

President's Report

July 2025

Introduction

As always, I am proud to highlight our continual efforts, to influence Government and support our Members through advocacy, expertise, and opportunities for connection.

This is a really busy time for Local Governments, leading into the annual budget period and planning for Local Government elections in October. There has also been some significant media on a range of matters including Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer, Renewable Energy proposals, pets registration system and credit card control, that I have represented the Local Government sector on recently.

Auditor General's Report on Local Government Management of Purchasing Cards - Response to media commentary

The Auditor General tabled a performance audit into Local Government management of purchasing Cards on 28 May.

The audit reviewed six metropolitan Local Governments. The report found no evidence of cards being misused. However as in all performance audit reports there were recommendations for some process improvements.

Subsequent to the report being tabled, there has been some media commentary around some case study items in the report. I have responded strongly to the implication that the report was indicative of a wider culture of entitlement in the Local Government sector.

Generalised interpretation, or application to the sector, is not reflective of the overall findings of the Auditor General Report or the extraordinary work that Local Governments perform across the State.

Local Governments understand that the community expects transparency and value for money. As a sector we are committed to upholding the highest level of integrity and maintaining public trust.

Dog and Cat Registration system - Pets WA

The Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beazley MLA recently announced that the State Government has agreed to end the contract for development and implementation of the Centralised Registration System. The Minister advised that the Local Government sector had raised the need for more time to develop the system.

WALGA will continue to support the introduction of a centralised cat and dog registration database and I have requested the State Government to consult with Local Governments, following its termination of the contract to deliver PetsWA.

Local Governments have been concerned that fees collected through PetsWA will not achieve full cost recovery for their regulatory responsibilities under the *Dog Act 1976* and *Cat Act 2011*.

A well-designed central registration system, with proper engagement with the Local Government sector, has the potential to deliver key benefits for both pet owners and Local Governments.

Renewable Energy Transition

Community Benefits and Engagement Guide

Work on WALGA's Community Benefits and Engagement Guide is now complete. An information session on the draft Guide was held in May, and all Local Governments were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft over a two-week period. We thank you all for your input over the last few months on this important piece of work.

Ministerial Forum

The Renewable Energy Ministerial Forum will be held on Thursday, 12 June, with the Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson BA MLA and the Minister for Planning and Lands, Hon John Carey MLA to address Local Governments on the State Government's plans for the renewable energy transition. This will be followed by a roundtable discussion with Minister Sanderson and a workshop session conducted by PoweringWA, focussing on community benefits. I have met separately with both Ministers to further discuss the Sector's key challenges and priorities in the transition to renewable energy.

Rating

WALGA is also undertaking work on the rating of renewable energy facilities, focusing on the WA legislative framework, how other Australian jurisdictions are managing the rating of renewable energy facilities and providing a summary of options and recommendations for the rating of renewable energy facilities by Local Governments going forward.

2025 Local Government Emergency Management Forum

I am excited to announce that WALGA will hold its first Local Government Emergency Management Forum on Tuesday, 17 June at the City of Stirling Reception Hall. The theme for the Forum is Local Government Future Proof: Preparing today for tomorrow's challenges. This forum will provide delegates with an opportunity to enhance their emergency management capabilities, gain valuable insights and strategies from shared lessons, and build and strengthen relationships within the sector. Hon Paul Papalia, CSC MLA, Minister for Emergency Services, will provide the opening address, with presentations from Dr Jill Charker, the National Emergency Management Agency Deputy Coordinator General, James Ashley, WA Manager, Bureau of Meteorology and panel sessions featuring Local Governments from around the State.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Emergency Management Roundtable

The second WALGA Bushfire Management Roundtable was held on Wednesday, 26 March, bringing together executive and subject matter experts from WALGA, LGIS, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), and Chief Executive Officers of Dandaragan, Albany, Manjimup, Corrigin, Kwinana, and Waroona Local Governments. Participants discussed a number of complex issues facing Local Governments in emergency management and identified priority actions for DFES and WALGA, focusing on further strengthening support to Local Government CEOs in Bush Fire Brigade (BFB) management, and strategic reform of the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS).

2025-26 State Budget

The State Budget will be handed down on Thursday, 19 June. WALGA staff will be in the Budget lock-up and will provide budget information and analysis directly to Mayors, Presidents and CEOs via the WALGA website.

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 7 May and scheduled before 2 July are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Hon Jessica Stojkovski MLA, Minister for Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport; Peel
- Hon John Carey MLA, Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure
- Mr Lachlan Hunter MP, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food; Racing and Gaming
- Hon Simone McGurk MLA, Minister for Creative Industries; Heritage; Industrial Relations; Aged Care and Seniors; Women
- National Cultural Ministers Meeting
- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne
- Hon Tjorn Sibma MLA, Shadow Minister for Finance; Training and Workforce Development; Major Infrastructure

Zone Meetings

- Kimberley Zone Meeting
- Northern Country Zone Meeting

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - Finance and Services Committee Budget Workshop
 - Local Government House Trust Meeting
 - Information Forum, 4 June 2025
 - Finance and Services Committee, 18 June 2025
- **ALGA**
 - Board Meeting, 9 May 2025
 - General Meeting, 9 May 2025
 - NGA Briefing
 - National General Assembly
- **LGIS**
 - Board Meeting, 23 May 2025
- WALGA Mayors and Presidents Forum
- WALGA Alumni Sundowner
- WALGA Renewable Energy Forum
- Bus Stop Infrastructure Agreement signing with Public Transport Authority
- Emergency Management Forum

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- 500 Club Sundowner
- Reconciliation WA, National Reconciliation Week Breakfast
- WA Women's Hall of Fame 15th Anniversary Alumni and Supporters Evening
- Telstra Infracore, WA Regional Connectivity Policy Workshop
- Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Board Meeting