



# MINUTES

## Annual Electors Meeting

Held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7:00pm  
Shire of Brookton Council Chamber  
14 White Street, Brookton

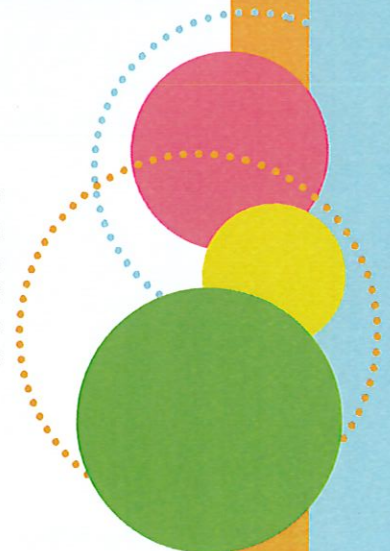
These minutes were confirmed by Council as a true and correct record of proceedings by the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 20/2/25

Presiding Member: *Amel* Date: 20/2/25

### Disclaimer

Please read the following important disclaimer before proceeding:

Statements or decision made at this meeting should not be relied or acted on by any applicant or any other person until they have received written notification from the Shire. Notice of all approvals, include planning and building approvals, will be given to applicants in writing. The Shire of Brookton expressly disclaims liability for any loss or damages suffered by a person who relies or acts on statements or decisions made at a Council or Committee meeting before receiving written notification from the Shire .



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## 1.02.25 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Shire President declared the meeting open at 7:00pm and welcomed all those in attendance.

On behalf of Council, I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Nyoongar People and pay respect to all Elders, past, present, and emerging. I wish to acknowledge and respect local people's continuing culture and the contribution they make to Country and its life.

### **Recording of proceedings**

In accordance with Regulation 14I Local Government (Administration) Regulations this meeting is being recorded. Recordings will be available on the Shire's website.

By being present at this meeting, members of the public consent to the possibility that their voice will be recorded.

### Elected Members (Voting)

Cr KL Crute	President
Cr T D de Lange	Deputy President
Cr HA Bell	
Cr B Copping	
Cr C Hayden	
Cr L McCabe	
Cr R Wallis	

### Staff (Non-Voting)

Gary Sherry	Chief Executive Officer
Deanne Sweeney	Manager Corporate and Community
Sandie Spencer	Executive Governance Officer

### Apologies

Kevin D'Alton	Manager Projects
Mrs Jan Eva	

### Members of the Public

Mrs Rosalie Pech Eva  
Mrs Lynne Bassett  
Mrs Coral Hall  
Mrs Lyn Pech  
Ms Wendy Rose

## **2.02.25 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**

In accordance with Regulation 15 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, the matters to be discussed at a General Electors' Meeting are, firstly, the contents of the annual report for the previous financial year and then any other general business.

### **2.02.25.01 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024**

<b>File No:</b>	FIN007A
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	4 February 2025
<b>Author and Authorising Officer:</b>	Deanne Sweeney – Manager Corporate and Community
<b>Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.

#### **Summary of Item:**

Council is to present the Shire of Brookton 2023/2024 Annual Report.

#### **Matters to be Considered:**

Attendees of the meeting are welcome to request clarification or further information in relation to the following components of the Shire of Brookton's 2023/2024 Annual Report including:

- Shire President's Report;
- Chief Executive Officer's Report;
- Other statutory reporting;
- Financial Report and Statements; and
- Audit Report.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the Shire of Brookton 2023/24 Annual Report be received.

(Simple majority vote required)

#### **AEM 02.25-01**

#### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED Cr Bell      SECONDED Cr Copping**

***That the Shire of Brookton 2023/24 Annual Report be received.***

***CARRIED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE 7/0***

***For: Cr Crute, Cr de Lange, Cr Bell, Cr Copping, Cr Hayden, Cr McCabe, Cr Wallis***

***Against: Nil***

**Attachment – Provided under separate cover  
Attachment 2.02.25.01– 2023/2024 Annual Report.**

### **3.02.25 GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **3.02.25.01 Annual Report - Summary**

Mrs Deanne Sweeney, Manager of Corporate and Community, identified the following points of interest in the Shire of Brookton financial statements:

1. The Shire had a financial surplus at 30 June 2024. 85% of this surplus included a prepayment of Financial Assistance Grants for the 2024/25 financial year. The surplus was also assisted by revenue greater than budget from interest income and the Brookton Caravan Park.
2. Council's rates income is set out on page 36 of the financial statements showing the details of Council's \$2.5 Million of rates income;
3. A summary of Council's borrowings is set out on page 38 and 39 of the financial statements. At the end of the 2024/25 financial year Council has loans of \$517,000 of which \$117,000 is a self-supporting loan.
4. A summary of Council's financial reserves are set out on page 40 of the financial statements. Council has \$11.8 million in financial reserves at 30 June 2024; and
5. A summary of Council's asset values are detailed from page 16 of the financial statements. The value of Council's building asset values increased by \$2Million in the financial year.

#### **3.02.25.02 Annual Report - Reserves**

Mrs Lynne Bassett asked about the \$11 million of Council's financial reserves. Does this include the \$7 million received from the sale of Kalkarni?

Mrs Deanne Sweeney, Manager of Corporate and Community, explained that the \$11.8 million total of Council financial reserves includes funds received from the sale of Kalkarni and these funds are distributed between the different reserve accounts.

#### **3.02.25.03 Annual Report - Operating Grants**

Mrs Lynne Bassett noted that the Statement of Financial Activity included the actual operating grants received was \$1.8 million, but the budget was \$2.2 million. What is the reason that Council didn't receive these budgeted grants as income?.

Mrs Deanne Sweeney, Manager of Corporate and Community, explained the main budget variance in Operating Grants was the being the DRFAWA Grant for the storm damage of the roads. The receipt of this grant was budgeted, however this did not eventuate. The receipt of this grant money has been included in the 2024/25 budget. The amount the Shire expects to receive in 2024/25 has also significantly reduced to approximately \$240,000.

#### **3.02.25.04 Annual Report - Capital Grants**

Mrs Lynne Bassett noted that the Statement of Financial Activity included about a difference of over \$2 million between the budgeted Capital Grants –compared to the actual Capital Grants received.

Mrs Deanne Sweeney, Manager of Corporate and Community, explained that Council is now required to only recognise the receipt of Capital Grants as income when the actual grant

funding is expended. Council will now receive Capital Grant income and hold it in Council's bank account and recognised the grant as income only when the grant funds are expended..

### **3.02.25.05 Robinson Road Sculpture**

Mrs Rosalie Pech Eva, thanked Council for the opportunity to ask the following questions regarding the sculpture on Robinson Road.

1. Please advise the total cost of the "sculpture" erected in Robinson Road near the Public Toilets - please include costs of procurement, installation and site preparation and landscaping. How many quotes were obtained for sculptures during procurement, and how were those quotes assessed? Was grant funding procured for this project, and if so, who was the funding body, and what were the conditions of the grant?
2. Why was the "sculpture" procured from outside of the Shire of Brookton when we have artists and makers within our boundaries, including Nyoongar artists? What enquiries we made of local artists and makers to gauge their capacity to deliver an appropriate public artwork?
3. What artistic merit does the "sculpture" have? What is the artists statement regarding this work, and who decided the appropriateness of installing it in the public realm of the main street of Brookton? What does the "sculpture" represent? What does it say about contemporary or historic or indigenous life in Brookton? How do the colours, forms, and mechanical action relate to Wheatbelt life, history, aspirations and landscape in the 2020s? Is it just eye candy, a folly? If so, why wasn't a more suitable sculpture installed at 'selfie' height to engage locals and travellers?
4. I understand the manufacturer of the "sculpture" is the current Works Managers partner's uncle - please confirm the relationship between the manufacturer and the Shire officer concerned. What process of approval was followed to permit the expenditure of funds to the relative of a Shire employee, and what oversight did this expenditure have by the Shire Executive? Does Council consider the relationship between the supplier and the Officer an appropriate basis for a financial transaction of this amount?
5. I ask this in light of the "sculpture" not being needed, requested or wanted by the Brookton community, as no community consultation has been done by the Shire to ascertain need or desire, to my knowledge. The money could have been well spent elsewhere on the maintenance of our public buildings, including the Matthews Rotunda in Robinson Road, which is in need of repairs and maintenance but which the Shire advises that cannot be attended to until the next financial year/budget.
6. In light of the above, does Council consider the expenditure for a non-essential item, not needed or wanted by the people of Brookton, and of dubious artistic merit, to be good value for money, and an appropriate use of ratepayer's funds?
7. I will finish with a statement, not a question - In my opinion, for the above reasons, this "sculpture" will stand as a monument to the tone-deaf management of our public places by the Shire of Brookton, a Marie Antoinettesque gesture, saying "Let them eat cake!" when what we want is basic repairs and maintenance of our public assets. Please do better, the people of Brookton expect better than this.

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, advised that as part of the Robinson Road Public Toilets Upgrade, the Shire purchased an artwork for \$13,000 for installation beside the toilet building from Mr Grant Hobbs of Beverley.

The total cost of the Robinson Road Public Toilets Upgrade was \$123,975.82. This cost included:

Labour & Overheads .....	\$12,366.41
Plant Operation Costs.....	\$2,077.31
Contracts/Materials .....	\$92,132.10
Sculpture & indirect costs .....	\$17,400.00

The Robinson Road Public Toilets Upgrade was funded 100% by the Local Government Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

As the project commenced, it became apparent that the cost of the upgrade works were going to be less than the grant allocation. Until this time the opportunity to install an artwork had not been considered.

The decision to use Mr Hobbs artwork was made by executive staff after consultation within the Shire of Brookton organisation. The Shire does not have policy around suitable artworks or an assessment for artistic merit.

Shire staff were not aware of any Brookton based commercial artists with the ability to provide an alternative artwork in the restricted time frame.

Mr Hobbs family links to Brookton were disclosed at all stages of the project. The purchase was completed within the legislative financial disclosure requirements.

As a comment, all artwork is non-essential. While the Shire is aware of local residents who are not captivated by the artwork, the Shire is also aware of local residents who believe the artwork is a positive addition to the Brookton town centre.

Cr Crute thanked Ms Pech Eva for providing her question in advance.

### **3.02.25.06 York-Williams Road**

Mrs Lyn Pech asked if the repairs to the crossing on York-Williams Road have been completed.

Shire President, Cr Katrina Crute, explained that these repairs were included in a DRFAWA grant funding application and that the Shire is still waiting for this money to be released. Once the grant funding has been approved, contractors will be engaged to complete the road works. This has been a long and drawn out process which is frustrating for not only the Shire of Brookton. The Shire of Beverley was in a similar position.

### **3.02.25.07 Rural Road Verge Spraying**

Mrs Lyn Pech commented that the rural road verge spraying program had not been conducted on rural roads. Could it please be completed this year, as there are many tree suckers coming through.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, explained that this spraying will be completed this year.

### **3.02.25.08 Councillor and Staff Bus Trip through Brookton District**

Mrs Lyn Pech commented that previously Councillors and Staff would take a bus trip around the Brookton Shire to inspect roads and infrastructure. At some stage will the Councillors and Staff inspect the infrastructure of these buildings?

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, explained that the bus trips were not conducive, as much of the time was spent on Brookton Highway. Staff prepare a 10 year works program which they provide to Councillors with detailed presentations. The majority of Councillors work Monday to Friday, which proves difficult in trying to arrange this time as it cannot be done in one day.

### **3.02.25.09 Road Maintenance**

Mrs Lynne Bassett stated that she had sent an email to Mr Sherry on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022, about a number of items.

Point two of that email noted the local roads lack guide posts. Along with most gravel roads do not have effect spoon drains to drain water off road, which resulted in the damage in the storm of March 2023. Nothing has been done to repair this damage.

Point three of that email identified a small section of the Boyagarra Road, approximately 3.5kms east of the Beverley turn off the road is in a bad state, where is becoming narrow and full of pot holes. There has been no maintenance on this road. This is now occurring in section of the Moorumbine Road.

Why is maintenance not being carried out when the damage is minor and a cheaper fix. If maintenance were being carried out regularly, maintenance costs would be kept at a minimum.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, explained that road maintenance is being carried out. Staff will be asked to provide an assessment on these roads.

### **3.02.25.10 General Maintenance**

Mrs Lynne Bassett asked about building maintenance in general and if there is a maintenance program in place for the assets within the Shire of Brookton. Is it correct painting the rotunda in Robinson Road could not be painted as it has to go to budget.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, explained that Council will engage a contact painter to paint the rotunda. Painting has been scheduled for a number of buildings this year and Council will be extremely unlikely to obtain additional painting services in this financial year.

Mr Sherry explained that building maintenance is planned and continues to be carried out on housing and other buildings. Shire maintenance staff are focused on obtaining and monitoring building contractors and responding to customer requests for minor building repairs.

### **3.02.25.11 Garden Maintenance**

Mrs Lynne Bassett commented that the town is looking neglected and why can't we have maintained facilities and gardens. Mrs Bassett noted that our neighbouring shires have lovely parks and gardens and how we have what we got.

Mrs Bassett noted that roses in the Pioneer Park garden were sprayed with round up. Mrs Bassett asked if the relevant Shire staff have completed training in chemical handling?



Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, explained that there have been many issues with the reticulation system and pumps providing water to Brookton and pumping water around the town. The entire reticulation system requires replacement, at a significant cost.

Mr Sherry noted that the Shire's reticulation system was identified as requiring significant upgrade in December 2020 but this information was not put into a comprehensive plan. Indeed the report detailing the issues was not found by current Shire staff until much later.

Mr Sherry noted that Shire staff have been working very hard in repairing the reticulation system, as breakdowns have occurred, but this was ineffective and comprehensive renewal of the systems was required. Mr Sherry noted that in 2023 the Shire had considerable issues with weeds growing through footpaths and brick paving around Brookton. In 2024 Shire staff were much more proactive in dealing with this issue, but unfortunately the roses in Pioneer Park were impacted by herbicide.

Cr Crute explained the replacement of the reticulation system comes at a significant price tag. If the community wants green parks and gardens, that is great, however this is a challenge for the Council to justify that cost along with the other major infrastructure costs.

#### **3.02.25.12 Shire of Brookton Staff Operations**

Mrs Lynne Bassett, who oversees the gardening crew? Mrs Rosalie Pech Eva, commented that losing a key staff member has such a detrimental and financial impact.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, explained the gardening crew are a group of three who are overseen by a Leading Hand, Works Coordinator and an Acting Manager of Works.

Mr Sherry commented that the Shire of Brookton had had significant turnover of staff in recent years. Considerable corporate knowledge has been lost and this had impacted the Shire of Brookton.

Mr Sherry cited examples where current staff were unable to locate key information. Staff were unable to locate an assessment of road condition that would have simplified the funding application to complete flood damage works. Staff are unable to locate the reticulation crossing under the railway line in Brookton. Staff are unable to locate a solenoid in Memorial Park that requires replacement.

Mr Sherry again acknowledged key failings in the Shire of Brookton's maintenance plans. The long term failures of maintenance at the Brookton Town Hall and Brookton Railway Station are examples of which the community is well aware. However Mr Sherry indicated that the Shire's sewerage system has received considerable upgrades in the last two years and will require considerably more, expensive upgrades in the near future to maintain reliable operations. The current Shire staff have been working diligently to overcome these failures, complete repairs and establish systems that prevent similar issues arising in the future.

#### **3.02.25.13 Retic and Roads**

Ms Wendy Rose who oversees the road work on Great Southern Highway to ensure it is up to standard?

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, explained that Main Roads Western Australia are responsible for Great Southern Highway.

### **3.02.25.14 Entry Statement**

Mrs Lynne Bassett asked about the entry statement on the west side of town where the stone work is lovely, however a raised garden bed has been placed in front of it and you now cannot see all of the Brookton sign.

Ms Rosalie Pech Eva noted that she prepared the design for this entry statement and the garden bed was not part of the plan.

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, indicated that if the community believed that a garden bed in front of the sign was not required, the Shire of Brookton would remove it.

### **3.02.25.15 Ratepayers**

Mrs Lynne Bassett asked what collectively can we do to instil some confidence for the ratepayers and residents of Brookton in our Council and our town. Mrs Lynne Bassett, there is no confidence and the town is sad, the people are sad, town looks sad. Brookton use to be a vibrant beautiful town.

Cr Beryl Copping responded that when she came onto Council recently, her motivation was similar to Mrs Bassetts, seeking to achieve improved maintenance and gardens. However since being on Council, I have seen things a little bit differently, as I know what is going on. The Chief Executive Officer and his staff are all new and are doing their darn best to pick up the pieces from the people that have been there in the past that have not done the job. Give him a chance to finish what he is trying to do.

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, believes that the Council and Staff are working really hard. Unfortunately some of these issues are not an overnight fix, we are doing the very best that we can. Anyone that thinks that this is not the case is very welcome to join us in this room and help do that. Cr Crute agreed with Cr Copping, they are going to take time and a collective we need to be working together.

### **3.02.25.16 Shire Communication**

Mrs Rosalie Pech Eva noted that what is lacking is that people do not understand those issues that the Shire is talking about and that the communication of Council and the Shire to the community is lacking.

Cr Crute, Shire President, identified that this communication is a hard balance, because there is a percentage of this community that think our staff need to be perfect a hundred percent of the time and if they are not, they are cut off at the knees. Every publication we put out there, we have to be so very careful with the wording used because the Shire gets absolutely smashed if the wording is even slightly wrong. The Shire get really nervous about what we put out due to what comes back. Cr Crute indicated that she willing to provide more information, but what I need the community to do is to have a bit of understanding and respect that Shire staff are trying to get Brookton back to the expectation the community has.

Cr Crute noted that the Shire can communicate that our reticulation is unsuitable, not fit for purpose all of those sorts of things. However the Shire is likely to receive unnecessary criticism which goes too far.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, noted that Shire staff do an exceptional job in certain areas. One example is Mrs Deanne Sweeney, Manager Corporate and Community, and the finance team who have been recognised by the Office of the Auditor General as being one of

the top 20 Western Australian Local Governments for their work in completing the Shire of Brookton 2023/24 Financial Statements.

Mr Sherry noted that one important part of his job currently was to seek to maintain a positive staff attitude in the face of quite a negative community comment.

#### **3.02.25.17 Shire & Community Relationships**

Mrs Rosalie Pech Eva commented that the negative Shire of Brookton and Brookton community relationship has been a perennial problem. Mrs Pech Eva asked if the Shire of Brookton is the only Shire that deal with such negativity? Mrs Rosalie Pech Eva noted that there are individuals that really exacerbate the problem and totally inflammatory. There is also the comment on Council's performance which is legitimate and which should be permitted in a democratic environment.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, suggested that the Shire of Brookton would be considered one of the top rural Councils that has at times a very difficult relationship with their community.

Mrs Lynne Bassett commented that this goes back a couple of CEOs when the damage was done. The ratepayers and residences were treated atrociously everyone lost faith with the Council, now you guys have to pick up the pieces.

Mrs Deanne Sweeney noted that the relationship between the community and Council needs to be worked on. Recently there have been a number of occasions where the Shire has gone to community groups seeking assistance or involvement in events but have received little if any positive response. From a staff point of view going forward, the Shire needs to be very mindful of our staff from a psychological welfare point of view.

Cr Katrina Crute noted that the Shire cannot be responsible for fixing everything. We, the Brookton community, need to be working together and supporting each other.

#### **3.02.25.18 Volunteer Activities**

Mrs Lynne Bassett noted that former Councillor Gail Macnab had offered to get a group of people together to tart up the town and was told that this couldn't happen. Mrs Bassett believes that if you got a group of like minded people together, that it could be achieved.

Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, noted that this proactive community response had been a very common occurrence in the past. However the OSH situation had changed considerably. One area of concern is the maintenance of the garden in front of the Stumpies Roadhouse. This area is very problematic with garden workers being one step away from being under a truck on either side of the garden. This site was not suitable for volunteer workers.

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, believes that this suggestion would be call a Tidy Towns Committee, however community groups are really struggling for volunteers.

**3.02.25.19 Cemetery**

Mrs Lynne Bassett noted that the Brookton cemetery looks very sad. Is that in the books to do something with it?

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, noted that as recently as September the Council had received compliments around the conditions of the Cemetery.

**3.02.25.20 Trees in Gutters**

Mrs Coral Hall noted that trees are growing in some gutters on Shire roads and streets.

Cr Katrina Crute, Shire President, acknowledged this and indicated that the Shire respond to this in the future.

**4.02.25 CLOSURE OF MEETING**

With no further business the Shire President Cr Katrina Crute, closed the meeting at 8:15pm.