

Great Southern Country Zone Minutes

22 November 2024

Hosted by the Shire of Katanning
Held at the Katanning Leisure and
Function Centre,
4 Pemble Street, Katanning

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES.....	4
1.1	Opening	5
1.2	Attendance	5
1.3	Apologies	6
2	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	7
3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.....	7
4	DEPUTATIONS / GUEST SPEAKERS	7
4.1	Members of Parliament	7
4.2	WA-DAMA – Department of Training and Workforce Development	7
4.3	Economic Regulation Authority	7
4.4	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	8
4.5	Local Government Legislative Reform – Tranche 2 Amendments	8
4.6	Western Power: Network Initiatives and Bushfire Risk Mitigation.....	8
5	AGENCY REPORTS	8
5.1	Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).....	8
5.2	Regional Development Australia Great Southern WA Inc (RDA-GS).....	8
5.3	Great Southern Human Services Forum.....	8
5.4	Great Southern Regional Roads Group	9
5.5	CBH Group	9
5.6	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)	9
5.7	WALGA Roadwise	9
6	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.....	10
6.1	Business Arising from the Minutes	10
6.2	Zone Resolutions and Action Items Status Reports	10
7	ZONE BUSINESS	10
7.1	Zone Reports	10
7.1.1	Zone Financial Report.....	10
7.1.2	Zone Chairperson’s Report	12
7.2	Zone Strategic Priorities.....	12
7.2.1	Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)	12
7.2.2	Mobile Black Spot Funding \$16M Announced – City of Albany Letter of Appreciation to Minister for Communications	13
7.2.3	Proposed Joint Mobile Black Spot Funding Application	13
7.2.4	Regional Education – Zone Submission on Draft Regional Education Strategy	14
7.2.5	Regional Housing.....	15
7.3	Matters for Zone Noting and Decision	15
7.3.1	2025 Proposed Zone Meeting Dates	15
7.3.2	Cooperation and Shared Services	17
7.3.3	Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer – Zone Advocacy	17
7.3.4	Office of the Auditor General – Parliamentary Committee Hearing	18
7.3.5	Submissions to the 2025 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members	19
7.3.6	Great Southern Place-based Reconciliation Pilot meeting 26 November 19	
7.3.7	Draft Public Health Planning Guide – Consultation closing 29 November	20
7.3.8	Band 4 Local Governments Meeting	20

7.3.9	Native Vegetation Clearing Issues Paper	21
7.3.10	Request to Present - Department of Planning, Lands and Cultural Heritage.....	23
8	WALGA STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS	24
8.1	Zone State Council Member Report.....	24
8.2	State Council Meeting Agenda – Matters for Decision.....	24
8.2.1	2024 Annual General Meeting Resolutions (State Council Agenda item 8.1).....	24
8.2.2	Local Government Elections Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda item 8.2).....	25
8.2.3	Aboriginal Communities Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda item 8.3)	26
8.2.4	Family and Domestic Violence Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.4)	27
8.2.5	Container Deposit System Policy Statement and Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.5).....	27
8.2.6	Bus Stop Infrastructure Agreement (State Council Agenda item 8.6) ..	28
8.2.7	2025 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members (State Council Agenda item 8.7)	29
8.2.8	Submission on the draft State Hazard Plan - Fire (State Council Agenda item 8.8)	30
8.3	Policy Team and Committee Reports	31
8.3.1	Infrastructure Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.1)	31
8.3.2	People and Place Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.2)	31
8.3.3	Governance Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.3).....	31
8.3.4	Environment Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.4)	32
8.3.5	Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report (State Council Agenda item 9.5)	32
8.3.6	Matters For Noting/Information.....	32
8.3.7	Key Activity Reports	33
8.3.8	WALGA State President's Report	33
9	EMERGING ISSUES/COLLABORATION.....	33
9.1	3G Network Shutdown - Community Impact.....	33
9.2	Zone Member - Updates	33
10	OTHER BUSINESS.....	34
11	NEXT ZONE MEETING	34
12	CLOSURE	34
	ATTACHMENTS	35
	Attachment 1: Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries Update - November 2024 (Item 5.6).....	35
	Attachment 2: Zone Status Report - November 2024 (Item 6.2)	41
	Attachment 3: Zone Action Items - November 2024.....	45
	Attachment 4: Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) (Item 7.2.1)	49
	Attachment 5: Mobile Black Spot Funding \$16M Announced - City of Albany Letter of Appreciation to Minister for Communications (Item 7.2.2).....	52
	Attachment 6: Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer – Zone Advocacy (Item 7.3.2).....	53
	Attachment 7: WALGA President's Report - December (Item 8.3.8).....	56
	Attachment 8: Regional Housing Advocacy – Minister for Energy Response (Item 7.2.5)	61

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)

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.02am, welcoming the Shire of Ravensthorpe delegates to their first meeting as members of the Great Southern Country Zone.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

City of Albany

Deputy Delegate/s

Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry

Cr Lynn MacLaren

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

President Cr Michael White

Deputy President Cr Doug Barritt

CEO Karen Callaghan (non-voting)

Shire of Cranbrook

President Cr George Pollard

Deputy President Cr Daisy Egerton-Warburton

Shire of Gnowangerup

President Cr Kate O'Keeffe

Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

CEO David Nicholson (non-voting)

Shire of Jerramungup

President Cr Joanne Iffla

Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders

CEO Martin Cuthbert (non-voting)

Shire of Katanning

President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

Cr John Goodheart

CEO Peter Klein (non-voting)

Shire of Kent

President Cr Kate Johnston

Cr Scott Crosby, **Zone Chair**

CEO Christie Smith (non-voting)

Shire of Kojonup

President Cr Roger Bilney

CEO Grant Thompson (non-voting)

Shire of Plantagenet

President, Cr Len Handasyde

Deputy President, Cr Ken Clements

CEO Julian Murphy (non-voting)

Shire of Ravensthorpe

President, Cr Tom Major

CEO Matthew Bird (non-voting)

Shire of Woodanilling

President Cr Dale Douglas

Deputy President Cr Russel Thomson

Observer

Cr Beverley Smith

CEO Paul Hanlon (non-voting)

GUESTS

Agencies

Regional Development Australia –

Great Southern WA Inc

CBH Group

Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development

Tim Roberts, Lead – Planning Approvals

Dept of Employment & Workplace Relations, Workforce Australia	Kim Hamer, Principal – Reconciliation Celia Gardner, Manager Network Planning Emma Everett, Employment Facilitator
Members of Parliament	Mr Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region Ms Jane Kelsbie, MLA Member for Warren-Blackwood Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, Member for Roe
WALGA	Lyn Fogg, Zone, Zone Executive Officer Sarah Coles, Policy Officer Environment
Guest Speaker/s	
Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA) Department of Home Affairs (Cwth) – Immigration Operations	Kristi Carlile, A/Associate Director, Migration Services Steve Lanyi, Assistant Director – Business, Industry and Regional Outreach (WA) Tim Napoleao, Business, Industry and Regional Outreach (WA)
Department of Fire and Emergency Services Western Power	Murray Carter, Executive Director Freya Barsby, Senior Community Engagement Specialist Dean Frost, Network Operations, Construction Manager

1.3 APOLOGIES

Albany	Mayor Greg Stocks Zone Deputy Chair CEO Andrew Sharpe CEO Linda Gray (non-voting) Deputy President Cr Cynthia Wieringa Deputy President, Cr Mark Mudie Ms Rebecca Stephens, MLA Member for Albany Jarrad Garner, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Cranbrook Shire of Kojonup Shire of Ravensthorpe Members of Parliament Great Southern Development Commission Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries Economic Regulation Authority WALGA	Mel Eastough, Regional Manager Steve Edwell, ERA Chair Michelle Blackhurst, Regional Road Safety Adviser, Roadwise Sam Torrens, Head of Community & Stakeholders Shane Duryea, Head of Network Operations
Western Power	
ABSENT	
Shire of Denmark	Cr Dominic Youel Cr Jackie Ormsby CEO David King (non-voting)

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the Great Southern Country Zone of WALGA acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture, and community. We embrace the vast cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including the Noongar People as the Traditional Custodians of this land, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. WALGA is committed to supporting the efforts of WA Local Governments to foster respectful partnerships and strengthen relationships with local Aboriginal communities.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Elected Members must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they have in a matter before the Zone as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors and deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Zone and State Council. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

NIL.

4 DEPUTATIONS / GUEST SPEAKERS

4.1 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Members of Federal and State Government, representing the Zone Member Local Government Districts, are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to Zone Members.

No Members of Parliament attended.

4.2 WA-DAMA – DEPARTMENT OF TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

At its August 2024 meeting the Zone agreed to:

Invite the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) to attend a future meeting (ideally November 2024) to provide a presentation on the WA-DAMA and how it will directly service the Great Southern Region.

Kristi Carlile, A/Associate Director of Migration Services, Department of Training and Workforce Development and Steve Lanyi, Assistant Director – Business, Industry and Regional Outreach (WA) from Department of Home Affairs provided a presentation on the WA-DAMA implementation program, explaining how the WA-DAMA will service the specific needs of the Great Southern Region.

A copy of the presentation is circulated with the minutes.

4.3 ECONOMIC REGULATION AUTHORITY

Steve Edwell, Chair of the Economic Regulation Authority was an apology (due to unforeseen circumstances) and will be invited to present at the Zone's February 2025 meeting.

4.4 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Murray Carter provided an update to the Zone on the following:

1. General DFES fire season update (previous and outlook for next)
 - 1700 fires in the year to date. 2130 fires in the same period for the previous year.
2. Performance of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) over the previous season / improvements for pending season
3. Update on bushfire mitigation funding / developments for LG's
4. DFES training packages now available to Local Government.

4.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE REFORM – TRANCHE 2 AMENDMENTS

WALGA has had requests when visiting Local Governments in the Great Southern region on the Local Government Legislative Reform.

Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer provided an overview of key elements included in the Tranche 2 *Local Government Amendment Bill 2024*.

A copy of the presentation is circulated with the minutes.

4.6 WESTERN POWER: NETWORK INITIATIVES AND BUSHFIRE RISK MITIGATION

Representatives from Western Power provided a brief update on bushfire preparedness and initiatives.

A copy of the presentation is circulated with the minutes.

5 AGENCY REPORTS

5.1 GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (GSDC)

Great Southern Development Commission representatives were an apology for this meeting.

Nil.

5.2 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA GREAT SOUTHERN WA INC (RDA-GS)

By Simon Lyas, CEO

Nil to report.

5.3 GREAT SOUTHERN HUMAN SERVICES FORUM

Report by Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

The Department of Communities has confirmed that the Great Southern Human Services Forum was disbanded earlier this year resulting from a review of the 'District Leadership Group' structure.

Under the Department of Communities' new structure, District Leadership Groups have been established that include representatives from State and Commonwealth Governments, with representative from other stakeholders, including Local Government invited to participate relevant to the matters under discussion.

The Zone Executive Officer has provided the Great Southern District Leadership Group background information about the Zone's membership and meeting protocols, extending an invitation to present at a future Zone Meeting should they wish to engage with all Local Governments within our zone.

The Zone's delegates to this Forum will be advised accordingly and this item will be removed from future Zone agenda.

Noted

5.4 GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL ROADS GROUP

Report by President Cr Len Handasyde, Shire of Plantagenet

The Regional Road Group meets next week. A report will be provided to the February 2025 Zone meeting.

Noted.

5.5 CBH GROUP

Report by Tim Roberts

Tim Roberts provided a verbal update to the Zone, including:

- Expecting the biggest yield ever
- Recent rain may impact some growers
- Slow start to harvest, but now ramping up with 40% through currently.
- Expecting late finish to this harvest.

Noted.

5.6 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES (DLGSC)

Report by Mel Eastough, Regional Manager

Attachment No 1 [DLGSC Update – November 2024](#)

Noted. Mel Eastough was an apology for this meeting.

5.7 WALGA ROADWISE

Report by Michelle Blackhurst, RoadWise Road Safety Advisor

Roadwise is an apology for this meeting.

Noted.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders
Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnston

That the Minutes of the Great Southern Country Zone meeting held on 23 August 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

6.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nil.

6.2 ZONE RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS STATUS REPORTS

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 2 [Zone Status Report November 2024](#)
Attachment No. 3 [Zone Action Items Report November 2024](#)

The Status Report provides an update on Zone resolutions referred to WALGA State Council. Status Items identified as 'Completed' will be removed following this meeting. Zone Members are asked to review responses.

The Action Items Report provides an update on Zone resolution for action by Zone members or the Zone Executive Officer. Action Items identified as 'Completed' in this Report will be removed following this meeting. Zone members are asked to review responses.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kate Johnston
Seconded: Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

That the Great Southern Country Zone NOTES the:

1. Status Report for November 2024, as detailed in Attachment No.2, and
2. Action Items Report for November 2024, as detailed in Attachment No.3.

CARRIED

7 ZONE BUSINESS

7.1 ZONE REPORTS

7.1.1 Zone Financial Report

By Mr Richard May, WALGA Finance Manager

Zone Financial Report for Sept 2024

(All amounts are excluding GST unless otherwise specified)

Financial statements for the zone have been prepared on an accrual basis and show the financial performance and financial position for the period ended 30 September 2024.

Income includes all member subscriptions invoiced and collected except one.

Meeting costs of \$500 related to payment for catering expenses for zone meetings held in the quarter.

The overall result for the year to date consists of a surplus of \$6,550 compared to the budgeted surplus of \$1,480.

There is a balance of \$11,290 in the unused project funds in the balance sheet.

Table 1: Statement of Income and Expenditure – period ended 30 September 2024

**Great Southern Country Zone
Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 30 Sept 2024**

	Note	Actual \$	Budget \$
Income			
Subscriptions	1	7,080	6,600
Other		-	
Total Income		7,080	6,600
Expenses			
Bank Fees		30	120
Meeting Costs (Catering)	2	500	5,000
Total Expenses		530	5,120
Surplus/(Deficit)		\$6,550	\$1,480
Notes			
1. Subscriptions excl GST 11@ \$600 each, 1 @ 480. - Invoiced by WALGA on behalf of GSCZ - All fully paid except one.			
2. Catering expense for zone meetings held throughout the year (Jerramungup, Denmark)			

Table 2: Balance Sheet presenting the Zone's financial position as at 30 September 2024

**Great Southern Country Zone
Balance Sheet as at 30 Sept 2024**

Assets	\$
Bank	21,672
Debtors	600
Total Assets	22,272
Liabilities	
Creditors	-
GST Payable	-
Unused Project Funds	11,290
Total Liabilities	11,290
Net Assets	\$ 10,982
Equity	
Members Funds B/F	4,432
Current year earnings	6,550
Total Equity	\$ 10,982

RESOLUTION

Moved: President, Cr Len Handasyde
Seconded: Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders

That the Great Southern Country Zone receives the Zone Financial Report for September 2024.

CARRIED

7.1.2 Zone Chairperson's Report

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chairperson

Zone State Councillor, Cr Scott Crosby noted WALGA is hosting a Large-Scale Renewable Energy Forum on Wednesday, 27 November 2024. Zone discussion included:

- Concern that the Forum did not include speakers reflecting community concerns / negative impacts of large-scale developments.
- Requested WALGA avoid scheduling important sector-wide engagement events on Council meeting days (usually Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday) and during harvest (late October to end December).
- Major concerns arising from State Government strategy encouraging large-scale renewable energy development without robust planning framework by which development is controlled to minimise negative impacts on local communities and local governments during construction, operation and future decommissioning.
 - For example, setback for development should be consistently calculated from neighbouring boundaries, not buildings, and should provide at least 2km exclusion zone, which can be extended where prevailing weather conditions may cause noise to travel further.
- Concern that State Government agencies are encouraging developers to opt to use Development Assessment Panels for large scale renewable energy development applications, rather than determination by the Local Government

Noted.

7.2 ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

7.2.1 Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

At its August 2024 meeting the Zone agreed to:

Write to the Premier and Minister for Training and Workforce Development, advocating for State Government to support the GS-DAMA application and if this is not successful, requesting advice as to how the WA-DAMA will guarantee Great Southern regional quotas and what will DTWD do to service the 126 occupations missing from the WA DAMA.

Correspondence was sent to the Premier and the Minister for Training and Workforce Development dated 16 September 2024. The letter was cosigned by Andrus Budrikis,

Committee Chair of Regional Development Australia – Great Southern, who kindly offered to support the Zone's advocacy.

The Minister for Training and Workforce Development responded on 10 October 2024.

Copies of these letters are provided in [Attachment No. 4](#).

The Great Southern Country Zone AGREED for the Zone Chair, in consultation with Regional Development Australia – Great Southern's CEO, to undertake further advocacy regarding the Zone's DAMA application and to advance servicing the Great Southern Regio's migrant skilled worker needs.

7.2.2 Mobile Black Spot Funding \$16M Announced – City of Albany Letter of Appreciation to Minister for Communications

By the City of Albany

The City of Albany have shared a copy of correspondence sent to Hon Michelle Rowland's Senior Advisor, Mr Matt Healy, in appreciation for the Federal Government's announcement of \$16M funding to address Albany Highway mobile blackspots between Bedfordale and Albany Airport. Refer: [Attachment No. 5](#)

Noted.

7.2.3 Proposed Joint Mobile Black Spot Funding Application

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

At the Zone's August 2024 meeting it was agreed to:

Circulate a copy of the Great Southern Development Commission's Mobile Black Spot List (2022/23) to Zone Member CEO's.

Request Zone Member CEO's to identify land / locations (aligned to addressing mobile black spots) that may be made available as potential sites for future installation of mobile tower infrastructure.

A report being provided to November 2024 Zone meeting, listing locations as a basis for a potential joint submission for mobile black spot funding to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Federal Communications Minister.

The list of mobile blackspot locations previously compiled by the Great Southern Development Commission was circulated to each member Local Government, request review of the existing location and requesting nomination of additional locations that may be suitable for locating mobile phone infrastructure.

Additional locations have been nominated by the following Local Governments:

- City of Albany – updated land tenure information for existing nominated sites.
- Shire of Gnowangerup – nominated 14 additional sites
- Shire of Kojonup – updated land tenure information for existing nominated sites.
- Shire of Plantagenet – nominated 1 additional site.
- Shire of Ravensthorpe – nominated 3 additional sites.

MEETING DETAILS

In the meeting it was noted the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) has been asked by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to advise of 5-7 priority sites for the Great Southern Region.

The GSDC is liaising with Regional Development Australia – Great Southern (RDA-GS) to assist with identifying and prioritising sites for submission to DPIRD.

Several LGs shared anecdotal evidence of 3G shutdown impacts in their communities e.g. town call and data only available outside of buildings or call only available. Discussion noted that these impacts may be transitional as new technologies are activated in the days following the shutdown.

The Great Southern Country Zone AGREED that:

- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development be advised prioritised investments should address blackspots resulting from the 3G network shutdown (prioritise reinstating the service status quo), subject to data collection quantifying impacted locations.
- The Zone's identified blackspot locations be provided to the Great Southern Development Commission and Regional Development Australia – Great Southern.
- Great Southern Development Commission be asked to consult with the City of Albany, the Zone Chair and Regional Development Australia – Great Southern to confirm priority sites.
- Zone to liaise with City of Albany to provide a Zone submission (aligned with sites proposed by GSDC) direct to DPIRD.

7.2.4 Regional Education – Zone Submission on Draft Regional Education Strategy

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

The Minister for Education released a draft Regional Education Strategy on 22 July 2024, calling for submissions by 20 September 2024.

At the August 2024 Zone meeting the Zone requested:

Each Zone Member Local Government to provide a submission in response to the Draft Regional Education Strategy.

A copy of the Zone's advocacy letter to the Minister for Education and the Minister's response – this detail may assist Local Governments to prepare their submissions.

A Zone submission be made and developed in consultation with:

- ***Zone Chair, Cr Scott Crosby, Shire of Kent***
- ***Cr Peter Callaghan, Shire of Gnowangerup***
- ***Mr Grant Thompson, CEO Shire of Kojonup***

The Zone secretariat circulated to all Zone members on 6 September 2024, the Zone's previous advocacy letter to Minister of Education (dated 21 March 2024) and information about making a submission on the draft Regional Education Strategy.

The Zone Chair, Cr Crosby, Cr Callaghan and Mr Thompson held a virtual meeting with the Zone Executive Officer and WALGA's Policy Manager Community on 13 September 2024 to develop the Zone's submission.

The submission was finalised and submitted to the Department of Education and circulated to all Zone delegates and CEOs on 19 September 2024.

COMMENT

Appreciation is extended to Zone Chair, Cr Crosby, Cr Callaghan and Mr Thompson for their time, insights and contribution to the development of the Zone's submission.

The Department of Education's Director Agricultural Education advised on 21 October 2024 that over 100 submissions were received, with the Department providing preliminary analysis of the feedback to the Minister by the end of October 2024.

Disappointingly, the Department advised there are no plans for the feedback to be made available to the public.

The Department has been requested to advise this Zone when more information is available and / or when the finalised Regional Education Strategy is published.

The Great Southern Country Zone AGREED for the Zone Secretariat to undertake follow up advocacy with the Department of Education seeking transparency for how the Zone's submission has been considered and outcomes incorporated in the final Regional Education Strategy

7.2.5 Regional Housing

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

The Zone secretariat tabled the Minister for Energy's letter dated 20 November 2024, responding to the Zone's advocacy dated 29 May 2024, regarding Western Power capacity and delays in providing designs and quotations for power supply to new residential developments.

A copy of the Minister's response is provided in [Attachment 8](#) to the minutes.

Noted.

7.3 MATTERS FOR ZONE NOTING AND DECISION

7.3.1 2025 Proposed Zone Meeting Dates

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

A schedule of the proposed meeting dates for the Great Southern Country Zone 2025 has been prepared and is set out below. The dates have been set to coincide with the WALGA State Council meetings. The table below state the State Council meetings dates for information.

The proposed meeting dates for the Great Southern Country Zone for 2025 require adoption by delegates.

As with previous years, the venue for each meeting has been rotated amongst Members and the meeting day has been kept to Friday's. The April meeting is proposed to be one week earlier than usual as 25 April is a Public Holiday.

Zone Meeting Dates (Friday, 10am)	HOST COUNCIL	State Council 2025 Meeting Dates
21 February	Shire of Kent	Wednesday, 5 March 2025
18 April	Shire of Kojoonup	Regional Metro Wednesday, 7 May 2025
20 June	Shire of Plantagenet	Wednesday, 2 July 2025
22 August	Shire of Ravensthorpe	Regional Meeting 4-5 September 2025
21 November	Shire of Woodanilling	Wednesday, 3 December 2025

COMMENT

Proposed Great Southern Country Zone 2024 meeting dates are recommended, ensuring Zone meetings fall within the preferred period for Zone meetings and align with preparation of the revised State Council agenda.

MEETING DETAILS

In the meeting it was noted that the following proposed dates could not be accommodated:

- 21 February 2025 – conflicts with the Fields and Fortunes Regional Business Forum
- 18 April 2025 – is Good Friday.

The Zone proposed alternative dates as follows:

- 14 February 2025
- 11 April 2025

RESOLUTION

Moved: Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders

Seconded: President Cr Michael White

That the Great Southern Country Zone 2025 Meeting Schedule be adopted:

Zone Meeting Dates (Friday, 10am)	HOST COUNCIL
14 February	Shire of Kent
11 April	Shire of Kojoonup
20 June	Shire of Plantagenet
22 August	Shire of Ravensthorpe
21 November	Shire of Woodanilling

CARRIED

7.3.2 Cooperation and Shared Services

By Tony Brown, WALGA

BACKGROUND

Please find **attached** with the Agenda the latest version of the Cooperation and Shared Services document. This document was created to capture the collaborative work between Local Governments, showcasing ways to maximise resources to deliver outcomes that would be difficult to achieve alone. Local Governments have contributed to this resource and will be consulted again next year for further updates/modifications.

All CEO's have received this document and were encouraged to share with Councillors and staff to fully display all collaborative work happening within Local Government.

WALGA will be promoting this to Government agencies to display the collaborative work that happens in our sector.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact Tony Brown – tbrown@walga.asn.au or Naoimh Donaghy – ndonaghy@walga.asn.au.

Noted.

7.3.3 Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer – Zone Advocacy

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

At its August 2024 meeting, the Great Southern Country Zone requested:

REQUESTS a letter be sent on behalf of the Zone to the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture, advocating for increased State Government funding, resourcing and action to enforce the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer quarantine zone and remove infestations as soon as they are identified, to prevent the spread of PSHB and the potential catastrophic impact on regional agriculture and economies.

Correspondence on behalf of the Zone was sent to the Premier Hon. Roger Cook and copied to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Forestry, Small Business, Hon Jackie Jarvis and dated 10 September 2024.

The Premier, Hon. Roger Cook's responded on 16 October 2024

[Attachment No.6](#) provides copies of the Zone's correspondence and the Premier's response.

Noted

7.3.4 Office of the Auditor General – Parliamentary Committee Hearing

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

The Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations held a public hearing with the Office of the Auditor General on 11 September 2024, in relation to Local Government Audit Fees.

The hearing was broadcast, and can be viewed online via this link:

[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/commit.nsf/\(EvidenceOnly\)/C8278D7463F9648B48258903001F5128?opendocument#Hearings](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/commit.nsf/(EvidenceOnly)/C8278D7463F9648B48258903001F5128?opendocument#Hearings)

COMMENT

Notable matters discussed in the hearing include:

- Admission that the timing of audit fees was “terrible” and acknowledgement of impact on Local Governments. However, the increase is beyond the OAG's control.
- There was some communication with some Local Governments regarding increased fees. However, there was no structured communication process.
- Future plans include:
 - bringing forward the process and advising earlier
 - better communication of the process and causes behind cost increases
 - better data analytics to improve efficiency
 - target of 80% of audits being conducted by the OAG (currently 8%)
 - more education on the value and benefits of the OAG audit process
- The Auditor General was unable to provide a firm target date for notification for the next financial year. The earliest that has been achieved previously has been May.
- Audit fees should be recoverable rather than through appropriations. It is not sustainable for the OAG to absorb costs that have until now been absorbed.
- Contractor fees have increased due to market forces.
- Beyond the Audit Opinion received, Local Governments receive additional value e.g. entity specific findings and recommendations, comparable and consistent format, sector results reports, capability development (e.g. financial statement preparation guidance, audit readiness tools, liaison with professional and sector bodies) and advocacy on financial governance.
- Fees do not cover Performance Audits, Information Systems Audits, Better Practice Guidance or Audit Chair Forum, which are covered by appropriations.
- Recognise there is a disproportionate increase (percentage) for smaller Local Governments. Their concerns are understood.
- It is difficult to complete an audit in compliance with Standards for less than \$30,000 (unavoidable baseline cost).
- The OAG has published a guide to their tender procurement process (<https://audit.wa.gov.au/resources/audit-fees/oag-tender-process/>)
- There has been an increase in scope of audits since the OAG commenced. This is not within the OAG's discretion, it is in response to changes to the Auditing Standards.
- In comparison to when the audit process was not conducted by the OAG:
 - There is a view that audits were previously conducted as “loss leaders” and audits fees may have been artificially low.
 - There is an extra cost to the additional value that the OAG provides. However, this is a benefit to the sector that was not previously obtained.
- The Committee also conducted a Private Hearing.

Noted.

7.3.5 Submissions to the 2025 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

BACKGROUND

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

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

SAT will likely publish its Determination for 2025-2026 in April 2025.

COMMENT

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

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

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

Noted.

7.3.6 Great Southern Place-based Reconciliation Pilot meeting 26 November

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

The Zone Secretariat emailed an invitation to this event to all Zone Delegates and CEOs on 28 October 2024.

ReconciliationWA is working in partnership with the Great Southern community to pilot a bespoke Reconciliation Action Plan to drive reconciliation outcomes. The place-based Pilot is a community driven initiative to co-design, co-decide and co-deliver the shared aspirations unique to the reconciliation landscape of the Great Southern.

This gathering is a continuation of the Pilot and will bring together stakeholders to contribute to the next iteration of the reconciliation journey - Relationships Rising.

The objective of the day is to formalise the local reconciliation action network, to establish terms of reference, governance mechanisms and decision-making frameworks to sustain positive relationships and positive outcomes.

When: 26 November 2024

Times: Full Day Yarn, times to be confirmed (coming soon!)

Where: Denmark, WA
Location: Denmark Riverside Club, 3 Morgan Road, Denmark
RSVP: <https://events.humanitix.com/place-based-reconciliation-pilot-great-southern>

Briefing packs and the agenda will be circulated by the event organiser to those registered to attend. For more information, please contact:

Francine Bayet
Project Manager
francine@recwa.org.au | recwa.org.au
08 6552 6990 or 0459 542 469
40 Havelock Street, West Perth, Whadjuk Noongar Boodja, WA 6005

Noted.

7.3.7 Draft Public Health Planning Guide – Consultation closing 29 November

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

The Department of Health has published the draft *Public Health Planning Guide for Local Government* and it is open for comment until 29 November 2024.

The Guide is being developed to assist Local Governments with public health planning and developing Local Public Health Plans by June 2026 as required under Stage 5 of the *Public Health Act 2016*.

WALGA requested Local Government feedback to WALGA by 11 November 2024 and the WALGA Policy team is currently collating this feedback to formulate and provide a sector wide position to the Department of Health.

Chief Executive Officers should have received an email from the Department of Health in mid-October to inform them the consultation period is open until **Friday 29 November 2024**.

The [draft Guide and feedback survey](#) are available on the Department of Health website.

Noted.

7.3.8 Band 4 Local Governments Meeting

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

BACKGROUND

On 3 September, the Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beasley, hosted a roundtable meeting of all Band 4 Local Governments in WA.

To continue the discussion, WALGA hosted a further meeting of Band 4 Local Governments. The meeting was held on 11 October at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. Chief Executive Officers and Presidents from all 60 Band 4 Local Governments in the State were invited to attend.

Ahead of the meeting, WALGA emailed all Band 4 Local Governments asking for their top three priorities. Responses were received from 33 Local Governments. The top issues (in order of priority) are listed below:

1. Housing
2. Medical services
3. Audit fees
4. Financial Assistance Grants
5. Waste management funding
6. Compliance requirements
7. Financial sustainability
8. ICT systems
9. Renewable energy

These top 9 issues were separated into operational challenges and strategic issues at the meeting and presented for further discussion and comment.

The aim of the meeting was to identify and agree on the top issues facing Band 4 Local Governments, to enable the group to consider and develop potential solutions to these issues, before presenting to the Minister.

COMMENT

Overall, 72 representatives from 48 Local Governments attended the meeting on 11 October.

Please note that this report provides a summary of the discussion and feedback received from participants at the meeting. The comments and views are those of participants, and do not necessarily reflect the endorsed position of WALGA or its Members.

As the main outcome of the meeting, WALGA will undertake work on the top four issues identified by the group:

1. Housing;
2. Audit fees;
3. Medical services; and
4. Financial Assistance Grants

WALGA will provide a progress update to all Band 4 Local Governments early next year. A copy of the report has been provided separately.

Noted.

7.3.9 Native Vegetation Clearing Issues Paper

By Sarah Coles, Environment Policy Officer

BACKGROUND

WALGA has developed an Issues Paper on Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations based on input from Local Government and analysis of Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), and Appeals Convenor, data. Drawing on this data and Local Government case studies, the Paper outlines challenges Local Governments have encountered in navigating the regulatory system and identifies opportunities for improvement.

WALGA's data analysis identifies that 60% of Local Government clearing permits applications relate to road construction or upgrade. Key challenges relate to the complexity of navigating the regulatory environment, costs associated with the process and the time taken (for assessment of permits and appeals). These challenges can delay road and

infrastructure projects and impact on Local Government's ability to attract and retain grant funding.

Based on discussions with the sector, and recommendations of previous submissions, WALGA has identified a range of potential opportunities to improve the native vegetation process. These focus on DWER process improvements, Local Government capacity building and taking strategic approaches to data collection, clearing permits and offsets:

1. The implementation of a State Government coordinated and funded biodiversity survey program.
2. Funding for a trial using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for biodiversity mapping.
3. DWER to develop a Strategic Offsets framework for Local Government.
4. The introduction of statutory timeframes for determination of referrals, permits and appeals and timely compliance and enforcement.
5. Increased support and capacity building for Local Governments to navigate the native vegetation clearing requirements.
6. Extended default periods for purpose permits and removal of the time limit requirement for maintenance in existing transport corridors.

The Issues Paper has been updated following consideration by the Environment and Infrastructure Policy Teams and is **attached** for zones' consideration and feedback. In particular Zones are requested provide feedback on the following:

- a. Does the Issues Paper capture the challenges experienced by Local Government in relation to native vegetation clearing regulations?
- b. The opportunities identified for improving the native vegetation clearing process for Local Government.
- c. Any additional opportunities.

Discussion at the Zone meeting is encouraged. Any written feedback should be provided by Friday, 13 December, to environment@walga.asn.au.

The Zone can provide feedback at the meeting as well as Local Governments can email WALGA direct by 13 December.

Following all Zones feedback an item will be prepared for the Zones and State Council in February/March 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Great Southern Country Zone:

1. Notes the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations Issues Paper;
2. Notes that Local Governments may submit their written feedback directly to WALGA for consideration;
3. Provides the following feedback;
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Lynn MacLaren
Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnston

That the Great Southern Country Zone:

1. NOTES the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations Issues Paper;
2. NOTES that Local Governments may submit their written feedback directly to WALGA for consideration;
3. ENCOURAGES each Zone Member Local Government to provide feedback.

7.3.10 Request to Present - Department of Planning, Lands and Cultural Heritage

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

The Zone Executive Officer has been contacted by the Department of Planning, Lands and Cultural Heritage seeking interest from Country Zones to have a representative attend a future Zone meeting and provide further information on the Department of Planning, Lands & Heritage's 'Aboriginal Heritage Survey Program' (AHSP).

As Local Government authorities are eligible applicants under the AHSP, the Department believes that a discussion about the program would be an opportunity for Country Zone members to determine whether the AHSP would be right for their LGA.

A brief outline of the AHSP follows:

The State Government has committed to a 10-year fully funded Aboriginal heritage survey program across the State, to be managed by the Department. Its purpose is to:

1. Survey areas to:
 - o Record Aboriginal heritage for inclusion on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (ACHIS) and the Register of Places and Objects.
 - o Ensure Aboriginal heritage information can be accessed easily and relied on as part of statutory approvals under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (Act) to use land where Aboriginal sites are located.
2. Accurately remap boundaries of Aboriginal sites and known Aboriginal heritage places where required.
3. Confirm locations where Aboriginal heritage has not been identified, meaning activities can be undertaken without the need for approval under the Act.

Further information relating to the AHSP can be found here: [Aboriginal-heritage-survey-program](#)

RESOLUTION

Moved: Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders
Seconded: Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry

That the Great Southern Country Zone ~~supports / does not support~~ a representative from the Department of Planning, Lands and Cultural Heritage to attend the April 2025 Zone meeting to discuss the Aboriginal Heritage Survey Program.

CARRIED

8 WALGA STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS

8.1 ZONE STATE COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone State Councillor

Zone State Councillor, Cr Scott Crosby noted WALGA is hosting a Large-Scale Renewable Energy Forum on Wednesday, 27 November 2024. Zone discussion included:

- Concern that the Forum did not include speakers reflecting community concerns / negative impacts of large-scale developments.
- Requested WALGA avoid scheduling important sector-wide engagement events on Council meeting days (usually Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday) and during harvest (late October to end December).
- Major concerns arising from State Government strategy encouraging large-scale renewable energy development without robust planning framework by which development is controlled to minimise negative impacts on local communities and local governments during construction, operation and future decommissioning.
 - For example, set back for development should be consistently calculated from neighbouring boundaries, not buildings, and should provide at least 2km exclusion zone, which can be extended where prevailing weather conditions may cause noise to travel further.
- Concern that State Government agencies are encouraging developers to opt to use Development Assessment Panels for large scale renewable energy development applications, rather than determination by the Local Government.

8.2 STATE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Zone delegates to consider the Matters for Decision contained in the WA Local Government Association State Council Agenda and put forward resolutions to Zone Representatives on State Council.

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

8.2.1 2024 Annual General Meeting Resolutions (State Council Agenda item 8.1)

By Meghan Dwyer, Executive Officer Governance

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. the item 71 Amendments to *Cat Act 2011*- Allow Local Governments to Make Local Laws to Contain Cats to the Owner's Property be endorsed.
2. the following resolutions from the 2024 WALGA Annual General be referred to the Environment Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.2 Advocacy for Legislative Reforms to Counter Land-Banking
 - 7.4 Action on Asbestos for Western Australia
 - 7.6 Advocacy for Accessibility.
3. the following resolutions from the 2024 WALGA Annual General be referred to the Governance Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.2 Advocacy for Legislative Reforms to Counter Land-Banking

- 7.3 Advocacy for Expansion of Differential Rating to Include Long Term Unoccupied Commercial Buildings (Property Activation Levy).
- 4. the following resolution from the 2024 WALGA Annual General be referred to the People and Place Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.5 Addressing the Impracticality of Local Governments Funding Department of Communities and GROH Houses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 9 October.
- The meeting resolved for WALGA to act in relation to six Member Motions:
 - Amendments to the *Cat Act 2011*- Allow Local Governments to Make Local Laws to Contain Cats to the Owner's Property
 - Advocacy for Legislative Reforms to Counter Land-banking
 - Advocacy for Expansion of Differential Rating to Include Long Term Unoccupied Commercial Buildings (Property Activation Levy)
 - Action on Asbestos for Western Australia
 - Addressing the Impracticality of Local Governments Funding Department of Communities and Government Regional Officer Housing
 - Advocacy for Accessibility
- The action proposed to be taken in relation to each of the resolutions has been summarised for State Council's information.

8.2.2 Local Government Elections Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda item 8.2)

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services and Jason Russell, Senior Governance Specialist

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA adopt the following Elections Advocacy Positions:

The Local Government sector supports:

1. *Voluntary participation in Local Government elections.*
2. *Councillors serve four-year terms with elections every two years and half of the Council positions spilled at each election.*
3. *First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) voting system for Local Government elections. If Optional Preferential Voting (OPV) remains as the primary method of voting, the sector supports the removal of the 'proportional' part of the voting method for general elections.*
2. *First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) voting system for internal Council elections.*
3. *Councils holding elections by means of in-person, postal and/or electronic voting.*
4. *Current legislative provision of Mayor/President of Class 1 and Class 2 Local Governments being directly elected by the community and Class 3 and Class 4 Local Government Councils electing the President.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of sector-wide consultation on WALGA's Elections Advocacy Positions.
- Consultation addressed key areas elements of the current Advocacy Positions:
 1. Voluntary participation,
 2. Terms on Council and election cycles,

3. Voting systems for public elections,
4. Voting systems for internal elections,
5. Methods for holding elections,
6. Ability to choose how Mayors/Presidents are elected.

8.2.3 Aboriginal Communities Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda item 8.3)

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Officer Community

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Replace Advocacy Position 3.1.2 Reconciliation with the following:

WALGA:

1. *Acknowledges the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community and embraces the vast Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia.*
2. *Supports the efforts of Local Governments to progress reconciliation at the local level.*

2. Remove Advocacy Position 3.1.3 Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

3. Replace Advocacy Position 3.1.4 *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* and South West Native Title Settlement with the following:

3.1.4 Aboriginal Heritage Protection

1. *WALGA supports the recognition, protection, conservation and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage and recognises the fundamental importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage to Aboriginal people and the State.*
2. *The State Government must:*
 - a. *Ensure that legislative requirements balance the need to protect Aboriginal heritage with the need for Local Government to undertake activities in a timely and affordable manner.*
 - b. *Provide adequate resourcing to ensure all parties have the capacity, capability and resources to discharge their statutory obligations.*
 - c. *Provide support and guidance to Local Governments to ensure that they have the resources, capacity and capability to effectively and efficiently deliver essential services to community while protecting Aboriginal heritage.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Following a review of WALGA's Aboriginal Community advocacy positions it is proposed that Advocacy Positions 3.1.2 Reconciliation and 3.1.4 *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* and South West Native Title Settlement be updated and that Advocacy Position 3.1.3 Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People be removed.
- The intent of the proposed revisions is to reflect contemporary approaches to key issues in Aboriginal Affairs policy and legislation as they relate to Local Government.
- The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed the proposed advocacy position changes at its meeting on 25 October.

8.2.4 Family and Domestic Violence Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.4)

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Officer Community

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace Advocacy Position 3.10.1 Family and Domestic Violence with the following:

3.10.1 Family and Domestic Violence

- 1. Family and domestic violence is unacceptable and has devastating and long-term impacts on individuals, families and communities.*
- 2. Preventing family and domestic violence requires commitment from all levels of government, different sectors, and members of the community.*
- 3. WALGA calls on the State and Australian governments to provide adequate funding and support for family and domestic violence programs and services, in particular:*
 - a. Funding for collaborative and connected family and domestic violence programs and services that are place-based and people-centred; and*
 - b. Better integration of family and domestic violence initiatives, including capacity building across all tiers of government and community services.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.10.1 Family and Domestic Violence be updated.
- The revised position makes a clear statement on the Local Government sector's condemnation of family and domestic violence and the collective responsibility of governments and the community in prevention.
- The revised position provides a framework for WALGA advocacy to the Australian and State Government, without impinging on individual Local Government's approach to this issue, which will be dependent on their capacity, capability, local context and strategic direction.
- The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the revised Advocacy Position at its meeting on 25 October.

8.2.5 Container Deposit System Policy Statement and Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.5)

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace the existing Container Deposit Systems Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.6 Container Deposit Systems with the following:

7.6 Container Deposit Systems

- 1. Local Government supports the WA Containers for Change Scheme and acknowledges its contribution to reducing litter, increasing material recovery and providing employment opportunities across the state.*
- 2. To maximise the benefits of the WA Scheme, Local Government calls on the State Government to:*

- a.** *Maintain a resource recovery target of 85% for eligible containers and a focus on litter reduction.*
- b.** *Expand the range of containers accepted in the Scheme, by:*
 - i. 2027: to include wine bottles, spirit bottles and larger sizes of currently eligible containers,*
 - ii. 2030: to include plain milk and milk alternative containers and composite container types, and*
 - iii. 2035: other container types.*
- c.** *Ensure national alignment of the materials covered by the Scheme and consistent messaging.*
- d.** *Maintain a State-based and managed Scheme.*
- e.** *Review the deposit amount to appropriately incentivise community engagement.*
- f.** *Increase the number of refund and donation points to ensure community access, including in public places and at events.*
- g.** *Ensure refund points are financially sustainable.*
- h.** *Leverage the refund point collection network to provide drop off points for other materials covered by effective product stewardship schemes.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's 2008 Container Deposit Systems (CDS) Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.6 Container Deposit Systems, formed the basis of WALGA's advocacy for the introduction and design of a WA CDS, Containers for Change, which commenced on 1 October 2020.
- The current Advocacy Position and many elements of the Policy Statement have been achieved. However, there are aspects of the Scheme that Local Government has identified as important to improve.
- The focus of the updated Advocacy Position is:
 - building on the environmental, social and economic benefits of the current Scheme;
 - expanding the range of containers covered by the Scheme;
 - increasing community access and incentives to use the Scheme; and
 - leveraging the refund point network to collect other materials covered by effective product stewardship schemes.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the new Policy Statement and Advocacy Position at its meeting on 23 October.

8.2.6 Bus Stop Infrastructure Agreement (State Council Agenda item 8.6)

By Negar Nili, Policy Officer Transport and Roads

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the proposed Bus Stop Infrastructure Partnership Agreement between WALGA and the Public Transport Authority 2024/25 to 2028/29.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has negotiated a new Bus Stop Infrastructure Partnership Agreement (Agreement) with the Public Transport Authority (PTA). If agreed this will be the third such Agreement, with validity through to 2028/29.

- The Agreement seeks to provide the foundation for an effective working relationship between the PTA and Local Governments.
- The purpose of the Agreement is to clarify the roles, responsibilities and discretion of PTA and Local Governments in the provision and maintenance of bus stop infrastructure in areas with regular public transport SmartRider ticketed services, including regional cities and towns.
- The Agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of the PTA and Local Governments in various scenarios including when bus routes are changed, bus stops are added or removed, and bus stop infrastructure is upgraded.
- The Agreement provides a funding contribution to Local Governments for the maintenance and installation of bus shelters.

8.2.7 2025 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members (State Council Agenda item 8.7)

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission to the 2025 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 member fees.
- The submission recommends:
 - an increase to Elected Member Fees and Allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) of 4%;
 - an increase to Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands of 4%;
 - 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;
 - the creation of a new fee category for independent audit, risk and improvement committee members without bands, and that the fee be set at a suitable level to recognise the skills and knowledge required for such a role; and
 - that the new category provide a fee for the independent chair position as well as the independent member position.
- SAT will likely publish its determination for 2025-2026 in April 2025.
- The Governance Policy Team endorsed the submission at its meeting on 4 November.

8.2.8 Submission on the draft State Hazard Plan - Fire (State Council Agenda item 8.8)

By Rachel Armstrong, Policy Manager Emergency Management

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission on the draft State Hazard Plan - Fire.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The State Hazard Plan - Fire (SHP Fire) outlines the arrangements for the management of fire in Western Australia including fire prevention, preparedness, response and initial recovery.
- Local Governments have a critical role in bushfire management, including statutory responsibilities for mitigation, prevention and response under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (BF Act) and responsibility for community-led recovery, as provided in the *Emergency Management Act 2005* (EM Act).
- The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has undertaken a comprehensive review of the SHP Fire and is seeking comments on the revised draft Plan by 9 December ([Engage WA Emergency Management](#)).
- WALGA's draft submission on the draft SHP Fire incorporates feedback from 33 Local Governments and LGIS.
- The submission focusses on the key issues that underpin Local Government's capacity to implement their roles and responsibilities for the hazard of fire including:
 - Emergency Services Funding;
 - The State Emergency Management Framework and Consolidated Emergency Services Legislation; and
 - Bush Fire Brigade management and Work Health and Safety (WHS).
- A detailed list of proposed specific changes to plan is also included.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Deputy President Cr Russel Thomson

Seconded: President Cr Michael White

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the following WALGA recommendations in the Matters for Decision as contained in the December 2024 State Council Agenda:

- 8.2.1 2024 Annual General Meeting Resolutions (State Council Agenda Item 8.1)
- 8.2.3 Aboriginal Communities Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda Item 8.3)
- 8.2.4 Family and Domestic Violence Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda Item 8.4)
- 8.2.5 Container Deposit System Policy Statement and Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda Item 8.5)
- 8.2.6 Bus Stop Infrastructure Agreement (State Council Agenda Item 8.6)
- 8.2.7 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members (State Council Agenda Item 8.7)
- 8.2.8 Submission on the Draft State Hazard Plan – Fire (State Council Agenda Item 8.8)

CARRIED

Moved: Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry
Seconded: Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports recommendation in the Matters for Decision as contained in the December 2024 State Council Agenda relevant to "Local Government Elections Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda Item 8.2), subject to WALGA's advocacy addressing the declining service levels and cost increases associated with Local Government elections conducted by the WA Electoral Commission, in particular the time taken to declare the October 2023 Election Results.

CARRIED

8.3 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.3.1 Infrastructure Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.1)

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager, Infrastructure

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team meeting for the 6 December 2024 meeting.

8.3.2 People and Place Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.2)

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the People and Place Policy Team to the 6 December 2024 meeting.

8.3.3 Governance Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.3)

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the Governance Policy Team for the 6 December 2024 meeting.
2. Determine to:
 - a. retain the following Advocacy Positions with amendment:
 - i. Advocacy Position 2.8.1 Industry Award Coverage
 - ii. Advocacy Position 2.8.3 Registration of WALGA as an Employer Organisation
 - b. retire Advocacy Position 2.8.2 Local Government Long Service Leave Regulations.

8.3.4 Environment Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.4)

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Environment Policy Team to the 6 December 2024 meeting.

8.3.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report (State Council Agenda item 9.5)

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Municipal Waste Advisory Council to the 6 December 2024 meeting.

The Great Southern Country Zone **AGREED** to:

1. **NOTE** all Policy Team and Committee Reports as contained in the December 2024 State Council Agenda; and
2. **SUPPORTS** the WALGA recommendations in the Governance Policy Team Report as contained in the December 2024 State Council Agenda and as listed above.

8.3.6 Matters For Noting/Information

- WALGA Strategic Planning Update (State Council Agenda item 10.1)
- Submission on Reform of Packaging Regulation (State Council Agenda item 10.2)
- Submission on The Draft State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies (State Council Agenda item 10.3)
- Local Government Primary Healthcare Survey Report (State Council Agenda item 10.4)
- Renewable Energy Survey Highlights (State Council Agenda item 10.5)
- Flying Agenda: Submission to Main Roads WA on the Revised Western Australia Traffic Signals Approval Policy and Process (State Council Agenda item 10.6)
- Flying Minute: Submission on the Draft Objectives and Priorities for the Upcoming State Public Health Plan (State Council Agenda item 10.7)
- Flying Minute: Submission On the Draft Regional Education Strategy (State Council Agenda item 10.8)
- Flying Minute: Submission on Derbal Yiragan (Swan) Djarlgarro (Canning) Draft River Protection Strategy (State Council Agenda item 10.9)
- Flying Minute: Submission on the State Hazard Plan - Human Biosecurity (State Council Agenda item 10.10)

The Great Southern Country Zone **AGREED** to **NOTE** all Matters for Noting/Information as contained in the December 2024 State Council Agenda.

8.3.7 Key Activity Reports

- Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.1)
- Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.2)
- Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.3)
- Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.4)

The Great Southern Country Zone AGREED to NOTE all Key Activity Reports as contained in the December 2024 State Council Agenda.

8.3.8 WALGA State President's Report

Attachment No.7 [WALGA State President's Report](#)

The Great Southern Country Zone AGREES to NOTE the WALGA President's Report - December 2024

9 EMERGING ISSUES/COLLABORATION

9.1 3G NETWORK SHUTDOWN - COMMUNITY IMPACT

By Scott Crosby, Zone Chairperson

Shire of Kent is conducting a community survey, with 24 of 26 respondents impacted following the 3G network shutdown. Shire of Kent offered to share details of their survey questions, which may assist other Zone members to conduct similar surveys of their communities.

Members noted Telstra's Regional General Manager, Boyd Brown, spoke on ABC Radio encouraging customers to advise him directly of any reduced service resulting from the 3G network shutdown. Zone members were encouraged to provide feedback to Telstra accordingly.

9.2 ZONE MEMBER - UPDATES

Broomehill-Tambellup

- Continuing advocacy regarding wind farm development, including rating mechanisms to return value to the community.

Albany

- Advocating against Water Corporation proposal for a desalination plant outfall into King George Sound.
- Albany Bicentenary 2026 program launch event – see [News Story - Major event program sets the stage for Albany 2026 » City of Albany](#)
 - [Albany 2026 website](#)

Katanning

- Townsite NBN upgrades (fibre to the node)
- District water shortage – dams at only 20% capacity
- Early Childhood Hub – lease negotiations with Department of Communities progressing.
- Noted Katanning Bush Fire Brigade communications had been impacted.
- Asked when 5G services would be available.

Plantagenet

- Tree farming (carbon sequestration) – emerging land use planning issue
- Renewable energy development planning controls
- Mobile network capacity issues – high traffic volumes on Albany Hwy impact bandwidth and service capacity in Mt Barker townsite (evident under 3G during ANZAC Centennial events in Albany). Shire will monitor impacts following 3G shutdown.

Ravensthorpe

- Appreciate inclusion in the Great Southern Zone and looking forward to contributing.
- Shire's economic outlook refocussing from mining to farming and tourism, as a result of a major miner closing its operations.

Kent

- Meeting with a mining company regarding future development.

Gnowangerup

- Key issue: Renewable energy land use planning controls
- Events:
 - [Fields and Fortunes Regional Business Forum](#) – Friday 21 February 2024
 - Shire hosted very successful Wild Gravel event - 5 October 2024.

10 OTHER BUSINESS

Nil.

11 NEXT ZONE MEETING

The next meeting of the Great Southern Country Zone will be held Friday, 14 February 2025 at the Shire of Kent commencing at 10.00am.

12 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 1.06pm.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries Update - November 2024 (Item 5.6)

[Back to Item 5.6](#)



Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries Report

November 2024

Local Government Act Reform

Tranche 1

- The *Local Government Amendment Act 2023*, containing the first tranche of reforms, was passed on 11 May 2023 and included priority reforms to election and council representation ahead of the October 2023 Local Government Elections.
- The electoral reforms included the introduction of optional preferential voting, changes to council member representation based on population, and abolishing the use of wards for smaller local governments.
- Tranche one reforms that were implemented without the need for further regulations included:
 - changes to special electors' meetings
 - compliance exemptions (due to emergency or unusual circumstances)
 - parental leave for council members
 - recording individual votes in minutes of council meetings.
- Various other regulations projects are currently in development or being drafted. These include:
 - standardised meeting procedures
 - council plans
 - community engagement charters
 - community surveys
 - online registers
 - publication of CEO key performance indicators
 - communications agreements
 - alfresco activities.
- A three-month consultation process was undertaken to inform the drafting of standardised meeting procedures in regulations.
- The consultation opened on 28 February 2024 and finished on 7 June 2024.
- In total, DLGSC received 139 responses.
- All local governments, council members, local government CEOs, local government employees and community members were encouraged to make a submission.

Tranche 2

- The Local Government Amendment Bill 2024 was introduced into Parliament on 15 August.
- It passed the Legislative Assembly on 17 October and is due to enter the Legislative Council for debate soon.
- Tranche two reforms include:
 - the new Local Government Inspector

- introduction of monitors for early intervention
- council member superannuation
- increasing penalties
- enabling resource sharing
- streamlining processes for model local laws
- greater role clarity for council members and CEOs
- introduction of a rates and revenue policy for local governments
- changes to audit committees
- providing greater flexibility for regional subsidiaries
- building upgrade finance.
- The DLGSC provides regular updates to the local government sector on the progress of reforms via DLGSC's Reform webinar series, revisions to the DLGSC website and LG alerts.
- The Bill may be viewed on the WA Parliament website:
<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=E89C0023410BDDCF48258B790032ADCF>

Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997

- Changes to extend local government approval powers came into effect on 1 September 2024.
- The reforms streamline the application process for temporary accommodation approvals on private property, cut red tape and offer more flexibility for local governments.
- Previously, local governments could only provide approvals for a maximum of 3 months, or up to 12 months if the proposed arrangement was in a caravan and the person had a building or demolition permit.
- Standard camping approvals for longer than 3 months required a separate application to the Minister for Local Government.
- Benefits of the simplified process include:
 - no approval required if a person intends to camp on private property for 5 days or less
 - applications for longer periods can seek approval from the relevant local government rather than the Minister for Local Government
 - local governments can now approve all camping applications for up to 24 months
 - applicants may re-apply to the local government on expiry of an approval
 - local governments can revoke approvals if an applicant fails to meet the conditions of approval.
- All applicants will still need to satisfy the existing conditions for these approvals, including meeting health and safety requirements set out in the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997*.
- Special approval from the Minister for Local Government will still be required if more than one proposed caravan or tiny home on wheels is proposed to be placed on a private lot.
- The Minister for Local Government will retain the power to consider camping approvals in instances where a local government does not provide an approval or revokes an approval.
- More information is available in our updated Temporary Accommodation and Camping Outside of Caravan Parks:
<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/department/publications/publication/temporary-accommodation-and-camping-outside-of-caravan-parks>

If you have further queries, please contact 6552 1530 or legislation@dlgsc.wa.gov.au for assistance.

Model Financial Statements (MFS) and Financial

- Updated Model Financial Statements (MFS) guidelines and templates for Class 1 and 2, plus a reduced version for smaller local governments (Class 3 and 4) were published on the DLGSC website on 25 June 2024 and apply to 2023-24 annual financial statements.
- Amendments to the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* published on 18 October 2023 prescribed that non-financial assets only need to be valued every five years, and in the intervening years it was not necessary to review whether a revaluation was necessary.
- The new asset valuation requirements apply from the 2023-24 financial year onwards. Non-financial asset valuation guidelines are currently being prepared. A draft was presented to a sector body workshop held on 22 March 2024, and feedback is being addressed with a view to finalise and publish it by the end of December 2024.

Contact LG Accounting for queries – Lg.accounting@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

Local Government Grants Commission

- On 28 October 2024, cabinet supported the reappointments by the Governor, in Executive Council for the Country Rural Member and the Deputy Country Rural Member, both for a term of three years.
- This appointment created a quorum for the Commission.
- The appointment of the vacant Chairperson position is progressing.
- On 28 June 2024 an advance payment of \$339,416,207 equal to an estimated 85 per cent of the 2024-25 Financial Assistance (FA Grants) was made to local governments.
- On 22 July 2024 the Commission resolved the FA Grants for 2024-25 with the recommendations subsequently endorsed by the Commonwealth Minister.
- Due to the 100 per cent advance from the prior year (2023-24 FA Grants), all WA local governments were either over or underpaid. The Commission had intended to recoup the variances from the 2024-25 funding, however with the large advance payment being made again, this was not able to be finalised in the one financial year as expected.
- The remaining 15 per cent of 2024-25 FA Grants totals \$60,616,774 (being \$36,799,358 General Purpose and \$23,817,416 Local Roads) and will be distributed quarterly on 16 August 2024, 15 November 2024, 17 February 2025, and 15 May 2025.
- The Commission finalised the 2024-25 FA Grant allocations to the Indian Ocean Territories on 29 August 2024.
- On 18 October 2024, the Commission distributed communications with local governments around allocations, adjustment and over/under payment status for the 2024-25 Grant via email and post.
- In late October 2024, the Commission conducted a visiting program to the Goldfields, hosting public hearings at the Shire of Menzies, Leonora, Laverton, Ngaanyatjaraku, Coolgardie, Dundas and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.
- The Commission is finalising plans for a visiting program to the Murchison region in November 2024.

Stop Puppy Farming

- The State Government is delivering on its commitment to stop and prevent puppy farming. These reforms have overwhelming community support.
- The *Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Act 2021* requires the design and development of a centralised registration system (called PetsWA) for dogs and cats.
- The CRS will also assist with the registration of cats under the *Cat Act 2011*, and the development of regulations, in consultation with stakeholders.
- The DLGSC awarded the contract to the solution implementer Seisma on 26 July 2024. The PetsWA project team commenced on 5 August 2024, with all resources onboarded by 2 September 2024. The project is funded for 12 months, with implementation planned for the latter half of 2025.
- Migrating the data from the current dog and cat registries is critical to the success of the project, to achieve one single repository of dog and cat registry information. There will be three data collections required across the project.
- A data migration webinar was hosted on 28 August 2024 and was well attended.
- Instructions for data migration were circulated to CEOs and data migration contacts on 6 September 2024.
- For data collection 1, there are five groups (by ERP), and a follow up email was sent on 24 September 2024. Since that time the project team has contacted CEOs or delegated data migration officer to progress this stream of work.
- The Minister for Local Government issued a Statement of Support via the DLGSC on 21 October 2024.
- As part of change management and engagement, a comprehensive stakeholder list and MS Teams channel has been developed and socialised.
- The project team attended the WALGA Convention and LG Pro Conference to network with LG stakeholders.
- A comprehensive project update was provided at the webinar on 31 October 2024. The development of the new system is on track.
- Public consultation on the proposed regulations closed late last year, and the final regulations are in development.
- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has undertaken targeted consultation with local governments about the implementation of the stop puppy farming legislation.

Off Road Vehicles

- ORV committee are continuing to meet regularly.
- A private proponent is currently investigating the potential of an ORV area south of Perth.
- The government has invested \$100,000 to improve the ORV areas, specifically in York and Ledge Point.
- Upgrades at other sites are in the pipeline, as the search continues to expand Western Australia's ORV network.
- The future of Pinjar's ORV site was assured when the government decided to end pine harvesting in the Gnaragara State Forest, to preserve the roosting habitat of the endangered black cockatoo and support the recreational use of the area.
- A safety assessment has been conducted at the Lancelin ORV area, within the Shire of Gingin with the final report to be delivered before the end of the financial year.

Off Road Vehicles Areas – Grants Program

- On 1 September, the government announced a \$4.8 million injection into the ORV account to run a grants program to support local governments establish new ORV areas, and deliver major upgrades at existing areas.
- This is one of the biggest investments ever made to support off-road riding in WA, ever.
- Applications are now open for local governments and prospective partners to submit proposals to deliver new facilities, anywhere in WA.
- The grant program aims to support local governments to establish new ORV facilities in partnership with the WA Government.
- The grant program consists of two streams
 - Stream A: Establish new ORV areas: \$1 million
 - Stream B: Upgrade existing areas: Up to \$200,000
- As part of this grant program, the WA Government has established an Inter-Agency Steering Group which is available to assist local governments progress approved proposals.
- Applications close/closed 8 November 2024.

Local Government Election Commitments

- The City of Bayswater's Riverside Gardens Urban Development project is on track. Detailed design is expected to be completed in June 2024, with an estimated project cost to be known at this time.
- The City of Gosnells' Sutherlands Park Youth (Skate) Plaza is on track. Detailed design is complete, and a contractor appointed for design and construction. Civil works are underway with main works commencing in August 2024 with expected completion in January 2025.
- The City of Joondalup's Greenwood Scout and Guide Hall Refurbishment project is on track with construction underway and due for completion in November 2024.
- The City of Swan's Ellenbrook Community Hub project has completed community consultation and a detailed needs analysis. The City is currently finalising the detailed design to a 50 per cent brief by August 2024.

Ratability of Miscellaneous Licences

- The State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) has recently determined that land subject to a Miscellaneous Licence is not subject to local government rates under any circumstances.
- The DLGSC has already issued an LG alert to warn regional local governments of this issue.
- The DLGSC is preparing to issue an anonymous survey to consult with regional areas to identify whether any local governments have been charging rates over miscellaneous licences or intended to do so.
- The intention of the consultation is to quantify the potential financial impact that this SAT decision has had on the sector.
- The DLGSC has been advised that the local government involved in the SAT decision appealed that decision, on the grounds that it contains errors of law.

Local Government Partnerships and Sponsorships

- To support the local government sector, the DLGSC provides various sponsorship or partnerships with key sector bodies. Over 2023/24, DLGSC provided sponsorships or partnerships to:
 - WALGA
 - LG Professionals WA
 - Reconciliation WA
 - Telethon
 - Town Team Movement
- For 2024/25 so far, DLGSC has committed to providing sponsorships to:
 - WALGA for their annual convention and Awards evening.
 - LG Professionals WA for a corporate principal partnership, CEO support program and the Emerging Leaders Award.
 - Town Team Movement for the Minister's Place Innovation Awards 2024 and the Town Teams Conference in Northam.

Placemaking Training Initiative

- In 2023/24 DLGSC engaged Town Team Movement to deliver 12 months of free online placemaking training to the WA local government sector.
- Placemaking helps build community connections by bringing together planners, community members, architects, local government, business and other groups, working collaboratively to activate local spaces.
- Over 500 local government staff or elected members from councils across WA accessed the free training in its first year.
- Due to strong interest from the sector, DLGSC has extended the Placemaking training partnership with Town Team Movement for 12 months.
- Local government staff and elected officials have another year to access the training, with funding for the program extended until July 2025 in response to strong interest from the sector.

DLGSC Contacts

LG Support and Engagement	lghotline@dlgsc.wa.gov.au
LG Policy and Legislation	legislation@dlgsc.wa.gov.au
CRS – Stop Puppy Farming	puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au
Grants Commission – Financial Assistance Grants	Grants.commission@dlgsc.wa.gov.au
LG accounting enquiries	LG.accounting@dlgsc.wa.gov.au
LG Act Reform	actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au
LG Advisory Board	advisoryboard@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

Attachment 2: Zone Status Report - November 2024 (Item 6.2)

[Back to Item 6.2](#)

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Great Southern C	24 November 2023 Zone Agenda Item 8.3.2. Appeal for Remedial Action on Education Policy and Procedures in Country Schools	<p>That the Western Australian Local Government Association Great Southern Zone (WALGA) request that WALGA strongly advocates to the Department of Education (Department) on behalf of rural and remote districts that greater efforts be made to reduce the inequality of educational opportunity with particular reference to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Department makes available resources for intervention in the experience of students specifically disaffected by the current model of schooling who are disruptive, falling behind and at risk of failing to learn to read, write and work in basic arithmetic; including intensive attention combined with health and like issues and more active, empathic, and practical instruction. 2. That the Department makes available the current resources of Distant Education and/or enables families to access similar private providers for secondary education in order that students can study for an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank), or other subjects of their own choosing, using internet resources and mentors provided in the schools closest to them; and 3. That the Department subsidises housing suitable for teachers or enables local governments to build and manage such housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This matter was referred to the People and Place Policy Team for consideration at its February 2024 meeting. • The People and Place Policy Team resolved: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the request of the Great Southern Country Zone and the issues raised regarding education policy and procedures, 2. Recommends that State Council consider the issue as a key policy priority in the 2024 Policy Priorities. 3. Recommends that the Great Southern Country Zone continue to advocate directly to the relevant State agencies on this issue, including further representations to the Minister for Education and Department of Education and Department of Communities. 4. Recommends that the Great Southern Zone inform other country zones of this advocacy position with a view to possible cooperation. <p>WALGA notes that the Great Southern Country Zone requested other zones to support the motion. Eight Zones have agreed to write to the Minister of Education on the matter of reducing regional disadvantage in educational opportunities.</p> <p>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</p>	November 2024	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039</p>

ATTACHMENT 2

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
			<p>investment in the attraction and retention payments/packages, and a developing Regional Education Strategy.</p> <p>WALGA notes that 2024-25 State Budget included an additional \$10 million for the School of Isolated and Distance Education.</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: 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> <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> <p>WALGA provided a submission on the Draft Education Strategy on 4 October 2024., provided as an item for noting at the December 2024 State Council meeting.</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>		

ATTACHMENT 2

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Grt Southern C	25 August 2023 Zone Agenda Item 7.3.1 Western Power Headworks – Lead time for quotes	That the Great Southern Country Zone request WALGA advocacy to State Government to reduce the time taken for Western Power to provide quotes to a maximum of three months.	<p>Meetings regarding Western Power performance, capacity and capability in distribution connection services were held during October with the Western Power CEO with some of his senior staff and separately with the Executive Manager Asset Operations at Western Power and some of his senior team. It was acknowledged that the current time frames are not acceptable to customers.</p> <p>Western Power discussed measures taken, including expanding the number of design consultants engaged and the establishment of a portal allowing customers (including Local Governments) to access information about the status of any of their projects.</p> <p>WALGA highlighted that the customer expectation, based on pre-COVID experience, is that the total time to deliver most projects should be within 30 weeks with around 10 weeks of this to provide a quote.</p> <p>Western Power indicated that projects commenced recently are on track to achieve much better turnaround but acknowledged that there are projects lodged a year ago yet to commence.</p> <p>Western Power indicated that they were open to consider an alternative delivery model that would enable Local Governments to directly engage electrical engineering contractors / consultants to design and deliver projects in a similar way to land developers.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	November 2024	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure iduncan@walga.asn.au 9213 2031
Grt Southern C	19 April 2024 Zone Agenda Item 7.2.2 Zone Strategic Priorities Workshop Outcomes	The Great Southern Country Zone requests: 1. WALGA advocacy to State Government for the Government Regional Officer Housing Program to: a. Increase State Government capital investment in the GROH program and review and address the impact of current policy settings on the wider regional housing shortage, including:	<p>WALGA acknowledges the ongoing housing supply challenges members are facing.</p> <p>WALGA is meeting with the Housing Supply Unit on 13 June.</p> <p>The Deputy Director General, Housing and Assets presented at the 10 July 2024 State Council Strategic Forum. The</p>	November 2024	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039

ATTACHMENT 2

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
		<p>i. GROH Leasing and purchasing from the established residential private market (Spot Purchase program).</p> <p>ii. Prioritise the State’s development of land to service GROH demand and reduce pressure on already constrained availability of regional residential land supplies.</p> <p>b. Review the GROH program policy settings, so that proposals for GROH development in partnership with Local Government align to regional commercial viability and financial capacity of the Local Government, including:</p> <p>i. Enabling State Agency leasing agreement periods of 20 years or greater.</p> <p>ii. State Agency contribution to capital costs, with commensurate lower rental returns.</p> <p>c. Release the GROH Program Review, undertaken by the Department of Communities in 2023, to facilitate further discussion of the viability and future of GROH program policy settings as it relates to the Local Government sector and regional housing availability.</p> <p>2. The Zone Secretariat write to the responsible Minister/s advocating for the matters outlined in Part 1 above.</p>	<p>presentation included an offer to Local Governments to submit expressions of interest for partnership on social and affordable housing as well the Government Regional Officer Housing program, including those that request variations to the current program parameters – such as rent returns or interest free loans.</p> <p>WALGA continues to advocate for State Government to optimize partnership opportunities with Local Government that make capital investment in housing supply viable.</p> <p>WALGA hosted a GROH workshop on 8 November 2024 to consider current and future Government Regional Officer Housing program build to lease model in the context of the current WA construction market with a view to policy changes. The workshop was led by the Department of Communities with senior representatives from Treasury and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.</p>		

Attachment 3: Zone Action Items - November 2024

[Back to Item 6.2](#)

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
2022, 26 Aug Item 7.2.1 Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)	<p>That a working group consisting of three Great Southern Local Government Authority CEOs from the Shires of Kojonup, Katanning and Plantagenet, and the Great Southern Country Zone President, be established to progress the DAMA on behalf of all committed Great Southern Local Governments.</p> <p><u>DAMA Working Group Charter:</u></p> <p>1. Recommending the committed Local Government's consult with their respective industries on skill shortages and gather supporting evidence by Friday, 23 Sept 2022.</p> <p>2. (a) Review the other WA DAMA business cases and their learnings to determine our process and next steps; and (b) Prepare a draft budget and scope of works for the business case and prepare a shortlist of suitable contractors to quote on the business case by 17 Oct 2022.</p> <p>3. Prepare the final report with recommendations for the next Great Southern Country Zone meeting on Friday, 28 October 2022.</p> <p>The meeting AGREED that the DAMA Working Group meetings should include representation from the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) and Regional Development Australia Great Southern (RDA-GS)</p>	<p>Working Group Terms of Reference conclude as at 28 October 2022.</p> <p>GSCZ 28/10/2022 - refer item 7.2.4 -Resolution to extend Charter:</p> <p>10. Endorse the Great Southern Country Zone DAMA Working Group Charter being extended to include review and recommendation to the Zone of the Draft Business Case.</p> <p>23 Jun 2023 – Phase 3 of the EY consultancy has been completed (business case submitted to Dpt of Home Affairs). Working Group will be wound up subject to any additional work required following feedback from the Dept / Minister – expected late June 2023.</p> <p>23 Feb 2024 – Refer item 7.2.1 – update on DAMA application with DoHA</p>	ONGOING	DAMA Working Group (Zone)
2022, 28 Oct Item 7.2.4 Designated Area Migration	<p>7. Endorse the Shire of Kojonup CEO and the Regional Development Authority Great Southern Inc CEO to act jointly as the Zone representatives for communication between the consultant and the Zone</p>	<p>21 Apr 2023: Phase 1 and 2 of the EY consultancy have been completed – refer DAMA Working Group and RDAGS reports at the April 2023 meeting.</p> <p>23 Jun 2023 – Phase 3 of the EY consultancy has been completed (business case submitted to Dpt of Home</p>	ONGOING (no change)	Kojonup CEO RDAGS CEO

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Agreement (DAMA) Project	and member Local Governments to facilitate preparation of the Business Plan.	Affairs). Item completion will be subject to any additional work required following feedback from the Dept / Minister – expected late June 2023. 24 Nov 2023 – Updated Business Case submitted to DoHA. <u>Updates provided</u> : no change to status - 23 Feb 2024, 21 Jun 2024, 23 Aug 2024		
2024, 21 June Item 7.3.2 Economic Regulation Authority	That the Great Southern Country Zone supports a presentation from Economic Regulation Authority Chair, Steve Edwell at the 22 November meeting in Katanning.	Nov 2024: ERA presentation refer Item 4.3 of the Zone's November 2024 meeting.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Chantelle Obrien Governance Support Officer.
2024, 21 June Item 7.2.2 Regional Education Opportunities Advocacy	That the Great Southern Country Zone write to the Minister for Education, thanking the Minister for his response to the Zone dated 24 April 2024 (Attachment 5) and requesting details of State 2024/25 budget allocations directed to programs and projects in the Great Southern Region that address the Zone's regional education opportunities advocacy.	This action was superseded by the Zone's Submission to the Minister on the draft Regional Education Strategy.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer
2024, 23 August Item 8.1 Zone State Council Member Report	The Great Southern Country Zone REQUESTS a letter be sent on behalf of the Zone to the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture, advocating for increased State Government funding, resourcing and action to enforce the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer quarantine zone and remove infestations as soon as they are identified, to prevent the spread of PSHB and the potential catastrophic impact on regional agriculture and economies.	Nov 2024: An advocacy letter was emailed to Premier Cook and Minister Javis on 10 September 2024. Refer Item 7.3.3 of the Zone's November 2024 meeting - Premier Cook's response dated 16 October 2024 – is provided to the November 2024 Zone Meeting in Attachment No.7	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer
2024, 23 August Item 7.3.2 Proposal: Joint Mobile Black Spot Funding Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate a copy of the Great Southern Development Commission's Mobile Black Spot List (2022/23) to Zone Member CEO's. Request Zone Member CEO's to identify land / locations (aligned to addressing mobile black spots) that may be made available as potential sites for future installation of mobile tower infrastructure. 	Nov 2024: Emailed Zone CEO's on 30 August 2024, requesting action to identify land / locations as potential sites for future mobile town infrastructure and advice by 25 October 2024. Reminder sent 19 September 2024. Refer Item 7.2.3 of the Zone's November 2024 Meeting.		Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report being provided to November 2024 Zone meeting, listing locations as a basis for a potential joint submission for mobile black spot funding to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Federal Communications Minister. 			
2024, 23 August Item 7.3.1 GSCZ Membership Request – Ravensthorpe	That the Great Southern Country Zone: 1. AGREES to the Shire of Ravensthorpe's request to join the Great Southern Country Zone, and 2. REQUESTS WALGA State Council's favourable consideration.	Nov 2024: State Council resolved to approved Shire of Ravensthorpe transfer to GSCZ on 4 September 2024. Shire of Ravensthorpe provided with information to support engagement into the Zone on 19 September 2024.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer
2024, 23 August Item 7.2.5 Draft Regional Education Strategy – Feedback by 20/9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Zone Member Local Government to provide a submission in response to the Draft Regional Education Strategy. A copy of the Zone's advocacy letter to the Minister for Education and the Minister's response – this detail may assist Local Governments to prepare their submissions. A Zone submission be made and developed in consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zone Chair, Cr Scott Crosby, Shire of Kent Cr Peter Callaghan, Shire of Gnowangerup Mr Grant Thompson, CEO Shire of Kojonup	Nov 2024: Zone Delegates and CEO's emailed information on 10 September 2024. Working Group met virtually on 13 September 2024 and subsequently consulted and refined draft submission by email. GSCZ submission on the Draft Regional Education Strategy was made on 19 September 2024 and circulated to all Zone Delegates and CEO's the same day.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer
2024, 23 August Item 7.1.2 ATO Zone Authorised Representative	That the Great Southern Country Zone AUTHORIZES, WALGA's Chief Financial Officer, Richard Andrew Murray for as the Zone's authorised representative for Australian Taxation Office (ATO) purposes.	Nov. 2024: WALGA Chief Financial Officer advised on 30 August 2024.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer
2024, 23 August Item 5.2 RDA-GS / GS DAMA	Invite the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) to attend a future meeting (ideally November 2024) to provide a presentation on the WA-DAMA and how it will directly service the Great Southern Region.	Nov 2024: DTWD and DoHA presenting at the November 2024 Zone meeting – refer Item 4.2.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
2024, 23 August Item 5.2 RDA-GS / GS DAMA	Write to the Premier and Minister for Training and Workforce Development, advocating for State Government to support the GS-DAMA application and if this is not successful, requesting advice as to how the WA-DAMA will guarantee Great Southern regional quotas and what will DTWD do to service the 126 occupations missing from the WA DAMA.	Nov 2024: An advocacy letter was sent to Premier Cook and cc'd Minister McGurk dated 16 September 2024 – Refer Item 7.2.1 of the Zone's November meeting – copies of the correspondence provided as Attachment 5.	COMPLETED GSCZ 22/11/2024	Lyn Fogg Zone Executive Officer

Attachment 4: Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) (Item 7.2.1)

[Back to Item 7.2.1](#)

ZONE ADVOCACY LETTER THE PREMIER:

GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

PO Box 1544
WEST PERTH 6872

Ph: (08) 9213 2042
email: ifogg@walga.asn.au

16 September 2024

Premier Hon. Roger Cook BA GradDipBus MBA MLA

Email: wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Premier Cook

Great Southern Designated Area Migration Agreement – Application Pending

The Great Southern Country Zone of WALGA respectfully requests your urgent advocacy to the Federal Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration requesting approval of the Great Southern Designated Area Migration Agreement lodged with the Department of Home Affairs on 30th May 2023.

Progression of the Great Southern's DAMA application has stalled, and this may be related to the Western Australian Government's initiation and subsequent establishment of the WA Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) in July 2024.

Whilst the WA-DAMA now covers the whole of Western Australia, it **does not** provide sufficient skilled migrant allocations and listed occupations to meet current and future needs of the Great Southern Region.

Your media release dated 30 June 2024, indicates that in 2024/25, there are 10,000 skilled migration places allocated to WA, split 50/50 between the State Nominated Migration Program (SNMP) and the WA DAMA. It is however, not yet clear the methodology State Government will use to prioritise allocations to meet skilled worker deficits across metropolitan, regional WA and specifically the Great Southern Region.

What is clear, is that the Great Southern DAMA application evidenced:

- via an April 2023 surveying of 108 businesses in the Great Southern Region, that **this Region has an immediate deficit of 1,943 workers** and a five-year future deficit of 5,048 workers; and
- **126 occupations not included in the WA DAMA's listed 310 occupations** (see attached).

The Great Southern DAMA application demonstrates specific regional skilled worker needs and demands, that cannot now be met under the WA DAMA's limitations, rendering it unfit to achieve the necessary outcomes for the Great Southern Region.

The Great Southern Country Zone's 11 Local Governments worked with the Great Southern Development Commission and Regional Development Australia – Great Southern since October 2022. This represents a 2-year collaboration and \$70,000 joint investment to bring the Great Southern DAMA to fruition. Regional Development Australia – Great Southern is our nominated Designated Area Representative and has a wait list of businesses ready to access the Great Southern DAMA.



Representing the
Local Governments of:

- Albany
- Broomehill-Tambellup
- Cranbrook
- Denmark
- Gnowangerup
- Jerramungup
- Katanning
- Kent
- Kojonup
- Plantagenet
- Woodanilling

GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

PO Box 1544
WEST PERTH 6872

Ph: (08) 9213 2042
email: lfogg@walga.asn.au

In the absence of an approval for the Great Southern DAMA, our Region continues to suffer compounding impacts of lost opportunity for local economies, local businesses and local communities.

Premier Cook, on behalf of the Great Southern Country Zone, we seek your support and advocacy to the Federal Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration, to urgently finalise approval of the Great Southern Designated Migration Agreement, as a mechanism to address regional needs that are not included in the WA DAMA.

Yours sincerely



Cr Scott Crosby
Chair, Great Southern County Zone



Andrus Budrikis
Committee Chair
Regional Development Australia – Great Southern



An Australian Government Initiative



GREAT SOUTHERN WA

CC: Hon. Simone McGurk, Minister for Training and Workforce Development
Email: Minister.McGurk@dpc.wa.gov.au

NOTE: The List of Great Southern DAMA Occupations Missing from the WA DAMA has not been included in this agenda attachment.

MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE
(on behalf of the Premier):

[Back to Item 7.21](#)



Hon Simone McGurk MLA
Minister for Training and Workforce Development;
Water; Industrial Relations

Our Ref: 74-78717

Cr Scott Crosby
Chair, Great Southern Country Zone

Mr Andrew Budrikis
Committee Chair, Regional Development Australia – Great Southern

lfogg@walqa.asn.au

Dear Cr Crosby and Mr Budrikis

Thank you for your correspondence dated 16 September 2024 to Premier Cook regarding the Great Southern region's Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) application. As Minister for Training and Workforce Development, I have been asked to respond directly to you on behalf of the Premier.

I acknowledge your intention to establish a DAMA for the Great Southern Region with the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs). As you are aware, the Cook Government recently established a DAMA to cover regional and metropolitan areas of Western Australia. This DAMA enables WA employers to access a broader range of skilled migrants through concessions and occupations included in the Head Agreement.

I am advised the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) is working with the Great Southern Region and providing information to assist employers to access the WA DAMA. In 2024-25, 5,000 places are available under the WA DAMA, 2,500 of which are for employers with jobs located in regional Western Australia.

I have asked Ms Kathy Hoare, Director State Workforce Planning at the Department of Training and Workforce development to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the WA DAMA. You may also wish to contact Kathy directly by telephone on 6551 5590 or kathy.hoare@dtwd.wa.gov.au.

DTWD also provides the Skilled Migrant Employment Register, to connect employers with skilled migrants seeking employment. Further information regarding the Register is available at migration.wa.gov.au/our-services-support/skilled-migrant-employment-register or by contacting Ms Michelle Brady, Associate Director Migration Services on 9224 6540.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simone McGurk'.

HON SIMONE MCGURK MLA
MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

10 October 2024

Level 8, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth, Western Australia, 6005
Telephone +61 8 6552 6600 Facsimile +61 8 6552 6601 Email: Minister.McGurk@dpc.wa.gov.au

**Attachment 5: Mobile Black Spot Funding \$16M Announced -
City of Albany Letter of Appreciation to Minister for
Communications (Item 7.2.2)**

[Back to Item 7.2.2](#)



City of Albany

102 North Rd, Yokania WA 6330
PO Box 484, Albany, WA 6331

Phone: (+61 8) 6820 3000
Fax: (+61 8) 9841 4099

Email: staff@albany.wa.gov.au
Web: www.albany.wa.gov.au

Our Ref: GR.FEL.34 / LT24321738
Cross Ref: LT24316763
Enquiries: Greg Stocks

10 September 2024

Mr Matt Healy
Senior Adviser to the Hon Michelle Rowland
Minister for Communications
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Matt Healy

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Further to our latest correspondence dated 22 July 2024, I wish to extend the City of Albany's gratitude for the time you dedicated to meeting with us on Monday, 1 July 2024. Your continued support and engagement are greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the City, we would also like to thank the Hon Michelle Rowland MP for her recent media release on 3 September 2024, announcing the \$16 million mobile coverage boost for regional Western Australia. We are particularly encouraged by the pilot program focusing on the Albany Highway between Bedforddale and Albany Airport, one of two key regional road transport corridors.

This initiative is a significant step toward addressing the pressing mobile coverage issues in our region, especially in improving connectivity during disaster and emergency situations. Both residents and travellers alike will greatly benefit from these enhancements, which are crucial for the safety and well-being of all who rely on this critical infrastructure.

We look forward to the continued collaboration between the City of Albany and the Minister's office to ensure the successful implementation of this program.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

Greg Stocks
Mayor

Andrew Sharpe
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment 6: Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer – Zone Advocacy (Item 7.3.2)

[Back to Item 7.3.2](#)

ZONE ADVOCACY LETTER TO THE PREMIER:

GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

PO Box 1544
WEST PERTH 6872

Ph: (08) 9213 2042
email: lfogg@walga.asn.au

10 September 2024

Premier Hon. Roger Cook BA GradDipBus MBA MLA

Email: wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Premier

Urgent Action Required to Enforce Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer Quarantine Zone

I write on behalf of the 11 Local Governments that comprise WALGA's Great Southern Country Zone, expressing our collective concerns regarding escalating Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) infestations and the urgent need for increased investment and prioritised action by State Government to enforce the Perth quarantine zone.


The PSHB poses a significant and potentially catastrophic threat to regional agriculture, with potential to devastate entire agricultural sectors. If this occurs, there will be severe economic consequences for regional communities, affecting livelihoods and the broader economy. The further loss of native vegetation and tree canopy will further impact climate change resilience, environmental and ecological sustainability and community wellbeing.

It is imperative that State Government take decisive action to prevent the further spread and eradicate PSHB. We respectfully request priority action to:

1. **Increase resourcing and investment** to ensure the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and impacted Local Governments have the resources and funding necessary for effective control and eradication.
2. **Immediately remove infestations** and prevent further spread. Delays in removal of infested trees contributes to the escalating spread of PSHB.
3. **Strengthen and enforce the Perth quarantine zone** to protect unaffected areas, ensuring the PSHB does not escape into regional Western Australia. Insufficient enforcement measures render the quarantine zone ineffective.
4. **Increase community education activities** targeted to communities inside and outside the quarantine zone, to increase community capacity to identify, report and achieve immediate action to remove PSHB infestations.

I urge you to ensure State Government takes decisive and sufficient action to mitigate the escalating risk posed by the PSHB, safeguard our valuable agricultural sector and the regional economies that support the wellbeing of regional communities.

Yours sincerely


Cr Scott Crosby
Chair, Great Southern County Zone

CC: Hon. Jackie Jarvis, Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry: Small Business
Email: Minister.Jarvis@dpc.wa.gov.au



Representing the
Local Governments of:
Albany
Broomehill-Tambellup
Cranbrook
Denmark
Gnowangerup
Jerramungup
Katanning
Kent
Kojonup
Plantagenet
Woodanilling

THE PREMIER'S RESPONSE:

[Back to Item 7.3.2](#)



Premier of Western Australia

Our Reference: 60-131332

Cr Scott Crosby
Chair, Great Southern Country Zone
WALGA
PO Box 1544
WEST PERTH WA 6872
lfogg@walga.asn.au

Dear Cr Crosby

Thank you for your letter dated 10 September 2024 regarding concerns of the Great Southern Country Zone about the current Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB) incident response and its associated resources.

A \$44 million nationally coordinated emergency biosecurity response is underway, led by Australia's top plant health scientists alongside the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) with funding from state, territory and Australian governments.

The Western Australian (WA) Government is committed to the PSHB response and has allocated over \$4.7 million towards the eradication effort over a 3-year period. Through the combined efforts of surveillance, trapping, tree management and quarantine restrictions, together with public information, DPIRD is ensuring every effort is being made to contain the spread of PSHB. To date, more than 2 million trees have been inspected on more than 88,000 properties, and more than 3000 surveillance traps have been deployed in the Perth metropolitan area and across the regions including Harvey, Mt Barker, Manjimup and Bunbury.

As you are likely aware, on 6 September 2024 the Quarantine Area was expanded to include all the Perth Metropolitan region, encompassing 30 local government areas to limit the movement of wood and green waste to stop PSHB spreading further and protect our growing regions. By expanding the Quarantine Area, it will help create a 'buffer zone' between areas with higher infestations of the borer and the remainder of the State. This expanded zone has areas of fewer or no infested trees and heightened surveillance is underway to identify and quickly control new infestations.

2 Havelock Street, West Perth, Western Australia 6005
Telephone: +61 8 6552 5000 Facsimile: +61 8 6552 5001 Email: WA-Government@dpc.wa.gov.au
www.premier.wa.gov.au

-2-

DPIRD is also deploying an education and communications campaign to raise awareness about the new PSHB Quarantine Area requirements – including signage, a social media campaign and resources for LGAs. DPIRD has been working closely with Local Government on these changes, and local governments remain an important part of an ongoing communications campaign. As part of this engagement, a Local Government Authority (LGA) engagement strategy has been developed in consultation with WALGA, which includes a commitment to provide training to LGAs on PSHB-related matters. I am pleased to hear that the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and impacted local governments are working closely with DPIRD, as this is essential in ensuring a robust response to PSHB.

DPIRD is continuing to deploy signage throughout the Perth metropolitan area and has offered updated signs and posters to all affected LGAs. Recently, 9 Variable Messaging Signs were deployed around the metro area on arterial roads heading out of the city. These are located around the border of Zone A of the Quarantine Area.

I appreciate the significant impact removal of trees has had in affected areas and how important a healthy tree canopy is to the community and the environment. The PSHB WA Tree Recovery Program, administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), will include establishment of a steering group with representatives from relevant state government agencies and WALGA to ensure successful delivery of this program.

Program funding will be available for local and state government owned lands, privately owned industrial and residential lands, hospitals and education areas. It is anticipated that over 16,000 trees will be planted as part of this recovery program, with some public spaces receiving 3 times the number of trees lost from PSHB. The program will seek to leverage off the existing Urban Greening Grants Program and aims to plant local provenance WA native species, noting that DWER will work with land managers to determine appropriate tree species on a site-by-site basis.

This program will also provide local governments with funding to address costs associated with planting new trees on public land. Thank you for your commitment to the PSHB response and the recovery process.

Yours sincerely



ROGER COOK MLA
PREMIER

16 OCT 2024

Attachment 7: WALGA President's Report - December (Item 8.3.8)

[Back to Item 8.3.8](#)

President's Report December 2024

Introduction

I have had the opportunity to advocate on behalf of all our Member Local Governments on a number of issues, in meetings, at presentations and through media opportunities over the last 3 months. The issues have included ongoing discussions on Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), housing, planning, the transition to renewables, improved funding for libraries, Safer High-Speed Local Roads and tiny homes on wheels/regional housing shortages.

2024 WALGA Local Government Convention

The 2024 WALGA Local Government Convention ran from 8 to 10 October, and I would like to thank the 650 delegates, the suppliers and commercial partners who made it such a successful event. We continually look to refine the Convention so it remains the preeminent event on the Local Government calendar, and I would like to thank the WALGA staff for their hard work in the organisation and planning.

State Election Campaign

I am pleased that the State Election campaign and the accompanying document "WALGA's 2025 State Election Priorities; The West at its Best" has been well-received within the Local Government sector, by external stakeholders and across Government.

WALGA has recently shared assets so that each Local Government can customise content to address their local priorities, as well as liaise with local MPs and Councils to publish stories that can support each key advocacy area.

WALGA is now implementing the campaign in the lead up to the 2025 Election, to:

- Influence election policy development and commitments from all parties
- Maintain relationships with key decision makers and Members of Parliament
- Educate current and future members of Parliament about WALGA and the role of Local Government

Media Interviews

I was asked to take part in a number of media interviews in the past few months, notably after WALGA distributed Media Releases on Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS), Tranche 2 reforms of the Local Government Act, the new caravan and camping reforms, increased PSHB funding, and the impact on Local Government as the State population passed 3 million people.

Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) Workshop

On 8 November WALGA hosted a Department of Communities' workshop to discuss current and future GROH build to lease models in the context of the current WA construction market. The workshop was attended by select Local Government CEOs and Senior Executives as well as the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Treasury. The workshop was proposed by the Department of Communities following the Deputy Director General's presentation to the July State Council Strategic Forum. The workshop focused on identifying the barriers to participation in GROH potential changes including Treasury borrowing and leasing terms and build specifications.

Renewable Energy

WALGA is hosting a Large Scale Renewable Energy Forum on 27 November for members to discuss the opportunities and challenges for local governments through the energy transition. This forum will be informed by the Renewable Energy Survey completed by 48 Members, as well as the recently adopted advocacy positions. This event will include a workshop component to inform the scope of WALGA's work to develop a Community Benefits Framework/Guide.

In response to member feedback, WALGA has created a Microsoft Teams group for CEOs and Elected Members, to facilitate continued collaboration and knowledge sharing between Local Governments around Renewable Energy. Available in this group is WALGA's October 2024 Renewable Energy in WA Research Paper. To join the group please contact WALGA's Principal Policy Advisor, Economic Development, Lisa Harwood on email lharwood@walga.asn.au

Polyphagous shot-hole borer

I understand the Sector's ongoing concern regarding the impact of the Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) on our urban tree canopy and the potential for this to wreak havoc on agricultural crops and native forests should it spread outside the metropolitan area.

Following the State Government's expansion of the PSHB Quarantine Area in September WALGA is continuing to strongly advocate for a more agile response, research into prevention, control and eradication and an increased focus on public awareness to reduce PSHB spread. I note that DPIRD is now deploying roadside signage to raise awareness about movement restrictions for wood and plant material. WALGA is also working with the State Government in the design of the \$7.2 million PSHB recovery package announced in August and to inform the development of a PSHB research priorities, in conjunction with the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration, universities, industry bodies, research institutes and CSIRO.

Kolbany Yanginy – Local Government Reconciliation Resource

WALGA, Reconciliation WA, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries have collaborated to develop an online Local Government Reconciliation Resource, Kolbany Yanginy (Going Forward | Sharing). The website, which was showcased at the WALGA Convention Exhibition and is scheduled to launch by the end of the year, will support Local Governments in building their capability to engage meaningfully with local Aboriginal communities, highlighting best practice examples of reconciliation and Aboriginal engagement.

ALGA National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress

We have a rare chance to engage face to face with the national government and agencies while staying here in Western Australia. I am looking forward to maximising the opportunities at the National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress being hosted in Margaret River on 3 – 4 December. A wide-ranging program has been developed covering innovations in road construction, freight, safety, land development, renewable energy transition impacts and much more. The Australian Government is the major source of external funding for Local Governments, so I encourage you to take this opportunity to contribute to the national agenda and learn how many of our common challenges are tackled in other jurisdictions.

Local Government Legislative Reform

The *Local Government Amendment Bill 2024* is progressing through State Parliament and is expected to be receive assent prior to the prorogue of Parliament toward the end of 2024.

The Bill includes the last of the Local Government Reforms that were announced in 2022, including:

- Office of the Local Government Inspector
- Local Government Monitors
- Clarified Roles and Responsibilities of Council, Council Members, Mayors and Presidents and CEOs
- Independent Member and Chair of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- Clarified Regional Subsidiaries Provisions
- Unreasonable / Vexatious Complaints
- Superannuation for Council Members
- Development Assessment Panel (DAP) Functions

WALGA does not support the Introduction of proposed provisions providing for regulations that will permit the CEO or other authorised officers to undertake certain functions of a DAP without reference to the Council.

Band 4 Local Governments Forum

On 3 September, the Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beasley, hosted a roundtable meeting of all Band 4 Local Governments in WA. To continue the discussion, WALGA hosted a further meeting of Band 4 Local Governments. The meeting was held on 11 October at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. Chief Executive Officers and Presidents from all 60 Band 4 Local Governments in the State were invited to attend. 72 representatives from 48 Local Governments attended the meeting on 11 October.

The main outcome of the meeting, was to prioritise the top four issues identified by the group:

1. Housing
2. Audit fees
3. Medical services
4. Financial Assistance Grants

WALGA will carry out work on these issues and provide a progress update to all Band 4 Local Governments early next year.

High Threat Weather Season

As Western Australia enters the high-threat weather season, WALGA is committed to supporting Local Governments. The WALGA team maintains situational awareness via the All Hazards Liaison Group meetings and WALGA is represented by CEO Nick Sloan on the State Emergency Coordination Group when a significant emergency occurs. Please don't hesitate to get in contact with WALGA if there is an emergency in your Local area and you have questions or concerns that you would like WALGA to raise at the state level. [Emergency WA](#) provides essential alerts and information and I encourage you to share this platform with your communities as the key source of information in any emergency.

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 4 September and scheduled before 6 December are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Commissioner Darren Klemm & Deputy Commissioner Melissa Pexton
- Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, Minister for Emergency Management, Minister for Cities
- Hon Stephen Dawson, Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy; Science; Medical Research; Minister Assisting the Minister for State and Industry Development; Jobs and Trade
- Hon Hannah Beazley, Minister for Local Government; Youth; Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workforce Development x2
- National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting (NEMMM) x2
- Extraordinary National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting (NEMM)
- Road Safety Ministers Meeting
- Labor Leader's Forum Lunch with Premier Roger Cook
- Labor Leader's Forum Lunch with Hon Reece Whitby

Zone Meetings

- Kimberley Zone Meeting
- Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting
- Northern Country Zone Meeting
- North Metropolitan Zone Meeting

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - Strategic Forum, 4 September
 - State Council Meeting, 4 September
 - Information Forum
 - Local Government House Trust Meeting
 - Finance and Services Committee Meeting
 - Strategic Planning Workshop

- **ALGA**
 - ALGA Special Board meeting
 - ALGA Board Meeting x 2
 - ALGA Annual General Meeting
 - ALGA President and Vice President Meeting

- **LGIS**
 - JLT Management Committee Meeting x2

- Meeting with the City of Perth Lord Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the City of Vincent Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the City of Karratha Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the Town of Port Headland Mayor & CEO
- Meeting with the Shire of Ashburton Mayor & CEO
- Band 4 Local Government Roundtable
- WALGA Public Libraries Forum 2024
- WALGA 2024 Local Government Convention & Annual General Meeting
- WALGA Mayors and Presidents Forum
- WALGA Public Libraries Forum
- Shire of Mundaring's President Sundowner
- WALGA Renewable Energy Forum
- Showcase in Pixels Celebration
- City of Melville Mayoral Dinner
- City of Stirling Christmas Dinner

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- WA Women's Hall of Fame 2025
- Pathways to Politics for Women UWA Advisory Committee Meeting
- Energy Transition Meeting
- ALGAWA 2024 Women in Local Government Forum
- Goldfields Region Electricity Forum
- Department of Education, WA Education Awards
- 2025 Australian of the Year for Western Australia Awards
- Town Teams Movement Event 2024
- Road Safety Vanguard
- National Roads and Transport Congress

Attachment 8: Regional Housing Advocacy – Minister for Energy Response (Item 7.2.5)

[Back to Item 7.2.5](#)



Hon Reece Whitby MLA Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action

Our Ref: 79- 15735

Cr Scott Crosby
Chair
Great Southern Country Zone
lfogg@walga.asn.au

Dear Cr Crosby

Thank you for your letter dated 29 May 2024 regarding residential lands and housing in the Great Southern Region.

The Cook Government is making every effort to increase Western Australia's housing supply, including by accelerating the installation of new power connections for residential subdivisions.

I acknowledge that the timeframes for many customer connections and upgrades in the Western Power network have been extended, and I appreciate the impact these timeframes can have on local governments, landowners, and developers.

Recognising the importance of responding to this pressing issue, the Cook Government and Western Power have been working with industry, including the Urban Development Institute of Australia, to identify solutions to these challenges.

Western Power has implemented several initiatives over the last 12 months to mitigate delays, through the outsourcing of electrical design and construction work, streamlining of processes, recruitment of additional staff, and the introduction of a risk-based quality assurance process to fast-track simple projects.

Western Power is also working to manage supply chain issues by assessing market capacity and supply alternatives, working with suppliers to meet the needs of critical projects and increasing stock holdings of materials and equipment.

In addition to increased industry communication through industry bulletins and regular consultation, Western Power has also invested \$10 million in a new customer portal, to improve visibility of the process and provide forward notice to applicants on what information they need to provide in relation to their proposed connection.

I am advised that the new online customer portal is quickly gaining traction as the first port-of-call for customers. In the coming months, customers will be able to access even more functionality including interactive dashboards for tracking projects, structured pre-enquiry FAQs, and an ability to make and track enquiries.

8th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth Western Australia 6005
Telephone: +61 8 6552 6300 Email: Minister.Whitby@dpc.wa.gov.au
www.wa.gov.au ABN: 61 313 082 730

Western Power also continues to work collaboratively with the Housing Supply Unit in the Department of Treasury to consider possible options for removing barriers to housing supply, particularly in regional areas. As part of this work, the Cook Government recently released the \$40 million *Unlocking Regional Accommodation Opportunities* stream of the Infrastructure Development Fund and I encourage the investigation of this opportunity for your region.

Thank you for raising this matter with me. I trust this information is of assistance.
Yours sincerely



20 NOV 2024

Hon Reece Whitby MLA
MINISTER FOR ENERGY; ENVIRONMENT; CLIMATE ACTION