

# Western Councillor



ISSUE 117 | DEC/JAN 2022



P4 TOWARD ZERO  
EMISSIONS

P26 NEW INITIATIVE  
HELPS FIND  
MISSING PERSONS

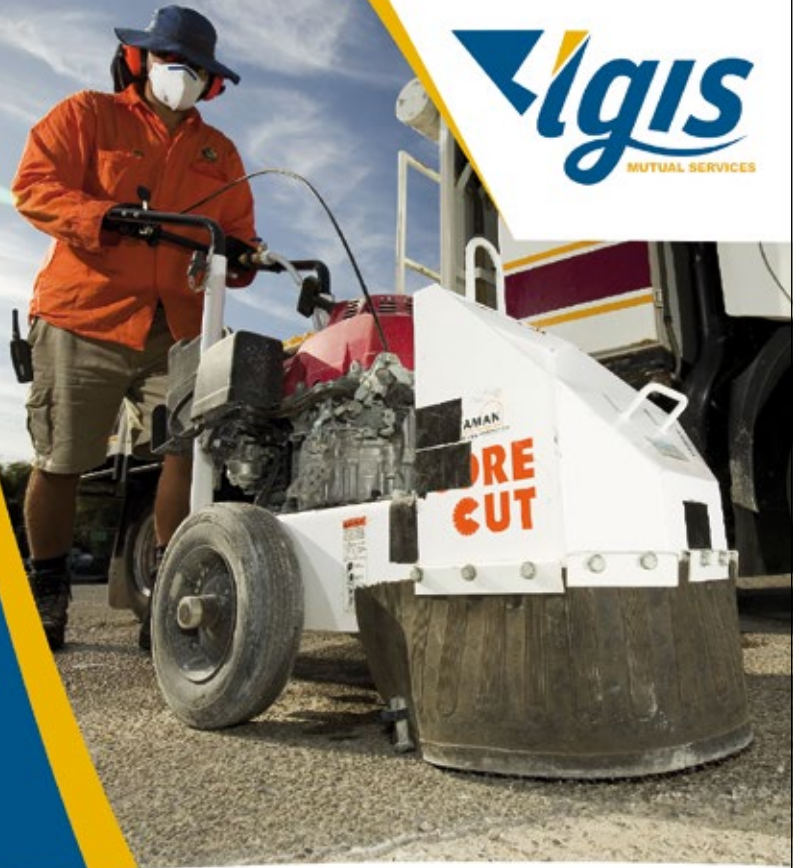
# Local governments working together.

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 [lgisw.com.au](http://lgisw.com.au) or call 9483 8888.



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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## Peer Support Team

A practical way to provide mediation and conciliation support to Local Governments in Western Australia.

The Peer Support Team is an initiative between the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Professionals WA.

The team was formed to provide conciliation, negotiation and mediation support to Local Governments that identified issues of relationship conflict between Councillors, or between Councillors and senior staff.

The key objective is to assist Local Governments resolve these issues

of conflict and reduce the need for formal investigations or enquiries.

The team will meet with the affected Councillors and staff individually, as well as in a group setting, allowing all parties to freely express their views in a neutral environment. The team will then assist the Local Government to develop outcomes and a path forward that is suitable for all involved.

So, to head off possible conflict or for the best resolution in situations where it already exists, call one of the team on the Hotline Numbers below.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PEER SUPPORT TEAM HOTLINE NUMBERS

Nick Sloan  
CEO  
WALGA  
Tel 9213 2025

Candy Choo  
CEO  
LG Professionals WA  
Tel 9271 1136



# Contents

ISSUE 117 | DEC/JAN 2022

- 02 From the CEO's Office
- 02 From the President
- 03 From the Minister
- 04 Toward Zero Emissions
- 07 LGIS Update
- 08 Around the Nation
- 10 Around The State In Pictures
- 21 Economic Update
- 22 Volunteers
- 24 Elected Member Profile
- 26 New initiative helps find missing persons
- 28 State Council Briefs

**Welcome to Issue 117** of Western Councillor

## COVER:

The City of Perth's fifth annual Christmas lights trail was launched on Friday, 19th November.

City goers were delighted by free roving entertainment, including Santa in the Murray Street Mall, opera singers in Yagan Square and angels on stilts in the Perth Cultural Centre.

26 enchanting installations were shining bright across the City until 2 January, including the Christmas Projections on St Georges Cathedral and the Magical Swans at Elizabeth Quay.



ASHBURTON



KWINANA



STIRLING



Chief Executive Officer  
**Nick Sloan**

## FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

In the blink of an eye 2021 has come and gone. We are still living with COVID-19 and anticipating what the impact of the Delta and Omicron variants will be on our communities when the State borders finally come down. It was terrific to be joined by newly elected members from across the State at our new Councillor Seminar in November, promoting the #LGsRollUp initiative in support of the national push to increase vaccination rates across the country.

WALGA has been actively engaged with the State Government on the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination mandates announced in October. The new Directions are challenging in both their number and complexity, however we have leveraged our access to the Chief Health Officer and his team to provide clear and timely advice to the sector as new Directions are released.

The situation with COVID-19 will continue to develop as Western Australia progresses towards reopening its borders in early 2022. To ensure that the Association remains well placed to respond we will continue to prioritise our resources across the WALGA COVID-19 Response Team.

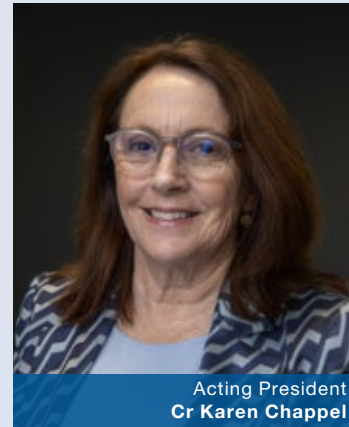
I have taken the opportunity to engage widely with Members on their concerns about the new Work Health and Safety legislation which was expected to come into effect in January 2022. Although many of the requirements under the WHS Act exist in the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984, there are a number of aspects of the Act, particularly as they relate to Local Government's responsibilities for volunteer Bushfire Brigades (BFBs) that are causing concern and uncertainty for the sector and BFB volunteers. The timing of the Act's commencement as the sector and BFBs deal with the high threat season and mandatory vaccination requirements is unfortunate.

WALGA had advocated that the WHS Act be delayed to allow Local Governments sufficient time to consider the implications for their management of BFBs and to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place. The Act had been expected to come into operation on 1 January 2022, when the supporting sets of regulations were finalised. Pleasingly, the Minister for Industrial Relations has announced that commencement is now not expected until March 2022. Exposure drafts of the Regulations will be released in late December 2021 and we will ensure the sector's concerns are highlighted during this time.

The November 2021 release of the legislative reform package by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Carey MLA, will ensure that any pause for reflection on 2021 will need to wait. Pleasingly, the Minister has considered the request for an extension to the Act Review consultation timeframe and provided a welcome extension. Many of the initiatives outlined as a part of the package have been informed by engagement between Members and the Minister. The Local Government sector will welcome the tiered approach to many requirements according to the differing size and scale of Local Governments.

The introduction of a new external oversight model to replace the existing legislative instruments is a central element of the reforms. The Local Government sector has asked for a more contemporary intervention model to support the sector; and the Minister is seeking to achieve this through the establishment of an office of the Local Government Inspector. Consultation on the detailed drafting will take place well into next year and we welcome the Minister's ongoing commitment to engagement with the sector and WALGA as its representative voice.

Finally, I'd like to thank and acknowledge the immeasurable contribution our outgoing President, Mayor Tracey Roberts has made to the Association, the Local Government sector in Western Australia and the community she so proudly represents. Tracey's election to WALGA President coincided with the rapid escalation and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am indebted to Tracey for her strength, leadership, counsel, and remarkable ability to stay upbeat and enthusiastic during what have been extraordinary times. The Federal Parliament will be a better place with Tracey representing the State and on behalf of all the team at WALGA we wish Tracey, Peter and family all the very best for the future.



Acting President  
**Cr Karen Chappel**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As Acting President of the Association, I would like to congratulate all Elected Members successful in the October elections and welcome those Councillors who are newly elected to the role. WALGA has hosted a number of events since the elections to support new Councillors in learning more about their roles and responsibilities.

The New Councillors Seminar held on November 12 attracted nearly 100 new and returned Elected Members keen to learn more about their role and responsibilities. Among the presenters were the City of Vincent Mayor Emma Cole and CEO David MacLennan speaking about their working relationship, exemplified through a challenging case study, Shire of Bruce Rock Cr Rebecca Waye presenting on her experience of being a new Councillor in 2019 and City of Stirling Mayor Mark Irwin who provided the closing keynote presentation on community leadership. These presentations were valuable and very much part of the learnings of the day.

In addition to the New Councillors Seminar, in November WALGA also held the first training session specifically targeted at the Role of Mayors and Presidents. This new course has been created to assist Council leaders in areas of leadership, communication, presiding at meetings and Elected Member support and development. Some 30 Mayors, Presidents, and Deputy Mayors and Presidents attended this inaugural session, with more sessions planned for 2022.

The Minister for Housing; Local Government, Hon John Carey MLA joined both events and was most generous with his time and in sharing his own experiences as Mayor, and I would like to thank him for his attendance.

In the New Year, newly Elected Members will be receiving an information pack from WALGA with further support materials including FAQs for Elected Members and a Quick Reference guide outlining key components of their role, declaration of interests and meeting procedures.

With nearly 300 newly elected Councillors coming into the role, there is 300 that are departing the sector and I would like to thank and acknowledge these individuals for their contribution during their time as Councillors. Whilst tenure of service or areas of specific interest may vary, what is undoubtedly the same across existing and past Elected Members is your commitment to your local communities in striving to make your local areas a great place to live and work. Thank you.



Minister for Local Government  
Hon John Carey MLA

## FROM THE MINISTER

It's been a big couple of months in the local government space.

Since I last wrote for the Western Councillor Magazine, we've made it through another round of local government elections.

Local government elections are a busy time and I know a lot of effort goes into making sure everything runs smoothly, so a big thank you to everyone across the sector for their involvement.

I also want to congratulate all elected members - those who have been re-elected and those

elected for the first time. Being able to serve your community as an elected member is an enormous privilege. You have genuine capacity to drive real and positive change and I urge everyone who is now sitting on a council throughout our state to grasp this opportunity with both hands.

I also want to acknowledge the great initiative of WALGA for running an inaugural council leadership seminar, aimed at providing Mayors and Presidents with the right tools to successfully lead their local government. I had the opportunity to address the Mayors and Presidents in attendance, and my message was simple. Culture starts at the top. If we can get culture right within our organisations, that fosters the right environment to deliver great outcomes for our communities.

Culture provides me a great segue to the second topic I want to address - the major reforms I have just announced for the local government sector.

These reforms represent the most significant change to local government since the Act was introduced more than 25 years ago.

The reforms cover a broad range of areas, but at the heart of the changes is fostering great culture by addressing dysfunction - which is destabilising to the work of local government.

Central to the reforms is the proposal to introduce a new inspector that will have the powers of a standing inquiry to address dysfunction and issues earlier, and avoid the need for inquiries. I have been on the record

as saying we should avoid inquiries where we can - they're disruptive and costly.

We would address issues sooner by providing greater support to local governments. This would be achieved through the use of independent monitors who would provide expertise such as governance, financial management and conflict resolution. We would also strengthen penalties to discourage poor behaviour, including suspensions and fines.

The reforms will also make sure the decision-making process is transparent and accountable, help local governments do more for their ratepayers by removing the burden of red tape where we can, and implement changes that improve the democratic process and encourage more community engagement.

I know many local governments across the state are already doing many of the things in these proposed reforms - and that is fantastic. But we need to bring everyone on the journey to ensure the same standard across the sector.

The reforms are currently out for public comment until February 25. If you haven't already, I want to encourage you to jump on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website and have your say:

[www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgactreform](http://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgactreform).



Department of  
**Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries**

# We're improving local government in Western Australia.

## Local Government Reform

The State Government has recently announced the most significant package of reforms to local government since the passage of the Local Government Act 1995, more than 25 years ago.

The reforms, developed in part from the findings of the Local Government Act Review and Local Government Act Review Panel Final Report, will address known issues and provide for a modernised framework of governance.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has sought feedback from the sector and the wider community, to help inform the implementation of the reforms.

**For more information and to view the summary of proposed reforms, visit [www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgactreform](http://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgactreform).**



# LEADING THE WAY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

## Local Government Emissions Reductions Activities

Local Government as a sector is leading the way with 63 Members taking at least one significant action to address climate change, representing 93% of the State's population. WALGA has a strong policy position on climate change and encourages Local Governments to make climate declarations, which includes making a commitment to setting an emissions reduction target. In addition, WALGA has the following initiatives and programs that assist Local Governments in addressing emissions reduction:

- Supporting regional climate alliances,
- Carbon accounting initiative,
- Urban Forest and Canopy Program,
- Climate training, eLearning modules and tools,
- Climate collaborative, and
- Environmental Sustainable Design of Buildings

The regional climate alliances grants program - a collaboration between DWER and WALGA - was highly successful with eight Expressions of Interest (EOI) received, representing 51 regional Local Governments from the Kimberley to the south coast. Whilst only two alliances could be selected, all of the eight alliances submitted strong applications, and the assessment panel found it difficult to choose from the top 4 alliances. All six unsuccessful alliances have committed to continue to progress actions on climate change, and whilst WALGA will support the two successful alliances, WALGA will also support the unsuccessful ones by seeking other avenues of funding to broaden the alliances grants program both in the regions and in the Perth-Peel area.

As noted above, 63 Local Governments have committed to taking some action on climate change, with at least 47 of these committing to reduce their emissions significantly, including adopting the Paris target of being net zero by 2050. A key element in support of these commitments is tracking corporate emissions by having a carbon accounting system. To date, no system exists that meets the specific requirements of Local Governments. In response, WALGA

has established a working group to establish a sector wide methodology and software for Local Government carbon accounting so as to track progress towards carbon emissions reduction targets, including net zero.

Most Local Governments have tree planting programs often supported by an urban forest strategy. Urban forest addresses both emission reductions through carbon capture, and adapting to climate change by reducing the heat island effect in urban settlements (cities and towns). WALGA has established an Urban Forest working group with 32 Councils from across the state involved working collaboratively for better canopy outcomes cover and to support WALGA's advocacy work of seeking funds for an additional 60,000 trees to be planted at a total cost of \$20 million.

WALGA has also developed climate action report templates to assist our members formulate action plans without the need to spend money on consultants. Templates include: corporate and community emission reduction plans, and corporate and community adaptation plans.

A Climate Change Collaborative has been established, which is a network of Local Government officers working on climate change actions. The aims of this group are to:

- facilitate exchange of information between members;
- identify gaps of knowledge; and
- undertake research and other activities to address these gaps.

Local Governments are also trying to elevate better environmentally sustainable design in built form outcomes through a WALGA facilitated ESD forum for the sector. Buildings and construction contribute nearly half of all energy related emissions globally and therefore a very important element of climate action and meeting net zero targets at the state and local level. Councils involved in the forum are committed to working with industry, government and community to advocate, education and show leadership in better ESD outcomes for the state.

# LANDMARK SHIFT TO GREEN ENERGY

More than 40 West Australian Councils have signed up to immediately move to 100% renewable energy for their contestable supply.

A landmark agreement with Synergy has been taken up by 48 Local Governments, 43 of which plan to go to 100% renewable at the contract commencement in April, with the remainder to transition over three years.

Developed by the WA Local Government Association, with the invaluable support of a sector steering group comprising senior officers, the agreement sources all renewable energy locally from wind farms at Albany and Emu Downs and Collgar wind farm.

WALGA Acting President Cr Karen Chappel said the initial three-year agreement for an estimated \$85 million and involving 48 WA Local Governments eclipses a similar project by 46 Victorian Councils.

Cr Chappel said significantly the WA initiative is the first renewable and carbon aggregation project approved by the by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and provides scope for the sector to develop additional green energy projects such as electric fleet and carbon sequestration.

“There was overwhelming enthusiasm from Local Governments to shift to renewable energy which has been driven by the attitudes and ambitions of their communities,” Cr Chappel said.

“That so many Councils have decided to immediately take up the 100% renewable option is outstanding and shows that the sector is leading the way.

“Certainly there is the environmental benefits of the agreement, but also there is a financial benefit as we have advice that since terms were secured by WALGA, market rates have already increased by at least twenty-five per cent.”

The Local Governments signed up to the agreement are the:

- Cities of Albany, Armadale, Bayswater, Belmont, Bunbury, Busselton, Canning, Cockburn, Fremantle, Gosnells, Greater Geraldton, Joondalup, Kalamunda, Kwinana, Mandurah, Melville, Nedlands, Rockingham, South Perth, Stirling, Subiaco, Swan, Vincent and Wanneroo.
- Towns of Bassendean, Cambridge, Claremont, Cottesloe, East Fremantle, Mosman Park and Victoria Park.
- Shires of Augusta Margaret River, Boyup Brook, Donnybrook-Balingup, Harvey, Manjimup, Morawa, Mundaring, Murray, Northam, Peppermint Grove, Plantagenet, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Dandaragan and Bridgetown-Greenbushes.
- Along with the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council, Mindarie Regional Council and Southern Metropolitan Regional Council.



Albany Wind Farm



Solar panels on select City buildings are just one of the ways the City of Subiaco is reducing its carbon footprint.

## A CARBON NEUTRAL FIRST

The City of Subiaco has become the first certified carbon neutral Local Government in Western Australia under the Commonwealth's Climate Active program.

The City has always considered emission reduction through its operations with the installation of solar panels and energy efficient systems, increase efficiencies in water use and waste, and improvements in fleet procurement with the introduction of electric and hybrid vehicles.

As well as reducing operational emissions, the City has purchased offsets from carefully considered projects to achieve carbon neutral status. These include a native reforestation project in WA, a carbon farming and fire management project in NT, and a renewable electricity project in India.

The benefits of reducing carbon emissions, such as greater efficiencies and cost savings, will be seen in years to come, but the City's journey to carbon neutrality began with its first Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan (2020 – 2030).

The plan sets out six ambitious targets – including obtaining and maintaining certified carbon neutral status – in pursuit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from City operations.

After the adoption of the plan, the City:

1. collected raw data (i.e. electricity, water and gas consumption) to establish a carbon emissions baseline
2. engaged a registered Climate Active consultant to translate this data into emission estimates
3. engaged an independent third party to validate the data collection process and confirm the overall emissions baseline
4. developed a carefully considered offsetting portfolio of projects
5. worked with a consultant to complete and submit required paperwork to Climate Active before being awarded formal certification.

The process will begin again in July 2021 to ensure carbon neutral status is maintained and, going forward, the City will continue to identify and pursue ways of reducing carbon emissions to ultimately reduce offsets needed.

In addition to becoming carbon neutral, the City has implemented a number of initiatives to minimise its impact on the environment over the years, including becoming a Waterwise Council, committing to an urban forest strategy, collecting food organics waste from local businesses and organisation, and moving to steam weeding. For more information, please visit the City's website.

# FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY TOPS 2021 NATIONAL RISK REPORT

By Jonathan Seth, CEO, LGIS

Financial sustainability, cyber security, and assets and infrastructure have rounded out the top three risks identified by Local Government's across Australia in a new report.

JLT Public Sector recently released their national Local Government risk report for 2021. 237 Local Governments responded to the risk survey providing an insight into the concerns of Local Government leaders around the country.

From a WA perspective, LGIS members shared the concerns of their national counterparts with financial sustainability, cyber security and assets and infrastructure coming in at first, second and third places respectively. 64 (27%) of WA Local Governments provided a response to the survey.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial sustainability was again confirmed as the number one risk to the Local Government sector in 2021. A key contributing factor is Local Governments' limited ability to increase revenue to deliver operational requirements in line with community expectations. Influencing factors are Local Government rate revenue growing at an insufficient rate to cover increased operational costs, particularly in well-established Local Government areas where there is limited new housing development. Key findings were:

- 54% of total respondents said that rate revenue to deliver services is a key driver of this risk
- 19% stated that there is inadequate government funding programs and grants for Local Government

## CYBER SECURITY

The reliance on technology continues to rapidly expand among every part of Local Government operations and this has escalated even faster during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Internet of Things, cloud-based computing systems, applications and devices now punctuate nearly every aspect of council business which leads to increased risks of frequent and severe cyber attacks.

While awareness of cyber risks has definitely increased, many Local Governments continue to identify gaps within their cyber security and risk mitigation programs which can leave them vulnerable if and when an attack occurs. These concerns mirror those of CEOs and GMs within Australian Local Government who rated their IT infrastructure or provider being unable to adequately (37%) and proactively (22%) manage their cyber security response in the event of a potential cyber attack. Further, participants noted they were not confident in the reliability and integrity of their IT infrastructure (19%).

The full Local Government risk report is available on the LGIS website or talk to your account manager to receive a soft copy.

## LGIS ON THE ROAD

The LGIS team have been out on the road since 1 November and we've visited over 90% of members across the state. Member visits are a part of the job that the LGIS service team and I really enjoy. It provides a great opportunity to meet with the executive management team and have in-depth discussions on specific member needs and experience.

During our visits we've briefed members on the Scheme results for 2020/21 and explored the Scheme benefits accessed by the member. We're always keen to assist our members in getting the most out of their Scheme membership and work together to identify the Scheme risk services most applicable to the members' experience.

If our team hasn't visited your Local Government yet we'll be out in the beginning of the new year.

If you would like more information about the Scheme, or to arrange a council presentation please contact me on **9483 8855** or your LGIS Account Manager.

## TOP RISKS IDENTIFIED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT



# Around the Nation

## News from State Associations across the country

### NSW



#### Joint Statement: Infrastructure Contributions Reforms

The NSW Government and the peak body representing the NSW Councils have agreed on improvements to reforms of the infrastructure contributions system.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said the changes to the package addressed issues raised by Local Government NSW (LGNSW) and Councils during extensive consultation.

"The changes we're making will build a simple, fair, consistent and clear system for delivering infrastructure to support more homes and jobs across the State," Mr Stokes said.

"I said that no Council will be worse off under these reforms and we will continue to work with LGNSW and Councils to make sure that happens.

"We all want the same thing – great infrastructure and more investment in our local communities. That's what these reforms will deliver.

"I want to thank LGNSW President Linda Scott for her tireless advocacy on behalf of Councils. She worked with me to make this a better package for the benefit of her community and others across NSW."

The reforms will unlock \$12 billion in productivity gains, create 2,600 jobs and attract new investment critical to the State's economic recovery.

President of Local Government NSW Linda Scott welcomed the NSW Government's commitment working with her to make changes to the package.

"The Minister has listened to the concerns of the Local Government sector and worked with Local Governments to make changes that address our concerns," Councillor Scott said.

"With the commitments made and changes to be made to the draft legislation, I am now confident that this is a package that will improve the infrastructure contributions system."

Modifications to the package include:

- Allowing Councils that currently fund community infrastructure from developer contributions to continue to do so.
- Ensuring that state contributions are spent in the region where they are collected.
- Re-setting the blanket rate Councils can charge, known as 7.12 plans.
- Increasing the maximum amount Councils can charge for infrastructure associated with solar and wind farms.

The Minister will seek financial assistance for Councils that can demonstrate cash flow problems due to directions about the payment of contributions at the construction certificate stage.

The Productivity Commissioner has confirmed that the changes to the package are consistent with the recommendations he made to reform the infrastructure contributions system.

Incoming Councils will have until the week after their first ordinary meeting in February 2022 to make submissions on the policy package currently on public exhibition.

### NT



#### LGANT AGM: Timely Forum by Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Deputy Medical Director

From Wednesday, 3 November to Friday, 5 November, delegates from Councils across the Northern Territory gathered in Alice Springs for the LGANT Annual General Meeting (AGM), Conference and Forums. The three-day event was a major success with over 80 participants from across the NT in attendance.

On Day 1, Mayors, Presidents and CEOs met in combined and separate forums at the offices of the Alice Springs Town Council.

The combined forum kicked off with a timely presentation by Dr Colin Marchant, Deputy Medical Director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. He described Congress's vaccination efforts in the Central Region where vaccination rates have lagged the NT average.

He reminded participants that the COVID-19 virus is a very real threat to Aboriginal lives and culture. Border closures have protected the State so far but the virus will arrive and not too long from now.

Vaccine hesitancy has been a challenge with too many people influenced by misinformation campaigns in the Central region. While Congress is making inroads, people in the 16-35 age range have been very slow to take up the vaccine.

To increase vaccination rates, Congress is employing a multi-pronged strategy. This includes: pop-up vaccination clinics in shopping centres and at football finals; door-to-door visits in town camps; engagement with local religious leaders; incentives (e.g., phone cards, Woolworths's rewards cards); radio and TV advertisements in language; good news stories; and using their Aboriginal staff as the organisation's lead messengers within their communities.

Dr Marchant noted that if Aboriginal communities fail to reach the vaccination targets, local community lockdowns will

be needed when the virus arrives. He also advocated for a vaccine passport requirement to enter venues as a means to motivate people to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 and vaccinations dominated discussions during the Mayors and Presidents Forum. Issues of concern included:

- The need for easier means for Council workers to access the documentation needed to demonstrate to their employer Councils their vaccination status. Access through MyGov has proven too problematic. No Councils want to see a worker lose their position simply because they cannot provide evidence of their vaccination status.
- The confusion created by the differences in the methodologies used by the NT and Commonwealth government to calculate community vaccination rates. The lack of data at a Local Government area scale outside the municipalities has also made it difficult for Councils to know how their communities are faring in terms of vaccinations.
- Concerns were expressed that if an Aboriginal person became seriously ill with Covid, was transported to Darwin or Alice Springs for treatment but subsequently died, authorities might not allow their body to be returned to country for a culturally appropriate burial.
- In some regional Council areas, large multi-day sports carnivals are occurring in small Aboriginal communities. There are fears that such gatherings could become super spreader events.

In a demonstration of the Local Government sector's solidarity in supporting the NT Government's vaccination push, Mayors and Presidents gathered for a socially distanced and masked group photo outside the Alice Springs Convention Centre.

### QLD



#### Councils Call for Incentives to Attract Doctors to Regions

Queensland Councils have urged the introduction of special incentive schemes to attract more GPs to rural and regional areas.

The idea is one of several measures being advocated by the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) on behalf of its member Councils, to ensure an adequate doctor-to-patient ratio in rural and regional areas which would provide a local level of health care comparable to that enjoyed in metropolitan areas.

At the LGAQ's annual conference in Mackay on October 27, delegates voted in favour of

a motion from Flinders Shire Council that urged the State and Federal governments to address doctor shortages and the lack of GP health services in rural and regional areas.

Flinders Shire Mayor Cr Jane McNamara said rural and regional Councils had endured long-term difficulty in recruiting doctors for their local communities.

Mayor McNamara said COVID-19 restrictions had generated greater interstate and intrastate travel, with regional centres experiencing increased tourist numbers and contractor visits which was placing pressure on local health services.

In the case of Flinders Shire, which had a population of more than 1500 residents, there was currently only one local GP available at any one time.

“If that GP is sick, there is not another local GP available in the Shire for someone to have scripts renewed or receive any other local medical services they may require from a GP,” Mayor McNamara said.

“This puts additional pressure on the public hospital at Hughenden, with the closest GP services being at Richmond or Charters Towers (if available) or Townsville which is more than four hours away.”

Mayor McNamara said the State and Federal governments should consider incentive schemes to encourage recruitment of regional health service staff, particularly the relocation of GPs to regional and remote areas.

Consideration should also be given to reinstating reduced higher education fees (HECS/HELP) linked to years of service in rural and remote areas.

“The re-introduction of bonded scholarships such as the ‘rural and remote pathway’ streams for junior medical officers would be another helpful measure,” Mayor McNamara said.

“There should also be guaranteed developmental opportunities for regional doctors as well as relocation incentive schemes for GPs that would lead to a sustainable and acceptable standard of regional health services, especially in rural and remote areas.”



### Transparency Needed Now and Into the Future

Community consultation has long been a key plank of Victoria’s planning system. It is an element of our system that is well-regarded nationally and internationally. Through their elected Councillors, communities have a say, and always have had a say, in the development of the places they live.

As with any system, of course, there is room for improvement and much-needed reform of the planning system is now afoot.

But it cannot be change at any cost. As the State Government moves forward in its plans, Councils across Victoria have noted an alarming lack of open consultation with Councillors and their communities. There is genuine concern that the voice of the community, which has a rightful place in directly shaping the places and places where they live, may be lost.

This lack of consultation may even foreshadow the reforms themselves, cutting out critical checks and balances within the planning system that allow communities to share a view in the process.

With the release of its Planning and Building Approvals Process Review, the Red Tape Commissioner outlined much of the case for reform at all levels of government in a pragmatic manner.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), as the peak body representing Local Government sector, was pleased to see the report consider the actual challenges and experience of Councils in navigating our current planning framework.

Importantly, what the report did not recommend is a watering-down of Council and community input into planning.

The concern for communities across the state is the Victorian Government’s consistent and deliberate moves to take planning decisions away from Councils.

A prime example of this happening even before any major reforms was the amendment to make the Planning Minister responsible for the Battery Energy Storage Systems at Hazelwood in the Latrobe Valley.

Often under the guise of “pandemic recovery”, this approach puts aside longer-term community aspirations, often already outlined in Councils individual planning schemes.

Our planning system should not be overhauled for short-term economic benefit. While MAV acknowledges the government’s needs to think laterally as we all recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we should all be increasingly alarmed by the type of projects the State is choosing to drive through the planning system themselves.

Local Government, through the MAV, is ready to engage with the Victorian government on these reforms to ensure communities - who value and care for their local character and amenity - can express their concerns about planning decisions.



### ALGA Welcomes \$150m For Local Disaster Mitigation Projects

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has welcomed the release of guidelines for the \$150 million community infrastructure component of the Commonwealth’s \$600 million Preparing Australia Program.

The program is focused on disaster preparedness and responds to recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements aimed at better preparing communities for more severe and frequent disasters.

Under the “Preparing Australian Communities – Local” component of the program, Local Governments and communities can apply for grants from \$20,000 to \$10 million for projects that will help them better prepare for future disasters and lessen their impacts.

ALGA President Linda Scott said the opportunity to enhance the resilience of essential local infrastructure and boost post-COVID economic recovery would be welcomed by all communities.

“Investing in betterment funding saves communities and governments millions of dollars in the long term by ensuring that our community infrastructure can better withstand natural disasters,” Cr Scott said.

“By funding Local Governments, the Federal Government is investing in our communities who receive additional benefits through the creation of new jobs, local economic growth, lower insurance premiums, and faster reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.”

Cr Scott said consultation with ALGA and its members was an excellent example of the Commonwealth and the sector working together to ensure maximum impact for Local Governments and their communities.

Grants will be open to all Local Government areas at high risk of disasters (not just the 110 disaster-declared ones) and ALGA welcomes the Commonwealth’s decision not to require cash co-contributions by Councils.

Projects under \$100,000 will require no co-contribution, nor will planning and awareness-raising projects. For infrastructure projects over \$100,000, Local Government’s co-contribution can be in kind.

“There is a mismatch between the amount of Local Government infrastructure exposed to climate change risks, and the resources we have to effectively manage these risks,” Cr Scott said.

“Preparing for natural disaster events is a shared responsibility, and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure the Royal Commission’s disaster risk reduction recommendations are fully implemented.”

# DEC/JAN AROUND THE STATE IN PICTURES

The following pictures celebrate the achievements of Local Government in Western Australia. Any WA Local Government that has held an event or function and wants to have it featured in Western Councillor is encouraged to contact the *WALGA Communications Team* via email: [communications@walga.asn.au](mailto:communications@walga.asn.au)



## ARMADALE

Say hello to Cuppa with a Cop! This project by the City of Armadale, Armadale Police and Armadale Neighbourhood Watch creates ongoing positive relationships between the community and local police over a free hot drink. Local residents can chat with police officers to get advice on personal and residential safety, plus receive a free community safety pack to take home.

## BAYSWATER

The City of Bayswater proudly celebrated its diversity with an inclusive program full of events and activities during Pride WA's PrideFEST throughout November.

Pictured from left to right: Cr Elli Petersen-Pik, Carl Gopalkrishnan, Nat Latter, Emery Wishart, Kaya Ortiz, Pride WA CEO Choon Tan and Cougar Morrison.



## ASHBURTON

On Friday, 5 November, the Shire of Ashburton helped to celebrate NAIDOC Week in Tom Price after celebrations earlier in the year were postponed. The Heal Country Sundowner, which took its name from the official NAIDOC theme for 2021, provided residents with an opportunity to formally recognise the traditional custodians of the land.



## BELMONT

The City of Belmont launched the first of its community safety video series on Thursday, 25 November – the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – to coincide with the 16 Days in WA campaign. The first video documents the City’s Ruah Community Services’ Belmont Safeguarding Families Advocacy Service which supports women escaping family and domestic violence. The City has supported the Safeguarding Families Advocacy Service since 2017. The video series is an initiative of the City’s Community Safety Taskforce and aims to empower residents with community safety information and advice.

## BROOME

The Broome community came together across November 5-6 to celebrate the official opening of Stage Two of the Chinatown Revitalisation Project and Town Beach Jetty.



## BUSSELTON

In November, more than 5000 people had an opportunity to get up close and personal with an Air Force Hawk 127 Lead-In-Fighter jet when the Busselton Margaret River Airport threw open the tarmac in an Open Day to commemorate 100 years of the Royal Australian Air Force.

In addition there was aircraft from the Busselton Aero Club, WA Police, Virgin Australia and Alliance Airlines and more where visitors were able to view and board some of the aircraft.

## CAPEL

Captivate Capel is one of the largest events in the Capel region. Into its fourth year, it was a great day of entertainment, activities, workshops, markets and more. Most importantly, it was a chance to bring our community together.

Not only does this event promote positive mental and physical wellbeing through social interaction and inclusion but it encourages supporting local businesses.



## CLAREMONT

As part of Town of Claremont's 'supporting a healthy mind at work' initiative the Town held a 'bring your dog to work' day. This is Mr Slinky helping owner and Customer Relations Coordinator Lisa Wardle answer phone calls.



## COCKBURN

The City of Cockburn has completed the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) Small Business Friendly Approvals Program.

The SBDC invested \$100,000 to conduct the program in the City. A working group of eight Cockburn City officers attended 10 workshops to help improve critical business approval issues and deliver reforms under the State Government's Streamline WA initiative.

More than 8500 businesses are registered in Cockburn, with 96 per cent having fewer than 20 employees.

Pictured from left to right: City of Cockburn Business Engagement Officer Sarah Kahle, Small Business Commissioner David Eaton, Hamilton Hill florist Flower Station's Annette Fusari, Mayor Logan Howlett and CEO Tony Brun.



## CUE

The annual Cue Cup Calcutta was held at the Cue Resource Centre on Thursday, 18 November and was proudly sponsored by the Water Corporation of WA. The race was called by CRC President and Cue Councillor Ian Dennis. Cr Greg Payne from the Shire of Yalgoo was the eventual winner having selected his own horse, 'Payne Management' in the Calcutta. A great community evening was enjoyed by the many who attended.

## DANDARAGAN

As part of the Jurien Bay foreshore redevelopment, the Shire of Dandaragan's Jurien Bay beachfront has undergone a significant transformation with the completion of a new state of the art skatepark in June, a new nature playground opening just in time for the October school holidays and the new family picnic area with BBQ and basketball mini-court. All facilities are getting plenty of use and the Shire looks forward to completing the final stages which include the construction of a new café and ablutions in 2022.



## DERBY / WEST KIMBERLEY

These participants are cashing in on the Containers for Change, which is a fabulous way to both clean up, recycle and make extra pocket money.

The Containers for Change initiative was launched in WA in October 2020. In Derby the service is provided locally by Winun Ngari.



## DONNYBROOK BALINGUP

The opening celebration of the Donnybrook Apple Fun Park was held on Friday 8 October. The Park had been closed to make way for a refreshed, crisp new look to the popular family attraction after the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup secured \$1.5 million under Round 3 of the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund to revitalise the iconic playground.

These lucky golden ticket holders (pictured) were given exclusive access to the playground just days earlier, to road test the brand new equipment.

## DUMBLEYUNG

This season's significant rainfall has not only been great for farmers, but also for filling the landmark Dumbleyung Lake.

The current conditions represent an excellent opportunity for boating and water enthusiasts to visit and enjoy Dumbleyung Lake.

To take advantage of the current excellent conditions, the Shire of Dumbleyung works team has been busy getting the lake amenities ready for access use.



## EXMOUTH

The Exmouth Nightfields program is a multi-sport-based activity designed for the youth aged 6-18 to have fun and further strengthen community relationships between local kids and external providers. The Shire of Exmouth supports the Stephen Michael Foundation in this weekly after school hours activity to encourage positive community engagement and participation, develop healthier individuals and reduce anti-social behaviour.

## GERALDTON

Geraldton has had a taste of success at the 2021 Perth Airport WA Tourism Awards and secured bronze for 'Excellence in Local Government Award for Tourism'.

Geraldton was the only regional Local Government authority in the top three award winners.

The Perth Airport WA Tourism Awards brings tourism operators and organisations together from across the state and is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the past 12 months.

Pictured: Mayor Shane Van Styn pictured with City staff Communications Officer – Digital Nicole Roberts, Communications Officer – Design Keely Grieve, Manager Libraries, Heritage and Gallery Trudi Cornish, Manager Strategic Planning and Economic Development Trish Palmonari and A/Coordinator Communications Tully Gray celebrating the win.



## GINGIN

Gingin is the largest of the Shire of Gingin's five towns and this year it turned 150 which makes it one of WA's oldest rural communities. In partnership with the community, Council and staff put on a celebration event to encourage new visitors to the region and to showcase Gingin's local food and beverages, history, lost trades, a market village, a popular billy cart race, live entertainment, village games and a huge fireworks display to conclude the event in the evening. An estimated 5000 to 7000 people attended the 150th anniversary celebration which was a wonderful example of Council and community partnership.

## GOSNELLS

Almost 30,000 people flocked to the City of Gosnells' Fusion Food and Culture Festival in November, held over two nights for the first time this year.

The City's annual celebration of diversity featured dozens of multicultural performances, cultural activities, food trucks, carnival rides, a satellite event for foodies and much more, culminating in fireworks each night.

The City is one of the most culturally diverse Local Government areas in Perth.



## HARVEY

In November, the Harvey Recreation and Cultural Centre (HRCC) was presented as the winners for the Pinnacle Performing Arts Awards for the Western Australian Presenter of the Year. HRCC was nominated for supporting and developing new WA productions and outstanding commitment to supporting WA work. The award celebrates the best in live performance industry across the whole state of Western Australia.



## JOONDALUP

A new park warrior obstacle course at the Whitfords Nodes Health and Wellbeing Hub was officially opened recently, with Joondalup Mayor Albert Jacob joined by members of hit TV program Australian Ninja Warrior and other key stakeholders. The first of its kind in WA and the largest in Australia, the course is the latest addition to the hub, which opened in September 2020 and features a stairway structure, outdoor fitness equipment and engaging play spaces.

## KALGOORLIE-BOULDER

This weekend the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder held the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Event for the community. The event brought together stall holders, local performers, food vendors, and organisations offering free activities. The event saw over 6000 attendees come along to support local shopping, watch the fireworks display following the lighting of the tree, and start off the festive season together.



## KARRATHA

One of the entrants from the City's The Youth Shed's Got Talent event, who had multiple issues with his bike tyres but after hours of preparation and problem solving, he won the whole competition.



## KWINANA

Get in the Grove! Summer Fest was a new event that activated The Grove area between the Kwinana Council building and the Koorliny Arts Centre, with shows and movies shown in the Arts Centre's theatre.

The Grove was filled with street performances, circus workshops, food trucks, and a pop-up bar for two fun-filled nights on 19 and 20 November.

Pictured: Mr Red and Mr Sharp (rear) with Morgan and Crystle from Ricochet Circus (front).  
Photo credit: Adam Kenna



## MANDURAH

The beauty and intricacies of more than 50 lovingly handcrafted garments were on full display at the City of Mandurah's 2021 Wearable Art Mandurah Showcase events in November.

The incredible finalist garments from local, national and international designers took to the stage in a theatricalised catwalk performance, which was a culmination of the efforts and dedication of the artists throughout the year-long program, and a chance for the community to celebrate these creative talents.

## MANJIMUP

The newly refurbished Little Taddies Day Care Centre in Pemberton was officially opened by Councillor Murray Ventris on Tuesday, 19 October.

The WA Government, through Lotterywest, provided a grant of almost \$1.2 million to support the broader Pemberton Colocation precinct.

The precinct, upon completion, will house the Public Library, RSL, Community Resource Centre, Arts Group, Pemberton History and Heritage Group, Chamber of Commerce, Little Taddies and the Visitor Centre.



## MELVILLE

The City of Melville is celebrating increased female representation on its Council with women now forming more than half of the Elected Members following the recent Local Government elections.

The City has a proud history of female leadership including recently retired Councillor June Barton, who was Mayor from 1989 to 1995 and current Councillor Katy Mair was also Mayor from 1995 to 2007

The current female Councillors are Jennifer Spanbroek, Glynis Barber, Karen Wheatland, Katy Mair, Jane Edinger and Margaret Sandford (absent: Nicole Robins).



## MUKINBUDIN

In October, work was completed at the Mukinbudin Sporting Complex which now has four gel surface tennis courts, funded by Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund and Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Fund. Adjacent is an outdoor recreational basketball/netball court which was also funded by Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Fun.

Both tennis and basketball courts have been well utilised and complete the outdoor recreation area.



## NORTHAM

The hemisphere's longest pedestrian suspension bridge spanning Northam's Avon River has received a spectacular upgrade in a unique activation project.

Through RAC's Reconnect WA Funding, the Shire of Northam was able to breathe new life into the treasured bridge with the installation of over 1200 programmable lights.

To date, the bridge colours have been used to celebrate the Grand Final, and to thank the WA Police for their work on finding Cleo.



## PINGELLY

The Shire of Pingelly opened the redeveloped Memorial Park. Memorial Park has been created with the community at the centre, from consultation through to its purpose.

The historical features of the Memorial Walkway, Rotunda and Courthouse have been retained and new features have added - shaded passive recreation areas, barbecues for families, a teenage playground, a nature playground, a junior playground and the central lawn for markets and events.

Pictured from left to right: Cr Karmvir Singh, Deputy President Jackie McBurney, Hon Mia Davies MLA, President William Mulrone, Hon Rick Wilson MP, CEO Andrew Dover.

## PERTH

The City of Perth's fifth annual Christmas lights trail was launched on Friday, 19th November.

City goers were delighted by free roving entertainment, including Santa in the Murray Street Mall, opera singers in Yagan Square and angels on stilts in the Perth Cultural Centre.

26 enchanting installations were shining bright across the City until 2 January, including the Christmas Projectionson St Georges Cathedral and the Magical Swans at Elizabeth Quay.

Photo Credit: Jarrad Seng.



## QUAIRADING

The Shire has invested in improved accommodation options within the Quairading Caravan Park with the installation of three self-contained cabins and four single bedrooms. These have been very popular with the cabins experiencing 70% tenancy most weeks. An on-site caretaker will commence in January 2022.

## ROCKINGHAM

On Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 November the Channel 7 Rockingham Beach Cup was hosted along the Rockingham Foreshore. The City of Rockingham Council supported the event by allocating \$175,000 of Iconic Event Sponsorship to assist the Rotary Club of Palm Beach deliver the event. The two-day festival included a free community fair and culminated with a series of horse races along the Rockingham Foreshore.

Photo credit: Allan Godley.



## SERPENTINE JARRAHDALE

Two Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale volunteer bush fire brigades have received a boost ahead of the bush fire season, with both the Jarrahdale and Serpentine brigades handed the keys to two new light tanker vehicles. The new light tankers replace the brigades' previous 14-year-old vehicles and include the latest technology and enhanced safety features such as a deluge system for crew protection, automated vehicle location function, radiant heat shield and in-cab air units.

## SHARK BAY

Commemorations for the 80th anniversary of the HMAS Sydney took place in Denham in November. The celebrations included a beautiful memorial march and service through Denham, honouring personnel from all HMAS Sydney warships. It also included a free family concert, with performances from the Royal Australian Navy Band, the Red Ochre Band, Johnny Young, Normie Rowe and more. Local dance school Coral Coast Dance Academy also performed at the concert.

Photo credit: Finn Films





## STIRLING

The Dianella Regional Open Space is now home to the newest BMX facility in the City of Stirling, with the track now complete and open to the public.

The \$630,000 BMX facility include a new pump track, viewing space and related infrastructure including shelter, drink fountains and bicycle racks, and a new mountain bike skills trail.

The City will continue to seek funding to deliver the final stage.

## SUBIACO

The vibes were high in Subiaco as 25 talented musicians filled laneways, galleries, bars, and unexpected places from Friday 8, October to Saturday, 16 October. Suburban Vibes in Subiaco received over 2500 visitors across 12 events and an estimated marketing reach of 1.01 million. Feedback was glowingly positive with the event encouraging patrons to explore places they have never heard of before; with one visitor making their way to Subiaco from Kalgoorlie to attend the event.



## VICTORIA PLAINS

The Shire of Victoria Plains celebrated their 150th Anniversary over the weekend of Saturday and Sunday, 4 and 5 September. A day of family fun at the Piawaning Expo on the Saturday, followed by a luncheon for invited guests at New Norcia on the Sunday. New Norcia was the location of the first election of Road Board Members on 24 February 1871.

## VINCENT

Vincent was proud to fly the rainbow flag once again for PrideFEST 2021.

Pride Fairday at Hyde Park and a Queer Dungeons and Dragons event were both a great success.

Attendees also partied in style at the Pride Parade in the colourful garden themed float.

Big Blue also in on the action and dressed up in a giant colourful headband to pose for pics with reps from our LGBTIQ+ sporting clubs.





## WANNEROO

The City of Wanneroo welcomed the Australian Air Force Cadets of 704 Squadron and 721 Squadron to exercise the right to Freedom of Entry to the City on Sunday 28 November.

Granting Freedom of Entry to a military unit is a symbolic honour dating back to medieval times that gives the right of general entry to the unit to march in the City on ceremonial occasions.

Pictured: Wanneroo Mayor Tracey Roberts officiates the proceedings for the formal parade and symbolic signing of the Freedom of Entry scroll.

## WICKEPIN

The Shire of Wickepin is working with Astrotourism WA to develop Dark Sky Tourism across the region. Lake Yealering, pictured, has become a very popular spot for night time astrophotography. The view across the lake and jetty to the southern night sky is magical. Recent foreshore and lake improvements make this a must-see destination.



## YORK

The York Residency Museum recently won in the Conservation or Adaptive Re-Use of a State Registered Heritage Place category at the 2021 State Heritage Awards. Judges described the project as "a model of best practice in its approach...future-proofing the last extant Convict Depot Superintendent's Quarters in WA". The Shire of York thanks all staff and partners involved: Geoscience Australia, University of Adelaide, Mr Peter Baxendale, Snappygum Heritage Services and Colgan Industries.

Pictured: Shire President, Cr Denese Smythe, accepting the Award on behalf of the Shire of York.



# ECONOMIC UPDATE

By Daniel Thomson, Economist

The WALGA Economics team produces the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) to estimate future changes in costs to Local Governments based on the spending patterns of the sector across the State.

The LGCI is updated as new data is released and forms part of the quarterly WALGA Economic Briefing which provides economic commentary tailored to the interests of the WA Local Government sector.

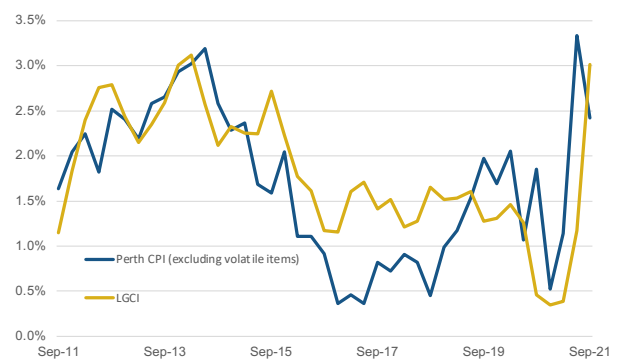
WALGA forecasts the LGCI to rise 3.9% in 2021-22 as the increased demand from Government stimulus arrives at the same time as labour supply is constrained by closed interstate and international borders, and supply issues continue for materials from both domestic and global challenges. Cost increases experienced by Local Governments in recent months are now being reflected in the data.

It is expected that these twin pressures of increased demand and capacity constraints will ease in future years with the LGCI expected to grow by 2.4% in 2022-23 and 2.2% in 2023-24. These forecasts will be updated as the impacts of WA and Australia opening up are realised.

It should be noted that there are significant challenges with forecasting in the current economic environment, and so the LGCI should be used with caution. It is important that Local Governments take into account their own local issues and experiences when considering cost pressures.

To sign up to receive the quarterly briefing, or to find out more contact WALGA Economist Daniel Thomson on [dthomson@walga.asn.au](mailto:dthomson@walga.asn.au).

## LGCI VS PERTH CPI, ANNUAL % CHANGE



SOURCE: ABS CAT 6401.0; WALGA



## WALGA FIELD DAY

WALGA is planning the inaugural WALGA Field Day, an outdoor Exhibition showcasing products and services of WALGA Preferred Suppliers at the Cannington Exhibition Centre and Showgrounds on Wednesday, 30 – Thursday, 31 March.

Complementary events planned to be held on site alongside the Exhibition include the 2022 Transport and Roads Forum, Waste & Recycling Forum, Emissions Reduction Forum and a Procurement Network Forum.

Further information including exhibition prospectus and event programs will be posted to the WALGA website events page.

## VOLUNTEERS

# BUSHFIRE BRIGADES A LOCAL FOCUS

Pending changes to work health and safety legislation and mandatory vaccination requirements have brought into focus the unique role played by volunteer Bushfire Brigades in WA.



Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Chris Scott has dedicated 50 years' service to the Bushfire Brigades, with the last 20 as Chief for the Capel community

Western Australia is the only State or Territory in Australia where Local Governments have responsibility for management of volunteer Bushfire Brigades.

More than 20,000 volunteers are members of 563 Bushfire Brigades managed by 111 Local Governments across rural, pastoral and peri-urban areas of the State.

Local Governments have extensive roles and responsibilities across the emergency management spectrum of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery embedded in the State emergency management legislative framework. Under the Bush Fires Act 1954, Local Governments have responsibility for fire suppression within their district, establish and maintain Bushfire Brigades, give notices to landowners to clear fire break notices for fire mitigation, and appoint Bushfire Control Officers.

Bush fire brigades protect the community from bush fires through undertaking bush fire prevention and risk mitigation activities, fire suppression and fire safety education.

Local Governments are responsible for administering and training Bushfire Brigades, supported through funding from the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS) for operating and capital costs. LGGS funds are administered by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and are derived from the Emergency Services Levy (ESL). Local Governments collect ESL from land holders through the rates process, remit the funds to DFES and then apply for grants under the LGGS. Many Local Governments also provide direct funding for Bushfire Brigade equipment and activities, and many Bushfire Brigades also undertake additional fund raising activities.

The anticipated commencement of the new Western Australian work health and safety legislation in early 2022 has caused some concern in the Local Government sector about the implications for Local Governments that manage Bushfire Brigades. The new legislation extends duties to all volunteers and increases penalties for breaches of the legislation.

WALGA continues to work with DFES and other stakeholders including the sector's mutual indemnity insurance fund LGIS to support the sector to meet the requirements of the new legislation and to ensure that Local Governments are adequately resourced to provide a safe work place for volunteers and can continue to support fire fighting efforts in the State.

Mandatory vaccination requirements for Bushfire Brigade volunteers have also been an emerging issue in recent months. WALGA has provided regular updates to the sector on the vaccination directions provided by the Chief Health Officer and a joint WALGA/DFES Communique in December 2021 provided additional explanatory information and options for the collection of vaccination status.

Bushfire Brigades are an important part of the culture and identity of rural and regional areas of Western Australia, and are highly valued for their generous contribution to the safety of the community, as well as for providing a sense of community connection and contributing to building community capacity.

### AUSTRALIAN FIRE DANGER RATING SYSTEM

Another emerging matter in the emergency management space is the implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) which was identified in 2014 as a priority by the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments. The Project is being led by the Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire and emergency services (AFAC) and will provide a contemporary and nationally consistent mechanism for predicting and assessing fire behaviour relating to fuel type and weather influence. DFES has been consulting with Local Governments on key changes that will be required to the State Emergency Management Framework and WALGA represents Local Government on the AFDRS Implementation Committee.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AWARDED FOR VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

The Shires of Harvey, Narrogin, Chittering and Carnarvon have all been recognised their commitment to helping protect local communities through their support for staff who volunteer for Western Australia's emergency services.

The Volunteer Employer Recognition Awards (VERA) were presented in November, with Emergency Services Minister Reece Whitby congratulating both volunteers and employers for their contribution.

"Emergency services volunteers have committed around 120,000 hours to their roles this past year, and that would not be possible without the support of their employers." Minister Whitby said.

"We can't predict when disaster will strike and that is why the flexibility and commitment of these employers to their volunteering staff is so important.

"These awards recognise the valuable contribution of employers throughout WA and I thank and congratulate the VERA recipients for helping create a safer State."



Brunswick Junction Volunteer Fire Brigade member Rob Burgoyne, Shire of Harvey Chief Executive Officer Annie Riordan and Fire and Emergency Services Deputy Commissioner Craig Waters



Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Darren Klem, Swan Volunteer Communications Bushfire Brigade Peta Leiper, Shire of Chittering Executive Manager Corporate Services Melinda Prinsloo, and Emergency Services Minister Hon Reece Whitby MLA

## ELECTED MEMBER PROFILE

# CR DOUG THOMPSON

CITY OF FREMANTLE



City of Fremantle Councillor Doug Thompson is the City's longest serving Councillor, and a WALGA State Councillor representing the South Metropolitan Zone. He is also the chairperson of the Municipal Waste Advisory Council, which sees him provides valuable input to State Government in waste minimisation issues.

Cr Thompson shares with Western Councillor his journey as an Elected Member and the challenges he faced in the role.

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### WHAT IS YOUR "DAY JOB" AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO YOUR ROLE AS AN ELECTED MEMBER?

I am retired but previously worked as a Principal Lecturer at South Metropolitan College of TAFE in a variety of areas. Training at the TAFE level is most effective when focussed on local needs. The connections I developed as a Councillor enabled me to work with local organisations such as St Pats Support Centre, Fremantle Hospital's Alma St, and the Noongar Patrol to develop and deliver on site programs for their clients. My Councillor role gave me the necessary connections and insights but also improved my understanding of wider community issues.

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### WHAT SAW YOU BEGIN A CAREER IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR?

I had four young children at the time and was active in school and community affairs. Our then local Councillor retired and asked if I would be interested in standing. I thought "why not, only one committee and one Council meeting a month, not a big ask". Looking back, I realise how little I knew about Local Government and how naive I was. It was a different world then: closed committee meetings with no public, any ratepayers who sat through a Council meeting were invited to a meal afterward. The time commitment and responsibilities have expanded considerably since then, as has the diversity of Council's composition.

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### HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT? HOW HAS THE SECTOR CHANGED/ EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

I am Fremantle's longest serving Councillor having served for 33 years. When I was first elected, the predominant view was that Council was about "roads, rates and rubbish. Fremantle even then was a bit different, with a concern for social issues not common in Local Governments at that time.

The big changes in the sector include the expansion of Local Government responsibilities and the complexity of issues that confront us. These have grown exponentially, as has ratepayer expectations of service delivery. However there has not been a corresponding increase in revenue or revenue sources. There has also been a dramatic increase in the time commitment, engagement and knowledge required of Councillors.

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### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED DURING YOUR TIME AS AN ELECTED MEMBER?**

The challenge, as for many Councillors, has been to balance the competing priorities of family, work and Council and keeping a sense of perspective.

Local issues, often justifiably, consume a lot of time. It can be difficult to stay focussed on the strategic and long-term issues.

At the broader level, keeping Councils working together with a shared long-term vision through changes of Officers and Councillors can also be difficult. This is especially the case in Waste Management where individual Councils can be distracted by short term economic considerations at the expense of long-term environmental benefits.

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### **CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE REGION YOU WORK IN AND SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING IN THIS REGION?**

One of the advantages of working in the south metropolitan region is that the six Councils seek to work collectively and proactively through the South West group to ensure a coordinated approach to regional issues.

The region has many advantages with a diverse economy and significant industry, tourism and natural area attractions and a large range of lifestyle options.

The six Councils in the south metro region work collaboratively on shared challenges such as transport planning, coastal erosion and increased development pressures. Perhaps the most significant challenge which will impact in the future revolves around the long-term future of the Fremantle Port.

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### **WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT WHILST WORKING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?**

No achievements are possible without the support and effort of others. I appreciate the support of my local community through nine elections and am fortunate to serve in a progressive Local Government that takes a stand on important issues.

My role in the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council (now the Regional Resource Recovery Group) is also deeply satisfying.

We have exceeded State Government waste targets and provided efficient recycling facilities for 20 years. We have introduced FOGO, and now provide FOGO processing facilities. I take great pride in the Resource Recovery Group's environmental outcomes in preventing greenhouse gas emissions.

We have earned 5.6 million dollars selling 614,000 carbon credit units into the market each unit representing the avoidance of one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent.

My involvement with WALGA's Municipal Waste Advisory Council is also deeply satisfying. The years of advocacy to the State Government to commit to Container Deposit Legislation was successful and was a significant collective accomplishment by MWAC.

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### **WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WISHING TO BECOME AN ELECTED MEMBER?**

I hesitate to give advice. All I can say is what has worked for me. Early on I sought to learn as much as I could about Council operations and gain expertise in a particular area. Of the "roads rates and rubbish" mantra I chose "rubbish".

I also engaged with regional and sector wide issues through participating in the WALGA Zone and State Council. This involvement helped place the "big issues" in my own Council into perspective.

Listening to Councillors and Officers in my own and other Councils is an important source of information and ideas. Visits to metro and regional LGA's throughout the state gives insight into the collective issues we face and the collaboration necessary to meet these challenges.

I enjoy my role as a community representative and value the relationships I have formed. Good relationships make for enjoyable interactions in Council and improve the quality of decision making.

## SAFE AND FOUND WA

# NEW INITIATIVE HELPS FIND MISSING PERSONS

Every year the WA Police Force undertake hundreds of searches for lost or distressed persons as part of their legislated responsibility for coordinating search and rescue operations around our state.

Despite best efforts, on occasion these searches end in tragedy.

Police are seeing a dramatic increase in searches for people living with cognitive impairment or decline, in particular persons living with dementia. In 2017 there were 46 dementia related searches and each year the number increases. As of late November 2021, Police had undertaken 159 dementia related searches.

A key to a successful search is understanding who we are looking for and where they might go.

The Safe and Found WA initiative is a collaboration between Western Australia Police Force and the not for profit Medic Alert Foundation developed to assist Police more rapidly locate vulnerable persons impacted by dementia or another cognitive impairment and at risk of becoming lost.

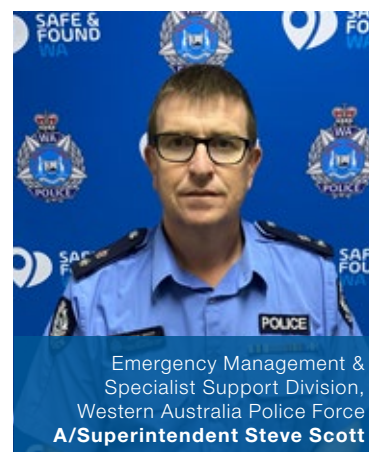
Safe and Found members are provided a unique ID bracelet engraved with both a carers and police phone number, as well as an individual member number that allows Police to identify the wearer if located by a member of the public, local rangers/security patrols or Police officers.

Members complete a detailed information package comprising of a series of questions designed to assist Police better understand who they are looking for, where and how far that person might travel as well as other relevant information that helps predict the lost persons behaviour. Information relating to any previous occasions where the person was lost and subsequently located is included. Critical medical information is also provided to assist Police. The information is designed to help searchers look in the right places and locate the missing person faster.

An up to date photo is stored on the Safe and Found database for Police to access if the member is reported missing.

Recently smart phones were issued to all WA Police Officers across the state as part of a mobility project meaning the missing persons photo can be shared with officers involved in the search.

WA Police also utilise social media platforms and the Emergency Alert system whereby a message and link to the missing persons image can be pushed to every mobile phone within a defined area greatly increasing the chances of the vulnerable persons being located by a member of the public.



Emergency Management & Specialist Support Division, Western Australia Police Force  
A/Superintendent Steve Scott

The Safe and Found initiative was launched by the Minister for Police; Road Safety: Defence Industry: Veterans Issues the Honourable Paul Papalia CSC MLA, on 12 August 2021.

Safe and Found has already resulted in 5 missing persons being located rapidly by WA Police after they went missing. All 5 were reunited with their loved ones quickly and most importantly safely.

Safe and Found represents a significant enhancement to WA Police Forces preparedness in search and rescue when we are called upon to locate vulnerable members of our community.

**To join Safe and Found please go to [www.safeandfound.org.au](http://www.safeandfound.org.au) or call 1800 882 222.**

## Are you concerned about a loved one or person in your care going missing?



There may be important pieces of information you are able to provide Police in the event that you or the person you are caring for has gone missing.



LAUNCHING MID 2021

**This information takes valuable time to collect, time better spent searching.**

For less than \$1 per week, **Safe & Found** helps you plan ahead by storing a detailed profile of the missing person, to be accessed by Police in an emergency. Purchase your Safe & Found ID bracelet to wear to help with a safe return home.

As a joint initiative of Western Australian Police and Australia Medic Alert Foundation you have peace of mind that your information is stored safely and accessed quickly.

Safe & Found WA is a joint initiative of:



For more information:  
Visit [safeandfound.org.au](http://safeandfound.org.au)  
Call 1800 88 22 22

## ADVERTORIAL

# WA'S FUTURE SHINES BRIGHT WITH SCHOOL SOLAR CHALLENGE

A joint initiative between Synergy and the Science Teachers Association of WA (STAWA) is offering future generations of WA secondary school students the chance to learn and apply new skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

The Synergy Schools Solar Challenge is an annual competition, where Year 6 and 8 students across WA build and race solar-powered model cars as they learn about solar energy, battery technology and basic engineering principles.

In March 2021, the finals were held at Bob Hawke College, which is located in the City of Subiaco.

Students from Rockingham Lakes Primary School, located in the City of Rockingham, won the Year 6 challenge, while students from Kingsway Christian College, located in the City of Wanneroo, won the Year 8 challenge.

### FRIENDLY COMPETITION AND HANDS-ON LEARNING

According to Synergy Manager, Marketing, Kelley Yeats, the program is designed to get students excited about science. "We've partnered with STAWA to promote energy literacy in a fun and interactive way, supporting STEM learning outcomes with curriculum-based classroom activities," said Ms Yeats.

Ms Yeats also said that "the aim is to help young people learn about energy use and management, and how to make the

most of renewable energy sources, while putting their problem-solving skills to the test through a friendly competition."

### PREPARING FOR FUTURE CAREERS

"It's estimated that 75% of the jobs in the emerging economy will require the kind of critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills which are supported by STEM learning," Ms Yeats said.

Ms Yeats also said that "students with these transferrable skills will be empowered to address real-world issues in the future. We're thrilled to be involved with this program, supporting and helping to develop WA's future energy leaders."

### SCHOOLS GEARING UP FOR THE 2022 CHALLENGE

The 2022 Synergy Solar Schools Challenge is set to begin in Term 1 of 2022, with seven events proposed to be held in Term 1. Two of the proposed events will be held in the Perth metropolitan area and the other five events will be held at locations in the City of Albany, the City of Bunbury, the Shire of Collie, the City of Greater Geraldton and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

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\*Source: Roy Morgan Net Trust Score survey 2018



### INSPIRING WA'S ENERGY FUTURE

As part of the WA Government's Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Roadmap, Synergy is working with the State Government and other energy industry participants, to address the opportunities and challenges related to how we produce, manage, and consume electricity, to best provide on-going support for WA's future energy needs.

"Exploring new opportunities for WA includes exploring how virtual power plants (or VPPs) could be used in WA, with the Schools VPP Pilot Project already underway," Ms Yeats said..

Ms Yeats also said that "as with the Schools Solar Challenge, the Schools VPP Pilot Project offers another opportunity to engage with students to learn about tomorrow's energy today."

To find out more about the Synergy Schools Solar Challenge, go to [www.solarchallenge.net.au](https://www.solarchallenge.net.au)

# STATE COUNCIL BRIEFS

The following resolutions were made at the State Council meeting held on Wednesday, 1 December at WALGA's West Leederville Office.

## PAID FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

That WALGA endorse the submission to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) regarding paid family and domestic violence leave (FDVL) which:

1. highlights that FDVL for employees is an important issue for the sector;
2. supports the introduction of a new entitlement in modern awards for employees to receive five days' paid FDVL per year as a minimum entitlement;
3. advocates for employees to be able to access their paid personal/carer's leave in circumstances of family and domestic violence; and
4. does not support the introduction of a new entitlement in modern awards, at this point in time, for employees to receive 10 days' paid FDVL per year as sought by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

## PAYMENT TO INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

That WALGA request the Minister for Local Government to amend the Local Government Act 1995 to allow the payment of meeting attendance fees to, and/or defined reimbursements for time committed by, 'other persons' appointed as Committee members under s.5.8 of the Local Government Act 1995.

## 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

That:

1. The following resolutions from the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed for action:

### Cost of Regional Development

That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.

### CSRFF Funding Pool and Contribution Ratios

That WALGA lobby the State Government to:

1. Increase the CSRFF funding pool to at least \$25 million per annum and revert the contribution ratio to 50% split to enable more community programs and infrastructure to be delivered.
2. Increase the \$1 million per annum quarantined for female representation to at least \$2 million per annum.

### Regional Telecommunications Project

That WALGA strongly advocates to the State Government to increase funding for the Regional Telecommunications Project to leverage the Federal Mobile Black Spot Program and provide adequate mobile phone coverage to regional areas that currently have limited or no access to the service.

2. The following resolution passed at the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the Mining Communities Policy Forum and the People and Place Policy Team for advocacy work to be undertaken:

### Review of the Environmental Regulations for Mining

Regarding a review of the Mining Act 1978:

1. To call on Minister Bill Johnston, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services to instigate a review of the 43-year-old Mining Act to require mining companies to abide by environmental regulations, and to support research and development into sustainable mining practices that would allow mining without detriment to diversification and community sustainability through other industries and development.
2. That abandoned mines in regional Western Australia receive a priority action plan with programmes developed to work with rural and remote communities to assist in the rehabilitation of these mines as a job creation programme, with funding allocated for diversification projects for support beyond mine life across Western Australia.

## REVIEW OF ADVOCACY POSITIONS RELATING TO THE BUILDING ACT 2011 AND BUILDING REGULATIONS 2012

That State Council endorses the replacement of Section 6.7: Building Act and Fees of WALGA's advocacy positions document relating to the Building Act 2011 and Building Regulations 2012 with the following:

1. Support the retention of Local Government as the primary permit authority in Western Australia for decisions made under the Building Act 2011.
2. Supports mandatory inspections for all classes of buildings, however, Local Government should not be solely responsible for all mandatory inspections.
3. Advocate for the State Government to urgently prioritise legislative reform that addresses systemic failures in the current building control model and to provide clarification on the role of Local Government in building control to ensure building legislation supports the following objectives:
  - a. Quality buildings that are cost efficient.
  - b. Functional, safe and environmentally friendly buildings.
  - c. Good decision making in all aspects of building.
  - d. Efficiency and effectiveness in building management, administration and regulation.
  - e. Openness and accountability with respect to all building matters.
  - f. Recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all parties in building matters in an equitable manner.

4. Existing and proposed building control related fees and charges to be cost recovery for Local Government.
5. WALGA will work with members, state agencies and industry groups to develop training opportunities and to promote the Local Government building surveying profession to ensure sustainability of Local Government building control services.
6. WALGA supports the Australian Building Codes Boards Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings by supporting Local Governments to meet community strategic objectives of a net zero carbon future by 2050 through work with members, state agencies and industry groups.

## WALGA CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE REVIEW

That the proposed Constitution and Governance Review as outlined in this report be endorsed.

## WALGA PRESIDENT VACATION OF OFFICE

1. That State Council note and accept the President's resignation and thank her for her service to WALGA and wish her best for the future.
2. That State Council determine that the vacancy be filled by the current Deputy President until the next scheduled election (being 2 March 2022).

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE REFORM

That WALGA requests that the Minister for Local Government extends the consultation period by 1 month to 4 March 2022.



WALGA State Council showing their support for the RoadSafe Ribbons for Road Safety campaign.



**WALGA**

WORKING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# State Council

President Cr Karen Chappel .....	Acting President/Northern Country Zone
Cr Ken Seymour.....	Avon-Midland Country Zone
President Cr Phil Blight .....	Central Country Zone
Cr Jenna Ledgerwood .....	Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Paul Kelly .....	Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Cate McCullough .....	East Metropolitan Zone
Cr Catherine Ehrhardt .....	East Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Cheryl Cowell.....	Gascoyne Country Zone
President Cr Malcolm Cullen .....	Goldfields Esperance Country Zone
President Cr Stephen Strange .....	Great Eastern Country Zone
Cr Ronnie Fleay .....	Great Southern Country Zone
Cr Chris Mitchell JP.....	Kimberley Country Zone
Cr Les Price .....	Murchison Country Zone
Mayor Mark Irwin .....	North Metropolitan Zone
Cr Russ Fishwick JP.....	North Metropolitan Zone
Cr Frank Cvitan JP.....	North Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Michelle Rich.....	Peel Country Zone
Mayor Peter Long .....	Pilbara Country Zone
Cr Julie Brown .....	South East Metropolitan Zone
Mayor Ruth Butterfield .....	South East Metropolitan Zone
Mayor Carol Adams OAM .....	South Metropolitan Zone
Mayor Logan Howlett JP .....	South Metropolitan Zone
Cr Doug Thompson .....	South Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Tony Dean.....	South West Country Zone
Ex-officio:	
Ms Annie Riordan.....	LG Professionals
Rt Hon the Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas .....	City of Perth



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