

President's Report

December 2025

Introduction

As WALGA President, I want to congratulate everyone who was elected to represent their communities at the recent Local Government Elections and I acknowledge and thank all retiring and outgoing Councillors for their contributions.

It has been another busy period for WALGA and the WA Local Government sector, with key policy matters and emerging issues attracting significant public and political attention.

Since the last report, WALGA has responded to over 70 media queries and at every opportunity, I have sought to champion and support the incredible work of WA Local Governments.

Recently, I responded to media queries regarding the WA Planning Minister's repeated commentary regarding the Local Government sector, which unfairly denigrates the extraordinary work that Local Government performs across the State in supporting new housing development.

2025 Local Government Convention

In late September, the sector came together for WALGA's 2025 Local Government Convention, which saw more than 500 attendees from across Western Australia participate in a full program of events. WALGA's Annual General Meeting was also held, which saw WALGA's 2024-25 Annual Report endorsed, while several motions were debated and passed.

Political Engagement

WALGA has continued to meet with our political representatives from Government and major parties, with discussions held on important issues for the sector including roads and transport, regional health, AI and technology, waste, planning and renewable energy.

The final sitting weeks for the Western Australian and Federal Parliaments were scheduled for late November and provided the last opportunity this year to pass legislation, introduce new bills, or respond to committee reports before the summer recess.

WALGA will continue to engage with decision makers during the recess, to ensure the sector's priorities are front of mind for policy makers when parliament resumes in February 2026.

State Budget Submission

Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming Budget.

WALGA's submission in advance of the 2026-27 Budget looks to build on the advocacy work undertaken in the lead up to the 2025 State Election. The submission seeks funding to progress initiatives set out in The West at its Best, which was pitched to Government as a term of Government policy platform.

The submission was presented to Government in November. WALGA is undertaking advocacy targeting several audiences including the Minister for Local Government, Premier/Treasurer, key members of the Expenditure Review Committee, other relevant Ministers and heads of agencies. There will also be traditional and digital media promotion of the key initiatives included in the submission.

Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025

On 23 October 2025, the State Government introduced the Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025 to Parliament. The Bill has been introduced in direct response to the WA Supreme Court's decision that Crown Land, subject to a miscellaneous licence, is rateable for Local Governments.

WALGA strongly opposes the proposed legislation, which would prohibit the rating of land under miscellaneous and small prospecting licences, extinguish rates imposed since 2017/18, and compel Local Governments to refund previously collected rates within 28 days of Royal Assent. WALGA considers these provisions unnecessarily punitive and disproportionate in their impact on Local Governments that have lawfully levied rates.

WALGA has written to the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government, urging reconsideration of the Bill's scope and timing. WALGA maintains that Local Governments should retain the right to rate occupied land under miscellaneous licences, consistent with the Supreme Court's interpretation.

High Threat Bushfire and Cyclone Season

As Western Australia enters the high-threat bushfire and cyclone season, WALGA acknowledges the vital role of Local Governments and Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades in keeping communities safe. During emergencies, WALGA maintains situational awareness through the All Hazards Liaison Group and represents the sector at State Emergency Coordination Group meetings. Local Governments are encouraged to review their preparedness, including Local Recovery Plans, to ensure readiness if impacted. WALGA remains available to support members throughout the High Threat Period.

Telecommunications

The high profile 000 outage in September and subsequent public interest and government focus highlights a serious concern that WALGA has consistently highlighted, that in times of emergency everybody needs to be able to rely on their telecommunications systems working. West Australians in peri-urban and rural areas have firsthand experience of emergency situations where there is no ability to communicate with anyone, including emergency services, because the mobile telecommunications system has failed, typically due to loss of power. We have raised this consistently with Federal and State Governments as well as the telecommunications industry.

I am encouraged that despite many hurdles the State Government and telecommunications industry are pushing forward with a pilot initiative to make back-up power generators for telecommunications facilities available in regional areas ahead of the coming bushfire season in parts of the Wheatbelt and Goldfields regions.

State Road Funding to Local Governments

The State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee met in September. Analysis of the 2024-25 financial results was the main topic for consideration. Requests to carry forward allocated funding for road improvement projects that have not been delivered continue to be a significant problem. The Metropolitan and South West regions combined

were allocated 49% of the road project grant funding but together were responsible for more than 60% of the carryover in this program.

Options to improve the 2025-26 outcome were discussed and the Committee resolved to invite Metropolitan Local Governments to nominate additional rehabilitation works and to invite other regional Local Governments to nominate additional “shovel ready” projects to be considered for funding in 2025-26. The Committee also discussed the methodologies that Regional Road Groups use to prioritise road project grant funding. It was agreed to prepare and consult on amendments to the State Road Funds to Local Government Procedures to provide additional guidance on this issue and consider these changes at the next meeting.

Finally, in my last report for 2025, I'd like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of all Elected members and officers across the year. Local Government continues to be the institution most relied on by our communities and your efforts, individually and collectively, are critical to making Western Australia the best place in the world to live.

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 5 September and scheduled before 3 December are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Dr Anne Webster MP, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne
- Hon Sabine Winton MLA, Minister for Education; Early Childhood; Preventative Health; Wheatbelt
- Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Regional Development; Ports; Science and Innovation; Medical Research; Kimberley
- Mr Shane Love MLA, Leader of the Nationals WA & Ms Kirrilee Warr MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government
- Hon Steve Martin MLC, Shadow Minister for Transport; Ports; Communities
- Ms Kirrilee Warr MLA, Shadow Minister for Local Government
- Inquiry into the safety, regulation and penalties associated with the use of eRideables

Zone Meetings

- Great Eastern Country Zone
- Kimberley Zone Meeting
- South West Country Zone
- Northern Country Zone

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - Regional State Council meeting, 5 September
 - Information Forum, 5 November
 - Finance and Services Committee
 - Local Government House Trust
 - New State Councillor Induction
- **ALGA**
 - Board meeting, 11 September
 - Ministerial Migration Roundtable
 - ALGA board executive meeting x3
 - Board meeting, 10 November
 - Roads and Infrastructure Congress
- **LGIS**
 - Regional Board meeting & Board Workshop, 8 September
 - Risk and Compliance Committee meeting
 - Board Meeting, 24 October
 - 30th Anniversary function
 - JLT Management Meeting

- Internal Audit Workshop
- Perth Capital City Plan 2026 and Beyond - City of Perth CEO, Michelle Reynolds
- Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia Meeting
- State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Stephen Dawson
- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Meredith Hammat
- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Roger Cook MLA
- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Paul Papalia MLA
- Pathway to Politics Advisory Committee
- State-Local Library Agreement signing with Hon Simone McGurk & LG Professionals President, Mr Anthony Vuleta
- RAC President Cocktail Function
- Auspire Australia Day Awards
- Great Eastern Country Zone Workshop
- WALGA New Councillor Seminar
- WALGA Pre-Season Emergency Management Webinar
- Rural and Remote General Practice Provision Workshop
- 2025 WALGA Local Government Convention
- WALGA Showcase in Pixels
- City of Stirling Christmas Dinner 2025
- WA Electoral Commissioner Vote Processing Centre site visit