

Western Councillor



WALGA

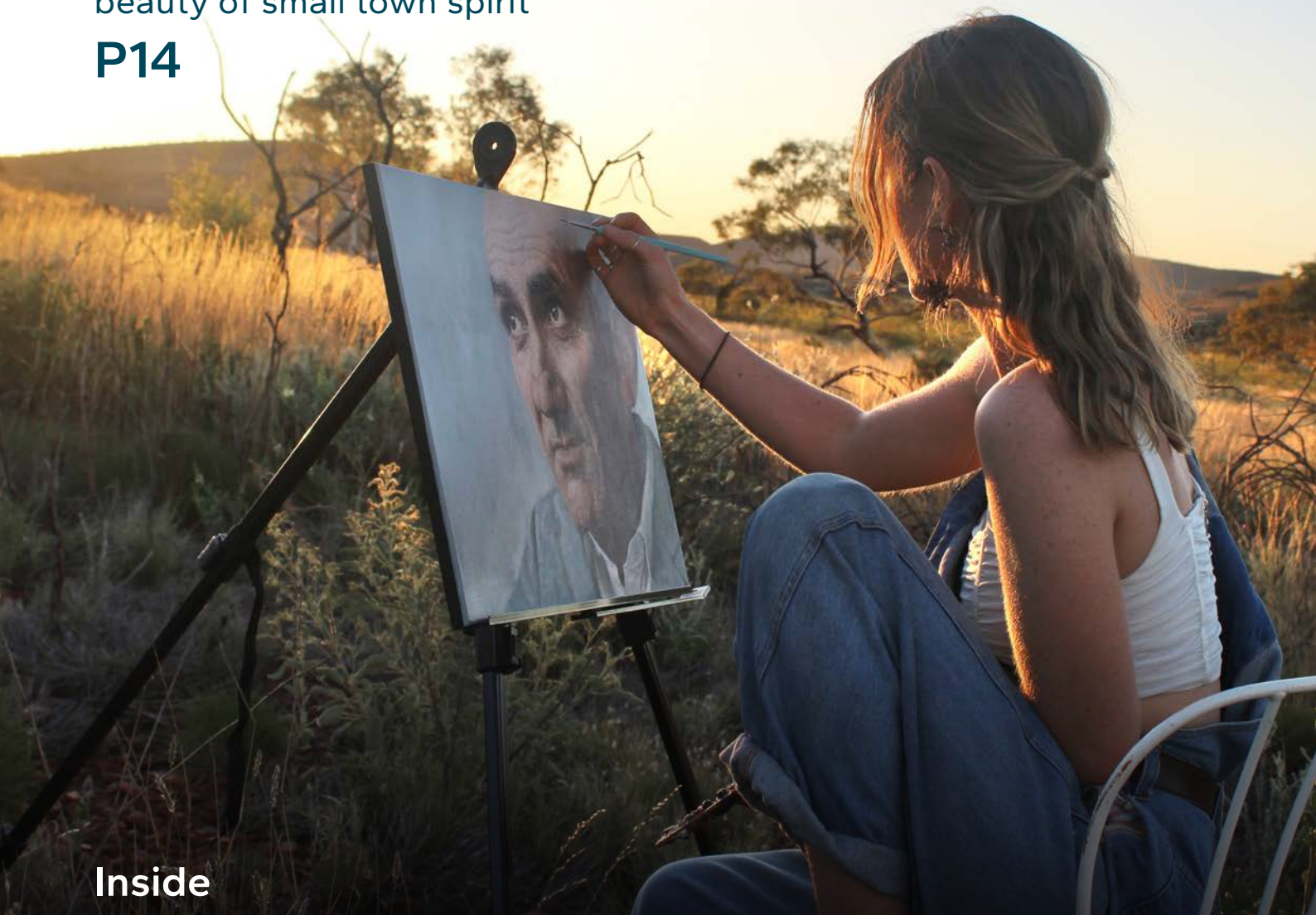
Influence. Support. Expertise.

Issue 130 August 2024

From the Pilbara to Perth

Tom Price artist captures the
beauty of small town spirit

P14



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**WALGA's 2025
State Election Edition**

The West at its Best.

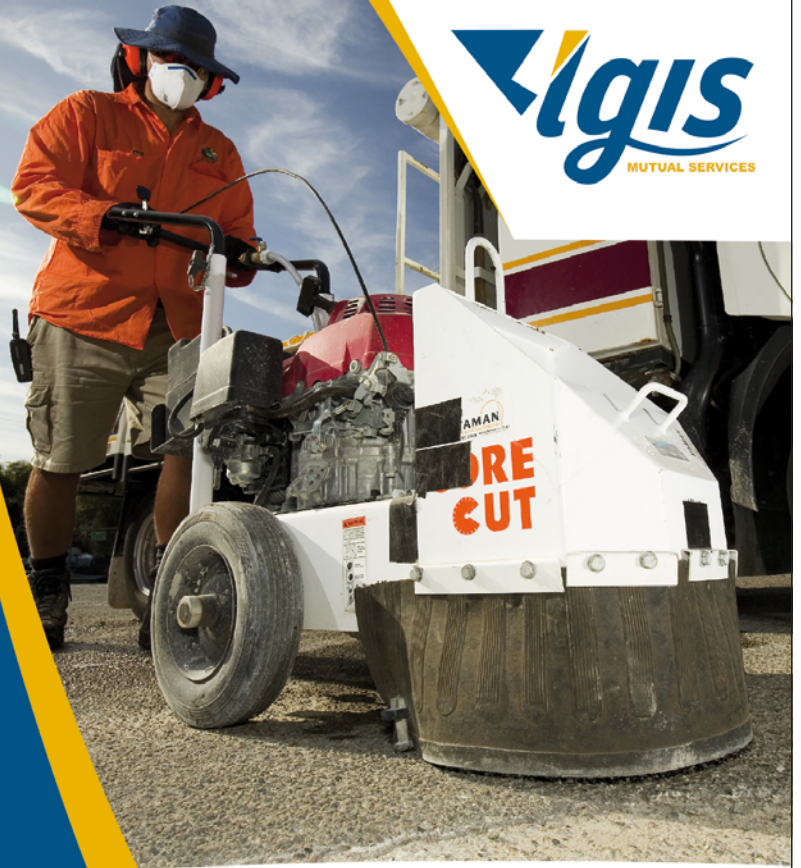
Local governments working together.

At LGIS, protecting our local government members is what we do.

We make sure our members have the right cover to suit their needs. If disaster strikes, our local government specialists help get them, and their community, back on their feet as soon as possible.

It's our members who make Western Australia such a great place to live – their roads get us around, we meet in their libraries and recreation centres, they manage our waste, and provide connection for the elderly. Every day they provide the countless services and support which makes us a community.

We believe that's worth protecting.



To find out how you can get the most out of your LGIS membership, visit lgiswa.com.au or call 9483 8888.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Peer Support Team

A practical way to provide mediation and conciliation support to Local Governments in Western Australia.

The Peer Support Team is an initiative between the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Professionals WA.

The team was formed to provide conciliation, negotiation and mediation support to Local Governments that identified issues of relationship conflict between Councillors, or between Councillors and senior staff.

The key objective is to assist Local Governments to resolve these issues

of conflict and reduce the need for formal investigations or enquiries.

The team will meet with the affected Councillors and staff individually, as well as in a group setting, allowing all parties to freely express their views in a neutral environment. The team will then assist the Local Government to develop outcomes and a path forward that is suitable for all involved.

So, to head off possible conflict or for the best resolution in situations where it already exists, call Nick Sloan or Candy Choo on the numbers below.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PEER SUPPORT TEAM HOTLINE NUMBERS

Nick Sloan
CEO
WALGA
Tel 9213 2025

Candy Choo
CEO
LG Professionals WA
Tel 9271 1136



WALGA

UPSKILL WITH WALGA TRAINING

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO Code 51992), WALGA offers comprehensive training solutions for Councils, Elected Members and Local Government officers.

Our approachable team is here to help you with booking requests, on-site training, eLearning quotes, and to answer any questions you might have about your effective learning journey.

Scan the QR code to view our full range of Local Government courses



WALGA - Your Essential Resource for Elected Member and Officer Training

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Welcome to Issue 130 of *Western Councillor*
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Strong advocacy by WALGA informed my decision to ensure the Inspector is established as a statutory officer appointed by the Governor.



From the Minister

Seven things to know about the latest Local Government reforms

It has been a busy year since being appointed Minister for Local Government in December 2023, a position I am very proud to hold.

From attending Zone Meetings to participating in the WALGA People & Culture Seminar; from celebrating excellence at the Local Government Awards to meeting with stakeholders, including WALGA, ALGA, LG Pro; and continuing my State-wide tour of Councils. It's been an important and illuminating time.

It's also been a time of critical consequence as these activities and conversations have heavily informed the latest reforms to the *Local Government Amendment Bill 2024*, which I introduced to Parliament last month.

These once-in-a-generation reforms are seminal; they will reshape Local Government, helping ensure better transparency, accountability, sustainability, and efficiency throughout the sector.

While nothing as significant as these reforms will ever be received without some level of controversy, these reforms respond to a range of advocacy positions from the sector, and have received substantial public support.

Here are some of the key aspects of these transformative reforms:

1. Local Government Inspector and their team of Monitors: backed by the Cook Labor Government's \$702,000 State Budget 2024-25 commitment for early planning works, the Local Government Inspector will handle complaints, manage investigations and coordinate the resolution of problems within Local Governments. Strong advocacy by WALGA informed my decision to ensure the Inspector is established as a statutory officer appointed by the Governor. Early intervention will be fundamental to the work of the Inspectorate, helping resolve issues before they escalate into dysfunction. That is a key focus of the Inspector's team of **Monitors**, who can provide guidance and expertise to Local Governments experiencing challenges or requiring extra supports.

2. Adjudicators replace Standards Panel: the replacement of the Local Government Standards Panel with individual Adjudicators aims to improve the resolution of conduct breach complaints. Adjudicators, who must all be legal practitioners, will have the power to hand out more significant penalties, which can be appealed

to the State Administrative Tribunal. Trivial complaints will be dismissed at a much earlier stage.

- 3. Superannuation:** the Bill will allow Council Members to receive superannuation payments – in addition to their regular fees. A regulation-making power will enable councillor Superannuation to be made mandatory for specified councils (e.g. bands 1 and 2). Individual councillors will be able to opt-out.
- 4. Transparent rates:** a new Rates and Revenue Policy requirement will facilitate better financial planning and increase transparency for ratepayers. Projected changes in rates will have to be updated and published annually.
- 5. Clarifying responsibilities:** clearer definitions of the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Mayors and Presidents, Council Members and Chief Executive Officers will provide greater clarity between the distinction of strategic and operational functions in Local Governments. Local Governments will also be able to share CEOs and senior employees, which will be particularly beneficial and cost-effective for our smaller regional councils.
- 6. Open and Transparent Council meetings:** revised provisions for closing Council meetings bolster the principle that meetings must be generally open; the Bill narrows the discretionary scope to close a meeting and introduces the requirement to minute the reasons why a meeting has closed.
- 7. Closing the door on unreasonable complaints:** going forward, Local Government CEOs can decide not to respond to complaints that are vexatious, misconceived or frivolous.

These important legislative reforms will create mechanisms for improved oversight and early intervention. They will create a stronger local democracy for all Western Australians.

Thank you to WALGA for working collaboratively with the WA Government on these new reforms - your expertise and insight are appreciated.

If you'd like to be kept informed on these important changes, I encourage you to subscribe to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' LG Alerts.

Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA
Minister for Local Government; Youth;
Minister Assisting the Minister for Training
and Workforce Development



From the WALGA President

WALGA continues to influence Government to deliver the best outcomes for our communities and support our Members through advocacy, initiatives and solutions.

The months of July and August were extremely busy for the Local Government sector.

From 2 to 4 July, WALGA joined 134 WA delegates from 45 Local Governments at the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) in Canberra.

I was proud to support and advocate on behalf of our 139 Member Local Governments in Canberra and advocate in key areas including climate resilience, emergency management, connected communities, infrastructure, and the future of Local Government.

In August, WALGA proudly hosted the Local Government Awards at the prestigious Winthrop Hall at the University of Western Australia. This year marked a significant milestone as the Awards evolved into a stand-alone event, providing a fitting backdrop for recipients to celebrate their accomplishments alongside their families, colleagues, nominators, and collaborators who have supported them throughout their Local Government journey.

The evening was a testament to the strength of our community, with Local Governments coming together to honour and thank these remarkable individuals for their invaluable contributions. The atmosphere was electric, filled with admiration and gratitude, as the sector's finest were recognised for their dedication and impact.

In line with WALGA's unwavering commitment to promoting excellence within the sector, I am pleased to share that the Awards will expand in 2025 to spotlight outstanding achievements at an organisational level, further enhancing the celebration of leadership and innovation in Local Government.

I am proud to share that since the last *Western Councillor*, WALGA's continued advocacy has seen sector wins and positive progression in a number of key areas.

After undertaking long term advocacy on behalf of regional Councils and their communities to increase PATS, WALGA recently welcomed the announcement that the State Government is increasing the fuel subsidy rate.

While we welcome the increase to the PATS fuel subsidy, we will continue to push for the Scheme to be reviewed annually

so that travel and accommodation costs increase in-line with the Consumer Price Index.

After extensive advocacy efforts over a number of years, WALGA also welcomed the great result of long overdue changes to the Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS) reducing the regulatory burden on Local Government.

The changes to the MRS, which has not been altered since 1963, were tabled in Parliament.

In most instances, these reforms will mean development proposals no longer need to seek approval under MRS. It will also reduce double handling and red tape for both Local Governments and the public.

WALGA and its Members also shared expertise and insight to assist the State Government in the latest reforms to the *Local Government Amendment Bill 2024*, which was recently introduced to Parliament.

In July, the Local Government House Trust ('The House Trust'), which has provided building accommodation to WALGA and its predecessors since 1980, became 100% owners of ONE70 (170) Railway Parade.

Taking full ownership of ONE70 allows WALGA to plan for the future. Ownership provides the stability and capital to focus on increasing and enhancing our service offerings, so that we can continue to advocate, support and provide expertise to our valued Member Councils and the sector well into the future.

Looking forward, WALGA's State Election campaign is well underway with a State Election Priorities document prepared for key stakeholders, dedicated microsite built, and public media campaign planned to support our advocacy and increase awareness in the run up to the election.

WALGA will share assets that each Local Government can personalise to fit their local challenges and priorities, as well as liaise with Councils to capture stories that can support each key advocacy area.

To further support this work, WALGA has prepared a comprehensive political engagement strategy to be implemented in the lead up to the 2025 Election. The objectives of the strategy are:

- 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 Local Government sector.

I encourage you to read the State Election Priorities overview in this edition of the *Western Councillor* and see how the Local Government stories throughout link to our key priority areas.

I look forward to coming together at WALGA's Local Government Convention as we join the innovation ecosystem and discuss these priorities, evoke new ideas, heighten passion for communities, and facilitate connections for ongoing skills and ideas sharing within the Local Government sector.

As we look forward to the next quarter, I am inspired by the collective dedication of our staff, Members, and sector as we continue to drive the best outcomes for our communities. In the lead-up to the election, we will continue to present initiatives and solutions for the incoming government to address the challenges facing our State. Together, we will continue to advocate to realise our vision of a sustainable, inclusive and resilient Western Australia.

Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

What would your council do if there was a cyber-attack?

by James Sheridan CEO, LGIS



The global software crisis, in August this year, brought into stark relief for governments and boards across the world how vulnerable society and organisations are to a cyber-incident.

Thankfully the software outage was not the result of a malicious threat actor, but it has made many organisations

reevaluate their cyber security plans. They've asked, 'were we prepared?', 'what would we have done if it was a cyber-attack?' And importantly for Local Government, 'what does our community expect of us?'

Cyber security – it's a national concern

Since 2019, cyber security has consistently ranked as the second highest concern for Local Government leaders in the JLT Public Sector Risk Report, and it did so again this year. From a WA perspective the threat is also ranked at number two behind assets and infrastructure.

This ranking is partly due to the ever-evolving cyber risk landscape and the difficulty Local Government faces in proactively mitigating the impact of a major cyber event. There is ongoing concern about potential reputational damage and managing community expectations in the event of a significant cyber incident that may compromise private information.

WA Local Government's cyber focus

The Office of the Auditor General has regularly shown the sectors high levels of cyber vulnerability. The fifth report following consecutive audits found 473 control weakness to 76 entities. The majority of weaknesses were in categories that increase information and cyber security risks.

Local Government leaders across the state know the challenges that the sector faces in lifting capacity and capability to manage cyber threats. It's made even more complex considering the variety of organisations, the size, resources and budget to be able to invest in mitigation strategies.

LGIS knows the challenges and has assisted a number of members when they've had a cyber-incident. Fortunately, the number of incidents for the sector thus far has been low and losses relatively contained. They've also predominately been the result of human error rather than an attack. That said we know the sector is vulnerable, it provides vital community services and collects high value personal information making Local Government an appealing target.

Cyber security is a challenge that can't be ignored. It is incumbent upon councils and executives to turn their mind to the interconnected risks of cyber threat and business continuity.

What's the role of elected members?

Councillors play an important strategic role in ensuring that their Local Government has taken appropriate measures to mitigate cyber risks and given due consideration to how the organisation will respond if there is a cyber-attack. From a risk perspective councillors have a responsibility to:

- Provide support to the Local Government's administration.
- Consider the level of risk associated with cyber security and agree on risk appetite.
- Ensure that there is an IT disaster recovery plan and cyber incident response plan.

Cyber risk resources to uplift sector capacity

In early August LGIS released two new, practical resources to support members in improving their cyber security maturity. The first resource provides a step-by-step guide to implement the Australian Signals Directorate's Essential Eight controls. Members can work towards their desired level of maturity for each control to improve their overall security position.

The second resource has a template and guide to develop and implement a cyber incident response plan. Members are encouraged to consider questions such as 'who is the spokesperson if there's a cyber-incident and personal information is stolen?' and 'will we pay a ransom?'

Over the coming months LGIS' cyber security experts will be out on the road running in-person workshops to explore both guides and support members in developing their cyber incident response plan.

If you have any questions on our cyber resources or would like to discuss your Local Government's issues, please contact me on 9483 8886 or talk to your LGIS account manager.

The West at its Best.

WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities

To protect what we value, ensure continuity of what's working and change what isn't. We want to see the West at its Best.

State pride runs strong among West Australians. We embrace our isolation, take pride in our rich resources and maximise our downtime in our blessed natural environment.

However, whilst Western Australians know deep down that WA is a state like no other, the cost of living crisis, growing number of natural disasters, more extreme weather events, shifting demographic profile and desire to transition to a low carbon economy are putting pressure on families and vulnerable members of the community and ebbing away at our wellbeing.

The 2025 election presents an opportunity for the incoming Government to address the challenges facing Western Australia both now and into the future.

The WALGA 2025 State Election Priorities document presents initiatives and solutions to keep the state running at its best. To protect what we value, ensure continuity of what's working and change what isn't.

We want to see the West at its Best. A state where families are financially secure, neighbourhoods are abundant with trees, roads are safe to drive on, public amenities are contemporary and accessible for all and we thrive in a low-carbon environment.

Through the document WALGA presents 'The West at its Best' where:

- Our **communities are safeguarded against the impacts of climate change**, including hotter days, extreme weather events and rising sea-levels.
- We are **prepared and resilient in the face of the growing number of natural disasters** and extreme weather events, with comprehensive plans and resources in place to protect lives and property.

- Communities thrive within a **low-carbon environment**; powered by clean energy sources that drive sustainable living and economic prosperity. We embrace innovative technologies and energy-efficient infrastructure, while committing to reducing carbon emissions.
- Our **infrastructure** supports safe access to jobs, education, health services, recreation and other services as well as enabling a vibrant, internationally competitive business sector to thrive.
- **Diversity, equity, and accessibility** are embedded in all aspects of community life, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, circumstance or location, feels valued and has equal opportunities to fully participate and thrive in the community. Essential services and infrastructure are accessible to all residents, regardless of where they live.
- **Local Governments have the resources and flexibility** needed to fulfil their community responsibilities without unnecessary regulatory barriers. The important role of Local Government in the planning system is enhanced.

WALGA's 2025 Election Policy Platform outlines essential initiatives identified by Local Governments and their communities to achieve these goals. These initiatives aim to enhance community well-being and foster economic prosperity, aligning with our collective aspirations for a better future.

WALGA welcomes the opportunity to work with the next State Government to realise the vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Western Australia.

For more information about WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities, visit thewestatitsbest.walga.asn.au



Paul Molony, the City of Melville's "FOGO King"

Leading the charge with sustainability

The King of FOGO is still cleaning up.

Sitting on the shores of the Swan River, home to over 102,000 residents, the City of Melville team is living and breathing their vision of "working together, to achieve community wellbeing, for today and tomorrow."

Since the rollout of the FOGO (Food Organics, Garden Organics) three-bin waste recycling system in 2019, residents in the City of Melville have managed an average recovery rate from kerbside bins of over 65%, diverting an impressive 80,872 tonnes of organic waste from landfill. We recently spoke with the City of Melville's Resource Recovery and Fleet Services Manager, Paul Molony, affectionately known as "FOGO King", about their FOGO journey, sharing the long-term sustainability vision of the City, and some great advice for other Local Councils who want to heighten their sustainability goals.

With the previous resource and recovery system coming to an end, and WA generating the highest volume of waste per capital with some of the lowest rates of resource recovery, something had to change. Bin and compositional audits were conducted, finding that over 50% of general waste bins contained food or garden organics, which the majority of that going to landfill, creating some harmful gasses contributing to global warming.

The City of Melville, Town of East Fremantle, City of Fremantle and their Regional Council came together, and a decision was made to get organic waste out of the system and to trial the FOGO recycling system across five locations and 7,000

households in the City of Melville. Within a year there was an amazing recovery rate with very minimal contamination, which set the wheels in motion to implement the first metropolitan three-bin FOGO system.

Flash forward to 2024 and there's now over 42,000 households utilising the FOGO system. The City of Melville is recovering over 80,000 tonnes of organic waste to date [or] around 19,000 tonnes per year, which is recycled and made into a premium compost that is used across parks and gardens to feed trees and shrubs. Over 3,300 bags of FOGO compost were used during the annual tree planting programs and the compost is even available for sale at a number of retailers.

But what is a bigger success story than the implementation of FOGO and the great environmental outcomes, is the efforts and dedication of the people working behind the scenes who went above and beyond to help the community.

"Moving to a three-bin system was quite a big behavioural shift for some residents. Getting people to do things differently was tricky and not without its challenges," said Paul.

But thanks to Melville's collaborative efforts and their amazing customer-centric approach, they really educated people and helped them change their recycling habits, which resulted in huge sustainability wins across the community.

“ Sustainability is a lifestyle, not a journey. I’m blessed with a good team here at the City of Melville, who love what they do, and it’s also the great residents that really make this all work. ”

Paul Molony, Manager Resource Recovery and Fleet Services, City of Melville (FOGO King)

The team went above and beyond to help support their customers. Over evenings and weekends they held residential information and education sessions in libraries and shopping centres. They had a dedicated hotline with subject matter experts on hand to answer the weird and wonderful queries that popped up, such as a concerned hairdresser checking which bin to put human hair in! They developed bigger 35 litre compostable liners for kitchen bins and caddies, when people identified the initial liners were far too small for their kitchens. They even offered upgrades of recycling and red bins, and for those who were against having FOGO bins on their bench in hot weather or with minimal space, the solution was a caddy that could be hooked on a door.

They made time to go through customers' weekly shopping lists to help them identify ways they could cut back on unnecessary packaging and waste. Paul even road tested new compostable doggie waste bags (the ones you get in parks) to make sure they were durable, and no resident was left with dog faeces on their hands! They even attended local community events, with Paul dressing up as 'FOGO Fairy' complete with a tutu, wings and a wand standing at the bins and educating people on how to separate their waste accordingly. That's just the tip of the customer service iceberg!

When asked if Paul would do it all again, his answer was a definite yes! His advice to other councils:

“Hurry up, start it! Understand you’re about to embark on a behaviour change that will upset some people, but you’ll be able to turn 99% of people around. It does cost money, but resource recovery has never been cheap, and there are State and other Local Government grants available. There are also lots of resources, information and educational programs already available, so you don’t need to start from scratch.”



City of Melville “FOGO fairies” at a community event

Building on the success of FOGO, the City of Melville remains very committed to resource recovery and long-term sustainability goals.

“The FOGO system aligns with the action the City is taking to address climate change. We’re committed to becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and achieving net zero carbon emissions across our City by 2050,” said Mayor Katy Mair.

City of Melville staff Horticulturalist Team Leader Vince Papalia and Arborist Warren Fleay with one of the 3,300 bags of FOGO compost



From little things, community hubs grow



Hank's Corner at dawn

Constructed in 1918, the building on Scarborough Beach Road in North Perth has transformed from an old school deli to a motorbike repair shop, and is now a thriving café which is loved by locals and visitors alike

Hanks Corner owner, Henry Bristow had a vision to provide a comfortable, friendly space for the community to enjoy and spend time in, while also staying true to the building roots and embracing local history. That is most certainly something Henry has achieved since opening in July 2022. Sustainability is also at the forefront of the café and is seen through their reusable coffee mugs and takeaway coffee cup library.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Hank's Corner, the City of Vincent, Water Corporation, and The Forever Project, there has been a recent upgrade of the outdoor space at Hanks including the addition of a huge pergola using reclaimed native timbers, more seating and a waterwise garden with educational signage.

The project was co-funded by owner Henry Bristow and the City of Vincent's Business Enhancement Grant which supports business and property owners to make small-scale incremental improvements that enhance the street appeal, presentation and functionality of its neighbourhoods and town centres.

The pergola area was approved as a parklet through the City of Vincent's Vibrant Public Spaces Policy meaning this part of the street has been repurposed into a public space for people to sit under shade and around greenery. This program supports social interaction and community engagement for everyone to enjoy; therefore, access to the area is not restricted by business hours.

On Sunday 30 June, the community gathered at Hank's Corner for the launch day. People enjoyed delicious coffee and food provided by Hank's Corner while also learning from Water Corporation's sustainability expert, Chris Ferreira on how they can create their own waterwise spaces at home.

City of Vincent Mayor Alison Xamon, and John Carey MLA, Minister for Planning, Lands, Housing and Homelessness, attended the launch day as locals themselves, with Mayor Xamon providing a few words on the process that goes into creating an eco-placemaking project like Hank's Corner.

"Small urban public spaces are great for spontaneous social interactions, quick catch ups and people who want to enjoy some peace and quiet. Our larger public spaces and parks are generally suited for bigger gatherings, community events and recreation."

The Forever Project, passionate about sustainable places, spearheaded this project. They applied eco-placemaking principles to transform Hank's Corner into an integrated community space. Waterwise practices were at the heart of the design, ensuring efficient water use and resilience for years to come. Henry is also committed to spreading the waterwise message by having educational signage and information throughout the garden and café.

"I am thrilled with how we've transformed a quiet outside area into a beautiful, vibrant location for residents and visitors to come together and enjoy as a community space. I'm really looking forward to seeing how everything grows and establishes itself in the coming years," said Henry.

"Hanks Corner is a local institution in North Perth and is popular among residents, cyclists and people commuting to work. It is a great new outdoor space but one of the things I also really like is that it has created a little pocket of local habitat. They have done such a great job of showcasing a sustainable garden and upcycling of materials," said Mayor Alison Xamon.

Hank's Corner is located at 64A Scarborough Beach Road, North Perth. While you're there checking out the new vibrant outdoor space, we recommend you also try Henry's traditional Welsh Rarebit!

City of Vincent Mayor Alison Xamon with Hank's Corner owner Henry Bristow



The West at its Best.

MEETING GROWING DEMAND FOR SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES



Above: some of the winners at this year's Parks and Leisure Australia Awards; Sports and Recreation Minister, Hon. David Templeman
Credit: Parks & Leisure Australia (WA)

Local Governments shine at 2024 PLA (WA) Awards

Held on Thursday, 20 June at the Wembley Golf Course, this year's Parks and Leisure Australia Awards (WA) showcased 41 finalists in 11 different categories.

Local Government Councils made up 33 of the 41 finalists, either as facilities, programs or as individuals.

Sports and Recreation Minister Hon. David Templeman MLA presented the Awards and gave a heartfelt speech on the people who work in the industry.

"When I was growing up in Northam, the public swimming pool was an incredibly important place to me and my family.

"My brother, sister and I spent countless hours at the Northam Pool and I used to dread hearing over the pool PA, the Pool Manager Mr Fettes, saying, 'Templeman, get out of the pool' at closing time.

"Pools, parks, foreshores: these open spaces become very important to families who share memories of their visits, often for generations.

"I want people who design, build and work in these places to know how important their work is. They make our cities and towns better places to live."

“ These open spaces become very important to families who share memories of their visits, often for generations. ”

Sports and Recreation Minister Hon. David Templeman MLA

Winners

Community Based Initiative of the Year

Sponsored by Woodlands
Winner: City of Stirling,
Launching the WA Tree Festival

Community Facility of the Year
Sponsored by Epcad
Winner: City of Joondalup,
Craigie Leisure Centre Refurbishment

Commendation: City of Rockingham,
Baldivis Sports Complex

Best Use of Technology
Sponsored by Doggie Dummies
Winner: City of Cockburn & SpacetoCo - **Growing Utilisation of Community Facilities Whilst Reducing Administration**

Best Regional/Rural Industry Contribution Award

Sponsored by Tredwell
Winner: **Waroona Community Precinct** - Epcad

Environmental Stewardship of the Year Award

Sponsored by Green by Nature
Winner: City of Gosnells - **Restoration in the Canning & Southern River Confluence**

Strategic and Master Planning Award

Sponsored by Development WA
Winner: City of Stirling - **Community Infrastructure Plan 2023-2033**

Park of the Year

Sponsored by Active Discovery
Winner: **The Oval, Subi East** - Landscape Elements

Commendation: **Alkimos Beach Foreshore & Bathers Park** - **Emerge Associates**

Emerging Leader of the Year

Sponsored by Landscape Elements
Winner: **Kylie Van Uden** - City of Gosnells

Playspace Award (Under \$500,000)

Sponsored by Plan E
Winner: City of Kwinana - **Calista Bike Skills Track**

(Over \$500,000)

Sponsored by Art+ Play
Winner: City of Albany - **Albany Youth Challenge Park**

Volunteer of the Year

Sponsored by Landscape Elements
Winner: **Wayne Stuart**



Kylie Van Uden, Western Australian Rodeo Queen 2024. Credit: Lyla Creative

Horticulturalist Rodeo Queen a leader in the field

Kylie Van Uden has worked in 'Parks' for twelve years. She started as an Apprentice Horticulturalist when she was 17 at the City of Gosnells. Now she is the Parks and Environmental Technical Officer and interviews and mentors the new apprentices.

Kylie recently won the David Aldous Emerging Leader Award at the Parks and Leisure Australia (WA) Awards of Excellence, an award that recognises an emerging professional who has made a significant contribution to the parks and leisure industry.

She was also recently crowned the Western Australian 2024 Rodeo Queen.

She is now 30 years of age and is a bit of a star, on and off the paddock.

Kylie describes the PLA award as a surreal but proud moment.

"Having started at such a young age, from when I was an apprentice to where I am now, how hard I've had to work, it feels like the Award means a chapter has closed.

"I'm a dedicated worker, I work hard. And if I want something, I will always make sure that I work hard to go get that. And the majority of the time I do get where I want to go."

Kylie has had good support from the City of Gosnells and has a good crew around her.

"I have had the backing of the City and my people that I have here that have supported me from the beginning. You know, I think I'm very lucky in that sense, of having such wonderful people around me that are willing to help and encourage me."

Gosnells Mayor Teresa Lynes speaks highly of Kylie.

"Kylie's got a really awesome outlook on life, and I think she's willing to put her hand up for things that elevate her, to elevate her learning as well. I think she's a great role model for other young people in the industry."

Like any Local Government, the City of Gosnells looks to invest in people like Kylie, whether they are starting out or come to an interview with experience.

Kylie Van Uden with City of Gosnells Mayor Teresa Lynes



Cr Lynes echoed Kylie Van Uden's thoughts about the culture at Gosnells. "That's fantastic that she's happy with the culture at the city. Good culture in your workforce is something as a Mayor that you always want to have, because obviously that leads to less turnover. So you've got a continuing service, and people want to come to work at the City of Gosnells.

"I think good culture just comes from respecting one another, valuing the opinions of others and empowering and allowing people to be heard and to express initiatives. The best thing is when people see their initiatives come to fruition.

"We try to lead by example. The Council is quite cohesive – I think when you've got a council that's working well together, that does reflect down the line, it sets the tone for the staff as well."

As a horticulturalist-turned-office-worker, Kylie still hankers for the great outdoors.

"I'm a gardener, I love plants – you should see my house. As a hands-on person, I never thought that I would work in the office. But I think it's been an advantage, working outside and then bringing the knowledge inside. It's been wonderful."

And the Rodeo Queen thing..?

"I've been riding horses since I was three, and doing endurance riding for 15 or 16 years. One of my friends asked me if I wanted to ride in the Onslow Rodeo last year, and then I applied to be Rodeo Queen and got it.

"I haven't fallen off or broken anything, touch wood. The Gosnells crew were a bit gobsmacked when I became Rodeo Queen but they have been really supportive.

"I'm very lucky. You know, a lot of these people have known me since the age of 17. They've watched me grow up.



Kylie being presented with her PLA Award

They've watched me become a mum. They watch me raising my child, working full time and now being the Rodeo Queen."

Does Kylie have any advice for young women making their way in Local Government?

"Think big things, just believe in yourself, stand your ground. And if you have something – if you have an idea, or you want someone to know something – say it, it may be heard."

Kylie started as an Apprentice Horticulturalist at the City of Gosnells when she was 17



“

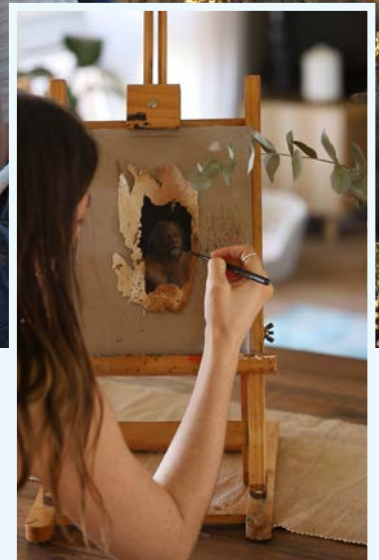
**I'm a gardener,
I love plants –
you should
see my house**

”

Kylie Van Uden
Parks and
Environmental
Technical Officer,
City of Gosnells



Above: The Shire of Ashburton's Jenna Pickering and her artwork of musician Paul Kelly
Right: Follow Jenna's art journey with 45k others via @jennapickering.art on Instagram



Pickering's portraiture brings Pilbara to Perth

Artist and Local Government staffer Jenna Pickering captures the beauty of small town spirit in this year's Lester Prize.

For Jenna Pickering, a Community Development Officer at the Shire of Ashburton who calls the remote mining town of Tom Price home, portraiture is more than just an art form – it's a powerful means of storytelling.

Jenna's dedication and unique perspective led to her being named Best Overall Winner at the Cossack Art Awards in 2023 and walk away with both the \$20,000 Tony Fini Foundation and \$5,000 Ashurst Emerging Artist awards at this year's prestigious Lester Prize.

The Lester Prize, which has grown from a local award into a national competition with over 900 entries, is renowned for showcasing the best of Australian portraiture. Yet for artists like Jenna, it represents much more than an accolade – it's an opportunity to share the untold stories of her community with a wider audience.

Jenna's artwork 'Together as one' is an oil on paperbark (sourced from her front yard) portrait of local resident and Yinhawangka Elder Brendon Cook.

"The Lester Prize is absolutely a huge deal because the first time I got in I remember thinking that this was it. This is how I feel like an actual artist," says Jenna.

Living in the Pilbara, Jenna is surrounded by landscape and people that are rich with history and character. "The Pilbara is a treasure trove for portraiture," she says.

"You see the most incredible faces, each one telling a story of deep connection to the land and the community."

Jenna's role as a Community Development Officer in Tom Price for the last four years sees her running programs and large-scale events that allow her to interact with each and every resident of this close-knit community of under 4,000 people.

"Luckily enough, throwing events is actually how I met Brendon in the first place. He was doing a Welcome at one of our NAIDOC events and I saw him on stage, and I was like, 'I'm going to paint him, I'm going to find out how to paint him.'"



Jenna's love for community, arts and music is reflected in her work

"I've painted Ian Moss, Paul Kelly, Phil Collins – very musician-heavy because I think music is just incredible.

"But painting people that I actually know is so rewarding. It's a warm and fuzzy feeling sharing the stories of the locals – the hidden gems, I guess."

"When my art is recognised everyone in town is excited for me, but they are excited for the people in the painting as well. It's so overwhelming, you don't think that people care but our little community is amazing, we're just a really big family."

Executive Director of The Lester Prize Shannon Yujinovich is proud of the Prize's WA roots and work to provide opportunities to finalists and artists.

Jenna's art has given her the chance to meet music legends like 1980s British pop singer Phil Collins (right)



Our little community is amazing, we're just a really big family... when my art is recognised everyone in town is excited for me, but they are excited for the people in the painting as well.



Jenna Pickering
Community Development Officer,
Shire of Ashburton

"Portraiture genuinely is a deeply personal medium, and it can depict many things, place being one of them. I think place is important in Jenna's work and work coming from the regions. We see a lot of regional entries and there's a strong sense of place with those."

"About 80% of our main awards come from Western Australia and we're very proud of that," said Yujinovich.

"We want to continue to grow our impact on not just artists themselves but on the wider community and make art very accessible to Western Australians across the State."

The Lester Prize connects the Local Government sector with the City of Perth acting as a presentation partner and working with Local Governments to encourage their residents to view the exhibition.

"During our exhibition season, we work with Local Governments to provide free bus tours and free entry for community members from beyond the metro area so they can come and see The Lester Prize.

"We recently collaborated with the Victoria Park Community Centre, and they developed the Victoria Park portraiture prize. So, we employed our previous art finalists, who gave a number of workshops to the community to encourage locals to enter.

"That's as important to us as the art competition itself."

Jenna's love for community, arts and music is reflected in her work with the Shire of Ashburton's Community Development Team, who collaborate with businesses across the Shire's four towns to deliver programs and events to residents.

Over the last three years the Shire has welcomed Australian artists Birds of Tokyo, Thirsty Merc, Eskimo Joe, The Choir Boys, Ian Moss and more, and in 2024 hosted the first Ashburton Art Awards.

"I love painting and art but also I think music in itself and performances are so heavily underrated because they bring people together in a space that's safe and open and people are just so happy to be with each other," Jenna says.



Above left: Jenna (seen here with former City of Karratha Mayor Peter Long) took the title of Best Overall Winner at the Cossack Art Awards in 2023

Above right: Jenna and coworker Jaimie Bravington (left) are part of the Shire of Ashburton's Tom Price team

WALGA's State Election Priorities call for the establishment of a \$30 million per annum Community Arts and Cultural Facilities Fund to support the development and enhancement of arts and cultural infrastructure across WA, which would assist regional Local Governments and Officers such as Jenna in hosting large scale events.

"We have one main space in Tom Price that we use for live music and some performers need adequate lighting and adequate space on a stage and we just can't tick those boxes for some of the touring artists that we could get here.

"Living in the Pilbara once it hits that hot season, events outside aren't really an option either."

Access to arts and culture fosters social cohesion, mental well-being, and education while also driving economic outcomes through tourism and generating activity.

As for Jenna's next project?

"Currently I'm trying to do a portrait on a feather and it's tiny. My thumbnail is about the size of the face, and I just love the challenge."

The Lester Prize exhibition is open to the public until Sunday, 17 November 2024 at the WA Museum Boola Bardip.



Above: Jenna Pickering, *Together as one*, 2023. Oil on paperbark, now on display at the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip. This artwork was awarded twice in the 2024 Lester Prize.



Three species of WA's black cockatoos face extinction due to habitat loss. Above: forest Red Tailed Black Cockatoo nesting in a mature eucalypt hollow

Carnaby's in perpetuity

by Sarah Coles, Environment Policy Officer, WALGA

Greg Warburton had something in mind: a conservation covenant.

"Powderbark wandoo... acacias... melaleucas... wonderful wildflower displays in spring... echidnas... kangaroos..." Greg Warburton, Reserve Management Officer with the Shire of Toodyay, is smiling as he lists the species that inhabit this particular block of land. "... Brushtail possums, possibly pygmy possums... the chuditch, or western quoll...". The block in question is Lot 108, a 123-hectare block owned by the Shire.

In 2021, the Shire of Toodyay applied for a native vegetation clearing permit to clear a 3km stretch of roadside vegetation for the purpose of improving road safety. Clearing is tricky in Toodyay because the Shire is located within the Avon Wheatbelt region, an extensively cleared landscape. The Avon Wheatbelt retains just 18.24 per cent of native vegetation cover, which is below the national target of 30 per cent. Corridors of remnant vegetation are valuable sources of biodiversity in the Wheatbelt.

If a Local Government wishes to clear native vegetation, they must apply for a permit from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER). Whenever a Local Government applies for a permit to remove native vegetation, DWER considers the impact to local biodiversity. This means that if a Local Government wants to clear native vegetation in an area which is home to an endangered species such as the Carnaby's cockatoo, which was the case when the Shire of Toodyay applied for their clearing permit, the Local Government must employ offsets.

DWER defines environmental offsets as 'actions that provide environmental benefits which counterbalance the significant residual environmental impacts or risks of a project of activity.' A simple way to think about it is: if you want to cut down mature eucalypts in *this* part of town, then you'll have to protect *that* patch of mature eucalypts over there.

The Carnaby's cockatoo habitat is native woodlands dominated by eucalypts such as wandoo, as well as heathlands and banksia woodlands. The birds need large hollows in tall eucalypts for breeding. The species is only found in the south-west region of Western Australia, and is protected under both Commonwealth and State legislation, which both list the species as endangered – a status largely attributed to the widescale clearing of trees with suitable breeding hollows.

Given the highly cleared context and the importance of ecological linkages, a condition of the clearing permit required the Shire to set aside a 2.18 hectare offset. Greg had a piece of land in mind for offsets. "I thought about this particular lot, which I was very familiar with. And sure enough, DWER agreed to accept two hectares of a lot as a vegetation offset for the clearing permit. However, we started to think more expansively, and I thought, well, why couldn't we designate the entire lot for conservation?"

Greg Warburton had something specific in mind: a conservation covenant, or deed to the land which would be binding upon all future owners of the block.



Covenant vegetation. Credit: Greg Warburton

"It's a way of protecting a parcel of land from environmental damage in perpetuity," Greg explains. "So, it's virtually like a reserve or even a National Park in that way, but it's on private land. Anyone that bought that private land in the future would have to continue to recognise the covenant which is on that land."

Greg worked closely with the Shire's Hugo DeVos, Executive Manager Development and Regulation, to create the covenant. "I was lucky because Hugo came on board with it straight away. He supported it and he had the contacts and the knowledge and the skill, being the Shire planner, to really move the project forward."

The Shire of Toodyay proposed an environmental offset consisting of the conservation of 2.18 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 108. On top of that, the Shire of

Toodyay signed a conservation covenant under section 30B of the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945*, setting aside the remainder of those 123 hectares for the protection and management of vegetation in perpetuity – that is, the remainder of the land will be used for future projects requiring similar offsets. Greg is delighted.

"It's quite a remarkable achievement, I think. And it came as a bit of a surprise, but we recognised an opportunity and ran with it... We engaged a consultant to help us, and the process was quite smooth. We ended up with the signed documents early last year."

The conservation covenant is protecting the Carnaby's cockatoo. "On the upper parts of the conservation covenant we've installed artificial nesting boxes for Carnaby's cockatoo. That part of the conservation covenant bounds onto private land and the people that share the boundary are monitoring the Carnaby's cockatoo activity in those nest boxes. So, it really is a very much favoured Carnaby's cockatoo habitat in the conservation covenant."

The Shire of Toodyay is fortunate to own Lot 108 but Greg encourages other Local Governments to explore the possibilities. "There are probably not that many Local Governments, particularly in the Wheatbelt, that have the good fortune to have a large lot of Shire-owned land like we did. I can't speak for the other councils, but if they do recognise land that is appropriate for conservation, a covenant is a good way to go."

One solution may be for Local Governments, via regional councils, to pool their resources to purchase land for offsets. WALGA supports this strategic use of offsets, including the establishment of regional conservation funds.

Shire of Toodyay's Hugo de Vos and Greg Warburton pictured at Lot 108 with a plaque commemorating the conservation covenant
Credit: Ebony Francis



Local Lens

The following pictures celebrate the achievements of Local Government in Western Australia. Local Governments are encouraged to submit notable events, initiatives and achievements to be featured in *Western Councillor* by contacting communications@walga.asn.au

City of Albany

Albany Public Library received the State Library Board Award for Innovation and Collaboration for its After-Hours Student Study Space Project. Launched in May 2023, the project addresses the need for central meeting places with stable internet access, providing a safe, secure, and accessible environment for students to study outside regular hours. Its proximity to student accommodation and central city location have made it highly popular. The project enhances the library's reputation as a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space for local families, students, seniors, and children.

Pictured: Hon. John Day, City of Albany Youth Services Librarian Dora Adeline, CEO and State Librarian Catherine Clark (State Library of WA).

Provided by Laura Condon, Communications Coordinator – City of Albany



Shire of Ashburton

The Shire of Ashburton welcomed the State Government's commitment to issuing a tender in August for the delivery of the Tom Price hospital, alongside a \$20 million pledge from Rio Tinto for the Paraburdoo hospital. After months of campaigning and community efforts, their hard work paid off. The fulfilment of this long-awaited promise is eagerly anticipated, ensuring that the community and regional healthcare receive the support they deserve.

Pictured (L-R): Hon. Peter Foster MLC, Member for Mining and Pastoral Region; Hon. Roger Cook, Premier; Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade; Public Sector Management; Audra Smith, Shire of Ashburton President; Kenn Donohoe, Shire of Ashburton Chief Executive Officer; Kevin Michel MLA, Member for Pilbara; and Richard Cohen, Rio Tinto Managing Director Port, Rail & Core Services

Provided by the Shire of Ashburton Media Team

Town of Bassendean

The Town of Bassendean celebrated the exceptional contributions of its residents at the 2024 Community Awards and Citizenship Ceremony, held on Friday 24 May. Several residents were honoured for their dedication and service, which strengthened the fabric of the community. The Best Verge Award went to 17 Hardy Road for its beautiful Australian waterwise plants. Genevieve Kent received the Youth Achievement Award for her leadership in Scouts. Carol Seidel and Valerie Ann Humphrey were recognised for over four decades of volunteering. Netta Thompson earned the Community Leadership Award for her innovative 'Bindaring Creative Trail', which enriched Bassendean's cultural landscape.

Pictured (L-R): Genevieve Kent, Valerie Ann Humphrey, Cr Kathryn Hamilton – Mayor, Netta Thompson, Carol Seidel, Kate and Brice Campbell and Hon. Dave Kelly MLA.

Provided by Elizabeth Martin, Communications Officer – Town of Bassendean



City of Bayswater

The City of Bayswater has unveiled its first Pride mural to recognise and celebrate its LGBTQIA+ community. Located on Lyric Lane in the heart of Maylands, the colourful mural painted by renowned artist Jordan Rush features drag queens from *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, rainbows and angel wings to symbolise protection and courage. Last year, during the City's annual PrideFEST celebrations, feedback was gathered from the community and the City's Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group to better understand how the City could best represent its LGBTQIA+ community in a new mural.

Pictured: City of Bayswater Mayor Filomena Piffaretti with Cr Nat Latter and artist Jordan Rush
Provided by the City of Bayswater Communications and Marketing team



City of Belmont

The City of Belmont has announced the installation of a new Acknowledgement of Country public artwork at the entrance of Belmont Hub. The artwork, created by award-winning Noongar artist Yondee Shane Hansen and fabricated by Jahne Rees from Scape-ism, is a unique addition to the City's public art collection, celebrating the deep cultural heritage and connection of Noongar people to this land.

Pictured: Jahne Rees, Yondee Shane Hansen and City of Belmont Mayor Robert Rossi standing by the completed Acknowledgement of Country artwork
Provided by Laura Chaplyn, Coordinator Media and Communications – City of Belmont

City of Busselton

As young individuals embark on their journey into the workforce, ensuring they have access to the necessary PPE to perform their job is paramount. Sponsored by the City of Busselton, Rio Tinto, APEX and Men's Shed, the 'Boots for Youth' initiative aims to equip young workers with high quality safety work boots. Young workers often face unique challenges as they transition from education to employment. While safeguarding feet from potential injury is crucial, the cost of safety work boots can be prohibitive for young people. The program ensures that each participant receives certified safety boots, providing essential protection.

Pictured (L-R): City of Busselton Youth Development Trainee Adia McMahon and Youth Development Supervisor Angela Griffin, Rio Tinto General Manager HSEC Claire Somerville-Brown and Vice President HSEC Pilbara Iron Cecile Thaxter, and Anglicare WA's Sue Riccelli, mustering up work boots for the initiative.
Provided by Deborah Holden, Communications and Marketing Officer – City of Busselton



Town of Cambridge

Paralympian Rhiannon Clarke recently joined Cambridge Library's weekly StoryTime session as a guest storyteller. Rhiannon read three picture books celebrating sports and personal goals, followed by songs and rhymes. She brought her medals to show the children, and led a fun craft activity where the children made their own medals. Rhiannon has represented Australia at the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in the women's 100m T38, two World Championships, and won a silver medal in the same event at the 2018 Commonwealth Games held on the Gold Coast. She represented Australia at her second Paralympic Games in Paris this August.

Pictured: Paralympic athlete Rhiannon Clarke shows her medals to children at Cambridge Library on 25 July 2024.

Provided by Matt Lau, Senior Media & Communications Officer.
Photo by Rory Cherry, Marketing & Communications Officer
– Town of Cambridge



City of Canning

The City of Canning is proud to announce the continuation of the 'Be Safe and Save' Security Incentive Scheme. Back by popular demand, the Scheme is now in its fifth year of assisting residents to improve the level of security within and around their home, offering rebates on a range of security items including CCTV, alarm systems, security screens, locks, and sensor lights. Over the last six rounds, the Scheme has incentivised a community expenditure of over \$1.47 million on home security items within the City of Canning. Security Incentive Scheme applications are open from now until June 30, 2025. Applicants are advised that rebates are subjected to availability, and funds could be exhausted before this date. Residents must submit their application and invoices following the purchase of eligible security products. Terms and conditions, along with the application form, can be found at canning.wa.gov.au/saferhomes.

Pictured: Joyce Gioffre and Mayor Patrick Hall.

Provided by Mischa Tan, Marketing and Communications Advisor, and the City of Canning Ranger and Community Safety Services Team

City of Cockburn

Fremantle Dockers legends, Paralympic medallists and professional soccer champions are among new inductees to the City of Cockburn Sports Hall of Fame. Athletes and administrators across six different sports were welcomed to the ranks of Cockburn's sporting elite, the largest cohort admitted since the hall of fame's inception in 2004. The 14 new inductees join 22 others – including AFL legends Glen Jakovich and Peter Sumich, and champion lawn bowlers Smiljana Jakovich and Steve Srhoy.

Pictured: Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett with Ashtyn Hiron (lacrosse), one of 14 new inductees to the City of Cockburn's prestigious Sports Hall of Fame established in 2004.

Provided by Michele Nugent, Media and Communications Officer
– City of Cockburn



Shire of Coolgardie

On 9 July a bus full of athletes departed Kambalda for the Goldfields CommonHealth games held at the Goldfields Oasis Recreational Facility, organised by the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder. Aimed at activity, movement and wellbeing, the event brought together seniors from across the region for a day of competitive fun. The Kambalda team was organised by Kathy Brooking, Leisure and Recreation Development Manager and supported by Estelle Barange, Leisure and Recreation Development Officer (pictured) and Ava Horan, Recreation Officer (pictured).

Pictured: Back row – Jan Blakey, Ava Horan, Joan Berthelsen; Right – Kathie Lindup; Middle row - Jenny Phelps, Wendy Meredith; Right – Bonnie Nicholson, Dahama Rowatt, Ned Albert;

Front row - Estelle Barange, Kia Albert
Provided by Joy Charlton, Communication and Media Officer
– Shire of Coolgardie



Town of Cottesloe

In celebration of NAIDOC Week, the Town of Cottesloe supported the book launch of KADJIL, a story of the magical crow man of Cottesloe's Mudurup Rocks. Written by Barb Dobson and Ken Macintyre and Illustrated by Year 4 students at North Cottesloe Primary School. The launch event was hosted at The Grove Library with a great turnout!

Pictured: North Cottesloe Primary School art teacher Stephanie Matthews with some of the Year 4 students who illustrated the book
 Provided by Lisa Mattiske, Senior Communications and Marketing Coordinator – Town of Cottesloe

Shire of Dardanup

The Shire of Dardanup's new Library, Administration, and Community Building in Eaton, marks the culmination of an 11-year journey. Despite cost escalations and COVID-19 setbacks, construction on the new building started in 2023 and finished last month, delivering this impressive \$19.3 million project, under budget and on schedule – this achievement reflects years of dedication. The new building, constructed by local company Perkins Builders, incorporates a range of essential elements, including a customer service area, a public library, community-meeting spaces, and the Council Chambers. The Café and state-of-the-art Make-It Space will open later this year, with the Make-It Space securing significant funding from Lotterywest and Wespine.

Pictured (L-R): CEO André Schönfeldt, Chairman of the State Library Board, Hon. John Day, Member for Collie-Preston Jodie Hanns, former Shire President and Honorary Freeman Mick Bennett, Hon. Nola Marino MP and Shire President Tyrrell Gardiner.
 Provided by Tahniah Creedon, Communications Officer – Shire of Dardanup



Shire of Derby West Kimberley

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley is excited to announce a \$6.32 million grant from Lotterywest for various community projects across Derby and Fitzroy Crossing. This funding will have a significant impact on the region's social and cultural landscape, where it will cover the scoping, design and construction of initiatives to enhance public spaces, amenities and youth engagement. Key projects include a new youth precinct in Fitzroy Crossing with a spray park, community art installations, shade shelters and seating, upgrades to community centres and playgrounds and improved lighting and fencing at the recreation precinct.

Pictured: (L-R): Shire President Peter McCumstie, Member for Kimberley Divina D'Anna, Team Leader Community Development Gertrude O'Meara, and Executive Services Project Director Mark Davis
 Provided by Maria O'Connell, Media and Communications Officer – Shire of Derby/West Kimberley



Shire of Dumbleyung

The Shire of Dumbleyung held the Dumbleyung Ag TechXPO on 23 July 2024, which despite the rainy weather, was a resounding success. With approximately 100 attendees, the event provided a learning experience for local farmers, with key speakers including fellow growers who had adopted Ag Tech into their farming enterprises, and AgTech vendors and researchers who presented commercialised products designed to solve connectivity challenges and improve on farm efficiencies. For more info, visit the Shire of Dumbleyung website.

Pictured: Panel discussion with Tash Teakle from Agristart and Brad Jones from Bungulla Farms
 Provided by Kristina Pearce, Economic Development Officer – Shire of Dumbleyung





Shire of Esperance

Saturday July 13 saw 5,000 locals and travellers experience snow in Esperance! The Shire of Esperance's free Winter Wonderland event is based on embracing the cold - kids made snow castles in the snow pit, danced through falling snow, zipped down snowslides and tested their snowball throwing skills to win a bike. Everyone enjoyed the book library, arcade games, movies and more – all free. Market stall spaces were also provided free, offering businesses the chance to increase business revenue, awareness, and for community groups to raise money for their worthy causes. The community loves this amazing day out!

Provided by Mary Bidstrup, Media and Communications Officer – Shire of Esperance

City of Gosnells

The City of Gosnells Smart Drainage program has been lauded on a national stage, winning the Disaster Readiness and Recovery category at the recent National Awards for Local Government. The program uses smart technologies to improve the way drainage is managed in the City, including tractor-mounted CCTV with the ability to push cameras beyond the reach of the tractor, ground penetrating radar to identify and accurately size voids in the soil, expanding foam technology to fill those voids, and flow meters linked to texting software to alert drainage crews when flows are high but before flooding occurs.

City of Gosnells Mayor Teresa Lynes accepted the National Award for Local Government from the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, in Canberra.

Pictured: Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, with Mayor Teresa Lynes
Provided by Carmen Carter, Communications Officer – City of Gosnells



City of Joondalup

Work has commenced on the \$9 million Duncraig Adventure Hub. In July, Joondalup Mayor Hon. Albert Jacob JP and South Ward Councillor Russ Fishwick JP were joined by Federal Member for Moore Ian Goodenough and Carine MLA Paul Lilburne in turning over the first piles of soil at the Percy Doyle site. Expected to open in winter 2025, the hub will feature a skate park and bike tracks alongside a multipurpose court, playground, barbecues, shaded hangout spaces and universal access toilets. In addition to \$3 million Lotterywest funding for the project, the City secured more than \$700,000 through the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Funding Program.

Pictured (L-R): Federal Member for Moore Hon. Ian Goodenough, Carine MLA Hon. Paul Lilburne, City of Joondalup Mayor Albert Jacob and South Ward Councillor Russ Fishwick
Provided by Stuart McLea, Media and Communications Officer – City of Joondalup

City of Kwinana

Believed to currently be the only Aboriginal Consultative Committee in WA, the City of Kwinana's Boola Maara (Many Hands) Aboriginal Consultative Committee held its first meeting on 1 July. The Boola Maara formed as an advisory group in 2018, but was elevated last year to the level of consultative committee under Council's Standing Orders, giving it a broader scope with meeting agendas and minutes made publicly available online. The City of Kwinana has a close relationship with the local Aboriginal community, as the City has the largest proportion of Aboriginal people in the metropolitan area.

Pictured: Boola Maara Aboriginal Consultative Committee members deputy-chair Paul Garlett, Lisa Garlett, chair Deputy Mayor Barry Winmar, Marie Walley, Doris Getta, Cr Matthew Rowse, Cindy Ballard, Marianne Mackay Headland (not pictured)
Provided by Jaime Shurmer, Communications Officer – City of Kwinana





Shire of Murchison

In August Murchison Shire presented the inaugural Murchison Camp Oven Muster. The event was conceived and delivered by a dedicated group of local residents driven to deliver authentic Murchison experiences that “feel like us”. Murchison Camp Oven Muster attracted 120 people to Murchison Settlement, normally the home of less than 20 permanent residents. The event provided a wide variety of experiences that are the essence of remote regional life from wildflower walks and camp oven cooking to woodworking and line dancing. The event successfully increased community pride for those that live across the almost 50,000km² Local Government area and raised awareness of the region for tourism.

Provided by Bec Fogarty, Community Officer
– Murchison Shire



Shire of Merredin

Following a six-month redevelopment project, Merredin’s beloved Apex Park | Danjoo Waabininy Boodja was officially opened to the community on Wednesday, August 7, 2024. Shire President Mark McKenzie and Hon. Darren West MLC performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony, after which hundreds of residents flocked to the park to enjoy the new facilities.

Pictured L-R: Hon. Darren West MLC, Councillor Brad Anderson, Michael Hayden (Njaki Njaki), Kris Hayden (Njaki Njaki), Councillor Donna Crook, Kris Hayden Jnr (Njaki Njaki), Mick Hayden (Njaki Njaki), Shire President Mark McKenzie, Councillor Phil Van Der Merwe, Councillor Lisa O’Neill, Councillor Megan Simmonds and Shire of Merredin CEO Craig Watts.

Provided by Kohdee Swinwood, Media and Communications Officer – Shire of Merredin



City of Perth

The City of Perth sponsored the Lightscape winter sensation for the second year in a row. Over a six-week period, almost 120,000 people braved the winter weather to check out Kings Park and Botanic Garden, soaking up the amazing light and sound show which highlighted the beautiful flora and fauna. The City brought some cheer to a rainy Perth through this immersive setup and proved once again that the people of Perth will brave the weather for the right event.

Provided by City of Perth with the Botanic Parks and Gardens Authority



Shire of Murray

On Saturday, 6 July 2024, the Shire of Murray proudly unveiled the new LED lighting systems at Sir Ross McLarty Oval. These new \$200k LED lighting instalments will help light the way to many future exciting events and matches. With lighting that is energy efficient, meets sporting standards, and needs less maintenance, these new lights at Sir Ross McLarty Oval will provide enhanced safety and enable more access to the precinct for the local community. This project was funded by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Alcoa, and the Shire of Murray.

Pictured: Shire President David Bolt, Hon. Robyn Clarke MLA, and representatives from Alcoa, Pinjarra Football Club, and the Pinjarra Netball Club
 Provided by Kaylin Heyns, Digital Communications and Marketing Officer – Shire of Murray

City of Rockingham

The City of Rockingham's first Changing Place facility has been completed. Located in Churchill Park at the Rockingham Beach Foreshore, this much-needed facility meets the needs of people who require a bathroom with additional accessibility features. It includes a height-adjustable adult-sized change table, a ceiling track hoist system, shower, toilet and additional circulation space for people with complex disability. The Changing Place is a key element of access and inclusion upgrades at the foreshore. The Department of Communities supported the project through its Changing Places Grant Program.

Provided by Michael Callaghan, Media and Communications Coordinator – City of Rockingham



Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

Muddy Buddies in Jarrahdale, held in June, welcomed 3,000 eager participants, transforming the area into a muddy playground. Now in its third year, this family-friendly event continues to grow in popularity. Attendees enjoyed activities like mud pits, mud kitchens, and the new Mud Mountain, along with bush fairy encounters, cubby building, and local food stalls. Shire President Rob Coales praised Jarrahdale as the perfect destination for weekend fun, while the event's soil will be repurposed to benefit local community groups.

Provided by Issy Rule, Communications Officer – Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

City of Stirling

Six-year-old Mason from Balga planted a beautiful *Hakea laurina* on his verge as part of the City of Stirling's tree planting season. He named it 'Shady' in honour of his favourite YouTuber and "because trees give you shade". Mason has counted all the trees, and Shady is the 22nd new tree on his street this year. In total, the City plans to plant over 6,000 new or replacement trees on verges, streets, and reserves in the 2024 planting season.

Pictured: Mason watering his new *Hakea laurina*
 Provided by Mikaela Henschel, Communications Officer – City of Stirling





City of Subiaco

To recognise Homelessness Week 2024, the City of Subiaco organised several events for people sleeping rough. From a community dinner and lunch to free laundry services and hygiene packs, this year's activities aimed to provide much-needed relief and support directly to those in need. Mayor David McMullen said Homelessness Week reflected the City's ongoing commitment to addressing homelessness. "The City works with local service providers year-round to support those experiencing, or being at risk of, homelessness," he said.

Pictured: City of Subiaco Mayor David McMullen with the Nando's team
 Provided by Sarah Pope, Senior Communications Officer – City of Subiaco

City of Swan

The sun was shining for the City of Swan's Avon Descent Festival on Sunday, 11 August as more than 9,000 people enjoyed a day of family fun. Records tumbled on the river and there was plenty of action on land, with rides, roaming entertainers, artisan markets and more. As usual, sustainability was a key focus for the City. A second-hand clothes swap was a popular attraction and the entire festival was single-use plastic-free. New to this year's festival was the Avon Descent Festival Log Chop. The inaugural competition featured 30 of WA's best woodchoppers going head-to-head across seven divisions, from juniors to veterans.

Provided by the City of Swan Communications and Engagement Team



Town of Victoria Park

ToVP recently completed stage 2 of the Protected Bike Lanes on Archer Street in Carlisle. Jointly funded by the Department of Transport and the Town as part of the WA Bicycle Network Grants Program, the lanes provide a safe route for users of active transport to the recently revitalised Carlisle Town Centre and contribute to the broader goal of creating a pedestrian and small business-centric environment for the local community. More info: vicpark.info/RideArcher

Pictured: Town Communications Advisor Andy Nicolau tests out the new lanes.
 Provided by Andy Nicolau, Communications Advisor, Photographer David Carter and Project Lead Rizwan Check – Town of Victoria Park

Shire of Victoria Plains

On 26 July Colin Ashe, Deputy CEO and Katrina Humphries, Community Development Officer had the privilege of attending the Bolgart Country Women's Association (CWA) Centenary Celebrations. This was a fantastic day that was very well received. From the decorations to the lunch and the wonderful people that were in attendance, all should be proud. There was some wonderful history and some great memorabilia on display. The community work the Bolgart CWA does each year is extremely appreciated – from fundraisers to community events, they really do an amazing job.

Pictured: Deputy CEO Colin Ashe, Brenda Clarke (Bolgart CWA) and Community Development Officer Katrina Humphries

Provided by Katrina Humphries, Community Development Officer – Shire of Victoria Plains



City of Vincent

A new playground designed just for preschoolers aged one to four is ready for play at Braithwaite Park in Mount Hawthorn. Vincent's youngest residents will be treated to a fresh adventure as they navigate through the spacious and accessible play elements, with plenty of space for parents to move around with their prams. Play equipment includes a cubby house, cafe play area, swings, sliding pole, bird's nest swing seat, monkey bars, two slides and a bike track on softfall. The park is a prime destination for families with different-aged children as it is also home to a nature play area.

Pictured: A parent with their child on a swing at the Braithwaite Park toddler playground
Provided by Kristie Lim, Media and Communications Officer – City of Vincent

City of Wanneroo

The City of Wanneroo has welcomed a rare opportunity to showcase an extraordinary collection of works by internationally renowned Torres Strait Islander artist, Alick Tipoti. Mariw Minal, meaning spiritual patterns, features a range of Alick Tipoti's works, including carvings, linocuts, masks, film and a life-size sculpture of a dugong. The exhibition, from the Australian National Maritime Museum, forms part of the state-wide Indian Ocean Craft Triennial, an arts festival spanning more than 70 exhibitions and events across WA. The exhibition runs from 7 August to 26 October at the Wanneroo Regional Gallery, Wednesday to Saturday, 10am-4pm. wanneroo.wa.gov.au/wanneroogallery.

Pictured: Alick Tipoti by Marinco Kojdanovski
Australian National Maritime Museum

Provided by the City of Wanneroo Communications and Brand Team





Clockwise from top: Winthrop Hall at the University of WA was the venue for this year's Local Government Awards; Master of Ceremonies, Jessie James; WALGA President Karen Chappel AM JP addresses the audience; Cr Barry Winmar of the City of Kwinana gives the Welcome to Country

A celebration of excellence at WALGA's Local Government Awards

On Friday 2 August, WALGA hosted the Local Government Awards for 2024 at Winthrop Hall at the University of WA.

Opened with a Welcome to Country by Cr Barry Winmar and speeches from WALGA President Karen Chappel AM JP and Hon. Hannah Beazley, Minister for Local Government, 2024 marked a significant milestone as the Awards evolved into a stand-alone event, providing a fitting backdrop for recipients to celebrate their accomplishments alongside their families, colleagues, nominators, and collaborators who have supported them throughout their Local Government journey.

The atmosphere was electric, filled with admiration and gratitude, as the sector's finest were recognised for their dedication and impact.

This separation allowed recipients to celebrate with their families, colleagues, nominators and collaborators who have supported them on their Local Government journey.

WALGA's Local Government Awards, sponsored by LGIS and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries serve as a platform to recognise and celebrate the remarkable achievements and lasting contributions of Elected Members and Officers within their respective Councils, the Local Government sector, WALGA, and the wider community.

Thank you to all who nominated their peers, attended the celebrations, and made the Awards a success.

As part of WALGA's ongoing commitment to showcasing excellence within the sector, the awards will be expanding to highlight achievements at an organisational level going forward – keep an eye out for the call for nominations in 2025!

2024 Local Government Award recipients

Local Government Medal recipients

The Local Government Medal in 2024 was awarded to two recipients who have provided exceptional long-standing service, outstanding achievements and significant contributions to WALGA and the entire Local Government Sector.

Carol Adams OAM

Hon. Paul Omodei - Shire of Manjimup

Life Membership recipients

Life membership of WALGA is awarded to those who have demonstrated outstanding service to WALGA, the Sector and the community over many years.

Cr Doug Thompson - City of Fremantle

Mr Frank Cvitan - City of Wanneroo

Mayor Logan Howlett - City of Cockburn

President Phillip Blight - Shire of Wagin

Troy Pickard Young Achievers Award recipients

Named in memory of former WALGA President Troy Pickard, the award recognises the contributions and commitment to Local Government by Elected Members or employees in the sector ages 35 years or under.

Ms Donna Shaw - City of South Perth

Cr Peter Rogers - City of Mandurah

Cr Liam Gobbert - City of Perth

Eminent Service Award recipients

These next awards recognise eminent service and distinguished contributions to WALGA, their Local Government and the Local Government Sector as a whole.

Ms Renee McLennan - Town of Bassendean

Cr Eileen O'Connell - Shire of Nungarin

Cr Isabelle Scott - Shire of Irwin

President Cr Les Price - Shire of Cue

Ms Robin Prentice - Shire of Laverton

Mr Rodney Forsyth - Shire of Kellerberrin

Mr Christopher Pavlovich - Shire of Plantagenet

Mr Andrew Brien - City of Kalgoorlie Boulder

Mr Christopher King - Shire of Perenjori

Mayor Mark Irwin - City of Stirling

Cr Ian Earl - Shire of Augusta Margaret River

WALGA President Karen Chappel AM JP with Local Government Medal recipients Carol Adams OAM, and Hon. Paul Omodei





WALGA President Karen Chappel AM JP with Life Membership recipients Frank Cvitan, President Phillip Blight, and Cr Doug Thomson

Local Government Merit Award recipients

The Local Government Merit awards recognise notable contributions to WALGA, their Local Government or the Local Government Sector.

- Mayor David McMullen - City of Subiaco
- Cr Ken Stokes - Shire of Morawa
- Ms Renae Jury - Shire of Kent
- Mr Timothy Borgward - Shire of Kent
- Cr Scott Crosby - Shire of Kent
- Cr Greg Ball - Shire of Wagin
- Cr Peter Jackson - City of Mandurah
- Cr John Chester - City of Joondalup
- Cr Dave Schumacher - City of Mandurah
- President Cr Harvey Nichols - Shire of Meekatharra
- Cr Bronwyn Ife - Town of Victoria Park
- Mr Paul Carter - City of Busselton
- Cr Stephen Lee - Shire of Murray
- Cr Christine Hamilton-Prime - City of Joondalup
- Mrs Moya Carne - Shire of Williams
- Mr Lui Camporeale - City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- President Cr Kirrilee Warr - Shire of Chapman Valley

Local Government Distinguished Officer Awards

- Mr Dean Unsworth - Shire of Murray
- Ms Dionie Johnson - City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
- Mr Andrew Dover - Shire of Pingelly
- Mr Darren Mollenoyux - Shire of Bruce Rock
- Mr Geoffrey McKeown - Shire of Williams
- Ms Sheri Moulds - City of Greater Geraldton
- Mr Jamie Blanchard - City of Stirling
- Ms Noelene Jennings PSM - City of Wanneroo
- Mr Abraham O'Connor - City of Stirling

Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) WA Branch

- Evelyn Parker Women of Excellence Award Winner: President Tracy Lefroy - Shire of Moora
- Rhonda Hardy Women of Excellence Award Winner: Ms Rebecca Maccario - City of Joondalup
- Commendation: Ms Nicole O'Neill - Shire of East Pilbara

RoadWise Five Ribbon Council

Shire of Manjimup

RoadWise Most Active Councils

- City of Albany
- Shire of Leonora
- City of Rockingham

All inaugural RoadWise Councils were also congratulated and recognised for their commitment to working towards best practice road safety.

WALGA Jacqui Dodd Scholarship recipients

WALGA Training is proud to continue to support the sector by offering the prestigious Jacqui Dodd Scholarship to four successful recipients to complete the LGA50220 Diploma of Local Government – Elected Member.

The Scholarship is named in honour of former long-serving WALGA Training Services Manager, Jacqueline Dodd.

- President Donelle Buegge – Shire of Manjimup
- Cr James Junio - Shire of Harvey
- Cr Ben Mayes – Town of Cambridge
- Deputy Mayor Deborah Sessions – City of Belmont



Shire of Peppermint Grove CEO Don Burnett, President Karen Farley and the wall of Alston cartoons

The Peppermint Trove

A Western Australian cartoonist targets a Council

Dean Alston has been a cartographer, once owned part shares in the Carine Tavern, grew up in Mount Pleasant, and is best known as being a Walkley Award-winning cartoonist with the *West Australian* newspaper.

With a reputation for witty, scathing, occasionally brutal social commentary, Alston takes no prisoners. Yet the numbers would suggest he has a thing about the Shire of Peppermint Grove, given how many cartoons he has produced on our smallest but arguably most prestigious Council.

Western Councillor spoke to Don Burnett, the charismatic CEO of Peppy Grove.

"Dean Alston has drawn 38 cartoons that either mentioned Peppermint Grove or referenced Peppermint Grove. This goes back to 2002."

Don and the Council became aware this year of the extensive collection when *The West* ran a feature on Dean and two of the cartoons were of Peppermint Grove. Further enquiries revealed the full range.

"We asked Westpix and they came back with 38 which was quite surprising. So we purchased them and framed them. So yeah, all good."

The Shire displayed the full, framed versions of the cartoons at the library this year. Mr Alston attended the exhibition and was full of praise for the Council.

"Peppy Grove has always been an interesting area to cover for me," Alston told *Perth Now*.

"As we know, its quite an affluent area but is filled with great people who always see the humour in the cartoons."

Mr Burnett says the Alston Peppermint Grove exhibition was well received.

" I don't know whether he has been mean, but he certainly has a dig "

Don Burnett
Shire of Peppermint Grove CEO

"Our Councillors were quite happy and thought it was quite good fun and in good nature. We didn't get any negative community feedback from the display in the library for two weeks. So I take that as a positive.

"And since we did the launch of his collection in our library in May, he's done another one. So we've got 39 now."

Has Dean Alston ever been mean to Peppy Grove, over the journey?

"Well, that's open for interpretation. I mean, a cartoon supposed to elicit some sort of thought, because he's always got something behind it. So I don't know whether he has been mean, but he certainly has a dig," says Don Burnett.

"He has a good poke at the Western Suburbs. And we get that, you know, it is a soft target. So we understand that we're always going to be the targeted Western suburb. If that's what he needs to draw, he'll draw it. And, you know, we just take it as it is."

We asked Don, 39 cartoons seems like a lot. Is that too many?

"Well, the wall in my office is full now, I can't fit any more in. They're in my office, straight opposite my desk.

"Unless I start a whole new line, which means he's got to do another 10, and we really don't need to do that."



Clockwise from top left: WALGA CEO Nick Sloan with the Minister for Local Government, Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA; Blake Williams, Mark Furr and Kathy Hoare on the “Building human capacity through Local Government” panel; Philippa Lonie from Seminar sponsor Green Shoots Consulting; audience members at the Seminar

Enhancing our workplaces with WALGA'S 2024 People & Culture Seminar

On Friday, 19 July WALGA hosted its annual People & Culture Seminar with the theme 'Enhancing workplace culture in times of change'.

The Seminar welcomed participants from across the State, including the Kimberley, Pilbara, Alice Springs, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany and everywhere in between!

WALGA was proud to utilise its extensive networks and relationships, combined with our credibility to curate a Local Government specific program for the day.

The day was opened by WALGA CEO Nick Sloan and Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government, and provided an opportunity for attendees to hear from a range of industry experts in the Employee Relations space.

Sessions included a keynote address from Dr Paula Smith from the Global Institute of Training and Presenting, and how workplace culture can give you an edge with Margit Mansfield from Keogh Consulting.

Renae Harding from Jackson McDonald Lawyers also presented an insightful talk on complying with the Positive Duty Legislation to prevent sexual harassment and sex-based harassment.

Philippa Lonie from the Seminar's Sundowner sponsor, Green Shoots Consulting, presented on applying trauma forced principles in investigations and care for People & Culture professionals.

Sarah Collins from Living Proud presented on creating a diverse and inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ+ employees, and Town of Port Hedland Executive Manager

of Human Resources, Cherry McNicol, highlighted a Local Government engagement success story. With over 20 years of international human resources experience, leading HR and recruitment teams for well-respected global organisations, Cherry shared her work on the Town's engagement journey.

The penultimate session of the day was a Local Government panel discussing building human capacity through Local Government Traineeships. Facilitated by MC Blake Williams, Mark Furr from the Shire of Narrogin and Kathy Hoare from the Department of Training and Workforce Development highlighted the positive effects of Traineeships in Local Governments and equipping staff to start their learning journey.

The day concluded with a WALGA Sector update and attendee sundowner. The Seminar provided an opportunity for Local Government staff from across Western Australia to network and connect with their peers and industry experts, in addition to meeting and engaging with WALGA staff who were able to share their advice and expertise in the Employee Relations, Training, and Procurement space.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the event a success.

For more information about WALGA's Employee Relations Services, please visit the WALGA website.

State Council resolutions

WALGA's State Council is the decision-making representative body of all 139 Member Local Governments and is responsible for sector-wide policy making and strategic planning.

Chaired by WALGA President Karen Chappel AM JP, State Council consists of 24 State Councillors – 12 from Country constituencies and 12 from Metropolitan constituencies.

WALGA hosted the third State Council Meeting for the year on Wednesday, 10 July, addressing the following resolutions.

Office of the Auditor General Increased Costs

That State Council:

1. Objects to the Office of the Auditor General's audit fees increases for the 2023-24 audits of accounts and annual financial report of Local Governments; and
2. Requests the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations to conduct an Inquiry into the OAG's performance of audits and increased audit fees to Local Governments.

Caravan Park and Camping Grounds Regulations

That State Council endorse a new Caravan Park and Camping Grounds Regulations Advocacy Position:

Part 2 of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 should be amended to allow Local Governments to:

1. Consider camping on private property for a period of greater than three months.
2. Establish policy to guide approvals beyond three months to ensure that camping is locally appropriate and provide for circumstances where caravans, predominantly in the form of tiny homes on wheels, can be occupied on a more permanent basis.

2024 Audit Experience Survey Results and Advocacy Position

That State Council:

1. Note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary 2022-23; and
2. Amend Advocacy Position 2.2.2 Local Government Audit Process to remove point 7 as it has been achieved.

WALGA Budget 2024-25

The WALGA Budget 2024-25 was endorsed.

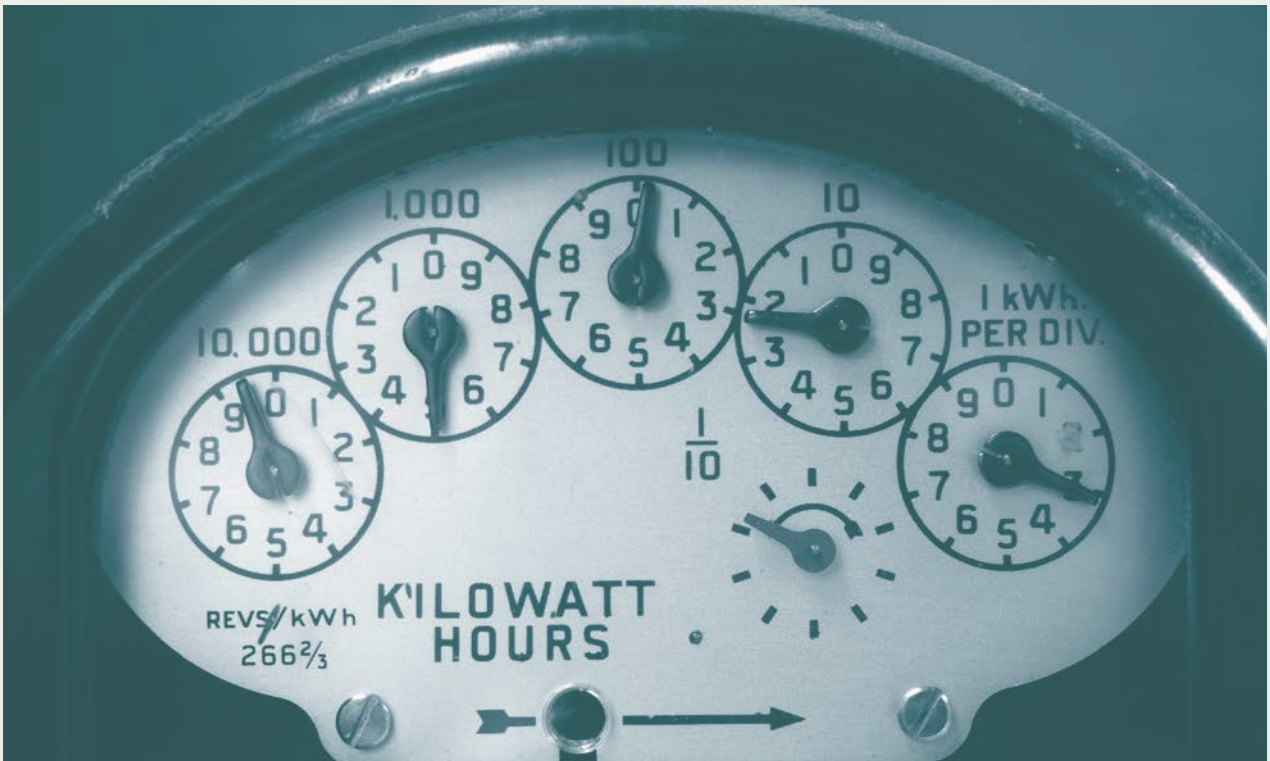
CEO Performance Review Report 2023-2024

The CEO Performance Review for 2023-2024 was endorsed.

For full resolutions, visit the [WALGA website](#).

In March, State Council met with WALGA's Strategic Executive Team and Policy Portfolio to determine key Policy Objectives. This workshop allowed WALGA Staff to gain valuable insight into the areas that matter most to State Council and their communities as part of the extensive work that led to the development of WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities – The West at its Best.





How Local Governments can influence capacity charges on energy costs

While Local Governments need financial resilience to provide their communities with critical services and infrastructure, they are not immune to the impacts of rising costs and inflation. Synergy is working proactively to help all customers, including Local Governments, find opportunities to save on energy costs.

According to Synergy Account Manager Luke Randell, Local Government authorities and other business customers who can reduce their demand for electricity when their electricity load is at its highest could take advantage of the potential for lower capacity charges.

“In current economic conditions when so many aspects can’t be controlled, taking steps to influence capacity charges could make a substantial difference,” said Mr Randell.

“Capacity refers not to the amount of electricity generated at one time but to the total amount of electricity generation resources available to produce electricity at that time. Capacity charges are based on, among other things, how much electricity your LGA uses on Peak Demand Days, which are the four days with the highest demand in the SWIS during the hot season.”

Capacity charges support WA's demand for electricity

As Mr Randell explained, the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) manages the reserve capacity mechanism that applies to WA's main electricity grid, the South West Interconnected System (SWIS). In simple terms, AEMO pays generators (and other eligible capacity providers) a capacity payment for making their electricity generation resources available so that total demand can be met. In its capacity as a retailer of electricity, Synergy pays AEMO for capacity based on the amount of electricity it requires to meet its customer demand, with this cost being recovered from customers through either a capacity charge or as part of a bundled price for electricity, depending on the type of electricity supply agreement.

To determine the capacity charges that Synergy and other market participants pay each year, AEMO uses the Peak Demand Days, which are the four trading days where demand for electricity is at its highest across the SWIS, between 1 December and 31 March each year. Each year, these four days are used to determine '12 Peak Trading Intervals', which are the three half-hour periods with the highest demand on each of the four Peak Demand Days. Synergy then uses the amount of electricity consumed by a customer (that does not pay a bundled price) during the 12 Peak Trading Intervals to calculate that customer's capacity charges for the following year.

"Your demand during these intervals affects your capacity charges during the next capacity year, which begins on 1 October and concludes on 30 September the following calendar year," said Mr Randell.

"Since capacity charges are based on the days when demand in the SWIS is highest, taking action to reduce your electricity during these times, generally between 5pm and 9pm on the hottest days in summer, could mean the capacity charges that are payable by you the following capacity year could be lower. This also has the benefit of helping to balance supply and demand across the SWIS."

Electricity management can impact capacity charges

Mr Randell noted that businesses may use an electricity management practice known as "peak-shaving" to reduce electricity use during peak demand times, to potentially reduce their capacity charges for the next year.

"As a first step, we would recommend looking at your LGA's electricity consumption to identify periods of high electricity usage. You could do this by taking advantage of usage interval data and other features in My Account, which can help you to monitor and manage your electricity consumption."

"Some businesses find they can encourage members of the team to work remotely during periods of high demand on Peak Demand Days. This could mean that your business isn't powering so many devices, appliances and other items at once and you use less energy for cooling and lighting."

"You might also be able to explore some temporary adjustments you could make for the days which are likely to be Peak Demand Days, for example make changes to your air conditioning settings or, when possible, power down energy-hungry equipment for the time when demand on the SWIS is likely to be highest."

Synergy offers a Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service to eligible business customers* which may help organisations better manage their electricity consumption during forecast Peak Demand Days. To learn more about this service or discuss ways to manage electricity consumption in preparation for predicted Peak Demand Days, please contact Luke Randell at luke.randell@synergy.net.au or call 0436 916 941.

**Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service eligibility and terms and conditions apply.*

You have the power.

My Account gives you more power, over your power. It's an account management tool that lets you track your electricity usage, manage and change payment options, and it's full of simple energy saving tips.

[synergy.net.au/myaccount](https://www.synergy.net.au/myaccount)



Across the State – showcasing the beauty of Local Governments across WA

Images by Jeff Henderson, Content Producer, WALGA

Shire of Cue



Shire of Denmark



Shire of Dandaragan



Shire of Dumbleyung



Shire of Exmouth



Shire of Katanning



Shire of Mingenew



Shire of Perenjori



Shire of Wongan-Ballidu



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