

**South East Avon  
Regional Transition Group  
(SEARTG)  
BOARD MEETING  
NOTICE PAPER  
MEETING ROOM  
CONVENTION CENTRE  
10.30 AM FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 2013**

*Incorporating the Shires of:*

*Cunderdin, Quairading, Tammin and York*



SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION GROUP  
(S E A R T G)

**BOARD MEETING**

**NOTICE PAPER**

MEETING ROOM – CONVENTION CENTRE  
10.30 AM FRIDAY, 9 AUGUST 2013

**1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**

- 1.1 Opening
- 1.2 Announcement of Visitors

Invitations extended to:

- Ms Caroline Tuthill - Senior Project Officer - Department of Local Government.
- Mr Tony Brown – Executive Manager – Governance and Strategy Government Association – Western Australian Local Government Association.
- Ms Joanne Burges – Regional Co-Operation Manager – Western Australian Local Government Association

**2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- 2.1 Present
- 2.2 Apologies
- 2.3 Leave of Absence

**3. DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Deputations
- 3.2 Presentations

**4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

- 4.1 South East Avon Regional Transition Group Board Meeting held at the Shire of Cunderdin Community Resource Centre on Thursday, 11 July 2013.

**5. ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION**

**6. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

- (a) Feedback on Advisory Board meetings with the respective communities.
- (b) Poll Provision Legislation – proposed amendments update.
- (c) Strategies and directions.
- (d) Other Business.

**7. BOARD MEMBERS’ MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**

**8. NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE**

**9. NEXT SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION BOARD MEETING**

**10. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

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*Securing Our Future...*



**MINUTES**

**SEARTG**

**BOARD MEETING**  
**11 JULY 2013**

**South East Avon Regional Transition Group**  
Cunderdin, Quairading, Tammin and York



**SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION GROUP  
(S E A R T G)**

**MINUTES**

MEETING OF BOARD MEMBERS

SHIRE OF CUNDERDIN - CUNDERDIN COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE  
10:00AM THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2013

**1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**

**1.1 Opening**

The Chairman took the opportunity of welcoming attendees, including Ms C Tuthill, Ms J Burges, Mr M Moody, and in particular:

- The Hon Tony Simpson MLA, Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering; Youth;
- Minister James Chown MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer; Minister for Transport; Fisheries; Member for Agricultural Region, and
- Ms Jessica Lenney, Principal Policy Advisor - Local Government Reform, Advisor to the Minister for Local Government.

Given Minister Simpson's early attendance at the Meeting, the Chairman suggested bringing forward discussion on those matters detailed on pages 1 and 2 of the Notice Paper, namely:

- Update of the progress to date in relation to the proposed amalgamation of the South East Avon Regional Transition Group (SEARTG), comprising the Shires of Cunderdin, Quairading, Tammin and York.
- Poll provisions.
- Impact on potential future amalgamations based on the work undertaken by SEARTG.
- Other matters.

The Chairman sought input on additional items, with Mr R Hooper suggesting that discussions include "election issues".

The Chairman then drew attention to the dry currently affecting the Wheatbelt, stating that this had lasted from 30 May until 10 July, equating to 40 days and 40 nights. It was then humorously suggested by the Chairman that Minister Simpson may provide something "prophetic" for the Group at this Meeting.

In again welcoming Minister Simpson, Minister Chown and Ms Lenney, the Chairman provided comment summarised as:

- Extended the Board's gratitude to Minister Simpson for his time in attending and speaking to the Group.
- Stated that it has been an adventure and a joy working with this pro reform Group.
- Being pro reform is unusual both in local government and the Wheatbelt.
- Recollection of attending a Kellerberrin meeting some time ago with Cr G Cooper, where the former Minister for Local Government was relieved that the reform message had been received by this Group at least.
- Members of the Group visited South Australia some time ago, witnessing first hand that amalgamations can work.
- Advantages were seen from this South Australian visit, with the Group moving on from this point.

Following the Chairman's invitation, Minister Simpson then addressed the Meeting, providing comment on the following:

- Thanked the Group for the invitation to attend.
- Has visited sixteen local governments in three days, including Kulin, Corrigin, Kondinin, Narembeen, Merredin, Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock, Yilgarn, Westonia, and Bencubbin.
- The further east, the drier the land is looking, conditions are bad.
- Great honour of being appointed Minister for Local Government, Community Services, Seniors and Volunteering, and Youth on 21 May 2013.
- First elected in 2005 as Member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale (where he resides), then in 2008 elected Member for Darling Range.

- Re-elected on 9 March 2013.
- Completed four years as a Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale Councillor before entering State politics in 2005.
- Prior to politics was a baker for 20 years, whilst owning the Byford Bakery for a period of 14 years.
- Being appointed as Minister for Local Government, there are a "couple of things on the table to resolve".
- Such matters include the Robson Report and its recommendations. This is in the final stages, with the need to go back to the community, Mayors and Presidents by the end of the month, prior to responding to the Robson Report.
- Some fifteen to twenty local governments will survive the process; the rest will go through some form of reform process.
- The Robson Report carries 30 recommendations that affect local governments all over Western Australia, not just the metropolitan area.
- Recommendations cover compulsory voting, three terms of Mayor, party politics, State Government managing waste, etc.
- Announcement to be made on changes to legislation, with the Department doing some "housekeeping and tidying up" in relation to elections and so forth.
- Changes are proposed to amend to poll provisions.
- Provided example of the Shire of Narrogin, Town of Narrogin, and Shire of Cuballing, where a poll was held in Cuballing which has approximately 600 voters. A poll was held on 16 April 2013 where 354 voted "no" and 89 voted "yes", ultimately concluding the process for all three Councils.
- Proposal is to change legislation requiring 25% instead of the previous 10% for a poll provision, with the vote to include all municipalities involved rather than just one. This would eliminate a minority in one Council stopping the process for all involved Councils.
- Five local governments wanting to come together, with a minority stopping the process for all.
- Work undertaken by councils who determine the need for reform, with a handful of voters having the ability to stop this.

Minister Simpson concluded by inviting questions from the Group, summarised as follows:

Cr G Cooper

- Whilst the Group is pro reform, there has been a problem in the lack of firm direction, and the way the process has been handled.
- This has created a lot of problems for the industry, staff, Councillors and reform process.
- This Group has a firm view after looking at a number of reform models and spending time in South Australia.
- The South Australian model seemed to be the most effective, with the Government providing eighteen months to halve the number of councils in the State.
- Albeit this was a voluntary process, it came with a "threatened consequence" if it did not work.
- There will always be someone who does not like reform.
- The South Australian reform process took place in approximately 1999, predominantly with success.
- Those councils that chose not to participate are now becoming unviable, with the State having to look at what can be done in this regard.
- Views the South Australian approach as a positive.
- The Wheatbelt has 43 Shires, 24 with 1,000 or less people who are wondering why they do not have much influence when it comes to debating and winning grants at both State and Federal levels.



- This Group sees the value in reform.
- Feels that direction in the nature of the South Australian process would have been beneficial.
- Suggests that if the metropolitan aspect is handled expediently, this may have a positive impact in the rural areas.
- Labor Members at a York meeting some years ago advised that the Group were "wasting their time, reform would have to be forced".

Minister Simpson

- Concurred with Cr G Cooper's comments.
- Metropolitan local governments advised on voluntary process in 2009.
- Metropolitan review will be released at the end of the month.
- Will be very clear on moving forward.
- Opportunity provided to comment with some not liking the boundaries; however these "may be tweaked at the edges only".
- Deadline provided for comment, after which written advice will be provided to the Advisory Board on the new plan for Perth, which will be signed off.
- Need to keep in mind that if the Federal election is called for 19 October 2013, local government elections will be deferred for one week.
- Concern that metropolitan political campaigns will be run on anti reform basis.

- Opportunity provided for voluntary reform, failure to do so will result in forced reform.
  - Responses are required by September, with advice on the new Perth plan provided to the Advisory Board in early October.
  - This will negate the possibility of political campaigns being based on anti reform.
  - The poll provision amendment needs to be included in the parliamentary sitting schedule, being mindful of budget requirements.
  - Will be very strong on the process.
  - There is a need to "get reform off the table and get it done and dusted".
  - Does not want to be a Local Government Minister with a failed reform process.
  - Has three and a half years to achieve a good level of reform.
  - Can take something away from the metropolitan process to give guidance to this Group and help drive the process.
  - Hopes that the poll provision amendment will assist this Group's needs.
  - Group can expect strong direction and leadership from the Minister and his Department.
- Chairman
- Time is against this Group in relation to a change to poll provisions.
  - Concern that a poll provision will go against the Group.

- Minister Simpson
- Confirmed that he will be tabling the changes in early August in order to get it through in time for the local government elections.
  - Poll provision issue must be dealt with prior to signing off on advice to the Advisory Board.
  - Clarified that agreement needs to be reached in the metropolitan area.
  - Once decision is made, there is no rush to finalise boundaries.
  - Under the Local Government Act employment must be guaranteed for current local government employees for two years.
  - Provided example of two amalgamating local governments:
    - Agreement reached to merge.
    - The two local governments will remain as they are, moving motions, paying bills.
    - Chief Executive Officers, Mayors/Presidents and/or others will form a sub committee, with an independent Chair brought in (who may or may not be a Commissioner).
    - This group will work on the process and timeframes in relation to uniting services such as information technology, record keeping, community groups, selection of name and logo, etc.
    - Minister has responsibility to fund *some* of this process.

- Dissolution of two councils to take place on 1 July 2015 with appointment of Commissioner, leading to an October 2015 election.
- The new entity then commences with the newly elected councillors at that time.
- One council of 20,000 electors and one of 80,000 come together; the Act permits 9-14 councillors; an equal number will come out of both, so each council will have an even say at the table of the new entity.
- Perception of one council being overtaken by another, not so, simply a new identity with the same history.
- All facets of existing local governments will remain, with the exception of a new logo on rate notices; all services remain the same, ie waste collection, etc.

Chairman

- Suggested that some SEARTG solutions to such issues may be of assistance.

Cr P Hooper

- Understands what Minister Simpson is saying.
- Has concern with legislating to remove the ability to campaign on anti reform.
- Need for Minister Simpson to publicly state that while reform is currently directed toward the metropolitan area, it will apply to all of Western Australia.
- York has three out of six Councillors up for election.
- There are four people who will stand on that issue alone, including ex councillors, who in the main are respected members of the community.

- Does not want to see six years of work lost due to the lack of a clear statement from Minister Simpson.
- Statement not to be about the SEARTG Group, simply that the opportunity has been provided, and whether people like it or not, reform will happen.
- Believes this Group potentially has three groups opposed to amalgamation.
- Concern that people will be elected on this stance and cause problems.
- Understands the importance of making announcements for, and dealing with, the metropolitan area first, given that 83% of the population lives in this area.

Minister Simpson

- Confirmed that this Group requires clear direction in relation to moving forward, and for this to occur before the October elections, similar to what is happening with Perth.
- Advised that this may be possible.

Cr P Hooper

- There is an appetite for amalgamation around the Wheatbelt and country areas.
- People understand that 200 people in a town is no longer viable.
- Concurred with Cr G Cooper's comments relating to an earlier York meeting, where the former Minister was requested to provide a set and firm timeline for reform to occur.
- Stated that Minister Chown knows what is happening out in the country, and can advise Minister Simpson in this regard.

- Members of this Group were in Canberra less than a month ago, where every politician at the conference was talking about 20,000 electors.
  - There is not 70,000 electors in the entire Wheatbelt, which covers a very large area.
  - Asked Minister Simpson not to isolate the SEARTG Group, but clearly state to the public of Western Australia that what is happening in the metropolitan area is going to happen elsewhere, perhaps not at the same pace, but it is going to happen.
- Minister Simpson
- Advised that there is something that can be done in this regard.
  - Once the Group sees what is happening in the metropolitan area, they will see that there will be clear and firm direction.
  - Confirmed that the comments and request have been taken on board.
- Mr R Hooper
- Concern that, whether the October election is deferred or on the same day, it is "farcical" for where this Group is at.
  - People could be elected for ten weeks, however cannot be advised of this until poll announcements are made.
  - Should a vacancy occur within six months of a local government election, Council may resolve to request that the Electoral Commissioner does not fill that position until the scheduled election.

- Queried why the same does not apply to those local governments who are already in the Local Government Advisory Board process. Namely that local government elections are deferred for this Group until May 2014, as this will stop electioneering on an anti reform basis.
- Drew attention to staff members being affected by such electioneering, providing examples of this.
- Stressed the need for a strong and clear Ministerial statement to eliminate such factors.
- Collectively, if all the Participating Local Governments went to a postal vote this year, it would cost approximately \$48,000.
- This money would be best spent elsewhere, eg constructing 2km of pathways, or something else of community benefit.
- Sees the difficulty being the ten week period, ie from the October election to the earliest poll date being the first week of December.
- This would defeat the principles of structural reform.

Minister Simpson

- The same issue arose when working out the metropolitan reform process.
- Confirmed that elections could not be deferred unless legislation was passed through both houses of Parliament before the end of the winter break, and this was not possible.
- Need to adhere to the provisions of the Act.

- Understands the difficulty and cost involved, however "hands are tied" in relation to this.
  - Changes to legislation are underway.
  - Queried if the Group does postal voting.
- Mr R Hooper
- Generally "in person" voting at a cost of \$26,000.
  - There is provision under the current Act whereby all current councillors can resign in September, and Minister Simpson can appoint the existing Presidents as Commissioners, and defer the election to a particular time.
- Minister Simpson
- Concern that once a Commissioner is appointed, there is no community input to the Council.
  - Will look at this option, whilst confirming there are four Councils involved with tis Group.
- Mr G Fardon
- Advised a total of 27 current councillors.
- Minister Simpson
- Queried the status of the Advisory Board inquiry.
- Mr R Hooper
- Advised the Board will be reporting to the Minister Simpson in the first week of September 2013.
- Executive Officer
- Confirmed the Advisory Board reporting timeframe as stated by Mr R Hooper.
- Minister Simpson
- Queried if this timing is the Advisory Board's recommendation to him.



- Mr R Hooper
- Confirmed that this is the Advisory Board's recommendation, which if signed off, will trigger the poll provisions and go into a 56 day electoral roll period.
- Minister Simpson
- If signed off and commissioners appointed, while the Group moves through the process.
- Chairman
- Suggested that current councillors can form committees while commissioners are in place.
- Minister Simpson
- Talked through parliamentary timings, with three weeks in August and September, the Budget, and the opportunity to get the poll provision legislation through parliament and signed off.
  - Will work on this aspect, as there may be room to do something.
- Mr R Hooper
- This would be an opportunity to stop the "naysayers", particularly if current Presidents are appointed as commissioners, and Elected Members form the community reference group.
  - Such appointments would maintain cohesion.
  - Election deferred for twelve months.
  - Suggested that Minister Simpson makes a recommendation that triggers a poll provision, a poll is held in two to three weeks, with appointment of Commissioners.
  - Signing off on an Advisory Board recommendation will stop the election cost and anti reform campaigns.

- Minister Simpson
- Also takes away the poll provision, and stops that process.
- Chairman
- Queried how this process would remove the poll provision.
- Minister Simpson
- Signing off on an Advisory Board recommendation and appointing commissioners takes away the election process.
  - Talks through timing of legislative changes, poll provisions, and signing off on a new entity, with work still to be done in this regard.
- Cr G Cooper
- Is in favour, however expressed the need for caution on being seen to "fix" the process.
- Minister Simpson
- There is a need for further work in this area before further advice can be provided.
  - Commented on finding a way through legislative issues.
  - Process should be simpler for four local governments wanting to come together.
  - The suggestion has some merit, however needs to look at legislative implications.
  - Community may not be pleased with immediate appointment of commissioners.
  - Will investigate further.
- Mr R Hooper
- Suggested that Minister Simpson talk to the Department in relation to the Kalgoorlie/Boulder merger done under Carmen Lawrence.

- Process commenced on 21 February with the Director General of the Department being appointed as Commissioner, and the combined Councils became the reference group.
  - Election was held on 22 May, with conclusion by 1 June.
- Minister Simpson
- The poll provision amendment is activated if you dissolve two districts.
  - Kalgoorlie's boundary moved to encompass Boulder, so only the Boulder district was dissolved, negating the poll provision.
  - This process could be one Council extending its border to encompass another; then the process is repeated to encompass another, and so on.
  - Provided example of Geraldton extending its border to encompass Chapman Valley, again in this instance there is no poll provision.
- Cr G Cooper
- Drew attention to Minister Simpson's comment in relation to what is happening in the metropolitan area.
  - Changes to the current poll provisions will provide an opportunity to sell the process.
  - If the democratic process is interfered with, it will not work.
  - This process needs to stand on its own merit.
  - If the process fails, then those opposed to reform will be left to "sort things out".

- Cr P Hooper
- Suggested that if the amalgamation is successful, in the future the boundary is extended to include Goomalling, Toodyay and Beverley, to become "the City of Avon".
  - Has discussed this suggestion with a few Participants.
  - Sooner or later such steps will need to be taken.
  - This Group has undertaken case studies and business plans, and is aware of the enormity of merging local laws, etc.
  - Believes the amalgamation can be successful, particularly if the poll provision legislation is amended.
  - This suggestion may complicate matters and be moving too fast, but such matters need to be "placed on the table" for discussion, and perhaps should form phase 2 of the reform process.
  - Having a total population of 8,000 will be no more effective than 2,000 or 4,000; what should be discussed is 20,000.
- Minister Simpson
- Suggested that Cr P Hooper has some good ideas.
- Chairman
- Provided comment on the reaction by local government representatives in attendance, and the Executive Officer, in relation to Cr P Hooper's suggestion.
- Cr G Cooper
- Believes Cr P Hooper's suggestion is fraught with danger.
  - Suggested that people are getting a "fixation" with numbers, namely that 20,000 is where the Group needs to be.

- Does not believe that this applies to Western Australia given the economies of scale.
- Numbers are the economy of scale for the Metropolitan area, whereas distance is for the country.
- With the spread across a much larger country area, the effect and value of the amalgamation will be lost.
- Suggested that the Group will be "shooting themselves in the foot" to act on this.
- In particular given the Group's stance on not amalgamating with Northam and other councils, and reasoning for remaining with the existing arrangement.
- Would push to work with these Councils under subsidiary legislation, achieving outcomes without an amalgamation process.
- Respects Cr P Hooper's views, however the Group need to prove the success of the current proposal in the first instance.
- Scope for future cooperation.
- Expressed caution in the timing of such discussions, with concern on community reaction.
- Disappointment that the subsidiary legislation was not successful.
- Important that such legislation is adopted with control by the Minister for Local Government, for both country and metropolitan areas.
- This model works effectively in South Australia, and provides the legal entity to work on projects with the removal of red tape.

- Options have been researched by this Group, including the current Act and regional legislation.
  - Suggested that this issue needs to be revisited, as it has a lot of potential for local government.
  - Believes that sparsely populated areas do not need to amalgamate, but need the legislation to permit them to work together.
- Minister Simpson
- WALGA have raised this matter, with work being done in this regard.
  - Drew attention to five regional councils in the metropolitan area who were fundamentally formed to deal with waste.
  - Concerns have been raised where the City of Stirling, who has an invested interest in the Mindarie Regional Council (MRC) and a population of 200,000, is sending its waste to the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC) for a cheaper fee.
  - The MRC are seeking Ministerial input into this situation.
  - With a \$90M debt, and one Council's withdrawal from the process, affects the MRC's ability to pay its debt.
  - One recommendation from the Robson Report is that the State Government take over waste management.
  - The State is not inclined to do so, however recognises that there is a need for policies to be put in place to deal with waste management.
  - Believes that five Regional Councils may be too many for Perth.

- The Forum of Regional Councils (FORC) is working on reducing the five Regional Councils to three, ie a north, an east, and a south.
  - There is a need to invest in smart technology, and incinerators to energy machines, for this purpose.
  - Subsidiary groupings work well in South Australia.
  - Concern that after sign off on a subsidiary group, the Minister has no power and no input.
  - Need to ensure that debt associated with such groupings is not placed back on the ratepayer.
  - Understands what the Group is hoping to achieve by a subsidiary group, however seeks patience while further work is undertaken in relation to this.
- Cr G Cooper
- Offers the Executive Officer's assistance to Minister Simpson in this regard.
- Chairman
- Drew Minister Simpson's attention to Participants' positive comments in relation to local government reform at this meeting.
  - Suggested that Cr P Hooper's earlier comments in relation to expanding the Group's boundary to encompass other areas is a debate that needs to be had at some point.
  - The priority however, is to see the current proposal through.
- Cr P Hooper
- Advised that his earlier comments were made to demonstrate to Minister Simpson that this Group was serious about the reform process.

- Whether it is a boundary change or the introduction of subsidiary legislation, reform is on the table to be discussed in whatever form it needs to be, in order to achieve maximum benefit for the community.
- Cr G Cooper
- Drew attention to Royalties for Regions funding, and the Country Local Government Fund.
  - Funding has potential to be used creatively for the reform process.
  - This Group supports the Country Local Government Fund continuing.
  - Whilst not directly Minister Simpson's responsibility, seeks his support in maintaining this funding.
- The Group has fought vigorously to at least maintain funding at a 50% pro rata level, instead of it moving to a regional or State competitive basis.
- It is evident through the Systemic Sustainability Study (SSS), Forward Capital and Asset Management Plans, that the Group will have a significant infrastructure renewal gap.
  - Strongly supports the funding being on a 50% pro rata basis, and not on a regional or State competitive basis.
  - In the country rates generally account for only 25-30% of a local government's income.
  - Federal and Government Assistance Grants (FAGS) are important.
  - Concerned with a "hit and miss" allocation of funding.



- Believes funding should remain at a minimum of 50% pro rata, at least until infrastructure renewal gaps are reduced significantly.
  - If funding is regional and goes toward major projects such as roads or sewerage infill, this would be a better outcome than State competitive.
  - Believes funding formula was originally based on FAGS funding.
- Minister Simpson
- Clarified that the Royalties for Regions and Country Local Government Fund are not his jurisdiction.
  - Commented on funding provided to the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale through these funding allocations.
  - Serpentine Jarrahdale has 12% growth and Byford has 8% growth, with infrastructure struggling to cope.
  - The Integrated Planning Framework (IPF) has been a topic of discussion during his country visits.
  - Traditionally councils have been operating on a budget process cycle, however the IPF process moves thinking to an asset management base.
  - Asset based management looks at the life cycle of assets and how such assets will be maintained, renewed and replaced.
  - Almost all councils have an asset gap, however the IPF process takes steps to manage and address this.
  - Such IPF reports can be attached to grant applications and will clearly demonstrate the need identified.

- Commented on Port Hedland's construction of a recreation centre, however are now facing the possibility of closing its library.
- Queried the investigation and development process undertaken by Port Hedland.
- The required strategic planning forces local governments to think broader, and look at the bigger picture.
- Provided comparison of replacing a tractor, looking at the hours it has already done, and assessing if it will last another season.

Chairman

- Suggested that using IPF reports for funding applications would be applicable to all Councils.
- This becomes a problem in itself because all Councils are competing for the same money.
- Observed that the Wheatbelt has fallen behind the City, with some Wheatbelt towns being "tired"
- The local component of Royalties for Regions had been instrumental in getting some new infrastructure into these towns.
- If the funding continues, it will help the region a lot.

Mr R Hooper

- Suggested that Minister Simpson needs to talk with a number of industry people.
- The Department of Planning will need to integrate four Town Planning Schemes.

- The Department of Planning have stated that there cannot be any more rural residential subdivisions beyond the scarp unless scheme water is available, however this is not possible.
- These are considered policy decisions from bureaucrats rather than the relevant Minister.
- There needs to be a lot of drive from the Government on how such matters are to be dealt with.
- The concept of the Integrated Planning Framework is good, and it is working well with this Group.
- Has an issue with professionally creating a 10 Year Financial Plan that is not "correct", ie there are a lot of unknowns.
- There are no forward estimates and no guarantees beyond Year 1.
- A lot of guess work has gone into preparing the 10 Year Financial Plan, with questions being raised down the track if the statements are not achieved.
- This will put the Group in conflict with the community.
- All aspects of the Asset Management, Workforce and Strategic Community Plans are accurate; the issue rests with the 10 Year Financial Year Plan, when such matters as Royalties for Regions, Roads to Recovery, Heavy Haulage Provision, and other funding is unknown.
- Queried if Disability Services will be placed back upon local government.
- Queried the chance to meet with Minister Simpson on an industry level.

- Drew attention to the Port Hedland issue, stating that the Act says a local government "may" have a library, and once they say they will, they are committed.
  - In York's case, \$78,000 per year, or a 2.5% rate increase, to provide the service that some would say is a Government service.
  - The Bushfires Act states that a local government "may" have a bush fire brigade, and if it does, must undertake a number of tasks.
  - Suggested that as an industry, local government can see where it fits into the bigger Government picture, however are not being told the full story, or given the reasons behind this.
  - Suggested that Minister Simpson call a meeting following Local Government Week for all 43 country Shire Presidents.
  - Stated that the President and Councillors of this Group are fighting a lone battle in relation to structural reform.
  - There is a strong need for a Ministerial statement on structural reform to eliminate the loss of the process by a small group of anti reformists.
  - This Group is trying to sell at local value, which is thought to fit with the State value, without having clear direction and advice from the Government in this regard.
- Minister Simpson
- Provided comment on the Kelmscott Bush Fire affecting the Darling Range Electorate.

- If the Department of Planning approve a subdivision in the hills without scheme water, they are potentially liable for loss of property life, hence the cautionary measures.
- The Kelmscott fire predominantly went through private property.
- Authorities had constructed fire breaks and done prescribed burns.
- Predominant issue was with private property and fire preparedness in this regard.
- There needs to be more work done in relation to private ownership of land.
- Concern that agencies are not driving the process with local governments has been raised a number of times during this country visit.
- Issues such as the time taken to get a zoning amendment, or Town Planning Scheme adopted.
- Aware that there is a problem, with a need for someone to take a lead role in resolving some of these issues.

Mr G Fardon

- Provided a local perspective on structural reform.
- Quairading has had eight public information sessions.
- Four more specifically on this Group's proposal, prior to this on SEAVROC and shared services.
- The community is saying that there is not enough information or basis in the Regional Plan.

- 180 people attended the second last meeting, with 100 at the last.
- It is unknown how many will attend the Advisory Board Hearing in two weeks.
- Advisory Board is holding four Hearings in four towns over four days.
- Two prospective candidates will run on the single issue of anti amalgamation, and in particular this Group's proposal.
- This Group has produced a fantastic Regional Business Plan, which has the backing of all Councillors involved bar a couple.
- Implored Minister Simpson to make a clear statement for this Group and rural Councils in general.
- This is needed more at the moment than amendments to poll provisions.
- Has queried Mr R Earnshaw on the timing of the Advisory Board's recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, versus amendment of poll provisions.
- Advised that attendees at the Quairading public meetings were not all necessarily against the proposal, but were drawing a lot of people in with a lot of misinformation.
- A resident asked to make a presentation on the subject at this meeting.
- A lot of pressure is coming back on Councillors and staff, primarily due to the lack of information and direction.
- Comment at last public meeting was "if it is voluntary, why go first".
- Argued that it is better to position the Council for the future, and better to go with the Group that works well together.

- Community is saying "wait until the State Government does something".
  - Prefers to be placed in front of the game, rather than behind.
  - Albeit that some in the community are asking good questions, there are a lot of negatives.
  - York residents are attending Quairading's public meetings, and this situation is repeated at other Participating Local Government meetings.
  - Real risk if polls are called under the current provisions, unless there is some timing and clear direction provided.
  - Thanked Minister Simpson for hearing his comments.
- Minister Simpson
- Commented on fear of reform and change.
- Cr T Boyle
- Queried if Minister Simpson could make a statement prior to the Advisory Board Hearings being held in Participating Local Governments at the end of July 2013.
- Minister Simpson
- Offered to make a statement detailing:
    - Great process working together.
    - Government looking for reform in the country and have asked for this.
    - Metropolitan statements will reinforce this, and provide confident in the process.
  - Cannot pre-empt decision of the Advisory Board.

- Can provide some confidence and make some good statements on congratulating this Group on its progress and moving forward.
  - Acknowledged that silence is not helpful.
- Mr G Fardon
- Reconfirmation of transitional cost arrangements is required as people are even doubting the veracity of this document.
  - Positives need reinforcement from the Minister Simpson.
- Minister Simpson
- Appreciates the difficulty in dealing with some ratepayers who are not informed or partially informed.
  - Provided example of Kalamunda spending \$8,000 writing to every ratepayer following the Robson Report.
  - This correspondence included an information brochure, which was considered somewhat skewed.
  - Kalamunda did not reach the 50% required, with only 40.1% responding.
  - Believes there is a "lacklustre" approach in the metropolitan area, as opposed to the country where ratepayers are more aware of their local government and its undertakings.
  - Fears include the perceived loss, such as a sporting facility or town name, with such concerns being more emotive.
  - Residents and ratepayers do not see the work being done behind the scenes.



- Gave an assurance to provide words of support and encouragement to the Group.
  - Took on board that silence is not helping.
  - Reiterated that the Group will be able to take a lot away from the metropolitan announcements to be made.
  - Confirmed that the Advisory Board Public Hearings are to be held on 22, 23, 24, and 25 July 2013.
- Chairman
- Change takes time and is evident with this Group taking six years to get to this point, with robust debate having taken place as part of the process.
  - The change process is now happening with the community as they catch up with the leaders of the community.
- Cr G Cooper
- At the end of the day, Minister Simpson's statement will help.
  - People do not want to listen to the Department's perspective on why change is a good thing and why local government supports it.
  - Participating Local Governments have to sell the process.
  - It is a democratic process, with the opinion that if it is not successful, those that vote against will be left to sort things out.
  - This Group will give it their best shot.

Mr R Hooper

- Raised the issue of waste management.
- Metropolitan growth is going to require strong waste management.
- Questions the strength of the Waste Management Authority.
- This matter was raised seven years ago.
- Need for the Departments of Planning and Health to work with the Department of Agriculture.
- Soil types for containment of landfill are known, transport routes are known.
- Shuffling of responsibility between Departments and no answers provided as a result.
- Community feel that applications in relation to this matter are a waste of time, and that they are being disadvantaged as a result.
- Inability of the Premier to override decisions of the Environmental Protection Authority.
- Waste management needs to be definitive, providing example of tyres and recycling in Tammin, metropolitan landfill in York or Toodyay, etc.
- Acknowledged that this is not this Minister Simpson's portfolio, but sought understanding and support.
- York currently pays Northam \$89,000 per year for tipping fees.
- Five year's free tipping fees will be possible through a new proposed landfill, which would be closer and easier to service.

- Queried how such matters can be accurately reflected in a 10 Year Financial Plan or Annual Budget.
- Minister Simpson
- Provided example of the Cardup landfill site, and receipt of tipping fees for Serpentine Jarrahdale.
  - There is hope that the Cardup site will be transformed to a transfer station.
  - This site has four methane burners.
  - Concern that the bores in this area need testing.
  - Landfill and waste in general is a difficult issue.
  - Took comments on board.
- Mr R Hooper
- Commented on \$122M given to the Department of Environment and Conservation from the Metropolitan Waste Levy.
  - Commented further on clearing permits, in particular processing times, the number of staff involved, inspection of every tree of every application, and determination of nesting hollows.
- Chairman
- Queried if there were any other issues to raise with Minister Simpson.
  - Invited the Minister Simpson, Minister Chown and Ms J Lenney to take lunch with the Group at 12:30pm.
  - Sought direction from Minister Simpson in relation to constitutional recognition of local government.

- Minister Simpson
- As Minister of Local Government, does not have an opinion one way or the other.
  - State Government will not get involved in this debate as it is not their decision.
  - Provided comment on Financial Assistance Grants via the Grants Commission.
  - Federal Government provides funding to the State Government to allocate via the Grants Commission.
  - Concern raised with the State Government when the Federal Government linked financial assistance to the matter.
  - Unease centres on the "play of the day", who is in politics at State and Federal level as to what happens with funding. In particular, the ability to provide additional funding to marginal seats to assist with re-election.
  - Reiterated that people do not like change.
  - Stated that \$10M was provided to the "yes" campaign.
- Cr P Hooper
- Sits on the Grants Commission and represents small Shires.
  - Implored Minister Simpson to very strongly push against Eastern States players at the COAG meeting.
  - Concern with the "metro-centric" concepts being adopted, ie Greater Western Sydney and Geelong.
  - Interesting political shift with Geelong losing its manufacturing base, but now to have the bigger industry of Disability Services centred there.

- As a Grants Commissioner can see various areas being affected by this drive.
  - Population base is playing a big part in the thinking and decisions being made.
  - The entire Wheatbelt of 70,000 people cannot compete, even with Ballarat.
  - Reiterates that Western Australian country local government obtains 25-30% of their income from rates, with the rest required from other funding sources.
  - Push to reduce Roads to Recovery from 11% to 9% based on population rather than road length.
  - That 2% loss would be devastating.
  - Reiterates the request for Minister Simpson to assist wherever possible in retaining an equal share for Western Australia, and decisions are not taken on population numbers.
- Minister Simpson
- Took on board Cr P Hooper's request, whilst advising that the referendum held in New South Wales was successful.
- Chairman
- Called for final comment or questions in regard to amalgamation of this Group.
- Executive Officer
- Believed that all facets had been covered, while reiterating that without legislative change, success will be difficult.
- Cr P Hooper
- Extended thanks to Minister Chown for being in attendance, and acknowledged his great support of this Group.

- Minister Chown
- Thanked Cr P Hooper, and advised that it was most encouraging to have Minister Simpson at the meeting.
- Chairman
- Stated that Minister Simpson understands the Group's frustrations.
  - The Executive Officer has prepared the most comprehensive report in relation to this Group's proposal, with the Current and Future State Reports.
  - Suggested that this Group would have to be the most researched and documented Group of amalgamating local governments.
  - Frustration in getting the Group "over the line".
  - Reiterates that a Ministerial announcement would be of assistance.
- Minister Simpson
- Happy to help.
  - Confirms that the Advisory Board will be visiting the four Participating Local Governments, holding community meetings, asking questions, etc.
- Chairman
- Confident that the Advisory Board will recommend in favour, particularly given the extensive work undertaken to date, and the business case being very strong.
- Minister Simpson
- Need to work through the politics of it all.
  - Reiterates that he will do some work on the points raised.
  - Will be meeting with Cr Mel Congerton, Chairperson Local Government Advisory Board next week

- Mr R Hooper
- Drew attention to a West Australian Newspaper article detailing the start of the Advisory Board's 130 day period, commencing 10 July 2013.
  - Period was scheduled to commence on 25 May 2013, however due to issues surrounding poll provision amendments, it was delayed to 10 July 2013.
- Ms C Tuthill
- Confirmed that Mr G Fardon and Cr D Richards met with the Department in terms of the process.
- Mr G Fardon
- Advised that they also met with the Chairman of the Advisory Board.
- Ms C Tuthill
- Stated that there is considerable work for the Advisory Board needs to do, and a statutory process to be undertaken.
  - Commented on the timeframe of any legislative change that may occur, and the final report being presented.
  - It is hopeful that these will be complimentary.
  - Reiterates that the Advisory Board is an independent authority and will not be pushing a particular view when visiting communities, simply undertaking Hearings, receiving submissions, and responding to the process.
  - Possibility of Departmental representation at the Hearings on 22, 23, 24 and 25 July 2013.
  - Departmental presence will be to advise on reform generally, the Government's position and achievements in reform, what is happening in other States, etc, whilst also supporting the Chief Executive Officers.

- Hearings will be a combined effort.
  - Advisory Board will then finalise its report and submit to Minister Simpson.
- Minister Simpson
- Stated that the October elections will take place in the middle of this process.
- Mr G Fardon
- Thanked Ms C Tuthill for her comment.

There being no further comment or questions, the Chairman took the opportunity of thanking Minister Simpson on behalf of the Group for his time, attendance, and consideration of the issues that were raised. Further, that the Group looked forward to speaking with him again soon.

Following the Chairman's invitation to take lunch with the Group at 12:30pm, Minister Simpson advised that he, Minister Chown and Ms J Chenney would be pleased to take a late morning tea with Participants. Following Mr G Fardon's suggestion, and with agreement, the Meeting stood adjourned for morning tea at 11:26am.

With the exception of Minister Simpson and Ms J Lenney, the Meeting reconvened with the same attendees present.

The Chairman then drew attention to the Notice Paper before the Meeting, commencing with Item 1.2.

## **1.2 Announcement of Visitors**

Invitations were extended to:

- The Hon Tony Simpson MLA – Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering; Youth.
- Ms Caroline Tuthill - Senior Project Officer, Department of Local Government.
- Mr Tony Brown – Executive Manager, Governance and Strategy – Western Australian Local Government Association.



- Ms Joanne Burges – Regional Cooperation Manager, Western Australian Local Government Association.

## 2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### 2.1 Present

State Government	- Hon Tony Simpson MLA	- Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering; Youth
State Government	- Hon Jim Chown MLC	- Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer; Minister for Transport; Fisheries Member for Agricultural Region
State Government	- Ms J Lenney	- Principal Policy Advisor – Local Government Reform; Advisor to the Minister for Local Government
Shire of Cunderdin	- Cr R Carter	- President (Chair)
Shire of Cunderdin	- Cr C Gibsone	- Deputy President
Shire of Cunderdin	- Cr G Cooper	- Councillor
Shire of Cunderdin	- Mr P Godfrey	- Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Quairading	- Cr G Anderson	- Deputy President
Shire of Quairading	- Cr C Hawksley	- Councillor
Shire of Quairading	- Cr B Caporn	- Councillor
Shire of Quairading	- Mr G Fardon	- Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Tammin	- Cr S Uppill	- President
Shire of Tammin	- Mr I Bodill	- Chief Executive Officer

Shire of York	- Cr T Boyle	- President
Shire of York	- Cr R Scott	- Vice President
Shire of York	- Cr P Hooper	- Councillor
Shire of York	- Mr R Hooper	- Chief Executive Officer
Shire of York	- Ms T Cochrane	- Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Department of Local Government	- Ms C Tuthill	- Senior Project Officer
Western Australian Local Government Association	- Ms J Burges	- Regional Cooperation Manager
Dominic Carbone and Associates (DCA)	- Mr D Carbone	- Executive Officer
Dominic Carbone and Associates (DCA)	- Mr M Moody	- Assisting Executive Officer

## 2.2 Apologies

Shire of Cunderdin	- Mr P Naylor	- Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Quairading	- Cr D Richards	- President (Chairman)
Shire of Tammin	- Cr C Crane	- Councillor
Western Australian Local Government Association	- Mr T Brown	- Executive Manager – Governance and Strategy

## 2.3 Leave of Absence

Nil.

## 3. DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

### 3.1 Deputations

Nil.

### 3.2 Presentations

Given Minister Simpson's early attendance, with agreement his presentation was brought forward to the beginning of the Meeting. Discussion on those topics listed in the Notice Paper, are therefore detailed on pages 1 through 36 of these Minutes.

## 4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### 4.1 South East Avon Regional Transition Group Board Meeting held at the Shire of York Council Chamber on Wednesday, 22 May 2013.

*MOVED Cr T Boyle, Seconded Cr S Uppill, that the Minutes of the South East Avon Regional Transition Group Board Meeting, held at the Shire of York Council Chambers on Wednesday, 22 May 2013, be received.*

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### Business Arising from Minutes

Nil.

## 5. ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION

Nil.

## 6. REPORTS

The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking Attendees for the input to discussion with the Minister, advising that the Minister had stated at morning tea, that this was the most positive meeting during his country visit. Further, that this Group remains positive in the Minister's view in regard to reform.

<b>RTG-010-13</b>	<b>STATUS REPORT – OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM SEARTG BOARD MEETINGS</b> (File: rtg010-13)
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The Chairman drew attention to this item of business, with the Executive Officer providing comment as follows:

- Federal Assistance Grants Meeting with the Grants Commission has been postponed, with advice awaited from the Commission Chair on rescheduling this meeting.
  
- Local Government Advisory Board Cr D Richards and Mr G Fardon met with the Chairman of the Local Government Advisory Board on 11 June 2013.

Mr G Fardon advised that this meeting was most positive, and was held the same day as the Minister's Breakfast. Separate meetings were held with Mr R Earnshaw and Mr M Glasson. Discussions centred on the timing of the process, public Hearings, advertising, complexities of the process, and submissions. Further, that this proved to be a worthwhile exercise, with relevant information being disseminated and placed on the web.

The Chairman queried whether Participants would attend Advisory Board Hearings being held in each locality.

Mr G Fardon advised that such attendance was strongly encouraged by the Chair of the Advisory Board, with confirmation that - Tammin 22 July 2013

- Quairading 23 July 2013
- Cunderdin 24 July 2013
- York 25 July 2013

Mr G Fardon further advised that Quairading would be an apology for the York Hearing, as it coincided with their Ordinary Council Meeting of that date.

Cr P Hooper drew attention to earlier comments, raising concern with the perception of other Councils attending cross border meetings as being coercive, with Mr G Fardon reiterating the Advisory Board's suggestion of such attendance. Further, that it was his understanding that members of the public could attend any or all Hearings.

General discussion on the matter determined that cross border public attendance would occur.

Whilst understanding Cr P Hooper's concern, Cr S Uppill advised that residents from Cunderdin and Quairading had attended Tammin's public meetings, with Quairading advising of similar. Cr S Uppill suggested that this attendance provided an opportunity for explanation and information sharing across those borders.

Cr P Hooper then suggested if the anti reformists from York were going to attend Quairading's Hearing for example, it would be a positive to have those who are pro reform in attendance to support and provide comment if necessary.

Mr G Fardon advised that the Advisory Board Chair was very clear on the Board's terms of reference. The Board will not go into the pros and cons of the proposal, but would ask Shire Presidents and Chief Executive Officers for clarification and to respond to questions.

Following Mr I Bodill's query, Mr G Fardon advised that the Advisory Board will take questions from the public, with these being included in the notes of the Hearing. The Board will defer to the Chief Executive Officers and Presidents for any clarification required.

The Executive Officer advised that the Chief Executive Officers will be required to respond to issues raised by the public which do not relate to amalgamation.

Cr P Hooper queried if individuals requested a meeting with the Advisory Board, would the Participating Local Governments be informed of this, with Ms C Tuthill advising that this will be detailed in the final report.

Mr G Fardon advised that at the time of his meeting, Mr R Earnshaw indicated that there had been no such requests. Cr P Hooper then advised there were indications that there was to be one such request from York.

Ms C Tuthill provided additional comment covering:

- Hearings will be held with each individual Council on the dates listed, in addition to the public Hearings.
- Gauge how each individual community will respond to the Hearings.
- Cross border attendance.
- Concurred with Mr G Fardon's comments.
- Feedback received from Cuballing/Narrogin hearings was that the Board's attendance was interpreted as pro the proposed amalgamation.
- Suggesting taking briefing documents to the Hearings.



The Executive Officer drew attention to this item of business, providing comment on:

- Page 5 of the Notice Paper detailing areas of expenditure.
- Understands that agreements have been signed by York.
- Relevant purchase orders and invoices have been actioned.
- Recommendation is to receive this Report.
- Queried what action the Executive Officer is to take in order to commence the respective projects.

Following the Chairman's suggestion that the Executive Officer commence as he sees fit, Cr P Hooper clarified that the "City of Armadale" detailed on page 6 was the Western Australian city.

The Chairman sought input from the Executive Officer, with advice as follows:

- ICT Workshop with participation of the Working Group.
- Look at the impact of Cloud technology which uses internet servers without any connections.
- Concern with response times.
- Technical issues, if any, and how many.
- If amalgamation is to take place, the Group cannot afford to not deliver on day one.
- Be mindful in making decisions on the best way to travel forward.
- Must guarantee a result; cannot take a gamble.
- First impression counts; efficient delivery through an amalgamation process on day one will be a lasting impression.
- Once determined, the Executive Officer would engage Focus to provide a breakdown on equipment that can be purchased for the allocated \$130,000.

Ms C Tuthill provided comment on:

- The Department's IT Working Group has representation from Local Government, including Busselton, Armadale, Stirling and Wanneroo.
- The Working Group includes the Department's Chief Information Officer and IT Manager.
- Working Group had concerns with the amount of hardware and product proposed for the Group, and how the Group as an amalgamated entity would fund this into the future.
- Year 3 would require hardware and system upgrade at a considerable cost.
- The Working Group is working on alternative options.
- The Department operates via Cloud, and does not have a server room.
- Outside entity takes on board upgrade, risk, firewall, and backup with Cloud environment.
- Armadale has offered to do the trial, with space and resources being an issue in most Local Governments.

- Need to determine if the speed and band width is sufficient for the Group's needs.
- Confirms that the trial will be undertaken on site at Participating Local Governments.

General discussion followed, with input by Cr P Hooper, Mr I Bodill, Mr G Fardon, Ms C Tuthill, the Chairman, Ms J Burges, Cr T Boyle, and the Executive Officer, covering

- Education required on Cloud as a Group.
- Get a peripheral view of what Cloud will mean.
- Understanding that this will save money in the long run.
- The rationale behind Cloud would make the proposal a worthwhile financial situation for the Group.
- There would be savings with Cloud, if it proves to work for the Group; but this is yet to be proven.
- Important that response times are not affected.
- Current technology versus NBN rollout, and associated issues.
- Potential for cost savings, good communication, reliability, and more flexibility.
- Not all systems utilised are compatible with Cloud.
- It is understood that half of New South Wales local governments are now operating on Cloud.
- Offers the Group the ability to be at the forefront of technology.
- Lobby Politicians to support the Group moving ahead with technology.
- Scaled introduction of Cloud.
- There are a lot of Councils wishing to assist this Group because they see this as the future of IT.
- Cloud provides mobility, eg being in Tammin but accessing information for Quairading.
- NBN will have speed required.
- This Group knows what it is dealing with; it will be known quickly if Cloud is the answer.
- Confirmation that all four Councils will participate in the trial.
- Utilisation of wireless and satellite for some Participants.

The Chairman confirmed that all Participating Local Governments will join the trial, with the Executive Officer advising that discussion has covered Report RTG-012-13, however there was a need for a motion in relation to this Report.

Mr R Hooper then advised that Minister Chown had indicated his interest in attending lunch with the Group, with the Chairman advising the Meeting was almost complete.



Attention was then drawn to those projects detailed on page 5 of the Notice Paper, with Agreement that the Executive Officer would commence the projects listed, with proposals referred to the SEARTG Board in due course. Further, given estimates, there may be some tendering requirements to be observed, with clarification by Ms Tuthill this would be the case.

It was then:

***MOVED Cr S Uppill, Seconded Cr G Anderson, that:***

- 1. Report No RTG-011-13 – Pre Release Funding - \$295,000, be received.***
- 2. The Executive Officer be authorised to obtain quotations, prepare tender documents, and liaise with appropriate consultants in relation to the following projects:***
  - Computer Hardware/Software Upgrades.***
  - Review of Delegations.***
  - Review of Policy Manuals.***
  - Process Mapping and Procedural Manuals.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

<b>RTG-012-13</b> <b>SEARTG – INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (ICT)</b> (File: rtg012-13)
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The Chairman drew attention to this item of business, which was included in discussion on Report RTG-011-13, with agreement that all four Participating Local Governments will take part in the trial.

Mr G Fardon clarified that agreement was for a trial of Cloud not an assessment on appropriate software at this point, with the Executive Officer advising that this was to ensure communication is where it needs to be, software will follow.

***MOVED Cr T Boyle, Seconded Cr S Uppill, that:***

- 1. That the South East Avon Regional Transition Group Board approve the conduct of a trial in relation to “cloud” computing on the basis that each Participating Local Government agrees to partake.***
- 2. Subject to (1) above, the Executive Officer liaise with the respective Participating Local Governments’ Chief Executive Officers to coordinate the trial.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

<b>RTG-013-13</b> <b>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD JULY 2012 TO MARCH 2013</b> (File: rtg013-13)
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The Executive Officer advised that the only anomaly was a minor over expenditure in the Regional Business Plan which will be resolved with Mr R Hooper, apart from this all statements were in order.

***MOVED Cr T Boyle, Seconded Cr G Anderson, that the following receipts of payments for the period 1 July 2012 to March 2013, be received for:***

- ***Connecting Local Government and Structural Reform Implementation Grant;***
- ***Strategic Planning;***
- ***Regional Business Plan;***
- ***Asset Management Plans; and***
- ***Financial Planning.***

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

#### **7. BOARD MEMBERS' MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**

Nil.

#### **8. NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE**

Nil.

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

Cr P Hooper queried, if as a result of metropolitan structural reform, the Government had intentions of rationalising all local governments in relation to information technology, with Ms C Tuthill advising:

- There are thoughts along these lines.
- Matter was raised in the Country Local Government Fund Review.
- Standardisation of accounting systems and treatments.
- The matter is on the radar for the Department's Advice and Support Team.

Cr P Hooper suggested this Group would be ahead of the game if they were to align themselves with metropolitan Local Governments who operated on the preferred systems.

Mr G Fardon advised that the City of Melville share services with Cockburn and another Local Government because they can no longer afford the hardware and its upkeep.

The Executive Officer advised that Canning had undertaken shared services with the Shires of Wiluna and Carnamah, as neither of these Shires had a computer on site, all was managed from Canning.

Mr R Hooper provided Participants with a document detailing dot points for a joint communiqué, questioning if this should be finessed to go out under the signature of all four Participating Local Government Presidents to assist the process.

Mr I Bodill drew attention to "States and Territories", with Cr T Boyle advising that this document was triggered by a plethora of requests in York for the proposal to be "sold better".

The Chairman suggested that there be comment on the capacity to increase rates due to the economic situation in the Wheatbelt, however the proposal was a way of limiting this by becoming more efficient.

General discussion followed, with input by Cr B Caporn, Mr G Fardon, Mr R Hooper, and the Chairman covering:

- Informing the community that there has been a diminishing trend of Council income.
- Costs are going up all the time, with comparison to a small farm of 30 years ago being unviable in today's terms.
- People think Councils have a bucket load of money.
- Savings in the Business Plan were not being recognised or acknowledged as valid estimates.
- Doubling of rates within a five year period to cover costs if amalgamation is not progressed.
- Current structure does not allow rating to cover demands of the future.
- Acceptance that as an industry, rural rate bases cannot meet future infrastructure demands.
- This is the message to convey, as discussed by Minister Simpson.
- Statement can be made without the inclusion of figures.

It was agreed that Participants take the document and advise York of any required changes by Sunday, 14 July 2013. The Executive Officer would then liaise with BKay Design to formalise a newsletter for urgent distribution prior to the Advisory Board Hearings. The document must carry the signature of the four Presidents to convey that this is the regional message. The document would carry the "Securing Our Future" logo.

*MOVED Cr S Uppill, Seconded Cr G Anderson that following input by each Participating Local Government on the document distributed by Mr R Hooper, the Executive Officer will liaise with BKay Design in the preparation of an urgent newsletter carrying the "Securing Our Future" logo and the signature of each of the four Presidents, to be distributed to all communities prior to scheduled Advisory Board Hearings.*

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**9. NEXT SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION BOARD MEETING**

As agreed at the SEARTG Board Meeting of 5 April 2013, meetings will be held on the first Thursday of each month, unless there is insufficient business to address.

**10. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking all Attendees for their presence and input, with particular thanks extended to the Shire of Cunderdin for hosting the Meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 12:45pm.

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