

# President's Report

## September 2024

### Introduction

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

I have been strongly advocating on behalf of all Local Governments on key issues, including Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), Urban Greening, Energy Transition, Aboriginal Heritage, and Regional Education. In addition, WA was well represented at ALGA's National General Assembly and the Commonwealth Governments Australian Council of Local Governments (ACLG) forum. I outline these issues in further detail in this report.

### State Election Campaign

The State Election campaign is well underway with a State Election Priorities document prepared, dedicated microsite built, and public media campaign planned to support our advocacy and increase visibility in the run up to the election. WALGA will share assets that each Local Government can personalise to fit their local challenges and priorities, as well as liaise with Councils to capture stories that can support each key advocacy area.

WALGA has prepared a comprehensive political engagement strategy to be implemented in the lead up to the 2025 Election. The objectives of the strategy are:

- Influence election policy development and commitments from all parties
- Maintaining relationships with key decision makers and Members of Parliament
- Educating current and future members of Parliament about WALGA and the Local Government sector

### Polyphagous shot-hole borer

WALGA and Local Governments continue focusing on the impact of Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) in meetings with the State Government and in the media.

In early July, WALGA met with the Minister responsible for the PSHB response Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, to discuss Local Governments' concerns and the need to escalate and commit additional funding for the response and to rebuild lost canopy.

WALGA, the City of Perth and the City of Vincent also presented to the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEEP), Australia's key technical body for coordinating the national response to the PSHB incursion. The Committee met in Perth on 16-18 July to inspect infested sites and see the extent of response activities being implemented by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and Local Government and deliberate on whether it is still technically feasible to eradicate PSHB.

### Urban Greening Grants

The Urban Greening Grant Program provides \$3.75 million (ex GST) to support additional tree and understorey planting for the 33 Local Governments located in the Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel) regions. Round 1 awarded \$591,839 to 12 Local Governments. \$2.8m

was available for Round 2, to support planting in the winter of 2025. Round 2 opened in early May and closed on 28 June. Round 2 funding will be awarded in early August.

### **Energy Transition**

There is growing concern that the State Government does not have a framework for how the energy transition that is currently underway will benefit the impacted communities, and that the state planning framework is not fit to manage this growing and rapidly challenging area of policy.

These discussions and concerns have been brought forward to WALGA through a number of zones and are reflected in the draft Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework Advocacy Position, Renewable Energy Facilities Advocacy Position, and the draft Priority Agriculture Position Statement items for decision in the September State Council Agenda.

### **Aboriginal Heritage legislation**

WALGA continues to support members to navigate their responsibilities under the amended *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. Since we last met, WALGA has attended a Native Title and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Roundtable with the Goldfields-Esperance Country Zone, Goldfields Esperance Development Commission and other representatives.

WALGA is continuing to foster the working relationships between Local Governments and regional representatives of DPLH through these roundtable discussions. Planning for future sessions is underway for the South West and the Great Eastern country zones.

### **Regional Education Strategy**

On 22 July, the Department of Education released a draft Regional Education Strategy. The Strategy aims to provide a framework to guide more effective delivery of regional education, focusing on improved education and wellbeing. This provides an excellent opportunity to provide direct feedback and comment to the Department on the issues have raised through recent Zone motions. To support members, WALGA has partnered with the Department of Education to facilitate an information and feedback session on the Strategy priority pillars. The session will be held online on Wednesday, 21 August 2:30pm - 3:30pm. A registration link will be sent via LG Direct.

### **ALGA National General Assembly**

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

Hosted at the National Convention Centre in Canberra, the event provided opportunities for Local Governments to advocate on behalf of their communities on a national platform.

Eight WA Local Governments (Shire of Ashburton, Town of Bassendean, City of Bayswater, City of Cockburn, Shire of Dundas, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, City of Melville, and City of Stirling) passed 10 successful motions at the NGA including regional health services, arts and culture, Closing the Gap, sustainability, emergency management and climate resilience.

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

The attendance of Members from across WA and the presentation of 10 successful motions conveys the important role of Local Government in identifying and addressing key issues as the tier of Government closest to their community. WALGA was pleased to host a WA delegates function on the night before the NGA, where it was great for WA delegates to network together.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts *National Awards for Local Government* were also hosted at the culmination of the week.

The National Awards highlight initiatives implemented by Local Governments that are innovative, make a difference to their local communities, display excellence, and have outcomes that are replicable across the country.

WALGA extends its congratulations to the Shire of Chittering, City of Gosnells, City of Greater Geraldton, and City of Stirling who were all awarded National Awards for Local Government for their work with women in Local Government, addressing violence against women and their children, disaster readiness, and recovery and productivity through infrastructure.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government hosted the Australian Council of Local Governments (ACLG) forum on Friday 5 July, and this was a wonderful opportunity for delegates to discuss issues and ask questions of Federal Cabinet Ministers.

### **2024 Local Government Awards**

The Local Government Awards was held on 2 August at Winthrop Hall, UWA. 280 guests attended the first stand-alone event to celebrate individuals and teams who exemplify the ethos of and display excellence in Local Government. It was a fantastic evening recognising those that go above and beyond for their community and I congratulate the winners again for their achievements.

### **Local Government House Trust – 100% Owners of ONE70 (170) Railway Parade West Leederville**

On 1 July, the Local Government House Trust ('The House Trust'), which has provided building accommodation to WALGA and its predecessors since 1980, became 100% owners of ONE70 (170) Railway Parade. For WALGA, this secures a permanent home for the Association and enables WALGA to future-proof its support and service offerings for our valued Members.

With the 10-year Joint Venture arrangement with Qube Property coming to an end, exercising our option to purchase Qube's 40 per cent share of this 5-star Naber-rated building was a natural progression, closing the loop from construction to full ownership.

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

The buyout allows the House Trust to realise the strategic and financial benefits of full ownership. This means that WALGA should never need to move premises in the future, as additional space will provide long-term scalability if required.

Purchasing the building also means that WALGA can provide its Members with a dedicated Hub. Recognising that many Members travel great distances when visiting Perth, there will now always be a home away from home for Members to work from, network and connect at WALGA.

**President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP**  
**WALGA President**

# President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 10 July 2024 and scheduled before 4 September 2024 are as follows:

## State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia - Inquiry into Workforce Development
- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Youth; Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workforce Development
- Hon David Michael MLA, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Ports; Road Safety; Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport
- Premier Hon Roger Cook MLA, Premier of Western Australia
- Hon Sue Ellery BA MLC, Minister for Finance and the Leader in the Legislative Council
- National Tree Day event at City of Bayswater with Hon Reece Whitby MLA, Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action and Mayor Filomena Piffaretti

## Zone Meetings

- Kimberley Country Zone Meeting
- Northern Country Zone meeting

## Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
  - State Council Meeting, 10 July 2024
  - Finance and Services Committee Meeting
  - State Council Information Forum
- **ALGA**
  - ALGA Board post NGA teleconference
  - ALGA Housing Summit, 16 August 2024
- **LGIS**
  - Board Meeting, 12 July 2024
  - Board Meeting, 23 August 2024
- St John Safe Streets meeting
- Pathways to Politics for Women Advisory Committee Meeting
- Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund Board Meeting
- Morawa Art Show
- State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee Meeting

## Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- RAC Breakfast with Scott Bales
- WALGA Local Government Awards
- RCA Meeting
- National Housing Summit, Adelaide

**Member Visits:**

- Shire of Dandaragan,
- Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
- Shire of Victoria Plains
- Shire of Upper Gascoyne
- Shire of Carnarvon
- Shire of Exmouth
- Town of Cambridge
- City of Fremantle