

Great Southern Country Zone Minutes

21 November 2025

Hosted by the Shire of
Woodanilling
Woodanilling Recreation Centre,
Yairabin Street, Woodanilling

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The WALGA Secretariat Mr Sam McCleod assumed the Chair and opened the meeting at 10:00am.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

City of Albany

Deputy Delegate/s

Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry

Mayor Greg Stocks

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

President Cr Doug Barritt

Cr Sara Robinson

CEO Karen Callaghan (non-voting)

Shire of Cranbrook

President Cr Perin Mulcahy

CEO Linda Gray (non-voting)

Shire of Denmark

CEO David King (non-voting)

Shire of Gnowangerup

Deputy Delegate/s

Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

Cr Peter Callaghan

CEO David Nicholson (non-voting)

Shire of Jerramungup

Cr Paul Barrett

CEO Martin Cuthbert (non-voting)

Shire of Katanning

President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

Cr Ian Hanna (observer)

CEO Peter Klein (non-voting)

Shire of Kent

President Cr Kate Johnston

Cr Scott Crosby

CEO Christie Smith (non-voting)

Shire of Kojonup

President Cr Roger Bilney

Cr Michael Mathwin

CEO Grant Thompson (non-voting)

Shire of Plantagenet

President Cr Len Handasyde

Cr Joshua Leibeck

André Pinto- Executive Manager Development & Regulatory Services (non-voting)

Shire of Ravensthorpe

President Cr Rachel Gibson

Shire of Woodanilling

President Cr Russel Thomson

Cr Sally Vermeulen

CEO Anika Serer (non-voting)

GUESTS

Agencies

Regional Development Australia – Great Southern WA Inc	Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development
Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Murray Carter, Executive Director
CBH Group	Timothy Roberts, Lead - Planning and Approvals

WALGA

Cr Paul Kelly, Deputy President
Sam McLeod, Manager Commercial Services
Negar Nili, Policy Officer, Transport and Roads

Guest Speaker

Economic Regulation Authority	Mr Steve Edwell, Chair
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1.3 APOLOGIES

Members of Parliament

Mr Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor
Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region
Mr Bevan Eatts, MLA Member for Warren-Blackwood
Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, Member for Roe
Mr Scott Leary MLA, Member for Albany
Hon Minister Reece Whitby MLA

City of Albany

Cr Craig McKinley
Cr Thomas Brough
CEO Andrew Sharpe

Shire of Cranbrook

Cr Daisy Egerton-Warburton

Shire of Denmark

Cr Dominic Youel
Cr Janine Phillips

Shire of Gnowangerup

President Cr Kate O'Keeffe
Cr Rebecca Kiddle

Shire of Jerramungup

President Cr Nathan Brown

Shire of Kojonup

Cr Cindy Wieringa
Cr Edwin Radford

Shire of Plantagenet

Cr Ken Clements
Cr Marie O'Dea
CEO Julian Murphy

Shire of Ravensthorpe

Cr Bill Auburn
CEO Matthew Bird

GUESTS

Agencies

Great Southern Development
Commission

Natasha Monks, Chief Executive Officer

Regional Development Australia –
Great Southern WA Inc

Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development

WALGA

Ms Michelle Blackhurst, Regional Road Safety
Adviser

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 ELECTIONS

Pursuant to the WALGA Constitution, the Secretariat assumed the Chair for conducting the election of office bearers, State Council Representatives and Deputy State Council Representatives.

3.1 ELECTIONS OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

The election for the Chair and Deputy Chair was conducted and the term set at two years expiring in November 2027, in line with the terms of State Council representatives and in sync with Local Government Elections.

Zone Chair

No written nominations were received for the position of Chair. Nominations were called from the floor. One nomination was received:

- Cr Scott Crosby Shire of Kent

DECLARATION

That Cr Scott Crosby is elected as Chair of the Great Southern Country Zone for the term of 2 years, November 2025 to November 2027.

Deputy Zone Chair

No written nominations were received for the position of Deputy Chair. Nominations were called from the floor. One nomination was received:

- Cr Len Handasyde Shire of Plantagenet

DECLARATION

That Cr Len Handasyde is elected as Deputy Chair of the Great Southern Country Zone for the term of 2 year, November 2025 to November 2027.

3.2 ELECTIONS OF STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES AND DEPUTY STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

In accordance with sub-clause 9(3) of the WALGA Constitution, representatives and deputy representatives to the State Council shall be elected by Zones of the Metropolitan and Country constituencies for two (2) year terms, commencing from the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025 and concluding on the day before the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2027.

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

State Councillor

No written nominations were received for the position of State Councillor. Nominations were called from the floor. One nomination was received:

- Cr Scott Crosby Shire of Kent

DECLARATION

That Cr Scott Crosby is elected as State Council Representatives of the Great Southern Country Zone to the State Council for the term of 2 years, December 2025 to December 2027.

Deputy State Councillor

No written nominations were received for the position of Deputy State Councillor. Nominations were called from the floor. One nomination was received:

- Cr Len Handasyde Shire of Plantagenet

DECLARATION

That Cr Len Handasyde is elected as Deputy State Council Representatives of the Great Southern Country Zone to the State Council for the term of 2 years, December 2025 to December 2027.

Cr Scott Crosby assumed the Chair.

4 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.

- *President Cr Russel Thomson declared an interest in item 8.3.3 due to being impacted by cattle wandering on roads.*

5 DEPUTATIONS / GUEST SPEAKERS

5.1 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 were present.

5.2 ECONOMIC REGULATION AUTHORITY (ERA) – STEVE EDWELL, CHAIR

Members of the Great Southern Country Zone supported the request for Mr Steve Edwell, Chair of the ERA to provide a presentation to the Zone in June 2024. Due to changes in Steve's availability, the presentation had been rescheduled.

The ERA is WA's independent economic regulator and regulates electricity, gas, water and rail. The presentation will focus on the energy transformation and regional service reliability, including initiatives in Western Power's current Access Arrangement to monitor actions by Western Power to address reliability concerns.

Mr Steve Edwell presented to the Zone.

Key Points from ERA Presentation

- ERA oversees market behaviour to protect consumers; recent actions include a \$30M fine to Synergy and ongoing investigations into alleged market power misuse by other retailers.
- Western Power's current Access Arrangement (AA5) involves an 18-month review process; approved revenue for 2022–27 is **\$9.1B**.
- ERA found declining **regional reliability performance** and required Western Power to provide more granular outage reporting at the **Local Government Area** level and comply with tightened reliability standards.
- ERA allocated **\$88M** for innovative reliability improvement trials ("regulatory sandpit"), including microgrids and standalone power systems; Western Power is behind on some implementation targets.

- ERA required Western Power to develop and annually update a **Public Lighting Strategy**, including LED transition timelines and transparent tariff calculations; the ERA rejected a proposed 46% street lighting tariff increase.
- Increasing pressure on Western Power's network connection processes noted due to rising renewable and business connection demand.
 - ERA required process reforms, including queue-management changes and data transparency.
 - Some early improvements were seen, though delays have recently returned.
- ERA is considering requiring **zone-level regional reliability plans** in the next access arrangement to ensure clearer forward planning and better engagement with Local Governments.
- Latest reliability data shows many regional LGAs remain above the standard (**290 minutes of unplanned outages per year**), with mixed performance trends across regions.
- ERA indicated standalone power systems rollout is behind approved timelines; unspent funds may be clawed back at the end of the period.
- ERA does not regulate Water Corporation pricing but audits compliance with licence conditions.

Comments

- Cr Scott Crosby commented on street lighting issues that significantly affect regional towns.
- Cr Kristy D'Aprile commented on the cost of lighting and how it is very challenging for Local Governments.
- Reference made to a past proposal to replace all older lighting with LEDs in the **City of Albany**. The project did not proceed due to unclear cost-benefit and opaque charge structures. A State election commitment to upgrade lighting has not yet progressed.
- Discussion noted that street lighting challenges are widespread across the State, not only in metropolitan areas.
- Shire of Gnowangerup noted ongoing concerns regarding large-scale wind and solar project proposals, emphasising the need for improved oversight and clearer community engagement processes. Responsibilities between Western Power, the State Government and project proponents remain unclear, and Local Governments continue to experience inconsistent engagement—particularly where developers approach landowners directly without involving the Shire.
- Clarification that ERA does **not** regulate water pricing; Government removed pricing oversight approximately 10 years ago. ERA only conducts licence compliance audits for water service providers.

5.3 WALGA PRESENTATION

Sam McLeod provided a presentation to the Zone on WALGA and the role of Zone Delegates.

5.4 KEYSTART PRESENTATION – PROPOSED

Sam McLeod advised the meeting a Keystart representative contacted the secretariat after the distribution of the Agenda for this meeting, proposing to provide a presentation to a future Zone meeting.

Keystart began in 1989 as a WA State Government initiative, that now operates under an independent Board. Keystart funds first homeowners and low deposit lenders, predominantly funded through the WA Treasury Corporation, including shared equity schemes.

The Keystart representative advised that Keystart is working closely with the Great Southern Development Commission and would like to provide information to the Zone regarding how Keystart may assist with shared equity development.

The Secretariat has advised Keystart of the proposed Zone meeting dates for 2026 and seeks confirmation from the Zone to coordinate Keystart providing a presentation at a future Zone meeting.

The Zone indicated interest in receiving a presentation from Keystart, noting widespread concern in relation to housing matters.

6 AGENCY REPORTS

6.1 GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (GSDC)

Lee Sounness, Director Regional Development, attended and provided a brief update on:

- The recent RED Grant Program round.
- The Regional Housing Support program (\$25 million), discussing general housing and land assembly challenges.
- Inviting prospective Board Nominees to contact the Chair (Ricky Burgess) or Commission CEO to express their interest.

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

2025 Workforce Needs Assessment Survey

To obtain an understanding of the workforce needs and gaps of the Great Southern, the Survey requires the widest participation of industries and business sizes across the Great Southern.

We are endeavouring to reach as many employers as possible. Any support in the distribution of the Survey would be very appreciated and will contribute towards a robust scan of the workforce needs and gaps in the Great Southern.

These insights will also support the occupations and concessions review process with the Department of Home Affairs to ensure the Western Australia Designated Area Migration Agreement (WA DAMA) program meets our region's unique needs.

RDA Great Southern has contacted each Local Government in this Zone seeking assistance with the distribution of the survey.

The concise Survey will take approximately 15 minutes – access the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCYPQ8W>

This Workforce Survey closes on **30 November 2025**.

6.3 GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL ROADS GROUP

Report by Cr Len Handasyde, Shire of Plantagenet

The Great Southern Regional Roads Group report is attached with the Minutes.

6.4 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Murray Carter, Executive Director

Murray Carter provided a brief update to the Zone.

- **Digital Engagement & Program Updates:**
 - Digital engagement recorded 16,175 interactions, a 6% increase from the same period last year.
 - Programmes continue to support Local Governments, including access to funding for on-ground projects on Crown lands.
 - Transitioning towards three-year programs for improved planning and delivery.
- **Active Science LG Programme:**
 - Early-stage implementation underway.
 - Programme includes funding and support for Local Government projects, with participation already underway in some areas.
- **Summer Preparedness:**
 - Annual work for preparedness for high threat season is underway.
 - Update on Grain Harvest Aerial Support program.
- **Bushfire & Harvest-Related Fire Incidents:**

- 34 harvest-related fire incidents recorded recently (likely underestimated).
- 17 incidents resulted in fires.
- Challenges exist in consistent data collection from Local Governments and bushfire brigades.
- Lack of formal rules for managing fire risks in certain industries (e.g., turbines, plant manufacturing) during fire bans.
- Government approval required prior to implementing further legislative or operational changes.
- **Local Government & Brigade Roles:**
 - Coordination issues observed with individual brigades (e.g., Margaret River Brigade).
 - Questions around Local Government responsibilities in integrated bushfire management, including section 33 notices, fire bans, and harvest bans.
 - Consideration of liability and management responsibilities remains a priority.
- **Next Steps / Actions:**
 - Focus on clarifying who manages brigades and the broader implications for Local Government.
 - DFES to engage with Local Governments soon to discuss integration, liability, and operational responsibilities.

6.5 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY (DLGIRS)

Report by Mel Eastough, Regional Manager

Attachment No 1 [DLGSC Update – November 2025](#)

7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

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

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

CARRIED

7.1 Business Arising from the Minutes

7.1.1 WA Electoral Commission Returning Officer Service Levels (City of Albany)

The Zone had resolved at the August meeting:

1. *EXPRESSES its concerns to State Council regarding the WAEC's decision to not allow Returning Officers to attend Candidate Information Sessions and reduction in service levels without commensurate reduction in fees charges to Local Governments to conduct the upcoming Local Government elections in October 2025.*

2. *REQUESTS that WALGA make representations to the Minister for Electoral Affairs Hon. David Michael MLA, to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the 2025 Local Government elections.*

WALGA's Executive Manager Member Services, advises:

- WALGA has raised the need for the WA Electoral Commission to attend Candidate Information Forums.
- The WA Electoral Commissioner has advised that this will happen for future Local Government elections.

7.2 ZONE RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS STATUS REPORTS

7.2.1 Zone Status Report

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 2 [Zone Status Report November 2025](#)

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.

7.2.2 Zone Action Items Report

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 3 [Zone Action Items Report November 2025](#)

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 Kristy D'Aprile
Seconded: President Cr Len Handasyde

That the Great Southern Country Zone NOTES the:

1. Status Report for November 2025, as detailed in Attachment No.2, and
2. Action Items Report for November 2025, as detailed in Attachment No.3.

CARRIED

8 ZONE BUSINESS

8.1 ZONE REPORTS

8.1.1 Zone Financial Report

By Mr Richard May, WALGA Finance Manager

Zone Financial Report for ending September 2025

(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 2025.

Table 1: Statement of Income and Expenditure – period ended 30 September 2025

Great Southern Country Zone			
Statement of Income and Expenditure as at Sep 2025			
	Note	Actual \$	Budget \$
Income			
Subscriptions	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Other			
Total Income		\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Expenses			
Bank Fees		\$30.00	\$150.00
Meeting Costs (Catering)	2	\$1,249.81	\$4,000.00
Historic ATO Payment			
Total Expenses		\$1,279.81	\$4,150.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		\$4,720.19	\$1,850.00

Notes

1. Subscription fee of \$500 per Zone Member excluding GST, invoices have been sent to members in September
2. Aug 2025 Zone meeting catering (\$1,331.81) and adjustment on GST on purchase to be recovered from ATO (\$82.00)

Table 2: Balance Sheet presenting the Zone's financial position as at 30 September 2025

Great Southern Country Zone		
Balance Sheet as at 30 Sep 2025		
Account	Note	Amount
Assets		
Bank		6,215
Debtors	1	6,000
Total Assets		\$ 12,215
Liabilities		
Creditors		-
GST Payable	-	215
Unused Project Funds		-
Total Liabilities	-	215
Net Assets		\$ 12,430

Equity	
Members Funds B/F	7,710
Current year earnings	4,720
Total Equity	\$ 12,430

Note

1. Subscription \$500 excluding GST x 12 to be transferred from WALGA account to GSCZ account after receiving all payments, currently 9 members paid.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Russel Thomson

Seconded: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

That the Great Southern Country Zone receives the Zone Financial Report as provided above.

CARRIED

8.2 ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

8.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities

The Secretariat seeks the Zone membership's contributions to identifying strategic priorities to inform the Zone's planning for the next 2-year period, which may include:

- Topics on which the Zone wishes to invite presentations from State Government agencies or other entities; and
- Topics on which the Zone wishes to prioritise advocacy on behalf of the Great Southern Country Zone members.

To facilitate the Zone's identification of its regional priorities, the Secretariat requests that each member Local Government advise the secretariat of the top three issues for its Local Government District.

The Secretariat will compile the submissions and facilitate a workshop at the February 2026 Zone meeting to enable the Zone to agree the Zone priorities for the 2026 – 2027 period.

The Secretariat will contact CEO's early in 2026 to collate Zone member submissions.

Mr Sam McLeod foreshadowed this request and requested all delegates to consider potential priorities.

8.3 MATTERS FOR ZONE NOTING AND DECISION

8.3.1 Submissions to the 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, Industry Regulations and Safety, WALGA, Local Government Professionals WA and other interested individuals to provide information or submissions.

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

COMMENT

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

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

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

The SAT website (www.wa.gov.au/organisation/salaries-and-allowances-tribunal) indicates the Tribunal's inquiry into Local Government CEOs and Elected Members is currently open – submissions can be made to submissions@sat.wa.gov.au

The Chair raised key issues for Zone members, including:

- **Challenges attracting councillors; some shires require costly elections.**
- **Current allowances (CPI increases only) may not reflect reduced council sizes and increased workloads.**
- **Councillors to consider if advocacy for higher allowances is needed.**

Noting the status of the submission, the Chair suggested that these issues could be considered ahead of the next review.

Noted

8.3.2 2026 Proposed Meeting Dates

BACKGROUND

The scheduling of WALGA Zone meetings enables Zone consideration of WALGA State Council agenda items, with subsequent Zone resolutions provided in the Revised Agenda for WALGA State Council's consideration. The following table outlines the WALGA State Council meeting and Agenda distribution schedule, which informs the proposed Zone 2026 meeting dates:

Walga State Council Agenda Distribution	Preferred dates for Zone meetings	Revised Agenda Distribution (incl. Zone resolutions)	State Council meetings 2026
Thursday 5 February	Friday 13 to Monday 23 February	Friday 27 February	Wednesday 4 March WALGA
Thursday 9 April	Friday 17 to Tuesday, 28 April	Friday 1 May	Wednesday 6 May <i>Central Metropolitan Zone</i>
Thursday 4 June	Friday 12 to Monday 22 June	Friday 26 June	Wednesday 1 July WALGA
Thursday 6 August	Friday 14 to Monday 24 August	Friday 28 August	Thursday-Friday 3-4 September <i>Central Country Zone</i>
Thursday 5 November	Friday 13 to Monday 23 November	Friday 27 November	Wednesday 2 December WALGA

Proposed Great Southern Country Zone 2026 meeting dates are recommended below, ensuring Zone meetings fall within the preferred period for Zone meetings and align with preparation of the State Council Revised Agenda. At the June 2025 GSCZ meeting, the host was swapped from Plantagenet to Albany, it was agreed at the meeting that when Albany is next due to host (February 2026), the meeting will be hosted by Plantagenet.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Len Handasyde
Seconded: President Cr Russel Thomson

That the Great Southern Country Zone meetings are to be held as per the schedule below:

Date	Host Local Government
20 February 2026	Plantagenet
24 April 2026	Broomehill- Tambellup
19 June 2026	Cranbrook
21 August 2026	Gnowangerup
20 November 2026	Jerramungup

CARRIED

8.3.3 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960 – Review

By the Shire of Katanning

BACKGROUND

The Katanning and Kojonup Councils have separately received multiple complaints, over an extended period, about a particular landowner's cattle consistently straying into road reserves and creating a material risk to road users. We understand this problem is not isolated to this farmer or to these two Councils.

Meetings with the landowner have not previously resulted in fences being sustainably repaired to a stockproof condition despite his cattle being implicated in multiple incidents and near misses.

This experience has demonstrated that local governments have limited avenues to influence the behaviours of such landowners through the application of infringement notices and modified penalties. This has left local governments effectively toothless in enforcing a higher road safety standard and this in turn exposes affected local governments to criticism from ratepayers frustrated with an apparent lack of action.

Under local government legislation, there are currently at least two possible prosecution pathways:

1. *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960*, section 484 - a cattle producer commits an offence if they permit their cattle to stray "in a street or other public place".

The penalty for this offence is \$200.

2. *Local Government Act 1995*, section 3.25 - a local government can issue a notice to a landowner requiring a dilapidated fence or gate that separates the land from land that is local government property to be modified or repaired (refer also to Schedule 3.1, Division 1, Section 12).

Failure to comply with the notice carries a penalty of \$10,000.

By adopting a local law, local governments may apply a modified penalty, but these modified penalties cannot be any greater than the penalty prescribed in the Act. Local law approval by the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation is typically provided for a penalty lower than, not equal to the penalty prescribed in the Act.

This highlights that the penalties in both the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960* are inadequate and should be reviewed to create a significantly greater disincentive for landowners who consistently fail to contain their stock to their properties.

Secondly, local governments should be provided with a clearer pathway to prosecution. This pathway should not be via the *Local Government Act 1995*, as defining a "dilapidated fence" is subjective, but rather through an amended *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960*.

The *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960* currently contains provisions relating, almost exclusively, to cattle but is inadequate in its dealing with both cattle and other livestock, especially sheep.

Finally, amendments to this Act could also introduce a more streamlined process to enable the recovery of costs (property, crop/pasture or biosecurity expenses) incurred by a landowner because of a neighbouring landowner not participating reasonably, in the management of a boundary fence.

SHIRE OF KATANNING COMMENT:

The required amendments to the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960*, aim to:

- a) broaden the Act's scope and establish contemporary provisions addressing all relevant interfaces between landowners, local governments and the public,
- b) establish penalties to create a meaningful disincentive for landowner non-compliance with provisions of the Act, and
- c) enable a local government to impose penalties against livestock owners who consistently allow their livestock to stray and create a nuisance, without the need to first create a local law or initiate a prosecution.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Local Governments may also adopt Fencing Local Laws under the *Dividing Fences Act 1961* that prescribe a sufficient fence for rural properties, including penalties and modified penalties for offences, where a sufficient fence is not maintained. Noting, as identified in the Shire of Katanning report, the low value of local law penalties is not an effective deterrent, where cost of rural fencing substantially exceeds the penalty value.

The *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960* contains only residual provisions that have not yet been addressed through legislation that superseded the former Local Government Act 1960, including:

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Building Act 2011*

In addition to the low value of prescribed penalties in the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960*, the rates and values prescribed in the Schedules of this Act (last amended in 2010) are also substantially below contemporary values:

- Schedule 2 Ranger's fees
- Schedule 3 Poundage fees and sustenance charges
- Schedule 4 Rates for damage by trespass by cattle

WALGA has previously recommended the Department of Local Government address the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960* residual provisions, by transferring these provisions either into the *Local Government Act 1995* or other relevant legislation.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

Seconded: Cr President Roger Bilney

That the WALGA State Council advocate for the State Government to comprehensively review the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960* to achieve at least, the following:

1. broaden the Act's scope and establish contemporary provisions addressing all modern interfaces between landowners, local governments and the public,
2. establish penalties to create a meaningful disincentive for landowner non-compliance with provisions of the Act, and
3. enable a local government to impose penalties against livestock owners who consistently allow their livestock to stray and create a nuisance, without the need to first create a local law or initiate a prosecution.

CARRIED

8.3.4 Work Health and Safety Act 2020 - Statutory Review

By the Shire of Katanning

BACKGROUND

Great Southern VROC seeking State Council support of its position regarding the statutory review of the Work Health and Safety Act 2020.

In 2008 state governments agreed to harmonise work health and safety legislation across all state government jurisdictions. At the same time state governments agreed to the establishment of Safe Work Australia as an independent statutory body.

In 2011 Safe Work Australia issued model workplace health and safety laws and since then all state jurisdictions, except Victoria, have implemented their own version of the model laws.

On 10 November 2020 WA's *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act) was passed. This requires the Act's "*operation and effectiveness*" to be reviewed every five years and for a subsequent report to be presented to the WA Parliament.

This review is currently underway and the State Government in conjunction with WorkSafe WA has released a discussion paper seeking submissions by 12 December 2025 regarding the operation and effectiveness of WA's workplace health and safety laws.

The terms of reference for this review relevantly include the following terms;

- a) consider whether the legislation provides a framework to affectively address ongoing and emerging workplace hazards; and
- b) consider the burden faced by industry and others in complying with the laws.

The discussion paper asks six questions with the first of them being, "***do you consider the health and safety duties in Part 2 to be operating effectively?***".

Part 2 details the duty of care a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has to their employees including, volunteers.

Emergency management and bushfire response is high risk and requires specialist training and experience and consequently the duty of care imposed on local government CEOs by the WHS Act, and other related state legislation, for bush fire brigade volunteers is inappropriate and unfair. This responsibility is a disincentive to the recruitment of quality local government leaders and a distraction to local government delivery of its core community services.

Local government CEOs already have significant duties of care to their employees and the public in respect to high-risk activities including working in road corridors, large and small

plant operations, high risk handheld equipment, building maintenance, youth & aged care services, recreation services and event management.

Responding to a bushfire is inherently dangerous, incidents are likely and extreme personal harm is possible. Because the risk and consequence of injury is high, the duty of care owed to bushfire brigade volunteers is high and a rigorous assessment of what is "*reasonably practicable*" in terms of eliminating or minimising risks will be applied during any incident investigation.

The identification of risks relevant to a bushfire response and the identification of risk controls requires trained and experienced personnel.

In rural and regional Western Australia, the entity hosting trained and experienced personnel in bushfire response are not the local governments, it is the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) who employ an extensive network of trained and experienced fire officers.

Conversely, rural and regional local government CEOs are employed for their general management and financial acumen and are typically untrained in emergency management and bushfire response.

In rural and regional Western Australia local governments are generally resource poor with senior management typically fulfilling operational duties in the delivery of core community services leaving them time poor. The time available for strategic effort is difficult to find. In recognition of this lack of internal capability and resource, DFES offers some local governments access to a Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM). However, many of the State's smallest local governments are not offered this service leaving these CEOs even more stretched and vulnerable.

Local government CEO responsibility for the operation and safety of bush fire brigades is inappropriate and unfair. Western Australian local government CEOs currently have all the responsibility but little, if any of the expertise available within the State to manage bushfire preparation and response operations.

In other Australian jurisdictions this responsibility is held by a state government entity.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Local Governments in Western Australia play a critical frontline role in bushfire management, with statutory responsibilities under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* for mitigation, prevention, and response, and under the *Emergency Management Act 2005* for community-led recovery. Western Australia is unique nationally in that Local Governments manage Bush Fire Brigades and their volunteers—111 Local Governments oversee 563 Bush Fire Brigades and over 18,000 volunteers.

Since the commencement of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* in March 2022, Local Governments have expressed heightened concerns regarding risk, liability, and duty of care in managing Bush Fire Brigades. As a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU), Local Governments are required to ensure the health and safety of workers and others "so far as is reasonably practicable." This duty extends to Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, creating complex legal and operational challenges, especially during multi-agency bushfire responses.

WALGA does not currently hold an advocacy position on amending the *WHS Act 2020* to exclude Bush Fire Brigade volunteers from being considered Local Government “workers” under the Act.

WALGA advocacy position 8.10 supports the development of a clear framework to enable the voluntary transfer of Bush Fire Brigade management from Local Governments to the State, and encourages the State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for bushfire volunteers, in response to sector feedback regarding risk and liability.

More broadly, WALGA's advocates for adequate resourcing of Local Governments in emergency management, including:

- Advocacy Position 8.9 – Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program – which advocates for all Local Governments to have the option to participate in the CESM Program, with the full cost funded through the Emergency Services Levy (ESL).
- Advocacy Position 8.8 – Local Government Grants Scheme, which advocates for an immediate increase in State Government funding to ensure Local Governments can safely and effectively operate Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades.
- Advocacy Position 8.7 – Emergency Services Levy, which calls for increased transparency and accountability in ESL administration and distribution, including a review of the CESM Program's role, responsibilities, and reporting arrangements.

WALGA is preparing a submission to the [Statutory Review of the Work Health and Safety Act 2020](#). WALGA has sought member feedback on:

- Specific issues that Local Governments have encountered in applying the WHS Act to Bush Fire Brigade volunteers.
- Any other feedback regarding the application of the WHS Act/

Member feedback has been sought by 17 November 2025 to enable a submission for WALGA State Council's consideration ahead of the submission deadline on 12 December 2025.

The Zone's decision on this item can be accepted as Zone feedback and considered in the preparation of the submission.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

Seconded: President Cr Roger Bilney

That WALGA State Council advocate for the introduction of relevant amendments to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* so that Bush Fire Brigade volunteers are not deemed as a Local Government “Worker” (as defined in the WHS Act).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.3.5 Polyphagous shot-hole borer Update – November 2025

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

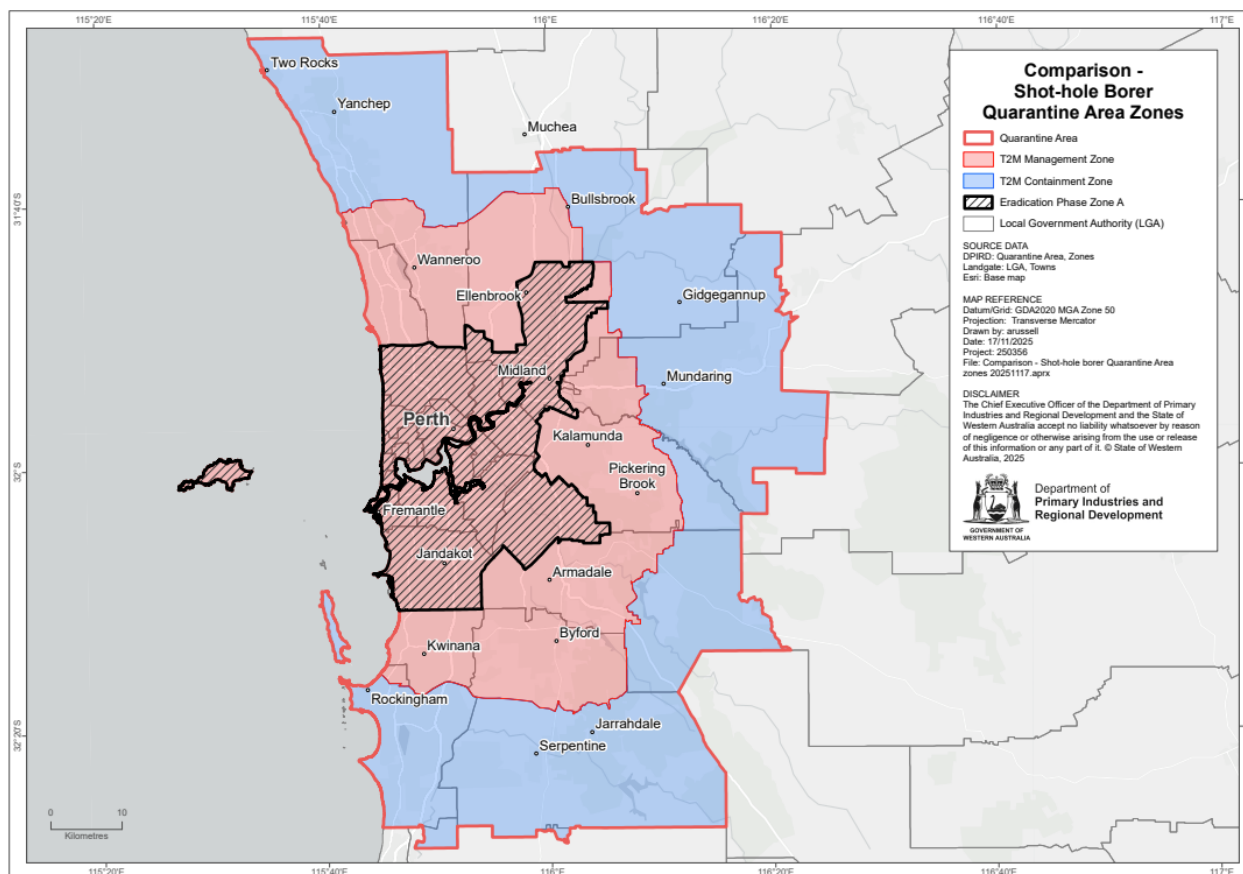


Figure 1: Quarantine Area, with Management and Containment Zones, compared to previous Zone A and B

COMMENT

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

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

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

Noted

9 WALGA STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS

9.1 ZONE STATE COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

The Zone State Council Member Report will be provided at the next Zone meeting.

9.2 STATE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA – MATTERS FOR DECISION

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

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

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

9.2.1 2025 Annual General Meeting Resolutions (State Council Agenda Item 8.1)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

ATTACHMENT

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions

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

7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position

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

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

7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses

That WALGA:

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

COMMENT

Comment on each of the 2025 AGM resolutions is below.

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

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

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

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

A revised Rural and Remote Healthcare Services Advocacy Position was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. The AGM resolution and WALGA's ongoing advocacy align on the need for financial reimbursement for Local Government support for essential primary health care services. WALGA's approach does not specify how reimbursement to Local Governments should be undertaken, or which Local Governments should be eligible. This approach aims to provide flexibility to achieve the same outcome, such as utilising the upcoming renewal of the National Health Reform Agreement.

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

7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions

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

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

7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position

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

7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses

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

It is recommended that this resolution is endorsed.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

Seconded: Cr Kate Johnston

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

CARRIED

9.2.2 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members (State Council Agenda Item 8.2)

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

ATTACHMENT

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

2.10 Elected Member Remuneration

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

1. *Vibrant democracy and good governance: fees and allowances payable to Elected Members should be sufficient to ensure that a diversity of candidates from a range of backgrounds seek election to Local Government leadership positions;*
2. *Demands of the role: as the complexity of Local Government increases, and community expectations placed upon Elected Members grow in the social*

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

2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees

The Local Government sector:

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

2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration

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

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

2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance

The Local Government sector:

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Tribunal also made two commitments in relation to:

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

COMMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

Seconded: Cr Kate Johnston

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above and request WALGA emphasise inequity in regional and remote allowances in its final submission.

CARRIED

9.2.3 Tourism Advocacy Position Update (State Council Agenda Item 8.3)

By Saul Cresswell, Principal Policy Advisor Economic Development

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key sector feedback during WALGA's consultation, included:

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

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

ATTACHMENT

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's **current** position:

That WALGA:

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

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

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

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

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

COMMENT

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

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

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

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

The proposed updates to the advocacy position seek to:

- Align State Government investment and support with the contemporary Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs).
- Reiterate the need for clear tourism governance across the State, without reference to which agency should lead the work.
- Reiterate and further clarify the need for accessible data to support informed decision making.

- Emphasise the pivotal role the Local Government sector plays in supporting the visitor experience, and advocate for adequate consultation and funding to ensure this role can be sustained.

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

Seconded: Cr Paul Terry

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

CARRIED

9.2.4 Waste Management Advocacy Positions (state Council Agenda Item 8.4)

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

7.2 State Waste Strategy

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

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

7.3 Waste Authority

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

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

7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

COMMENT

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire Advocacy Positions:

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Len Handasyde

Seconded: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile

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

CARRIED

9.2.5 Electoral Material – Authorisation Statement Address Requirements (State Council Agenda Item 8.5)

By Felicity Morris, Manager Governance and Procurement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

ATTACHMENT

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

COMMENT

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

However, the obligation to publish a candidate's physical address raises significant privacy and safety concerns. Candidates for Local Government elections in Western Australia do not typically have official campaign headquarters. They may not have a business or other suitable address to use and are often required to list their personal residence. The internet and social media have increased the accessibility and permanence of personal information,

making it easier for individuals to be targeted. Publicly disclosing a residential address can expose candidates and their families to risks such as harassment, intimidation, or unwanted contact, particularly in contentious or high-profile elections. These concerns are especially acute for candidates from vulnerable groups or those campaigning on polarising issues. This may deter individuals from standing for election, thereby limiting diversity and participation in local democracy.

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

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

This demonstrates that there are a range of options for identifying the person responsible for the material, without needing to provide their address. The Returning Officer and regulatory bodies have access to candidates' contact and nomination details, ensuring that any breaches can be investigated and enforced without compromising personal privacy. The draft advocacy position recommends that the requirement is limited to the name and locality of the person authorising the material.

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile
Seconded: Cr Paul Barrett

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

CARRIED

9.3 OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

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

Nil.

9.3.1 WALGA State President's Report

Attachment No. 4 [WALGA State President's Report](#)

Noted

10 EMERGING ISSUES/COLLABORATION

City of Albany

- State-supported airport runway upgrade (~\$100M) aiming for completion by June 2027 to support larger aircraft, design finalised by April, tender by September.
- Minister Carey to fast-track Albany Health Campus upgrade (\$60M, 32 beds, 30 nurses); city seeking clarity on timelines.
- City advocating for private sector involvement to expand local health capacity.

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

- Caravan Park project in Tambellup progressing, with three self-contained single-bed cabins expected to open between late February and March.
- Additional cabin tenders currently out; project previously delayed by Western Power headworks issues, now moving forward after intervention from former and current Shire Presidents.
- Ongoing concerns about lack of communication and transparency regarding wind farm developments.
- Questions raised about whether turbines could provide rating revenue to the Shire.
- It was noted that uncertainty is increasing and stakeholder engagement remains limited, despite expectations that clarity would improve over time.

Shire of Cranbrook

Provided apologies due to another commitment.

Shire of Denmark

- Surf Lifesaving building works are complete and the facility has reopened.
- A major project—the \$5 million youth precinct along the river—has been approved.

Shire of Gnowangerup

- Participation in the three-year mitigation/congregation funding program, shared with another officer.
- Strong bushfire brigade engagement across two of the three towns, with positive outcomes from consistent funding.
- Encouragement for other local governments to pursue this funding due to demonstrated community benefits.
- Application submitted to the Regional Housing Support Fund, noting high competition for limited funding.
- Concern about the significant financial burden on local governments due to ongoing funding shortfalls.
- Recent gravel event was highly successful, with appreciation expressed to all who contributed.

Shire of Jerramungup

- Acknowledgement of progress on Meekatharra and Albany Hospital projects.

Shire of Katanning

- the Shire's proposed lease to OzGold for a workers village, marking the first public engagement with the company.
- Early Years Childhood Hub construction progressing, though challenged by economic conditions and funding pressures.
- Concern raised about the pause on CSRF (Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund), noting uncertainty about its future and the impact on local recreation planning and funding needs.
- Emphasis on the difficulty of planning community recreation projects without clear State Government funding commitments.

Shire of Kent

- Disaster Resilience Funding application for the pavilion was unsuccessful; alternative funding sources need to be sought.
- CEO has actively advocated to politicians regarding funding; awaiting responses.
- Royalties for Regions funding remains unclear; no replies received from municipal contacts.
- Tender issued for construction of two additional staff houses.

Shire of Kojonup

- Concern raised over wind farm developments proceeding without proper guidelines.

Shire of Plantagenet

- Funding for Small Farmers WA proposals is progressing, though details and scale are still to be determined.
- Work on a key infrastructure project is ongoing but will take time.
- Housing developments on Big Lazy Land are advancing after long delays.
- 25-year celebration of a regional service recently held, highlighting its ongoing strategic importance.

- Consolidated revenue is being directed toward strategic areas including transport, water, power, and road safety within the Great Southern Zone.

Shire of Ravensthorpe

- Recruitment for the new CEO is underway.
- Local shop purchased; works required to bring it up to standard and complete foundational works before it can operate fully.

Shire of Woodanilling

- Tenders are being assessed for two regional link roads: Robinson Road (from Great Southern Highway to Albany Highway) to support heavy traffic and Katanning Dungeon Road.
- A local group purchase has been successfully completed, with positive community engagement.

11 OTHER BUSINESS

Nil.

12 NEXT ZONE MEETING

The next meeting of the Great Southern Country Zone will be held on Friday, 20 February 2026 at the Shire of Plantagenet commencing at 10:00am.

13 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:41pm.



Department of Local Government,
Industry Regulation and Safety

Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety

Local Government Division Report

November 2025

Local Government Reforms

Local Government Inspector

- Mr Anthony (Tony) Brown has been appointed by the Governor as the inaugural Local Government Inspector for Western Australia.
- Mr Brown's appointment is for five years and commenced on 20 October 2025.
- The Office of the Local Government Inspector is scheduled to formally start operations from 1 January 2026.
- The Inspector will have greater powers to investigate and intervene to ensure compliance, focussing on early intervention so issues are identified and resolved before they escalate.
- The Inspector will work with a panel of local government monitors with expertise in various matters such as governance, financial management and conflict resolution.
- The Inspector will also be supported by skilled investigators, compliance specialists, complaints handlers and other support staff.
- Adjudicators with legal expertise will replace the Standards Panel to assess conduct breaches (formerly minor breaches).
- LGIRS is developing regulations to support the implementation of new requirements for the Inspector.
- The recently established Regulations Working Group (RWG) has been invited to provide feedback on regulations dealing with the operational requirements for the Inspector.

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC)

- LGIRS is developing regulations to support the implementation of new requirements for Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARICs).
- The RWG provided valuable feedback on draft consultation regulations.
- Once section 87 of the *Local Government Amendment Act 2024* (WA) is commenced, local governments will be required to establish a committee of council to be the ARIC.
- The ARIC must have an independent chair to ensure a level of independence and provide impartial oversight.
- Local governments may wish to appoint independent members to audit committees ahead of the proposed changes, following the local government elections on 18 October 2025.
- For further information, visit the LGIRS website [Reforms to Governance and Committees](#).

Communications Agreements

- These changes are part of the implementation of the *Local Government Amendment Act 2023* (2023 Amendment Act) reforms.
- The communications agreement supports governance within each local government by setting out the expectations for formal communications between council members and employees of the local government.
- More information about the proposed reforms is available in the [Communications Agreement Consultation Paper \(PDF 255 KB\)](#).
- [Local Government Regulations Amendment Regulations 2025 \(PDF 276 KB\)](#) and the [Local Government Default Communications Agreement Order 2025 \(PDF 271 KB\)](#) are also available for download.
- A consultation process inviting feedback on the draft regulations and orders closed on 22 August 2025.
- Feedback received is currently being considered and will assist in finalising this legislation.
- Local governments may adopt their own communications agreements (or continue to use an existing one) in the interim if they wish.

IPR Reforms

- The changes for Integrated Planning and Reporting are part of the implementation of the *Local Government Amendment Act 2023* (2023 Amendment Act) reforms.
- A 'council plan' for the future services and facilities to be provided by the local government is intended to replace the current 'strategic community plan' under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework.
- The reform proposes simplified:
 - short-form council plans that replace strategic community plans and set high-level objectives
 - asset management plans to consistently forecast costs of maintaining assets
 - long-term financial plans that outline long-term financial management and sustainability issues, and any investments and debts.
- The new requirements for council plans are being developed to ensure the reforms meet the needs of the sector and provide a mechanism for local governments to plan for the short, medium and long term.
- An Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Working Group has been established with key sector stakeholders to assist with the development of this project.

Reform updates

- A Regulations Working Group (RWG) was established comprising key stakeholders from the local government sector to assist with progressing the various regulations reform projects.
- LGIRS also provides regular updates to the local government sector on the progress of reforms via a reform [webinar series](#), revisions to the LGIRS website and LG alerts.
- Further updates on the status of local government reforms will be made ahead of implementation.
- The LG Act Reform team can be emailed directly at actreview@lgirs.wa.gov.au.
- Reform updates are made on the [Local Government Reform](#) webpage.
- Also see the [Implementation](#) webpage for key updates as legislation is passed or regulations are made.

Model Financial Statements (MFS)

- Updates to the Model Financial Statements for the 2024-25 annual financial statements were published in the second quarter of 2025.
- Non-financial asset valuation guidelines are currently being finalised. Inter-jurisdictional consultation has been undertaken and feedback is being addressed with a view to finalise and publish in November 2025.

Differential rates and Budget/Financial Report Extensions/Caretaker exemptions

- Recent amendments to section 3.73(6) of the *Local Government Act 1995* (Act) provide that the Director General may authorise a local government to do a significant act during caretaker period, if satisfied that:
 - It is necessary because of an emergency; or
 - It is necessary to ensure the proper operation of the local government.
- Additional amendments allow a significant act to occur during caretaker periods where:
 - The action is required by legislation; or
 - The action is required due to a contractual obligation relating to a contract which was entered into prior to the caretaker period; or
 - The action was authorised by a council decision made prior to the caretaker period, provided that the local government issues a public notice containing the prescribed information and gives a copy of this notice to the Director General.
- Regulation 11(1) of the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996 (the Regulations) requires that tenders be publicly invited before a local government enters into a contract for goods or services valued at more than \$250,000, unless an exemption applies.
- LGIRS received thirteen applications from local governments seeking approval to undertake a significant act during the caretaker period. Of these, one application was withdrawn and one was declined.
- LGIRS has finalised the local government applications for an extension of time to submit their annual financial report for 2024-2025 to the Auditor. Twelve applications were received, which is seven fewer than those submitted in 2024.
- LGIRS received seven applications from local governments for an extension of time to submit a 2025-26 budget, an increase of four applications in comparison to 2024.
- LGIRS received 28 applications for differential rates and minimum payment approval this year. 2 applications were for minimum payment, and 26 for differential rates. Class 4 local governments made the most applications (11), with Class 2 local governments making the least applications (4).

Local Government Grants Commission

Financial Assistance Grants funding

- The total funding allocation to WA local governments for 2025-26 is \$423,375,700 (consisting of \$261,451,711 in general purpose funding and \$161,923,989 in local road funding and special projects) compared to \$400,140,692 in 2024-25.
 - Local governments were advised in June 2025 that the Federal Government had brought forward 50 per cent of the estimated 2025-26 Federal FA Grants program allocation into the 2024-25 financial year.
 - The total advance allocated to WA was \$211,241,816, which consisted of \$130,665,199 in general purpose grants and \$81,128,705 local road grants.
 - Payments were made on 24 June 2025.
- All local governments received their first quarterly payment of remaining 2025-26 funds on 18 August 2025. Further payments will be made in mid-November, mid-February and mid-May. The grant schedule is available on the Grants Commission website.
- Local governments were sent formal correspondence on 26 or 27 August advising of their final grant allocations and where appropriate, explanation of any significant grant changes.
- The Grants Commission Information Return to collect 2024-25 financial data was sent to all local governments in November 2025 and has also been made available on the Grants Commission website. Local governments are asked to complete the document and return it by email before 31 January 2025.
- If local governments have any questions regarding their grant allocation, the methodology or wish to make a submission regarding the process of allocation finds, they can be directed to grants.commission@lgirs.wa.gov.au

Stop Puppy Farming

- Regulations were published on 27 November 2024 to affect the pet shop and dog supply approval reforms.
- On 26 May 2025, only pet shops that hold a pet shop approval can sell dogs and puppies that are sourced from holders of a dog supply approval. All pet shops known to be selling puppies have ceased selling from their shops.
- Only refuge operations and dog management facilities may apply for dog supply approval.
- Applications for pet shop approval are to be made to local governments, and applications for dog supply approvals to LGIRS. No applications for pet shop or dog supply approvals have been received.
- Please contact stoppuppyfarming@lgirs.wa.gov.au if you have any questions on these changes,
- Further regulation changes are currently under development in relation to implementing the Stop Puppy Farming reforms.

PetsWA

- The PetsWA project is in a reset phase and LGIRS is evaluating what has been delivered to date.
- LGIRS values the sector's contribution and would appreciate the opportunity to engage further as we chart our path forward.
- Local governments will need to continue existing pet registration programs and engagement with pet owners for annual registration and renewal processes.

Off Road Vehicles

- The *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Act 2025*, once commenced and in effect, will update existing legislation to simplify the process for riders to register their off-road vehicles (ORV) and increase penalties for offences, such as riding in prohibited areas or riding an unregistered ORV.
- The ORV Bill was passed in Parliament in August 2025.
- Supporting regulations are now being developed to provide for the commencement of the legislation.
- The ORV Advisory Committee continues to meet regularly and has recently convened to advise on the ORVA Grants Program applications with 5 Local Governments being awarded grants from the 2024 ORVA Grants Program. This includes the shires of Manjimup, Pingelly, York and Gingin, as well as the City of Kwinana.

LGIRS Contacts

LG Support and Engagement Includes MyCouncil queries	lghotline@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Statutory Approvals (Differential rates, budget and audit extensions)	legislation@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG Policy and Legislation	stoppuppyfarming@lgirs.wa.gov.au
CRS – Stop Puppy Farming	Petswa@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Grants Commission – Financial Assistance Grants	Grants.commission@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG accounting or financial enquiries	L.G.accounting@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG Act Reform	actreview@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG Advisory Board	advisoryboard@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Off-Road Vehicles	orv@lgirs.wa.gov.au

Zone Status Report - November 2025

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Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
5 March 2025 State Council Agenda Item 8.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position	<p>The Zone's motion to support the recommendation was defeated and the following comment was noted:</p> <p><i>The majority of Zone Delegates noted their Local Governments did not have adopted positions on climate change and those delegates considered they did not have a basis by which they could support the proposed WALGA advocacy position.</i></p>	<p>WALGA has suggested an approach to the Environment Policy Team which identified that, based on a range of developments at both the State and national level, there is a need to reconsider the draft Advocacy Position. These include the ALGA Adapting Together – Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate Report, the Australian Government has released the nation's first National Climate Risk Assessment, Climate Adaptation Plan and 2035 emissions target and recent comments from the WA Government regarding climate change targets.</p> <p>These developments provide an opportunity to update and streamline the draft Advocacy Position. WALGA will take the feedback provided by Zones and State Councillors, and the additional information and direction released, to finalise a draft Advocacy Position and Background Paper for consideration by the sector in 2026. As previously recommended by the Environment Policy Team Local Governments will be encouraged to provide CEO / Council endorsed feedback on the Position and have at least a 10-week period to provide that feedback.</p>	November 2025	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
22 August 2025 Zone Agenda Item 7.3.5 WA Electoral Commission Returning Officer Service Levels	<p>That the Great Southern Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> EXPRESSES its concern to State Council regarding the WAEC's decision to not allow Returning Officers to attend Candidate Information Sessions and reduction in service levels without commensurate reduction in fees charged to Local Governments to conduct the upcoming Local Government elections in October 2025. REQUESTS that WALGA make representation to the Minister for Electoral Affairs, Hon. David Michael MLA, to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the 2025 Local Government elections. 	<p>WALGA has raised the need for the WA Electoral Commission to attend Candidate Information Forums.</p> <p>The WA Electoral Commissioner has advised that this will happen for future Local Government elections.</p>	November 2025	Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2095 kmartin@walga.asn.au

ATTACHMENT 2

5 September 2025 State Council Agenda Item 8.1 Rating of Renewable Energy Facilities	<p>That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda, subject to the following change to point 2:</p> <p>That WALGA advocate to the State Government for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Legislative amendments to enable WA Local Governments to rate large-scale renewable energy facilities using current rating mechanisms (differential rating based on UV, differential rating based on GRV, or GRV alone) with certainty.2. <u>Priority to be given to uncapped GRV rating mechanism over the differential rating based on UV.</u>	<p>Secretariat Comment</p> <p>WALGA's position is to advocate for Local Governments to have the ability to rate large-scale renewable energy facilities. The method of GRV, UV or differential rating will be determined by each Local Government.</p> <p>STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTION</p> <p>That WALGA advocate to the State Government for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Legislative amendments to enable WA Local Governments to rate large-scale renewable energy facilities using current rating mechanisms (differential rating based on UV, differential rating based on GRV, or GRV alone) with certainty; <u>and</u>2. A commitment to implement a Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLoR) framework in Western Australia. <p>RESOLUTION 049.4/2025 CARRIED</p>	November 2025	Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2095 kmartin@walga. asn.au
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Zone Action Items - November 2025

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Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
2025, 11 April Item 7.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities	<p>The Great Southern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates for the Minister for Great Southern to attend meetings of the Zone and if the Minister agrees to attend, then at the first meeting attended the Zone Secretariat is to coordinate with Zone members a presentation at that meeting on the Zone's Strategic Priorities for discussion with the Minister. Writes to responsible Ministers advocating for the Zone's Strategic Priorities. <p>NOTE: Secretariate to send GSCZ's Regional Education submission to the Minister for Education.</p>	<p>Action deferred until after Minister attends June Zone meeting.</p> <p>August 2025: Minister's office has remained in contact with the WALGA Secretariat and has been advised of the Zone's 2025 meeting schedule. The Secretariat will advise the Minister's office of the 2026 meeting schedule, once determined by the Zone.</p>	Ongoing	Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

WAGA Presidents Report - December 2025

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President's Report

December 2025

Introduction

As WALGA President, I want to congratulate everyone who was elected to represent their communities at the recent Local Government Elections and I acknowledge and thank all retiring and outgoing Councillors for their contributions.

It has been another busy period for WALGA and the WA Local Government sector, with key policy matters and emerging issues attracting significant public and political attention. Since the last report, WALGA has responded to over 70 media queries and at every opportunity, I have sought to champion and support the incredible work of WA Local Governments.

Recently, I responded to media queries regarding the WA Planning Minister's repeated commentary regarding the Local Government sector, which unfairly denigrates the extraordinary work that Local Government performs across the State in supporting new housing development.

2025 Local Government Convention

In late September, the sector came together for WALGA's 2025 Local Government Convention, which saw more than 500 attendees from across Western Australia participate in a full program of events. WALGA's Annual General Meeting was also held, which saw WALGA's 2024-25 Annual Report endorsed, while several motions were debated and passed.

Political Engagement

WALGA has continued to meet with our political representatives from Government and major parties, with discussions held on important issues for the sector including roads and transport, regional health, AI and technology, waste, planning and renewable energy.

The final sitting weeks for the Western Australian and Federal Parliaments were scheduled for late November and provided the last opportunity this year to pass legislation, introduce new bills, or respond to committee reports before the summer recess.

WALGA will continue to engage with decision makers during the recess, to ensure the sector's priorities are front of mind for policy makers when parliament resumes in February 2026.

State Budget Submission

Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming Budget.

WALGA's submission in advance of the 2026-27 Budget looks to build on the advocacy work undertaken in the lead up to the 2025 State Election. The submission seeks funding to progress initiatives set out in The West at its Best, which was pitched to Government as a term of Government policy platform.

The submission was presented to Government in November. WALGA is undertaking advocacy targeting several audiences including the Minister for Local Government, Premier/Treasurer, key members of the Expenditure Review Committee, other relevant Ministers and heads of agencies. There will also be traditional and digital media promotion of the key initiatives included in the submission.

Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025

On 23 October 2025, the State Government introduced the Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025 to Parliament. The Bill has been introduced in direct response to the WA Supreme Court's decision that Crown Land, subject to a miscellaneous licence, is rateable for Local Governments.

WALGA strongly opposes the proposed legislation, which would prohibit the rating of land under miscellaneous and small prospecting licences, extinguish rates imposed since 2017/18, and compel Local Governments to refund previously collected rates within 28 days of Royal Assent. WALGA considers these provisions unnecessarily punitive and disproportionate in their impact on Local Governments that have lawfully levied rates.

WALGA has written to the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government, urging reconsideration of the Bill's scope and timing. WALGA maintains that Local Governments should retain the right to rate occupied land under miscellaneous licences, consistent with the Supreme Court's interpretation.

High Threat Bushfire and Cyclone Season

As Western Australia enters the high-threat bushfire and cyclone season, WALGA acknowledges the vital role of Local Governments and Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades in keeping communities safe. During emergencies, WALGA maintains situational awareness through the All Hazards Liaison Group and represents the sector at State Emergency Coordination Group meetings. Local Governments are encouraged to review their preparedness, including Local Recovery Plans, to ensure readiness if impacted. WALGA remains available to support members throughout the High Threat Period.

Telecommunications

The high profile 000 outage in September and subsequent public interest and government focus highlights a serious concern that WALGA has consistently highlighted, that in times of emergency everybody needs to be able to rely on their telecommunications systems working. West Australians in peri-urban and rural areas have firsthand experience of emergency situations where there is no ability to communicate with anyone, including emergency services, because the mobile telecommunications system has failed, typically due to loss of power. We have raised this consistently with Federal and State Governments as well as the telecommunications industry.

I am encouraged that despite many hurdles the State Government and telecommunications industry are pushing forward with a pilot initiative to make back-up power generators for telecommunications facilities available in regional areas ahead of the coming bushfire season in parts of the Wheatbelt and Goldfields regions.

State Road Funding to Local Governments

The State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee met in September. Analysis of the 2024-25 financial results was the main topic for consideration. Requests to carry forward allocated funding for road improvement projects that have not been delivered continue to be a significant problem. The Metropolitan and South West regions combined were allocated 49% of the road project grant funding but together were responsible for more than 60% of the carryover in this program.

Options to improve the 2025-26 outcome were discussed and the Committee resolved to invite Metropolitan Local Governments to nominate additional rehabilitation works and to invite other regional Local Governments to nominate additional "shovel ready" projects to be considered for funding in 2025-26. The Committee also discussed the methodologies that Regional Road Groups use to prioritise road project grant funding. It was agreed to prepare and consult on amendments to the State Road Funds to Local Government Procedures to provide additional guidance on this issue and consider these changes at the next meeting.

Finally, in my last report for 2025, I'd like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of all Elected members and officers across the year. Local Government continues to be the institution most relied on by our communities and your efforts, individually and collectively, are critical to making Western Australia the best place in the world to live.

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 5 September and scheduled before 3 December are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Dr Anne Webster MP, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne
- Hon Sabine Winton MLA, Minister for Education; Early Childhood; Preventative Health; Wheatbelt
- Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Regional Development; Ports; Science and Innovation; Medical Research; Kimberley
- Mr Shane Love MLA, Leader of the Nationals WA & Ms Kirrilee Warr MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government
- Hon Steve Martin MLC, Shadow Minister for Transport; Ports; Communities
- Ms Kirrilee Warr MLA, Shadow Minister for Local Government
- Inquiry into the safety, regulation and penalties associated with the use of eRideables

Zone Meetings

- Great Eastern Country Zone
- Kimberley Zone Meeting

- South West Country Zone
- Northern Country Zone

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - Regional State Council meeting, 5 September
 - Information Forum, 5 November
 - Finance and Services Committee
 - Local Government House Trust
 - New State Councillor Induction
- **ALGA**
 - Board meeting, 11 September
 - Ministerial Migration Roundtable
 - ALGA board executive meeting x3
 - Board meeting, 10 November
 - Roads and Infrastructure Congress
- **LGIS**
 - Regional Board meeting & Board Workshop, 8 September
 - Risk and Compliance Committee meeting
 - Board Meeting, 24 October
 - 30th Anniversary function
 - JLT Management Meeting
 - Internal Audit Workshop
- Perth Capital City Plan 2026 and Beyond - City of Perth CEO, Michelle Reynolds
- Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia Meeting
- State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Stephen Dawson
- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Meredith Hammat
- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Roger Cook MLA
- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Hon Paul Papalia MLA
- Pathway to Politics Advisory Committee
- State-Local Library Agreement signing with Hon Simone McGurk & LG Professionals President, Mr Anthony Vuleta
- RAC President Cocktail Function
- Auspire Australia Day Awards
- Great Eastern Country Zone Workshop
- WALGA New Councillor Seminar
- WALGA Pre-Season Emergency Management Webinar
- Rural and Remote General Practice Provision Workshop
- 2025 WALGA Local Government Convention
- WALGA Showcase in Pixels
- City of Stirling Christmas Dinner 2025
- WA Electoral Commissioner Vote Processing Centre site visit