



Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

AROC Governance Group Meeting

17 November 2025

Commencing at 12 pm

AGENDA

Notice of Meeting

To: AROC Members

The next AROC Governance Group (Presidents & CEOs) meeting will be held on the abovementioned date and commencement time, in Council Chambers at the Shire of Toodyay, 15 Fiennes St, Toodyay.

Aaron Bowman

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AROC Secretariat

November 2025

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ATTACHMENTS with separate index follows item 5.

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

The AROC in-person meeting will commence at 12.00 pm.

1.1. Announcement of visitors

Tony Mahar, Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (online)

Hon Rob Horstman MLC, Member for Western Australia, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services; Volunteering (online from 12.30pm).

Warwick Carter, Director, Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance (~1.30pm)

1.2. Record of attendance and apologies

2. MINUTES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Confirmation of minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on 1 September 2025 be accepted as a true and correct record.

2.2 Review of status report

Review of actions and progress arising from previous meetings and decisions.

2.3 Inward / outward correspondence

In

- Letter from the Hon Josh Wilson MP to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, Mr Tony Maher.
- Letter to AROC from the Hon Josh Wilson MP follow up from meeting on 18 September.

2.3.1 Financial report

RECOMMENDATION

That the financial report to 31 October 2025 is received.

3. OTHER BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

3.1 Submissions, presentations or representations from third parties;

3.1.1 Tony Mahar, Australia Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

Commissioner Mahar is interested to hear from AROC members about the challenges arising from the energy transition.

3.1.2 Hon Rob Horstman MLC, Member for Western Australia, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services; Volunteering (online from 12.30pm).

Mr Horstman is interested to hear from AROC members regarding emergency services.

3.2 Matters referred by the Officer's Group for consideration or decision;

3.2.1 MOU amendments to include Shire of Chittering and a change of name

At the Governance Group meeting on 1 September 2025, AROC Res. No. 03/09/2025 *'accepted the Shire of Chittering as a member of AROC; and referred the MOU to the Officer's Group to make agreed changes.'*

A copy of the amended MOU with tracked changes is provided as an agenda attachment. In summary, the Officer's Group reviewed and approved the following changes to the MOU:

- Inclusion of the Shire of Chittering as a member.
- Quorum shall consist of delegates of more than 50% of member local governments (four of six members).
- A member local government will be appointed to act as secretariat to provide secretariat support to AROC.
- Removal of the annual fee for treasurer services.
- The annual contribution will be sufficient to cover operating expenses determined in the annual budget item presented at its April meeting.
- Any new member will be required to pay the full annual financial contribution on joining the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (removal of the buy-in fee).
- A withdrawing member must advise by the 1 January in the financial year they intend to withdraw (there will be no distribution of assets on withdrawal).

It is recommended that the Governance Group endorse the amended MOU, request members to sign it and formally welcome the Shire of Chittering to AROC.

However, before doing so, members may wish to determine a change of name for AROC, and incorporate this change to the MOU.

At the Governance Group meeting on 1 September, AROC Res. No. 05/09/2025 resolved *'that a change of name is referred to the Officer's Group for consideration and report back to the next Governance Group meeting.'*

Officer's Group discussion – name change

At the Officer's Group meeting on 13 October, officers discussed the proposed change of name to 'Avon-Midlands Alliance'. The Officer's Group initially agreed on the use of 'Alliance' to replace ROC, but considered that Avon-

Midland is likely to be confused with WALGA's Avon-Midland Zone. References to outer metro, future growth, 'where county meets city' and growth area alliance were suggested.

Officers narrowed down search results for possible names and by identifying their top three choices for consideration by the Governance Group, which are as follows:

- Avon Midland Growth – Organisation, Alliance, Partnership, Network (AMG-)
- Avon Arc Outer Metro 2035 (AAOM2035)
- North East Outer Metropolitan Group (NEOMG)
- Outer Metro 2035 (OM2035)
- Outer Metro Regional Partnership (OMRP)
- Outer Growth Council Network (OGCN)
- Peri-Urban Partnership (PUP)
- Perth Outer Metro - Organisation, Alliance, Partnership, Network (POM-)
- Perth's Outer Metro 2035 (POM2035)

Members are encouraged to consider:

- The acronym which helps with marketing.
- If a name needs to reflect the identities of current member local governments, or appeal broadly to governments and industries that we are seeking to influence and secure investment from.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Governance Group determine:

1. *A new name for AROC; and,*
2. *Endorse the amended MOU, request members to sign it and formally welcome the Shire of Chittering to AROC.*

3.2.2 Warwick Carter, Director, Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance (~1.30pm)

Warwick Carter will speak about the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance and its approach to advocating on priorities.

3.3 Matters raised by individual member local governments for consideration;

4. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2026

2026	Officer's Group (CEO) Meetings	Governance Group (President's) Meetings
	11.00am	11.00am
	Online Meetings	Council Chambers
JAN	No meeting	No meeting
FEB	9/02/2026	
MAR		9/03/2026
APR	20/04/2026	
MAY		11/05/2026
JUNE	8/06/2026	
JULY		20/07/2026
AUG	10/08/2026	
SEPT		14/09/2026
OCT	12/10/2026	
NOV		16/11/2026
DEC	No meeting	No meeting

5. CLOSURE OF MEETING



AROC Governance Group Meeting

Agenda attachments – Monday 17 November 2025

Minutes and additional information

2.1 Minutes of the Governance Group meeting held on 1 September 2025

2.2 Status report

2.3 Inward correspondence

Letter from the Hon Josh Wilson MP to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, Mr Tony Maher.

Letter from the Hon Josh Wilson MP follow up from meeting on 18 September.

2.3.1 Financial report to 31 October 2025

Other business / new business of an urgent nature

3.2.1 Amended MOU with tracked changes



Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

AROC Governance Group Meeting

1 September 2025

Commencing at 11 am

MINUTES

To: AROC Members

Here within are the minutes of the AROC Governance Group (Presidents & CEOs) meeting held on the abovementioned date and commencement time, in Council Chambers at the Shire of Toodyay, 15 Fiennes St, Toodyay.

Aaron Bowman

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AROC Secretariat

Preface

These Minutes will remain "Unconfirmed" until the next AROC Meeting, where the Minutes will be tabled and confirmed subject to any amendments.

The "Confirmed" Minutes are then signed off by the Chairperson.

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

Distribution

These minutes were approved for distribution on 2025.

Aaron Bowman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Confirmation

These minutes of meeting were confirmed at a meeting held on
..... 2025.

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 with separate index follows item 5

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

The AROC in-person meeting commenced at 11.07 am.

1.1. Announcement of Visitors

Mr Scott Wildgoose	CEO, Shire of Gingin
Cr Linday Balcombe	Shire President, Shire of Gingin
Ms Melinda Prinsloo	CEO, Shire of Chittering
Cr Mary Angus	Deputy Shire President, Shire of Chittering

1.2. Record of Attendance and Apologies

Cr M McKeown	Shire President, Shire of Toodyay
Mr A Bowman	CEO, Shire of Toodyay
Cr P Bantock	Shire President, Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr K Trent	Shire President, Shire of York
Mr C Linnell	CEO, Shire of York
Cr C Antonio	Shire President, Shire of Northam
Ms D Terelinck	CEO, Shire of Northam
Mrs K Murray	Executive Officer, AROC

Apologies

Mr S Fletcher	CEO, Shire of Victoria Plains
Cr J Chester	Shire President, Shire of Goomalling
Mr S Bryce	CEO, Shire of Goomalling
Josh Pomykala	Director Regional Development Australia, Wheatbelt

2. MINUTES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.01/09/2025

MOVED Cr Trent **SECONDED** Cr Antonio

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on 7 July 2025 be accepted as a true and correct record.

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Review of Status Report

See attached status report for an update on actions and progress arising from previous meetings and decisions.

2.3 Inward / Outward Correspondence

In – Shire of Chittering to re-join AROC

2.3.1 Financial Report

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.02/09/2025

MOVED Cr Antonio

SECONDED Cr Bantock

That the financial report to 31 July 2025 is received.
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MOTION CARRIED

3. OTHER BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

3.1 Submissions, presentations or representations from third parties;

3.1.1 Regional Development Australia - Wheatbelt

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development. See attachments for report.

3.1.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission

No update.

3.2 Matters referred by the Officer's Group for consideration or decision;

3.2.1 Accept membership of the Shire of Chittering

Correspondence from the Shire of Chittering received 22 July 2025 advised that Council has resolved to join AROC, and *'looks forward to actively contributing to AROCs collaborative advocacy and regional development initiatives'*.

The AROC MOU states that:

"Any new member will be required to buy in to the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils;

The buy in figure will be determined by preparing a balance sheet for AROC and dividing the net equity position by the number of Members".

The most recent financial statement has a balance of \$142,551 as at 31 July 2025. After payment of outstanding expenses, the estimated balance at 31 August 2025 will be ~ \$124,558. A buy in figure based on the net equity position divided by the number of members is likely to be \$124,551 / 5 = \$24,910.

The proposed buy in figure will enable the Shire of Chittering to benefit from the AROC's current commitments, including:

- Learnings from the Corella Management Project
- Inclusion in the Waste Facilities and Resource Recovery Plan
- Inclusion in AROC brand development

- Developing advocacy approach with federal and state government

RECOMMENDATION

That AROC determines a buy-in figure for the Shire of Chittering to become a member of AROC.

Discussion: members expressed that:

- The proposed buy-in figure was too high and could be a disincentive for new members.
- The calculation model is flawed as it incentivises new members to join when AROC has less equity.
- There needs to be a way to preserve the equity contributed by the five current members over time e.g. a project contribution by new members for any joint project funded from AROC's accumulated funds;.
- Chittering advised that Council approved membership based on a \$5,000 per annum membership fee and that any additional buy-in figure would need Council approval.
- The terms of the current MOU need to be reviewed, that is:
 - Replace a buy in figure for new members with an annual membership contribution plus a commitment to project contributions where projects are funded using AROC's accumulated funds.
 - Remove the financial payout for departing members.
- All members should have the option to opt out of a project that is deemed not to benefit that member.
- The current equity is a result of minimal expenditure over a long period of time and pre-dates the employment of an Executive Officer. Current annual members contributions (\$5,000 pa) cover the costs of employing an Executive Officer only.

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.03/09/2025

MOVED Cr Bantock **SECONDED** Cr Trent

That:

1. AROC accepts the Shire of Chittering as a member of AROC.
2. The AROC MOU be referred to the Officers Group to determine recommended changes to the terms and fees associated with members joining and departing AROC, to provide equity for current and future members.

MOTION CARRIED

3.2.2 Advocacy

Thursday 18 September session

With Trish Cook MP, Dr Chris Rodwell, Transition Advocate and Assistant Minister for Climate Change & Energy, Assistant Minister for Emergency Management, Josh Wilson MP.

It is recommended that members determine Shire and collective priorities to raise with speakers and how best to communicate these points.

Cr Antonio – Focus discussion with Dr Rodwell on what the transition package provides for our communities.

It was suggested that the Shire of Victoria Plains take the lead on energy discussions with the Assistant Minister, Josh Wilson MP.

D Terelinck – Opportunity to push for better access to disaster relief funding, including expansion of purpose to enable prevention works.

C Linnell – Would like an indication from Trish Cook as to how she would like to manage requests for attendance from the public.

Approach to advocacy

EO to continue liaison with Trish Cook's office to bring Ministers to the AROC region for an audience with members; and to facilitate meeting arrangements with Ministers in Canberra, ideally before the last sitting week of the year (24-27 November).

AROC members to consider which issues/priorities and related Ministers should be approached.

3.2.2 Draft Guideline on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects

At the July Governance Group meeting, members resolved (Res.No.04/07/2025) to review the Country Local Governments Renewables Energy Alliance's submission on PoweringWA's Draft Guideline on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects, and if no objections are raised, that AROC support the position outlined by the submission.

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.04/09/2025

MOVED Cr Bantock **SECONDED** Cr Antonio

That AROC supports the position outlined by the Wheatbelt Renewables Energy Alliance's submission on the Draft Guideline on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects.

MOTION CARRIED

3.3 Matters raised by individual member local governments for consideration;

3.3.1 Name change to reflect membership

Cr Bantock suggested that AROC should consider a change of name to reflect the current and proposed membership.

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.05/09/2025

MOVED Cr Bantock **SECONDED** Cr Antonio

That a change of name is referred to the Officers Group for consideration and report back to the next Governance Group meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

5. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2025

2025	Officer's Group (CEO) Meetings	Governance Group (President's) Meetings
	11.00am	11.00am
	Zoom Meetings	Council Chambers
OCT	13 October	
NOV		17 November
DEC	No meeting	No meeting

6. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 12.18 pm.



AROC Governance Group Meeting

Attachments to Minutes – Monday 1 September 2025

Minutes and additional information

2.2 Status report

2.3 Inward / outward correspondence

2.3 Letter from the Shire of Chittering

2.3.1 Financial report to 31 July 2025

Other business / new business of an urgent nature

3.1 Submissions, presentations or representations from third parties;

3.1.1 Regional Development Australia - Wheatbelt

Report provided by Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development.

3.2.2 Draft Guideline on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects

AROC STATUS REPORT
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

Secretariat
CEO - Shire of Toodyay

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
2.1 Confirmation of Minutes	2/9/2024	That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils Governance Group meeting held on 7 July 2025 be accepted as a true and correct record.	9/2025	EO		25.8.25: Minutes to be confirmed and signed at the 1 September 2025 Governance Group meeting.
Corella Management	13/03/2023	AROC RES. NO.02/03/23: That AROC members individually commit \$5,000 per annum in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and commit \$25,000 pa from AROC funds for three years, towards corella management activities.	2026	ALL	2026	25.8.25: WNRM to assist in coordinated Corella Cull; Q4 2024/25 report circulated on 29 July; next Corella steering group meeting is on 22 September at 9am.
Housing shortage	16/05/2022	AROC to advocate to relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers (Housing & Local Government) to address a critical shortage of housing in the Avon Region.	2026	EO	Ongoing	25.8.25: Shire of VPs had advised that 70% of the total amount of funding from HSP1 has been received and invoices should be raised accordingly.
Regional Collaboration on Waste	13/11/2023	That AROC submit a motion to the WALGA Avon Zone meeting to advocate for a metropolitan waste levy to fund investment in alternative waste management locations and technologies in	2025-2026	EO	Motion completed. Waste strategy continues.	25.8.25: RfQ to be approved for release; and assessment panel to be appointed.

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
		regional areas.				
Branding & Promotions	2/9/2024	RES. NO.03/09/24: That the Officer's Group prepare a branding brief for AROC to be considered by the Governance Group.	18/11/2024	Officers		4.6.26: On hold. The Officer's Group panel selected Market Creations and recommended that the Governance Group postpone commencement of branding work until the outcome of discussions with the Shire of Gingin and Shire of Chittering are known. Market Creations has advised that they will be available to work with AROC when required.
Canberra Advocacy	22/7/2024	Res.04/07/24: That AROC members seek the support of their Council's for the Shire President and CEO to form an AROC delegation to lobby Ministers and Shadow Ministers regarding collective and individual priorities prior to the Federal Election.	30/9/24	ALL		25.8.25: Trish Cook (Member for Bullwinkle) has invited Josh Wilson MP and Dr Chris Rodwell (Transition Advocate) to a meeting on 18 September, hosted by the Shire of Northam. EO to liaise with Trish Cook's office to assisting with meeting arrangements for a return trip by all AROC members possible during parliamentary sitting week 24-27 November.
Climate Change Initiative	12/07/2021	AROC CEOs to work together to identify a project we could apply for funding on a regional level.	Ongoing	ALL		14.11.24: On hold. WALGA is seeking funding for Regional Climate Alliances in the 2025 State budget and has updated the Climate Change advocacy position.

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
Road clearing permits and pre-funding for road projects.	08/05/2023	That AROC submit a motion to the WALGA Avon Zone meeting to advocate for specific changes to the native vegetation clearing permit system.	23/06/2023	EO		6.8.24: No further update to that provided 22.7.24: Rebecca Palumbo, Shire of York, met with DWER staff about the Native Vegetation Policy Implementation Roadmap and specifically the Action 4.1 Roadside Vegetation Advice.
Water sustainability	10/05/2021	Avon River health & access to funding.	Ongoing	Northam, York & Toodyay		15.4.24: On hold. No recent action.



Shire of Chittering
6177 Great Northern Highway
PO Box 70 Bindoon WA 6502
(08) 9576 4600
chatter@chittering.wa.gov
www.chittering.wa.gov.au

Enquiries to: Melinda Prinsloo
Telephone: 9576 4600

21 July 2025

Cr Michael McKeown
Chairperson, Avon Regional Organisation of Councils
15 Fiennes Street
TOODYAY WA 6566
aroc@toodyay.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr McKeown

ALIGNMENT WITH THE AVON REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

I refer to your letter dated 11 June 2025 inviting the Shire of Chittering to rejoin the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC). I am pleased to advise that, at its Ordinary Council Meeting held on 16 July 2025, Council unanimously resolved to accept your invitation and formally rejoin AROC.

As per the AROC Memorandum of Understanding, Council has appointed the following representatives to AROC

1. **Delegate** – Cr Aaron King (Shire of Chittering President)
2. **Proxy Delegate** – Cr Mary Angus (Shire of Chittering Deputy President)

We look forward to actively contributing to AROCs collaborative advocacy and regional development initiatives.

Could you please advise on the next steps for processing any administrative requirements, including payment arrangements.

Should you require anything further from our end, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Melinda Prinsloo
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Administered by Shire of Northam

[illegible]



An Australian Government Initiative



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT

RDA Wheatbelt Inc | 3 Constable St, Gingin WA 6503

P: (08) 9575 1888 | E: admin@rdawheatbelt.com.au

Website: www.rdawheatbelt.com.au

ABN: 30 580 026 380

August 2025

RDA Wheatbelt Update - Local Government Zone Meetings

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
E: josh.pomykala@rdawheatbelt.com.au | P: 0428 372 179

Director Regional Development

RDA Wheatbelt has a number of projects currently underway to continue development throughout the Wheatbelt region.

RDA Wheatbelt continues to meet with Local Government CEOs and any available Elected Members to discuss projects, opportunities, and challenges within their Shires. RDA Wheatbelt attempts to do this regularly, meeting with representatives to offer any support that we can provide. Whilst we try to attend events as regularly as possible, we are a small team and attempt to fit as many things into our schedules as possible.

I am also available to chat via phone, email or video conference to any CEOs that are seeking support for any initiatives their LG may be undertaking. Alternatively, Chris Evans (Research, Evaluation and Project Officer) is available to provide support for any Project/Community/Economic Development Officers on any proposed projects – chris.evans@rdawheatbelt.com.au.

RDA Wheatbelt Committee

RDA Wheatbelt has recently finished advertising for Committee positions, including Deputy Chair. All positions were declared vacant, to allow staggered terms. The RDAW Chair is responsible for the selection of Committee members and their tenures. The Committee will be selected in the coming weeks, with the first meeting to be held in September.

Additionally, due to unforeseen circumstances, RDAW is seeking the appointment of a Chair. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCA) is currently advertising this position. The Chair position is a ministerial appointment, and the Department will prepare a summary of all applications received and provide this to the Australian Government Minister for Regional Development.

It is anticipated that this position will be appointed before the September Committee meeting.

Economic Development Training for Local Government

A number of Local Governments have already participated in the Economic Development Training program run by RDAW. Feedback from this training is highly encouraged and can be sent to admin@rdawheatbelt.com.au.

The training is a full day program which provides tailored data and reports for each participating Local Government, along with resources and training available to analyse and understand this information through the lens of economic development. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for Local Governments to strategically align their needs with economic development principles and uses case studies to expand concepts and ideas for participants. Participants can include any LGA staff member and Elected Member who has an interest or works in the area of economic development. RDAW highly encourages Elected Members to utilise this training as the key strategic decision makers of their communities.

The training will continue to run for participating Local Governments until November 2025.

Training for Aboriginal Corporations and NFPs – Governance and Financial Management

RDAW is in the process of developing the next stage. This project aims to provide governance and financial management training in a culturally appropriate context and setting for Aboriginal corporations and not-for-profit organisations. This training is to align with the Australian Government legislative environment, whilst empowering the staff and Board Members of these entities in our local communities. A ‘train the trainer’ element will also play a vital part, providing the necessary resources and knowledge to build the capacity for local Aboriginal corporations to empower their communities.

The project will begin with a handful of entities as an initial training course, which will then be assessed for developmental purposes and rolled out across the region pending the success of the project.

Research Evaluation – Aboriginal Student Achievement Through Secondary/Primary Schools Cluster Model Approach (Cluster Model)

RDAW is undertaking research work for the Ngala Koolangka Education Foundation Aboriginal Corporation, to provide a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the School Cluster Model (SCM) approach to Aboriginal Student Education Achievement, through regular Aboriginal language and cultural learning. This work will underpin understandings of how the cluster model may be utilised in the Wheatbelt within the Department of Education framework, and serve as a basis for other initiatives that may be available to strengthen education delivery in the Wheatbelt.

Education in Regional Communities

RDA Wheatbelt continues its work in advocating strongly to the State and Australian Governments for greater support for regional and rural schools. Regional education is vital to the sustainability of regional communities and economic development, having large social and economic impacts throughout the region. Along with various stakeholders, RDA Wheatbelt is taking part in a coordinated approach to ensure the future of regional education is strong throughout the Wheatbelt. We continue to work with relevant policy makers and stakeholders to address the issues regional education faces for the Wheatbelt.

RDA Wheatbelt’s recent submissions on the education reviews highlight the current education structure in the Wheatbelt, the challenges faced by regional schools (including students and teachers), and what opportunities/change mechanisms can enhance students’ experiences.

Defence Manufacturing Project

Gemma Bovington and Chetan Bhatia have been appointed as Special Project Officer for RDAW’s Defence Manufacturing Project. Gemma and Chetan will work to liaise with Wheatbelt businesses and defence contractors, undertake work to identify regional capability and develop new or update existing reports based on the operations of businesses, match requirements and needs of the defence industry and the capabilities of businesses, provide continued support to businesses already engaged in the project, gauge interest from

new Wheatbelt businesses who wish to work with existing defence industry contractors, and organise engagement activities. Additionally, RDAW will be seeking in-principal support from both State and Australian Government levels to leverage legitimacy of the project and relationships with defence contractors. The Office of Defence Industry Support (ODIS) remains a key stakeholder and enabler of the project.

A number of businesses were already engaged in the first iteration of this project, and RDAW will continue to work with them as well as any new businesses. The newly created roles will continue to proactively seek further opportunities that will allow for economic diversification of Wheatbelt businesses.

Housing

RDAW is exploring further opportunities for key worker accommodation throughout the Wheatbelt through Australian Government departments and channels. RDAW understands that Local Governments require appropriate key worker accommodation to fill critical shortages in employment areas, as well as meet demand of large-scale projects set to begin in the region. RDAW is looking at activating any funding opportunities, building relationships with key Government contacts, and speeding up processes to alleviate these pressures on our LGAs. RDAW will also provide support for any funding proposals for housing options, and encourage Local Governments to contact us.

Local Government Funding Support

RDA Wheatbelt has assisted a number of Local Governments with funding opportunities for various projects throughout the region. Our organisation has assisted with connection-building between various industries and LGs, and the lobbying of Australian Government Ministers to access greater support for projects within our region. RDA Wheatbelt encourages Local Governments to contact us regarding:

- Initial proposals – discussion regarding the logistics and requirements of such undertakings to achieve maximum funding opportunities.
- Business cases – to analyse and provide feedback on completed business cases before submission.
- Funding applications – to analyse and provide feedback on funding applications before submission.

Our organisation provides this at no cost to stakeholders and ensures that funding submissions contain all necessary information and elements for assessors. If your Local Government is undertaking any particular project that seeks Government support or funding, please reach out to see how we can provide as much support as possible.

Regional Precincts and Partnership Program (rPPP)

The rPPP will run over 3 years, from 2023/24 to 2025/26. It is primarily focused on a partnership approach, bringing together government bodies and communities to plan and deliver regional precincts, tailored to local needs and create a shared vision in how the precinct connects to the region. Partners can be from government, First Nations groups, community organisations, regional universities, or private enterprise.

Regional precincts or ‘places with a purpose’ are user-defined geographic areas with a specific shared need or theme. Regional precincts may include business districts, neighbourhoods, activity centres, commercial hubs or community and recreational areas. They are located in renewal and growth areas in regional centres, regional corridors, regional cities, as well as smaller town centres that serve as service hubs in more remote communities.

There are two streams of the rPPP which are delivered as two separate grant opportunities:

- Stream One - Precinct development and planning: to activate partnerships and to deliver an investment-ready precinct plan.
- Stream Two - Precinct delivery: to deliver a specified project or projects as part of a precinct.

The objective of Stream One is to activate partnerships to jointly deliver precinct plans. The intended outcomes of Stream One are:

- establish partnerships comprised of relevant government entities, community organisations and businesses that have a shared vision for a regional precinct;
- deliver precinct plans that are tailored to their local contexts and based on community feedback and engagement;
- support precinct plans to become investment ready; and
- contribute to the Australian Government's current policy priorities, including but not limited to Closing the Gap, transition to a net zero economy, Australia's emission reduction goals, social and affordable housing, and National Cultural Policy.

The objective of Stream Two is to work with partners to support the delivery of precincts that will provide targeted benefits related to productivity, equity, and resilience for regional, rural and remote areas across Australia.

The intended outcomes of Stream Two are:

- deliver project(s) that form part of a precinct or foundational infrastructure that activates a precinct;
- develop and deliver regional precincts comprised of multiple infrastructure components, which provide benefits related to productivity, equity and resilience; and
- contribute to the Australian Government's current policy priorities, including but not limited to Closing the Gap, transition to a net zero economy, Australia's emission reduction goals, social and affordable housing, and National Cultural Policy.

Go to this link for guidelines, F&Qs and a recording of the webinar explaining the program.

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs/regional-precincts-and-partnerships-program>

RDA Wheatbelt has assisted numerous Local Governments with their intentions to apply for the funding and encourage any other Local Governments to approach us to provide any support.

The first six funded projects can be viewed at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs/regional-precincts-and-partnerships-program>

Grants

GrantGuru is an aggregation of all online grant portals, it is essentially a one stop shop for funding pathways. Remember to register for free email alerts for when grants open or if they change according to your preferences and profile. Register here <https://rdawa.grantguru.com.au/register/> The free community portal can be embedded on your shire websites to boost support of businesses and community groups access to grant information.

We negotiated a half price subscription for Local Government, \$500 ex GST per year for two years to join the exclusive Local Government portal which collates grant information only available to Local Governments. Please contact Pippa at admin@rdawheatbelt.com.au to renew or sign up.

Study Hubs

RDA Wheatbelt welcomed the Federal Minister for Education, The Hon Jason Clare MP, to attend the official opening of the Ellenbrook Study Hub on 3 June. The Ellenbrook Study Hub currently has close to 300 students who have already registered to use the facility. This study hub captures students from the Wheatbelt's peri-urban Local Government areas and provides access to services where they would otherwise be required to travel into the city.

Additionally, the Northam Study Hub is set to become operational in the very near future, bringing the total number of study hubs operating to service Wheatbelt students to six (Merredin, Narrogin, Northam, Wongan Hills, York – regional study hubs; Ellenbrook – metropolitan study hub).

Joint Local Government Submission

On behalf of
Country Local Governments
Renewables Alliance

*PoweringWA – Draft Guideline on Community
Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects
(Consultation Paper)*

Approved Version - 25 July 2025

Overview

Western Australia has an opportunity to set a nation leading standard for community benefits arrangements that benefits local communities, industry and all Western Australians.

Developing a robust, WA oriented framework that benefits from the experiences of more advanced jurisdictions is essential to provide industry and local communities with the certainty and confidence necessary to navigate the renewable energy transition.

Local Government Authorities (LGAs) that have contributed to this submission are supportive of the need for a community benefits Guideline that recognises the diverse characteristics and needs of Western Australia's LGAs. The PoweringWA Draft *Guideline* is a welcome start that requires some targeted improvements and a clear regulatory or state policy standing.

This submission by the undersigned LGAs identifies a series of opportunities to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the Guideline prior to finalisation. These include:

- **A single recommended contribution value**

Improving the Guidance on community benefit contribution values by providing a single contribution value benchmark (based on the NSW Guidelines) instead of the wide ranges in the Draft Guideline. This approach will provide better basis for agreement of mutually acceptable terms between LGAs and industry. It will also improve the transparency of the process and reduce the risks to LGAs involved in negotiations on behalf of the community.
- **Allocation of benefits according to the location of nameplate capacity**

Many projects are located in multiple LGAs. The Guideline should include a recommendation that benefits are allocated according to the nameplate capacity located in each LGA. This will provide a simple and transparent basis for allocating benefit contributions between communities.
- **Including Security of benefits arrangements as a key element in the Guideline**

Including a focus on ensuring the security of benefits arrangements is essential for both communities and industry to have certainty over the operating life of these projects. The addition of Secure principle in the Guideline and an explicit expectation that community benefit contributions will be secured by LGA-developer agreements (and/or network access and planning conditions if future policies allow this to occur).

The future security of contributions is essential for communities who need to make long term planning, financial and other decisions. It also reduces sovereign risk for industry.

LGAs are also engaging with Planning Minister and WPCEO to seek practical changes to planning and network access arrangements that can improve security. We request PoweringWA support in achieving these outcomes.
- **Focussing on the opportunities community benefits provide**

Community benefit arrangements should not be identified as a driver of power prices or project viability by the Guideline and these inferences should be removed. Drawing these links is unnecessarily divisive and not supported by the evidence.

The Guideline should focus on the opportunities community benefit arrangements provide for communities, industry and government which far outweigh the minor additional costs.

- **Removing inconsistencies in the discussion of local rates**

Community benefit arrangements should be consistently recognised as additional to rates within the final Guideline.

- **Investing in LGA capability**

A request for PoweringWA to convene workshops to build LGA negotiating capabilities alongside finalisation of the Guideline.

- **Providing advice on existing projects**

Including clear trigger points for existing projects community benefit arrangements to be brought in line with the Guideline in the future will avoid confusion about whether there need to be changes to arrangements for projects that are built, in construction or have approvals.

These recommended improvements reflect the deep, direct and ongoing experience of LGA leaders in negotiating with renewable developers on behalf of their communities. These negotiations have been undertaken without the support of PoweringWA's guidance. The proposed changes will benefit all parties – communities, State and LGAs and industry - if they are incorporated by PoweringWA into the final guideline.

Local Governments supporting this Submission

This submission has been prepared on behalf and is supported by the following **thirty-six (36)** Local Governments:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Shire of Beverley | • Shire of Moora |
| • Shire of Boddington | • Shire of Mount Marshall |
| • Shire of Bruce Rock | • Shire of Mukinbudin |
| • Shire of Brookton | • Shire of Nannup |
| • Shire of Carnamah | • Shire of Narrogin |
| • Shire of Chapman Valley | • Shire of Northam |
| • Shire of Chittering | • Shire of Northampton |
| • Shire of Coorow | • Shire of Nungarin |
| • Shire of Corrigin | • Shire of Pingelly |
| • Shire of Cunderdin | • Shire of Toodyay |
| • Shire of Cuballing | • Shire of Trayning |
| • Shire of Dandaragan | • Shire of Victoria Plains |
| • Shire of Gingin | • Shire of West Arthur |
| • Shire of Goomalling | • Shire of Westonia |
| • Shire of Kellerberrin | • Shire of Williams |
| • Shire of Kondinin | • Shire of Wongan-Ballidu |
| • Shire of Kulin | • Shire of Woodanilling |
| • Shire Mingenew | • Shire of York |

Key Points of Feedback

1. Replace the Benefit Contribution Ranges with a single recommended contribution and include contribution guidance for BESS projects

The signatories strongly advocate for the adoption of a uniform, fixed-contribution per megawatt (\$/MW) formula for determining community benefit contributions associated with wind energy, solar array, and battery energy storage system (BESS) developments across Western Australia.

In contrast to a variable or range-based contribution model—where proponents negotiate individual outcomes with host local governments—the fixed-contribution model provides clarity, fairness, transparency, and consistency. A **mandated** contribution value would significantly reduce the uncertainty and risks inherent in the current approach proposed under the State's draft guidelines.

The proposed range-based model creates a situation where local governments and their representatives are placed under unreasonable and unsustainable sovereign and political risk. This risk arises from the perception—often shaped during local election cycles or executive reviews—that a council's mayor, president, CEO, or negotiating officers have either failed to secure a 'sufficient' contribution or have been outperformed by other jurisdictions. This dynamic fosters:

- Public mistrust, especially in communities that may compare outcomes across local governments;
- Accusations of incompetence or, worse, corruption, where negotiations fall short of the upper end of the State's recommended range;
- Undue pressure on elected members and executives, which can erode public confidence and destabilise local governance;
- Political weaponisation of contribution outcomes during biennial local government elections, CEO contract renewals, or changes in council leadership.

This is particularly fraught given that local governments are often negotiating with multinational corporations possessing vastly greater resources, legal capacity, and experience. The expectation that volunteer elected members or even seasoned CEOs can reliably negotiate top-tier contributions within a range framework is not only unrealistic—it is systemically inequitable and unsustainable.

In contrast, a statewide fixed-contribution approach, as already implemented successfully in jurisdictions such as New South Wales, provides a level playing field. It ensures:

- Predictability for proponents, streamlining project feasibility and budgeting;
- Certainty and consistency for local governments, avoiding reputational damage from perceived negotiation shortcomings;
- Transparency and fairness for communities, who are assured of equitable treatment regardless of where they live;

- Reduced risk of conflict or regulatory scrutiny, as contribution expectations are clearly established in policy and uniformly applied.

Unless there are extraordinary or site-specific extenuating circumstances, the use of a fixed contribution value per MW is a superior model—one that mitigates sovereign and political risk, fosters public trust, and enhances the integrity of renewable energy planning and delivery in WA.

Accordingly, we strongly recommend that the WA State Government adopt a consistent, mandated community benefits contribution value, aligned with the proven New South Wales model, and resist the implementation of loosely defined or negotiable contribution ranges.

This single recommended contribution values aligned to the NSW Guideline¹ and include a contribution for stand-alone Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) would be:

- \$1,050 per megawatt per annum indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for wind energy development
- \$850 per megawatt per annum indexed to CPI for solar energy development
- \$150 per megawatt hour per annum indexed to CPI for stand-alone battery energy storage systems²

Setting clear contribution value guidance empowers local communities and industry, creating a firm foundation for agreements that can demonstrate the maturity of interactions between the parties and create mutually beneficial outcomes reflecting the local community and project context.

2. Benefit contribution allocations should align to nameplate capacity location for projects that span multiple LGAs

Community benefits should flow to impacted communities. Many renewable energy projects are located within more than one LGA and it is important that there is clarity on how community benefits should be allocated between communities.

The Guideline should include clear guidance that allocation of community benefit contributions should be made on the basis of the proportion of nameplate capacity located in each LGA. For example, if a 10MW project had 4MW in one LGA and 6MW in another then a 40/60 split would be made in the contribution arrangements.

There may be exceptions to this approach for a small number of projects. For example, where significant population areas are located in close proximity to a project but the majority of the project is an adjoining LGA with no nearby towns or more densely settled areas. These exceptions can be resolved by discussion and agreement.

¹ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2024, Benefit-Sharing Guideline: Guidance for large scale energy projects <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-11/benefit-sharing-guideline.pdf>

² The consultation paper argues that there is no industry benchmark for BESS projects. In our view, the NSW Guideline has established an industry benchmark for BESS agreements, and this should be included in the Guideline. Not including a contribution for BESS projects will unnecessarily complicate negotiations, creating risks for both parties.

However, for vast majority of arrangements this simple approach to apportioning benefits funds will provide a clear basis for agreement. Inclusion of this expectation in the Guideline will help to avoid unnecessary conflict, competing expectations or time-consuming negotiations between LGAs.

3. The Guideline should include a focus on ensuring the security of benefits arrangements for communities and industry

The Guideline should include a focus on ensuring the security of community benefit arrangements to increase certainty for both industry and communities.

Security is essential as LGAs, and communities must have confidence that benefit arrangements (and other commitments to supporting local communities) will actually be enforceable and delivered by industry once approvals are in place. This is essential for long-term statutory management, financial and strategic planning.

Without proper security from the outset, these arrangements could be the subject of renegotiation or change at the discretion of the project owner or LGAs. A lack of security therefore introduces risk for both communities and project owners. In our view:

- Relying on the on-going goodwill of industry over 30-year project lifespans and potentially repeated changes in ownership is an excessive and unreasonable risk to communities. If a project ceases payments, there is no way for this to be addressed unless these arrangements are secure.
- There are also sovereign risks for industry without proper security. New Councils or leaders in LGAs could seek to renegotiate for higher benefit arrangements at their discretion unless arrangements are appropriately secure. Renegotiation may also become a local political issue during election campaigns, leading to local division and uncertainty.

The fundamental insecurity of benefit arrangements has been emphasised in recent project approvals. Currently, community benefit arrangements are only recognised within the advice notes of statutory body assessments. The advice notes are not binding which provides very limited to no security for the future.

We note that community benefit agreements are better secured in other jurisdictions. For example, Voluntary Planning Agreements are utilised in NSW, supported by planning conditions. Community Benefit Agreements have also recently been introduced in Queensland as part of legislative changes.

To address this issue in the Guideline it is recommended that **Secure** be added as an additional principle in the guideline in *Principles for community benefit arrangements* section. This could be drafted as:

- **Secure:** the arrangements for community benefits should be appropriately secured via enforceable agreements between LGAs and project owners to provide certainty for communities and industry over the life of the project. These agreements should wherever possible be integrated within planning approvals and network access arrangements where policies provide the basis for these links to be made.

Whilst security can be supported via community benefits being captured in dedicated legal agreements between LGAs and project owners, this approach brings additional costs. Establishing a requirement within network access arrangements with Western Power is a preferred pathway and consistent with approaches in other jurisdictions.

Specifically, agreement of a community benefits contributions consistent with the Guideline should be made a condition for granting and maintaining a network access licence with Western Power. This would also require the granting of any future network access licenses / agreements to be conditional on the new operator committing to the community benefit arrangement.

We note that *State Planning Policy 3.6 Infrastructure Contributions*³ could also provide a pathway for creating a nexus within the existing planning framework. However, the requirements for these processes are onerous and SPP3.6 is not commonly utilised by smaller rural local governments, creating a significant burden on LGAs.

The focus on achieving greater security through network access arrangements mirrors arrangements in NSW such as the Renewable Energy Zone Access Scheme and complements existing considerations in the Commonwealth Capacity Investment scheme. By linking appropriate community benefit arrangements to network access and government support, community benefits are placed at the heart of project arrangements and developers have a significant incentive to agree to proper arrangements with communities.

Whilst we recognise that implementing these changes is beyond the scope of the Guideline and PoweringWA's mandate, PoweringWA can play an important role in realising this security through its advocacy for change within government and we request your support.

The Guideline can also support this by recognising the potential for these future security pathways and creating an expectation that - in the absence of the changes recommended above - developers should enter into binding agreements with Local Governments to provide life-of-project security and certainty for host communities.

4. Remove elements of the Guideline that link community benefit contributions to power prices, project viability and sovereign risk

Community benefit arrangements are an insignificant factor in future power prices, are not a material factor impacting project viability and communities are not creating sovereign risk by seeking reasonable benefit arrangements.

It is also unnecessarily divisive to include these inferences within the Guideline. To do so implies that host communities seeking reasonable community benefits are imposing significant costs and risks for industry and the rest of the Western Australian community. In an environment where renewable energy is already very divisive within communities, it is important

³ https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-09/SPP_3.6_Infrastructure%20Contributions_Guidelines%20april2021_0.pdf

the WA Government seeks to foster unity and maximise benefits for all Western Australians from the energy transition.

Tables 2 and 3 provide a simple evidence-based review of the significance of community benefit contributions to power prices and project viability, supporting the removal of any negative links to power prices, sovereign risk and project viability in the final Guideline.

Table 2: Comparative Factors

Project Type	Indicative annual MWh generation per MW ⁴	2024 average SWIS wholesale price/MWh ⁵	2024 retail electricity charge (\$/MWh) ⁶	Community Benefit Contribution
Onshore wind	3504	\$79.93	\$315.82	\$1,050
Solar	2190	\$79.93	\$315.82	\$850

Table 3: Community Benefit Significance Assessment

Project Type	Indicative Annual Generation Revenue/MW	Community Benefit: cost to project owner (\$/MWh)	Community Benefit: % of annual facility revenue	Community Benefit: % of average annual wholesale price	Community Benefit: % of retail energy price
Onshore wind	\$280,075	0.30	0.37%	0.37%	0.09%
Solar	\$175,047	0.38	0.49%	0.47%	0.12%

This simple indicative analysis is based on industry benchmarks. It identifies community benefit contributions as comprising less than half a percent of potential generation revenue and around 0.1% of retail power prices in 2024. They represent a small, fixed additional cost and will only be incurred once projects are operational and generating revenue.

Compared to major cost factors such as project capital expenditure, financing costs, and supporting transmission capital investment, community benefit contributions cannot reasonably be identified as a significant factor impacting either project viability or future power prices.

More importantly, communities hosting renewable energy are making a significant contribution to the future of the energy system, bearing the direct impacts of this change which is industrialising rural landscapes, and they should be justly recognised for that contribution.

⁴ Derived based on the midpoint of the relevant capacity factor ranges in the CSIRO GenCost report - https://www.csiro.au/-/media/Energy/GenCost/GenCost2024-25ConsultDraft_20241205.pdf

⁵ Sourced from the AEMO Wem data dashboard <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/electricity/wholesale-electricity-market-wem/data-wem/data-dashboard>

⁶ Based on 2024 residential electricity tariff, excluding supply charges <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/energy-policy-wa/household-electricity-pricing>

Rather than framing these contributions as a cost, community benefits should be framed in the Guideline as an opportunity to contribute to the future development of regional communities and create a genuine social licence for the energy transition.

The development of a robust and secure basis for negotiating community benefits is also an opportunity to reduce sovereign risk for developers. If this approach also helps to achieve earlier approvals the reductions in capital costs, smoothing of the energy transition and other benefits has the potential to increase project viability and contribute to lower power prices. These positive impacts could well outweigh the modest additional costs imposed on projects.

5. Clarify that community benefit arrangements are additional and are separate to local rates

Community benefit arrangements are necessitated by the limited long-term positive impact the renewable industry will leave for host communities. Unlike other key regional industries such as agriculture, tourism and resources, renewables provide very limited direct economic benefits over their operating life but have on-going material impacts.

Like other State fees, taxes and charges, local rates should be immutably independent of community benefit arrangements. Local rates represent a baseline contribution by all landowners to support community infrastructure and services.

The draft Guideline is inconsistent on this separation and needs clarification.

The statements in first paragraph of Community Benefits section and Role of Rates sections appropriately identify that community benefit payments are additional and separate to any rate obligations. These statements should be retained.

However, the following paragraph in the role of rates section should be removed:

“Nevertheless, communities and Local Governments should consider the cumulative impact of any change in ratings approach along with any independently negotiated community benefits program. This will ensure commerciality is maintained, sovereign risk is reduced, and that additional revenue is split fairly between hosting councils seeking to recover their costs, and communities seeking benefits for hosting new renewable energy projects.”

This paragraph undermines the clarity of earlier statements and introduces inappropriate and inaccurate statements. In particular, conflating the payment of rates with the commerciality of projects is inappropriate. There is no evidence to suggest that these relatively minor fixed costs are a material commercial consideration for developers and they are a cost that any land use in the State must pay.

The charging of rates based on State Government statutes by LGAs does not constitute a sovereign risk issue and this reference is similarly inappropriate.

Finally, this paragraph also infers that community benefit funds are a cost recovery mechanism for LGAs. This is completely at odds with the way in which community benefit funds are defined in the Guideline (see for example the *Communities and The Energy Transition* section). The

intent of these funds to provide additional benefits to host communities beyond what local resources – including rates – can provide.

The reference to rates within the criteria for any benefit contribution should be also removed.

6. Invest in LGA strategy and negotiation capability

The objective of community benefit contributions is to improve the long-term position of LGAs and their communities. This means, the LGAs involved need to produce a clearly thought through strategy to preserve their infrastructure and facilities for the next 20-30 years. Once this wave of development passes, the communities are unlikely to be supported at anything but the most basic level.

The Guideline should encourage long-term LGA strategic thinking, formulation of legacy projects and outcomes, and consideration of how community benefits funds can be applied and maximised to enable communities to position themselves for the future. A strategic view of how the community will absorb and manage both the immediate development pressure and the future beyond the construction period when new economic activity dissipates, and communities are left to reassemble themselves.

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) has recently developed a Renewable Energy Community Benefits and Community Engagement Guide⁷. The Guide provides LGAs with a baseline of practical information and processes to consider their local strategy and priorities, engagement with developers and the community, and development of community benefit schemes that work locally.

PoweringWA should build on this initiative and the Guideline by funding negotiation workshops for LGAs. These workshops would assist local leaders in preparing and presenting their expectations/ask to developers, improving face-to-face meeting conduct, issues management, knowledge, and the overall capacity of LGAs to negotiate successfully with developers. With much of the development occurring in small, under resourced rural LGAs, this capability building approach would greatly assist in lifting skills, avoiding delays and improving community and industry outcomes.

7. Emphasise the importance of early engagement and genuine consultation

The Guideline should emphasise the importance of early engagement with LGAs by developers and genuine engagement with communities as a foundation for agreeing strong community benefits arrangements. This will allow the communication of key issues between both sides and the identification and understanding of how communities can best utilise contributions and create a foundation for future prosperity as energy generating regions. This is currently mentioned in the Guideline but could be more clearly identified as an expectation of the Government and important pathway to success.

⁷ https://walga.asn.au/getmedia/ea947a1a-fc88-460f-966b-7e55f511d3a2/WALGA_Renewable-Energy-Community-Benefits-and-Engagement-Guide.pdf

8. Provide clearer guidance on community benefit arrangements for existing projects

Whilst the Guideline will provide a framework for improved benefit frameworks for new projects, we note that there are many existing projects (completed, under construction or approved) that have community benefit arrangements that do not align to the guidance provided.

It is not reasonable or feasible that these pre-Guideline community benefit arrangements be renegotiated to align to the new standard.

However, the Guide should note clear triggers for project arrangements to be improved to align to the Guideline. These triggers should include:

- if a project is rescope and an approval significantly modified
- if turbines, panels or batteries are progressively upgraded to higher capacity (name plate),
- project life extensions (repowering),
- changes to operating approvals.

Conclusion

The transition to renewable energy presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver long-term social, economic and environmental benefits to Western Australia's regions. The Draft Guideline represents a strong starting point, but it must be refined to ensure **fair, consistent and secure outcomes** for host communities.

As the tier of government closest to the communities impacted by these projects, Local Governments are uniquely placed to facilitate, administer and advocate for lasting community benefit outcomes. However, this role must be supported by a clear, enforceable policy framework that empowers LGAs and sets a minimum benchmark for industry to meet.

The signatory Local Governments call on PoweringWA to incorporate the recommended improvements outlined in this submission, including adopting a fixed-contribution model, embedding benefit security mechanisms, clarifying and distinguishing the independence of community contributions from rates, and supporting LGA capability building.

These changes will foster trust, reduce risk, and enhance the social licence of renewable energy projects across Western Australia. With the right framework in place, community benefits can become a catalyst for strengthening regional communities and ensuring the energy transition delivers for all.

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
2.1 Confirmation of Minutes	17/11/2025	That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils Governance Group meeting held on 1 September 2025 be accepted as a true and correct record.	11/2025	EO		10.11.25: Minutes to be confirmed and signed at the next Governance Group meeting on 17 November 2025
Corella Management	13/03/2023	AROC RES. NO.02/03/23: That AROC members individually commit \$5,000 per annum in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and commit \$25,000 pa from AROC funds for three years, towards corella management activities.	2026	ALL	2026	10.11.25: Steering Group meeting was held on 3.11.25 to review the project plan and arrangements for a coordinated cull, which is now likely to proceed with the use of commercial shooters as a result of the impact of firearms legislation on arrangements; DPIRD have endorsed a trial use of alphachloralose (details tba).
Housing shortage	16/05/2022	AROC to advocate to relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers (Housing & Local Government) to address a critical shortage of housing in the Avon Region.	2026	EO	Ongoing	10.11.25: Sean advised that he has signed off on the WA Treasury FAA for HSP CEI. WA Treasury will receive the funds on 7 November 2025. Vic Plains will then be paid 70% of the HSP CEI funding within 7 days of this happening.
Canberra Advocacy	22/7/2024	Res.04/07/24: That AROC members seek the support of their Council's for the Shire President and CEO to form an AROC delegation to lobby Ministers and Shadow Ministers regarding collective and individual priorities	30/9/24	ALL		10.11.25: Officer's Group recommends deferring plans to advocate in Canberra until AROC has confirmed membership, considered a name change and had the benefit of hearing from Warwick Carter, Director Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance, regarding PSWMA's advocacy

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
		prior to the Federal Election.				approach (November meeting).
Regional Collaboration on Waste	13/11/2023	That AROC submit a motion to the WALGA Avon Zone meeting to advocate for a metropolitan waste levy to fund investment in alternative waste management locations and technologies in regional areas.	2025-2026	EO	Motion completed. Waste strategy continues.	10.11.25: RfQ ready for release; and assessment panel to be appointed.
Branding & Promotions	2/9/2024	RES. NO.03/09/24: That the Officer's Group prepare a branding brief for AROC to be considered by the Governance Group.	18/11/2024	Officers		10.11.25: To be initiated once a change of name and branding brief are agreed. The Officer's Group panel selected Market Creations to develop branding and promotions.
Climate Change Initiative	12/07/2021	AROC CEOs to work together to identify a project we could apply for funding on a regional level.	Ongoing	ALL		10.11.25: WALGA states that the 2025-26 State Budget "lacks climate action commitment" and has seen a "noticeable shift away from broader climate action". Notes a lack of sufficient investment in climate adaptation and mitigation.
Road clearing permits and pre-funding for road projects.	08/05/2023	That AROC submit a motion to the WALGA Avon Zone meeting to advocate for specific changes to the native vegetation clearing permit system.	23/06/2023	EO		6.8.24: No further update to that provided 22.7.24: Rebecca Palumbo, Shire of York, met with DWER staff about the Native Vegetation Policy Implementation Roadmap and specifically the Action 4.1 Roadside Vegetation Advice.

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
Water sustainability	10/05/2021	Avon River health & access to funding.	Ongoing	Northam, York & Toodyay		15.4.24: On hold. No recent action.



THE HON JOSH WILSON MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MB25-000679

Mr Tony Mahar
Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
PO Box 24434
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Aeic@aeic.gov.au

Dear Commissioner

I write to inform you of my attendance at a workshop with the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC) in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia on 18 September 2025, and to request you consider scheduling a meeting with them as part of your work program.

At the forum, councils informed me of the significant scale of the roll-out of renewable energy infrastructure planned for the region, and the challenges this is presenting for rural councils with limited capacity to engage with energy proponents and constituents with complex concerns.

The AROC councils were particularly interested in the work of the Commission and during the forum we discussed your role in considering complaints from concerned residents about renewable energy and major transmission projects, and your broader work to identify and promote best practice relating to the planning, development and operation of renewable energy projects and new transmission.

I would be grateful if you would consider visiting the Wheatbelt to engage in a similar forum with local government at the appropriate time. Ms Kelly-Anne Murray, AROC Executive Officer, is a key contact who will be able to assist your office to arrange a meeting. She can be contacted at aroc@toodyay.wa.gov.au.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Josh Wilson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JOSH WILSON



THE HON JOSH WILSON MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MB25-000677

Kelly-Anne Murray
Executive Officer
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

aroc@toodyay.wa.gov.au

Dear AROC Councils

I am writing to thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet with the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC) on 18 September 2025. I would like to commend you on this forum. I found it very valuable, and it provided me with insights on a range of issues of importance to your region.

Renewable energy generation was of course an important element of discussion, and I acknowledge that the Wheatbelt is contributing to the heavy lifting to support new renewable energy generation and capacity in the South West Interconnected System. The significance of these developments underscores the need for energy infrastructure proponents to meaningfully engage and consult with the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in your region.

The Albanese Government is strongly encouraging energy infrastructure proponents to meaningfully engage and consult with local governments. In particular, the Government is implementing the Community Engagement Review in collaboration with the states and territories. This includes introducing a renewable energy developer ratings scheme (DRS) that was launched in August as a pilot. To receive a positive assessment under the DRS, energy proponents will need to demonstrate their credentials for good community engagement. I also wanted to acknowledge the feedback that some regional councils have limited capacity to engage with project proponents. I will raise this issue with the Western Australia Government.

We also discussed the role of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner in considering complaints from concerned residents about renewable energy and major transmission projects, and the work of the Commissioner's office in working across governments and with other stakeholders to support implementation of the recommendations from the Community Engagement Review and development of the DRS. I am in the process of writing to the Commissioner, Mr Tony Mahar, to ask that he come to the Wheatbelt to further engage with AROC and other wheatbelt councils.

As noted in our discussion, I encourage all councils to read the National Climate Risk Assessment and consider the information pertaining to their LGA. We will be considering local government feedback via the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) in developing the action agenda for National Adaptation Plan and I encourage local governments to provide their feedback through WALGA.

Regarding betterment projects under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), states are able to request the Prime Minister's agreement for exceptional assistance to cost-share betterment works to essential public assets following a significant disaster. These programs provide an opportunity to rebuild to a more resilient standard, with the goal to mitigate risks of future disaster events and their costs.

On 21 November 2023, the Prime Minister agreed to jointly fund \$104.9 million in betterment funding with the Western Australian government following Tropical Cyclone Ellie. This betterment program makes funding available to state agencies and affected local governments – in this case, Broome, Derby West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham East Kimberley – to undertake works for the reconstruction of assets impacted by the event, ensuring they are built to a stronger, more resilient standard. This is the first betterment fund implemented in Western Australia.

I encourage you to continue engaging with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services as the administering agency for DRFA in Western Australia on matters relating to infrastructure betterment.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to participate in the AROC forum on 18 September.

Yours sincerely



JOSH WILSON

cc: The Hon Trish Cook MP
Member for Bullwinkel

AVON REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Administered by Shire of Northam

	01.07.2025 31.10.2025 \$	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022
Brought Forward	144,349	174,489	141,001.39	178061	161,314
Revenue					
Member Contributions	15,000	25,000	25,000.00	25000	25,000
Grants					
WDC Contribution					
Fees & Charges					
Interest Earnings	1,354	5,265	6,135.67	2,882	247
Workforce Housing			47,500.00		
AROC Corella Project		5,000	20,000.00		
GST refund	1,562	4,894	7,177.23		
Total Revenue	17,917	40,159	105,812.90	27,881.85	25,247
Expenses					
Insurance					
Recreation Plan					
Equipment Expenditure	-			2,959.90	
Shire of Toodyay Administration	-			15,000.00	
Corella Population Management		2,750		26,999.50	3,000
WB Infrastructure Conway Highbury					
WB Infrastructure refund to WDC					
AROC - DANDARAGAN Workforce Housing		23,650	28,600.00		
WHEATBELT Corella Project	16,500	30,250	27,500.00		
Localise Aged Friendly Audit					
Strategic Waste Management Plan					
Travel	149	106	49.40	100.10	
Mobile Phone	750	576	791.40	580.00	
Training					
Capacity and capability assessment					5,500
Executive Office Wages	6,609	11550	12,975.00	16,796.18	
Executive Office Super	1,077	2046	2,000.89	2,505.78	
Administration expenses other		399	408.70		
Other Expenditure Exit Dowerin					
Total Expenditure	25,086	71327	72,325.39	64,941.46	8,500
Net Result	(7,169)	(30,138)	33,487.51	(37,060)	16,747
Accumulated Funds on hand	137,179	144349	174,488.90	141,001.39	178,061
31.10.2025					
Represented by Commonwealth Muni Account	137,179				

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{insert logos alphabetical order)

AROC
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

**Memorandum of Understanding for the
operation of the AROC Group Agreement**

BETWEEN THE:

SHIRE OF CHITTERING
SHIRE OF GOOMALLING
SHIRE OF NORTHAM
SHIRE OF TOODYAY
SHIRE OF VICTORIA PLAINS
SHIRE OF YORK

Adopted at an AROC meeting held on 21 September 2020

(Res. No. 16/09/20)

Amended at an AROC meeting held on 21 November 2022

(Res. No 03/11/22)

Amended at an AROC meeting held on 17 November 2025

(Res. No XX/11/25)

November 2025

Memorandum of Understanding
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC)

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Memorandum of Understanding
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC)

A. Description of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

1. The purpose of this document is to set out the framework for regional cooperation between the member local governments.
2. The regional body shall be known as the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils, or under the short form AROC.
3. AROC will not be a legal entity or a body corporate and may only operate under the auspices of one or more-member local governments.
4. AROC operates under the authority of Section 3.68 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

B. Period of Agreement

1. This agreement shall apply from the date it is adopted by the member local governments for a period of five years. At the end of that period the members may:
 - Renew the agreement;
 - Change the agreement; or
 - Take no action, in which case the agreement ceases to have effect.
2. The agreement may be modified or cancelled at any time with the unanimous agreement of the member local governments.

C. Membership

1. Membership of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils shall consist of the following organisations. Each member is a local government constituted under the Western Australian *Local Government Act 1995*.
2. Member local governments of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils are:
 - Shire of Chittering
 - Shire of Goomalling;
 - Shire of Northam;
 - Shire of Toodyay;
 - Shire of Victoria Plains; and
 - Shire of York.

D. Mission Statement

The mission of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils is to:

“Work cooperatively for the benefit of the region and well-being of the community.”

E. Purpose

The purpose of AROC is to arrange and facilitate members:

- Working together cooperatively to address regional problems, issues or challenges and advance the interests of the region;
- Developing and implementing resource sharing strategies or regional service delivery models;
- Delivery of training and development programs for elected members or staff; and
- Undertaking joint tendering or purchasing arrangements.

F. The AROC Governance Group

1. The prime decision-making body for AROC shall be the Governance Group;
2. The Governance Group will meet every two months at a time and place agreed by the group;
3. Each member local government shall have equal representation on the Governance Group;
4. The Governance Group shall consist of:
 - one Elected Member from each member local government, usually the Mayor or Shire President;
 - one Senior Officer from each member local government, usually the CEO;
5. Each local government shall nominate an Elected Member to represent it on the Governance group;
6. Proxies are permitted;
7. Each member local government shall have a single vote to be exercised by their nominated elected member or proxy, or in the absence of an elected member by the CEO or senior officer present;
8. Governance Group meetings are not open to the public, but additional elected members from member local governments are encouraged to attend as observers;
9. Invited guests may attend the meeting to address particular issues and can remain for the remainder of the meeting unless decided otherwise by the meeting;
10. Members may attend by prior arrangement through instantaneous electronic communication.

G. The AROC Officers' Group

1. The AROC Officers' Group will meet every two months at a time and place agreed by the Officers' Group, in the months when the Governance Group does not meet;
2. Each member local government shall have equal representation on the Officers' Group, usually the CEO;
3. Proxies are permitted; and
4. Decisions shall be by consensus.

H. Authority

1. The Governance Group will have authority from member local governments to deal with funds held by AROC from members and third-party contributions;
2. The individual local government that is auspiced to deliver a program or project under third party grant funding shall ensure that the program or project is delivered and the funds are expended and acquitted in accordance with the grant agreement.

I. Role of the Executive Officer

The purpose of the role of the Executive Officer is to:

- Be the principal point of contact for the AROC;
- Increase the effectiveness of the AROC;
- Assist in achieving the objectives of the AROC MOU;
- Encourage greater participation by member local governments;
- Build the brand of the AROC as a collective voice for the Avon region; and,
- Lead to greater advocacy for the benefit of all AROC local government members.

Key responsibilities and duties of the Executive officer include:

1. Regular communication with AROC members and key stakeholders;
2. Coordinate all meetings and administration of the AROC Governance Group and Officers' Group;
3. Action AROC Governance Group and AROC Officers' Group decisions;
4. Monitor AROC finances in collaboration with the Treasury;
5. Undertake special projects as resolved by the AROC Governance Group with operational direction provided by the AROC Officers' Group;
6. Apply for, administer, and acquit funding for AROC projects;
7. Prepare submissions relating to matters affecting AROC, in line with direction provided at meetings;
8. Facilitate appointment of consultants for AROC business or projects as directed; and,
9. Any other function as specified or directed by the AROC Officers' Group and AROC Governance Group, the Presiding Member (Chair) or the CEO of the Secretariat.

J. Meetings

1. AROC Governance Group meetings shall be convened at the time and at the place determined by the group;
2. The Executive Officer will prepare a program for the meeting that will consist of:
 - Matters referred by the Officers' Group for consideration or decision;
 - Matters raised by individual member local governments for consideration;
 - Review of actions and progress arising from previous meetings or decisions;

- Submissions, presentations or representations from third parties arranged by the secretariat or agreed by the Chairperson;
 - Such other matters as may be agreed by the Governance Group.
3. The meeting Program will generally be circulated one week prior to the Governance Group Meeting.
 4. A quorum shall consist of delegates of more than 50% of member local governments.

K. Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

1. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Governance Group will be elected at the first Governance Group meeting following the local government Ordinary Elections, or at such other times as may be necessary if the position is vacated;
2. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson must be elected members from the member local governments;
3. The Chairperson shall have a deliberate vote only and no casting vote. Unresolved matters are to be referred to the next meeting;
4. If the Chairperson is absent, whether represented by a proxy or not, the Deputy Chairperson will preside;
5. If both the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson are absent, whether represented by proxies or not, the group will elect a presiding member for that meeting only.

L. Secretariat

- ~~1. An individual, member local government or other corporate body may be appointed to provide secretariat support to AROC. Unless the Governance Group determines otherwise the secretariat will be provided by the local government represented by the Chairperson;~~
1. A member local government will be appointed to act as Secretariat to provide secretariat support to AROC.
2. The secretariat will oversee the appointment and supervision of the Executive Officer on behalf of AROC;

M. Treasury

1. A member local government will be appointed to act as Treasurer to hold, manage and account for funds held on behalf of AROC;
2. The Treasurer will provide regular financial reports to the Governance Group;
- ~~3. The Governance Group may determine an annual fee for the provision of Treasury services at the time that it adopts its annual budget.~~

N. Annual Financial Contribution

1. Each year at its April meeting the Governance Group will determine the annual contribution for member Councils for the following financial year;
2. The annual contribution ~~shall~~ will be identical for each member Council;

~~Q.~~—The annual contribution will be sufficient to cover operating expenses determined in the annual budget item presented at its April meeting, not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000 per member local government.

P.Q. Project Financial Contribution

1. AROC through the Governance Group may decide to undertake a project or projects which require additional financial contributions from member local governments;
2. Projects must involve at least two local governments, but could involve all member local governments;
3. Each project will have a separate form of agreement which will ensure that:
 - The costs of the project are equitably distributed;
 - That any additional costs or savings are equitably distributed to the participating local governments; and
 - That there will be no impost on, or windfall to those member local governments that choose not to participate.

Q.P. New AROC Members

1. The Governance Group may by unanimous agreement:
 - Allow an additional local government to become a member; or
 - Invite an additional local government to become a member.
2. Any new member will be required to pay the full annual financial contribution on joining, buy in to the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils;
- ~~3.—The buy in figure will be determined by preparing a balance sheet for AROC and dividing the net equity position by the number of Members.~~

R.Q. Withdrawal of AROC Members

1. AROC members recognise and agree that participation in AROC is a long-term strategy and any decision to withdraw should be reflective of the long-term nature of the commitment;
2. A ~~withdrawing retiring~~ member must advise by the 1 January in the financial year they intend to withdraw; give at least one full financial year notice of an intention to withdraw;
- ~~3.—At the conclusion of the notice period the departing member will be entitled to receive a payout calculated as the AROC net position not including any restricted funds, at 30 June divided by the number of members;~~
- ~~4.—A member may withdraw at any time without notice but will be required to pay any contributions due and payable up to the end of the current financial year, but will not be entitled to any distribution of assets.~~

Commented [KAM1]: This allows time to prepare a draft budget and annual contributions based on memberships from 1 July.

S.R. Strategic Priorities

1. AROC will agree on strategic priorities that will inform planned projects and activities for the next two-year period;
2. The priorities will be outlined in an AROC Strategic Plan in a schedule to this MOU;

3. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually.

T.S. Executed by the Parties

Shire of Chittering

SHIRE PRESIDENT

Printed Name

Signature

Date

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Shire of Goomalling

SHIRE PRESIDENT

Printed Name

Signature

Date

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Shire of Northam**SHIRE PRESIDENT**_____
Printed Name_____
Signature_____
Date**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**_____
Printed Name_____
Signature_____
Date**Shire of Toodyay****SHIRE PRESIDENT**_____
Printed Name_____
Signature_____
Date**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**_____
Printed Name_____
Signature_____
Date**Shire of Victoria Plains****SHIRE PRESIDENT**_____
Printed Name_____
Signature_____
Date**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**_____
Printed Name_____
Signature_____
Date

Shire of York

SHIRE PRESIDENT

Printed Name

Signature

Date

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Printed Name

Signature

Date

U.T. Schedule 1 – AROC Strategic Priorities

It is agreed that the strategic priorities for activities undertaken by the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils will include:

PURPOSE	MISSION	VISION	ABOUT US
Working together to address regional issues and advance the interests of the region.	Work cooperatively for the benefit of the region and well-being of the community.	For the Avon region to grow and prosper.	AROC is a voluntary regional organisation of Councils including the local governments of Goomalling, Northam, Toodyay, Victoria Plains and York. Established in 2009.
REGIONAL PRIORITY	ACTIONS		
Advocacy	Work collaboratively to advocate on issues and opportunities that impact our communities.		
Community	Identify strategies and partnerships to address a critical shortage of housing in the Avon region.		
	Enhance emergency management collaboration through alignment of procedures, practices, and a statement of intent to extend support to members if required.		
Economy	Advocate for changes to the native vegetation clearing permit system to address detrimental impacts on the delivery of road projects, including delayed timeframes and budgeted expenditure.		
Environment	Form a Regional Climate Alliance to progress action on climate change and enhance opportunities for funding at a regional level to support climate change initiatives.		
	Work collaboratively to implement C orella management strategies to reduce the negative impacts of eC orella activities on our communities.		
	Identify local and regional water priorities and seek funding to improve water access and sustainability.		
	Work collaboratively to manage waste more effectively.		
Shares Services & Regional Funding	Review the delivery of Local Government services and projects across the region to identify opportunities to share resources and attract and retain LG professionals.		
	Collaboratively apply for State and Federal funding.		

