

Western Councillor

ISSUE 135 | SUMMER/AUTUMN 2026



WALGA

Influence. Support. Expertise.

WALGA's 2026 Local Government Awards

WALGA's annual Local Government Awards for 2026 saw more than 40 current and former Elected Members and Local Government Officers recognised P10

P12

CEOs for Gender Equity's impact on Local Government

P14

The Cup that captures a community

P18

Young leaders in action as Junior Council takes the spotlight

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MORE ABORIGINAL BUSINESSES AVAILABLE THROUGH WALGA'S PSP



In response to Member feedback, WALGA has been actively working to increase the number of Aboriginal businesses on the Preferred Supplier Program (PSP). There are now over 65 Aboriginal businesses available to Members through the PSP delivering goods and services, from ICT supplies and project management consultancy, through to architects and civil contractors.



Explore Aboriginal Preferred Suppliers by using the filter on the WALGA Preferred Supplier Directory



Western Councillor

Issue 135 SUMMER/AUTUMN 2026

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| From the Minister | 04 |
| From the Shadow Minister | 05 |
| From the President | 06 |
| LGIS Update | 07 |
| WMRC – Shared services advantage | 08 |
| Local Government Awards | 10 |
| CEOs for Gender equity | 12 |
| The Cup that captures a community | 14 |
| City of Swan's Blueprint | 16 |
| Junior Council | 18 |
| Local Lens | 19 |
| Aboriginal Engagement Forum | 28 |
| State Council Resolutions | 29 |
| Synergy | 30 |

Welcome to Issue 135 of *Western Councillor*
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Cover photo

by Portia Gebauer

Latest news

WALGA engages with Fuel Security State Controller

Representatives from WALGA's State Council and Executive Team have been meeting regularly with Fuel Security State Controller, Rob Cossart.

These meetings provide an opportunity to provide insights from Local Governments to Mr Cossart. WALGA will continue to stay central to the conversations and provide timely sector updates.

WALGA launches Economic Development Case Studies

WALGA's economic development publication and web collection 'From Idea to Implementation: Local Government economic development case studies' was launched in May 2026.

Developed in response to sector feedback, it includes stories and successes of economic development from Local Governments throughout WA.

While every Local Government area is unique, each plays an integral role in creating liveable and vibrant places, attracting investment, supporting local businesses and encouraging visitation.

Emergency Management Forum

More than 150 of WA's top Local Government leaders, emergency management experts and practitioners came together recently for a day of insights, bold conversations and future-focused thinking at WALGA's 2026 Emergency Management Forum.

Bringing the sector together under the theme 'One State, Many Realities', attendees came together to make the event a standout success with all parties working together to build safer, more resilient communities across WA.

Aligning to this year's Forum, WALGA also released the 2025 Emergency Management Snapshot, showcasing the findings from the 2025 EM survey. This important snapshot provided the sector with a holistic view of how WA Local Governments are managing growing emergency demands.

WALGA Members Hub

Located on level 3 at WALGA's Head Office, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville., the Members Hub offers modern workspaces, private meeting rooms, a fully equipped conference room, printing, WiFi, and a comfortable kitchen and breakout area — all designed to support productivity and collaboration.

Members can book spaces for meetings, hybrid calls, focused work, or hosting colleagues while in Perth. For information and bookings phone (08) 9213 2000 or email info@walga.asn.au



It is important that we work together and have mature discussions and conversations about the future of the Local Government sector, especially in relation to structural reform.



From the Minister

Firstly, congratulations to City of Stirling Mayor Mark Irwin AM on his election as WALGA President. I also congratulate Shire of Northam President Chris Antonio on his election as WALGA Deputy President.

This is a well-deserved recognition of their leadership, dedication and longstanding commitment to strengthening Local Government across our state.

As Mayor of the City of Stirling, Mark Irwin AM has demonstrated a strong ability to bring communities together, champion locally driven solutions, and advocate for long term strategic outcomes that benefit the City.

His leadership has been marked by a clear focus on collaboration, transparency and ensuring that Local Government remains responsive to the communities they serve.

These qualities make him an outstanding choice to guide WALGA at a time when Local Governments face both significant challenges and important opportunities.

This was highlighted recently, when Mayor Irwin stepped forward, showed leadership and urged Local Governments to lead when it comes to structural reforms and improvement opportunities in the sector.

It is important that we work together and have mature discussions and conversations about the future of the Local Government sector, especially in relation to structural reform.

I want to make it clear that as Minister, my priority is to ensure every community has a strong and sustainable Local Government that provides good governance, services and facilities to the communities they represent.

It is incumbent on us to work together to restore faith and confidence in the Local Government sector. In doing this, we need to be realistic and acknowledge that the Local Government sector has been through a very difficult period, particularly over the past 18 months.

Key to this, is the ability for Local Governments to have conversations with neighbouring Local Governments to consider if there are economies of scale that would benefit the community and stakeholders moving forward.

To make it absolutely clear this is an opportunity for the Local Government sector to lead the way and to be the champions of their own destiny.

The other important discussion that is taking place currently is the potential system of Local Government elections, including four-year full spill elections and compulsory voting.

I thank WALGA for engaging with the sector in relation to these issues and have been interested to hear the different views of Local Governments as each Council considers its position.

I am confident we can achieve an outcome that is financially responsible and delivers stronger, more unified Local Governments and increases voter engagement and turnout for the betterment of the communities you represent and we all serve.

Hon Hannah Beazley MLA

Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne Member for Victoria Park



From the Shadow Minister

It's been a big year to start 2026 for Local Governments. I want to reiterate that the majority of Local Governments are doing a good job.

Most are delivering not only the services that are required, but some are going above and beyond their scope to deliver for their communities, whether it be through health, housing, or other means. However, 2026 has already shown that Local Governments are being asked to do more than ever while navigating significant legislative and policy changes from the State Government.

The Office of the Local Government Inspector commenced at the beginning of the year. As part of the changes under the Local Government Amendment Act 2024, these reforms aim to strengthen oversight of Councils, improve accountability and provide a clearer process for managing complaints and governance concerns within Local Governments. I will be watching this situation to see the impacts the inspector has.

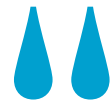
More recently, the State Government unveiled its community benefit guidelines for large renewable projects. It was something Local Governments had been calling for and had been anticipating for some time. While the guideline provides a framework for renewable energy companies, it ultimately remains voluntary. For communities hosting these projects, voluntary arrangements do not provide the certainty that many Local Governments have been calling for.

Renewable energy projects are becoming more prevalent, and the impacts to the community are set to be felt. It's important for the communities that are affected get the necessary benefit as a result of this fund. As it stands, there is no certainty for the local community, Local Governments, or any other stakeholders that the funds go towards local groups.

Mandating community benefits would provide guarantees that there would be local investment. In lieu of these mandates, Local Governments must remain a key part of the discussion going forward.



Councils understand their communities better than anyone, and their voice must be part of shaping the decisions that affect them.



The Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill passed through the Legislative Assembly late last year. We have heard from a number of Local Governments that are concerned about the unintended consequences of this bill, with the matter impacting budgets.

The Nationals WA sought to amend the bill to allow Local Governments to access funds to assist with the repayments through the Country Local Government Fund. This would have ensured financial stability to Local Governments who ultimately found a lawful way to rate miscellaneous licences. This was blocked by the State Government and we are working with our colleagues in the Legislative Council regarding this matter. At the time of writing, the bill had not yet been debated in the upper house.

This year, the Local Government Minister introduced the Cat Amendment (Local Laws) Bill 2026, which aims to enable Local Governments to mandate cat containment. For many Local Governments, this has been a long time coming. We have seen 29 disallowances of local laws in the Legislative Council when it comes to cat containment.

There have been clear issues with the Act, and it is hoped this process with a level of detail can be completed in a timely manner to ensure these powers come into effect for Local Governments as soon as possible.

Over the past year, I've had the pleasure of visiting a number of Local Governments across the State, and it's been positive to get an insight into both the challenges and opportunities that are present within your areas. As these reforms and policy changes continue to unfold, it will be critical that Local Governments remain central to the conversation. Councils understand their communities better than anyone, and their voice must be part of shaping the decisions that affect them. My door is always open should you wish for me to visit or chat with you about the things that matter to your Local Government.

Kirrilee Warr MLA

Shadow Minister for Local Government
Member for Geraldton



From the WALGA President

It is with great pleasure that I share my first contribution to the Western Councillor as President of the WA Local Government Association.

Having served in Local Government for more than a decade, I am deeply committed to representing and supporting the best interests of our sector.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge the significant contributions of Karen Chappel AM JP and Paul Kelly as former WALGA President and Deputy President. They have been incredible representatives for our sector. I'd also like to extend my congratulations to the Deputy President, Chris Antonio from the Shire of Northam.

I've thoroughly enjoyed my first four months in the role, especially attending Zone meetings across the State and I'm excited by the numerous opportunities we have to empower Local Government to deliver for their communities.

I've had the opportunity to represent the sector on a range of issues since I assumed the role and it has been a valuable reminder of how diverse the challenges are facing our sector and the unique characteristics of communities across our State.

In March, WALGA welcomed the State Government's *Community Benefits Guideline for Large-scale Renewable Energy Projects in the South West Interconnected System* as an important step towards ensuring that communities hosting large-scale renewable energy projects receive direct benefits from the energy transition. I want to acknowledge the Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation for her engagement with the sector and WALGA regarding the Guideline.

WALGA's annual Aboriginal Engagement Forum was hosted in March and brought together Local Government delegates, partners, stakeholders and organisations committed to change and striving to achieve better collaboration with Aboriginal people and the sector.



I'm excited by the numerous opportunities we have to empower Local Government to deliver for their communities.



As part of the event, I attended WALGA's second Aboriginal Elected Members Roundtable. The warmth and connection in the room was incredible, and I thoroughly enjoyed being able to meet Aboriginal Elected Members from across the State, hear about their roles and the challenges they face, and share the support available through WALGA.

I also had the opportunity to address Mayors and Presidents at WALGA's Mayors and Presidents Forum. In addition to sharing my background and my vision for WALGA, it was great to be joined by the Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beazley, and the Local Government Inspector Tony Brown, who engaged in a valuable Q&A with attendees.

I am passionate about building a better future for our communities and believe the best outcomes are achieved when Federal, State and Local Governments work collaboratively together.

I will continue to work closely with the State and Federal Government, ensuring that the voice of our Members is heard, and that engagement and collaboration with Local Government happens when it matters most.

Mark Irwin AM
WALGA President



LGIS

By James Sheridan
CEO, LGIS

Why won't LGIS pay the claim? I'm being questioned by ratepayers

It's a familiar scenario for many Councillors, it might be the local paper, on your social media page or when you're at the weekend footy match, and a community member wants to talk about the outcome of their claim.

For many it's difficult to understand how far a Local Government's duty of care extends and what is considered reasonable to meet that duty.

No matter if it's a claim for injury or damages caused by a tree limb or root, footpath, pothole or any other matter, there are some fundamental public liability concepts that apply.

Understanding local government and liability

LGIS considers every claim from third-parties against a local government on its merits; claims are denied when the member is not legally liable. It's important to remember that a Local Government is NOT the same as an individual or business when it comes to liability.

Common law places the onus of proving negligence on the claimant who has allegedly suffered a loss.

In general the *Civil Liability Act 2002 (WA)* states that a person (or Local Government) is not liable for harm caused by that person's fault in failing to take precautions against a risk of harm unless:

- a) the risk was foreseeable (that is, it is a risk of which the Local Government knew or ought to have known);
- b) the risk was not insignificant; and
- c) in the circumstances, a reasonable Local Government in the same position would have taken those precautions.

The question then becomes 'What are reasonable precautions against a risk of harm?', and the following is considered:

- a) the probability that the harm would occur if care were not taken;
- b) the likely seriousness of the harm;
- c) the burden of taking precautions to avoid the risk of harm; and
- d) the social utility of the activity that creates the risk of harm.

In addition to the above Local Governments are specifically recognised within the *Civil Liability Act* and receive additional protections, not ordinarily available to the general public or commercial organisations.

For LGIS members the question is 'What would a reasonable Local Government, with similar information and resources, do in this situation?' Consideration of resources may include financial capacity, workforce size and area of responsibility – such as how many thousands of trees are in their jurisdiction.

Consider a common claim, where a tree branch has fallen and caused damage to the claimant's property. The question will be asked 'given due consideration to resources and information, has the Local Government taken reasonable steps or precautions to meet their duty of care?'

It's also important to remember that although something has occurred it cannot be assumed that the Local Government is automatically responsible. In this instance it should be noted that a tree branch may sporadically fail without any external indication or forewarning. In this regard it's unlikely that the failure is due to lack of maintenance or that the Local Government could have taken reasonable steps to prevent the failure.

Containing and reducing claims – it's better for your bottom line

LGIS carefully assesses every claim on its merits, accepting only those where there is liability. This is important for two reasons, the first is to avoid setting a precedent and the second is to contain the total number of claims for the sector. The sector's claims performance is one of four factors that influence member contributions – the other three are (re)insurance prices, information provided by members, and overall performance of the Scheme.

We work with our members to place downward pressure on claims by funding and delivering a sector wide risk management program that targets key issues for the sector. Scheme risk services have a strong public liability component and in 2026 we're focused on playgrounds, trees, footpaths and roads.

If you have any questions on claims management or any other matter please contact me on or talk to your LGIS account manager. Our dedicated team is also available to present to your entire Council and address any questions.



Shared services to strategic advantage: How WMRC delivers real value through regional collaboration

Provided by Western Metropolitan Regional Council

As waste and resource recovery services become more complex, regulated and costly, Local Governments across Western Australia face increasing pressure to deliver high-quality outcomes within constrained budgets.

For the Western Metropolitan Regional Council (WMRC), regional collaboration has moved beyond theory to become a proven, high-performing model that delivers measurable value for its member Councils.

Established under the Local Government Act 1995, WMRC supports its members (Town of Claremont, Town of Cottesloe, Town of Mosman Park, City of Subiaco and Shire of Peppermint Grove) through shared waste management, resource recovery and education services. In recent years, WMRC has deliberately strengthened its governance, organisational capability and commercial discipline, positioning itself as a trusted partner in a challenging and evolving operating environment.

WMRC's experience demonstrates how scale, clarity of purpose and mature governance can translate directly into improved outcomes for Councils and their communities, particularly for smaller Local Governments without access to specialist internal resources. According to WMRC Chair and Town of Claremont Deputy Mayor Paul Kelly, organisational clarity has been foundational to recent success.

"We've been very deliberate in defining why WMRC exists – to deliver real, practical and financial value for our member Councils," Cr Kelly said.

"That clarity drives disciplined decision-making and keeps the focus firmly on outcomes."

Over recent years, WMRC has strengthened its governance framework through clearer decision-making responsibilities, structured planning and procurement processes, and improved reporting to support effective oversight and risk management. These reforms have enabled Elected Members to make confident, informed decisions about investment, service delivery and long-term direction.

At the core of WMRC's value proposition is shared capability. By aggregating waste volumes across member Councils for processing and haulage contracts, WMRC has leveraged scale to engage the market more effectively, secure better pricing, reduce administrative burden and improve service certainty. In an environment of rising costs and contractor consolidation, market access at scale has become a critical advantage.

WMRC also undertakes commercial work for non-member Councils and commercial customers. Importantly, this activity is tightly aligned with WMRC's core purpose, with revenue reinvested to offset essential services that do not attract user fees, including waste education and Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste programs. This approach directly reduces financial pressure on members.

"Commercial revenue is not an end in itself," WMRC CEO Stuart Devenish said.

"The intent is clear – to reduce the financial burden on member Councils by supporting services that would otherwise need to be fully funded through Council contributions."

To better manage escalating haulage costs and market disruption, WMRC invested in its own prime mover and rear blade ejection trailers to service core waste transfer functions.

These operational efficiencies enabled WMRC to reduce general waste fees in the current financial year – a significant achievement in the current economic climate.

More than just a cost-saving measure, the transition to the self-haul system replaces an outdated silo approach, improves safety outcomes, strengthens business continuity, and provides the scalability needed to increase throughput.

WMRC also delivers coordinated waste education programs across the region, ensuring consistent, compliant messaging aligned with State Government requirements, while avoiding duplication and reducing Council resourcing demands. Shared policy advisory capability further supports member Councils to respond effectively to regulatory change and sector reform.

Trust underpins the success of WMRC's shared service model. Investment in transparency, engagement, rigorous risk management and improved reporting has strengthened organisational maturity and alignment between strategic intent and delivery.

WMRC's experience shows that while scale matters, success depends on disciplined governance, clarity of purpose and an unwavering focus on member outcomes.

For WMRC and its members, collaboration is not simply a cost-sharing exercise – it is a strategic and commercial advantage.

To learn more, visit www.wmrc.wa.gov.au

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 lgis.wa.com.au or call 9483 8888.

A celebration of excellence at WALGA's 2026 Local Government Awards

WALGA's annual Local Government Awards for 2026 saw more than 40 current and former Elected Members and Local Government Officers recognised with Honours Awards for their outstanding contributions across WA.

A number of Local Governments were also acknowledged for their significant work in making WA roads safer through WALGA's RoadWise Recognised Awards and in making Local Governments more accessible through the Most Accessible Communities WA Awards (MACWA).

Former WALGA President and Shire of Morawa President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP was awarded the Local Government Medal, recognising exceptional service, achievements and contributions to the Local Government sector.

President Cr Beth Walton from the Shire of Sandstone was awarded WALGA Life Membership, for her outstanding service and contribution to WALGA.

Mason Pickard, son of former WALGA President Troy Pickard was a special guest on the evening and proudly awarded Deputy President Cr Reece Jerrett from the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, the Troy Pickard Young Achievers Award. This Award recognises those aged 35 years or younger for notable contributions and commitment to Local Government and demonstrated potential for professional success.

"Behind every great community are Local Government Elected Members and Officers who put in extraordinary efforts to deliver better outcomes," said WALGA President Mark Irwin AM.

"Congratulations to everyone who was recognised for their efforts."

Photo credit: Portia Gebauer Photographer



Local Government Medal

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
Shire of Morawa



WALGA Life Membership

President Cr Beth Walton
Shire of Sandstone



Troy Pickard Young Achievers Award

Deputy President Cr Reece Jerrett
Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale



Eminent Service Awards

Mr Barry Haywood – Shire of Goomalling

Mayor Karen Vernon – Town of Victoria Park

Mr Gavin Treasure – Shire of Dumbleyung

Cr Wendy McWhirter Brooks – Shire of East Pilbara

Cr Linton Rumble JP – Shire of Ashburton

Mayor Patrick Hall – City of Canning

Mr Jeremy O'Neill – Shire of Capel

Mr Gregory Dwyer – Shire of Menzies



Merit Awards

- Deputy President Luke Ellery – Shire of Mundaring
- Mr Ben Rose – Shire of Manjimup
- Ms Natalie Bird – Shire of Goomalling
- Mr Richard Walker – Shire of Boyup Brook
- Cr Eng Wah Joel Chan – Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale
- Ms Ann-Marie Mia Hicks – City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Ms Alina Behan – Shire of York
- Cr Amy Hardham – Shire of Narembeen
- Cr Deborah Fay Botica – City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Ms Kayla McNicol – City of Swan
- Gary Smith – City of Armadale
- Cr John Raftis – City of Joondalup
- President Cr Ramesh (Ram) Rajagopalan – Shire of Bruce Rock
- Mr James Watt – Shire of Broome
- Mr David Blurton – Shire of Katanning
- Cr Brie Noone – Shire of Ashburton
- Ms Mary Ross – City of Canning
- Cr Tony Krsticevic – City of Stirling
- Cr Teresa Olow – City of Stirling
- Cr Andrea Creado – City of Stirling
- Cr Todd Harris – Shire of Cunderdin
- President Cr Alison Harris – Shire of Cunderdin
- Mr Norm Jenzen – Shire of Cunderdin
- Mayor Linda Aitken – City of Wanneroo
- Cr Ben Kunze – City of Canning
- Mr Mark Dickson – City of Wanneroo
- Mr Theo Naude – Shire of Dardanup
- Ms Rhonda Mettam – Shire of Shark Bay
- Mayor Katy Mair – City of Melville
- Cr Jacqui Huntley – City of Wanneroo



WALGA RoadWise Recognised Awards

Acknowledgement of Participating Councils

- City of Albany
- Shire of Northam
- Shire of Dalwallinu
- Shire of Victoria Plains
- WA Perpetual Award
- Shire of Dowerin

RoadWise Recognised Award (Sponsored by Brooks Hire)

- City of Wanneroo



Most Accessible Communities WA (MACWA) Awards

Access Award

- Winner: Town of Victoria Park
- Runner up: City of Albany
- Highly Commended: Shire of Augusta Margaret River

Inclusion Award

- Winner: Town of Port Hedland
- Runner up: City of Swan
- Highly Commended: City of Stirling



Driving genuine progress: CEOs for Gender Equity's impact on Local Government

Since its launch at Government House in 2014, CEOs for Gender Equity (CGE) has grown from 18 founding leaders into a network of more than 90 CEOs and Heads of State committed to accelerating gender equity in Western Australian workplaces and communities.

Through its collective influence, CGE is shaping how gender equity is led and delivered at the highest levels of decision-making across Western Australia.

It is driving systemic change by embedding gender equity into the structures, behaviours and priorities that define organisational performance. Across Local Government, members are advancing measurable progress while contributing to a broader shift in how leadership and culture are defined across the sector.

Four Local Governments are currently Members, including the City of Kalamunda, the City of Stirling, City of Fremantle and City of Joondalup.

For City of Kalamunda CEO Anthony Vuleta, the journey began with a conversation.

"I was invited to a roundtable discussion with the CEO of CEOs for Gender Equity several years ago, which first piqued my interest in the initiative," he said.

This initial engagement led him to join CGE at both the Town of Victoria Park and later the City of Kalamunda. "I see real value in the work it is doing across the sector."

Vuleta emphasised that CGE's strength lies in collective learning.

"Participation in the network has reinforced the importance of looking beyond policies and considering how leadership roles and opportunities are designed.

"At the City of Kalamunda, the conversation has shifted from whether flexible leadership is possible to how we design it well while maintaining strong governance and organisational performance.

"Like many organisations, one of the challenges has been ensuring leadership opportunities remain accessible at different stages of people's careers and lives.

A recent example is the introduction of a Director-level job-share arrangement within the City's Infrastructure Directorate while the incumbent Director is on parental leave.

Senior leaders Liah Ale and Chris Thompson currently share the Director Infrastructure role at the City of



Kalamunda, bringing complementary expertise across the Directorate while maintaining clear delegated authority and shared accountability.

“Rather than treating flexibility as an exception, we approached the model as a leadership design challenge – rethinking how leadership roles and opportunities are designed,” Vuleta said.

City of Stirling CEO Stevan Rodic entered the network in 2024 during a period of organisational reflection.

“Joining felt timely because gender equity is both essential and complex, and I recognised that I didn’t have all the answers,” he said.

“In the same way I see organisational culture as a continual improvement process, embedding equity is a journey.

“The opportunity to learn from peers, share experiences, and collaborate on real workplace challenges motivated me to join.

“For me, this was never a box-ticking exercise – it was about meaningful accountability and improving outcomes for our people.”

Rodic says CGE has helped sharpen Stirling’s priorities.

“It has encouraged us to actively challenge the status quo, ask better questions, and continuously seek new ideas.

“This mindset shift has helped deepen our commitment to fostering a workplace where people can perform at their best and where equity is not a slogan but a lived practice.”

A recent milestone for the City of Stirling was the launch of Rise to Shine, a six-month leadership program for women at the City of Stirling. Rise to Shine is a tailored leadership program, designed to unlock the potential of talented women across the City of Stirling and build a community where collaboration, confidence and capability thrive.

“This six month program is all about helping women step into their power, elevate their leadership voice and champion one another along the way, Rodric said.

“The program is being advertised via an Expression of Interest process and includes a multi-stage format consisting of immersive workshops, peer coaching, one-on-one professional coaching culminating in a speaker showcase.”

CEOs for Gender Equity Chief Executive Officer Dr Ashley McGrath said she values the Local Governments involved in CGE.

“Local Government CEOs are uniquely positioned to lead on gender equity – not only within their own workforces, but across the communities they serve,” she said.

“Their decisions and leadership shape the experiences of thousands of residents.

“We greatly value their involvement in CEOs for Gender Equity, as their influence extends far beyond organisational boundaries and into meaningful, community-wide change.”

Both Local Government CEOs shared their advice for other Local Government’s looking to get involved:

“Approach it as a leadership commitment rather than a compliance exercise,” Vuleta said. “Small structural changes can often have a significant impact on participation and opportunity.”

“My advice is simple: join with a mindset of continuous improvement and genuine accountability,” said Rodric.

“If you value your people as your most important asset, CGE provides a powerful platform to collaborate, challenge assumptions, and drive meaningful, lasting impact.”



The Cup that captures a community

Provided by Racing and Wagering Western Australia

Ask any WA racing participant and they will tell you that a win anywhere is a win worth celebrating, whether it is the \$5 million Quokka at Ascot or at a picnic meeting out in the bush.

Racing has that certain magic and Gingin thoroughbred trainer Sue Olive felt every bit of it about a year ago when her horse Bambun Boy won the historic \$125,000 Geraldton Gold Cup even though she was watching on from the other side of the nation.

Sue and her husband Alan were in Sydney selling a yearling filly from their Gold Front Thoroughbreds operation for a tidy \$400,000 and watching anxiously on television when their gelding crafted the gritty Geraldton Gold Cup win. The financial result from that one Mid West race now represents more than a third of Bambun Boy's career prizemoney of \$176,932 earned in 34 starts.

"We were watching it from afar and it was just so great... I was absolutely stoked about it."

"There are horses for courses in racing, but a win is a win anywhere you get one. Country racing gives opportunity for so many horses and their connections and the

atmosphere at these events is just as good and just as electric as it is in the city.

"It's a big buzz for the owners and me and if it is in the country, so be it. Everyone comes out of the woodwork for races like the Geraldton Cup and for a lot of country places, the Cups are one of their biggest highlights of the year."

The Geraldton Turf Club was formed way back in 1861 – the same year as the very first Melbourne Cup was won by Archer. The first Geraldton Cup was run in 1887 and won by Baron Nectar – a horse that was transported from Albany by steamer to Geraldton to take part in the race that featured stake money of £300 (\$600).

The local racing industry has since become a major financial driver in the Geraldton region, generating \$21.6 million a year for the local economy. It provides for 165 full-time jobs and features some 1,590 industry participants and volunteers.

About 13,300 attend the Geraldton races each year.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Jerry Clune said the Cup was a major staple of the annual local social calendar.

"It is and always has been one of the biggest ticket items on the Mid West calendar. It always provides a



great opportunity to catch up with friends and business acquaintances in a family-friendly environment," Mayor Clune said.

"This event is the crowning glory on the local race scene and draws visitors from all parts of the State. The Cup itself attracts quality race fields and has some serious prizemoney."

Geraldton Turf Club manager David Wrensted said the club was focused on making Cup day a family-focused event. This year's Cup featured family favourite activities including pony rides, face painting and a bouncy castle, while there would also be two live bands, a Fashions on the Field competition and big screens to watch the Western Derby between West Coast and Fremantle.

He said the date for the Cup had been changed in recent years from its traditional January timeslot to April, to give it more of its own 'identity' at a time of the year when there were more favourable weather conditions.

Many talented gallopers have won the Geraldton Gold Cup, including Black Tycoon in 2013. That horse went on to win the iconic Perth Cup the following year.

"Like all country towns, the Cup is one of the main highlights of our social scene and the pinnacle of Geraldton racing," Wrensted said.



It is and always has been one of the biggest ticket items on the Mid West calendar.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor, Jerry Clune



"It's a time-honoured event with a great deal of history behind it. We've tried to make it a more family-oriented day and that's what we're trying to do with the whole season to get young people back to the races.

"It's important to the town, it's important to the region and it's important for the area's history that we keep Cup day going."



City of Swan's Blueprint paves the way towards a secure, sustainable future

Provided by the City of Swan

The City of Swan's Community Futures Blueprint (the Blueprint) is a first-of-its-kind, evidence-based framework bridging State and Local Government planning.

Developed in-house with input from Local and State Government and key infrastructure partners, it identifies essential State infrastructure needed to support Swan's fast-growing population – projected to increase by 64 per cent to nearly 300,000 residents by 2050 – across health, education, emergency services, law and order and core infrastructure.

The Blueprint redefines the City's future planning processes, shifting from reactive responses to proactive opportunities that build stronger, connected communities within complex growth environment that demands new ways of thinking.

The Blueprint provides a 25-year living roadmap incorporating 13 interlinked documents, delivering 28 recommendations across five key sectors, including nine major infrastructure projects that have influenced the City's Advocacy List and secured State and Federal funding.

By combining data, building trust through collaboration, and advocacy, it sets a national benchmark for strategic growth-area planning.

Stephen Cain, City of Swan CEO, says "The Blueprint is innovative because it is the first framework to systematically bridge high-level State strategies with

detailed local evaluation, directly addressing the 'missing middle' in planning.

"Unlike conventional State-led frameworks which can be prone to inconsistent outcomes due to Departments planning in isolation, the Blueprint enables the City of Swan to plan proactively with locally actionable, evidence-based recommendations.

"By embedding community wellbeing, it supports the City's vision for a thriving, sustainable community while remaining fully flexible and adaptable. The Blueprint framework provides a model other growth-area Councils can adopt."

Key features:

- **Data-driven scenario modelling:** the Blueprint integrates population forecasts, workforce analysis, spatial mapping, and service-gap evaluations
- **Integrated multi-sector planning:** the Blueprint translates high-level policy into locally actionable projects
- **Modular, adaptive design:** the Blueprint's 13 interlinked summary and research documents and its 28 recommendations across five sectors are capable of evolving as new data or priorities emerge, providing actionable insights for decision-makers
- **Embedded advocacy:** the Blueprint aligns evidence with proactive engagement with elected officials, State agencies, and utilities
- **Replicable model:** the Blueprint uses open datasets and structured analysis, fully transferable to other Councils.



The Blueprint advances best practice in state-level infrastructure and service planning by enabling proactive, evidence-based infrastructure advocacy.

Through multi-sector consultation, robust data analysis, and strategic foresight, it identifies infrastructure and service needs before demand becomes critical, supporting Swan's projected 64 per cent population growth by 2050.

It has already influenced over \$20 million in State and Federal investment and informs both greenfield and infill development negotiations.

Through modular, accessible insights, elected officials and technical officers can make adaptive, coordinated decisions, while embedding advocacy ensures a single, evidence-based message to government, reinforcing Swan as a national benchmark for growth-area Councils.

Key outcomes delivered so far include:

- Prioritisation of advocacy for the Ellenbrook Health Hub, Midland Public Hospital expansion, and Bullsbrook Fire Station
- \$8 million secured for Bullsbrook Fire Station and a Federal commitment to a Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in Ellenbrook.

Adopted in late 2025, the Blueprint translates complex evidence into measurable outcomes, improves access to services, guides long-term investment, and positions Swan as a leader in growth-area strategic planning while simultaneously continuing to shape infrastructure and services for future needs.

Relevance to growth-area challenges

By 2050 – now only 24 years away – Swan will have grown by 110,000 residents and 52,000 homes, creating complex planning challenges, service gaps, and resource pressures.

The Blueprint directly addresses these by identifying current and future gaps – including health workforce and service shortages, emergency service capacity, and community wellbeing needs – enabling the City to sequence projects strategically, align with State priorities, and secure land and funding ahead of demand.

Its modular, adaptive design ensures ongoing relevance, strengthens cross-sector collaboration, and aligns with the City's vision for a sustainable, thriving community.

By 2050, the City of Swan's central and northern growth areas of Ellenbrook and Bullsbrook, 20–30 kilometres north of the Midland Strategic Centre, will be supported by new health, emergency, education, and enabling infrastructure that does not yet exist.

Midland will host an expanded health precinct and a new justice precinct, and the Blueprint provides the framework to ensure our communities thrive.

Stephen Cain continued, "the Blueprint represents a transformative shift in how growth-area Councils plan, advocate, and deliver for communities – a living, adaptable framework that embeds evidence-based planning, consultation, and advocacy into City processes.

"By translating complex data into clear, actionable insights, it empowers elected officials, agencies, developers, and the community to make coordinated decisions.

"Its development has strengthened cross-government partnerships, creating a lasting framework for shared investment, while its replicable methodology provides a model for other Councils building liveable, connected, resilient communities."



Young leaders in action as Junior Council takes the spotlight

Provided by the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

Sixteen Year 6 students from across the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale are stepping into leadership, as the Shire's first-ever Junior Council begins its 2026 program.

Representing eight local schools, the students were nominated by their school communities and are proudly supported by their principals, families and peers. The group will meet monthly through to December, learning how Local Government works and how decisions are made.

The program officially kicked off with an induction day in February, marking the beginning of a hands-on learning experience designed to build confidence and leadership skills. Throughout the year, students will take part in Council-style meetings, develop formal motions and gain practical experience in public speaking, debating and negotiation. This month, they will elect their Junior Council President and Deputy Junior President.

Under their guiding slogan, 'Our Shire, Our Voice', the group will explore issues that matter to young people, share ideas and contribute their perspectives on the future of the community.

Shire President Rob Coales said the program is about giving young people a genuine voice, helping them build confidence while creating a stronger connection between Council and the Shire's youngest residents.

For many of the students, the program is already opening doors to new opportunities and ambitions.

Ethan from Marri Grove Primary School said he is excited to meet new people and learn more about leadership.

"Making friends and meeting new people motivates me and I am thrilled to experience the opportunity to learn the process of debating and how to be a Councillor or Shire President," he said.

"I hope to learn how a Council runs so maybe one day I can be elected and help improve the Shire for everyone."

Carter from Serpentine Primary School said he was keen to represent his peers and advocate for better local facilities.

"I want our school to have a say in local Council decisions," he said.

"I feel like we could improve public areas kids use, for example the skate park. I want to learn how decisions work and communicate the wants of students to Council."

Local educators have also welcomed the initiative, recognising its value in building confident, community-minded young people.

Woodland Grove Primary School Deputy Principal Adele Seymour said the program gives students a meaningful platform to grow.

"Students bring fresh perspectives and creative solutions, and the Junior Council provides them with the opportunity to share these ideas and represent their peers," she said.

Serpentine Primary School Principal Stephanie Le Lievre said it helps students understand the importance of having their voices heard.

"It's important that students feel empowered to speak up, contribute, and know their ideas matter," she said.

Cale from Beenup Primary School summed up the excitement shared by many of the participants.

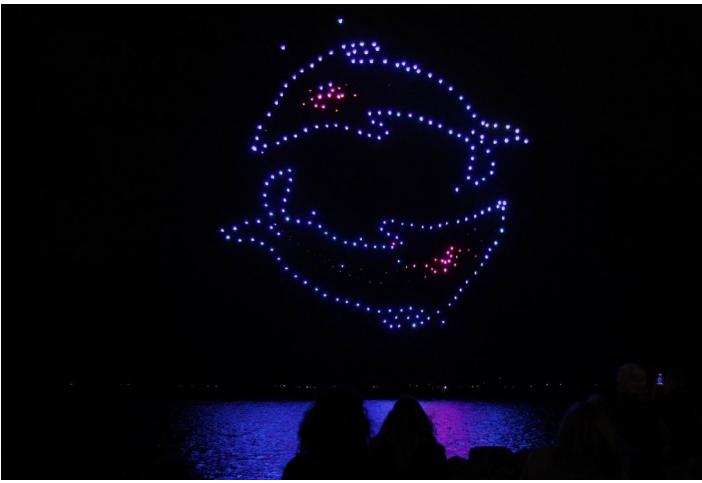
"I think it's amazing to be part of a pilot program in our Shire and meet all of these fabulous new people," he said.

"I hope it continues for many years so the voice of our age group gets heard."

The Junior Councillors will present an overview of their work at a Council meeting later this year, before graduating in November, marking the end of what promises to be a rewarding and inspiring journey.

Local Lens





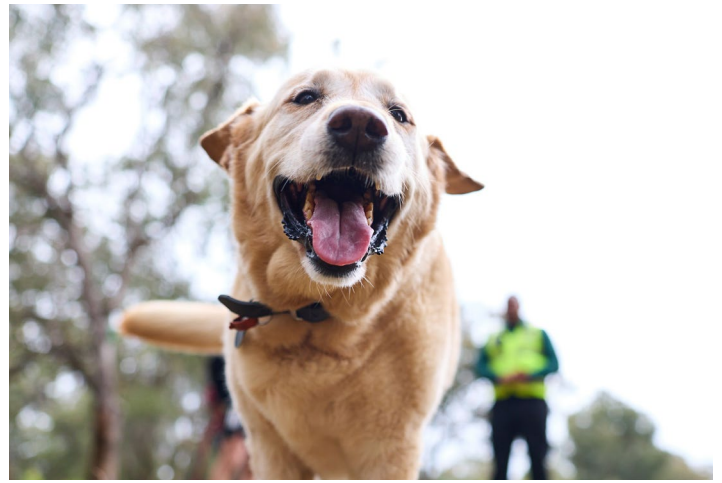
City of Albany

First Lights Kinjarling transformed Albany skies over three consecutive nights, bringing light, sound and storytelling to the city. Using cutting-edge drone technology, the event brought ancient Menang Noongar narratives to life, sharing stories passed down by Menang Elders.

Each night presented a unique story, blending culture, landscape and state-of-the-art drone choreography to illuminate thousands of years of connection to Country and the rich history of Albany.

First Lights Kinjarling attracted approximately 27,000 individuals to Anzac Peace Park across the weekend with an immersive experience that celebrated Albany as a place where stories meet – honouring the world’s oldest living culture while creating a memorable shared moment for the community.

Pictured: First Lights – Kinjarling (2026). Courtesy of the artists and Fremantle Biennale, Photo: Clancy Martin
 Provided by Laura Condon, Communications Coordinator



Town of Bassendean

The Town of Bassendean recently ran a fun and engaging campaign to promote responsible pet ownership.

The campaign included a series of light-hearted videos starring four-legged locals that covered topics like off-lead park etiquette, barking and wandering dogs.

The community response was very positive, with the videos generating strong engagement online and even catching the attention of local media.

By spreading this message in an accessible way, the campaign is helping pet owners stay informed and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community.

Provided by Bree Smolinski, Communications Officer



Shire of Ashburton

The Onslow Streetscape Revitalisation Project shows no sign of slowing down! Last year we rounded out our civil works and installed our long-awaited public art sculptures – more recently our agenda included major stormwater upgrades, new road and car park constructions and installation of new landscaping and footpaths, while enhancing our existing infrastructure. We look forward to sharing ongoing updates as our coastal jewel town continues its revitalisation, transforming the heart of Onslow into a vibrant, connected community.

Pictured: Stage 2 of the Onslow Streetscape Progressing, March 2026
 Provided by Gemma Taylor and Amelia Johnston, Digital Communications Officer and Manager Media and Communications



City of Belmont

The City of Belmont recently launched its People and Places Grants, offering up to \$2,000 to support activities that brighten local streets, activate parks and shared spaces, and help neighbours connect. Residents can also apply for the Your Neighbour Activation Scheme, which provides up to \$250 to help host small, local gatherings and bring people together.

Pictured: City of Belmont Mayor Robert Rossi and Deputy Mayor Councillor Deborah Sessions handing out flyers for our new People and Places Grants
 Provided by Laura Chaplyn, Coordinator Media and Communications



Shire of Brookton

The Shire of Brookton hosted a sculpture competition inviting artists to create something inspired by Brookton.

From heartfelt family creations to striking pieces shaped by the landscape, each artwork offered a unique perspective.

Angela Trethaway won First Place with Galah and The Nelson Family received Second Place for Together as One.

These two sculptures will become the first pieces in the Brookton Sculpture Collection, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter for art in our town.

Pictured: Shire of Brookton Deputy President Lachlan McCabe presenting first prize to Angela Trethaway

Provided by Jessika Ashworth, Community Development Officer



Town of Cambridge

More than 300 people gathered at City Beach Foreshore on Sunday, 22 February 2026 for the Town of Cambridge's Sunset Beats event, featuring live music from More Than a Feeling. The free community event brought families, friends and visitors together for an evening of dancing, face painting, beachside activities and a relaxed evening by the coast.

Pictured: Crowds enjoy live music and dancing at Sunset Beats at City Beach Foreshore (Photography by Stephen Heath).

Provided by Rory Cherry, Acting Senior Media & Communications Officer



City of Busselton

Art enthusiasts flocked to Dunsborough on the March long weekend for the 25th anniversary of the Dunsborough Arts Festival and Sculpture by the Bay. Visitors and locals experienced creativity, community connection and the coastal charm of picturesque Dunsborough. With 101 artists taking part in the Sculpture by the Bay and 123 sculptures showcased across two exhibitions, the festival provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and promote both professional and emerging artists from the region. The City of Busselton's Acquisitive Prize awarded annually as part of the exhibition, supports the continued growth of public art along the Dunsborough Sculpture Trail.

Pictured: 2025 City of Busselton Acquisitive Prize sculpture 'Wayfinder' in situ with City of Busselton Mayor, Phill Cronin; Bandicoot Productions, Jenny Fletcher; and City of Busselton Cultural Development Officer, Jacquie Happ

Provided by Deborah Holden, Senior Corporate Communications Advisor



City of Canning

In collaboration with SpaceJump, the City of Canning's first Gaming Open Day at Riverton Library was a huge success with over 200 people in attendance! This family-friendly event featured a range of activities including immersive virtual reality experiences, the excitement of video games, a taste of esports, as well as the nostalgic charm of classic board games. The partnership with SpaceJump makes a first for Local Government in WA, introducing the community to the global phenomenon of esports.

Pictured: Osman Masnor, Coordinator Library Services

Provided by Bronwyn Keys, Marketing and Communications Advisor



City of Cockburn

A crew of U.S. Navy submariners visiting WA teamed up with the City of Cockburn to help protect local beaches from coastal erosion.

About 15 submariners joined the City's Environmental Operations team to install two tonnes of brushing and undertake hand weeding of invasive species at Coogee Beach.

Brushing involves the installation of natural dune stabilisation materials, such as twigs, branches and vegetation, which help to prevent the movement of sand.

The collaboration forms part of the City's ongoing efforts to reduce the impacts of erosion along the coastline, which continues to face pressure from climate change.

Pictured: Crewmembers of a U.S. Navy submarine with City of Cockburn Environmental Operations staff, Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett and CEO Daniel Simms (far right)

Provided by Michele Nugent, Media and Communications Advisor



Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, working in partnership with the Department of Health, is strengthening early detection of mosquito-borne viruses through proactive surveillance across our community. Environmental Health Officer Julia Wilson is pictured setting up specialised mosquito traps used to monitor mosquito populations and test for viruses such as Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus. This program provides timely early warnings that help protect local families, support community awareness, and guide our seasonal mosquito management strategies. The initiative reflects the Shire's genuine commitment to caring for the health and wellbeing of our community through dedicated environmental monitoring.

Pictured: Julia Wilson, Environmental Health Officer

Provided by Julia Wilson, Environmental Health Officer and Kylie Tame, Manager Development Services



Shire of Cue

In 2019, the Shire of Cue purchased the former Bank of Western Australia, recognising its significance to the town's history. Built in 1900 and now heritage-listed, the restored building showcases original features such as the intact counters and vault. Thanks to dedicated Shire staff, local contractors and support from DPIRD and the Mid West Development Commission, REDS funding enabled installation of a commercial kitchen, paving the way for a future café or restaurant. The revitalised Bank of WA was officially opened on 21 November 2025 by Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, alongside Shire President Les Price and CEO Richard Towell.

Provided by Lisa Keen, Deputy Chief Executive Officer



Shire of Esperance

Excitement is building for Esperance's Lalor Bike Jump Track, with construction progressing well. The Track is being shaped and fine-tuned to create a fun, challenging freestyle experience for older kids, teens and adults, filling a gap in Esperance's bike riding options. It has a higher level of difficulty than other local beginner-friendly facilities, and is designed to provide a conveniently located space to build new skills. This project reflects strong community demand identified through the Shire of Esperance Mountain Bike Feasibility Study and will provide a safe, purpose-built alternative to informal bushland jumps.

Pictured: Lalor Bike Jump Track under construction

Provided by Mary Bidstrup, Media and Communications Officer



Shire of Exmouth

Two endangered turtles have been successfully rehabilitated by the Aquarist team at Ningaloo Discovery Centre and Aquarium through a collaborative partnership between the Shire of Exmouth and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

Lolli the Loggerhead and Harold the Hawksbill recovered from significant injuries and health issues under the care of aquarists and experts from both government organisations at the turtle rehabilitation facility. Their treatment has been extensive and closely monitored by the teams, who are overjoyed at their recovery and successful release back to the wild via the first vessel-based release since the facility opened. Lolli was also fitted with a satellite tag to enable continued research of the endangered loggerhead species in the wild, a rare and exciting opportunity made possible through the power of collaboration.

Provided by Rosa Harper – Communications Team



City of Greater Geraldton

A new bronze sculpture honouring Edith Dircksey Cowan (nee Brown) OBE, Australia's first woman elected to Parliament, has been unveiled in Geraldton's Edith Cowan Square. Born at Glengarry Station near Geraldton, Cowan devoted her life to advocating for women, children and social reform. The project was led by the Geraldton Voluntary Tour Guides Association, who raised more than \$120,000 to bring the sculpture to life. Crafted by renowned WA sculptors Joan Walsh Smith OAM and Charles Smith OAM, the sculpture now forms part of the City's Public Art Collection and will feature in regular guided tours and community visits.

Pictured: City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Jerry Clune and Geraldton Voluntary Tour Guides Association President Julie Clark standing with the Edith Cowan sculpture.

Provided by Guy Shepherd, Communications Officer – Digital



City of Gosnells

The City of Gosnells recently completed construction of the Southern River Business Park, a 21ha commercial and light industrial subdivision. The project represents the first commercial subdivision undertaken by the City of Gosnells. The business park will provide a strong economic boost and generate new employment opportunities. The profits generated from the sale of the land will be reinvested into local infrastructure, helping support the rapidly growing community within Southern River.

Provided by Kim Christian, Communications Officer



Shire of Merredin

The Shire of Merredin hosted its free annual Kickstart Pool Party on 7 February 2026, celebrating the return to school. Held at the Merredin District Olympic Swimming Pool, the event welcomed students for an afternoon of music, food, and fun activities including pool inflatables and diving for coins. By facilitating this energetic start to the new academic year, the Shire was able to foster community spirit and offer a positive space for local youth to connect with their friends and family.

Provided by Kohdee Swinwood, Media and Communications Officer



City of Mandurah

The City of Mandurah officially kicked off the countdown to the 2026 Channel 7 Mandurah Crab Fest with a media launch in February, celebrating everything locals love about the city – community, collaboration and crabs!

The festival came to life on March 14 and 15, filling the Western Foreshore with great food, live music, cooking demonstrations, celebrity appearances, family fun, and a strong sense of community pride. Havana Brown and Thelma Plum headlined the music stage, Home and Away favourites James Stewart and Ada Nicodemou were festival ambassadors, and Diana Chan and Brendan Pang were this year's cooking ambassadors.

Crab Fest continues to thrive thanks to strong partnerships with Channel 7, the WA State Government through Tourism WA, and a wide network of sponsors and supporters.

Pictured: City of Mandurah Mayor Amber Kearns and local fisherman, Damien Bell, crack the first crabs at the Crab Fest media launch.

Provided by Kaylee Meerton, Communications and Public Relations Advisor



Shire of Mundaring

The Shire of Mundaring has officially opened the Glen Forrest Jump Track, delivering a purpose-built outdoor space designed to encourage young people to be active and connected.

Developed in partnership with the WA Government through the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund, the \$370,000 project forms part of the PlayOn WA initiative.

Shaped by strong community consultation, the facility provides local riders with a free, high-energy space to build skills, confidence and social connection in the Perth Hills.

Pictured (L-R): Levi Rosolin, Kai Toohey, Cr Ben Heptinstall, Cr Prapti Mehta, Stacie Woodward, Hon. Klasey Hirst MLC, Shire President Paige McNeil, Adam Hort MLA, Jarrah Wallace at the official opening of the Glen Forrest Jump Track

Provided by Breyon Gibbs, Communications Coordinator and Eleanor Forte, Digital Communications Officer



Shire of Murray

The beloved Murray Library has officially turned a page to a bright new chapter. Refurbishments have been completed, and the revitalised space has officially opened to the community.

The upgrade delivered a full interior refresh, an improved layout, updated furnishings, enhanced accessibility features, and modernised spaces designed to support reading, learning, and connection.

Alongside the physical transformation, the library has also unveiled refreshed branding that better reflects its welcoming, contemporary identity. To celebrate and share in the excitement, a community event was held in January, welcoming residents to come and explore the updated space.

The Shire of Murray would like to thank Community Bank Pinjarra for sponsoring this project and supporting our community.

Pictured: Library patrons enjoying the revitalised space during the community event

Provided by Kaylin Heyns, Digital Communications and Marketing Officer



City of Joondalup

Premier Roger Cook, Member for Kingsley Jessica Stojkovski and Federal Member for Moore Tom French joined Mayor Daniel Kingston and South East Ward Councillor John Chester for the official opening of the new pedestrian and cycleway bridge over Moolanda Boulevard in Kingsley.

The bridge restores a key link in the Robertson Road Cycleway, giving the local community a safer, more accessible and more enjoyable way to walk, ride and connect with the places they love.

The \$3.2 million project was jointly funded by the Federal Government through the Thriving Suburbs Program, Main Roads Western Australia and the City of Joondalup.

Provided by Daniel Davini, Media Advisor

Shire of Plantagenet

More than 115 volunteers gathered at West Cape Howe Wines on 6 March for the Shire of Plantagenet's annual Thank a Volunteer Sundowner. The evening recognised the many residents who generously give their time to support more than 70 community and emergency service organisations and 37 sporting clubs across the Shire. Shire President Len Handasyde thanked volunteers for playing a vital role in strengthening the fabric of the local community and applauded the strong volunteering culture throughout the Shire.

Pictured: Volunteers Glenys Steel, Wendy Miell, Kate Stanhope, Alison Armstrong, Pat Fagents and Donelle Hermans at the Shire of Plantagenet Thank a Volunteer Sundowner. Credit: Shire of Plantagenet
Provided by Lisa Newbury, Communications Coordinator and Isabelle Draffehn, Community Events and Initiatives Coordinator



City of Perth

The City of Perth reached a significant milestone in support of Western Australia's container deposit scheme, Containers for Change, with 50 million eligible containers collected through local refund points.

The scheme provides a simple and rewarding way for the community to recycle, helping to reduce litter, protect the environment and create new opportunities for social enterprises and community groups.

Pictured: City of Perth Container Deposit Scheme and Operations teams receive a certificate from CEO Michelle Reynolds in recognition of 50 million containers collected

Provided by City of Perth and Containers for Change

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

Sixteen Year 6 students, representing eight schools from across the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, have been inducted as the Shire's first Junior Council begins its 2026 program.

Nominated by their schools and proudly supported by their principals, families and wider school communities, the students will meet monthly from February to learn how Local Government works and how decisions are made.

The program has been designed to amplify young voices and build a stronger connection between Council and the Shire's youngest residents. The Junior Councillors will present an overview of their work at a Council meeting later in the year, before graduating in November.

Pictured: 2026 Junior Council with Cr Scott, Cr Mazzini and President Coales
Provided by Issy Rule, Media & Advocacy Advisor



City of Stirling

The City of Stirling is officially an owl-friendly City after phasing out all use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) from its operations and contracts.

SGARs not only kill rodents, but the native species, such as owls, that eat the poisoned rodents. In April 2025, City of Stirling Council voted to become an owl-friendly City, following on from a motion by Cr Tony Krsticevic. Less than a year on from this vote, the City has ended its use of SGARs, taking an important step towards protecting our wildlife and any non-target animals from the impacts of SGARs and earning owl-friendly status.

Pictured: City of Stirling Environmental Education Officer Chanel Cronje with Hagrid the barn owl

Provided by Mark Ravi, Communications Officer



Town of Victoria Park

The turnout was high as the Town of Victoria Park hosted its third annual Lunar New Year night markets on 20 February, closing a portion of the Albany Highway strip for Lion Dances, music, roving performances and LNY-themed market stalls. Local businesses got in on the action with street-facing stalls and dinner and drink specials, and specially curated light projections honouring the Year of the Fire Horse were projected on trees and buildings by VJZoo.

Photography by Derrin Kee and event coordination by Aleisha Hunter. Provided by Andy Nicolau, Communications Advisor



City of Swan

The City of Swan's Ellenbrook Community Centre, opened in late January, is set to become the community heart of one of the City's fastest-growing suburbs.

The Centre will bring diverse groups together within a central, purpose-built facility, providing district-scale function, activity and workshop spaces designed to accommodate a wide range of community uses.

The community-driven project was supported by \$3.5 million funding from the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety, \$2 million from the Federal Government's Department of Infrastructure, \$2 million in support from Lotterywest and a \$1.5 million contribution from the City of Swan.

Pictured: Cutting a ribbon to mark the official opening are, (L-R), Tanya Richardson, City of Swan Mayor; Tania Lawrence, Member for Hasluck; Michelle Maynard MLA, Member for Swan Hills, and Lorna Pritchard, General Manager Grants and Community, Lotterywest.

Provided by Richard Whitehead, Media and PR Officer



City of Vincent

A hole in the wall coffee concept has sprung up on Beaufort St thanks to a Business Enhancement Grant from City of Vincent. The grants support businesses to make small-scale improvements that enhance the street appeal and functionality of the neighbourhood. GroundPlan combines thoughtful architecture with a high-quality café experience, creating a welcoming stop for locals. The project shows how small-scale design can contribute to vibrant, people-focused neighbourhood spaces.

Provided by Chloe Mort, Coordinator Marketing & Communications



City of Wanneroo

In December, the City proudly opened the Dordaaak Kepup Library and Youth Innovation Hub in Landsdale. This state-of-the-art facility features a modern library, gaming zone, recording studios, kitchen and STEAM spaces. The project was supported by \$12 million from the City, plus WA Government and Lotterywest funding.

Pictured: City of Wanneroo staff with community members outside Dordaaak Kepup Library and Youth Innovation Hub, Landsdale.

Provided by Alana Martinovich, City of Wanneroo Communications and Brand Team



Shire of West Arthur

Peter Lutz recently celebrated 45 years of service with the Shire of West Arthur. Peter started at the Shire in 1981 as a general hand, working his way up to the position of mechanic, and now as Leading Hand – Road Maintenance. The Works crew celebrated this achievement with a cake. Congratulations on this milestone, Peter.

Photo by Cass Squires

Provided by Sharon Bell, Community Development Officer



Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu turned up the summer fun this Australia Day with a lively Pool Party at the Wongan Hills Memorial Swimming Pool. The free, family-friendly event featured live entertainment, giant water inflatables, pool games and a sizzling community barbecue, creating a vibrant atmosphere for residents of all ages.

Families gathered on the shady lawns while kids and teens made the most of the water activities, filling the afternoon with laughter and energy. Designed to remove financial barriers and bring people together, the event provided a great opportunity for the community to relax, reconnect and celebrate what makes living in Wongan-Ballidu so special.

Pictured: Wongan Hills Police Sgt Russell Evans and Assistant Pool Manager Adele Caporn.

Provided by Esther Mephram, Community Engagement Officer. Photos by Julie Lynn Creative Co



Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley

In November, the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley proudly opened the Kimberley's first All Abilities Playground in Kununurra, a vibrant community-built space welcoming people of all ages and abilities. Featuring local artwork, Miriwoong language elements and thoughtful accessible design, the playground reflects the region's strong community spirit.

The Shire thanks students, artists, schools, community groups and staff for their contributions, as well as major funding partners Lotterywest and the Federal Government. Special thanks to Chris and Emma from Nature Play Solutions for their collaboration. The Shire looks forward to families enjoying this inclusive space for many years.

Provided by Jessica Buchan, Digital Media and Communication Officer



Photo credit:
Portia Gebauer
Photographer

2026 Aboriginal Engagement Forum success

On Wednesday, 18 March, more than 250 delegates including Aboriginal leaders, Local Government Officers, State Government representatives and WA business owners came together at the State Reception Centre, Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park) for WALGA's 2026 Aboriginal Engagement Forum.

The Forum provided opportunities for learning, stories and fostering collaboration between Local Governments and Aboriginal communities across policy, programs and service delivery.

Kaartidjin kwop koorliny | Empowerment in Action

This year's Forum theme 'Kaartidjin kwop koorliny | Empowerment in Action' focused on strengthening Aboriginal representation within Local Government, and building employment, business and leadership pathways.

Opened with a Welcome to Country by State Councillor and City of Kwinana Deputy Mayor Barry Winmar, with addresses by WALGA President Mark Irwin and the Honourable Don Punch MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, delegates were asked to think how they could empower action in their own communities once they left the room.

'How many more people have potential, but lack opportunity?'

The event keynote, 2026 Australian of the Year Local Hero Frank Mitchell delivered a powerful keynote presentation 'The Multiplier Effect: Transforming Local Investment into National Impact'. Frank shared his personal story and how he and his partners have created over 70 Aboriginal upskilling positions in the electrical and construction industry. Frank shared how he integrated cultural values with business leadership, strengthening his ties to community, while reshaping the construction industry and creating lasting impact and social justice.

In conversation and case examples

Across the day, delegates heard from a number of collaborative panels and case examples including learnings from Beediyar – AIM WA's pilot accelerator program for First Nations executive leaders. Local Government examples were also shared to empower the workforce through cultural safety and allyship facilitated by RecWA, and tangible business collaboration examples from GIVIT and Morrgul.

2026 also saw the return of the Yarning Space, with representatives from the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety, Morrgul, GIVIT, Reconciliation WA, The Australian Institute of Management (AIM WA) and WALGA joining attendees and providing opportunities to reflect and connect.



On Tuesday, 17 March WALGA was proud to host its second Aboriginal Elected Member Roundtable, bringing together Councillors from 15 diverse Local Governments across metropolitan, regional and remote WA.

Elected Members led insightful discussions with senior leaders from WALGA and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

A key focus of the Roundtable was exploring partnership opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal representation across the sector and support culturally safe, inclusive and welcoming Councils for all communities.

WALGA's 2026 Aboriginal Engagement Forum was guided by members of a Local Government reference group. Thank you to:

- Aimee Ryan and Kelsee Kickett – City of Melville
- Ash Narkle-Watson and Ben Armstrong – City of Canning
- Michelle Sultan – City of Rockingham
- Cr Helen Sadler, WALGA State Councillor – Town of Cottesloe
- Carol Littlefair – Shire of York
- Nichola Tomkins – Town of Victoria Park, and
- Bree Crawley – City of Wanneroo

The event built meaningful relationships and provided tangible actions, encouraging delegates to empower community-led initiatives in their own communities.

WALGA is proud to have received support for our 2026 Aboriginal Engagement Forum from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS), the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH), and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

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 the WALGA President, State Council consists of 24 State Councillors – 12 from Country constituencies and 12 from Metropolitan constituencies.

March 2026 State Council Meeting

The elections for the WALGA President and Deputy President were held at the March State Council meeting.

State Council elected Mayor Mark Irwin AM as WALGA President, and President Chris Antonio as Deputy President. The President and Deputy President terms started immediately and will conclude at the first ordinary State Council meeting of 2028.

At the State Council meeting, resolutions were made on the following matters:

- New Aviation Advocacy Positions on Regional Airports and Regional & Remote Air Services
- Amendments to the AGM Standing Orders
- Appointment of Policy Team Chairs.

May 2026 State Council Meeting

In May, WALGA's State Council and Executive Team travelled to the Shire of Pingelly for State Council and the Central Country Zone Forum.

Regional meetings allow State Council to meet with Elected Members and senior Officers from Member Local Governments and gain an understanding of the various issues confronting Local Governments in each Zone.

Thank you to the team at the Shire of Pingelly for the warm welcome.

For full resolutions, visit the WALGA website.

Streamlined energy account management for Local Governments

With rising costs and a range of unexpected challenges to manage, a growing number of businesses, including Local Governments, are taking proactive steps to maximise their energy efficiency and prepare for upcoming business energy bills.

According to Synergy Account Manager Luke Randell, businesses who make energy management a priority can then investigate how to potentially reduce consumption and optimise their energy use, which could help them to have more control over their costs.

"Creating a business energy savings strategy doesn't have to be complicated," he says. "For any Local Government trying to reduce business' energy costs, we say the best starting point is to understand exactly what makes up your electricity and gas bills."

Understand your energy bills and patterns

"As a Synergy customer, your Local Government can use Synergy's My Account platform for a clear idea of how and when you use your electricity to understand the charges and costs involved."

"Additionally, if you have a smart meter, you can also identify your main sources of electricity use at different times of day – for example when you're using heating and cooling or motors and pumps in your facilities."

"For any other energy bills not from Synergy, make sure you check with your retailer for details of your consumption profile, what contributes to your bill and how much energy your business is using."

Recent changes to Synergy's My Account platform

Synergy's online portal for customers, My Account, is being updated to provide a more secure and user-friendly experience. Following this upgrade,

customers will need to register to use the updated version*.

"You can use My Account to track your energy usage, update your contact details, view your Synergy bills and manage payments. The new My Account portal has been designed to put our customers in control, with access to historical bills, previous transactions, energy usage and more."

As Randell explains, the new system requirements and improved security measures will require businesses to re-register for My Account, even if they may have registered for My Account previously.

How to register for the new My Account

"The process of re-registering only takes a few minutes. You'll just need your Synergy account number, business name as it appears on your bill and your business email address."

Randell adds that registrants must be an authorised contact on the Synergy business account to register. Multiple contacts on the same Synergy account will be able to create their own My Account registration using their own business email address.

"This platform can help you understand your baseline electricity use for your Local Government, why this might vary and what you can do about it."

"Overall, Local Governments who take action to understand their patterns of energy use will be able to then explore and seek to address any inconsistencies in consumption and make informed decisions to help potentially reduce their electricity consumption and costs."

To explore more ways to help take control of your business energy costs, including how to use the new My Account platform to manage your business energy account, contact Luke Randell at luke.randell@synergy.net.au or on 0436 916 941.

*My Account terms and conditions apply.

Tips to boost business energy efficiency

- **Get your team involved.** Your staff might have insights and ideas to try, such as a challenge to print less, signage to remind everyone about what needs to be switched off or an agreement to reduce air conditioner and heating use when not required.
- **Identify what uses most of your electricity.** In some cases, it might be more efficient for you to run certain equipment all day compared to starting it up and shutting it down at several points throughout the day.
- **Explore potential operational changes.** For example, you could create a plan to reduce

electricity consumption by turning off equipment that might usually be left on when not needed, such as overnight and weekends.

- **Make the most of in-built energy saving modes.** Make sure your team are familiar with the manuals for each item of equipment they use, including how to use energy efficiency modes or timers.
- **Optimise your solar power.** If you have solar panels installed, try to shift your consumption to make the most of that energy while it's being generated by the sun. In WA, this is generally between 10am and 2pm each day.

New My Account, ready to be put to work.

We're upgrading My Account to bring you an even simpler, more secure way to manage your business energy account online.

Find out more about these changes and how they impact you:
[synergy.net.au/BusinessAccount](https://www.synergy.net.au/BusinessAccount)



WALGA 2026

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CONVENTION



WALGA



16 – 18
SEPTEMBER

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