

2 September 2019

Select Committee into Local Government
Legislative Council of Western Australia

Dear Committee

SUBMISSION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Committee with feedback into the inquiry into Local Government.

The Shire of Gingin would like to express its direct support for the Avon Midland Zone of Local Government motion to support the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) submission to the Committee.

In addition to the above, the Shire of Gingin expresses its concern to the Committee in regards to the effectiveness and accuracy of listening to the vocal minority who are strongly criticising the Local Government sector. The Local Government sector is made up of primarily hard working and dedicated Elected Members and Officers who strive to improve their community.

The Local Government sector over the years has proven that it is not a perfect system and failures have occurred, albeit mostly through inappropriate input or actions of Elected Members or Staff. In this regard the issues that have abounded within the State Government sector should be equally as criticised and investigated as there have been more instances of concern within the State than there has been in Local Government.

The Shire of Gingin accepts that the sector can get better and welcomes the Hon David Templeman's MLA *Local Government Act Reform*. This Reform has been long overdue and requires many alterations to bring the sector forward into the current environment. However, the Committee needs to acknowledge and review the processes in which, over the many years, Local Government has been required to take over and administer responsibilities through cost shifting from the State.

This cost shifting has forced Local Government to absorb services within their structure without reimbursement of staff time and cost, the fees that are regulated to be charged are not appropriate to cover the provision of the service and yet Local Government are criticised for raising rates and/or poor service provision which is facilitated with limited staff.

It is proposed that in the future any shifting of responsibility to Local Government should be done so in consultation with the Local Government sector and WALGA and have the provision of awarding Local Governments with compensation for providing the service.

Whilst this is not accepted as a serious issue within the State, it is enormous for the Local Government sector, especially the smaller non City Local Governments who are forced to work with very limited resources yet have to adhere to the same, and in many instances, more legislation and regulation than some larger local Councils.

Local Government does not want to revert back to Roads, Rates and Rubbish but the only way for the Committee or the State Government to understand the impact on Local Government and the level of shifting responsibility is to undertake a study into what additional services and roles that Local Government must adhere to that is outside of the Local Government mandate. This would allow for all parties to understand in a clear manner the impact on Local Governments and the subsidy that it provides to the State on an ongoing basis.

Should the Committee require additional information from the Shire we would be happy to provide a presentation if requested.

We would like to thank the Committee for reviewing the Shire of Gingin submission and look forward to the positive findings and recommendations to improve the sector.

Yours sincerely



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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