

10 August 2017

Economic Regulation Authority  
Level 4, 469 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000  
PO Box 8469,  
Perth BC WA 6849  
<https://www.erawa.com.au/consultation>

To whom it may concern

As a result of attending the ERA's Emergency Services Levy Review consultation on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of August and listening to comments both on the day and those relayed by presenters it appears that there is an overall level of distrust of State Government from most Local Governments. In this regard it is also clear that greater transparency may be a way of addressing this distrust. The Shire of Nannup would therefore like to submit the following submission for consideration in addition to the previous submission forwarded to WALGA:

A closing request to the consultation meeting was a request to state *"what your local government considers to be the priority of the collection and disbursement of ESL funding?"* From this Council's perspective this should take the form of ensuring that ESL funds are used on preparation, prevention and response to all components of emergency management. As a result of this thought process, this expenditure should be used to cover all areas of support to local volunteers. While this is an outcome currently contained within this funding there are parameters around expenditure approved that currently are not contained within this model. An example of this includes but is not limited to the reimbursement for IT devices bought for brigades to ensure that they remain up to date while participating in a current emergency situation. At present only career fire fighters can make expenditure claims for these types of items. This further enhances the perception that is held by many volunteers that the colour of the truck goes a long way in deciding the level of funding and support offered. This should not be the case. If you par back the reasoning behind why these funds are collected and for what purpose they should be used all parties should find that regardless of what position you hold within emergency management, or what level of government you operate within, all parties are there to protect the community and ensure that lives and property are not lost. Based on this analogy the above mentioned perception needs to be adequately addressed. The Shire of Nannup believes this could occur via greater transparency including a review of the guidelines of acceptable ESL expenditure undertaken jointly between all parties currently using ESL funding and by ensuring that the overarching department responsible for the payment of expenses is independent to any party receiving funding. Council therefore supports the Office of Emergency Management becoming an independent authority charged with ensuring that ESL funds are collected and disbursed in an effective manner.



Management becoming an independent authority charged with ensuring that ESL funds are collected and disbursed in an effective manner.

It needs to be remembered that the primary difference between volunteers and career based emergency workers is that one is providing a service without remuneration. This should be respected and applauded to the same capacity as those who are paid for their services.

A second point that needs to be addressed is the provision of Community Emergency Services Officers (CESM). If an outcome of the collection of ESL is that these funds should be used to fund expenditure related to community safety and ensuring that volunteer based emergency personnel have their expenses met then the CESM role should be fully funded. The sole purpose of the CESM is to ensure that volunteers have the resources and the training needed ready for use in an emergency. There is no component within their role that deviates from this. If the premise (as expressed within the abovementioned session) is that it is too hard to separate administration within DFES on a ESL portion versus other expenditure then the same principles should be applied to the implementation of this role and all costs associated should be covered by ESL funding.

Finally the following question was brought up for discussion within this session.

*“If Local Governments’ expectations are that all components of emergency management expenditure should be covered within the ESL funding then should Local Governments have funding cuts applied to the Federal Assistance Grants (FAGs)? This is based on the principle that preparation, prevention and response functions should form part of the services offered by Local Governments to their communities that are covered by FAGs funding?”*

In answer to this the Shire of Nannup would like to make the following comments. At present 87% of this local governments land area is owned or controlled by State Government which results in Council being unable to collect rates on this land. This has a significant impact on our ability to cover expenditure within this shire. Compounding this is another point considered within the consultation; landowners should be responsible and pay for overall prevention and preparedness on their land. Given that a significant portion of emergencies i.e. fires historically will start from an incident within state controlled land, there appears to be an inequity in this thought process. Council is of the opinion that given the significant impact of State Government land being non-rateable and the impact that this had to our income stream Council should not be penalised via cuts to the FAG’s grant income. Further all ESL expenditure should be recompensed via the ESL funding model.

Thank you for giving the Shire of Nannup the opportunity to give feedback on the draft document and on comments considered within the consultation phase of this review. Council looks forward to the overall outcome as a result of all submissions considered.

Kind regards

**Tracie Bishop**  
**MANGER CORPORATE SERVICES**