Regional Development Australia WA	Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
Members of Parliament	Hon Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt Kath Brown, Electorate Officer, Office of Hon Mia Davies MLA
WALGA	James McGovern, Manager Governance & Procurement Naomh Donaghy, Governance & Organisational Services Officer
Apologies	
Shire of Cunderdin	President Cr Alison Harris
Shire of Dowerin	Deputy President Cr Nadine McMorran
Shire of Kellerberrin	President Cr Matt Steber Deputy President Cr Emily Ryan Mr Raymond Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Kondinin	President Cr Kent Mouritz Deputy President Cr Bev Gangell Mr David Burton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Koorda	Deputy President Cr Gary Greaves
Shire of Merredin	President Cr Mark McKenzie Deputy President Cr Renee Manning Ms Leah Boehme, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Mount Marshall	Deputy President Cr Nick Gillett
Shire of Nungarin	President Pippa de Lacy
Shire of Narembeen	Rebecca McCall, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Tammin	Cr Nick Caffell
Shire of Trayning	Cr Michelle McHugh
Shire of Westonia	Deputy President Ross Della Bosca

Shire of Wyalkatchem
Shire of Yilgarn

President Cr Owen Garner
Deputy President Cr Bryan Close

Hon Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Steve Martin, Member for the Agricultural Region
Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor
Hon Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Darren West MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural Region

Department of Local Government,
Sport, & Cultural Industries

Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Manager Wheatbelt

Wheatbelt Development Commission

Renee Manning, Principal Regional Development Officer – Central East

3. Attachments

The following are provided as attachments to the Minutes:

1. Item 6.1 Telstra presentation
2. Item 8.4 Main Roads report

The full State Council Agenda can be found via link: [State Council Agenda 6 March 2024 \(walga.asn.au\)](https://www.walga.asn.au)

4. Declarations of Interest

NIL

5. Announcements

NIL

6. Guest Speakers / Deputations

6.1 Speakers for the February Zone Meeting

6.1.1 Telstra

Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager, Telstra Retail & Regional, presented to the Zone on key topics including 3G network closure, mobile update on co-investment and 4G/5G upgrades, satellites and network resilience. Additionally, Mr Brown provided an update on telecommunications resilience planning in the wake of recent severe weather event across the wheatbelt and Goldfields regions.

Boyd took a number of questions from Zone members during his presentation – **Attachment 1**

NOTED

7. Members of Parliament

Any Members of Federal and State Government in attendance were invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone.

- Mia Davies, Electorate Officer, Office of Hon Mia Davies MLA

NOTED

8. Agency Reports

8.1 Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries

Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Director Wheatbelt was an apology, a report was submitted for the Zone.

Executive Officer Comment:

The Executive Officer suggested the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries be contacted to request a representative attends Zone meetings. Members were in agreeance.

NOTED

8.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission

Renee Manning, Principal Regional Development Officer was an apology for this meeting.

NOTED

8.3 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development was in attendance and took a few moments to introduce himself. There was no report for the February meeting.

NOTED

8.4 Main Roads Western Australia

Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt provided a report in advance of the meeting, now attached – **Attachment 2**

NOTED

8.5 Water Corporation

Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer & Stakeholder gave a verbal report.

NOTED

9. Minutes

9.1 Confirmation of Minutes from the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Monday 20 November 2023

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Tuesday, 20 November 2023 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Shire of Koorda

Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on Monday, 20 November 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

9.2 Business Arising from the Minutes from the Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting held on Monday, 20 November 2023

9.2.1 Carriage Lighting/Train Visibility – Rail Network (Item 13.1)

At the November 2023 Zone meeting, Cr Alison Harris raising concerns in relation to lighting of train carriages. WALGA provides the following update of information:

In December 2023, the Federal Government released the [National Level Crossing Safety Strategy \(Department of Transport and Main Roads\) \(tmr.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.transport.gov.au/publications/national-level-crossing-safety-strategy) which includes strategies for train lighting and visibility.

Additional commentary is available in this article:

<https://infrastructuremagazine.com.au/2024/02/05/national-level-crossing-safety-strategy-released/>

WALGA also provided a technical submission to the review of AS 7531 'Lighting and Visibility Standard' which occurred in October 2023. There is no current WALGA advocacy or Policy Team activity on this matter.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Melanie Brown, Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Cr Gary Shadbolt, Shire of Mukinbudin

That the Zone Executive Officer request a comment from WALGA on their capacity to advocate for change, with an item to be prepared for the next Great Eastern Zone meeting.

CARRIED

9.2.2 Zone Council Member Training Rebate (Item 13.4)

Following discussion of this item in November 2023, WALGA commenced monitoring Zone Local Governments that enrol Councillors in the Council Members Essentials training modules.

Under the revised rebate scheme, the Zone through the WALGA Secretariat will directly reimburse each Local Government their \$2,000 allocation rather than request Local Governments to raise an invoice. The rebate is not dependent on all Council Members completing the modules.

NOTED

9.3 Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2024

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024 were attached.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Nungarin

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2024 be received.

CARRIED

9.4 Business arising from the Great Eastern Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024

9.4.1 Prioritisation of Strategic Zone Issues

In no particular order, the following items are regarded as strategic Zone priority issues for 2024 with proposed new items identified in **green**:

- Regional Health Services to include:
 - Hospitals
 - Aged Care
 - Future of Nurse Practitioner Service
- St John Ambulance Service – Impact on Volunteers and the provision of the service generally.

- Regional Subsidiaries
- Transport – Road Network
- Telecommunications
- Education
- Review of GROH Housing and Regional Housing issues
- Waste Management
- Agricultural Land Use

Executive Committee Comment:

Strategic priorities have been updated for consideration of Zone members. Covid-19 has been excluded and the theme of regional housing has been added to GROH housing in recognition that many Local Governments struggle with lack of residential housing.

In advance of the Executive Committee meeting, Cr Mark Crees proposed a new priority based on corporations purchasing productive agricultural land to offset their carbon footprint by planting trees; this issue is aligned to the use of productive agricultural land for solar farms and wind farms. There is a relationship between this emerging issue and the buying up of productive agricultural land in various regions of WA commencing in the 1990’s for planting of commercial blue gum farms.

Both added priorities were the subject of adopted 2023 WALGA AGM motions that are currently under consideration by WALGA Policy Teams:

Regional Housing

That WALGA advocates to the WA State and Commonwealth Governments to address the dire shortage of affordable key worker family housing options in regional and remote towns to encourage families to live and work in regional and remote towns. Social housing is addressed at both the State and Federal levels.

Agricultural Land Use

That WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State’s productive agricultural land.

Comment:

Cr Crees, Shire of Westonia, gave an overview on the importance of the addition of “Agricultural Land Use”, using the example of the potential sale of Merredin Farms to a Mining Corporation for their Carbon Offsets. This would equate to 20,000Ha of 240,000Ha farmland in the Shire of Westonia alone.

The Executive Officer will keep Zone Members informed on what WALGA are doing in this space.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Westonia
Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the Great Eastern Country Zone endorse the Strategic Zone Priorities for 2024.

CARRIED

9.4.2 Medicare Rebate

At the November 2023 Zone meeting, Cr Alison Harris brought a Medicare item forward; that Medicare are proposing that the rebate will not be offered for first telehealth consultations with speciality doctors.

The current Medicare Benefits Schedule does not identify any change to the first telehealth consultation with speciality doctors. The Executive Committee discussed this matter and recommended that the Zone prepare correspondence to advocate against any change, highlighting the impact it will have on regional communities who rely heavily on telehealth consultations.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock
Seconded: Shire of Westonia

That the Zone Executive Officer write to Medicare / Services Australia and inform that the WALGA Great Eastern Country Zone is opposed to any change to the Medicare rebate for initial telehealth consultations with specialist doctors.

CARRIED

9.4.3 Women of the Wheatbelt Elected Members (WoWem) Sundowner

On Friday 15 March 2024, Cr Harris in partnership with other Members of the Great Eastern Country Zone, will host a Sundowner for female councillors in the region, the “Women of the Wheatbelt Elected Members (WoWem) Sundowner” in Merredin. It is estimated there will be 30+ attendees.

The Executive Committee supports a request for Zone consideration of a financial contribution in support of this event.

The organisers are currently awaiting catering quotes and can advise on a suggested contribution closer to the event. In the absence of specific costings, the Executive Committee therefore propose a financial contribution to a maximum of \$1,000 be considered.

Comment:

Cr Brown thanked Cr Harris for her work, stating this event is a great initiative.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the Great Eastern Country Zone make a financial contribution up to a maximum of \$1,000 toward the cost of hosting the Women of the Wheatbelt Elected Members (WoWem) Sundowner to be held on 15 March 2024.

CARRIED

10. Zone Business

10.1 2024 Meeting dates

Background:

Meeting dates for the Great Eastern Country Zone's Executive Committee and Zone meetings are presented for the Zone's review and acceptance.

These dates were endorsed by the Executive Committee at their meeting on Tuesday 13 February.

The Executive Committee dates are 1.5 weeks prior to the Zone meeting. Zone meetings are scheduled to align with State Council meetings.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS
GREAT EASTERN COUNTRYZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2024

Exec Comm Meeting Dates Tuesday	Time	HOST COUNCIL
2 April	Tuesday 8am	Teleconference
4 June	Tuesday 8am	Teleconference
13 August	Tuesday 8am	Teleconference
5 November	Tuesday 8am	Teleconference

NOTICE OF MEETINGS
GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE 2024

Zone Meeting Dates	Time	Host Council	State Council meeting Dates 2024	Time to read State Council Agenda
11 April	Thursday 9.30 am	Kellerberrin	Wednesday 1 May	2 weeks and 1 day
13 June	Thursday 9.30 am	Merredin	Wednesday 3 July	1 week and 1 day
22 August	Thursday 9.30 am	Kellerberrin	Regional Meeting 5-6 September	1 week and 1 day
14 November	Thursday 9.30 am	Merredin	Wednesday 4 December	2 week and 1 day

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Dowerin

Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the 2024 Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee and Zone dates are confirmed as stated above.

CARRIED

10.2 Great Eastern Country Zone Conference 2025

The Great Eastern Country Zone Conference was held in Merredin on Tuesday 28 February 2023. Themed “Regional Collaboration,” the intent of the Conference was to provide information on current and planned regional collaboration involving Zone Local Governments. A total of 100 people attended, including Local Government Councillors, Senior officers, and three members of Parliament.

A subsequent survey provided a strong response that the conference is a valuable experience, particularly the information and networking opportunity it provides for Council Members that do not attend the Zone.

The Zone is committed to a biennial conference and it would be practical to commence planning for the 2025 conference as soon as possible. The Executive Committee recently discussed establishing a Zone Conference Planning Subcommittee to take the lead on the conference theme, speakers, location and potential innovations.

It is recommended the Subcommittee comprise between 4 and 6 members and it will be supported by WALGA through the Zone Executive Officer. The Zone Conference Planning Subcommittee will also be able to leverage the capability within WALGA’s Marketing and Events team to assist with matters including conference planning and promotion, venue identification and logistics, speaker and MC acquisition.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Westonia

Seconded: Shire of Mukinbudin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone establish a Zone Conference Planning Subcommittee comprising the following Zone delegates:

Cr Melanie Brown, Shire of Trayning;

Cr Jannah Stratford, Shire of Koorda :

Cr Ram Rajagopalan, Shire of Bruce Rock;

Cr Gary Shadbolt, Shire of Mukinbudin :

Cr Tony Sasche, Shire of Mount Marshall;

Cr Stephen Strange, Shire of Bruce Rock;

Cr Mark Crees, Shire of Westonia

CARRIED

10.3 Road Works during a Total Fire Ban Regulatory Review Update

By Max Bushell, Senior Policy Advisor, Road Safety and Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has announced that changes to the Bush Fires Regulations 1954 dealing with grading and bituminising works during a Total Fire Ban have come into effect.*
- *All conditions on conducting road works during a Total Fire Ban have been removed, except for the following three conditions: 24Y, 24ZA, and 24ZB.*
- *Local Governments should still employ robust risk management and assessment strategies when deciding whether to proceed with roadworks during a Total Fire Ban.*

BACKGROUND

Following consultation with WALGA and Local Governments, Main Roads, and contractors, DFES have removed all conditions on conducting road works during a Total Fire Ban, except for:

- Regulation 24Y: road work remains prescribed for the purposes of section 22B(2) of the Bush Fires Act 1954; meaning business, industry and public authorities (which include Local Governments) can continue to conduct road work during a total fire ban without requiring an exemption.
- Regulation 24ZA: road work must stop during a Total Fire Ban where there is a Catastrophic fire danger rating – with exceptions for essential services.
- Regulation 24ZB: notification is still required via the online notification form which notifies DFES and the Local Government where the works are occurring during a Total Fire Ban. If working within 3kms of DBCA managed land, notification to DBCA is also required.

Local Governments should continue to employ their own thorough risk assessment and risk management practices that consider fire prevention and mitigation when programming road works during a Total Fire Ban.

Additional information can be found on the DFES [website](#). The DFES road work [factsheet](#) may be particularly useful for Local Governments.

NOTED

10.4 Consultation Opportunities

The following consultations are currently open and Zone Local Governments may consider providing a response or formal submission:

Auditor Experience Survey

WALGA has again partnered with LG Professionals WA to conduct a survey of the sector seeking feedback in relation to the annual audit process.

To this end we have jointly revised the questionnaire based on last year's experiences to ensure we obtain feedback from the sector that will enable us to provide constructive advice to the Office of the Auditor General. The OAG is supportive of this process and welcomes advice from the peak bodies to inform their continued improvement.

Please assist us in this important research exercise by completing the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6KRF2K9> before close of business on **Friday, 15th March**.

Kindly note that only one response is required per organisation.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on either my mobile: 0439 914 349, direct work number 9213 2051 or email: tbrown@walga.asn.au

Stop Puppy Farming - Fees and Charges Consultation Paper

Consultation is now being undertaken by consultants Marsden Jacob Associates on the new and existing fees and charges under the Dog Act 1976 and Cat Act 2011. Local Governments should have received correspondence from them providing a consultation paper and a link to an online survey for submissions in response.

The five-week consultation period opened on Thursday 1 February and responses will inform the development of fees for the following approvals:

1. Dog and cat registration by owners and contributions to the Centralised Registration System (CRS)
2. Dog supply approvals
3. Approvals to breed for dogs
4. Pet shops approvals (only applicable to dogs)

If you have not received a copy of the consultation paper and a link to their survey, please contact Marsden Jacob Associates for at SPFees@marsdenjacob.com.au

The consultation closes on **Friday, 8 March**.

Cemeteries and Cremations Act Review

The March 2024 State Council Agenda includes an Item for Decision on this review, this is a timely opportunity to inform the Zone that the consultation period has been extended to 15 March. This provides Local Governments with a renewed opportunity to provide a submission, with information provided below:

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has commenced a **Review of the Cemeteries Act 1976 and the Cremations Act 1929**.

Local Governments that operate cemeteries or have cremation facilities within their district are encouraged to provide a submission to the DLGSC via the above link. WALGA would appreciate receiving a copy of submissions to inform the development of advocacy. Please send copies of submissions to governance@walga.asn.au by Thursday 25 January 2024.

NOTED

10.5 2024 Local Government Honours Program

By Meghan Dwyer, Executive Officer Governance

The annual Local Government Honours Program affords public recognition and celebration of the outstanding achievements and lasting contributions made by Elected Members and Local Government officers to their respective Councils, the WA Local Government sector and the wider community.

There are six awards in the 2024 Program:

1. Local Government Medal
2. Life Membership
3. Eminent Service Award
4. Merit Award
5. Local Government Distinguished Officer Award
6. Young Achievers Award

Nominations will open on **Friday, 8 March 2024** and close at **5:00pm on Friday, 31 May 2024**.

Details on the 2024 Honours Program and Nomination Forms will be available from Friday, 8 March 2024 on the [WALGA website](https://www.walga.asn.au).

For more information contact Meghan Dwyer, Executive Officer Governance, on 9213 2050 or via email at honours@walga.asn.au.

NOTED

11. Zone Reports

11.1 Zone Chair President Report

President Tony Sachse

As we moved into 2024 and January in particular, GECZ member councils experienced a series of bushfires, mainly due to lightning, followed by a very intense super cell with wide-ranging impacts such that it was designated a Level 2 Amber emergency. There are items relating to this in today's agenda.

The GECZ met for the first-time last week with items relating to current and future meetings as well as discussion on holding a Wheatbelt Zone Conference in 2025. Our guest speaker today is Mr Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager, Telstra Retail & Regional who will present on a range of topics. We also look forward to all our Agency and other reports. By working together in a positive way, we are hopeful many of the concerns we have can be addressed, within the resources available. Good planning and process is also important.

Thanks to the WALGA staff for their contribution in preparing today's agenda, especially James McGovern and Naoimh Doherty. Thanks also to the Shire of Merredin for hosting us today.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning

Seconded: Shire of Mukinbudin

That the Zone President's Report be received.

CARRIED

11.2 Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC)

President Tony Sachse

The last Wheatbelt DEMC met on 19th October 2023. The unconfirmed minutes were attached.

You will probably already be aware but Yvette Grigg, District Emergency Management Advisor, Wheatbelt and Goldfields-Esperance Districts, Department of Fire and Emergency Services finished up in her role on Thursday 25th January, 2024. Yvette has given all of us considerable support over many years. Thank you, Yvette.

The Wheatbelt Operational Area Support Group (OASG)/ISG is now meeting on an as needed basis. After the multiple bushfires and the Level 2 Amber Emergency due to the Super Cell in January 2024, Meetings were held twice daily from 17th January 2024 until and including 21st January 2024, and daily from 22nd – 24th January, 2024. A final meeting a debrief of this emergency is scheduled for Tuesday, 20th February, 2024.

Wheatbelt OASG Minutes, Extracts and attachments were distributed to the WALGA GECZ members during the emergency by our executive, so they are not repeated in this report. Of note though are the notes from DFES relating to the use of generators during a Total Fire Ban. A TFB was in place in some Local Governments on Sunday 21st January 2024 during the Emergency. Agencies, Local Governments, Businesses and Individuals were required to consider the reasons for running a generator, and if they did so, that they met the conditions for doing so including having a suitable spark arrestor fitted.

- Regulation 24A(4) Bush Fire Regulations provides that use of an engine, vehicle, plant, equipment or machinery is not prohibited under reg 24A / s 23B Bush Fire Act provided that: o (a) the purpose of that use or operation is the prevention of an immediate and serious risk to the health or safety of a person or livestock; and o (b) all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent the use or operation from causing a bush fire; and o (c) without limiting paragraph (b), the condition applicable under sub regulation (5) is complied with.
- Based on the above information the use of the generators is to prevent an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of a person or livestock given the known impacts of the current outage and failure to return normal services within a reasonable period of time may mean for those persons already identified as vulnerable in the community due to pre-existing medical conditions among other things.
- The generator user must ensure that the internal combustion engine that is, or that activates, the engine, vehicle, plant, equipment or machinery being used or operated is mechanically sound and has an exhaust system that — o (a) is clean and free from gas leaks; and o (b) except in the case of a motor vehicle, is fitted with a suitable spark arrester for the engine. • The use of a generator for an essential service becomes relevant if the fire danger is catastrophic, but that does not appear to be the case at the moment.
- The relevant exemption holders should also consult any exemptions they have regarding works they can perform.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock

Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

11.3 Regional Health Advocacy Group

Cr Alison Harris was an apology for this meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock

Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the Regional Health Advocacy Report be received.

CARRIED

11.4 WALGA RoadWise

Cliff Simpson, Road Safety Advisor, was an apology.

12. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) Business

12.1 State Councillor Report

Cr Stephen Strange

- Cr Strange gave a verbal report referencing;
- We have a record 14 new Councillors on State Council.
- A new WALGA President and Deputy President will be elected at the March meeting.

- Highlighted the positive actions coming from Policy Teams.
- Following the next State Council meeting, State Council will meet to determine sector's key asks in advance of the March 2025 State election and will develop our advocacy campaign around these priorities, which will be a key focus of our work in 2024.
- Reminder that all Council meetings will be audio recorded from January 2025 onwards. Encouraged Zone Members to take advantage of WALGA's Meeting Procedures workshop training.

Executive Officer Comment:

The Executive Officer reminded Members that there are free workshop training opportunities available through WALGA to prepare for the recording of Council meetings.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Kellerberrin
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the State Councillor Report be received.

CARRIED

12.2 State Council Agenda Items – 6 March 2024

Background

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

Zone delegates to consider the Matters for Decision contained in the WA Local Government Association State Council Agenda and put forward resolutions to Zone Representatives on State Council

The full State Council Agenda can be found via link: [State Council Agenda 6 March 2024 \(walga.asn.au\)](https://www.walga.asn.au)

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

MATTERS FOR DECISION

1.1 Separation (Centre) and Edge Line Markings by Local Government on Low Volume Rural Roads

Executive Summary

- The Main Roads WA warrant does not currently allow edge line or separation (centre) line markings on Local Government roads that carry less than certain traffic volume thresholds.
- Local Governments would like to enhance the safety of their roads by installing line markings in instances where only the traffic volume criterion under the warrant is not met.
- A process is proposed in this item whereby Local Governments would pay for the installation and maintenance and Main Roads would perform the necessary inspections to ensure that the markings adhere to the applicable standard.

- Local Governments would not be required to undertake these works, but rather would have the option to install line markings on qualifying roads that do not meet the traffic volume criterion at their own cost.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA endorse the below Advocacy Position:

- Main Roads Western Australia allow Local Governments to install edge line and separation (centre) line markings on roads that meet all relevant criteria, but do not meet the criterion on traffic volume.**
- For this exemption, Local Governments must adhere to the following conditions:**
 - The Local Government contact Main Roads via the Regional Network Manager with their intent to undertake line marking on specific roads that do not meet the traffic volume criterion, but meet all the other criteria.**
 - The Local Government obtain a Council resolution, committing to fund all installation and maintenance costs.**
 - Local Government undertake spotting/surveying.**
 - Main Roads to undertake an inspection following the survey/spotting work, confirm the start and finish points for the longitudinal line markings, and record the sections of road with line markings to be maintained by Local Government in the relevant database.**
 - Main Roads approve the final layout prior to line marking occurring.**
 - Local Government undertake the works.**
 - Local Government maintain the works in accordance with Main Roads WA standards.**
 - Local Government remove the lines if maintenance works are not performed to the standard.**

1.2 Recovered Materials Framework Advocacy Position

Executive Summary

- The [Standards for Recycled Organics Applied to Land Policy Statement 2007](#) was developed at a time when the main option for landfill diversion of organic material in Western Australia was through mixed waste Alternative Waste Treatment (AWT) facilities.
- The Policy Statement provides principles for the development of standards for recycled organics applied to land, however these principles are potentially broadly applicable to any recovered material applied to land.
- The approach taken is that the principles/approach in the Policy Statement have been reviewed and used to inform the development of the Recovered Materials Framework Advocacy Position.
- The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is developing a Recovered Materials Framework to cover the application of recovered materials to land.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the new Advocacy Position in December 2023.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

- Rescind the existing WALGA *Standards for Recycled Organics Applied to Land Policy Statement 2007* and Advocacy Position 7.9:**

Local Government:

- Acknowledges the benefits of applying recycled organics to land, especially as a means of diverting organic material from landfill; and,**
- Supports the development of standards for applying recycled organics to land, to ensure a fit for purpose product is developed.**

2. **Endorse a new *Recovered Materials Framework* Advocacy Position as follows:**

The use of recovered materials, across a range of applications, is essential in reducing the use of basic raw materials, meeting State Waste Strategy Targets and increasing diversion of waste from landfill. To ensure end users have high confidence in the quality and safety of products derived from recovered materials, consistent, outcomes-based standards and investment certainty are required.

The State Government, in consultation with Local Government and the waste management industry, should take a leadership role in facilitating the use of recovered material by:

1. **Developing a regulatory framework which:**
 - a. **Outlines clear, outcomes-based specifications for individual products which take into consideration the receiving environment and allow for site-specific assessment.**
 - b. **Minimises risk to human health and the environment from the use of recovered material.**
 - c. **Establishes robust systems to provide quality assurance and ongoing surveillance throughout the supply chain.**
2. **Providing guidance and support mechanisms for the successful implementation of the framework.**
3. **Supporting the development of, and access to, sustainable end markets and long-term offtake agreements through initiatives such as active engagement with potential end users and the inclusion of recovered material content targets in Government procurement and large infrastructure projects.**

1.3 Review of Cemeteries Act 1986 and Cremation Act 1929 Discussion Paper

Executive Summary

- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries released the Review of *Cemeteries Act 1986* and *Cremation Act 1929* Discussion Paper in November 2023 for public submission.
- WALGA was granted an extension to the submission closing period of 16 February 2024 to permit sector involvement in providing feedback from the Zone process and State Council consideration.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

1. **Supports the intent of the Review of Cemeteries Act 1986 and Cremation Act 1929 Discussion Paper to reduce red tape, modernise legislation and standardise administrative practices; and**
2. **Advocates that Local Government cemetery managers retain the capacity to impose cemetery fees and charges under Part 6 of the Local Government Act.**

POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 9.1 Environment Policy Team Report
- 9.2 Governance Policy Team Report
- 9.3 Infrastructure Policy Team Report
- 9.4 People and Place Policy Team Report

9.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report

MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

10.1 2024-25 Federal Budget Submission

10.2 Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) Local Government Consultation Project

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin

Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone:

- 1. Supports all Matters for Decision as listed above in the March 2024 State Council Agenda; and**
- 2. Notes all Matters for Noting, Policy Team and Committee Reports and Organisational Reports as listed in the March 2024 State Council Agenda.**

CARRIED

12.3 WALGA President's Report

The WALGA President's Report was attached to the agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Koorda

Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

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

CARRIED

13. Emerging Issues

NIL

14. Date, Time, and Place of Next Meetings

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 2 April, via MS Teams – 8am.

The next Great Eastern Country Zone meeting will be held on Thursday 11 April commencing at 9.30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Kellerberrin.

15. Closure

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.19pm.