



## AGENDA

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# SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

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20 FEBRUARY 2023



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**SHIRE OF WAGIN**  
**NOTICE OF MEETING**

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**Dear President and Councillors,**

**The next Special Meeting of Council will be held**

**ON: Monday 20 FEBRUARY 2023**

**WHERE: Council Chambers, Shire Office**

**AT: 7:00pm**

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**Ian McCabe**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*Note: That, under section 5.65 of the Local Government Act 1995, care should be exercised by all councillors to ensure that a 'financial interest' is declared and that they refrain from voting on any matters which are considered that may come within the ambit of the Act.*



## **DISCLAIMER**

No responsibility is implied or accepted by the Shire of Wagin for any act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or committee meetings.

The Shire of Wagin disclaims any liability for any loss whatsoever and howsoever caused arising out of reliance by any person or legal entity on any such act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or committee meetings.

Any person or legal entity who acts or fails to act in reliance upon any statement, act or omission made in a Council or committee meeting does so at that person's or legal entity's own risk.

In particular and without detracting in any way from the broad disclaimer above, in any discussion regarding any planning application or application for a licence, any statement or intimation of approval made by any member or officer of the Shire of Wagin during the course of any meeting is not intended to be and is not taken as notice of approval from the Shire of Wagin

The Shire of Wagin advises that anyone who has any application lodged with the Shire of Wagin shall obtain and should only rely on **WRITTEN CONFIRMATION** of the outcome of the application, and any conditions attaching to the decision made by the Shire of Wagin in respect of the application.

**Ian McCabe**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



## **Community Strategic Vision**

Wagin is a community where individuals, families and businesses can invest and prosper, preserving the safe, affordable and inclusive country lifestyle and ensuring that Wagin is a place people like to live in and visit.

## **Council's Mission and Philosophy**

The Shire of Wagin is a focussed Local Government providing progressive and innovative leadership that builds a sustainable future while supporting a vibrant, healthy and caring community.

## **Council's Guiding Values**

- Governance and Leadership
- Honesty and Integrity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Community Focused
- Environmentally Aware

*Shire of Wagin Strategic Community Plan 2020 - 2030*

1. Economic Development	2. Buildings and Infrastructure	3. Community Services and Social Environment	4. Town and Natural Environment	5. Council Leadership
1.1 Increase in the number and diversity of businesses in the town and district.	2.1 Improve road conditions on all Shire and State roads.	3.1 Keep the family-friendly country lifestyle, community spirit, safe community with low crime rate.	4.1 Upgrade main street appearance for the amenity of residents and encourage travellers and tourists to stop.	5.1 Support and provide incentives for more businesses and retail opportunities.
1.2 Support more job/ training opportunities, and entities especially for young people.	2.2 Monitor heavy vehicle movements through the townsite.	3.2 Retain the school and hospital and grow health, Doctor services, allied health and aged care services.	4.2 Improve town approach and entry statements.	5.2 Foster Communication with the community.
1.3 Increase tourism and promotion of town and heritage.	2.3 Improvement in condition and appearance of the main streets of the Town and improved signage.	3.3 Housing, Job and training especially for young people.	4.3 Maintain and improve natural environment and recreation areas	5.3 Plan services and activities based on sustainability, affordability and resources.
1.4 Facilitate Broadband and other associated electronic media infrastructure	2.4 Continue to upgrade Footpaths in town.	3.4 Progress the Wagin Community Recreational Hub	4.4 Improved waste management in town and Shire.	5.4 Encourage and acknowledge volunteering.
1.5 Explore affordable accommodation for workers.	2.5 Refine Infrastructure to support arts, culture, entertainment and library services.	3.5. Youth focus on services and recreation development including coordination of effort across the Shire/region.	4.5 Continue to increase the number of suitable trees within the townsite to enhance the tree canopy in particular the CBD	5.5 Be responsive to community aspirations and requirements within the capacity of council.
1.6 Aid retention and encourage more government services in Wagin.	2.6 Encourage greater care and restoration or preservation of heritage buildings.	3.6 Foster and support Woolorama and other events, cultural and other entertainment opportunities.		5.6 Council to have a sound strategy to the sustainability to the Shire
1.7 Support and Promote Wagin as a business opportunity.	2.7 Develop a safe fenced playground for children in a park environment	3.7 Support community activities with resources and facilities as required.		5.7 Investigate rebranding of the Shire.
1.8 Determine further waste management options.	2.8 Investigate planning and development of sporting facilities	3.8 Investigate to establish Wi-Fi Hotspots		5.8 Continue lobbying and advocacy for road infrastructure and freight networks and other strategic infrastructure for the benefit of the Shire
1.9 Maintain and improve the freight network in the Shire	2.9 Investigate future housing and expansion for tourist and other attractions.	3.9 Promote and Enhance the Wagin caravan and camping experience.	Shire of Wagin Strategic Community Plan - Key Results Areas	
	2.10 Optimise water harvesting and storage			



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## SHIRE OF WAGIN

Agenda for the Special Meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chambers,  
Wagin on Monday 20 February 2023 commencing at 7pm

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### CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>OFFICIAL OPENING</b> .....	6
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF PURPOSE OF MEETING</b> .....	6
<b>3.</b>	<b>RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED)</b> .....	6
3.1	ATTENDANCE .....	6
3.2	APOLOGIES.....	6
3.3	APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE .....	6
3.4	VISITORS.....	6
<b>4.</b>	<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> .....	6
<b>5.</b>	<b>PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS</b> .....	6
<b>6.</b>	<b>DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER INTERESTS</b> .....	6
6.1	DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL INTEREST – Local Government Act Section 5.60a ..	6
6.2	DISCLOSURE OF PROXIMITY INTEREST – Local Government Act Section 5.6 .....	7
6.3	DISCLOSURE OF IMPARTIALITY INTEREST – Administration Regulation Section 34c .....	7
<b>7.</b>	<b>REPORTS TO COUNCIL</b> .....	7
7.1	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER .....	7
7.1.1	REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION .....	7
<b>8.</b>	<b>CLOSURE</b> .....	11



## 1. OFFICIAL OPENING

The Presiding Member, Cr Phillip Blight opened the meeting at \_\_\_\_\_pm.

## 2. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is for Council to review Councillor representation.

## 3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED)

### 3.1 ATTENDANCE

Cr Phillip Blight	Shire President
Cr Greg Ball	Deputy Shire President
Cr Sheryll Chilcott	
Cr Bronwyn Hegarty	
Cr Bryan Kilpatrick	
Cr Wade Longmuir	
Cr Geoff West	
Cr Ann O'Brien	
Ian McCabe	Chief Executive Officer
Donna George	Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer

### 3.2 APOLOGIES

### 3.3 APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### 3.4 VISITORS

## 4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

*Council conducts open Council Meetings. Members of the public are asked that if they wish to address the Council that they state their name and put the purpose of their address as precisely as possible. A minimum of 15 minutes is allocated for public forum. The length of time an individual can speak will be determined at the President's discretion.*

## 5. PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

## 6. DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER INTERESTS

### 6.1 DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL INTEREST – Local Government Act Section 5.60a



**6.2 DISCLOSURE OF PROXIMITY INTEREST – Local Government Act**  
Section 5.6

**6.3 DISCLOSURE OF IMPARTIALITY INTEREST – Administration Regulation**  
Section 34c

**7. REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

**7.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**7.1.1 REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION**

PROPONENT:	Local Government Advisory Board
OWNER:	Not Applicable
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	Not Applicable
AUTHOR OF REPORT:	Chief Executive Officer
SENIOR OFFICER:	Not Applicable
DATE OF REPORT:	14 February 2023
PREVIOUS REPORT(S):	21 September 2022
DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST:	Nil
FILE REFERENCE:	GV.CO.3
STRATEGIC DOCUMENT REFERENCE	Not Applicable
ATTACHMENTS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ministerial Memorandum 20 September 2022;</li><li>2. Public Notice;</li><li>3. Discussion Paper;</li><li>4. Submission Form.</li><li>5. Report to the Local Government Advisory Board (to be tabled on closure of public submissions)</li></ol>

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved Cr**

**Seconded Cr**

**That Council:**

- 1. Receive the Report to the Local Government Advisory Board;**
- 2. Having considered the Government's position and community consultation in relation to the number of council offices, determines that the number of elected members to represent the electors of the Shire of Wagin should be seven (7) and that this should take effect from the ordinary Council elections scheduled for October 2023.**

**Carried 0/0**

**BRIEF SUMMARY**

This item addresses the number of council offices as required by the state government Local Government Reforms: election transition arrangements (Changes to Council Size). A report including Council's Decision is to be submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board 21 February 2023.

**BACKGROUND/COMMENT**

In July 2022, the Minister announced a number of reforms in relation to local government engagement and elections. This included optional preferential voting (where voters indicate as many or as few preferences as they choose); directly elected Mayors and Presidents for band 1 and 2 local governments (Wagin is a band 4); Councillor (office) numbers based on population; and, the removal of wards for bands 3 and 4. Wagin does not have wards.

It is intended to introduce these changes by the 2023 election.

In September 2022, the Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; Local Government wrote to the CEO indicating the likelihood that Wagin would have to reduce the number of councillors as part of the reform process.

The memorandum proposed a Voluntary Pathway where by Council elected to consult the community on the subject of the number of councillor positions; make an absolute majority decision informed by the consultation; and thereafter provide a report to the Local Government Advisory Board. A Voluntary Pathway would see only those offices due for re-election vacated (including any variation determined by this decision and legislation). For example, a council decision to reduce to seven offices in 2023 would require candidates for three offices in October 2023 (five offices notionally due for election, a reduction of two, therefore three required). The Minister has indicated Council may opt for five, six or seven council offices. This item recommends seven.

Alternatively, an Amendment Act to the Local Government Act 1995 would provide for the declaration of all council offices vacant and the legislating of the number of offices and mechanism for their election cycle.

At its September 2022 meeting Council decided to follow the Voluntary Pathway and advised the Local Government Advisory Board of the decision.

A consultation paper considering the number of offices and inviting members of the public to comment was distributed and advertised by public notice. In addition to public discourse, the paper and notices have been available in excess of public notice requirements for 42 days. At the preparation of this item there had been no submissions

The Minister indicated that the consultation process and council's review is to consider the number of councillor offices and not otherwise diverge from the reform process.

### **CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION**

Full Council; community and staff; Local Government Advisory Board.

### **STATUTORY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Local Government Act 1995 is to be amended to enact the proposed Local Government Reforms. The legislation has not been sighted but has been reviewed by a working group comprising the Department of Local Government; LG Professionals WA (including serving CEO(s)); and the West Australian Local Government Association (WALGA). There are no serving elected members on this working group and the draft legislation has not been provided to the wider sector.

Gazettal of proposed changes to representation is scheduled for 30 June 2023 ahead of the October 2023 elections.

The Amendment Act will limit offices and wards in line with the government's reform agenda and the Minister has indicated a failure to respond or act will result in all offices being spilled.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There is no relevant policy.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no direct financial implications to this item. In time, minor savings due to reduced offices may eventuate but equally changes to workflow may see increased staff costs with no financial benefit realised.

### **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are implications for local democracy and representation of the proposed reforms. In principle, the number of offices should allow for a reflection of community diversity and consider the ability of the community to attract a field of nominees and fill offices. This may be a number greater than the government's proposal.



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However, the Minister is intent on creating uniformity across the sector and implementing standardisation of process and governance practice. This includes the approach to financial management and resource sharing. While avoiding amalgamations this will have the effect of highlighting exceptions and may identify councils that may be less sustainable, either financially or in terms of governance or compliance.

## **VOTING REQUIREMENTS**

Absolute Majority



**Hon John Carey MLA**  
**Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; Local Government**

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Our Ref: 78-08502 (Category 5)

20 September 2022

Dear Local Government Chief Executive Officers

**MEMORANDUM TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS: ELECTION TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**  
**(CHANGES TO COUNCIL SIZE)**

On 3 July 2022, I announced the final package of proposed local government reforms, following a review of public submissions. As part of the reforms to strengthen local democracy and increase community engagement, new requirements will be introduced to provide for:

- The introduction of optional preferential voting;
- Directly elected Mayors and Presidents for band 1 and 2 local governments;
- Councillor numbers based on population; and
- The removal of wards for band 3 and 4 local governments.

Work on a Bill to amend the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) is ongoing, and a Bill is expected to be introduced into Parliament in early 2023.

Many of the reform proposals related to council representation are based on recent trends, and are intended to provide greater consistency between districts. Accordingly, for more than half of all local governments, the reforms will not require any specific change to the size or structure of the council.

However, the reform proposals do require some local governments to:

- Reduce the number of elected members on council in accordance with population thresholds; or
- Change from a council elected mayor or president to a directly elected mayor or president (this reform affects only band 1 and 2 local governments); or
- Abolish wards (for band 3 and 4 local governments with wards); or
- Implement more than one of the above.

The Amendment Act will also provide that optional preferential voting will apply for all local government elections. As you may know, optional preferential voting means that all electors have the choice to number preferences for as many or as few candidates as they wish to.

I appreciate the significant interest in the reform proposals, and transitional arrangements for the upcoming 2023 ordinary elections. Many councils have expressed a proactive intent to implement reforms as early as possible.

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I also acknowledge that, for some local governments, it may be desirable to implement changes to the size of the elected council over two ordinary election cycles.

**The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) has completed an initial review, and identified that your local government may need to reduce the number of council members under the proposed reforms.**

As you would know, the Act already provides that local governments may initiate proposals to change the size or structure of the council. Accordingly, I write to advise of two pathways your local government may consider for making these election transition arrangements.

### **Voluntary Pathway**

Your local government may decide to implement these changes on a voluntary basis. This pathway will require the council to make the steps outlined below, and could involve staging any larger changes in the number of councillors over two ordinary elections. This pathway provides the greatest possible lead time to plan for next year's ordinary elections.

If your council wishes to undertake this process, it should, by 28 October 2022:

- Advise the DLGSC of its intention to undertake a voluntary process. This advice should include a high-level plan outlining the potential changes to be implemented for the ordinary elections to be held in 2023 (and in 2025, if applicable); and
- Initiate a Ward and Representation Review to determine the specific changes to the structure of the council for the 2023 and 2025 ordinary elections, to be completed by 14 February 2023.

I appreciate that significant effort is required to complete a Ward and Representation Review. The Ward and Representation Review would need to be initiated ahead of the 28 October 2022 date, and finalised by 14 February 2023, to ensure that the timeframes set out in the Act can be practically met. While the Ward and Representation Review can consider the size of the council, and any wards, any changes should not diverge from the proposed reforms.

Further information is attached to this letter to assist with this process.

### **Reform Election Pathway**

Alternatively, it is intended that the Amendment Act will provide for all changes to be implemented through reform elections in 2023. This pathway would provide that all of the council's offices can be declared vacant, all wards can be abolished (if applicable), and the number of council offices would be set based on the reform proposals.

Elections would then be held to fill all council offices, with a split between two and four year terms as might be necessary to re-establish an ordinary election cycle. For local governments in band 1 or 2, the newly-elected council would then be able to consider whether to establish new wards through a future Ward and Representation Review.

Your local government may specifically decide to follow the Reform Election Pathway. If this is the council's intention, I request that you advise the DLGSC by 28 October 2022.

It is also intended that the Amendment Act will contain provisions for the Reform Election Pathway to apply if a local government:

- Does not advise of an intention to follow the Voluntary Pathway, or
- Decides to follow the Voluntary Pathway, but does not suitably complete a Ward and Representation Review by the dates outlined in this letter.

### **Next Steps**

In line with the above, I request that your council considers these matters, and provides formal written advice on the preferred pathway to the DLGSC by 28 October 2022. Given the timeframes already established in the Act, no extension to the dates specified in this letter will be possible.

The DLGSC is available to assist with these election transition arrangements. If you require any assistance, please contact Ms Julie Craig, Strategy and Research Officer, on 6552 7300 or at [advisoryboard@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:advisoryboard@dlgsc.wa.gov.au).

I have also written a formal letter to the Mayor or President of your local government, which contains the same information as this memorandum. That letter should be received shortly.

Yours sincerely



**HON JOHN CAREY MLA**  
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Att: Timeline and steps – local government ward and representation reviews

## Timeline and steps – local government ward and representation reviews

The following steps will need to occur to allow all required local governments to meet the **30 June 2023** timeframe of publication in the Government Gazette of any proposed ward and representation review changes, ahead of the October 2023 local government elections. Please note that all stages that are currently followed for 'regular' reviews are included below.

Table 1 includes suggested timeframes which will need to be considered by all local governments that will be required to undertake a review ahead of the October 2023 elections.

All local governments should aim to have their completed reviews submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board (the Advisory Board) by no later than **14 February 2023**.

**Table 1 – proposed timeframes for local government actions**

<b>Due date (latest possible)</b>	<b>Requirements/actions</b>
28 October 2022	Council resolves to undertake a ward and representation review A comprehensive discussion paper is developed
December 2022	Completion of six-week consultation period
December 2022 - January 2023	Draft review report is prepared, considered and adopted by council
14 February 2023	Formal review report is submitted to the Advisory Board

Please note that the above dates are suggestions only, as each council will have to consider their own calendars for their monthly meetings. It is also possible that some affected councils will have an earlier meeting in December 2022, and then no meeting in January 2023. This is why mid to late December 2022 is suggested as the date by which the draft review report should be considered by council.

**Table 2 - Ward and representation review process – for local governments**

	<b>Existing requirements/actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1	The council resolves to undertake a ward and representation review	Variable
2	A comprehensive discussion paper is developed	Variable
3	Council advertises that it is conducting a review and the associated public submission period opens (minimum 6 weeks)	6 weeks
4	The discussion paper is made available to the community for consideration, and public submissions are invited on the matter	
5	Public submission period closes	
6	The Council assesses all submissions, considers options for change against the relevant factors to be considered, and drafts a report, which includes their decision, for the Local Government Advisory Board (the Advisory Board)	Variable
7	The formal report is presented to Council on the outcome of the public submissions and the proposed ward and/or boundary changes	Variable
8	Council resolves to adopt the report to the Advisory Board	Variable
9	The preferred option is submitted to the Advisory Board via the formal report, for the Board's consideration and recommendation	Variable
10	The Advisory Board considers the council's review report, and a recommendation is submitted to the Minister, which can either be accepted or rejected	Variable



## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Review of councillor positions

The state government has mandated a review of the number of councillor positions across the state. As part of proposed local government reform, the government has indicated smaller communities must reduce the number of council positions to either five, six or seven councillors. Wagin currently has nine councillors and last reviewed this number in 2020.

A Discussion paper has been prepared and can be viewed on the shire website, at the shire administration or at the public library. A submission form is also available for completion.

Electors and residents are invited to read the paper and make a written submission by 4.30pm Thursday 16 February 2023.

Council will consider all submissions and make a decision on the number of council positions. This will then be advised to the Local Government Advisory Board.

IAN MCCABE

Chief Executive Officer

5 January 2023



## DISCUSSION PAPER

### REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Shire of Wagin conducted a review of councillor representation in mid-2020 and Council decided in October 2020 to reduce the number of Councillors from eleven to nine, effective at the 2021 elections. Prior to this, council reduced the number of offices (elected members) from 13 members to 11 members in 2003. The Shire has not operated a ward system for many years and there no intention to change this situation.

This Review Discussion Paper has been prepared in response to a late September 2022 memorandum from the Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; Local Government about local government reform. This memorandum detailed a number of proposed changes to the Local Government Act but specified the approach to changes in council size.

Specifically, the Minister has indicated reform will mean that districts of populations of less than 5,000 will have five, six or seven councillors. Wagin has a population of approximately 1,800 with nine councillors, which will mean a reduction in councillor offices to five, six or seven.

This paper and other actions reference the provisions of Schedule 2.2 of the *Local Government Act* which specify:

### **7. Reviews**

- (1) Before carrying out a review a local government has to give local public notice advising —**
  - (a) that the review is to be carried out; and**
  - (b) that submissions may be made to the local government before a day fixed by the notice, being a day that is not less than 6 weeks after the notice is first given.**
- (2) In carrying out the review the local government is to consider submissions made to it before the day fixed by the notice.**

A number of factors may be considered when deciding upon a change in Councillor representation. There are no wards (or segmentation of the shire) within the district, so all councillors represent the entire district and all electors. Matters such as community of interests, physical and topographical features and economic factors are therefore not applicable in this discussion. Relevant factors are those impacting on representation, including:

- Demographic trends
- Economic factors
- Ratio of councillors to electors

## **CURRENT SITUATION:**

The Shire of Wagin comprises nine Councillors. The President is elected by the Councillors. Elector numbers for the 2021 local government elections were 1,285 (one councillor per 143 electors).

## **THE PROCESS:**

The review process is required to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995* and involves a number of steps as follows:

### **CONSULTATION**

- Council resolves to undertake the review
- Public submission period opens – a minimum of six weeks is allowed for the lodgement of submissions

### **EVALUATION**

- Public submission period closes
- Council considers all submissions and relevant factors and makes its decision
- Council submits a report to the Local Government Advisory Board for its consideration

### **DECISION**

- Local Government Advisory Board makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government
- The Minister makes a decision and makes recommendation to the Governor
- Any changes approved by the Minister will be in place for the next election (October 2023) where possible or where mandated.

## **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MEMBERS:**

The Department of Local Government and Communities has the following viewpoint on Council membership:

*The ideal number of elected members for a local government is for the local government to determine. There is a diverse range of Councillor/elector ratios across Western Australia reflecting the sparsely populated remote areas and the highly populated urban areas. The structure of the Council's operations will provide some input into the number of elected members needed to service the local government.*

However, the state government reform program has determined that populations of up to 5,000 will have 5, 6, or 7 councillors (including the President). A decision by

Council to maintain a greater number than 5, 6 or 7 elected members is subject to the Local Government Act being amended as the Minister has indicated but may see all offices vacated at the next election and the number of councillors mandated. This could be as few as five. In considering the number of councillors, it is open to a decision being made locally to have five, six or seven councillors.

The **advantages** of a reduction in the number of elected members may include the following:

- There is a marginal benefit in decision-making. The decision-making process may be more effective and efficient if the number of Councillors is reduced – but only in the reduction of diversity of views and less time in debate. It may be more timely to ascertain the views of fewer people and decision making may be easier. A smaller number of people may be more cohesive and cooperative.
- There is little effect on community consultation provided the community, individuals and groups are able to contact an elected member. This may be an administrative matter.
- The cost of maintaining elected members and governance activities is likely to be reduced. A lesser number of elected members, however, may result in an increased need for individual commitment from those elected in the participation in Council's affairs.
- Fewer elected members may mean increased levels of profile within the community.
- Fewer positions on Council may lead to greater interest in elections with an increased possibility of contested elections.
- There is a State-wide trend for reductions in the number of elected members and some local governments have found that having fewer elected members has worked well.

The **disadvantages** of a reduction in the number of elected members may include the following:

- A smaller number of elected members may result in an increased workload – this is dependent on the extent of use of committees and how administration resources are utilised; consequently, assuming all elected members are equal, there is some possibility of reduced effectiveness. This may be reliant on nominees for office and possible that a demanding role may discourage some from nominating for Council.
- A reduction in the number of elected members may limit the diversity of interests around the Council table, reducing community participation.

## COMPARISONS WITH SOME OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

The following are some examples of Councillor representation with population and elector ratios in medium sized agriculturally based Shires. The ratio is how many councillors per 100 persons or electors. The average of these councils is 0.9 councillor per 100 population or 1.4 councillors per 100 electors. For Wagin this is much less than these numbers, reflecting a much greater population (more than 1800 against an average of 770). This also means Wagin councillors each represent more electors and more persons than neighbouring councils. For comparison, it should be noted that a large regional council such as Plantagenet has nine councillors and serves a population of 5,388 (0.2 councillor per 100 persons). Kojonup has a similar population to Wagin and one less councillor resulting in a similar ratio of representation to Plantagenet (0.2 per 100 persons). This indicates Wagin has regional significance and is atypical to its neighbours.

It is highly likely that councils with seven members will remain at that size. Councils with eight or nine members and a district population of less than 5,000 will be reducing the number of offices (members) to five, six or seven. A decision to not change may result in a mandated membership number less than seven.

	Population	Electors	Councillors	Councillors ratio	
				/100 Pop.	/100 Electors
West Arthur	798	582	7	0.9	1.2
Dumbleyung	671	467	7	1.0	1.5
Williams	684	284	9	1.3	3.2
Lake Grace	1,268	908	8	0.6	0.9
Woodanilling	423	290	6	1.4	2.1
Wagin (current)	1,761	1,285	9	0.5	0.7

## SOME OPTIONS, COSTS AND IMPLICATIONS TO CONSIDER WITH RESPECT TO REPRESENTATION RATIOS ASSOCIATED WITH MAINTAINING NUMBERS OF ELECTED MEMBERS IN WAGIN:

The 2022/23 Shire of Wagin budget allows \$63,171 in meeting fees and expenses for nine elected members (an average of \$7,019 per elected member). The President and Deputy President have allowances of \$15,375 included in that amount. This approximates to \$3,587 per 100 population and \$4,916 per 100 electors.

A reduction to seven elected members including a President, would reduce the total cost to \$54,027 (an average of \$7,718 per elected member). The greater average costs reflect the same level of allowances for the President and Deputy President and no change to committee membership or structure (some costs are fixed and do not

change), the total being distributed to less councillors. However, reduced total costs do result in lower costs per capita. A reduction to seven councillors would approximate to \$3,068 per 100 population and \$4,204 per 100 electors.

**OTHER FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

Whilst the Councillor Representation Ratio has been addressed in the preceding sections, the following factors could also be considered:

**Demographic Trends:**

Census data over the last four census periods is shown in the following table.

Shire of Wagin – Census Statistics 2006 - 2021

	2006	2011	2016	2021
Total Population Wagin	1846	1847	1852	1761
Median Age Wagin	42	45	49	49
Median Age Australia	37	37	38	38
65 years and over	16.9%	19.7%	24.7%	27.6%
15 to 64	61.4%	59.6%	57.4%	57.0%
0 to 14	21.7%	20.7%	17.9%	15.7%

The table shows that the population of the Shire has been stable but ageing with an increased median age and a greater percentage of people aged 65 years and over. This could translate into a higher demand for the Shire to meet the needs of people in the higher aged groups. The Shire is however keen to grow the population and is currently focussed on improving sporting and recreational facilities and encouraging business activity to enhance employment opportunities and strengthen the local economy.

**Economic Factors:**

The economy of the Shire is largely agriculturally based with wool, livestock and coarse grains being the economic mainstays. Wagin is however well supported with ancillary industries with some downstream processing of agricultural products, manufacturing, fabrication, vehicle, plant and machinery servicing and a strong general retail sector. In addition, the district is well served by builders, associated trades and accounting and legal, medical and allied health professions.

These businesses and services have been relatively stable over a long period and are not expected to change much in the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding this relatively buoyant economic situation, the 2021 census showed that the average weekly household income in Wagin of \$1,183 was well below the State average of \$2,214, or Australia’s overall average of \$2,240. This could indicate

a greater proportion (and therefore reliance) on fixed incomes such as pensions. This accentuates the importance of all residents within the Shire of Wagin having adequate and diverse Councillor representation, to ensure that a reasonable level of equity to the provision of services that the Shire provides to the community.

### **Effectiveness and Efficiency of Council Meetings:**

A fair degree of flexibility exists as to how a local government structures its business to deal with matters at Council meetings. Some Councils extensively utilise committees which make recommendations to Council, whilst others operate with very few committees and conduct most of their business through their ordinary Council meetings. There are also wide differences in how decision-making is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.

Councils with several committees and relatively few delegations to the CEO for example, would logically need to have more elected members than Councils which operate with few committees and which delegate a broad range of functions and decisions to the Chief Executive Officer. The key issues revolve around the capacity to make timely and effective decisions, compliance with legislation, the capacity to attract candidates for Council positions and the ability to attract high performing CEO's and professional staff.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

Advice from the Minister is that reform will result in reduced Councillor numbers. Should Council decide to not reduce councillor numbers, it is open to the government to legislate and mandate the number of councillors according to the population of the district. The Minister has indicated that a population of up to 5,000 will see five, six or seven councillors. This could mean as few as five councillors would be mandated.

It is expected that the reduction in Councillor numbers will take effect from the next election due in October 2023.

### **ELECTION CYCLES**

Ordinarily five offices would be vacant at the October 2023 election – that is, Council would seek to fill five councillor offices. A change to seven councillors, for example, would mean that just three vacancies would exist and candidates would be sought for these vacancies at the election of October 2023.

The remaining four council positions would then become vacant in October 2025 and be subject to election as per the normal election cycle.

**SUBMISSIONS:**

Your opinion matters. You are invited as a member of the community to participate in this process and make known your view on how many councillors ought to represent the community at Council. You may also make mention of any relevant factor that would assist Council in deciding how many councillors is suitable for this district.

Written submissions will be received up to 4.30pm Thursday 16 February 2023. Submissions may be made by way of the attached form or may be submitted in any written form. Submissions should be lodged with:

The Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Wagin

PO Box 200  
WAGIN WA 6315

[shire@wagin.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@wagin.wa.gov.au)

Hand delivered to the administration office 2 Arthur Rd Wagin.

Attachment: submission form.



**SUBMISSION FORM**

**REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION**

I/We favour the following option with respect to the number of Councillors that should represent electors within the Shire of Wagin:

(Tick Box)

7 Councillors

6 Councillors

5 Councillors

9 Councillors

Other ( Please specify)

Reasons/Comments in support of favoured option (Optional)

Name: .....

Ratepayer / resident Address:.....



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## 8. CLOSURE