

Securing Our Future...

"State Government Turns Up the Heat on Rural Councils"

The Premier Mr Colin Barnett, stated publicly last month, changes to Metropolitan Local Government will take effect as of July 2015 and this will flow directly onto Regional and Rural Local Government reform thereafter.

Premier Colin Barnett is quoted as saying "Councils that don't amalgamate will simply wither on the vine"

In his Statement the Premier also stated that funding for Rural Local Government would cease in line with these reforms drastically reducing support for individual councils whilst channelling Federal and State funds to those regions that have developed and implemented an amalgamation plan.

The Premier went on to say, "I implore people in Country Towns to get on with it and start setting up local government structures that are going to be relevant for the future" "we have Councils with less than 1,000 people and even less than 500 people, times have moved on and Local Government should move on..."

These statements clearly show the State Governments intent towards future Local Government funding, in particular in the rural areas.

The threat of "do nothing and you will be forced into amalgamation not of your choosing" has serious implications for the future sustainability of Rural Councils. Funds currently available to the four RTG Councils for Transition, valued at \$2.95



West Australian Premier Mr Colin Barnett

million is guaranteed by the State Government. If the Amalgamation Proposal does not proceed in its recommended form the Transitional Costs Agreement will cease and any new proposal and its Transition Costs will have to be borne by the respective Councils and their Ratepayers.

The proposed new Council has also secured guaranteed elevated levels of the Financial Assistance Grants over the first 5 years of Operation of the new Council. These highly elevated levels of Federal Funding (assessed and delivered by the WA Local Government Grants Commission) are not on offer to any "Stand Alone Council" or any of the four individual RTG Member Councils in an un-amalgamated state. This represents a potential loss of additional Government Funding of in excess of \$1.0M per Year over the 4 individual Councils.



The table below shows year by year the grants available to SEARTG from WALGGC in moving into amalgamation.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDING

YEAR	GRANT AMOUNT
2013/14	\$3,360,671 Preservation Amount
2014/15	\$3,845,793 Year 1 Preservation
2015/16	\$4,032,785 Year 2 Preservation
2016/17	\$4,153,769 Year 3 Preservation
2017/18	\$4,278,382 Year 4 Preservation
2018/19	\$4,406,733 Year 5 Preservation
2019/20	\$4,538,935
2020/21	\$4,675,103

Furthermore in a Statement made at the announcement of the recent State Budget, the Royalty for Regions Country Local Government Fund has been slashed to a mere \$34.5 million in 2013/14. Individual Councils will no longer receive the "Local Component Funds" totalling \$1.47M per year for the Four Councils which currently assists towards funding of the maintenance, renewal and development of much needed Community Infrastructure.

Firstly SEAVROC and then the SEARTG foresaw the pending situation and since 2006, has been researching and developing a fully costed Regional Business Plan for the sustainability and growth of our four rural councils being Cunderdin, Quairading, Tammin and York. This places our similar shires in a strong position to move into the future with a cohesive Place Management Structure for the betterment and prosperity of our communities.

It is unrealistic to think that without the State and Federal funds currently on offer and being withdrawn at the will of the State Government our individual "stand alone" shires can survive in the longer term.

In order to maintain our identity, to grow and prosper in a sustainable and effective way in the future has never been more clear. The change in the political funding of rural shires from 2013 means we can no longer sit on our hands and do nothing, if we do not change, change will be thrust upon us and not of our choosing, the future viability of our communities and its Assets and Local Government Services as we currently know it can no longer be guaranteed.

Over the coming weeks the SEARTG Committee will be releasing a series of fact sheets outlining important information on the positive effects amalgamation will have on our communities. This will include the importance of the Place Management Structure, Guaranteed Representation, Infrastructure Asset Management, Operating Costs and Surplus Projections and the Last Opportunity for Choice.

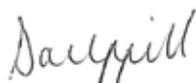
For all the information regarding SEARTG, the detailed Business Plan, Executive Summaries, Service Plans along with frequently asked questions regarding amalgamation go to our website at www.securingthefuture.com.au or your Shire Websites.



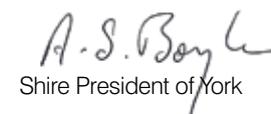
Shire President of Cunderdin



Shire President of Quairading



Shire President of Tammin



Shire President of York

