

Pilbara Country Zone Minutes

21 August 2024

**Held at the City of Vincent
244 Vincent Street, Leederville**

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Zone Delegates were requested to provide sufficient written notice, wherever possible, on amendments to recommendations within the State Council or Zone agenda to the Zone Chair and Secretariat prior to the Zone meeting.

Agenda Papers were emailed 7 days prior to the meeting date.

Confirmation of Attendance An attendance sheet was circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes of previous meeting
2. August 2024 Update – Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries
3. President's Report

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The Chair, Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks opened the meeting at 3:21pm.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

City of Karratha

Mayor Daniel Scott
Cr Brenton Johannsen
Mr Simon Kot, A/Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate

Town of Port Hedland

Mayor Peter Carter
Cr Ash Christensen
Mr Carl Askew, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate

Shire of East Pilbara

President Anthony Middleton
Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks - **Chair**
Mr Steven Harding, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate

Shire of Ashburton

President Audra Smith
Cr Alana Sullivan
Mr Kenn Donohoe, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate

WALGA Secretariat

Cr Paul Kelly, Deputy President
Mr Tony Brown, Executive Director, Member Services
Ms Chantelle O'Brien, Zone Executive Officer

GUEST SPEAKERS

Department of Transport

Mr Richard Davies, Senior Policy and Project Officer

1.3 APOLOGIES

DLGSC Representative

Mr Toby Cotterell, Regional Manager

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the delegates of the Pilbara Country Zone acknowledge the traditional owners of this land that we are meeting on today and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 DEPUTATIONS

4.1 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

The State Government recognises the need for an integrated, multi-modal regional transport strategy for Western Australia (WA), that will facilitate growth and secure optimal network performance for the WA regional freight network.

In July 2022, Infrastructure WA released its State Infrastructure Strategy, Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow, that recommended developing, publishing and implementing a new regional transport strategy.

The Department of Transport (the Department) is developing the Regional Freight Strategy (the Strategy) in close collaboration with the Freight and Logistics Council of WA, industry, government, and community stakeholders.

Since the development of the previous regional freight plan (Western Australian Regional Freight Transport Network Plan) in 2013, a raft of shocks has impacted the global economy, including the COVID 19 pandemic, technological change, deteriorating climatic conditions and more extreme weather events. WA needs a new strategy to ensure the ongoing relevance of regional freight planning in this changing social and economic context.

The Department is conducting a series of consultations across WA to gather information from businesses, government bodies, industry associations, and special interest groups about the state's current and future freight tasks and the supply chains required to address these tasks. This work also includes seeking the views of Local Government Authorities through a range of different forums.

The input gathered from these consultations will feed into the development of the Strategy. The Strategy will provide holistic and cross-regional guidance for freight movements across all regions of WA over the next 10 years, excluding Perth and Peel.

The Strategy will provide strategic directions for infrastructure investment and policy development for the public and private sectors.

A discussion paper was attached with the agenda and was previously distributed to freight industry stakeholders in the region.

Richard Davies, Senior Policy and Project Officer from the Department of Transport provided a brief presentation.

A copy of the presentation is **attached** with the Minutes.

4.2 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES – EMERGENCY RELIEF AND SUPPORT

The Emergency Relief and Support Directorate provided an update on the state-wide audit of evacuation centres. This update explored the findings and potential funding opportunities to address risks associated with cyclones.

Jeanette Gould, Regional Manager Pilbara/Kimberley and Sharna Sumpton, Manager Strategy and Capability presented on the team's recent state-wide audit of evacuation centres. This audit was brought about from lessons learned activities in relation to Communities' responses to Severe Tropical Cyclone Seroja and Tropical Cyclone Ilsa.

Communities aimed to gather additional information on risks associated with opening an evacuation centre in response to specific hazards. This includes factors such as backup power and flood vulnerability, as well as factors associated with the structural integrity of a building during a cyclone. Communities would like to discuss grant funding opportunities that could improve Local Government facilities and increase the number of cyclone-suitable evacuation centres in the Pilbara region.

A copy of the presentation is **attached** with the Minutes.

Noted

5 AGENCY REPORTS

5.1 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES UPDATE REPORT

The August 2024 report from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) was provided as an attachment within the agenda.

Noted

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Anthony Middleton

Seconded: Mayor Peter Carter

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Pilbara Country Zone held on 21 June 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

7 BUSINESS ARISING

7.1 STATUS REPORT

BACKGROUND

Presenting the Status Report for August 2024 which contains WALGA's responses to the resolutions of previous Zone Meetings.

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
22 February 2024 Zone Agenda Item 6.2 Remote Area Residential Fuel – Fringe Benefits Tax Exemption Request	That the Pilbara Country Zone request WALGA advocate to the Federal Government to provide a 100% Fringe Benefits tax exemption to remote area residential fuel when provided in conjunction with an accommodation-related Fringe Benefit in a remote area.	This issue will be discussed with the Australian Local Government Association.	June 2024 Ongoing	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
18 April 2024 Zone Agenda Item 8.2 Enhanced and Alternative Education Opportunities for Regional WA	That the Pilbara Country Zone; 1. Supports the call to action to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities, 2. Agrees to write to the Minister for Education requesting action; and 3. Requests the WALGA Secretariat to advocate to State Government on this matter.	WALGA notes that the Pilbara Country Zone supports the call to action raised by the Great Southern Zone to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities and that the Zone will write to the Minister for Education on the matter. WALGA understands that the Great Southern Zone received a response to their letter to the Minister of Education on this issue on 24 April 2024. The letter references a number of initiatives including a \$7.1 million funding boost for the School of Isolated and Distance Education, a proposed expansion of VET certificates in the coming years, Education and Training Participation Plans, the support provided by the School of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour and Engagement located in Albany, the recently announced federally funded two new Regional University Study Hubs, further financial investment in the attraction and retention payments/packages, and a	August 2024	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039

		<p>developing Regional Education Strategy.</p> <p>WALGA is also aware that the Great Southern Zone has raised these issues directly with Department of Education representatives at recent Zone meetings.</p> <p>WALGA notes that 2024-25 State Budget included an additional \$10 million for the School of Isolated and Distance Education.</p> <p>WALGA is continuing to advocate broadly on issues that intersect with regional education such as Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH). WALGA has written to the Department of Communities Deputy Director General, Housing and Assets on this matter. Department of Communities officials will present on the GROH program at the July Strategic Forum.</p> <p>On the 22 July, the Department of Education released a draft Regional Education Strategy. The Strategy aims to provide a framework to guide more effective delivery of regional education, focusing on improved educational and wellbeing opportunities across four pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pillar 1: Build the capability of our regional workforce Pillar 2: Expand curriculum delivery Pillar 3: Strengthen support for student wellbeing Pillar 4: Develop partnerships to create opportunity <p>Country zones and Local Governments are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the strategy, particularly given the relevance of the Strategy to matters raised by the Great Southern Zone with support from other country zones.</p> <p>The consultation period closes on Friday 20 September 2024. More information is available here.</p> <p>WALGA has partnered with the Department of Education to facilitate an information and feedback session on the Strategy priority pillars. The session will be held online on Wednesday 21 August 2:30 -3:30pm. A registration link will be sent via LG Direct.</p>		
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21 June 2024 Zone Agenda Item 7.3 Live Sheep Exports by Sea	That the Pilbara Country Zone support the State Government in their advocacy against the Commonwealth legislation against Live Sheep Export by sea. ACTION – Zone Executive Officer to prepare a letter from the Pilbara Country Zone to all Country Zone Chairs to advise of the Zone's above position, offer empathy and share support on this matter.	Letters were prepared and sent to each of the following Country Zone Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Country Zone • Great Eastern Country Zone • Great Southern Country Zone • Goldfields-Esperance Country Zone and • South West Country Zone Action has been completed.	August 2024	Chantelle O'Brien, Governance Support Officer 9213 2013 cobrien@walga.asn.au
18 April 2024 Zone Agenda Item 8.1 State Government Owned Infrastructure	That the Pilbara Country Zone request WALGA to raise the matter of investigating infrastructure that are Local Government operated buildings with the Office of the Auditor General.	This item will be considered at the June 2024 meeting of the Governance Policy Team and the Zone will be advised accordingly.	June 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director, Member Services 9213 2051 tbrown@walga.asn.au

This is an opportunity for Member Councils to consider the response from WALGA in respect to the matters that were submitted at the previous Zone Meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Anthony Middleton

Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

That the Pilbara Country Zone notes the August 2024 Status Report.

CARRIED

8 ZONE BUSINESS

8.1 REQUEST TO CHANGE NOVEMBER ZONE MEETING DATE

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

Prior to the August meeting, a request from the Chair was raised to consider changing the date of the November Zone meeting as the Shire of East Pilbara's Council meeting events will be around the same day and may result in the CEO and Delegates having to leave the Zone meeting early to get back to Newman in time.

To allow members to consider this request, the secretariat has proposed alternative dates that do not coincide with member Local Governments Council meeting dates. These options are:

- Tuesday, 19 November
- Monday, 25 November

Zone meeting dates for 2025 will be an item for consideration at the November meeting and will ensure that such conflicts can be avoided in the future.

The meeting will commence at 3pm as resolved at the June meeting and to be held in the Boardroom, Level 3 (LGIS), 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Brenton Johannsen

Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

That the November Pilbara Country Zone meeting be amended to be held on Monday, 25 November at 9am, in the Boardroom, Level 3 (LGIS), 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville.

CARRIED

8.2 REQUEST FOR WALGA STATE COUNCIL SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT BANK OF AUSTRALIA BANKING MODEL

By Shire of Ashburton

BACKGROUND

With nearly 7 million people (approximately 28% of the population) living in regional and remote Australia, there is an urgent need to develop a practical and pragmatic solution that provides essential financial services, carries a more relevant risk profile, leverages not only the social license and tangible community trust experienced by the LG sector, but leverages the sector's mandate as a not-for profit, governing local community.

As the Australian Government's Senate Standing Committee on Bank Closures in Regional Australia Inquiry continues, current banking data states that more than 2100 Australian bank branches have closed across the country since 2017, with regional areas suffering a 34% loss in branches.

Key benefits to having local government as part of the solution to accessible, relevant banking and financial services include:

- Funding reinvestment: profits invested back into local community/regions.
- Liveability: retain and expand upon regional Australian's quality of life.
- Regional equality and accessibility: closing the financial inclusion gap, changing the risk profile of banking services, increasing financial literacy and access to information and services.
- Business and economic growth: access to credit, planning and relationship banking.
- Insurance: addressing the unattainable goal of asset protection and wealth creation both financially and practically – a scalable, more equitable platform; providing alternative insurance options for communities and businesses.
- Workforce stability: attracting skilled migrants and people from metro and peri-urban areas.
- Leveraging the trend to move to regional Australia, addressing the crisis of regional workforce shortages.
- Utilising and leveraging existing local government assets and infrastructure.
- Providing a competitive advantage to the banking sector.

The social, financial and economic impact of this accelerating inequality effects:

- Vulnerable members of our community.
- Aboriginal peoples and their communities.
- Sustainability and productivity of businesses.
- Community safety, participation and wellbeing.
- Survival of community groups and clubs.
- Access to credit and other core financial services including insurance.
- Reliance on technology already compromised due to the regional digital inclusion gap.
- No access to face-to-face banking services results in limited to no financial relationships or financial education, impaired financial literacy.
- Less access to financial information relevant for credit assessment and decisions for business and personal needs.

The proposed solution to undertake a feasibility study into a Local Government Bank of Australia

Primary purpose:

- Provide essential community banking services and facilitate investment in regional Australia.
- Operate on a not-for-profit basis with surplus funds reinvested into local communities.
- Geared to higher risk levels to promote investment in regional communities and businesses.

Benefits:

Ensures regional Australia remains a viable destination for businesses, employees, families, residents, and visitors.

With the support of the Western Australian Local Government Association, the Shire continues to seek the support of Local Governments Australia-wide to consider this alternative financial services community-centric model. A model that draws on the sector to be agile and innovative in how it can invest in community and seeks the support of Australian Local Government Associations for the communities across regional Australia and the seven million people that could benefit from a new community platform for banking services and investment.

Premier Cook has also shown support and has asked how the State Government could assist in considering the concept and has shown positive support for the initiative and of a national conversation which is needed, for a national solution.

In April 2024, the Shire of Ashburton called upon the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) to pass a motion to further investigate the feasibility of establishing a '*Local Government Bank of Australia*' or an alternative model for regional Australia.

The Shire of Ashburton received overwhelming support from other Local Government Associations across Australia, not only from regional areas but also from metropolitan based Local Governments in support of the proposed solution to a national problem, in the formation of a '*Local Government Bank of Australia*' model.

ALGA resolved to support a feasibility study which will include how the Local Government sector can facilitate or deliver a face-to-face banking service; and have requested that the feasibility report findings are presented at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) 2025 National General Assembly.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

The Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport undertook an inquiry into Bank Closures in Regional Australia with the following terms of reference:

1. the branch closure process, including the reasons given for closures;
2. the economic and welfare impacts of bank closures on customers and regional communities;
3. the effect of bank closures or the removal of face-to-face cash services on access to cash;
4. the effectiveness of government banking statistics capturing and reporting regional service levels, including the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's authorised deposit-taking institutions points of presence data;
5. consideration of solutions; and any other related matters.

In May 2024, the References Committee tabled a report with eight recommendations. Of particular note is Recommendation 2 which states:

- *The committee recommends that the Australian Government commission an expert panel to **investigate the feasibility of establishing a publicly owned bank**. In investigating this, the panel should examine options including, but not limited to a stand-alone public bank or one associated with, and using the branch network of Australia Post.*

Other key points in the recommendations include:

- That the Australian Government adopt a policy recognising access to financial services as an essential service
- That the Australian Government urgently develop a mandatory Banking Code of Conduct or Customer Service Code, incorporating a robust branch closure process
- That the Australian Government establish the Regional Community Banking Branch Program (RCBBP) to help underwrite the establishment of 'community bank' branches providing in-person banking services in regional, rural and remote Australia
- The committee recommends that the Australian Government works closely with the banks and Australia Post, to require all major banks to have agreements with Bank@Post and to harmonise the terms of Bank@Post agreements to improve fairness and sustainability
- The committee recommends that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission consider measures to protect access to personal and business banking services in regional, rural and remote locations

The Committee Secretariat has provided the following update on next steps:

- *Typically, government responses should be tabled in the Senate within three months of the committee report being presented; however, this is not always the case and responses can take longer. As of today, the committee has not received a response.*

It may be worth seeing the Government's response to the report and seek opportunities to work with them if they respond positively to the recommendations.

Further information

- Full report: [Bank closures in regional Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au)
- [Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee website](#)

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Audra Smith

Seconded: Cr Brenton Johannsen

That the Pilbara Country Zone:

1. Seeks WALGA State Council support in principle for the endorsement of the 'Local Government Bank of Australia' initiative which will provide an alternative model of banking across regional Australia as to provide support to the feasibility study which is to be presented to the Australian Local Government Association at the National General Assembly in 2025.
2. Supports the Shire of Ashburton in developing a detailed business paper for further consideration of the Pilbara Country Zone once available.

CARRIED

8.3 WALGA HONOURS AWARDS

By Chantelle O'Brien, Governance Support Officer

BACKGROUND

WALGA celebrated their 2024 Honours awards recipients at an event on Friday, 2 August at Winthrop Hall. For the first time, a WALGA awards event was held solely to acknowledge and appreciate the extraordinary efforts of Elected Members and Local Government Officers in service of their Local Government, the sector and the community.

There were 46 recipients of Honours awards in the 2024 program, including two Local Government Medal recipients. Four new WALGA Life Members were also inducted.

Congratulations to all Honours recipients!

Nominations for the 2025 Honours Program will open early next year.

Noted

9 STATE COUNCIL AGENDA – MATTERS FOR DECISION AND NOTING

Zone delegates to read and consider the September 2024 WALGA State Council Agenda, which has been provided as an attachment with this Agenda.

The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation that will then be presented to the State Council for consideration.

9.1 STATE COUNCIL MATTERS FOR DECISION

8.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS ANALYSIS 2015-2023

By Emma Heys, Governance Specialist

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government:

1. *For an independent Local Government election audit, focusing on the Western Australia Electoral Commission's (WAEC) cost allocation methods and costing applications used, to confirm that marginal cost recovery principles are applied and that the costing program is being effectively managed.*
2. *For the requirement for the WAEC to develop and implement Service Level Agreements with Local Governments, similar to those agreements currently used in New South Wales and Victorian Local Government elections and that includes:*
 - a. *transparency of costing methodology,*
 - b. *direct engagement with Local Governments pre and post elections, and*
 - c. *the roles and responsibilities of the WAEC and Local Governments in the conduct of elections.*
3. *For the introduction of a provision for private service providers to enter the market for the conduct of Local Government elections.*
4. *For a mandated WAEC Report to Parliament specific to Local Government elections post each election cycle, outlining costs, results, voter turnout and matters for improvement both in the conduct of elections and the legislation, if relevant.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of a comprehensive review and analysis of five election cycles up to and including the 2023 Local Government election against the backdrop of legislative reforms to the Local Government electoral process in Western Australia.
- With a focus on postal elections conducted exclusively by the Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC), the analysis has found evidence of the rising cost of conducting Local Government elections in Western Australia.
- Elected Member feedback, costs vs service comparisons and engagement by the sector with WALGA's governance services over the 2023 Local Government election period, are the basis for the recommendations as outlined above.
- The Governance Policy Team considered this item at its meeting of 7 August and endorsed the position for consideration by State Council

8.2 ENERGY TRANSITION ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT FRAMEWORK ADVOCACY POSITION

By Daniel Thomson, Manager Economics

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse a new Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework Advocacy Position as follows:

It is essential that the energy transition currently underway delivers economic opportunities, ensures reliable and affordable electricity, and the greatest possible benefits for the community.

WALGA 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 community benefits from energy transition projects as a priority.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Western Australia's energy industry is transforming to achieve the goal of net zero emissions by 2050.
- In Western Australia there is no framework that provides a consistent approach to how proponents of major energy projects consult with local communities and how they can share in the benefits.
- WALGA will advocate for the State Government to develop a framework to guide consultation and benefit sharing with local communities during the energy transition.
- A joint meeting of the Environment Policy Team and Infrastructure Policy Team held on 10 July endorsed the position for consideration by State Council.
- This draft advocacy position should be considered in conjunction with the accompanying draft WALGA advocacy positions Renewable Energy Facilities (Item 8.3) and Priority Agriculture (Item 8.4).

8.3 RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES ADVOCACY POSITION

By Kieran McGovern, Policy Officer Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse a new Renewable Energy Facilities Advocacy Position as follows:

The growth in the number, size, and complexity of renewable energy facilities across Western Australia is expected to continue as energy generation and other traditional industries de-carbonise their facilities and operations. The renewable energy state planning framework requires changes to ensure it is fit for purpose to guide the ongoing development of this sector.

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. *Adopt a new State Planning Policy for renewable energy facilities, to replace the existing Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities, that:*
 - a. *Facilitates the orderly development of renewable energy facilities across Western Australia;*
 - b. *Outlines the key planning and environmental considerations, for the location, siting, design and operation of renewable energy facilities and their associated infrastructure;*

- c. *Provides a framework that clearly stipulates the minimum required documentation and technical reports that need to be submitted with proposals for renewable energy facilities;*
 - d. *Supports the development of Local Planning Policies by Local Governments to further guide locally appropriate planning consideration of renewable energy facilities;*
 - e. *Provides a clear relationship with:*
 - i. *State Planning Policy 2.5 - Rural planning and Development Control Policy 3.4 - Subdivision of rural land, to ensure planning decisions adequately balance the need to protect and preserve rural land for rural purposes;*
 - ii. *State Planning Policy 2.4 - Planning for Basic Raw Materials to ensure proposals for renewable energy facilities consider their impact on basic raw material supply at the earliest stage of the planning process; and*
 - iii. *State Planning Policy 2.9 - Planning for Water to ensure water resources impacted by renewable energy facilities are identified and adequately managed.*
 - f. *Includes policy measures to address:*
 - i. *concerns relating to the location of these facilities and their associated infrastructure on agricultural land, their proximity to lot boundaries, town sites and sensitive land uses, and potential impact on airport operations and rural activities;*
 - ii. *planning for renewable energy facilities in industrial areas in relation to the coordination of these facilities, their appropriateness in the 'General Industry' zone and impacts and suitable location on heavy industry sites;*
 - iii. *the need for local engagement and the realisation of community benefits from the development of renewable energy facilities.*
2. *Review the definition of 'renewable energy facility' considering the increasing size and scope of facilities and consider creating definitions based on the scale of the facility (Utility-scale and other), and the form of facility (solar energy and wind energy).*
 3. *Provide guidance to Local Governments on the consideration of green hydrogen production facilities on rural land where it is an incidental use to a renewable energy facility.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting resolution and subsequent resolution by the Great Eastern Country Zone requested *WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.*
- The Central Country Zone resolved to request WALGA to advocate to the State Government *to develop a more comprehensive and effective approach to guide the management and placement of renewable energy facilities; including but not limited to wind, solar, battery renewable diesel and associated infrastructure.*

- The existing State Government *Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities* does not adequately address these concerns, leading to inconsistent application and approvals of renewable energy facilities across the State.
- WALGA will advocate for the existing *Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities* to be amended and elevated to a State Planning Policy, including more nuanced provisions which provide greater guidance to Local Governments and applicants, and allow for renewable energy land uses to be classified as either small or large facilities.
- A joint meeting of the Environment Policy Team and Infrastructure Policy Team on 10 July endorsed the position for consideration by State Council.
- This draft advocacy position should be considered in conjunction with accompanying draft WALGA advocacy positions Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework (Item 8.2) and Priority Agriculture (Item 8.4).

8.4 PRIORITY AGRICULTURE ADVOCACY POSITION

By Kieran McGovern, Policy Officer Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse a new Priority Agriculture Advocacy Position as follows:

The state planning framework should provide sufficient statutory protections for areas identified as high quality agricultural land.

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. *Amend the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 to:*
 - a. *Create a new model zone under Schedule 1, Part 3, Clause 16 for land identified as high quality agricultural land known as the 'Priority Agriculture' zone, with the following objectives:*
 - i. *to retain priority agricultural land for agricultural purposes; and*
 - ii. *limit the introduction of sensitive land uses which may compromise existing, future and potential agricultural production.*
 - b. *Define 'Priority Agriculture' zone under Schedule 2, Part 1, Clause 1 to align with the definition provided in State Planning Policy 2.5 - Rural planning.*
2. *Review the areas which have been identified by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development as high quality agricultural land and expand the extent of mapping to address the whole of Western Australia.*
3. *Undertake a 'health check' of State Planning Policy 2.5 - Rural planning and Development Control Policy 3.4 - Subdivision of rural land, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting resolution and subsequent resolution by the Great Eastern Country Zone have requested *that WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its*

displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.

- WALGA prepared a *Research Paper: Protection of Productive Agricultural Land* that provides policy context, previous WALGA advocacy and analysis of State and Local Government approaches to agricultural land use protections.
- This work identified that a lack of consistency between the sub-regional planning strategies across the different regions of WA has impeded the implementation of best practice planning controls into local planning frameworks, and thus inconsistent application across the State.
- This advocacy position recommends statutory protections of areas that have been identified as high quality agricultural land, through amending the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* to include a model zone for 'Priority Agriculture'. This will provide the ability for Local Governments to adopt the model zone into their local planning schemes.
- A joint meeting of the Environment Policy Team and Infrastructure Policy Team endorsed the position for consideration by State Council on 10 July 2024.
- This draft advocacy position should be considered in conjunction with accompanying draft WALGA advocacy positions Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework (Item 8.2) and Renewable Energy Facilities (Item 8.3).

8.5 PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND REFORM ADVOCACY POSITION

By Coralie Claudio, Senior Policy Advisor Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Retire Advocacy Position 6.2 Planning Reform; and
2. Replace Advocacy Position 6.1 Planning Principles with the following:

6.1 Planning Principles and Reform

1. *The Local Government sector supports an efficient and effective planning system guided by legislation, policy, and processes that:*
 - a. *facilitates the creation of sustainable and liveable communities and places;*
 - b. *has a focus on strategic planning that delivers on long-term objectives and outcomes that balance social, environmental, cultural, and economic interests;*
 - c. *is easy to understand, accessible and transparent;*
 - d. *recognises the diversity of Western Australia and ensures that local environment, context, communities and character are appropriately reflected in planning frameworks and decision making;*
 - e. *ensures decisions are made by the level of government closest to and most impacted by a planning proposal; and*
 - f. *establishes consistent planning frameworks and streamlines planning processes where there is a demonstrated benefit in doing so.*
2. *Reforms to the planning system should:*
 - a. *be guided by the above principles;*
 - b. *deliver community benefit;*

- c. promote system efficiency, including through the use of technology;*
- d. be evidence-based and informed by robust, transparent data;*
- e. proceed at an appropriate pace to enable effective implementation;*
- f. be informed by engagement with the community; and*
- g. be amended only with WALGA involvement and/or consultation/involvement with Local Government.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that the Advocacy Positions 6.1 Planning Principles and 6.2 Planning Reform be replaced with a new contemporary combined position that reflects the current planning system and planning reform agenda.
- The updated position identifies key elements that would create an effective and efficient planning system and how planning reform can be developed, prioritised, and implemented to achieve this.
- The updated position has been informed by feedback from Local Government officers, including WALGA's Planning Advisory Group and previous WALGA submissions on State Government planning reform initiatives.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the advocacy position at their meeting on 29 July.

8.6 PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP POLICY STATEMENT AND ADVOCACY POSITION

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Rescind the existing Extended Producer Responsibility Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.5 Extended Producer Responsibility.
2. Endorse a new Product Stewardship Advocacy Position as follows:
 1. *Industry should take responsibility (physical and/or financial) for the waste that it generates through the entire life cycle of the products it produces through the implementation of effective product stewardship. Without effective Product Stewardship, there will be increasing costs for the community, resource recovery targets will be difficult to reach and a transition to a circular economy is unlikely.*
 2. *Effective Product Stewardship is characterised by:*
 - a. Producers and importers taking responsibility for post consumption product impacts.*
 - b. Schemes covering the entire cost of product recycling or recovery, including transport.*
 - c. Leveraging existing Schemes and collection locations.*
 - d. Being easy and convenient for the community to access.*
 - e. Having equitable national coverage and access for all, including regional and remote locations.*
 - f. Being evidence based.*

- g. Consistent regulation and implementation across Australia using national Product Stewardship legislation.*
 - h. Timely action and industry cooperation during Scheme development and implementation.*
 - i. Being demand based and aiming to recover the maximum amount of material, rather than being limited by targets.*
 - j. No additional cost to consumers when the product is disposed of post consumption.*
- 3. Local Government calls on the Commonwealth Government to implement effective Product Stewardship schemes for all products that drive environmentally and socially sustainable outcomes through the design, manufacture and distribution of products that can be more easily reused, repaired, recovered or recycled.*
 - 4. If national action is not progressed within a reasonable timeframe, or in a way that meets the needs of the Western Australian community, then Local Government supports a State based approach to Product Stewardship.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\) Policy Statement](#) was first endorsed in 2004 and reviewed and amended in 2008.
- The Statement outlines the rationale for Local Government support for EPR, as a way of ensuring producers take responsibility for their products at the end of life, and some of the key elements of successful Schemes.
- WALGA's [Local Government Principles for Product Stewardship](#) was endorsed in 2022. The Principles provided more detail on key design elements for Schemes and have been used to inform advocacy.
- Following discussion at the April Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) and Officers Advisory Group meetings it was agreed to review the EPR Policy Statement and incorporate the Local Government Principles into a new Product Stewardship Policy Statement and Advocacy Position.
- The Product Stewardship Policy Statement and Advocacy Position has been updated to:
 - Include a greater focus on the potential for Product Stewardship to influence the design of products, as well as their post consumption disposal.
 - Identifying the increasing cost burden on Local Government and the community of increasing complex products.
 - Focus on ensuring all products have a clear and funded end of life pathway.
- The MWAC endorsed the new Policy Statement and Advocacy Position in June.

8.7 SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT STATE WASTE STRATEGY

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the Draft State Waste Strategy Submission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Draft State Waste Strategy](#) (Draft Strategy) and [State Waste Infrastructure Plan](#) were released on 29 May. This follows the release of the [Strategy Directions Paper](#) in May 2023. WALGA provided a comprehensive [Submission](#) on the Directions Paper.
- Given the significant impact of the Strategy on Local Government, WALGA was granted an extension to the deadline to allow the draft submission to be considered by WALGA Zones and State Council.
- The focus of the Draft Strategy is:
 - Better outcomes for regional and Aboriginal communities
 - Increasing our focus on waste avoidance
 - Better management of priority materials
 - Realising the economic potential of recycling
 - Contingency planning and climate resilience.
- New Targets are also proposed for each of the Avoid, Recover and Protect areas.
- WALGA's draft submission on the Draft Strategy was informed by Local Government written feedback and feedback received at a webinar held on 19 July.
- This Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the draft submission on 31 July 2024.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Peter Carter

Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

That the Pilbara Country Zone supports all WALGA recommendations in the Matters for Decision as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda and as listed above.

CARRIED

9.2 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 ENVIRONMENT POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Environment Policy Team to the 4 September 2024 meeting.

9.2 GOVERNANCE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Governance Policy Team meeting for the 4 September 2024 meeting.

9.3 INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager, Infrastructure

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team to the 4 September 2024 meeting.
2. Determine to retire the following Advocacy Positions:
 - a. 5.2.4 Seat Belt Legislation
 - b. 5.8 Ports
 - c. 5.12 Infrastructure WA

9.4 PEOPLE AND PLACE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the People and Place Policy Team to the 4 September 2024 meeting.
2. Determine to:
 - a. retain the following Advocacy Positions with amendment:
 - i. 3.2.1 Local Public Health Plans
 - b. rescind the following Advocacy Position:
 - i. 3.5 Crime Prevention

9.5 MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL (MWAC) REPORT

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Municipal Waste Advisory Council to the 4 September 2024 meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Daniel Scott
Seconded: President Anthony Middleton

That the Pilbara Country Zone:

1. notes all Policy Team and Committee Reports as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda; and
2. supports the WALGA recommendations in the Infrastructure and People and Place Policy Team Reports as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda and as listed above.

CARRIED

9.3 MATTERS FOR NOTING/INFORMATION

- 10.1 Local Government Legislative Reform
- 10.2 Report on Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure 2022/23

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Audra Smith
Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

That the Pilbara Country Zone notes all Matters for Noting/Information as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda.

CARRIED

9.4 KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS

- 11.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio
- 11.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio
- 11.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio
- 11.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ash Christensen
Seconded: President Anthony Middleton

That the Pilbara Country Zone notes all Key Activity Reports as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda.

CARRIED

10 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

10.1 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALGA Deputy President, Cr Paul Kelly presented the President's Report. The report was attached within the Agenda.

Noted

10.2 STATE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO THE ZONE

State Councillor, Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks presented on the previous State Council meeting.

Noted

11 OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 STRATEGY OUTCOME

RESOLVED

That the Pilbara Country Zone:

1. Request each Pilbara Zone Local Government to consider their housing needs.
2. Request the Chief Executive Officers Group (COG's) prepare for endorsement at a future meeting, a draft Housing Strategy that considers all four member Local Governments requirements and needs, as a reference tool when opportunity for funding submissions and advocacies arise.

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Pilbara Country Zone will be held on Monday, 25 November 2024 in the LGIS Boardroom commencing at 9am.

13 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5:40pm.