

SHIRE OF WEST ARTHUR

Minutes of the Special Electors Meeting of the Shire of West Arthur held on Thursday 21 April 2022 at the Hawthorn Room, West Arthur CRC, Burrowes Street, Darkan.

In accordance with the *Local Government 1995 Act 5.27 (3)* and Regulation 15 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* the matters to be discussed at a general electors' meeting are, firstly, the contents of the annual report for the previous financial year and then any other general business

1. ATTENDANCE

The Presiding Member declared the meeting open at 6.01pm and advised how the Special Electors meeting will be conducted.

2. ATTENDANCE**COUNCILLORS**

Cr Neil Morrell	Shire President
Cr Graeme Peirce	Deputy Shire President
Cr Duncan South	
Cr Karen Harrington	
Cr Robyn Lubcke	

STAFF

Vin Fordham Lamont	Chief Executive Officer
Darren Friend	A/Manager Corporate Services

ELECTORS

Nicki Morrell	Robyn Lubcke	Trevor Bunce	Jacqueline Bunce
Louis Verheggen	Rebecca South	Susan Ballingall	Alan Blencowe
Karyn Buller	Mary Dew	Ann Doudle	Sara Ritchie
Andrew Ritchie	Eloisa Goss	Lehua Chiswell	Pam Stockley
Wayne Stockley	Lomond South	Karen Prowse	Gerry Hartnett
Ray Harrington	Kerrie Putland	Stuart Putland	Julie South
Sharon Joll	Ian Joll	Rosalie Bunce	Janice King
Noel Brewster	Francoise Battikha	Sue Blake	Brad Barber
Jim Wisniewski	Joshua Battikha	Aaron Mawby	Toia Keefe

APOLOGIES

Cr Neil Manuel
Cr Adam Squires

3. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to provide electors of the Shire of West Arthur the opportunity to vote on a number of motions pertaining to the West Arthur community being declared a Pro Choice community in relation to the State Government vaccination mandates.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Access means to enter or remain at a premise.

Approved COVID-19 vaccine means:

- a. any vaccine that has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for use in Australia for the purpose of vaccinating persons against COVID-19 or any mutations and derivatives thereof; and/or
- b. any other vaccine specified by the Chief Health Officer, or any other person authorised by the Chief Health Officer for that purpose, as an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

Premises has the same meaning that it has in the Public Health Act 2016 (WA).

Vaccine does not mean the medical terminology as defined in medical journals but is the generic term in the context of COVID-19 as referred to by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Chief Health Officer and Government Officials, and publications and statements made and issued under their auspices.

Vaccination status means whether a person is not vaccinated or has been vaccinated.

Not vaccinated means that the person has not been administered with any dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccinated means that the person has been administered with any prescribed doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

4. CONSIDERATION OF MOTION

Note: Councillors are voting as electors and not Councillors.

4.1 COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement – Part 1

We request that the Council adopt an advocacy position statement called the 'COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement' with the content:

That no person shall or should be:

- a) prevented from performing work or receiving income on the basis of vaccination status;
- b) discriminated against on the basis of vaccination status;
- c) coerced or manipulated into the need for vaccination for any reason;
- d) restricted access to premises on the basis of vaccination status;
- e) restricted in any form of community participation on the basis of vaccination status;
- f) required to provide evidence for any reason of vaccination status; and / or,
- g) subject to anything under written law that a person who differs in vaccination status is not.

Moved: Susan Ballingall

Seconded: Jacqueline Bunce

Speakers For:

Susan Ballingall spoke on vaccine status and problems with reactions to the vaccine for some people. Lack of access to social functions within their own Darkan Community.

Jacqueline Bunce explained she was stood down from the CRC on 30th November 2021 as an employee as the CRC is also a medical centre. She advised as a member of the public she could enter the CRC.

Alan Blencowe spoke of the adverse reactions to the AZ vaccine in Australia is 1:5000, same with Pfizer. There is a lack of informed consent by the Australian Government in relation to this data. For example, in Hong Kong the ratio is 1:200. Strokes and heart attacks as a result of the vaccines are a major concern.

Speakers Against:

Pam Stockley stated that she trusts in the science. The government would not put people at undue risk. There are small risks in many parts of everyday life. She is very much in favour of the mandate to keep us safe.

Sue Blake drew comparisons to the introduction and use of seatbelts in motor vehicles. Her husband requires medical assistance and substantial treatment, and vaccines assist in keeping him safe.

LOST 16/22**4.2 COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement – Part 2**

We request that the Council adopt an advocacy position statement called the 'COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement' with the content:

That the Local Government shall:

- a) not restrict any function, property, or service of the Local Government based on vaccination status; and
- b) honour all obligations under contract for all persons adversely impacted as a consequence of inferred mandatory requirement for vaccination.

Moved: Karyn Buller

Seconded: Francoise Battikha

Speakers for:

Karyn Buller advised she has major concerns that young, fit, healthy adults are being coerced into getting vaccinated. There is a very small chance of young people dying of covid 19. She advised that she could not attend the recent Sheepfest with her dogs and that her husband could not play bowls in their grand final.

Francoise Battikha said she moved to Darkan 12 months ago and enjoyed being welcomed into the community. She joined in volunteer organisations including the sewing group, senior's meals and the CRC. This changed in November 2021 when she was told she had to be vaccinated to be a part of these groups. Vaccination rules do not apply to government employees or members of parliament.

Susan Ballingall has received private medical advice not to get the jab. This advice came from a physician. She has undertaken her own research over the last 2 years to formulate her own opinion. She believes that the premier has jumped the gun with his vaccination mandate.

Speakers Against:

Pam Stockley said that what is being spoken about is known as 'confirmation bias'. This means that you trust in the science you may read that suits your own opinion. Everyone has the right to their own opinion. The Shire of West Arthur is following the mandate as per the State Government's directive.

Sue Blake advised that following World War II, the Smallpox vaccine was introduced to the general populace without people having an understanding if it would work, which it did. She has the same opinion regarding the COVID-19 vaccines currently available.

LOST 16/21

4.3 COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement – Part 3

We request that the Council adopt an advocacy position statement called the 'COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement' with the content:

That the Local Government actively advocate for:

- a) the removal of the COVID-19 mandatory vaccination policy and any associated directions made under the Public Health Act 2016 (WA); and
- b) the repeal of any mandate or written law, or, anything done under any mandate or written law that conflicts with this position statement.

Moved: Susan Ballingall

Seconded: Rebecca South

Speakers For:

Susan Ballingall stated it is difficult to trust the vaccine with the changed parameters concerning coverage of the vaccination. The Therapeutic Goods Administration approval is based solely on pharmaceutical advice which is not backed up by properly conducted trials by the pharmaceutical companies. There is an increase in other diseases as a result of the vaccines. Insurance companies may not pay out on claims resulting from adverse reaction to the vaccines as they are considered experimental drugs.

Rebeca South stated that there are major inconsistencies concerning employment status as opposed to being a private citizen. This has impacted her employment at the CRC and at the Shire of West Arthur. An example of the inconsistencies relates to the requirement to social distance at airports but seating arrangements on planes are 'normal'. There are impacts on sports involvement for parents in Darkan in relation to basketball and swimming events. Parliamentarians are not required to be vaccinated as per the general population.

Alan Blencowe stated that Dr Michelle Wilenski in the USA has provided studies that show 75% of all COVID-19 deaths from the Delta variant had 4 vaccinations. Lesser or no vaccinations had less deaths as an overall percentage.

Speakers Against:

Pam Stockley advised that, as at the 31st January 2022, all members of parliament needed to be vaccinated. The Shire of West Arthur, as with all local governments, is governed by State Government Law.

Andrew Ritchie advised that he did not believe the Special Electors meeting to be the right forum to debate this issue. Council does not have the resources to deal with this matter.

LOST 18/21

4.4 COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement – Part 4

We request that the Council adopt an advocacy position statement called the 'COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement' with the content:

The Local Government in performing an advocacy role will seek the cooperation of:

- a) Other Local Governments across the State;
- b) Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA);
- c) Local Government Professionals WA; and
- d) Other professional bodies, associations, and business entities.

Moved: Alan Blencowe

Seconded: Jacqueline Bunce

Speakers For:

Alan Blencowe cited a legal opinion from a lawyer, Rosie Cornell, who believes that a legal case can be made for local governments to argue against the mandate. He spoke to the Wanneroo council in relation to this earlier this week. The Mayor of Wanneroo, Tracey Roberts, is also the WALGA President.

Jacqueline Bunce also spoke about the legal opinion from Rosie Cornell. The current vaccination mandate goes against Human Rights adopted in Australia following World War II. These Human Rights apply worldwide. Informed consent is a must, but the State Government has not followed this. She asked that residents in attendance at this meeting support this motion.

Rebecca South advised that Livingston City Council in Queensland has mandated this motion (Note – this statement was corrected by the Shire President). She advised that a number of councils in Western Australia are moving towards Pro Choice.

Speakers Against:

Sue Blake advised that the Fremantle City Council had recently voted to keep all of the mandates. Pro Choice supporters present at that council meeting took the council decision very badly.

Pam Stockley advised of the current position of the Livingston City Council in relation to the mandates. Minorities within a number of councils are pushing this issue. She was disappointed in the item in the Bleat with inaccurate information which can mislead others.

LOST 17/21

4.5 COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement – Part 5

We request that the Council adopt an advocacy position statement called the 'COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement' with the content:

That the Council advocate to all relevant departments and ministers of the State Government on behalf of the West Arthur agricultural and trade sectors, that the mandates be amended to allow these industries to operate without restriction given that the work environments are open air, with the capacity to easily socially distance and Low Risk.

Moved: Trevor Bunce

Seconded: Karyn Buller

Speakers For:

Trevor Bunce advised that he had livestock delivered to the market for over 20 years. He has been advised by DBC that he needs to be vaccinated in order to continue delivering his goats. As his goats are the last livestock to be delivered at each market sale, he has minimal contact with others. The same rules apply with CBH grain deliveries. Current mandates make no sense.

Speakers Against:

Nil.

LOST 18/20

4.6 COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement – Part 6

We request that the Council adopt an advocacy position statement called the 'COVID-19 Vaccination Pro-Choice Statement' with the content:

That the Council advocates on behalf of our local volunteers to all the relevant departments and ministers of the state government, to allow for all willing community members to actively participate in a volunteer role, particularly emergency services, free from medical prejudice.

Moved: Alan Blencowe

Seconded: Trevor Bunce

Speakers For:

Alan Blencowe spoke as to the unfairness of the mandates which discriminates against volunteers. He has extensive training as a firefighter but can no longer volunteer which he believes is totally unfair.

Trevor Bunce stated that the mandate issue threatens cohesiveness between volunteers and is most divisive. Fires should be fought first, and mandates dealt with as an afterthought.

Speakers Against:

Sue Blake respects the fact that qualified people may feel excluded, but the State Government have mandated vaccination rules. Local governments do not have the power to contravene this. She spoke of dealing with her husband's medical conditions which has resulted with her spending many hours sitting in her parked car as she was not allowed in the hospital despite having driven her husband to the hospital.

Pam Stockley stated that ambulance volunteers or volunteer firefighters will still respond to emergencies irrespective of who, where, when etc.

LOST 16/21

5. CLOSE OF MEETING

Karyn Buller thanked Council for the opportunity to be heard.

The President declared the meeting closed at 7.07pm.