



murchisonshire

Ancient land under brilliant skies

Ordinary Council Meeting

23 July 2020

Attachments

Plant	Plant Description	Year	Registration	Total Costs	Total Recovered	Plant Hours YTD
P001	*Sold* JD 770G Grader	2011	MU1063	39318.08	91770	1311
P004	Ford New Holland Tractor	2006	MU 380	3944.08	0	0
P005	Dolly	2001	MU 2003	2246.49	0	0
P007	*Sold* UD Nissan Prime Mover Truck	2009	000 MU	12864.31	16402.5	364.5
P008	Dolly	2000	MU 2009	3746.6	6745	674.5
P009	*Sold* Iveco Prime Mover	2003	1GXA630	5175.28	0	0
P010	Iveco Tipper 2004	2004	MU 00	457.07	0	0
P011	Komatsu D85A BullDozer	1997	0	61912.9	1035.5	9.5
P013	Low Loader Float	2008	MU 663	9169.89	12660	211
P014	Low Loader Float	2001	MU 2004	4012.7	0	0
P017	Trailer - Evertrans Side Tipper	2001	MU 662	6404.28	14231	749
P018	Trailer - Side Tipping Roadwest	2001	MU2010	7441.15	15352	808
P024	Water Tanker Trailer	2005	MU 2024	24352.94	25726	1354
P027	*Sold* Volvo L110E Loader	2006	MU 65	15669.7	297.5	3.5
P028	LV Isuzu D-Max 4x4	2009	MU 300	8119.67	1200	80
P032	Genset - Construction	0	0	4380.01	350	17.5
P033	Genset - Maintenance 13 KVA	0	0	12015.79	0	0
P034	Genset Perkins On Mechanic Truck	0	0	4648.2	0	0
P035	Genset Power House	2011	0	203631.75	24174.98	0
P037	Forklift	0	0	761.25	0	0
P041	Loader CAT 938 GII	2004	MU 193	22355.46	6757.5	79.5
P043	BOMAG Roller (Rubber)	2012	MU1027	21315.67	21460	536.5
P048	Howard Porter Flat Trailer - Construction Gen	1979	MU 2026	1169.11	0	0
P049	Howard Porter Fuel Trailer	1972	MU 2005	710.23	0	0
P055	*Sold* Toyota Prado 3.0I T/D 5 door Wgn	2012		6793.1	585.55	0
P057	Great Wall 2012 Gardeners Ute	2012	MU 167	6100.89	0	0
P059	Trailer - 45ft Flat top	1978	MU2044	4700.77	494	26
P060	Patient Transfer- Mercedes Sprinter	2004	MU 1009	4899.73	456.98	0
P061	Kenworth T604 Prime Mover	2004	MU 000	43422.69	60975	1355
P064	Isuzu FRR500 5-Tonne Truck	2013	MU 140	29630.99	23478	301
P065	Generator 9 KVA Kuboto Machine	2013	0	3682.82	140	7
P067	Trailer - Side Tipper Roadwest	2013	MU2042	9587.87	14136	744
P068	BOMAG Padfoot Roller BW211PD-4 - Yellow	2013	MU1071	35499.43	41120	1028
P072	Isuzu Fire Truck	2013	MU1068	7722.44	693.6	10
P073	Toyota Fire - Fast Attack	2014	MU1069	944.04	73.07	0
P076	Dolly	2017	0	1578.88	0	0
P077	Kubota U25-3 Mini Excavator & Attachments	0	0	2457.37	3225	64.5
P079	Evertrans Low Loader	0	0	113.38	0	0
P080	Fuso Canter	2017	MU120	11195.71	3159	40.5
P081	John Deere 670G Motor Grader	2017	MU105	48956.69	105315	1504.5
P082	Isuzu/Dmax Sx - Works Supervisors Vehicle	2017	Traded 06/20	17725.42	9720	648
P086	Maxitrans Tandem axle Dolly	2012	1TNW068	120.78	8455	845.5
P087	Kubota Generator 20KVA SQ3200B-AU-B	2018	0	14018.55	0	0
P089	Toyota Prado GXL	2019	MU0	10269.79	767.67	0
P091	Caterpillar 950GC	2019	MU1039	17139.33	47855	563
P092	Kenworth T909 Prime Mover	2019	MU1065	34409.58	32467.5	721.5
P093	Caterpillar Road Grader	2020	MU1051	21599.92	42420	606
P094	Water Truck	2020	New	3061.33	225	5
P096	Hilux Single Cab - Works Supervisor	2020	01MU	2342.28	615	41
P11076	Mower Ride on JDZ	2013	0	297.48	25.47	0
P15003	Grader John Deere 672G	2012	MU121	81675.48	100415	1434.5
P15006	Truck - Isuzu NPR 65/45	2015	MU1018	21874.63	29562	379
P16063	2016 Toyota Prado	2016	MU1011	16088.17	0	0
P16075	Kubota Tractor B2301 HD with mower deck	2016	0	4069.99	3157	225.5



Technical Officers Report
July 2020

15 July 2020

The opportunity of having many trades in town for the new houses has given us the opportunity to make a list of all the outstanding works required in the settlement and request quotes!

New Houses

The Journey of our houses is almost complete! Quality Builders management team John Hearn and Nigel Barr were in town the week of July 8,9,10 and the final inspections with the CEO and his offsider (replacing me) Grot who would see the detail of anything potentially not quite right! The inspection and hand over were completed without incident and the keys are now with the CEO

I must say that it has been a pleasure to co-ordinate the project and to work with Quality Builders, Hosken Electrical, Murchison Gas & Plumbing and Yuin Pastoral. Great teamwork and I thank you all. In the background of course has been our work crew and I thank you too!

The Works Supervisor has organised the crews to bring in the soils in readiness for the irrigation to be laid, followed by the grass. Then fences will be erected.

Other Works

Once projects have been approved to proceed, we will commence as soon as they have been vacated.

We are waiting for ARCUS to arrive in town to install the Chiller and Freezer Rooms at the Roadhouse. This will mean a more efficient operation and many fridge freezers can be sold off!

Whilst Quality Builders (John and Nigel) were in town they inspected some homes that require works to be done and currently awaiting their quotations.

Slowly but surely all current residences will be gone through and if work is required then we plan to do the repairs etc in a timely manner.

Other

On a personal note, you can't keep this ol' girl down, results of tests in Perth has meant I shall be back on deck next week. I am rather excited!

Kaye Doyle

Technical / Project Officer



COVID-19 Coronavirus Update - July 2020

Introduction

As we are aware the current declared COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic continues is to be the most significant national events in our history that affecting us all. This summary report formally condenses the information and provided to Council and the decisions taken as a result on some of those matters that pertain to our operation since the March 2020 Meeting.

March 2020 Meeting

General Overview

Every Government, Organisation and person thought the world is being affected drastically by COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic with situations changing daily. The gravity of the situation is highlighted below in what is a snapshot summary of the current situation.

- The World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic on 11 March 2020
- On 15 March 2020 the Minister for Emergency Services declared a state of emergency with effect from 12 midnight on 16 March 2020
- On 16 March 2020 the Minister for Health declared a public state emergency with effect from 12 midnight on 17 March 2020
- On 20 March 2020 the WA State Emergency Officer exercised emergency powers by issuing a Mass Gatherings Direction Order to prohibit (and for the purpose, better define) non-essential mass gatherings in order to prevent, control or abate the serious public health risk presented by COVID-19 by limiting the spread of COVID-19
- On 23 March 2020 the Minister for Emergency Services issued a direction for the closure of certain places of businesses worship and entertainment commencing 12 noon on 23 March 2020 and ending midnight on 13 April 2020.
- At that time there were indications that closures will be extended to areas such as swimming pools and public libraries etc.
- Over the weekend of 21-22 March, the WA premier advised that from 1.30pm (WST) Tuesday, March 24, Western Australia will implement strict border controls for all access points – by road, rail, air and sea. Unless exempted, arrivals from interstate will be ordered to self-isolate for 14 days.
- On 24 March 2020 the WA Premier announced in strong terms that people coming to WA should think twice. He also foreshadowed an intention to have in place soon non-essential travel restrictions in Regional WA. To illustrate what was intended the Chief Commissioner indicated that people should not travel on holidays for Easter and that if you live in Perth and have a holiday home in Denmark stay in Perth!
- On 24 March 2020 through WALGA Council was advised by the WA Premier that the circumstances that are facing the State, and indeed the world are without precedent; and the State's response to this is going to rely heavily on Local Government and the contribution the sector can make in supporting households and business. The Premier reaffirmed his call for Local Governments to place an urgent and immediate freeze to all household and business fees and charges. Other initiatives discussed included: freeing up approvals processes; support for small businesses and relief for organisations that lease Local Government premises.

Given the impact to date of the COVID-19 virus on the WA workforce the Premier urged the sector to focus on continuity of employment for their workforce and focusing on new ways in which to utilise staff whose roles may have been impacted.

He further urged activity to bring about job creation, bringing forward projects currently planned or under consideration.

The Premier was emphatic in his statement that *"we're beyond talking about business as usual"* and he was looking to the sector to think outside the box on ways in which to support community and business during this time.

- On 24 March 2020, following a meeting of the National Cabinet, the Prime Minister addressed the nation and has now begun sending text messages to keep you informed about the national response to COVID-19. Please act on that advice, it will help save lives. This includes the following:
 - ~ Tighter restrictions on weddings, funerals, fitness classes, beauty salons, arcades, play centres and more from 11:59pm, 25 March
 - ~ Pubs, licensed clubs and hotels (excluding accommodation), places of worship, gyms, indoor sporting venues, cinemas, casinos must close. Takeaway only at restaurants and cafes. Supermarkets, and pharmacies remain open.
 - ~ Tasmania, the NT, WA, Queensland and SA announced border closures. Anyone entering is to self-isolate for 14 days. See specific State and Territory Government sites for information.
 - ~ JobSeeker Payment claims can be submitted online 24/7. Online service capacity is being increased.
 - ~ For school closures (government and non-government) please refer to state and territory education authorities.
 - ~ Stop the spread! Stay 1.5 metres away from others, wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face and if sick, stay home.

Local Government Specifics

On an hourly basis emails and information arrives from all sorts of sources that further clarifies, and sometimes confuses the situation.

With respect to issues specific to Local Government on two occasions the Shire President and I have separately attended two WALGA Webinar presentations hosted by WALGA President, Mayor Tracey Roberts for all Mayors. Presidents and Chief Executive Officers with another planned for Friday 27 March 2020 where the Premier will address our sector.

- On Monday 16 March 2020 meeting included the Hon Roger Cook MLA, Deputy Premier; Minister for Health, Hon David Templeman MLA, Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture & the Arts assisted by Dr Clare Huppertz, Senior Medical Adviser, Communicable Disease Control, Western Australian Department of Health. A copy of subsequent correspondence is attached
- On Friday 20 March 2020 meeting included Hon David Templeman MLA, Minister for Local Government and a variety of Health Professionals

A few points arising out of these meetings include the following

- 1 National Cabinet has been formed and meets regularly. Decisions, directions and actions move very quickly.
- 2 Local Governments role will be critical in the coming months.
- 3 WALGA is the governments key point of contact with Local Government who will be a conduit to disseminate information to our sector
- 4 The Government has requested that Local Government Freeze rates for 2020/21. There has been a request to ensure that the current valuations used remain in force.
- 5 The State Government has advised that it has instigated special COVID-19 leave provisions for State employees. The ASU have written to WALGA requesting a statewide response and as indicated in the attached letter that a decision is up to each individual Council. The State Government supports the ASU request.
- 6 The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries will deliver important changes to regulations, quorums and legal obligations through circulars as soon as possible. This should address arrangements for remote meetings. A copy of the amendment to the regulations is attached

- 7 There is a strong push for Local Government to lead their respective communities and to fast track and bring forward capital projects. On 24 March 2020 this sentiment was echoed by the WA Premier.
- 8 Some suggestion that there will be less emphasis by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries on compliance aspects so that resources can be directed to more proactive endeavours.

Murchison Specifics

The current situation is already having and will have significant influence on our operation. The issues surrounding us as a small remote community we are in many ways less problematical but nevertheless we have need to respond sensibly and responsibly; even if at times we think that the situation seems an overkill.

The decisions are in the main predicated around the following principles / rationale associated with health and economic activity

- (a) Our overriding responsibility is to act to protect our citizens and community to prevent, control or abate the serious public health risk presented by COVID-19 by limiting the spread of COVID-19.
- (b) Council will act to ensure that we can function and deliver the required works and services to support and stimulate the local economy.

Council Decisions

- 1 The Chief Executive Officer's report relating COVID-19 Coronavirus Update Report be received and noted.
- 2 In responding to the COVID-19 Coronavirus that Council act in accordance with the following principles and rationale associated with health and economic activity
 - (a) Our overriding responsibility is to act to protect our citizens and community to prevent, control or abate the serious public health risk presented by COVID-19 by limiting the spread of COVID-19.
 - (b) Council will act to ensure that we can function and deliver the required works and services to support and stimulate the local economy.
- 3 As requested by the State Government Council agrees to freeze current rate levels for the 2020/21 year.
- 4 As requested by the Australian Services Union (ASU) through WALGA that Council note that special COVID-19 leave provisions have been introduced for State Government employees and that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to introduce provisions similar for Council employees that are appropriate to our circumstances.
- 5 That Council look to expanding its works program by bringing forward projects that can stimulate the local economy and provide lasting benefits for the community.
- 6 The Council Library be closed to members of the public until such time that Council considers it appropriate to re-open.
- 7 The Council recommend to the Murchison Museum Committee the Museum close and that the current volunteer management program be suspended.
- 8 Council notes that public access to the Council Office may have to be restricted due to COVID-19 Coronavirus and authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make changes if deemed necessary.
- 9 On the foreseeable future that Council Meetings are conducted remotely in accordance with the Local Government (Administration Amendment) Regulations 2020.

That council resolve that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised, in consultation with Council, to develop, update and implement as required COVID-19 guidelines specific to the Murchison Shire.

April 2020 Meeting

Comments

On an hourly basis emails and information arrives continues to arrive from all sorts of sources that further clarifies, and sometimes confuses the situation. WALGA continues to positively represent the local government sector with regular updates provides as well as information that we provide back to them so that they can articulate and inform others.

The Shire President and I have continued to have the opportunity to separately attend regular WALGA Webinar presentations hosted by WALGA President, Mayor Tracey Roberts, for all Mayors, Presidents and Chief Executive Officers. During the month these have been held on Friday 27 March 2020, Friday 3 April 2020, Thursday 9 April 2020 and Friday 17 April 2020.

A few points arising out of these updates and meetings include the following

Local Government Specifics

- 1 The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is working on a range of regulatory amendments to facilitate Council business during the COVID-19 pandemic. These have been or about to be finalised and include the following:
 - Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations
It is proposed the Regulations will be amended by raising the tender threshold to \$250,000; introduce a new tender exemption for purchases required during a state of emergency declaration; and permit the extension or renewal of existing contracts which are due to expire (at the Local Government's discretion). These amendments will permit a wider range of procurement activities to be conducted under Purchasing Policies and assist Local Governments in their response and recovery activities.
 - Local Government (Long Service Leave) Regulations
The proposed amendment to the Regulations will enable employers and employees to agree to the taking of long service leave in two or more separate periods
 - Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations
The Regulations propose to ease the process for the movement and use of reserve funds, and borrowing of money while a state of emergency declaration is in force
- 2 Deferral of next year's Valuations
This matter was actively pursued by WALGA and the Minister for Local Government with the view that when 2020/21 rate notices are sent out the valuations would be the same as for 2019/20 and therefore with the same rate in the \$ the rates bill, which is what ratepayers will likely focus on, would be identical. Unfortunately for various reasons in part associated with the independence of the Valuer General, this amendment was not accepted by State Parliament.
As a result, all Councils will need to undertake their 2020/21 rates modelling so that the total rates delivered remains the same recognising that that may be variations at an individual level. WALGA have indicated that they would assist in communication. Given the small and simple nature of our rates base this may not be such a significant issue but time will tell.
- 3 WALGA have indicated that they would work with the State Government to endeavor to move the role in collecting the Emergency Service Levy to a State Agency.
- 4 The LGIS Board is looking at advancing additional funds that they have in Reserves to the sector in 2020/21 as an extra distribution over and above the current one.
- 5 As part of WALGA's role they facilitated an information gathering exercise in relation to the delivery of food and produce to the regions which was then taken to some a logistic meeting in Perth. Our submission based on information obtained from some members of staff and Nicole Mahony at the Oasis Roadhouse was well received such that after the meeting we were able to receive a phone call from Western Independent Foods who amongst other things were able to secure a supply of toilet paper.
- 6 The ALGA and WALGA were unsuccessful in getting the Federal Job Seeker payment made available to local government.
- 7 Similarly, those local governments that manage childcare facilities are not eligible to access assistance packages that apply to private operators.
- 8 The State Government has frozen all its fees and charges at 2019/20 levels.
- 9 The stay at home message has been and is being continually reinforced.

10 Regional travel restrictions are well enforced.

Murchison Specifics

Local specific issues addressed include the following.

11 Thus far we have not had any issue with our letters of authorisation having been accepted when drivers of vehicles that are servicing Murchison Shire travel across regional boundaries.

12 The State Government have been advised that Council has agreed to freeze current rate levels for the 2020/21 year. There have been at least four instances where this advice has been provided in writing or by way of a survey back to WALGA / the State Government.

As a general comment it seems important that WALGA and the State Government be kept abreast of the positive actions that the sector is undertaking.

13 Staff have been briefed of Council's general support for the work that they do and that we will, if required instigate special COVID-19 leave provisions

14 Work has commenced to expanding its works program by bringing forward projects that can stimulate the local economy and provide lasting benefits for the community as follows:

Roadworks

- As indicated under the Works Supervisors Report a contract for three (3) packages of resheet / rehabilitation works have been let for the Beringarra-Pindar Road
- Tenders for two (2) packages of Works to rectify damage from the April 2019 Flood event (AGRN863) includes in its scope of works that ability with our consent, to expand the works required to include other Council related non flood damage works that can be cost effectively undertaken if required

Settlement Works

- As identified in the March Budget Review works associated with the minor renovations to the Council Offices / Library and Roadhouse are being actioned.
- Prices and designs are being obtained for the construction of an additional staff house
- Prices and design for and a new Ablution Block for the Caravan Park and to refurbish and convert the central unit of the three (3) older accommodation units to provide two (2) fully ensuite units are being obtained.
- Other works associated with the sporting facilities and water supply are being more closely examined.

Financial impacts associated with these works have been and will be include in the next budget review which will be part of next year's formal consideration.

15 Library and Museum have been closed

16 Operators of the Murchison Roadhouse have been advised of Councils support and decisions already made in relation to their operation. We continue to work with them as the operational situation changes.

17 We have been working with Mid-West Freight given changed circumstances. As a result, we have agreed to expand the free list for grocery pickup to re-include IGA Wonthella and introduce Western Independent Foods. This should give more options, especially with the increased demand placed on pick up services generally and variations in supply. There have also been changes at supplier level which mean that the we have now to load in Geraldton very early on the Thursday morning before travelling up to deliver in Murchison on the Thursday

Council Decision

That the Chief Executive Officer's Council COVID-19 Coronavirus Update Report be received and accepted.

May 2020 Meeting

Update

On an hourly basis emails and information arrives continues to arrive from all sorts of sources that further clarifies, and sometimes confuses the situation. WALGA continues to positively represent the local government sector with regular updates provides as well as information that we provide back to them so that they can articulate and inform others.

I have continued to have the opportunity to separately attend regular WALGA Webinar presentations hosted by WALGA President, Mayor Tracey Roberts for all Mayors, Shire Presidents and Chief Executive Officers. During the month these have been held on Friday 24 April, Friday 1 May, Friday 8 May, Friday 15 May and Friday 22 May 2020. The Local Government Minister David Templeton continues to attend every session with a variety of other Government Ministers and department representatives such as the Minister for Tourism, State Emergency Coordinator and Commissioner of Police, and Auditor General also attending specific sessions.

A few points arising out of these updates and meetings include the following

- ~ Health and wellbeing focus remain with social distancing governing everything eg workshops, meetings.
- ~ Generally small changes in lifting restrictions followed by monitoring, and revaluation before moving onto new ones.
- ~ Be strategic in recovery actions and seek and provide feedback to State Government with respect to innovative ways of doing things more effectively.
- ~ Let the Government know what you are doing.
- ~ Explain the story behind what you are doing and why.
- ~ Expectation that as travel restrictions ease that local government will support the changes.
- ~ The Auditor General indicated that Financial Indicators contained within the Financial Statements are only an entry point for discussion and should not be used as a reason to not proceed with any cash stimulus program merely because a ratio may alter and become outside some pre-established measure. Provided that the Council had the financial position verified and appropriately examined this would indicate responsible management by the Council.

Road Map & Correspondence

A copy of the WA State Governments Road Map Program to Recovery is attached is a copy of the latest correspondence from the Premier and Minister for Local Government.

COVID Safety Guidelines

A copy of Closure and Restriction (Limit the Spread of) Directions (No 3) Order which provides the details of the current state of play is attached

Additional information has been released to assist Local Governments in managing COVID Safety Plan requirements. With Phase 2 easing of restrictions, Local Governments have been referring to guidelines as relevant to individual areas of operations; whether it be generic COVID Safety Guidelines or those guidelines for Food Businesses; and Sport and Recreation activities and facilities. The role of Environmental Health Officers is considered essential from a support advice perspective.

In recognition of the wide ranging activities covered by the Local Government sector, WALGA has been providing input to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries on further information for Local Governments with considerations specifically for the reopening of community, cultural and arts activities

Local Government Legislation

As advised at the last meeting the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is working on a range of regulatory amendments to facilitate Council business during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are immediately relevant to Councils deliberations:

- Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations

It is proposed the Regulations will be amended by raising the tender threshold to \$250,000; introduce a new tender exemption for purchases required during a state of emergency declaration; and permit the extension or renewal of existing contracts which are due to expire (at the Local Government's discretion). These amendments will permit a wider range of procurement activities to be conducted under Purchasing Policies and assist Local Governments in their response and recovery activities.

- Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations

The Regulations propose to ease the process for the movement and use of reserve funds, and borrowing of money while a state of emergency declaration is in force

Local Government Legislation Comments

Specific aspects relating to our operation relating to the above are detailed separately below.

Economic Stimulus

There is a strong push by the National and State Governments for all organisations and Local Government to actively pursue a and bring forward variety of economic stimulus programs. A few examples are highlighted as follows:

WA State Government.

\$111.6 million in important regional programs and projects across regional Western Australia. Funding for the next four years has been locked in ahead of this year's Budget. The funding package includes

- ~ \$25 million over the next four years for Healthy Estuaries WA, which continues and expands on the previous work under the Regional Estuaries Initiative and Revitalising Geographe Waterways projects.
- ~ Another \$18.5 million will be invested into Broome, Derby and Kalgoorlie Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation, to ensure sustainable operations at three critical short-stay facilities in the Kimberley and Goldfields.
- ~ To continue to help protect regional communities from the risk of catastrophic bushfires, the McGowan Government will add another \$15 million to extend mitigation efforts.
- ~ \$3.2 million for the Regional Men's Health Initiative, ensuring the successful men's wellbeing program can continue to operate in regional and rural communities.
- ~ \$4.2 million for the Aboriginal Governance and Leadership Development Program, to support Aboriginal business capacity in the regions.
- ~ \$3 million for the Regional Athlete Support Program, to ensure WA continues to foster talented athletes in regional areas.
- ~ \$2.4 million for the Family and Domestic Violence Therapeutic Women's Refuge Peel to support operations at the refuge over the next four years.
- ~ \$1.5 million for regional financial counselling services.
- ~ \$1 million for the Better Beginnings program, supporting delivery of family literacy services to regional areas.
- ~ \$2.1 million to provide ongoing funding for management of the Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

Australian Government

\$73 million for WA Councils in Commonwealth Stimulus Package the Commonwealth Government has announced an additional \$500 million in funding will be made available to Australian Local Governments through the new Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program.

Murchison Shires allocation is \$602,446.

Western Australian Treasury Corporation (WATC)

WATC continues to be a major finance partner with WA local governments, currently providing close to \$600 million in loan funding supporting the development of WA local communities. During this period of challenging financial and economic conditions, WATC is able to provide support to local governments via a range of option such as a Short Term Lending Facility (STLF). The specific purpose of the STLF is to support local governments facing cash flow pressures due to COVID-19 through the following:

- ~ Initial STLF global limit of \$100 million for local governments and universities.
- ~ The STLF limit will be reviewed within three months
- ~ The State Government Loan Guarantee Fee (LGF) will not be charged on funds under the STLF
- ~ Applications for funding from the STLF will open from 1 June 2020

A copy of WATC's Lending Options Paper and Presentation is attached

WALGA.

In coming weeks, WALGA is planning to increase its public promotion of the Local Government sector's response to COVID-19 and our advocacy efforts in relation to the economic stimulus the sector would like to see from the State Government during the recovery phase. To strengthen this advocacy, we are commissioning a survey of the sector that will allow us to:

- ~ estimate the amount of economic stimulus that could be facilitated through the Local Government sector during the recovery phase of COVID-19, *if* additional support was provided from the State, and
- ~ calculate accurately the collective financial support and stimulus that the WA Local Government sector has already committed to providing local communities

Details on additional regional programs and projects that have secured funding will be released as details are known in coming weeks.

Economic Stimulus Comments

These few examples reinforce how serious the situation is and how important local governments response is at a local level. Putting things into context generally a local governments funding base is overall solid, stable and predictable. Rate Revenue is rarely forgone. Some Councils who are more exposed with market driven revenue streams will be more affected than others, but this situation does not apply to Murchison nor most rural based local governments. Expenditure decisions are also within our own control; meaning that projects can be programmed and or reduced later if financial circumstances change.

In these circumstances it is understandable that Governments are looking to local government to strongly play its part

In addition, it is essential that Council explore these Short Term Lending Options with WATC.

Resumption of In Person Council Meetings

With easing of restrictions and comments from the Minister for Local Government encouraging in person Council meetings, WALGA has received advice received from the Department of Local Government is that appropriate space to allow for the four square metres per person requirement and gathering restrictions of 20 people need to be maintained.

WALGA's advice is that each Local Government will need to review the chamber or hall that they hold Council meetings in to ensure there is sufficient space to accommodate Elected Members and staff, and then consider how many members of the public can attend, given space and gathering restrictions.

If a Local Government does not have enough room, then the meetings should continue electronically.

Where a Local Government has enough space for Elected Members and staff, they also need to consider access for the public and appropriate mechanisms that need to be in place to ensure community participation is possible.

If the chamber or hall cannot accommodate the Council members, staff and members of the public in accordance with the one person per four square metre rule, Local Governments should continue to hold electronic meetings.

Resumption of In Person Meetings Comments

The space available within the Council Chamber is considered just sufficient to accommodate 6 Councillors and 3 Staff, with space for perhaps 2 members of the public and still meet social distancing requirements. The Library can act as a queuing overflow although I understand that Council rarely has visitors. As

evidenced by a recent example Council was able to effectively handle Public Question Time via a written question where the response was able to be provided on the day.

The Council furniture has been laid out to suit but in doing so it has become apparent that the design of the tables is not conducive to the efficient utilisation of the space

In these circumstances on balance it is considered appropriate for meetings to be conducted in public but with social distancing restrictions rules applying meaning that if there was a large public gallery requirement then some adaptation would be required.

Local Government Act Ministerial Orders

The recent amendment to introduce Part 10 to the Local Government Act permits the Minister for Local Government to make Ministerial Orders to modify or suspend specified provisions of the Act or associated Regulations while a state of emergency declaration is in force.

A recent Ministerial Order, will have the following effect on the operation of the Act and Regulations as follows:

- ~ Residential and small business ratepayers who are suffering financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic will not be charged interest on overdue rates in 2020/2021.
- ~ The maximum interest rate payable by all ratepayers has also been reduced, from a maximum of 11% to a maximum of 8%. This new limit aligns with the Australian Tax Office penalty for overdue payments.
- ~ Interest on instalments remains at 5.5% if a Local Government has a Hardship Policy, and to a maximum of 3% if a Local Government does not have a hardship policy.
- ~ If adopting a minimum rate or rate in the dollar no higher than that imposed in 2019/20, then there is no need to advertise differential rates. Only requirement is to place a notice on your website.
- ~ WALGA has developed a template Financial Hardship Policy and is currently preparing a Financial Hardship Assessment Guide.

Local Government Ministerial Orders Comments

The Rating Items contained elsewhere in this agenda has been prepared in response to these changes.

Murchison Specifics

Local specific issues addressed include the following.

Work has commenced on expanding the works program by bringing forward projects that can stimulate the local economy and provide lasting benefits for the community as follows:

- As indicated under the Works Supervisors Report a contract for three (3) packages of resheet / rehabilitation works have been let for the Beringarra-Pindar Road and the successful tenderers for two (2) packages of Works to rectify damage from the April 2019 Flood event (AGRN863) includes in its scope of works that ability with our consent, to expand the works required to include other Council related non flood damage works that can be cost effectively undertaken if required
- As identified in the March Budget Review works associated with the minor renovations to the Council Offices / Library and Roadhouse are being actioned.
- Prices and designs are being obtained for the construction of an additional staff house.
- Prices and design for and a new Ablution Block for the Caravan Park and to refurbish and convert the central unit of the three (3) older accommodation units to provide two (2) fully ensuite units are being obtained.
- Other works associated with the sporting facilities and water supply are still to be more closely examined.
- A suite of projects in and around the Murchison Settlement are being examined as part of the 2020/21 Budget.
- Financial impacts associated with these works have been and will be include in the next budget review which will be part of next year's formal consideration.

With the lifting of some COVID-19 restrictions the operators of the Murchison Roadhouse have advised us that they can now successfully operate the roadhouse and caravan park within the new operating guidelines. As a result, both facilities are open, albeit with reduced patronage. We continue to work with them as the operational situations change.

Reserves

Cashflow management will be critical in to respond effectively to meet the financial demands associated with COVID-19 responses, particularly relating to the funding of additional capital works. Already Councils available unrestricted cash resources are stretched.

The recent amendment to the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 provides the opportunity for Council to re-purpose its Reserves without giving public notice so long as the reason is directly brought about by the current State of Emergency. The current cashflow issues are such a circumstance.

Councils Current Reserves with \$ balances as at 30 June 2019 are as follows.

Reserves	Anticipated date of use	Purpose of the Reserve	Balance 2019
Leave Reserve	Ongoing	To be used to fund annual and long serve leave requirements	135,709
Plant Replacement	Ongoing	To be used for the purchase of plant	1,410,356
Buildings	Ongoing	To be used for the construction / renovation of administration centre	502,893
Beringarra-Cue Road	Ongoing	To be used to convert road from bitumen to gravel as required	3,411,313
Cue Road Reserves	Ongoing	To be used to convert road from bitumen to gravel as required	125,171
Transaction Centre	N/A	Set up for development of CBD – transferred to settlements buildings and facilities reserve	0
Ballinyoo Bridge	Ongoing	To be used for the maintenance or replacement of bridge 837	0
CSIRO Beringarra - Pindar Road	Ongoing	To be used to fund additional maintenance work required due to CSIRO traffic	171,673
Flood Damage Repairs	Ongoing	To be used towards the “trigger point” for WANDRRA funded flood damage works	250,568
Settlement Buildings and Facilities	Ongoing	To be used to fund improvements to and maintenance of settlement buildings and facilities	920,425
Road Sealing Reserve	Ongoing	To be used to fund road sealing program	375,000
Totals			7,308,108

To be able more effectively to meet the current needs associated with COVID-19 responses it is considered that several reserves could be repurposed slightly as indicated below. However, from an operational view point it is considered that advertising Councils intention as required in normal operational time will not be an issue.

Beringarra-Cue Road and Cue Road Reserves

These reserves are effectively combined and treated as one as the Cue Road Reserve appears to have been used in the past as a shorter term investment option. The purpose stated for each are identical. This reserve was established with from the Jack Hill Mine to provide Council with funds to maintain the road in a post mine closure environment. Whilst Council has decided that returning the road from a wide seal road to

gravel is the best solution for effective management of the allocated money, in reality other works such as providing concrete cut-off walls and constructing and sealing or resealing floodways all go towards meeting this aim. A slight rewording and broadening of the scope of the Reserves purpose is suggested without moving away from the current intent.

Buildings Reserve

The current purpose of the Reserve seems on the surface to mean dedicated for the Administration Centre. The Councils Works Depot however is effectively part of the Administration of the Shire, albeit in a location remote from the actual Office. It also has direct hard wired telephone and IT connections. Widening the scope of buildings covered but retaining the purpose of the Reserve would seem appropriate.

Settlement Building and Facilities Reserve

As it currently stands the purpose of the Reserve relates to existing and not new buildings. Extending the scope to include new Facilities has some advantages and would seem appropriate in the current COVID-19 circumstances

Roads Sealing Reserve

As it currently stands the amount already contained within the reserve is far less than the total for this year's road sealing program, which as previously noted at the February Council Meeting will continue unabated for the at least the next 10 years. Having a reserve that effectively has the same amount transferred in and out annually for a single purpose has limited value but there are some advantages if the purpose is broad enough. A broader Assets Rehabilitation Reserve would fulfill these requirements.

Interim Use of Reserves

A secondary but important consideration with Reserves is how they are used to manage the Shires overall operations. It is therefore suggested that we explore the options of being able to temporarily use money from various reserves during the year in an interim manner to manage cashflow, especially in a COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Works environment, provided that there is appropriate Council authorisation and that the end of the year any amounts withdrawn are returned with accrued interest.

Staff Housing

As indicated above under Murchison Specifics, works have been put in train to constructing a new house to house a new Plant Operator that is to be employed in Councils Works Construction Gang. There is some urgency to engage a suitable person and to have him work as soon as is practicable, especially as we have now purchased a second-hand water truck which this person would operate.

One of the issues associated with employment of staff is having a suitable accommodation, which invariably requires some lead time. Council has a current contract in place for the supply of two houses which is well advanced. Council went through a long process to call tenders for this engagement, with the current supplier being successfully chosen from four tenderers in late 2019. Thus far we have been pleased with the selection and performance. Some local trades have also been engaged.

Given that we have a significant COVID-19 economic stimulus related capital works program to deliver, and that this project is a key part, it is considered open, through negotiation to Council to extend the terms of the current contract with the current supplier to perform these works. These expenses will likely be incurred in 2020/21 and not this year.

Council Decisions

1. COVID-19 Coronavirus Update Report
That the Chief Executive Officer's Council COVID-19 Coronavirus Update Report be received and accepted.
2. Western Australia Treasury Corporation
That Council explore Short Term Lending Options with Western Australia Treasury Corporation.
3. Resumption of In Person Council Meetings
That Council resume In Person Council Meetings subject to any minor variations operationally that are required to meet COVID-19 Restrictions
4. Reserves

That the following Council Reserves be repurposed as outlined below and that Public Notice of this be undertaken

- ~ *Beringarra-Cue Road and Cue Road Reserves* be officially combined and repurposed to maintain the road in a post Jack Hills mine closure environment by converting the road from bitumen to gravel and performing other associated works as required.
- ~ *Buildings Reserve*. To be used for the construction / renovation of the administration centre and Works Depot.
- ~ *Settlement Building and Facilities Reserve* be repurposed to be used to fund improvements to and maintenance of settlement buildings and facilities as well as new facilities.
- ~ *Roads Sealing Reserve* to be renamed the *Assets Rehabilitation Reserve* and that it be used to fund works associated with rehabilitating Councils Infrastructure and Assets.

June 2020 Meeting

Brief Update

On an hourly basis emails and information arrives continues to arrive from all sorts of sources that further clarifies, and sometimes confuses the situation. WALGA continues to positively represent the local government sector with regular updates.

During the past month additional new activity has declined with most emphasis locally associated with incorporating actions and responses into the forthcoming 2020/21 (2021) Budget. This is as a direct result of actions, work and reports undertaken as previously reported is attached, partly to provide the context of the current responses that are being and will be considered through next year's budget but also relevant over the next few years.

WA Premier, Hon Mark McGowan

On 7 June 2020, the WA Premier announced a \$444 million housing stimulus package aimed at providing timely support to the Western Australian building and construction sectors. This investment will bring forward a much needed pipeline of work for local residential building companies and tradespersons. A key element of the package is the commitment of \$117 million for \$20,000 Building Bonus grants for homebuyers to build new houses or purchase a new property in a single tier development (such as a townhouse) prior to construction finishing. Those planning to build a new home in order to receive the grant are required to enter into a home building contract before 31 December 2020. Construction must commence within six months of entering into the contract. Local governments, therefore, are being asked, to the extent applicable, to act as an enabler for the timely consideration of planning approvals and building permits. It is incredibly important that local government work with builders, developers and individual home builders to ensure that activity gets into the sector as soon as possible.

WALGA Sector Rates Campaign

At the request of State Council, WALGA has created an advertising campaign to support Local Governments in educating the community about rates notices in the context of a rates freeze and pending revaluations across the metropolitan area.

The campaign comprises two 30-second ads and a longer form content piece supported by print advertisements. It features former Australian Hockey Captain and Coach, Ric Charlesworth, talking through the basics of a rates freeze and how rates are calculated, focused around two main points: the rates freeze means that Local Governments will not be receiving any additional income, though the revaluation process could mean you pay more, and rates are not directly linked to property rates, and that whilst individual property value changes can impact your rates, whole of property market movements do not.

The initial campaign will involve print advertising in Saturday's West Australian over four weeks, starting 20 June 2020, together with an eight-week promotion of the video content on online www.walga.asn.au/rates and social media, pointing to additional information on the WALGA.

WALGA Rebooting Local Economies

WALGA's President and CEO held a webinar on 19 June 2020 for Members to discuss the sector's plans to deliver economic support and stimulus to WA communities and businesses to assist in the recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Together with WALGA's Economist Nebojsha Franich, WALGA President Mayor Tracey Roberts and CEO Nick Sloan will provide further information on the *Rebooting Local Economies* document created with information from Member Local Governments on proposed support and stimulus activities, as well as insights from their attendance at the State Recovery Advisory Group and Ministerial Roundtables being held to inform the development of the State Government COVID-19 Impact Statement and Recovery Plan due to be finalised in July.

Comments

A few brief update comments are considered relevant as an update:

- 1 The COVID-19 response is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional with all levels of government at the coal face now with overall aim to protect the health of the nation and the economy. To achieve this Stimulus measures are required now with the aim that in the next few years they can be reduced as the economy picks up. The three-year budget approach we are taking is now more relevant than ever.

- 2 The 2021 budget will need to react to various requirements under the Local Government (COVID-19) Response Order, a copy of which is attached. Amongst other things this includes modifications to various compliance aspects such as waiving the requirement to reference to the contents of the plans for the future of the district but also including the option of potentially including a hardship policy with respect to the payments of rates.
- 3 Recent further information reinforces the governments commitments to an economic stimulus push. Additional COVID-19 grant opportunities are potentially being discussed and Treasury is looking at developing a tool to assist local governments to assess the capacity to cope with an expanded stimulus program.
- 4 Given the nature of our municipality and projected expenditure requirements we are potentially well placed. As outlined in the attached previous actions that we have already commenced a proactive approach is being undertaken. Exploring Short Term Lending Options with Western Australia Treasury Corporation, rationalising Council Reserves as well as looking at three (3) year budget program are all positive actions.
- 5 From a compliance aspect, whilst we may not need to reference to the contents of the plans for the future of the district, we are actively ensuring a future outlook is undertaken with a review desired later in the year. The Budget can be predicated and adapted on this basis if necessary.

Council Decision

That the Chief Executive Officer's report relating COVID-19 Coronavirus Update Report be received and noted.



9 JUL 2020

16,1.2 - July 2020
4.3.0

PSC | Public Sector
Commission

PSC Ref: PSC2059522

29 June 2020

Mr Bill Boehm
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Murchison
PO Box 61
MULLEWA WA 6630

Dear Mr Boehm

ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S COVID-19 RECOVERY PANDEMIC

I write to clarify the role of local government in Western Australia's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. I acknowledge the considerable support local governments have provided to their communities and the way many have proactively adapted their service delivery to the changing environment. Criticality of the two levels of government working together in partnership is fundamental to successful recovery planning and delivery for citizens in Western Australia.

Given the scale of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the extended nature of recovery efforts, the Government has determined that Western Australia's approach to recovery is most appropriately coordinated at a State rather than a local level. However, every local government will play a key role in recovery, particularly as they are the closest touch points to the community.

Local government has played an integral part in the stakeholder engagement process for recovery, with representation on the State Recovery Advisory Group, at Ministerial roundtables and at a dedicated roundtable on local government and leadership. The outcomes of this engagement will help to inform the final Impact Statement and State Recovery Plan to be released in July 2020.

As you know, I have tasked Graham Swift, State Recovery Coordinator, to coordinate activities across local governments throughout recovery. Thank you to those who completed the survey issued to capture impacts, initiatives, risks, opportunities and emerging risks at the local level.

Going forward, local government's role in recovery will be to:

1. collect and provide local impacts to the State Recovery Coordinator to inform recovery planning and implementation

430

2. align local recovery plans to the State Recovery Plan where required to ensure consistency
3. build on the strong work already undertaken by local governments in:
 - a) reviewing or adopting financial hardship policies to support ratepayers to provide rate, fee and tenancy relief to businesses and individuals in distress
 - b) reviving community services, sports and recreation to promote wellbeing and enable the community to resume active, connected lives in a COVID-safe manner
 - c) supporting arts, culture, events and tourism activities and content in local areas and helping these industries to innovate to operate in the future
 - d) accelerating small capital works projects to provide vital employment channels and use local materials, contractors and labour services to support vulnerable parts of the workforce
 - e) streamlining or fast tracking approvals processes and relieving compliance burdens on businesses and households where possible to stimulate local economic activity
4. monitor recovery progress and report any emerging issues and key actions taken at the local level to the State Recovery Coordinator to inform quarterly reporting to the State Recovery Steering Committee.

Thank you in advance for your efforts. The knowledge and expertise of local government is a vital component to the success and sustainability of State recovery outcomes. The two levels of government working together is integral to the development and delivery of the State's priorities in local communities.

Should you have any questions, please email Graham Swift, State Recovery Coordinator, at graham.swift@dfes.wa.gov.au or telephone 9395 9300.

Yours sincerely



SHARYN O'NEILL
STATE RECOVERY CONTROLLER
PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONER

Budget Cash Summary Net Current Assets

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Reserve Balance	1,664,960	1,307,648	1,409,991	4,754,723	3,230,932	931,115	4,399,696	4,909,862	7,303,108	7,061,063	6,578,679	6,774,294	6,512,909
Predicted Year End Operating surplus (deficit) (\$2m loan in 2021 & \$750k loan in 2022)	134,634	3,180,148	2,191,032	5,106,080	7,104,899	4,180,997	4,913,067	3,752,856	4,562,188	4,205,589	2,501,314	2,259,456	1,221,121
Predicted Year End Operating surplus (deficit) (Without Loans)	134,634	3,180,148	2,191,032	5,106,080	7,104,899	4,180,997	4,913,067	3,752,856	4,562,188	4,205,589	501,314	-490,544	-1,528,879

