

President's Report

May 2025

Introduction

As always, I am proud to highlight our continual efforts to use our influence and support our Members through advocacy, expertise and the services provided by WALGA.

One election finished, two more to go in 2025.

In this report, I outline the State election result and touch on the outcomes of WALGA's advocacy, the Federal election strategy, the Aboriginal Engagement Forum, Local Government legislative reform and work in the Renewable Energy area.

State Election

The State Election was held in March and saw the re-election of the Cook Government.

I have written to the Premier, Deputy Premier, Leader of the Opposition and all Ministers to congratulate them on their appointment and seek the opportunity to discuss the sector's priorities for the next term.

I have invited Ministers with a Regional Portfolio to attend Zone meetings where possible.

WALGA's "The West at its Best" State Election Priorities was highly successful with all parties committing to components of the priority requests. The Labor Government's commitments were significant, and a report will be provided in the State Council agenda for this round of meetings.

Federal Election Strategy

WALGA's 2025 Federal Election policy platform is now complete and was provided to the Federal Government and WA Members of Parliament and candidates in February 2025. The Australian Local Government Association will also be running a public campaign to seek additional funding for priority areas for Local Governments.

WALGA's key areas of focus are Community Infrastructure, Coastal Management, Emergency Management, Regional Health, Safer Roads and Telecommunications.

WALGA is seeking meetings with relevant Members of Parliament in coming months to discuss these important priorities.

Aboriginal Engagement Forum

I want to thank those Elected Member and State Councillors who have registered to join us at the Aboriginal Engagement Forum on 9 April and especially mention Cr Barry Winmar and Cr Helen Sadler for their membership of the event Reference Group. I'm delighted to report that we've had a record number of State Councillors, Elected Members, and CEO delegates register this year, which speaks to the importance of this issue and high calibre program.

The afternoon before the Forum, WALGA will hold its first Aboriginal Elected Members Roundtable with 15 Aboriginal Elected Members from across the State. This event will provide an opportunity for attendees to share their experiences, achievements, challenges and aspirations as a Councillor and to explore how WALGA can assist and support them. I look forward to building on this important work.

Renewable Energy

Work has commenced on the development of a best practice Community Benefits and Engagement Guide to assist Local Governments working with proponents on large scale renewable energy projects. Two workshops have been held with Local Governments, providing them the opportunity to speak about the challenges and opportunities they are facing.

WALGA is also conducting research relating to Local Government rating and payment in lieu of rates in respect to renewable energy projects.

Through this project, consultants have been engaged to provide advice on current rating provisions available to Local Governments. This includes differential rating and reviewing rating methods from other jurisdictions including Victoria's Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOR) Scheme.

Letters have also been sent to the Premier and the new Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation; Manufacturing; Skills and TAFE; Pilbara, seeking a meeting to discuss the key issues being faced by Local Governments.

Local Government Legislative Reform

WALGA continues to support members in implementing and preparing for reforms included in the Local Government Amendment Acts of 2023 and 2024.

The requirement to appoint all Committee Members by absolute majority Council decision by 1 July 2025 is now in effect. Preparation is also being made for the anticipated reforms to Audit Risk and Improvement Committee, including the requirement to appoint an independent person as Presiding Member. In addition, Local Governments are required to consider the application of newly introduced caretaker restrictions in their forward planning.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries consultation regarding the publication of CEO KPIs and online registers is open until 8 May. WALGA circulated an Info Page and Discussion paper, seeking feedback on the draft regulations. The results of this consultation, and proposed WALGA submission will be in the State Council agenda to be considered at the April/May round of Zone and State Council meetings.

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 5 March and scheduled before 7 May are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Australian Government Black Spot - WA Consultative Panel Meeting
- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering Youth; Gascoyne
- State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee Meeting

Zone Meetings

- Kimberley Zone Meeting
- Murchison Country Zone Meeting
- Northern Country Zone Meeting

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - State Council Performance Evaluation Outcome Workshop
 - Strategic Forum, 5 March
 - State Council Meeting, 5 March
 - Governance Policy Team Meeting
 - Environment Policy Team Meeting
 - State Council Information Forum, 2 April
 - Finance & Services Committee Meeting
- **ALGA**
 - Executive Meeting
 - Local Government Tech Leadership Summit
 - Board Meeting, 13 March
- **LGIS**
 - JLT Management Committee Meeting
 - LGIS Board Workshop
- RCAWA Meeting
- Meeting with City of Wanneroo Mayor, Linda Aitken & CEO, Bill Parker
- Meeting with Shire of Augusta Margaret River Shire President, Julia Meldrum & CEO Andrea Selvey

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- WA Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony 2025
- City of Cockburn 100 Years at Memorial Hall
- Great Eastern Country Zone Forum
- Office of the Auditor General IMPACT 2025 Conference
- Aboriginal Elected Members Roundtable
- 2025 WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum
- Pathways to Politics for Women