

Western Australia Preventative Health Strategy

WALGA Submission
February 2026

About WALGA

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is an independent, member-based, not for profit organisation representing and supporting the Western Australian (WA) Local Government sector. WALGA uses its influence, support and expertise to deliver better outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities.

We do this through effective advocacy to all levels of Government on behalf of our Members, and by the provision of expert advice, services and support to Local Governments. WALGA's vision is for agile and inclusive Local Governments, enhancing community wellbeing and enabling economic prosperity.

Introduction

WALGA thanks the Minister for Preventative Health for the opportunity to attend the Preventative Health Roundtable: Health Promotion on 28 January 2026. This Submission provides an overview of the critical role Local Governments provide in progressing preventative health outcomes for Western Australians. It also highlights the need for a State Preventative Strategy (the Strategy) to create pathways and funding to enable initiatives across a broad range of intersecting policy areas and State Government priorities to deliver preventative health outcomes for Western Australians.

This submission aligns to WALGA [Advocacy Position 3.2.1 Local Public Health Plans](#).

The Local Government sector in WA is diverse. There are 139 Local Governments; 30 metropolitan and 109 regional, varying in geographical size and population. There is significant diversity in the range of functions and services they provide. All Local Governments play a key role in preventative health through targeted local initiatives and delivery of core responsibilities focused on community well-being. Local Governments can provide the collaboration and partnerships to facilitate greater outcomes.

State and Local Public Health Plans

Preventative health intersects with a multitude of State Government priorities including public health, mental health, road safety, disability access and inclusion, primary care access and health equity for First Nations and CaLD communities. This necessitates a holistic, whole of Government approach. The [State Public Health Plan 2025- 2030](#) (SPHP) provides a comprehensive strategic framework to drive progress on preventative health and should be considered the major structural driver for identifying preventative health priorities and commitments to action. The *Public Health Act 2016* requires Local Governments to publish local public health plans by June 2026, aligned to the SPHP. WALGA is aware that several leading preventative health organisations are already utilising State and public health planning processes to progress key initiatives.

WALGA strongly recommends that the Strategy serves as an enabler to the SPHP, particularly in creating pathways for Local Government funding and support to deliver meaningful outcomes. Currently, the legislative requirement to create local public health plans is unfunded and access to existing funding for implementation limited. WALGA delivered a significant tranche of work throughout 2024-25 to strengthen coordination across the public health system and to support Local Governments to engage with the new requirements, and we would welcome ongoing discussions with State Government.

Health Equity

WALGA welcomes the Minister's acknowledgement that the Strategy should seek to progress health equity for all Western Australians. Health equity is typically considered in relation to health determinants such as biological, behavioural, social, cultural and environmental factors. WALGA encourages additional consideration of geographical location as an indicator of health inequity. Many Western Australians living in rural, and remote WA do not have equitable access to General Practice (GP) services. Inadequate access to primary and preventative healthcare is straining the broader health system. More than half of emergency department visits are for non-urgent issues, many of which could be managed by a local GP if one were available.

In 2024-25, over half of non-metropolitan Local Governments were supporting primary healthcare services, an investment totalling over \$9.5 million. [WALGA's 2025 Local Government General Practice Support Survey Report](#) provides more information on this issue and its impact on rural communities. Ensuring adequate access to primary health requires urgent systematic reform.

Sustained and coordinated State Government investment is essential to unlock stronger partnerships, foster collaboration and drive innovation across Local Government, not-for-profit and community service sectors, ensuring collective expertise is fully leveraged to deliver meaningful preventative health outcomes.

WALGA supports the Minister's ambition to meet the recommendation of the [2019 Sustainable Health Review](#) to "increase and sustain focus and investment in public health, with prevention rising to at least five per cent of total health expenditure by July 2029". This ambition must be part of broader investment in the State health system to improve health equity, particularly for rural and remote communities.

Enablers Outside of the Health System

Several preventative health enablers sit outside of the health system. Matters such as climate change, active transport and community infrastructure all impact preventative health outcomes and intersect with Local Government responsibilities. WALGA is already working in partnership with many of the roundtable attendees on these issues. WALGA's key priorities can be viewed in the [2025 State Election | WALGA](#) and [2026-27-WALGA-State-Budget-Submission-\(WEB\).pdf](#).

WALGA recommends that the Strategy be developed with regard to existing mandated commitments and that funding efforts be aligned accordingly. Without whole of Government alignment, the Strategy risks constraining its own impact.

Conclusion

WALGA thanks the Minister for Preventative Health for the opportunity to engage in the Roundtable and Strategy development. Local Government make a significant contribution to preventative health outcomes for WA and are key collaborators and facilitators at the local level. WALGA recommends that State Government continues to engage with Local Government on the development of the Strategy.

WALGA strongly recommends the Strategy utilises the opportunity to align State Government priorities and funding with flexible, sustainable models that respond to local needs to achieve its intended ambition for Western Australians.

WALGA looks forward to continuing our work with the Department of Health and other relevant State Government agencies on the development of the Strategy.

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