



**GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Frequently Asked Questions

Abbreviations Used in this Document

Council – Regional Development Council

Minister – Minister for Regional Development; Lands

PSC – Public Sector Commission

RDC – Regional Development Commissions

RDL – Department of Regional Development and Lands

Review Committee – Review Committee into the Functions and Responsibilities of Regional Development Commissions

WARDC – Western Australian Regional Development Commission

WAPC – Western Australian Planning Commission

Why was there a review of the Regional Development Commissions?

The Minister set up the review in response to a request from the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee (this is a Cabinet sub-committee).

When did the Review Committee report?

The Review Committee's report was presented to the Minister on 26 November 2010.

Were the recommendations of the review relating to structural changes accepted?

No.

The responses to the review placed a great deal of weight on RDCs local operations, independence and governance arrangements. The Government response leaves the RDC structure unchanged.

Essentially, Government does not accept the review's recommendation on changing the structure of the RDCs and the proposal to create a new WARDC.

It was clear from the 207 submissions to the review, and public comments on the recommendations, that there was very strong support for maintaining the existing structure for RDCs, with the associated level of autonomy and direct reporting to the Minister.

These arguments outweighed the restructure option put forward by the review committee, although importantly Government strongly supports the non-structural change recommendations.

Through the wider framework and structure supporting regional development, regional boards need to be assured that their time commitments and efforts translate to making real differences for their regions, ensuring future prosperity and wellbeing.

Therefore no new WARDC will be established.

As there will be no WARDC the recommendations on its location, membership and staffing are no longer relevant.

Were the recommendations of the Review Committee relating to non-structural changes accepted?

Yes, although some of these had to be reframed given the current RDC structure will be retained.

The proposed changes in the Government response are consistent with the Economic Audit Committee's view on the need for better integration and collaborations for government agencies and their operations, and that administrative hosting arrangements should be put into place for small agencies.

Below are the changes and projects that relate to the Government's formal response:

New Membership of Boards

Government supports membership of the Council and RDC boards reflecting the more effective and flexible approach to boards suggested by the review, including the Council having a full-time Executive Chair.

New Roles and Responsibilities

The Council jointly working with and supported by the Department of Regional Development and Lands (RDL) will be responsible for developing drafting instructions for the legislative change, ensuring that there is full consultation with the community. Legislative change will include:

- the roles and responsibilities of the RDCs and the Council being updated through amended legislation to create a new operating model. Such updating will reflect for the Council the direction set by the review committee through recommendation 7 and for RDCs the review's recommendation 8.
- gaining agreement from the WAPC on the development of Regional Investment Blueprints to avoid any potential for confusion and role conflict with the development of regional planning frameworks and strategies.

Additional Resources for the Council

The Council will be provided with additional dedicated and ongoing support, to be located in RDL, as it will have a key role in setting strategic directions, policy prioritisation and strategies common to all RDCs for regional economic and community development responsibilities, including industry attraction.

New Council Executive Chair

To further strengthen the Council an Executive Chair will also be appointed on a contract for services arrangement from 1 September 2011, providing full-time leadership.

Assessment by the Public Sector Commission

The Premier and Minister will be provided with the assessment led by the PSC supported by the Council (through which RDC CEOs would be expected to be involved) and RDL.

Essentially, this will develop a new operating model for RDCs.

The PSC will:

- assess the RDCs current skills, including analysis of any gaps in capabilities, in order to meet roles and responsibilities based on recommendation 8 of the review
- propose new positions and establishments for RDCs, including the reclassification or change to existing positions, including CEOs
- review RDC Board member entitlements
- assess how RDL can provide some non-core work and support for RDCs, recommending a generic Service Level Agreement. This would particularly cover corporate services, such as human resources, finance and reporting, and grant administration, and
- detail any funding implications.

Projects to be Undertaken Jointly by the Council and RDL

- Developing a performance management and accountability framework.
- Agencies review of their regional boundaries.
- Developing a framework for monitoring regional partnerships.
- Agencies review of their collocation arrangements.

Other Projects

- RDL will implement the recommendation on using the Royalties for Regions Directors General Reference Group to facilitate cross-agency collaborations.
- The Directors General Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee will progress the recommendation on identifying solutions to enhance Aboriginal partnership and governance.
- RDL will lead in implementing Recommendation 10 as Government will establish a Ministerially endorsed and mandated working party to strengthen the integration and alignment of statutory land use planning, regional development, and local government service delivery within existing legislative planning frameworks for the Pilbara region.

The RDC review report and a summary of the report is available on the RDL website:
www.rdl.wa.gov.au