



Western Australian Regional Capitals Alliance

Meeting of the Alliance Members

10 December 2015 at 11.30am

John Glover Room, Geography Building, University of Western Australia

Members in attendance:

Dennis Wellington		Mayor, City of Albany
Ron Johnston		Mayor, Shire of Broome
Gary Brennan		Mayor, City of Bunbury
Shane van Styn		Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton
John Bowler		Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Peter Long		Mayor, City of Karratha
Kelly Howlett		Mayor, Town of Port Hedland
Andrew Sharpe		CEO, City of Albany
Kenn Donohoe		CEO, Shire of Broome
Andrew Brien		CEO, City of Bunbury
Ken Diehm		CEO, City of Greater Geraldton
Rob Radosevich		CEO, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Chris Adams		CEO, City of Karratha
Mal Osborne		CEO, Town of Port Hedland
Fiona Haslam-McKenzie		UWA
Paul Plummer		UWA
Sally Haslam		Secretariat
Invited guests		
Ryan Victa	11.00 – 12.00	Program Co-ordinator, Regional Centre Development Plan, Department of Regional Development
Stuart Hicks	11.00 – 12.00	Chair of the South West Regional Development Commission, Deputy Chair – Regional Development Council and member of the Regional Development Trust.

Proceedings

1. Introductions

2. Election of Chair

- Three members of the Alliance stood for the position:
 - Mayor Dennis Wellington (City of Albany)
 - Mayor Peter Long (City of Karratha)
 - Mayor Shane van Styn (City of Greater Geraldton)

The first vote resulted in a tie between Mayor Dennis Wellington and Mayor Peter Long. Mayor Shane van Styn withdrew from the contest and following a further vote from the members; Mayor Peter Long was elected as Chair and accepted the position.

3. Presentation by Mr Ryan Victa and Mr Stuart Hicks from the Regional Development Council of WA

Key points:

- Mr Hicks presented to the Alliance members regarding the progress of the Growth Planning strategy and updated the members on the current status.
- The main points of the presentation:
 - Growth plans are recognised in the State Planning Strategy and therefore a strong commitment from the State Government is evident.
 - WARCA has played a significant role in the growth planning process.
 - Mr Hicks pointed out that 78% of the WEA population is located in Perth, the highest of any state in Australia, and is expected to increase to 82% by 2030.
 - The process is about giving councils authority and power to plan for their own future growth giving them confidence whilst engaging the community in the process.
 - First stage centres – Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Broome, Greater Geraldton and Bunbury are well advanced in their planning.
 - No promise that Royalties for Regions (RFR) funding will flow as a direct result of the growth planning process.
 - However strong growth plans will receive Government support in the future.
 - Respective Regional Development Commissions (RDC's) are considered integral in the planning process.
 - Government agencies are getting a real sense of the need to engage with the regions to form alliances. Finding ways to do this effectively (from both sides) is the key. Growth plans will work better if State agencies are included in the plans – agencies want to get involved. For those cities/regional towns in Stage Two (Albany, Busselton, Carnarvon and Kununurra), Mr Hicks strongly recommended they get relevant agencies involved now in the discussion process.
 - It is important to not forget the role of private enterprise.

4. Q and A:

- Announcement of Stage Two will be made following sign off from Cabinet next year. There are no doubts about it going ahead and it would be preferable that it is announced before the next State election.
- Reports from those in the Stage One process are optimistic and enthusiastic with some reservations at the cost of the consultancy process. However most were positive on the results of the process so far.
- Department of Regional Development is using some of the economic modelling developed through WARCA
- Mr Hicks is conscious of the 'consultant overload' factor in this process however reminded the members that the Growth Plan document is owned by their communities and therefore the process should be regarded as providing an opportunity .
- What should Stage Two towns be doing?
 - Gaining momentum in the planning process
 - Get the Development Commissions on board
 - Start discussions with relevant Government agencies
 - Mr Hicks has a small amount of funding which could work to build capacity in the towns so that they are able to 'hit the ground running' when Stage Two is announced.
- Chair Peter Long thanked Mr Hicks and Mr Victa for their attendance and information provided.

5. Overview of WARCA, Research Agenda and Previous Strategic Direction (Professor Fiona Haslam McKenzie)

Following the PowerPoint (PP) presentation from Professor Haslam McKenzie, a number of points were raised:

- A challenge to the notion that the Alliance does not lobby (as stated in the PP) was discussed.
- Alliance members agreed that as long as the lobbying was apolitical, then it was deemed part of their agenda.
- Professor Paul Plummer told the members of the increasing interest from overseas of the economic modelling developed through the Regional Alliance project.
- Cluster analysis was discussed with Professor Paul Plummer who explained that it was research carried out on certain clusters of industry sectors and spatial interactions so that there is effective use of resources, savings in costs and an increase in productivity.
- Some concern was raised regarding the level of contact with the Department of Regional Development in particular and government more generally. Most members were very happy with their level of contact.
- Members questioned the inclusion of smaller towns into the Alliance (for example Busselton, Northam and Esperance). This was discussed at an earlier WARCA meeting however didn't progress. The criteria for the membership was regarded as:
 - Strategically significant in their catchment area

- Industry sector strength
- Industry resilience
- Population size
- Some concern at the idea of increasing the membership at this stage. Big enough and 'feels right' as it is.
- State Planning Strategy supports the city criteria.

6. Strategic Direction for 2016

Key points from the discussion:

- **Areas of concern:**
 - Some members were concerned at a perceived lack of benefits accruing from membership of the Alliance. It was regarded as important that tangible benefits for each City/Shire be achieved.
 - There was also concern from some at the dollars being spent on a consultant for the Growth Planning process.
 - There was concern about the role WARCA has in its relationship with both the State and Federal Government Ministers – there is a definite need to increase the effectiveness of the relationships with relevant Ministers and Government Departments.
 - Commitment has been an issue. There needs to be time spent on ideas and actions by all members to make the organisation work.
 - Meetings should be shorter – less rambling and with a clear purpose.
 - There is a lack of a clear strategy for WARCA – what are its Objectives and how should these be realised?
- **Successes** of the Alliance to date were considered and included:
 - The \$20M for Arts in Regional WA, which was lobbied by WARCA with a positive result
 - Funding for the Economic Development Plans, which was promoted strongly by WARCA
 - The UWA research which is universally considered to be ground-breaking
 - The value in the collegiate nature of the organisation - it is useful to be able to discuss issues with each other and learn from other councils.
- **Strengths** of the Alliance were generally agreed to be:
 - The ability to advocate as part of a group rather than a single entity and the protection this provides at a political level
 - The economic strength of the regions – Karratha alone has the 6th largest local government gross regional product in the nation
 - The fact that WARCA has a great deal of government and political experience in its ranks – this assists us becoming a body that will be recognised by the State
 - Sometimes it is difficult to see the cause and effect of the group, however, we cannot underestimate the influence the group has on the Government.
- **Purpose:** It was agreed we need to have a clear purpose for the organisation. Focus areas considered important were:

- Advocacy
- Policy Influence
- Research
- Promotion
- Information sharing and networking
- **Limits:** Areas WARCA was not considering being involved with included:
 - Joint procurement
 - Internal policy development
 - Advocacy on matters being pursued by WALGA and other State-wide institutions
 - Resource sharing
- **Way Forward:** Points raised included:
 - The need for a collective vision/statement on the role WARCA plays.
 - The need to plan, monitor and assess the function and effectiveness of the group.
 - Alliance members would like to see a Minister or a member of the relevant Ministerial Departments attend each of the WARCA meetings. At the very least a representative from the RDA should be at the WARCA meetings.
 - The CEO's should play a more strategic part in the Alliance.
 - UWA research has been a great success, however the group agreed that not enough has been made out of this work. Need to consider how we can do more with this.
 - We need to confirm or otherwise that the current seven WA capitals will comprise WARCA.
 - Secretariat to organise a meeting of CEO's before the end of February to prepare a draft Strategic Plan, budget and list of items to present to the Premier at the March meeting. **ACTION**
 - Secretariat to update MOU as per the Chair and with consultation with UWA. **ACTION**

7. Update on Status of Finances

Members have received the copies of the WARCA Membership Cash Balances and 2015/16 Contributions. Ken Diehm gave a summary of the financial status of the Alliance and has written a draft Budget for 2015/16 which is included in the document (Attachment 2).

Ken will table a draft Budget for 2016/17 at the CEO meeting to be held in February.

Motion: Move that the 0% balance option be adopted.

Moved Garry Brennan
 Seconded John Bowler
CARRIED

Chair Peter Long thanked Ken for the work he and the City of Greater Geraldton have done in providing this report. The Alliance members all agreed it was a huge task and were grateful for the work Ken Diehm and his team have completed.

8. Update on Secretariat and Website

Key points:

- Sally Haslam has been appointed to work in the position of the Secretariat.
- Website revision has been completed by Heartlands, an organisation in Bencubbin.
- Review of the new website was positive from the Members.
- Note – there is a spelling mistake in the word Senate which needs to be rectified. **ACTION**
- www.waregionalcapitals.com.au
- Discussion regarding the logo. The logo on all documentation should reflect the name of the organisation which is now *Western Australian Regional **Capitals** Alliance*. **ACTION**
- Chair Peter Long queried the September minutes. These had not been circulated and the members were unsure if they existed. Professor Haslam McKenzie to investigate. **ACTION**
- There were queries regarding the \$500 charge to gain ownership of the logo and another \$700 which Ken Diehm needed to chase up as outstanding in the accounts.

9. Other Business

- The members queried how often the meetings should be held. Professor Haslam McKenzie said the MOU stated at least quarterly meetings.
- CEO meeting to be teleconferenced and CEO's will decide what will be discussed at the March meeting.
- Venue of next meeting to be decided. UWA, Parliament House and WALGA were mooted as possibilities. CEO meeting will discuss and decide.
- Date of March meeting unconfirmed until the Premier's office confirms a date when the Premier can attend.
- CEO's to decide on a yearly calendar of meetings.
- Professor Haslam McKenzie thanked the members of the WARCA sincerely for their sincere and enthusiastic letters of support for the funding application for the Western Australian Centre for Regional Development.
- The group asked for a note of appreciation be sent to Ian Carpenter to thank him for his work. Chair Peter Long will write a letter of appreciation. **ACTION**
- Concerns about the level of red tape that Local Government was faced with were raised.
- Chair Peter Long noted that the Premier's support for WARCA is valued and appreciated.

There being no further business, the meeting was concluded at 2.20pm.