



# **AGENDA**

**Late Reports**

**Ordinary Council Meeting**

**Thursday, 25 July 2024**

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Gibbs'.

**Nicole Gibbs**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Date: 24 July 2024**

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**ITEM 15 CEO'S OFFICE****15.17 Removal of Trees at the War Memorial on Blackwood Road****File Ref****Responsible Officer** Nicole Gibbs, Chief Executive Officer**Reporting Officer** Nicole Gibbs, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments** Nil**Voting Requirements** Simple Majority**Disclosure of Interest** Reporting Officer:  
Responsible Officer:

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**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the request by the Returned Services League to remove the two trees blocking the view of the War Memorial on Blackwood Road during the Anzac Day Ceremony every year.

**IN BRIEF**

At the July 2024 Concept Forum Council discussed a request by the Returned Services League to remove the two trees blocking the view of the War Memorial on Blackwood Road during the Anzac Day Ceremony every year.

**MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

Whether Council approves the request by the Returned Services League to remove the two trees blocking the view of the War Memorial on Blackwood Road during the Anzac Day Ceremony every year.

**BACKGROUND**

At the July 2024 Concept Forum Council discussed a request by the Returned Services League to remove two trees blocking the view of the War Memorial on Blackwood Road during the Anzac Day Ceremony every year. Whilst this is technically an operational matter, the removal of street trees is a contentious issue and so officers have asked Council to make the final decision.

Regardless of the decision made, officers will inform the community about the reasons behind this decision post the August 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting.

The two trees in question are situated on either side of the memorial on Blackwood Road. The trees cannot undergo understory pruning due to power lines above them preventing them from growing taller. Additionally, the large trunks are already quite low, making it impractical to work with them. The exact cost of removing the trees can be covered with the operational budget. The main expense will involve hiring a stump grinder and redoing the verge.

The Principal Project Manager has met with the landscape architect working on the detailed design for the footpaths, and the idea of creating a larger feature entrance to the memorial,

possibly extending it into the road, was discussed. The footpath Master Plan includes bringing tree walls out into the road to reduce traffic speed and enhance the atmosphere. Removing the trees could significantly improve the area through landscaping.

### **STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT**

*Local Government Act 1995*

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

CR 3 - Community Engagement

CE 1 – Feedback Policy

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Minimal (tree removal costs)

### **STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN**

- 1 A growing community that is diverse, welcoming and inclusive.
- 8 Local history, heritage and character is valued and preserved.
- 15 A well informed and engaged community.

### **CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN**

- 2.4 Build community capacity by supporting community organisations and volunteers.
- 7.3 Create vibrant, attractive and welcoming towns.
- 7.5 Provide attractive and sustainable parks, playgrounds and reserves.

### **LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Nil

### **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS**

Nil

### **WORKFORCE PLAN**

Nil

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Risk Rating is LOW.

Measures of Likelihood			
Rating	Description	Frequency	Probability
<b>Almost Certain</b>	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances	More than once per year	> 90% chance of occurring
<b>Likely</b>	The event will probably occur in most circumstances	At least once per year	60% - 90% chance of occurring
<b>Possible</b>	The event should occur at some time	At least once in 3 years	40% - 60% chance of occurring
<b>Unlikely</b>	The event could occur at some time	At least once in 10 years	10% - 40% chance of occurring
<b>Rare</b>	The event may only occur in exceptional circumstances	Less than once in 15 years	< 10% chance of occurring

		Consequence				
		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
Likelihood	5 Almost certain	Moderate 5	High 10	Extreme 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	4 Likely	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Extreme 16	Extreme 20
	3 Possible	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Extreme 15
	2 Unlikely	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1 Rare	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5

**COMMENT**

Nil

**ITEM 17 COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****17.2 Recommendation for Levying Differential Rates for the 2024-25 Financial Year****File Ref****Responsible Officer** Nicole Gibbs, Chief Executive Officer**Reporting Officer** Megan Richards, Executive Manager, Community & Economic Development**Attachments** 1. Community Consultation Report [↓](#)**Voting Requirements** Simple Majority**Disclosure of Interest** Reporting Officer:

Responsible Officer:

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**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council;

1. Applies differential rates for rating in the 2024-25 financial year in accordance with Section 6.33 of the Local Government Act 1995; and
2. The differential rates and minimum payments applied in the draft 2024-25 Budget are the same as those advertised in the Public Notice to Levy Rates.

**IN BRIEF**

Council is asked to consider submissions in response to the shire's advertised proposal for applying differential rates for the 2024-25 financial year.

**MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 6.36 of the Local Government Act 1995 (the Act), the Shire advertised its intention to apply differential rating for the 2024-25 financial year and outlined the proposed differential rating, objectives and reasons in the community consultation process.

Residents and ratepayers were advised through a Public Notice which was advertised in the following locations;

- Shire Website
- Shire Facebook Page
- Bridgetown CRC
- Greenbushes CRC
- Shire Noticeboards
- Greenbushes CRC Notice Boards
- The Bridgetown Library
- The Bridgetown Leisure Centre
- The Shire Administration Building – Customer Service Area
- Manjimup Bridgetown Times

The Public Notice included a document outlining the Objectives and Reasons for the Proposed Differential Rates for the Year Ending 30 June 2025 (Attached). The minimum advertising period of 21 days was completed, as outlined in section 6.36 of the Act, during which time the Shire invited submissions in relation to the proposed differential rates. The closing date for public submissions was Tuesday 23 July 2024. 1 submission relating to the levying of differential rates above double the lowest general rate was received. 4 Submissions focusing on general rate rise were received.

The outcome of the invitation for submissions is listed in the Community Consultation Outcomes Report attachment to this report. The Shire received 4 submissions opposing the residential rate increase. 1 submission relating to differential rates was received.

Council is required, under section 6.36 of the Local Government Act to consider any submissions received that respond to the proposed differential rates. Council received 1 submission commenting on the proposed differential rates. The Public Notice submissions relating to the general rate increase are included in the Community Consultation Report (attached) for Council’s viewing, even though these submissions were not related to the proposed differential rate, will not be included in the application to the Minister for Local Government and should not impact the considerations of Council for this recommendation. Council is required to consider the submission focusing on differential rates in its consideration regarding the officer recommendations. This submission is provided in full as an attachment (3) to the Community Consultation Report.

The proposed differential rates for 2024-25 are estimated to yield general rates revenue that is 7.46% higher than general rates revenue in 2023-24, which incorporates a 0.84% decrease in the cents per dollar and an 8.3% increase due to natural movement in values and volumes during the current year. In 2023/24 the differential rates raised an extra \$31,843.78 in differential Mining UV rates above the general rates and in 2024/25 that figure will be \$29,800.49.

Council can either;

- Amend any or all of the differential rate, cents in the dollar and/or minimum payments proposed and advertised in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.33 and 6.36 of the Act, or
- Approve the differential rates as advertised for the draft 2024-25 budget.

Option 2 is recommended.

**BACKGROUND**

At its meeting held in June 2024 Council considered the proposal to apply differential rates when drafting the 2024-25 budget and agreed to advertise the proposal for public submissions in accordance with section 6.36 of the Local Government Act 1995.

The Proposed Differential Rates:

Rate Category	Rate in \$	Minimum Payment
General Gross Rental Value (GRV) Properties	11.0431	1,195.00
Mining Gross Rental Value (MRV) Properties	21.4750	1,195.00
Rural Unimproved Value (UV) Properties	0.4623	1,481.00
Mining Unimproved Value (MUV) Properties	6.8326	219.00

Differential rating (above double the lowest rate in the dollar) was introduced in the Shire of Bridgetown Greenbushes in 2011-12 financial year to maintain the equitable distribution of the rate burden between classes of residential, rural, urban farming and mining land, taking into consideration the levels of services provided to each of the respective land classes within the Shire. The differential rates levied under the Mining Unimproved Value Properties is included as part of the general rate revenue.

A 4<sup>th</sup> rating category, Mining Gross Rental Value (MRV), was included in the 2022-23 budget, in agreement with Talison, to enable Shire funds to be raised from Talison to be allocated specifically for the repair and maintenance of Shire roads impacted by the expansion of the Talison Mining operation. The difference between the General Gross Rental Value rate and the differential rate applied to Mining Gross Rental Value (MRV) Properties (1) is allocated to the Maintenance and Renewal of Mine Heavy Haulage Roads Reserve and does not require Ministerial approval as it is under double the lowest rate in the dollar.

## **STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT**

### *Local Government Act 1995*

*Section 6.33 sets out the provisions in relation to differential rates and enables the Shire to apply separate rates in the dollar for different categories of property based on zoning, land use, improved or unimproved value.*

*Section 6.36 requires the Shire to provide a local public notice of its intention to apply differential rates and invite submissions in relation to the proposed differential rates and minimum payment, within 21 days of the date of notice. Before making a final decision in relation to the setting of rates in the dollar and the adoption of the budget Council is required to consider any submissions received in relation to differential rates.*

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

If Council support the officer recommendations the estimated revenue to be generated from the proposed rates and minimum payments will be \$6,158,693.91 and will be included in the draft 2024/25 budget to cover the 2024-25 budget deficit. \$29,800.49 will be raised in differential Mining UV rates above the general rates, given the application to apply differential rates above double the minimum payment is supported by the Minister.

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN**

**14 Effective governance and financial management.**

## **CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN**

Nil

## **LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Nil

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS**

Nil



**WORKFORCE PLAN**

Nil

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

The current recommendation address’s the following Risk Management Priority area identified according to Policy RM 1 – Risk Management - Compliance, Reputational (External).

If Council does not accept the Officer recommendations, the risks are:

- There is a risk to Council that the 2024/25 Budget will not be adopted by the statutory deadline of 31 August 2024 if the Minister does not approve Council’s Mining UV differential rate.
- Reputational Risk (External)– the reputational risk is high given the potential of community becoming aware that Council have been unable to adopt the 2024/25 Budget within the statutory deadline.

Measures of Likelihood			
Rating	Description	Frequency	Probability
<b>Almost Certain</b>	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances	More than once per year	> 90% chance of occurring
<b>Likely</b>	The event will probably occur in most circumstances	At least once per year	60% - 90% chance of occurring
<b>Possible</b>	The event should occur at some time	At least once in 3 years	40% - 60% chance of occurring
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		Consequence				
		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
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	4 Likely	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Catastrophic 16	Catastrophic 20
	3 Possible	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Catastrophic 15
	2 Unlikely	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1 Rare	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5

**COMMENT**

Nil



# Community Consultation Report

## Proposal to Levy Differential Rates 2024-25



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## Overview

The community was invited to provide feedback from Monday 1 July 2024 to Tuesday 23 July 2024 on Council's proposal to levy differential rates in 2024-25. Feedback was sought via written submission to the CEO.

There was 1 submission made in response to the proposed differential rates and 4 submissions by residents regarding the proposed general rate rise. Although not specifically related to the current community consultation, for reasons of transparency the 4 responses by residents opposing the increase to General Gross Rental Value were included in this report. They will not be included in the application to the Minister.

## Consultation Materials

The consultation Materials included a Public Notice with a request to write to the CEO, emails were also accepted are attached to this document (1 and 2).

The consultation materials included;

- Public Notice – Attachment 1
- Objectives and Reasons for Differential Rates 2024-25 – Attachment 2

The Shire advertised the consultation to residents and rate payers via the following means;

- Shire Website
- Shire Facebook Page
- Bridgetown Community Notice Community Facebook Page
- Bridgetown CRC
- Greenbushes CRC
- Shire Noticeboards
- The Bridgetown Library
- The Bridgetown Leisure Centre
- The Shire Administration Building – Customer Service Area
- Manjimup Bridgetown Times

The Facebook page posts were uploaded on the 1 July 2024 and included a link to the Shire website where community could access the Objectives and Reasons for Differential Rates 2024-25 document. The Public Notice hard copies were distributed on 1 July 2024 and included the web address for the Shire website page to direct interested parties to the Objectives and Reasons for Differential Rates 2024-25 document. The Public Notice and support document also included the contact name and number of an Officer able to answer queries regarding rates and the community consultation process.

The 4 email submissions regarding the general rates are included in the table below. The 1 submission regarding the inclusion of differential rates –is included in full as Attachment 3. The names of the residents and ratepayers have been redacted to protect privacy.



## Email Submission – General Rates

Dear Councillors

I STRONGLY OBJECT TO ANY INCREASE IN OUR SHIRE RATES.. All effort should be aimed at REDUCING our rates by EFFICIENCY measures. All members of our community have had to tighten their belts & SPEND LESS to make ends meet & get through tough times. The rate payers are constantly being BLED for more money so that those in the shire offices can expand & improve their lot. It would be wonderful if the Shire actually undertook efficiency measures that brought about a REDUCTION of our rates during these difficult times. Please ensure this email is made available to all councillors.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Dear Councillors

WE STRONGLY OBJECT TO ANY INCREASE IN OUR SHIRE RATES.

All efforts should be aimed at REDUCING our rates by EFFICIENCY measures.

All members of our community have had to tighten their belts & SPEND LESS to make ends meet to get through very tough times. The rate payers are constantly being BLED for more money.

It would be helpful if the Shire actively engaged in efficiency measures that brought about a REDUCTION of our rates during these difficult times.

Please ensure this email is made available to ALL councillors.

Thank you to the Councillors who vetoed this rate rise & called for canvassing of the rate payers.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Farmers

Yornup

Dear Councillors

I STRONGLY OBJECT TO ANY INCREASE IN OUR SHIRE RATES..

All effort should be aimed at REDUCING our rates by EFFICIENCY measures.

All members of our community have had to tighten their belts & SPEND LESS to make ends meet & get through tough times.

The rate payers are constantly being BLED for more money so that those in the shire offices can expand & improve their lot.

It would be wonderful if the Shire actually undertook efficiency measures that brought about a REDUCTION of our rates during these difficult times.

Please ensure this email is made available to ALL councillors.

Regards

[REDACTED]

PS: I also wish to thank the Councillors who vetoed this rate rise & called for canvassing of the rate payers - unfortunately only those who get the local newspaper will be aware of this matter & the news article did not give clear instructions on how ratepayers were to register their objections.



I STRONGLY OBJECT TO ANY INCREASE IN OUR SHIRE RATES.

All effort should be aimed at REDUCING our rates by EFFICIENCY measures.  
 All members of our community have had to tighten their belts & SPEND LESS to make ends meet & get through tough times.  
 The rate payers are constantly being BLED for more money.  
 It would be wonderful if the Shire actually undertook efficiency measures that brought about a REDUCTION of our rates during these difficult times.  
 Please ensure this email is made available to ALL councillors.

PS: I also wish to thank the Councillors who vetoed this rate rise & called for canvassing of the rate payers - unfortunately only those who get the local newspaper will be aware of this matter & the news article did not give clear instructions on how ratepayers were to register their objections.

Regards, [REDACTED]



## Attachment 1 - Public Notice

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## NOTICE OF INTENTION TO LEVY DIFFERENTIAL RATES FOR THE 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

In accordance with section 6.36 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, notice is hereby given with respect of the intention of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes to adopt and levy in the 2024/25 financial year the following rates in the dollar (Rate in \$) and minimum payments for differential general gross rental value (GRV) and differential general unimproved value (UV) rates:

Rate Category	Rate in \$	Minimum Payment
General Gross Rental Value (GRV) Properties	11.0431	1,195.00
Mining Gross Rental Value (MRV) Properties	21.4750	1,195.00
Rural Unimproved Value (UV) Properties	0.4623	1,481.00
Mining Unimproved Value (MUV) Properties	6.8326	219.00

The proposed rates in the dollar and minimum payments will fund the estimated budget deficiency of \$6,152m. Any further updates to valuations received will result in the rate in the dollars being updated to achieve this advertised rate yield.

A Statement of Objectives and Reasons for adopting these rates is available for inspection at the Shire Administration Building or Bridgetown Library during operating hours or may be downloaded from the Shire website <https://www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/council/news-information/public-notices.aspx>

Submissions from electors and ratepayers in respect of the proposed rates or minimum payments and any related matter may be made (in writing) addressed to the CEO by close of business on Tuesday 23 July 2024. Any general enquiries should be directed to Bruce Mead - Executive Manager, Corporate Services.

NICOLE GIBBS  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

1 JULY 2024



## Attachment 2 - Objective and Reasons for Differential Rates

### **OBJECTIVES AND REASONS FOR PROPOSED DIFFERENTIAL RATES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2025**

In accordance with Section 6.36 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes is required to publish its Objectives and Reasons for implementing Differential Rates.

#### **Overall Objective**

The purpose of levying rates is to meet Council's budget requirements in each financial year to deliver services and community infrastructure. The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes maintains facilities for and provides services to a diverse and changing district comprising residential, commercial, industrial, rural and mining land.

Property valuations provided by the Valuer General are used as the basis for the calculation of rates each year. Section 6.33 of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides the ability differentially rate properties based on zoning and/or land use as determined by the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes. The application of differential rating maintain equity in the rating of properties across the Shire, enabling the Council to provide facilities, infrastructure and services to the entire community.

As part of its budget deliberations Council has determined the budget deficiency by:

- Assessing the current Corporate Business Plan taking into consideration the Shire's Strategic Community Plan
- Review the funding allocation included in Council's forward capital works plan for Road Infrastructure
- Reviewed the Plant Replacement Program
- Consideration of the following efficiency measures;
  - A review of the staff structure across the organisation
  - Continued investigation into employment sharing opportunities with neighbouring local governments including the Environmental Health Officer

The estimated budget deficiency will require an increase to the rate yield on 7.5% from the 2023/24 rate yield (adjusted for natural growth).

In setting the rates in the dollar Council has considered its existing differential rating categories in line with the key values contained within the Rating Policy Differential Rates (s6.33) released by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, being:

- Objectivity
- Fairness and equity
- Consistency





- Transparency and administrative efficiency

For the 2024/25 financial year Council will maintain all existing differential rating categories that applied in 2023/24. These categories ensure that rate revenue is collected on a fair and equitable basis, taking into consideration the cost of delivering services to each of the respective land classes in the district.

Council will maintain existing relativities between all rating categories to those that applied in 2023/24 (adjusted for natural growth). This will ensure a consistent and equitable distribution of the required rates yield from one year to the next.

**RATING CATEGORIES**

**Gross Rental Value (GRV) Properties**

The *Local Government Act 1995* determines that properties of a non-rural purpose be rated using the Gross Rental Valuation (GRV) as the basis for the calculation of annual rates. The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes applies the following differential Gross Rental Value rating categories:

**General Gross Rental Value (GRV)** – Consists of properties that are used for residential, commercial and industrial purposes and is considered to be the base rate by which all other GRV rated properties are assessed. The rate in the dollar applied ensures this rating category will pay a particular percentage of the overall rate yield to reflect the level of services provided.

**Mining Gross Rental Value (GRV)** – This category applies to mining leases with improvements of the land. These improvements include offices, workshops and processing facilities.

The object of this differential rate is to raise additional revenue to contribute towards higher road maintenance and renewal costs associated with mine site activity, specifically the high volume of heavy haulage traffic on Council roads.

**Differential Gross Rental Value (GRV) Rates**

	Rate in the \$	Minimum Payment
General Gross Rental Value (GRV)	11.0431 cents	\$1,195
Mining Gross Rental Value (GRV)	21.4750 cents	\$1,195

**Unimproved Value (UV)**

The *Local Government Act 1995* indicates that where the land is used predominantly for rural purposes, the unimproved value of the land will be used as the basis for the rates. Unimproved Value (UV) means the capital amount that an estate of fee simple in the land might reasonably be expected to realise upon sale, assuming that any improvements to the land had not been made. Unimproved values are supplied and updated by the Valuer General on an annual basis. Council applied the following differential unimproved value rating categories:

**Rural Unimproved Value (UV)** – Consists of properties that are exclusively for rural use and is considered to be the base rate by which all other UV rated properties are assessed. The rate in the dollar applied ensures this rating category will pay a particular percentage of the overall rate yield to reflect the level of services provided.



**Mining Unimproved Value (UV)** – Consists of mining prospecting and exploration tenements located in the district. The higher rate applied to this category reflects the Shire’s experience that mining activities associated with these tenements impact as follows:

- there is greater burden on the Shire’s internal road network caused by heavy haulage mining vehicles e.g. trucks , drill rigs and excavators;
- disturbance to the landscape on and adjacent to tenements requires Shire oversight and input with noxious weed mitigation and management; and
- administration and oversight of the application and approvals process for new tenement areas noting that these applications do not attract a fee to the Shire.

**Differential Unimproved Value (UV) Rates**

	Rate in the \$
Rural Unimproved Value (UV)	0.4623 cents
Mining Unimproved Value (UV)	6.8328 cents

**Differential Minimum Payments (UV)**

A reduced minimum payment will apply to Mining (UV) properties. This will ensure not more than 50% of properties within this category are on the minimum payment as required by Section 6.35 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

	Minimum Payment
Rural Unimproved Value (UV)	\$1,481
Mining Unimproved Value (UV)	\$219

**SUMMARY**

In arriving at the proposed rates in the dollar Council has attempted to balance the need for revenue to fund essential services and facilities with the desire to limit increase for ratepayers to an affordable level in an equitable manner.

Submissions addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, PO Box 271, Bridgetown WA 6255, by electors or ratepayers in respect of the proposed Differential Rates shall be lodged and received at the Shire Offices by close of business Thursday, 22 July 2024.



## Attachment 3 – Submission

Dear CEO,

Re: Notice of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes' intention to levy differential rates for the 2024-25 financial year.

I am making this submission as a concerned resident/ rate payer and former local government employee (for several shires throughout the state) having experience levying differential rates where approval is being sought from the Minister to impose a differential general rate that is more than twice the lowest differential general rate imposed by that local government. As it turns out, I was the Executive Manager of Corporate Services who first introduced this kind of rating strategy to the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes (the shire) in 2011-12, or there abouts.

Having had regard for the matters set out under the key values in the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries' (DLGSCI, the Department) *Rating Policy: Differential Rates* I have formed the view that the shire has not correctly addressed some of the Department's matters.

### **The Department's Objectivity key value**

Regarding the Department's *Objectivity* key value, I have formed the view that the matters contained therein were correctly addressed by the shire.

### **The Departments' Fairness and Equity key value**

Fairness and Equity Matter 1.

*The council of the local government has reviewed its expenditure and considered efficiency measures as part of its budget deliberations. This is to be reflected in the council minutes when it adopts the budget strategy and endorses objects and reasons for each differential rating category and each minimum payment.*

This value will have it that council:

- has adopted a budget strategy;
- endorsed the objects and reasons for each differential rating category and each minimum payment; and
- will have reviewed its expenditure and considered efficiency measures when deliberating on the above two dot points.

Given that for 2024-25 budget process council: has not adopted a budget strategy; and did not demonstrated that it reviewed its expenditure when endorsing its objects and reasons for differentially rating (and refer council decision OCM 155-23/24), this fairness and equity matter has not been correctly addressed.

Fairness and Equity Matter 2.

*If a category of ratepayer is significantly contributing to the local government's revenue through fees, charges and other payments, the local government has not used these same costs as the justification for the difference in differential general rate.*

As I understand it, in the 2023 calenda year Tallison Lithium Greenbushes (Tallison) made a financial contribution to the shire of some \$1.5m, and then some \$2.5m in the 2024 calenda year. Notwithstanding these substantial contributions, made toward the upkeep of the road, drainage



and footpath networks in Greenbushes, among other projects, in its 2024-25 *Objects and Reasons* council argues that it will impose a higher rate burden on the mining sector as follows:

**Mining Gross Rental Value (GRV)** – *This category applies to mining leases with improvements on the land. These improvements include offices, workshops and processing facilities. The object of this differential rate is to raise additional revenue to contribute towards higher road maintenance and renewal costs associated with mine site activity, specifically the high volume of heavy haulage traffic on Council roads.*

**Mining Unimproved Value (UV)** – *Consists of mining prospecting and exploration tenements located in the district. The higher rate applied to this category reflects the Shire’s experience that mining activities associated with these tenements impact as follows:*

- *there is greater burden on the Shire’s internal road network caused by heavy haulage mining vehicles e.g. trucks, drill rigs and excavators;*

As council has not demonstrated that it has taken into consideration the mining sector’s substantial financial contributions when imposing differentially higher rates on them, Fairness and Equity Matter 2. has not been correctly addressed.

Fairness and Equity Matter 3.

*If there are fewer than thirty ratepayers who will be subject to the differential general rate, each affected ratepayer has been informed in writing by the local government of:*

- *the terms of this policy (through the provision of a copy of this document to the ratepayer)*
- *the local government’s objects of and reasons for proposing to impose the differential general rate*
- *the differential general rate that will apply to the ratepayer’s property*
- *the differential general rate that applied in the previous year for comparison and was given at least 21 days to make submissions to the local government on the proposal.*

On Thursday 18 July 2024 I commenced engaging with the shire’s Executive Manager Corporate Services (Mr Bruce Mead) about this matter. Notwithstanding this, by close of business on Monday 22 July Mr Mead had not responded to me as to whether the shire had written directly to the mining sector ratepayers who in 2024-25 will be levied a differential rate which is more than twice the lowest rate in the UV rate class. What I have been able to learn from Mr Mead is that public notice of the proposed 2024-25 differential rates was done in accord with the act, and not in accord with the department’s *Rating Policy: Differential Rate* i.e. in accordance with the above Fairness and Equity Matter 3. For this reason, I would estimate that the level of probability that Fairness and Equity Matter 3. has been correctly addressed would be low (approaches zero).

#### **The Department’s Consistency key value**

Consistency Matter 1.

*The proposed differential rates align with the rating strategy in the corporate business plan and long term financial plan or the council of the local government has detailed its reasons for deviating from that rating strategy.*

Firstly, what does a rating strategy look like? It could be a set of precepts, I suppose, or it could look something like what the Shire of Boddington has produced in their *Strategic Rating Review Draft Report April 2022*. The below is a copy of the contents page from the report, and the full report can be viewed at



[https://www.boddington.wa.gov.au/Profiles/boddington/Assets/ClientData/Shire\\_of\\_Boddington\\_-\\_Draft\\_Strategic\\_Rating\\_Review.pdf](https://www.boddington.wa.gov.au/Profiles/boddington/Assets/ClientData/Shire_of_Boddington_-_Draft_Strategic_Rating_Review.pdf)

*Strategic Rating Review Draft Report Shire of Boddington April 2022*

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When you contrast the shire’s rating strategy with that of the Shire of Boddington, one gets the impression that the shire’s is more of a *vibe* than a strategy as such, and refer the following:

*Council last reviewed its rating strategy as part of the 2023/24 budget process. Council considered its existing differential rating categories in line with the key values contained within the Rating Policy Differential Rates (s.6.33) released by the Department ... (this is an excerpt from the officer report from which council decision OCM 155-23/24 was made),*

and,

*Council last reviewed its rating strategy as part of the 2022/23 budget process. Council considered its existing differential rating categories in line with the key values contained within the Rating Policy Differential Rates (s.6.33) released by the Department ... (this is an excerpt from the officer report from which council decision C.10/0523 was made).*

Each of the above examples refer to some vague concept from a past time, and clearly the level of probability that the shire’s rating strategy was reviewed as part of the 2023-24 budget process must be zero, i.e. could not be true, as decision c.10/0523 purports that the last review took place in 2022-23.

As neither the shire’s long term financial plan (LTFP) nor its corporate business plan (CBP) outline a rating strategy or reference a tangible rating strategy document, no decision can be made as to whether the 2024-25 differential rates adopted by council (OCM 155-23/24) align with anything in the LTFP or CBP. Further, in its decision has not claimed that all three are aligned.

There is evidence that council’s decision does not align with the LTFP, however. The officer report to council decision OCM 155-23/24 asserts that:

*Rate in the dollar has been modelled at 7.5% for this report based on Councillor feedback from rate percentage workshops.*



and public questions at the 27 June 2024 ordinary meeting of council revealed the following:

*The 7.5% figure emerged as the most agreeable among councillors on average.*

Contrasting with this, the shire’s LTFP sets the rates revenue increase from 2023-24 to 2024-25 at 6.56%. Notwithstanding that the difference between the LTFP’s 6.56% and council’s 7.5% is substantial, council’s reason for taking the higher increase ( ... *the most agreeable .. on average* ) is hardly ‘detailed’, and for this reason and others outlined above the Department’s Consistency Matter 1 has not been correctly addressed.

Consistency Matter 2.

*The local government has reviewed and considered rates proposed in neighbouring or similar local government districts in the rating strategy.*

In the table below I’ve endeavoured to compare and contrast wealth generated by the respective mining sectors in Bridgetown-Greenbushes and the shire of Boddington. Apparently, gold extraction from the Boddington mine eclipses that from the Super Pit in Calgoorlie. Annual wealth generated from mining at Greenbushes is in excess of \$6.2 billion I understand, and that from gold & copper mining in Boddington is of the order \$3.0 billion. Contrasting with this, the rateable value of mining land in Greenbushes (\$2,034,622) is and order of magnitude less than that in Boddington (\$51,515,342), the consequences of which are enormous for the shire. Mining rates revenue for the shire represents only 4.6% of the total rates revenue levied, compared with 30.2% in Boddington. Does the cost of servicing the mining sector in Bridgetown-Greenbushes really represent only 4.6% of the total cost of servicing the whole of the district? I don’t think so.

**Wealth (\$billions) generated by the mining sector in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes compared with Boddington - including comparatives of the value of rateable land (mining as a percent of the total) and revenue generated from rates**

	Annual Wealth*	Rateable Value - Mining	Rateable Value - All	Mining % of Rateable Value	Mining Revenue \$	Revenue \$ all sectors	Mining % of Total Revenue
Greenbushes (Lithium)	> 6.2	2,034,622	290,539,475	0.7%	246,609	5,343,483	4.6%
Boddington (Gold & Copper)**	3.0	51,515,342	224,253,354	23.0%	1,847,890	6,124,419	30.2%

\* Annual wealth is an estimate of product value/profit in 2022-23 in \$au billions.

\*\* Value of alumina mined in Boddington and transferred to Worsely in Collie - not included.

For this reason I have come to the view that the Department’s Consistency Matter 2 ( ... *reviewed and considered rates proposed in ... similar local government districts ...* ) has not been correctly addressed.

I’ve run out of time and will have to wind up on that note. Thank you for listening to my concerns.

kind regards,

