Western Metropolitan Regional Council

Managing waste wisely

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION INFORMATION STATEMENT 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgement

The Western Metropolitan Regional Council (WMRC) acknowledges the Whadjuk Noongar people as the traditional custodians of this land, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. The WMRC acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this region.

Introduction

Section 96(1) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* requires each government agency, including local governments, to prepare and publish an Information Statement on an annual basis. The Information Statement must set out:

- Details of legislation administered
- The agency's mission statement
- Details of the agency's structure and functions
- Details of functions affecting the public
- Public participation in the formulation of policy and performance of agency functions
- Documents held by the agency
- The operation of Freedom of Information (FOI) in the agency

This document has been prepared by the WMRC to satisfy part five of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. Copies of this document may be obtained from the WMRC's website at www.wmrc.wa.gov.au or at:

Western Metropolitan Regional Council
Suite 2, 317 Churchill Avenue
SUBIACO WA 6008

Enquiries can be made on (08) 9384 4003 or by email at admin@wmrc.wa.gov.au

2. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

The purpose of the *Local Government Act 1995* is to provide direction to local governments on what their functions are and how they are administered and financially managed. The main themes of the Act are:

- Autonomy
- Public participation
- Accountability
- Efficiency and effectiveness

Autonomy

Local governments are governed by legislation and regulations which specify how some tasks are to be done. This means that there is not true autonomy for local government. The reference to autonomy has been brought about by the way the *Local Government Act 1995* has been drafted. The general competence style of drafting has the effect of giving wider powers and more flexibility compared to the previous Act from 1960.

Accountable

Being accountable in public life means explaining actions and giving reasons for what is done (or is not done). The need for local governments to keep various registers and records is an accountability measure. As is the requirement to provide annual reports that include an assessment of the local government's performance.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Measures in the *Local Government Act 1995* that reflect the aim for greater efficiency and effectiveness are:

- The need to produce future financial plans
- The requirements for local government to evaluate its performance each year
- Deregulation of the qualification required to head the administration
- Separate the policy making function of the council from the administrative and managerial side of the organisation
- Increasing the ability of local governments to delegate powers and duties

3. REGULATIONS

Throughout the *Local Government Act 1995* there are references to Regulations. For convenience, lengthy procedures that are to be followed are enacted in the form of Regulations. These have the full force of the *Local Government Act 1995* and must be followed. For example:

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996

These deal with matters in connection with Part 5 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. Amongst other things they cover requirements for conducting council and committee meetings, requirements for the disclosure of financial interests in returns and the payment of meeting attendance fees.

Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996

These relate to Part 7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and cover the appointment and functions of the Audit Committee, auditors, and the matters to be included in the audit report.

4. VISION

The WMRC envisions a world where waste is managed wisely. In serving our five Member Councils, Participating Councils, Commercial Customers, and individual residents, the WMRC aims for a sustainable and efficient future.

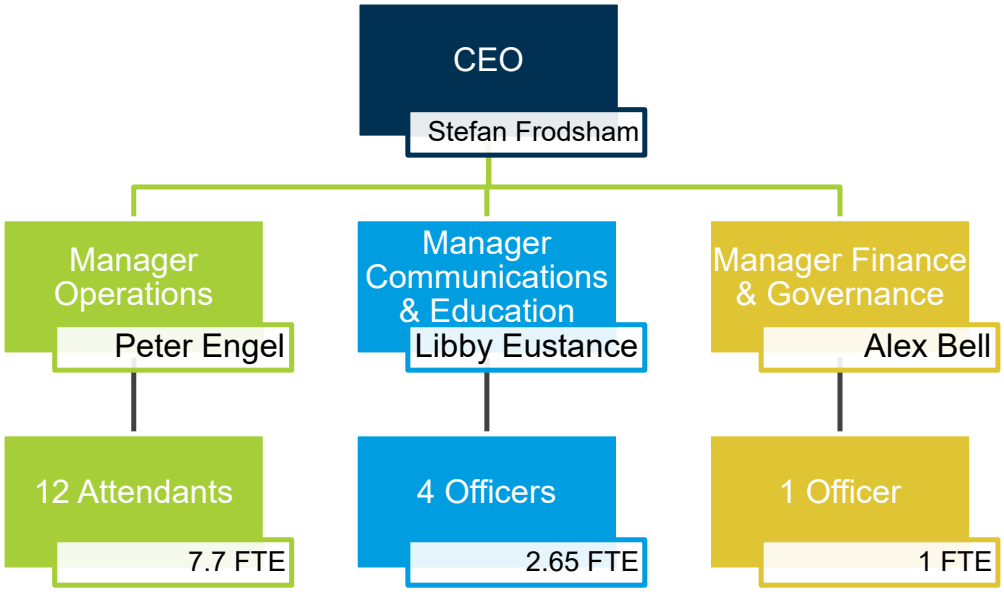
Key WMRC Guiding Principles are:

Purpose	To minimise and efficiently manage waste for Perth's central western communities and organisations		
Vision	A world where waste and its impact on the environment is minimised		
Values	**Reliability** We deliver on our purpose and our undertakings to our member Councils and the community	**Transparency** We are open and transparent in our business dealings	**Customer Service** We aim for excellence in customer services
	Excellence We seek to do the best we can in all that we do	**Risk Management** We understand that sound risk management is fundamental to our ability to create value and manage our costs	**Value for Money** We strive for more efficient and effective delivery of services
	Collaboration We foster partnerships with key stakeholders to identify opportunities and work collaboratively to achieve our purpose and vision		
Stakeholders	**Primary Stakeholders** • Member Council Residents • Member Council Councillors & staff • Customers	**Secondary Stakeholders** • Councillors, staff and residents of other surrounding local governments • Customers throughout Perth's central western communities and organisations	**Tertiary Stakeholders** • Other Regional Councils • State Government

5. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and three managers provide leadership for the WMRC's departments, which deliver services to the community and the organisation.

The WMRC currently employs 23 people in 15.35 full time equivalent roles.



6. EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Chair handle matters relating to the Councillors, council, and committee meetings. The Executive Team is made up of the CEO and managers of each department. The team's functions include:

- Leadership
- Liaison with Councillors
- Management of change
- Performance review
- Strategic planning

Role of the Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is the head non-elected officer. The role is directly responsible to the Council and involves:

- Advising the Council in relation to the functions of the local government
- Liaising with the Chair on local government affairs and performance of functions
- Speaking on behalf of the local government if the Chair has agreed
- Ensuring that advice and information is available to the Council so that informed decisions can be made and implemented
- Being responsible for decisions in line with legislation, strategic and operational plans and directs the implementation
- Managing and being accountable for the staff and the day-to-day operations of the WMRC in line with strategic plans
- Being responsible for the employment, management, supervision, direction, and dismissal of other employees
- Ensuring that the records and documents of the local government are properly kept
- Acting as the conduit between the Council Elected Members and the employees

Executive team

Stefan Frodsham – Chief Executive Officer

Email: stefan.frodsham@wmrc.com.au

Phone: 0415 886 096

Peter Engel – Manager Operations

Email: peter.engel@wmrc.wa.gov.au

Phone: 0432 533 662

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7. OPERATIONS

Municipal waste management is becoming ever more complicated and is attracting increasing community interest. It encompasses waste reduction as well as household waste collection through three routes:

- Kerbside bins (recycling, general waste, and garden organics streams)
- Vergeside for bulky waste (household or garden waste, scheduled or pre-booked)
- Dropped off for specialist disposal or processing

Under the State Waste Strategy, waste management is changing from a linear disposal solution towards a circular economy, keeping materials and energy circulating in the economy.

The WMRC's purpose is to minimise and effectively manage waste for Perth's central western communities and organisations. The West Metro Recycling Centre, located in Shenton Park, is essential to the provision of waste transfer and community recycling services.

Transfer services

Transfer stations move waste from Council collection trucks which are suitable for residential roads to larger trucks which are suitable for efficient long-distance haulage. At the West Metro Recycling Center, we transfer general waste (red-lid bin) and organics (lime green lid bin) for our Member Councils to be disposed or recycled.

Waste to Energy

Waste to Energy is the treatment of waste materials to create energy. In this context, it is thermal treatment or burning of general waste (red lid bin) to create energy. Waste is combusted, flue gases are scrubbed, bottom ash and non-combustible material are extracted for reuse, and steam drives a turbine to generate electricity for the grid. It is a tried and tested technology and there are around 500 similar plants around the world.

The State Waste Strategy includes a target of less than 15% of household waste being landfilled by 2030. This target cannot be met through organics processing and recycling alone. Our Waste Levy, which is applicable to all landfill-bound waste from Metropolitan Perth, is around 50% of that in the Eastern States and is expected to double over the next few years. The energy generated via Waste to Energy, is semi-renewable and diverts over 95% of general waste from landfill. The emission standards match those in Europe and will be checked continuously and periodically to ensure negligible atmospheric pollution.

The WMRC and East Rockingham Waste to Energy (ERWtE) have completed a long-term agreement to recover energy from available residual (red lid bin) waste and divert it from landfill. The WMRC will continue to consolidate and transport residual waste efficiently. The agreement will shield residents and ratepayers of the WMRC's Member Councils, and other Councils, from inevitable rises in the State Waste Levy.

Food and garden organics (FOGO)

FOGO is the collection of household food organic waste, combined with garden waste, in the existing weekly GO bin collection. Households will be provided with a kitchen caddy and supply of compostable liners. Once collected, FOGO material is processed and sold for use as a soil conditioner or compost.

The benefits of processing FOGO include:

- avoiding methane production which is caused by the anaerobic break down of organic material in landfill.
- producing a compost which improves plant growth and food production.
- helping to reach the Federal Government's target for 50% reduction in food waste by 2030.
- providing a service for those residents who do not have space for home composting.

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has a target of 67% material recovery by 2025 for councils in Perth and Peel. To achieve this metropolitan councils are required to move to a three-bin system with food and garden (FOGO) collection by 2025. The WMRC and its member councils have approved waste plans to meet these targets and requirements.

8. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community recycling and waste treatment services

The West Metro Recycling Centre represents waste infrastructure and services vital to the achievement of the objectives of the State's Waste Strategy 2030. We are a drop off point for residents to dispose of a wide range of waste materials for safe disposal, recycling or reuse as appropriate. See here for a complete list of items which are accepted.

Community services

We work directly with residents through tours, workshops, events, online and print communication, and a Recycling Hotline 9384 6711 phone service to help them better manage their waste. This decreases the quantity of waste overall and the amount of waste put into the wrong bins. See here for a complete list of the services offered.

Verge Valet®

This is a best practice pre-booked bulk and green waste kerbside collection system that we coordinate for Member and nearby councils. Users prefer Verge Valet® to the traditional system and it reduces both waste quantities and cost for its host councils. We encourage the use of alternative means to dispose of reusable items and allow residents to buy extra collections once they have exhausted their annual allocation. WMRC's role is to manage collection and processing contracts and to support host councils in their communications with their residents.

9. CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services provides a range of services that support the organisation. The key responsibilities are outlined below.

Coordinating the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

- Reviewing the Corporate Business Plan and Strategic Financial Plan
- Misconduct reporting and management
- Reviewing Council policies
- Providing procurement support and advice to ensure compliance with legislation and policy

Finance and Governance Services

Incorporates accounts payable, accounts receivable, governance, procurement, budget, and financial management. The main areas of activity include:

- Providing financial information to management, Councillors, and other stakeholders
- Managing insurance and investments
- Ensuring legislative compliance of the WMRC's operations through preparation of the annual Compliance Audit Return
- Providing governance advice to the organisation
- Maintaining regulatory registers (i.e., gifts, delegations, risk)
- Coordinating primary and annual statutory returns
- Compiling and distributing council and committee agendas and minutes

Information Services

Incorporates Information Technology, Records Services and Service and Customer Relations. The main areas of activity include:

- Managing the WMRC's knowledge and records including retention and disposal
- Managing the WMRC's systems, software, and hardware infrastructure and security
- Manage and implement projects to improve workplace efficiency and/or customer service
- Develop ICT and customer service strategic plans
- Manage Freedom of Information requests and processes

People and Organisational Development

People and Organisational Development provide advice and systems to maximise workforce capability to deliver services efficiently for the community. The main areas of activity include:

- Occupational Safety and Health
- Employee relations
- Remuneration
- Recruitment, induction, training, and development
- Employee assistance
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Human resources policies, procedures, and practices

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are several ways the public are encouraged to participate in the affairs of local government through provisions of the Act including:

- Restricting those items which can be deemed as confidential business at council or committee meetings.
- The public having the ability to attend council and committee meetings where binding decisions are made. Some decisions require providing public notice and access to certain information.
- The production of Annual Reports

11. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

The following documents are available for inspection at the WMRC's Administration Office as well via the below links:

- Agendas and Minutes
- Annual Budget 2021-2022
- Annual Report 2019-2020
- Annual & Primary Returns Register 2020-2021
- Council Policy – Acting CEO
- Council Policy – Elected Members
- Council Policy – Employee Payments
- Council Policy – Events Attendance & Gifts
- Council Policy – Finance
- Council Policy – Purchasing
- Corporate Business Plan 2021-2025
- Delegations Register 2021
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2019 to 2022-2023
- Elected Member Continued Development Report 2020-2021
- Elected Member Code of Conduct
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Gifts Register
- Occupational Health and Safety Pan 2020-2021
- Schedule of fees and charges
- Standards for CEO Recruitment, Performance & Termination
- Strategic Community Plan 2020-2021 to 2029-2030
- Tenders Register
- Waste Plan 2020-2025
- WMRC Bulletins
- WMRC Customer Service Charter
- WMRC Fees & Charges 2021-2022
- WMRC Establishment Agreement
- WMRC Local Law

Please click the links to access the online legislation:

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*
- *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996*
- *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003*
- *Disability Services Act 1993*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 2020*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2003*
- *State Records Act 2000*
- *State Waste Strategy 2030*
- *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 (WARR Act)*

The WMRC will also make available on request other information as stipulated under the *Local Government Act 1995.*

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCEDURES

It is the aim of the WMRC to make information available whenever possible outside the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* process. If information is not routinely available, the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* provides the right to apply for documents held by the agency and to enable the public to ensure that personal information in documents held by the WMRC is accurate, complete, and up to date.

Freedom of Information (FOI) applications

An application for information through FOI must:

- be in writing; and
- give enough information so that the documents requested can be identified; and
- give an Australian address to which notices can be sent; and
- be lodged at the WMRC with any application fee payable.

Applications should be addressed to:

The FOI Officer
admin@wmrc.wa.gov.au
Suite 2, 317 Churchill Avenue
SUBIACO WA 6008

Please click here to access the Freedom of Information Application Form (create link once online)

Applications will be acknowledged in writing and applicants will be notified of the decision within 45 days.

Freedom of Information charges

A scale of fees and charges set under the *Freedom of Information Act Regulations 1993* are as follows:

- Personal information about the applicant N/A
- Application fee (non-personal information) $30.00
- Charge for time dealing with the application (per hour, or pro rata) $30.00
- Access time supervised by staff (per hour, or pro rata) $30.00
- Photocopying staff time (per hour, or pro rata) $30.00
- Per photocopy $00.20

Deposits may be required on certain applications.

For impecunious applicants or those issued with prescribed pensioner concession cards, the application fee, and any charges payable can be reduced or waived.

Access arrangements

Access to documents can be granted in a variety of ways including copies of the document/s, by way of inspection, transcripts, etc., whichever is most appropriate depending on the nature of the application. Please note that access by way of inspection requires staff supervision and there are applicable fees as per the Freedom of Information Act Regulations.

Notice of decision

A notice of decision will be issued to the applicant within 45 days and will include details such as:

- date of decision
- the name and the designation of the officer who made the decision
- if access is refused, the reasons for claiming the documents are exempt
- information on the rights of review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

Internal review of decisions

Applicants who are aggrieved by a decision made by the WMRC have a right to have the decision reviewed. An aggrieved person may lodge an application for review within 30 days after being given written notice of the decision. Applicants should be notified of the outcome of an internal review within 15 days. For further details regarding the FOI process please contact the Office of the Information Commissioner http://oic.wa.gov.au/

External review of decisions

Applicants who are aggrieved by a decision made by the WMRC as a result of an internal review of decision have a right to have the decision reviewed by the Office of the Information Commissioner. Applicants should contact the Office of the Information Commissioner for details regarding this process including timelines, how to submit an application and further information. http://oic.wa.gov.au/.