

Great Eastern Country Zone Minutes

12 February 2026

Hosted by the Shire of Trayning
(Trayning and Districts Sporting Club)
Commenced at 9:30am

ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following items are the Zone's priority issues, as resolved at the February 2024 Zone meeting:

- Regional Health Services to include:
 - Hospitals
 - Aged Care
 - Future of Nurse Practitioner Service
- St John Ambulance Service – Impact on Volunteers and the provision of the service generally.
- Regional Subsidiaries
- Transport – Road Network
- Telecommunications
- Education
- Review of GROH Housing and Regional Housing issues
- Waste Management
- Agricultural Land Use

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1. OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1. OPENING

The meeting opened at 9:32am.

1.2. ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council
Shire of Bruce Rock	Cr Stephen Strange (State Council Representative)
	Mr Mark Furr, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Cunderdin	President Cr Alison Harris
Shire of Dowerin	Cr Ashley Jones
	Deputy President, Cr Robert Trepp, deputy delegate
Shire of Kellerberrin	Cr Emily Ryan
	Ms Morgan Ware, Manager Governance, voting delegate
Shire of Kondinin	Cr Toni Smeed
Shire of Koorda	Deputy President, Cr Gary Greaves
Shire of Merredin	President Cr Donna Crook
	Mr Craig Watts, Chief Executive Officer, deputy delegate
Shire of Mount Marshall	President Cr Tony Sachse (Zone Chair)

Shire of Narembeen	President Cr Holly Cusack
	Ms Rebecca McCall, Chief Executive Officer, deputy voting delegate
Shire of Nungarin	Cr Gary Coumbe
Shire of Tammin	Deputy President, Cr Tanya Nicholls
	Mr Andrew Malone, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Trayning	President Cr Melanie Brown
	Mr Peter Naylor, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Westonia	President Cr Mark Crees
	Mr Bill Price, Chief Executive Officer, voting delegate
Shire of Wyalkatchem	President Cr Christy Petchell
	Mr Ian McCabe, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Yilgarn	President Cr Bryan Close
	Mr Cameron Watson, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

GUESTS	
Main Roads WA	Mr Mohammad Siddiqui, Director Wheatbelt Region
Regional Development Australia WA	Mr Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
Wheatbelt Development Commission	Mr Grant Arthur, Director Regional Development
Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee	Ms Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisor
CBH Group	Ms Kellie Todman, Manager Governance and Industry Relations Ms Emma Haak, Planning and Approvals Lead
NBN Co	Ms Jenny Thomas, Regional Development and Engagement Manager – North WA

WALGA	
Mr Sam McLeod, Manager Commercial Services (Executive Officer)	
Ms Habiba Farrag, State Council Governance Officer	
Mr Kieran McGovern, A/Senior Policy Advisor Planning	
Ms Lauren McDonnell, Administration Assistant, Policy	

1.3. APOLOGIES

MEMBERS	
Shire of Bruce Rock	President Cr Ramesh Rajagopalan
Shire of Cunderdin	Mr Stuart Hoble, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

Shire of Dowerin	President Cr Darrel Hudson Mrs Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Kondinin	Deputy President, Cr Beverley Gangell Mr Bruce Wright, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Merredin	Deputy President, Cr Renee Manning
Shire of Mt Marshall	Deputy President, Cr Nicholas Gillett Mr Ben McKay, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Mukinbudin	President Cr Gary Shadbolt Ms Tanika McLennan, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Narembeen	Deputy President, Cr Hannah Bald
Shire of Nungarin	President Cr Pippa de Lacy Mr David Nayda, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Tammin	President Cr Charmaine Thomson
Shire of Westonia	Deputy President, Cr Ross Della Bosca, Deputy
Shire of Wyalkatchem	Deputy President, Cr Mischa Stratford
Shire of Yilgarn	Cr Donna Newbury

GUESTS	
Wheatbelt Development Commission	Mr Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer
Water Corporation	Ms Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer & Stakeholder – Goldfields & Agricultural Region

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
Hon Melissa Price MP, Member for Durack
Mr Lachlan Hunter MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt
Hon Sandra Carr MLC
Mr Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor
Hon Steve Martin MLC
Mr Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe

WALGA
Ms Tracey Peacock, Road Safety Advisor

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the Great Eastern Country Zone of WALGA acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Elected Members must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they have in a matter before the Zone as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors and deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Zone and State Council. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

Nil.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nil.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOST

A Zone member Local Government is invited to make a short (10 minute) presentation on what is occurring in their Local Government.

The Shire of Trayning made a presentation at this meeting.

All host presentations for this year are proposed to be delivered by the Local Government physically hosting the meeting (with no host in June).

The Shire of Cunderdin is invited to make a presentation to the next Zone meeting, in April (to be held at Cunderdin).

The following hosts will be:

Date	Time	Host Council
Thursday, 23 April	9:30 am	Shire of Cunderdin
Thursday, 11 June*	TBC	Perth/MSTeams (No Host)
Thursday, 13 August	9:30 am	Shire of Bruce Rock
Thursday, 12 November	9:30 am	Shire of Dowerin

6. GUEST SPEAKERS

Guest Speaker Protocols

- *The main speaker or keynote address to the Zone will be generally 30 minutes with 15 minutes for questions*
- *Other guest speakers will have a time limit of 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions.*

6.1. SPEAKERS FOR THE FEBRUARY ZONE MEETING

6.1.1. NBN CO

Jenny Thomas, Regional Development and Engagement Manager – North WA

A presentation on the following NBN updates was provided:

- NBN Fix Line Internet upgrades;
- Copper to Fibre (FTTP) upgrades;
- fixed wireless tower upgrades;
- upcoming launch of NBN's LEO Satellite; and
- Emergency Response STAND Sites.

A summary was provided to the Zone.

6.1.2. KIERAN MCGOVERN, SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR (PLANNING), WALGA

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) has released a draft Renewable Energy Planning Code and Guidelines for public consultation. The Code and Guidelines aim to provide a clear and consistent framework for assessing energy infrastructure that supports the generation, storage and transmission of renewable energy across Western Australia.

The draft Code proposes consistent development standards and application requirements for renewable energy projects, supported by Guidelines that explain how applicants and decision-makers can meet these requirements.

WALGA is hosting an online information session for Elected Members on the draft Code alongside the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) on Monday, 9 February 2026 at 10am. Further information is available at: [Renewable Energy Planning Code Elected Member Information Session](#).

While the DPLH has also been seeking to engage directly with Zones about the release of the Draft Renewable Energy Planning Code for comment, timing clashes and limitations have prevented their attendance at this meeting.

Accordingly, Mr McGovern provided a briefing for Zone delegates on the codes, and provided an opportunity for questions and answers on local planning and land use considerations for Zone members.

Should Zone delegates have detailed or specific questions, WALGA can seek to facilitate further engagement between Zone delegates and DPLH.

Consultation on the draft Code and Guidelines closes Friday, 10 April 2026, with submissions accepted via post, online through email or [Have your say, WA!](#)

WALGA is preparing a submission on behalf of the sector. Should you have any feedback to inform the submission, please provide this to us by 27 February 2026.

Noted

7. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Members of Parliament Protocols

Any Members of Federal and State Government in attendance are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone. Members of Parliament are invited to make a brief (approx. 5-10 minute) address, with equivalent time left for questions from delegates wherever possible.

Any Members of Federal and State Government in attendance are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone.

Nil

8. AGENCY REPORTS

Agency Reports Protocols

The Zone appreciates and prefers written updates (circulated with the Agenda) wherever possible. Agency representatives are invited to make brief (5 minute) remarks if the speaker wishes to provide context or a further update on a specific matter.

The Zone appreciates if time can be left for questions, typically for around 10 minutes. Briefings on a significant policy proposal or contentious topic are to be dealt with by the agency representative attending as a Guest or Keynote Speaker (item 6).

8.1. DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety report was submitted for the Zone.

Noted

8.2. WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Grant Arthur, Director Regional Development

Mr Arthur provided a verbal update to the Zone.

Noted

8.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development

The report was submitted to the Zone.

Noted

8.4. MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Mohammad Siddiqui, Director Wheatbelt Region

Mr Siddiqui provided an update to the Zone.

Noted

8.5. WATER CORPORATION

Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer and Stakeholder

Ms Bowler was an apology to the meeting.

Noted

8.6. CBH

Kellie Todman, Manager - Govt & Industry Relations, and Emma Haak, Lead – Planning and Approvals

Ms Todman and Ms Haak provided an update on the 2025/26 harvest, and associated logistics.

Noted

8.7. WHEATBELT DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisory

Ms Robinson provided a verbal update to the Zone.

Noted

8.8. HC CONSTRUCTION SERVICES PTY LTD

For delegates' information – no associated presentation.

WALGA has been approached by HC Construction Services Pty Ltd requesting the opportunity to attend Zones meeting in 2026 to provide a deputation on how to navigate through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement (DRFA).

Interested Zone CEOs or staff members can approach WALGA or contact HC Construction directly at: <https://hcconstruction.net.au/contact-us/>

Noted

8.9. REQUEST TO PRESENT – AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (ABS)

BACKGROUND

WALGA has been approached by a representative from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) requesting support for a deputation to be provided at Zones meetings to facilitate a targeted, Elected Member/CEO-focused discussion on the Australian Census.

The ABS is seeking insight on local community considerations, participation challenges, and how Census engagement can be strengthened across Western Australia.

This proposal recognises that councillors have distinct responsibilities, insights, and perspectives that extend beyond operational Census delivery.

CEOs and Elected members will also have the opportunity to explore how Census data supports council planning, advocacy, and service delivery, while helping shape future engagement approaches.

The session is designed to be practical, collaborative, and responsive to the priorities and experiences of local governments.

The session would be framed as: “We are here to listen – what would you like to ask, know, or see changed?”

Focus points:

- Elected-member perspectives
- Local challenges and insights
- Improvement and change
- Value for Local Governments
- Strengthened collaboration

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning

Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Great Eastern Country Zone does not support a deputation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics at the April 2026 Zone meeting.

CARRIED

9. MINUTES

9.1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2025

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on 13 November 2025 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Trayning

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Great Eastern Country Zone held on 13 November 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

9.2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2025

9.2.1. REPRESENTATION AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOUSING FORUM, THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA – REPORT FROM DELEGATES

At the November meeting, the Zone resolved to support a representative to attend the Local Government Housing Forum, which was held on Thursday 27 November 2025 at the Australian Parliament House Theatre, Canberra. In line with the Zone's resolution, President Cr Brown travelled to Canberra as the Zone's representative.

The President (Cr Holly Cusack) and Chief Executive Officer (Ms Rebecca McCall) of the Shire of Narembeen also attended the Forum, recognising the Shires' contribution to the development of the *Australian Community Housing and ALGA Guide for Local Government on the Delivery of Affordable Housing*. The Shire's input was informed by practical experience with CEACA.

President Cr Brown, President Cr Cusack and Ms McCall were able to maximise the advocacy value of the trip by arranging several meetings with Parliamentarians and stakeholders.

In line with the November report, the final cost to the Zone associated with sending a representative was approximately \$2,760.

A further report was provided to the Zone by the representatives.

Noted

9.2.2. LETTER TO THE DEPUTY PREMIER – GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY

Following discussion about the condition of Great Eastern Highway at the November Zone meeting, a letter from the Zone to the Deputy Premier has been drafted, based on a recent letter to the Minister from WEROC.

The Zone's Executive Committee provided comments on the draft, and the letter was duly revised for signing by the Zone's Chair, Deputy Chair, and State Councillor at the February Zone Meeting.

A draft version of the letter is included as an attachment to the Agenda. A final copy of the letter was signed at the meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Yilgarn
Seconded: Shire of Cunderdin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone note the signing of the letter to the Deputy Premier expressing concern at the condition of the Great Eastern Highway.

CARRIED

9.2.3. LETTER TO THE MINISTER FOR THE WHEATBELT – INVITATION TO ZONE

Due to scheduling challenges with attending Zone Meetings in-person during 2025, the Hon Sabine Winton MLA (the Minister for Education; Early Childhood; Preventative Health; Wheatbelt) invited the Chairs and Deputy Chairs from the Avon Midland Country Zone, Central Country Zone, and Great Eastern Country Zone to a working lunch at Parliament House held on 7 October 2025.

Prior to the meeting, WALGA supported the Chairs and Deputy Chairs to meet to discuss potential discussion points of broad relevance across the three Wheatbelt Zones. Through this process, the four key issues of Housing, Health, Roads, and Energy were identified as the most pressing topics of relevance across the three Zones.

The lunch provided an opportunity to discuss a range of matters related to the four key issues with the Minister, in her capacity as the Minister for the Wheatbelt.

As there is strong interest in the Minister attending an upcoming Zone meeting, a letter from the Great Eastern Country Zone has been drafted to:

- Express thanks to the Minister for hosting the lunch;
- Reiterate the key issues common to the three Zones discussed at the lunch (with notes included as an attachment); and
- Invite the Minister to attend and provide an address at a meeting of the Great Eastern Country Zone in 2026.

A draft version of the letter was included as an attachment to the Agenda. A final copy of the letter was signed at the meeting.

A similar letter has been drafted for the consideration of the other two Zones represented at the lunch.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen
Seconded: Shire of Nungarin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone note the signing of the letter to the Minister for the Wheatbelt inviting the Minister to provide an address to a meeting of the Zone in 2026.

CARRIED

9.3. MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2026

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 27 January 2026 were provided as an attachment to the agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin
Seconded: Shire of Westonia

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 27 January 2025 be received.

CARRIED

9.4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2026

9.4.1. ZONE CONFERENCE – EARLY PLANNING

The Zone's Executive Committee is keen to initiate early planning for the 2027 Conference. Accordingly, expressions of interest are invited for Zone Local Governments and delegates wishing to be involved in the delivery of the 2027 Conference.

Host Local Government

All Zone Local Governments are invited to consider expressing their interest to host the 2027 Conference.

Any interested Local Governments must have access to a venue suitable to accommodate 80-100 guests indoors in February/March 2027 (with a date to be determined). Ideally, the host Shire will also be able to nominate a venue for a welcome event for delegates wishing to arrive the prior afternoon or stay the following evening.

Expressions of interest are non-binding, and WALGA can assist in discussing any logistical considerations, etc. It is requested that expressions of interest include a basic overview of the proposed venue(s).

Expressions of interest for prospective host Local Governments are requested by email to WALGA by Friday, 6 March.

Conference Planning Committee

As with the 2025 Conference, a Planning Committee is proposed to be formed to provide advice and input over the course of planning the event.

Zone delegates are invited to express their interest on serving on the Committee, which will generally meet informally via MS Teams.

Expressions of interests from prospective Zone Conference Committee members are requested by email to WALGA by Friday, 6 March.

The Zone Conference Committee will consider nominations from prospective hosts and comments on potential themes, speakers, ideas, etc. to progress further planning.

Comment on Themes, Ideas, Speakers, etc.

The Executive Committee considered a working list of potential themes for the 2027 Conference, including:

- “The Wheatbelt in a Changing World” (agronomic/economic/impact of global politics)
- “Growing the Wheatbelt” (economic development, particularly ag-related, maintaining and supporting population centres)
- “Regional Resilience” (emergency/social connectedness/community governance)
- “Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide” (rural community development/knowledge and resource sharing between Local Governments)
- “Wellness in the Regions” (focus on regional health, especially comparing to other case studies in similar countries)
- “Regional Community Leadership and Influence” (focus on State and Federal engagement, leadership, advocacy)

The Executive Committee also discussed interest in recruiting a notable keynote speaker to align with the selected theme.

Zone delegates are invited to provide any comment on the potential themes to inform planning and programming.

Comments can be provided email to WALGA by Friday, 6 March or verbally at the Zone meeting.

Next Steps

Anyone with an Expressions of Interest, query, or comment can contact Sam McLeod, Executive Officer at smcleod@walga.asn.au or by phone on 0488 668 301.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem

Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone notes:

- 1. The opening of Expressions of Interest for Local Governments to host the 2027 Zone Conference;**
- 2. The opening of Expressions of Interest for Zone delegates to serve on the 2027 Zone Conference Planning Committee; and**
- 3. That general comment is invited on potential 2027 Zone Conference themes, topics, and speakers.**

CARRIED

10. ZONE BUSINESS

10.1. ZONE CONSTITUTION

The following attachments were previously distributed with the Agenda:

1. Constitution with proposed amendments (clean formatting)
2. Constitution with proposed amendments (full markup)
3. Standing Orders (version from circa 2005)

In 2025, the Zone's External Auditor identified the potential need to consider amendments to the Zone's Constitution to allow for the Zone's accounts to be administered through a finance system, rather than through a specific bank account.

Since WALGA was appointed as the Zone Secretariat, WALGA has managed the Zone's accounts utilising WALGA's finance systems. WALGA also place the Zone's excess cash reserves in term deposits. As WALGA is subject to an annual external audit, the Zone's cash balance—including the associated term deposit—is incorporated within the scope of that audit, providing independent assurance over the accuracy and completeness of these balances. The Zone can also commission external audits of the Zone's finances, as occurred in 2025.

The Zone's Constitution was adopted in 2005 and appears to have been last reviewed in 2012. Accordingly, a desktop review of the Constitution has been undertaken, with reference to WALGA's Constitution.

The review seeks to modernise language, and ensure the Constitution is aligned with the current practices of the Zone.

It appears that the Zone's meeting procedures were adopted in 2005. For ease of reference and understanding, it is proposed to move the quorum requirement from the meeting procedures to the Constitution.

The amendments provide for these Standing Orders (or other procedures) to still be used if needed, or for the Zone to adopt other procedures. A review of the Standing Orders could be undertaken in future if required.

A marked-up version of the proposed Constitution is attached, with amendments summarised below.

Section	Nature of Proposed Change
1. Name	- Added short form name of "Great Eastern Country Zone".
2. Interpretation	- Removed redundant references.
3. Objects	(No change)
4. Membership	- Added reference to Members typically being able to appoint two delegates, unless otherwise determined by the Zone.
5. Change of Membership Status	- Removed redundant reference to withdrawal of membership from WALGA (this is more appropriately in the WALGA Constitution)

Section	Nature of Proposed Change
6. Meetings – Ordinary and Special	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added “typically” before “held in person”, to allow for occasional meetings held virtually or using a hybrid format (e.g. Perth meeting) if necessary. - Removed reference to a specific day of the week for meetings - Added new section on quorum to provide for meeting to reduce ambiguity. This is based on the Zone’s Standing Orders. - Removed specific reference to “Meeting Procedures”, replaced with “any rules and practices of the Zone as adopted from time to time”. In practice, meeting procedures can still be adopted/used as required. A copy of the current Meeting Procedures is attached to this item.
7. Zone President/Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added “Chair” as alternative term, given this term is now generally favoured. - Minor change to express that President/Chair is to have duties which are similar to those of a President of a Local Government.
8. Deputy President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added “Deputy Chair” alternative language as for Zone Chair
9. Representative to State Council and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election of State Councillors and Deputy State Council is dealt with under Clause 16 of WALGA’s Constitution. Therefore, these clauses are proposed to be amended to simply reference WALGA’s Constitution but retain reference to State Councillor to report State Council meeting outcomes back to the Zone.
10. Deputy Representative to State Council	
11. Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplified language that Zone and Zone’s Executive Committee may make decisions which the Executive Officer is to progress or implement.
12. Zone Executive Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplified that Executive Committee can consist of delegates as the Zone determines (as occurred at the last election) - Added reference to Executive Committee engaging with the Executive Officer on the implementation of the Zone’s decisions, actions, or initiatives - Added that Executive Committee can determine its procedures.
15. Zone Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reworded previous clause about authority for the Zone being ultimately through decisions at Zone meetings.
16. Election Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minor rewording to references to holding elections in accordance with the Zone’s practices, “having regard to the general principles of the Local Government Act” to avoid need to apply prescriptive details in Act (e.g. preferential vote count procedures, backfilling, etc.).
17. Vacating of Office	(No change)
17 Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added general clause about Zone may utilise funds for any purpose in best interests of the members of the Zone
19. Subscriptions	(No change)
20 Banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reworded to generally require Executive Office to establish and maintain a banking facility to account for the Zone’s finances (rather than requiring an individual account). - Reworded that payments are only to be made as duly authorised and reported in accordance with the Zone or Executive Committee’s requirements

Section	Nature of Proposed Change
21. Constitutional Disputes	(No change)
22. Dissolution	(No change)
23 Amendments to the Constitution (Generally)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided for the Executive Officer to fix typographical errors in the Constitution, but is to notify Zone after doing so. - Fixed clause numbering - Repagination (appears as intended if “Tracked Changes” is not displayed) - Updated fonts and graphic to match WALGA meeting papers style - Deleted “Register of Powers, Authorities, Discretions and Duties” at appendix

A majority of not less than 75% of representatives present at an Ordinary Meeting of the Zone will be needed to pass amendments.

Therefore, this item is presented for discussion at this meeting, to allow for comment and any revision before a decision is considered at the April meeting.

Any comments or queries can be raised at the meeting, or by email to WALGA by Friday, 6 March. Any comments received at this time will be considered in finalising proposed amendments.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Merredin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone:

- 1. Note the proposed amendments;**
- 2. Discuss the proposed amendments if required;**
- 3. Note that any further comments are requested by 9 March 2026;**
- 4. Note that a final proposed form of amendments will be presented to the April Zone meeting.**

CARRIED

No specific comments on the proposed amendments were raised at the meeting.

10.2. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – MUTUAL AID

Some Zone members have recently raised queries about the Zone Mutual Aid Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from June 2023, mostly in the context of emergency management and recovery.

It is understood that the MOU has served as an instrument to encourage Zone Shires to work together on emergency management and response initiatives.

Records indicate that most (but not all) member Local Governments last signed a version of the MOU in 2023.

Given the MOU is a non-binding expression of intent to offer help when needed and when capacity is available, the existence and awareness of the document is, to some degree, more important than a formal signature.

Depending on the views of the Zone, one option would be for the Zone to adopt a new MOU on the same terms, which is reaffirmed annually by a resolution of the Zone. A pro-forma item for the CEO of each Member Local Government to present to their Council before the high-threat season each year may be prepared for noting or formal endorsement to ensure timely awareness.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem
Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Great Eastern Country Zone discuss the proposed approach to a standing MOU noted/renewed annually, potentially including a pro-forma for member Councils to note each year.

CARRIED

Zone delegates discussed general support for the proposal as outlined in the item, including potential to align the initiative with DFES and other local emergency management initiatives.

10.3. IN-PERSON TRAINING INITIATIVE

In 2025, the Zone pursued an initiative to provide Zone-funded face-to-face training for Council Members in the Zone. The proposed dates were:

Block	Units	Dates
Block 1 2 days	Understanding Local Government; Conflict of Interest; Meeting Procedures	Thursday, 5 February and Friday, 6 February 2026
Block 2 2 days	Serving on Council	Thursday, 19 February and Friday, 20 February 2026
Block 3 1 day	Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets	Monday, 9 March 2026

Each Block had places for 20 attendees.

Following the close of the Expressions of Interest, there were insufficient nominations to justify running the first two blocks of training.

Accordingly, a second call of Expressions of Interest was run to see if additional attendees could be recruited. The results of this were:

- 7 Council Members interested in Block 1 (up from 6)
- 11 Council Members interested in Block 2 (up from 7)
- 16 Council Members interested in Block 3 (up from 11).

Accordingly, the Zone's Executive Committee elected to proceed with only running Block 3 on this occasion. Zone Councillors who nominated for Block 1 or 2 (but not 3) were invited to take the remaining places in Block 3, which is now essentially fully subscribed.

Arrangements are being made for the Block 3 (Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets) training module to be held at Westonia on 9 March 2026. This change will result in an underspend on this item for the 2025-26 financial results.

Noted

10.4. SENATE RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE

On 27 November 2025 the Senate referred an inquiry into the state of rural, regional and remote Medicare access and funding to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee for inquiry and report by 30 June 2026. Information about the inquiry, including terms of reference, is available at the [inquiry webpage](#).

The committee has invited Local Governments to make a submission addressing some or all of the terms of reference. The closing date for submissions is **Thursday, 19 February 2026**. Late submissions may not be accepted unless an extension has been granted by the committee; please contact the secretariat if you require an extension. For further information about making a submission see: [Making a submission – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](#)

WALGA is currently preparing a submission on behalf of the sector.

An example of current inequity has been provided by a Zone Shire. The Zone Shire contracted a private provider to provide GP services within the Shire. The provider chose not to sign up to the bulk billing initiative because the extra rural/remote incentive is split between the business owner and the doctor providing the services, diluting the benefit to the business. Just up the road in the next Shire, where the practice is owned and operated by a sole provider, the GP there has signed up to the arrangement, meaning that in the space of 40 kms or so, you can pay nothing for a GP visit or you can pay \$110.

Zone members are encouraged to consider making a submission.

Noted

10.5. MURCHISON ZONE REQUEST FOR SUPPORT REGARDING DISASTER RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS FOR FLOODING

The Murchison Country Zone of WALGA recently passed a resolution at their November meeting about issues relating to disaster recovery funding arrangements for flooding, as follows:

“That the Murchison Country Zone request WALGA and other WALGA Zones to call upon the Office of the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of Recovery and Resilience management of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia.”

Rather than take this item directly to the Zone, the resolution is being considered through the usual State Council and Policy team process, and is therefore likely to be subject of a future item to the Zone.

Noted

10.6. DELEGATION WORKSHOP

The Delegation Workshop is currently booked for Monday, 23 February 2026. An update, including a review of the Zone Priorities will be provided at the April Zone meeting.

Noted

10.7. DISASTER READY FUND: ROUND 4 ANTICIPATED TO OPEN IN MARCH 2026

By Rachel Armstrong, Policy Manager Emergency Management

The Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is the Australian Government's key funding program to support projects that reduce disaster risk and strengthen community resilience.

Round Four of the DRF is expected to open in March 2026 with approximately \$200 million available nationally. A strong focus on *construction-ready*, infrastructure-based mitigation projects with clear risk reduction benefits is expected. This is similar to Round 3 which prioritised infrastructure-based projects such as flood levees, cyclone shelters, warning systems. A list of Round 3 projects funded is available at [Disaster Ready Fund | NEMA](#)).

WALGA is providing early notice to Zones and member Local Governments to consideration of both individual and collaborative project opportunities, and pre-planning ahead of the formal announcement.

The DRF is administered by DFES, in Western Australia. Further information is available at [Disaster Resilience Grants - Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) and by emailing DisasterResilienceGrants@dfes.wa.gov.au.

DRF Round 4 is likely to be released in March 2026, and encourage Local Governments to consider shared or individual disaster risk reduction projects.

WALGA will advise the Sector when the DRF is formally announced.

Noted

10.8. WATER MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

By Rebecca Brown, WALGA Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has developed a Water Management in Western Australia Discussion Paper exploring issues for Local Governments in managing water resources.
- To inform the Discussion Paper, WALGA undertook research and direct engagement with the sector and reviewed existing Water Advocacy Positions and feedback from WALGA Zones.
- Based on this consultation, the Discussion Paper identifies water security and water efficiency as key themes.
- Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform the development of a new water management advocacy position.
- Zones and Local Governments are encouraged to provide comments to WALGA by 12 March 2026.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#):

- Service Delivery to Aboriginal Communities;
- 4.3 Clearing Permits and Water Licenses and Permits;
- 6.10 Public Open Space (POS); and
- 6.14 Planning for Water.

ATTACHMENT

- [Water Management in Western Australia Discussion Paper](#)

BACKGROUND

Local Governments contribute to the management of water through strategic planning, land management, development approvals, community behaviour change and, in some cases, direct water service provision. Local Governments' role in water service provision includes drainage, water use and re-use and aspects of wastewater and sewerage services. The challenges for future water management are escalating across Western Australia due to population growth, climate change and increased competition for limited water resources.

To inform the Discussion Paper WALGA reviewed its existing Water Advocacy Positions and motions, feedback from WALGA Zones and undertook research and direct consultation with the sector. Consultation included workshops with both metropolitan and non-metropolitan Local Governments, an online session with 40 officers focused on water security and efficiency and a regionally focused session with 30 Local Government representatives exploring the barriers to being waterwise in a regional setting. In addition, WALGA conducted 14 one-on-one interviews with officers from 22 metropolitan, regional and remote Local Governments to better understand key issues. Further insights were gained

through meetings with officers from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Water Corporation, as well as internal discussions with WALGA.

COMMENT

From consultation and research WALGA has undertaken with Local Government, two key themes consistently emerged - water security and water efficiency.

Water security relates to the reliable availability, adequate quantity and acceptable quality of water needed to support human health, economic development and environmental amenity. Issues identified include:

- **Infrastructure:** Funding to repair and upgrade aging Local Government water infrastructure including irrigation, drainage and stormwater systems and to improve reliability of State-managed assets.
- **Alternative Sources:** Diversifying water supply through non-traditional sources such as recycled water, stormwater harvesting, or desalination to support community assets.
- **Licensing:** Reforming the current water licensing system, including equity, access and regulatory enforcement.
- **Access:** Addressing barriers to equitable water access, particularly for regional and remote communities.
- **Use:** Planning for water allocation and consumption across sectors.

Water efficiency is focused on reducing unnecessary water loss through better practices, technologies and infrastructure. Issues identified include:

- **Technology:** Adopting waterwise technologies to enhance water efficiency.
- **Water Literacy and behaviour change:** Increasing water literacy within Local Government and the community to support change management and adaptation within communities.
- **Water Sensitive Urban Design:** Improving understanding to encourage the adoption of efficient technologies and design standards to reduce water consumption across public and private infrastructure.

Local Governments across Western Australia are addressing water security and efficiency through various actions across strategic infrastructure planning, innovative water management practices and community awareness. A new Water Management Advocacy Position will ensure WALGA can effectively advocate on behalf of the sector in relation to this issue. The Discussion Paper includes options to address these issues and questions for the sector relating to each of the key areas.

Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform the development of a new water management advocacy position. All Zones and Local Governments are encouraged to provide comments to WALGA by 12 March 2026.

Noted

10.9. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY POSITION

By Rebecca Brown, WALGA Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA is undertaking consultation on a revised Climate Change Advocacy Position.
- This Draft was developed following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team of State Council.
- Since WALGA's current Advocacy Position and Policy Statement were endorsed in 2018, there have been significant legislative, policy, technological and scientific changes.
- An updated climate change advocacy position, which complements other WALGA advocacy positions, will provide a sound basis for WALGA's advocacy.
- WALGA is seeking Council endorsed feedback by 1 May 2026.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item is intended to replace WALGA's 2018 Climate Change [Advocacy Position](#) and [Policy Statement](#).

ATTACHMENT

The Consultation Paper is available [online](#).

BACKGROUND

Climate change, and related legislation, policy and action, have implications for many aspects of Local Governments' operations and services. More frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves, bushfires, extreme rainfall events and warming, rising sea levels are increasing the costs and complexity of delivering critical services, infrastructure and ensuring community wellbeing.

In 2018, State Council endorsed a [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and advocacy position, following extensive sector consultation. Since this Advocacy Position was adopted there have been significant legislative, policy, technological and scientific changes, including:

- The national *Climate Change Act 2022* and the Western Australian Climate Change Bill 2023.
- The *Local Government Amendment Act 2023*, which expanded Western Australian Local Governments' general function to include planning for, and mitigating, the risks associated with climate change.
- The release of the Australian Government's [National Climate Risk Assessment](#) and [National Adaptation Plan](#) in 2025.
- Escalation of the transition to renewable energy, uptake of electric vehicles and energy efficiency standards under the National Construction Code.
- Climate science and projections ([international](#), [national](#) and [WA specific](#)) have also become clearer regarding the risks posed by climate change and the need for action to address the consequential impacts.

COMMENT

It is important that the WALGA climate change advocacy position is updated to reflect these changes and the consequent needs and priorities of Local Governments. An updated

climate change advocacy position, which complements other WALGA advocacy positions, will provide a sound basis for WALGA's advocacy.

Following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team, WALGA has developed a revised, draft Climate Change Advocacy Position for Local Government feedback.

WALGA Environment and Waste Team members will be attending Zone meetings in April 2026 to support zone discussions on the draft Advocacy Position.

WALGA is seeking Council endorsed feedback on the draft Climate Change Advocacy Position by **COB Friday, 1 May 2026**. Feedback can be provided to environment@walga.asn.au.

Following consideration of this feedback a final draft advocacy position will be developed and provided to Zones and State Council for consideration, expected to be in July 2026.

Noted

10.10. 2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HONOURS AWARDS

The Honours Program recognises and celebrates the outstanding achievements and lasting contributions made by Elected Members and officers to their respective Local Government, the Local Government sector, WALGA and the wider community.

There are five awards in the 2026 Program:

1. Local Government Medal
2. Life Membership
3. Eminent Service Award
4. Merit Award
5. Young Achievers Award

All Local Government Elected Members and officers are eligible for nomination for each award.

Nominations are open now and will close at **5:00pm on Thursday, 2 April 2026**.

Further information about the 2026 Honours Program, including the nomination form and guidelines for preparing nominations, are available on the [WALGA website](#).

All awards will be presented later this year at the WALGA Local Government Awards event. More details about the event will be announced shortly.

For more information contact Habiba Farrag, State Council Governance Officer, on 9213 2050 or via email honours@walga.asn.au.

Noted

10.11. DRAFT RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANNING CODE

By Kieran McGovern, Senior Policy Advisor, Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA Advocacy Position 6.17 Renewable Energy Facilities calls for changes to the renewable energy State planning framework to ensure it is fit for purpose to guide the ongoing development of the sector.
- The State Government has released a draft Renewable Energy Planning Code and Guidelines with the aim of establishing a consistent assessment framework, clear development standards, and improved certainty around impacts such as noise, landscape, environmental considerations, and safety.
- The Code initially focuses on wind farms but is designed to expand to other renewable technologies, requiring detailed technical reporting and encouraging (but not regulating) community benefit-sharing agreements.
- Proposed regulatory amendments would align local planning schemes with the Code and classify renewable energy projects valued at \$20 million or more as mandatory significant development, shifting decision-making authority to the WAPC.
- WALGA strongly encourages consideration of the draft Code by Zones. Local Governments should make their own submissions on the draft Code by 10 April 2026 and provide feedback to WALGA to inform our submission on behalf of the sector by 27 February 2026. Council endorsed submissions are preferred.

ATTACHMENT

- [Draft Renewable Energy Planning Code and Guidelines](#)
- [Information Sheet - Proposed Amendments to Local Planning Scheme Regulations](#)
- [Information Sheet - Proposed Amendments to Significant Development Regulations](#)
- [WALGA summary of the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's proposed advocacy approach is consistent with WALGA [Advocacy Positions](#):

- 6.1 Planning Principles and Reform
- 6.4 State Development Applications and Decision Making
- 6.16 Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework
- 6.17 Renewable Energy Facilities
- 6.18 Priority Agriculture.

BACKGROUND

The growth in the number, size, and complexity of renewable energy facilities across Western Australia is expected to continue as energy generation and other traditional industries de-carbonise their facilities and operations. As a result, the placement and management of renewable energy facilities have become contentious issues in local communities across Western Australia.

In September 2024, WALGA's State Council endorsed three advocacy positions to address concerns related to renewable energy. Advocacy Position 6.17 Renewable Energy Facilities noted that the existing Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities was inadequate to address these concerns, leading to inconsistent application and approvals of renewable energy facilities across the State.

The advocacy position calls for the existing Position Statement: Renewable Energy Facilities to be elevated to a State planning policy, to provide the highest level of planning policy control and ensure the state planning framework is fit for purpose to guide the ongoing development of the sector.

On 12 December 2025, the State Government released a draft Renewable Energy Planning Code (the Code) and associated Guidelines for public consultation. The Code has been prepared to provide guidance to industry, Local Government and communities by:

- introducing a consistent development assessment framework for renewable energy infrastructure across Western Australia.
- establishing clear development standards and application requirements.
- addresses potential land use and environmental impacts, such as noise and landscape considerations.

The initial focus of the Code is on wind farms, with flexibility to expand to other renewable energy developments, including solar farms and battery energy storage systems.

The draft Code covers key planning issues such as safety, noise, shadow flicker, landscape and visual impact, natural environment, natural hazards, aviation safety, electromagnetic interference, transport, construction, and decommissioning.

Under the proposed Code, development applications must include detailed technical reports, whilst community benefit-sharing agreements are encouraged, these agreements sit outside of the planning system.

To enable implementation of the Code, regulatory amendments are proposed to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* to support incorporation of the Code into local planning schemes through Model Provisions, introduce standard land-use definitions that will apply to all local planning schemes and guide assessment of new noise-sensitive development near existing or approved wind farms.

There are also proposed reforms to the *Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024*, which will classify renewable energy development applications valued at \$20 million or more as mandatory significant development. These projects will be assessed and determined by the WAPC under the State Significant Development Pathway (under Part 11B of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*), and Local Governments role will be to provide commentary to the development application, but final decision-making authority will rest with the WAPC.

Consultation on the draft Code and Guidelines closes 10 April 2026.

COMMENT

WALGA's has advocated for changes to the renewable energy State planning framework to ensure orderly and proper planning of renewable energy facilities and therefore welcomes the release of the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code and Guidelines by the State Government for public comment. This draft Code represents a significant step toward establishing a consistent planning framework to guide the ongoing development of

renewable energy facilities across WA - providing important clarity and guidance to WA Local Governments.

The proposed amendments to classify renewable energy projects over \$20 million as 'mandatory significant development' that must be determined by WAPC does not align with WALGA's Advocacy Position 6.4 State Development Applications and Decision Making, as it has the potential to erode Local Government decision making powers and community input. WALGA's position is that Part 11B should be abolished, or, if it is retained, the cost threshold should be raised to \$50 million.

WALGA considers it is essential that the requirement for community benefits be mandated. There are several options that should be examined as potential mechanisms to mandate community benefit-sharing agreements, including (but not limited to) amendments to existing planning or energy legislation or new, standalone legislation.

There is also a lack of guidance regarding appropriate land uses in particular zones, specifically protecting rural land for agricultural purposes, instead stating that wind farms are generally compatible with agricultural land uses. WALGA's position is that regulatory amendments are required to create a model zone through the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* for land identified as high quality agricultural land (noting most of this land is located in the South West region) known as the 'Priority Agriculture'.

WALGA held two online information sessions on the Code alongside the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on 5 and 9 February 2026 for Local Government officers and Elected Members respectively.

WALGA will prepare a submission to the State on behalf of the sector to ensure the draft Code delivers positive outcomes for Member Local Governments, communities and industry.

WALGA strongly encourages consideration of the draft Code by Zones. Local Governments should make their own submissions on the draft Code by 10 April 2026 and provide feedback to WALGA to inform our submission on behalf of the sector by 27 February 2026. Council endorsed submissions are preferred.

WALGA's submission will be provided to State Council by flying agenda to meet the submission deadline.

Noted

11. ZONE REPORTS

11.1. CHAIR REPORT

President Cr Tony Sachse

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin

Seconded: Shire of Trayning

That the Zone Chair's report be received.

CARRIED

11.2. WHEATBELT DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DEMC)

President Cr Tony Sachse

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

11.3. WALGA ROADWISE

Tracey Peacock, Regional Road Safety Advisor

Noted

12. WALGA STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE REPORTS

12.1. WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The WALGA President's Report was attached to the meeting Agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Trayning

That:

1. **The WALGA President's Report be received; and**
2. **The Great Eastern Country Zone sends a letter thanking President Chappel for her service as WALGA President.**

CARRIED

12.2. STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cr Stephen Strange

Cr Strange provided an update to the meeting on various WALGA matters including:

- Recent and upcoming business of State Council and Policy Teams;
- Overview of the Government's Review of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (BAM) Act as well as the Polyphagous shot-hole borer Transition to Management;
- Update on the Electoral Address Advocacy Position - Elected Members should not be required to put their address on their campaign material (particularly in the Metropolitan regions) and should instead be able to put a locality.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Westonia

Seconded: Shire of Kellerberrin

That the State Councillor Report be received.

CARRIED

12.3. STATUS REPORT

Noted

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	WALGA Contact
13 February 2025 Zone Agenda Item 14.1 WA Telstra Automatic Transfer Unit Pilot Deployment Program	That the Great Eastern Country Zone requests WALGA organise a roundtable with WALGA, Telstra, Department of Fire and Emergency Services and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to discuss the drafting of Community Support Agents Agreement for the implementation of the WA Telstra Automatic Transfer Unit Pilot Deployment Program.	Automatic Transfer Units (ATUs) have been installed by Telstra at 80 sites as per their agreement with the State Government. For this first season deployment will be managed by DFES in conjunction with Telstra. This addresses the residual liability issues that would otherwise fall to volunteers or Local Governments. Negotiations regarding the qualifications and training required for people to connect the generators to an ATU, the indemnity required to be provided to Telstra and principles for operationalizing the arrangements are ongoing.	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure iduncan@walga.asn.au 9213 2031
5 March 2025 State Council Agenda Item 8.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position	The Zone supported the recommendation. However, the Zone also requests that WALGA remains open minded to further conversations on climate change.	WALGA has been working on an updated Draft Advocacy Position for consideration by Local Government. The Draft Advocacy Position, and accompanying Background Paper, will be released for a 12-week period to provide feedback. COMPLETE	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
18 August 2025 Zone Agenda Item 9.4.1 Local Government Elections – Four Year Terms, Two Yearly Election Cycle	That the Great Eastern Country Zone request that WALGA continues to advocate to the State Government to retain the current system of four-year terms with a two-year spill for Local Government elections	This matter formed part of a State Council Strategic Forum discussion in December. Sector consultation will be undertaken to inform a proposed advocacy position for consideration by State Council.	Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2051 kmartin@walga.asn.au
13 November 2025 Zone Agenda Item 16.2 Review of the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)	That the Great Eastern Country Zone: 1. Express its concern at the ongoing review of the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) without a timeline for completion or confirmation of the program's future structure or funding levels. 2. Request WALGA to advocate to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) for:	In November 2025, WALGA contacted the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) and was advised that funding rounds for 2025-26 had been paused while a review of the programs was undertaken. Further information on the impact on current and future rounds was requested but not provided. WALGA wrote to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and CITS in December 2025 and is awaiting a response.	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Public release of the CSRFF review's scope, commencement date and expected completion timeline; b. Confirmation of the program's continuation and funding levels beyond the review period, with increases to reflect inflation, demand, and regional construction costs; c. Commitment that CSRFF will remain a merit-based, transparent, and equitable program accessible to regional and metropolitan communities alike; and d. Urgent communication of future funding round dates to enable regional local governments and community clubs to plan projects effectively. <p>3. Request WALGA to highlight to the Minister that the lack of certainty around CSRFF is jeopardising the fruition of regional projects vital to community wellbeing, participation, and sustainability.</p>	<p>On 7 January 2026, CITS confirmed to a Local Government that the CSRFF and CNLP have been temporarily paused, including remaining 2025-26 funding allocations, to focus on delivering 2025 State Election commitments.</p> <p>WALGA is urgently seeking a meeting with the Director General of CITS and the Ministers Office to gain further clarity and information.</p>	
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13. WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

Zone Delegates are invited to read and consider the WALGA State Council Agenda, which has been provided as an attachment with the Agenda and can be found via the link [here](#).

The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation on any of the items, including the items for noting. The Zone comment will then be presented to the State Council for consideration at their meeting.

The State Council Agenda items requiring a decision of State Council are extracted for Zone consideration below.

13.1. AVIATION ADVOCACY POSITION

By Negar Nili, Policy Officer Transport and Roads

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Two new Advocacy Positions are proposed to strengthen WALGA's aviation advocacy framework and to inform WALGA's response to future inquiries and/or consultation relating to aviation.
- The aim of the new positions is to provide clearer and more contemporary guidance on:
 - the sustainability and ongoing viability of Local Government-owned regional airports; and
 - the affordability, reliability and accessibility of regional and remote air services for Western Australian communities.
- The proposed positions will assist WALGA to advocate more effectively on behalf of its Members by:
 - clearly articulating the essential service role of aviation in regional, rural and remote Western Australia;
 - strengthening WALGA's capacity to engage with State and Commonwealth governments on aviation policy and funding; and
 - supporting Local Governments facing regulatory, financial and service-delivery challenges associated with regional aviation.
- The development of the proposed Advocacy Positions has been informed by engagement with a sample of Local Governments, which highlighted shared concerns regarding high regional airfares, service reliability, capacity constraints and the role of aviation in supporting health access, emergency response and regional economic development.
- WALGA currently has two existing aviation Advocacy Positions; however, feedback from Local Governments clarified that the inclusion of additional, targeted policy positions is essential to better reflect contemporary challenges and to strengthen support for Councils.
- The proposed positions build on existing WALGA policy and provide a stronger basis for:
 - sector advocacy;
 - engagement with State Council and Zones to seek feedback; and
 - informing WALGA's potential submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Regional Airfares.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#) relating to Aviation are positions 5.9 Aviation and 5.9.1 Airfare Pricing in Regional Western Australia. The proposed new positions would be in addition to these existing positions.

5.9 Aviation

Position Statement *The Local Government sector supports the Department of Transport's State Aviation Strategy 2020, with more focus required on non-RPT airports to ensure it is representative of all of WA, more focus on general aviation development across WA and noting that the preferred ownership and governance of Local Governments is Council Controlled Organisations. The Local Government sector advocates for a clear position on the economic benefit of airports in regional areas to be included in the future state wide Airports State Planning Policy.*

5.9.1. Airfare Pricing in Regional Western Australia

Position Statement *The Local Government sector supports:*

- 1. An evidence-based assessment commissioned by the State Government to determine the degree to which market structure and other factors influence the cost of providing air services on each route, the pricing structure offered and the actual prices paid.*
- 2. The State Government providing oversight of airfares ensuring transparency, encouraging partnerships between Local Governments and airline carriers to grow the market and the provision of subsidies in some situations.*

BACKGROUND

Aviation plays a critical role in Western Australia, particularly for regional, rural, and remote communities, by providing essential connectivity for access to healthcare, education, employment, and social engagement. Reliable and affordable air services are also vital to regional economic development, workforce mobility, and community resilience, especially where alternative transport options are limited.

WALGA's advocacy on aviation is underpinned by its existing policy framework, which emphasises the need for safe, reliable, and cost-effective air services across regional and remote Western Australia. These policies highlight the critical role of aviation in enabling regional connectivity, supporting service delivery, and contributing to economic development, while recognising the operational and regulatory responsibilities faced by Local Government-managed airports.

WALGA has also contributed to State-level policy development including the State Aviation Strategy 2020. This strategy supports key initiatives including regulating certain routes to support a sustainable service, the Regional Airfare Zone Cap, Regional Airports Development Scheme and regulation of closed charters in some situations. It is anticipated that the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure will review and refresh the State Aviation Strategy in 2026-27.

At the national level, WALGA engaged in consultation processes leading to the Green and White Papers on Regional Transport and Aviation, representing Local Government perspectives and regional needs.

Two recently initiated inquiries — the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the determinants of regional airfares and the Senate (Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee) Inquiry into the State of Australia's Aviation Sector and its ability to deliver reliable and affordable services to rural, regional and remote communities — provide important opportunities to review and improve policies supporting regional aviation. Both inquiries have overlapping focus areas, including affordability, government intervention, and impacts on regional communities.

To inform its responses to both inquiries, WALGA has engaged with a sample of Local Governments to understand their experiences, challenges, and priorities for regional air services. This engagement has clarified the needs of Local Governments and communities, forming the basis for developing two proposed new Advocacy Positions to support Members and advocate for improved connectivity, affordability, and service sustainability across regional Western Australia.

NEW ADVOCACY POSITIONS

Regional Airports

Position Statement *WALGA supports the sustainable operation of Local Government owned regional airports and advocates for proportionate regulatory frameworks, targeted funding, and operational guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and resilient airport infrastructure and services.*

Background Regional airports are vital for connectivity, economic development, tourism, health access, and emergency response in Western Australia. Local Governments operating regional airports face increasing regulatory and operational pressures, including aviation security requirements, compliance obligations, ageing infrastructure, and limited staffing capacity. Many Council-owned airports cover day-to-day operating costs but lack sufficient capital to fund major infrastructure renewal or security upgrades. Airports that support both community access and FIFO activity can face additional funding constraints despite their ongoing role in servicing regional communities. These challenges highlight the need for regulatory settings and funding arrangements that reflect airport scale, risk profile, and regional operating conditions.

Regional and Remote Air Services

Position Statement *WALGA advocates for reliable, affordable, and equitable regional air services, calling for greater oversight of airline pricing practices, including transparent fare structures and equitable access to discounted and lower-cost fares, to mitigate the impacts of limited competition and dynamic pricing on regional residents, businesses, and essential travel. WALGA also promotes*

the continued viability of essential routes and recognises regional aviation as an essential service supporting community access, workforce mobility, and regional economic development.

Background

Regional communities rely on air services for essential travel, including access to health care, employment, education, and family connections, particularly where alternative transport options are limited. High airfares, limited availability of lower-cost seats, and opaque pricing structures reduce affordability for residents and businesses, even in markets with more than one airline. Regional air services are also vulnerable to sudden service reductions or route withdrawals, which can isolate communities and disrupt economic and social activity. These challenges underscore the importance of policy settings that support affordability, service continuity, and equitable access.

COMMENT

Engagement with a sample of Local Governments operating airports with Regular Passenger Transport (RPT) services highlighted operational, financial, and service delivery issues affecting both Council-owned airports and regional air services.

Key matters raised by Councils include:

- Airline pricing and equitable access: Complex, opaque, and highly variable fare structures; limited availability of lower-cost seats; competition does not always deliver affordable or equitable outcomes.
- Aviation security requirements: Standards designed for larger airports impose significant operational and financial burdens, with outdated equipment, regulatory ambiguities, and high upgrade costs creating compliance challenges.
- Funding and resource constraints: Many Councils operate airports with limited staff and capital; while day-to-day operating costs may be covered, major infrastructure renewal or expansion and security upgrades are often unfunded.
- Service continuity and reliability: Regional air services are fragile, with sudden route reductions or withdrawals impacting essential travel, community connectivity, and local economies.
- Coordination across governments and industry: Fragmented policy, regulatory, and funding arrangements limit Local Governments' ability to respond quickly to changes, highlighting the need for improved collaboration.
- Regional aviation as an essential service: Airports and air services underpin health access, emergency response, tourism, economic development, and social cohesion, demonstrating their broader value beyond transport alone.

Based on these issues and priorities identified through Local Government engagement, WALGA has developed the two proposed Advocacy Positions above on aviation – one focusing on regional airports and the other on regional and remote air services – to address the challenges of affordability, accessibility, operational sustainability, and service continuity for regional communities.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse two new Advocacy Positions on Aviation as follows:

1. Regional Airports
WALGA supports the sustainable operation of Local Government owned regional airports and advocates for proportionate regulatory frameworks, targeted funding, and operational guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and resilient airport infrastructure and services.
2. Regional and Remote Air Services
WALGA advocates for reliable, affordable, and equitable regional air services, calling for greater oversight of airline pricing practices, including transparent fare structures and equitable access to discounted and lower-cost fares, to mitigate the impacts of limited competition and dynamic pricing on regional residents, businesses, and essential travel. WALGA also promotes the continued viability of essential routes and recognises regional aviation as an essential service supporting community access, workforce mobility, and regional economic development.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Merredin

Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Great Eastern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 9.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

13.2. OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

Nil

14. EMERGING ISSUES

14.1. SECONDARY FREIGHT ROUTE

Shire of Nungarin

Zone delegates raised and discussed recent media reports that funding for the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network may not be included in the upcoming 2026-27 State Budget.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Westonia

Seconded: Shire of Cunderdin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone requests the Executive Committee to consider the current status of funding for the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network for 2026/27 and consider any potential advocacy action to take on behalf of the Zone.

CARRIED

14.2. STATUS OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS RELATING TO THE RATING OF MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES

Shire of Bruce Rock

Zone delegates raised and discussed the status of the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025*, which may be debated in the Legislative Council during an upcoming sitting week of State Parliament.

Zone delegates discussed issues associated with the potential repayment of rates, as well as definitional challenges where licences over land may intersect with different land tenure. The Zone discussed Local Governments' estimates of expected revenue impacts associated with the proposed legislative changes.

WALGA staff provided a general overview on the Association's advocacy in relation to the proposed legislation.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock

Seconded: Shire of Westonia

That the Great Eastern Country Zone supports WALGA's ongoing advocacy in relation to the rateability of land subject to a miscellaneous license, including to address any uncertainty related to definitions or proposed legislative amendments.

CARRIED

15. NEXT MEETING

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 24 March commencing at 8:00am, via MSTeams.

The next Great Eastern Country Zone meeting will be held on Thursday, 23 April commencing at 9:30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Cunderdin.

Date	Time	Host Council
Thursday, 23 April	9:30 am	Shire of Cunderdin
Thursday, 11 June*	TBC	Perth/MSTeams
Thursday, 13 August	9:30 am	Shire of Bruce Rock
Thursday, 12 November	9:30 am	Shire of Dowerin

The June date is being planned around proposed delegation engagements.

16. CLOSURE

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 12:50pm.