



GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items

Unconfirmed Minutes

Monday 24 November 2025
Zoom Videoconference, commencing at 9.00am

CONTENTS

1.	OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	3
2.	DECLARATION OF INTEREST	3
3.	RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE	3
3.1	Attendance	3
3.2	Apologies	3
3.3	Guests	4
3.4	WALGA Representatives	4
4.	PRESENTATIONS	5
4.1	WALGA	5
5.	MINUTES OF MEETINGS	5
5.1	Minutes of a Meeting of GVROC to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items held 22 August 2025	5
5.2	Matters for Noting	5
6.	WALGA State Council Agenda	6
7.	Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Decision	7
7.1	2025 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	7
7.2	2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members	9
7.3	Tourism Advocacy Position Update	12
7.4	Waste Management Advocacy Positions	16
7.5	Electoral Material – Authorisation Statement Address Requirements	18
8.	Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Noting/Information	20
8.1	WALGA Transport and Roads Forum 2025: Summary Report	20
8.2	Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB): Transition to Management	22
8.3	Government Response to Independent Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act Review	25
8.4	Flying Minute – Submission for Draft Guidelines on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects	32
8.5	Flying Minute – Communications Agreement Consultation Submission	34
8.6	Flying Minute – WALGA Submission on the Amendment Regulations and Draft Chapters of the WA Planning Manual	39
8.7	Flying Minute – WALGA Submission on Phase 2 Reforms to Western Australia's Working with Children Check Law	41
8.8	Flying Minute – WALGA Submission to the Education and Health Standing committee Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities	44
8.9	Flying Minute – WALGA Submission to the Federal Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy ...	46
9.	Other State Council Agenda Items	48
9.1	Policy Team and Committee Reports or the Organisational Key Activity Reports State Council Agenda Items	48
9.2	President's Report	48
9.3	Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions - To the December 2025 State Council Meeting	48
10.	LATE ITEMS as notified, introduced by decision of the Meeting	49
10.1	Rateability of Miscellaneous and Mining Leases – Sector Support Discussion	49
10.2	GVROC Regional Climate Alliance Coordinator Contract	51
10.3	Polyphagous shot-hole borer Update – November 2025	52
10.4	Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability	54
11.	FUTURE MEETINGS	56
12.	CLOSURE OF MEETING	56

GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (GVROC)

Videoconference meeting of the GVROC Council to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items was held Monday 24 November 2025 at 9.00am

AGENDA

1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The purpose of the meeting is to provide advice to the GVROC WALGA State Council Representative, on the Agenda for the WALGA State Council Meeting to be held on 3 December 2025.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Code of Conduct, Councillors and CEOs must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they may have in a matter before the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors, CEOs and Deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

Nil.

3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Attendance

Cr Paul Wilcox	President, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Anthony Ball	Councillor, Shire of Coolgardie
Mr Aaron Cook	A/CEO, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Glenn Wilson	Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Cr Laurene Bonza	President, Shire of Dundas
Cr Sharon Warner	Councillor, Shire of Dundas
Mr Peter Fitchat	CEO, Shire of Dundas
Cr Ron Chambers	President Shire of Esperance
Cr Wes Graham	Councillor, Shire of Esperance
Mr Shane Burge	CEO, Shire of Esperance
Cr Peter Craig	President, Shire of Leonora
Mr Ty Matson	CEO, Shire of Leonora
Mr Peter Bentley	A/CEO, Shire of Menzies
Mr Matt McIntyre	CEO, Shire of Wiluna
Mr Andrew Mann	Executive Officer, GVROC

3.2 Apologies

Cr Wayne Johnson	Councillor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Patrick Hill	President, Shire of Laverton
Cr Shaneane Weldon	Councillor, Shire of Laverton
Mr Phil Marshall	CEO, Shire of Laverton
Cr Paul Warner	President, Shire of Menzies
Cr Jill Dwyer	Councillor, Shire of Menzies
Cr Tim Carmody	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna
Cr Jim Quadrio	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna
Cr Damian McLean	President, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku
Mr David Mosel	CEO, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku

3.3 Guests

Nil

3.4 WALGA Representatives

Ian Duncan Executive Manager, Infrastructure

Chistina Colegate Senior Policy Advisor Community

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 WALGA

WALGA representatives, Ian Duncan and Christian Colegate, provided members with an overview of WALGA and the role of State Council Zone Delegates following the outcome of the GVROC Election on 14 November 2025.

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

5.1 Minutes of a Meeting of GVROC to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items held 22 August 2025

Minutes of the GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council held Monday 22 August 2025 are presented for adoption (**Attachment 1**).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council held Monday 22 August 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

RESOLUTION:	Moved:	Seconded:
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Note: the Minutes from 22 August 2025 were incorrectly attached to the Agenda that was emailed out and thus will be presented at the next GVROC State Council meeting for endorsement.

5.2 Matters for Noting

The following matters were presented for noting.

1. LGIRS Report November 2025 (see **Attachment 1.1**)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the matters for noting as listed be received and noted.

RESOLUTION:	Moved: <i>Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie</i>
	Seconded: <i>Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora</i>

Carried

6. WALGA State Council Agenda

From: Chair GVROC

Background:

GVROC/Goldfields Esperance Zone Delegates are invited to read and consider the WALGA State Council Agenda for its meeting on 3 December 2025, which can be found at **Attachment 2** and can be found via the link [here](#).

The GVROC/Goldfields Esperance Zone can provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation on any of the items, including the items for noting. The GVROC/Goldfields Esperance 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 GVROC/Goldfields Esperance Zone consideration in **Section 6** of this Agenda.

Section 8 of the is Agenda also lists those State Council matters for noting plus any additional items from WALGA for the GVROC/Goldfields Esperance Zone to note.

7. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Decision

7.1 2025 Annual General Meeting Resolutions

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

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 Licences
- 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.*

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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC support the WALGA Recommendation as presented.

RESOLUTION: Moved: *Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder*
Seconded: *Mr Matt McIntyre, Shire of Wiluna*

Carried

7.2 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC:

1. **support WALGA's submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members.**
2. **Note that Local Governments can also put forward a submission, particularly in relation to their own circumstances, including requests to be classified in a different Band.**
3. **Note that WALGA encourages all Local Governments to make a submission to SAT before the due date.**

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie

Seconded: Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder

Carried

7.3 **Tourism Advocacy Position Update**

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.**

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 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.

GVROC COMMENTS

While the GVROC was supportive of the updated WALGA advocacy position it also believes that it could be enhanced with further consideration of the following points:

- The current position doesn't recognise the conflict that arises between the local community and businesses and the Local Governments during the influx of seasonal tourist visitors. For example, while tourism is great economically for a town, benefiting local businesses. especially during peak season, it also places significant strain on LGA finances, services and infrastructure for which the local governments do not receive any of the direct economic benefits/revenue from these visitors to offset these costs.
- There is also an issue with season tourist visitors' compliance with local government laws and regulations and the impacts that this has on the local government services and infrastructure.
- For many of the Goldfield's towns, there also needs to be consideration on the definition of significant seasonal tourist visitors as is listed in Point 2 – "Ensure that tourism destinations with significant seasonal influxes of visitors have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications." as these towns have significant influxes of visitors daily through fly in fly out workers also requiring these services that place impacts on the local governments.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC support the WALGA's updated advocacy position 3.9 Tourism as presented noting its comments above.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder***
 Seconded: *Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*

Carried

7.4 Waste Management 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.**

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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC support the WALGA's recommendation to retire the advocacy positions on:

- 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 Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie

Seconded: Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance

Carried

7.5 Electoral Material – Authorisation Statement Address Requirements

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

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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC support the WALGA's recommendation to 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: *Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance*

Seconded: *Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder*

Carried

8. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Noting/Information

8.1 WALGA Transport and Roads Forum 2025: Summary Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Transport and Roads Forum was held at the State Reception Centre in Kings Park (Kaarta Koomba), on 14 August.
- With over 200 people in attendance, the event brought together transport experts and leaders from industry, stakeholder groups, Local, State and Federal Governments.
- The Forum is the premier Transport and Roads event for WA Local Governments and is jointly hosted by WALGA and Main Roads WA. The Forum was designed to meet the expressed needs of Local Government Members.
- The keynote speakers were:
 - Hon Jessica Stojkovski, in her capacity as Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport;
 - Paul Durdin, Road safety expert, Technical Director and Board Member of Abley Limited;
 - Michael Caltabiano, CEO, National Transport Research Organisation; and
 - Peter Woronzow, Director General, WA Department of Transport.
- The 2025 theme was 'From Vision to Action' with a focus on:
 - Road Safety
 - Sustainability
 - Active Transport
 - Asset Management
- The Forum was successful in stimulating discussion, challenging thinking and providing opportunities to share knowledge and network with colleagues. It included expert presentations and panel discussion sessions.
- A detailed report summarising the presentations and key deliverables is attached below.
- The full presentations can be viewed on the WALGA website [here](#).

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA Transport and Road Forum 2025 Report](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The Forum aligns to the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

- Influence – lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government;
- Support – Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs;
- Support – Offer integrated, Member-centric services; and
- Expertise – Foster relationships between our subject matter experts and stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

The origins of the Transport and Roads Forum dates back to 26 August 1998, when WALGA and Main Roads WA jointly convened the first event in response to the expressed needs of Local Government Members. The program was developed in consultation with Regional Road Group Chairpersons and representatives of Main Roads WA, with an initial focus on road funding issues, which were of critical importance to Local Governments at the time.

Since then, the Forum has become a regular event, broadening its scope to address a wide range of transport and road-related issues. It has consistently provided a platform for Local Governments, Main Roads WA, and other stakeholders to share information, discuss challenges, and consider emerging issues affecting the sector.

The Forum program typically includes plenary and concurrent sessions, with time allocated for questions and discussion. Topics are selected to ensure relevance to both metropolitan and regional Local Governments and have included issues such as policy and funding, road construction and design, sustainability, transport issues, disaster recovery, and future planning.

Across its history, the Forum has maintained its original purpose of supporting informed discussion and strengthening collaboration between Local Governments and State Government agencies. The 2025 Forum, held in August, was the fifteenth Forum convened by WALGA and Main Roads WA.

COMMENT

WALGA has prepared a detailed summary of the presentations and key deliverables. The full presentations can be viewed on the [WALGA website](#).

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Transport and Roads Forum 2025: Summary Report.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie*

Seconded: *Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*

Carried

8.2 **Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB): Transition to Management**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Since the State Government [accouncement](#) on 18 June 2025 that it was no longer technically feasible to eradicate Polyphagous Shot-hole borer (PSHB) from Western Australia, a national [Transition to Management \(T2M\) Plan](#) has been put in place.
- The T2M Plan focuses in four program areas:
 - Orderly transition of eradication activities
 - Slow the spread
 - Capacity building and training
 - Future proofing.
- WALGA and Local Governments have been actively engaging with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) on the T2M Plan implementation, including the development of the \$2.5M funding Program for Zone A Local Governments and capacity building.
- WALGA has written to the Director General of DPIRD identifying the priorities for Local Government including:
 - increased and sustained funding for Local Government and community PSHB management;
 - clear and consistent messaging – stop the spread;
 - ongoing and comprehensive PSHB surveillance;
 - development of effective management tools;
 - data sharing to enable targeted management efforts;
 - preparedness outside the Quarantine Area;
 - further funding for PSHB research; and
 - capacity building for Local Government.
- In addition to advocacy, WALGA has been supporting Local Government through a range of capacity building focusing on sharing knowledge on PSHB management.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following [advocacy positions](#):

4.4 Post Border Biosecurity

Western Australia's economy, environment and the community are facing increasing challenges posed by already established and new pests, weeds and diseases. Local Government has a significant role in biosecurity management, as land managers and regulators, and therefore has an interest in ensuring that Western Australia's biosecurity system, including control of declared pests, is effective and appropriately resourced.

WALGA considers significant changes to the operation of the State's biosecurity system, including the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007, are required to ensure these risks can be managed now and into the future. To be effective the Western Australian biosecurity system must:

- 1. Take a transparent approach to the notion of 'shared responsibility' by ensuring that:*
 - a. The respective roles and responsibilities of Commonwealth, State and Local Government, industry, landholders, community groups and individuals are agreed and clearly articulated; and*
 - b. There is improved pest management on State Government managed land and a formalised structure for State Government agencies with responsibilities for biosecurity management to work together and coordinate their activities.*
- 2. Be underpinned by a strategic framework, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, that:*
 - a. Establishes priorities for biosecurity threats in geographically defined regions, sets measurable targets and guides investment in biosecurity activities; and*
 - b. Is regularly evaluated and reported on.*
- 3. Have a greater focus on environmental biosecurity, through the increased recognition and management of pest species that have significant ecological impacts.*
- 4. Be adequately, sustainably and equitably funded:*
 - a. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) and Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) model as key mechanisms for the management of widespread and established declared pests should be reviewed and alternate mechanisms considered;*
 - b. Increased and more equitable distribution of funding for every step in the biosecurity continuum and adequate resourcing for all stakeholders, including Local Government; and*

- c. *The provision of funding for declared pest management in metropolitan areas.*
5. *Ensure that the criteria and process for listing of declared pests is evidence-based, timely and transparent.*
6. *Have an increased emphasis on compliance through education and enforcement activity, to ensure land managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities and are supported to implement biosecurity actions.*
7. *Facilitate the use of new technologies, strategic monitoring, and the establishment of data management systems to inform biosecurity investment decisions and support adaptive management.*
8. *Improve the community's understanding, awareness and action in relation to biosecurity to assist with threat surveillance and timely response to incursions.*

4.7 Polyphagous shot-hole borer

The Local Government sector:

1. *Recognises the significant threat the Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) represents to the growth and retention of urban forests;*
2. *Recognises the importance of shared surveillance by government, industry and community to assist with eradication efforts; and*
3. *Advocates for State Government funding for trees lost due to PSHB and to ameliorate the long term urban canopy impact.*

ATTACHMENT

- [Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer - Transition to Management](#)

BACKGROUND

PSHB was first detected in East Fremantle in September 2021 and since that time the State Government undertook a nationally funded eradication response. However, on 18 June 2025, the State Government [announced](#) the National Management Group's (NMG) decision that it was no longer technically feasible to eradicate PSHB from Western Australia and the PSHB would transition to long-term management. The Transition to Management (T2M) phase commenced on 1 July with the T2M Plan in place by 1 September. Local Government was provided with a summary of the T2M Plan in late September.

The focus of the T2M Plan is:

1. *Orderly transition of eradication activities: Concluding the previous eradication tasks in a structured way to ensure continuity and minimise disruption for residents and industry.*
2. *Slow the spread: Implementing targeted surveillance, compliance and tree treatment to reduce the rate of PSHB spread, while providing practical opportunities for training and upskilling our partners.*
3. *Capacity building and training: Supporting landowners, local governments, industry, and communities through the development of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs, accessible resources, and practical training initiatives.*
4. *Future proofing: Preparing all stakeholders for long-term management through dedicated research, the development of improved surveillance tools, and the establishment of sustainable management systems.*

Some of these initiatives have been progressed, with DPIRD establishing a capacity building and training team.

COMMENT

WALGA has continued to advocate to Government for increased funding and support as well as providing capacity building avenues for Local Government. WALGA and Local Government continue to actively engage DPIRD on the T2M Plan implementation, including the development of the \$2.5M funding Program for Zone A Local Governments and capacity building.

WALGA hosted two seminars for Local Government in October (17 and 31 October) and is holding an in-person seminar on 28 November. These events showcase Local Government and relevant State Government agency on ground work with PSHB management. Recordings of these sessions will be available on request.

WALGA has written to the Director General of DPIRD identifying the priority actions needed in the T2M phase and included the funding request in the WALGA Budget Submission.

Increased and sustained funding for Local Government PSHB

- \$30 million over three years for Quarantine Area (QA) Local Governments, from 2026-27 to 2028-29.
- \$6 million over three years for QA residents, from 2026-27 to 2028-29 (for tree removal and pruning).

Clear and consistent messaging – stop the spread

In both the T2M, and long-term management phase, the approach needs to be agreed and clearly communicated as stopping, rather than slowing, the spread. Information released by DPIRD does mention 'stopping the spread of PSHB out of the Perth Metropolitan area' however the terminology in the T2M plan is 'slow the spread'. WALGA has expressed concern that the slow the spread messaging generates confusion, as typified by media reports of WA 'losing the PSHB battle', which confuses community understanding of the continued quarantine requirements.

Ongoing and comprehensive surveillance

A comprehensive surveillance system is critical to identify and treat new infestations and reduce the long-term impact rather than allowing PSHB to spread unchecked. DPIRD's decreased surveillance in Zone A is not supported until there are appropriate alternative measures in place. Early detection, and rapid response, has been shown to be highly effective at suppressing populations and reducing long-term impacts in other parts of the world. At present, Local Governments do not have the necessary resources to undertake the systematic surveillance.

Development of effective management tools

The T2M phase needs to equip land managers with the tools required to effectively manage PSHB long-term. The ability for Local Government to implement an integrated pest management approach that includes the use of chemical treatments is critical, noting that research is underway to find new effective biological and chemical treatments. Some pesticides have been shown to be effective at suppression of low level infestations in other parts of the world.

Data sharing to enable targeted management efforts

It is critical that data sharing arrangements are in place to support access to data on the location of infested trees across public and private property. The tracking and monitoring of infestations will support efficient surveillance and collaborative management across Local Government boundaries.

Preparedness in areas outside the QA

There is significant concern amongst Local Governments located outside of the QA regarding the risk of spread. As in Zone B, targeted surveillance of high-risk species is required, including sites that are likely to receive greenwaste (transfer stations and landfills). The location of amplifier hosts across the landscape will need to be determined.

There are land management practices in regional areas that will require specific PSHB management advice for landholders, such as bushfire preparedness and considerations when undertaking fuel reduction burning.

Further Funding for PSHB Research

Local Government welcomed the allocation of funding through the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration (WAARC) to projects related to PSHB and are actively interested and engaged in the outcomes. WALGA also notes the commitment in the Response Plan Overview to progressing a national research strategy. The scope of this strategy is appreciated however needs to have funding attached to ensure that it can occur in a timely and coordinated manner.

Capacity building for Local Government

Building capacity both within Local Government and in the arboriculture industry is essential to increase capacity of stakeholders to meet the T2M plan objectives. The provision of training, workshops and skill development on signs of infestation, management priorities, available tools and community messaging will help to ensure a consistent management approach across all stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA report on Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB): Transition to Management.

RESOLUTION:

**Moved: Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance
Seconded: Cr Sharon Warner, Shire of Dundas**

Carried

8.3 **Government Response to Independent Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act Review**

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the release of the Government Response to the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act Review* and WALGA's ongoing advocacy in this area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The first statutory review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) [commenced](#) in March 2022 with the appointment of an Independent Panel. The three-stage review process was completed in December 2023 when the Panel provided their Report to Government.
- WALGA and Local Government provided considerable input into the Review Process, including through the development of a discussion paper, workshops, presentations to the Panel and [submissions](#).
- The [Review Report](#) was provided to the Minister for Agriculture and Food in December 2023 and the [Government Response](#) was Tabled in Parliament on 23 October 2025.
- The Government response recognises the need to strengthen the State's biosecurity system and undertake reform of the biosecurity system. However, most of the more significant recommendations have only been noted, with the Government citing that further work is required.
- WALGA welcomes the release of the report and Government Response and will be advocating for this work to be progressed as a priority and for the sector to be consulted as part of this process.
- WALGA's 2026-27 State Budget Submission is requesting an additional \$20 million per annum from 2026-27 for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to ensure WA is prepared and can respond to increasing biosecurity threats.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following [Advocacy Position](#):

4.4 Post Border Biosecurity

Western Australia's economy, environment and the community are facing increasing challenges posed by already established and new pests, weeds and diseases. Local Government has a significant role in biosecurity management, as land managers and regulators, and therefore has an interest in ensuring that Western Australia's biosecurity system, including control of declared pests, is effective and appropriately resourced.

*WALGA considers significant changes to the operation of the State's biosecurity system, including the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, are required to ensure these risks can be managed now and into the future. To be effective the Western Australian biosecurity system must:*

1. *Take a transparent approach to the notion of 'shared responsibility' by ensuring that:*
 - a. *The respective roles and responsibilities of Commonwealth, State and Local Government, industry, landholders, community groups and individuals are agreed and clearly articulated; and*
 - b. *There is improved pest management on State Government managed land and a formalised structure for State Government agencies with responsibilities for biosecurity management to work together and coordinate their activities.*
2. *Be underpinned by a strategic framework, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, that:*
 - a. *Establishes priorities for biosecurity threats in geographically defined regions, sets measurable targets and guides investment in biosecurity activities; and*
 - b. *Is regularly evaluated and reported on.*
3. *Have a greater focus on environmental biosecurity, through the increased recognition and management of pest species that have significant ecological impacts.*
4. *Be adequately, sustainably and equitably funded:*
 - a. *The appropriateness and effectiveness of the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) and Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) model as key mechanisms for the management of widespread and established declared pests should be reviewed and alternate mechanisms considered;*
 - b. *Increased and more equitable distribution of funding for every step in the biosecurity continuum and adequate resourcing for all stakeholders, including Local Government; and*

- c. *The provision of funding for declared pest management in metropolitan areas.*
5. *Ensure that the criteria and process for listing of declared pests is evidence-based, timely and transparent.*
6. *Have an increased emphasis on compliance through education and enforcement activity, to ensure land managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities and are supported to implement biosecurity actions.*
7. *Facilitate the use of new technologies, strategic monitoring, and the establishment of data management systems to inform biosecurity investment decisions and support adaptive management.*
8. *Improve the community's understanding, awareness and action in relation to biosecurity to assist with threat surveillance and timely response to incursions.*

BACKGROUND

The *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act), and associated regulations, allow for the identification, control and management of organisms and activities that may pose a biosecurity risk. This first statutory Review of the BAM Act [commenced](#) in March 2022 with the appointment of an Independent Panel to oversee the process.

The Review Panel was tasked with assessing the BAM Act's operation and effectiveness. This included the extent to which the BAM Act provides a fit-for-purpose, efficient and effective legal framework to underpin WA's biosecurity system. The Review was undertaken in a three-stage process which identified themes, explored those themes then identified solutions.

WALGA and Local Government provided considerable input into the Review Process, through workshops, presentations to the Panel, a detailed [Discussion Paper](#) and [submissions](#) on each stage of the process. WALGA's submissions recommended that significant reform of the State's biosecurity system was required. The 11 key biosecurity management themes that were identified by WALGA reflect issues raised by Local Governments and those found by the Auditor General's 2013 and 2020 assessment reports:

1. Strategic direction and regional priorities
2. Agency responsibilities
3. The Declared Pest Rate and Recognised Biosecurity Groups
4. Environmental biosecurity
5. Responses to incursions
6. Management of declared pests in urban areas
7. Problematic non-declared pests
8. Sustainable funding model
9. Compliance and enforcement
10. Monitoring, research and innovation
11. Community education and involvement.

State Council also endorsed an updated Biosecurity Position to inform WALGA's input and advocacy to the Review process.

The [Review Report](#) was provided to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Jackie Jarvis, in December 2023. WALGA's submissions are referenced throughout the report. The [Government Response](#) to the Review was Tabled in Parliament on 23 October 2025. Of the 33 review recommendations, the WA Government fully supports 8, supports 16 in principle, and notes 9 recommendations.

COMMENT

While WALGA welcomes the release of the Review Report and Government Response, it is important that there is now meaningful progress towards systemic reform and strengthening of the State's biosecurity system. The Government Response recognises the need to strengthen the State's biosecurity system to better respond to increasing risks and impacts and commits to a long term program to reform WA's biosecurity system to be developed and coordinated by DPIRD.

The 33 Recommendations of the Review, Government Response and WALGA comments are included in [the table below](#). WALGA's comments are based on the Post-Border Biosecurity Advocacy Position and submissions to the BAM Act Review. The main themes of the recommendations and the Government response include:

- support for increased alignment with national legislation and contemporary biosecurity regulation
- support for improved communications and community engagement

- a move beyond agricultural biosecurity as a focus for the legislation
- moves towards greater clarity and obligation regarding responsibilities for biosecurity management
- increased strategic direction and oversight for biosecurity
- increased penalties and regulation
- the need for substantial further work on funding of the biosecurity system prior to any changes.

WALGA is meeting with DPIRD to discuss the Government response and the next steps in relation to implementing the outcomes of the Review.

WALGA's 2026-27 State Budget Submission is requesting an additional \$20 million per annum from 2026-27 for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to ensure WA is prepared and can respond to increasing biosecurity threats.

Recommendation	Government Response	WALGA Comment
1. Change the title of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 to the 'Biosecurity Act', removing the reference to agriculture management and making clear the legislation's scope extends beyond agriculture	Supported	Agree. Aligns with Local Government view regarding legislation scope and focusing on environmental biosecurity.
2. Align the reformed biosecurity act's purpose and objects with nationally agreed principles for biosecurity and set out what it is intended to achieve, modernising the legislation and making its intent clearer to system participants	Supported	Agree. These recommendations speak to national alignment of the legislation and while this was not specifically included in the consultation, Local Government consistently support clear roles and responsibilities – increased national alignment would assist in this matter.
3. Adopt defined terms and concepts for biosecurity matter, dealing, event, impact, risk, emergency and carrier that align with the national biosecurity system, aiming to harmonise approaches across state borders and facilitate compliance through a consistent framework	Supported	
4. Structure the reformed biosecurity act so that its regulatory framework aligns with principles and key concepts that guide biosecurity across Australia, making it easier for stakeholders and administrators to understand, comply with and implement	Supported in principle	
5. Progress the amendments to the BAM Act listed in Attachment 1 [to the BAM Act review] to make the BAM Act more workable and better able to support WA's biosecurity system while the more substantial legislative reforms recommended in this report are progressed	Supported in principle	Agree in principle. WALGA will advocate for changes to address issues identified during the response to the Polyphagous shot-hole borer response regarding sharing of data (s184) and barriers to timely response actions (e.g. tree removal).
6. Finalise the repeal of the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976 and its subsidiary legislation, which was one of the 17 Acts intended to be fully superseded by the BAM Act	Supported	Administrative amendment.
7. Improve biosecurity communications and engagement to enhance everyone's understanding of what biosecurity is, how it benefits them, how they can contribute and the value of their participation	Supported	Agree. Aligns with Local Government view regarding the importance of education and awareness of biosecurity responsibilities.

8. Include a statement in the reformed biosecurity act that the act is to be administered, where feasible, in consultation with the general public, communities, Aboriginal peoples, industries, and local, state and Australian government bodies, to reinforce the importance of consultation and engagement	Supported in principle	Agree. Aligns with Local Government view regarding effective engagement with the sector and community.
9. Introduce a general biosecurity obligation into the reformed biosecurity act requiring individuals and organisations to take reasonable and practicable measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks and impacts when dealing with biosecurity matter	Supported in principle	Agree in principle. Aligns with Local Government views, however noting for it to be effective it relies on all participants in the biosecurity system having an understanding of their obligation, and undertaking action as deemed reasonable.
10. Regulate dealings with biosecurity matter as a more practical regulatory construct to underpin WA's biosecurity legislation into the future	Supported in principle	Aligns with Local Government views regarding a simplified framework and assessment process based on the level of risk of the matter, which would provide a more transparent process, and potentially a stronger foundation for WA's biosecurity system. The current framework for the assessment and declaration of organisms in WA is unclear, with stakeholders questioning the reduction in the number of declared animals and pests, and the change of some control categories to unassigned, following a review by DPIRD in 2016. WA's current biosecurity system is based on the declaration of organisms and assignment of management categories, which provides the legislative basis for management obligations of landholders. The replacement of this process with prescriptive legal requirements such as control orders, permits and codes would need to be clearly designed and communicated.
11. Target the use of declarations of biosecurity matter under the reformed biosecurity act to achieve an appropriate level of protection, ensuring that controls are proportionate to the risk and potential impact	Supported in principle	
12. Regulate established pests and diseases using the general biosecurity obligation and subsidiary legislation when necessary, to support regulation that is flexible and appropriate to the impact presented	Supported in principle	
13. Develop a policy statement to provide strategic direction and guide decisions on WA's regulatory approach for specific biosecurity matter, ensuring transparency and consistency	Supported	Agree. Aligns with Local Government advocacy regarding strategic direction.
14. Include biosecurity emergency provisions in the reformed biosecurity act, requiring the declaration of a biosecurity emergency to activate special powers	Supported in principle	Agree. Aligns with Local Government view that it is critical that the BAM Act includes effective emergency provisions for pests and diseases. However noting it is essential that Local Government is consulted in the emergency response where emergency actions impact on Local Government operations or

		responsibilities. Also, the interface between the BAM Act, the Emergency Management Act 2005 and Public Health Act 2016 needs to be clarified, in terms of triggering and enabling an emergency response.
15. Include authority for compensation and reimbursement to be paid under certain circumstances for direct losses incurred when destructive biosecurity measures are taken or ordered by the WA Government under the reformed biosecurity act	Noted	Agree in principle. Local Government identified some merit in this approach, however only if the sector was included. It is particularly topical for Local Government following experience with PSHB.
16. Use behavioural science to better understand the values and views of system participants and inform an expanded program of initiatives that encourage compliance with WA's biosecurity legislation	Supported	Agree. Aligns with Local Government view regarding the importance of education and awareness of biosecurity responsibilities.
17. Consider expanding the use of regulatory personnel authorised under other legislation as BAM Act inspectors to bolster the on-ground presence of monitoring and enforcement	Supported	Agree in principle. The use of other Government agencies was considered in relation to this activity.
18. Include in the reformed biosecurity act a suite of inspector powers and tools that support the enforcement of modern biosecurity concepts including the general biosecurity obligation and requirements relating to dealings with biosecurity matter	Supported in principle	Agree in principle. Aligns with Local Government view regarding the need for enforcement, however noting that the reform opportunities do not address the lack of compliance and enforcement action by DPIRD – which will need additional resourcing to ensure effectiveness.
19. Align the value of penalties in the reformed biosecurity act with the value of penalties in modern biosecurity legislation and WA environmental legislation to ensure the penalty is proportional to the harm caused	Supported in principle	Agree. Aligns with Local Government views regarding increased compliance activities and penalties. In particular noting that there needs to be monitoring and appropriate penalties applied where landholders are non-compliant and their lack of action is contributing to increased pest incursions on surrounding land. WALGA supports the increase in the monetary value of the penalties. As a minimum, penalties should align with WA's Environmental Protection Act 1986, which provides a tiered penalty system (Tier 1 maximum penalty for a corporate body of \$500,000). This is significantly higher than the current maximum post-border biosecurity penalty of \$100,000 under the BAM Act.
20. Incorporate aggravated offence considerations in the reformed biosecurity act to reflect the seriousness of the action	Supported in principle	
21. Use penalty units in the reformed biosecurity act as a versatile tool for setting and adjusting the value of penalties to account for inflation or changes in the economy	Supported in principle	
22. Expand the scope of the provisions that enable local governments to make local laws to include established diseases, pest animals and plant pests	Noted	Agree in principle. WALGA is not opposed to local governments having an expanded ability to create local laws that enable Local

		Governments to regulate local pests and diseases of concern, however this should not be a requirement or an expectation and should not be used to shift costs onto the sector.
23. Authorise third parties to deliver biosecurity accreditation schemes under robust oversight, and align certification regulations with the standard set in modern biosecurity legislation	Supported in principle	No position. Feedback at the time of the Review identified concern that this approach could increase costs to industry.
24. In consultation with industry, develop a whole-of-system biosecurity policy, framework and legal instruments for the introduction of industry-government biosecurity response agreements at a state level	Supported in principle	No position. WALGA identified that these arrangements have limited relevance to Local Government, although there are benefits for the public good.
25. Establish pest management regions under the reformed biosecurity act, that are prescribed in regulation, and with a requirement for each pest management region to have a minister-approved pest management plan	Noted	Agree in principle. In submissions on the Act Review WALGA provided detailed feedback from the sector on the limitations of the current funding model. In the Government Response it is identified that “the WA Government agrees that the current declared pest rate system is not efficient or sustainable and requires reform if it is to be retained long term.” However, it identifies that “economic analysis and impact assessment of different funding approaches will be required....and the declared pest rate will continue to be raised in its current form until the government has considered alternative approaches for funding established pest management”. Local Government supports the adequate and sustainable funding for the biosecurity system and acknowledges that further work is required, however this is a priority to ensure the system functions.
26. Allocate pest management rate and matched WA Government funds (currently known as Declared Pest Account or declared pest rate funds) raised from a pest management region to carrying out that region’s approved pest management plan	Noted	
27. Establish clear funding and eligibility requirements, processes and guidelines that support the regional allocation of pest management rate and matched WA Government funds (currently known as Declared Pest Account or declared pest rate funds) through a competitive process and multi-year funding agreements	Noted	
28. The WA Government leads the allocation of pest management rate and matched funds (currently known as Declared Pest Account or declared pest rate funds) preferably through a central body such as the biosecurity planning committee, to support a robust, transparent and independent process	Noted	
29. 29. Rename the declared pest rate to a pest management rate and apply it consistently across the state to pastoral and diversification leasehold land, and rural and urban farming freehold land in a way that targets landholders with significant pest management requirements who primarily benefit from funded coordinated pest management activities	Noted	
30. Consider implementing a simplified and standardised rating structure for the pest management rate that: a. applies a progressive ad valorem (cents in the dollar) rate that increases commensurate with the total unimproved value of the land held by an individual entity b. uses Land IDs as the basis for assessing the value of landholdings owned by an individual entity rather than Valuation Entity Numbers	Noted	

c. applies a minimum flat rate and a capped maximum rate per individual entity		
31. Establish a biosecurity planning committee under the reformed biosecurity act to provide strategic leadership and initiate whole-of-system planning, coordination and governance of WA's biosecurity system	Supported in principle	Agree. Aligns with Local Government views regarding a strategic approach.
32. Replace the provisions of section 186 of the BAM Act with a requirement for public authorities to include a compliance statement as part of their own annual reporting that reports on biosecurity measures taken and discloses any directions issued to it	Noted	Agree. This current provision provides some transparency regarding activities of public authorities such as DBCA.
33. Develop a new rolling 10-year WA biosecurity strategy to provide strategic guidance and direction to help achieve a transformation of WA's biosecurity system	Supported in principle	Agree. Aligns with Local Government views and WALGA Advocacy Position which calls for a strategic framework to provide guidance. Consultation and engagement with Local Government and other stakeholders will be key to effective development and implementation.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the release of the Government Response to the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act Review and WALGA's ongoing advocacy in this area.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Sharon Warner, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Cr Anthony Ball, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

8.4 Flying Minute – Submission for Draft Guidelines on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Submission for Draft Guidelines on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Western Australia's energy sector is transforming to achieve the State and Australian governments' 2050 net zero emissions target.
- The State Government released a draft Guideline Benefits Guideline Consultation Paper for consultation on 12 June 2025.
- The deadline for submissions on the draft Guideline was extended to 18 August following a request from WALGA.
- WALGA has prepared a draft submission aligned to WALGA's renewable energy advocacy positions and incorporating feedback from Local Governments.
- Local Governments were provided 4 weeks to provide feedback on the draft WALGA submission, from 26 June to 25 July 2025.
- 48 Local Governments provided feedback, including a joint submission on the Consultation Paper from 36 regional Local Governments.
- The draft submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 08 August 2025. It was provided to the State Government on 18 August 2025.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute – Submission for Draft Guidelines on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following [WALGA advocacy positions](#):

- 6.16 Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework
- 6.17 Renewable Energy Facilities
- 6.18 Priority Agriculture

BACKGROUND

WALGA has three advocacy policy positions related to the renewable energy transition, which were endorsed by WALGA zones and State Council at the September 2024 State Council Meeting. One of these positions calls on the State Government to develop a comprehensive framework to manage the impact of the energy transition that includes local engagement and the realisation of local community benefits from energy transition projects. Other State Governments, including NSW, Queensland and Victoria, already have guidelines or frameworks that support communities, Local Governments and industries in negotiating community benefits.

On 12 June 2025, the State Government released its Draft Guideline on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects. The stated purpose of the Guideline is to:

- provide information to communities about the types of benefit sharing arrangements available for the renewable energy infrastructure they are hosting,
- provide information to developers about State Government expectations for community benefits arrangements,
- provide a guide on appropriate value of community benefits in different contexts,
- provide suggestions for the governance and administration of community benefits funds,
- provide confidence and clarity for proponents and investors by setting out a clear framework for benefit-sharing arrangements across Western Australia.

The State's Guideline complements WALGA's recently released [Renewable Energy Community Benefit and Engagement Guide](#).

The deadline for submissions on the draft Guideline was extended to 18 August 2025 following a request from WALGA.

COMMENT

WALGA has prepared a submission on the Guideline. 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:

- The need for the requirement for community benefits to be mandated.
- Changes to the contribution rate, from the proposed range to a single, indexed figure floor for wind, solar and battery storage projects.
- That benefit sharing arrangements should commence during the construction phase of projects.
- Further clarity on the role of rates versus community benefits and that these be viewed separately.
- That Local Government should determine the appropriate governance mechanisms.
- Clearer guidance on when developers should engage with neighbouring Local Governments.
- The need for a statewide strategy to guide the rollout of the energy transition.
- 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.
- Clarity on when the Guideline should apply to existing projects.

Feedback was requested on the draft submission from Local Government CEOs and Mayors/Presidents between 26 June and 25 July. WALGA received responses from 48 Local Governments, via SurveyMonkey, email and a joint submission on the discussion 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 was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 8 August and provided to the State Government on 18 August.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Submission for Draft Guidelines on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie*
Seconded: *Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*

Carried

8.5 **Flying Minute – Communications Agreement Consultation Submission**

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Submission on the Communications Agreements Consultation, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Consultation is open on the draft [Local Government Regulations Amendment Regulations 2025](#) (the Draft Regulations) and draft [Local Government \(Default Communications Agreement\) Order 2025](#) (the Draft Order) which give effect to reforms regarding communications agreements between Council and the CEO.
- Communications agreements will regulate Council and Committee Member requests and access to information.
- Sector feedback has been collated and identifies some overarching concerns, specific amendments and elements that are broadly suitable.
- The overriding view is that the Draft Order is overly prescriptive and complex and requires simplification. A principles-based approach is preferred.
- The attached submission, informed by this feedback, is recommended for endorsement.
- The submission attached was endorsed by the Governance Policy Team on 11 August and by State Council via Flying Minute on 20 August. It was provided to the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety on 22 August.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute – Communications Agreement Consultation Submission](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's existing advocacy position is based on the high-level reform proposals provided for public consultation in 2022. The current [Advocacy Position](#) is:

2.5.3 Council Communication Agreements

The Local Government sector supports the introduction of a consistent, regulated Communications Agreement between Councils and the CEO within Local Governments.

This position was based on the understanding that communication agreements would be consistent with the existing policies and protocols used by Local Governments, rather than significantly more prescriptive and complex.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Amendment Act 2023* (2023 Amendment Act) included amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) to:

- Provide that the right of a Council Member or Committee Member to access information under section 5.92 must be exercised in accordance with the Local Government's communications agreement.
- Require every Local Government to have a communications agreement between the Council and the CEO regulating the matters specified in the Act and regulations.
- Require the Minister to make a Ministerial Order setting out a default communications agreement which applies at any time a Local Government does not have its own communications agreement.
- Enable Local Governments to adopt and amend their own communications agreement with the agreement of the CEO, which will expire at the end of every caretaker period, and upon the end of the CEO's employment with that Local Government.

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) published the draft [Local Government Regulations Amendment Regulations 2025](#) (the Draft Regulations) and draft [Local Government \(Default Communications Agreement\) Order 2025](#) (the Draft Order).

The Draft Regulations prescribe the minimum requirements for all communications agreements and include mechanisms to require compliance by Local Government employees, Council Members and Committee Members. The Draft Order sets out what is proposed to be the default communications agreement.

The Draft Regulations and Draft Order were released for public consultation on 5 June, with submissions closing on 25 July. WALGA requested an extension to this period and the public consultation period now closes on 22 August. WALGA circulated a discussion paper to Local Governments requesting comments by Monday 28 July. This short timeframe has been challenging for Local Governments to review the materials and report through their Council meeting cycles.

The Governance Policy Team considered the attached submission at their meeting on 11 August and recommend endorsement by State Council.

COMMENT

Responses received from Local Governments indicate general concerns regarding:

- Excessive prescriptive detail in both the Draft Regulations and Draft Order which will impose increased red-tape and administrative burden, in conflict with stated aims of the reforms.
- Complex, regulatory style drafting in the Draft Order that will make the default communications agreement difficult to interpret and apply.
- Unworkable proposed commencement date of 19 October, given the existing Local Government workload supporting elections and preparing for Council Member inductions.

Draft Regulations

The Draft Regulations will:

- prescribe additional matters that must be addressed in communications agreements including providing copies of correspondence sent by the Mayor or President to all Council Members and arrangements for Commissioners;
- prescribe definitions for key terms that will apply to all communications agreements;
- amend the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021* and *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* to modify Council and employee codes of conduct.

Feedback clearly indicated the provisions dealing with Mayor / President correspondence would not be suitable for all Local Governments, with the potential to generate high volumes of largely irrelevant correspondence to all Council Members. Removal of this matter from the Draft Regulations and Draft Order would allow Local Governments to include appropriate provisions in their own communications agreements if they consider them necessary. Similarly, Local Governments strongly objected to the requirement that all communications agreements allow Commissioners special powers to determine how requests may be made and to make requests of any Local Government employee.

The Draft Regulations prescribe key definitions for "request for information" and for "administrative matters", which are subject to simplified process. The sector strongly opposes the vague and expansive definition of "request for information" as it is inconsistent with the Act, likely to cause an increased administrative burden, generate unreasonable expectations and overreach, and introduce uncertainty that increases the likelihood of disputes. The definition for "administrative matter" is more suitable, but may still be inappropriate for some Local Governments. Feedback suggested some improvements, but ultimately supported removing this definition from the Draft Regulations, to allow each Local Government to agree to an appropriate definition.

Local Governments oppose proposed amendments to the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021* that would mean Council Members were not prohibited from directing or attempting to direct an employee when making requests under a communications agreement. This would undermine a key principle of the Act, that the CEO is responsible for the direction of employees. Some responses also expressed concerns that the Codes of Conduct would be used to enforce compliance with communications agreements, regarding this as unnecessarily regulation.

Draft Order

Feedback suggested amendments to several provisions of the Draft Order. In particular, Local Governments oppose the inclusion of minimum numbers of nominated employees (employees to whom requests may be addressed). These arrangements were regarded as unnecessarily bureaucratic. The proposed mechanism for disputes also prompted concerns regarding damage to relationships, entrenching adversarial relationships between members and the CEO, abuse of the process and substantial use of resources. A significant number of Local Governments did not support empowering Council to make a final determination of disputes, or to overturn a decision of the CEO. Responses proposed a broad range of improvements to several clauses that specify the requirements and processes for requests. The most frequent amendments have been addressed in the draft WALGA Submission. However, the range of these suggestions reflect the difficulty in providing a default

communications agreement that allows for the diverse needs and contexts of Local Governments. This reinforces the need for a more principles-based, policy style drafting approach for the Draft Order.

The sector feedback and detailed analysis of the Draft Regulations and Draft Order has informed the preparation of the attached draft WALGA submission. The submission recommendations are provided below.

Submission Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Drafting style

1. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to:
 - (a) Minimise the level of prescriptive detail in the Draft Regulations to avoid unnecessary red-tape and administrative burden, which is inconsistent with reform objectives.
 - (b) Ensure that Councils and CEOs have the flexibility to adopt communications agreements that are appropriate for their needs, context, structure and resource levels.
 - (c) Simplify the Draft Order by using clear, plain language drafting.

Recommendation 2: Commencement date

2. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to revise the commencement date of the Regulations to allow at least six months after publication of the final Regulations and Order for Local Governments to prepare.

Recommendation 3: Provision of Mayor or President Correspondence to all Council Members

3. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety:
 - (a) Not to prescribe in regulations the provision of Mayor / President correspondence to all Council Members as an additional matter that must be regulated by all communications agreements.
 - (b) To delete Clause 5 of the Draft Order and exclude this matter from any future default communications agreement.

Recommendation 4: Requests for information – definition and scope

4. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to delete the words "or otherwise" and "other information" from any definitions of request for information.

Recommendation 5: Administrative matters – definition and scope

5. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to:
 - (a) Not prescribe a definition for "administrative matter" in regulations, allowing it to be defined in each communications agreement.
 - (b) Include the following definition of administrative matter in the default communications agreement:

administrative matter in relation to a council member or committee member, means support or assistance provided to an individual council member or individual committee member to facilitate an administrative process related to that member, and may include:

- (i) council and committee meeting scheduling, attendance, apologies, leave of absence, deputy committee member attendance, drafting a notice of motion or alternative motion;
- (ii) attendance at professional development, training or events, associated speech writing, ceremonial protocols, travel, accommodation and incidental expense arrangements;
- (iii) entitlements to a fee, allowance, reimbursement or superannuation;
- (iv) personal compliance obligations under the Act, Regulations, or other written law including code of conduct, conflict of interest, gift disclosure or recordkeeping requirements; or
- (v) information and communication technology software or hardware provided by the local government.

Recommendation 6: Commissioners

6. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety:
 - (a) Not to prescribe in regulations any requirement for all communications agreements to include provisions for commissioners.

- (b) Not to prescribe in regulations that commissioners may make requests to any employee, determine the manner of their requests and the manner of the response.
- (c) To delete Clauses 29 and 30 from the Draft Order.

Recommendation 7: Model Code of Conduct Amendments

- 7. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety not to proceed with the amendment to clause 20 of the Model Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates.

Recommendation 8: Clause 4 General principles

- 8. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to include an additional principle in Clause 4 that emphasises the importance of mutual respect for the separate roles and responsibilities of Council Members, Council and the CEO under the Act.

Recommendation 9: Clause 8 Nominated employees

- 9. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to:
 - (a) Delete the minimum numbers of nominated employees from Clause 8.
 - (b) Replace requirements to direct a request to "an appropriate nominated employee" with requirements to direct a request to "a nominated employee" to allow flexibility.
 - (c) Allow the CEO to keep Council Members informed of nominated employees by any appropriate method, rather than requiring maintenance of a register.

Recommendation 10: Clause 12 Information that may be requested

- 10. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to:
 - (a) Review the matters listed in Clause 12 to ensure they are clear and suitable.
 - (b) Clarify that Clause 12 is subject to Clause 13.

Recommendation 11: Clause 13 Requirements applicable to requests for information

- 11. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to:
 - (a) Consider amendment of Clause 13(2)(b) to read:
"accompanied by any supporting information that may assist the local government to respond to the request, including the relevance of the request to the functions of the requesting member under the Act or another written law."

Recommendation 12: Clause 14 Certain information not required to be provided

- 12. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to amend Clause 14(c) to provide that information is not required to be provided if it is not held by the Local Government.

Recommendation 13: Clause 15 Disputes

- 13. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to:
 - (a) Amend sub-clause 15(2) to provide that where the requesting member is the Mayor or President, the dispute should be discussed at a meeting between the requesting member, the CEO and the Deputy Mayor or President.
 - (b) Consider options for referring disputes to an impartial third party, including the Inspector if appropriate.
 - (c) Replace sub-clauses 15(3) and 15(4) with a statement noting that Council Members may bring a notice of motion for Council's consideration, with reference to Council's role under the Act.
 - (d) If Council's authority to determine disputes under sub-clauses 15(3) and 15(4) is retained, provide guidance about the scope and limitations of this authority, and the information and considerations that must inform Council's decision-making.

Recommendation 14: Division 4 Processes for requests for information

- 14. That WALGA advise the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety to clarify Clause 22 to provide additional guidance on:

- (a) when it is appropriate not to provide a copy to all members; and
- (b) the process to resolve a disagreement between the CEO and requesting member.

The Submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 20 August and provided to the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety on 22 August.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Submission on the Communications Agreements Consultation, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder***
 Seconded: *Cr Sharon Warner, Shire of Dundas*

Carried

8.6 Flying Minute – WALGA Submission on the Amendment Regulations and Draft Chapters of the WA Planning Manual

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Submission to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on the *Planning and Development Regulations Amendment (Review of Planning Instruments) Regulations 2025* and supporting Draft Chapters of the WA Planning Manual - Local Planning Schemes and the Local Planning Policy, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) is seeking comments on the *Planning and Development Regulations Amendment (Review of Planning Instruments) Regulations 2025* (Amendment Regulations) and two supporting Draft Chapters of the WA Planning Manual - Local Planning Schemes chapter (LPS Manual) and the Local Planning Policy (LPP Manual) by 3 October 2025.
- The Amendment Regulations facilitate the 10 yearly reviews of local planning instruments, introduces new provisions for local planning policies (LPPs) and expanding the circumstances where Local Government can revoke a local development plan (LDP).
- The LPP Manual was previously consulted on in late 2024 and has been updated in response to submissions received and to ensure consistency with the Amendment Regulations.
- WALGA's submission broadly supports the Amendment Regulations and Manuals, recognising they will modernise planning processes and provide contemporary guidance and resources. The submission includes recommendations on standardising and improving accessibility of local planning frameworks, enhancing WAPC accountability and transparency, and addressing resourcing and implementation challenges.
- The submission was endorsed by the Environment Policy Team on 18 September and State Council via Flying Minute on 30 September.

ATTACHMENT

- [Submission to the Amendment Regulations and supporting Draft Chapters of the WA Planning Manual - Local Planning Schemes and the Local Planning Policy](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's submission is consistent with WALGA [Advocacy Positions](#) 6.1 Planning Principles and Reform, 6.12 Special Residential Zone, 6.17 Renewable Energy Facilities, 6.18 Priority Agriculture and 4.5 Urban Forest.

BACKGROUND

The Amendment Regulations are necessary to implement Part 9A of the *Planning and Development Amendment Act 2023*, which introduces a 10-year review cycle for State and local planning instruments under the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

Importantly Part 2 of the Amendment Regulations, seeks to amend the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* to:

1. Facilitate 10 yearly reviews of local planning instruments (local planning schemes and local planning strategies) including a Report of Review (RoR) process. Currently local planning schemes are required to be reviewed every five years.
2. Introduce new provisions relating to the manner and form, purpose, duration, review, and extension of LPPs. This includes introducing a five-year lifespan for LPPs and the requirement for LPPs to be prepared in a standard manner and form. Currently LPPs are not subject to a statutory timeframe or review requirements or a specific manner and form template.
3. Expand the circumstances where Local Government can revoke a LDP. Currently LDPs can only be revoked if the development to which the plan relates becomes a non-conforming use.

The LPS Manual provides an extensive guide to support the preparation, amendment, review and assessment of local planning schemes (LPS), elaborating on the requirements of the Regulations. The LPS Manual consolidates a significant number of documents into a single, practical guide, supplemented by relevant appendices, including manner and form documents.

The LPP Manual was previously consulted on in late 2024 and has been updated in response to submissions received and to ensure consistency with changes proposed by the Amendment Regulations. WALGA prepared a [response](#) to the previous draft Manual, raising concerns that the changes to the Regulations and the LPP Manual shouldn't have the effect of incrementally standardising the content and narrowing the scope of LPPs which remain one of the few planning instruments over which Local Governments retain control.

WALGA, alongside DPLH hosted an Information Session for Local Governments on Thursday, 7 August 2025 on the Amendment Regulations and Manuals.

COMMENT

WALGA's submission broadly supports the Amendment Regulations and Manuals, recognising they will modernise planning processes and provide contemporary guidance and resources, enhancing consistency across local planning frameworks.

However, the submission raises the following matters that require addressing:

- local planning framework standardisation should not be at the expense of robust local planning instruments, specifically LPPs, that enable context appropriate outcomes and reflect the unique characteristics of individual communities.
- local planning instruments should be clear, user-friendly, and written in plain language for all stakeholders.
- WAPC processes and decisions should be subject to appropriate statutory timeframes and transparency, consistent with the requirements placed on Local Government.
- Additional support and resources may be required to help Local Governments meet expected timeframes and deliverables, particularly in regional areas where planning workforce shortages are more pronounced.

WALGA's submission was informed by feedback at the Information Session, Local Government officer input, and WALGA's previous submissions and advocacy positions, specifically 6.1 Planning Principles and Reform.

The submission was endorsed by the Environment Policy Team on 18 September and State Council via Flying Minute on 30 September.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Submission to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on the *Planning and Development Regulations Amendment (Review of Planning Instruments) Regulations 2025* and supporting Draft Chapters of the WA Planning Manual - Local Planning Schemes and the Local Planning Policy, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute noting the comments submitted by its State Councillor.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Sharon Warner, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance

Carried

8.7 Flying Minute – WALGA Submission on Phase 2 Reforms to Western Australia's Working with Children Check Law

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Submission on Phase 2 Reforms to Western Australia's Working with Children Check Law, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 26 August 2025, the WA Department of Communities (DoC) released a public Consultation Paper seeking feedback on potential [Phase Two reforms to Western Australia's \(WA\) Working with Children law](#).
- The Consultation period closed on 23 September, however WALGA secured an extension until 14 October 2025.
- The potential Phase 2 reforms aim to:
 - Improve protections for WA's children by updating the [Working with Children \(Screening\) Act 2004](#) (WWC Act) scope to reflect contemporary service provision.
 - Ensure that regardless of where a child lives, they are provided a consistent level of protection by increased national consistency across State and Territory WWC Schemes to the extent possible and appropriate.
- WALGA's submission was informed by Member feedback and provided technical detail on the issues the sector would want to see included in the reforms.
- WALGA's submission recommended that the potential Phase 2 reforms:
 - Amend the WWC Act definitions of 'contact' or 'child-related work' to more appropriately reflect the variety of engagement Local Government staff and Elected Members have with children.
 - That the WWC Act includes a category for those in positions whose duties require ongoing contact with children.
 - That both commercial and non-commercial services remain captured under the WWC Act.
- The submission was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team on 30 September and State Council via Flying Minute on 8 October.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute: Submission on Phase 2 Reforms of Western Australia's Working with Children Check Law](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This Submission aligns to the following Advocacy Positions:

[3.6 Children and Young People:](#)

The Local Government sector supports the development and well-being of children and young people through strategic partnerships and a combination of services and facility provision. The Association advocates that the State and Commonwealth should continue to invest in the wellbeing of young West Australians.

[3.10.2 Child Safeguarding:](#)

1. *Local Government supports:*
 - a. *the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017, in particular Recommendation 6.12 which can be achieved by Local Government implementing and embedding child safeguarding across its functions with support from Governments at the national, state and territory levels; and*
 - b. *the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Humans Rights Commission).*
2. *The State Government through an Independent Oversight Body should provide financial, resourcing and capacity building support to Local Governments to implement and embed child safeguarding across its functions, through the provision of:*
 - i. *supporting materials such as template policies, procedures and guidelines;*
 - ii. *consistent key messaging and resources to promote and share in venues and facilities and online;*
 - iii. *examples of best practice, including case studies;*
 - iv. *self-assessment tools to assist Local Government;*

- v. *ongoing training and skills development for Local Government staff, including online training options;*
 - vi. *funding for the delivery of the child safeguarding function within smaller, less well resourced (Band 3 and Band 4) Local Governments; and*
 - vii. *expert officers within each region to provide support and guidance to Local Government on child safeguarding.*
3. *The Local Government sector supports Local Government participation in the State's National Redress Scheme, with full financial coverage by the State.*

BACKGROUND

The WWC Act requires Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for employees and volunteers undertaking child-related work to minimise the risk of harm to children. On 1 July 2023 the Department of Communities [Phase 1 WWCC reforms](#) came into effect. Reforms to WWCC systems are undertaken within the context of the recommendations of the [Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse](#) (Royal Commission) and media coverage of child abuse cases.

The potential Phase 2 reform to the WWC Act consultation paper was released on 26 August 2025. The Paper aimed to provide a framework to feedback on potential Phase 2 reforms to the WWC Act in response to the [Working with Children Check Report](#) recommendations from the Royal Commission. The reforms seek to balance capturing persons relevant under the WWC Act and ensuring the system remains effective and not overloaded.

Local Governments have a broad engagement with children across a variety of roles and duties including:

- direct service provision such as child and youth programs
- community facing roles such as customer service officers and community safety rangers
- roles that engage with children as part of their wider roles and responsibilities, including elected members.

Most Local Government services that engage children are captured by the WWC Act under category 18, 'children's entertainment or party services'. This is not an accurate representation of Local Government staff's engagement with children. Furthermore, Local Government staff receive inconsistent advice of the application of the categories, and which roles require WWCC.

COMMENT

WALGA's submission made 8 recommendations:

1. That the phase 2 reforms review the definitions of 'contact' or 'child-related work' and categories to more appropriately reflect contemporary service models and the variety of engagement Local Government staff and Elected Members have with children.
2. That the current WWCC categories are reviewed to ensure they adequately capture the extent of support services provided by Local Governments.
3. That both commercial and non-commercial services remain captured under the legislation.
4. That a category that better defines community facing services undertaken by Local Governments is introduced.
5. That employers are not required to inform the WWCC Screening Unit when a person commences or ceases being engaged by them in child-related employment, and that penalties are not applied.
6. That a nationally consistent WWCC scheme is implemented and accepted across all jurisdictions, with provisions for transitional and processing costs.
7. That the WA Government mandate the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
8. That the WA Government establish an independent child safeguarding oversight body.

The submission was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team on 30 September and State Council via Flying Minute on 8 October.

WALGA will continue to work with the Department of Communities to ensure a statewide culture of child safety and further detailed consultation on the implementation of the WWCC Phase 2 reforms with the Local Government sector.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Submission on Phase 2 Reforms to Western Australia’s Working with Children Check Law, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Cr Anthony Ball, Shire of Coolgardie***
 Seconded: *Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie*

Carried

8.8 Flying Minute – WALGA Submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 26 August, WALGA was invited to make a submission to the Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities.
- The Consultation period closed on 12 October.
- The WALGA submission was informed by feedback from Members and provided high level commentary on this emerging policy direction from the State Government.
- WALGA's submission supported increased community use of WA public school facilities but recommended that the:
 - Local Government sector be included as a key stakeholder in the development and delivery of community use of public school facilities initiatives.
 - State Government prioritises the development of policy frameworks and clarifies roles and responsibilities in consultation with all involved parties to address the identified barriers to community use agreements.
 - State Government establishes funding mechanisms to supplement costs incurred by Local Governments related to community use of public school facilities.
- The submission was endorsed by the People and Place Policy team on 30 September and was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 8 October.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute: Submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The submission aligns to WALGA [Advocacy Position 3.7 Community Infrastructure](#):

Local Governments own, lease, and maintain vital community infrastructure across Western Australia that delivers essential benefits to local communities. Local Governments face significant funding pressures to ensure this infrastructure is effectively planned, developed, maintained, and enhanced to meet evolving community needs and population growth.

1. WALGA calls on the Australian Government to provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.
2. WALGA calls on the State Government to:
 - a. Provide \$60 million per annum for the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund, separate to the PlayOn WA 2030 Funding commitments.
 - b. Provide \$60 million per annum for community arts and cultural infrastructure,
 - c. Provide funding for retrofitting accessible design features to community infrastructure,
 - d. Align all community infrastructure funding with existing State co-contribution of at least two-thirds.

BACKGROUND

The Education and Health Standing Committee sought feedback on the community use of WA public school facilities, with a focus on the:

- benefits and risks of community use of public school facilities,
- patterns of community use across WA,
- current policy framework and other arrangements that guide community use,
- barriers to maximising community use,
- opportunities to enable increased use of public school facilities,
- approaches taken to promote community use of school facilities by non-government schools, and in other jurisdictions.

Local Governments are key providers and operators of community facilities. Local Governments across WA reported that community demand for sport facilities is growing significantly beyond the capacity of existing infrastructure. The [ALGA National State of Assets Report](#) highlights the significant need for replacement of Local Government buildings and facilities due to poor condition, function, and capacity.

Existing funding mechanisms available to Local Governments to support the development and maintenance of community infrastructure are typically oversubscribed, focused on sports facilities and not of sufficient value to meet demand. This issue is a central element of the Community Infrastructure advocacy position endorsed by State Council in September 2025.

The Community Use of School Sporting Facilities Program is a \$10 million initiative of the State Government, jointly developed by the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) and the Department of Education (DoE), that aims to increase use of public school sporting facilities in Western Australia. Local Governments are currently not eligible for this funding.

COMMENT

WALGA's submission supported increased utilisation of school facilities for community use as a cost effective mechanism for a meeting increasing demand.

The submission made 3 recommendations:

1. That the Local Government sector be included as a key stakeholder in the development and delivery of community use of public school facilities initiatives.
2. That the State Government prioritises the development of policy frameworks and clarifies roles and responsibilities in consultation with all involved parties to address the identified barriers to community use agreements.
3. That the State Government provide Local Governments with additional funding for administrative or maintenance costs associated with community use of public schools.

The submission was endorsed by the People and Place Policy team on 30 September and was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 8 October.

WALGA and representative Local Governments have been invited to attend an inquiry hearing. WALGA will continue to work with the Committee and State Government agencies on this matter.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Sharon Warner, Shire of Dundas
Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora

Carried

8.9 Flying Minute – WALGA Submission to the Federal Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Submission to the Federal Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In July 2025, the Senate agreed that the National Cultural Policy Inquiry be re-adopted in the 48th Parliament.
- The Consultation period closed on 3 October, however WALGA secured an extension until 14 October.
- ALGA is also provided a submission to the inquiry which the WALGA submission referenced.
- WALGA's submission highlighted the important role of the Western Australian Local Government in fostering the creative industries sector.
- WALGA's submission made 3 recommendations:
 - Future Revive implementation should be developed in consultation with the Local Government sector to identify and prioritise locally based need.
 - The Australian Government provide sustainable funding streams for Local Governments to build and maintain arts and cultural infrastructure to meet community accessibility requirements.
 - That the Australian Government provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.
- The submission was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team on 30 September and was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 8 October.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute: Submission to the Federal Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The submission aligns to WALGA [Advocacy Position 3.7 Community Infrastructure](#):

Local Governments own, lease, and maintain vital community infrastructure across Western Australia that delivers essential benefits to local communities. Local Governments face significant funding pressures to ensure this infrastructure is effectively planned, developed, maintained, and enhanced to meet evolving community needs and population growth.

1. WALGA calls on the Australian Government to provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.
2. WALGA calls on the State Government to:
 - a. Provide \$60 million per annum for the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund, separate to the PlayOn WA 2030 Funding commitments.
 - b. Provide \$60 million per annum for community arts and cultural infrastructure,
 - c. Provide funding for retrofitting accessible design features to community infrastructure,
 - d. Align all community infrastructure funding with existing State co-contribution of at least two-thirds.

BACKGROUND

The Australian Government's 2023 [National Cultural Policy](#) (Revive) provides a five-year plan to revive the arts in Australia. Revive sets out the Australian Government's ambition to "change the trajectory of the creative sector, to deliver new momentum." Revive contains 85 actions structured around five interconnected pillars:

1. First Nations first
2. A place for every story
3. Centrality of the artist
4. Strong cultural infrastructure
5. Engaging the audience

In July 2025, the Senate agreed that the National Cultural Policy Inquiry be re-adopted in the 48th Parliament for inquiry and report. The terms of reference for the Inquiry are broad: To inquire into: a. the National Cultural Policy released on 30 January 2023; and b. any other related matters.

Local Governments play a key role in supporting place-based arts and cultural practices, including a significant level of financial investment. The role on Local Governments is not well represented in Revive.

The Australian Government published [progress on the implementation of Revive](#) in September 2025.

COMMENT

WALGA's submission focussed on the gaps in implementation of Revive actions, with an emphasis on the need for increased investment in cultural infrastructure, consistent with the revised Community Infrastructure Advocacy Position endorsed by State Council in September 2025.

WALGA's submission highlighted the important role WA Local Governments have as providers and operators of cultural infrastructure and the wider benefits these facilities provide for community cohesion and wellbeing. Reference was also made to the sectors local level expertise and relationships that can support the implementation of Revive and wider Australian Government priorities on regional prosperity and economic growth.

The submission made 3 recommendations:

1. Future Revive implementation should be developed in consultation with the Local Government sector to identify and prioritise locally based need.
2. The Australian Government provide sustainable funding streams for Local Governments to build and maintain arts and cultural infrastructure to meet community accessibility requirements.
3. That the Australian Government provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.

The submission was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team on 30 September and was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 8 October.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Submission to the Federal Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora

Seconded: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

9. Other State Council Agenda Items

9.1 Policy Team and Committee Reports or the Organisational Key Activity Reports State Council Agenda Items

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

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the Policy Team and Committee; and the Organisational Key Activity Reports to be presented at the meeting as received.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**
 Seconded: Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance

Carried

9.2 President's Report

WALGA Recommendation

That the President's Report for December 2025 be received. (refer to Attachment 3)

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the President's Report for December 2025 to be presented at the meeting as received.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**
 Seconded: Cr Anthony Ball, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

9.3 Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions - To the December 2025 State Council Meeting

GVROC COMMENT:

Additional to the Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions, **Attachment 4** provides the relevant Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the Complete State Council Status Report to the December 2025 State Council meeting and the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora**
 Seconded: Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance

Carried

10. LATE ITEMS as notified, introduced by decision of the Meeting

10.1 Rateability of Miscellaneous and Mining Leases – Sector Support Discussion

GVROC Recommendation from meeting on 14 November 2025

That the GVROC:

1. Endorses the WALGA and Shire of Mount Magnet positions in opposing any amendment to the *Local Government Act 1995* that removes the rateability of Miscellaneous Licences or Mining Leases;
2. Supports the GVROC Chair and Executive Officer writing to the Minister for Local Government to express the GVROC's strong concerns of the introduction of the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025* to Parliament.
3. Request the GVROC Executive Officer to seek clarification on the issue from WALGA and a copy of the letter it has sent to the Minister for Local Government and bring the item back to the GVROC State Council meeting on 24 November 2025 for further consideration and discussion.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Tim Carmody, Shire of Wiluna

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

Attachments

[Local Government Amendment \(Rating of Certain Mining Licences\) Bill 2025](#)

WALGA letter to Minister Beazley - Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025 (ID 852358) (**Attachment 5**)

Background

On 8 July 2025, the Supreme Court of Western Australia determined that occupied Miscellaneous Licences are rateable under section 6.26(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Despite this judicial clarification, on 1 August 2025, the Minister for Local Government announced the State Government's intention to introduce legislation to make Miscellaneous Licences non-rateable.

This proposal would override the Supreme Court's ruling and remove an established, lawful revenue stream available to Local Governments. The impact would fall most heavily on regional and remote Band 3 and 4 Local Governments, which service large mining operations but receive limited compensation for infrastructure wear, environmental health oversight, or community service impacts caused by mining activity.

The Shire of Mount Magnet CEO, Tralee Cable, submitted a motion to the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting opposing any amendment to the *Local Government Act 1995* that would restrict Local Governments' ability to rate Miscellaneous Licences.

On 23 October 2025, the State Government as highlighted by the Minister for Local Government on 1 August 2025 introduced the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025* to Parliament (see attached link).

The Bill aims to give effect to the decision to legislate changes to the rating of miscellaneous licenses on Crown Land, undermining the decision of the Supreme Court of Western Australia.

WALGA has advised it has serious concerns about the proposed legislation, which, if passed, will:

- Prohibit Local Governments from rating Crown land that is the subject of a Miscellaneous Licence or a Small Prospecting Licence held under the *Mining Act 1978*. A Small Prospecting Licence is defined as a prospecting licence held in respect to land which does not exceed 10 ha. Collectively these are referred to as 'licence land'.
- Extinguish all rates imposed on licence land dating back to the 2017/2018 financial year.
- Compel Local Governments to refund any rates collected for licence land during this time period, including any additional charges, interest or costs of proceedings to recover rates.

- Require Local Governments to pay any refunds within 28 days from the day after the Amendment Act receives Royal Assent.
- Allow a ratepayer to recover the paid amount in the courts as a debt due if the Local Government does not meet the 14-day time period.

WALGA considers the proposed amendments to be unnecessarily punitive and disproportionate in their impact on any Local Government that has lawfully levied rates on occupied land under miscellaneous licences.

WALGA have written to the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne to express their strong concerns and to urge the Cook Government to reconsider both the scope and timing of the proposed changes (see **Attachment 5**).

WALGA maintains that Local Governments should retain the right to rate miscellaneous licences, as determined by the Supreme Court.

However, if the Government proceeds with the exemption, WALGA are advocating for it to take effect from the 2026/27 financial year, with a prohibition on reassessing rate records for miscellaneous or prospecting licences. This would prevent future levying while allowing communities to retain rates already collected lawfully.

Officer Comments

As per the request at the GVROC meeting on 14 November 2025, the GVROC Executive Officer has obtained a copy of the WALGA letter to Minister Beazley outlining the concerns of the Local Government sector on the introduction of this bill to Parliament.

Using the information from WALGA's letter it recommended that the GVROC urgently proceed with a letter of its own expressing the same concerns raised by WALGA and to send this to the Minister Beazley and also to the Minister for Goldfields, David Michael MLA.

GVROC RECOMMENDATION:

That the GVROC:

1. Notes the WALGA letter to Minister Beazley outlining the concerns with the [Local Government Amendment \(Rating of Certain Mining Licences\) Bill 2025](#).
2. Requests the GVROC Chair and Executive Officer write to the Minister and Shadow Minister for Local Government to express the GVROC's strong concerns of the introduction of the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025* to Parliament.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie
Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora

Carried

10.2 GVROC Regional Climate Alliance Coordinator Contract

GVROC Recommendation from meeting on 14 November 2025

That the GVROC:

1. Note the GVROC Executive Officer's assessment review and performance of the GVROC RCA Coordinator for the period February 2025 to December 2025.
2. Endorse Niki Curtis to continue in the role as the GVROC RCA Coordinator for a further two years months from January 2026 to December 2027 as per the attached contract renewal and KPI's.
3. Request that the GVROC Chair and the GVROC Executive Officer execute the contract and continue to monitor performance against the KPI's and initiate discussions relevant to contract review/renewal 3 months prior (October 2027) to the contract end date of 31 December 2027.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies***
 Seconded: *Cr Jill Dwyer, Shire of Menzies*

Carried

Officer Comments

During the discussion on the renewal of Niki Curtis contract for the RCA Coordinator role there was some confusion regarding the funding of the position and whether as like the GVROC Executive Officer contract resolution that a CPI increase should also be approved.

The GVROC now fully fund the RCA Coordinator role, with the original seed funding provided by DWER under the grant program completed and the decision made by the GVROC to continue and self-fund the RCA and the RCA Coordinator role. The GVROC does look to offset some of the cost of the RCA Coordinator position with any grant funds that the GVROC attracts related to the RCA, which reduces the impact on the GVROC budget. However, the current GVROC budget can accommodate the funding of this position with an increase in CPI if the GVROC wish to endorse this as part the contract renewal for Niki Curtis as it did for the GVROC Executive role.

GVROC RECOMMENDATION:

That the GVROC in addition to the resolution from its meeting on 14 November 2025:

1. As part of Agenda Item 11.9 Recommendation 2, endorse a CPI indexed increase (3.2%) on the current hourly rate charged (\$120 and hour) by the RCA Coordinator from the start of the new contract, 1 January 2026, bringing the new hourly rate to \$124.00.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance***
 Seconded: *Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder*

Carried

10.3 Polyphagous shot-hole borer Update – November 2025

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

The WALGA Polyphagous shot-hole borer Update is provided to Zones for information and noting.

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.

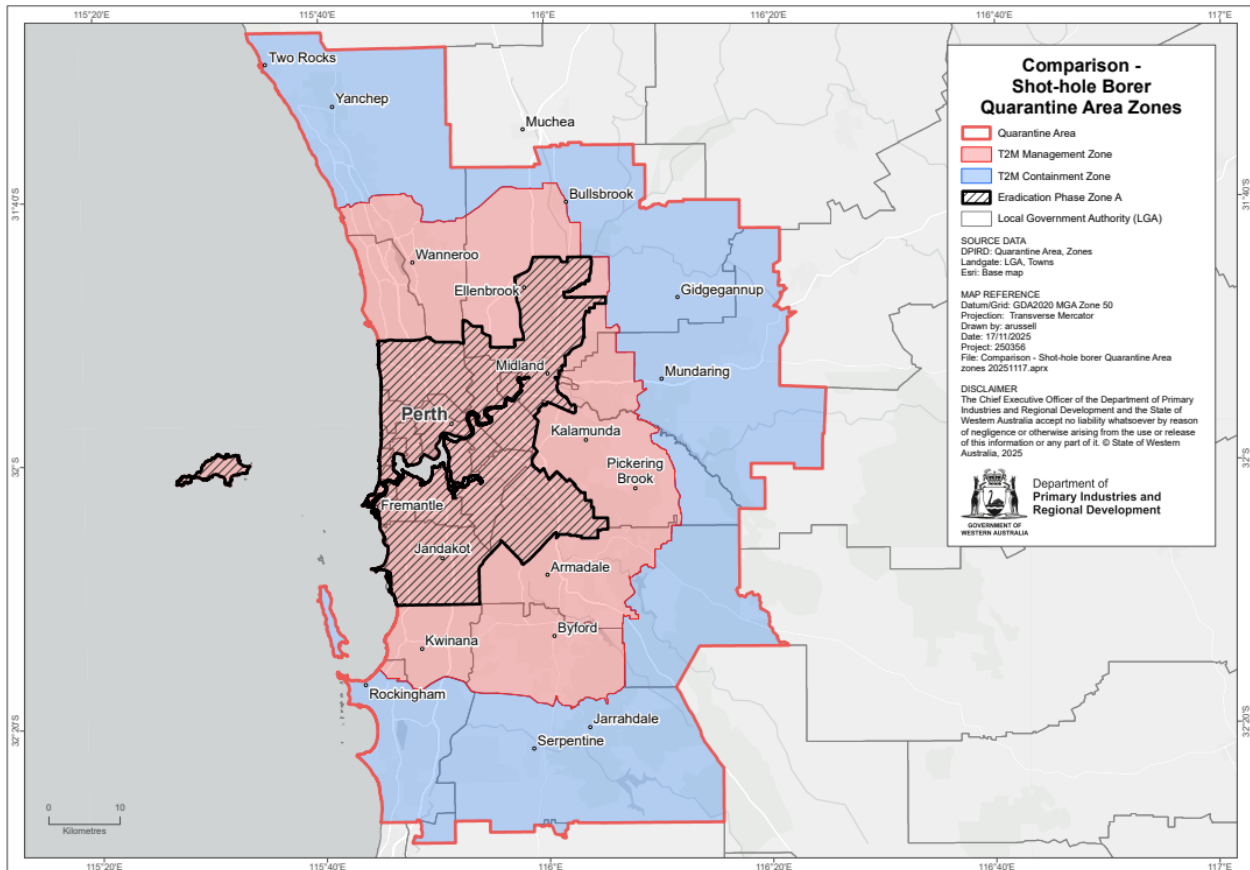


Figure 1: Quarantine Area, with Management and Containment Zones, compared to previous Zone A and B

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.

GVROC COMMENTS

While the GVROC has noted the WALGA updates in Agenda Item 8.2 and this item at 10.3 it makes the following comments for consideration by WALGA and the State Council.

- The GVROC request stronger communication and transparency in the provision of more information and updates from the State Government and DPIRD that will assist all local governments that have now been left with responsibility to manage the PSHB situation and containing its potential spread outside the current expanded quarantine areas.
- The GVROC would like to strong advocacy position from WALGA to request from the State Government the reintroduction of dedicated bio-security officers being placed out in the regions to manage ongoing and new biosecurity threats. Having on the ground officers has worked in the past and should be reintroduced to assist local governments in the regions.

GVROC RECOMMENDATION:

That the GVROC note the WALGA update on the Polyphagous shot-hole borer.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Paul Wilcox, Shire of Coolgardie
Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora

Carried

10.4 Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability

BACKGROUND

The Federal Parliament House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport adopted an inquiry into local government funding and fiscal sustainability on 6 November 2025, following a referral from the Minister for Emergency Management; Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, the Hon Kristy McBain MP.

The **Terms of Reference** for the inquiry are as follows:

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport will inquire into and report on local government funding and fiscal sustainability, with a particular focus on:

1. Interactions between Governments

- i. Assess the nature and scale of Australian, state and territory government funding provided to local government, both directly and through Commonwealth-state agreements.
- ii. Examine the legislative and policy frameworks underpinning Commonwealth financial support to local government.

2. Identification of All Funding Sources

- i. Identify and map all sources of funding received by local government from the Australian Government and state/territory governments, including:
 - a. Untied grants (e.g., Financial Assistance Grants).
 - b. Tied/specific-purpose grants and project-based programs, co-contribution requirements and competitive grant processes.
 - c. Revenue sharing arrangements (e.g., stamp duty, rates capping subsidies, GST-related disbursements where applicable).
 - d. Emergency, disaster recovery and resilience funding.
 - e. One-off or ad hoc funding streams.
- ii. Examine local government own-source revenue (such as rates, fees, charges and commercial activities).

3. Impacts and Effectiveness

- i. Evaluate how funding arrangements, including indexation freezing, influence the financial sustainability, service delivery capacity and infrastructure investment of local governments.
- ii. Consider whether existing funding mechanisms are addressing the evolving responsibilities of local governments.
- iii. Identify barriers to infrastructure service delivery, including trends in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, impediments to security for local government workers and impacts of labour hire practices.
- iv. Explore opportunities to improve productivity and coordination of local government.

4. Previous Inquiry

- i. Consider evidence provided to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport of the 47th Parliament [Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability](#)

5. Other relevant matters

Committee Secretariat contact:

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Phone: +61 2 6277 2232
rdit.reps@aph.gov.au

COMMENT

The Office of Rick Wilson MP Federal Member for O'Connor on the 19 November 2025 contacted the GVROC Executive Officer to bring to the GVROC's attention an important opportunity to contribute to this Federal Government Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.

This inquiry will provide a vital opportunity for O'Connor councils and organisations to share how appropriate and sustainable funding is essential for the long-term success, safety and viability of our regional communities.

Further details Terms of Reference and how to make a submissions can be found on the inquiry webpage: [House of Reps Inquiry - Local Government Funding](#) and are open until **3 February 2026**

Rick Wilson MP has stated that even a concise submission from our organisation can make a valuable contribution.

Rick has also advised if anyone would like to discuss potential points for inclusion, please feel free to contact him directly at rick.wilson.mp@aph.gov.au or call one of the offices.

GVROC RECOMMENDATION:

That the GVROC:

1. note the terms of reference for the Federal Parliament House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport inquiry into local government funding and fiscal sustainability with submission closing on 3 February 2026.
2. Endorse a combined GVROC submission to the inquiry.
3. If endorsed in Recommendation 2, request all GVROC LGA CEOs to provide comment and feedback to the GVROC Executive Officer by the 9 January 2026 so a submission can be finalised for consideration by the GVROC at its meeting on 30 January 2026 prior to submission.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder

Seconded: Cr Anthony Ball, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

11. FUTURE MEETINGS

The following suggested dates in 2026 have been set for the GVROC meetings.

- **30 January 2026** in Kalgoorlie (to be hosted by City of Kalgoorlie Boulder)
- **27 March 2026** in Esperance (to be hosted by Shire of Esperance)
- **29 May 2026** in Wiluna (to be hosted by Shire of Wiluna)
- **31 July 2026** in Menzies (to be hosted by Shire of Menzies)
- **August/September 2026** in Norseman (to be hosted by Shire of Dundas) **TBC**
- **16-18 September 2026** (WALGA LGA Convention and AGM in Perth)
- **13 November 2026** in Leonora (to be hosted by Shire of Leonora)

The following are the WALGA State Council meeting dates for 2026 with suggested GVROC Zoom video conference meeting dates prior to these to inform the GVROC's representatives attending the meetings with relevant input for State Council Agenda Items:

- 4 March 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **20 February 2026**
- 6 May 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **24 April 2026**
- 1 July 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **19 June 2026**
- 4 September 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **21 August 2026**
- 2 December 2026 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **23 November 2026**

12. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10:07am.