

# **Central Country Zone Minutes 21 November 2025**

**Hosted by the Shire of Brookton,  
WB Eva Pavilion, 14 White Street,  
Brookton  
Commenced at 9:30am**

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## Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework

The Central Country Zone adopted the Framework on 12 April 2024.

How to use the Framework:

- If the majority of the factors are towards the left column, the issue is a high priority.
- If the majority of the factors are towards the middle, the issue requires action, but is not a high priority.
- If the majority of the factors are towards the right column, the issue is a low priority.

<b>Impact on Local Government Sector</b> Impact on Local Government sector without intervention	High	Medium	Low
<b>Reach</b> Number of member Local Governments affected	Sector-wide	Significant (multiple regions, Zones, or bands)	Few
<b>Influence</b> Capacity to influence decision makers	High	Medium	Low
<b>Principles</b> Alignment to core principles such as autonomy, funding, general competence	Strong	Partial	Peripheral
<b>Clarity</b> Policy change needed is clear and well-defined	Clear	Partial	Unclear
<b>Decision-maker support</b> Level of support among decision-makers (political and administrative)	High	Medium	Low
<b>Public support</b> Level of support among the public or other stakeholders	High	Medium	Low
<b>Positive consequences for WALGA</b> Prospect of positive consequences for WALGA. E.g. enhanced standing among members or leverage for other issues.	High	Medium	Low
<b>Negative consequences for WALGA</b> Prospect of negative consequences for WALGA for not undertaking the advocacy effort. E.g. diminished standing among members or other stakeholders.	High	Medium	Low
<b>Partnerships</b> Potential for partnerships with other stakeholders	Yes (3+)	Possibly (1-2)	No (0)

## ATTACHMENTS

The following were provided as attachments to the Agenda

1. Item 5 WALGA Induction Presentation
2. Item 8.1 Department of LGIRS Report
3. Item 8.3 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt - November 2025
4. Item 9.1 Minutes of the August Central Country Zone
5. Item 9.2.1 Letter to the Standing Committee
6. Item 9.2.2 Letter to the Minister
7. Item 9.3 Minutes of the October Central Country Zone Special Meeting
8. Item 9.4.1 Executive Officer Expression of Interest
9. Item 9.5 Minutes of the November Executive Committee Meeting
10. Item 12.1 WALGA President Report

The full [State Council Agenda can be found on the WALGA website](#).

## ATTACHMENTS

The following were circulated as attachments with the Minutes:

1. Item 4 Shire of Brookton, host council presentation
2. Item 6.1.1 Powering WA Presentation
3. Item 6.1.2 District Emergency Management Advisor, DFES Presentation

## 1. OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

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### 1.1. OPENING

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*Cr Des Hickey (as outgoing Zone Chair) opened the meeting. The WALGA Secretariat will assumed the position of Chair for the elections.*

*The Chair declared the meeting open at 9:30am.*

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### 1.2. HOUSEKEEPING – ZONE CHAIR

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#### 1. **Welcome:**

The Zone Chair will welcome Zone members and provide OSH/bathroom/exit information to those in attendance.

#### 2. **Share your name and Local Government:**

Delegates are reminded to ensure that they call their name and Local Government when taking the floor to allow for accurate Minutes to be recorded.

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### 1.3. ATTENDANCE

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<b>Shire of Beverley</b>	President Cr Dee Ridgway
<b>Shire of Brookton</b>	President Cr Rod Wallis Cr Gary Crouch Cr Peta Harben, non-voting Deputy President Cr Lachlan McCabe, non-voting Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Corrigin</b>	President Cr Sharon Jacobs Cr Des Hickey (Chair) Ms Natalie Manton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Cuballing</b>	President Cr Adrian Kowald Mr Chris Paget, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Dumbleyung</b>	President Cr Amy Knight Mr Gavin Treasure, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Kulin</b>	Cr Robbie Bowey Taryn Scadding, Executive Manager Community Services, non-voting
<b>Shire of Lake Grace</b>	Deputy President Cr Stephen Hunt President Cr Len Armstrong Mr Alan George, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Narrogin</b>	Deputy President Cr Graham Broad
<b>Shire of Pingelly</b>	President Cr Jackie McBurney Deputy President Cr Peter Wood Mr Andrew Dover, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Quairading</b>	President Cr Trevor Stacey Deputy President Cr Jo Hayes Ms Jen Green, Acting Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

<b>Shire of Wagin</b>	President Cr Phillip Blight Dr Kenneth Parker, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Wandering</b>	President Cr Sheryl Little Dr Alistair Pinto, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of West Arthur</b>	President Cr Karen Harrington Deputy President Cr Duncan South Mr Vin Fordham Lamont, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Wickepin</b>	President Cr Julie Russell Mr David Burton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Williams</b>	President Cr Jarrad Logie Cr Heidi Crowcher Mr Peter Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Guests</b>	
Regional Development Australia	Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
Wheatbelt Development Commission	Grant Arthur, Director Regional Development
DFES	Vivienne Gardiner, District Emergency Management Advisor
	Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisor
PoweringWA	Natalie Cook, Principal Community Engagement Officer
	Wenona Hadingham, Director Planning and Coordination
<b>WALGA</b>	Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance Sam Scherr, Building and Facilities Coordinator Sammy Jones, Member Services Executive Administrator

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## 1.4. APOLOGIES

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### MEMBERS

Shire of Beverley	Deputy President Cr Alan Sattler Mr Stephen Gollan, Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Brookton	Cr Tamara de Lange
Shire of Cuballing	Deputy President Cr Rob Harris

Shire of Dumbleyung	Deputy President Cr David Head
Shire of Kulin	President Grant Robins Mr Alan Leeson, Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Narrogin	President Leigh Ballard Cr Clive Barton Mr Dale Stewart, Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Wagin	Deputy President Cr Bryan Kilpatrick
Shire of Wandering	Deputy President Cr Alan Price
Shire of Wickepin	Cr Tyron Miller
<b>GUESTS</b>	
Wheatbelt Development Commission CBH Group	Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer Kellie Todd, Manager Government and Industry Relations
Main Roads WA	Yogesh Shinde, Operations Manager Narrogin
<b>Members of Parliament</b>	
	Peter Rundle, MLA, Deputy Leader of The Nationals WA Lachlan Hunter, Member for the Central Wheatbelt Hon Steve Martin, MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region

## 2. ELECTIONS

Pursuant to the WALGA Constitution, the Secretariat assumed the Chair for conducting the election of office bearers.

Guidelines for elections were distributed to Member Councils via email on 4 November 2025.

Nominations were asked to be submitted preferably by Monday, 10 November 2025.

However, nominations were still accepted prior to the commencement of the Zone meeting and from the floor.

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### 2.1. ELECTIONS OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE

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The election for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson shall be conducted and the term set at two (2) years expiring in November 2027, in line with the terms of State Council representatives and in sync with the Local Government Elections.

Zone Chair:

The following nomination was received for the position of Chair.

- Cr Des Hickey                      Shire of Corrigin

No nominations were received from the floor.

#### DECLARATION

**That Cr Des Hickey be elected as Chairperson of the Central Country Zone for the term of two years, November 2025 to November 2027.**

Deputy Zone Chairperson

The following written nomination was received for the position of Deputy Chair.

- Cr Karen Harrington                      Shire of West Arthur

No nominations were received from the floor.

#### DECLARATION

**That Cr Karen Harrington be elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Central Country Zone for the term of two years, November 2025 to November 2027.**

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## 2.2. ELECTIONS OF THE STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES AND DEPUTY STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE.

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In accordance with sub-clause 9(3) of the WALGA Constitution representatives and deputy representatives to the State Council shall be elected by Zones of the Metropolitan and Country constituencies for two (2) year terms, commencing from the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025 and concluding at the Ordinary Meeting of State Council two years later.

For the Central Country Zone, there is one (1) representative position on State Council and one (1) deputy representative position.

### State Councillor:

The following written nomination was received for the position of State Council Representative:

- President Cr Phil Blight                      Shire of Wagin

No nominations were received from the floor.

### **DECLARATION**

**That President Cr Phil Blight be elected as State Council Representative of the Central Country Zone to the State Council for the term of two years, December 2025 to December 2027.**

### Deputy State Councillor:

The following written nomination was received for the position of Deputy State Council Representative.

- President Leigh Ballard              Shire of Narrogin

No nominations were received from the floor.

### **DECLARATION**

**That President Leigh Ballard be elected as Deputy State Council Representative of the Central Country Zone to the State Council for the term of two years, December 2025 to December 2027.**

### *We ask the elected delegates to the note the following details:*

WALGA will host a 'State Councillor Induction Session' on Friday, 28 November 2025. Further information on this session will be emailed through to elected State Council representatives following the Zone meeting.

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### 2.3. ELECTIONS OF UP TO THREE (3) ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE

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Automatic Executive Committee membership will include the Zone President, Deputy Zone President and the State Councillor Representative. There are up to three (3) positions available for additional members on the Executive Committee.

The election for the Zone Executive Committee representatives shall be conducted and their term set at two (2) years expiring in November 2027, in line with the terms of Zone Delegates and in sync with Local Government Elections.

The following written nominations were received for the position of Executive Committee Member:

- President Cr Jackie McBurney                      Shire of Pingelly
- President Leigh Ballard                              Shire of Narrogin
- President Cr Julie Russell                              Shire of Wickepin

No further nominations were received from the floor.

#### **DECLARATION**

**That President Cr Jackie McBurney, President Leigh Ballard, and President Cr Julie Russell, be elected as Zone Executive Committee members for the term of two years, November 2025 to November 2027.**

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### 2.4. ELECTIONS OF GREAT SOUTHERN DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE – ONE (1) DELEGATE

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An election for the delegate position for the Central Country Zone on the Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee shall be conducted.

#### Delegate

No written nominations were received. Nominations were called from the floor. One nomination was received from the floor.

- Deputy President Cr Lachlan McCabe                      Shire of Brookton

#### **DECLARATION**

**That Cr Lachlan McCabe, Shire of Brookton, be elected as the Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee Delegate of the Central Country Zone.**

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

President Cr Phil Blight declared an impartiality interest in item 9.4.1 due to his membership on the WALGA State Council.

### 4. HOST COUNCIL PRESENTATION

President Cr Rod Wallis, Shire of Brookton, extended a welcome to delegates and guests and provided a presentation on projects and issues facing the Shire of Brookton. A copy of this presentation was circulated with the Minutes.

### 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **WALGA Induction Presentation**

*Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance*

The Zone Executive Committee members have discussed the importance of providing a thorough induction for new Zone Delegates at the November meeting to ensure they fully understand their role and the role of the Zone.

WALGA presented an overview of the Association and the role of the Zone.

Cr Phil Blight, Cr Des Hickey and Cr Karen Harrington also presented on their experience as a Zone Delegate. A copy of this presentation was provided with the Agenda at **Attachment 1**.

**NOTED**

### 6. GUEST SPEAKERS / DEPUTATIONS

All Deputations have a time limit of 20 minutes, which includes time for questions.

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#### **6.1. SPEAKERS FOR THE NOVEMBER ZONE MEETING**

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##### **6.1.1. POWERING WA**

*Natalie Cook, Principal Community Engagement Officer and Wenona Hadingham, Director Planning and Coordination*

Natalie Cook and Wenona Hadingham provided an update on the energy transition in WA and the next steps that are anticipated for the transition. A copy of this presentation was circulated with the Minutes.

**NOTED**

### **6.1.2. DISTRICIT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADVISOR, DFES**

*Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisor & Vivien Gardiner, District Emergency Management Advisor*

Shelby Robinson and Vivien Gardiner provided a presentation to the Zone. A copy of this presentation was circulated with the Minutes.

**NOTED**

## **7. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

Any Members of Federal and State Government in attendance are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone. No Federal or State Government Members were in attendance at the meeting. The 2026 dates will be circulated to relevant Members of Parliament following the confirmation of these dates.

**NOTED**

## **8. AGENCY REPORTS**

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### **8.1. DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATIONS AND SAFETY**

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The DLGIRS report was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 2**.

**NOTED**

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### **8.2. WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

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*Grant Arthur, Director Regional Development*

Grant Arthur gave a verbal update to the Zone.

**NOTED**

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### **8.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT**

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*Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development*

The Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt report was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 3**.

**NOTED**

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### **8.4. MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

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Main Roads were an apology for this meeting.

**NOTED**

*The meeting took a break for 10 minutes from 11:10am, resuming at 11:20am.*

## **9. MINUTES**

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### **9.1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2025**

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The Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on 22 August 2025 have previously been circulated to Member Councils and were attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 4**.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** President Cr Phil Blight  
**Seconded:** President Cr Adrian Kowald

**That the Minutes of the meeting of the Central Country Zone held on 22 August 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.**

**CARRIED**

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### **9.2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2025**

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#### **9.2.1. AUDIT FEE 2025**

*By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance, WALGA*

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the August meeting of the Zone it was resolved;

- 1. That the Central Country Zone write to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations to request that the zone prepare a presentation on behalf of the sector.*
- 2. That the Executive Officer circulate the meeting details to all Zone Members so that they can view the meeting via Livestream.*
- 3. That the Central Country Zone advocacy in relation to audit includes a request to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations and the Minister to conduct and publish a review into the effectiveness and cost to the community of the Local Government Amendment Act (Auditing) 2017*

The Executive Officer wrote to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations. A copy of this letter was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 5**. We are still awaiting a reply.

The Executive Officer emailed all Zone members with the details of the hearing and how to access this on 15 September 2025.

#### **NOTED**

## **9.2.2. TO ADDRESS ANOMALIES ARISING FROM CHANGES TO THE AUDIT FUNCTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

*By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance, WALGA*

### **BACKGROUND**

At the August meeting of the Zone it was resolved;

*That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to support a representation to the State Government to remove the Office of Auditor General (OAG) as the sole auditor of Local Government in Western Australia.*

The Executive Officer wrote to Hon Hannah Beazley and received a response on Tuesday, 4 November. A copy of the letter was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 6**.

### **NOTED**

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## **9.3. MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2025**

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The Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Special Committee meeting held on 9 October 2025 and a copy was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 7**.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** President Cr Karen Harrington

**Seconded:** President Cr Jackie McBurney

**That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee Special Meeting held on 9 October 2025 be received.**

**CARRIED**

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## **9.4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CENTRAL COUNTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2025**

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*President Cr Phil Blight declared an impartiality interest to this item due to his membership on the WALGA State Council and remained in the meeting.*

### **9.4.1. EXECUTIVE OFFICER SERVICES REVIEW**

*Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance*

### **BACKGROUND**

WALGA were appointed as the Executive Officer to the Central Country Zone in April 2021, commencing July 2021, for 12 months. At the November 2021 meeting, the Executive Committee resolved to defer any review of the Executive Officer position for an additional 12 months, to November 2022. In November 2022, the Executive Committee conducted a

review and decided to continue with WALGA's Executive Officer support to the Zone and again review in 2025.

At the August 2025 Zone Meeting the Zone resolved the following:

*The Central Country Zone seek expressions of interests from external providers including WALGA for Executive Officer Services for a period of 2 weeks and bring back to the Central Country Zone Executive Committee prior to the November meeting.*

The EOI was advertised between Friday, 12 September to Monday, 29 September on seek.com.au and for a period between Monday, 15 September to Monday 29 September LGNet and seek.com.au.

The complete advertisement including the Position Description and form for completing, as well as all four submissions received were attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 8**.

A Special Meeting of the Zone Executive Committee was held on Thursday, 9 October via MS Teams. The Committee resolved as follows.

*That the Central Country Zone Executive Committee recommend that the Zone appoint WALGA as the Executive Officer for a period of 3 years. On expiry of this contract, the Zone will refer the matter back to the Executive Committee for further review. CARRIED (6/0)*

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Central Country Zone appoint WALGA as the Zone Executive Officer for a period of three (3) years expiring in November 2028. On expiry of this contract, the Zone will refer the matter back to the Executive Committee for further review.**

#### **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: Cr Julie Russell**

**Seconded: President Cr Dee Ridgway**

**That the Central Country Zone appoint WALGA as the Zone Executive Officer for a period of three (3) years expiring in November 2028. Prior to expiry of the contract, the Zone will refer the matter back to the Executive Committee for further review, including an option to renew the contract for a further three (3) years without going through the selection process.**

**CARRIED**

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## 9.5. MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2025

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The Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 11 November 2025 and a copy was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 9**.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** President Cr Jackie McBurney

**Seconded:** President Cr Sharon Jacobs

**That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 11 November 2025 be received.**

**CARRIED**

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## 9.6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CENTRAL COUNTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2025

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### 9.6.1. COST SHIFT COMPLIANCE PROJECT UPDATE

*By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance, WALGA*

#### BACKGROUND

At the August Zone meeting, the Zone resolved to:

1. *endorse the Cost Shifting and Compliance report, including the Zone position statements;*
2. *invite the Auditor General to an upcoming Zone meeting; and*
3. *organise a delegation to appropriate Ministers to present the report.*

The WALGA Central Country Zone Cost Shifting and Compliance report presented at the August meeting of the Zone stated the following three Zone Positions:

**ZONE POSITION:** *Reinstate the requirement for a Regulatory Impact Assessment for all amendments to legislation and regulation. There should be transparency and a statement of benefits in State Agreements to reduce risk and financial costs on Local and State Governments.*

**ZONE POSITION:** *That the Office of Auditor General review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit costs, reflective of the Local Government Band. That the Office of Auditor General provide a breakdown on the cost of the audit and justification for any variance to the estimate to the Local Government as part of the final billing process.*

**ZONE POSITION:** *The Australian Government increase the Financial Assistance Grants to Local Governments in remote and very remote locations that are providing funding, sourced through their rates, to attract and retain general practitioners. The Medical Facilities Cost Adjustor in the Financial Assistance Grants provided to Local Governments, administered by the WA Grants Commission, be increased to \$200,000.*

At the November meeting of the Executive Committee the Committee considered next steps on this item. The Executive Committee resolved the following recommendation be presented to the Zone for further consideration and resolution.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Central Country Zone:**

- 1. resolve to action each Position as follows:**
  - a. Position 1 be referred to State Council for consideration as a WALGA Advocacy Position.**
  - b. A letter be sent to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum in relation to Position 2.**
  - c. Position 3 to be dealt with as a separate issue given recent communications with the Office of the Auditor General.**
  - d. Position 4 be amended to remove the reference to the Financial Assistance Grants, to read: "The Australian Government increase the support to Local Governments in remote and very remote locations that are providing funding, sourced through their rates, to attract and retain general practitioners."**
- 2. supports sharing a copy of the report with the other Wheatbelt Zones (Avon-Midland and Great Eastern Country Zones), seeking their support for the four Positions.**

## **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: President Cr Jackie McBurny**

**Seconded: President Cr Phil Blight**

**That the Central Country Zone:**

- 1. resolve to action each Position as follows:**
  - a. Position 1 be referred to State Council for consideration as a WALGA Advocacy Position.**
  - b. A letter be sent to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum in relation to Position 2.**
  - c. Position 3 to be dealt with as a separate issue given recent communications with the Office of the Auditor General.**
  - d. Position 4 be amended to remove the reference to the Financial Assistance Grants, to read: "The Australian Government increase the support to Local Governments in rural, remote and very remote locations that are providing funding, sourced through their rates, to attract and retain general practitioners."**
- 2. supports sharing a copy of the report with the other Wheatbelt Zones (Avon-Midland and Great Eastern Country Zones), seeking their support for the four Positions.**
- 3. Supports sharing a copy of the report with the Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport's new Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.**

**CARRIED**

## 10. ZONE BUSINESS

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### 10.1. WHEATBELT REGIONAL CREMATORIUM

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At its June meeting, the Avon-Midland Country Zone considered an item submitted by the Shire of Northam seeking support and advocacy to the State and Federal Governments for the establishment of a regional crematorium in the Central Wheatbelt.

The Avon-Midland Country Zone agreed to support the proposal and resolved as follows:

1. *To undertake advocacy with the State and Federal Governments for the investigation, planning and establishment of a regional Crematorium and Chapel to be located preferably at the Northam Cemetery.*
2. *To approach the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones for support for this initiative.*

The Avon-Midland Country Zone has now approached both the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones, asking for their joint support of the proposal.

The Executive Committee considered this item at its meeting on 11 November and resolved to support the recommendation.

#### BACKGROUND

*Provided by the Avon-Midland Country Zone*

In July 2021, there was a motion prepared for The Nationals State Convention that proposed:

*That this State Convention of The Nationals WA calls on the State and Federal Government to plan, investigate and fund an eco-friendly crematorium and chapel to be built in Northam in the Central Wheatbelt region of Western Australia.*

The background and reason for the motion was articulated as follows:

*Currently there is no crematorium facility in the Central Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. In fact, there are no crematoriums between Kalgoorlie and the metropolitan area; a distance of some 600 kilometres.*

*It has been accepted in the past that if a person from the Wheatbelt or other wishes to be cremated then arrangements are made with the metropolitan crematorium locations of Karrakatta Cemetery, Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Fremantle Cemetery and more recently Rockingham. Alternative crematoriums are located along the coastal regional cities of Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton and inland Kalgoorlie.*

*In the last year (being 2020), more than 212 cremations were serviced in the Central Wheatbelt with a potential 300 from funeral companies in the Midland area.*

*Cremations are costly where the deceased is transferred from the country to the metropolitan area for a non-attendance and no chapel service. Furthermore, a family*

*member must travel to the metropolitan area to collect the ashes of the deceased, as a funeral business cannot legally collect the ashes on their behalf.*

*Issues faced by already grieving family, relatives and friends include - leave of absence, road safety, traffic anxiety, driving anxiety, fuel costs, accommodation, hire of venues, clothing, catering, flowers and other.*

*Northam is the largest regional town in the Central Wheatbelt with a busy network of five arterial roads, including the Great Eastern Highway, along with the rail network. The Shire of Northam also hosts an airport and helipad that would support repatriated bodies from the North-West and other areas of the State.*

*The well-established Northam Cemetery, along Katrine Road overlooking the Avon River, had land opportunities for regional development and expansion for an eco-friendly crematorium and open air chapel facility (like Kalgoorlie).*

*It is timely that the State and Federal Governments take some responsibility to strategically plan, investigate and fund an eco-friendly (solar power with battery backup and/or natural gas) crematorium and chapel to be built in Northam in the Central Wheatbelt region.*

## **COMMENT**

*Provided by the Avon-Midland Country Zone*

To date, there has been no State or Federal Government investment in planning or establishing a regional crematorium in the Central Wheatbelt.

The Northam Cemetery Focus Group was recently formed, comprising interested community members. One of the issues raised by the Focus Group has been the ongoing need for a regional crematorium in the Central Wheatbelt and the lack of action in this regard.

Whilst contemporary statistics for the number of cremations performed across the eight public crematoria in Western Australia are not available, indications from the Australian Funeral Directors Association are that 72% of funerals conducted in Australia each year are cremations. In metropolitan Perth, this figure is as high as 80%.

The Shire of Northam is currently considering an action being incorporated into its 2025/26 Council Plan (Community Strategic Plan), to develop a Master Plan for the Northam Cemetery. It is anticipated that the Master Plan would include provision for a crematorium and chapel, noting that this facility would require investment from State and/or Federal Government to bring the project to fruition.

Given that a regional crematorium would service many of the Local Governments in the Avon-Midland Country Zone, the Shire of Northam requested support from Zone Members to undertake advocacy by the Zone to the State and Federal Governments for investigation, planning and establishment of a regional crematorium in Northam.

The Avon-Midland Country Zone supported the Shire’s proposal at its June meeting, and has now approached both the Central and Great Eastern Country Zones, to ask for their similar support of the proposal.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Central Country Zone:

1. supports the Avon-Midland Country Zone’s proposal in relation to the establishment of a regional Crematorium and Chapel; and
2. joins the Avon-Midland Country Zone in its advocacy efforts with State and Federal Governments for the investigation, planning and establishment of a regional Crematorium and Chapel to be located preferably at the Northam Cemetery.

**AMENDMENT**

**Moved:** President Cr Amy Knight

**Seconded:** President Cr Dee Ridgway

That the Central Country Zone:

1. supports the Avon-Midland Country Zone’s proposal in relation to the establishment of a regional Crematorium and Chapel; and
2. joins the Avon-Midland Country Zone in its advocacy efforts with State and Federal Governments for the investigation, planning and establishment of a regional Crematorium and Chapel.

**CARRIED**

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**10.2. 2026 EXECUTIVE AND ZONE MEETING DATES**

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A schedule of the proposed 2026 meeting dates for the Central Country Zone are presented to the Zone for adoption.

Zone dates are scheduled to coincide with the WALGA State Council meetings. The window for Zone meeting is listed in the last column of the proposed Zone dates table.

<b>Executive Committee Meeting Dates</b>	<b>Day &amp; Time</b>	<b>Host</b>
3 February	Tuesday, 7:30am	Teams
7 April	Tuesday, 7:30am	Teams
2 June	Tuesday, 7:30am	Teams
4 August	Tuesday, 7:30am	Teams
3 November	Tuesday, 7:30am	Teams

<b>Zone Meeting Dates</b>	<b>Day &amp; Time</b>	<b>Host Council</b>	<b>State Council Meeting Date</b>	<b>Preferred Dates for Zone Meetings</b>
<b>13 February</b>	Friday 9:30 am	Corrigin	4 March	Friday, 13 – Monday, 23 February
<b>17 April</b>	Friday 9:30 am	Cuballing	6 May	Friday, 17 – Tuesday, 28 April

<b>12 June</b>	Friday 9:30 am	Dumbleyung	1 July	Friday 12 – Monday, 22 June
<b>14 August</b>	Friday 9:30 am	Kulin	4 September	Friday, 14 – Monday, 24 August
<b>13 November</b>	Friday 9:30 am	Lake Grace	2 December	Friday, 13 – Monday, 23 November

## RESOLUTION

**Moved:** President Cr Dee Ridgway  
**Seconded:** President Cr Sharon Jacobs

**That the 2026 Executive Committee and Zone meeting dates listed above be endorsed.**

**CARRIED**

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## 10.3. SEPTEMBER REGIONAL STATE COUNCIL MEETING

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### BACKGROUND

Each year, the WALGA State Council meets in a regional location hosted by a Zone. There are generally two regional State Council meetings per year – one hosted by a Metropolitan Zone and another hosted by a Country Zone. Regional meeting hosts are rotated between the Zones.

It is proposed that the September 2026 Regional State Council meeting be hosted by the Central Country Zone.

The Central Country Zone last hosted a regional meeting in 2015 in the Shire of Narrogin.

It is proposed that the September 2026 Regional State Council meeting be held over two days, **Thursday and Friday, 3 – 4 September 2026.**

The general requirements for a location to host the Regional meeting are:

- the ability to accommodate State Councillors and WALGA staff overnight (approx. 35 rooms required); and
- a venue to host dinner for the WALGA group plus Zone Delegates and CEOs (approx. 60 attendees).

The host Local Government is also asked to provide a venue to accommodate the following:

Strategic Forum and State Council meeting	U-shaped seating for 24 people, plus head table for 6 people Additional seating for 20 people (observers) A screen with HDMI connectivity for screen sharing Microphones (at least one for the Chair)
Zone Forum	Theatre style seating for 40 people Lectern and microphone for presenters

General

Break out area for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea

WALGA requests the Local Government to set up facilities and arrange catering, with WALGA to reimburse the cost of catering.

WALGA will arrange the WALGA Dinner.

WALGA is seeking the appointment of a host Local Government and a Zone representative to act as liaison between WALGA and the Zone to plan the 2026 Regional State Council meeting, particularly in relation to venues and the format of the Zone Forum. The appointed liaison person would normally be an officer from the Host Council.

Following the appointment of a host Local Government, the WALGA secretariat will liaise with the host to plan the event.

Prior to the Zone Meeting the Executive Officer emailed all Zone CEO's to advise of this item and outline the requirements for hosting the meeting. This provided each Local Government with the opportunity to consider the proposal and prepare a brief "pitch" to the Zone should they wish to nominate as host for the event. Following this a nomination was received from the Shire of Pingelly.

Nominations can still be accepted from the floor should there be any other Local Governments that wish to nominate to host this event. In the event that we have multiple nominations we will go to a vote.

*Nominations were received from the Shire of Pingelly and the Shire of Corrigin.*

*President Cr Jackie McBurney from the Shire of Pingelly presented at the meeting stating they meet the requirements for the Regional meeting and have their CEO Andrew Drover as the appointed liaison.*

*President Cr Sharon Jacobs from the Shire of Corrigin presented at the meeting stating they meet the requirements for the Regional meeting and have their CEO Natalie Manton as the appointed liaison.*

*A vote was conducted and tallied, and the result was declared a tie. President Cr Rod Wallis from the Shire of Brookton pulled a name out of the hat as a final decision maker and Shire of Pingelly was appointed as the host Council for the September 2026 State Council Meeting.*

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Phil Blight**

**Seconded: President Cr Jackie McBurney**

**That the Central Country Zone endorse:**

- 1. the proposal to host the September 2026 Regional State Council meeting;**
- 2. the appointment of the Shire of Pingelly as the host Local Government; and**
- 3. the appointment of CEO Andrew Dover to act as liaison between the Zone and WALGA in planning the Regional State Council meeting.**

**CARRIED**

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#### **10.4. SUBMISSIONS TO THE 2026 SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL REMUNERATION INQUIRY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND ELECTED MEMBERS**

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*By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance*

##### **BACKGROUND**

The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an annual inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member remuneration.

SAT generally advertises its intention to receive submissions in December for its inquiry and Determination in relation to the following financial year. The Tribunal will invite individual Local Governments, the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulations and Safety, WALGA, Local Government Professionals WA and other interested individuals to provide information or submissions.

SAT will likely publish its Determination for 2026-2027 in April 2026.

##### **COMMENT**

In preparation for the inquiry to be undertaken early next year, a draft submission from WALGA has been prepared making recommendations to SAT on behalf of the sector in relation to Elected Member fees and allowances, Chief Executive Officer remuneration, the Regional/Isolation Allowance, and independent audit, risk and improvement committee member fees. The draft WALGA submission is contained in the December State Council Agenda for Zone and State Council consideration.

Local Governments can also put forward a submission, particularly in relation to their own circumstances, including requests to be classified in a different Band.

WALGA encourages all Local Governments to make a submission to SAT.

##### **NOTED**

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#### **10.5. CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONENCE TO MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

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*By Shire of Wagin*

##### **BACKGROUND**

At the 28 October 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting, the Shire of Wagin resolved that a motion be presented at the 21 November 2025 Central Country Zone meeting asking that the Zone write to the Minister for Local Government stating the Zone's opposition to compulsory voting and full Council elections every four years

On the eve of the 2025 Ordinary Local Government Elections, Minister Beazley expressed concern regarding voter turnout and proposed both compulsory voting and full Council elections every four years.

Every Minister for local government since 2015 has complained about the level of community participation in local government elections.

Namely, Minister Simpson in 2015; Minister Templeman in 2017 and in 2019, Minister Carey in 2021, Minister Michael in 2023 and now Minister Beazley in 2025 all were critical of voter turnout following a local government election.

Minister Beazley's earlier comments did not reference compulsory voting and appeared to make statements in favour of compulsory voting only after the Premier showed support for the concept.

While increasing voter participation was one of the stated aims of the State Government's previous Local Government Act 1995 reforms during the Templeman Ministry, the concept of compulsory voting was not present or even mentioned in any of the Government's discussion papers or fact sheets that charted possible options for reform.

This suggests that Minister at the time or Cabinet opposed compulsory voting and effectively it was not considered to be on the table.

Australia is an outlier in respect to compulsory voting with 21 countries adopting the practice. The only European countries where voting is compulsory are Belgium, Greece, Turkey, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg. Many of the countries with compulsory voting have had troublesome relationships with political expression and freedom including Argentina, Bolivia, Egypt, Thailand and Honduras.

In at least one ranking of strong democracies none of the first fifteen countries including those in Scandinavia, Ireland, Canada, Japan and Netherlands had compulsory voting.

Minister Beazley's comments also were premised on comparisons to east coast local governments. Officers do not understand the preoccupation with adopting practices from east coast local governments where their approach introduces new challenges. In New South Wales and Queensland, it is easy to find examples of overt party politics resulting in dysfunction and strife.

Community participation is the central feature of local government and Officers note that community participation in local government in Western Australia is a daily occurrence. This is particularly the case in rural Western Australia where the public has tremendous access to local government officials both employees and elected. In rural areas especially the participation of Councillors represents a commitment to community and often an opportunity cost to business opportunities, social endeavours, family time and participation in sporting, cultural or emergency service organisations.

The legislative framework that supports local government to operate – and to deliver a range of essential and unfunded and underfunded State and Commonwealth Government services – should support and value this participation.

Compulsory voting and full Council elections would undermine this. For example, in a local government where there are traditionally few people willing to be candidates, candidates may be less likely to run if their participation forces people to vote (which would be an

unpopular decision). In such scenarios there would be fewer candidates and more uncontested elections.

Compulsory voting would also represent an additional cost to local governments. This cost would be greatest for local governments that currently undertake their own elections and penalise disadvantaged groups that have trouble accessing government services.

#### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

Following a report to State Council on WALGA's Elections Advocacy Position in December 2024, State Council requested that the WALGA Secretariat further investigate the implications of compulsory and voluntary voting in Local Government elections.

WALGA's sector-wide consultation in late 2024 showed:

- 74% support for voluntary voting overall, but majority support for compulsory voting among metropolitan and Class 1 and 2 Local Governments.
- 98% support for four-year terms with a two-year spill (biennial elections).

Recent Ministerial comments have indicated State Government support for reform, including consideration of compulsory voting and a four-year, all-in/all-out election cycle. These comments have prompted renewed interest and discussion across the sector.

WALGA now understands that electoral reforms will be the subject of formal public consultation commencing late 2025.

The Governance Policy Team has requested that WALGA provide a balanced and factual discussion paper to support sector feedback to the public consultation process. Pending release of State Government's discussion paper WALGA will undertake full sector consultation.

It is open to the Zone to write to the Minister to express their view in advance of any formal public consultation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Central Country Zone write to the Minister for Local Government stating the Zone's opposition to compulsory voting and full Council elections every four years.**

#### **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: President Cr Phil Blight**  
**Seconded: Cr Robbie Bowey**

**That the Central Country Zone write to the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Wheatbelt and Shadow Minister for Local Government stating the Zone's opposition to compulsory voting and full Council elections every four years.**

**CARRIED**

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## **10.6. TELSTRA SITE FIREBREAKS**

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**BACKGROUND**

Landowners are required to maintain firebreaks in accordance with their firebreak notice. Each year local governments police compliance with firebreak notices with a combination of encouragement, reminders, warnings and sanctions. Under section 33 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* when a landowner does not comply, the local government can recover the costs of undertaking the works.

Local landowners who understand directly the importance of firebreaks are often the easiest to convince. Larger entities, including government departments are often more difficult to contact and seemingly less regard for local interests.

This can be particularly frustrating when the site is of strategic and practical emergency importance.

Telstra's facilities at Mt Latham, Wagin represents such a facility. The facility which provides telecommunications and utilities communications is under lock and key.

Each year the Shire makes representations to Telstra to undertake firebreak works and where possible undertakes works around the perimeter of the facility.

As a single local government entity, the Shire has limited power to compel Telstra. Undertaking works at a landowner's cost is an option but this presents real occupational health and safety risks and well as problems with access given the secure state of the facility. The Shire would not want to expose its workers and contractors to these risks.



The issue is suspected to be common across regional Western Australia and is particularly concerning when the infrastructure is essential in emergency events.

It would be worthwhile if delegates could check their mobile phone transmission sites and similar prior to the meeting to understand the scale of this issue.

### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

WALGA recognises the ongoing challenges faced by Local Governments in ensuring bushfire mitigation compliance at critical infrastructure sites, particularly those owned by large entities such as Telstra. The example provided by the Shire of Wagin, involving the Mt Latham telecommunications facility, highlights the limitations of enforcement under the Bush Fires Act 1954, especially where access is restricted and significant health and safety risks are present.

Owners and occupiers of land, including the private sector and industry, have clear responsibilities under State Hazard Plan Fire. Owners and occupiers are responsible for identifying and reducing their fire risk, and understanding how their actions influence that risk (Section 2.1.1). The private sector and industry must implement mitigation measures aligned with regulatory frameworks and consider any additional risks introduced by their operations (Section 2.1.2). Further, private sector entities must prepare for fire hazards relative to their risk profile and surrounding context (Section 3.1.2). Telstra's Code of Conduct supports the expectation that the organisation will act responsibly and ethically in managing fire risks at its facilities, particularly those with strategic emergency importance.

WALGA advocates for improved resilience of telecommunications infrastructure, including through the strategic investment of public funds in backup power systems such as batteries and generators. However, the effectiveness of these measures may be compromised if vegetation management within facility compounds is not adequately addressed. Ensuring basic fire mitigation practices is essential to protect infrastructure assets and maintain continuity of service during emergencies.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** President Cr Phil Blight  
**Seconded:** President Cr Jackie McBurney

That the Central Country Zone write to the Federal Minister for Communications raising the matter of bush fire mitigation in communications facilities in regional Australia.

**CARRIED**

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## **10.7. REGULATIONS WORKING GROUP**

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*Shire of Wagin*

### **BACKGROUND**

In an alert distributed to local governments on 29 October 2025, the Department of Local Government mentioned that a Regulations Working Group had been established in August 2025 with representatives from the sector to provide input into new regulations, including for example new Audit Regulations.

Following enquiries from the Shire of Wagin, the Department has advised that WALGA and LG Professionals WA have been invited to provide two members each. LG Professionals advised that its Board had appointed the Director of Corporate Services, City of Subiaco and CEO of the Shire of Gingin as their nominees.

WALGA advised that the Shire of Harvey also had representation. The Shire of Harvey is a Band 2 local government. The Shire of Gingin is Band 3 local government.

A wider expression of interest has not been conducted.

The Regulations Working Group will likely have a role informing the contents of regulations related to standing orders, audit, communications agreements and the powers of the local government inspectorate. They will also likely have a function reviewing the regulations concerning the various registers that local governments will be required to maintain into the future.

These regulations will result in further requirements and effort on the part of local governments. This means that they will impact band 4 local governments most that are least able to absorb the requirements.

#### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

WALGA recognises the concerns regarding the limitations of the Working Group consultation model. WALGA will seek to facilitate broad sector representation within the constraints of the current Working Group structure as established by the Department. It is open to the Zone to request direct representation of each Local Government band.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Phil Blight**

**Seconded: President Cr Karen Harrington**

That the Central Country Zone write to the Minister seeking that representation on the Regulations Working Group be extended to include two representatives from each local government band and include representation from both elected members and officers as well representation from remote and regional Western Australia.

**CARRIED**

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## **10.8. POLYPHAGOUS SHOT-HOLE BORER UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2025**

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*By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste*

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Since the State Council Agenda and Item for Noting was developed, there has been a further development relating to PSHB management.
- On Friday 14 November, the State Government [gazetted](#) changes to the zones within the Quarantine Area for Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB).
- This change sees a significantly larger portion of the metropolitan area, and all 30 Local Governments, having responsibility for managing PSHB infestations.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This item relates to [advocacy positions](#) 4.4 Post Border Biosecurity and 4.7 Polyphagous shot-hole borer.

## **BACKGROUND**

On Friday 14 November, the State Government [gazetted](#) changes to the zones within the Quarantine Area (QA) for Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB). Figure 1 shows a comparison of the previous and new areas.

Previously the QA included Zone A and B; with DPIRD undertaking limited activity in Zone A and some tree removal and surveillance in Zone B. Zone A and B have been renamed the Management Zone and Containment Zone, respectively. Zone A, now the Management Zone, has been expanded to cover all 30 Local Governments in the metropolitan area. Previously, Zone A completely covered 15 Local Government areas and partially included 6. The new Management Zone covers 23 Local Governments completely and parts of a further 7 Local Governments.

All Local Governments and other landowners and managers in the Management Zone are now responsible for managing borer-affected trees on their land. The Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) has discontinued tree removal and pruning in the Management Zone – except where trees were already designated for removal or pruning during the eradication phase of the response.

The Containment Zone is the area between the Management Zone and the outer boundary of the QA. Under the Transition to Management Plan, DPIRD's response will now be limited to pruning and removal of trees in the Containment Zone that pose a risk of spreading the borer outside of the QA.

WALGA met with the DPIRD on Thursday 13 November regarding these changes and requested an urgent briefing for Local Governments in the QA – this was held on Tuesday 18 November. A recording of this session will be made available to Local Government. DPIRD are hosting a more extensive briefing on Monday 8 December.

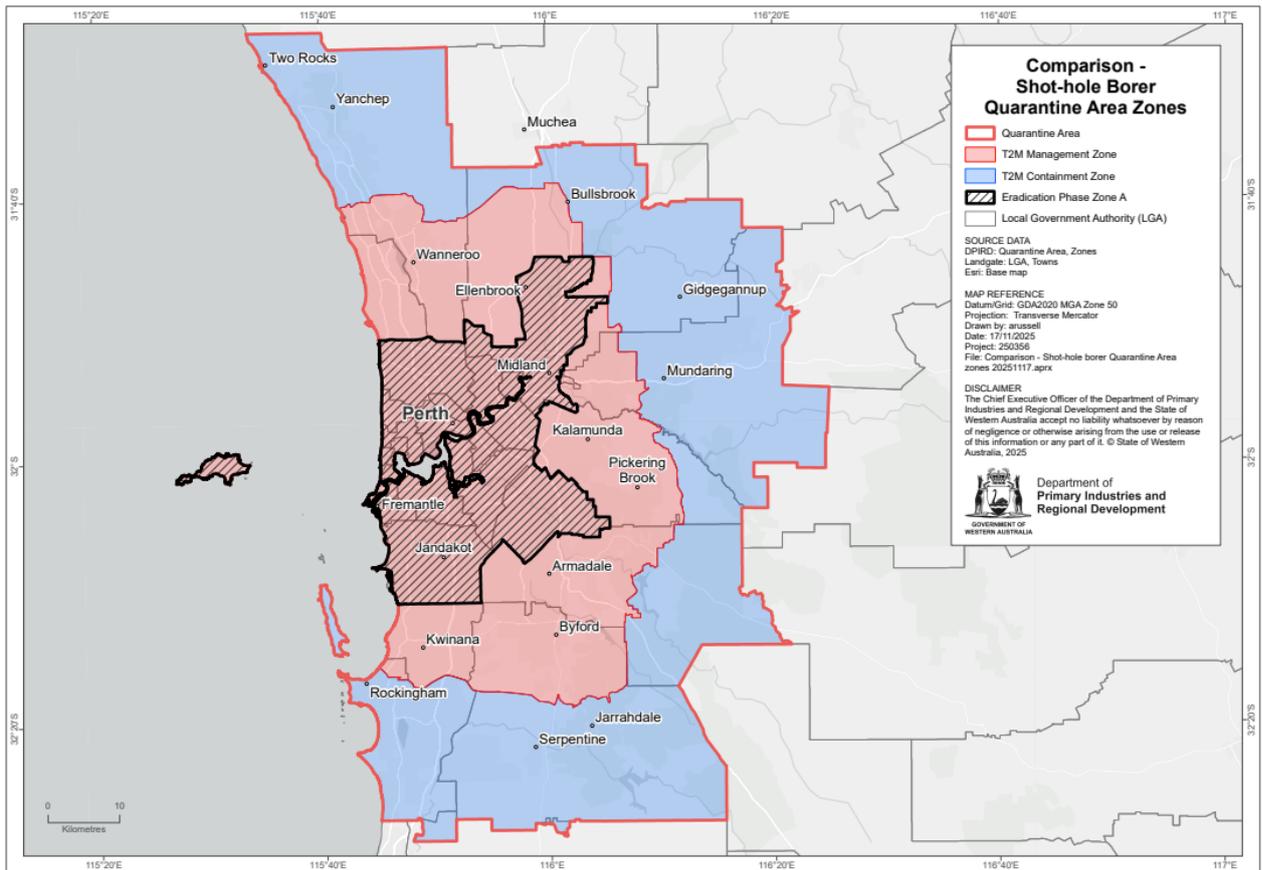


Figure 1: Quarantine Area, with Management and Containment Zones, compared to previous Zone A and B

**COMMENT**

WALGA was not consulted on these changes, which have immediate and unanticipated impacts for Local Governments that are now in the Management Zone and ongoing impacts for Local Governments who have been managing PSHB since the Transition to Management commenced in July 2025.

WALGA has expressed its concerns to DPIRD regarding the impact of these changes for the spread of PSHB, on Local Government and the urgent need for further financial support.

To assist Local Governments undertaking management activities, WALGA is hosting capacity building webinars and events.

**NOTED**

## 11. ZONE REPORTS

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### 11.1. CHAIR REPORT

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The Chair, Des Hickey provided a report to the Zone.

**NOTED**

### 11.2. WHEATBELT INTERAGENCY HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

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*President Cr Jackie McBurney*

President Cr Jackie McBurney advised that this group has finalised and disbanded.

The standing item for this report will be removed from future Zone Agendas.

**NOTED**

### 11.3. WALGA ROADWISE

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Rodney Thornton was an apology for this meeting.

## 12. WALGA STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE REPORTS

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### 12.1. WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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The WALGA President's Report was attached to the Agenda at **Attachment 10**.

**NOTED**

### 12.2. STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

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*President Cr Phillip Blight*

This meeting was held in Norseman, being the annual regional meeting of State Council

- **Item 8.1 RATING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES**  
**And**
- **Item 8.2 RATING OF MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES**  
Were both passed with little descent as seen by most delegates as a logical extension of the rating process.
- **Item 8.3 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY SPORTING AND RECREATION FACILITIES FUND ADVOCACY POSITIONS**  
Was amended to raise the funding to **\$60m** pa for both the CSRFF and the arts
- **Item 8.4 RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SERVICES ADVOCACY POSITION**

## RESOLUTION

Moved: Phil Blight  
Seconded: Eddie Smith

That WALGA replace Advocacy Position 3.2.2 Regional Health Services with the following:

*The Western Australian and Australian Governments are responsible for ensuring that all West Australians have equitable access to primary healthcare services, regardless of their location. Local Governments should not have to step in to support the provision of these services for their communities.*

*WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to address the systemic failures in the provision of rural and remote primary healthcare services, including through:*

- a. the development and implementation of adequate, appropriate and sustainable funding models*
- b. incentivising rural and remote healthcare workforce recruitment and retention.*

*Local Governments should be reimbursed for costs incurred to support the provision of primary healthcare services until sustainable funding and workforce models are in place.*

- **This Zone asked that the Auditor General** might appear before the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations with regard to the transparency of audits of Local Governments.

Attached is a link to the transcript: [OAGpublicTranscript.pdf](#)

Subsequent to that, CEO Ken Parker and I met with the Auditor General and raised some queries about the session.

## NOTED

## 12.3. STATUS REPORT – NOVEMBER 2025

### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** President Cr Adrian Kowald  
**Seconded:** President Cr Jackie McBurney

**That the November 2025 Central Country Zone Status Report be received.**

**CARRIED**

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Central C	20 June 2025 Zone Agenda Item 9.4 Concerns Regarding the Delays in Electrical Connections by Western Power – Impact on Regional Development in Brookton	That the Central Country Zone request State Council to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage with Western Power to review and improve timelines for electrical connections, particularly in regional areas;</li> <li>2. Prioritise connections for essential infrastructure, residential housing, and commercial investment projects; and</li> <li>3. Consider additional resourcing or regional service delivery strategies to ensure timely support for regional development.</li> </ol>	<p>WALGA CEO and senior officers again met with senior Western Power staff in October to follow up resource and process changes made to improve timelines for electrical connections.</p> <p>Focus is aligned to Government priorities; housing, health, essential services, schools and childcare infrastructure (telecommunications, Black Spot / roads).</p> <p>There is not a separate process for regional projects. The major delays are in design rather than construction, but this may change as the design bottlenecks are removed.</p> <p>Additional design consultants have been engaged by Western Power.</p> <p>Large land developers have seen improvements in service delivery, by arranging more of the design and conformance review work themselves.</p> <p>The next working group meeting with Western Power is scheduled for 1 December with a Local Government forum to be convened in early 2026.</p>	November 2025	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031

			Consideration is being given to if and how these services can be included within the scope of the Western Power Access Arrangement which regulates the services offered and prices charged by Western Power.		
<b>Central C</b>	14 February 2025 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.1.3 Support for Public Ownership of WA Freight Rail Network</b>	That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supports State Government efforts to ensure the on-going sustainability and growth of freight rail in Western Australia;</li> <li>2. Seeks a commitment from the in-coming State Government to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. focus on ensuring a competitive freight rail network and services reduce freight on roads; providing road safety, environmental benefits; and</li> <li>b. work with Local Governments and other stakeholders to maximise the local economic growth opportunities provided through effective management of the rail network and corridors.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	The Infrastructure Policy Team supported including the proposed advocacy position in a new or consolidated policy statement in relation to freight rail following consultation with Local Governments and other stakeholders to better define the social, economic and environmental benefits sought from a publicly controlled freight rail network.	<b>August 2025</b>	<b>Ian Duncan</b> Executive Manager Infrastructure iduncan@walg a.asn.au 9213 2031
<b>Central C</b>	20 June 2025 Zone Agenda Item <b>13.1 Polyphagous shot-hole borer</b>	That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Call on the State Government to appropriately fund the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development given that the 2025-26 State Budget shows that investment in the Department will drop by \$166m in 2026-27 (35%) and be lower than the investment in 2023-24 which was insufficient to respond to the Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer.</li> <li>2. Noting; The 2025-26 budget provides just \$50,000 for 'Biosecurity Incident and Emergency Management Response' grants in 2026-27 and no funding in the further out-years.</li> </ol>	The Zone's resolution aligns with WALGA advocacy position 4.4 Post Border Biosecurity.  WALGA continues to advocate to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) regarding the range of issues Local Government has identified in relation to PSHB. WALGA's Budget Submission will also include specific funding requests in relation to PSHB and funding for DPIRD to enhance preparedness and response capacity.	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@w alga.asn.au 9213 2039
<b>Central C</b>	11 April 2025 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.3 Advocacy for Statewide Community Enhancements Fund (CEF) Framework &amp; Renewable Energy Guidelines</b>	That the Central Country Zone of WALGA: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supports the Shire of Narrogin's Community Enhancements Fund (CEF) Policy as a best-practice model for equitable benefit-sharing from large-scale renewable energy projects;</li> <li>2. Requests WALGA State Council to advocate to the State Government for the development of a Statewide Community Enhancements Fund Framework, consistent with the key principles of the Shire of Narrogin's CEF Policy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A minimum indexed contribution from renewable energy proponents based on installed capacity;</li> <li>○ Local Government management of restricted cash reserves for community benefit;</li> <li>○ A dedicated component for Indigenous Nations Funds (recommended 10%);</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	In August, the State Government released a draft Community Benefits Guideline Consultation Paper.  WALGA has prepared a submission on the Guideline on behalf of the Sector. 48 Local Governments provided feedback to this submission, including a joint submission on the Consultation Paper from 36 regional Local Governments. Relevant feedback from Local Governments was incorporated into the draft submission. All Local Governments were also encouraged to provide their own submissions to the State Government.  The submission broadly supports many aspects of the State's draft Guideline, but recommends a specific focus on, or changes to, several aspects. This includes:	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@w alga.asn.au 9213 2039

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alignment with Local Government strategic planning;</li> <li>○ Transparent governance, community engagement, and annual reporting.</li> </ul> <p>3. Further requests WALGA to advocate for the adoption of a broader Renewable Industry Framework for WA as outlined in the Shire of Narrogin's Advocacy Position, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consistent planning standards for renewable energy development (e.g., setbacks, zoning);</li> <li>○ A State-mandated community engagement framework;</li> <li>○ Legacy workforce housing solutions in lieu of short-term TWAs;</li> <li>○ A uniform Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILoR) model for wind, solar and BESS facilities;</li> <li>○ Empowerment of Local Governments to manage benefit-sharing and rating mechanisms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for the requirement for community benefits to be mandated.</li> <li>• Changes to the contribution rate, from the proposed range to a single, indexed figure floor for wind, solar and battery storage projects.</li> <li>• That benefit sharing arrangements should commence during the construction phase of projects.</li> <li>• Further clarity on the role of rates versus community benefits and that these be viewed separately.</li> <li>• That Local Government should determine the appropriate governance mechanisms.</li> <li>• Clearer guidance on when developers should engage with neighbouring Local Governments.</li> <li>• The need for a statewide strategy to guide the rollout of the energy transition.</li> <li>• The need for State Government to lead and coordinate regional cumulative impact assessments for large scale renewable projects, in consultation with proponents and Local Governments.</li> <li>• Clarity on when the Guideline should apply to existing projects.</li> </ul> <p>Powering WA has not yet provided a response to the feedback received on the Community Benefits Guideline Consultation Paper</p> <p>In May 2025 the Western Australian Planning Commission considered a confidential item related to the establishment of a Renewable Energy Facility Planning Code. DPLH has advised that formal consultation on the draft Code is expected to commence in Q1 2026. WALGA will facilitate engagement between DPLH and Local Government and will be preparing a submission on behalf of the sector</p>		
<b>Central C</b>	5 March 2025 State Council Agenda Item <b>8.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position</b>	<p>That State Council replace the 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change with the following advocacy position:</p> <p>WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to deliver a climate change response that improves and maintains the quality of life for all Western Australians for generations to come.</li> </ol>	<p>WALGA has suggested an approach to the Environment Policy Team which identified that, based on a range of developments at both the State and national level, there is a need to reconsider the draft Advocacy Position. These include the ALGA Adapting Together – Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate <a href="#">Report</a>, the Australian Government has released the nation's first <a href="#">National Climate Risk Assessment</a>, <a href="#">Climate Adaptation Plan</a> and <a href="#">2035 emissions target</a> and recent comments from the WA Government regarding <a href="#">climate change targets</a>.</p>	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> <b>Executive Manager</b> <b>Policy</b> <b>nmatthews@w</b> <b>alga.asn.au</b> <b>9213 2039</b>

		2. provides funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable local communities to respond to the effects of climate change	These developments provide an opportunity to update and streamline the draft Advocacy Position. WALGA will take the feedback provided by Zones and State Councillors, and the additional information and direction released, to finalise a draft Advocacy Position and Background Paper for consideration by the sector in 2026. As previously recommended by the Environment Policy Team, Local Governments will be encouraged to provide CEO / Council endorsed feedback on the Position and have at least a 10-week period to provide that feedback.		
<b>Central C</b>	26 August 2023 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.2 Water Corporation – Non-Standard Water Services</b>	That the Central Country Zone: 1. Rejects Water Corporation attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service' (unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority); 2. Formally writes to Water Corporation and the Minister for Water confirming this position; 3. Requests that WALGA supports the position of the Central Country Zone and rejects the Water Corporation's attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service'; and 4. Requests WALGA to engage with the Minister for Water to retain the current services, unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority.	WALGA is currently finalising a Water Discussion Paper which includes the issue raised by the Central Country Zones. WALGA has also raised this in discussion with Water Corporation.  Noting that the Non-Standard Water Service classification did not reflect a <i>change</i> to the water service provided but instead more data on the standard of water provided.  WALGA also provided the Central Country Zones contact details for a recent media inquiry on this issue.	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
<b>Central C</b>	22 August 2025 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.3 To Rationalise the Audit Function for Local Government in WA</b>	That the Zone request WALGA to advocate for the choice of an auditor of Local Governments in Western Australia be opened to individuals who are Registered Company Auditors with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) as well as the Office of Auditor General OAG).	This item will be referred to the Governance Policy Team for consideration.  The Zone will be informed of the outcome.	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Kirsty Martin,</b> Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2095 kmartin@walga.asn.au
<b>Central C</b>	22 August 2025 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.2 To Address Anomalies Arising from Changes to the Audit Function of Local Government in WA</b>	That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to support a representation to the State Government to remove the Office of Auditor General (OAG) as the sole auditor of Local Government in Western Australia.	This item will be referred to the Governance Policy Team for consideration.  The Zone will be informed of the outcome.	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Kirsty Martin,</b> Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2095 kmartin@walga.asn.au

<b>Central C</b>	19 November 2021 Zone Agenda Item <b>12.1 Sector ICT solution</b>	That the Zone request WALGA to research providers and the viability of an in-house IT system.	<p>Work continues to be undertaken to support Members seeking ICT solutions.</p> <p>WALGA has commenced work with an IT Consultant experienced in the development and assessment of ERP systems for Local Government. The engagement includes the development of Template Documents for an ERP Scope and an Evaluation Guide, these resources these resources are available now to download through Vendorpanel under PSP001.</p> <p>An ERP Vendor scan through the PSP panel has also been initiated, with up-to-date ERP information to be collated and provided as a Member resource once completed.</p> <p>This work is ongoing and being led by WALGA's Commercial Development Team. Any queries can be directed to Brian Ging.</p>	<b>November 2025</b>	<b>Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2095 kmartin@walg a.asn.au</b>
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### 13. WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

Zone Delegates are invited to read and consider the WALGA State Council Agenda, which has been provided as an attachment (Attachment 10) with this Agenda and can be found via the link [here](#).

The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation on any of the items, including the items for noting. The Zone comment will then be presented to the State Council for consideration at their meeting.

The State Council Agenda items requiring a decision of State Council are extracted for Zone consideration below.

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#### 13.1. MATTERS FOR DECISION

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##### 13.1.1. 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.1)

###### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 23 September.
- The meeting resolved for WALGA to act in relation to four Member Motions:
  - Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
  - Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
  - Rating Exemption Advocacy Motion
  - Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses
- The action proposed to be taken in relation to each of the resolutions has been summarised for State Council's consideration.

###### ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA 2025 Annual General Meeting Minutes](#)

###### BACKGROUND

The 2025 WALGA AGM was held on 23 September 2025. 220 Voting Delegates were in attendance, with 124 Local Governments represented.

Five Member Motions were considered, with four being supported by Members at the AGM, as follows.

#### 7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments

*That WALGA calls on the Western Australian Government and WA Grants Commission to:*

1. *increase the total funding and then the Medical Facilities Cost Adjuster component of the Financial Assistance to Local Governments; and*
2. *recalculate distributions to those Local Governments that are providing block cash payments to attract and retain general practitioners to allow affected Council to redirect ratepayer funds to Local Government responsibilities.ssss*

## **7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions**

*That WALGA advocate to the State Government to provide culturally appropriate short-term accommodation options and wrap-around support services that provide sustainable homelessness solutions in all Local Governments across Western Australia.*

## **7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position**

*That WALGA, in addition to its current advocacy positions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 relating to rating exemptions, advocate to the WA Government for the introduction of a reimbursement model, whereby the WA Government repays Local Government the greater of:*

- 1. 75% of the value of rates lost in applying the charitable purposes exemption; or*
- 2. 1% of the total revenue of the Local Government.*

## **7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licences**

*That WALGA:*

- 1. Formally oppose any move by the Local Government Minister to introduce amendments to the Local Government Act to restrict the application of rates on Miscellaneous Licences.*
- 2. Develop an advocacy position on sector consultation prior to any amendment to the Local Government Act.*
- 3. Undertake a financial analysis of the cost to the Mining Industry of the rating of Miscellaneous Licences compared to the benefit to the Local Government sector.*

## **COMMENT**

Comment on each of the 2025 AGM resolutions is below.

In considering these resolutions, State Council and the relevant Policy Teams are guided by Clause 22(7) of the [WALGA Constitution](#), as follows:

*Where the State Council considers that a direction or decision from an Annual General Meeting has been made without information or a material nature or in circumstances which have materially altered and such direction or decision is not in the best interests of the Association, the State Council may decline to follow that direction or decision and, in that event, the Chief Executive Officer by notice shall advise the Ordinary Members of the decision of the State Council and the reasons for that decision.*

Members will be informed of progress on the above issues through Policy Team Reports in future State Council Agendas and through the AGM Status Report in next year's AGM Agenda.

## **7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments**

A revised Rural and Remote Healthcare Services Advocacy Position was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. The AGM resolution and WALGA's ongoing advocacy align on the need for financial reimbursement for Local Government support for essential primary health care services. WALGA's approach does not specify how reimbursement to Local Governments should be undertaken, or which Local Governments should be eligible.

This approach aims to provide flexibility to achieve the same outcome, such as utilising the upcoming renewal of the National Health Reform Agreement.

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the People and Place Policy Team.

## **7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions**

WALGA is currently reviewing the Homelessness Advocacy Position as part of a regular advocacy position review process. To inform the review, WALGA will survey Local Governments to gather information on the extent of Local Government engagement with homelessness and the extent of services, including accommodation options, available within their Local Government areas.

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the People and Place Policy Team.

## **7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position**

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the Governance Policy Team.

## **7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses**

An Advocacy Position on Rating of Miscellaneous Licences was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. WALGA will continue to advocate for a broad review on all rating exemption categories and oppose legislative amendments that seek to exempt occupied miscellaneous licence land from rating.

It is recommended that this resolution is endorsed.

### **WALGA RECOMMENDATION**

That:

1. the following resolutions from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the People and Place Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
  - 7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
  - 7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
2. the following resolution from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the Governance Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
  - 7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position
3. the following resolution from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed:
  - 7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licences

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Phil Blight**

**Seconded: President Cr Adrian Kowald**

**That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.**

**CARRIED**

### **13.1.2. 2026 SALARIES AND ALLOWANCE TRIBUNAL REMUNERATION INQUIRY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND ELECTED MEMBERS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.2)**

*By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance*

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member remuneration annually.
- In preparation for the Inquiry to be undertaken early next year, WALGA has prepared a draft submission to SAT that makes recommendations in relation to Elected Member fees and allowances, Chief Executive Officer remuneration, the Regional/Isolation Allowance and independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) member fees.
- The 2026 submission recommends:
  - an increase to Elected Member fees and allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) of 3%;
  - an increase to Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands of 3%;
  - an increase to the Regional/Isolation Allowance payable for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities;
  - the publication of clear guidance to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings; and
  - an increase to the current fee range for independent committee members, including ARIC members and chairs; and
  - a higher fee range for independent ARIC chairs, in recognition of the additional skill, knowledge and time commitment of the role.
- SAT will publish its determination for 2026-27 in April 2026.
- The Governance Policy Team considered the submission at its meeting on 29 October and recommended that it be included in the December Agenda for State Council endorsement.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

- Draft WALGA submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry – Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The current Advocacy Positions relating to this submission are [Position 2.10 Elected Member Remuneration](#), [Position 2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees](#), [Position 2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration](#), and [Position 2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance](#).

#### **2.10 Elected Member Remuneration**

*The Local Government sector supports appropriate remuneration of Local Government Elected Members on the basis of:*

1. *Vibrant democracy and good governance: fees and allowances payable to Elected Members should be sufficient to ensure that a diversity of candidates from a range of backgrounds seek election to Local Government leadership positions;*

2. *Demands of the role: as the complexity of Local Government increases, and community expectations placed upon Elected Members grow in the social media age, the remuneration paid to Elected Members for their significant time commitment must compensate them for the personal and opportunity costs of taking on significant community leadership positions;*
3. *Skills and training: with the implementation of the State Government's universal Elected Member training policy and the increasing expectation for Elected Members to undertake training, the time that Elected Members spend on professional development should be recognised by the fees and allowances framework; and*
4. *Economic conditions: Elected Member fees and allowances must be considered within the surrounding economic environment. The value of fees and allowances paid to Elected Members should keep pace with the increasing costs of living and rates of inflation, to ensure that the relative value of Elected Member fees and allowances does not erode over time.*

### **2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees**

*The Local Government sector:*

1. *supports Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC) having a clearly defined role with an Elected Member majority;*
2. *supports the option for smaller Local Governments to share ARIC to reduce the burden on their resources;*
3. *does not support the requirement for the chair of the ARIC to be an independent member. The appointment of the chair should be at the discretion of the Local Government; and*
4. *supports the payment of meeting fees or defined reimbursements to independent ARIC members. The fees payable should be set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal within a separate fee category and at a suitable level that recognises the skills and knowledge required for such a role.*

### **2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration**

*The Local Government sector supports appropriate remuneration of Local Government Chief Executive Officers on the basis of:*

1. *Importance of the role: the role of the CEO within Local Government is undeniably one of importance. The efficient operations and accountability of Local Governments is dependent on the appointment of a suitably qualified CEO.*
2. *Attraction and retention: Local Governments must compete in the broader labour market to attract and retain CEOs with the requisite qualifications and experience.*
3. *Demands of the role: the skill, workload and time commitment required from the role of a Local Government CEO must be fairly compensated.*

#### **2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance**

*The Local Government sector:*

1. *values the Regional/Isolation Allowance payable to Chief Executive Officers as an important means for Local Governments, particularly those that are remote or isolated, to supplement remuneration and attract suitably qualified Chief Executive Officers; and*
2. *supports greater transparency regarding methodology of application for the Regional/Isolation Allowance.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an annual Inquiry into Local Government Elected Members' fees and allowances and Chief Executive Officers' remuneration. SAT invites submissions from Local Governments and other stakeholders.

SAT are yet to invite submissions for the 2026 Inquiry, however in anticipation of the upcoming end of year closure period and noting that the next ordinary meeting of State Council will be in March, the submission has been drafted early for consideration by Zones and State Council.

Local Governments are also encouraged to make their own submission to SAT, particularly in relation to their individual circumstances including requests to be classified in a different Band.

The content and recommendations in this submission were shaped by existing advocacy positions, previous submissions and feedback from individual Members since the 2025 Determination was published earlier this year.

The 2025 SAT Determination broadly aligned with WALGA's submission on behalf of Members, including:

- 3.5% increase to CEO remuneration band ranges (plus the 0.5% additional Superannuation Guarantee);
- 3.5% increase to the fee band ranges and some allowances for Elected Members (exclusive of superannuation where relevant);
- reduction of the four band ranges for independent committee members to one band, with the range to be from \$0 to \$450; and
- for the first time, provision for reimbursement of expenses for independent committee members.

The Tribunal also made two commitments in relation to:

- conducting a comprehensive survey of Local Governments in the latter half of 2025, the results of which will assist SAT in reviewing the quantum and effectiveness of the Regional/Isolation Allowance; and
- determining the rates for the independent chair of the audit, risk and improvement committee at a future date, to coincide with the commencement of the legislative changes.

## **COMMENT**

WALGA's submission for the 2026 Inquiry makes six recommendations:

1. That Elected Member Fees and Allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) are increased by 3%.
2. That the Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands are increased by 3%.
3. That the maximum payable Regional/Isolation Allowance be increased for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities.
4. That clear guidance be published to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings.
5. That the current fee range for independent committee members be increased to recognise the level of skill and knowledge required of independent audit, risk and

improvement committee members, and to attract suitably skilled individuals to the role.

6. That a higher fee range be determined for independent chairs of audit, risk and improvement committees to recognise the additional skill, knowledge and preparation required to fulfil the role, and to attract suitably skilled individuals.

In relation to Recommendation 1: Elected Member Fees and Allowances, the submission:

- Reiterates WALGA's current advocacy position.
- Points to the current economic conditions putting pressure on households, including those of Elected Members and potential candidates, which lends itself to an increase in fees and allowances. Noting that CPI is currently at 2.1% and WPI 3.7%

In relation to Recommendation 2: Chief Executive Officer Remuneration, the submission:

- Summarises WALGA's current advocacy position in relation to the importance of the role of Chief Executive Officer, including the skill, workload and time commitment required from the role, and the difficulties of attracting and retaining suitable candidates in a competitive labour market.

In relation to Recommendations 3 and 4: Regional/Isolation Allowance, the submission:

- Underlines the importance of the Regional/Isolation Allowance for attracting and retaining quality Chief Executive Officers to some Local Governments that are particularly isolated or remote.
- Recommends both a review of, and publication of guidance about, the methodology, criteria and weightings for the Allowance to provide clarity for the sector.

In relation to Recommendations 5 and 6: Independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Member Fees, the submission:

- Recognises the 2025 Determination went some way to help attract, retain and adequately compensate suitable individuals to the roles of member and chair of ARICs.
- Notes that the current maximum rate of \$450 is not adequately competitive when trying to recruit members and chairs within the broader labour market and should be increased.
- Reinforces WALGA's existing position that a separate, higher fee range needs to be established for ARIC independent chairs.

On 29 October, the Governance Policy Team considered the submission and recommended that it be included in the December State Council Agenda for endorsement.

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.**

## **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: President Cr Julie Russell**

**Seconded: Cr Peter Woods**

**That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above with the inclusion of an extra recommendation that the Regional/Isolation Allowance be fully reviewed.**

**CARRIED**

### **13.1.3. TOURISM ADVOCACY POSITION UPDATE (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.3)**

*By Saul Cresswell, Principal Policy Advisor Economic Development*

#### **BACKGROUND**

The visitor economy is an important driver of economic development for metropolitan and regional Local Governments in Western Australia. Comprising people travelling for leisure, business events, education, and those visiting friends and relatives, the visitor economy contributed \$18.3 billion to the Western Australian economy in 2023-24. Approximately 45 per cent of this spend took place in the regions.

In 2015, WALGA undertook research and consultation on tourism, developing a *Local Government and Tourism Discussion Paper* that included recommendations. As part of the recommendations, Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism was endorsed by State Council in March 2017.

Local Governments are instrumental in maintaining the amenity of destinations, a critical factor in safeguarding tourism reputation and repeat visitation. There has been a growth in demands on Local Government resources to meet gaps in service delivery from other levels of Government or the private sector and to align with changes in community expectations (see [WALGA's submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Financial Sustainability](#)).

The WA Government's *Diversify WA* economic framework considers tourism and events a priority sector in the diversification of the state's economy. The *WA Visitor Economy Strategy* (WAVES) sets a vision for a \$25 billion visitor economy by 2033.

The State Government, through Tourism WA and the Regional Tourism Organisations, have developed regional tourism strategies, known as Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs), to identify the challenges and opportunities across demand, supply and capability. TDMPs are the most informed articulation of a shared tourism vision undertaken to date, yet have no funding mechanism to implement them.

Tourism emerged as a key topic in WALGA's 2024 Economic Development Survey, with visitor attraction a focus area for Local Government economic development efforts. Responding to the findings, WALGA undertook a Tourism Survey in June 2025, which received 36 Local Government responses from a diversity of regions, with 92% of respondents stating that tourism had medium or high importance to their Local Government.

WALGA developed the *Role of Local Government in Tourism Discussion Paper*, which outlined the constraints and opportunities for Local Governments, and was distributed for Member and stakeholder feedback in September 2025. It also included a draft revised advocacy position. Feedback was received from 28 Local Governments, plus Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA and Regional Tourism Organisations. Local Government responses were received from each of the five tourism regions: Australia's South West, Australia's North West, Australia's Coral Coast, Australia's Golden Outback and Destination Perth.

The consultation provided unanimous support for the overarching intent of the draft advocacy position. Nearly half of respondents proposed amendments, which were considered and incorporated into to the revised draft advocacy positions.

Key sector feedback during WALGA's consultation, included:

- Inadequate recognition of the pivotal role Local Government plays in providing community infrastructure and services that underpins amenity for visitors, and the need for sustainable funding mechanisms.
- Continued confusion about the roles of tourism agencies across WA and who to turn to for support.
- The prohibitive costs of accessing data relating to tourism in Local Government areas.
- Impacts of a difficult regulatory environment at all levels of government on tourism and events.
- The need for support addressing tourism literacy and the visitor economy.

The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the updated advocacy position at its meeting on 22 October 2025, with the inclusion of an additional point requesting resourcing for emergency management and medical services that face significantly increased demand during peak tourism periods.

## ATTACHMENT

- [The Role of Local Government in Tourism - 2025 Research Paper](#)

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's **current** position:

*That WALGA:*

1. *Continues to advocate for a Local Government tourism strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes;*
2. *In the short-medium term, advocates that the State Government:*
  - a. *Produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, Elected Members and Local Government officers;*
  - b. *Provides guidance for Local Government on marketing small projects including events and attractions;*
  - c. *Directs Regional Development Commissions to facilitate the coordination of tourism stakeholders to provide strategic support where required for Local Government; and*
  - d. *Provides funding to Local Government for tourist infrastructure.*
3. *In the long term, advocates that the State Government:*
  - a. *Articulates the lead agency and defines the roles of other agencies in tourism, to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State and to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism in WA;*
  - b. *Defines and communicates how it provides destination marketing support to Local Governments and communicates how Local Governments can most effectively direct their resources;*
  - c. *Develops a sustainable State Government tourism funding mechanism for both regional and metropolitan Local Governments which is clearly communicated to Local Governments;*
  - d. *Implements and invests in Regional Investment Blueprints and delivers through appropriate funding models such as Royalties for Regions and federal funding opportunities which are clearly communicated to Local Government;*

- e. *Continues funding to support sustainability of visitor centres;*
- f. *Undertakes improvements to tourism-related infrastructure and technology including mobile signals and WIFI in regional areas; and*
- g. *Undertakes measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services.*

It is proposed that the position **be replaced** with:

*WALGA calls on the State Government to:*

1. *Fund the implementation of the WA Visitor Economy Strategy and the supporting Tourism Destination Management Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies, including for:*
  - a. *maintenance and renewal of Local Government assets and services that underpin a positive visitor experience*
  - b. *new and existing tourism infrastructure*
  - c. *improving telecommunications infrastructure*
  - d. *measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services*
  - e. *accredited Visitor Centres.*
2. *Ensure that tourism destinations with significant seasonal influxes of visitors have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications.*
3. *Articulate a clear tourism governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.*
4. *Adequately consult and consider Local Government when undertaking strategic tourism planning across Western Australia.*
5. *Provide improved access to affordable, timely and granular data that delivers LGA-level insights on visitation, spend and event impacts.*

## **COMMENT**

Since the current advocacy position was adopted, tourism across the State has continued to evolve and change, including post pandemic visitation growth, changing tourism behaviour, and the increasing costs of doing business.

Many challenges identified in the current advocacy position persist and remain part of the new draft advocacy position. These include:

- a lack of clarity in tourism organisation roles and responsibilities
- ineffective coordination efforts
- lack of capacity building opportunities for Local Government
- and inaccessible and expensive data, often missing a localised focus.

The suggested revision to Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism aims to provide a consolidated and contemporary position on the important role Local Government provides for tourism in WA and how best to capitalise on opportunities to benefit their communities.

The proposed updates to the advocacy position seek to:

- Align State Government investment and support with the contemporary Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs).
- Reiterate the need for clear tourism governance across the State, without reference to which agency should lead the work.
- Reiterate and further clarify the need for accessible data to support informed decision making.
- Emphasise the pivotal role the Local Government sector plays in supporting the visitor experience, and advocate for adequate consultation and funding to ensure this role can be sustained.

WALGA will continue to work with State Government agencies and support the Local Government sector, including sharing the updated tourism research paper which provides context around tourism and the diverse roles Local Government can play.

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism with an updated position as follows:

*WALGA calls on the State Government to:*

1. *Fund the implementation of the WA Visitor Economy Strategy and the supporting Tourism Destination Management Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies, including for:*
  - a. *maintenance and renewal of Local Government assets and services that underpin a positive visitor experience*
  - b. *new and existing tourism infrastructure*
  - c. *improving telecommunications infrastructure*
  - d. *measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services*
  - e. *accredited Visitor Centres.*
2. *Ensure that tourism destinations with a significant seasonal visitor influx have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications.*
3. *Articulate a clear tourism governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.*
4. *Adequately consult and consider Local Government when undertaking strategic tourism planning across Western Australia.*
5. *Provide improved access to affordable, timely and granular data that delivers LGA-level insights on visitation, spend and event impacts.*

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.3 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

## AMENDMENT

Moved: President Cr Julie Russell

Seconded: President Cr Phil Blight

That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.3 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above with the inclusion of a new point 1(f) "regional travel directions and destinations".

CARRIED

### 13.1.4. WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVOCACY POSITIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.4)

*By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has been undertaking a process of reviewing and updating Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements.
- There are three Waste Management Advocacy Positions (7.2 State Waste Strategy, 7.3 Waste Authority and 7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement) which have been recently reviewed.
- It was determined that these positions are either no longer relevant or have been incorporated into other positions and it is therefore recommended they be retired.
- To ensure a clear Local Government position on all relevant waste management matters, WALGA is also undertaking a policy position gap analysis to inform the development of future Advocacy Positions.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed retiring the three Advocacy Positions at its meeting on 15 October 2025.

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The item retires the existing [Advocacy Positions](#):

##### ***7.2 State Waste Strategy***

*Local Government requires leadership and clear direction from the State Government in relation to waste management. As such, Local Government supports the development and implementation of a comprehensive State Waste Strategy which:*

- 1. Is consistent with the content, purpose and objective of existing legislation and policy at both a state and national level;*
- 2. Clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Waste Authority in regard to the development and implementation of the Strategy, as outlined in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007;*
- 3. Is reviewed, with Stakeholder input, within 2 years of implementation; and*
- 4. Includes achievable targets for all waste streams and focuses on waste reduction, resource recovery and the diversion of waste from landfill. Targets should be based on accurate baseline data and clearly identify roles, responsibilities and funding for each target area.*

### **7.3 Waste Authority**

*Local Government considers that an independent and effective Waste Authority is required. The role of the Waste Authority should be of a collaborative, facilitative and strategic nature. Specific activities should include:*

- 1. Developing, administering, monitoring and reviewing the State Waste Strategy;*
- 2. Developing a Priority Waste List (for Extended Producer Responsibility) as required in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007; and*
- 3. Developing and implementing an annual Business Plan that delivers the objectives of the Waste Strategy.*

### **7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement**

*The Local Government sector supports the initiation of a State Local Government Partnership Agreement on Waste Management and Resource Recovery.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The process to review and update Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements relating to waste management is nearing completion. Three Advocacy Positions remain which have recently been reviewed:

- *7.2 State Waste Strategy* - The substance of this position is covered in the [Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation](#) which was endorsed by State Council in March 2025, and outlines requirements for State and Australian Government Waste Strategies.
- *7.3 Waste Authority* - This advocacy position is no longer required, as the Waste Authority's legislative requirements are defined under the WARR Act, and other aspects of waste management are addressed through Policy Position 7.1, endorsed by State Council in March 2025.
- *7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement* - Partnership agreements have not continued and advocacy efforts are being pursued through a variety of other approaches.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the retirement of the three Advocacy Positions at its meeting on 15 October 2025.

## **COMMENT**

A review of all existing Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements has been progressed over the last two years. The three remaining advocacy positions are covered or included in other advocacy positions or have become dated and are no longer a relevant focus of advocacy. The Officers Advisory Group supported retiring the Advocacy Positions acknowledging that they are either incorporated into other existing positions or have become outdated. The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed retiring the three Advocacy Positions and supported a gap analysis of advocacy positions.

## WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire Advocacy Positions:

1. 7.2 State Waste Strategy;
2. 7.3 Waste Authority; and
3. 7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement.

## RESOLUTION

**Moved: Cr Graham Broad**

**Seconded: President Cr Karen Harrington**

**That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.4 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.**

**CARRIED**

## **13.1.5. ELECTORAL MATERIAL – AUTHORISATION STATEMENT ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.5)**

*By Felicity Morris, Manager Governance and Procurement*

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Authorisation requirements for electoral material are intended to protect the transparency and accountability of the electoral process.
- The mandatory publication of a street address, often the candidate's home, raises privacy and safety concerns, potentially deterring participation in Local Government elections.
- Other Australian jurisdictions offer more flexible approaches, such as allowing post office boxes or partial addresses, which maintain transparency without compromising safety.
- It is proposed that WALGA advocate that only the locality is included in the authorisation statement.
- The Governance Policy Team revised and endorsed the new advocacy position at its meeting on 20 October.

### **ATTACHMENT**

- [Jurisdictional comparison - Electoral material authorisation requirements](#)

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this report is to provide a new advocacy position for endorsement. WALGA has several existing advocacy positions regarding election matters, but none dealing with electoral material.

## **BACKGROUND**

Section 4.87 of the *Local Government Act 1995* requires all printed, published or distributed electoral material to include the name and address of the person who authorised the electoral material. The address cannot be a post office box. Printed electoral material must also include the name and business address of the printer.

In recent electoral cycles, concerns have been raised regarding the requirement to publish a physical address, often the residential address of the candidate. Members increasingly raised these concerns in the lead up to the 2025 Ordinary Local Government Elections, including at the Mayors and Presidents Forum at the 2025 WALGA Convention.

## **COMMENT**

Authorisation requirements for election advertising are designed to enhance transparency and accountability in the electoral process. By clearly identifying the individual or organisation responsible for electoral communications, these rules ensure that voters can assess the source, credibility, and intent behind campaign materials. This transparency helps voters make informed decisions, discourages misinformation, and prevents “irresponsibility through anonymity”. Authorisation also enables regulatory bodies to trace and address any breaches of electoral laws, reinforcing the integrity of democratic participation.

However, the obligation to publish a candidate’s physical address raises significant privacy and safety concerns. Candidates for Local Government elections in Western Australia do not typically have official campaign headquarters. They may not have a business or other suitable address to use and are often required to list their personal residence. The internet and social media have increased the accessibility and permanence of personal information, making it easier for individuals to be targeted. Publicly disclosing a residential address can expose candidates and their families to risks such as harassment, intimidation, or unwanted contact, particularly in contentious or high-profile elections. These concerns are especially acute for candidates from vulnerable groups or those campaigning on polarising issues. This may deter individuals from standing for election, thereby limiting diversity and participation in local democracy.

A review of the requirements in other Australian jurisdictions has been carried out and is provided as an attachment. While many jurisdictions have similar requirements to WA, others have more flexible approaches:

- PO boxes satisfy the address requirement in Local Government elections in South Australia and Victoria.
- The locality (town/city) is sufficient for material that is published by an individual in Local Government elections in the Northern Territory, while a full address is required for material published by an organisation.
- The street name and locality are sufficient for material published by an individual in Territory elections in the Northern Territory, while a full address is required for material published by an organisation.
- Only the name of the person authorising the material is required for ACT Territory elections.

This demonstrates that there are a range of options for identifying the person responsible for the material, without needing to provide their address. The Returning Officer and

regulatory bodies have access to candidates' contact and nomination details, ensuring that any breaches can be investigated and enforced without compromising personal privacy. The draft advocacy position recommends that the requirement is limited to the name and locality of the person authorising the material.

It should be acknowledged that elected Council Members may be required to disclose their addresses in Primary and Annual Returns, which are available for public inspection. Similarly, a disclosure of a proximity interest in Council Meeting documents may allow a Council Member's address to be identified. However, these materials are not circulated as widely as electoral materials or subject to the heightened electoral context.

As a final matter, if candidates print materials at home, the WAEC advises that no separate statement of the printer's address is required, as this is satisfied by the authorisation statement. Many Australian jurisdictions do not require the printer's name or address on printed electoral materials. Increasingly, printing may be done through companies operating online only, without physical addresses. The review of authorisation requirements provides an opportunity to remove the requirement to include the printer's details.

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government to amend section 4.87 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to:

1. Replace the requirement to include the name and address of the person authorising the electoral material, with a requirement to include the name and locality of the person authorising the material.
2. Remove the requirement for the name and business address of the electoral material printer to appear at the end of the electoral material

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** President Cr Dee Ridgway

**Seconded:** President Cr Sharon Jacobs

**That the Central Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.5 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.**

**CARRIED**

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#### 13.2. OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

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Zone Delegates are invited to raise for discussion, questions or decision any of the items in the State Council Agenda, including the items for noting, Policy Team and Committee Reports or the Key Activity Reports.

Nil.

#### **14. EMERGING ISSUES**

Nil.

#### **15. NEXT MEETING**

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3 February commencing at 7:30am, via MSTeams.

The next Central Country Zone meeting will be held on Friday, 13 February commencing at 9:30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Corrigin.

#### **16. CLOSURE**

*There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:39pm.*