



AGENDA FORUM

21 JANUARY 2025

Departmental Guideline for Agenda Forums

Council Forums

Local government forums range from a once-only event to discuss and explore a particular issue, a number of sessions to address matters such as a specific project or the compilation of a report for internal or external use, through to forums held at regular intervals with a consistent structure and objectives.

Regular forums run in local governments exhibit two broad categories which we have titled *agenda* and *concept*. They are differentiated by the stage of development of issues which are discussed by elected members and staff. The two types are described below along with the variations in procedural controls and processes suggested for each.

Agenda Forums

For proper decision-making, elected members must have the opportunity to gain maximum knowledge and understanding of any issue presented to the Council on which they must vote. It is reasonable for elected members to expect that they will be provided with all the relevant information they need to understand issues listed on the agenda for the next or following ordinary Council meetings. The complexity of many items means that elected members may need to be given information additional to that in a staff report and/or they may need an opportunity to ask questions of relevant staff members.

Many local governments have determined that this can be achieved by the elected members convening as a body to become better informed on issues listed for council decision. Such assemblies have been termed *agenda forums*. It is considered they are much more efficient and effective than elected members meeting staff on an individual basis for such a purpose with the added benefit that all elected members hear the same questions and answers.

To protect the integrity of the decision-making process it is essential that *agenda forums* are run with strict procedures.

There must be no opportunity for a collective council decision or implied decision that binds the local government to be made during a forum.

Agenda forums should be for staff presenting information and elected members asking questions, not opportunities to debate the issues. A council should have clearly stated rules that prohibit debate or vigorous discussion between elected members that could be interpreted as debate. Rules such as questions through the chair and no free-flowing discussion between elected members should be applied.

Procedures Applying to Both Concept and Agenda Forums

The Department recommends that councils adopt a set of procedures for both types of forums which include the following:

- Dates and times for forums should be set well in advance where practical;
- The CEO will ensure timely written notice and the agenda for each forum is provided to all members;

- Forum papers should be distributed to members at least three days prior to the meeting;
- The mayor/president or other designated elected member is to be the presiding member at all forums;
- Elected members, employees, consultants and other participants shall disclose their financial and conflicts of interest in matters to be discussed;
- Interests are to be disclosed in accordance with the provisions of the Act as they apply to ordinary council meetings. Persons disclosing a financial interest will not participate in that part of a forum relating to their interest and leave the meeting room;
- There is to be no opportunity for a person with an interest to request that they continue in the forum; and
- A record should be kept of all forums. As no decisions will be made, the record need only be a general record of items covered but should record disclosures of interest with appropriate departures/returns.

Procedures Specific to Agenda Forums

The Department recommends that councils adopt specific procedures for *agenda forums* which include the following:

- Agenda forums should be open to the public unless the forum is being briefed on a matter for which a formal council meeting may be closed; and
- Items to be addressed will be limited to matters listed on the forthcoming agenda or completed and scheduled to be listed within the next two meetings (or period deemed appropriate).

Meeting Record

Meeting Name	Agenda Forum	Meeting No.	1 - 2025
Meeting Date	21 January 2025		
Meeting Time	5.00pm		
Meeting Location	Chambers, Cathedral Avenue		
Attendees	By Invitation		
	Member of Public Press		
	Leave of Absence	Cr P Fiorenza Cr S Keemink	
	Apologies	Cr V Tanti C Edwards, A/Director Infrastructure Services C Lee, Director Infrastructure Services	
	Absent		
	Distribution		

1. Declaration of opening

2. Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Yamatji people who are the Traditional Owners and First People of the land on which we meet/stand. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Yamatji people.

3. Apologies/leave of absence (previously approved)

Existing Approved Leave

Councillor	From	To (inclusive)	Date Approved
Cr S Keemink	17 December 2024	24 January 2025	26/11/2024
Cr J Denton	25 January 2025	4 February 2025	26/11/2024
Cr P Fiorenza	16 January 2025	30 January 2025	17/12/2025

Any new leave requests will be published in the final agenda.

If an Elected Member on Approved Leave subsequently attends the meeting, this will be noted in the Minutes.

4. **Disclosures of Interests**
5. **Review of the Agenda Items for the forthcoming Ordinary Meeting of Council dated 28 January 2025.**

Please Note that this forum does not allow for debate or decision making on any item within this agenda. Briefings will be given by staff or consultants for the purpose of ensuring that elected members and the public are more fully informed

The Presiding Member will call each Report in the Agenda and open the floor to deputation, questions and statements.

Members of the public may verbally make presentations or ask questions on the item relating to the Draft Report to Council, subject to the provision in writing of the statement or question on the prescribed form.

Councillors may ask questions (strictly no debating) relating to each item as it is called by the Presiding member.

There is no general public questions or statements permitted on matters not contained in the set agenda Council Agenda Forum. Any Questions relating to general matters or matters not in the agenda of the current Council Agenda Forum should be asked at Public Question time at an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Questions are to be put to Council via the Mayor. No questions can be put to individual Councillors at Council meetings as answers to questions reflect the view of Council.

6. **Councillor Questions Without Notice**
7. **Meeting closed to the Public**
8. **Meeting closure**

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1. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS

1.1 REPORTS OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

DS054	PROPOSED LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT – SHORT-TERM RENTAL ACCOMMODATION
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-002202
AUTHOR:	K Elder, Coordinator Strategic Planning
EXECUTIVE:	R Hall, Director Development Services
DATE OF REPORT:	6 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	LP/14/0019
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x1) Scheme Amendment Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider an amendment to the City's Local Planning Scheme to make consistent with the recently updated deemed provisions within the Planning & Development Regulations for short-term rental accommodation.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

PART A

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Part 5, Section 75 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005* RESOLVES to:

1. AMEND Local Planning Scheme No. 1 in accordance with Local Planning Scheme Amendment No. 19 as contained in the Attachment No. DS054.

PART B

That Council by Simple Majority, pursuant to Part 5, Division 1, Regulation 35 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* RESOLVES to:

1. DETERMINE that Amendment No. 19 is a 'basic' amendment;
2. MAKE the determination on the following grounds:
 - a. the amendment is consistent with the model provisions in Schedule 1 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*; and
 - b. the amendment deletes provisions that have been superseded by the deemed provisions in Schedule 2 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

Western Australia has implemented new regulations for Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) to establish consistent rules across the state. Key changes include:

1. **State-Wide Registration:** All STRA properties must be registered by January 1, 2025, to legally advertise and accept bookings. Registration requires providing property details, including compliance with fire and safety standards, and is managed by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.
2. **Planning Approval Requirements:**
 - **Hosted STRA:** Properties where the host resides on-site are exempt from requiring planning approval but must still register.
 - **Unhosted STRA: Perth Metropolitan Area:** Unhosted properties can operate without planning approval for up to 90 nights per year. Renting beyond this period requires obtaining development approval from the local government.
 - **Unhosted STRA: Regional Areas:** Local governments have the discretion to set their own planning rules for unhosted STRA, allowing for regional flexibility.
3. **Local Planning Scheme Amendments:** Local governments are required to update their planning schemes to align with the new regulations, ensuring uniformity across jurisdictions. This requires:
 - a. Replacing 'bed and breakfast' with 'hosted short-term rental accommodation'. This use is to be assigned as a 'P' use in all zones where any type of dwelling is capable of approval. This reflects the state-wide exemption.
 - b. Replacing 'holiday house' with 'unhosted short-term rental accommodation'. This use is to be assigned as a 'D' or 'A' use in all zones where any type of dwelling is capable of approval, 'P' in Tourism zones and 'X' in remaining zones.
4. **Incentives for Long-Term Rentals:** The government has introduced a \$10,000 incentive for owners of unhosted STRA properties who transition to long-term rentals, aiming to alleviate housing shortages.

These reforms are designed to balance the growth of the STRA sector with community needs, providing clarity for operators and local authorities.

This report presents the opportunity for Council to amend its Local Planning Scheme to bring it into alignment with the regulations.

As a summary this amendment proposes the following:

- Replacing the existing use class of *bed and breakfast* with a new use class *hosted short-term rental accommodation*, whilst retaining the same land use permissibilities.
- Replacing the existing use class of *holiday house* with a new use class of *unhosted short-term rental accommodation*, whilst retaining the same land use permissibilities.
- Minor administrative modifications to the scheme text to support these changes.

The timely update of the City's local planning scheme will allow for consistent development approvals and ensure the City is aligned to the State's regulations for short-term rental accommodation. The scheme amendment report which specifies the details of the proposal is included as an attachment to this report.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

These changes to the Local Planning Scheme will benefit the Greater Geraldton community by ensuring the fair and consistent regulation and management of short-term rental accommodation to that occurring across WA.

Economy:

Tourism is a contributor to the local economy and consistency with the regulations may help establish a stable business environment and boost investor confidence.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts.

Leadership:

There are no adverse leadership impacts.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

There are no relevant precedents.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

In accordance with the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* there is no requirement to publicly advertise a basic amendment.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Planning and Development Act 2005:

Part 5, Section 75 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005* provides for a local government to amend a local planning scheme.

Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015:

Part 5, Division 1, Regulation 35 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* requires that the local government resolution must specify whether, in the opinion of the local government, the amendment is a basic, standard or complex amendment.

In essence a 'basic' amendment is one that corrects an administrative error, rectifies a zoning anomaly or aligns with the deemed provisions.

A 'standard' amendment is one that is consistent with a local planning strategy, would have minimal impact on land in the area and does not result in any significant impacts on the land.

A 'complex' amendment is one that is not consistent with a local planning strategy and is of a scale that will have an impact that is significant relative to the development in the locality.

This amendment is considered to be a 'basic' amendment to align Local Planning Scheme No. 1 with the deemed provisions.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial or resource implications.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Economy	Aspiration: A healthy thriving and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all whilst protecting the environment and enhancing our social and cultural fabric
Outcome 2.1	Local business is empowered and supported.
Outcome 2.4	A desirable place to live, work, play, study, invest and visit
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making
Outcome 4.2	Decision making is ethical, informed and inclusive

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

The proposal supports investment in regional development by ensuring an up-to-date and consistent planning framework.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

This amendment will ensure that the City's statutory planning framework will be consistent with the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*, which is essential for supporting an informed and effective decision making process.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

There are a number of optional changes to land uses and definitions within the model scheme provisions. A comprehensive review of the City's Planning Scheme is due in 2025 and all land uses will be reviewed and considered through that process.

1.2 REPORTS OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURE - NIL

There are none.

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

1.3 REPORTS OF CORPORATE SERVICES

CS182	REGIONAL CAPITALS AUSTRALIA MEMBERSHIP
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-002087
AUTHOR:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
EXECUTIVE:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
DATE OF REPORT:	7 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	GR/10/0029-003
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x1)
	Regional Capitals Australia Annual Statement 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for continued membership of Regional Capitals Australia (RCA) and to provide the Council with a copy of the recently completed annual statement for 2023-24 (Attachment No. CS182).

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. RECEIVE the Regional Capitals Australia (RCA) 2023-24 Annual Statement; and
2. APPROVE continued membership with the RCA.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

RCA was formed in 2012 to bring Australia's 51 regional capital cities together as one unified voice. The RCA vision is to provide an alliance, a reference group, a 'strength-in-numbers' body that understands all things 'regional capitals'. Through the local government member councils, RCA present to the Federal Government the needs of our combined communities, voicing the social and economic issues specific to our cities as distinct from the needs of Sydney, Melbourne or the other 'Big 5'.

RCA member cities understand that regional Australia works like a 'hub and spoke' model. In other words, regional capital cities like Geelong, Wagga Wagga or Townsville are the 'hubs' of their region, supporting rural towns and communities (the 'spokes') that surround their city. Thriving regional capital cities mean a strong regional Australia, resulting in benefits that filter down to the whole country.

RCA's mission is to narrow the divide between metropolitan cities and regional capital cities – they advocate for policy outcomes that make our regional capital cities more connected and liveable. RCA seek a fairer share of government attention and investment than what our cities have traditionally experienced.

Regional capitals have never been more relevant or important to the fabric of our nation. More and more city residents are discovering what we have known for a long time: regional capitals offer an attractive, relaxed lifestyle that our state and territory capitals cannot.

The past 12 months have been busy as Regional Capitals Australia worked hard to secure additional government investment to help ease housing and workforce shortages and deliver critical infrastructure at a time of rising costs. RCA had a busy program of advocacy as the Federal Government developed and released programs across key portfolio areas impacting regional capitals.

RCA had a seat at the table at:

- Departmental National Urban Policy Consultative Forum, which informed a new national urban policy;
- Ministerial Regional Roundtable, which advises government on key issues impacting regional Australia; and
- Federal Peak Body Alliance for Regionalisation, which advocates for issues impacting regional Australia.

RCA policy recommendations were reflected in the:

- National Urban Policy, which will deliver successful cities (including regional capitals) across Australia; and
- Aviation White Paper, which is the framework to deliver a strong aviation sector.

RCA also successfully advocated for new funding programs to support our members:

- The Regional Airports Program: \$40 million over three years to improve safety, improved delivery of services and air services and emergency response;
- The Housing Support Program (Federal Government): \$500M to support the delivery of increased housing supply by funding enabling infrastructure and provide amenities to support; and
- Housing Infrastructure Programme (Federal Opposition): \$5 billion commitment to deliver housing enabling infrastructure including a 30% allocation to regional Australia.

RCA has been continuing its advocacy for members to receive a greater share of skills as the Federal Government conducts its review into Regional Migration Settings, and to secure recognition for the members' role as a service hub that requires them to deliver services and infrastructure that our metropolitan counterparts do not.

This year has been turbulent for regional aviation, with both Rex Airlines and Bonza entering voluntary administration. RCA continues to ask the Federal Government to formally recognise the vulnerability of regional aviation and act to ensure regional routes operated by Rex Airlines continue.

With the federal budget and federal election approaching, RCA has put together their priorities for the coming year. They are:

- A national population plan that recognises and plans for the growth of regional capital cities;
- Regional migration settings that enable regional capitals to sustainably grow;
- Housing enabling infrastructure and a housing innovation fund to enable our member cities to address the housing crisis;
- Annual allocations to each regional council to support the delivery of community infrastructure;
- Topping up the regional airports program and resolving airport security arrangements to allow for a more equitable system that reflects the risk environment;
- More support for regional arts and culture activities in regional capitals; and
- Better planning and access to funding for water infrastructure to support industry and population growth.

The City of Greater Geraldton has been an active member of RCA for many years. RCA provides an affordable vehicle to advocate to the Federal Government for our local issues. At the recent RCA Annual General Meeting, the Mayor of the Town of Port Hedland, Mr Peter Carter, was elected Chair and Mayor Jerry Clune was elected as the Western Australia Representative.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

Continued membership and involvement in Regional Capitals Australia is critical to the City's advocacy efforts focused on the Federal Government. These endeavours provide a vehicle for the local community to have a voice at the Federal level.

Economy:

Continued membership of RCA allows the City of Greater Geraldton affordable access to promote the Mid West region with the Federal Government which in turn provides an opportunity to improve the local economy.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts.

Leadership:

By maintaining its membership to RCA, the Council is demonstrating leadership by firmly and positively advocating for the local community at the highest level of government in Australia.

Disclosure of Interest:

Ross McKim, Chief Executive Officer, provided input in the formulation of this report and will be declaring an impartiality interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

The City of Greater Geraldton is currently a member of the following organisations:

- Australian Airports Association;
- Australian Library and Information Association;
- Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Western Australia (CCAWA);
- Oral History Association of Australia WA Branch;
- Performing Arts Connections Australia (PAC Australia);
- Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia (RCAWA);
- Regional Capitals Australia (RCA);
- WA Rangers Association (WARA); and
- WA Local Government Association (WALGA).

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no legislative or policy implications.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The annual membership fee for RCA is \$11,000 (inclusive GST).

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Economy	Aspiration: A healthy thriving and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all whilst protecting the environment and enhancing our social and cultural fabric.
Outcome 2.3	The voice of the community is heard at regional, state and national forums.
Outcome 2.6	A diverse and globally recognised regional capital.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.9	Collaboration and strategic alliances with Local Government partners delivers results for common aspirations.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

Successful advocacy to the Federal Government results in an increased flow of funds into the region and positive economic outcomes.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

The Council needs to decide if the benefits received from being a member of RCA exceed the annual membership fee. Officers believe this is the case. The Federal Government collects approximately 85 percent of Australia's total tax income and hence it is critical that the sector advocate for its share of these funds.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The alternative is to not be a member of RCA.

CS183	REGIONAL CAPITALS ALLIANCE WESTERN AUSTRALIA MEMBERSHIP
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-003339
AUTHOR:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
EXECUTIVE:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
DATE OF REPORT:	7 January 2024
FILE REFERENCE:	GR/10/0024-003
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x1) Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia 2023-24 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for continued membership of Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia (RCAWA) and to provide the Council with a copy of the recently completed annual report for 2023-24 (Attachment No. CS183).

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. RECEIVE the Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia (RCAWA) 2023-24 Annual Report; and
2. APPROVE continued membership with the RCAWA.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

The Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia (RCAWA) consists of eleven large regional capitals in Western Australia. As detailed in the attached annual report, the board consists of the Mayor/Shire President and CEO of each Council. The Councils that are RCAWA members are:

- Albany
- Broome
- Bunbury
- Busselton
- Esperance
- East Pilbara
- Geraldton
- Kalgoorlie
- Karratha
- Northam
- Port Hedland

This group provides a strong and united voice for regional Western Australia and actively lobbies a regional perspective to counter tendencies towards a Perth-centric approach to policy, strategy and budget resource issues in WA.

The group represents regional WA. RCAWA members are home to over 250,000 people – half the population of regional WA.

RCAWA capitals do not reflect the stereotyped rural idea of a regional centre. Rather, each capital offers a unique, vibrant community with well-developed infrastructure, services, and opportunities. Harnessing these assets and building the regions of Western Australia is at the core of RCAWA's vision.

The Alliance collaborates to provide strategic advice to our government on the social and economic issues impacting on, and often unique to, regional areas. RCAWA advocate so the government decision making, and investment match our growth needs and results in our communities continuing to thrive. Combining strong economies and relaxed lifestyles, our regional centres are growth leaders for our state, building outcomes that benefit not just our immediate communities, but also provide growth to the whole of regional Western Australia.

Specific benefits to the Geraldton community from RCAWA membership in recent times have included additional funding for the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery; the completion of a report into Regional Performing Art Centres which has coincided with additional grant Federal funding, the ability to raise local issues directly with State Ministers; joint submissions to the State Budget process and a report on regional housing issues.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

Continued membership and involvement in RCAWA is critical to the City's advocacy efforts focused on the State Government. These endeavours provide a vehicle for the local community to have a voice at the State level.

Economy:

Continued membership of RCAWA allows the City of Greater Geraldton affordable access to promote the Mid West region with the State Government which in turn provides an opportunity to improve the local economy.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts.

Leadership:

By maintaining its membership to RCAWA, the Council is demonstrating leadership by firmly and positively advocating for the local community at the National, State and Regional levels.

Disclosure of Interest:

Ross McKim, Chief Executive Officer, provided input in the formulation of this report and will be declaring an impartiality interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

The City of Greater Geraldton is currently a member of the following organisations:

- Australian Airports Association;

- Australian Library and Information Association;
- Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Western Australia (CCAWA);
- Oral History Association of Australia WA Branch;
- Performing Arts Connections Australia (PAC Australia);
- Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia (RCAWA);
- Regional Capitals Australia (RCA);
- WA Rangers Association (WARA); and
- WA Local Government Association (WALGA).

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no legislative or policy implications.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The annual membership fee for RCAWA is currently \$16,500 (inclusive GST). Please refer to the financial section of the annual report (Attachment No. CS183) for how the funds are utilised.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Economy	Aspiration: A healthy thriving and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all whilst protecting the environment and enhancing our social and cultural fabric.
Outcome 2.3	The voice of the community is heard at regional, state and national forums.
Outcome 2.6	A diverse and globally recognised regional capital.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.9	Collaboration and strategic alliances with Local Government partners delivers results for common aspirations.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

There are many regional benefits to being a member of an organisation specifically constructed to promote regional Western Australia.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

The Council needs to decide if the benefits received from being a member of RCAWA exceed the annual membership fee. Officers believe this is the case.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The alternative is to not be a member of RCAWA.

CS184	RATES	EXEMPTION	APPLICATION	–	WORKPOWER
	INCORPORATED				

AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-003291
AUTHOR:	L Farrell, Coordinator Rates
EXECUTIVE:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
DATE OF REPORT:	19 December 2024
FILE REFERENCE:	RV/4/0003-004
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x3)
	A. Certificate – Endorsement as an income tax exempt charitable entity
	B. Statutory Declaration
	C. Constitution

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council determination for a rates exemption request from Workpower Incorporated for the property at Lot 1650 (208) Shenton Street, West End. Workpower Incorporated have had the property ownership transferred to them under a Crown Grant in Trust and utilise the property for the purpose of employment and training for people with a disability. The Geraldton branch operate commercial services providing a gardening and mowing service, manufacturing craypots and pallets, a shredding service and textile manufacturing.

It is recognised Workpower Incorporated is a charitable organisation however the use of the property is what deems the property eligibility for a rates exemption. The commercial services operating on the premises are not considered to meet the land use eligibility for the property being used exclusively for charitable purposes and are in direct competition with other like businesses in the Geraldton Mid West region.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 6.26(2)(g) of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. REJECT a rates exemption to Workpower Incorporated on the property Lot 1650 (208) Shenton Street, West End on the basis that the property is not being used exclusively for a charitable purpose due to the operation of commercial services.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is Workpower Incorporated.

BACKGROUND:

The objectives of Workpower Incorporated listed in their Constitution (Attachment No. CS184C) include to provide and assist in the creation of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, to assist in the development of alternatives to work for people with disabilities, to provide support for people with disabilities into their chosen communities, to promote to the community the contribution of people with disabilities, evaluate services and facilities available to people with disabilities and provide advice regarding its administration in matters affecting people with disabilities.

As per the 2023-24 Annual Report Workpower Incorporated generated a total of \$18.6M in commercial sales revenue from these activities.

Workpower Incorporated have a Crown Grant in Trust for the property Lot 1650 (208) Shenton Street, West End. A Crown Grant in Trust is land granted free of cost for the specific purpose beneficial for the community. The Crown Grant in Trust was registered on the title on 13 September 2023 and will remain until the land is no longer required for its purpose. The land may then be sold and the value of the land returned to the Government, leaving the value of the building on the land as revenue to be returned to the organisation.

Determination of the application is required based on the land use, that is, whether the property is being used for a charitable purpose, not on the status of the ratepayer organisation.

Workpower Incorporated are currently engaged under RFT 2425 05 to provide land management services to the City at an estimated value of \$150,000 per annum.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

Workpower Incorporated provides employment and training for people with a disability within the community.

Economy:

There are no adverse economic impacts.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts.

Leadership:

There are no adverse leadership impacts.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

Most recently in 2023, Council (Item No. CS022) had rejected a rates exemption on specific properties under Community Housing Limited, on the basis that the properties were not being used exclusively for a charitable purpose.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides broad definition for rateable and non-rateable land. Section 6.26(2)(g) states land is not rateable if it is “used exclusively for charitable purposes”.

'Charitable purposes' is not currently defined in the *Local Government Act 1995* or other statutes; rather charity is defined at common law.

The definition of a charitable purpose is largely based on the preamble to the Statute of Elizabeth enacted by the English Parliament in 1601 and the judgment of Lord Macnaghten in *Commissioners for Special Purposes of Income Tax v Pemsel*. Lord Macnaghten classified the categories of charitable as trusts for one of the following:

- the relief of poverty;
- the advancement of education;
- the advancement of religion; and
- other purposes beneficial to the community.

The High Court of Australia incorporated the Statute of Elizabeth into Australian law, finding that in order for an institution to be charitable, it must be:

- (a) within the spirit and intendment of the Preamble to the Statute of Elizabeth; and
- (b) for the public benefit.

The Western Australian case law (arising from both Courts and the State Administrative Tribunal) summarise that for a purpose to be charitable:

- (a) it must fall within the purposes set out in the Statute of Elizabeth, or by Lord Macnaghten (above); and
- (b) there must be a public benefit, being a benefit directed to the general community, or to a sufficient section of the community to amount to the public.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The annual rates for A10102 being Lot 1650 (208) Shenton Street, West End for the 2024-25 financial year is \$12,351. The amount for the exempt period from 30 September 2024 to 30 June 2025 to be refunded if Council were to approve an exemption would be \$9,272.

Exempt properties are still required to pay the Emergency Services Levy and rubbish collection charge.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Community	Aspiration: Our Culture and heritage is recognised and celebrated. We are creative and resilient. We can all reach our full potential.
Outcome 1.1	Enhanced lifestyle through spaces, places, programs and services that foster connection and inclusion.
Outcome 1.5	The opportunity for all to reach their potential exists.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.2	Decision making is ethical, informed and inclusive.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

There are no impacts to regional outcomes.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

Council by not approving the application for rate exemption may be required to defend its decision if the matter were to be appealed by the applicant to the State Administrative Tribunal and legal costs may be incurred as a result.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The alternative option is for Council to approve the application for a rate exemption on the basis that it considers Workpower Incorporated do provide a charitable purpose to the community and the charitable use of the property is considered as an exclusive use.

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

CS185	WALGA/SYNERGY POWER SUPPLY OFFER – CONTESTABLE SITES
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-006308
AUTHOR:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
EXECUTIVE:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
DATE OF REPORT:	16 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	GO/6/0013-003
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x1) Confidential Confidential – Information Package

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In March 2021, the City of Greater Geraldton (City) via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed up to participate in WALGA's Energy Sustainability and Renewables Project (Phase One). The MOU afforded the City the opportunity to be part of WALGA Consortia energy procurement agreements. Subsequently in October 2021 (Item No. CCS646), the City of Greater Geraldton, along with forty-seven (47) other Western Australian Local Governments, approved a three (3) year Synergy Electricity Unbundled Supply Offer for its contestable sites. This Phase One contract commenced on 1 April 2022 and will expire on 31 March 2025.

With the expiry of Phase One, this report seeks a Council decision on the subsequent three (3) year arrangement being offered to current LG participants (Phase 2). WALGA requires notification from all existing participants by 7 March 2025 to secure the Synergy offer.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. ACCEPT and APPROVE as part of the WALGA Sustainable Energy Project a new Renewable Energy Supply Arrangement (Contestable Sites) effective 1 April 2025 for a three year term;
2. ENDORSE applying to Synergy to price the cost of adding a Natural Power Product to Street Lighting and provide a report back to Council on the related cost impact and level of carbon offsets to be achieved; and
3. MAKE PROVISION in the 2025-26 Annual Budget and City's Long Term Financial Plan for any related cost adjustments.

PROponent:

The proponent is WALGA.

BACKGROUND:**Definitions:**

kWh – stands for 'Kilowatt Hour' and is a composite unit of energy equal to one kilowatt (kW) sustained for (multiplied by) one hour. Kilowatt-hours are the common billing rate applied by energy providers.

Natural Power – otherwise known as Commercial Green Energy, Natural Power is a product that offsets consumption using accredited generation from the national GreenPower program. It's a voluntary government accreditation program which guarantees your electricity use is offset with electricity which comes from renewable sources. You can choose how much of your electricity you want to offset - and Synergy will buy the equivalent amount in Large-scale Generation certificates (LGCs). Currently, we offset to 100% of contestable sites consumption.

Contestable Site – sites that consume more than 50,000 kWh per annum. Current examples of eligible sites include Airport, Aquarena, Civic Centre and HMAS Sydney Memorial. In total, there is currently seventeen (17) sites included in our current agreement.

Bundled Pricing Option - a simple pricing structure that combines the price of energy, network, metering and other charges at a fixed rate, and is presented as an on-peak and an off-peak rate.

Unbundled Pricing Option - disaggregates the price into energy, network, capacity, and other charges separately. Contractors are generally unwilling to take on risks to provide a bundled rate for large sites due to the uncertainty of regulated network and other cost increases.

The electricity providers in Perth WA commonly offer two types of energy contract, they are referred to as **Bundled** and **Unbundled**. Each offers different types of pricing rules and have distinct advantages and disadvantages:

1. Bundled Energy Contract

The bundled electricity contract is a very straight forward option. This type of contract is simple to calculate and easy to understand. Generally, when you receive a bundled offer, the electricity suppliers charge you by bundling the charges. Other components that make up your energy costs such as the network cost, capacity cost and renewable charges are also lumped into the offer. Therefore, the risk is sitting at the electricity providers level, and the provider will manage any unexpected increase in cost due to the way the energy is consumed.

2. Unbundled Electricity Contract

Unbundled electricity contracts are transparent, but have higher risks, and cheaper if managed well. All the components that make up your electricity cost, such as the energy cost, capacity cost, network cost, and renewable price are fully disclosed and charged accordingly. Any variation in cost due to the market changes or the way you use the energy will be passed through to you, generally at a price.

3. New Offer

As the first tender is expiring, WALGA ran a procurement process for a new contract commencing 1 April 2025. The process was overseen by a steering committee and evaluated by a team of WALGA Officers, Local Government Officers, and independent technical consultants.

The City of Greater Geraldton is a current participant in the WALGA Sustainable Energy Project. The Project is an Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) approved buying group of Local Governments that has contracted electricity under a volume aggregated purchasing process. Participants benefit from access to renewable energy and reduced energy prices. The Phase One term of the Project is estimated to have saved Local Governments \$34 million in expenditure and offset over 120,000 tonnes of carbon.

Similar to the current agreement includes a Natural Power component that as at 30 June 2024 and over a two year period, has generated 2,144 tonnes of carbon offsets for the City.

Table 1 – Contestable Sites Analysis

Contracts	Energy Consumption per Annum (kWh)	Energy Cost \$ per Annum	Average Unit Rate cents per kWh
Previous 2021-22 (Bundled)	2,616,201	\$506,806	19 cents
Current 2022-23 (Unbundled)	2,582,375	\$496,838	19 cents
Current 2023-24 (Unbundled)	2,829,543	\$571,577	20 cents

The above table underlines the following:

- When the City moved from a bundled to unbundled arrangement in April 2022, the average unit rate (19 cents per kWh) was the same prior to and after transition to the new arrangement.
- The average unit rate increased under the current arrangement from year 1 (19 cents) to year 2 (20 cents) due to a phased increase to the percentage of natural or green power purchased as part of overall contestable sites consumption.
- Comparing the average unit price paid by contestable sites under our current arrangement to those non-contestable sites on standard Synergy tariffs, our non-contestable sites average unit price (36 cents) is currently 80% higher than our contestable sites average unit price (20 cents).

It is estimated that as at 30 June 2024 and over a two year period, the City has saved around \$700,000 when benchmarked against comparative market tariffs.

Apart from changes in unit rates, the major change to price structure (see Attachment No. CS185) under the alternate and recommended offer by Synergy compared to current contract, is that it would consist of a three-time band offer (Peak, Midday and Offpeak) instead of two-time band offer (Peak and Offpeak).

The new offer will also provide flexibility to transfer contestable accounts in or out of the resulting Local Government contracts at +/- 20% roll in/out provision, based on annual forecast consumption (subject to the site consuming in excess of 50,000 kWh per year). Sites have been identified that would now be eligible to be added to the current list to both achieve lower unit rates and assist in keeping our total consumption with the required quotient in lieu of sites such as the Airport estimated to reduce consumption by 90% from the grid once the Microgrid is commissioned.

Value added services under the new offer includes a new option to apply the Natural Power product to street lighting, either incrementally or in full. This can assist project participants to achieve net zero policy objectives by additionally purchasing Natural Power for their public lighting at the market preferential contract rate. Separate to the contestable sites offer, LG's would individually apply and negotiate with Synergy on this street lighting product option.

Over the past decade in Australia, there has been an increase in both corporations and Local Governments entering into long-term Power Purchase Agreements with the aim to reduce electricity costs, manage volatile electricity prices and meet carbon reduction targets.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

Various community engagement exercises over recently years have indicated their support for the City undertaking activities that reduce its carbon footprint. By progressively purchasing natural power through the consortia, Council has been able to achieve this without incurring significant cost increases.

Economy:

By endorsing Phase Two of this initiative, Council is supporting the emerging renewable energy industry which presents future opportunities for the Mid West's economy.

Environment:

The purchase of natural energy is a key requirement for the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets. The purchase of natural power combined with the current Meru Gas Flaring project, the Airport Microgrid project, the installation of solar arrays on City buildings and the purchase of Hybrid vehicles in the City's fleet all combine to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the challenge.

Leadership:

By taking the risk and committing to Phase One of this project, the Council demonstrated leadership and achieved rate savings and carbon reduction.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

Council resolved on 26 October 2021 (Item No. CCS646) to:

1. *ACCEPT and APPROVE WALGA's Contestable Electricity Supply Offer – Option 1 Unbundled;*
2. *ACCEPT and APPROVE WALGA's Contestable Electricity Supply Offer – Natural Power (Renewable Energy) Option over the following phased implementation:*
 - a. *25% for the period 1/04/2022 to 31/03/2023;*
 - b. *50% for the period 1/04/2023 to 31/03/2024;*
 - c. *100% for the period 1/04/2024 to 31/03/2025.*

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The WALGA led procurement process has been conducted in consideration for compliance with *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996*, internal Local Government Procurement Policies and has been granted Authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

The procurement process was overseen by a steering committee and evaluated by a team of WALGA officers, Local Government officers, and independent technical consultants.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

In 2021-22, prior to the commencement of Phase One our total electricity bill was \$1.9M per annum. Since the current contract took effect 1 April 2022, the City's total electricity bill for 2022-23 and 2023-24 has remained at the same cost level of \$1.9M per annum. The City's electricity cost structure is broken down as 30% from our contestable sites, street lighting 60% and the remaining 10% is from our non-contestable sites.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Environment	Aspiration: Our natural environment has a voice at the table in all our decisions. We are a leader in environmental sustainability.
Outcome 3.2	Regional leader in adapting to climate change.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.9	Collaboration and strategic alliances with Local Government partners delivers results for common aspirations.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

The three key objectives of the overall project are:

- Enhance access to and development of renewable energy for Western Australia Local Government thereby driving positive climate change outcomes.
- Diversify supply options and application of new technology.
- Leverage the best price outcomes for Local Government supply.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

Unbundled energy contracts come at a higher cost risk than bundled energy contracts as movement in non-commodity cost component of the energy bill is passed onto the customer.

A sector led procurement of power including an approach to renewable energy has a greater buying power than what would now be likely or available to the City as an individual LG and through a direct market approach.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The following options were considered by City Officers:

1. NOT ACCEPT WALGA's Renewable Energy Supply Arrangement (Contestable Sites) effective 1 April 2025 for a three year term and instead undertake to achieve competitive pricing through a direct market approach.
2. The Council could endorse the purchase of natural power for the City's Street Lights immediately without waiting for advice from Synergy.

CS186	STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY AND STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-004004
AUTHOR:	J McLean, Senior Management Accountant / Analyst
EXECUTIVE:	P Radalj, Director Corporate Services
DATE OF REPORT:	10 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	FM/17/0015
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x1) Monthly Management Report for period ended 31 December 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a comprehensive report on the City's finances to 31 December 2024.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Regulation 34 and 35 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* RESOLVES to:

1. RECEIVE the monthly Statement of Financial Activity for the period ended 31 December 2024, as attached, and
2. RECEIVE the monthly Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024, as attached.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

The financial performance and position at the end of December 2024 is detailed in the attached report.

Summarised below are the variances between Year-to-Date (YTD) budgets and actuals:

Operating Income	\$	719,319	0.9%	over YTD Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Operating Expenditure	\$	839,234	1.7%	under YTD Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Net Operating	\$	1,558,553	5.6%	under YTD Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Capital Expenditure	\$	7,118,641	34.2%	under YTD Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Capital Revenue	\$	190,039	23.4%	under YTD Budget	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cash at Bank – Municipal	\$	6,563,697			
Cash at Bank – Reserve	\$	22,754			
Current Investments		\$75,517,421			

Current Rates Collected to December 2024	82.30%
Current Rates Collected to December 2023	83.08%

Rates Arrears Collected to December 2024	35.45%
Rates Arrears Collected to December 2023	37.85%

The attached report provides explanatory notes for items greater than 10% or \$50,000. This commentary provides Council with an overall understanding of how the finances are progressing in relation to the budget. The financial performance presented in the December financials show a YTD positive variance of \$1,558,553 in the net operating surplus/(deficit) result.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

There are no adverse community impacts.

Economy:

There are no adverse economic impacts.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts.

Leadership:

The Financial Management Regulations require presentation each month of a statement of financial activity accompanied by other supporting information that is considered relevant and a statement of financial position. In addition to the compliance requirements, the purpose of regularly reporting on the financial activities of the City is to enable Council Members to monitor and review the allocation of financial and other resources against the budget. Reporting on a regular basis evidences the ongoing financial management and performance of the accounting systems. The monthly report provides a summary of the organisation's liquidity and going concern status.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

Council is provided with financial reports each month.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Section 6.4 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and Regulation 34 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* require the local government to prepare a statement of financial activity, reporting on the revenue and expenditure as set out in the adopted annual budget.

Regulation 35 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* also requires the local government to prepare a statement of financial position as at the last day of the previous month.

A statement of financial activity, statement of financial position and any accompanying documents are to be presented at an Ordinary Meeting of the Council within two months after the end of the month to which the statements relate.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

As disclosed in the attached report.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.2	Decision making is ethical, informed and inclusive.
Outcome 4.3	Accountable leadership supported by a skilled and professional workforce.
Outcome 4.4	Healthy financial sustainability that provides capacity to respond to change in economic conditions and community priorities.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

There are no impacts to regional outcomes.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

The provision of monthly financial reports to Council fulfils the relevant statutory requirements and is consistent with good financial governance.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

There are no alternative options to consider.

1.4 REPORTS OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – NIL

There are none.

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

1.5 REPORTS OF OFFICE OF THE CEO

CEO129 TELSTRA PROJECT – FLAT ROCKS MOBILE COVERAGE

AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-000843
AUTHOR:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
EXECUTIVE:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
DATE OF REPORT:	7 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	GO/6/0029
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x3) 2x Confidential
	A. Confidential - Surf Beaches Mobile Coverage Grants Program Telstra Submission
	B. Confidential - Telstra Submission Costing Spreadsheet
	C. Aerial Map – Flat Rocks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek a Council resolution regarding the provision of funding support to Telstra in support of their grant application to enable mobile phone coverage at the Flat Rocks surf beach, Greenough.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Absolute Majority pursuant to Section 6.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. NOTE Telstra's Surf Beaches Mobile Coverage grant submission; and
2. APPROVE and AUTHORISE expenditure in the 2024-25 Annual Budget of \$50,000 in support of the funding application.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City) and Telstra.

BACKGROUND:

On Tuesday 1 December 2024, the Chief Executive Officer attended an on-line meeting with Telstra representative regarding their Surf Beaches Mobile Coverage Grants Program Submission (Confidential Attachment No's. CEO129A and CEO129B).

The State called a grant for telecommunication's companies to lodge proposals to improve mobile coverage at surf beaches along Western Australia's coastline. This is the second round of the grant. Telstra advised that they did not submit to the first round. For this current round, they investigated 35 locations and lodged 29 of these as part of their submission. One of the 29 locations is within the City of Greater Geraldton boundaries – Flat Rocks.

Flat Rocks Beach, or “Flatties” as it is known to the locals is located 30 minutes south of Geraldton and close the historic Greenough Flats. As one of the Midwest’s premier surf spots, Flat Rocks hosts a number of competitions throughout the year, including the iconic Sunshine Surf Masters. Now in its 45th year competing in the “Sunny Fest” has become a rite of passage for local surfers. The event also attracts a swathe of talented wave riders from right across WA, all looking to cut their teeth on Flat Rock’s high-performance waves whilst invariably contributing to the region’s tourist economy.

Throughout the year Geraldton Board Riders Club host multiple competitions at Flat Rocks, these events providing a launching pad for many of the region’s best surfers. As well as being a mecca for the surfer community Flat Rocks is also a favourite with fisherman and four-wheel drive enthusiasts.

The total grant pool offered by the Department of Primary Industries, Regional and Development (DPIRD) is \$2 million. The grant was offered to Telecommunications providers and has now closed. The Telstra bid exceeded the total grant funding pool and hence they are seeking funding support from the relevant councils to enable all sites to proceed (assuming their bid is successful). The impact of the City deciding not to support the application is unclear and depends on the decision made by DPIRD.

DPIRD have not announced when the applicants will be advised of the outcome of the grant, however, round one was announced in May. Should Council determine to provide financial support, this means the funds may need to be provided in the 2024/25 financial year. The Telstra grant application includes sufficient funding to maintain the facilities for the first five years after its installation.

Should the Flat Rocks upgrade proceed, the resulting telecommunications infrastructure will be owned by Telstra and their responsibility to maintain. As such, the proposal will provide Telstra mobile coverage. Other carriers and their customers would benefit by being able to access triple zero calling.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

Mobile coverage within the regional areas of the City of Greater Geraldton is patchy and non-existent in some locations such as Flat Rocks. Supporting this project will improve community communications and safety in this location.

Economy:

There would be a small economic benefit resulting from improved communications and safety at Flat Rocks. Flat Rocks hosts a number of competitions throughout the year, including the iconic Sunshine Surf Masters, which would be enhanced by having mobile coverage.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts. The physical infrastructure required to establish the mobile coverage will have some visual impact. But it would be limited. Attachment No. CEO129C shows the location of the required hardware.

Leadership:

As this is not normally a function of local government (the provision of funding towards telecommunication equipment), leadership is required to determine if this is a project the City believes it should be assisting financially.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

The author of this paper is not aware of any previous instances where the City has financially contributed to mobile coverage hardware. As such, this decision has the potential to create a precedent for similar projects in the future.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no legislative requirements to provide the requested funding.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed contribution to the project is \$50,000. If Council approves a contribution, City Officers are recommending the funds are found from savings that are identified in the Mid-Year Budget review.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Community	Aspiration: Our Culture and heritage is recognised and celebrated. We are creative and resilient. We can all reach our full potential.
Outcome 1.4	Community safety, health and well-being is paramount.
Outcome 1.8	Active living and recreation is encouraged.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.8	Deliver secured technology that supports sustainability, the environment, service delivery and the community.
Outcome 4.9	Collaboration and strategic alliances with Local Government partners delivers results for common aspirations.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

There are no impacts to regional outcomes.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

As per the City's report lodged with the Federal Government's Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of the Local Government Sector, this is another example of the local government being asked to support funding to essential infrastructure that is the responsibility of the Federal and State Governments.

This requirement seems to be more prevalent in the regions where the small populations are not as well serviced. By supporting this funding request, future telecommunications upgrades may also require a local government contribution to obtain approval. By not supporting this request, the Flat Rocks upgrade may not occur.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The following options were considered by City Officers:

1. Not support the funding request and advise Telstra accordingly.
2. Support the project to a higher or lower financial value and advise Telstra accordingly.
3. Instead of providing support to this mobile coverage project, provide it for a different upgrade of the local telecommunications networks such as back up power systems for existing regional towers that are critical in time of disaster and power outage.

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

CEO130 MERU CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-003091
AUTHOR:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
EXECUTIVE:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
DATE OF REPORT:	7 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	GO/6/0029-002
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x3) 1x Confidential
	A. Confidential – Cleanaway Quotation
	B. Volumetric Survey
	C. Site photos

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to bring forward an operational project to crush approximately 23,000 tonnes of Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste stockpiled at the Meru Waste Management Facility using savings and un-budgeted revenue in the existing 2024-25 financial year. Bringing forward these essential works is proposed because of the City's favourable year to date operational position.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Absolute Majority pursuant to Section 6.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. APPROVE the crushing of approximately 23,000 tonnes of construction and demolition waste at the Meru Waste Management Facility under the established site management contract; and
2. APPROVE and AUTHORISE expenditure of \$1,000,000 in 2024-25 Annual Budget for this purpose.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

The Meru Waste Management Facility (MWMF or Meru) was developed as a waste disposal facility in the early 1990s. Meru is the only Class III landfill in the Midwest and Gascoyne region. The site's upkeep is critical to the region as it services surrounding local governments and the region's commercial and industrial businesses. The site is managed through a ten-year contract with an experienced waste provider.

The region's residential and commercial waste is taken to Meru for either processing or burying. On-site efforts to reduce the amount of material being buried include the recent construction of a new transfer station which facilitates segregation of various waste streams which are then recycled. One of the waste streams separated is Construction and Demolition rubble that can be crushed and repurposed as road building material.

The Construction and Demolition rubble has been accumulating since the opening of the landfill. Although efforts were made last year and 20,000 tonnes of rubble was crushed and utilised as part of the new Transfer Station construction, the pile is continuously growing and needs to be addressed before it becomes a non-compliance to the facility premise licence.

In December 2024, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) amended the City's facility premise licence, to allow for 60,000 tonnes of rubble material to be crushed per calendar year until the legacy pile is crushed. The historic crushing maximum allowed was 20,000 tonnes per annum. Officers have consulted with the City's landfill contractor who have advised they can secure the plant & equipment and resources required to undertake the project in March 2024.

The December 2024 financial report to Council indicated that the City is in a good position compared to the budget forecast. This positive position provides Council with an opportunity to use funds to reduce its environmental and financial liability at Meru by crushing construction and demolition waste.

Undertaking this work will assist the City:

- Upkeep its premise licence and avoid a non-compliance.
- Start preparing the site for future development at the landfill (e.g. new liquid waste ponds).
- Acquire crushed sub-based material to be re-used on site or on other City projects or sold to third parties.
- Avoid disposal of the legacy rubble in landfill cell.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

The provision and good management of a modern waste management facility is critical to the region. The processing of the segregated waste is integral to the success of the operation.

Economy:

Having a class III waste management facility in the Mid West is a critical asset required to enable residents and businesses to operate economically.

Environment:

The City has been working very hard in recent times to enhance its environmental performance which is reflective of the community's feedback. This has been demonstrated in its actions taken to implement its carbon zero commitment and in the recent construction of the Meru Transfer Station.

Meru's current Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) licence allows the crushing of a maximum of 60,000 tonnes per annum. Officers have negotiated with the Department to increase this figure to facilitate reduced processing time for the stockpile.

As this is a legacy waste pile, there is the possibility that it contains asbestos material. This is managed through extensive sorting and testing throughout the crushing activity.

The crushed material will be re-used on site or on other City projects or sold to third parties reducing the volume of waste going to landfill and extending the life of our cells.

Leadership:

There are no adverse leadership impacts.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

The City crushed 20,000 tonnes of construction and demolition waste in 2023 as part of the new Transfer Station project.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

By presenting this matter to the Council, the City is complying with the requirements of the Local Government Act.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The construction and demolition waste pile has been a legacy issue for the City for some time. The City crushed 20,000 tonnes of construction and demolition waste in 2023 as part of the Transfer Station project, leaving approximately 68,000 tonnes of material in the pile. This represents a financial liability to the City of approximately \$3 million. Approval of this report will reduce the stockpile by one-third.

The charge (GST inclusive) to dispose of uncontaminated Construction and Demolition Waste (concrete, bricks, rubble) at Meru in the current financial year is \$54.50 per tonne. This charge roughly covers the cost of crushing. The City also has a fee (GST inclusive) in the 2024-25 fees and charges schedule of \$42 per tonne for the purchase of crushed rock and rubble. However, all material crushed to date has been used on the Meru site.

In recent years, the following volumes have been received:

- 2023-24 (YTD) = 4,170 tonnes
- 2022-23 = 5,750 tonnes
- 2021-22 = 4,600 tonnes

A recent review and updated projections of the City's operating result at year end now forecasts an improved position of over \$1million. This improved position is based on the following:

- Above budgeted revenue from Financial Assistance Grants of around \$600,000.
- No drawdown on \$200,000 CSRFF co-contribution provision in 2024-25.
- Employment costs currently tracking around \$500,000 under budget with a provision that this level of underspend is likely to diminish in the 2nd half of the financial year.
- Water Utilities costs currently tracking well under budget and actual expenditure in comparison to same period (December) of the previous financial year is \$150,000 under.

The City is currently finalising its Mid-Year Budget review that incorporates budget amendments based around the above projections which will offset the proposed additional \$1million expenditure to undertake the crushing of materials.

Confidential Attachment No. CEO130A was obtained to crush 20,000 tonnes as at the time it was requested, this was the maximum amount the site's licence allowed and the minimum amount that is viable for the mobilisation of the equipment and personnel from Perth to undertake the project. This quotation would be updated depending on the Council's decision.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Community	Aspiration: Our Culture and heritage is recognised and celebrated. We are creative and resilient. We can all reach our full potential.
Outcome 1.4	Community safety, health and well-being is paramount.
Outcome 2.1	Local business is empowered and supported.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.4	Healthy financial sustainability that provides capacity to respond to change in economic conditions and community priorities.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

Meru is the only Class III landfill in the Midwest & Gascoyne Region receiving waste from across the two regions. Responsible management of the facility is essential for the region.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

The construction and demolition stockpile represents a legacy environmental concern and hence financial liability that could be reduced by approving the officer recommendation.

The current location of the stockpile has been ear-marked for the future liquid waste ponds. Management of the pile is essential to accommodate this future development without impacting the life expectancy of the cells.

The inherent risk in approving this recommendation is that it results in the City's budget being overspent. However, this expenditure needs to occur at some point and hence the current opportunity needs to be considered.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The following options were considered by City Officers:

1. The Council can determine to not approve the redirection of operational funds and consider undertaking these works in a future budget.
2. The Council can determine to approve the redirection of a lesser amount of operational funds to crush the Construction and Demolition stockpile (minimum amount of 20,000 tonnes at a cost of \$860,000).

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

CEO131 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION	
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AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-000765
AUTHOR:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
EXECUTIVE:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
DATE OF REPORT:	7 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	GO/6/0029
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x3)
	A. Submission Invitation
	B. Midwest Regional Projects
	C. Local Government Primary Healthcare Services Survey - Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to lodge a 2025-26 Pre-Budget Submission to the Federal Government.

Local governments are no longer simply associated with roads, rates and rubbish. They are complex and diverse businesses effectively delivering a wide range of essential services, whilst only receiving 3.5 percent of Australia's total taxation. To enable the sector to continue to deliver for the community, additional support from the Australian Government is essential.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. DIRECT the Chief Executive Officer to make a 2025-26 Federal Government Pre-Budget submission based on the information contained within this report; and
2. PROVIDE a copy of the City of Greater Geraldton submission to all Durack candidates and Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

The Federal Government is inviting individuals, businesses, and community groups to submit their ideas and priorities for the 2025-26 Budget via the Federal Government's Treasury Website. The Federal Government advises that it places significant importance on receiving submissions in developing its budget policies and strategy. It is vital that the Federal Government is aware of the issues faced by the Mid West Community and that the City and other stakeholders take this opportunity to communicate them to the Federal Government. Submissions are due by Friday 31 January 2025.

Appreciation should be expressed to the Federal Government for the assistance it has provided to the Local Government sector in recent times. The funding streams provided directly from the Federal Government to the Local Government sector are now a core part of the financial survival of the sector (Financial Assistance Grants, Roads to Recovery Grants, Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, Building Better Regions) enabling the provision of essential local infrastructure. However, as always, there is more to be done. Appreciation is also expressed for the consultation opportunity provided via the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability and now to lodge a pre-budget submission.

Many of the ideas lodged by the City into the Local Government Sustainability Inquiry are relevant to this submission. This submission however will focus on specific ideas/requests for the Federal Government in the preparation of their budget as it relates to Geraldton, the Mid West more broadly.

Relationship Between the Federal and Local Governments:

The Federal Government has the following Domestic Policy:

Federal Government Domestic Policy: Effective Commonwealth-State relations.

- *We support the development of productive relationships between state, territory and Commonwealth governments to promote policy reforms of national significance.*

This policy is also repeated in the Prime Minister's Strategic Priorities:

"Build a strong partnership between the Commonwealth, states and territories to deliver for all Australians."

For the author, it is a real disappointment that the local government sector does not receive a mention in this Federal Government policy. The local government sector is the level of government most trusted by the community, it is the level of government closest to the people and it does not receive a mention.

The author originally thought it was the tyranny of distance that prevented a better relationship and communications between the Australian Government and the local government sector. However, it seems it starts at the policy level. One of the consequences that impact the Federal Government's ability to meet its stated aims is grants that miss the mark. A recent example would be housing. This is a shame as the sector is in a good position to advance this issue if it was correctly incentivised.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests the Federal Government review its policies and Strategic Objectives to:

- Review its policies and strategic objectives to include building a relationship with the local government sector.

- Review and increase the formal and informal opportunities for the local government sector to communicate directly with the Federal Government.
- Prioritise investigations into removing financial waste from duplication of services by both Federal and State agencies and direct the savings to the regions.

Un-Tied, Non-Competitive Grants:

The Federal Government has the following Domestic Policy:

Federal Government Domestic Policy: Care and Support Economy

- *Place the Government's Budget on a sustainable footing by improving the quality of Commonwealth spending and reducing wasteful spending and exercising fiscal restraint to ensure we can continue to deliver the quality of services that Australians deserve.*

This policy is also repeated in the Prime Minister's Strategic Priorities.

The City of Greater Geraldton supports the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) call for the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grants to be increased to at least 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue. The value of Financial Assistance Grant Scheme provided to local government has declined over the past decades from around 1% to 0.55%.

Local governments are responsible for approximately a third of Australia's non-financial assets worth more than \$350 billion (roads, parks, buildings, drainage systems, airports, art galleries, community halls, playgrounds, theatres, aquatic and recreation facilities and more). The Australian Government, with 82% of the tax revenue, has just one tenth of the assets. Local government assets are aging and hence there is a significant short fall in funding available to renew critical community infrastructure.

The City of Greater Geraldton is very appreciative of the Australian Government's Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs), its Roads to Recovery Grants and the Local Road and Community Infrastructure Projects funds (LRCIP). These types of grants enable local governments to fund the meaningful day to day needs of their local communities. They don't create an asset that is expensive to operate, and they assist the implementation of non-glamorous needs. As per the ALGA position, the City of Greater Geraldton would request that FAGs be increased to one percent of the annual tax take, for Roads to Recovery to be doubled and the LRCIP grant to reintroduced. The nation's backlog of assets requiring renewal would be far higher without the Roads to Recovery funds which are critical to keep our roads at a reasonable standard. The provision of untied, non-competitive grants directly from the Federal Government to Local Government also significantly reduces red tape wastage when grants are competitive and pass through State Governments.

Firstly, there is a large bureaucratic cost in collecting taxes from the community. Secondly, there is a round of large bureaucratic costs to determine which local governments are worthy of receiving some of these funds. Thirdly, there is a round of bureaucratic costs when the grant passes through the State

Government on the way to the local government. Finally, there is a round of bureaucratic costs when the local government must provide audited accounts on how the funds were spent. In a period of labour shortages, it makes sense to increase the level of untied, non-competitive grants to the local government sector.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- Increase the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.
- Reintroduce the Local Road and Community Infrastructure Projects funds (LRCIP).
- Maintain Roads to Recovery Funding at \$1 billion per annum.

Regional Housing:

The Federal Government's budget document has a commitment to:

"Improving Housing Supply and Affordability

Australia faces significant housing pressures. In response, the Australian Government is implementing a comprehensive housing reform agenda. Safe and affordable housing is central to improving productivity and enhancing the wellbeing of Australians. Currently, too many Australians are unable to access such housing. Home ownership has become increasingly difficult for Australians to achieve, as housing prices have outpaced incomes. Renters are experiencing deteriorating conditions, with rents increasing and vacancies low. Our housing challenge needs to be addressed by all levels of government and market participants to ensure Australians have access to safe, stable and affordable housing, close to schools and transport.

One million new homes: The new Housing Accord sets an initial, aspirational target of one million new, well located homes over 5 years from 2024. The residential construction industry is currently facing capacity constraints. Looking forward, building activity is expected to decline from recent peaks, exacerbating supply and affordability pressures. Under the Accord, state and territory governments will undertake expedited zoning, planning and land release to deliver on a joint commitment to improve the availability of social and affordable housing in well-located areas, including looking for immediate opportunities to free up well-located state land. The Australian Local Government Association will work with state and territory local government associations to advocate for a commitment from Australia's councils to support the delivery of social and affordable housing.

The provision of housing is not a core service of local governments. However, it is interesting that the Federal and State governments are increasingly using the statement; *"It will take all levels of government to solve"*. Interestingly, Councils that are taking the challenge to assist solve the housing crisis are being heavily criticised by their local communities for using funds for this purpose. Hence it is vital that the Federal Government communicate effectively with the sector and provide assistance to enable the local government sector to provide local solutions. It is potentially a win-win with the Federal Government getting new accommodation and the local governments being able to establish a small financial return.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- Improved direct communications with the sector on the housing crisis.
- The removal of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) provision on local governments that construct new housing would provide an automatic 10% incentive to the sector. This option also does not come with the administrative burden that comes with establishing new grant structures.
- Provide directly to local government, ten-year interest free loans for the purpose of constructing new housing.
- Establish a separate tranche/category in the existing Australia Housing Funding program providing direct grants to local government enabling them to deliver additional regional housing stock for their communities.

Regional Roads:

The Federal Government has a 'National Road Safety Strategy' (NRSS) and has issued its response to the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety report: 'Improving Road Safety in Australia' as follows:

"The Government has a responsibility, collectively with state and territory governments, for the strategic direction and implementation of national road safety policy and actions. The Government has a guiding and influencing role in road safety and established the Office of Road Safety (ORS) in July 2019, with the aim of improving coordination and leadership across all levels of government. While many of the levers for road safety are controlled by the states and territories, the Government is responsible for developing the National Road Safety Strategy with all states and territories and supporting its implementation; funding infrastructure investment aimed at delivering road safety outcomes; and regulating first imports of vehicles into the country. The National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 (Strategy) and its Action Plan for 2021-2025 are expected to be released in the coming months, subject to jurisdictional approval processes

Recommendation 1 The committee supports the findings of the NRSS Inquiry Report which recommended that the Australian government commit more funding to road safety. The Australian Government supports an increase of funding by all governments towards improving road safety, as recommended by the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-20 (NRSS Inquiry). This was agreed in principle by Council in November 2019. In response the Government has since made significant funding commitments that will deliver road safety outcomes in major cities and regional and remote areas."

"Around 1,200 people are killed each year on Australia's roads and about 40,000 are seriously injured. Even one death on our roads is one too many. Australia is working towards the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2050 (Vision Zero)."

Source: National Road Safety Strategy.

The City greatly appreciates the Australian Government's recent increases to road funding. These funds are so critical to the financial sustainability of the local government sector that spend approximately half their revenue on road matters. It is interesting that the nation's road safety decisions appear to be made without the sector with the most number of roads not having a seat at the table.

The author would suggest the Federal and State governments also consider the impact on road safety and the transportation of essential goods of Disasters when considering road safety policy decisions. The increasing frequency of cyclones, floods and severe storms is adding significantly to the cost of road management and maintenance. Funding to improve the resilience of these assets would ultimately reduce the cost of repeatedly repairing these assets.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton supports the Regional Capitals' Position on road funding as follows:

- Maintain Roads to Recovery Funding at \$1 billion per annum and ultimately increase.
- Maintain Black spots Funding at \$150 million per annum and ultimately increase.
- Maintain the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program with at \$200 million per year and ultimately increase.
- The majority of the Roads to Recovery funding increase be directed to non-urban councils and ultimately increase.
- Provision of greater flexibility for project timeframes to allow councils to manage staff and supply constraints and cost variations and ultimately increase.
- Reconsideration of the disaster recovery funding requirement of "like for like" replacement to allow councils to build back better in the face of climate change pressure.

Recognition Of Regional Cities Provision of Additional Services:

The Federal Government has the following Domestic Policy:

Federal Government Domestic Policy: Care and Support Economy

- *Place the Government's Budget on a sustainable footing by improving the quality of Commonwealth spending and reducing wasteful spending and exercising fiscal restraint to ensure we can continue to deliver the quality of services that Australians deserve.*

Australia has over fifty Regional Capitals. Being a regional capital, the hub for the surrounding area, these councils must fund and operate services that are provided by the Australian Government and State Governments in capital cities. Examples include airports (Geraldton and Mullewa), Performing Art Centres, Museums, Regional Libraries, Class A Art Galleries, regional waste facilities and a wide variety of sporting venues and associated infrastructure.

These activities are very costly and place a large financial burden on Regional Capitals. Regional Capitals bear this burden because these community facilities are central to a region's liveability and social fabric. In delivering these services, Regional Capitals are saving the Federal and State Governments from doing so. Financial support for these activities is required for regional capitals to remain financially viable.

The City requests acknowledgment of the important role of local government regional arts and culture facilities through provision by the Australian Government of dedicated ongoing streams of operating and capital funding to ensure that local governments can continue to deliver the full suite of arts cultural experiences to local and regional communities and to assist in meeting the large financial burden of managing and maintaining these facilities.

In the Federal Government's policy settings, the City of Greater Geraldton would like the Federal Government to not only consider population numbers but consider also factoring in the nation's revenue generation localities with the aim of providing resources back into these areas to improve their liveability. This investment would greatly assist the de-densification of the Australian population to areas outside the State capitals.

Federal Policy and funding need to reflect that regional and remote Australia should not simply be a passive recipient of arts and culture flowing from capital cities. Rather, the real and potential contribution of regional and remote Australia to the nation's broader cultural life should be fully supported.

Additionally, a disproportionate burden of regional arts and culture financial support and burdensome application processes falls on regional local governments. This is particularly the case when compared with those in capital cities. The City of Greater Geraldton provides a Class A Art Gallery and a 650-seat theatre. These facilities are highly valued by the mid west community but come at a high financial cost to the City. Both facilities are over 45 years old and require a high level of

Regional Airports and Regional Airlines are equivalent to public train stations and trains in cities and should be treated as such. The loss of Bonanza Airlines and Rex Airlines in 2024 and the lack of reliability on regional routes by the major carriers has further exposed regional airports as the income pipeline for many airports remains unclear.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- Review the Financial Assistance Grant Scheme distribution methodology to increase the support offered to regional capital cities who provide services to the regions that are delivered by State and Federal Governments in the state capitals.
- Review Federal grant criteria to include regional revenue generation.
- Provide \$100 million over four years for Regional Capital Cities to replace/renew their aging regional arts and culture infrastructure.
- Provide \$20 million over four years of recurrent funding to enable regional areas to develop new arts and culture products for the entire Australian community.
- Increase funding for the Regional Airports Program to \$200 million over four years.
- Clarify funding for regional airports to establish Financial Management Frameworks.

- Resolve funding and requirements for security screening at regional airports including increasing funding under the existing Regional Airport Security Screening Fund.

Adequately Resourcing Federal Services in the Regions:

“The Australian Government’s vision for regional Australia is one of strong connected regions that shape economic growth and wellbeing; are resilient and responsive to economic shocks; and are inclusive, vibrant and diverse. Regions that our First Nations people have every opportunity to engage in and shape, and where people, business and investments thrive”
Regional Development Fact Sheet

“RDA committees are real-time advisers to government on critical regional development issues, opportunities and challenges in their regions. RDAs use their local, cross-sector expertise and regional voice to:

- *collaborate with integrity, transparency, respect and accountability*
- *engage with diverse communities, especially First Nations people*
- *support the Government’s ambition of ‘no one held back and no one left behind’*
- *support gender equality opportunities in their regions.”*

Source: Regional Development Fact Sheet.

The Federal Government also has the following Domestic Policy:

Federal Government Domestic Policy: Care and Support Economy

- *Place the Government’s Budget on a sustainable footing by improving the quality of Commonwealth spending and reducing wasteful spending and exercising fiscal restraint to ensure we can continue to deliver the quality of services that Australians deserve.*

This policy is also repeated in the Prime Minister’s Strategic Priorities:

- *A strong inclusive and sustainable economy*
- *Build a stronger public service that delivers better outcomes for the community, acts as a model employer and contributes to building a fairer and more inclusive Australia.*

There are so many untapped opportunities in the Mid West that align with the Federal Government’s stated intentions for regional Australia. The region has the potential to develop rare minerals, increase the nation’s food production, and meet the international National and State objectives for the production of sustainable energy and sustainable steel. Investment in the required infrastructure by Federal and State governments would allow Western Australia to continue to provide significant revenue for the Federal Government even if the demand for and/or price of iron ore diminishes.

When the Federal Government does not adequately resource their regional services, there is a subtle cost shifting to the local government sector (disaster response, information gathering and communicating with the local community). We would request that these services (railways, telecommunication carriers, energy providers etc) are required to provide a minimum level of customer service into the regions.

A local example in Geraldton is the provision of Centrelink Services. Members of the local community who wish to access Centrelink services must do so on-line. Many of these people either do not have access to a computer or do not have the training/skills needed to comply. As a result, these residents frequently go to the library to access a computer and to get assistance from librarians. These residents are often in desperate situations that can result in tension and poor behaviours being exhibited in a City facility, with staff and public negatively impacted.

A further example of cost shifting in the regions is associated inadequate customer services systems offered by the National Telecommunications Carriers. For instance, a rural telecommunication tower will stop working. The local community attempt to gain information from the national carrier. When that is unsuccessful, the community approaches their local Councillor who in turn contact their Chief Executive Officer who must then commit local government resources to try and obtain the required information and to then relay it back to the telecommunications customer. As there are regular and repeated outages in the regions, this requirement consumes a reasonable amount of local government resource.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton would request:

- Provision of well-resourced front facing customer service centres for federal government services in the nation's 51 regional capital cities.
- Provision regional computer centres with face-to-face staffing so regional customers (especially the elderly and those with limited computer literacy) can obtain in person assistance on how to interact with the Federal Government and lodge the required on-line information.

Rural And Remote General Practitioner Funding:

The Federal Government has a National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health. The National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health promotes a national approach to policy, planning, design and delivery of health services in rural and remote communities.

"The planning, design, funding and delivery of quality, contemporary health care is universally a complex and challenging task. This is irrespective of setting, community and population characteristics, economic circumstances and individual health status.

In rural and remote Australia the complexity is magnified by unique characteristics and challenges. These necessitate the development and application of a dedicated framework which supports a nationally coordinated approach that is also adaptable to local conditions.

Health care planning, programs and service delivery models must be adapted to meet the widely differing health needs of rural communities and overcome the challenges of geographic spread, low population density, limited infrastructure and the significantly higher costs of rural and remote health care delivery. In rural and remote areas, partnerships across health care sectors and

between health care providers and other sectors will help address the economic and social determinants of health that are essential to meeting the needs of these communities

Equity of access for country people must be measured not only by the ratio of hospital beds and facilities available locally to given populations but also by:

- the standards of safety and quality of rural and remote hospital services*
- the alignment of services provided with local needs*
- availability and sustainability of an appropriately trained and skilled workforce*
- the existence of planned and effective systems to provide safe and predictable access to hospital services at local, regional and metropolitan centres as required.”*

Again, it is interesting that the role of local governments across Australia in directly funding and providing health clinics, housing, Information Technology and transportation for rural and remote General Practitioners is not mentioned in the Federal Government’s National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health or was the local government sector involved in the development of the framework.

Regional and Remote local governments are forced into providing significant funds to attract and retain rural General Practitioners (GP) to ensure these services are provided which is just not right. The local governments are then criticised by the local community if the GP decides to move on. The provision of this service to regional Australia has simply been neglected by the Australian Government. Items provided by the local government sector include fully funded medical centres, fully funded houses, cars and cash. The City has written to the Federal Government seeking direct funding to local governments for this purpose. The response was that the Federal Government is working to increase the number of GPs in the system hoping that this will result in more GPs wanting to work in the regions.

There are approximately 534 local Councils in Australia. If you assume 100 Councils across Australia support General Practitioners to the value of \$250,000 per annum, they are saving the Federal Government in the order of \$25 million per annum.

Reference is made to the recently released WALGA report on this topic in Attachment No. CEO131C.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- Provision of \$25 million per annum for on-going recurrent grants directly to those local governments that financially support Rural and remote General Practitioners.
- Provision of direct financial support for General Practitioners who practice in regional and remote Australia.
- HECS incentives to graduate Doctors to work in the Nation’s rural and remote regions.

Regional Training/ Employment:

The Federal Government has the following Domestic Policy:

Federal Government Domestic Policy: Care and Support Economy

- *Place the Government's Budget on a sustainable footing by improving the quality of Commonwealth spending and reducing wasteful spending and exercising fiscal restraint to ensure we can continue to deliver the quality of services that Australians deserve.*

This policy is also repeated in the Prime Minister's Strategic Priorities:

- *"A strong inclusive and sustainable economy*
- *Host a Jobs Summit bringing together business, unions, the non-government sector and all levels of government, to discuss options to reduce unemployment, deliver secure jobs and increase wages, supporting the development of a Full Employment White Paper.*
- *Implement fee-free TAFE and more university places to increase productivity and address skills shortages.*
- *Build a stronger public service that delivers better outcomes for the community, acts as a model employer and contributes to building a fairer and more inclusive Australia."*

Local governments, often one of, if not the largest employer in regional and remote communities, is also well placed to support transition to employment pathways, including traineeships. An increased focus on acknowledging that role by the Australian Government through greater allocation of funded traineeships to local governments would increase local training and employment opportunities.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- Provide \$20 million over four years for the creation of on-line degree courses with block tuition where necessary (especially in states like WA and SA where they are not available) relevant to the local government sector: Environmental Health, Planning, Construction/Building Inspection, are examples.
- Provide travel and accommodation bursaries for regional students to attend metropolitan and/or interstate course requirements.
- Provide Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) reimbursements to attract graduates to regions for local government jobs.
- Review the Fringe Benefits Tax definition of 'remote' to enable all regional and remote local government officers to access the allowances available in the remote zone. This change would make it financially more attractive for workers to move to the regions and encourage more workers to make the change.

Climate Change, Environment and Sustainability:

The Australian Federal Government has committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030. The stated key strategies follow:

Rewiring the Nation (RWN) – The government plans to invest \$20 billion to rebuild and modernise Australia’s electricity network via its Rewiring the Nation plan. (Powering Australia Plan).

- *RWN will upgrade Australia’s energy grid to allow and grow the renewables share of the National Electricity Market (NEM) to 82% by 2030. The government will:*
 - a. Invest \$224 million in 400 community batteries across the nation to maximise benefits of roof top solar*
 - b. Invest \$102 million to deliver 85 solar banks around Australia for households unable to access rooftop solar.*

National Electric Vehicle Strategy – the government has commenced a consultation. The EV strategy will:

- a. encourage a rapid increase of EVs in Australia by making them more accessible and affordable.*
- b. establish and support the infrastructure to support EV use*
- c. Establish a \$500 million Driving the Nation Fund*

The National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) is the government’s plan to build Australia’s industrial base. Up to \$3 billion from the \$15

- a. Wind Turbine Manufacturing*
- b. Battery and Solar panel supply chain and manufacturing*
- c. Modernising steel and aluminium manufacturing*
- d. Hydrogen Electrolysers*
- e. Bioenergy and biomass*
- f. Innovative packaging solutions for waste reduction.*

There are many opportunities in the Mid West that align with the Federal Government’s stated carbon reduction objectives. It is no secret that the Mid West has attracted international attention for its wind and solar resources that are ideal for sustainable energy creation. Subsequently, the region has the potential to be a renewable energy powerhouse if the required infrastructure backbone is provided by State and Federal Governments.

The Mid West unfortunately is not immune from the impacts of climate change. Coastal Erosion is one such impact that is already costing the local governments and State Governments significant funds and resources.

Australia is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Its impacts are already affecting our environment and communities.

While working to lessen future impacts by reducing emissions, the government is also leading on climate adaptation policies.

Ocean and coastal spaces involve complex politics, given the enormous number of interest groups. To support multiple interests, there must be a blending of policy agendas to address financial, economic, ecological and cultural accountability. Ocean and coastal management challenges governments to work cooperatively with the multiple actors and to adapt to changing circumstances and values.

Source: Australian State of the Environment Report 2021.

A further potential impact of Climate change facing Australians is the change in rainfall patterns impacting water security. Geraldton's water supply is a bore field which the State advises is reaching its maximum capacity and hence an alternate water source is required if the region is to grow – potentially desalination. Federal Government support for investigations and forward planning to ensure future water security is an important task that needs to be considered.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- The Federal Government assists the Western Australian State Government in extending the South West Interconnected System (SWIS) to Geraldton.
- The Federal Government assists the Western Australian State Government in securing the required water supply for the establishment of a renewable energy industry.
- Incentivise the renewable energy sector establishing in the Mid West.
- The Federal Government develop the required legislative/policy framework to enable a consistent approach across the Australian Coastline that includes financial support for coastal councils that subsequently implement it.
- Match State and local government funding for predictive studies on coastal erosion over the next 100 years.
- Establish a coastal adaption/mitigation/protection fund for the installation of physical works and the purchase of coastal land.
- Consider working with State Governments to fund investigations into future water security issues on a competitive grant basis.

National Security / Crime Prevention:

From the Australian Federal Police Website:

“The Australian Federal Police (AFP) is the federal law enforcement agency of the Australian Government. Its role is investigating crime and protecting the national security of the Commonwealth of Australia. The AFP has a focus on preventing, investigating and disrupting transnational, serious, complex and organised crime including terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime, child exploitation, drug smuggling, and human trafficking. The AFP is also a member of the National Intelligence Community and works with the Australian Border Force. The Australian Border Force (ABF) is a federal law enforcement agency responsible for offshore and onshore border enforcement, investigations, compliance, detention operations and customs services in Australia.”

The City of Greater Geraldton is currently consulting the community with respect to its new Strategic Community Plan. One of the issues that is front and centre in the community's mind is crime and community safety. Though not a core service provided by local governments, the City provides the Police service with a comprehensive and extensive Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) network, by coordinating agencies efforts through its Crime Prevention Committee and through advocacy.

The impact of limited Australian Federal Police resources and Australian Border Force resources can be seen through international drug smugglers using the Western Australian coastline and through its contribution to the loss of the local Cruise Industry.

Recommendations

The City of Greater Geraldton requests:

- An increased Federal Police and Border Force presence in Geraldton to manage international drug importation and border security matters.
- Sufficient Federal resources in Geraldton to enable the Cruise ship industry to operate.
- Provide \$50 million per annum for local governments to renew and/or upgrade or operate CCTV infrastructure in regional and remote Australia.

Specific Mid West Infrastructure Requirements:

Recommendation

The City of Greater Geraldton request:

- the Federal Government fund the Council approved project list submitted as part of the City's submission.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:

Community:

A financially viable local government sector is critical to community wellbeing and resilience. If a local government is not financially viable, its ability to provide high quality services to the local community is constrained. This subsequently reflects poorly on the Federal Government and their ability to deliver services to the regions.

Economy:

A Federal Government with constructive and current policies positively impacts the economy.

Environment:

A Federal Government with constructive and current policies positively impacts the environment.

Leadership:

The Council is demonstrating leadership by advocating for the sector to the Australian Government.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

The City of Greater Geraldton regularly participates in Australian Government and State Government consultation processes. Recent examples would be our participation in the Telecommunications Review and the Inquiry into the financial sustainability of the local government sector.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

The tight timeframe provided by the Australian Government has not allowed for significant consultation to occur. However, local community members, businesses and community groups are encouraged to lodge a submission via the following web address: <https://treasury.gov.au/consultation/2025-26-pre-budget-submissions>.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

It is hoped that the Australian Government will implement decisions and legislative reform that enhances the local government sector's ability to provide high quality services to the community.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no immediate financial or resource implications associated with making a submission.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Direction: Economy	Aspiration: A healthy thriving and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all whilst protecting the environment and enhancing our social and cultural fabric.
Outcome 2.3	The voice of the community is heard at regional, state and national forums.
Outcome 2.6	A diverse and globally recognised regional capital.
Strategic Direction: Leadership	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well-informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.4	Healthy financial sustainability that provides capacity to respond to change in economic conditions and community priorities.

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

Contributing to the long-term financial sustainability of the local government sector is critical to economic, environmental and social outcomes of the region.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

The local government sector as a whole is grappling with the issue of Financial Sustainability on a daily basis. The community's expectations are rising, but their capacity and willingness to pay is diminishing. Not making a submission would be a missed opportunity to have the local community's voice heard in Canberra.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

The Council may determine to not provide a submission or determine to submit an amended submission.

1.6 REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED**RR67 REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED - DECEMBER**

AGENDA REFERENCE:	D-25-006467
AUTHOR:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
EXECUTIVE:	R McKim, Chief Executive Officer
DATE OF REPORT:	17 January 2025
FILE REFERENCE:	GO/6/0029
ATTACHMENTS:	Yes (x3)
	A. DSDD027 - Delegated Determinations and Subdivision Applications for Planning Approval.
	B. CS187 – List of Accounts Paid Under Delegation – December 2024
	C. CS188 - List of Payments by Employees via Purchasing Cards – December 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to receive the Reports of the City of Greater Geraldton.

EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**PART A**

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. RECEIVE the following appended reports:
 - a. Reports – Development Services:
 - i. DSDD027 - Delegated Determinations and Subdivision Applications for Planning Approval.

PART B

That Council by Simple Majority, pursuant to Regulation 13 and 13A of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* RESOLVES to:

1. RECEIVE the following appended reports:
 - a. Reports – Corporate Services:
 - i. CS187 – List of Accounts Paid Under Delegation – December 2024; and
 - ii. CS188 - List of Payments by Employees via Purchasing Cards – December 2024.

PROPONENT:

The proponent is the City of Greater Geraldton (the City).

BACKGROUND:

Information and items for noting or receiving (i.e. periodic reports, minutes of other meetings) are to be included in an appendix attached to the Council agenda.

Any reports received under this Agenda are considered received only. Any recommendations or proposals contained within the “Reports (including Minutes) to be Received” are not approved or endorsed by Council in any way. Any outcomes or recommendations requiring Council approval must be presented separately to Council as a Report for consideration at an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP ISSUES:**Community:**

There are no adverse community impacts.

Economy:

There are no adverse economic impacts.

Environment:

There are no adverse environmental impacts.

Leadership:

There are no adverse leadership impacts.

Disclosure of Interest:

No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has a declarable interest in this matter.

RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:

Reports to be received by Council at each Ordinary Meeting of Council.

COMMUNITY/COUNCIL MEMBER CONSULTATION:

There has been no community/Council Member consultation.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no legislative or policy implications.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial or resource implications.

INTEGRATED PLANNING LINKS:

Strategic Leadership	Direction:	Aspiration: A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.
Outcome 4.3		Accountable leadership supported by a skilled and professional workforce

REGIONAL OUTCOMES:

There are no impacts to regional outcomes.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

There are no risks to be considered.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY CITY OFFICERS:

No alternative options were considered by City Officers.

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

2. MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC

Pursuant to Section 5.2 of the Meeting Procedures Local Law 2011, please note this part of the meeting *may* need to be closed to the public, *if* confidential discussion is required.

Livestreaming will be turned off, if required.

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

3. CLOSURE

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA

APPENDIX 1 – ATTACHMENTS AND REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

Attachments and Reports to be Received are available on the City of Greater Geraldton website at: <https://www.cgq.wa.gov.au/council-meetings/>

FOR PUBLIC REVIEW - NOT FINAL COUNCIL AGENDA