

**NOTICE OF
SPECIAL MEETING & AGENDA**

To:
All Councillors

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a **SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL** will be held in the **Council Chambers**, Council's Administration Centre, Orchard Avenue, Armadale commencing at **7.00 pm** on

MONDAY, 31 AUGUST 2009

R S TAME
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

27 August, 2009

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

**2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE
(previously approved)**

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Minimum time to be provided – 15 minutes (unless not required).

A procedure has been adopted by Council to ensure the orderly conduct of Public Question time and a copy of this procedure is attached to the Council Agendas made available in the public gallery.

The public's cooperation in this regard will be appreciated.

4 BUSINESS BEFORE COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURAL REFORM

To urgently consider the matter of the City's Final Submission to the Minister for Local Government on Structural reform.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGY

WARD All
FILE REF: G/AM/1
DATE 27 Aug 09
REF RST
RESPONSIBLE CEO
MANAGER

In Brief:

- On 5 Feb 2009 Minister Castrilli announced a package of wide-ranging reform strategies and has invited advice from Councils within the next 6 months.
- A Local Government Steering Committee and four working groups was formed to oversee, advise and guide the process.
- Guidelines outlining the State Government's objectives were released in late February requiring Councils to make an initial submission by 30 April 2009, followed by a final submission by 31 August 2009 following a community consultation process.
- The Department's assessment of Council's initial submission in April indicates that the City of Armadale has the organisation and financial capacity to meet current and future needs.
- Community consultation was undertaken in August in various forms – an online questionnaire, random telephone survey of 200 residents by a consultant and a public meeting held on 19 August 2009. Results of the consultation are outlined in the Reform submission.
- A Councillor workshop was held on 12 August to discuss the issue of number of elected members and ward representation.
- Advice has since been received from WALGA (12 August) that the Minister has now extended the deadline for submissions to 30 September 2009 which will allow Council some flexibility in considering its final submission.
- Council's draft submission on Structural Reform has been forwarded under separate cover.
- It is recommended that Council endorse the *City of Armadale's Reform Submission* as presented at Attachment A-1.

Tabled Items

Nil

Officer Interest Declaration

Nil

Strategic Implications

The Steps to the Future

These have been built around six areas of initiative:

1. *Planning ahead and evaluating progress*
2. *Building our community*
3. *Communicating and marketing*
4. *Developing our City*
5. *Developing our organisation*
6. *Providing physical infrastructure and caring for the natural environment*

Legislation Implications

Nil

Council Policy/Local Law Implications

Nil

Budget/Financial Implications

Nil

Consultation

Elected Members

Neighbouring Local Authorities

Residents & Ratepayers

BACKGROUND

On 5 February 2009 the Minister for Local Government, the Hon, John Castrilli MLA, announced strategies for local government structural reform

The first stage of the reform process required local governments to complete a Local Government Reform Checklist.

This checklist covered information such as whether a local government had strategic, business and financial management plans and Councils were asked to identify their capital reserves, income streams and debt levels.

The City submitted the requested Local Government reform Checklist to the Minister for Local Government in late April 2009.

In forwarding Armadale's response to the Minister's checklist, the City advised that it has considered all potential partners for amalgamation and "the largest combination of Councils".

The Mayor and CEO met with their counterparts at the two authorities sharing the greatest community of interest, the City of Gosnells and the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

The CEO also held discussions with CEOs of all other neighbouring Councils. The outcome of those discussions is outlined in the City's conclusion to the checklist.

The City has determined that after considering the checklist and discussion with our neighbouring authorities, Armadale's ultimate population of 120,000 provides a sound base for an effectively governed local government.

Accordingly, it respectfully submitted that there is *no benefit, financial or otherwise, to be gained by amalgamation with neighbouring authorities.*

On 22 July 2009, the City received the Department of Local Government's assessment of the City's Reform Checklist. The City was identified as a Category 1 local government, meaning that it had provided evidence to indicate that there is existing organizational and financial capacity to meet current and future community needs.

The assessment of the City of Armadale's checklist and associated documents identified many key strengths, in particular:

- demonstrable evidence of best practice approach to integrated long term strategic planning;
- demonstrable evidence of best practice approach to asset and infrastructure planning;
- demonstrable evidence of long term financial management planning in place to supplement future financial viability and planning;
- demonstrable evidence of a comprehensive staff attraction and retention policy;
- demonstrable evidence of a strategic, human resources approach to employee training and professional development to build organisational capacity;
- demonstrable evidence of a coordinated approach to attract investment and facilitate local economic growth in the district;
- demonstrable evidence of significant partnerships negotiated with levels of Government and the private sector to attract investment and enhance community service provision and infrastructure;
- demonstrable evidence of a strategic, corporate approach to community engagement and consultation;
- demonstrable evidence of planning for demographic change and population growth incorporated into key corporate documents;
- demonstrable evidence of environmental management planning incorporated into corporate planning documents;
- planning and finance strategies in place to provide optimal service delivery in response to community expectations;
- identified opportunities for working in partnership with neighbouring local governments to address regional issues.

Whilst the checklist and attached documents demonstrate a best practice approach in long term planning by the City, areas where improvements are required were identified in relation to:

- some delays noted with processing building and development applications; and
- the need to encourage greater community participation in voting at local government elections.

On Wednesday 12 August, the WA Local Government Association advised as follows:-

Please be advised that at the WALGA State Council Meeting on Sunday 9 August 2009, The State Council resolved to request the Minister for Local Government to extend the time for Local Governments to submit their reform submissions to the end of September 2009.

Due to the direction provided at the Local Government Convention by the Premier, Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Local Government; many Local Governments are reconsidering their positions and require more time to develop reform proposals in consultation with their Communities.

We have been advised that the Minister has accepted this request and Local Governments can have to the 30th of September to complete their submissions. The Minister's office has stated that they look forward to receiving those submissions that are complete now, however those Councils that require more time can have until 30 September 2009.

COMMENT

The second phase of the reform process involved community consultation and the preparation of the City's final submission.

A timeframe was established as follows:-

- feedback/submission by 14 August 2009
- Public Meeting on Wednesday 19th August 2009 and
- report to Council on Monday 24 August 2009.

Council at its meeting on 24 August 2009 considered preliminary results of the community consultation undertaken to date.

Community Consultation

Following receipt of the Department's response to Council's original submission, advertisements requesting community comment on the Structural Reform Issues had been published in the local press on Thursday 30th July (Examiner) and Tuesday 4th August 2009 (Comment News).

A Media Release was issued and the City's website provided a direct link from the Homepage to Council's submission on Structural Reform and the Department's response.

The website also contained a questionnaire on the key issues.

A consultant group was commissioned to undertake a telephone survey and conduct analysis of the results.

On Wednesday, 12 August Councillors and Executive Directors attended a workshop to discuss the issue of number of elected numbers and ward representation.

The consultation process concluded with a public meeting held on Wednesday 19 August 2009 to discuss community's views on amalgamation, ward boundaries and number of elected members.

While Council does not propose to change its consultation schedule, it does allow some flexibility with regard to considering Council's final submission on 24 August. Additional information will be tabled at Committee.

Results of the Community Consultation are included in the *City of Armadale Local Government Reform Submission*, a Draft of which has been forwarded to all Councillors under separate cover.

RECOMMEND

1. That Council, having regard for the outcomes of its Community Consultation process and in accordance with the Minister for Local Government's guidelines for developing a Reform Submission, advise the Minister as follows:

A. Voluntary Amalgamation and Boundary Changes

That the City of Armadale:

- does not propose to amalgamate with any other local governments,
- will continue to review and be supportive of boundary changes with neighbouring local governments where there is a demonstrated net benefit to the affected communities.

B. Number of Elected Members

That the City of Armadale can see no tangible benefit in the Minister's proposal to reduce the number of elected members to between 6 and 9, especially for urban local governments like Armadale. Furthermore, if an amendment to the Local Government Act resulting in a reduction to the maximum number of elected members on a Council is to eventuate, then the City of Armadale is of the view that the number for urban local governments be set at between 8 and 12 and if this were to occur, then the City of Armadale would propose reducing its member numbers from 14 to 12.

C. Regional Grouping

That the City of Armadale:

- supports working collaboratively with other local governments on a regional grouping basis
- already operates a number of very successful joint local government initiatives namely, the *Rivers Regional Council* involving the local governments of Gosnells, South Perth, Mandurah, Murray and Serpentine-Jarrahdale; the *Outer Metropolitan Growth Councils Group*, and several Land Care and Environmental based Programs; and
- will continue to actively examine, evaluate and implement joint local government initiatives as and when the opportunity presents and when it can be demonstrated that there are tangible net benefits to the communities of the participating local governments.

2. That Council endorses the *City of Armadale Local Government Reform Submission* being submitted to the Minister for Local Government as being the rationale and evidence in support of the above recommendation to the Minister.