



M: 0403 447 303  
Email: [mannadvisory@bigpond.com](mailto:mannadvisory@bigpond.com)

# GVROC Council Meeting

Friday 27th March 2026  
In person meeting and video  
hosted by Shire of Esperance  
8:30am – 1:00pm  
held at the at the  
Esperance Civic Centre (Council Place, Esperance).

## Minutes

Andrew Mann  
GVROC Executive Officer  
22 May 2026

Cr Laurene Bonza  
GVROC Chair  
22 May 2026

## CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	Attendance.....	4
3.2	GVROC and Agency Apologies .....	5
3.3	Guest Speakers and Presenters .....	5
3.4	WALGA Representatives .....	5
3.5	DLGIRS Representatives .....	5
3.6	GEDC Representatives .....	5
3.7	RDAGE Representatives .....	5
3.8	Observers .....	5
<b>4.</b>	<b>GUEST SPEAKERS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	Ali Kent MLA .....	6
<b>5.</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Telstra .....	6
5.2	Department of Fire and Emergency Service – Goldfields Esperance District Emergency Management Committee .....	6
5.3	Shire of Esperance .....	6
<b>6.</b>	<b>AGENCY REPORTS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
6.1	Goldfields Esperance Development Commission.....	7
6.2	Regional Development Australia Goldfields Esperance .....	7
<b>7.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF MEETINGS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
7.1	Minutes of the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (GVROC) meeting held 30 January 2026 .....	8
7.2	Action Sheet Report.....	8
7.3	Matters for Noting.....	8
7.4	Correspondence for Noting .....	9
7.5	GVROC CEOs Group Meetings.....	10
<b>8.</b>	<b>GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS FINANCE .....</b>	<b>11</b>
8.1	Financial Statement for March 2026.....	11
<b>9.</b>	<b>GVROC REGIONAL CLIMATE ALLIANCE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>13</b>
9.1	GVROC Regional Climate Alliance Program Update.....	13
9.2	Goldfields Esperance Water Security Group and Regional Drought Resilience Plan (RDRP) Update .....	15
<b>10.</b>	<b>GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS BUSINESS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
10.1	GVROC Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 2026-2028 .....	17
10.2	Update on the Rateability of Miscellaneous and Mining Leases – Sector Support Discussion .....	18
10.3	GVROC Shared Regional Event Equipment Pool - Update.....	21
10.4	GVROC Housing and Land Update .....	23
10.5	Fuel Security for the Goldfields Esperance Region .....	25
10.6	Addressing inappropriate use of parking bays by trucks and haulage companies ..	28
10.7	Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (ERHS).....	31
10.8	Request to Support ABS Presentation and Advocate for Service Population Recognition .....	33
10.9	ALGA NGA 2026 Shire of Dundas submitted motions .....	36
10.10	Electoral Reform – Compulsory and Voluntary Voting and Election Frequency .....	39
10.11	Draft Renewable Energy Planning Code .....	41
<b>11.</b>	<b>LATE ITEMS as notified, introduced by decision of the Meeting .....</b>	<b>46</b>
11.1	Resignation of Tracey Rathbone from Shire of Coolgardie and subsequently the GVROC and DEMC .....	46
11.2	WA Review in the Financial Sustainability of Racing in Western Australia in all three codes .....	47

11.3 Invitation for President of WALGA State Council to attend a future GVROC meeting 48

**12. FUTURE GVROC COUNCIL MEETINGS/FUNCTIONS ..... 49**

**13. CLOSURE OF MEETING ..... 49**

## GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (GVROC)

An in person and video conference meeting of the GVROC Council was held Friday 27 March 2026 commencing at 8:30 am at the Esperance Civic Centre (Council Place, Esperance).

# AGENDA

### 1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss business related to the activities of the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils.

### 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Code of Conduct, Councillors and CEOs must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they may have in a matter before the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors, CEOs and Deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

Nil.

### 3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

#### 3.1 Attendance

Cr Laurene Bonza	President, Shire of Dundas	(Chair)
Cr Sharon Warner	Councillor, Shire of Dundas	
Mr Peter Fitchat	CEO, Shire of Dundas	
Cr Paul Wilcox	President, Shire of Coolgardie	
Cr Anthony Ball	Councillor, Shire of Coolgardie	(via Zoom)
Ms Sabine Taylor	A/CEO, Shire of Coolgardie	
Cr Terrence Winner	Deputy Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder	(via Zoom)
Cr Wayne Johnson,	Councillor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder	(via Zoom)
Mr Mal Osborne	A/CEO, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder	(via Zoom)
Cr Ron Chambers	President, Shire of Esperance	(via Zoom) joined 10:58am
Cr Wes Graham	Councillor, Shire of Esperance	
Ms Felicity Baxter	A/CEO, Shire of Esperance	
Cr Patrick Hill	President, Shire of Laverton	
Cr Rob Wedge	Councillor, Shire of Laverton	
Cr Peter Craig	President, Shire of Leonora	
Mr Ty Matson	CEO, Shire of Leonora	(via Zoom)
Cr Paul Warner	President, Shire of Menzies	
Cr Jill Dwyer	Councillor, Shire of Menzies	
Mr Rob Stewart	A/CEO, Shire of Menzies	
Cr Tim Carmody	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna	
Cr Jim Quadrio	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna	
Mr Matt McIntyre	CEO, Shire of Wiluna	(via Zoom)
Mr David Mosel	CEO, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku	
Mr Andrew Mann	Executive Officer, GVROC	
Ms Niki Curtis	GVROC Regional Climate Alliance Coordinator	

### **3.2 GVROC and Agency Apologies**

#### **GVROC**

Cr Glenn Wilson	Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Cr Ron Chambers	President Shire of Esperance
Mr Shane Burge	CEO, Shire of Esperance
Ms Jackie Hawkins	A/CEO, Shire of Laverton
Cr Damian McLean	President, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku

#### **Agency**

Nicole Mathews	Executive Manager, Policy
----------------	---------------------------

### **3.3 Guest Speakers and Presenters**

#### Guest Speakers

<b>Ali Kent MLA</b>	Member for Kalgoorlie
---------------------	-----------------------

#### Presenters

<b>Eva Colic</b>	Telstra Regional Engagement Manager	(via Zoom)
------------------	-------------------------------------	------------

<b>Shelby Robinson</b>	District Emergency Management Advisor, DFES
------------------------	---

### **3.4 WALGA Representatives**

Nil

### **3.5 DLGIRS Representatives**

Nil

### **3.6 GEDC Representatives**

<b>Kris Starcevich</b>	CEO, GEDC
<b>Sophie Willsher</b>	Regional Development Officer (for Item 9.2)

### **3.7 RDAGE Representatives**

<b>Sharon Henderson</b>	Director, RDAGE	(via Zoom)
<b>Ross MacCulloch</b>	Chair	(via Zoom)

### **3.8 Observers**

Cr Leonie de Haas	Councillor, Shire of Esperance
-------------------	--------------------------------

## 4. GUEST SPEAKERS

### 4.1 Ali Kent MLA

Ali Kent MLA, Member for Kalgoorlie, provided an update on regional matters from the State Government perspective.

## 5. PRESENTATIONS

### 5.1 Telstra

Eva Colic, Regional Engagement Manager, presented to the GVROC on the following key topics:

- Mobile Network upgrades
- Co-investment programs
- Satellite to mobile
- Network resilience

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes of the meeting and Eva's is happy for anyone to reach out directly if they have questions or want to discuss further. Her contact details are as follows:

Eva Colic, Regional Engagement Manager WA, Telstra Business  
M: 0429 300 431  
E: [Eva.Colic@team.telstra.com](mailto:Eva.Colic@team.telstra.com)

### 5.2 Department of Fire and Emergency Service – Goldfields Esperance District Emergency Management Committee

Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisor, DFES presented on the role of the Goldfields Esperance District Emergency Management Committee and ways of utilising it to assist the GVROC LGAs with emergency management issues and process around bushfires and floods and mitigation requirements to better deal with these situations into the future as raised in discussion at the last GVROC meeting.

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes of the meeting and Shelby is happy for anyone to reach out directly if they have questions or want to discuss further. Her contact details are as follows:

**Shelby Robinson**  
District Emergency Management Advisor  
Wheatbelt & Goldfields-Esperance Regions  
79 Newcastle Rd, Northam WA 6401  
M: 0488 907 187 | E: [Shelby.robinson@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:Shelby.robinson@dfes.wa.gov.au)

### 5.3 Shire of Esperance

Felicity Baxter, Acting CEO will provide a presentation on current major projects within the Shire of Esperance.

A copy of the presentation is attached with the minutes of the meeting.

## **6. AGENCY REPORTS**

### **6.1 Goldfields Esperance Development Commission**

GEDC verbal update report by Kris Starcevich.

### **6.2 Regional Development Australia Goldfields Esperance**

RDAGE verbal update report by Sharon Henderson.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC note the Agency Reports as provided.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

**Seconded: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton**

---

**Carried**

GVROC Chair called motion to adjourn the meeting for morning tea break at 10:20am.

**Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**

**Seconded: Cr Rob Wedge, Shire of Laverton**

GVROC Chair called motion to resume the meeting at 10:45am.

**Moved: Cr Jill Dwyer, Shire of Menzies**

**Seconded: Cr Tim Carmody, Shire of Wiluna**



## 7.4 Correspondence for Noting

The following correspondence was sent and received since the last GVROC meeting and are all contained in **Attachment 5**

### Correspondence received:

1. Email received on 2 February 2026 from the Committee Secretary for the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport notifying acceptance of the GVROC submission to the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.
2. Letter received on 4 February 2026 from the Minister of Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth and Gascoyne in response to the GVROC letter regarding a request to strengthen oversight and accountability of candidate conduct during local government elections.
3. Letter received on 25 February 2026 from WALGA Central Country Zone (CCZ) Chair, Cr Des Hickey to the GVROC Chair regarding the CCZ position on the recent consultation on WALGA's Draft Climate Change Advocacy Position.
4. Email received on 27 February 2026 from Office of Auditor General in response to the GVROC letter sent to the Auditor General WA calling for the Office of Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the Disaster Recovery Funding arrangements in Western Australia.
5. Letter received on 10 March 2026 from the Minister for Local Government in response to the GVROC letter outlining its concerns regarding the Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025 sent on 26 November 2025.
6. Letter received on 12 March 2026 from Mia Carbon, Deputy Director General DPIRD in response to GVROC letter regarding concerns with the drafting of regulations to prescribe local governments, regional local governments and regional subsidiaries (local governments) as information sharing agencies under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*.
7. Emails received on 12 & 13 March 2026 from various Members of WA Parliament and the WA National Party in relation to the GVROC letter sent requesting urgent Cross-Party Action on the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licenses) Bill 2025* to protect the sustainability of regional Local Governments.
8. Email received on 16 March 2026 from the Office of the Hon Rita Saffioti MLA regarding GVROC letter sent requesting an update on fuel security for the Goldfields Region and WA, so that the local governments can keep its communities and residents informed.
9. Email received on 18 March 2026 from the Office of the Premier of Western Australia regarding GVROC letter sent requesting an update on fuel security for the Goldfields Region and WA, so that the local governments can keep its communities and residents informed.

### Correspondence sent:

1. GVROC submission sent on 2 February 2026 to the Federal Government House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.
2. Email sent on 9 February 2026 to Kirilee Warr MLA, Shane Love MLA, and Neil Thomson MLC with an extract from the GVROC Meeting Minutes on 30 January 2026 regarding the Rateability of Miscellaneous and Mining Leases - Sector Support Discussion.
3. GVROC letter sent on 24 February 2026 to Heather Brayford, Director General DPIRD, and Mia Carbon, Deputy Director General DPIRD in response to the advice that regulations are being drafted to prescribe local governments, regional local governments and regional subsidiaries established under the *Local Government Act 1995 (WA)* as an 'information sharing agency' for the purposes of section 184 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (the Act)*.
4. GVROC letter sent on 25 February 2026 to Caroline Spencer, Auditor General WA, calling for the Office of Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the Disaster Recovery Funding arrangements in Western Australia.
5. GVROC letter sent on 11 March 2026 to the Premier and Deputy Premier; Treasurer; and Minister for Transport requesting an update on fuel security for the Goldfields Region and WA, so that the local governments can keep its communities and residents informed.
6. GVROC letter sent on 12 March 2026 to all Members of WA Parliament requesting urgent Cross-Party Action on the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licenses) Bill 2025* to protect the sustainability of regional Local Governments.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the correspondence that was sent or received since the last GVROC meeting be noted.

**RESOLUTION:**                    **Moved: Cr Jill Dwyer, Shire of Menzies**  
   **Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

---

**Carried**

**7.5 GVROC CEOs Group Meetings**

The GVROC CEOs held a meeting on 6 March 2026, and the Minutes of that meeting are presented at **Attachment 6** for noting by the GVROC.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC CEOs Group Minutes from its meeting on 6 March 2026 be noted.

**RESOLUTION:**                    **Moved: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie**  
   **Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**

---

**Carried**

## 8. GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS FINANCE

### 8.1 Financial Statement for March 2026

**Reporting Officer:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** No interest to disclose

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** GVROC Financial Statements and accounts payable and receivable to 27 March 2026, Full Transaction Account history to 27 March 2026 and GVROC Bank Statement Snapshot, plus Account history full transaction to date for 2025/26 financial year, 2025/26 Budget update (**Attachment 7**).

**Background:**

Presenting the financial statement position and the accounts approved for payment for the period 1 July 2025 to 27 March 2026.

Also providing a picture of the 2025/26 Budget outlook as of 27 March 2026.

**Financial Statement:**

The Officer provides the following comment:

Since the last GVROC meeting for the period of 1 February 2026 to 27 March 2026 new transactions included in the financial statements are:

- Payments to Mann Advisory for the Executive Officer services and travel costs
- Payments to Niki Curtis for RCA Coordinator services and travel costs.
- Payments to XERO Accounting System – Monthly subscription for accounting software
- Payment to Up-to-Date Accounting for preparation of GVROC BAS Statement and Lodgement.
- Payment to DataAU for annual subscription to Data and modelling system for GVROC and all LGAs.
- Payment to REX Airlines for GVROC Executive Officer travel to attend meeting in Esperance.
- Interest earned on Commonwealth Saver account

**Officer Comment:**

The budget for 2025/26 is currently tracking according to plan.

The Shire of Dundas President and CEO as the lead GVROC LGA now have full financial authorisations for Xero Accounting software and the Commonwealth Bank GVROC accounts, with the Shire of Coolgardie being removed.

**Consultation:** GVROC Chair, GVROC CEO Chair

**Financial Implications:** Funds for the expenditure is included in the 2025/2026 Budget

**Strategic Implications:** GVROC Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Objective 3

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That GVROC:

1. Note that the Statement of Financial Position for the period 1 July 2025 to 27 March 2026 and the accounts approved for payment for the period 1 February 2026 to 27 March 2026 totalling \$39,515.46 and revenue received of \$0.57.
2. Endorse the actions taken by the GVROC Executive Officer to pay for GVROC expenses and receipt of GVROC Revenue.

3. Note the changes to the GVROC Bank Account Authorised Signatories have been completed with the Shire of Dundas President and CEO added, along with the GVROC Executive Officer.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

**Seconded: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie**

---

**Carried**

## 9. GVROC REGIONAL CLIMATE ALLIANCE PROGRAM

### 9.1 GVROC Regional Climate Alliance Program Update

**Reporting Officers:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer  
Niki Curtis, GVROC Regional Climate Alliance Coordinator

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** Nil

**Background and Officer Comments on each project are below:**

The GVROC Regional Climate Alliance (RCA) Working Group has not met since the last GVROC meeting on 30 January 2026.

Regarding the GVROC led RCA projects being managed by the RCA Coordinator, these are listed below in more detail.

**Urban Greening Program for the Goldfields Esperance Region.**

In December 2024, GVROC was notified that it has been successful in a \$573,000 grant from Lotterywest to plant over 30,000 native species across the GE region.

As part of this project, each Council has agreed to sign up to the Waterwise Council program with Water Corporation, and we are waiting on the final application documents from Water Corporation.

Lotterywest agreed for a variation to the contract for 2026 and 2027 and changes to the budget reflect that:

- less trees will be planted in 2026 and more in 2027; and
- there will be further online training provided for staff by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) in 2026; and
- Kim Eckert from the Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) will be engaged to visit some towns to better plan for landscaping and tree planting locations; and
- a working group will be established in 2026 with ground staff to better communicate timing of community planting days, etc.

Tree and shrub orders have been placed with the Esperance Native Nursery and Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group, and these orders may be extended once more planning has been undertaken.

A Request for Quote closed on January 30 for consultancy services to develop a landscaping masterplan for the Karlkurla Bushland Park at Kalgoorlie and Josh Byrne and Associates had their contract extended to undertake further work with the Shire of Wiluna this year.

A summary of both the payment and reporting details for the project are outlined in the table below.

Date	Description	Payment amount	Payment requirements
19/12/2024	<b>Payment 1</b>	<b>\$165,193</b>	<b>PAID</b>
30/11/2025	<b>Payment 2</b>	<b>\$342,293</b>	<b>PAID</b>
30/1/2026	<b>Report 1 due</b>	<b>Completed</b>	
30/01/2027	<b>Report 2 due</b>		Provide this through Portal
30/01/2028	<b>Payment 3 (Acquittal)</b>	\$65,910	Provide an update on progress against the Community Impact Planner and an Income and Expenditure statement that accounts for 75% of payment 2.
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$573,396 (ex GST)</b>	

**Officer Comment on Urban Greening Program:**

- Botanica Consulting has been awarded the contract to undertake work with the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder and the Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) to develop a landscaping Master Plan for Karkurla Bushlands. The Plan will prioritise planting local species to enhance shade, biodiversity, and cultural identity in the park, which is a key recreation attraction for the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder.
- Josh Byrne and Associates held a community planning session in Wiluna from 11-13 March 2026 for the next stage of the Wiluna Martu Bush Walk. TMPAC rangers will plant some trees and shrubs this year, with most work scheduled for 2027.
- Kim Eckert from KBULG has contacted those Shires that have expressed interest in her services to develop plans for planting programs in 2026 and 2027 (Coolgardie, Dundas, Leonora and Menzies) and will visit towns in the next few weeks.

**EV Charging Stations - Leonora and Menzies****Officer Comment on EV Charging Stations:**

EV Charging Systems are hoping to install the charging stations at Menzies and Leonora ASAP – we are just waiting on some electrical works to be done at Leonora.

**Community Water Supply Partnership Program (CWSP)**

The next round of the CWSP is open until 17 April 2026 to support communities with non-potable water solutions, improve emergency water access for livestock and firefighting, increase drought resilience, expand public water amenities, and assist regions with inadequate water supplies.

Funding priorities include creating or upgrading emergency water sources, maximizing community benefits, reducing reliance on treated water, and enhancing irrigation for public areas.

Grants up to \$100,000 per project are available (larger requests need approval) and must be used by June 2027. Local Governments can submit multiple applications. Applicants must contribute at least 30% of costs (in-kind contributions count), but co-funding from other government sources is not permitted.

**Strategic Implications:**

- Mitigating drought impacts and improving water security
- Sustainably managing the increased risk of bushfire threats
- Improving uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions
- Managing waste sustainably at a regional scale
- Reducing carbon emissions across the GE region to support our vision of a thriving, clean, green and economically resilient region

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC notes:

1. The Urban Greening project has engaged three consultants to plan for planting programs in 2026 and 2027 at various locations across the region.
2. The charging stations at Menzies and Leonora will be installed soon.
3. Another round of the Community Water Supply Partnerships Program has opened and closes on 17 April 2026.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

**Seconded: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton**

---

**Carried**

## 9.2 Goldfields Esperance Water Security Group and Regional Drought Resilience Plan (RDRP) Update

**Reporting Officers** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer  
Sophie Willsher, GEDC Regional Development Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil.

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** Nil

### **Background:**

The [Goldfields-Esperance Regional Drought Resilience Plan \(RDRP\)](#) provides a foundation to identify, inform and guide actions to achieve water security and drought resilience across the region.

Jointly funded by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the Federal government's \$5 billion Future Drought Fund (FDF), this RDRP builds on the region's aspiration to achieve water security through a shared vision.

The RDRP should be read in conjunction with the [Drought Vulnerability Assessment \(DVA\)](#) for the region, which provides an evidence base that underpins the priorities and actions identified.

The RDRP was approved and officially released on 12 November 2025.

### **Officer Comment:**

The GEWSG held its last meeting on the 24 March 2026, and the minutes will be distributed with the minutes of this meeting as they are not yet available.

Key items of note from the GEDC in relation to the GEWSG and RDRP include:

- The GEDC is running a procurement process for the [Water Demands Study](#) and are currently in the process of evaluating tender responses. GEDC aim to have the contract awarded soon and expect to engage with LGAs in April 2026.
- The GEDC has finalised the scope for the [Wastewater Treatment Policy Review piece](#) and is looking to progress an RFQ process for this project during March/April.
- Program level conversations are underway for [phase two of the RDRP program](#) which the GEDC hope to have more information on soon.
- Kris Starcevich and Sophie Willsher from the GEDC plus Mayor Glenn Wilson from the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder attended the [Australian Water Associations Connected by Water Conference](#) 25-26 February 2026 in Perth, where a dedicated panel session was held on Water Supply for Industry in the Goldfields. You can find out more about the panel and conference [here](#). There were a number of sessions and speakers that are relevant to the priorities of the RDRP.
- [In-Region Resilience Workshops March](#): The Southwest WA Drought Hub is working with the University of Canberra on a WA pilot that will gather "indicators of community resilience" during difficult times including drought. The GEDC are participating on the Steering Committee for the pilot, along with other RDC's, local governments and industry/community reps from across WA which included workshops this week in our region on 25 March (Esperance) and 26 March (Kalgoorlie) 2026. Project details below:

The *Early Insights for More Resilient Communities (Early Insights)* project aims to improve availability of data so rural, regional and remote communities can track how their resilience is changing over time and be able to see early signs of change. This is being done through an online dashboard of resilience indicators that provide data at local government scale, and which can be updated annually to provide an ongoing picture of how resilience is changing as communities experience different events – whether drought, floods, bushfire, storms, pandemic or economic downturn.

The [Early Insights for More Resilient Communities](#) project is seeking input from individuals and organisations across regional Western Australia. The project aims to gather data that will help identify early warning signs of stress during catastrophic events. Insights will ensure the national dashboard developed to track these signs is relevant and meaningful for our region and community.

Led by University of Canberra through the Southern NSW Innovation Hub, the project aims to improve access to data, so communities can monitor how their resilience changes over time and detect early signs of emerging challenges. This will be delivered through an online dashboard of resilience indicators, providing data at the local government level and reviewed annually.

The outcomes of the project also support priority actions of the Goldfields-Esperance Regional Drought Resilience Plan, under the theme; Informed, Empowered Communities.

The GEDC will provide an update from these workshops at our meeting.

<b>Consultation:</b>	GEDC, GEWSG
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Implications:</b>	Alignment with Regional Climate Alliance strategies

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the update from the GEWSG and the RDRP Implementation Plan for 2025-2027.

**RESOLUTION:**                    **Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton**  
   **Seconded: Cr Tim Carmody, Shire of Wiluna**

---

**Carried**

<b>10. GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS BUSINESS</b>
--

**10.1 GVROC Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 2026-2028**

**Reporting Officers:** Andrew Mann, Executive Officer GVROC

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** Draft GVROC MOU 2026-2028 (**Attachment 8**)

**Background:**

GVROC is a regional grouping of local governments that operates by way of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The current MOU was in place for the period 2023 to 2025 and has now expired.

As a result, and in discussion with the GVROC at its 30 January 2026 meeting a request was made for the GVROC Executive Officer to draft a new MOU for consideration by the GVROC for the period 2026 to 2028 as per the resolution below.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the need to update the current GVROC MOU.
2. Request the GVROC Executive Officer to prepare a new draft MOU based on the current version for consideration by the GVROC at its meeting on 27 March 2026.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**  
**Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**

---

**Carried**

**Officers Comment:**

As per the request a GVROC MOU 2026-2028 has been drafted by the GVROC Executive Officer (see **Attachment 8**), which was presented to the GVROC CEOs Group at its meeting on 6 March 2026 and endorsed for presenting and consideration by the GVROC at this meeting.

It is recommended that the GVROC endorses the new MOU and request it be signed under seal by each LGA.

**Consultation:** GVROC CEOs Group

**Financial Implications:** N/A

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note and endorse the new draft MOU 2026-2028.
2. Request it be signed under seal by each LGA and a copy of their executed section be returned to the GVROC Executive Officer when completed.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**  
**Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

---

**Carried**

## **10.2 Update on the Rateability of Miscellaneous and Mining Leases – Sector Support Discussion**

**Reporting Officer:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** [Local Government Amendment \(Rating of Certain Mining Licences\) Bill 2025](#)  
[Legislative Council Supplementary Notice Paper 42, Issue 3 proposed amendments to Bill.](#)  
Letter from the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA dated 10 March 2026 (see **Attachment 5 – GVROC Correspondence received page 5**)  
GVROC letter dated 11 March 2026 (see **Attachment 5 – GVROC Correspondence sent page 29**)

### **Background:**

On 8 July 2025, the Supreme Court of Western Australia determined that occupied Miscellaneous Licences are rateable under section 6.26(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Despite this judicial clarification, on 1 August 2025, the Minister for Local Government announced the State Government's intention to introduce legislation to make Miscellaneous Licences non-rateable.

This proposal would override the Supreme Court's ruling and remove an established, lawful revenue stream available to Local Governments. The impact would fall most heavily on regional and remote Band 3 and 4 Local Governments, which service large mining operations but receive limited compensation for infrastructure wear, environmental health oversight, or community service impacts caused by mining activity.

The Shire of Mount Magnet CEO, Tralee Cable, submitted a motion to the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting opposing any amendment to the *Local Government Act 1995* that would restrict Local Governments' ability to rate Miscellaneous Licences.

The Shire of Mount Magnet also advise that it is worth noting that a Miscellaneous License was NOT exempt from rates after the 1978 Mining Act was introduced, as has been alleged by AMEC. A Miscellaneous License was in fact clearly rateable under the 1960 Local Government Act.

In addition, in 1998, post the 1995 Act implementation, an amendment was made to the Mining Act that modified the term of a Miscellaneous License from 5 years, plus two further 5-year terms to 21 years plus two further 21-year terms.

Clearly the intention was to facilitate long term investment and infrastructure requirements.

The Supreme Court judgment affirms Local Governments' role in regulating and servicing land subject to Miscellaneous Licences and acknowledges that such licences are used for permanent mining infrastructure, including:

- Roads and haulage corridors
- Accommodation camps
- Power, pipeline, and communication facilities
- Airstrips and storage depots

These activities have a direct and ongoing impact on local infrastructure and services. Removing the capacity to levy rates on such tenements would:

- Create further financial inequity between mining companies and local ratepayers;
- Increase cost-shifting from State to Local Governments; and
- Undermine the principle of user-pays in regional service delivery.

A coordinated LGA sector response is required to reinforce Mount Magnet's advocacy and demonstrate to the Minister and Parliament that the Local Government sector is united in seeking consultation and fairness.

On 23 October 2025, the State Government as highlighted by the Minister for Local Government on 1 August 2025 introduced the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025* to Parliament (see attached link).

The Bill aims to give effect to the decision to legislate changes to the rating of miscellaneous licenses on Crown Land, undermining the decision of the Supreme Court of Western Australia.

WALGA has advised it has serious concerns about the proposed legislation, which, if passed, will:

- Prohibit Local Governments from rating Crown land that is the subject of a Miscellaneous Licence or a Small Prospecting Licence held under the *Mining Act 1978*. A Small Prospecting Licence is defined as a prospecting licence held in respect to land which does not exceed 10 ha. Collectively these are referred to as 'licence land'.
- Extinguish all rates imposed on licence land dating back to the 2017/2018 financial year.
- Compel Local Governments to refund any rates collected for licence land during this time period, including any additional charges, interest or costs of proceedings to recover rates.
- Require Local Governments to pay any refunds within 28 days from the day after the Amendment Act receives Royal Assent.
- Allow a ratepayer to recover the paid amount in the courts as a debt due if the Local Government does not meet the 14-day time period.

WALGA considers the proposed amendments to be unnecessarily punitive and disproportionate in their impact on any Local Government that has lawfully levied rates on occupied land under miscellaneous licences.

WALGA and the GVROC have written to the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne to express their strong concerns and to urge the Cook Government to reconsider both the scope and timing of the proposed changes.

WALGA and GVROC maintains that Local Governments should retain the right to rate miscellaneous licences, as determined by the Supreme Court.

However, if the Government proceeds with the exemption, WALGA and the GVROC are advocating for it to take effect from the 2026/27 financial year, with a prohibition on reassessing rate records for miscellaneous or prospecting licences. This would prevent future levying while allowing communities to retain rates already collected lawfully.

**Officer Comment:**

Since the GVROC meeting on 30 January 2026, the GVROC received a response back from the Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beazley MLA on 10 March 2026 (see **Attachment 5** – GVROC Correspondence received) in relation to the GVROC letter back in November 2025.

The Minister reaffirmed the State Government's position on this matter and to proceed with the Bill in its current form through to the Legislative Council for debate. In her response the Minister highlighted part of her second reading speech of the Bill as follows:

*"The Bill clarifies that mining tenements, permits, drilling reservations, leases or other types of licences subject to the imposition of rates will continue to be rateable, including where they coexist with a miscellaneous licence or small prospecting licence on the same parcel of Crown land."*

Based on the response from the Minister, and noting that the Bill was close to being tabled for discussion and debate in the Legislative Council, the GVROC Chair then requested a GVROC out of session endorsement of a GVROC letter to all members of the WA Parliament (see **Attachment 5** – GVROC Correspondence sent), which was carried by voting of 7 for, 1 against (Menzies), 1 not voting (Ngaanyatjarraku). Based on the majority the letter was then sent on 12 March 2026.

As a result of the letter, the GVROC Chair, GVROC Executive Officer and GVROC delegates (Mayor Glenn Wilson, Cr Peter Craig, Cr Patrick Hill) met with the National Party on 17 March 2026 to discuss the Bill and proposed Amendments that the National and Liberal Parties were going to table as part of the Bills second reading in the Legislative Council. This meeting was productive and allowed the GVROC to assist with further information that both parties could use in their speeches on this matter.

The National Party with the support of the Liberal Party are proposing an Amendment that will allow the local governments up to 90 days instead of the 28 days for repayment of rates, plus allowing those affected LGAs that need to repay under the bill to apply to the Minister to be reimbursed those amounts from the Royalties Regions Fund (see [Legislative Council Supplementary Notice Paper 42, Issue 3 proposed amendments to Bill.](#)).

Additionally, the Greens also proposed an Amendment contained in the above link that recommends that affected LGAs are not required to repay the amount paid already rated and received and that these amounts paid are not recoverable from local government by any person.

The Bill was introduced for its second reading in the Legislative Council on 18 March 2026. Opening speeches were provided by the National Party via Hon Rob Horstman MLC who introduced the proposed amendments to the Bill and then followed by the Liberals Hon Neil Thomson MLC but was adjourned before a decision was made.

Due to other priorities and Bills listed for discussion on 19 March 2026, the Hon Rob Horstman MLC has advised it is unlikely that the Local Government Amendment Bill will not be debated again until May 2026.

This delay also allows more time to provide further details to the opposition members in the Legislative Council, before the debate resumes.

<b>Consultation:</b>	GVROC CEOs Group/WALGA/Shire of Mt Magnet
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	Loss of rateability would remove a potential or existing source of revenue from mining infrastructure occupying Crown land within Local Government districts.
<b>Strategic Implications:</b>	The issue directly relates to the financial sustainability of local governments and regional fairness, particularly for remote, resource-based communities.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	Supports WALGA's advocacy for financial autonomy and procedural fairness for Local Governments.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the update on the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025* and the outcome of the debate of its second reading in the Legislative Council.
2. Support the current Amendments being proposed by the National and Liberal Parties and Greens and continue to work with all opposition parties in Parliament to ensure and equitable outcome is achieved for Local Governments going forward.

**RESOLUTION:**                    **Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton**  
   **Seconded: Cr Rob Wedge, Shire of Laverton**

---

**Carried**

### **10.3 GVROC Shared Regional Event Equipment Pool - Update**

**Reporting Officers:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** Nil

**Background:**

Back in 2012, the GVROC through funding received by each GVROC LGA under the then Country Local Government Fund, entered a joint agreement to acquire event equipment (crowd control barriers and fences, BBQ Trailer and ablution facilities (16 pan toilet block)) that could be hired by community groups and also used by LGAs in the GVROC when holding regional events. The City of Kalgoorlie took on the responsibility of storing and managing the hiring of these assets on behalf of the GVROC.

The City of Kalgoorlie Boulder (CoKB) have advised that the current ablution block asset is now at the end of life and the GVROC has been working with the City to look at replacement of the asset.

At the GVROC meeting held on 31 January 2025 the GVROC resolved the following:

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Notes the quotations received by the CoKB for a new replacement 16 pan Toilet Facilities costed at \$91,700 exc GST and a new 6-cubicle unisex shower block costed at approx. \$83,000 exc GST.
2. Request the GVROC Executive Officer and CoKB investigate possible grant funding towards purchasing these new facilities and the costs for a disabled toilet trailer.
3. Subject to the advice being received regarding possible grant funding options, will make a decision on whether to proceed with a funding allocation towards this within its current budget.
4. If a replacement is sourced, the GVROC Executive Officer to work with the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder to arrange the sale of the existing toilet block, with any surplus funds returned back to the GVROC, less selling costs involved.

**RESOLUTION:** **Moved: Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder**  
**Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

**Carried**

Following the resolution, the GVROC Executive Officer in consultation with the CoKB submitted an application to Lotterywest on 25 June 2025 based on the project proposal for the GVROC Shared Community Potable Event Equipment Replacement. The grant requested was to be for the new equipment (6-cubicle unisex shower block and a universally accessible mobile toilet) estimated at \$104,000 and not the replacement of the existing 16 pan Toilet Facilities costed at \$92,000, which the GVROC would fund as its contribution to the overall replacement project.

**Officer Comment:**

The City has advised that it has now included a CAPEX budget for the procurement of all items, and it is currently planning to go for quotations for procurement of all items post 1 July 2026, noting that Lotterywest requires the funding to be acquitted by 30 August 2026.

The City will keep the GVROC updated on the procurement process as it progresses.

**Consultation:** GVROC Chair  
CoKB

**Financial Implications:** up to \$128,550 contribution

**Strategic Implications:** Liveability, social and community wellbeing.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC notes the update from the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder and the planned procurement process to meet the Lotterywest Grant approval and schedule requirements

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie**

**Seconded: Cr Tim Carmody, Shire of Wiluna**

---

**Carried**

## 10.4 GVROC Housing and Land Update

**Reporting Officers:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** Nil

**Background:**

In March 2023, the GVROC finalised a [GVROC LGA Housing and Land Audit and Action Plan](#). This followed a [GVROC Housing Strategy](#) which was completed in April 2022.

Since then, the GVROC has continued to advocate and support progress towards housing and land opportunities in the region.

**Officer Comment:**

Since the last GVROC meeting on 30 January 2026 the following related regional housing announcements have been made by the State Government through the Minister for Housing and Works:

- [Partnership delivers 36 homes in Albany through \\$21.8m project](#)
- [Stamp duty concessions to give more choice for home buyers](#)
- [Pilbara land release to help Western Australians into a home](#)
- [Pilbara land release to help Western Australians into a home](#)
- [Land tax exemption to help more Western Australians have a home](#)
- [Homes refurbished under Remote Communities Fund](#)
- [Submissions open to deliver more social and affordable housing](#)
- [Expressions of interest open to boost housing supply in Karratha](#)
- [Successful Pilbara Aboriginal housing support program extended](#)

Of these announcements, two for noting for the Goldfields Esperance region are the homes refurbished under Remote Communities Fund, which included \$4 million investment to refurbish 13 homes in the Goldfields-Esperance community of Bondini, and the second one is the Cook Government Calls for Submissions inviting builders, developers, and community housing providers (CHPs) to further boost the delivery of new social and affordable housing across Western Australia. This may open opportunities for the region if builders, developers or CHPs can be identified for the region.

Also since the last GVROC meeting the GVROC Executive Officer has met with the Department of Housing and Works Regional Housing Director – South, Damian Cunnane on 11 February 2026 to discuss obtaining an update for each Goldfields Esperance LGAs on the current status of existing social and GROH stock for each LGA area, its plans for repairs, maintenance or upgrade of this existing stock, and any future plans for new construction of social housing or GROH within the region.

Key issues raised at the meeting included:

- Existing damaged housing stock left vacant and boarded up in several towns causing antisocial behaviour. It was also highlighted how these damaged houses distract from the look of the towns and in attracting required key workers to the towns.
- Cost of housing new builds/repairs is still greater than actual valuations of the properties, providing an imbalance of the market resulting in market failure, which is when the State Government should be stepping in to address the issues and not pushing it back to LGAs and the local communities.

Several phone calls have been had since then, but the GVROC Executive Officer is still waiting for detailed updates for each LGA. Damian Cunnane has advised though that he will look to join the next GVROC meeting in May in Wiluna to discuss with the LGAs the current issues.

Damian has also advised that he has had recent direct meetings with the Shire of Leonora and the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder to discuss some of their housing issues and is keen to meet more of the LGAs.

**Consultation:** GVROC CEOs Group

**Financial Implications:** TBD

**Strategic Implications:** Improved Liveability, social and community wellbeing.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the update on housing and land.
2. Note that the Department of Housing and Works, Regional Housing Director – South, Damian Cunnane, has agreed to join the next GVROC meeting to be held on 22 May 2026 in Wiluna to further discuss the housing issues with the GVROC and its LGAs.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton**

**Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**

---

**Carried**

## 10.5 Fuel Security for the Goldfields Esperance Region

<b>Reporting Officers:</b>	Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer
<b>Disclosure of Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Date:</b>	March 2026
<b>Attachments:</b>	Letter to Premier and Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Transport requesting update on fuel security for the region (See <b>Attachment 5 Correspondence Sent page 26</b> )

### **Relevant State Government Media Statements on this matter**

[Cook Government to convene Fuel Security Roundtable](#)  
[Government, industry take steps to address fuel security concerns](#)  
[Road trains to bring more diesel, petrol and fertiliser to the regions](#)  
[Cook Government unveils new measures to boost fuel response](#)

### **Relevant Federal Government Media Statements on this matter**

[Joint media release: Fair go for consumers at the bowser | Ministers](#)  
[Securing more fuel for Australia's regions | Ministers](#)  
[More fuel for regional Australians | Ministers](#)  
[Meeting of National Cabinet on fuel security and supply chain resilience in response to Middle East conflict | Prime Minister of Australia](#)  
[Appointment of Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator | Prime Minister of Australia](#)

### **Background:**

Recent international developments involving Iran and the Strait of Hormuz have generated significant uncertainty across global energy markets. While Australia does not import fuel directly from Iran, our nation remains heavily reliant on imported refined fuel products, many of which originate from refineries that depend on crude oil transported through the Middle East.

For regional Western Australia and the remote Aboriginal communities, fuel security is not simply a matter of price volatility but one of economic continuity and community resilience.

The GVROC region covers a vast portion of Western Australia, supporting a wide range of critical industries and communities, including:

- Pastoral operations across extensive leasehold lands;
- Agricultural industry in the Esperance Region;
- Mining and resource industry projects that underpin the regional and state economy;
- Tourism industry and businesses operating along the Eyre Highway and throughout the inland Goldfields;
- Remote Aboriginal Communities particularly across the Ngaanyatjaraku Lands; and
- Local small businesses and service providers supporting remote communities.

In addition, the Eyre Highway corridor across the Nullarbor is a nationally significant freight route connecting Western Australia with the eastern states. Within the Shire of Dundas alone, there are six major truck stops between Eucla and Norseman, and many more across our region from Wiluna to Esperance, which serve as critical refuelling points for interstate freight, transport operators, emergency services, tourism, and regional supply chains.

Given the strategic importance of these corridors and industries, GVROC sought, via an urgent agreed out of session endorsed letter (see **Attachment 5 Correspondence Sent page 26**) to the Premier and Deputy Premier; Treasurer and Minister for Transport on 11 March 2026, an update from the State Government on the current fuel security to the region.

Specifically, the letter sought advice on:

1. The current Commonwealth and State Government assessment of fuel supply security for Western Australia.

2. Any contingency planning for regional and remote communities should consider international fuel supply chains experiencing disruption.
3. What measures are being considered to ensure the continuity of diesel supply for freight, mining, agriculture and emergency services across regional Western Australia.
4. Any specific strategies to maintain supply along critical freight corridors, such as the Eyre Highway across the Nullarbor.

In relation to this matter, the GVROC also noted the State Government's announcement on the 10 March 2026 to convene a "Fuel Security Roundtable" on 11 March 2026.

**Officer Comment:**

Regarding the GVROC letter sent on this matter the Premier and the Deputy Premier; Treasurer and Minister for Transport have referred the matter over to the Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Energy to respond.

The fuel situation in the region and across regional and remote Australia is evolving on daily basis based on the events happening in the Iran conflict with Israel and the USA.

In the Goldfields Esperance region there have been issues felt with some junior mining companies pulling back operations and advising FI-FO workers to not come to work due to not having enough fuel supplies to maintain operations and many of the agricultural areas around Esperance not having enough diesel to meet the current window for seeding for next cropping season with only a limited time window open for this seeding period to makes crops viable. Both examples will have significant economic impacts for the region.

As another example, Eagle Fuel who operate in the regions has been in contact with both state and federal Ministers. They have been allocated only 25% of their March 2025 usage. So, in short, 75% of their customers are going to run out or there is going to be a reduction of 75% of what work can be done. There are many businesses that can operate at 25% and this may mean shutdowns or closures of businesses until fuel is more readily available. As mentioned above there are already transport companies parking up trucks, miners/drillers/exploration companies reducing/stopping operations.

Cr Tim Carmody at the Shire of Wiluna advised that he has been in contact with four fuel entities, Oil Tec, EFL/WFG, RTA and Eagle, they are all saying the same thing, they have no clear view of a plan, and a strong indication that they are only going to get greatly reduced amounts of what they took/sold last year this time.

Following the State Government Fuel Security roundtable, government and industry have agreed to the following actions to address the situation:

1. the State Government will investigate prioritising fuel and fertiliser imports through WA's ports;
2. fuel providers will respond to the needs of regional Western Australians with timely restocking;
3. industry will explore the use of higher efficiency vehicles or road trains to support the delivery of fuel to the regions;
4. fuel retailers will take immediate measures to address excessive stockpiling;
5. the State Government will convene an Industry Operational Group, which will meet weekly to manage specific domestic supply chain issues as they arise;
6. the State Government will continue working closely with industry to raise WA's priorities with the Federal Government; and
7. industry and government will coordinate on public messaging to reassure Western Australians that supply is continuing to arrive in WA.

From the 16 March 2026 the State Government has authorised, 27.5m and 36.5m road trains to be permitted to transport up to an additional 10 tonnes per load if they are carrying petrol, diesel and/or fertiliser to certain priority regions. It has been suggested by Cr Tim Carmody that triple-trailer operation be permitted on all products in the regions until the situation changes as this could greatly reduce the fuel burn per ton and provide efficiencies.

Since the conflict commenced two weeks ago the Federal Government has taken action to:

- Release up to 20 per cent of our diesel and fuel reserves to help address regional shortages.
- Temporarily amend national fuel standards to keep more Australian-made fuels onshore
- Crack down on petrol company price gouging.

On the 19 March 2026 the Federal and State Governments also announced the appointments of a Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator and a Fuel Security State Controller plus State management Team which will provide points of contact for continued advocacy on the situation happening in the Goldfields Esperance region.

The Federal Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Leading a new Fuel Supply Taskforce that will be established in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Driving coordination between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories on fuel security and supply chain resilience.
- Providing consistent, coordinated updates to the Commonwealth and States and Territories on our fuel supply outlook as well as our domestic fuel distribution.
- Supporting State and Territory governments to get fuels to their regions where they are in demand, and act as a single convening point for fuel supply and forward planning.

The appointment of a Fuel Security State Controller and establishment of a State Management Team will also facilitate coordination across both State Government agencies and with the Commonwealth Government, in the delivery of WA's fuel security response and its seven-point plan. Western Australia currently sits at 'level one' of its Hazard Management Plan for energy disruption, which calls for close collaboration between industry and government.

It is recommended that the GVROC continue to closely monitor the situation in the region and advocate back to the Federal Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator and a Fuel Security State Controller for fuel supply to be delivered to the Goldfields Esperance region at 100% of the levels required based on previous usage levels to ensure that industry (mining, agriculture, transport etc) can continue to operate at normal capacities so as not to negatively impact the economy.

**Consultation:** GVROC

**Financial Implications:** N/A

**Strategic Implications:** Improved Liveability, social and community wellbeing.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the current situation and actions taken to date both at the Federal and State Government levels regarding ensuring fuel security for the region.
2. Continue to advocate to both the Federal Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator and a Fuel Security State Controller for fuel supply to be delivered to the Goldfields Esperance region at 100% of the levels required based on previous usage levels to ensure that industry (mining, agriculture, transport etc) can continue to operate at normal capacities so as not to negatively impact the economy.

**RESOLUTION:** **Moved: Cr Tim Carmody, Shire of Wiluna**  
**Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

---

**Carried**

## 10.6 Addressing inappropriate use of parking bays by trucks and haulage companies

**Reporting Officers:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:**

1. [DWER investigating illegal truck dumping concerns in Kalgoorlie-Boulder | Kalgoorlie Miner](#) - 9/2/2026
2. [Trucking industry calls out misuse of roadside parking bays - ABC News](#) - 10/2/2026
3. [Racism targeting migrant truck drivers rampant amid regulatory gaps - ABC News](#) - 14/1/2026
4. [WA transport bodies call for tougher truck licensing model - ABC News](#) - 2/3/2026

### **Background:**

Increases in truck haulage traffic across the GVROC region and a resulting influx of companies without a local base of operations to complete servicing and park equipment has resulted in a noticeable deterioration of the cleanliness and general upkeep of roadside parking bays and LG-owned assets such as truck rest areas.

Outside of enforcement of local laws (often with minimal fines) and patrols by rangers, LGs are limited in what actions can be taken to reduce such undesirable activity in particular the federal and state road corridors. Main Roads WA has made it clear in the attached media commentary that they do not have enforcement powers over their rest bays and hence cannot issue infringements for any activities that might take place in them. It is not clear what responsibility or powers police have over this matter, however if no specific laws are being broken then their ability to act as a deterrent is also diminished.

DWER has legislative responsibility to follow up reports of environmental damage and illegal dumping of rubbish and issue infringements as needed, however once such activities have occurred it is often challenging identify, locate and prosecute individuals and companies responsible.

### Mitigating issues

- Regional/State unpreparedness to mitigate the impact of expansive haulage campaigns re mining boom,
- Local asset deterioration due to misuse of community vacant spaces,
- Local rest stops, and those on State/Federal Highways cluttered by unhitched/abandoned haulage vehicles,
- Increasing road hazard during wet weather events – haulage debris/mud,
- Absence of signage and road user warning alerts due to traffic movements entering/exiting rest stops creating high risk hazards,
- Increasing evidence of inappropriate ablution practices,
- Absence of any meaningful investigation, nor consultation with LGs/local industry, and current perpetrators,
- Questionable liability associated with the facilitation of service provision and business operations to maintain heavy haulage campaigns in rest stop facilities.
- Absence of resources to mitigate “move on” notices,
- Industry disregard for accountability/assisting with solution.

This issue is complex as it crosses multiple areas of responsibility and a workable long-term solution requires multiple levels of government to work together on developing a solution.

Strategies to manage the issue could include:

1. LGs taking steps to strengthen local laws related to parking infringements and increase the fines payable by offenders (perhaps differentiating between fines for individuals and fines for corporations / businesses). This approach will require expenditure from LGs and a lengthy process to revise laws.
2. LGs revising processes related to the granting of haulage permits when using LG roads for their operations (e.g. when mining companies engage contractors to deliver raw product to a local mill). This could involve additional questions being asked during the application process for such permits; such as requiring companies to disclose the business details of their subcontractors, asking questions about whether these companies have a local footprint, and charging differential haulage rates based on whether a contractor's operations are likely to have a greater impact on local infrastructure as a result of not having a local base of operation or a place to park their equipment.
3. LGs / WA State Government investigating the availability of industrial land that is either underutilised or unavailable for use by the haulage industry. One example in the Shire of Coolgardie would be the Mungari Strategic Industrial Area (SIA) that is currently privately owned by DevelopmentWA but has not seen any meaningful development in decades.
4. Development of facilities by LGs / WA State Government outside of town sites that are set up specifically for the purpose of truck maintenance activities with appropriately bunded areas, environmental controls in place and basic services available (e.g. power, water, personal amenities, hydrocarbon waste disposal). These facilities could be operated on a "fee for service" model as a cost recovery or profit generation exercise as appropriate.

#### Suggested actions for consideration

- Potential to unlock more industrial land availability in the GVROC region/state (which in many LGs is limited by virtue of surrounding land uses), and whether existing land zoned for this purpose is being used effectively.
- Greater accountability/responsibility of Industry/business to provide land for contractual haulage vehicles to maintain vehicles and provide accommodation,
- Review state policy/legislation to support/implement necessary changes to alleviate, mitigate and prosecute offending haulage activity. With attention to supporting LGs with lawful actions to prosecute local issues and fund required upgrade of monitoring equipment to do so.
- Activate a statewide Road Wise campaign to educate road users of the dangers present with the significant increase of haulage vehicles within the regions and across the state.

#### Recent actions taken within the Shire of Coolgardie:

- Increased ranger patrols and visibility around the truck stop in Coolgardie to encourage compliance with signage. This includes marking wheels of vehicles parked, and trailers left unhooked longer than the signed stopping limit (24 hours). This is currently a legal grey area in terms of enforcement and the ability to issue fines due to limitations present in the Shire of Coolgardie Parking Local Laws (2019)
- Engagement with other agencies such as the WA Police to conduct similar "visibility" patrols as a means to discourage certain activities; although the WA Police also have limited enforcement powers in this area as no state laws are being broken in most cases
- Conversations between President and WA Local Member regarding longer term "strategic" solutions that could be advanced, such as reactivating underutilised industrial zones allocated for specific industries by opening up other usage options (e.g. Mungari SIA).
- Community BBQ and discussion forum held at the Coolgardie truck stop on 26/2/2026 to listen to community and stakeholder concerns. Attended by most Councillors, CEO, Works Supervisor, representatives from WA Police, Main Roads & Transport Inspectors. Shire residents and local trucking companies also participated and voiced some of their concerns. Several avenues being explored and connections between various agencies and stakeholders were established as a means to enable conversations to continue.

#### Officers Comment:

Support is being sought from GVROC members around the need to address the aforementioned issues and agree on an advocacy platform.

**Consultation:** Ali Kent MLA – Member for Kalgoorlie  
GVROC Chair and Executive Officer  
Local trucking companies

**Financial Implications:** Nil

**Strategic Implications:** Nil

**Voting Requirement:** Simple majority

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That GVROC:

1. Request the CEO working group to investigate the capacity of the region to develop a case study on the actions to date, proposed local improvements/financial implications, and impacts of inappropriate use of parking bays by haulage vehicles, and haulage companies in the Goldfields Esperance Region.
2. Write to Ali Kent – Member for Kalgoorlie – requesting that the imminent concerns of the GVROC be taken to the state parliament outlining the above advocacy position.
3. Engage with WALGA to seek advice on the potential of support through advocacy, from State Council and member regions throughout Western Australia.
4. Engage
  - Hon Rita Saffioti MLA – Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Transport; Sport and Recreation,
  - Hon Steven Dawson - Minister for Regional Development,
  - Hon David Michael – Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Finance; Electoral Affairs: Goldfields Esperance,
  - Hon John Carey MLA – Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure,
  - Alistair Jones – Director General, Department of Water and Environmental Regulations,
  - Doug Morgan – Main Roads, Acting Managing Director,Outlining the GVROC imminent concerns and advocacy position above, inviting them to participate in solution focused discussions and outcomes.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Rob Wedge, Shire of Laverton**

**Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

---

**Carried**

## 10.7 **Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (ERHS)**

**Reporting Officer:** Peter Fitchat, Shire of Dundas CEO

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** 18 March 2026

**Attachments:** Emergency Air Assets for Goldfields Esperance (**Attachment 9**)  
Shire of Dundas report (**Attachment 10**)

**Background:**

The Goldfields–Esperance region, represented by GVROC, currently has no dedicated Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (ERHS) base, despite covering a vast and high-risk geographic area including major transport corridors, mining operations, pastoral leases, and tourism routes.

The attached DFES ERHS briefing (that the GVROC received back in 2021 – see **Attachment 9**) highlights that:

- Western Australia currently has only two helicopter bases (Perth and Bunbury) servicing a landmass of over 2.5 million km<sup>2</sup>
- Helicopter coverage across WA is less than 5%, significantly below other Australian states (65–100%)
- The primary use of ERHS is road trauma response (approx. 70%), which is highly relevant to regional areas such as the Goldfields–Esperance
- Helicopter response can improve patient survivability by up to 49%

The successful establishment of the Bunbury ERHS base (via Royalties for Regions funding) demonstrates that regional helicopter bases are viable, heavily utilised, and deliver strong community outcomes.

Given:

- Increasing freight, mining and tourism activity across the region
- Long distances to definitive medical care
- High road trauma and incident risk across highways such as the Eyre Highway and Coolgardie–Esperance Highway
- The absence of rapid-response aeromedical capability

There is a clear and evidence-based case for the establishment of a permanent ERHS helicopter based in the Goldfields–Esperance region (Kalgoorlie / Esperance) (see **Attachment 10**).

**Officer Comment:**

The Shire of Dundas considers this matter to be of critical regional importance, impacting:

- Community safety and emergency response capability
- Worker safety across mining and pastoral sectors
- Tourism safety across remote coastal and inland routes
- Equity of service provision between metropolitan and regional Western Australia

The ERHS briefing provides a strong technical and operational foundation to support advocacy for a regional helicopter.

This agenda item seeks GVROC support to:

- Formally recognise the service gap in the region
- Advocate collectively to the State Government for the establishment of a Goldfields–Esperance ERHS base
- Consider inclusion of this project as a priority regional advocacy item and State election commitment

A coordinated GVROC position will significantly strengthen the case for funding under programs such as:

- Royalties for Regions
- State health and emergency services infrastructure investment

**Consultation:** DFES (via ERHS briefing)  
GVROC member councils (informal discussions)  
Regional emergency services observations (DFES, WA Police, St John Ambulance – operational context)

**Financial Implications:**

- No direct financial impact to GVROC at this stage
- Future advocacy may seek State Government capital and operational funding
- Potential for co-funding discussions (State / Federal / industry) in later stages

**Strategic Implications:**

This initiative aligns with GVROC priorities including:

- Regional safety and emergency response capability
- Advocacy for equitable service delivery in regional WA
- Supporting mining, tourism, and freight industries
- Strengthening regional resilience and disaster response

It also supports broader State objectives around:

- Road safety reduction
- Emergency response times
- Regional development

**Voting Requirement:** Simple majority

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That GVROC:

1. Notes the Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (ERHS) briefing and the identified service gap in regional Western Australia.
2. Recognises the lack of dedicated emergency rescue helicopter coverage within the Goldfields–Esperance region as a critical risk to community safety and emergency response capability.
3. Supports advocacy to the Western Australian State Government for the establishment of a permanent Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service base in the Goldfields–Esperance region (Kalgoorlie / Esperance).
4. Endorses the inclusion of this initiative as a priority item in GVROC’s regional advocacy agenda, including future State election commitments; and
5. Supports working in conjunction with the Remote Hazards Working Group and the DEMC to ensure a joint position when seeking formal consideration and funding for this service.

**RESOLUTION:** **Moved: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**  
**Seconded: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie**

---

**Carried**

## **10.8 Request to Support ABS Presentation and Advocate for Service Population Recognition**

**Reporting Officers:** Peter Fitchat, CEO Shire of Dundas

**Disclosure of Interest:** Nil

**Date:** March 2026

### **Summary:**

The Shire of Dundas is seeking its Council's endorsement to support a deputation by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) at the April 2026 WALGA Zone meeting and to formally advocate for improved recognition of "service populations" within Census and population datasets.

The current Census methodology is based primarily on **Place of Usual Residence**, which does not adequately reflect the true service burden experienced by remote local governments such as the Shire of Dundas. In Dundas, FIFO workers, highway travellers, grey nomads, and seasonal tourists can exceed the permanent resident population at peak periods. Yet Commonwealth and State funding allocations are largely determined by usual resident counts.

This structural misalignment materially impacts infrastructure funding, emergency management planning, health service allocation, and Financial Assistance Grants.

It is also proposed that this is an item and policy position that could be presented to the GVROC for consideration at its March meeting in Esperance, prior to having the ABS present to it at the next GVROC State Council meeting in April 2026.

### **Background:**

WALGA has advised that the ABS is seeking to present at upcoming WALGA Zone meetings to engage directly with Elected Members and CEOs regarding Census engagement, participation challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.

The Shire of Dundas presents a unique case study in regional Western Australia:

- Permanent population approximately 728 (usual residence basis)
- Significant FIFO accommodation villages servicing regional mining operations (Estimates 300 FIFO Beds, Railway Motel, Nor Eyre Motel, Great Western Motel, Gateway Caravan Park, Most of these beds)
- Eyre Highway freight corridor traffic
- Tourism and caravan seasonal influx
- Grey nomad and transient population
- Two towns are approximately 720km apart
- 50% Crown land limiting rate recovery capacity in Norseman (Less than 1% is Freehold Land).
- The rest of the Shire consists of 12 Pastoral Stations, 6 Truckstop's, Native Title, Exclusive Native Title, Crown and unallocated Crown Land, Mining and abandoned Mining Leases, State Reserves.

Despite serving substantially more people throughout the year, funding models rely on the usual resident population.

This will also be the case for many of the LGAs in the Goldfields Esperance Region.

### **Statutory Environment**

Relevant legislation and frameworks include:

- **Census and Statistics Act 1905 (Cth)**
- Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants methodology
- Local Government Act 1995 (WA)
- Strategic Community Plan 2022–2032
- Corporate Business Plan

The ABS is responsible for Census collection and population estimates. However, Commonwealth funding allocations often rely on ABS population data.

### **Policy Implications**

This item aligns with the Council's:

- Advocacy role for equitable regional funding
- Long-Term Financial Plan sustainability objectives
- Commitment to infrastructure resilience
- Emergency management responsibilities

Failure to advocate for reform perpetuates structural under-recognition of remote service populations.

### **Financial Implications**

No direct cost is associated with supporting the ABS presentation.

However, the broader financial implications are significant:

- Underestimation of service population impacts Financial Assistance Grants
- Infrastructure planning based on inaccurate baseline populations
- Increased road maintenance, waste, water and emergency services demand without proportional funding
- Misalignment in health and policing resource allocation

Recognition of the service population could materially improve long-term funding equity.

### **Strategic Implications**

This matter intersects with:

- FBT reform advocacy for regional workers
- Bushfire cost-sharing reform
- Freight Corridor and Commodity Route funding (Eyre and Coolgardie Esperance Highways)
- Workforce housing strategies
- Infrastructure sustainability in remote communities

The development of a "Service Population Metric" would strengthen future funding submissions and evidence-based advocacy.

### **Risk Assessment**

#### **Risk if not pursued:**

- Continued underfunding
- Inaccurate planning baselines
- Infrastructure strain
- Escalating financial sustainability pressure

#### **Risk if pursued:**

- Low reputational risk
- Advocacy framed collaboratively
- Opportunity to influence future Census methodology

### **Consultation**

- WALGA Zone
- GVROC member councils
- ABS representatives
- Regional CEOs

**Officer Comment:**

The Shire of Dundas services a population that significantly exceeds its usual resident Census count. During peak periods, FIFO workers, freight corridor users, travellers, and tourists can outnumber permanent residents.

Current ABS datasets capture Place of Enumeration data; however, this additional ghost population is not integrated into funding formulas or service planning metrics.

This process and policy setting for data capture creates significant financial and strategic implications for regional and remote communities. It is recommended that the GVROC advocate for the ABS to develop a "Service Population Metric" into its census counts which would strengthen and improve long-term funding equity across the regions that reflect the real populations in remote and regional towns, not just the residential side.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the report the Shire of Dundas is taking to its Council regarding the upcoming ABS Presentation to the GVROC in April 2026 and its advocacy position to include a "Service Population Metric" into its census counts.
2. Endorse this advocacy position.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie**  
**Seconded: Cr Rob Wedge, Shire of Laverton**

---

**Carried**

## 10.9 ALGA NGA 2026 Shire of Dundas submitted motions

**Reporting Officer:** Peter Fitchat CEO Shire of Dundas

**Disclosure of Interest:** No interest to disclose

**Date:** March 2026

### **Background:**

The ALGA NGA will be held from **23–25 June 2026** at the **National Convention Centre, Canberra**. The theme for next year's Assembly is Stronger Together: Resilient. Productive. United. Program and registration details will be released by ALGA in due course.

The **Call for Motions** opened on **27 October 2025** and will close at **11:59pm AEDT on Friday, 27 February 2026**. Motions must be submitted via ALGA's online portal. For guidance, please refer to the Discussion Paper (see **Attachment 16**), which outlines the process and requirements and the ten priority areas that this year's call for motions will focus on.

When preparing motions, ALGA asks that they:

- Are new and do not duplicate matters debated in the previous two years.
- Have national relevance (not council or region-specific, unless there are national implications).
- Align with your State/Territory Local Government Association's policy positions.
- Be concise and practical, with a clear national objective and supporting arguments.

### **Officers Comments:**

Following the outline of potential motions to be presented by the Shire of Dundas as per the item submitted to the GVROC at its January 2026 meeting, the Shire of Dundas provides the following two motions for noting by the GVROC which it has submitted.

#### **Motion 1: Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) Reform for FIFO and Regional Workers**

<b>Theme</b>	Housing and Planning
<b>National Objective</b>	Workforce shortages, housing pressures and population imbalance between capital cities and regional Australia are national economic challenges. Current FBT settings unintentionally incentivise FIFO and metropolitan concentration rather than permanent regional settlement. Reforming FBT is a federal taxation matter requiring legislative change and has implications for productivity, housing affordability, infrastructure demand and decentralisation across all states and territories. As these impacts extend beyond individual councils and affect national workforce distribution and economic resilience, the issue is appropriately debated at the NGA.
<b>Motion</b>	This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to reform the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) regime to expand housing, relocation and travel concessions for workers in regional, rural and remote Australia, modernise outdated "remote area" definitions, and introduce equitable incentives that support permanent regional residency, workforce attraction, housing uptake and national decentralisation objectives.
<b>Summary of Key Arguments</b>	Regional councils face chronic workforce shortages and severe housing constraints while relying heavily on FIFO models. Under current FBT rules, employer-provided housing concessions apply only to narrowly defined "remote" areas based on outdated population thresholds. Many regional centres experiencing housing stress and workforce shortages do not qualify. This discourages permanent relocation, concentrates housing demand in capital cities and undermines decentralisation policy. Expanding and modernising FBT concessions would incentivise long-term regional residency, strengthen local economies, support housing supply, improve productivity and reduce infrastructure pressure in metropolitan areas. FBT reform is a structural policy lever that aligns taxation settings with contemporary regional development and national housing objectives.

This motion is about structural reform — not subsidy expansion.

Across Australia, we face three connected national challenges:

- Workforce shortages in regional areas.
- Housing pressure in capital cities.
- And growing reliance on FIFO employment models.

Under the current Fringe Benefits Tax regime, housing concessions apply only to narrowly defined “remote” areas — definitions that rely on outdated population thresholds and distance tests.

Many regional centres facing workforce shortages and housing stress simply do not qualify. The unintended consequence? We incentivise people to live in capital cities and fly to regional jobs, rather than relocate permanently and build communities.

That drives up metropolitan housing demand. It weakens regional settlement. It undermines decentralisation policy and it limits the effectiveness of infrastructure investment in regional Australia.

This is not about disadvantaging FIFO workers — they are vital to our economy.

It is about creating equitable tax incentives so that workers who choose to relocate permanently to regional communities are supported, not penalised.

Modernising FBT definitions and expanding concessions for regional housing and relocation is a federal taxation reform. It aligns directly with:

- National housing affordability objectives;
- Productivity improvement;
- Decentralisation policy; and
- Balanced population growth.

This is a structural lever sitting within Commonwealth control.

If we are serious about strengthening regional Australia, taxation settings must align with that ambition.

**Motion 2: Federal Support for Equitable Bushfire Cost and Risk Sharing Including Volunteer Support**

<b>Theme</b>	Emergency Management
<b>National Objective</b>	Bushfire risk is a national emergency management challenge with increasing frequency and severity across all states and territories. While local governments play a statutory role in mitigation, volunteer coordination and operational support, funding responsibility is not equitably shared. Disaster resilience, volunteer sustainability and climate risk adaptation are national priorities requiring federal policy leadership and funding reform. As current cost burdens disproportionately impact councils—particularly small and remote jurisdictions—this issue warrants debate at the NGA as a matter of national fiscal equity and community safety.
<b>Motion</b>	This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish equitable and ongoing federal funding arrangements for local government bushfire risk mitigation, emergency management and volunteer support costs, and to review national disaster cost-sharing frameworks to ensure fair allocation of operational, mitigation and volunteer coordination expenses between federal, state and local governments.
<b>Summary of Key Arguments</b>	Local governments are legally required to undertake bushfire mitigation, planning and volunteer support under state legislation, including the Bush Fires Act 1954, yet funding is often partial and insufficient. While state agencies such as the Department of Fire and Emergency Services provide grants, councils routinely absorb shortfalls for training, facilities, administration, insurance and equipment. Nationally, volunteer emergency services underpin disaster response capacity, but escalating climate risk is increasing operational costs. Without equitable federal cost-sharing reform and recognition of local government’s frontline role, councils face growing financial strain and risk exposure. A fairer funding framework would strengthen resilience, support volunteers and improve national disaster preparedness outcomes.

Across Australia, bushfire risk is increasing in frequency, intensity and cost.

Local governments are on the frontline of mitigation, volunteer coordination and operational response by:

- maintaining firebreaks;
- managing fuel loads;
- coordinating brigades;
- maintaining facilities;
- supporting training;
- carrying insurance; and

we do this largely from limited rate bases.

In Western Australia, councils operate under the Bush Fires Act 1954 and associated emergency legislation. Similar statutory obligations exist across every state and territory.

But here is the issue — responsibility is clear, funding is not.

State grants rarely cover the full cost of volunteer support, administration, infrastructure and compliance. Councils routinely absorb the shortfall. For small and remote shires, that can mean significant portions of discretionary budgets are redirected into essential emergency services.

Nationally, volunteer emergency services number in the hundreds of thousands. They are the backbone of Australia's disaster response capacity. Yet the financial model underpinning that system is fragmented and inequitable.

Disaster resilience is a national priority. Climate risk is a national challenge. Insurance affordability is a national concern. But cost-sharing arrangements remain inconsistent and heavily weighted toward local government.

This motion does not seek to shift responsibility — it aims to share it fairly.

We are asking the Commonwealth to establish ongoing, equitable funding arrangements and to review national disaster cost-sharing frameworks so that operational, mitigation, and volunteer coordination costs are shared appropriately across all three levels of government.

Strong local brigades mean safer communities. Fair funding means sustainable brigades. If we value resilience, we must fund resilience.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the Shire of Dundas final motions submitted to the ALGA NGA 2026.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton**

**Seconded: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie**

---

**Carried**

## 10.10 Electoral Reform – Compulsory and Voluntary Voting and Election Frequency

**Reporting Officer:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** No interest to disclose

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** WALGA Draft Discussion Paper – Electoral Reform (**Attachment 11**)  
InfoPage – Sector Consultation Reform Discussion (**Attachment 12**)  
WALGA State Council Flying Minute Sector Consultation Compulsory and Voluntary Voting and Election Frequency (**Attachment 13**)

### Background

WALGA is seeking Council-endorsed feedback from Local Governments to inform a sector-wide response to anticipated State Government proposals for Local Government electoral reform. This follows a recent State Council Flying Minute that was discussed and distributed through each of the WALGA Zones (see **Attachment 13**).

As outlined in the attached InfoPage (**Attachment 12**) and accompanying Discussion Paper (**Attachment 11**), the State Government is expected to progress reforms relating to:

- the introduction of **full spill elections every four years**; and
- **compulsory voting** at Local Government elections.

The Discussion Paper summarises these emerging reform considerations and provides example questions your Local Government may wish to address.

**Responses to WALGA were due by 4:00pm, Friday 27 March 2026 (date of this meeting)**, and should be submitted to [governance@walga.asn.au](mailto:governance@walga.asn.au).

If you have any queries, please contact Kirsty Martin on 9213 2051 or Felicity Morris on 9213 2093.

### Officer Comments

As per the GVROC Executive Officer email sent out on 26 February 2025 to all the GVROC delegates and CEOs, the GVROC Chair is encouraging all LGAs to list this item on their March Council meetings for consideration and to determine their endorsed positions in relation to compulsory voting and four-year terms.

This will also assist the Chair to provide a regional Goldfields Esperance Zone view to advocate within State Council but also to the Minister and State Government. The following Councils have met and advised these positions:

Council	Position
Leonora	Essentially supporting the status quo with continuation of four-year terms with elections held every two years and voluntary voting.
Kalgoorlie Boulder	Supports voluntary voting under the current two-year, half-spill election cycle.
Dundas	Supports transitioning to full-spill Local Government elections every four years in Western Australia but retaining voluntary voting in Local Government elections.
Menzies	The Shire of Menzies supports half spill elections every two years with Voluntary voting. Compulsory voting in remote areas would increase costs for local governments in ensuring that all those on the electoral roll had the opportunity to vote.
Laverton	Council supports four-year terms with a two-year spill. Council supports voluntary voting at Local Government Elections.
Esperance	Continues to support half spill elections every 2 years to retain continuity of knowledge and continue with smoother and more consist local leadership; Continues to support voluntary voting; Considers that compulsory voting should be introduced if full spill elections every 4 years was introduced so there is a greater community participation in the election of a full spill Council; and Would like to see a simpler voting method be introduced such as online or computer application to increase voter participation.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Position</b>
Ngaanyatjarraku	Supports four-year terms with elections held every two years (two-year spills) Supports the continuity of voluntary voting for local government elections.
Coolgardie	Support in principle proposed reforms to Local Government electoral arrangements, including the introduction of compulsory voting and consideration of a four-year election cycle; and  Council's support is conditional upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. compulsory Local Government elections being administered by the WA Electoral Commission;</li> <li>b. the State Government providing adequate and ongoing funding to ensure no cost-shifting to local governments;</li> <li>c. appropriate governance safeguards, induction and transition arrangements being implemented should a four-year full spill election model be adopted;</li> <li>d. electoral reforms addressing accessibility challenges faced by regional and remote communities; and</li> <li>e. comprehensive voter education and continued consultation with the local government sector.</li> </ul>
Wiluna	Supports retention of the current two-year half-spill model for Local Government elections in Western Australia based on its former Position Supports mandatory voting in Local Government elections

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the GVROC:

1. Note the WALGA Draft Discussion Paper, Infopage and State Council Flying Minute.
2. Note the GVROC Council positions already made as listed above, which the majority are in favour of retaining the current system of four-year terms with elections held every two years and voluntary voting.
3. For those yet to report their positions, agree to report their Council positions back to the GVROC Executive Officer for sharing with the GVROC Chair and Goldfields Esperance Zone State Council Representative as soon as possible.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**

**Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies**

---

**Carried**

## 10.11 Draft Renewable Energy Planning Code

**Reporting Officer:** Peter Fitchat CEO Shire of Dundas

**Disclosure of Interest:** No interest to disclose

**Date:** March 2026

**Attachments:** [Renewable Energy Planning Code | Have Your Say, WA!](#)

### **Background:**

The draft Renewable Energy Planning Code (Code) is a new planning code made under Part 3A of the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and in accordance with the Planning and Development (Planning Codes) Regulations 2024.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Code is to provide a clear and consistent framework for assessing energy infrastructure that supports the generation, storage and transmission of renewable energy across Western Australia.

### **What the Code does**

The draft Code has been prepared to provide clearer guidance to industry, local government and communities by:

- introducing a consistent development assessment framework for renewable energy infrastructure across Western Australia;
- establishing clear development standards and application requirements;
- improving certainty in managing potential land use and environmental impacts, such as noise and landscape considerations.

The initial focus of the Code is on wind farms, with flexibility to expand to other renewable energy developments in the future, including solar farms and battery energy storage systems. Once finalised, the Code will take effect when incorporated into a local planning schemes.

### **Guidelines**

The Code is accompanied by Guidelines that will form part of the planning framework however will not be incorporated into planning schemes.

The Guidelines may be updated and provide guidance on matters addressed in the Code, including:

- material required to accompany development applications;
- key reports and plans that may be required as a condition of development approval; and
- proponent-led preliminary community and stakeholder engagement.

To assist users, a combined Code and Guidelines document has been prepared, which will remain available after adoption as the primary user-friendly reference. In this version:

- statutory provisions of the Code appear in the main body with a white background
- guidelines are presented in grey boxes for easy differentiation.

Both the standalone Code and combined Code and Guidelines document are available in the Key Documents section.

### **Planning Regulation Changes**

A range of regulatory changes are also proposed to support the Code and Western Australia's renewable energy transition. While specific comment is not sought on these changes, Information Sheets are provided to give stakeholders a complete understanding and inform submissions on the Code.

Once drafted, consultation on the proposed amendments is expected to occur in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

### **Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 (LPS Regulations)**

The Minister for Planning and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) have approved the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage to progress further regulatory enhancements, including:

- introducing Model Provisions to support incorporation of the Code into local planning schemes via scheme amendments and reviews
- clarifying the interaction between the Code and local government-adopted local planning policies
- requiring local governments to have 'due regard' to an approved planning code when determining development applications
- defining renewable and green energy-related land uses
- approval requirements for noise-sensitive developments near wind farms (see the Wind Farm Noise section below).

For more information, see Information Sheet – Renewable Energy – Policy Intent Summary – Proposed Amendments to *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* in the Key Documents section.

### ***Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024***

Amendments to the Significant Development Regulations are being prepared to introduce a mandatory assessment pathway for significant renewable energy projects.

Applications for significant renewable energy projects will be submitted through the Significant Development Pathway and determined by the WAPC.

For more information, see the Information Sheet – Renewable Energy – Policy Intent Summary – Proposed Amendments to *Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024* in the Key Documents section.

### ***Wind Farm Noise***

Wind farm noise has the potential to affect nearby houses and other noise-sensitive land uses. Under the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 (Noise Regulations), assigned noise levels apply at noise-sensitive premises, with compliance the responsibility of the noise emitter (in this case, the wind farm operator).

A key challenge arises when new noise-sensitive land uses are approved or developed near existing wind farms. These new developments could require wind farms to reduce noise emissions, potentially impacting operations and investment. This has raised renewable energy industry concerns and prompted calls for adjustments to the planning framework and Noise Regulations.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) are working together to develop a balanced approach that protects both community and industry interests. Alignment across the Code, LPS Regulations and Noise Regulations will be important to achieve an integrated approach.

### ***Proposed Code Provisions***

The Code includes provisions requiring wind farms to comply with prescribed limits in the Noise Regulations for existing or approved noise-sensitive land uses, while ensuring that wind farm noise levels received at nearby lots does not unreasonably restrict future residential development.

### ***Planning Regulations***

Amendments to the LPS Regulations are proposed to require development approval for houses and other noise-sensitive uses within a defined proximity to wind farms, regardless of any other exemption. For more information, see the Information Sheet – Renewable Energy – Policy Intent Summary – Proposed Amendments to *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* in the Key Documents section.

### ***Noise Regulations***

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is reviewing how wind farm noise is regulated for new houses arising near wind farms to complement the Code and planning regulation changes. Further information is available from DWER [here\(External link\)](#).

### ***Public Comment***

Feedback is welcome, with comment specifically sought on the draft Code and supporting Guidelines. The current consultation period closes at **5pm 10 April 2026**.

Electronic submissions can be made using any of the below options:

- Click the 'Feedback Form' button below.
- Download the [Feedback Form here](#) and email it to [renewableenergyplanning@dph.wa.gov.au](mailto:renewableenergyplanning@dph.wa.gov.au)([External link](#)).
- Email a written submission to [renewableenergyplanning@dph.wa.gov.au](mailto:renewableenergyplanning@dph.wa.gov.au)([External link](#)).

Hard copy submissions can be made by mail to:

Infrastructure Planning and Policy  
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage  
Locked Bag 2506, Perth WA 6001

### **Officer Comments**

As per our GVROC State Council meeting held on 20 February 2026, Agenda Item 8.3 – WALGA is consulting the sector and preparing an advocacy position on this matter and will be providing its submission to the State Government.

WALGA will prepare a submission to the State on behalf of the sector to ensure the draft Code delivers positive outcomes for Member Local Governments, communities and industry.

WALGA strongly encourages consideration of the draft Code by Zones. Local Governments should make their own submissions on the draft Code by 10 April 2026 and provide feedback to WALGA to inform our submission on behalf of the sector by 27 February 2026. Council endorsed submissions are preferred.

WALGA's submission will be provided to State Council by flying agenda to meet the submission deadline.

The Shire of Dundas has also drafted its own submission to reflects local planning considerations and risks associated with large-scale renewable energy infrastructure within its district.

This includes risks associated with major projects such as the Western Green Energy Hub (WGEH) that overlaps with the Shire of Dundas and the broader Nullarbor region.

The Shire recognises the importance of a consistent planning framework for renewable energy infrastructure across Western Australia but has significant concern about potential impacts on local land use, community rights, environmental protection, rehabilitation obligations and governance.

The Shire of Dundas sees the following key risks associated with the Draft Renewable Energy Planning Code:

### **Governance & Decision-Making**

- State-level approval bypasses councils for large renewables.
- Local voices may have reduced influence.

### **Community Engagement**

- Community benefit arrangements are optional, not enforceable.
- Perception of planning bypass can erode social license.

### **Rehabilitation & Long-Term Liability**

- Decommissioning requirements not firmly integrated into planning codes.
- Lack of financial assurance requirements. (implied by guideline status)

### **Land Use & Environmental Protection**

- Agricultural/sensitive land not explicitly protected by the Code.

The Shire of Dundas will consider the following Council positions and recommendations:

## **1. Local Decision-Making Authority & Governance**

### **1.1 State vs Local Decision-Making Processes**

The Draft Code proposes amendments enabling the **Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC)** to determine major renewable energy developments valued at over \$20 million under a mandatory significant development pathway, thereby reducing Local Government decision-making powers.

The Shire of Wiluna CEO, makes the point that Minister call in powers for developments over a certain value i.e. \$20m here, are consistent with Planning Law across Australia since the late 1980s.

Noting the above comment, it is still relevant that we pressure WAPC to use current Planning Scheme processes and extend these for the use of Strategic Environmental Assessments to be completed at LGA levels to map out potential areas for unique/large area uses, as part of the process of generating Local Planning Assessments - legislatively required before amendments to or making of Local Planning Schemes. By doing this it would be good for community input/engagement, good for involving LGAs in critical decisions, and can be done following existing legislative frameworks.

**Council Position:**

- The Shire of Dundas is concerned that this removes meaningful local input into significant developments that will have direct impacts on local communities and environments.
- We recommend retaining formal local decision-making rights for projects within council boundaries, regardless of project value.

## **2. Community Engagement and Benefit-Sharing**

The Draft Code's Guidelines encourage—but do not mandate—community benefit engagements.

**Council Position:**

- Mandate enforceable community-benefit provisions within the planning framework to ensure local communities directly benefit from hosting large infrastructure developments.
- Voluntary arrangements lack enforceability and leave communities at risk of receiving minimal or token benefits (which should be legislated; otherwise, they could be removed with a change of government).

## **3. Rehabilitation & Environmental Protection**

### **3.1 Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Responsibilities**

The Code references decommissioning (end-of-life) planning but is reliant on non-statutory Guidelines which may not be enforceable.

**Council Position:**

- Robust statutory obligations for **progressive rehabilitation, decommissioning, and financial securities** should be required to safeguard against abandoned infrastructure and long-term environmental liabilities.
- These mechanisms must be clearly defined, enforceable and administered in a way that ensures local regulators are not left with remedial costs.

## **4. Specific Risks – Western Green Energy Hub (WGEH)**

The **Western Green Energy Hub**, a proposal co-led by Intercontinental Energy and CWP Global in partnership with the Mirning Traditional Owners, is a multi-stage, ultra-large-scale renewable energy and green hydrogen/ammonia export project on the Nullarbor Plain. Project proponents forecast up to 70 GW of wind and solar capacity and production of millions of tonnes of green hydrogen annually, making it one of the largest proposed renewable export hubs globally.

### **4.1 Environmental Risk to Unique Nullarbor Karst Landscape**

- Scientists and conservation groups have raised concerns that the WGEH footprint overlaps with one of the world's most extensive **limestone karst systems**, featuring thousands of caves, rock holes, blowholes, and dolines with significant ecological, palaeontological and geological values.
- Construction and infrastructure may irreversibly damage fragile subterranean networks due to their highly porous and brittle nature.

**Council Position:**

- A comprehensive, peer-reviewed independent environmental heritage assessment is required before the project proceeds further in the planning system.
- Environmental safeguards must exceed standard compliance requirements, given the Nullarbor's rare ecosystem values.

#### 4.2 Scale, Infrastructure and Cumulative Impacts

- WGEH planning documentation estimates the project covering vast areas of pastoral leases and crown land, with associated infrastructure including desalination, roads, pipelines, accommodation villages, and workspace infrastructure.

#### Council Position:

- The scale of land disturbance, water extraction (e.g., from a large desalination plant), and ancillary infrastructure poses risks to the local environment, biosecurity, heritage landscapes and social fabric of the region.
- Strategic, long-term socio-economic impact assessments should accompany any development applications under the Code.

#### 4.3 Economic and Feasibility Uncertainties

- Broader investment and commercial viability of large-scale hydrogen exports have been challenged across Australia, with some major hydrogen projects withdrawing due to market and cost barriers.

#### Council Position:

- Economic risk must be transparently assessed, including the viability of long-term export markets and reliance on government incentives or subsidies.

### 5. Recommendations

The Shire of Dundas respectfully recommends the following amendments or inclusions in the final Renewable Energy Planning Code framework:

1. Local Governments retain a meaningful role in decision-making for projects within their boundaries, with greater thresholds or conditions on state-only determinations.
2. Enforceable community benefit and engagement obligations must be integrated into statutory planning instruments.
3. Strengthened rehabilitation, decommissioning and financial assurance provisions to protect local environments and councils from long-term liabilities.
4. Mandatory independent environmental, cultural heritage, and socio-economic assessments for ultra-large-scale projects such as WGEH before planning approval decisions.
5. Explicit recognition and protection measures for fragile landscapes (e.g., Nullarbor karst systems), Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and unique ecological values.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the GVROC:

1. Note that Local Governments can make their own submissions to the State Government on the draft code through the link provided on this item due by 10 April 2026.
2. Note the Shire of Dundas positions on the draft Code as presented.
3. Encourage all GVROC LGAs to submit their own submission by the due date.

#### RESOLUTION:

**Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, shire of Laverton**  
**Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**

---

**Carried**

**11. LATE ITEMS as notified, introduced by decision of the Meeting****11.1 Resignation of Tracey Rathbone from Shire of Coolgardie and subsequently the GVROC and DEMC**

**Reporting Officer:** Andrew Mann, GVROC Executive Officer

**Disclosure of Interest:** No interest to disclose

**Date:** March 2026

**Background:**

The Shire of Coolgardie advised on the 11 March 2026 that its long-serving Elected Member, Tracey Rathbone has tendered her resignation at the Shire of Coolgardie, effective Tuesday 10 March 2026.

Shire of Coolgardie President, Cr Paul Wilcox advised that this also means Tracey Rathbone will no longer represent the Shire on the GVROC and that Cr Anthony Ball will replace her until the Shire's Council has met in April to discuss an endorse a permanent replacement.

**Officers Comments:**

Tracey Rathbone was a valued member of the GVROC that contributed significantly during her time on it.

It is recommended that given her service to the GVROC and the region, volunteering on many committees, organisations and groups over 14 years, that the GVROC formally recognise this with a GVROC Certificate of Appreciation, as previously provided to Malcolm Cullen, and invite Tracey to a future meeting that is convenient for her attendance for this to be presented.

As Tracey Rathbone was also the GVROC's representative on the District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC), the GVROC will also need to nominate a new representative to the DEMC.

**Consultation:** GVROC Chair and Shire of Coolgardie President

**Financial Implications:** Nil

**Strategic Implications:** Nil

**Voting Requirement:** Simple majority

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That GVROC:

1. Support formally recognising Tracey Rathbone with a GVROC Certificate of Appreciation and invite Tracey to a future meeting that is convenient for her attendance for this to be presented.
2. Nominate Cr Ron Chambers, President at the Shire of Esperance as the new GVROC representative to the District Emergency Management Committee.
3. Request the GVROC Executive Officer advise the DEMC Adviser of the change to the GVROC representation to the DEMC.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Moved:** *Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies*  
**Seconded:** *Cr Wes Graham, Shire of Esperance*

---

**Carried**

## **11.2 WA Review in the Financial Sustainability of Racing in Western Australia in all three codes**

### **Background:**

Cr Peter Craig, President at Shire of Leonora, in his capacity as one of the Executive members of the Country Racing Association of WA (CRA), advised the GVROC of the current Independent Review being conducted into the Financial Sustainability and Governance of Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA).

The Independent Review into the Financial Sustainability and Governance of Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA), was announced by the Minister for Racing and Gaming on 30 December 2025.

Attached is:

- a letter from the Independent Reviewers; (**Attachment 14**)
- the Terms of Reference outlining the scope, objectives and parameters of the Review; (**Attachment 15**) and
- the Public Discussion Paper identifying key issues and questions to inform stakeholder engagement. (**Attachment 16**)

The Review is being conducted independently and is seeking informed input from key stakeholders to support consideration of RWWA's long-term financial sustainability and governance arrangements.

### **Comments:**

Attached (**Attachment 17**) for information, is an Executive Summary of the CRA's Submission to the current Ministerial Review into Racing (Governance and Financial Sustainability).

The CRA's formal Submission is a 13 page, very specific, document that details its position.

Advice received at a Thoroughbred Consultative Group meeting was:

- A final Report from the Review Team to the Minister is expected in about September 2026
- This final Report may be due for public release by about December 2026
- When the Final Report is publicly available, all submissions will either be made available, or they will at least be accessible.

Consultation for the CRA submission has included Country Race Clubs, RWWA, Minister for Racing, Hon D Templeman and the Review Team, Department of Liquor & Gaming and others. All have given advice, information and support for the submission.

Peter advised that key concerns have ongoing costs incurred with no increased funding received since the failed sale of the TAB, yet these country towns and their racecourses and meets provide an important and needed resource and event within country communities.

Peter advised he would keep the GVROC members informed on the ongoing process and outcomes from the independent review.

### **11.3 Invitation for President of WALGA State Council to attend a future GVROC meeting**

Cr Patrick Hill, President at Shire of Laverton, requested if the new President for the WALGA State Council, Mark Irwin can be invited to a future GVROC meeting to hear from each of the GVROC Local Governments.

**Comments:**

It was agreed that the GVROC Chair and Executive Officer would raise this with WALGA to organise a suitable date for one of our upcoming GVROC meetings.

## **12. FUTURE GVROC COUNCIL MEETINGS/FUNCTIONS**

### **Next Meetings**

The following suggested dates in 2026 have been set for the GVROC meetings.

- **22 May 2026** in Wiluna (to be hosted by Shire of Wiluna) (**note change of date**)
- **31 July 2026** in Menzies (to be hosted by Shire of Menzies)
- **11 September 2026** in Norseman (to be hosted by Shire of Dundas)
- **16-18 September 2026** (WALGA LGA Convention and AGM in Perth)
- **13 November 2026** in Leonora (to be hosted by Shire of Leonora)

The following are the WALGA State Council meeting dates for 2026 with suggested GVROC Zoom video conference meeting dates prior to these to inform the GVROC's representatives attending the meetings with relevant input for State Council Agenda Items:

- 6 May 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **24 April 2026**
- 1 July 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **19 June 2026**
- 4 September 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **21 August 2026**
- 2 December 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **23 November 2026**

## **13. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:20pm.