

# President's Report

## December 2024

### Introduction

I have had the opportunity to advocate on behalf of all our Member Local Governments on a number of issues, in meetings, at presentations and through media opportunities over the last 3 months. The issues have included ongoing discussions on Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), housing, planning, the transition to renewables, improved funding for libraries, Safer High-Speed Local Roads and tiny homes on wheels/regional housing shortages.

### 2024 WALGA Local Government Convention

The 2024 WALGA Local Government Convention ran from 8 to 10 October, and I would like to thank the 650 delegates, the suppliers and commercial partners who made it such a successful event. We continually look to refine the Convention so it remains the preeminent event on the Local Government calendar, and I would like to thank the WALGA staff for their hard work in the organisation and planning.

### State Election Campaign

I am pleased that the State Election campaign and the accompanying document "WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities; The West at its Best" has been well-received within the Local Government sector, by external stakeholders and across Government.

WALGA has recently shared assets so that each Local Government can customise content to address their local priorities, as well as liaise with local MPs and Councils to publish stories that can support each key advocacy area.

WALGA is now implementing the campaign in the lead up to the 2025 Election, to:

- Influence election policy development and commitments from all parties
- Maintain relationships with key decision makers and Members of Parliament
- Educate current and future members of Parliament about WALGA and the role of Local Government

### Media Interviews

I was asked to take part in a number of media interviews in the past few months, notably after WALGA distributed Media Releases on Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS), Tranche 2 reforms of the Local Government Act, the new caravan and camping reforms, increased PSHB funding, and the impact on Local Government as the State population passed 3 million people.

## **Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) Workshop**

On 8 November WALGA hosted a Department of Communities' workshop to discuss current and future GROH build to lease models in the context of the current WA construction market. The workshop was attended by select Local Government CEOs and Senior Executives as well as the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Treasury. The workshop was proposed by the Department of Communities following the Deputy Director General's presentation to the July State Council Strategic Forum. The workshop focused on identifying the barriers to participation in GROH potential changes including Treasury borrowing and leasing terms and build specifications.

## **Renewable Energy**

WALGA is hosting a Large Scale Renewable Energy Forum on 27 November for members to discuss the opportunities and challenges for local governments through the energy transition. This forum will be informed by the Renewable Energy Survey completed by 48 Members, as well as the recently adopted advocacy positions. This event will include a workshop component to inform the scope of WALGA's work to develop a Community Benefits Framework/Guide.

In response to member feedback, WALGA has created a Microsoft Teams group for CEOs and Elected Members, to facilitate continued collaboration and knowledge sharing between Local Governments around Renewable Energy. Available in this group is WALGA's October 2024 Renewable Energy in WA Research Paper. To join the group please contact WALGA's Principal Policy Advisor, Economic Development, Lisa Harwood on email [liharwood@walga.asn.au](mailto:liharwood@walga.asn.au)

## **Polyphagous shot-hole borer**

I understand the Sector's ongoing concern regarding the impact of the Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) on our urban tree canopy and the potential for this to wreak havoc on agricultural crops and native forests should it spread outside the metropolitan area.

Following the State Government's expansion of the PSHB Quarantine Area in September WALGA is continuing to strongly advocate for a more agile response, research into prevention, control and eradication and an increased focus on public awareness to reduce PSHB spread. I note that DPIRD is now deploying roadside signage to raise awareness about movement restrictions for wood and plant material. WALGA is also working with the State Government in the design of the \$7.2 million PSHB recovery package announced in August and to inform the development of a PSHB research priorities, in conjunction with the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration, universities, industry bodies, research institutes and CSIRO.

## **Kolbany Yanginy – Local Government Reconciliation Resource**

WALGA, Reconciliation WA, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries have collaborated to develop an online Local Government Reconciliation Resource, Kolbany Yanginy (Going Forward | Sharing). The website, which was showcased at the WALGA Convention Exhibition and is scheduled to launch by the end of the year, will support Local Governments in building their capability to engage meaningfully with local Aboriginal communities, highlighting best practice examples of reconciliation and Aboriginal engagement.

## **ALGA National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress**

We have a rare chance to engage face to face with the national government and agencies while staying here in Western Australia. I am looking forward to maximising the opportunities at the National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress being hosted in Margaret River on 3 – 4 December. A wide-ranging program has been developed covering innovations in road construction, freight, safety, land development, renewable energy transition impacts and much more. The Australian Government is the major source of external funding for Local Governments, so I encourage you to take this opportunity to contribute to the national agenda and learn how many of our common challenges are tackled in other jurisdictions.

## **Local Government Legislative Reform**

The *Local Government Amendment Bill 2024* is progressing through State Parliament and is expected to be receive assent prior to the prorogue of Parliament toward the end of 2024.

The Bill includes the last of the Local Government Reforms that were announced in 2022, including:

- Office of the Local Government Inspector
- Local Government Monitors
- Clarified Roles and Responsibilities of Council, Council Members, Mayors and Presidents and CEOs
- Independent Member and Chair of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- Clarified Regional Subsidiaries Provisions
- Unreasonable / Vexatious Complaints
- Superannuation for Council Members
- Development Assessment Panel (DAP) Functions

WALGA does not support the Introduction of proposed provisions providing for regulations that will permit the CEO or other authorised officers to undertake certain functions of a DAP without reference to the Council.

## **Band 4 Local Governments Forum**

On 3 September, the Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beasley, hosted a roundtable meeting of all Band 4 Local Governments in WA. To continue the discussion, WALGA hosted a further meeting of Band 4 Local Governments. The meeting was held on 11 October at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. Chief Executive Officers and Presidents from all 60 Band 4 Local Governments in the State were invited to attend. 72 representatives from 48 Local Governments attended the meeting on 11 October.

The main outcome of the meeting, was to prioritise the top four issues identified by the group:

1. Housing
2. Audit fees
3. Medical services
4. Financial Assistance Grants

WALGA will carry out work on these issues and provide a progress update to all Band 4 Local Governments early next year.

## **High Threat Weather Season**

As Western Australia enters the high-threat weather season, WALGA is committed to supporting Local Governments. The WALGA team maintains situational awareness via the All Hazards Liaison Group meetings and WALGA is represented by CEO Nick Sloan on the State Emergency Coordination Group when a significant emergency occurs. Please don't hesitate to get in contact with WALGA if there is an emergency in your Local area and you have questions of concerns that you would like WALGA to raise at the state level. [Emergency WA](#) provides essential alerts and information and I encourage you to share this platform with your communities as the key source of information in any emergency.

**President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP**

**WALGA President**

# President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 4 September and scheduled before 6 December are as follows:

## State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Commissioner Darren Klemm & Deputy Commissioner Melissa Pexton
- Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, Minister for Emergency Management, Minister for Cities
- Hon Stephen Dawson, Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy; Science; Medical Research; Minister Assisting the Minister for State and Industry Development; Jobs and Trade
- Hon Hannah Beazley, Minister for Local Government; Youth; Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workforce Development x2
- National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting (NEMMM) x2
- Extraordinary National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting (NEMM)
- Road Safety Ministers Meeting
- Labor Leader's Forum Lunch with Premier Roger Cook
- Labor Leader's Forum Lunch with Hon Reece Whitby

## Zone Meetings

- Kimberley Zone Meeting
- Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting
- Northern Country Zone Meeting
- North Metropolitan Zone Meeting

## Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
  - Strategic Forum, 4 September
  - State Council Meeting, 4 September
  - Information Forum
  - Local Government House Trust Meeting
  - Finance and Services Committee Meeting
  - Strategic Planning Workshop
- **ALGA**
  - ALGA Special Board meeting
  - ALGA Board Meeting x 2
  - ALGA Annual General Meeting
  - ALGA President and Vice President Meeting
- **LGIS**
  - JLT Management Committee Meeting x2

- Meeting with the City of Perth Lord Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the City of Vincent Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the City of Karratha Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the Town of Port Headland Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the Shire of Ashburton Mayor & CEO
- Band 4 Local Government Roundtable
- WALGA Public Libraries Forum 2024
- WALGA 2024 Local Government Convention & Annual General Meeting
- WALGA Mayors and Presidents Forum
- WALGA Public Libraries Forum
- Shire of Mundaring's President Sundowner
- WALGA Renewable Energy Forum
- Showcase in Pixels Celebration
- City of Melville Mayoral Dinner
- City of Stirling Christmas Dinner

### **Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations**

- WA Women's Hall of Fame 2025
- Pathways to Politics for Women UWA Advisory Committee Meeting
- Energy Transition Meeting
- ALGAWA 2024 Women in Local Government Forum
- Goldfields Region Electricity Forum
- Department of Education, WA Education Awards
- 2025 Australian of the Year for Western Australia Awards
- Town Teams Movement Event 2024
- Road Safety Vanguard
- National Roads and Transport Congress