



SHIRE OF WAGIN

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Minutes

30 January 2014

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1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

The Shire President Cr Blight declared the meeting open at 7.09pm.

2. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED)

Present:	Cr P J Blight	Shire President
	Cr G R Ball	Member
	Cr I C Cumming	Member
	Cr R C Walker	Member
	Cr D C Lloyd	Member
	Cr J P Reed	Member
	Cr G T Hegarty	Member
Staff:	Mr P R Webster	Chief Executive Officer
Visitors:	Nil	
Apologies:	Cr A J Howell	
	Cr G K B West	
	Cr C J Brockwell	
	Cr J L C Ballantyne	

3. CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS

3.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

PROPONENT:	Shire President
OWNER:	Shire of Wagin
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	Shire of Wagin
AUTHOR OF REPORT:	Shire President
SENIOR OFFICER:	Chief Executive Officer
DATE OF REPORT:	23 January 2014
PREVIOUS REPORT(S):	N/A
DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST:	Nil
FILE REFERENCE:	GV.AM.1
ATTACHMENTS:	Nil

BACKGROUND:

As some of you would know, WALGA, as the representative body for Local Government in Western Australia, has held the position for some time that some structural reform is needed.

Several years ago it commissioned a report titled "The Journey" now commonly referred to as the SSS Report.

Clause 3.3 of The Scope for Change in the SSS Report introduction says:

"The SSS Panel Report was careful to emphasise that there was no demonstrated case that amalgamations of Local Governments will deliver improved outcomes. The forced amalgamation of Local Governments without existing capability and without specific regard to the ability to deliver more sustainable arrangements offers slim prospects of improvement. The extensive work of the five working parties which have generated the Plan has confirmed this conclusion."

In 2009 the then Minister for Local Government John Castrilli announced a policy to reform local government in W.A. There were few guidelines and largely a lack of direction other than to say that there are too many local governments and this should be changed.

Sustainability was used as the focus and little or no regard was given for the valuable contribution that Local Government provides for a community and the social dividend of that.

Councils and staff have invested thousands of hours and millions of dollars to comply with the Minister's regulatory requests to submit business case plans and develop strategies within those plans.

Most if not all Local Government fulfilled these obligations in writing direct to the Minister through the Department of Local Government.

Since then the State Government has shifted its reform focus away from the country areas towards the metropolitan area. There are concerns however, that whatever happens in the metropolitan area will be repeated in the country.

COMMENT:

The State Government has no mandate or ethical position to accuse Local Government of being poor managers of assets and finances.

Successive State Governments, have neglected to maintain essential infrastructure such as Tier 3 railways, roads, hospitals, electricity supply grids, water supplies throughout WA. Local Governments and their communities are adversely impacted by that.

In fact there is considerable pressure on Local Governments to increase the range of services that they deliver and also to manage this within already tight budgets. Cost shifting by both State and Federal Governments has been a large part of that. Rural local governments are increasingly having to fund medical services as well as provide housing for police, teachers and doctors. There has been a steady withdrawal of state services and decline in the standards of infrastructure.

If the State and Federal governments were to resume funding tasks that are not the core function of Local Government, then the relief to the Local Government budgets would, in most cases rejuvenate their sustainability.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION:

STATUTORY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

VOTING REQUIREMENTS:

2356 OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr. P J Blight

Seconded: Cr. G T Hegarty

1. That WALGA reject any moves by the State Government to force the amalgamation of local governments.
2. That amalgamations, mergers and boundary changes be supported by WALGA only if introduced and supported by the effected Local Governments.
3. That each Local Government community be entitled to hold a poll if structural change is proposed.
4. That this resolution be submitted to the Central Country Zone of WALGA for consideration by the zone.
5. That the Shire President circulate this resolution to ALL WA Local Governments via email and letter seeking their support and requesting that they submit this motion to their next Zone meeting for consideration.

Carried 7/0

4. CLOSURE

Shire President closed the meeting at 7.20pm.

I certify that this copy of the Minutes is a true and correct record of the meeting held on 30 January 2014.

Signed:
Presiding Elected Member

Date: