



STRUCTURAL REFORM
SUBMISSION

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To the Hon John Castrilli MLA

Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

Minister

This Structural Reform Submission has been endorsed by the Council of the Shire of Plantagenet at a Special Meeting of the Council held on 15 September 2009.

A copy of the submission has been forwarded to the Chief Executive Officers of the City of Albany and the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Kojonup, Gnowangerup and Jerramungup.

**Cr Kevin Forbes AM
Shire President**

18 September 2009

STRUCTURAL REFORM SUBMISSION

Conclusions and Recommendation

The Shire of Plantagenet has resolved that to answer the Minister's call for structural reform, the four shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet [members of the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC)] should amalgamate on 1 July 2011 to form one new Council.

At the ordinary meeting of the Shire of Plantagenet held on 11 August 2009, the Council resolved:

'That in the opinion of the Shire of Plantagenet the best structural reform outcome for the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils is that the member Councils of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet indicate their willingness to amalgamate and form one local government.'

Since then the Shire acknowledges that, except for the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup, the other two Shires oppose such an amalgamation, due primarily to concerns expressed by sectors of their respective communities. Initially, support had been expressed by all VROC members for amalgamation of the four member Councils.

The opposition expressed by Cranbrook and Kojonup has only developed comparatively recently. On 12 August 2009 a joint media release (attached at Appendix five) and signed by each member Council's Shire President explained the 'proactive approach... to bring four like-minded Councils together looking confidently into the future...'.

In arriving at its considered position, Plantagenet canvassed its community widely. There is little doubt that a large majority is in favour of no change, or, at the most, boundary adjustment or amalgamation with Cranbrook. The community, at public meetings and through a 'householder' questionnaire opposed amalgamation of the VROC members. The community also opposed an amalgamation with the City of Albany and the Shire of Denmark.

Nevertheless, Councillors who attended the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) Local Government Convention in early August 2009, came away from that event convinced that the Minister for Local Government, the Leader of the National Party and the Premier were each committed to local government structural reform and that to fight this process may disadvantage the electorate, especially due to potential funding cuts which would result in Councils, in the words of the Premier 'withering on the vine' through funding reductions. Further, opposition for structural reform may have resulted in unwanted or inappropriate alliances being forced by a committed government.

The final public meeting held by the Shire was on 20 August 2009 in the Plantagenet District Hall. A paper prepared by the Shire President Cr Kevin Forbes AM was distributed at this meeting and is attached (Appendix Eight). The paper referred to the Local Government Convention and the commitment by the Council to protect the interests of ratepayers and residents by seeking amalgamation with our VROC partners. This position was accepted by the meeting, the notes for which are included in Appendix One.

Introduction

On 5 February 2009 the Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Castrilli MLA, announced wide-ranging local government reform strategies. These strategies were aimed at achieving greater capacity for local governments to better plan, manage and deliver services to their communities with a focus on social, environmental and economic sustainability.

The reform strategy involved local governments across Western Australia in firstly completing a Structural Reform Checklist, which sought local governments' responses in a number of areas including:

- Long term strategic planning;
- Detailed asset and infrastructure management planning;
- Future financial viability and planning;
- Equitable governance and community representation;
- Organisational capacity;
- Effective political and community advocacy for service delivery;
- Understanding of and planning for demographic change;
- Effective management of Natural Resources;
- Optimal Service Delivery to the Community;
- Membership of an effective regional grouping; and
- Previous Structural Reform.

The completed Structural Reform Checklists were examined by Department of Local Government officers and then scored as either a 'One', 'Two' or 'Three'. The scores were defined as:

Category One: evidence indicates that there is existing organisational and financial capacity to meet current and future community needs. Local governments should still consider reform opportunities which enhance service provision to local and regional communities.

Category Two: structural reform including amalgamation/boundary adjustments and formalisation of regional groupings should be considered to enhance organisational and financial capacity to meet current and future community needs.

Category Three: significant structural reform including amalgamation and formalisation of regional groupings is required to ensure long term community and organisational benefit in order that the needs of the current and future generations are met.

The Shire of Plantagenet received a Category One rating.

The reform strategy then required local governments to establish project teams, which were asked to undertake a number of responsibilities including:

- Determine preferred amalgamation structure or other types of boundary adjustments;
- Determine appropriate elected member representation;
- Determine methods for ensuring appropriate community representation;
- Consider regional grouping;
- Undertake community consultation; and
- Formulate Reform Submission and circulate to affected local governments.

Plantagenet's project Team consisted of Shire President Cr Kevin Forbes AM, Deputy Shire President Cr Ken Clements and CEO Mr Rob Stewart.

Methodology

The Shire of Plantagenet was fortunate in that it was already a member of a regional group, being the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). This VROC comprises the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet.

The VROC had previously asked its member CEO's to examine Structural Reform, concentrating on shared services and specifically:

- Asset Management;
- Shared IT Services;
- Central Records; and
- Joint Tendering.

Each of these initiatives is currently being 'championed' by individual CEO's. Each Council has allocated funds to engage a joint Asset Management Officer, the appointment of whom has already occurred. The former Broomehill Shire offices have been identified as a central record repository for all member Councils. Joint tendering is being developed.

Further, the VROC is the preferred grouping for Royalties for Regions regional funding purposes.

The following table shows key statistical information for each local government:

	Area (km ²)	Population* +	Councillors	Staff (FTE)	Electors	Roads Sealed	Roads Unsealed	\$m Rates	\$m Op Revenue
Broomehill- Tambellup	2,810	1,214	9	26	843	272	754	1.580	4.649
Cranbrook	3,390	1,130	9	27	767	343	762	1.657	5.578
Kojonup	2,937	2,269	9	42	1,604	344	905	2.790	7.440
Plantagenet	4,792	4,950	9	58	3,111	326	908	4.069	10.338

* Source: ABS Cat. No. 32180.0 Table 5 released 23 April 2009

+ Estimated Resident Population 30.6.08

The Plantagenet project team formulated a program to undertake the structural reform process set by the Minister. This process included:

- Publicise the Structural Reform process in local print media;
- Discuss the situation with our VROC partners and other neighbours, including Albany, Denmark, Gnowangerup and Jerramungup;
- Develop a series of reform proposals to discuss further with VROC partners and neighbours;
- Hold a series of well publicised public meetings to discuss structural reform (Note: an additional public meeting was held on 20 August 2009, after the Local Government Convention);
- Distribute a 'Householder' questionnaire to each household in the local government district;
- Analyse public meeting and questionnaire results;
- Formulate final proposal;
- Forward final proposal to affected Councils; and
- Forward submission to Department of Local Government.

The Proposals

Various proposals were considered by the project team. These were:

- *Status Quo*. This proposal recommended no boundary adjustment/amalgamation but a continued commitment to the Southern Link VROC;
- Seek boundary adjustment with the Shire of Cranbrook along geographic and man-made boundaries;
- Seek amalgamation in total with Cranbrook;
- Seek boundary adjustments with both Cranbrook and Albany;
- Form a Regional Council with the four VROC members; and
- Seek amalgamation of the four Southern Link VROC members.

STATUS QUO

The '*Status Quo*' proposal was the preferred Council position, provided that VROC participation continued.

The Council was of the opinion, especially after receiving a score of 'One' in the Structural Reform Checklist, that the Shire was sustainable in the short, medium and long terms and was able to provide appropriate levels of service.

By continuing to actively participate in the VROC, further efficiencies could be developed for all four member Councils, while retaining local decision making, autonomy and representation.

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT WITH SHIRE OF CRANBROOK ALONG GEOGRAPHIC AND MAN-MADE BOUNDARIES.

The Cranbrook community shares a very similar population makeup, industries and agriculture with Plantagenet and therefore has similar communities of interest.

This proposal was investigated quite closely. It was based on a boundary adjustment with Cranbrook so that the Gordon and Frankland Rivers formed a natural boundary as well as Albany Highway. This would result in the portion of Cranbrook south of the Gordon River, east of the Frankland River and west of Albany Highway being incorporated into the Shire of Plantagenet.

Although reasonably efficient for the Shire of Plantagenet, the excision of land would leave Cranbrook smaller in size and with a reduced rate base, requiring that Council to urgently seek amalgamation partners.

This proposal was met with strong resistance from the Shire of Cranbrook.

AMALGAMATION IN TOTAL WITH CRANBROOK

An amalgamation between Plantagenet and Cranbrook would result in a Council of some 8,200km² and a population of over 6,000, achieving a population density of 1.35persons/km².

Given the similarities in community, industry, agriculture and topography, this proposal has much merit. However, it was met with strong resistance from both the Shire and community of Cranbrook.

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS WITH BOTH CRANBROOK AND ALBANY

This proposal is an extension of the proposal for boundary adjustment with Cranbrook to include a boundary adjustment with Albany as well.

Albany, being an amalgamated Council of the previous Town and Shire, has a thriving CBD, large urban and suburban areas as well as extensive rural and agricultural districts. It extends over 4,300 km², part of which is actually further north than its northern neighbour of Plantagenet. Albany's boundaries could be contracted to its west, north and east so that it became more urban-centric, concentrating on its CBD, airport, industrial area, foreshore, coast and urban and suburban areas.

To be completely effective, this proposal would also need to include the Shires of Denmark and Jerramungup and possibly the Shire of Gnowangerup.

Denmark would expand eastwards to Elleker, Jerramungup would extend southwards to Two Peoples Bay, Gnowangerup could also expand southwards to potentially take that part of Plantagenet east of Chester Pass Road and Plantagenet could extend southwards along Albany Highway to Millbrook Road.

Although some initial interest was shown by Jerramungup and Gnowangerup in such a proposal, the issue hasn't been pursued. The proposal is seen to be so different from anything proposed by the City of Albany, it was not brought to the discussion table.

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SOUTHERN LINK VROC

This option is made possible by the Local Government Act. A regional council could be created with Ministerial approval to undertake responsibilities of the member local governments.

Although possible from a legislative point of view, there is nevertheless the concern that a Regional Council actually creates a further level of governance/bureaucracy, which appears contrary to the structural reform process.

This proposal has not been taken further.

AMALGAMATION OF THE FOUR SOUTHERN LINK VROC MEMBERS

Although all VROC members have expressed a desire to retain the *status quo*, at least two members have indicated the possibility of an amalgamated ‘super’ council comprising the four members. This would create a Council of some 14,000km² with a population approaching 10,000. The two main centres of Kojonup and Mount Barker are 100km apart, Kojonup to the north and Mount Barker to the south.

In embracing the concept and need for structural reform in the sector and notwithstanding the Shire’s score of Category One in the Sustainability Checklist, the Council resolved at its meeting held on 11 August 2009:

‘That in the opinion of the Shire of Plantagenet the best structural reform outcome for the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils is that the member Councils of

Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet indicate their willingness to amalgamate and form one local government.'

Public and Sector Engagement

The Minister indicated that public consultation was an important part of the structural reform process. The Council addressed the need for public consultation seriously and indicated that it would have a public meeting to discuss structural reform integrated into the annual pre-budget meeting. Although this was well advertised only a handful of ratepayers attended on the evening of 16 June 2009 in the Council Chambers. It was obvious from that meeting that members of the public were not fully informed about the issues and therefore articles were prepared for publication in the Plantagenet News along with the development of a structural reform paper, a questionnaire and public meetings.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings were held during the week beginning 20 July 2009 and were held at Forest Hill, Narrikup, Mount Barker, Kendenup and Porongurup. The notes from each of these meetings is attached (Appendix One).

Prior to the start of each meeting, those in attendance were handed a structural reform paper ('Structural Reform - What does it mean?') which had been prepared by the Chief Executive Officer and agreed by the Shire President and Deputy Shire President. This paper provided a balanced view of the structural reform process including frequently asked questions (FAQ's). This paper is attached (Appendix Two).

The meetings each had a general consensus that the preferred position for Plantagenet should be to stay independent while continuing to develop resource sharing arrangements with our neighbours. Each meeting also came to the consensus that if this was unacceptable to the Minister then either a boundary adjustment or amalgamation with the Shire of Cranbrook should be sought. Most also believed that there would be no point in seeking amalgamation with Albany as the interests of Plantagenet were so different from Albany's they might be overwhelmed by the population of that City. This feeling was unanimous at all meetings except that held at Porongurup. Although a majority of Porongurup attendees believed that Plantagenet was sustainable on its own, some did feel that the higher rate base of Albany may subsidise services in Plantagenet and that therefore this should not be discounted completely.

QUESTIONNAIRE

While undertaking the public meetings, a questionnaire, which had been developed by the Chief Executive Officer, Shire President and Deputy Shire President, was distributed as a 'Householder' throughout Plantagenet. A copy of this questionnaire is attached (Appendix Three).

The total circulation for a householder in Plantagenet is 2,300. A summary of the results is attached (Appendix Four). A total of 356 was returned. This is a 15.5% response rate.

A further public meeting was called for the evening of 20 August 2009. A paper prepared by the Shire President Cr Kevin Forbes AM was distributed to all those in attendance and is attached (Appendix Eight). This further meeting was needed as a result of the speeches made at Local Government Week by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Castrilli,

the Leader of the National Party, the Hon Brendan Grylls and the Premier, the Hon Colin Barnett.

Each of the above politicians had indicated that structural reform was a reality and that Councils that did not embrace reform ran the risk of losing external grant funding. It was also advised that there was a wish to see less than 100 Councils in Western Australia. This would mean that at least 40 Councils would need to be amalgamated with neighbours. The final public meeting was therefore necessary to advise the community that although the community's preferred position, as determined by questionnaires and public meetings, was to remain as a stand alone entity, the Council considered this to be ill-advised as the risk of losing future funding was too great. Also, the risk of being directed into an alliance/amalgamation contrary to the community's and the Council's wishes was considered unacceptable. Accordingly the Council would be considering an amalgamation of the Southern Link VROC members as the best strategy to bring about meaningful reform and to retain future funding opportunities.

It was also noted that a majority of those responding to the Council's questionnaire had expressed a desire not to look south of Plantagenet for amalgamation partners. Both Albany (89% opposed) and Denmark (83% opposed) were seen to have such differing communities of interest, that amalgamation of those communities with Plantagenet could never effectively occur.

The position to look north towards our VROC partners was accepted by the meeting.

SPECIAL MEETING OF VROC

On the afternoon of 12 August 2009, a special meeting of the Southern Link VROC was held in Cranbrook. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Local Government Convention message that structural reform was a reality and that the VROC needed to make its position known.

The meeting was attended by 34 out of a possible 36 Councillors from the four member Councils.

All in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions and to respond to presentations by each of the Shire Presidents and CEO's.

The meeting resolved (VROC representatives voting):

'That it is the opinion of the Southern Link VROC that the structural reform outcome for the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils is that the member Councils of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet, indicate their willingness to amalgamate and form one local government.'

A media release was prepared and distributed, a copy of which is attached (Appendix Five).

Prior to this special meeting, the CEO's of the member Councils had been meeting weekly to prepare a joint submission on behalf of the member Councils. During the following weeks the position of Kojonup and Cranbrook changed to that of wishing to retain their existing boundaries.

Previous attempts at Structural Reform

GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL CATTLE SALEYARDS

The Shire of Plantagenet has a long history of cooperation with its neighbours. Prior to the amalgamation of the Shire of Albany and the Town of Albany, the Shire of Plantagenet had entered into a joint venture with the Shire of Albany to build and operate jointly owned cattle saleyards in Plantagenet. These saleyards were built five kilometres south of Mount Barker on the Albany Highway and operated under a joint venture agreement. The Saleyards were constructed to replace two existing yards - one in Plantagenet and one in the (then) Shire of Albany, both of which had reached the end of their useful lives.

With the amalgamation of the Shire and the Town into the City of Albany, the joint venture soured somewhat as the City had adopted an attitude that saleyards were not part of the City's core business. The City indicated to the Shire of Plantagenet that further capital expenditure would not be contemplated. The previous successful running of the saleyards was based on goodwill and the joint venture agreement effectively amounted to a Voluntary Regional Organisation rather than a legal document. As the City no longer wanted to be involved in the Saleyards the Shire of Plantagenet was effectively forced into the position of borrowing \$1.3m to buy out the 50% share of the City of Albany and assume the running of these regional facilities on its own.

The saleyards in Plantagenet are truly regional. Cattle from as far away as Esperance are available for sale every week with an average throughput of 60,000 head per annum.

The development of new saleyards at Muchea by the WA Meat Industry Authority will enhance the regional significance of the Great Southern Regional Cattle Saleyards as cattle

producers south of Perth and formerly transporting to Midland may no longer find that viable and transport to Mount Barker instead.

GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL (WASTE)

The Shire of Plantagenet was also a member of the Great Southern Regional Council, a regional council having membership of the City of Albany and the Shires of Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup and Plantagenet. The Regional Council had been formed with the intention of disposing of regional waste at a site in Plantagenet purchased for that purpose. Significant sums had been invested in consultants' reports to develop the site. The City of Albany resolved that it no longer supported the disposal of waste at the Shire of Plantagenet site and this effectively brought the Regional Council to an end. The City of Albany in coming to this decision indicated that it was cheaper to dispose of rubbish at its own sites. This was a perfectly legitimate decision. However, it highlights the differences between the needs of the City of Albany being a largely CBD and urban centric Council when compared with those of Plantagenet and other rural Councils.

RAINBOW COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL (VROC)

The Shire of Plantagenet, along with the City of Albany and the Shires of Cranbrook and Denmark were also members of a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Council named the Rainbow Coast Regional Council. Although called a Regional Council it had never been formally incorporated as a Regional Council. This VROC was in existence for some twelve years and in late 2008 the Shire of Plantagenet withdrew its membership. Plantagenet had come to the conclusion that the differences in communities of interest between Plantagenet, Denmark and Albany were too great to achieve common outcomes or effective sharing

opportunities. At the same time the Council was seeking cooperation from its northern neighbours of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Kojonup to form the Southern Link VROC which, although operating for only a short time, has already achieved successful outcomes regarding asset management and records storage.

The Shire of Plantagenet's previous experiences with a formal Regional Council, a joint venture and a voluntary regional organisation of councils which involved the much larger City of Albany have not been successful. There is a tendency for a larger Council to exert undue influence over a smaller council due to the differing natures of populations and needs. The City of Albany is largely CBD and urban centric as opposed to the largely rural and agricultural nature of Plantagenet.

CRANBROOK, DENMARK AND PLANTAGENET - 'WORKING BETTER TOGETHER'

Utilising funds made available through the Connecting Local Governments Feasibility Study Grants, the Shires of Cranbrook, Denmark and Plantagenet in 2007/2008 engaged an external consultant to examine opportunities for the three Shires to combine resources so that tasks currently undertaken separately could be combined.

The study identified many advantages of working together including:

- Joint Tendering; and
- Sharing of professional services such as Information Technology, Engineering, Town Planning, Accounting, Environmental Health and Building Services.

It also identified benefits from standardisation of procedures, terminology, agendas/minutes, record management, payroll, rating, Human Resources, Bush Fire Control and Waste Management.

It was noted that each of the advantages identified would accrue to an amalgamated organisation.

Conclusions

The Shire of Plantagenet has spent considerable time and energy in:

- Completing the reform checklist;
- Undertaking community consultation;
- Preparing reports and consultation papers;
- Preparing and analysing a householder questionnaire; and
- Hosting and attending meetings with our neighbours.

It is perhaps some measure of the Council's and the community's pragmatic approach that, although preferring an outcome that didn't involve amalgamations, both the Council and the community are accepting of an outcome which would see the Shires of Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Plantagenet form one new local government.

These four existing local government areas share similarities in broadacre farming, plantations, vineyards, cattle and sheep production and tourism. Further the four Council amalgamation configuration will result in an area with a large town in its north and a large town in its south. The new Council area would have population dispersed over a wide area,

with population settlements in Broomehill, Cranbrook, Frankland, Kendenup, Kojonup, Mount Barker, Narrikup, Porongurup, Rocky Gully, Tambellup and Tenterden.

The two main centres of Kojonup and Mount Barker are situated on Albany Highway, with Mount Barker also being on the Great Southern Railway.

It should be noted that of our VROC partners, now only the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup embraces the concept of an amalgamation of member Councils. Both Kojonup and Cranbrook have moved away from the concept due to community pressure and (we believe) National Party encouragement.

Our Requirements for Reform

To lessen the financial impact of reform on each of the districts affected by this proposal, a number of issues would need to be addressed and agreement reached, including:

- Proposed Representation and Boundaries;
- Rating issues;
- The costs of amalgamation;
- Outstanding debt of Plantagenet/Great Southern Regional Cattle Saleyards;
- Engagement of existing contract staff;
- Amalgamated Town Planning Schemes;
- ‘Shop Fronts’ Administration Centre/Staff travelling/Housing;
- Appointment of Commissioner(s);
- Selection of CEO; and
- Aged Care Facility in Kojonup (Springhaven).

PROPOSED REPRESENTATION AND BOUNDARIES

The Shire of Plantagenet believes that initial representation of the new authority should be based on existing electoral populations. These are:

Broomehill-Tambellup	843
Cranbrook	767
Kojonup	1,604
Plantagenet	3,111
TOTAL	<u>6,325</u>

Eight elected representatives would result in representation, based on the former Shire boundaries of:

Broomehill-Tambellup	1
Cranbrook	1
Kojonup	2
Plantagenet	4
TOTAL	<u>8</u>

A map of the revised local authority area is attached (Appendix Six.)

This results in an elector to councillor ratio of 790 overall, with actuals being:

Broomehill-Tambellup	1:843	(variation: +6.7%)
Cranbrook	1:767	(variation: - 2.9%)
Kojonup	1:802	(variation: +1.5%)
Plantagenet	1:778	(variation - 1.5%)

Former Shire boundaries should stay in place for at least the elections to be held in October 2011 and 2013. Subsequently, a 'No Ward' policy could be implemented.

Councillor representation of either 9, 7 or 6 Councillors results in unacceptable variances.

RATING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

During analysis of the proposal it became evident that rate burden anomalies would need to be addressed.

Unimproved Value rates in the dollar for the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Kojonup are set at 0.7551, 0.7076 and 0.7288 respectively in the financial year 2009/10. Plantagenet's is 0.44469.

In the first year of amalgamation, to raise a similar overall revenue from UV rates would require a rate in the dollar that would result in acceptable increases for Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Kojonup, but would result in a massive increase for Plantagenet ratepayers.

This would obviously be unacceptable and would need to be addressed utilising section 6.47 of the Local Government Act (1995) to grant concessions as appropriate to equalise the rate burden, especially for former Shire of Plantagenet ratepayers. A possible rate equalisation scenario is attached (Appendix Seven).

However, this scenario makes certain assumptions regarding necessary revenue increases. Importantly it is critical to cushion the inevitable rate increased for Plantagenet ratepayers. Without this concession it would be expected that much ill will would be generated.

The equalisation scenario can be altered for time-frame and required revenue increases to achieve acceptable concessions.

THE COSTS OF AMALGAMATION

The costs of structural reform will be high, judging by the experiences of previously amalgamated Councils, but would be too great a burden for local communities. It is understood that the direct cost of amalgamation of the Shires of Broomehill and Tambellup was \$750,000.

Commitment by the State Government to meet these costs is necessary to ensure that the reform process proceeds as smoothly as possible.

The following costs need to be addressed at a minimum:

- Full cost of staff redundancy packages;
- Full cost of information technology conversions;
- Full cost of conversion of financial systems and records and the development and implementation of a single finance system;
- Full cost of land title and land vestings to the new local government entity;
- Full cost of conversion or transfer of legal contracts from the individual local governments to the new entity;
- Full costs associated with the merging of, and or, new Workplace Agreements applicable across the staff of the new entity;
- Full costs of merging Town Planning Schemes to ensure that a fully merged or a new Town Planning Scheme is in place within 5 years of the date of operation of the new local government entity;

- Full cost of adopting, repealing or amending Local Laws to ensure that Local Laws are in place to operate across the new local government entity from the date it comes into operation;
- Full costs for building construction, alterations and refurbishments associated with staff re-locations and staff increases required for a fully effective and efficient workforce.

OUTSTANDING DEBT OF SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET

The Shire of Plantagenet borrowed \$1,725,000 in 1999 to construct in partnership with the then Shire of Albany, the Great Southern Regional Cattle Saleyards, situated in Mount Barker.

In 2005 the Council borrowed a further \$1,300,000 to purchase the (now) City of Albany's 50% share for \$1,000,000 and to undertake necessary refurbishment.

Principal outstanding at 30 June 2009 was \$2,284,000.

Negotiations have been ongoing with successive Ministers for Agriculture for either outright purchase of the Saleyards, in line with the State Saleyards Strategy, or at least the retirement of the associated debt.

The Mount Barker Saleyards are a true regional facility, and, with the sale of the Midland Saleyards and the almost completed Muchea Saleyards, funds should be made available to complete this long promised purchase/retirement of debt.

There is no doubt that one of the reasons that the Shire of Cranbrook has stood against amalgamation is due to in its opinion, Plantagenet's high debt burden.

STAFF MATTERS

The lifeblood of local government, along with its elected members, is no doubt its committed staff.

Although permanent staff have some protection under the Act, this leaves many contracted staff in an unsafe position. Contracts which may normally be renewed may not be. This is unfair and helps create unrest and uncertainty where none needs to be, especially for staff in the last 1-2 years of a contract.

It is difficult for Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) to counsel staff in this situation, especially as the uncertainty may be affecting the CEO's as well.

The Minister needs to address this important issue decisively to ensure stability and certainty of employment.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

With a new Council to be formed, it is important to retain corporate knowledge and stability. The four CEO's of the Councils affected by this submission have indicated a wish to remain in their districts and for one of their number to be appointed as inaugural CEO. This not only makes sense, it would ensure the commitment of these officers to the long process of amalgamation and give the new CEO the opportunity to 'hit the ground running'. The retention of corporate knowledge would be invaluable.

ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

The Shire of Plantagenet is of the opinion that the main administrative centre of the new council should be in the existing council offices/chamber in Mount Barker. The building in Mount Barker is only three years old and has some spare capacity for workstations. A large and well equipped depot/workshop is also situated in Mount Barker.

Further, Mount Barker is the major population centre of the four existing Shires, has a recently completed Community College (Kindergarten to Year 12 by first term 2010), a District Hospital, a recently refurbished Home and Community Care Centre, a heated Olympic swimming pool, a new Medical Centre, a newly refurbished (August 2009) Police Station, Library, TAFE, Recreation Centre in partnership with the Education Department and a soon to be completed Community Centre. Mount Barker is situated at the junction of Albany and Muirs Highways, Porongurup Road and Albany Highway and Woogenellup Road and Albany Highway. Also, Mount Barker is the home of the Mount Barker Turf Club, a very successful provincial thoroughbred racing club, which last season had a turnover of on and off course betting over eight meetings of:

On course betting	\$389,809.00
WATAB	\$4,024,627.00
Eastern States Betting	\$14,568,952.00

Next season broadcasting will be going straight to Singapore for all Sunday meetings.

‘SHOP FRONTS’

Although full service local government offices will need to be provided in both Kojonup and Mount Barker, it will be necessary to provide ‘shop fronts’ in Broomehill, Cranbrook and Tambellup. These ‘shop fronts’ will need to provide licensing and receipting services and provision of town planning, health and building services on an appointment basis.

TOWN PLANNING SCHEMES

Presently there are five operating Town Planning Schemes over the four Councils.

Commitment from the Department of Planning would be necessary to ensure that a combined Town Planning Scheme would be completed within five years of amalgamation.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners should be appointed from within the local communities. This would help ensure that communities were accepting of the changes if ‘locals’ are involved.

AGED CARE FACILITY IN KOJONUP

The Aged Care Facility in Kojonup (Springhaven) should be taken over as part of a Multi Purpose Service (MPS). It creates a drain on Kojonup’s resources and administration.

This process has already successfully occurred in Plantagenet with the Home and Community Care centre and Plantagenet Village Homes being joined in a multi-purpose service with the Plantagenet District Hospital.

STAFF HOUSING

Existing staff housing contracts should be honoured and transferred to alternative locations if this proves to be needed.

Appendixes

One Public Meeting Notes

Two Structural Reform paper and FAQ's

Three Questionnaire distributed to Householder

Four Summary of Questionnaire Results

Five VROC Media Release

Six Map of revised Boundaries

Seven Rate Equalisation Scenario

**Eight Paper prepared by Cr Kevin Forbes AM for public meeting 20
August 2009**

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Forest Hill 20 July 2009

Kendenup 22 July 2009

Porongurup 23 July 2009

Narrikup 21 July 2009

Mount Barker 21 July 2009

Mount Barker 20 August 2009

Structural Reform - Forest Hill

The Forest Hill Structural Reform meeting was attended by fifteen members of the public along with Councillors Forbes AM, Clements and CEO Rob Stewart on the evening of 20 July 2009 at 6.00pm. All were invited to read the Structural Reform report which had been distributed.

Those in attendance were:

John Howard
Sheryn Howard
Val Drage
Darrel Drage
Pam Sounness
Robert Sounness
Len Handasyde
Michael Lanigan
Catherine Lanigan
Sharon Lynch
Arthur Drage
Barry Drage
Trevor Allison
Norm Handasyde
Beqte Handasyde

As temperatures plummeted to around 5^o and the rain pelted down, those in attendance read the Council's position paper which was circulated.

Shire President Cr Kevin Forbes chaired the meeting and noted the Minister's requirement for reform of the local government sector which could mean amalgamation of neighbouring Councils.

Questions revolved around the theme of 'why should amalgamation be necessary when the Council was going well on its own?'

All speakers indicated that the first preference should be the same as the Council's - that is that we should stay as we are. Speakers then explored the option of boundary changes to our north (Cranbrook) and to our south (Albany).

One speaker indicated that there was no point in amalgamating with the City of Albany as a whole as Plantagenet's interests would be overrun possibly by those of Albany. However, all agreed that boundary adjustment to the south could make sense as well as to the north.

Discussion also took place regarding the possibility of amalgamating with the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Kojonup. The group, as a whole said this should not be considered and that the only amalgamation that should be considered, if staying on our own wasn't sufficient and if boundary adjustments were not sufficient, would be with Cranbrook.

In summary the meeting considered that:

1. In the first instance Plantagenet should stay as it is.
2. If option one above is not acceptable then boundary adjustments to the north and the south should be considered.
3. If neither one nor two is acceptable an amalgamation with Cranbrook should be considered.

Trevor Allison thanked the Council for arranging the meeting.

The Shire President thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting at 7.10pm.

Structural Reform - Porongurup

The Porongurup Structural Reform meeting was attended by eighteen members of the public along with Councillors Forbes AM, Clements and CEO Rob Stewart on the evening of 23 July 2009 at 6.00pm. All were invited to read the Structural Reform report which had been distributed.

Those in attendance were:

Roger Crook
Lynne Crook
Trevor Wager
Wendy Wager
Ron Caudwell
Scott Drummond
Andrew Turk
Mark Vitler
Di Drummond
Lee McInness
Garry Mulder
Michael Phipps
Alison Phipps
Miepie Coleman
Ron Coleman
Lucia Quearry
Peter Form
Elizabeth Braun

The meeting was boisterous and many in attendance pre-empted the structural reform flavour of the meeting by complaining about the state of the Mount Barker-Porongurup Road.

Councillor representatives indicated that the road was planned to be sealed earlier in the year but due to a state wide shortage of bitumen, the sealing was unable to be completed. The state of the road after recent rains was noted.

Cr Forbes then invited all those in attendance to read the structural reform notes that had been distributed and also advised that the Porongurup meeting was the fifth public meeting to be held that week. He noted that although the Shire of Plantagenet had recently received the highest score possible in the structural reform checklist this did not make the Shire immune from structural reform. Therefore the purpose of the meeting was to gain information from members of the public as to how they perceived structural reform.

Some of those in attendance indicated that it was impossible to give an informed decision unless full financial statements were provided as to the effect of any proposed boundary adjustment or structural reform. However, after a good deal of discussion there appeared to be some consensus although many different opinions were expressed. A majority of those in

attendance believed that the Shire should stay as it is but if that wasn't possible then some form of boundary adjustment or amalgamation with Cranbrook should be investigated. Most also considered that amalgamation with Albany should not be an option although this was by no means unanimous. Other comments from the floor queried the notion that if it was going to be done anyway why should an opinion even be put forward? Others felt that an amalgamation with a bigger Council such as Albany may be beneficial to the residents and ratepayers of Plantagenet as the bigger CBD of Albany could effectively subsidise services in Plantagenet. It was also noted that any change should be business-like and made under a business environment. Others adopted a more fatalistic attitude and said whatever happens, we will learn to live with it. Yet others said that we should simply foster more cooperation between all our neighbours as there was no advantage financially in an amalgamation with Cranbrook and maybe the whole of the Great Southern should be considered.

In summary, although a majority felt that the Shire should stay as it was or consider looking towards Cranbrook many others felt completely differently with regard to the concept of amalgamation, which 'was not necessarily a bad thing'.

The Shire President thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting at 8.00pm.

Structural Reform - Kendenup

Six members of the Kendenup Community attended the Structural Reform Meeting held at the Kendenup Hall on the evening of 22 July 2009 at 6.00pm. All were invited to read the Structural Reform report which had been distributed.

Those in attendance were:

David Williamson
Judith Allen
Pavel Moore
Tim Saggars
Ian Jagger
Ivan Edwards

The discussion was robust and all participants had the opportunity to address the Councillors in attendance (Councillors Forbes AM, Clements and Budrikis) or the CEO.

Questions asked by the group sought information about what the Minister was trying to achieve and how would any new arrangements bring more benefit to Kendenup. Concerns were raised regarding the possibility of the need for two administration offices and the costs of an amalgamation.

In response Cr Forbes indicated that very little information had been given by the Minister as to specific criteria for amalgamation or boundary adjustments. Cr Forbes also noted that depending on the size of any new Council there may be a need for more than one administrative office. Cr Forbes also noted that the amalgamated Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup had indicated that the cost of the amalgamation was \$750,000 over two years.

There was a consensus in the room that no amalgamation should take place with Albany although possibly a boundary adjustment to the east of Plantagenet may have some merit. Also there was some consideration that Plantagenet could possibly have some boundary adjustments to the south but not any coastline.

Consensus also indicated that we should stay the same if possible but the preferable direction should be to go north even with the boundary adjustment or a complete amalgamation with Cranbrook.

The Shire President thanked all those for coming along and closed the meeting at 7.15pm.

Structural Reform Meeting - Narrikup

An enthusiastic group of 18 Narrikupians along with Councillors Forbes AM, Clements, Moir and CEO Rob Stewart attended the Narrikup Hall on the evening of 21 July 2009 at 6.00pm to learn about the Minister for Local Government's plans for structural reform within the local government sector.

Those in attendance were:

Marg Hick
Charlie Hick
Keith Townsend
Joe Plowright
Ben Stan-Bishop
Toby Stan-Bishop
Jason Stan -Bishop
Warren Forbes
Norman Findlay
Evan Findlay
Liz Frusher
Graeme Frusher
W Matthews
Jamie Stan-Bishop
Kelvin Ridgway
R Stan-Bishop
NG Stan-Bishop
L Handasyde

Cr Kevin Forbes welcomed all those in attendance and invited them to read the report that had been prepared and distributed. He then invited questions from the floor.

One question related to the historical setting for structural reform in local government and Cr Forbes explained the national status and how other states in Australia had already undertaken structural reform which, in most people's language, amounted to amalgamation of Councils. Cr Forbes noted that he believed that the Minister in Western Australia wanted to see less than 100 Councils down from the present 139.

Another question from the floor indicated concern that if the Council got bigger how could we be guaranteed the level of existing services?

A further question related to the poll provisions of the Act and the CEO responded to this. There was general agreement from the floor that if the amalgamation was forced then we should demand a poll. People considered that we should promote the Voluntary Regional

Organisation of Councils with Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup and Cranbrook as much as possible.

Cr Forbes then sought feedback from individuals and in summary the group believed that in the first instance Plantagenet should stay the same but that if a change was forced then we should look to the north at Cranbrook for either amalgamation or boundary adjustment. The group believed it was important to stay agricultural in nature and that looking towards Cranbrook was a logical link. The group believed that Denmark was too far away being separated by a forest and that we would 'get lost' in Albany. The group believed that the Southern Link VROC would be too big and 'if it ain't broke don't fix it'.

The Shire President thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting at 7.05pm.

Structural Reform Meeting - Mount Barker

Councillors Forbes AM, Clements, Hollingworth, Moir, Nicole Selesnew and CEO Rob Stewart attended the Structural Reform Meeting held in the Council Chambers on the evening of 21 July 2009 at 8.00pm to learn about the Minister for Local Government's plans for structural reform within the local government sector.

Those in attendance were:

Leigh Wallace
Ron Thomas
Sandra Perry
Marl Wallace
Kylie Wallace
Ian Couper
George Corke
Anderson Dufty
Stephen Carson
Len Handasyde

Cr Forbes invited all those in attendance to read the tabled structural reform report.

Cr Forbes noted that the Minister had said publicly that amalgamation would not be forced upon local government but his actions indicated that he wants fewer Councils. The only way to achieve fewer Councils would be for amalgamation to occur. He noted that Plantagenet had been awarded the highest possible score of 'One' with the structural reform checklist and that Plantagenet's adopted position was to stay the way we are and emphasised our relationship with our VROC partners. Cr Forbes noted however that this position may not be defensible if the Minister forced amalgamations and therefore a fallback position was needed.

Cr Forbes invited questions from the floor and also explained the nature of a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC) and the Southern Link VROC in particular.

A question was asked whether all members of the VROC were happy with their present situation and membership in the VROC and Cr Forbes responded with an emphatic 'yes'. Cr Forbes noted in response to a question, that amalgamations and local government structural reform had happened in all other states in Australia and that Western Australia was the last.

Another question was asked where Plantagenet's funding came from and Cr Forbes indicated that funding came predominantly from rates, financial assistance grants and specific road funding.

Those in attendance noted that the 'local' should be retained in 'local government'. It was noted that a 'super' Council would not work over a big geographical area with sparse

population. It was unanimous from the group that an amalgamation with Albany was not wanted.

Further questions related to the needs of Cranbrook and whether those needs could continue to be satisfied with boundary adjustments or amalgamation.

A further question noted that any submission the Council made should address the issues of ‘good government’ as required by the Local Government Act.

It was noted from the floor that the process of structural reform appeared to be similar to that of reform of the health service several years ago where health services were centralised.

There was consensus from the group that an amalgamation with Albany was not an option and that the Council should look at a Cranbrook scenario while ensuring that we remain as ‘local’ as possible. The group considered that Albany was difficult to work with and an amalgamation with Albany would mean that services in Plantagenet could easily be curtailed. The concept of a boundary adjustment with Cranbrook up to the Gordon River was considered to be a viable option and it was noted that ‘we don’t want to be Albany’s Rocky Gully’. Some expansion to the South could be considered.

The Shire President thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Structural Reform Meeting - Mount Barker.

The Shire President Councillor Kevin Forbes AM opened the meeting at 7.07pm and welcomed all those in attendance and invited them to read the distributed paper, a copy of which is attached.

The Shire President recorded apologies from:

Max Trenorden MLC
Councillor Deb Nye-Chart
Councillor Andrus Budrikis
Councillor Bill Hollingworth
David Williamson

Councillor Forbes noted that the meeting had been called urgently as the Council wanted to indicate to as many people as possible as quickly as possible that after attending Local Government Week recently speeches from the Premier Mr Colin Barnett, the Leader of the National Party Mr Brendon Grylls and the Minister for Local Government Mr John Castrilli, that amalgamations of local governments were a reality and most Councillors were now of the opinion that boundary adjustments or even an amalgamation between Plantagenet and Cranbrook would be insufficient to give the Minister what he wants and that a majority of Councillors were now considering that an amalgamation between Plantagenet, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Kojonup was the best fit.

Councillor Forbes indicated that if we are pro-active we may have the opportunity to choose our own path rather than a path dictated to us with the risk of losing grant funding in the future.

Councillor Forbes then invited questions from those in attendance.

In response to a question relating to public consultation Councillor Forbes noted that five public meetings had been held regarding structural reform and that a questionnaire had been distributed to all residents of the Shire. He noted that although the view of the people wasn't what is now being proposed, that the purpose of this meeting is to let people know that the view of the people is not necessarily the outcome that will be accepted.

Councillor Forbes advised that the population of Plantagenet was in the vicinity of 4,950 and that the population of an amalgamated Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet would be around 9,000. Councillor representation would most likely be four from Plantagenet, one each from Broomehill-Tambellup and Cranbrook and two from Kojonup if wards were based on the old shire boundaries, although this is not set in stone.

It was then noted from the floor that amalgamation could give the new Council some efficiencies, but that it would be good to retain representation.

Councillor Forbes said that the government was committed to one vote/one value and that over time there would probably be no wards in the amalgamated Council. He said also that unspecified funding is possibly available to help with the process. However, if we get in first there may be a better chance of receiving maximum funding.

A comment from the floor noted that at present Plantagenet subsidises some regional service areas such as Saleyards and Swimming Pool.

It was then asked from the floor whether we had looked at combining with Manjimup and Denmark.

Councillor Forbes indicated in the negative as it was felt that Manjimup was too far away and that we shared insufficient communities of interest with Denmark.

It was then asked whether an amalgamation with Cranbrook was an option.

The Shire President indicated that the Premier and the Minister for Local Government wanted to get the total number of Councils 'well below 100' and that an amalgamation with Cranbrook may be insufficient to achieve this number and also may not be considered a suitable amalgamation (size wise and population wise) by the government.

The Shire President noted that the main administration centre of any new Council would most likely be in Mount Barker and that jobs for employees would be retained by legislation for a period of two years for non contract staff.

A comment was made that the main word in local government is 'local'. The questioner also congratulated the Council and its officers for being pro active in this matter. The questioner note that the push for bigger local governments came from Canberra although the questioner didn't believe that bigger was necessarily better. The questioner noted that Canberra was a long way away and didn't necessarily know what was going on in regional areas of Australia, especially Western Australia. Bigger could become unwieldy and possibly unaccountable to the people. He questioned whether ratepayers and residents could still talk to their representatives and officers.

Councillor Forbes advised that elected representation would still be there and that there would always be an office in Mount Barker.

Another questioner indicated concerns that development might stop during the amalgamation period within Plantagenet.

Councillor Forbes indicated that there shouldn't be any reduction in output as budgets and programs were still in place, but in the long run it would be the decision of the new Council.

A question was then asked regarding the Council's debt and the attitude of other Councils to this.

Councillor Forbes said that about fifty percent of our debt was related to the saleyards and that discussions were well advanced with the State Government for that debt to be taken on by the Government or the Saleyards would be purchased completely by the Government.

Councillor Forbes also noted that a loan from the Bendigo Bank for the Medical Centre was interest free and that the balance of the Council's loan portfolio related to the Administration Centre, apart from self supporting loans.

Councillor Forbes said he believed that the workload for new Councillors would be greater and that Councillors would need real commitment.

Councillor Forbes indicated that the Council wouldn't be debt free within two years but the amount of debt for the Council at present would be insignificant to a larger Council.

Councillor Forbes indicated that there was no specific time frame for amalgamation but suggested that 1 July 2011 may be a potential date.

Councillor Forbes advised that every state except WA had gone through this structural reform process, some voluntary and some not voluntary. In some instances Councils had chosen not to amalgamate and were now suffering funding issues.

He also noted in response to a question about the uniqueness of WA, that Queensland was also big and that amalgamation had been forced in that state.

In response to a question relating to simply undertaking boundary adjustments, Councillor Forbes said that a boundary adjustment to the south would not give us the necessary population to appease the Minister. Further, Jerramungup and Denmark were not particularly keen in adjusting their boundaries to take in some of the rural areas of Albany.

Once amalgamation took place the former Councils ceased to exist. He noted that there should be benefits from this as many services presently provided by four Councils could be centralized into one area such as accounts, rates, IT and the like.

A comment from the floor said that the grouping of the four like minded Councils was good and that we should get on with it to get as much funding from the process as possible and that the process would need the good will of the people of Plantagenet.

Councillor Forbes noted that there was some hesitation in Cranbrook especially as that Council and the people of Cranbrook were worried about Plantagenet's debt level.

A further question from the floor indicated concern that a bigger Council may be expected to take on some of the State Government's services.

Councillor Forbes noted that this should not be an issue and that by being bigger we should get more influence and that there should not be any negative effect on services.

A question from the floor regarded funding leverage if amalgamation took place.

Councillor Forbes responded that we were hoping that saleyards in Mount Barker could be used as a lever as well as aged care in Kojonup. If we are first in line we may be able to have more influence.

It was then noted from the floor that we should stay the way we are if we can but that if that was not possible we should not go south. An amalgamation with Cranbrook alone would be OK.

A question from the floor indicated that there may be a threat of reduced funding if amalgamation didn't go ahead. A questioner asked if this was legal.

Councillor Forbes noted that grant funding needed to be fought for on a competitive basis and that the Federal Assistance Grant Funding (FAGS) from the Federal Government, which was a share of income tax, was based on a complex formula which could be changed by the Federal Government or the State Government through the Grants Commission.

Councillor Forbes said that on a recent sustainability check list, Plantagenet was one of only 30 Councils in Western Australia who received the highest possible score. Even though the Shire is travelling well from that point of view it is not immune to Structural Reform.

A questioner asked what would the name of the new Council be and advised that no name had been chosen or considered.

A questioner also asked whether local number plates for vehicles would stay and the answer was that they should, but this may need further investigation.

It was then asked whether a poll pursuant to the Local Government Act 1995 would be called.

Councillor Forbes explained the legislative process for a poll but noted that the poll provisions could be taken out of the equation through legislation.

A questioner asked whether Councils had been left in the dark regarding the structural reform process.

Councillor Forbes indicated that to a certain degree this was the case. He noted that the Chief Executive Officers of the four Councils were working hard on presenting a case to the Minister.

A questioner was concerned regarding volunteers, especially Emergency Services. Councillor Forbes indicated that there should not be any change but that the structure may change to reflect the new Council but that the towns and communities would still be in existence.

Another questioner asked whether this reform only affected rural areas. Councillor Forbes noted that he was aware that the Western Suburbs of Perth were investigating Structural Reform to bring about a reduction in the number of Councils.

A questioner asked whether a change of government would upset the process.

Councillor Forbes noted that the previous Labor government had talked about structural reform of local government and would most likely support the Liberals in this push.

Councillor Forbes then concluded the meeting indicating that local government elections were coming up and that the community needed people to put their hand up for election, especially for election to the new amalgamated Council. Cr Forbes also advised that he would not be seeking re-election.

Mr Stephen Carter then thanked the Shire President for his presentation and this was acknowledged by acclamation.

The Shire President then closed the meeting at 8.12pm and invited everyone for a cup of coffee and a biscuit and to contact the Council if they had any further questions.



STRUCTURAL REFORM - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The question of structural reform for local government has been raised almost constantly over the past two decades.

Most people are aware of the structural reform that occurred recently in Queensland which involved Councils being amalgamated with their neighbours with little or no consultation. Similarly, the State of Victoria under Jeff Kennett also reformed local government through the amalgamation process without consultation. Amalgamation of local government generally results in the Councillors of the affected Councils being sacked along with the Chief Executive Officers (CEO). In place of the Councillors are Commissioners appointed by the Minister and an interim CEO until the amalgamation issues are settled. Fresh elections are then held and a new CEO is appointed for the amalgamated Council.

In Western Australia the Minister for Local Government the Hon. John Castrilli has advised all local governments in Western Australia that structural reform must occur. Mr Castrilli has not defined what this structural reform should be, however there is strong evidence that the number of local governments in Western Australia (139 mainland local governments) needs to be reduced to satisfy Federal government future funding proposals. Mr Castrilli said that there were 85 Councils in WA serving populations of less than 2,000 people and that a reduction in the number of Councils could save ratepayers substantial sums.

The Minister has requested all Councils to report back to him, initially with a 'Structural Reform Checklist' which was due on 30 April 2009 and then a Reform Submission by 31 August 2009.

The checklists sent to the Minister in April were judged against sustainability criteria and were awarded Categories of 'One', 'Two' or 'Three'. The Department of Local Government defined the categories as:

Category One: '..evidence indicates that there is existing organisational and financial capacity to meet current and future community needs. Local governments should still consider reform opportunities which enhance service provision to local and regional communities.'

Category Two: '..structural reform including amalgamation/boundary adjustments and formalisation of regional groupings should be considered to enhance organisational and financial capacity to meet current and future community needs.'

Category Three: ‘..significant structural reform including amalgamation and formalisation of regional groupings is required to ensure long term community and organisational benefit in order that the needs of the current and future generations are met.’

The Shire of Plantagenet was classified as Category One.

Notwithstanding the ‘One’ classification, the Shire of Plantagenet is not immune from potential change and, late in 2008, approached its northern neighbours of Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup and Cranbrook with the proposal to form a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). This VROC was subsequently formed and a Memorandum of Understanding signed. The reason for having a VROC is so that autonomous Councils can work together to seek ways to achieve economies through joint tendering, common IT platforms, employment of specialist staff and administrative systems to name just a few.

The VROC members have operated well together as they are like-minded with similar industries and communities. Plantagenet is of the opinion that there are similar communities of interest with our northern neighbours rather than our southern neighbours of Albany and Denmark. Albany is obviously very much larger than Plantagenet and both Albany and Denmark share substantial coast line.

Plantagenet was of the opinion that the formation of the VROC would be sufficient to satisfy the need for further structural reform. We now believe however that a VROC may not be sufficient to satisfy structural reform outcomes. Due to a VROC’s voluntary nature, a member could, for particular projects, decide to pull out. For reasons such as this the Minister is saying that VROC’s may not be the best vehicle to bring about structural reform. In fact, if the Minister wants fewer local governments in Western Australia the only way to achieve this is through amalgamation of local governments.

It has been suggested that the VROC members of Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Plantagenet should consider amalgamation. This would be a large Council covering some 14,000sq kilometres and 9,000 population. Also, the main centres of Kojonup and Mount Barker are 100 kilometres apart. Size can introduce its own inefficiencies and can create difficulties in administration, although there are many local government areas in Western Australia and indeed Australia which are already of a similar size or larger.

It has also been suggested that possibly Cranbrook and Plantagenet could amalgamate and also the Shires of Kojonup and Broomehill-Tambellup. This would achieve two reasonable sized Councils with similar communities of interest.

Other suggestions have been that amalgamation is not necessary at all. All Councils could simply remain as they are with the VROC or the VROC could be formalised into a Regional Council which would, in effect, be another Council sitting over the top of the four existing ones. That Council would be tasked with particular jobs such as, for instance, road construction. As a Regional Council is a properly incorporated local government it must undertake all the statutory requirements of a local government and therefore some say that

this is not necessarily a good outcome as it creates another level of bureaucracy and administration and the ongoing costs of such an organisation.

Each Council which is a member of the VROC has indicated to the Minister that it is perfectly happy to stay on its own and cooperate with its neighbours as necessary. With the Minister saying that the '*status quo*' is not acceptable Councils either need to make up their own minds how structural reform should occur or run the risk of having structural reform imposed.

Plantagenet has indicated that its first preference is to stay the way it is - that is as a stand alone Council, cooperating with its neighbours. If this position isn't acceptable then some form of amalgamation or boundary re-alignment may be necessary. In this event there are a number of options.

Firstly, rather than amalgamate, there may be advantages in undertaking boundary adjustments along geographical features such as rivers or man-made features such as roads. To the North, the Gordon and Frankland Rivers could be seen as natural boundaries with Cranbrook. To the South, possibly Millbrook and Hazzard Roads could serve as a boundary with Albany. Neither of those scenarios is necessarily attractive for Cranbrook or Albany, however Plantagenet and Albany would continue to exist. Cranbrook would need to seek restructure partners to the North.

Secondly the Council could investigate the amalgamation of all of the VROC Councils (Kojonup, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Plantagenet). This isn't an attractive proposition for Plantagenet, but is favoured by Kojonup and Broomehill-Tambellup, should amalgamation need to occur. Plantagenet feels that the combined area of some 14,000km² is too large to manage effectively.

The Council could look at the amalgamation of the Lower Great Southern Councils (being Albany, Denmark, Cranbrook and Plantagenet). Again, this isn't a favoured position of Plantagenet. The smaller population areas could easily be overwhelmed by the urban and city areas of Albany.

If forced to choose, an amalgamation with Cranbrook would bring similar communities together with similar interests.

Although an amalgamation with Albany only, with Albany being 50kms from Mount Barker, could also work, Albany and Plantagenet do not share similar communities of interest. Albany is a coastal city with a large CBD and a population of over 31,000. Plantagenet has a population of 5,000 and is predominantly a rural and agricultural district.

Councillors at the Shire of Plantagenet are concerned that if structural reform is imposed it may include Councils of the Lower Great Southern being amalgamated into a '*super*' Council. Councillors at Plantagenet are worried that if this occurred the interests of residents and ratepayers of Plantagenet would be lost in the greater area and population of Albany.

The situation is complex and is not helped in that specific criteria for structural reform have not been made available by the Minister. Nevertheless any input from Plantagenet's ratepayers and residents is valuable and will assist the Council in preparing its Reform Submission by 31 August.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What are the benefits of local government structural reform?

- increased capacity for local government to better plan, manage and deliver services to their communities with a focus on social, environmental and economic sustainability;
- increased capacity for local government to have adequate financial and asset management plans in place;
- enhanced efficiency in the processing of planning, building and other licence applications made by business and the community;
- greater ability to attract and retain staff and the provision of further career development opportunities;
- greater competition for elected and appointed positions on Council and, in conjunction with other reforms, potential for enhanced governance capacity; and
- larger local governments with greater capacity to partner with State and Federal Government, and the private sector, to further improve services to communities.

Q2 What are the disadvantages of local government structural reform?

- potential loss of local identity;
- loss of representation;
- time consuming and complex;
- dilution of wealth;
- accepting another local government's debts;
- cost savings experience in other states has demonstrated that cost savings through perceived economies of scale are not realised for a number of years after amalgamation, if ever;
- perceived favouritism of higher population density over more sparse population, e.g. rural versus urban;
- possible disenfranchising of electors by increasing elector numbers and reducing Councillor numbers;
- larger area to govern, increasing competition for funding of services and facilities;
- perceived restricted access to staff in a larger organisation; and
- perceived favouritism of staff toward previous affiliates and groups.
- high cost. The Shire President of the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup recently noted that the cost of amalgamating in the former Shires of Broomehill and Tambellup was approximately \$750,000 over two years.

Q3 Will the amalgamation with another Shire or the City of Albany reduce rates?

No.

History from other amalgamations in Western Australia has not resulted in reduced rates. The rates to provide services to all residents are still required. A larger organisation however, with larger budgets has a greater capacity to fund efficiencies and put those efficiencies into new and improved services.

Q4 Is the Shire of Plantagenet sustainable as it is?

Yes.

The Shire has completed its Structural Reform Checklist and has concluded that the Shire is sustainable now and into the future. The Shire received the highest possible rating.

Q5 Would changing Plantagenet's boundaries, such as making the Shire smaller, make Plantagenet less sustainable?

Yes.

If boundaries are changed to make the Shire smaller, there will be significantly less income.

Q6 What will happen to the staff:

All Chief Executive Officers will be made redundant immediately amalgamation occurs. The new local government will appoint a new CEO. All other staff will have guaranteed employment for two years.

Q7. Is amalgamation a takeover by the bigger Shire?

No.

Amalgamation creates a whole new entity. New elected members are elected that represent the new area of the local government.

Shire of Plantagenet

STRUCTURAL REFORM SURVEY

The Shire of Plantagenet invites members of the community aged 18 years or older to complete the following survey. Please answer all questions by circling your response or writing in comments. Your responses will remain private and confidential.

As part of a Local Government Reform process, the Minister for Local Government would like Councils to consider amalgamations with their neighbouring Councils. The Shire of Plantagenet is keen to learn how the community feels about the following options.

Before completing this survey, you may like to read the report 'Structural Reform - What Does It Mean?'_which is attached. That report explains the background of Structural Reform and the Shire of Plantagenet's position. Remember, the Council's preferred position is 'no change' but if this isn't acceptable to the Government some amalgamations maybe required.

Q1. Do you support or oppose boundary adjustments between the Shire of Plantagenet with either or both of the following?

	Support	Oppose	No Opinion	Unsure
a) The Shire of Cranbrook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The City of Albany	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you support boundary adjustments, what do you consider the advantages to be?

If you oppose boundary adjustments, what do you consider the disadvantages to be?

Q2. Do you support or oppose an amalgamation between the Shire of Plantagenet and any of the following?

	Support	Oppose	No Opinion	
Unsure				
a) The Shire of Cranbrook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The Shire of Denmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The City of Albany	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you support amalgamation, what do you consider the advantages to be?

If you oppose amalgamation, what do you consider the disadvantages to be?

Q3. Do you support or oppose an amalgamation between the following group of Shires?

The Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet

This group of Councils represents the Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC) of which Plantagenet is a member. These Councils are currently collaborating on a voluntary basis with a view to achieving better levels of service and economies of scale.

Support	Oppose	No opinion	Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you support this amalgamation, what do you consider the advantages to be?

If you oppose this amalgamation, what do you consider the disadvantages to be?

Q4. Do you support or oppose an amalgamation between the Shire of Plantagenet and all other Shires in the Great Southern Region, which would include the City of Albany and the Shires of Denmark, Katanning, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Kent, Woodanilling, Jerramungup and Kojonup.

Support	Oppose	No opinion	Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you support this amalgamation, what do you consider the advantages to be?

If you oppose this amalgamation, what do you consider the disadvantages to be?

Finally, just a few optional questions about you to help us to classify responses.

	Male	Female	Answered as A couple
What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18-34 Years	35-54 Years	55-64 Years
Which age group are you in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	65 years Or older		
	Mount Barker	Narrikup Townsite	Porongurup Village
Where is your home/property located?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Kendenup Settlement	Rocky Gully Townsite
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			Rural <input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify:

Is anyone in your household employed by the Shire of Plantagenet? Please tick one response

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you for your time.
Please return your completed survey to:
Shire of Plantagenet
PO Box 48
Mount Barker WA 6324
in the enclosed envelope
Closing date: Friday 7 August 2009**

Questionnaire Summary of Results

Total number distributed as Householder	2,300
Total number returned	356
Percentage returned (N=2,300)	15.5%

Question 1(a) - Do you support or oppose boundary adjustments between the Shire of Plantagenet and Cranbrook?

Support	156	45.5%
Oppose	133	38.8%
No Opinion	17	4.9%
Unsure	<u>37</u>	<u>10.8%</u>
	N = 343	100%

Comment

Although 45.5% support the question, 55.5% either oppose, are unsure or have no opinion.

Question 1(b) - Do you support or oppose boundary adjustments between the Shire of Plantagenet and City of Albany?

Support	38	11.6%
Oppose	271	83.13%
No Opinion	9	2.76%
Unsure	<u>8</u>	<u>2.45%</u>
	N=326	100%

Comment

Over 83% of respondents oppose boundary adjustments with Albany.

Question 2(a) - Do you support an amalgamation between the Shire of Plantagenet and Cranbrook?

Support	174	51.5%
Oppose	118	34.9%
No Opinion	8	2.36%
Unsure	<u>38</u>	<u>11.24%</u>
	N=338	100%

Comment

Even though more than half of the respondents favoured amalgamation with the Shire of Cranbrook, nearly half either opposed such an amalgamation or had no opinion or were unsure. However, more were in favour of amalgamation rather than boundary adjustments [refer Q1(a)].

Question 2(b) - Do you support an amalgamation between the Shire of Plantagenet and Denmark?

Support	35	10.9%
Oppose	265	82.6%
No opinion	7	2.18%
Unsure	<u>14</u>	<u>4.32%</u>
	N=321	100%

Comment

More than eight in ten respondents did not like the concept of amalgamating with Denmark.

Question 2 (c) - Do you support or oppose the amalgamation between the Shire of Plantagenet and Albany?

Support	26	8.42%
Oppose	274	88.67%
No Opinion	6	1.94%
Unsure	<u>3</u>	<u>.97%</u>
	N=309	100%

Comment

Nearly nine out of ten respondents opposed the idea of amalgamating with Albany. The 'no opinion' or 'unsure' only accounted for less than 3%.

Question 3 - Do you support or oppose an amalgamation between Plantagenet, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook and Kojonup?

Support	48	14.73%
Oppose	227	69.63%
No opinion	14	4.29%
Unsure	<u>37</u>	<u>11.35%</u>
	N=326	100%

Comment

This survey was distributed prior to the Local Government Convention held in early August 2009.

Question 4 - Do you support or oppose an amalgamation between the Shire of Plantagenet and all other Shires in the Great Southern Region (including Albany, Denmark, Katanning, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Kent, Woodanilling, Jerramungup and Kojonup:

Support	9	2.7%
Oppose	308	92.5%
No Opinion	4	1.2%
Unsure	<u>12</u>	<u>3.6%</u>
	N=333	100%

Comment:

More than nine out of ten respondents are of the opinion that an amalgamation of all of the Councils of the Great southern is too large.

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup



Dear Community Member,

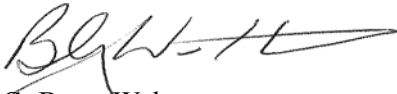
The four Shires of the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC), being the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet, have agreed to a willingness to consider amalgamation, and have indicated their intention to prepare a joint submission to the Minister for Local Government.

Each of these four communities has held public meetings in which there was overwhelming support from their respective communities for 'No Change'. Although this stance was to be presented to the Minister by each Council as its primary preference, during Local Government Week 6-8 August 2009, the Premier Hon. Colin Barnett MLA, Minister for Regional Development, Hon. Brendon Grylls MLA and Minister for Local Government Hon John Castrilli, made their positions abundantly clear. Each indicated that amalgamations are necessary and will progress. Although each said that forced amalgamations would not occur, it was also clearly communicated that those Councils choosing to take no action on amalgamations would risk losing future funding. The politicians specifically referred to councils with smaller populations being most at risk. The Ministers also indicated that voluntary groupings of Councils, such as the existing VROC, would not be acceptable.

The Premier has indicated he wants significantly less than 100 councils in WA and has invited all councils to reform voluntarily or risk the process being taken out of their hands. An amalgamation between the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup and Plantagenet brings four like-minded Councils together looking confidently to the future to undertake their responsibilities to their combined communities. By taking this proactive approach the shires will seek to preserve local representation, employment, identity and culture, and the positive contribution of shires to the local economies.

The amalgamation process will be formally considered by each shire in order to provide a combined submission to the Minister for Local Government by the end of September, which will also allow further communication with each of their respective communities. Many details are yet to be determined and will be negotiated through the submission process. All Councils will keep their residents fully and regularly informed on details as they become available.

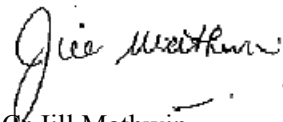
Yours sincerely



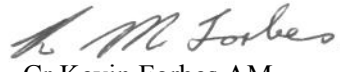
Cr Barry Webster
Shire President, Broomehill-Tambellup



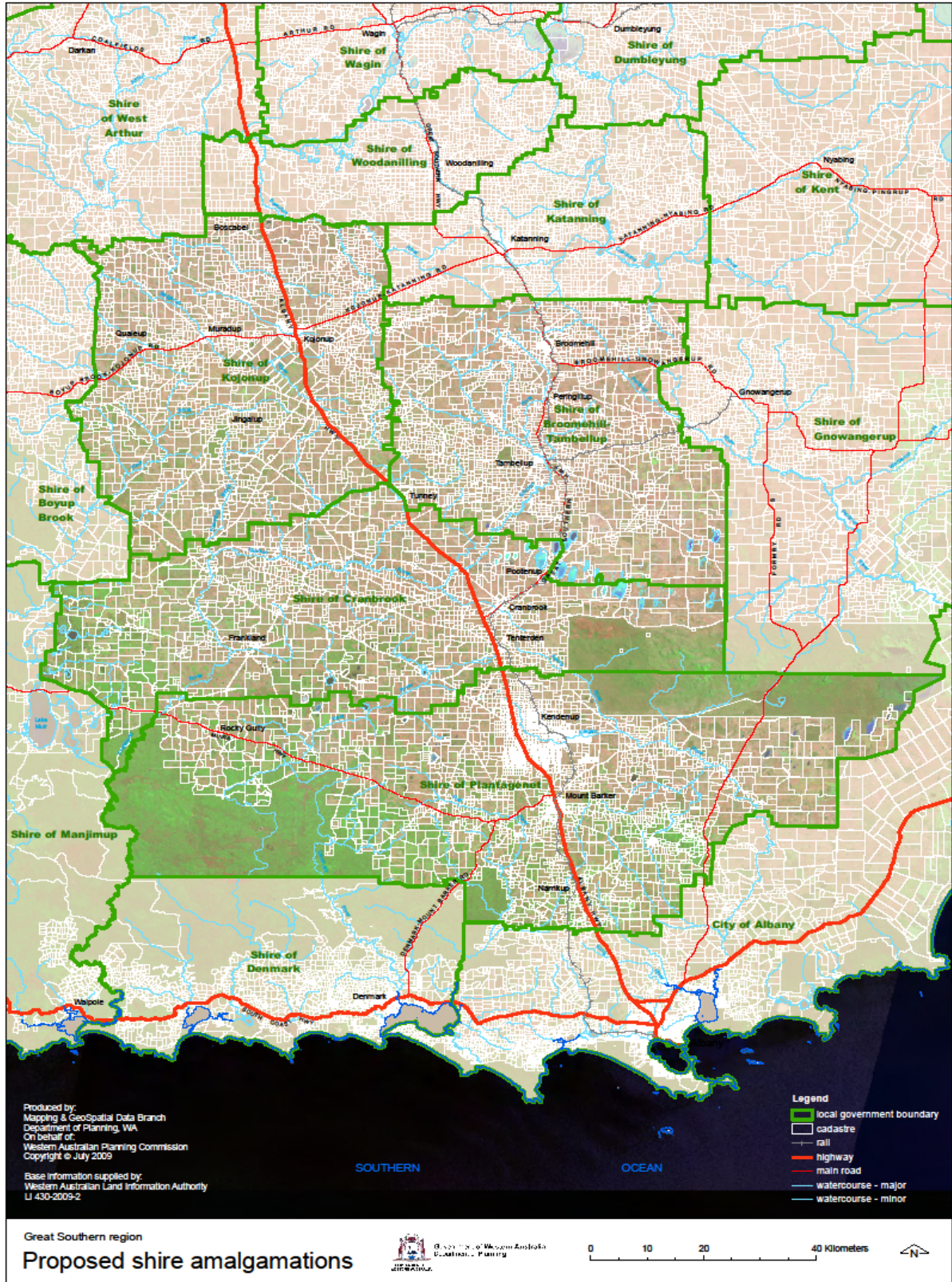
Cr Nick Burges
Shire President, Cranbrook



Cr Jill Mathwin
Shire President, Kojonup



Cr Kevin Forbes AM
Shire President, Plantagenet



Rate Equalisation Scenario 2 – 6 years (3% increase to income each year)

	Plantagenet	Broomehill - Tambellup	Cranbrook	Kojonup	Total Income	Increase Income
2009/10 Rates in \$	0.44469	0.7551	0.7076	0.7288	\$\$	%%
% of Highest Rate in \$	59%	100%	94%	97%		
Gap/Variance	41.1%	0%	6%	3%		
Total UV Rates	3154046	1421700	1502200	2136556	8214502	
% of Total	38%	17%	18%	26%		

Year 1 2.17%

Single Rate in \$	0.77152	0.77152	0.77152	0.77152
Concession = 75 %	0.30831	0.00000	0.04718	0.02612
Effective Rate in \$	0.46321	0.77152	0.72434	0.74540
% of Highest Rate in \$	60.0%	100.0%	93.9%	96.6%
Gap/Variance	40.0%	0.0%	6.1%	3.4%
Effective Inc./Dec)	4.2%	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%

Total UV Rates	3285402	1452622	1537747	2185224	8460995	3.00%
% of Total	39%	17%	18%	26%		

Year 2 -2.02%

Single Rate in \$	0.7559	0.7559	0.7559	0.7559
Concession = 60%	0.2467	0.0000	0.0377	0.0209
Effective Rate in \$	0.5093	0.7559	0.7182	0.7350
% of Highest Rate in \$	67.4%	100.0%	95.0%	97.2%
Gap/Variance	32.6%	0.0%	5.0%	2.8%
Effective Inc./Dec)	9.9%	-2.0%	-0.8%	-1.4%

Total UV Rates	3612218	1423279	1524693	2154851	8715042	3.00%
% of Total	41%	16%	17%	25%		

Year 3 -1.99%

Single Rate in \$	0.7409	0.7409	0.7409	0.7409
Concession = 45%	0.1850	0.0000	0.0283	0.0157
Effective Rate in \$	0.5559	0.7409	0.7126	0.7252
% of Highest Rate in \$	75.0%	100.0%	96.2%	97.9%
Gap/Variance	25.0%	0.0%	3.8%	2.1%
Effective Inc./Dec)	9.2%	-2.0%	-0.8%	-1.3%

Total UV Rates	3942983	1394984	1512821	2126111	8976900	3.00%
% of Total	44%	16%	17%	24%		

Year 4 -1.96%

Single Rate in \$	0.7264	0.7264	0.7264	0.7264
No Concession	0.1233	0.0000	0.0189	0.0104
Effective Rate in \$	0.6031	0.7264	0.7075	0.7159
% of Highest Rate in \$	83%	100%	97%	99%
Gap/Variance	17%	0%	3%	1%
Effective Inc./Dec)	8%	-2%	-1%	-1%

Total UV Rates	4277338	1367643	1502024	2098855	9245860	3.00%
% of Total	52%	17%	18%	26%		

Year 5 -6.56%

Single Rate in \$	0.6788	0.6788	0.6788	0.6788
No Concession	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Effective Rate in \$	0.6788	0.6788	0.6788	0.6788
% of Highest Rate in \$	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gap/Variance	0%	0%	0%	0%
Effective Inc./Dec)	13%	-7%	-4%	-5%

\$ %

Total UV Rates	4814278	1277980	1440988	1989878	9523124	3.00%
% of Total	59%	16%	18%	24%		

Year 6 3.00%

Single Rate in \$	0.6991	0.6991	0.6991	0.6991
No Concession	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Effective Rate in \$	0.6991	0.6991	0.6991	0.6991
% of Highest Rate in \$	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gap/Variance	0%	0%	0%	0%
Effective Inc./Dec)	3%	3%	3%	3%

Total UV Rates	4958707	1316319	1484218	2049574	9808818	3.00%
% of Total	60%	16%	18%	25%		

Overall Increase	57.2%	-7.4%	-1.2%	-4.1%
Discounted for Rate Inc	39.21%	-7.41%	-1.20%	-4.07%
Av. Yrly Increase	9.54%	-1.24%	-0.20%	-0.68%
Av. Yrly Increase- Disc.	6.54%	-1.24%	-0.20%	-0.68%

Structural Reform - Public Meeting - 20 August 2009

The amalgamation of Local Governments in Western Australia has been mentioned by both political persuasions whilst in State Government for several years.

The current State Government has decided to act and encourage amalgamation to considerably reduce the number of Local Governments in WA to a number well UNDER 100. There are currently 139.

There is no doubt that the Federal Government is also behind this move as they are dealing directly with Local Government more each year and in particular with grant funding.

Although this process is called non compulsory by the Minister for Local Government, both the Premier and the Leader of the National Party have in recent weeks, clearly indicated that Councils that do nothing can expect a serious reduction in grant funding.

Although we are a medium sized inland rural Shire of some 4,800 square kilometres with a population of approximately 4,950 people, we are not immune.

If we were to do nothing we could either become one of the smallest Shires in WA or be told at some later stage that we are now part of X Local Government.

The Shire of Plantagenet Councillors along with those from Kojonup, Broomehill/Tambellup and Cranbrook recently met and have taken a pro-active approach to progressing the amalgamation of the four Shires.

This would mean 14,000 square kilometres, 9,560 people.

These four Councils have been working together in a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC) for almost a year.

We have found this group to be like minded and have cooperated well on several new initiatives.

We understand that our action may not be what our ratepayers and residents prefer, neither do we as Councillors.

However we clearly believe our hand will be forced one way or another within two years.

Kojonup and Broomehill/Tambellup have been encouraging this amalgamation of four Councils and Cranbrook has recently reluctantly agreed.

There are many issues to be resolved!

Some examples:

- Name of new authority (Shire of ?);
- New Councillor representation? Do we go to no wards or 8 Councillors, 2 from Kojonup, 1 from Broomehill/Tambellup, 1 from Cranbrook, 4 from Plantagenet;
- Structure of Administration, Staffing and Offices;
- Amalgamation of four IT systems, four Town Planning Schemes, four Bush Fire organisations;
- Structure and location of Road Work Crews;
- The combining of Rate Registers;
- The progression towards one Rate in the Dollar; for UV (unimproved value-Rural); and one Rate in the Dollar for GRV (Gross Rental Value-Residential, Business).

This is by no means a complete list of issues.

Our submission to the Minister for Local Government must be submitted by 30 September 2009.

Our understanding is that if this option goes forward successfully, our operations will come together on 1 July 2011 with the combined Council being elected in October 2011.

The Shires of Kojonup, Broomehill/Tambellup and Cranbrook have low debt levels and substantial reserve funds, whilst we have considerable debt and low reserve funds.

This reflects the major projects we have achieved in recent years.

On the rating issue, our Rate in the Dollar for Unimproved Value (rural) is considerably below the other three Shires. Yes, Plantagenet rates are low.

This is a problem as rates will need to be brought together over a period of years. (higher rates)

If we do not amalgamate we may well lose much of our Grant Funding and thus rates will have to rise considerably to help maintain our current services.

An amalgamated Council will be in a much stronger position to attract grants or lobby for funds.

Shire of Plantagenet 2009/2010 budget:

Total rates \$4m (approximately);

Grants – Federal Road2Recovery \$410,000;

State Regional Road Group \$360,000;

State TIRES (roads for timber haulage) \$550,000;

Federal Black Spot \$240,000;

General purpose grants \$1,240,000; and

Royalties for Regions \$1,070,000.

Any reduction in the above \$3,870,000 worth of grants would need to be covered by rate revenue.

Whether we amalgamate with other Shires or stay as we are, it will still mean increased UV (rural) rates.

The ability to be part of a larger Council with more strength to attract further funding must be a preferred option.

Thank you for your attendance tonight.

Please ask your questions.

Cr Kevin Forbes AM
President Shire of Plantagenet
20th August 2009