



INDEPENDENT  
MEMBER -  
AUDIT & RISK  
COMMITTEE

INFORMATION  
PACKAGE

May 2020



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### West Wimmera Shire Council

West Wimmera Shire Council (WWSC) is located in Western Victoria alongside the Victorian-South Australian border. The Shire encompasses around 9,200 square kilometres and includes the townships of Apsley, Edenhope and Harrow in the southern half of the Shire through to Goroke, Kaniva and Serviceton in the north. Home to approx. 4,000 people, the region prides itself in its welcoming communities and a wide diversity of industry and environment. We have a strong economy, primarily based on agriculture, with sectors in health, education and retail.

Consisting of untouched desert parks, vast wetlands and fertile plains, West Wimmera is equally known for its acres of wheat and legumes, and as a home to the famous Malleefowl, red-tail black cockatoo and a unique abundance of wildflowers.

### Our Vision

Our West Wimmera communities are healthy, thriving, diverse, harmonious, prosperous and self-sustaining, with regional and global connectivity.

### Our Values

- WWSC values its resident population and its wellbeing. This will be demonstrated through the promotion of viable and sustainable communities, the retention of the current population and support to grow communities
- WWSC values good governance and transparent decision-making. Supporting community groups and advocating on their behalf will enable open dialogue to occur with residents
- Representing the whole of West Wimmera is valued highly by Councillors
- A connected community, both via transport infrastructure and modern digital technology that enables us to be connected to the world for business and education
- Partnerships (locally, regionally and with the Government) are valued as a way of ensuring sustainable service and delivery.



## The Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory committee to Council and consists of Councillors along with a majority of external independent members (one whom is elected as Chairperson). Selected senior Council staff members attend committee meetings in a non-voting, advisory capacity.

The primary objective of the Audit and Risk Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for financial reporting, management of risk, maintenance of its internal systems and governance activities.

The Audit and Risk Committee is formed under Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Audit and Risk Committee's internal monitoring function is undertaken by a contracted Internal Auditor according to the agreed audit plan. The internal auditor reports to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis. Further details on roles and responsibilities are available in the attached Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

More information on the Council Plan, Budget and Annual Report can be found on our website [westwimmera.vic.gov.au](http://westwimmera.vic.gov.au)



## THE POSITION

### Skills, qualifications and experience

The following are desirable key criteria of an independent Audit and Risk Committee member:

- Financial literacy and experience and/or qualifications in the field of business management and/or accounting;
- Knowledge of local government operations and the environment within which councils operate;
- Strong communication skills;
- High level of personal integrity and ethics; and
- Knowledge of risk management principles and practices.

### Remuneration

Independent members receive an allowance of \$563 per meeting, indexed annually, paid following attendance. The Chairperson receives an additional payment of 10%. Allowances are also provided for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, including travel and accommodation.

### Appointment

Appointment of an independent member is made by a resolution of Council and is for a term of three years.



## GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Thank you for taking an interest in the role of Independent Member with the West Wimmera Shire Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

The following information is provided to ensure that all applicants clearly understand the requirements of the overall selection process.

### Audit and Risk Committee Charter

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter should be read carefully as it describes the requirements and duties of the Audit and Risk Committee and its members. A copy of the Charter has been included in this information package.

### Application Guidelines

Applications must include a cover letter, along with a brief resume outlining your relevant skills, experience and qualifications.

Applications must be received by **5pm (AEST) Friday 29 May 2020** and may be submitted electronically or by mail to:

Ashley Roberts  
Director Corporate and Community Services  
West Wimmera Shire Council  
PO Box 201  
Edenhope VIC 3318

Applications can be emailed to: [AshleyRoberts@westwimmera.vic.gov.au](mailto:AshleyRoberts@westwimmera.vic.gov.au)

### Evaluation Process

The evaluation of applications for the Independent Member will be undertaken by the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, Director Corporate and Community Services, Finance Coordinator and Governance Manager, taking into account the experience of applicants and their likely capacity to apply the appropriate analytical and strategic management skills required in the role.

### Enquiries

For further information, please contact Ashley Roberts, Director Corporate and Community Services on 03 5585 9900 or by email [AshleyRoberts@westwimmera.vic.gov.au](mailto:AshleyRoberts@westwimmera.vic.gov.au)



**WEST  
WIMMERA  
SHIRE COUNCIL**



**AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE  
CHARTER**

*The best of country living*

## 1. Purpose

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act (2020)* (The Act) requires that each Council establish an Audit Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee is a formally appointed Advisory Committee of Council.

The Audit and Risk Committee's role is to report to Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations relevant to its charter in order to facilitate decision-making by Council in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities. The Audit and Risk Committee plays a key role in assisting Council to fulfil its governance and overseeing responsibilities in relation to financial reporting, internal control, risk management systems, ethical accountability and the internal audit function.

The Audit and Risk Committee (The Committee) does not have executive powers or authority to implement actions in areas over which management has responsibility and does not have any delegated financial responsibility. The Committee does not have any management functions and is therefore independent of management. The Committee does not have any role in relation to issues normally addressed by Council or a sub-committee of Council, which may have delegated powers and financial management responsibilities in relation to budgets, financing decisions and expenditure priorities. The Committee is a separate activity and acts independently of Council and does not have any role in relation to financial management issues or have any executory role or powers.

The Committee is not a delegated committee under Section 63 of The Act. It is established according to section 53 (1) of The Act.

## 2. Authority

The Committee is an advisory committee and has the responsibility for advising Council on:


- Providing appropriate advice to Council in relation to:
  - Governance and internal controls
  - Financial Reporting and compliance
  - Risk Management
  - Internal Audit
  - Ethics
  - Legislative compliance
- Review the investigation of and recommend internal control responses to any incidents of fraud detected within Council's operations
- Providing oversight and guidance to Council on Conflicts of Interest and Related Party transactions
- Seeking resolution on any disagreements between management and the external auditors on financial reporting; Seeking information it requires from Council members, and Council staff via the Chief Executive officer and external parties; and
- Formally meeting with Council staff, internal and external auditors as necessary.

## 3. Composition

The Audit and Risk Committee will consist of five members, comprised as follows:

- Two Councillors; and
- Three suitably qualified independent representatives, one of whom will be appointed annually as Chair of the Committee.
  - One of the independent members should be financially literate with relevant experience and/or qualifications.





Council shall seek applications from suitably qualified and/or experienced candidates at the end of each term and as a casual vacancy arises. The Audit and Risk Committee members shall be appointed through a resolution by Council.

Independent members will be appointed for an initial term of three years, after which time they may be eligible for re-appointment following a formal review of their performance.

The Chief Executive Officer, Director Corporate and Community Services, and Finance Coordinator are not members, but should attend meetings in an advisory capacity. Council's Internal and External Auditors are to attend meetings as required to present their reports and findings in an advisory capacity. Other Senior Officers of Council may attend Audit Committee meetings on invitation by the Chair if the need arises.

#### **4. Meetings**

- The Committee will meet at least four times a year, with authority to convene additional meetings, as circumstances require;
- All Committee members are expected to attend each meeting in person, or via teleconference or video conference;
- The Chief Executive Officer will facilitate the meetings of the Committee and invite members of management, auditors or others to attend meetings to provide information as necessary;
- Meeting agendas will be prepared and provided at least one week in advance to members, along with appropriate briefing materials;
- Management, including the Chief Executive Officer, may be asked to leave a meeting at any time should the Chairperson consider it appropriate;
- Minutes will be prepared and reported to Council at the next Forum and/or Council Meeting after the Audit and Risk Committee meeting; and to the Audit Committee in a timely manner; and
- Each meeting will require a quorum of three members of the Committee, two of whom should be independent members.

#### **5. Responsibilities**

The Audit and Risk Committee will carry out the following responsibilities:

##### **5.1 Monitoring financial and regulatory reporting, including:**

- Scrutinising financial statements and providing advice to the Council.
- Monitoring compliance with accounting policies and financial management compliance framework.
- Monitoring the adequacy of, and compliance with internal control systems.
- Reviewing the acceptability, disclosure and correct accounting treatment of significant and non-routine transactions.
- Reviewing related-party transactions.
- Meeting with the external auditors:
  - Prior to the annual audit to discuss the audit plan; and
  - Following the annual audit.
- To be informed and abreast of evolving compliance requirements.
- Sign-off on accounting policies.
- Financial reports provided to the Council will also be included with agenda papers for Committee meetings.
- To exercise Risk Management Principles in providing advice / recommendations regarding financial management.

5.2 Perform independent review and assessment of key risks by independent audit including:

- Develop, review, and recommend to Council a risk based internal audit program.
- Regularly review and approve the Internal Audit Charter.
- Managing the procurement, scope of works, performance and quality of internal audit service provision.
- Considering the scope, quality and findings of the external audit.
- Review relationships that may impact the internal and external auditor's independence.

5.3 Regular review of Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework.

- Review the adequacy of Council's Risk Register, associated internal controls and strategies to mitigate the risks, including:
- Monitoring the presence and effectiveness of internal controls.
- Monitoring the implementation of internal audit and external audit findings and associated management actions.
- Monitoring key risks and trigger events, including; prevention and investigation of fraud, ethical culture, protection of assets and insurance.
- 5.5 Ensuring that there is a suitable framework and process for compliance with legislation, regulations, standards, and best practice guidelines.
- Monitor processes and practices of Council to ensure for effective business continuity.
- Other responsibilities:
- Deal with matters delegated by Council;
- Annually review the Audit Committee Charter and request Council approval for any proposed changes.
- Annually review the performance of the Committee.
- In accordance with the Act, Committee members must declare any conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting and such details shall be appropriately minuted.
- In accordance with the Act, Committee members are to submit a primary and ordinary return in the prescribed form to the Chief Executive Officer within 30 days of becoming a member of The Committee; 30 June or within 40 days after 30 June; and 31 December or within 40 days after 31 December.
- Prior to 30 September each year, the Chairperson shall report to Council a summary of the activities and achievements of the Committee during the financial year.

## 6. Payment of members

- 6.1 Independent members shall be remunerated for attendance at all meetings. An exception to this shall be applied where an independent member is part of a reciprocal arrangement with another municipality. In this instance no payment shall be made.
- 6.2 The chair shall receive an additional 10% allowance over the allowance paid to other members.
- 6.3 The payment amount shall be indexed annually on 1 January by the immediately preceding December quarter Melbourne all groups CPI.
- 6.4 Payment shall be made via Council's Accounts Payable process upon receipt of an appropriate invoice from the member.

### Document control

<b>Author</b>	<b>Approver</b>	<b>Date approved</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Andrea Gash	Council	19 December 2018	1	May 2019
Melanie Jordan	Council	15 April 2020	2	April 2021