



**WALGA**

WORKING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# MINUTES

Annual General Meeting

Perth Convention Exhibition Centre  
Perth

Wednesday, 5 August 2015



## Table of Contents

Annual General Meeting – Order of Proceedings .....	3
4.1 Eradication of Trachoma in Australian Populations (05-030-02-0009 AH) .....	5
4.2 Prescribed Burning Program (05-024-02-0044 AH) .....	7
4.3 Bushfire (Planning) Regulations – Local Government Impacts (05-024-02-0056 AH) .....	8
4.4 Integrated Response by Local Governments to Hoarding (05-026-03-0016 AH) .....	11
4.5 Shark Hazard – Local Government Expectations (05-017-02-0006 AH) .....	12
4.6 Inland Waterway Shoreline Management (05-064-01-0001 MB) .....	14
4.7 Planning for Waste Management Facilities (05-025-03-0003 MB) .....	16
4.8 Management of Narrow Leafed Cotton Bush (05-046-03-0010 MB) .....	18
4.9 Illegal Camping (05-034-01-0007 JMc).....	21
4.10 Non-rateable Properties: Charitable use of Land (05-034-01-0007 JMc).....	22
4.11 Financial Limits for Tenders (05-034-01-0001 JMc).....	24
4.12A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Local Government Governance ....	25
4.12B Local Government Governance (05-034-01-0015 TB).....	25
4.13A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Advocacy Fund.....	28
4.13B Advocacy Fund (05-034-01-001 TB) .....	28
4.14A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Rate Capping .....	29
4.14B MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Rate Capping (05-034-01-0001TB) .....	29
4.15A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Local Government Reform (05-034-01-0015 TB) .....	31
4.15B Local Government Reform (05-034-01-0015 TB) .....	31

## Annual General Meeting – Order of Proceedings

### 1.1 Record of Attendance and Apologies

#### Apologies:

- Cr Pixie Pidgeon (Cue)
- Cr Valerie Ammon (Gingin)
- President Ronnie Fleay (Kojonup)
- Cr Andrew Walker (Lake Grace)
- Cr Dean Bavich (Manjimup)
- President Robert Breakell (Mt Marshall)
- President Ken Clements (Plantagenet)
- Cr Rob Butler (Perth)
- Cr Janet Davidson (Perth)
- Cr Doug Thompson (Fremantle)

### 1.2 Announcements

Nil

### 2.0 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the 2014 WALGA Annual General Meeting is contained within the AGM Agenda.

**Moved: Cr J Brown (Gosnells)**

**Seconded: Cr G Pule (Bassendean)**

**That the Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.**

**CARRIED**

### 3.0 Adoption of President's Annual Report

The President's Annual Report for 2014/2015 is contained within the AGM Agenda.

**Moved: Cr E O'Connell (Nungarin)**

**Seconded: Cr D Michael (Stirling)**

**That the President's Annual Report for 2014/2015 be received.**

**CARRIED**

**4.0 WALGA 2014/2015 Financial Statements**

The audited 2014/2015 WALGA Financial Statements were distributed to all members prior to the meeting.

**Moved: Cr K Chappel (Morawa)**  
**Seconded: Cr W Barrett (Murray)**

**That the WALGA Financial Statements for 2014/2015 be received.**

**CARRIED**

**5.0 Consideration of Executive and Member Motions**

As per motions listed.

**6.0 Closure**

There being no further business, the President declared the meeting closed at 5.46pm.

## 4. Consideration of Executive and Member Motions

### 4.1 Eradication of Trachoma in Australian Populations (05-030-02-0009 AH)

Town of Bassendean:

**Moved: Cr G Pule (Bassendean)**  
**Seconded: Cr A Pratico (Bridgetown-Greenbushes)**

**That WALGA advocate to the Federal and Western Australian State Government a Nationwide program for the eradication of Trachoma in Indigenous Populations, especially in Western Australia.**

#### **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: Cr M Halleen (Murchison)**  
**Seconded: Cr G Pule (Bassendean)**

**That WALGA advocate to the Federal and Western Australian State Government a Nationwide program for the eradication of Trachoma in all geographically isolated communities, especially in Western Australia.**

**CARRIED**

**THE AMENDMENT BECAME THE MOTION, WAS PUT AND CARRIED**

#### **MEMBER COMMENT**

That WALGA State Council seek the State Governments advice on how reduced Commonwealth health funding and the introduction of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) program has impacted on health service delivery to discrete Aboriginal Communities, in order to address a Western Australian program for the eradication of Trachoma in Indigenous Populations.

There are 287 discrete Aboriginal Communities in Western Australia with over 17,000 people across 22 Local Governments. As part of the Federal Budget 2014/2015, the Commonwealth Government announced significant policy reform to Aboriginal service delivery with the introduction of the Indigenous Advancement strategy and Remote Community Advancement Network.

There is \$4.9 billion of programme funding over four years that is available under the five IAS programmes managed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. There is concern that the funding structure is not addressing the health needs of remote communities and that many organisations who were funded are no longer. Further funding changes have been made to the Commonwealth Health Budget which has resulted in a number of health programmes ceasing. This has impacted health service delivery in Western Australia.

A key concern is the future of funding and support for the eradication of trachoma in Aboriginal Communities. The State Government has announced the development of an Aboriginal Investment strategy. The Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub Committee considers cross-agency initiatives to improve the effectiveness of spending and reduce duplication. The Committee has recommended the development of an Aboriginal Investment Strategy for Western Australia.

The development is being led by the Department of Regional Development.

## **Background**

The Fred Hollows Foundation has estimated that the elimination of Trachoma in Australia (Western Australia) can be achieved with a program funded by ten million dollars and Indigenous People can be involved. Australia is the only Developed Country in the world that still has extensive Trachoma affected peoples. This presents a great challenge to Australian Governments to train and utilise Indigenous people to address not only Trachoma, but the turn-around of remote indigenous communities.

Such programs can be the lynch pin to revitalize and renew remote communities. There has already been an assessment of rating sustainability in remote communities with many seen as sustainable. These communities need programs of sustainability and such proposed Trachoma Eradication Programs can be the core of a betterment and sustainability system for remote communities. The involvement of Indigenous people in their own community sustainability is greatly beneficial.

Knowledgeable and expert Foundations like the Fred Hollows Foundation can become the core of such a Trachoma Program and this can be done for a very small investment in "Closing the Gap". Closing the Gap identifies the deficiencies that affect Indigenous Populations and Trachoma ranks as a major contributor to the impact on negative health of Indigenous People.

Trachoma is a completely preventable disease and can be prevented if only the will be there.

## **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

The need for greater investment in controllable diseases is acknowledged. There is already a comprehensive State program for Trachoma Management in WA for discrete Aboriginal Communities. WA is one of the leading States in the management of Trachoma through targeted personal hygiene programs and use of new generation 6 month and 12 month antibiotics.

## 4.2 Prescribed Burning Program (05-024-02-0044 AH)

Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes:

**Moved: Cr A Pratico (Bridgetown-Greenbushes)**  
**Seconded: Cr P Scallan (Bridgetown-Greenbushes)**

**That WALGA lobby the Minister for Regional Development to negotiate conditions on the use of Royalties for Regions funds for enhancement of the State Government's prescribed burning program to ensure that these additional funds are used only for prescribed burns for asset preservation and protection around towns and settlements and that the funds not be used for broad scale prescribed burning of forests and national parks distant from towns and settlements.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- The State Government has announced an additional \$20 million investment in prescribed burning under the Royalties for Regions Program.
- The focus of this additional investment should be on asset preservation and protection around towns and settlements rather than broad scale prescribed burning

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

On 11 May 2015 the State Government announced a four year Royalties for Regions investment of \$20 million to increase prescribed burning in the South West. These funds are on top of the Department of Parks and Wildlife annual prescribed burning budget of \$10 million per annum.

The Government announcement stated that the new funding will fund extra positions and extended employment contracts for seasonal land management officers to expand the prescribed burning effort. The Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Terry Redman MLA was quoted as saying that "the extra Royalties for Regions investment would bring greater security and protection to South-West communities".

The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes endorses the above comments of the Minister for Regional Development. Royalties for Regions funding shouldn't be used to prop up the normal operations of Government departments that have otherwise been short changed from years of reduced budget allocations. Instead Royalties for Regions funding should be used to enhance normal Government expenditure and in this case it should be ensured that the additional funding directed to the prescribed burning program should be focused on the preservation of assets and public safety in our settlements and towns rather than the funding being simply used by the Department of parks and Wildlife to meet acreage targets in the easier to burn areas such as forests and national parks. Often these areas are remote from towns and settlements and it is easier to carry out larger burns. Whilst there may well be strong environmental benefits in such burns the focus of the additional funding over the next four years should be the preservation of built assets.

### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

Given the limited funding available within the state for bushfire risk mitigation, it is critical that any additional funding for prescribed burning is used in high priority areas of the state, particularly those that are in close proximity to towns, settlements and significant economic infrastructure.

Identification of the priority areas and the subsequent prescribed burning programs could be done through coordination of the results of the bushfire risk management planning process, which is currently being piloted by several Local Governments, the DFES mapping generated for the purposes of the soon to be implemented, WAPC state planning policy – bushfire prone areas and the office of bushfire risk management's approvals process.

## 4.3 Bushfire (Planning) Regulations – Local Government Impacts (05-024-02-0056 AH)

City of Bunbury:

**Moved: Cr B Kelly (Bunbury)**  
**Seconded: Cr D Prosser (Bunbury)**

- 1. That WALGA move to seek that the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner recognises existing Local Government bushfire risk assessment processes that demonstrate sufficient rigour and accept that Local Government's Bushfire Risk Mapping in the application of the new Bushfire (Planning) Regulations.**
- 2. That appropriate support be provided to Local Government, to offset the costs and delays that will be incurred as a result of implementing the new Regulations into the development application processes. This would include (but not limited to) training in bushfire risk assessment - Bushfire Attack Level (BAL). A media campaign to explain the new Regulations and its impacts would assist in deflecting some of the negative reaction that may be incurred by Local Governments.**
- 3. That WALGA request the State Government to assist with the implications of State owned lands providing risk to developments. Rather than insist on construction requirements to increase resilience for new structures, it may be more beneficial to treat the risk. This would be especially important where existing structures are also impacted. Currently, the Bush Fires Act (1954) does not bind the Crown.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- The State Government has brought down new regulations on development within areas of the State declared as 'bushfire prone'.
- A State wide map will highlight areas that will be declared, being essentially, any land that is within 100 metres of bushland greater than 1 hectare in area.
- Local Government will be expected to manage the application of the Regulations, to new development within those areas, upholding the requirements of 'AS 3959 (2009) – Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas'.

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

Large areas of the State are likely to be declared as Bushfire Prone by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. These will be demonstrated on a State map of Bushfire Prone Areas. The rationale for the decision on bushfire prone status is essentially any area that is within 100 metre proximity to bushland that is greater than 1 hectare in area. Some smaller parcels will also be included, whereby they may be relatively close to other areas of bushland that can be aggregated in some situations.

While no-one would be against recognising and avoiding high risk developments, this suite of arrangements passed from State Government, will be highly problematic for Local Government.

Local Governments were given limited opportunity to comment on early risk assumptions, through a relatively crude process. Early communications indicated that the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) would accept a Local Government's risk mapping, if the Commissioner was satisfied with its rigour. This has not happened at this stage, nor have we seen the final OBRM maps, to indicate the potential of this situation to impact Local Governments.

These new regulations have the potential to impact considerably upon Local Governments through the following:

- This system only looks at new development applications, putting the bushfire safety focus on that environment alone. It does not recognise the need to manage existing risks.
- This system will require a cadre of bushfire risk assessors, likely to be contractors, adding to development costs. The competencies required and formal training programs for these persons, has not yet been established.
- The focus on risk management in this case, will be on the building proponent (element at risk) not on the bush land manager (source of risk). There is no focus on working to reduce risk by treating areas presenting that risk. It is likely that any land managed by Local Government that is seen to present increased complexity and/or costs to a developer or owner, would attract considerable criticism for that Local Government.
- There is a strong potential for insurance premium rises on existing structures, due to a likely increase in replacement construction costs.
- For construction within declared bushfire prone areas, there will be an increase in cost to construct to the new standards, a need for Local Government to understand, apply and police the construction standards. There is likely to be a relatively hostile reaction from builders/owners to this new regime of costs and compliance complexity.
- Some areas of land, rated as BAL 40 or BAL FZ may be now impossible to build on, due to an external risk (adjacent bushland). This would drastically reduce the value of these lands, with likely political backlash.

The AS 3959 considers bushfire risk based upon only three factors, being the proximity of potential development to bushland, the predominant vegetation type and the gradient under that vegetation. The new Bushfire (Planning) Regulations consider only proximity to bushland. This is a crude risk assessment process, which will cause huge areas to be presumed to be high risk. It will be up to the developer/owner to prove lower risk levels exist, which in many cases will be the case.

Using the *AS/NZS ISO 31 000 (2009) – Risk Management – Principles and guidelines* encourages that consideration of 'risk versus consequence' measures and other factors such as bushfire behaviour, would be prudent. Further, the use of the National Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) to challenge the assumptions made, would further add confidence to risk assessments.

Where a Local Government could demonstrate that their processes contain that rigour, then these should be upheld. A very high percentage of the land that is within 100 metres of existing bushland (and likely to be declared as bushfire prone) could easily be demonstrated to be an acceptable bushfire risk and avoid the added complexity of the new Regulations.

## **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

The declaration of bushfire prone areas by the State Government and the application of minimum state-wide bushfire standards for development in bushfire prone areas is consistent with State Councils resolution of May 2013 (200.2/2013). Prior to forming this resolution, the Association undertook widespread consultation with members to discuss arrangements for managing bushfire risk and received strong support from the sector for the State Government taking the lead in identifying bushfire risk areas and establishing state wide planning provisions for bushfire mitigation.

The Association understands that the Western Australia Planning Commission (WAPC) have made substantial modifications to the previously advertised draft State Planning Policy (SPP) 3.7 Planning for Bushfire Risk Management and its associated Guidelines. The Association has been informed by the Department of Planning intends to release the revised draft Policy and Guidelines for public

consultation in July. The Association will be preparing a submission to WAPC in relation to the revised draft SPP and will be seeking feedback from members to inform this submission.

The Association understands that any default declaration of 'bushfire prone areas' as being within in 100m of a hectare of bushfire vegetation is only an interim measure which will be superseded by the release of bushfire prone area mapping. This mapping will be further refined over time. Further, it is important to note that the declaration of a bushfire area does not automatically mean that higher construction standards will be necessary, rather a more accurate assessment of bushfire risk will need to be undertaken by development proponents.

Throughout the process of developing the proposed land-use planning bushfire risk management policy framework, the Association has consistently advocated that the State provides the necessary funding for any additional requirements placed on Local Governments, including any training for Local Government officers.

## 4.4 Integrated Response by Local Governments to Hoarding (05-026-03-0016 AH)

City of Bunbury:

**Moved: Cr B Kelly (Bunbury)**  
**Seconded: Cr D Prosser (Bunbury)**

**That WALGA:**

- 1. acknowledge that hoarding is a complex problem for Local Governments to address in Western Australia.**
- 2. facilitate the development of an integrated response to the problem of hoarding by using consistent best practice standards which can be applied by all Local Governments in Western Australia.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- A Toolkit exists for Metropolitan Local Governments however this does not apply for regional Councils.
- Local Governments can only prosecute offenders under Health Legislation
- An integrated response to the problem which can be applied by all Local Governments would be an initial step to looking at these issues

### **CARRIED**

#### **MEMBER COMMENT**

The Department of Health has developed a squalor toolkit which is used by the Metropolitan Local Governments.

In circumstances when regional Local Governments have tried to implement the recommendations/requirements of the tool kit for cases, the support from key agencies was not available in regional areas.

This results in regional Local Governments only ability to address the problem being to prosecute the offender under Health legislation and on some occasions this action may result in the Local Government incurring considerable costs.

It is felt that an integrated response to the problem of hoarding by using consistent best practice standards which can be applied by all Local Governments in Western Australia would be an initial step to looking at these issues.

#### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

The recommended action is consistent with WALGA policy.

## 4.5 Shark Hazard – Local Government Expectations (05-017-02-0006 AH)

City of Bunbury:

**Moved: Cr B Kelly (Bunbury)**  
**Seconded: Cr D Prosser (Bunbury)**

- 1. That WALGA move to seek that the State Government declare Shark Attack as a ‘hazard’ within the Emergency Management Regulations (2006) and assign an Hazard Management Agency, for the development and maintenance of Hazard Management Arrangements. This agency would then also be responsible for the provision of community information and advice, to enable the community to make informed decisions with their use of the marine environment.**
- 2. That WALGA recommend the adoption of the South West Local Government Response Flowchart and Responsibility Matrix, as the basis for Local Government response to any credible risk from sharks in local waters.**
- 3. That WALGA act on behalf of WA Local Governments in the negotiation with the Department of Fisheries, to ensure that Local Government Officers are not expected to make any response decisions, where they do not have the Subject Matter Expertise, nor jurisdiction (i.e. when to open a beach after sighting, or when to close a beach etc.) for those decisions.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- The Shark hazard in WA is not a ‘declared hazard’ under the Emergency Management Regulations. No agency is identified to be responsible to manage community information or advice, nor develop arrangements to manage the hazard.
- The Department of Fisheries has developed draft Hazard Plans that identify a range of responsibilities to Local Government (as land owners), where they would have limited subject matter expertise or jurisdiction, to under-pin any decisions or actions.

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

There is currently an expectation from the Department of Fisheries (DoF), that Local Government staff will respond to any shark sighting (confirmed or not) and close beaches and warn public. This also assumes that Local Government Officers remain constantly available to travel to a beach to carry out this work, immediately. This was first noted in the draft Shark Hazard Plan from that Department on 20 September 2012.

Local Governments in the main, have jurisdiction only to the high water mark and would not be considered to be experts in shark behaviour. The DoF have established and funded a ‘Shark Response Unit’, which presumably, would have the peak body of knowledge on this subject. Therefore, it would seem odd that the DoF would expect Local Governments to be making decisions, with respect to the risk that a shark may present and/or what should be done in respect of that risk.

As a result of a string of unfortunate fatal encounters with sharks, the media showed understandably high levels of interest in the shark risk. In the absence of a credible response agency, these reports were not challenged for credibility, nor wisdom. The resultant media coverage then raised the public interest and the matter became political. If there had been an identified Hazard Management Agency to provide an active and visible spokesperson role, that interest could have been managed and taken the form of public safety information and advice. It would have tempered the tone of the reporting and gone some way to educating the community on the actual risks and presumably, what people could do to manage their exposure. Any other declared hazard enjoys the benefit of a ‘one source – one message’ environment, which ensures consistent, credible information is provided on which

community members may base their decisions, along with the mandated responsibility to communicate.

In early 2014 the City of Bunbury, through the Chief Executive Officer, sought the assistance of the other South West Local Governments mentioned in the DoF Draft Shark hazard Plan (plus Harvey). The result was the establishment of a working group who worked collaboratively to develop a process and ultimately a Response Plan. This plan was developed to guide any Local Government response to any report of a shark hazard. This work recognised the limitations of Local Government in the jurisdiction and subject matter expertise as well as other agencies that would have a role (i.e. Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). The group then conducted a workshop, funded by WALGA and the participating Local Governments, along with the agencies that would be impacted in the South West. The Departments of Fisheries and Premier and Cabinet had senior staff in attendance, including the Acting Director General of DoF.

DoF and Premier and Cabinet continued not to accept the South West proposed processes.

With the summer tourist season beginning, the City of Busselton took to providing an interim solution, essentially causing a hiatus in the collaborative work that was being undertaken. Further, it would seem that DoF and the State Government were not concerned with the discontent of a few Local Governments and keen to preserve the status quo.

Under the current situation, whereby DoF have effectively handed over responsibility to Local Governments, there is potential conflict between community expectations for a safe environment and the risks that Local Governments and their Officers face in making decisions. This is especially the case, in a subject area where they do not possess the expertise nor jurisdiction to operate. DPaW and other land managers are in a similar position (though DPaW do have jurisdiction on the water). Should there be scrutiny over a decision that was made prior to an incident, the Local Government and/or its Officer may be held to account over why they had made a decision that had ended unsatisfactorily. Equally, adherence to the 'do nothing' option carries its own risks, in that public safety may be seen to be compromised, especially if a Local Government could be proven to have known of that risk.

Any action or decision taken as a result of a shark sighting, should be under-pinned with due recognition of the skills and knowledge of the decision-maker and their jurisdiction to act. Protection from subsequent scrutiny and criticism must be provided by a process which follows sound risk management processes and clear, concise guidance documentation.

## **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

In 2012 the State Emergency Management Committee developed a comprehensive risk management strategy for Western Australia to have a better understanding of the risks to which the State is exposed and to ensure that emergency management strategies are in place. In 2013 the State Government commenced the *State Risk Project* which has identified 27 hazards - both natural and made in Western Australia. The State Risk project demonstrates an integrated approach and consistent framework for risk assessment and management across the State.

## 4.6 Inland Waterway Shoreline Management (05-064-01-0001 MB)

City of Mandurah:

**Moved: Cr D Lee (Mandurah)**  
**Seconded: Mayor M Vergone (Mandurah)**

**That WALGA lobby for a single State Government agency to be responsible for inland waterway shoreline management in the same manner as the Department of Transport' current role to administer the State Government's policy directly relating to coastal management.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- WALGA's support is requested to address the management and responsibility of inland waterways shoreline management.

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

Local Governments which have estuarine and riverine environments experience shoreline erosion. Others may have a coastal environment where-in coastal erosion occurs from time to time.

It is agreed that the requirement to investigate the mechanisms of shoreline erosion and to undertake significant protection works is equal to that which is required along the coastline.

Inland waterway shoreline erosion is addressed through a number of agencies that have specific interests. For example, the Swan River Trust and the Department of Water have specific areas of interest. On the other hand, the Department of Transport has carriage of coastal management via its Coastal Protection Policy for Western Australia.

The aims of this Coastal Protection Policy are to:

- Ensure the provision of the appropriate level of advice and assistance to coastal managers investigating and recommending coastal protection solutions
- Ensure that valuable coastal assets, whether natural or constructed, are protected from the unwanted impacts ocean forces
- Ensure the adoption of the most appropriate and cost-effective interventions to project coastal property at risk of damage from sea erosion
- Provide support to broader coastal management policies of the State.

The specific principles that guide this Coastal Projection Policy are to:

- Minimise the need to interfere with natural coastal processes
- Undertake coastal protection works only if the benefits outweigh the cost
- Ensure that the direct beneficiaries of coastal development carry all consequential costs
- Ensure that the coast continues to be available for the benefit of the whole Community Services and Infrastructure Projects
- Ensure that local coastal managers receive proper guidance and assistance to solve their coastal protection problems
- Establish that coastal protection is a partnership between the State and local coastal managers, with the lead taken by the local coastal managers, and
- Ensure that the most appropriate coastal protection technologies are considered.

Both the policy and principles should be equally applicable to estuarine and riverine environments.

There appears to be a reluctance to address inland waterways shoreline management in the same manner that currently applies to coastal management.

Support via WALGA to address this anomaly is sought.

### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

As outlined in the July 2015 State Council Agenda, the Department of Transport is reviewing its *Coastal Protection Policy for Western Australia*. It is noted that the new draft policy document does not provide greater clarity for local government and does not provide a greater amount of transparency on how the Department of Transport will be helping to manage the coastal environment.

The policy is pared back from the previous version (as cited by the City of Mandurah). Therefore, at a time when coastal management roles and responsibilities should be solidified, the Department seems to be tempering its response to this issue and notions of operational responsibility.

It is also noted that the Swan River Trust has recently developed a comprehensive foreshore asset management system to manage the approximately 300km of foreshore of the Swan Canning system. As members may be aware, the Swan River Trust is currently in the process of being absorbed into the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW).

Discussion with the Director General of the Department of Parks and Wildlife have indicated the potential for such a role to be considered by DPAW, beyond the current remit of the Swan and Canning River estuaries.

## 4.7 Planning for Waste Management Facilities (05-025-03-0003 MB)

Shire of Toodyay:

**Moved: Cr D Dow (Toodyay)**  
**Seconded: Cr B Rayner (Toodyay)**

**That WALGA request the State Government as a matter of urgency:**

- **Develop a waste management infrastructure plan for Western Australia**
- **Progress regulatory reforms to establish a framework for planning and siting of landfills.**
- **Implement a moratorium on new private landfill approvals until adoption of a durable planning framework.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- Planning for future landfills in WA has stalled.
- State policy discourages new landfills on the Swan Coastal Plain.
- New landfills are considered on a case by case basis by small LGAs with no State Plan.
- Planning framework for waste management now urgent.

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

The State Waste Strategy *Creating the right environment*<sup>1</sup>, adopted in 2012, identifies targets for waste diversion from landfill for the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. In the 2014, the Department of Environment Regulation (DER) released a *Discussion Paper on the Review of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act*<sup>2</sup>. The Paper identified that “about 43% of Perth’s waste is currently recovered... the balance is sent to landfills which have capacity until around 2025 on current projections or until 2030 if the targets in *Western Australia’s Waste Strategy, Creating the right environment*, are met”.

The Paper states one of the “Waste Strategy’s initiatives is long-term planning for waste and recycling processing. The focus of the planning is on waste processing and recycling facilities that divert waste from landfill to promote the most efficient use of resources”. The process of developing this plan was commenced through a Strategic Waste Infrastructure Planning Project<sup>3</sup> however after the initial research (which is still to be released) this process appears to have stalled.

Regulatory reform is also highlighted in the DER Paper. The Paper notes there is a need for reform to the planning and siting of landfills and the establishment of framework to assist decision making for new landfills. The Paper states:

*There is increasing pressure for metropolitan waste to be disposed to landfill outside of the metropolitan area. These pressures are in part the result of increased waste generation, and the limited supply of future putrescible landfill space in the metropolitan area arising from the preference for no new putrescible landfills on the Swan Coastal Plain to address groundwater issues.*

<sup>1</sup> Waste Strategy, available from <http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/publications/western-australian-waste-strategy-creating-the-right-environment>

<sup>2</sup> DER Discussion Paper, available from

<sup>3</sup> Strategic Waste Infrastructure Planning Project, available from <http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/strategic-waste-infrastructure-planning/>

*There is a strong case to reform the landfill policy and regulatory framework to include planning, siting and compliance considerations so that landfills can be managed consistent with government policy. Policy considerations should balance the need to ensure availability of sufficient landfill space to manage residual waste and unplanned events (such as spikes in waste caused by natural disasters or failures in alternative waste-processing infrastructure) with the need to limit supply to encourage maximum diversion from landfill.*

Despite the reforms and planning highlighted, there is not a strategic infrastructure plan in place for waste management facilities. Decisions regarding waste management facilities, whether it be landfills, recycling facilities or waste to energy plants, are made on a company by company or Council by Council basis. Small rural Councils are bearing the brunt of the lack of a wider planning framework. The industry licensing system is also out dated and under review. Private waste management companies may be able to take advantage of this policy vacuum, resulting in inappropriate facilities with long term licenses.

### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

WALGA fully supports the need for better strategic planning for all waste management facilities and understands the concerns raised by the Shire. The Association's Submission on the Review of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act highlighted that without such planning there will be limited coordination of infrastructure selection and placement.

## 4.8 Management of Narrow Leafed Cotton Bush (05-046-03-0010 MB)

Shire of Murray:

**Moved: Cr W Barrett (Murray)**  
**Seconded: Cr C Thompson (Murray)**

**That WALGA Lobby the Minister for Agriculture and Food seeking support for a multi-tiered approach to the management of Narrow Leafed Cotton Bush including:**

- **Training Local Government staff who can assist with infringing any land-owners not managing cotton bush and other declared pests.**
- **Provide funding to regional biosecurity groups of \$100,000 per annum to ensure their survival.**
- **Make Changes to the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM) to ensure any pest rate raised stays within the district**
- **Request cabinet address the issue of cotton bush and the inaction of state departments in managing their own land.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- The current situation and impacts of Cotton Bush and other Declared Species in the South West Agricultural Region
- That State Government work with Local Government who are in the firing line of these impacts and empower them under current legislation
- That the proposed funding model is reviewed.

### **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: Cr M Cullen (Coolgardie)**  
**Seconded: Cr Williams (Kalgoorlie-Boulder)**

**That WALGA Lobby the Minister for Agriculture and Food seeking support for a multi-tiered approach to the management of Narrow Leafed Cotton Bush including:**

- **Training Local Government staff who can assist with infringing any land-owners not managing cotton bush and other declared pests.**
- **Provide funding to regional biosecurity groups of \$100,000 per annum to ensure their survival.**
- **Make Changes to the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM) to ensure any pest rate raised stays within the district**
- **Request cabinet address the issue of cotton bush and the inaction of state departments in managing their own land.**
- **That WALGA be requested to conduct a state wide forum on issues around biosecurity, including the management of narrow leafed cotton bush, and its impact on Local Governments across the State with all key stakeholders to be invited.**

**CARRIED**

**THE AMENDMENT BECAME THE MOTION, WAS PUT AND CARRIED**

## MEMBER COMMENT

Several Local Governments in the South West Agricultural Region (including the Shire of Murray) are suffering and continue to suffer from the impacts of C3 declared pest species and in particular from narrow Leafed Cotton Bush (*Gomphocarpus fruticosus*).

Two years ago the Shires of Murray and Dardanup tabled a motion to the WALGA AGM asking them to lobby the government to put more resources into control of Cotton Bush. Since then the Department of Agriculture and Food have suffered several significant cuts to its personnel and operations. This has led to a significant loss of on ground control and compliance measures.

Due to the increase in absentee landholders and idle subdivisions fuelled by the land speculation in the economic boom followed by stagnation since the global financial crisis this has led to a significant number of peri urban properties being effectively unmanaged which has helped lead to an uninhibited spread of Cotton Bush throughout Murray and many other LGAs.

In Murray alone there are 177 recorded instances of Cotton Bush infestations one of which is over 1200 hectares in size. This is 9% of all the properties in the Shire. This is expected to lead to a cumulative impact on the agricultural sector of WA between \$400,000 and \$800,000 per annum.

The State Government has favoured a community based model for delivery of pest management in the form of a Recognised Biosecurity group and there is one set up in the Peel region which is making some positive impact. However the Shire feels that this is not enough and has some serious concerns about the potential imposition of a Declared Pest Rate which is an effectively another levy on rate payers in an area suffering from significant unemployment. There is also the fact that under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM) there is no guarantee that any money collected in a rate has to be spent in that region.

It is also a concern that the rate would be effectively penalising those who are currently doing the right thing and may be used to fund government owned tracts of land being managed.

Murray has also been lobbying to have Local Government officers empowered under the BAM Act in a similar way to how the Fire Act is managed as there are already provisions in the Act for this to occur. The Shire has been requesting this for two years but to date there has been no action.

The Shire would like support from WALGA in achieving these goals and achieving a continuation of the current RBG funding framework which sees Local Government money matched by State for their continued running without the impost of a declared pest rate. The Shire of Murray seeks support in generating a whole of government approach including:

- Training up any Local Government staff who can assist with infringing any land-owners not managing cotton bush and other declared pests.
- Giving those trained staff the authority to infringe landowners not managing cotton bush and other pests
- Provide funding to regional biosecurity groups of \$100,000 per annum to ensure their survival.
- Make Changes to the BAM Act to ensure any pest rate raised stays within the district.
- Have cabinet address the issue of cotton bush and the inaction of state departments in managing their own land.

## SECRETARIAT COMMENT

The current funding from the DAFWA to underpin the creation of Recognised Biosecurity Groups is from a strategic grant from the State NRM Program. Accordingly there is no certainty that the current level of DAFWA support for the formation of RBGs will continue.

There is no core funding in the forward estimates of the DAFWA budget to ensure the continuation of funding required to support future Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBG's). A policy shift by the Government is therefore required if it is to match Local Government investment, be it through contributions to a levy raised by an RBG, or of its own volition and revenue (rates).

In relation to the issue of regulation and enforcement, the Association position is to empower a Local Government CEO, should the relevant Local Government desire, to be delegated under the *Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act (2007)* to undertake regulatory functions, thereby having the force of the BAM Regulations at their disposal for specific declared species.

The Association has raised this with both the Minister directly, and through its interim submission on the draft State Biosecurity Strategy, and will continue to advocate for this outcome. Funding will be required to build the capacity of local government officers in undertaking a regulatory role on specific declared species.

An amendment of the BAM Act legislation will be required to ensure that any monies collected within a region are spent in the region in which it is collected, as currently Section 138 (f) of the BAM Act provides Director General discretion in the use of funds in the Declared Pest Account for "any purpose authorised under this Act or another written law".

## 4.9 Illegal Camping (05-034-01-0007 JMc)

Shire of Northampton:

**Moved: Cr G Wilson (Northampton)**  
**Seconded: Cr C Simkin (Northampton)**

**That WALGA is to investigate legislation changes to allow Local Governments to recover fines issued to illegal campers through vehicle hire companies (as a majority of offenders are from overseas using hire vans/vehicles), as an example, to try and assist Local Governments to control this activity and recover costs incurred in policing illegal camping.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- Local Government needs a tight legal mechanism to allow receipt of infringements to assist in recouping part of the costs for policing this activity

### **CARRIED**

#### **MEMBER COMMENT**

Illegal camping throughout the Shire and other coastal areas (and no doubt inland areas) is becoming a real problem with many offenders being from overseas. We issue infringement notices (on the spot fines) where illegal camping is occurring within our town sites but those fines and our Rangers warnings/ requests to relocated are simply ignored by these persons.

Local Government needs a tight legal mechanism to allow receipt of infringements to assist in recouping part of the costs for policing this activity and also to act as a deterrent. Use of local laws provisions is simply not good enough.

#### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

Difficulties associated with recovery of illegal camping fines is an Australia-wide issue particularly impacting popular coastal locations.

Illegal camping often presents a conundrum to communities, keen on the one hand for tourism visitations to stimulate the local economy but aware also of the negative impact illegal camping may have on sensitive environments or the general amenity of popular local attractions.

The capacity to issue infringements for illegal camping has a positive deterrent effect on responsible tourists, but it is agreed that recovering fines in certain circumstances is problematic.

It is notable there is no similar State-based legislation of the nature proposed in the Member motion, and research will be required to determine whether it is legislatively feasible and will result in a workable deterrent to the practice of illegal camping.

## 4.10 Non-rateable Properties: Charitable use of Land (05-034-01-0007 JMc)

City of Mandurah:

**Moved: Cr D Lee (Mandurah)**  
**Seconded: Mayor M Vergone (Mandurah)**

**That WALGA increases it's lobbying for an amendment to the Local Government Act 1995 Section 6.26(2)(g) to allow land used for charitable purposes to be rateable if it is used for housing.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- The Western Australian Local Government Association's support is requested to lobby for legislative amendments to allow land used for charitable purposes to be rateable if it is used for housing.

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

Non-rateability of land used for charitable purposes, particularly in the areas of retirement and social housing, is presenting an increasing cost burden to the community if Local Government is to be able to provide services and infrastructure. This also raises issues of equity and fairness in both the rating of properties and the ability to access and utilise Local Government services and facilities.

The demographic shift towards an ageing population is likely to see a growth in retirement/lifestyle housing and the involvement of charitable organisations will probably increase with it. Although meeting the needs of the aged is a charitable purpose, it is not the exclusive domain of charitable organisations. Residents of these villages are not forced by their personal circumstances to seek shelter but mostly are making a lifestyle decision to move to the village. The business model of villages operated by charitable organisations is the same as commercial providers in that in-going residents provide a substantial payment, generally as an interest-free loan, and pay for all operating costs. The services provided, the financial arrangements and quality of accommodation are the same, and in some cases better, than commercial providers. In these circumstances it is not equitable that a non-profit organisation should be relieved of a rates burden for providing the same service and facilities as their commercial counterpart. It also brings into question the nature of the charity actually being provided.

As a matter of policy, the implementation of tax exemptions for older people in an ageing society will tend to skew the cost burden towards a reducing number of people able to pay. Revenue raising policies which rely on fewer people to provide income tend to act against growth and development. The attraction of cost relief should be resisted to allow agencies such as Local Governments to provide the best possible environment for all of its population. Residents of retirement villages, although not property owners, have available to them the same rebate as property owners under the Rates and Charges (Rebates and Deferrals) Act 1992. In addition residents of villages benefit from being exempt from the provisions of minimum rating which local governments can apply under the Local Government Act 1995 S6.35.

With respect to social housing, the need for affordable housing for those who would not otherwise be able to pay for accommodation, or who are otherwise disadvantaged, is recognised. Local Governments should support the progress made in providing these types of accommodation. However, when this form of housing was provided by the Department of Housing, it was known that, as Crown Land, homes were not rateable. Despite this, recognising that residents used Local Government services and facilities, sometimes to a disproportionate extent, the Department paid property rates on an ex gratia basis. Since the decision has been made to outsource this activity, the

non-profit organisations have actively, and mostly successfully, obtained relief from the payment of rates. The business case for outsourcing for the government is self-evident but the cost transfer has been to the rate-paying community.

There is reluctance from the State Government to address this issue. It would appear that the Government is content to allow the matter to be decided through decisions by the State Administrative Tribunal and judgment by the WA Supreme Court. This tends to produce a fragmented solution as individual issues are decided on a case by case basis. It is better to have clarity through legislative amendments so that both Local Governments and housing providers have certainty.

## **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

The Member motion aligns with the Association's policy in relation to charitable land use rate exemptions, which reads:

1. *Amend the Local Government Act to clarify that Independent Living Units should only be exempt from rates where they qualify under the Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997;*
2. *Either*
  - a) *amend the charitable organisations section of the Local Government Act 1995 to eliminate exemptions for commercial (non-charitable) business activities of charitable organisations;*

*or*

  - b) *establish a compensatory fund for Local Governments, similar to the pensioner discount provisions, if the State Government believes charitable organisations remain exempt from payment of Local Government rates.*

The motion also aligns with State Council's current position on affordable housing.

## 4.11 Financial Limits for Tenders (05-034-01-0001 JMc)

City of Melville:

**Moved: Cr C Robartson (Melville)**  
**Seconded: Cr D Macphail (Melville)**

**That the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* (as amended from time to time) be amended so the minimum threshold for the purchase of a good or service, be altered to match the threshold level from time to time gazetted under the State Supply Policies for State Government Departments and instrumentalities.**

### ***IN BRIEF***

- Purchases in excess of \$100,000 require a tender.
- The threshold was set in 2007.
- A link to State Government purchasing provides:
  - ongoing review;
  - a higher threshold.

**CARRIED**

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

The current financial threshold levels under these Regulations require Local Governments to use an open tender process for the purchase of goods or services with a value of over \$100,000. This threshold level has existed since February 2007 when it was changed from \$50,000 by an Amendment to these Regulations.

Local Governments may also avail themselves of the WALGA Contract Panels which allow quotations for work above \$100,000 to be sought from contractors and suppliers who have pre-qualified for the Contract Panels through an open public process that satisfies the requirements of the Regulations.

With respect to State Government Departments and instrumentalities whose purchasing activities are generally covered under the *State Supply Commission Act 1991* and its subsidiary legislation (with a plan for this to be eventually subsumed by the Department of Finance) the minimum threshold for open tenders is a value of \$150,000, and this is varied from time to time by policies issued under the State supply legislation (currently \$250,000).

The proposed motion simply links Local Governments to State Government Departments where similar processes and controls over purchasing practice exist, and then suggests that the Regulations be amended to simply link the Local Government threshold to the one in force from time to time for State Government Departments.

### **SECRETARIAT COMMENT**

The Member motion aligns with current Association policy.

At the time of writing, the Department of Local Government and Communities is finalising amendments to the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1997. It is WALGA's position that the tender threshold should align with the threshold that applies to State Government agencies, \$250,000. The current proposal is to amend the Regulations so that the tender threshold be increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

#### 4.12A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Local Government Governance

City of Vincent:

**Moved: Cr G Amphlett (Joondalup)**  
**Seconded: Cr D Michael (Stirling)**

**That the Members agree that the following item of Special Urgent Business, relating to Local Government Governance be considered.**

**CARRIED BY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY**

#### 4.12B Local Government Governance (05-034-01-0015 TB)

City of Vincent:

**Moved: Mayor J Carey (Vincent)**  
**Seconded: Mr L Kosova (Vincent)**

**That the Western Australian Local Government Association:**

1. **Develops and advocates a suite of reforms to the Local Government Act 1995 and related Regulations to enhance governance, transparency, accountability and consistency in Local Government, particularly in relation to:**
  - a) **Recording of Council Member contact with Developers;**
  - b) **Prohibition of donations from developers to Local Government election candidates;**
  - c) **Reporting and publicising of gifts and hospitality to Council Members and Local Government employees;**
  - d) **Reporting and publicising of council paid travel undertaken by Council Members and Local Government employees;**
  - e) **Appointment and review of performance of the Chief Executive Officer and prescribed contract renewal procedures;**
  - f) **Any other areas which lead to improved governance and transparency.**
2. **Develops the suite of reforms referred to in 1 above in consultation with members by no later than 3 months before the March 2017 State Election for consideration by all political parties in Western Australia.**

***IN BRIEF***

- That WALGA advocates for reforms which enhance Local Government transparency and accountability, for presentation to all political parties prior to the February 2017 State Election.

## AMENDMENT

Moved: Cr B Kelly (Bunbury)

Seconded: Cr D Prosser (Bunbury)

That the Western Australian Local Government Association:

1. Develops and advocates a suite of reforms to the Local Government Act 1995 through proposed amendments and related Regulations to enhance governance, transparency, accountability and consistency in Local Government, particularly in relation to:
  - a) Recording of Council Member contact with Developers;
  - b) Prohibition of donations from developers to Local Government election candidates;
  - c) Reporting and publicising of gifts and hospitality to Council Members and Local Government employees;
  - d) Reporting and publicising of council paid travel undertaken by Council Members and Local Government employees;
  - e) Appointment and review of performance of the Chief Executive Officer and prescribed contract renewal procedures;
  - f) Any other areas which lead to improved governance and transparency.
2. Develops the suite of reforms through proposed amendments referred to in 1 above in consultation with members by no later than 3 months before the March 2017 State Election for consideration by all political parties in Western Australia.

LOST

Moved: Mayor J Carey (Vincent)

Seconded: Mr L Kosova (Vincent)

That the Western Australian Local Government Association:

1. Develops and advocates a suite of reforms to the Local Government Act 1995 and related Regulations to enhance governance, transparency, accountability and consistency in Local Government, particularly in relation to:
  - a) Recording of Council Member contact with Developers;
  - b) Prohibition of donations from developers to Local Government election candidates;
  - c) Reporting and publicising of gifts and hospitality to Council Members and Local Government employees;
  - d) Reporting and publicising of council paid travel undertaken by Council Members and Local Government employees;
  - e) Appointment and review of performance of the Chief Executive Officer and prescribed contract renewal procedures;
  - f) Any other areas which lead to improved governance and transparency.
2. Develops the suite of reforms referred to in 1 above in consultation with members by no later than 3 months before the March 2017 State Election for consideration by all political parties in Western Australia.

LOST

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

The whole Local Government reform debate became fixated on one primary issue: where lines were drawn on a map. The performance of a Local Government authority should not be measured by its size but its efficiency and effectiveness, its awareness and achievement of community expectations and the attitudes and behaviours that drive the culture in the organisation.

The endgame should be a Local Government that is prepared to foster and encourage innovation, be a facilitator of change and be prepared to think outside the box for policy solutions.

This includes striving to improve and enhance how we governed ourselves including transparency and accountability in decision making. Accordingly, this motion proposes consideration of reforms to the Local Government Act, which will achieve this end goal.

The City of Vincent also believes this is in line with local community expectations, who are demanding more information about how decisions are made.

The City of Vincent believes the sector has two choices; to show strong leadership by beginning the process to advocate a clear pathway for reform or have external authorities and decision makers, like the State Government, determine this for the sector.

#### 4.13A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Advocacy Fund

Town of Victoria Park:

**Moved: Cr G Amphlett (Joondalup)**  
**Seconded: Cr S Thomas (Joondalup)**

That the Members agree that the following item of Special Urgent Business, relating to Advocacy Fund be considered.

**CARRIED BY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY**

#### 4.13B Advocacy Fund (05-034-01-001 TB)

Town of Victoria Park:

**Moved: Mayor T Vaughan (Victoria Park)**  
**Seconded: Cr F Reid (South Perth)**

***IN BRIEF***

- WALGA to establish an Advocacy Fund to enable lobbying objecting to decisions that impact Local Governments.

1. That the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) establish an 'Advocacy Fund' to be used for lobbying the State and or Federal Governments to support the needs for Local Governments where the decisions made by the State and or Federal Governments impact on the services provided by Local Governments to their communities.
2. As a matter of urgency funding be identified within existing resources of the WALGA budget.

**LOST**

#### **MEMBER COMMENT**

WALGA does not have any funds set aside for lobbying when the services provided by Local Governments are impacted by the decisions made by State and or Federal Governments.

#### 4.14A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Rate Capping

Shire of Kalamunda:

**Moved: Mayor J Gangell (Bassendean)**  
**Seconded: Cr J Brown (Gosnells)**

That the Members agree that the following item of Special Urgent Business, relating to Rate Capping be considered.

**CARRIED BY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY**

#### 4.14B MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Rate Capping (05-034-01-0001 TB)

Shire of Kalamunda:

**Moved: Ms R Hardy (Kalamunda)**  
**Seconded: Cr P Blight (Wagin)**

**That WALGA:**

- 1. Oppose the introduction of rate-capping for Western Australian Local Governments as reported to be proposed by the current State Government.**
- 2. Express its opposition to continued cost shifting by the State Government to Local Government by requiring Local Government to assume responsibility for services previously provided by the State.**

##### **IN BRIEF**

- Concern at reported comments that the State Government are considering rate capping.
- The Local Government sector needs to oppose the continued cost shifting of services from the State Government to Local Government.

#### **AMENDMENT**

**Moved: Mayor R Norris (Mosman Park)**  
**Seconded: Cr G Jacob (Port Hedland)**

**That WALGA:**

- 1. Oppose the introduction of rate-capping for Western Australian Local Governments as reported to be proposed by the current State Government.**
- 2. Develops a policy which ensures that the sector is prepared to oppose any attempt by the government to introduce rate-capping in the future.**
- 3. Express its opposition to continued cost shifting by the State Government to Local Government by requiring Local Government to assume responsibility for services previously provided by the State.**

**CARRIED**

**THE AMENDMENT BECAME THE MOTION, WAS PUT AND CARRIED**

## MEMBER COMMENT

Following the publication of an article in the West Australian on Thursday 16 July 2015, the Premier is quoted as being dissatisfied with the number of Local Governments within the metropolitan area, particularly the smaller Local Governments that have either adopted or proposed Rate increases well above the current Perth CPI figure of 2.5%.

A rate-capping system administered by the State Government could severely diminish the autonomy of Local Government, particularly in financial decision-making.

A blanket rate-capping limit imposed by State Government would not take into account regional variations in price movements, (such as between metropolitan and rural areas).

A rate-capping limit imposed upon Local Governments could be vulnerable to the political expedience of State Government.

Under a State-imposed rate-capping system, the overall income from Rates Charges could be considerably lower and could severely restrict a Local Government's purchasing decisions. In particular, if the initial (pre-cap) rating level is not high enough when the rate-cap is imposed, then a Local Government could struggle to adequately provide services and infrastructure to residents if the population continued to grow, (or if the population changed significantly in composition).

In order to generate the income required to be raised from Rates Charges, a portion of the rate burden would likely be distributed to other ratepayers, (i.e. while some ratepayers would be charged less, other ratepayers would be charged proportionately more).

Whilst there are no specific details of the Premiers proposed rate-capping model, the CPI figure seems to be the main focus.

The utilisation of the standard CPI figure as the basis for rate-capping is considered inappropriate because the items included to determine the CPI rate bear little or no resemblance to the goods and services procured by a Local Government compared to ordinary consumers. In addition, it does not take into account the increases in costs for State Government services past onto Local Governments.

Such a proposal would only add to the significant burden imposed on Local Government over more than two decades of "cost shifting", whereby Local Governments have had to assume more and more responsibilities for services previously provided by the state

There is also evidence that the introduction of rate-capping by other state governments has caused issues for Local Governments in those states in being able to raise sufficient revenue through rates to provide the level of services and facilities expected by their communities.

The possible introduction of rate-capping has the potential to severely impact the prime untied revenue raising capacity of the Shire with consequential impacts on the provision of services and facilities. In view of this it should be vigorously opposed.

#### 4.15A MATTER OF SPECIAL URGENT BUSINESS: Local Government Reform (05-034-01-0015 TB)

Town of Mosman Park:

**Moved: Cr G Pule**  
**Seconded: Cr Brown**

That the Members agree that the following item of Special Urgent Business, relating to Local Government Reform be considered.

**LOST - ABSOLUTE MAJORITY NOT ACHIEVED**

#### 4.15B Local Government Reform (05-034-01-0015 TB)

Town of Mosman Park Delegate to move:

##### **MOTION**

- 1. That this conference records its disappointment at the State Government's failure to reimburse Metropolitan Local Governments for their expenditures directly attributable to the abandoned Local Government reform process, thereby unfairly and unreasonably transferring these costs to ratepayers.**
- 2. That WALGA State Council is requested to consider reviewing its previous policy position on Local Government reform and adopting a policy position which includes:**
  - a. Any future State Government proposals to reform the sector without adequate funding being provided for the costs incurred by councils will not be supported by the sector; and**
  - b. No forced mergers be proposed by way of boundary adjustments without the requirements for the preparation of a business case and a poll of ratepayers both being in support of the proposal.**

##### **IN BRIEF**

- Concern regarding State Government policy during the Metropolitan Local Government Reform process, particularly:
  - i. The State Government's refusal to reimburse Local Government expenses; and
  - ii. The policy process used to facilitate structural reform.

**ITEM NOT CONSIDERED**