

Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

AROC Governance Group Meeting

12 July 2021

MINUTES

To: AROC Members

Here within are the Minutes of the AROC Governance Group (President's & CEO's) Meeting held on the abovementioned date in the Council Chambers at the Shire of Toodyay, 15 Fiennes Street, Toodyay.

Suzie Haslehurst

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AROC Secretariat

Preface

When the CEO approves these Minutes for distribution they are in essence "Unconfirmed" until the following AROC Governance Group Meeting, where the Minutes will be confirmed subject to any amendments.

The "Confirmed" Minutes are then signed off by the Presiding Person.

Attachments that formed part of the Agenda, in addition to those tabled at the Meeting are incorporated into a separate attachment to these Minutes.

Unconfirmed Minutes

These minutes were approved for distribution on 13 September 2021.



Suzie Haslehurst
Chief Executive Officer
AROC Secretariat

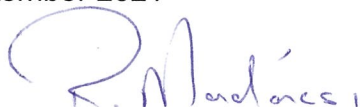
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Confirmed Minutes

These minutes were confirmed at a meeting held on 13 September 2021



Signed:

Note: The Presiding Member at the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed is the person who signs above.

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ATTACHMENTS *follow Item 9.*

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

Cr Madacsi, Chairperson, commenced at 9.35am.

2. PRESENTATIONS

3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES

Members:

Cr R Madacsi	Shire President, Shire of Toodyay
Cr B Ruthven	Deputy Shire President, Shire of Toodyay
Ms S Haslehurst	CEO, Shire of Toodyay
Cr D Smythe	Shire President, Shire of York
Mr C Linnell	CEO, Shire of York
Mr P Bentley	CEO, Shire of Goomalling
Cr B Haywood	Shire President, Shire of Goomalling
Cr P Bantock	Shire President, Shire of Victoria Plains
Mrs G Teade	CEO, Shire of Victoria Plains (<i>via teams</i>)
Mr J Whiteaker	CEO, Shire of Northam
Cr C Antonio	Shire President, Shire of Northam (<i>arrived 9.39am</i>)

3.1 APOLOGIES

Nil.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 10 May 2021.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION/AROC RESOLUTION NO. 04/05/21

MOVED Cr B Haywood

SECONDED: Cr Smythe

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on 10 May 2021 be accepted as a true and correct record.

MOTION CARRIED 3/0

5. INFORMATION ADDITIONAL TO THE MINUTES

5.1 From the Action List

The Action List was reviewed.

6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6.1 Financial Report

Report not presented.

6.2 Climate Change Initiative & Water Sustainability

Points raised as follows:

- Thank you to everyone who sent support letters for the Climate Change Alliance Program. There were 2 allocations

available and project money was available. WALGA advised 8 applications to the program were received and that all applications were very strong. AROC was not successful in this instance but is encouraged to apply for the next round. WALGA is advocating strongly with the Minister to continue the program.

- We have the opportunity to consolidate the next application to get solid data and a strategy in there. Those local governments who picked up the grant funding had strong strategies to support that. How we envisage tackling this issue is by being more strategic regionally.
- Each Shire contributing what their vision of what that looks like. Northam done work on that and it would be worthwhile to see where each local government is at. The information can be considered. Common factors noted and how similarities can be covered in the region could be the focus.
- The Wheatbelt NRM and RDA have databases. We may tap into their resources to give us a strong science argument of why we need the money. We can get a clear understanding of what the strategy or strategies will look like.
- We could facilitate existing programs at each Shire. It may be worth giving it a go and see where we stand by the time this application reopens.
- Possibility of AROC contributing funds for the first two years of the program, allowing time for all member local governments to contribute funds thereafter; giving each shire time to look at what might be required from budgets to contribute to projects that are identified. When you have to have shovel ready projects you need to plan to get there.
- Shire of Toodyay planning for it but not in a position to put money into it. Goomalling and York the same.
- Federal and State Level advocacy: time we need to start getting ourselves positioned to have a clear understanding and once we have strategy in place look at combined projects and what is needed to have them be shovel ready.
- The Shire of Northam have collected data and determined their carbon footprint. They are going to Council and looking at strategies to fix it. Their Environmental Officer coordinated the project, focussing on utilities and plant; analysing purchasing patterns. Using software called Azility (<https://www.azility.co/>) including payments. We use that program to calculate the carbon footprint. We spend \$20,000 a year on the software and staff time to manage it is 0.5

FTE. Two years of data is in the program and we are working out what impact it had.

Question:

Will what you are using lend itself to a regional capturing of data.

Northam CEO responded as follows:

I will ask the question. We have allocated the 0.2/0.3 and WALGA have supporting framework environmental tools.

- Sharing an Environmental Officer resource with familiarity across the Avon region across the Shires to alleviate budget constraints.
- Liaising with Wheatbelt NRM to access funding they may have (e.g. for study establishing current footprint of all the Shires).
- Liaising with RDA Wheatbelt have significant funding coming through but AROC needs to be clearer with climate changing strategies.
- York has significant work to do around roads and maintenance techniques. When to grade and not grade. Basics with staff. Improving techniques managing and maintaining roads instead of renewing. Capture and containment. Infrastructure. Drainage.
- Goomalling – first year had problems with water and how much rain the cyclone belt brought as it moved down south.
- Vic plains: climate change not discussed at a strategic level as they have got bigger things to deal with. Some funding to help with planning on a regional level is more of a start for us. To have ability to stop and think about it we need funding / resources. Is this something that needs to be that every single council is involved in it? All supportive of getting the ball running in the area and learning from bigger councils to then expand as time going forward. Trying to get us all on the same level not going to happen.
- York: Townscape's project. Water Corporation liaison for water reuse systems is not viable for smaller towns. Drainage is funny because every 3-5 years it is forgotten.
- Scope broad – policy on procurement and management and improvement in that. Work out what the options are and representing something back for consideration. Easy start or going too difficult.

- Water re-use scheme (Goomalling) potential for external funding.
- Shire of Northam liaising with Mike, the Regional Manager at Water Corporation to assess the current scheme and their capacity for expansion.
- Strategy for re-use of water required for Goomalling projects;
- Victoria Plains: trucking in water trucks is not sustainable. A bore that can sustain a town is too broad a project.
- Ownership of water and sewerage infrastructure discussed.
- In the late 1980s, Water Resources Minister Ernie Bridge proposed a water pipeline from the Kimberley.[2]

In 2005, infrastructure company Tenix proposed the idea of a \$2 billion, 7 m (23 ft) wide canal as a solution for Perth and the Western Australian region's water problems.[3]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimberley%E2%80%93Perth_Canal

Action: AROC CEOs to work together to identify a project we could apply for funding on a regional level.

7. OTHER MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED

7.1 Shire of Northam CEO

7.1.1 Regional Partnerships

Discussion Points were as follows:

- Our Council spoke of amalgamations. Discussions with Toodyay and Northam had. Toodyay not receptive. We look more to build regional alliances for different areas and enhancing capacity and viability that way rather than amalgamation.
- Goomalling been down that road before and definitely not down that road as no value in that. Looked at other states where they have had that occur and seen the damage done. Successive govts pushing us along that line. Have not been successful
- Amalgamations were driven by State Government and Victoria Plains are not in a position to say whether we would be interested or not. We could be split up but not sure what value it would bring to the town. Why would a neighbouring shire take on ageing assets without an increased ratepayer base?
- York been through this and knocked the idea of it on the head. A lot of money was given to look at it but the people were not happy about it.

Question

Where does the Shire of Northam see the benefits in the process for you? Smaller shires see it as a big brother mentality whereas we want to hear what your view is.

We are interested in it as just a scale thing. People haven't got enough resource to focus in areas we think should be focused on. If done properly, you become one Council and if looking at what we invest in the rural community as opposed to the town more is spent in the rural areas. It is needs based and looking at where we invest funds. Bumpy in the first few years but long-term significant benefits.

Staffing: how many staff worked in one or more York, Toodyay or Northam. Puts upward pressure on salaries and costs.

Regional centre benefits: Two regional councils got the funding. When talking with other presidents it is about identity. Look at the English model where each branch has its own funding. What resources and federal and state funding goes there. If we are a bigger entity we have huge fighting power.

Transition big clunky stuff we all replicate. Not having washouts. Becoming delivery of things for the community. More relevant and tangible. In point of that you are a new entity but you have town boards which self-govern. Are allocated budgets have people sit and advise to the council delivering to the community and do it across the geographic area.

Points raised as follows:

- Never seen a town disappear when amalgamation occurs. Community still community. Can strengthen the deliverance of democracy. Self-governance at local level. Community outcomes. Be more tangible to the community. Transition – reference back to new Zealand and things we do from scale opportunity to have an entity like AROC that just delivers services and looks at roads and skill set required. If we set up an entity to manage that as a subset of AROC keep crews local but manage as entire entity and transition into facilities management (planning schemes and strategy).

Action: Strengthen AROC and make it a power in itself to attract resources and funding. Look at that as a mechanism. Need to take it to the level of what we have to offer. This is where we are going. Use it as an amalgamated Councils without the formality but need to become more focused. Size does count with funding.

7.1.2 Tenders concept from Cr Ruthven

In small communities if putting something out to tender and we have local people applying it can compromise staff making recommendations to Council and wondered if other Shires could be that outside voice – one of the senior staff just to make up part of the panel.

Discussion Points were as follows:

- That is really for the CEOs to discuss because we only employ our CEOs so they have to be the ones that do that.
- Northam CEO: Have to understand the issue. Processes in place. Financial interests get handed off to another person to assess. Our reliance is on the rigour of process.
- Toodyay CEO: If a person had a friendship with a proponent or tenderer they would not be assessing the tender and they would be required to declare an interest.
- York CEO: We have used WALGA to assess tenders because one of the Councillors was the waste contractor and we did award the contract to them, without fear of favour. Our processes had integrity around them. The final decision was passed to council.
- Goomalling CEO: we do not have lot of tenders but we make a recommendation to Council and they have the ability and information to make decisions and know why that decision is made.

I would not want to pass my tenders off to someone else to evaluate for me. I would make a recommendation on the fact that this is the best outcome for the community.

8. NEXT MEETING

Officer's Group (CEO's)

14 June 2021

Governance Group (CEO's & Presidents)

12 July 2021

9. MEETING CLOSURE

The Presiding Member closed the meeting at 10.45am.

AROC STATUS REPORT
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

Secretariat
CEO - Shire of Toodyay

Meeting Date	Purpose	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
12 July 2021	Climate Change Initiative & Water Sustainability	AROC CEOs to work together to identify a project we could apply for funding on a regional level.	ASAP	ALL		
10/05/2021	Corella Management	That AROC authorise the CEO Officer Group to expend up to \$30,000 from AROC Funds to have Wheatbelt NRM undertake field work on behalf of the member shires to develop strategies for Corella management.	ASAP	J Whiteaker, CEO, Northam Shire	Completed.	Wheatbelt NRM engaged. Letter to come
10/05/2021	Water Sustainability (Actions to take)	<p>Northam CEO to arrange a meeting with Water Corporation (Toodyay and York to be included) (Mike) to discuss the concept for the future and they may have advice to offer to Vic Plains' subject.</p> <p>Toodyay CEO to arrange a meeting with Christian (the two Federal Members).</p> <p>Vic Plains to get some advice regarding their already written</p>	ASAP	Refer to Resolution column.	t.b.a.	Hon Melissa Price invited to AROC meeting in future.

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Secretariat
CEO - Shire of Toodyay

Meeting Date	Purpose	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
		business case for lobbying of (Melissa) election candidate. Goomalling to also contact Melissa's office.				