



NORTHERN Guardian



Vince Catania

Member for North West Central



Ph: 08 99412 999

E: northwest@mp.wa.gov.au

REGIONALS for Regional WA



Top quality chefs Nick Donlin, Michelle Forbes, Shane Watson and Scott Bridger came to the Gascoyne to cook and meet the producers of some of the State's finest ingredients. Picture: Anton Blume

Shires lash funding change

■ Darcy Hay

The Gascoyne's two smallest shires say a three-year Federal Government freeze on indexation of Financial Assistance Grants is essentially a funding cut, and services will suffer.

The grants are distributed every year to all local governments in Australia, and have been since 1974.

This year, Carnarvon has been given about \$4.86 million, Exmouth has been given about \$1.89 million, Shark Bay Shire has received about \$1.86 million and Upper Gascoyne Shire has received

It doesn't matter how you look at it, this is a cut, we'll have to scale back

Dirk Sellenger

\$3.51 million.

But for the first time since the 1997-98 financial year, there will be no rise in funding accounting for population growth and increases in CPI — rates will stay at a nominal level until the 2017-18 financial year.

Shark Bay Shire chief executive officer Paul Anderson said it was, at best, undesirable, and could create problems in meeting expenses

if economic conditions sour.

"The freeze is effectively a funding cut, and it's going to affect us over the next three years," Mr Anderson said.

"It's disappointing, and it's good to warn people now.

"If, over three years, indexation of the grant might have come out at six or seven percent of the Financial Assistance Grant figure, that would be perhaps \$80,000 or so,

which is quite a bit to have to find in the budget."

Upper Gascoyne chief executive officer Dirk Sellenger said many items in this year's \$7.8 million budget for general expenditure had been scaled back as a direct result of the freeze. For example, contracts for graders, water trucks and other road maintenance providers guaranteed a minimum 1000 hours work two years ago, when the positions first became open. Only 200 hours work can be guaranteed under new contract.

"It doesn't matter how you look at it, this is a cut," Mr Sellenger said.

"We'll have to scale back road works, we'd like to employ two doggers to combat our serious wild dog program, but there's no money, something had to give, so we've only got one.

"We're very disappointed, but there have been cuts in the past, there'll be cuts in the future, and we're in the middle of one now."

Carnarvon Shire chief executive officer Ian D'Arcy said the Federal funds would be slotted into the Shire's general pool of money for the budget, which typically runs at about \$15 million a year.

He raised no concern about the lack of indexation.

IGA COMMUNITY CHEST **EXTRA VALUE - GREAT FRESH VALUE**

- Yearling Beef Porterhouse Steak Min Weight 1kg **\$16.99**
- Pepsi or Schweppes 30x375ml Selected Varieties \$1.33 per Litre **35% off** **14.99**
- PICNIC! SOUR PATCH! Kids 65g Selected Varieties **BETTER THAN 1/2 PRICE** **84c**
- Cadbury Medium Bars 30-60g or Sour Patch Kids 65g Selected Varieties **\$1.55 per litre**
- Coca Cola, Fanta, Lift or Sprite 2 Litre Selected Varieties **\$3.09**
- Kleenex Cottonelle White Unscented Toilet Tissue 48 Packs \$0.23 per 100 sheets **30% off** **20.19**
- Mainland Block Cheese 1kg Selected Varieties \$9.19 per kg **20% off** **\$9.19**

OPEN 7 DAYS 8am-6pm Corner Angelo/Robinson St, Carnarvon Ph 9941 1403