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Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries

Via email: actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Local Government Reform – Shire of Murray Submission

I present the following submission to the Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries (DLGSC) on behalf of the Shire of Murray.

In commencing this submission, the Shire brings to attention the very successful resource-sharing that the Shires of Murray and Waroona have been undertaking for almost a decade. This includes a shared Information Technology service (since 2013), an amalgamated Ranger service (since 2015), environmental health and building services (since 2017) and a shared CEO between 2019 and 2021.

With the significant resource sharing that has been demonstrated, the Shire of Murray has demonstrated its support for reform and for developing innovative solutions to ensure better service and value for money.

The reform package presented for public comment is, in general supported. The areas in which the Shire either oppose or make specific comment on are as follows:

- **3.1 Recordings and Live-Streaming of All Council Meetings**

Council isn't opposed to this proposal, however feels it is reasonable for the State Government to provide funding or at least a subsidy to assist this requirement.

- **3.5 – CEO's KPIs**

Council supports that the set Key Performance Indicators be published. However, it does not support the proposal to have the results of those KPI's published. By doing so, it could set the Council or CEO up for failure in that any area that may need development of did not reach the desired level could be scrutinised by vexatious ratepayers and be counter-productive. Also, it may sanitise the performance review and encourage an approach where things may be said in a review but excluded from the record.

With the CEO KPI's being published, if set requirements weren't met, residents would easily be able to find out through an enquiry or by asking a question at the Council meeting.

- 4.3 Introduction of Preferential Voting

Council supports the First Past the Post (FPTP) system as opposed to the differential voting system. The FPTP has been used very effectively in the past and reduces the potential for 'groups' or 'tickets' to form as part of an election campaign. A FPTP system encourages candidates to campaign on their own merits.

- 4.4 Public Vote to Elect the Mayor and President

Councils (or at least a Band 2 being a smaller Council) should have the option of having a popularly elected President or it voted by the elected members

This proposal is presented by the Shire to ensure that 'one-issue' electors are not able to present a potentially narrow-minded approach that may be very popular with voters but are just not feasible. For example, a candidate could campaign on a platform to risk its financial sustainability; for example, campaigning on a "reduce rates by 20%". By having the team pick their captain, unfeasible or single-issue campaigners would be exposed and that the team can pick the leader they wish to lead them.

- 6.6 – Audit Committee

Council does not support the majority of independent members on the Audit Committee. This erodes the role of Councillors and erodes the fundamentals of democracy.

- Previous Resolution in terms of reform - Requirement to Readvertising a CEO position when incumbent has been in the position for 10 years.

Council believes that it should have the power to make this decision. Currently, the Council can readvertise a CEO position at the end of any employment contract, whether it be 3, 5 or 10 years. However, if Council are satisfied with its CEO then it shouldn't have to allocate significant funds towards the process and potentially create a 'sham' process.

Council thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this important process.

Yours faithfully



Dean Unsworth
Chief Executive Officer