



Minutes of the Shire of Dumbleyung Structural Reform Community Meeting held at Mouluyinning Hall on Monday 3rd August 2009 at 7.30pm.

Attendance:

Cr Gordon Davidson	Moulyinning	Shire President
Cr Ross Ditchburn	Kukerin	Deputy Shire President
Cr B Bracknell	Dumbleyung	
Cr J Ball	Dumbleyung	
Cr M Brown	Dumbleyung	
Cr T Pearce	Moulyinning	
Cr J Dare	Dumbleyung	
Cr M Frame	Dumbleyung	
Cr G Wilson	Dumbleyung	
H Van Der Ende	Dumbleyung	Chief Executive Officer
P Godfrey	Dumbleyung	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
J Alderton	Dumbleyung	Manager of Works and Services
A Adams	Kukerin	Minute Secretary
S Leo	Kukerin	
D Leo	Kukerin	
M Gooding	Moulyinning	
H Gooding	Moulyinning	
G Gooding	Dumbleyung	
B Gooding	Dumbleyung	
K Gooding	Kukerin	
R Gooding	Moulyinning	
P Shields	Moulyinning	
T Smith	Dumbleyung	
C Smith	Dumbleyung	
L Smith	Dumbleyung	
G Smith	Kukerin	
D Smith	Dumbleyung	
M Angel	Dumbleyung	
M Davidson	Moulyinning	
L Davidson	Moulyinning	
J Davidson	Moulyinning	
D Davidson	Kukerin	
J Adams	Kukerin	
P Adams	Kukerin	
B Bartram	Dumbleyung	
L Bartram	Dumbleyung	

H Bairstow	Dumbleyung
J Bairstow	Dumbleyung
M Clune	Dumbleyung
S Pearson	Dumbleyung
A Pearson	Dumbleyung
R Forward	Dumbleyung
E Forward	Dumbleyung
R Willmott	Dumbleyung
E Mitchell	Dumbleyung
P Holmes	Dumbleyung
M King	Kukerin
P King	Kukerin
I Faulkner	Kukerin
N Faulkner	Kukerin
T Gray	Moulyinning
L Wilson	Dumbleyung
C Ball	Dumbleyung
M Taylor	Kukerin
K Taylor	Kukerin
G Taylor	Kukerin
K Ladyman	Dumbleyung
E Gossage	Dumbleyung
D Gossage	Dumbleyung
M Stephens	Dumbleyung
S Richardson	Dumbleyung
D Mott	Dumbleyung
D Bairstow	Dumbleyung
S McDougall	Dumbleyung
L Pearce	Moulyinning
K Alderton	Dumbleyung
G Burrows	Kukerin
R Atkins	Dumbleyung
B Atkins	Dumbleyung
S Tyler	Dumbleyung
D O'Donnell	Dumbleyung
P West	Dumbleyung
M Hudson	Dumbleyung
J Hudson	Dumbleyung
S Joyce	Kukerin
H Joyce	Kukerin
G Dent	Dumbleyung
J Beecroft	Dumbleyung

J Mott	Moulyinning
D Ware	Dumbleyung

Apologies:

M Clarke	Kukerin
D Hladio	Dumbleyung
B Bracknell	Dumbleyung
S Robertson-Hall	Dumbleyung
Z Eyre	Dumbleyung
L Dare	Dumbleyung
B Berkley	Dumbleyung
L Hannah	Dumbleyung
R Coles	Dumbleyung
C Batchelor	Dumbleyung
D Ward	Dumbleyung
S Gleeson	Dumbleyung
K Ward	Dumbleyung

Business of the Meeting

Cr Davidson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present. He then went through a power point presentation to outline the background of structural reform and inform the meeting of the Shire's actions so far; with a view to asking the question to the meeting "what would you like to see happen in the future?" He pointed out that today Premier Colin Barnett had announced that there would be amalgamations and reminded the meeting that he would require a motion to come from the floor which would give Council a direction for the next set of actions in the structural reform issue.

Cr Davidson outlined the fight the community has had so far to keep its services, such as the Hospital and the Police. So far these are fights the community has won; the community now has another fight on its hands if it wishes to keep its Shire.

Cr Davidson then explained the Systemic Sustainability Study report which the Shire has been working with by expanding its resource sharing. Previously under the SSS Report the Shire was deemed to be sustainable.

On 4th February 2009 the Shire was told by the Minister for Local Government that they had to inform him who the shire wished to amalgamate with and how many councillors would be representing. Since then no specific information has been forthcoming from the Minister about what he specifically wants from the Shires.

In April 2009 a checklist was submitted by the Shire to the Minister, which outlined current practice in administration, long term financial planning, and long term asset management among other things. The Shire was not told how the checklist would be assessed and has since been rated a category 2, which deems that the Shire should seriously consider amalgamation. Only one Shire in our region was rated as a category 1 which means they are deemed as being okay to remain as they are. The completion of the checklist was mandatory and done under the threat of council being sacked by the Minister. A forum was conducted in Perth prior to the deadline and was attended by Cr Davidson, and still no guidance was received from the Minister.

Council now has to put together a reform submission for the Minister, which is due on 31st August 2009. So far Council has stated that they do not believe an amalgamation will serve the community in a positive way.

In working towards resource sharing, Dumbleyung council has been involved with a group of five councils; Wagin, West Arthur, Woodanilling, Williams and Dumbleyung – known as the 4WD Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). Council has been working with the 4WD VROC for a number of years but the group has so far not been moving ahead. Council has stated that this group of Councils shall not amalgamate and that Council wishes to withdraw from this grouping of Councils on the grounds that in a recent survey the community stated that it would prefer to work with an eastern group of councils. As a result of this Council has moved into negotiations for resource sharing with the Shires of Lake Grace and Kent.

Cr Davidson informed the meeting that at the upcoming WALGA Annual General Meeting there was a motion to reject the Ministers amalgamation proposal.

Questions from Members of the Public

- M Gooding asked how would the Shire function if it were to be amalgamated with the Shires of Lake Grace and Kent.
- The President replied that the likely structure would be on Chief Executive Officer, two Deputy Chief Executive Officer's, the works crews would have to stay as they are and the functions of Rates, and payroll etc would all be managed from one office. There would likely be six councillors, two representing the Dumbleyung Shire.
- M Gooding commented that "amalgamation will destroy our community and I don't see how it would be cost efficient."
- G Gooding asked the President what Nationals Leader Brendan Grylls thinks.
- The President advised that Mr Grylls has stated that the National Party do not support forced amalgamations.
- Cr Ditchburn stated that for the smaller city councils amalgamation could be a good thing, due to the fact that travel distances are smaller and a works crew would not have to travel such a great distance as they do here in the bush.
- C Smith stated that she would be against the 4WD grouping of Councils as it would be too easy to become pushed under the jurisdiction of Narrogin in the future.
- The President replied that Dumbleyung Council shared that concern.
- R Gooding asked if the shires of Lake Grace and Kent had stipulated their preference for a grouping.
- The President replied that they had and so far the Dumbleyung council has an amicable arrangement with both these shires.
- Cr Ball asked if the Wagin shire had stated its preferences.
- The President replied that the Shire of Wagin preferred the 4WD grouping of councils.
- M Clune asked what would happen if Dumbleyung, as a sustainable shire, ends up being amalgamated with a shire that is in financial debt.
- The President explained that the current rates would increase.
- Cr Bracknell added that we would also see a reduction in services.
- D Mott asked if it is worth our while to amalgamate or will we lose our facilities.
- The President replied that he did not see what the benefit of amalgamation would be. Our small community would not likely be the base of any major facility under an amalgamated council.

- D Mott stated that he does not see any benefit from a forced amalgamation.
- M King stated that he is against amalgamation but asked if it would cost us to stay as we are.
- H Bairstow commented that we will lose our identity whichever way councils goes; either west to the 4WD VROC or east to Lage Grace and Kent.
- The President replied that there is no guarantee that the Minister will accept our proposals and we could end up being told what to do.
- E Mitchell raised concerns for the Dumbleyung Hospital, stating that a larger shire would not give the hospital the support it needs and receives from the Dumbleyung Shire. Amalgamation would certainly be a bad thing from a health point of view.
- The President agreed that an amalgamation would lead to a loss of services for our proud community.
- Cr Bracknell pointed out that Kalgoorlie had put together a community petition.
- The Chief Executive Officer advised of the technical requirements of getting a petition accepted.
- G Gooding asked if there was any background on other amalgamated shires from the Eastern States.
- The Chief Executive Officer advised that in Queensland, Wheatbelt shires were mostly left alone.
- G Gooding said there was merit in the smaller city councils being amalgamated, but not the Wheatbelt shires.
- The President stated that he did not understand what benefit Minister Castrilli sees in amalgamating Wheatbelt shires.
- M Gooding asked what will happen to our councillors under an amalgamation.
- The President advised that councillors would be trained as professional councillors.
- T Smith enquired about the meeting being held in Wagin tomorrow with the Minister and asked if there had been much publicity.
- The President commented that the press seemed to have stayed away from the issue so far.
- M Clune raised the example of the Dumbleyung District High School undergoing forced closure and stated that in hindsight the school could perhaps have looked for different solutions rather than just refusing to be closed. She asked if we were going to fight the idea of amalgamation or go with it but under our own terms.
- The President said that this is what needs to be decided at this meeting.
- Cr Bracknell stated that the Shire should fight outright and that in the end the Minister will end up forcing the Shire to amalgamate anyway.
- C Smith commented that to fight is fine, but it would be better to go with our own choice under an amalgamation.
- The President explained the three tiers of government; Federal, State and Local, and stated the amalgamation issue is all about politics and money.
- M Gooding asked if there is enough feeling in the bush to go and march on St Georges Terrace and commented that the closer we get to the next election the more power the people will have.
- The President replied that we may not have the support we need at this stage but perhaps modern technology could be utilised as a protest.
- G Gooding asked about Colin Barnett at the next election.
- The President replied that the amalgamation issue had not been to Cabinet but the Minister does have the power to do this.

- L Davidson asked if the shire could use tomorrow's meeting with the Minister and the feelings generated from today's meeting as weight to use in Perth.
- The President replied that there is certainly weight in numbers and that Dumbleyung has backed up a communication to WALGA to use weight in this issue. He said that WALGA's official position is that it supports the SSS report and read out the motion going up to the AGM next week.
- H Bairstow commented that it is obvious this issue is deeply political; therefore the shire needs to fight politically.
- C Smith asked if it was worth getting together with other shires to fight.
- The President advised that this is what will happen at local government week.

Motion 001

Moved M Gooding

Seconded H Bairstow

That the Shire of Dumbleyung shall not amalgamate with anyone.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 002

Moved M Clune

Seconded Cr Ball

That if the above motion is unacceptable to the Minister then the Shire of Dumbleyung determines to amalgamate with the Shires of Lake Grace and Kent; with our own terms and conditions being negotiated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY/1

The President reminded all community groups that they must renew their current agreements with the Shire of Dumbleyung in order to gain some security if an amalgamation does occur.

S McDougall asked if groups from outside the Shire can make a submission.

The President replied that any group can go straight to the Minister if they wish.

Closure

The President thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.10pm.