

Western Councillor

ISSUE 131 | NOVEMBER 2024



Golden Skateparks

Do you have an Olympian rolling around your skatepark?

P23



**WALGA's 2025
State Election Priorities**

The West at its Best.

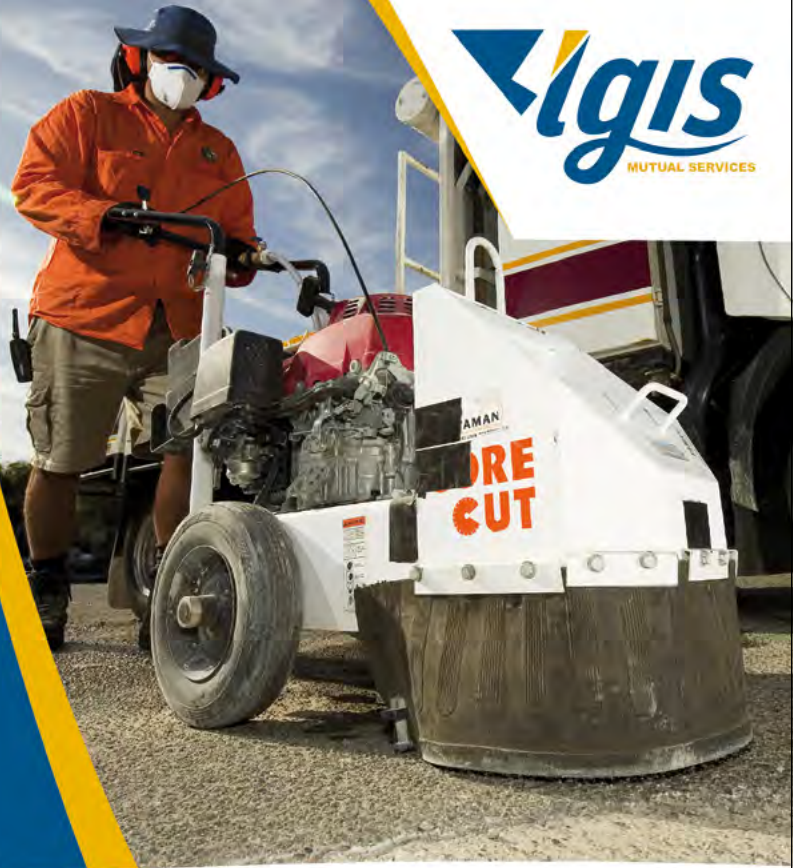
Local governments working together.

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



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

Western Councillor

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Welcome to Issue 131 of *Western Councillor*
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Key takeaways from the July – September Quarter Influence

Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB)

In early July, WALGA met with the Minister responsible for the PSHB response Hon. Jackie Jarvis MLC, to discuss Local Governments' concerns and the need to escalate and commit additional funding for the response and to rebuild lost canopy. WALGA has generated significant media coverage across TV, print and radio, imploring the State Government to raise public awareness and increase efforts to contain and eradicate PSHB. WALGA's advocacy and publicity around the issue led to an announcement from the State Government that \$7.2 million would be provided to Councils and community groups to replace trees lost to the borer.

Band 4 Local Governments Forum

Following a roundtable meeting of Band 4 Local Governments hosted by the Minister for Local Government, Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA, on 3 September 2024, WALGA coordinated a further meeting of Band 4 Local Governments to continue the discussion on the key issues for this group of Local Governments.

After receiving presentations from WALGA staff and participating in a group discussion, 72 representatives (including CEOs, Presidents and Councillors) from 48 Local Governments identified issues and will continue to work with WALGA over the next 12 months.

Expertise

Energy Transition

There is growing concern that the State Government does not have a framework for how the transition to renewable energy policy, that is currently underway, will benefit the impacted communities.

These discussions and concerns have been raised to WALGA through a number of zones and are reflected in the Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework Advocacy Position, Renewable Energy Facilities Advocacy Position, and the Priority Agriculture Position Statement items, endorsed at the September 2024 State Council meeting.

On Wednesday 27 November, WALGA hosted a large-scale Renewable Energy Forum bringing together Local Governments, State Government and industry representatives to discuss the opportunities and challenges of large-scale renewable energy projects, and what support the sector needs for engaging with proponents on community engagement and community benefits. Further information on outcomes will be shared via the weekly WALGA e-news 'LG Direct'.

Collaboration and Shared Services

WALGA has produced the latest version of the Cooperation & Shared Services document. This document captures a large proportion of collaborative work between Local Governments, showcasing ways to maximise resources to deliver outcomes that would be difficult to achieve alone. WALGA will be promoting this to Government agencies to display the collaborative work that happens in our sector.

Economic Briefing September edition

WALGA's September 2024 Economic Briefing has been distributed to the sector and can be viewed via the WALGA website.



From the Minister

A highlight of the Local Government sector's calendar is the annual WALGA Convention, a drawcard event bringing together Elected Members, executives, staff and stakeholders to discuss the issues affecting them and their communities.

It was my pleasure to attend this year's event for the first time as Minister for Local Government, meeting more of the dedicated people working across the sector and hearing some of the fascinating discussions firsthand.

This year's convention was focused on the theme, 'Innovation Ecosystem', with the sector exploring ideas of how to do things better and smarter.

In efforts to best serve the needs of incredibly diverse communities across our State, Local Government is often at the forefront of innovation.

Our Cook Labor Government has been focused on steering the sector's forward trajectory through landmark Local Government Act reforms, which continue to deliver benefits across our State.

We have worked closely with the sector to shape these significant reforms, the largest in more than 25 years.

I am confident these reforms will help Local Governments be even more efficient and responsive to their communities by strengthening governance, transparency and accountability.

With rising cost-of-living continuing to be a major issue for communities across our State, Local Governments must adapt to deliver high quality services and infrastructure while keeping costs at a minimum.

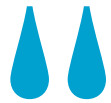
We know our first tranche of reforms passed by Parliament in May last year, is delivering cost savings for Local Governments by reducing the need for expensive extraordinary elections.

Now before Parliament is our second tranche of reforms, which will see the creation of an independent Local Government Inspector supported by a team of investigators who will have greater powers to investigate and address complaints.

These major changes will create a more effective compliance system focussed on early intervention, such as the Inspector's



This is a fantastic opportunity for Local Governments to build valuable recreation assets for their communities, and popular attractions for visitors and tourists.



power to appoint monitors to Local Governments to help prevent problems from escalating and possibly requiring costly solutions.

Our reform package will also produce cost-saving efficiencies by allowing Local Governments to more easily share resources such as senior employees and audit, risk and improvement committees – this will particularly benefit councils covering vast areas in regional WA.

To further understand the needs and issues of concern to smaller Local Governments, I recently hosted a roundtable with Band 4 Local Government representatives from across the state.

It was an opportunity to discuss how the reforms affect them including the abolition of wards, changes to regional subsidiaries, the recording of council meetings, standardised meeting procedures, model financial statements and superannuation for Elected Members.

The support for our reforms was evident at both the WALGA Convention and the roundtable, and I'd like to thank everyone in the industry for their positive and constructive contribution to this process.

In other news, I was excited to recently announce one of the biggest ever investments to support off-road riding in WA.

Our Cook Labor Government is proud to be offering \$4.8 million worth of grants for Local Governments to develop and improve off-road vehicle areas across the state.

Local Governments can access grants of up to \$1 million to construct new areas and grants of up to \$200,000 are available for expanding and upgrading existing areas.

I have seen first-hand how important it is for riders to have dedicated areas to ride, especially younger riders learning and developing their skills.

This is a fantastic opportunity for Local Governments to build valuable recreation assets for their communities, and popular attractions for visitors and tourists.

More information is available on the DLGSC website.

Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA

Minister for Local Government; Youth;
Minister Assisting the Minister for Training
and Workforce Development



From the WALGA President

The last quarter has been busy for the Local Government sector. From Tuesday 8 - Thursday 10 October, WALGA welcomed over 650 delegates to our 2024 Local Government Convention (LGC24).

The WALGA Local Government Convention continues to be the landmark event on the Local Government calendar, bringing together Elected Members, Officers, suppliers and key stakeholders as part of a unique program of professional development, networking and business opportunities.

Highlights of the event included our annual State of Play session hosted by Gareth Parker with panellists former Premier the Hon. Colin Barnett MLA AC, the Hon. Brendon Grylls MLA and the Hon. Alannah MacTiernan MLC, the Icons Breakfast with Layne Beachley AO and Kirk Pingelly, WALGA's AGM, breakout sessions relevant to key topics within the sector and the cocktail gala at the Kingsman Marquee.

Leader of the Opposition Shane Love MLA also announced a pledge from the Nationals in his address to invest \$276 million to establish the Safer Local Roads program, delivering targeted and effective road safety improvements to more than 8,200 kilometres of high-speed Local Government roads.

This announcement was in direct response to WALGA's advocacy efforts with the RAC, and our 2025 State Election Priorities which call for \$276 million over four years to fund the State's contribution to applying proven road safety countermeasures on 439 Local Government roads.

Overall, WALGA delivered an elevated event that included an incredible lineup of keynote speakers, engaging collaborative sessions, opportunities to discuss topical issues with key stakeholders and plenty of opportunities to network with your Local Government colleagues.

I encourage you to mark your calendars and save the date for WALGA's 2025 Local Government Convention which will take place from Monday, 22 – Wednesday, 24 September at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

As we approach the 2025 State Election, WALGA continues to advocate on behalf of the sector through our 2025 State Election Priorities Campaign – The West at its Best.



WALGA continues to leverage the collective strength and influence of our Members for the benefit of WA Local Governments and their communities.



CEO Nick Sloan and I presented the West at its Best document to Premier Roger Cook MLA and in the lead-up to the Election we will continue to meet with Ministers, candidates and key decision-makers to advocate for initiatives and solutions that enhance community well-being and foster economic prosperity, aligning with our collective aspirations for a better future.

In December, I attended ALGA's 2024 National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress, hosted in Margaret River. Relevant to WALGA's State Election Priorities, the event provided an opportunity to hear from government leaders, academics, peak bodies and Local Government peers on topics including making our roads safer, enabling infrastructure for future housing development, renewable energy deployment and integration, innovations in active transport, and transitioning to a circular economy.

As we move towards the end of the calendar year, I know many of our Members start to put their minds towards the high threat season.

WALGA recently attended the National Higher Risk Weather Season Summit in Canberra, joining 240 other leaders from key sectors and organisations to help prepare for the 2024-25 high-risk weather season.

Throughout the summit, the need for collaborative decision-making and national coordination was highlighted, with crises overwhelming State Government capacities and Australia entering an era of complex, concurrent events that will test response capabilities.

As we know, Local Governments and their communities are often at the forefront of these emergency situations. WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities calls for Local Governments to be better funded to deal with all aspects of emergency management and natural disasters.

As always, I look forward to continuing to work with you all in the lead-up to the 2025 State Election as we continue to present initiatives and solutions to keep the State running at its best.

Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President



LGIS Editorial

LGIS Protections for Elected Members

by James Sheridan CEO, LGIS

The WA Local Government Convention this year was an excellent opportunity to chat with Members and talk about the issues that matter to you.

LGIS also appreciated the invitation from WALGA to provide Members with an update on our 2023/4 results and achievements. On a personal note, I really enjoyed the conversations I had with Councillors across the state and appreciated the effort many made to seek out our team to provide feedback and ask questions.

There was plenty of conversation on our stand as delegates placed their 'vote' for the top risks for their Local Government. Unsurprisingly the perennial issue of financial sustainability came in at number one, followed by assets and infrastructure. Waste management closed out the top three with less than half the votes of financial sustainability.

On the road with Members

In the past few months, the team and I have been out on the road providing briefings to Members. We've met with councils across the state from Subiaco to Manjimup answering their questions on LGIS services and the protections we provide to the Local Government sector and Elected Members as individuals.

Councillors have been seeking information on LGIS' services delivered as part of the psychological safe program. This service aims to equip all Local Government staff with the skills to contribute to mentally healthy workplaces. As leaders within the sector Councillors also have a role to play – in addition to being able to participate in our preventative workshops which educate attendees on workplace behaviours, mental health and personal resilience, Councillors can also access our mediation and counselling services for role related matters.

Another area of interest has been the protections provided to individuals as Councillors, including matters such as defamation defence or support in regulatory investigations. To further support Members understanding we've developed an information sheet for Elected Members on LGIS protections and services, plus a specific guideline on defamation.

Elected Member protections

The cover we provide to Councillors as individuals has also been an area of interest at council briefings and the recent WALGA Convention. We know that Local Government wouldn't work without dedicated Elected Members who

care passionately about building better communities. At LGIS we believe that Elected Members should be protected while carrying out their official duty; that's why we provide a range of protections and services to all Elected Members.

Full details of LGIS protections including terms, conditions, inclusions and exclusions can be found in the policy documents.

Personal injury

The personal accident policy provides lump sum payment for permanent injury, weekly wage replacement for temporary disablement, non-Medicare medical expenses, and some out of pocket following an accidental bodily injury.

Motor vehicle

Where you are using your private vehicle for the benefit of the council, you will be fully covered by LGIS Motor and Fleet protection for damage to your vehicle and liability you may incur as a result of a motor vehicle accident (damage to third party vehicles).

Liability protection

If you damage third party property or cause injury, or loss, to a third party by act or omission arising from your duties as a Councillor then your Local Government's LGIS Liability protection will respond to protect your legal position and cover any legal liability you may incur as a result of the incident.

Travel

You are covered for travel during your time as a Councillor on council business trips, including for expenses for overseas medical treatment, emergency medical evacuation, flight cancellation, baggage and personal effects.

Councillors' liability

Councillors' liability in respect of claims for any alleged wrongful acts arising out of your official duties. This includes a complimentary legal helpline for related matters before a claim arises.

Personal property

LGIS Property extends cover for damage/loss to your personal property whilst undertaking official duties.

If you have any questions on our protections and services or would like a briefing for your council, please contact me on 9483 8886 or talk to your LGIS account manager.







Local Government Convention 2024

A look back on the moments that make WALGA's Local Government Convention (LGC24) the landmark event in the Local Government calendar.

Tuesday, 8 October

Mayors and Presidents Forum

Mayors and Presidents had the opportunity to hear from the Director of Anacta Strategies, Mark Reed as he presented his keynote 'Cost of Living, Cost of Living, Cost of Living - The top three issues this election cycle'.

As the head of Anacta's Perth office, Mark provided delegates with unparalleled expertise in navigating the political and policy-making landscape, exploring the issues dominating the State and Federal elections, and highlighting how to find the oxygen for your issue in a campaign environment.

Welcome Drinks

Hosted in the exhibition pavilion, this year's Welcome Drinks provided the first opportunity to catch up with fellow delegates whilst meeting this year's suppliers.

Wednesday, 9 October

Heads of Agency Breakfast

The breakfast provides Local Governments with an opportunity to speak directly with Director-Generals and Heads of Agency about the matters impacting their communities.

Morning Session

Opening Performance

The all-new beautiful and emotional Dancing on Country video opened LGC24, featuring First Nations people from across Western Australia, followed by the amazing Katy Steele and the incredible WALGA State Councillor and City of Kwinana Deputy Mayor, Barry Winmar's Welcome to Country.

Michael McQueen

Multi-award winning speaker, change strategist and bestselling author of ten books Michael McQueen presented '5 Key Trends for Local Government - Deep Dive into AI and Disruptive Tech'.

State of Play

Masterfully moderated by media legend Gareth Parker, the State of Play panel session featured high-profile State politicians former Premier the Hon. Colin Barnett MLA AC, former leader of the Nationals, the Hon. Brendon Grylls MLA and Labor big hitter the Hon. Alannah MacTiernan MLC and covered a range of relevant and topical issues inciting great back and forth from the political heavyweights.

Minister's Address and Place Innovations Awards

Minister for Local Government Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA addressed delegates, discussing key initiatives and announcing the winners of the Minister for Local Government's Place Innovation Awards. Congratulations to the City of Melville, the City of Subiaco, and the Shire of Carnarvon for delivering inspiring projects and policies that continue to have a positive impact on locals.

Lucinda Hartley

As an award-winning urban designer and a cofounder of world-leading social analytics company Neighbourlytics, Lucinda Harley is a globally recognised expert in the future of work and living.

She offered inspiration and practical advice through her keynote on navigating some of the biggest questions of our time including 'What will the future of living and the future of work look like?' and 'How can technology be a force for good in turbulent times?'





AGM

WALGA's 2024 AGM was held with 225 Voting Delegates in attendance and 128 Local Governments represented. For an overview of the Six Member Motions, see page 27.

Cocktail Gala

Held under the glass canopy of The Kingsman Marquee with panoramic views of the Swan River in the heart of the CBD, WALGA's Cocktail Gala was one of the first events to take place in this new and exclusive space. The evening included an incredible performance from William's Creative Co. and the awarding of WALGA Life Membership to City of Cockburn Mayor, Logan Howlett, JP.

Thursday, 10 October

Icons Breakfast

A dynamic duo of down-to-earth icons, Layne Beachley AO shared her triumphs and challenges on the surfing world stage and beyond, while Kirk delved into his musical career, most notably highlighted by memories with Michael Hutchence in INXS and his inspirational advocacy work in recent years. The breakfast concluded with an acoustic rendition of 'Never Tear Us Apart' by Kirk on the guitar – supported by Layne with the sax solo on her phone!

Showcase in Pixels

Logie award winner Joel Jackson took the stage with a rendition of David Bowie's 'Heroes,' highlighting the 2024 Showcase in Pixels finalists.

Collaborative Panel Session

The Community Brains Trust collaborative panel session featured the City of Albany Mayor, Greg Stocks, and CEO Andrew Sharpe, Town Teams Movement General Manager – Partnerships and Impact Kendell Terell, and Dr Stephanie Godrich from the Curtin University Food Community Project as they highlighted collaborative innovation in both Local Government and community projects.

Opposition Leader's Address

Leader of the Opposition Shane Love MLA announced a pledge from the Nationals in his address to invest \$276 million to establish the Safer Local Roads program, delivering targeted and effective road safety improvements to more than 8,200 kilometres of high-speed Local Government roads in direct response to WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities ask.

Breakout sessions

This year's breakout sessions, 'Level Up! Renewable Technology in Our Cities - Supported by Energy Policy WA' and 'In Case of Emergency - A Spotlight on Regional Telecommunications' provided an opportunity to ask subject matter experts their thoughts on topics relevant to the sector.

Chadden Hunter - closing keynote

As Sir David Attenborough's right-hand man, wildlife filmmaker, environmentalist and adventurer Dr Chadden Hunter has spent the last 20 years documenting everything from snow leopards in Pakistan to tribal ceremonies in Africa.

Dr Hunter's closing keynote inspired delegates with messages on purpose, our future on the planet and those watershed moments that shape our lives.

MC Di Darmody

Once again Di Darmody was the consummate professional guiding the audience through the convention program.

Local Lens



City of Albany

On Tuesday, 1 October, Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre celebrated its 5th anniversary of the 'Long Live You' program with a morning full of senior-focused exercise classes to mark the milestone.

The Long Live You program has grown steadily over the past five years, inspiring community members that are more than 50 years old to stay active, healthy, and socially connected.

Today the program continues to thrive, with a 56% increase in Long Live You Members in the last financial year and classes consistently at capacity.

Provided by Laura Condon, Communications Coordinator – City of Albany



City of Armadale

The City of Armadale proudly sponsored three of Rowing WA's marquee events this year, culminating in the WA State Championships on 14-15 September 2024. The event was held at the world class Champion Lakes Regatta Centre and saw the best of WA's elite and club athletes competing, including several athletes who recently competed at the Paris Olympic Games. The City's partnership with Rowing WA included the Masters State Championships in May and the All Schools State Championships in August, both held at the Champion Lakes Regatta Centre.

Pictured: City of Armadale Mayor Ruth Butterfield with athletes Lily Lockwood-Case and Izzy Utley from The UWA Boat Club.

Provided by Nic Errol, Media & Communications Advisor – City of Armadale



Shire of Ashburton

From getting ready for Halloween to learning to skate, the Shire of Ashburton's Communities teams were hard at work delivering activations for their youth this School Holidays! Although it was hard to pick what they enjoyed most, Tom Price's skating community night with special guests Skate of Mind was a crowd favourite, with young people learning all the tips and tricks they needed to wow the town.

Skating also hit the parks in Paraburdoo and Onslow, with the skating programs across all three towns enjoyed by nearly 200 youth!

Pictured: Tom Price youth enjoying their Skate of Mind Community Night. Provided by Amelia Johnston, Manager Media and Communications and Gemma Taylor, Digital Communications Officer – Shire of Ashburton



Town of Bassendean

The Town of Bassendean has partnered with Connect Victoria Park Inc. to manage tenancies at Hyde Retirement Village, supporting affordable housing for vulnerable seniors. This agreement, running until at least August 2029, covers 11 of the 31 units, prioritising older women and those connected to the Town. Connect Victoria Park, a community housing provider, enhances residents' independence and social connections through regular visits and services. A successful pilot from 2022 to 2024 led to full occupancy and strong integration with the village's traditional residents, contributing to the village's vibrant, supportive community.

Pictured: Hyde Retirement Village. Provided by Elizabeth Martin, Communications Officer – Town of Bassendean



Shire of Brookton

The West Brookton Fire Station was formally opened on Friday, 13 September 2024.

Shire President, Cr Katrina Crute, and Chief Superintendent Paul Carr, cut the ribbon flanked by West Brookton Fire Brigade Captain Tim Evans and long-time brigade volunteer Georgie Beecroft (pictured).

The Shire of Brookton sourced funding for the station through the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Local Government Grants Scheme, funded by the Emergency Services Levy.

The original grant approval in February 2022 for just over \$600,000 was later increased by nearly \$300,000 in July 2023 due to rising construction costs. The LGGS grant covered the station's construction and fit-out, with the Shire of Brookton contributing an additional \$53,000 to date for site costs and other expenses.

Provided by Sandie Spencer, Executive Governance Officer – Shire of Brookton



Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

A beautiful spring day in September provided the perfect backdrop for the launch of the Great Southern Treasures WCP Civil Bloom Festival, featuring a market day hosted by the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup. The month-long festival invites regional communities to unite and celebrate all things that bloom in the region. Showcasing the unique charm of rural WA, the festival offers vibrant experiences for visitors from across the nation, highlighting the passion and creativity of the local community.

Provided by Pam Hull, Strategic Support & Projects Officer – Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup. Image Credit: Jenny Feast Photography/Great Southern Treasures



City of Bunbury

On Saturday, 7 September the Bunbury Regional Art Gallery celebrated the opening of the Noongar Country 2024 exhibition. The Noongar Country 2024 - Our Elders, Our Pathfinders Opening and Awards event saw over 150 attendees come together to celebrate a special exhibition honouring Noongar Elders and their continued dedication to community, family and Country. Curated by Zali Morgan, Katelyn Whitehurst (pictured) and Amanda Bell, this exhibition showcases a range of captivating artworks by Noongar Elders and highlights their unique stories, cultural knowledge, contributions to community.

Pictured: Noongar Country 2024 Co-Curator Katelyn Whitehurst presenting the Noongar Maaman Runner Up award to Arthur Eades at the opening of the Our Elders, Our Pathfinders exhibition

Provided by Holly Ashdown, Communications Officer – City of Bunbury



City of Busselton

Geopathe Leisure Centre's Inclusive Sports Day welcomed all abilities.

With the conclusion of the recent Paralympic Games, it was a perfect time to showcase inclusive sports in the City of Busselton.

Over 80 participants enjoyed a variety of sports, including Wheelchair AFL and Basketball, Sitting Volleyball, Blind Soccer and Tennis. This event wasn't just about providing people living with disability the chance to participate, but also a fantastic educational opportunity for high school students on disability awareness and social inclusion.

Thank you to Sport4All, Blind Sports WA, Volleyball WA, Wheelchair Sports South West Inc. and WA All Abilities Football who supported the day.

Pictured: Leisure Centres Team Leader, Brad Scott; Community Development Officer and Sports Inclusion Coach, Mel Egan; with Busselton Senior High School Students playing Wheelchair Basketball

Provided by Adrian Fisher, Recreation and Community Development Coordinator – City of Busselton



Town of Cambridge

The Town of Cambridge hosted more than 90 students and their families at the 2024 Local Schools Art Exhibition opening on 4 September. This annual event supports young artists by providing a platform to showcase their talent, with the Town fostering their creative development.

The exhibition, displayed at the Boulevard Centre for two weeks, was judged by Elected Members, local artists, and art enthusiasts. Tayla Rowbottam, a Year 5 student from Holy Spirit Primary School, won the overall exhibition prize for her artwork, "Animal Eyes."

Pictured: Overall exhibition prize winner Tayla Rowbottam of Holy Spirit Primary School pictured with her parents and her winning artwork at the 2024 Local Schools Art Exhibition opening night. Provided by Matt Lau, Senior Media & Communications Officer - Town of Cambridge. Photo credit: Stephen Heath Photography

City of Canning

The City of Canning is excited to announce the launch of the Wanju Neighbourhoods StreetSport Program, a new community initiative generously supported by a Department of Justice grant. It is designed to provide positive and engaging activities for young people aged 10-15 years living in the Queens Park and Bentley St James areas.

"The StreetSport Program represents a fantastic opportunity for our young residents to develop skills, build friendships, and stay active. We are proud to support projects that provide our youth with positive alternatives and help them thrive within their communities," said Mayor Patrick Hall.

The program will be delivered in partnership with Bentley Primary School, Football West, Perth Basketball Association, and WA Cricket, supported by the WA Police, the Salvation Army, and Cannington headspace.

Provided by Mischa Tan, Marketing & Communications Advisor – City of Canning



Shire of Carnarvon

Wayne and Jeanette Taylor lead Carnarvon's Litter Legends, a community initiative supported by the Shire of Carnarvon, dedicated to keeping the town clean. Each Friday, they and local volunteers tackle litter hotspots, creating a cleaner environment.

The group evolved from the Clean Community Coffees initiative, where participants received coffee vouchers in exchange for picking up litter. Wayne and Jeanette stood out for their dedication, often collecting bags of litter while redeeming just one coffee.

Residents are encouraged to join the Friday cleanups or collect litter at their convenience and receive a coffee voucher as a thank you for their efforts.

Pictured: Jeanette Taylor (with Granddaughter), Helen Tipton, Bill Smith, Keely Robertson, Stephanie Leca, Jenny Guard, Sandy, June Mckenzie and Wayne Taylor. Provided by Ashleigh Barr, Communications & Engagement Officer, Shire of Carnarvon

City of Cockburn

The City of Cockburn and The University of Western Australia are collaborating to drive sustainable development of the local blue economy and the thriving business community that has grown up around it over several decades.

Located on a vibrant coastline, the City is an active leader in the blue economy, and has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the UWA Oceans Institute.

The MoU will support the development of ocean-related industries and infrastructure, education, training and research to support investment attraction and employment in the growing sector, positioning WA as a leader in the blue economy.

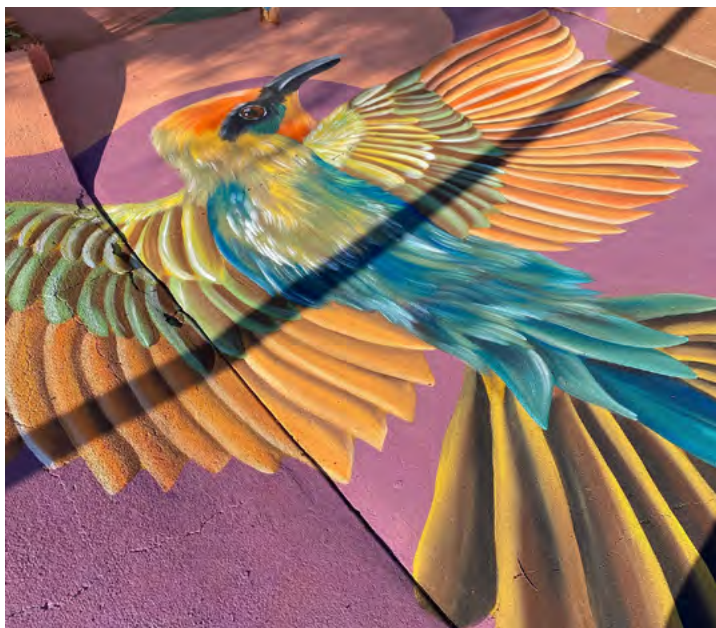
Pictured (L-R): City of Cockburn Director Planning and Sustainability Daniel Arndt, City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett, Western Australian Marine Science Institution Chief Executive Luke Twomey and UWA Oceans Institute Director Professor Christophe Gaudin commemorate the MoU at Port Coogee Marina. Provided by Michele Nugent, Media & Communications Officer – City of Cockburn



Shire of Coolgardie

Children in the Shire of Coolgardie recently had the exciting opportunity to attend a Basketball Clinic in Kambalda, led by Coach Albert Ellis (Dip.T, B.Ed II). While the clinic focused on basketball, Coach Ellis also brought his expertise as a Life Skills Mentor, offering participants a chance to not only improve their game but also develop valuable life skills along the way. It was a fantastic way for local kids to stay active and grow both on and off the court.

Pictured: Coach Albert Ellis pictured with Leisure and Recreation Development Officer pictured with local Kambalda and Kalgoorlie children aged 5-11 at a recent Basketball Clinic. Provided by Joy Charlton, Communication and Media Officer – Shire of Coolgardie



Shire of East Pilbara

Three vibrant street murals have been commissioned to enhance the liveability of Newman. The work of Martumili artist Marlene Anderson has been transformed into a colourful mural installed on the footpath at Miner's Promise Park. Shire President Anthony Middleton said the mural projects received Regional Economic Development Grant Funding and will link into the Art Trail via the Martumili Tourism App, still under development. Further murals are currently being completed at Lee Lane and Knox Way in Newman. The two mural artists engaged on the three projects. Mel McVee and Tayla Beynon expect the projects to be completed by early December.

Pictured: Part of the Knox Lane mural by Tayla Beynon shows a Rainbow Bee Eater. Provided by Sally Spalding, Communications & Engagement Officer, Shire of East Pilbara



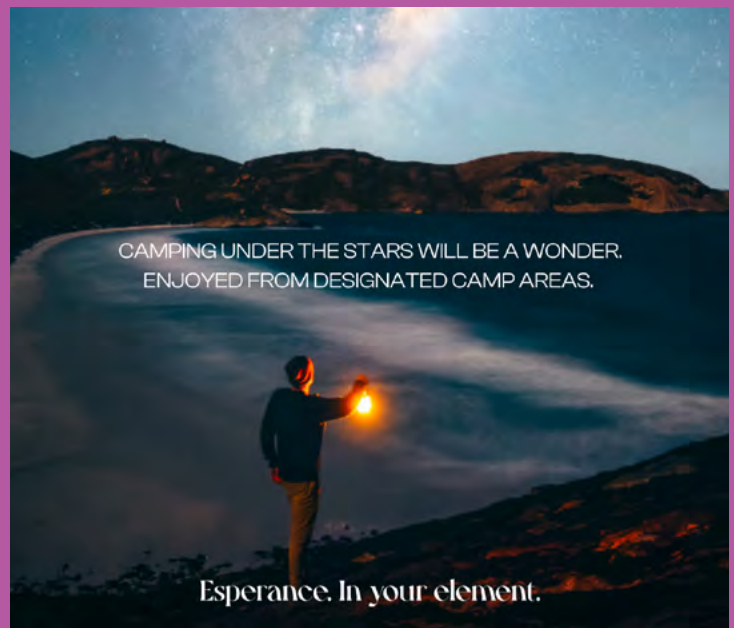
Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

In Fitzroy Crossing, within the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, flood recovery is a top priority. Recovery officers are actively visiting affected communities to foster connection, share stories and enjoy good food and music while discussing weather changes ahead of the wet season and providing recovery updates.

These gatherings, called "Cuppa Circles," promote meaningful connections, laughter, and support. Recently, the Shire hosted two Cuppa Circles in Loanbun and Bayulu, attended by Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services, Legal Aid, and local artist Lucy.

Together, the group discussed important issues and celebrated a shared sense of community and resilience amidst the recovery efforts.

Pictured: Sally Marvin, Colleen Garner and Elizabeth Jingle
 Provided by Maria O'Connell, Media and Communications Officer – Shire of Derby/West Kimberley



Shire of Esperance

An Australian-first initiative aiming to encourage responsible travel behaviour among visitors was launched in Esperance on Friday, 27 September. The Shire of Esperance, in partnership with regional tourism organisation Australia's Golden Outback, revealed "The Esperance Promise" to provide guidance on how to visit sustainably, and crucially - return home safely.

The Esperance Promise works to prevent the kind of anti-tourist sentiment recently on display across Europe, promoting respect, sustainability and meaningful interactions between visitors and locals. This will naturally lead to a more sustainable long-term local tourism industry. Visitors are encouraged to visit The Esperance Promise website and make the Promise.

Pictured: One part of the new Esperance Promise. Provided by Mary Bidstrup, Media and Communications Officer – Shire of Esperance



Shire of Gingin

On Friday 11 October, 30 people turned out for a special tree planting ceremony at Granville Park, Gingin. To celebrate Arbor Day back in 1898, a Sugar Gum eucalyptus was planted in the Shire gardens on Brockman Street by local pioneer Ralph H. Hill, but in 2020 the Sugar Gum began lifting at the roots and after a distinguished lifespan of 122 years, it had to be removed. Fortunately, seedlings were propagated from this tree for the Shire by Chittering Landcare, and five years on the Shire was pleased to host the official planting and unveiling of a commemorative plaque which included the original from 1898, kindly restored by the Gingin Men's Shed. Councillor Linda Balcombe officiated the unveiling and soil turning with Hill family descendants Dot Glanz and Vi Howell. The new site will provide the sapling easy access to water and care by Shire staff – and in time, provide a lovely shady spot for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Pictured: Cr Linda Balcombe and Dot Glanz with the newly planted Sugar Gum. Provided by Meredith Taylor, Coordinator Communications & Marketing and photo by Oliva Forbes, Community Development Officer – Shire of Gingin



City of Gosnells

In a first for Western Australia, the City of Gosnells will trial an innovative food waste recycling process, cutting carbon emissions and turning food waste into sought-after products.

The process uses insect larvae to convert food waste into quality fertiliser, before the larvae are harvested to provide protein for animal feed.

Mayor Terresa Lynes said the three-year GOsFO pilot program will initially involve 2,000 households on an opt-in basis.

"The City is committed to reducing carbon emissions and GOsFO will help us do that, in partnership with thousands of residents who are interested in sustainability and reducing waste," she said.

Pictured: City of Gosnells Mayor Terresa Lynes. Provided by Carmen Carter, Communications Officer – City of Gosnells



Shire of Harvey

The Shire of Harvey has completed its inaugural visit to the City of Moka, Japan.

This visit is part of the Shire's 2022 Friendship City Agreement with the City of Moka, which encourages both Local Governments to meet regularly and promote cultural exchange and educational opportunities in local primary and secondary schools.

The delegation included Councillors, Executive staff, the Shire's Economic Development team and a local Japanese teacher.

While there, the Shire connected with visiting representatives from the USA and Taiwan, attended a Friendship City symposium and celebrated the City of Moka's 70th anniversary.

Pictured: The Shire of Harvey delegation with Japanese hosts in the City of Moka, shortly before the City's 70th anniversary parade. Shire President Michelle Campbell, pictured middle, wears a gifted short winter Japanese coat known as a hanen. Provided by Tamra Carr, Coordinator Marketing and Communications – Shire of Harvey



City of Karratha

The City of Karratha met with the Premier and Ministers as part of the State Government's Community Cabinet visit to Karratha to better understand the issues facing their local community.

Pictured: State Cabinet meeting at the Red Earth Arts Precinct – August
 Provided by Kylie Taylor, Communications Support Officer – City of Karratha



Shire of Mundaring

Stoneville Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade's new \$1.2 million station officially opened on 14 September, funded by \$900,000 from the Australian Government and \$300,000 from Shire of Mundaring.

The station which includes modern features and expanded space for firefighting equipment and the addition of female changerooms, hopes this will help the brigade grow its volunteer numbers.

Shire President Paige McNeil affirmed the vital role of volunteers in bushfire management stating, "Our volunteers are our first line of defence. It is our duty to equip them with the resources they need to keep our community safe."

Pictured: Tania Lawrence MP and Shire President Paige McNeil with Members of the Stoneville Volunteer Bushfire Brigade

City of Mandurah

Four City of Mandurah lifeguards from the Mandurah Aquatic and Recreation Centre (MARC) were honoured at the 2024 Royal Life Saving Bravery Awards for saving a man's life while on duty back in May.

Ryan Felton, Kate Chaisty, Debbie Gillard and Phillip David were among the first to respond when a local man fell unconscious while swimming in the MARC's indoor pool after suffering a severe heart attack. The team performed CPR and administered a defibrillator, and the man went on to make a full recovery.

Ms Chaisty received a Gold Medallion while Ms Gillard, Mr Felton and Mr David received Gold Stars for their professionalism and care. Six other staff Members at the Centre received Bravery Commendations for their efforts in the rescue.

Pictured: Lifeguards Ryan Felton, Kate Chaisty, Debbie Gillard and Phillip David at the Bravery Awards. Provided by Holly Sutton, Communications and Public Relations Advisor, Strategic Communications – City of Mandurah. Image by Royal Life Saving WA



City of Joondalup

The City of Joondalup has added to its internationally recognised achievements for environmental management, claiming two major awards at the 2024 International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) World Green City Awards.

These prestigious awards showcase bold and inspiring urban greening initiatives by cities from around the world, all of whom are leading the way in shaping a greener urban future.

The City won the Living Green for Water category, which recognises Joondalup's commitment to building a more waterwise, liveable and resilient City in the context of a changing climate.

In addition, Joondalup was named the inaugural AIPH Youth Award winner for its efforts to support, engage and collaborate with young people in regard to urban greening and creating opportunities for youth in social, recreational and sporting activities.

Pictured: City of Joondalup Environmental Development Coordinator Danielle Bowler, Joondalup Mayor Albert Jacob, City of Joondalup Manager Parks and Natural Environment Michael Hamling and City of Joondalup Manager Strategic and Organisational Development Rebecca Maccario. Provided by Stuart McLea, Media and Communications Officer – City of Joondalup



Shire of Murray

During this recent school holiday period, the Shire of Murray buzzed with an array of activities hosted by the Murray Aquatic and Leisure Centre (MALC), the Murray Library, and the Murray Youth for Youth Team.

Some of the holiday highlights included pop-up skate park sausage sizzles, a youth choir, movie PJs, and pizza nights, Dungeons and Dragons nights and more.

Creative minds were also allowed to explore their curiosities through events at the Murray Library's fantastic physics, youth virtual reality and arts and crafts sessions.

In addition, families could enjoy the plethora of programs offered at the MALC, including multiple swim clinics, a fun-filled inflatable day at the pool, and basketball events.

Once again making these school holidays one to remember, and the next certainly one to look forward to.

Pictured: Two curious minds creating their paper helicopters during the Murray Library's Fantastic Physics activity. Provided by Kaylin Heyns, Digital Communications and Marketing Officer



City of Perth

An abundance of native plants and flowers have been planted across the City of Perth, bringing a burst of spring colour to the streets.

The natives not only add to the beauty of the city, but also have a positive impact on the urban ecosystem.

Pictured: City of Perth Parks and Environment team member planting spring natives at the Thomas Road median strip



Shire of Narembeen

The Shire of Narembeen's 100th Celebration was a great success, bringing the community together for a day of fun and entertainment for all ages. Highlights included kids' activities, live music, delicious food from local groups, and impressive static displays. The formal proceedings featured the placement of a time capsule and acknowledgments of key contributors. The day concluded with a spectacular fireworks display, lighting up the sky and creating a memorable experience for everyone involved.

Provided by Georgia Atkins, CRC Project Officer – Shire of Narembeen



Shire of Shark Bay

Beats in the Bay is a free annual arts and cultural festival hosted by the Shire of Shark Bay, held along the stunning Shark Bay foreshore in Denham. This unique event features live original music from local bands, artisanal markets, roving entertainment, and interactive workshops. In 2024, the festival introduced an Under 18 Musician Discovery, allowing young musicians the opportunity to showcase their talent. The 2025 event will expand further to include Astrotourism and a Cultural Connection experience with the Malgana People, enriching the festival's celebration of community and culture.

Provided by Michelle Fanali – Community Development Officer; Event Co-ordinator, Beats in the Bay; Janelle Caddy – Musician Consultant – Shire of Shark Bay



Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

On Monday, 14 October 2024 the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale received a visit from the Premier Roger Cook MLA and Ministers, as the Community Cabinet came to Mundijong.

Shire President Rob Coales and CEO Paul Martin presented to Cabinet on the Shire's key advocacy projects, and the Shire signed a \$18.5 million funding agreement with the State Government for one of these projects - the Keirnan Park Recreation Precinct. This is on top of \$3.5 million funding already received.

Sport and Recreation Minister David Templeman found time to drop in on the mobile library with Member for Darling Range Hugh Jones MLA.

Pictured: Hon. David Templeman MLA, Mobile Library Officer Cindy Bain and Hugh Jones MLA Member for Darling Range. Provided by Issy Rule, Strategic Communications & Advocacy Advisor – Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale



City of Subiaco

Subiaco Library has achieved 'working towards becoming dementia friendly' status, demonstrating the City's dedication to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for people living with dementia and their families.

Several key initiatives were initiated, including free information sessions, and Dementia Memory Kits to engage and stimulate those with dementia.

Subiaco Mayor David McMullen said, "The dedication of library staff and volunteers in raising awareness and offering practical support for individuals living with dementia is incredibly valuable. It plays an important role in our initiatives to ensure Subiaco is a welcoming and accessible place to live and visit."

Pictured: Coordinator Library Services Kirsten Cooper who was integral to the library's Dementia Memory Kits. Provided by the City of Subiaco Communications Team

City of Stirling

Stirling Libraries – Karrinyup recently hit the big 5-0! Opening its doors on 19 September 1974 as the Karrinyup Cultural Centre Library, it kicked off with an impressive 40,000 books – well above the standard for the time. The City of Stirling marked the milestone by stepping back to the groovy 70s, sharing memories, and celebrating its evolution. From vintage photos to community stories, it was a day filled with nostalgia and fun.

Pictured: Mayor Mark Irwin with City of Stirling Library Staff
Provided by Mikaela Henschel, Communications Officer – City of Stirling.



City of Wanneroo

The Alkimos Aquatic and Recreation Centre project has achieved an exciting milestone with the release of the construction tender this month.

The City is grateful to have received funding commitments of \$30 million from the Australian Government (\$25 million under the Priority Community Infrastructure Program and \$5 million under the Female Facilities and Water Safety Stream), \$12.6 million from the State Government (\$10 million under the WA Recovery Program, \$2.5 million from the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund and \$147,592 through the Changing Places program) and \$14.2 million through the Alkimos-Eglinton Developer Contribution Plan.

Pictured: A drone shot of the Alkimos Aquatic and Recreation Centre site. Provided by the City of Wanneroo Communications and Brand Team



Shire of Wandering

The establishment of the Wandering Roads Board was constituted on 6 October, 1874.

On Friday, 13 and Saturday, 14 September the Shire celebrated with food, drinks, music and dancing, as well as celebrations at the primary school for their 100th anniversary. Shire and community buildings were open for viewing, there were food vans, old fashioned games on the oval, history display boards, cutting of the 150th anniversary birthday cake, live music and topped off with a fireworks extravaganza.

His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson and his wife Darrilyn attended for the celebrations on Saturday and were warmly received by the Wandering community.

Pictured: His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson at the community event. Provided by Lisa Boddy, Executive Assistant – Shire of Wandering



Shire of West Arthur

The Shire of West Arthur recently installed stage 1 of the Darkan Community Builders Art Path project. This consists of 7 double-sided panels that showcase local attractions and industries, as well as highlighting what locals love about living in their community. The colourful images, taken by local photographers, were designed to draw people to the main street.

Provided by Sharon Bell, Community Development Officer – Shire of West Arthur

Shire of York

York: A Rising Film Destination

The Shire of York is excited to announce the town's growing role in the film industry, with three major productions recently filmed in the town.

- *Runt* premiered in September, bringing York to cinema audiences
- Season two of *The Twelve*, streaming on Binge and Foxtel, showcases York as a stunning backdrop
- *Overture*, filmed in August 2024, was directed by award-winning Bruce Beresford, known for *Driving Miss Daisy*, and features stars like Susie Porter and Bryan Brown.

These films have contributed over \$1 million to the local economy, directly benefiting local businesses, accommodation providers, and tourism. York's picturesque appeal is boosting visitor numbers and supporting the vibrant local economy.

Pictured: *Runt* filming taking place in the Shire of York. Provided by Allan Brady, Media and Engagement Officer – Shire of York



Shire of Wyalkatchem

On Wednesday, 14 August 2024, Wyalkatchem had the privilege to host the prestigious Melbourne Cup Tour.

The celebrations began with a street parade led by horse and cart on our main street. Retired jockey Damien Oliver rode on the sulky with the Cup in hand. The parade was followed by a stop at Ashelford Park to meet and greet the local school children and local residents who came to see the Cup in person.

After the parade, a delicious High Tea was held at the Town Hall, with entertainment by the Wheatbelt Warblers Choir.

The evening saw the Cocktail Party with Dan Garner performing acoustically as the crowd mingled and chatted into the night.

The day was a huge highlight for our small town, loved by all who attended.

Pictured: Shire of Wyalkatchem staff and residents at Town Hall with retired jockey Damien Oliver and the Melbourne Cup. Provided by Nikki Towell, Community Development Officer – Shire of Wyalkatchem



Annual General Meeting

Each year, WALGA holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Members during the annual Local Government Convention.

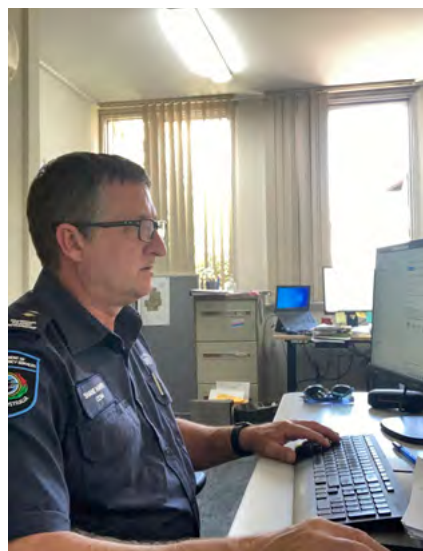
WALGA's 2024 AGM was held on Wednesday, 9 October with 225 Voting Delegates in attendance and 128 Local Governments represented.

Six Member Motions, as follows, were considered and supported by Members at the AGM:

- 7.1** *Amendments to Cat Act 2011 - Allow Local Governments to Make Local Laws to Contain Cats to the Owner's Property*
- 7.2** *Advocacy for Legislative Reforms to Counter Land-Banking*
- 7.3** *Advocacy for Expansion of Differential Rating to Include Long Term Unoccupied Commercial Buildings (Property Activation Levy)*
- 7.4** *Action on Asbestos for Western Australia*
- 7.5** *Addressing the Impracticality of Local Governments Funding Department of Communities and GROH Houses*
- 7.6** *Advocacy for Accessibility*

The action proposed to be taken in relation to each of the resolutions will be considered by State Council at its meeting on Friday, 6 December.

For full resolutions, please visit the WALGA website.



Putting 'Community' at the heart of Community Emergency Services Management

How Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Shane Harris has become invaluable to the Shire of Cranbrook and the community.

The Shire of Cranbrook is experiencing a significant transformation in its fire management capabilities, thanks to the appointment of Shane Harris as the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM). Harris, who serves the Shires of Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, and Kojonup, has quickly become an invaluable part of the local firefighting effort, bringing his extensive experience in fire management and construction to the table.

CESMs are an important resource which allow Local Governments to improve their ability to perform all-hazard preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery (PPRR) initiatives within their communities.

CESMs are particularly valuable to smaller regional Local Governments with responsibility for Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (VBFBs) that lack the financial resources to sustain a dedicated Emergency Management Officer.

Former Shire of Cranbrook Mayor Phil Horrocks emphasised the importance of having a CESM, highlighting how the increasing need for occupational health and safety measures in firefighting prompted the move.

"There had been a push for more occupational health and safety, more rules and regulations around fighting fires, and I thought we should certainly have a look at this [getting a CESM]," said Horrocks.



Supporting our Volunteer Furies.

The West at its Best.

He noted that while Council supported the decision, some of the local brigades were initially resistant. However, Harris' dedication and understanding quickly won them over.

"Shane won over the brigades very quickly. His main job was administration – to stand back and do all the admin stuff, and all the comms were done by him. The Chief organises the troops on the ground, and Shane, well he sits back and holds all the equipment and gets in touch with everyone, and it works really well."

Harris's volunteer background has also contributed to his success in the role, and his understanding of the needs and challenges of volunteers has helped him create strong working relationships with the local brigades.

"My background is volunteering in a Bush Fire Brigade as well as in fire rescue as a volunteer, so that's where my fire and emergency management experience comes from," said Harris.

"I still volunteer with the local town brigade just to keep my skill set up and to keep up to date with things so I don't lose touch with what it means to be a volunteer.

"I spent that time when I started to get to know the volunteers. And I mean, one way to get volunteers on side is to ask what they need you to do and do it.

"If I'm planning training and I get an 'oh well, we're busy during the day' I say 'I understand let's catch up in the evening I don't care five o'clock, six o'clock, seven o'clock, you tell me.'

"Whatever suits them, that's what will suit me, then all of a sudden you can see it change to 'okay, this guy's actually willing to work with us, not against us,'" he said.

"That's part of the job. Is that you've got to be prepared to work outside of normal hours and be there in support when something does happen.

As part of his role, Harris is also involved in community education and outreach. He works closely with elderly residents to ensure their safety in case of emergencies and educates children in schools about fire safety.

"Working with the community is a big one," Harris explained. "It's something that drives me more and more, seeing that you can actually make a difference.

"My motto is that I'm only as good as the people that are working around me."

As Cranbrook's CESM, Harris has become an essential link between the volunteers, Local Government, and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). His ability to manage both the operational and administrative aspects has not only improved the efficiency of the local brigades but also helped secure vital resources and funding.

Shire of Cranbrook President George Pollard said Harris was instrumental in securing funding for the building of a new fire shed.



"Thanks to Shane, we're going to build a great \$600,000 fire shed for our town brigade. We're lucky he was a builder in a previous life so he understands how to put it all together. He can speak the building language and also the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) language."

This new fire shed is being funded through a grant from the Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGs), which Harris was instrumental in securing.

"When applying for the funding, I had some key words I was able to use from my past experience tendering for jobs or working with clients," Harris explained.

"I was able to design something that was fit for purpose and probably half the cost of what a standard DFES shed would be, which I think helped us get it over the line and secure LGGs funding.

"We're in the midst now of starting the process of finalising the design and what we want in it, and then it'll be tendered and we'll start the process," Harris added.

President Pollard reinforced how significant this achievement was for the community. "It's a real tick for Shane that he got that because before him, we didn't actually think we'd get the funding."

WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities calls to expand the Community Emergency Services Manager Program to all Local Governments to bolster local emergency management capability across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

So why should every Local Government have access to a CESM? President Pollard puts it best:

"We just want to go to the fire, put the fire out, and then go home. We get the guys with all this experience who are happy to be volunteers, and with the CESM they can do that – just volunteer.

Our CESM then helps do all their paperwork, gets their PPEWW, all of that; I can't speak highly enough of having a CESM, it's a great idea."



Thanks to Shane, we're going to build a great \$600,000 fire shed for our town brigade.

Shire of Cranbrook

President George Pollard





The 2024-25 High Threat Fire Season

At the time of Western Councillor going to print, many of WALGA's Member Local Governments have already battled significant fire emergencies in metropolitan Perth and regional WA, including in the Shires of Menzies, Esperance, Yilgarn, Nannup, Dandaragan and the City of Kwinana.

We are reminded that our 20,000 Volunteers in our Bushfire Brigades will once again be on the frontline protecting communities throughout the summer months.

WALGA is asking the State Government for more financial support and resources for Emergency Management, including equipment, buildings, kit, hazard mitigation and Community Emergency Service Managers, through WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities 'The West at its Best' initiatives.

Pictured: The Shire of Capel (Elgin) Volunteer Bushfire Brigade at a controlled burn



Golden Skateparks

Do you have an Olympic Gold Medallist-in-waiting rolling around your local skatepark..?

Incredibly, two of Australia's Olympic gold medallists from Paris this year grew up skating at the same community skatepark – Elanora Oval in the City of Gold Coast. Both Keegan Palmer and Arisa Trew began shredding at the humblest of humble skate bowls as kids at Elanora, some 95km from Brisbane and 500m from the ocean at Palm Beach.

18 year old Palmer won his second Olympic gold in August this year and paid tribute to his home track and his 14-year fellow medallist Arisa, telling the ABC,

“We grew up skating at the same park together, Elanora in the Gold Coast. Elanora's holding it down right now! A hundred per cent, Arisa's gold was an inspiration for me.

“We're the king and queen of the skateboarding park right now and we both grew up in the same town.”

Skate parks are now a huge part of the facilities mix that West Australian Local Governments are offering kids, like Keegan and Arisa, and their families.

These parks abound through WA, metro and regional, often sited at ovals incorporating pump and BMX tracks. Throw in a potential organised sport pathway for potential Olympians and Local Governments can start to eye off funding schemes like the State's Community Sports and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF).

The Cities of Albany and Bunbury have mature spectacular, significant skate parks heavily used by locals of varying levels of skill and age.

Albany's Youth Challenge Park, a combined skate plaza and pump track in the middle of town, recently won the Parks & Leisure Association WA Playspace Award (Over \$500,000).

Skaters and riders of all ages frequent the park with older skaters mentoring the younger skaters, passing on important skills and etiquette lessons in using a skate park appropriately.

In a cool nod to the demographic, Albany's Park has free wi-fi.

Mayor of Albany Greg Stocks said the success of Youth Challenge Park is a testament to what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared vision.

“The Youth Challenge Park is not just a playspace; it's a place where young people can develop their skills, connect with others, and feel a sense of belonging,” he said.

“Input from our local youth and the collaboration with organisations like Common Ground and Skate Sculpture has resulted in a space that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our community.

“This park is a hub for creativity, resilience, and positive engagement, offering young people the opportunity to learn, grow, and build confidence in a supportive environment.”

Jaysen Miguel is the Mayor of the City of Bunbury and gets that the Bunbury Skatepark is more than a place to hang out and roll around.

“I have been to watch a number of competition skate-offs. Some of these kids are just fearless and crazy in what they do, but I've got no doubt that there's a serious future in that. These kids might be able to make a living or career out of their skills.”

Competition events were considered by Council and the corporate partners during the design and build of the park.

We asked the question, what does the next big thing look like?



Upping the game
on sports facilities.



The West at its Best.

"We'd really like to have conversations about bringing events here. First and foremost, it is a community infrastructure for our everyday use, but when we've got the opportunities to showcase some of Australia's best, it gives our youngsters a chance to look at what they might be able to do if they continue honing their skills."

So, back to the Olympians from Elanora Oval.

The Mayor of the Gold Coast Council Tom Tate reckons Keegan Palmer and Arisa Trew "put the gold in Gold Coast."

He told Western Councillor,

"Following Arisa Trew's phenomenal win in the women's skateboarding event in Paris, the Gold Coast claimed another Olympic gold with Keegan Palmer defending his title in the men's park skateboarding event.

"I met (a slightly smaller) Keegan back in 2015. We celebrated his Tokyo Olympic win in 2021, and to see him triumph in Paris alongside Arisa is just incredible.

"The Gold Coast is producing true champions. Proud is an understatement!

"Both grew up training and competing at the southern Gold Coast's skateparks. Our investment in these facilities not only promotes health and fitness for our young people, but also produces Olympic champions."

Your Local Government skatepark. A gnarly community place, a potential training ground for Olympians and a potential CSRFF grant.



Some of these kids are just fearless and crazy in what they do, but I've got no doubt that there's a serious future in that. These kids might be able to make a living or career out of their skills.



City of Bunbury Mayor
Jaysen Miguel

When libraries are no longer just about books



The West at its Best.



Creating reel connections

[ID: Librarian puts sweaters on shirtless boys on romance covers] Not exactly the first thing you picture when you think of your local library? For 1.9 million viewers, this is the exact content that graced their Instagram feeds in August.

At the heart of this fresh digital approach is Nina Dakin, a Library Marketing Officer at the City of Cockburn who is leading a fresh way of showcasing libraries' relevance within the community through internet trends.

"That one reel in particular was very popular," said Nina.

"That was a bit of an anomaly. The knitting from that video I'm pretty sure came from the knitting ladies at Success Library who are so fabulous."

The City of Cockburn Libraries Instagram account is home to tongue-in-cheek photos, videos and content that highlight the many areas that local libraries cover.

"The goal of our social media is to provide the community with a fun, pop culture inspired way to engage with the library," Nina said.

"We want to break the old stereotypes of librarians shushing people and instead show that libraries are dynamic spaces for everyone."

The library's social media efforts often feature humorous content to catch the attention of people who might not typically think of libraries as engaging or relevant in their daily lives.

Nina shared another example, where they used a water-damaged copy of a Bee Gees biography to create a funny video set to the band's iconic song *Stayin' Alive*.

"Instead of a boring notice about protecting books from water damage, we made something fun and memorable."

The reach of these campaigns extends far beyond Cockburn Libraries' usual patrons.

"It's great to see people from different walks of life engage with the library content, even if they aren't regular visitors," Nina said.

"Social media creates an interconnected web where we can remind people that libraries exist and offer so much more than just books.

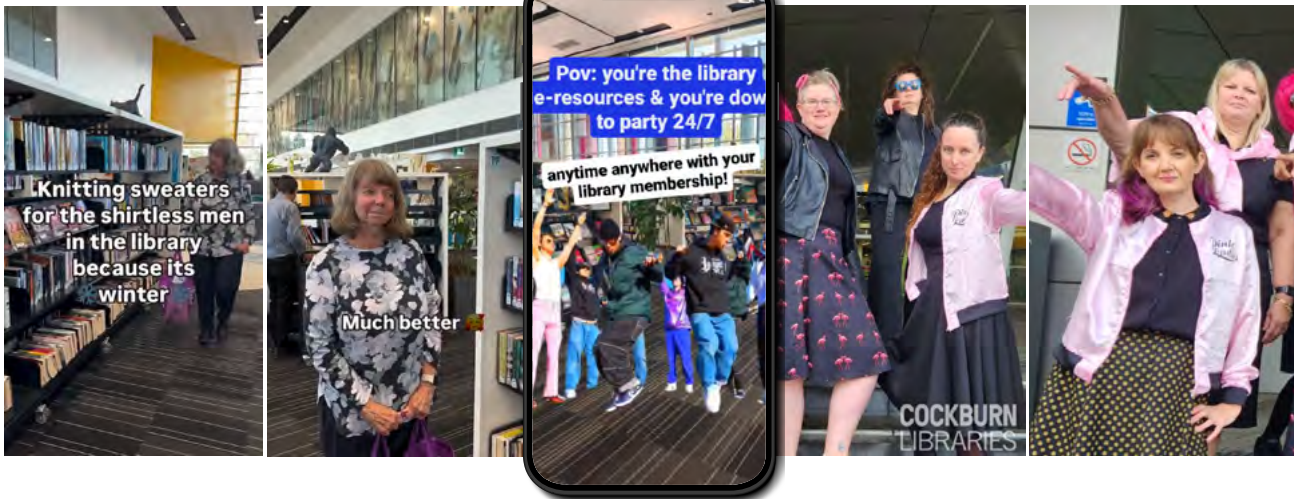
"It's also a great opportunity to put library programs and services in front of the eyes of young people who may not be subscribed to our newsletter, or just may not be thinking about libraries at the time."

Nina's creative approach has not only helped promote library services but also strengthened connections within the community. From engaging social media content to vital community programs, libraries continue to serve as essential hubs for connection, learning, and support in modern society.

Public libraries are well-loved community facilities. WA is home to 233 public libraries with over 637,000 active Members.

Every year, these libraries help Western Australians borrow nearly 11 million physical items; over 3.4 million digital items; and welcome 7.6 million visitors – that's about three visits for every person in WA.

"Libraries offer a third space for people, especially parents who need a place to socialise and connect before their kids start school, and older residents," Nina said.



"It's important to give them a voice and a space to be seen and heard. I've featured some of our regular knitting ladies and book club Members on our social media, and they've loved the recognition."

City of Cockburn Head of Library and Cultural Services Brittany Cover said public libraries had always been leaders in the use of innovative technology, enabling diverse communities easy and largely free access to the services they need.

"With gaps in digital literacy increasing, social isolation becomes a major health issue and with an increasingly diverse population, public libraries play a key role in connecting people to services, to other people and to engage them in a love of reading, connection with others, creativity, and just as a space where people can connect."

"To ensure our libraries are inclusive at Cockburn, we strive to provide a range of contemporary services which far eclipse loaning books," Ms Cover said.

"Libraries - we have three in Cockburn - are also important places for people to make social connections and feel a part of their community."

Ms Cover said engaging with the community in a fun way, including via social media, helped break down barriers to visiting a library, which promoted social inclusion, and encouraged reading, lifelong learning, and digital literacy.

"Around 30,000 people a month visit our Success, Coolbellup and Spearwood Libraries, run by the City of Cockburn. They welcome about 700 new Members every month, and lend about 55,000 items a month, with 24 per cent of these being e-loans," Ms Cover said.

However, while the services provided by libraries have changed, funding has not. The State Government provides direct support for public libraries through the provision of funds for library resources, however this is out of step with the needs of modern libraries and is falling behind what is required to keep up with the growing population and inflation.

WALGA's State Election Campaign "The West at its Best" calls for sustainable funding for public libraries to maintain and enhance service levels that meet the diverse needs of communities across WA and support the implementation of the WA Public Library Strategy 2022-2026.

"Increased State Government funding is vital to keep libraries relevant so they can continue to help the communities in Cockburn that have embraced them over decades, including Success Library which celebrated its 10th birthday in September," Ms Cover said.

"With increasing cost of living pressures in the community, more and more vulnerable people are turning to libraries."

As for Nina's favourite piece of content she's made?

"We had a *Grease* interactive movie that was a breast cancer fundraiser, and the entire staff dressed up as pink ladies and we just did a dance around the library and filmed it before the library opened in the morning.

"One of the librarians' mother had passed away from breast cancer, and they were all doing it to support her – they came to me with the video idea, and it was a really fabulous team bonding moment."

To see Cockburn Libraries video content, follow @cockburnlibraries on Instagram.



It's a great opportunity to put library programs and services in front of the eyes of young people who may not be subscribed to our newsletter, or just may not be thinking about libraries at the time.

Nina Dakin, Library Officer – Marketing – City of Cockburn





Elektrekking Australia

Renee McLennan is the former Mayor of Bassendean. Well regarded for her Mayoral skills, community-mindedness and environmental thinking, Renee and husband Tim are trekking around Australia. In an Electric Vehicle (EV). Towing a camper. With the kids.

"Well, when Tim was a child, his family did a similar trip on his Dad's long service leave, and it's always been something that had a huge impact on him, and so when the opportunity came for us to sort of recreate a similar trip with our children, it was something that was really appealing.

"Both myself and Tim are very conscious of trying to do the best we can for the planet, so we wanted to see if we could do this trip all electric.

"We thought it would be a good opportunity to dispel some of the myths that exist in Australia about the capability of EVs, especially now that battery technology has improved and with so much charging infrastructure going in. And there are more vehicles available in Australia."

Team McLennan headed north in WA in March ready to take on the EV charging challenges. Given WA has received funding from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and the State Government (administered by WALGA), Renee's observations on the network in our state are illuminative.

"I expected it to be at least a bit challenging, but it has been less challenging than we anticipated, particularly through northern WA where it's very remote. The WA EV network is going in well, that's made a huge difference, and has really opened up the state for travelling electric.

"The Northern Territory is probably less advanced in putting their infrastructure in. But there are other ways of charging. If you go and stay overnight at a station - which is what you do on this kind of trip - most of them are self-sufficient with

power, either through solar panels or some of them with their generators. So, there are charging options beyond just the formal charging stations that have gone in."

Renee and Tim and their kids are taking their time, which takes the pressure off the time-spent-charging-while-driving-around-Australia issue immensely. That said, there have been moments of "range anxiety."

"Oh yeah, there have been a couple of places where we've rolled into where we're staying with about 2% battery left, which is about seven kilometres range left in our vehicle. We could drop the camper at 10km before town and do the last bit without dragging that along until we can get to the fast charger, however, we haven't run out of charge yet."

The kit is souped up, Tim style. As our readers can see from the photos, the camper is pretty tricked out, with solar panels to charge the backup batteries. We asked Renee if the backups have been deployed?

"So we've got a Kia EV9, which has 100 kilowatt hour battery. If you're driving around the city, that would get you 550, maybe up to 600 kilometers. Driving on the country roads, probably more like 450km to 480km, and then if you put a camper on the back, that really reduces your range as well, obviously, because you're dragging two tons behind you. And so we get about 300km.

"Tim is the kind of person that likes tinkering, so he's made some modifications to the camper. Some of them are aerodynamic modifications, just to try and reduce the loss of range that we get while towing. And then he's also put a whole heap more batteries in and solar panels over the roof of the camper, so they act pretty much like a jerry can for us. Obviously the sun's shining a lot out here, charging those batteries all the time. If we were thinking we were going to



Driving

Emissions Down.

The West at its Best.



Oh yeah, there have been a couple of places where we've rolled into where we're staying with about 2% battery left, which is about seven kilometres range left in our vehicle...

Renee McLennan, former Mayor of Bassendean



run short of whichever destination we were heading to, then we could charge the car from the camper. We haven't needed to do that yet, though, so it's great to have the backup, but it's also great not to have to use it.

From feedback and word-of-mouth, Renee has heard there may be three other families doing full laps of Australia towing a camper or a caravan presently. The charging network is improving significantly and she believes the government investment is well worth it and well evident.

"Most of the charges are 150 kilowatts, which is great because if you rolled in on 0%, you could get up to 80% in 25 minutes. And after you've just driven 300km, you're ready to get out, go to the toilet, stretch your legs anyway.

"The only criticism of the network, and this has arisen because of challenges in finding appropriate land parcels, was that they're great if you're just driving an EV. If you're towing something on the back, most of the charges haven't been set up as drive through, so you need to unhitch the camper and charge, then re hitch whatever it is you're tying before you can continue on.

"For people like us who are on a trip and you're not in a hurry, that's not a problem. But if you were somebody who was just

trying to do a road trip to get to a particular destination fairly quickly, that's not as efficient.

"It's definitely something that Government needs to be addressing as a high priority, not only for people that care about the planet, but also to address cost of living, because we know that electrification is so much cheaper. People can save thousands of dollars in the long run. So that needs to be accessible to everybody, not just to those who can afford it at the moment."

TRIP NAME Elektrekking Australia

LEFT HOME March 2024

DISTANCE SO FAR (AS OF EARLY NOVEMBER) 28,000km

DELEGATES Renee, Tim, Ellie (10) and Xavier (8) McLennan.

VEHICLE Kia EV9

RANGE 550-600km

RANGE WITH 2 TONNE CAMPER 300km

SOUNDTRACK Wings of Fire audiobooks

(roughly 122 hours worth)



The big whale: Local Governments bearing the cost of the whale superhighway

by Sarah Coles, Environment Policy Officer, WALGA

On Monday, 15 July 2024, Michael Dufour, Manager of Climate, Environment and Waste, with the City of Greater Geraldton, had the weight of the world on his shoulders: 24 tonnes to be exact.

A Member of the public had phoned the City to inform them of the presence of a large whale carcass on Greys Beach.

Coordination of the City's response fell to Dufour, "I'm the person responsible if we get a big whale." Dufour describes the removal operation. "It took me four days, four whole days of my time to prepare all the safety documentation, a range of contractors, and to be on site to arrange its removal."

Removing the whale required three cranes, an excavator, heavy machinery including a six-wheel drive vehicle capable of dragging the carcass 800m to the nearest carpark where two large cranes working together loaded the whale onto a truck for transporting to the landfill facility where, Dufour says, "We needed a 115-tonne crane to lift it over the fence."

All the while, the City's phone was ringing off the hook with questions from the community. Why can't you tow it out to sea? Why don't you blow it up? Valid questions. Towing a carcass out to sea is an option, but it poses a risk of attracting sharks and of creating navigational hazards. A risk of towing includes the carcass breaking up or drifting back towards the coast. Blowing up a whale carcass is too dangerous.

For proof of this watch the 1970 video of the Highway Oregon Division blowing up a whale carcass in Florence, Oregon, where a KATU news reporter described the scene as chunks of whale blubber rained down on spectators, "The humour of the situation rapidly gave way to a run for survival."

The Western Australian coastline is a whale migration superhighway, and as Michael Dufour can attest, things get expensive when a whale carcass washes ashore. Coastlines present a complex legal landscape due to overlapping jurisdictions and multifaceted governance. In Australia, the Commonwealth Government oversees waters beyond 3 nautical miles from the shore, while State Governments manage waters within this limit. Local Governments often handle coastal reserves and shorelines.

Effective whale carcass disposal requires collaboration between State and Local Government. In Western Australia, whale strandings are primarily managed under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. This legislation empowers the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to respond to and manage marine wildlife incidents, including whale strandings.

If a whale carcass washes up in a populated area, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is called in to consult due to the shark attraction risk.



Over 700 customer service requests and more than 900 items of correspondence were processed this year...These encompassed an enormous variety of tasks including investigations, signage upgrades, public education, and even coordinating the removal of a dead whale. Shire of Capel Annual Report 2020-2021



(Or in the case of the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley, crocodiles!) The responsibility for disposal falls to the relevant land manager. If the beach is part of a marine park, national park, or other areas managed by the DBCA, the DBCA handles the removal. But in all other cases, Local Governments foot the bill.

There are 44 Western Australian Local Governments with coastlines. Of these, at least 31 have recent records of a dead whale washing up on the coastline, and the remaining Local Governments, such as the Coolimba Coast in the Shire of Carnamah or the Eucla coast of the Shire of Dundas, are in less populated remote areas with less frequent reporting.

Whale strandings are caused by a variety of factors. The DBCA cites an increase in humpback and southern right whale populations following the end of commercial whaling as one reason. Whales may beach after navigational errors due to geomagnetic disturbances or because of social cohesion, where healthy whales follow sick individuals. Human activities such as acoustic pollution and entanglements may also contribute to whale deaths.

Whatever the cause of whale deaths, Local Governments

face significant costs. The big whale cost the City of Greater Geraldton \$43,000, excluding GST. Dufour says, "Our carcass budget was \$22,800 for the year. So, we blew that one." In 2024, the City also paid to dispose of two small whales and a dolphin at a cost of \$2,000 each.

2014 saw one of the most expensive whale disposals ever recorded when a 17-metre humpback whale washed up on Scarborough Beach. The whale carcass forced the closure of the beach (it was attracting sharks), and it took three days to remove the whale to landfill at a cost of \$188,000 to the City of Stirling. Cr Italiano from the City of Stirling was quoted as saying, "We pay the government \$26.3 million for fire and emergency services levies, and this was an emergency." The State Government partially reimbursed the cost, but this was a rare occurrence. Ten years have passed, and Local Governments are still calling for the State Government to assist with the costs associated with the disposal of whale carcasses.

Dufour advises, "It is not necessarily a frequent occurrence. But if you're a coastal council, you're likely to have to go through this exercise at some point, so be prepared."



Above: The whale carcass being loaded onto a semi-trailer for transport to the landfill where the carbon dioxide and methane emissions will be high. Image: City of Greater Geraldton

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 fourth State Council Meeting for the year on Wednesday, 4 September where resolutions were made on the following matters:

- Local Government Elections Analysis 2015-2023
- Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework
- Renewable Energy Facilities
- Priority Agriculture
- Planning Principles and Reform
- Product Stewardship
- Submission on the Draft State Waste Strategy

Other Advocacy Position changes included Retirement of the following;

- 5.2.4 Seat Belt Legislation,
- 5.8 Ports,
- 5.12 Infrastructure WA, and
- 3.5 Crime Prevention, and

Amendment to 3.2.1 Local Public Health Plans.

For full resolutions, visit the WALGA website.



Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service.*

Register and you could receive notifications to reduce your electricity use during peak times, to potentially save on capacity charges.

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

*Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service t&cs apply. Synergy's Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service is offered in Synergy's sole discretion.

Top tips for summer peak demand management

Summer has arrived in Western Australia, along with the seasonal spike in electricity use as households and businesses across the State turn to long hours of air-conditioning to help escape the heat. In fact, according to Western Power estimates, on the hottest days in January, February and March each year, air conditioner use accounts for almost one third of the electricity consumed across the South West Interconnected System.

Synergy Account Manager Luke Randell noted that while higher electricity consumption over summer can have an impact on energy costs, customers can be proactive and plan for these impacts, particularly in relation to capacity charges.

"This is the best time of year for commercial customers, including our Local Government authorities, to make sure they understand when the Peak Demand Days for electricity occur – because their use on these days can impact their electricity costs, not only through their consumption but through capacity charges," he said.

"Capacity charges are based on how much electricity a business uses on four Peak Demand Days. If your Local Government authority can reduce its demand for electricity when demand in the grid is at its highest, you could reduce the capacity charges which would be payable in the following year."

"Exploring ways to effectively manage your electricity usage during peak demand periods could help to reduce electricity costs and can also benefit the stability of the entire electricity network." The practice of strategically using less energy during times of peak demand is known as 'peak-shaving', and Mr Randell offered these tips for Local Government authorities.

- **Involve staff Members:** "Consider adding energy efficiency to the agenda for your next staff meeting. Different Members of your team will have specific knowledge about your buildings, processes and equipment, and could have some new ideas to help reduce your energy consumption."
- **Understand your electricity consumption:** "If your business is not already using My Account, it's worth registering through the Synergy website to start tracking your electricity usage and costs so you can plan ahead."
- **Look for simple solutions:** "Conduct an energy audit of your premises, such as looking at how you're using work areas, storage spaces and staffrooms. As an example, you might choose more energy efficient lighting or run lighting in some of these areas using timers or sensors, rather than lighting unused spaces all day."

- **Consider the efficiency of your equipment:** "It could be time to have your electrical appliances and equipment serviced or cleaned for maximum efficiency. If it's time to upgrade, consider the highest energy efficiency rating possible and read the manual for any energy-saving features."
- **Use your air conditioning carefully:** "Don't cool the spaces you don't need – and keep doors shut in between rooms so you're only cooling the areas you're using. Setting your air conditioning to 24C in summer still offers a comfortable temperature compared to the heat outside and requires less energy than lower temperature settings."

To learn more or discuss ways to manage electricity consumption in preparation for predicted Peak Demand Days, including whether your business is eligible for our Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service*, please contact Luke Randell at luke.randell@synergy.net.au or call 0436 916 941.

** Synergy offers a Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service at their sole discretion, and terms and conditions apply.*

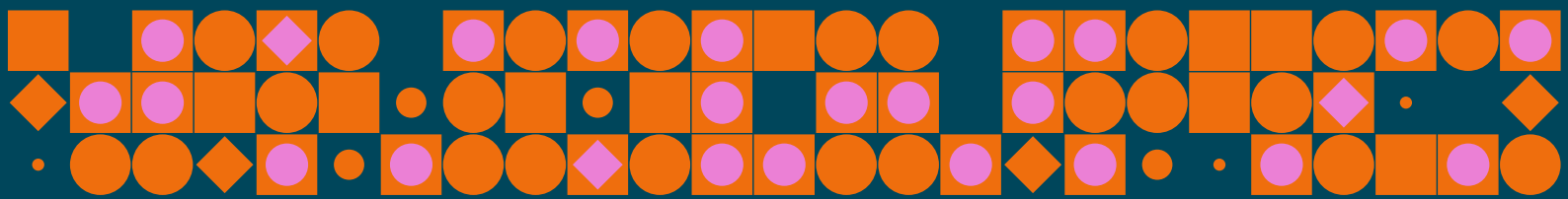
Key terms explained

Peak demand: This is when electricity consumption is the highest across an electrical grid, generally highest between 4pm and 8pm each day in the South West Interconnected System (SWIS).

Peak Demand Days: These are the four days with the highest demand for electricity in the SWIS from 1 December to 31 March each year.

Capacity: The total amount of electricity generation resources available to produce electricity at any one time. This is different to the amount of electricity actually generated and sent out to be used across the grid.

Capacity charges: Synergy pays the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) a price for capacity, based on the amount of electricity it requires to meet customer demand. This cost is recovered through customer billing, as a capacity charge based on their Peak Demand Days or as part of a bundled price of electricity, depending on the type of electricity supply agreement.



A WALGA Production

SHOWCASE IN PIXELS

Showcase in Pixels, the pre-eminent Local Government arts competition has been run and won, with the People's Choice Winner 7-year-old Emma Eva from the Shire of Pingelly.

Emma Eva, a talented 7-year-old from the Shire of Pingelly was awarded in the Junior Primary and 'People's Choice'

awards for her artwork of a numbat that she was inspired to draw after learning that they are not only endangered but also Pingelly's emblem.

Emma told us, "From conservationists to bushfire volunteers, these people are protecting not just the numbats, but also Pingelly's natural environment, making them heroes to everyone."

This year's winners were announced at a special event at the Shoe Bar in Yagan Square with students, community groups and artists from across the State representing their local communities against this year's theme *Heroes Among Us*. Their artwork has been displayed on the digital tower at Yagan Square during November.



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