



GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items

Minutes

Friday 19 November 2021
Zoom Videoconference, commencing at 8.30am

To Join Zoom Meeting use the following link

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GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (GVROC)

Videoconference meeting of the GVROC Council to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items was held Friday 19 November 2021 at 8.30am

Minutes

1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The purpose of the meeting is to provide advice to the WALGA State Council Representative, Cr Mal Cullen on the Agenda for the WALGA State Council Meeting to be held on 1 December 2021.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Attendance

Cr Mal Cullen (Chair)	President, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Tracey Rathbone	Councillor, Shire of Coolgardie
Mr David Trevaskis	A/CEO, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Laurene Bonza	President, Shire of Dundas
Mr Peter Fitchat	CEO, Shire of Dundas
Cr Sharon Warner	Councillor, Shire of Dundas
Cr Ron Chambers	Councillor, Shire of Esperance
Mr Shane Buge	CEO, Shire of Esperance
Mr Peter Naylor	CEO, Shire of Laverton
Cr Peter Craig	President, Shire of Leonora
Mr Jim Epis	CEO, Shire of Leonora
Cr Paul Warner	Councillor, Shire of Menzies
Mr Brian Joiner	CEO, Shire of Menzies
Cr Peter Grundy	President, Shire of Wiluna
Mr Gary Gaffney	A/CEO, Shire of Wiluna
Mr Kevin Hannagan	CEO, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku
Mr Cary Green	Director Governance & Corporate, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku
Mr Andrew Mann	Executive Officer, GVROC

3.2 Apologies

Mr James Trail	CEO, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr John Bowler	Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Cr Kim Eckert	Councillor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Ian Mickel	President Shire of Esperance
Cr Patrick Hill	President, Shire of Laverton
Cr Robert Wedge	Councillor, Shire of Laverton
Cr Jill Dwyer	Councillor, Shire of Menzies
Cr Timothy Carmody	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna
Cr Damian McLean	President, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku

3.3 Guests

Nil

3.4 WALGA Representatives

Mr Ashley Robb Senior Policy Advisor Planning

3.5 DLGSC Representatives

Mr Tim Fraser Executive Director of Local Government

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes of a Meeting of GVROC to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items held 20 August 2021

Minutes of the GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council held Friday 20 August 2021 are presented for adoption (**Attachment 1**).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council held Friday 20 August 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**
 Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies

Carried

4.2 Action Sheet Report

An update on the actions based on the resolutions from the meeting held on 20 August 2021 meeting are presented for noting (**Attachment 2**).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Action Sheet Report as listed for noting be received.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

4.3 Correspondence for Noting

The following correspondence was sent and received since the last GVROC State Council meeting (refer to **Attachments 2.1 and 2.2** for copies of correspondence).

Correspondence received:

1. 12 October 2021 – Letter from Cr Doug Thompson, Chair, Municipal Waste Advisory Council regarding MWAC understanding how it can assist with waste management issues in regional WA.

Correspondence sent:

1. 18 October 2021 – Letter to Cr Doug Thompson in response to letter received dated 12 October 2021 (refer to correspondence received, point 1 above).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the correspondence that was sent or received since the last GVROC meeting be noted.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

5. EMERGING ITEMS

From: Chair GVROC

Background:

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure. The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternate recommendation that is then presented to the State Council for consideration.

A full copy of the State Council Agenda for the 1 December 2021 can be found at **Attachment 3**.

Notification of emerging items must be provided to the Chair no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

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

6.1 Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave Entitlements

WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA:

Endorse the submission to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) regarding paid family and domestic violence leave (FDVL) which:

- 1. highlights that FDVL for employees is an important issue for the sector;**
- 2. supports the introduction of a new entitlement in modern awards for employees to receive five days' paid FDVL per year;**
- 3. advocates for employees to be able to access their paid personal/carer's leave in circumstances of family and domestic violence; and**
- 4. opposes the introduction of a new entitlement in modern awards for employees to receive 10 days' paid FDVL per year as sought by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).**

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment 1 contains the draft submission to the FWC (refer to page 9 WALGA State Council Agenda – Attachment 3).
2. Attachment 2 contains a summary of the submissions received by the FWC advocating for 10 days' paid FDVL (refer to page 13 WALGA State Council Agenda – Attachment 3).
3. Attachment 3 contains a summary of the survey questions and results (refer to page 15 WALGA State Council Agenda – Attachment 3).

IN BRIEF:

- There is currently no legislative or award entitlement to *paid* FDVL in the federal industrial relations system.
- The National Employment Standards (**NES**) in the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (**FW Act**) provide employees with an entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL per year.
- The FWC commenced a review of FDVL in April 2021 to determine appropriate FDVL provisions in modern awards, including whether an entitlement to ten days' paid FDVL should be included in modern awards as requested by the ACTU.
- WALGA Employee Relations has surveyed the sector to determine whether WALGA should prepare a submission for the FWC on FDVL and whether Local Governments believe employees should be provided with an entitlement to paid FDVL.
- 50% of the sector responded to the survey and 69% of respondents believe employees should be provided with paid FDVL.
- The majority of respondents take the view that employees should be provided with five days' FDVL per year.
- Many Local Governments already provide employees with paid FDVL either through their enterprise agreement or by policy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The recommendation aligns with WALGA's Advocacy Position 3.10.1 – Family and Domestic Violence, which states:

WA Local Governments recognise the prevalence, seriousness and preventable nature of family and domestic violence and the roles that Local Governments can play in addressing gender equity and promoting respectful relationships in their local community.

BACKGROUND:

Background to the FDVL Review 2021

- The FWC is currently reviewing the FDVL terms in federal modern awards.

- On 26 March 2018, a decision was made by the FWC as part of the four yearly review of modern awards to include an entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL in most modern awards. 123 modern awards were varied, including the Local Government Industry Award 2010 which was varied from 1 August 2018.
- Federal Parliament later introduced an entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL in the NES in the FW Act so that all national system employees (and not just those covered by modern awards) could have access to this entitlement.
- On 13 December 2018, the *Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2018* amended the FW Act to provide all employees with a new entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL as a NES entitlement.
- When the Local Government Industry Award 2020 commenced operation, the model FDVL term was removed, and a note was inserted which referred to the NES entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL.
- During the four yearly review of modern awards, the ACTU made a claim for 10 days' paid FDVL.
- The ACTU claim for 10 days' paid FDVL was rejected by the Commission at that time, but the majority of the Full Bench expressed the preliminary view that all employees should have access to unpaid FDVL and that employees should be able to access personal/carer's leave for the purposes of taking FDVL. The Full Bench issued a decision on 26 March 2018 confirming the preliminary view regarding access to unpaid FDVL.
- In April 2021 the FWC commenced a review of the FDVL term in modern awards, which will impact on the Local Government Industry Award 2020, to consider:
 - whether employees should be able to access paid personal/carer's leave for the purpose of taking FDVL;
 - the adequacy of the unpaid FDVL entitlement, and
 - whether provisions should be made for paid FDVL.
- WALGA has an opportunity to file a submission in the FWC regarding the proposed changes to the modern awards sought by the ACTU, which includes a new entitlement to 10 days' paid FDVL.

FDVL in the state industrial relations (IR) system

The FWC's FDVL Review 2021 will not impact those Local Governments which operate in the state IR system. Currently there is no legislative or award entitlement to paid or unpaid FDVL in the state IR system however, some industrial agreements registered with the WA Industrial Relations Commission may contain an entitlement to FDVL.

The *Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* which was introduced into WA Parliament on 20 October 2021 contains a new entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL per year. If this Bill is passed, Local Governments who are state system employers will be required to provide employees with a minimum entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL per year.

Proposed variation to modern awards

The ACTU, the McAuley Community Services for Women and the Victorian Government have each filed a submission seeking 10 days' paid FDVL for employees. A more comprehensive summary of these submissions are outlined in **Attachment 2** (refer to page 13 WALGA State Council Agenda – GVROC Attachment 3).

WALGA FDVL survey

WALGA Employee Relations developed a survey for the sector on FDVL to inform an appropriate position that WALGA should take in its submission to the FWC. All Local Governments were invited to participate in the survey which was open from 10 September 2021 to 8 October 2021. The survey was promoted through ER Alerts, LG News and a direct email to all CEOs. 69 Local Governments responded to the survey representing 50% of the sector. The survey results indicate:

- 85% of respondents believe that FDVL is an important issue for the Local Government sector
- 69% of respondents believe that paid FDVL should be provided to employees and 70% believe WALGA should advocate for paid FDVL as a sector issue
- 58% of respondents believe employees should be provided with five days' paid FDVL per year

- 28% of respondents believe employees should be provided with ten days' paid FDVL per year, which is the entitlement sought by the ACTU
- 90% of respondents believe employees should be able to access paid personal/carer's leave for the purpose of taking FDVL
- 45% of Local Governments already provide employees with paid FDVL.

A table summarising the full survey questions and results is set out in **Attachment 3** (refer to page 15 WALGA State Council Agenda – GVROC Attachment 3).

Draft submission

WALGA Employee Relations has prepared a submission for the FWC based on the survey responses received. The proposed submission is contained in **Attachment 1** (refer to page 9 WALGA State Council Agenda – GVROC Attachment 3). The submission along with any evidence supporting the submission must be filed with the FWC by 4 February 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

GVROC support the WALGA submission to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) regarding paid family and domestic violence leave (FDVL) as presented.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie
Seconded: Cr Sharon Warner, Shire of Dundas

Carried

6.2 Payment to Independent Committee Members (05-034-01-0005 TB)

WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA request the Minister for Local Government to amend the *Local Government Act 1995* to allow the payment of meeting attendance fees to, and/or defined reimbursements for time committed by, 'other persons' appointed as Committee members under s.5.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

IN BRIEF

- Local Governments have raised the issue that clarification is needed to allow Local Governments to pay meeting attendance fees to independent members of Committees in respect of their preparing for, attending and/or participating in Committee meetings, in accordance with s5.100 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.
- There has been differing advice provided to the sector over the years and conjecture as to the method by which a professional person, appointed as the independent member to an Audit Committee, may claim reimbursement for their commitment of time and professional expertise.
- This item recommends advocating for the *Local Government Act 1995* to be amended to allow the payment of meeting attendance fees to, and/or defined reimbursements for time committed by, 'other persons' appointed as Committee members under s.5.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

BACKGROUND:

WALGA has received requests from a number of Local Governments highlighting the issue that Local Governments cannot legally pay meeting attendance fees to independent members of the Audit Committee in respect of their preparing for, attending and/or participating in Audit Committee meetings, and can only provide reimbursement of 'expenses', in accordance with s5.100 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The current legislative requirements are:

1. The *Local Government Act 1995* (Act) provides for payments to members of Council and Committees.
2. Section 5.100 of the Act expressly provides that a person who is a committee member but is not a council member or an employee is not to be paid a fee for attending any meeting.
3. The Act prescribes a distinction between a re-imbursement of an expense and a payment of a meeting attendance fee in respect of attending a meeting.
4. A significant number of Local Governments also have independent committee members on their audit committee and this matter could also affect them.

WALGA's support and assistance has been requested to advocate to the Minister for Local Government to provide a prompt resolution to this matter by making the necessary legislative amendments to enable independent Audit Committee members to be paid a meeting attendance fee.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries Operational Guideline 9 "*Audit in Local Government – The appointment, function and responsibilities of Audit Committees*", includes the following guidance on the payment / reimbursement of expenses to independent Committee Members:

"The legislation prevents a meeting fee being paid to an external person but it is permissible for a payment to be made as a reimbursement of expenses, commensurate with the expertise and knowledge such people bring to the committee. The Council will need to determine whether payment will be offered and the level of that reimbursement payment."

COMMENT

There has been differing advice provided to the sector over the years and conjecture as to the method by which a professional person, appointed as the independent member to an Audit Committee, may claim reimbursement for their commitment of time and professional expertise. In the past, Departmental advice supported arrangements for an independent professional member of an Audit Committee to claim by invoice an hourly rate, as agreed with the Local Government, relevant to the time taken to prepare for and attend an Audit Committee meeting.

However, section 5.9 of the Act, provides that any Committee of Council may include membership of other persons, which may not necessarily be involved in the business of providing professional services, and therefore cannot invoice for their time and expertise in a way that a professional person appointed to an Audit Committee may do.

This ambiguity of how s.5.100 reimbursement may be reasonably applied, results in inconsistent and perhaps unfair arrangements for not only independent persons appointed to Audit Committees, but also to other persons who are appointed to Committees of Council and similarly contribute time and expertise to assist the Council in performing its functions under law.

This issue has recently been raised by a number of Local Governments who are appointing independent Audit Committee members and wishing to compensate them for their time.

There may be a range of options that could be included in an advocacy position regarding providing reimbursements and/or payment of meeting attendance fees to other persons appointed as members of a Committee of Council.

For example, the legislative arrangements could specify that an independent Audit Committee member must be paid the equivalent meeting attendance fee determined by the Local Government for payment to Council Members, but provide flexibility for the Council to determine a separate meeting attendance fee (within the relevant Local Government SAT Bands) for other persons appointed as members of a Committee of Council.

The proposal for advocacy on this matter can be broadened to allow for payment to independent members of any committee of Council established under s.5.8 of the *Local Government Act*.

RECOMMENDATION

GVROC support the WALGA request to the Minister for Local Government to amend the *Local Government Act 1995* to allow the payment of meeting attendance fees to, and/or defined reimbursements for time committed by, 'other persons' appointed as Committee members under s.5.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

6.3 2021 Annual General Meeting (01-003-02-0003 TB)

WALGA Recommendation

That:

1. The following resolutions from the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed for action:

Cost of Regional Development

That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.

CSRFF Funding Pool and Contribution Ratios

That WALGA lobby the State Government to:

1. *Increase the CSRFF funding pool to \$25 million per annum and revert the contribution ratio to 50% split to enable more community programs and infrastructure to be delivered.*
2. *Increase the \$1 million per annum quarantined for female representation to \$2 million per annum.*

Regional Telecommunications Project

That WALGA strongly advocates to the State Government to increase funding for the Regional Telecommunications Project to leverage the Federal Mobile Black Spot Program and provide adequate mobile phone coverage to regional areas that currently have limited or no access to the service.

2. The following resolution passed at the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the Mining Communities Policy Forum and the People and Place Policy Team for advocacy work to be undertaken:

Review of the Environmental Regulations for Mining

Regarding a review of the Mining Act 1978:

1. *To call on Minister Bill Johnston, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services to instigate a review of the 43-year-old Mining Act to require mining companies to abide by environmental regulations, and to support research and development into sustainable mining practices that would allow mining without detriment to diversification and community sustainability through other industries and development.*
2. *That abandoned mines in regional Western Australia receive a priority action plan with programmes developed to work with rural and remote communities to assist in the rehabilitation of these mines as a job creation programme, with funding allocated for diversification projects for support beyond mine life across Western Australia.*

IN BRIEF:

- WALGA's 2021 Annual General Meeting was held on Monday, 20 September 2021.
- The meeting resolved for WALGA to act in relation to four member motions:
 1. Cost of Regional Development
 2. CSRFF Funding Pool and Contribution Ratios
 3. Regional Telecommunications Project
 4. Review of the Environmental Regulations for Mining
- The meeting also resolved by special majority to make suggested amendments to the Association's Constitution as per an executive motion.
- The action taken or proposed to be taken in relation to each of the resolutions since the Annual General Meeting has been summarized for State Council's information.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [WALGA 2021 Annual General Meeting Minutes](#)

BACKGROUND:

The 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Monday, 20 September 2021.

Four member motions, as follows, were considered and supported by members at the AGM:

1. Cost of Regional Development

That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.

2. CSRFF Funding Pool and Contribution Ratios

That WALGA lobby the State Government to:

- 1. Increase the CSRFF funding pool to \$25 million per annum and revert the contribution ratio to 50% split to enable more community programs and infrastructure to be delivered.*
- 2. Increase the \$1 million per annum quarantined for female representation to \$2 million per annum.*

3. Regional Telecommunications Project

That WALGA strongly advocates to the State Government to increase funding for the Regional Telecommunications Project to leverage the Federal Mobile Black Spot Program and provide adequate mobile phone coverage to regional areas that currently have limited or no access to the service.

4. Review of the Environmental Regulations for Mining

Regarding a review of the Mining Act 1978:

- 1. To call on Minister Bill Johnston, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services to instigate a review of the 43-year-old Mining Act to require mining companies to abide by environmental regulations, and to support research and development into sustainable mining practices that would allow mining without detriment to diversification and community sustainability through other industries and development.*
- 2. That abandoned mines in regional Western Australia receive a priority action plan with programmes developed to work with rural and remote communities to assist in the rehabilitation of these mines as a job creation programme, with funding allocated for diversification projects for support beyond mine life across Western Australia.*

In addition to the member motions, an executive motion was endorsed by special majority to amend the [Association's Constitution](#).

COMMENT:

Comment on the 2021 AGM resolutions is as per below:

1. Cost of Regional Development

That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.

It is recommended that this resolution be endorsed for action.

2. CSRFF Funding Pool and Contribution Ratios

That WALGA lobby the State Government to:

- 1. Increase the CSRFF funding pool to \$25 million per annum and revert the contribution ratio to 50% split to enable more community programs and infrastructure to be delivered.*
- 2. Increase the \$1 million per annum quarantined for female representation to \$2 million per annum.*

As this resolution is consistent with an existing WALGA advocacy position, as per below, it is recommended that the resolution above be endorsed for action.

3.7.1 Community Infrastructure

*The Association continues to advocate for better planning and support for community infrastructure and investment by the State, Commonwealth and private partners
(Last updated May 2018)*

3. Regional Telecommunications Project

That WALGA strongly advocates to the State Government to increase funding for the Regional Telecommunications Project to leverage the Federal Mobile Black Spot Program and provide adequate mobile phone coverage to regional areas that currently have limited or no access to the service.

The Western Australian State Budget includes \$12.971 million in 2021-22 to deliver the Regional Telecommunications Project administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). This project focuses on improving high-speed mobile voice and data coverage across regional Western Australia, leveraging investment by the Commonwealth Government and the telecommunications carriers. The currently funded projects are due to be completed by 30 June 2022. Further applications have been made under Round 5A of the Commonwealth Mobile Black Spot Program.

The Australian Government has committed \$80 million for Round 6 of the Program. The design process for Round 6 has not been completed. However, it is likely that project proposals that include significant co-contributions from State Governments will be highly competitive. Western Australia will be well placed if the State Government is able to both coordinate the identification of needs and provide co-funding.

In September 2021, WALGA made a submission to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee, based on advice received during consultation with Local Governments (including matters raised during WALGA Zone meetings). The submission was endorsed by State Council by [Flying Minute](#). The submission identified acute limitations in the coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience of the mobile telecommunications network, particularly in remote, rural and peri-urban areas. Further investment will be required to remedy these constraints.

It is recommended that this resolution be endorsed for action.

4. Review of the Environmental Regulations for Mining

Regarding a review of the Mining Act 1978:

- 1. To call on Minister Bill Johnston, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services to instigate a review of the 43-year-old Mining Act to require mining companies to abide by environmental regulations, and to support research and development into sustainable mining practices that would allow mining without detriment to diversification and community sustainability through other industries and development.*
- 2. That abandoned mines in regional Western Australia receive a priority action plan with programmes developed to work with rural and remote communities to assist in the rehabilitation of these mines as a job creation programme, with funding allocated for diversification projects for support beyond mine life across Western Australia.*

This resolution is consistent with the 2019 WALGA AGM resolution which called for:

- WALGA to request the Hon. Bill Johnston, Minister for Mines and Petroleum, to undertake a review of the *Mining Act 1978* with a view to maximising the benefits to local communities and its impact on local communities; and
- the Mining application process to include a mandatory MOU with the Local Government which would be overseen by the Auditor General to ensure fairness to the Community by having the mining company contribute to local infrastructures as a Legacy project.

The WALGA Mining Communities Policy Form considered this resolution on 4 December 2019 and agreed that there are many aspects of the *Mining Act 1978* that require a review and update, including to:

- make the negotiation and compensation process between the mining Industry and other stakeholders more balanced;
- require mining companies to make an ongoing social contribution to the communities they operate in;
- limit the use of FIFO and DIDO to encourage the use of workers from residential communities;

- require compulsory planning approval for onsite accommodation;
- require miners to fund the upgrades/maintenance of local infrastructure use for their operations, such as local roads that were not initially constructed to carry heavy freight;
- require mining companies to pay outstanding rates when they transfer leases or when their lease lapses; and
- make it easier for Local Governments to appropriately categorise and rate mining tenements and mining infrastructure.

It was also acknowledged that the State Government is unlikely to be open to a review of the *Mining Act*, particularly if it would result in making it more difficult for miners to do business or impact on job creation and economic growth.

It is recommended that the 2021 AGM resolution, together with the 2019 AGM resolution, be referred to the Mining Communities Policy Forum and the People and Place Policy Team for further advocacy work to be undertaken. The next meeting of the Forum is scheduled for Monday, 8 November 2021.

5. Amendments to WALGA's Constitution

The proposed amendments to the Association's Constitution were endorsed by a special majority of State Council at the meeting on 7 July, before being endorsed by a special majority at the 2021 AGM (as required by clause 29 of the Constitution). The [Constitution](#) has now been amended as per the above resolution.

Letters enclosing a copy of the amended Constitution were sent by the WALGA Chief Executive Officer, Nick Sloan, to the Commissioner for Consumer Protection and the Minister for Local Government for their information.

RECOMMENDATION

GVROC support and note the WALGA recommendations as written.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**
 Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies

Carried

6.4 Review of advocacy positions relating to the Building Act 2011 and Building Regulations 2012 (05-015-02-0010 CL)

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council endorses the replacement of Section 6.7: Building Act and Fees of WALGA's advocacy positions document relating to the *Building Act 2011* and Building Regulations 2012 with the following:

1. Support the retention of Local Government as the primary permit authority in Western Australia for decisions made under the *Building Act 2011*.
2. Supports mandatory inspections for all classes of buildings, however, Local Government should not be solely responsible for all mandatory inspections.
3. Advocate for the State Government to urgently prioritise legislative reform that addresses systemic failures in the current building control model and to provide clarification on the role of Local Government in building control to ensure building legislation supports the following objectives:
 - a. Quality buildings that are cost efficient.
 - b. Functional, safe and environmentally friendly buildings.
 - c. Good decision making in all aspects of building.
 - d. Efficiency and effectiveness in building management, administration and regulation.
 - e. Openness and accountability with respect to all building matters.
 - f. Recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all parties in building matters in an equitable manner.
4. Existing and proposed building control related fees and charges to be cost recovery for Local Government.
5. WALGA will work with members, state agencies and industry groups to develop training opportunities and to promote the Local Government building surveying profession to ensure sustainability of Local Government building control services.
6. WALGA supports the Australian Building Codes Boards Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings by supporting Local Governments to meet community strategic objectives of a net zero carbon future by 2050 through work with members, state agencies and industry groups.

IN BRIEF:

- At its meeting on 16 August 2021 the People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed a review of WALGA's Planning and Building Related advocacy positions.
- The Policy Team determined the Building Act and Fees policy positions as a section to be retained and reviewed, and that the policy area would have a high priority as part of the broader review.
- A review of the Building Act and Fees policy section has been undertaken, with several recommended changes proposed, and
- The People and Place Policy Team considered the matter at its meeting on 25 October and resolved to support the review and progress the matter to State Council for endorsement.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Attachment 1: Existing positions and comments](#)
- [Attachment 2: Proposed new positions and comments](#)

RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Advocating and facilitating sector solutions and policy

- We amplify the voice of Local Government and bring sector concerns directly to key decision makers
- We develop future-focused and evidence-based policy positions
- We connect and bring together expertise to maximise sector outcomes

Policy Implications

WALGA's existing policy positions are based on several State Council Resolutions dating back to 2011, including:

- December 2020 – 143.6/2020
- December 2019 – 151.7/2019
- December 2019 – 153.7/2019
- March 2017 – 7.1/2017
- September 2016 - 85.5 /2016
- July 2016 – 60.4/2016
- December 2015 - 124.7/2015
- December 2014 – 119.5/2014
- September 2013 – 246.4/2013
- December 2012 – 140.6/2012
- May 2012 – 56.3/2012
- February 2011 – 16.2/2011

Acceptance of the recommendation will see the replacement of the existing policy positions. Attachment 1 provides an overview of the existing positions and rationale for deleting, retaining and/or amending these.

BACKGROUND:

Assessments of the effectiveness of building control systems across Australia have recognised that there is diminishing public confidence in the building and construction industry, and that change is required to ensure buildings are safe and perform to expected standards. Now more than ever the focus is on Local Government building departments to deliver good governance, local leadership and sustainable services that meet the needs of their communities whilst supporting local jobs and economic growth.

The *Building Amendment Act 2012* was passed in Parliament in October 2012, with regulations being drafted shortly to accompany this Act. Prior to the release of the new Act, WALGA presented an issues paper that identified the guiding principles that should influence the new proposals:

- Quality buildings that are cost efficient.
- Functional, safe and environmentally friendly buildings.
- Good decision making in all aspects of building.
- Efficiency and effectiveness in building management, administration and regulation.
- Openness and accountability with respect to all building matters.
- Recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all parties in building matters in an equitable manner.

Following the Grenfell tower fire in 2017 and a number of high-profile structural issues in apartment buildings in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, all State and Territory Building Ministers agreed to an assessment of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building industry across Australia. It was recognised that there was diminishing public confidence in the building and construction industry and change was required to ensure buildings were safe and performed to expected standards. The resulting *Shergold Weir-Building Confidence Report* made 24 recommendations for a

best practice model for compliance and enforcement, to strengthen the effective implementation of the National Construction Code (NCC). A team was set up in the office of the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) to develop and publicly report on a national framework for the implementation of the recommendations. In February 2018, the State Government gave in-principle agreement to implement recommendations of the Commonwealth Government Building Ministers Forum, *Building Confidence: Improving the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia*. In addition, the State also noted the findings of a 2018 inquiry into non-conforming building products conducted by the Senate Economics References Committee of the Parliament of Australia.

The State Government through DMIRS is currently undertaking a comprehensive reform process of building regulation in response to the in-principal agreement to implement the Building Confidence Report. WALGA and the Local Government sector has been heavily engaged in these reforms. It is expected that this reform agenda will take several years to finalise and implement. The review of WALGA's advocacy positions is in part to provide a more robust policy position to support early, active and efficient engagement with the State Government going forward.

In support of the review, WALGA's existing positions were circulated to 54 metropolitan based and 35 regional Local Government Building Surveyors for comment, with feedback received from officers at the City of Perth, City of Swan, Shire of Collie, Town of Victoria Park, Shire of Beverley and Shire of Boddington. In total the 89 officers consulted undertake building regulatory functions for approximately 110 Local Governments. The Local Government officers who provided a response indicated support for reviewing the existing positions to ensure they reflected the current industry climate.

The existing positions and recommendations for re-wording, removal or new positions are detailed in Attachment 1 and 2, respectively.

RECOMMENDATION

GVROC support the WALGA recommendation as written.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Peter Grundy, Shire of Wiluna

Carried

6.5 Draft WA Building Surveyors Code of Conduct (05-015-02-0010 CL)

WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA:

1. Recommend to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) that the Draft WA Building Surveyors Code of Conduct be reviewed to ensure it addresses the following matters:
 - a) The impact of the obligations recommended in the draft Code be considered in relation to the current Western Australian building control model to ensure Local Government are able to maintain their statutory functions in line with community expectations.
 - b) That other building reform that will greatly impact the role of Local Government in the current Western Australian building control model, such as mandatory inspections and minimum documentation, be formalised prior to the Code of Conduct being introduced to ensure Local Government in Western Australia are able to maintain their statutory functions in line with community expectations.
 - c) Ensure that communities in remote and regional areas are considered when developing policy to restrict building surveyors being involved in design consultation work.
2. Endorse the attached consultation response summary on the draft Code.

IN BRIEF:

- The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is undertaking consultation on the WA Building Surveyors Code of Conduct (draft Code), which is based on a National Code.
- Building on previous consultation regarding the National Code, WALGA has engaged with Local Government building surveyors regarding the implications of the draft Code.
- Key concerns from the sector include:
 - Potential to limit Local Government building surveyor ability to provide advice on how to meet the requirements of building standards
 - Significant liability concerns for individual building surveyors
 - Inability to meet provisions regarding conflict of interest, particularly in non-metropolitan areas
 - Lack of integration of the draft Code with the other building reform measure in progress.

ATTACHMENT:

- Consultation response summary (refer to page 35 WALGA State Council Agenda – GVROC Attachment 3)

BACKGROUND:

Following the Grenfell tower fire in 2017 and a number of high-profile structural issues in apartment buildings in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, all State and Territory Building Ministers agreed to an assessment of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building industry across Australia. It was recognised that there was diminishing public confidence in the building and construction industry and change was required to ensure buildings were safe and performed to expected standards. The resulting *Shergold Weir-Building Confidence Report* made 24 recommendations for a best practice model for compliance and enforcement, to strengthen the effective implementation of the National Construction Code (NCC). Recommendation 9, 10 and 11 of the Building Confidence report recommended legislative changes around the integrity of private building surveyors, codes of conduct for building surveyors and building surveyors role in enforcement, respectively.

In response to these recommendations the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) released, in December 2020, a National Model Code of Conduct for Building Surveyors. As the Code was a model, it did not have any force until adopted by jurisdictions. The ABCB advised in its document that States and Territories should have regard to the content of the Code when amending or adopting a Code of Conduct for Building Surveyors in their jurisdiction. WALGA has previously provided Submissions to the ABCB on a Discussion Paper the integrity of private building surveyors and their role in enforcement

that proposed changes to how a private building surveyor may be appointed, detailing conflict of interest controls and enhanced supervisory and enforcement powers for private building surveyors. On 17 September 2021, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS), the Department with carriage of this issue in WA, released a draft WA Code of Conduct for Building Surveyors (draft Code).

COMMENT

WALGA circulated the draft Code to the Local Government Building Surveyor group (representing approximately 100 Local Governments) for comment. Feedback was received from officers at the City of Vincent, City of Karratha, Town of Victoria Park, Shire of Collie, Shire of Boddington, Shire of Broome, City of Perth, Shire of East Pilbara, City of Joondalup, City of Stirling, Town of Cambridge, Shire of Waroona and Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes. Separate meetings were held for metropolitan and non-metropolitan building surveyors in October where the draft Code was discussed in detail with approximately 60 officers. Comments received from Local Government officers expressed concern regarding the negative impact that the proposed changes will have on the service the building surveyors provide to their communities. Of particular concern was the potential limitations the Code would place on Local Government building surveyors' ability to provide design advice and liability that is placed on building surveying practitioners.

The draft Code defines statutory "*building surveying approval work*" (authorising construction and occupation) and "*building surveying assessment work*" (verification/review, inspection and testing of construction works). In Western Australia, unlike other jurisdictions, this work is not only carried out by private building surveyors but extends to registered building surveyors in Local Government. The draft Code proposes to prohibit carrying out statutory building surveying approval work where the building surveyor participates in design work. Included in the proposed prohibited design work is providing advice on how to amend a plan or specification in order to comply with building standards. It is common practice in Western Australia, for a Local Government Building Surveyor to carry out both consultation with the community and a regulatory role as the permit authority. If they are prohibited from providing design advice services, if they have a regulatory function, there would be a detrimental impact in these communities, particularly in regional areas, where it is often difficult to gain access to independent design services. The draft Code also proposes that carrying out statutory building surveying work where there is a risk that their decision could be influenced by a conflict of interest would be a contravention. Regional building surveyors have also expressed that compliance with this provision would be extremely difficult in small towns where they interact with most community members.

There is also concern from Local Government building surveyors that the draft Code only references registered "*building surveying practitioners*". The *Building Services (Registration) Act 2011* uses the terminology "*building surveying contractor*" and "*building surveying practitioner*" with the contractor being the only registered entity required to hold Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance. Individual Practitioners are not required to have PI insurance nor are they able to obtain it in Western Australia. Recent enforcement action by DMIRS' registration board has been directed towards a Practitioner, which has raised concerns that building surveyors will hold a liability risk even if they change jobs or retire from a Local Government position. There is already industry concern regarding declining numbers of building surveyors; the sector has expressed that the implementation of the draft Code will only serve to further discourage Local Government building surveyors from remaining in the profession and exacerbate the current trend.

The implementation of a draft Code in Western Australia without addressing the lack of mandatory inspections, minimum documentation standards and registration of other professionals will not result in better quality or safer buildings for the community, nor will it enhance community confidence in the building industry. As such it is recommended that the draft Code be reviewed to ensure it is combined with other legislative reform that addresses systemic failures in the current building control model and to provide clarification and certainty regarding the role of Local Government in building control

RECOMMENDATION

GVROC support the WALGA recommendation as written.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Peter Grundy, Shire of Wiluna

Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies

Carried

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

7.1 Local Government Support for Single Use Plastic Bans (01-006-02-0003)

WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA note the introduction of the Single Use Plastics Bans.

IN BRIEF:

- The State Government have committed to banning a number of single-use plastic items by the end of 2021, including plates, bowls, cutlery, stirrers, straws, cups and lids, thick plastic bags, polystyrene food containers and helium balloon releases. Then from 2022, a range of other single use plastic items.
- Local Government has an opportunity to support the implementation of the bans, which will assist in reducing litter and encourage the transition to reusable or compostable alternatives which will reduce contamination in the kerbside recycling and Food Organic and Garden Organic (FOGO) bins.
- Local Government has previously been supportive of state-wide regulation for these products as the approach is more consistent and streamlined than each Local Government regulating.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, after significant advocacy from Local Government and WALGA, the State Government introduced a ban on light weight single use plastic bags. The State Government, through the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), is now progressing [bans](#) for a range of other single use plastic items. With the proposed schedule for the bans as follows:

▪ End of 2021 – Regulations in place, enforcement to commence mid 2022	▪ End 2022 - Regulations in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plates • bowls and lids • cutlery • stirrers • straws • cups and lids • thick plastic bags • polystyrene takeaway food containers • helium balloon releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barrier/produce bags • microbeads • polystyrene packaging • polystyrene cups • coffee cups and lids • cotton buds with plastic shafts • oxo-degradable plastics (plastics designed to break up more rapidly into fragments under certain conditions).

WALGA represents Local Government on the DWER Single Use Plastics Working Group.

- At its September 2018 meeting, State Council adopted a detailed position in relation to the Stop Puppy Farming Initiative (*Advocacy Position 2.11, Resolution 103.6/2018*).
- The Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020 (the 2020 Bill) was introduced to Parliament on 19 February 2020.
- At its March 2020 meeting, State Council resolved:

“That WALGA write to the Minister and request that he withdraw the Stop Puppy Farming Bill and more appropriately consult with the sector, traditional custodians and the wider community, or failing that, that he remove any reference to Local Government in the bill as the sector does not endorse it in its current form.”

Advocacy Position 2.11, Resolution 13.1/2020
- The 2020 Bill was not passed by the Legislative Council, and lapsed when Parliament was prorogued on 7 December 2020. The Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 (the 2021 Bill) was introduced on 2 June 2021.
- On 6 July 2021, the Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team supported:
 1. That WALGA continue to engage with DLGSC to advocate for the outstanding points of Advocacy Position 2.11, and in particular to ensure that fees and charges are set at levels that achieve cost recovery for Local Governments.
 2. That an Item for Noting be prepared for the September 2021 State Council meeting.

COMMENT:

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) considered the single-use plastic ban at the August meeting and resolved to write to the Environment Minister in support of the single use plastic bans. MWAC would also like to encourage Local Government to show support for the bans by writing to the Environment Minister and identifying the various benefits of the bans from the community and service provision perspective.

MWAC was supportive of the bans because:

- Environmental benefit: many of the products which will be covered by the bans are currently being littered and contribute to plastic pollution in rivers and oceans. By eliminating the product, and ensuring it is replaced with a more environmentally acceptable material, the bans will reduce littering and improve overall environmental outcomes.
- Recycling benefit: biodegradable and compostable plastics are plant-based products which are difficult to distinguish from petroleum-based products. Compostable and biodegradable plastics are considered a contaminant in the recycling stream. When the ban is in place, many of these plastic types will be eliminated. This will assist in improving the quality of recyclable materials collected.
- Food Organic and Garden Organic (FOGO) benefit: Currently, compostable plastic packaging is not accepted through the FOGO collections provided by Local Governments because there is a large range of plastic packaging in the market, and it is not possible to differentiate between compostable and non-compostable plastics. When the bans are in place, the only options on the market will be compostable, which presents an opportunity to potentially allow these products into the FOGO system.

The approach that DWER has taken is to recommend that no single-use plastics are used (including compostable plastic), where there is a workable alternative. There are some instances where there is not currently an alternative product, so compostable plastic is allowed in some instances. Terminology is frequently confusing for the community, as the terms degradable, biodegradable and compostable are often used interchangeable. Some general definitions:

- Degradable – describes petroleum-based plastics that break down into smaller fragments of plastic.
- Biodegradable – frequently used to describe petroleum-based and petroleum/plant-based plastics which contain additives that enable the plastic to be broken down into smaller fragments by bacteria or other living organisms.
- Compostable – when used appropriately, describes plant-based plastics that can be readily broken down through home or industrial composting systems.

The bans are targeted at retailers so Local Governments will still be able to provide products such as dog waste bags for their communities to use in public areas and caddy liners for FOGO systems.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update the introduction of the Single Use Plastics Bans.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Peter Grundy, Shire of Wiluna

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

7.2 Report Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) (01-006-03-0008 RNB)

WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA note the resolutions of the Municipal Waste Advisory Council at its 25 August and 13 October 2021 meetings.

IN BRIEF:

- This item summaries the outcomes of the MWAC meetings held on 25 August and 13 October 2021.

BACKGROUND:

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council is seeking State Council noting of the resolutions from the **25 August and 13 October 2021** meetings, consistent with the delegated authority granted to the Municipal Waste Advisory Council to deal with waste management issues.

Copies of Agendas and Minutes are available from WALGA staff, on request.

COMMENT:

The key issues considered at the meetings held on **25 August and 13 October 2021** included:

Submission on Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Guideline Assessment of environmental noise emissions

In June 2016, WALGA made a Submission on the Department's Draft Guideline on Environmental Noise for prescribed premises. In that Submission issues identified included:

- The use of separation distances as a trigger for a full-scale noise assessment
- Noise from construction activities was not addressed
- Existing and prospective facilities will be subject to significant and costly requirements to assess noise.

On 16 June 2021, the Department released its Draft Guideline: Assessment of environmental noise emissions for public consultation for a 12-week period. The Draft Guideline is a more extensive version of the previously released Guideline.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorse the Draft Submission on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Guideline Assessment of environmental noise emissions.

Moved: Mayor Howlett Seconded: Mayor Butterfield

CARRIED

Submission on Dust Emissions

DWER has released a Draft Guideline: Dust emissions for consultation. The Draft Guideline relates to fugitive dust emissions only (point source emissions are covered in separate document). The Draft Guideline is more comprehensive form of an existing Guideline and will apply to new and existing licenced premises.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorse the Draft Submission on Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) Draft Guideline: Dust Emissions.

Moved: Cr Price Seconded: Cr Stroud

CARRIED

Submission on Productivity Commission inquiry into the Right to Repair

In December 2020, WALGA undertook an online survey of Local Government seeking feedback on the potential for Right to Repair legislation that could extend the life of products and reduce waste going to landfill. The February Submission was informed by the survey and input from MWAC. In June 2021 the Productivity Commission released a Draft Report seeking additional input for the final report which will be submitted to the Australian Government by 29 October 2021. The Draft MWAC Submission builds

on the February Submission and identifies the benefits that right to repair requirements could have for Local Government and the community.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorse the Draft Submission on Right to Repair.

Moved: Mayor Howlett Seconded: Mayor Butterfield

CARRIED

Local Government Support for Plastics Bans

The State Government have committed to banning a number of single-use plastic items. Local Government has been consistently supportive of this approach as state-wide regulation is a more consistent and streamlined way to regulate these products. Consultation has occurred regarding the bans, with some concerns raised by the packaging industry about the timeline and approach. Local Government has an opportunity to support the implementation of the bans, which will assist in reducing the use of single-use plastic items, transitioning to reusable or compostable alternatives and reduce potential contamination issues for recycling and FOGO systems.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council:

- 1. Write to the Environment Minister supporting the Single-use Plastics Ban**
- 2. Encourage Local Governments to write to the Environment Minister supporting the Ban**
- 3. MWAC request State Council to place this item on the agenda for the next round of Zone Meetings.**

Moved: Mayor Howlett Seconded: Mayor Butterfield

CARRIED

Submission on Waste Tyres Rules

The Export Bans of glass, plastic, tyres and paper/cardboard are being progressively implemented, with the tyre export ban scheduled for 1 December 2021. The Rules are the regulations which will govern the ban. The ban is for baled and whole tyres but allows shredded tyres and some types of tyres for re-treading. In the draft Submission, two main concerns are raised regarding tyres:

- If shredded tyres are still exported to the same destination and for the same use as baled whole tyres, this does not represent a more positive environmental outcome or a value-added product
- Shredded tyres represent an increased fire risk, compared to whole tyres.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorse the Draft Submission on Waste Tyres Rules Discussion Paper.

Moved: Cr Price Seconded: Cr Stroud

CARRIED

Product Stewardship Principles

WALGA, working with other State and Territory Local Government Associations, has developed Principle for Product Stewardship. The intent of this document is to assist in generating national consistency, between Local Government Associations, regarding what product stewardship needs to include which will amplify advocacy on this issue.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorse the draft Product Stewardship Principles.

Moved: Cr Price Seconded: Cr Stroud

CARRIED

Submission on Container Deposit Scheme Minimum Network Standards

DWER has released an Issues Paper on the Minimum Network Standards for the Container Deposit Scheme. The DWER Paper outlines considerations relating to access to refund points over the first year of Scheme operation including:

- How the Standards apply to public holidays and emergency event
- How the definition of flexible refund points has been interpreted
- The requirement for a full-time fund point in every region.

MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MOTION

That the Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorse the draft Submission on CDS Minimum Network Standards.

Moved: Cr Price Seconded: Cr Stroud

CARRIED

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the resolutions of the Municipal Waste Advisory Council at its 25 August and 13 October 2021 meetings.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*

Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Carried

7.3 WALGA submission on the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy

WALGA Recommendation

That WALGA's submission to the Commonwealth Government National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (NCRAS) be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The Commonwealth Government is seeking to update the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, accepting public consultation for a short period of only 4 weeks.
- WALGA prepared a draft submission on behalf of the sector, aligned with WALGA's existing [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and other previous submissions endorsed by State Council.
- The submission argues that the implementation of the overarching strategic framework for climate adaptation requires strong leadership and adequate resourcing from the Commonwealth Government.
- The draft submission was considered by the Environment Policy Team out of session and was signed by WALGA State Council President, Mayor Tracey Roberts.
- State Council is to note the final WALGA submission as submitted to the Commonwealth Government as the consolidated position of the sector on the proposed NCRAS update.

ATTACHMENT:

- [WALGA's submission on the Commonwealth Government National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy](#)

BACKGROUND:

The Commonwealth Government is developing a new National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (NCRAS) in 2021. The Commonwealth intends that [the new strategy](#) will provide a roadmap towards a climate resilient Australia and will showcase Australia's adaptation and resilience efforts and strengthening national coordination to manage physical climate impacts.

Due to the very tight consultation periods, WALGA has prepared a submission, on behalf of the sector, aligned with WALGA's existing [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and other previous submissions endorsed by State Council.

To facilitate sector engagement within the extremely tight consultation timeframe, WALGA alerted the sector to the consultation period via WALGA Climate Change Officer network. WALGA acknowledged that the submission would be aligned with WALGA'S existing policy position.

The draft submission was considered by the Environment Policy Team for endorsement on Tuesday, 7 September as the submission date was prior to the next State Council meeting. The final submission was signed by WALGA President, Mayor Tracey Roberts on Friday, 10 September before submitting to the Commonwealth Government.

COMMENT:

WALGA's submission argues that climate change adaptation cannot be separated from mitigation and the need for the Commonwealth to commit to a more ambitious emissions reduction target under the Paris Agreement, as detailed within the WALGA Climate Change Policy Statement. The nature and extent of the adaptation task is intrinsically linked to the extent of climate change, which is in turn dependent on reducing emissions.

Further, the extensive role expected of Local Government in shouldering the immediate impacts of climate change proposed by NCRAS, such as addressing coastal erosion and inundation, is not backed by adequate support or funding from the Commonwealth Government.

The submission also argues that the implementation of the overarching strategic framework for climate adaptation requires strong leadership from the Commonwealth Government.

WALGA will continue to advocate for stronger leadership, adequate resourcing and funding and a shift away from the emergency response approach currently taken in climate adaptation planning on behalf of its members.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note WALGA's submission to the Commonwealth Government National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (NCRAS).

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Mr Shane Burge, Shire of Esperance

Carried

7.4 **Closing the Gap Update**

WALGA Recommendation

That the recent updates on Closing the Gap are noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) (the National Agreement) came into effect on 27 July 2020. The objective of the National Agreement is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians. The National Agreement requires all government parties to develop Implementation Plans that set out how they will meet their commitments.
- In September 2021, the State Government released its [Implementation Plan](#), which sets out their approach to meeting the Closing the Gap outcomes included in the National Agreement.
- The [Partners in Government Agreement](#) signed in September 2021 between the State Government, WALGA and LG Professionals includes Closing the Gap as a focus area.
- The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is a co-signatory to the Agreement on behalf of the Local Government sector and released its [Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#) on 9 September 2021.
- Being the level of Government closest to the community Local Governments play a key role in delivering outcomes that address Closing the Gap priority areas, with many already delivering initiatives through Reconciliation Action Plans.

BACKGROUND:

The refreshed National Agreement came into effect on 27 July 2020. The objective of the National Agreement is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and governments to work together to overcome the inequality faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians. The National Agreement was developed in partnership between Australian Governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations.

The National Agreement contains four key priority reform areas:

1. **Formal partnerships and shared decision making** - building and strengthening structures to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making with governments.
2. **Building the community-controlled sector** - building formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors to deliver services to support Closing the Gap.
3. **Transforming government organisations** - systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government organisations to improve accountability and better respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
4. **Shared access to data and information at a regional level** - enable shared access to location specific data and information to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to achieve the first three Priority Reforms.

All Government parties are required to develop an implementation plan outlining how they will meet their commitments under the National Agreement.

The State Government released its Implementation Plan (the Plan) in September 2021. The Plan focusses on a phased approach to whole of Government reform. The Plan details actions that the State Government is currently undertaking or planning to undertake in the near future. The Plan is in two parts:

- Part A: an overview of system-level actions the WA Government intends to progress.
- Part B: information on specific activities, programs and services relevant to each priority reform areas.

The [Partners in Government Agreement](#) signed in September 2021 between the State Government, WALGA and LG Professionals includes Closing the Gap as a focus area.

ALGA is a co-signatory to the National Agreement on behalf of the Local Government sector. ALGA's Implementation Plan is designed to:

- Ensure that Local Government understands the National Agreement and its commitments thereunder, and encourage its adoption by Local Governments.
- Assist State and Territory Governments to work with Local Governments in the implementation of the National Agreement.
- Support strengthened shared decision-making at the local level, supporting Local Governments to be part of partnerships with the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Governments and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

COMMENT:

As the level of Government closest to the community, Local Government play an important role in supporting the development and implementation of policies and programs in partnership with local Aboriginal communities that address the priority reform areas within the National Agreement.

Through the implementation of Reconciliation Action Plans many Local Governments are already undertaking actions that align with the Closing the Gap outcomes, for example through:

- Delivery of Aboriginal focused Mentorship/Traineeship Programs.
- Facilitation of Aboriginal Advisory Groups.
- Celebrating key events such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week.

WALGA works to support Local Governments to build strong, positive relationships with local Aboriginal communities through a number of avenues including:

- Delivery of Aboriginal engagement and reconciliation forums and events for Local Government, such as the recent Aboriginal Engagement and Reconciliation Forum held on 22 September 2021 at Crown Perth which was attended by more than 200 registrants.
- Supporting the WA Local Government Aboriginal Engagement Network which brings together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal officers at quarterly meetings to share peer to peer advice and learnings, offer support and encouragement and explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration between Local Governments.
- Regular engagement with key stakeholders including the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Reconciliation WA and Danjoo Koorliny Aboriginal Elders to ensure that Local Government is abreast of emerging legislative and policy matters including Closing the Gap, South West Native Title Settlement and other native title settlements, and the new Aboriginal Cultural heritage legislation.

WALGA will continue to work with the State Government through the Partners in Government Agreement on the implementation of the National Agreement, and ALGA, to support Local Governments actions in response to the key outcome that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments work together to overcome the inequality faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the recent updates on Closing the Gap.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Seconded: *Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies*

Carried

7.5 Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Provision of General Practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians (03-030-03-0001 VB)

WALGA Recommendation

That the WALGA submission to the Senate Inquiry into Provision of General Practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians, be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The Standing Committee on Community Affairs of the Commonwealth Parliament commenced an inquiry into the above matter on 4 August 2021 with submissions due by 30 September 2021.
- 18 Local Governments provided input into WALGA's submission.
- Regional and rural Local Governments have consistently identified shortages in the provision of GP and related health services as a serious long-standing issue in their communities.
- Local Governments, as the 'provider of last resort', are compelled to enter costly medical services contracts to support housing, medical center operations and other benefits to attract and retain GPs and related health professionals to regional areas.
- Submissions are due by 30 September 2021 and will be published on the [Committee's website](#) on 8 October 2021.

ATTACHMENT:

- [WALGA Senate Inquiry Rural and Regional Health Services Submission](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The Submission aligns with [WALGA Policy Position 3.2.2 – Regional Health Services](#):

The Association supports continuing to work with affected Local Governments and key stakeholders to identify and develop collaborative strategies. The Association supports continuing to advocate to the State Government to prioritise regional health and the regional health workforce. The Association supports developing a policy connection with the Australian Local Government Association as a pathway for advocating for stronger specialised regional health workforces.

September 2018 – 105.5/2018

BACKGROUND:

The Standing Committee on Community Affairs commenced an inquiry into the above matter on 4 August 2021, with submissions due by 30 September 2021.

The Terms of Reference sought feedback on:

1. the current state of outer metropolitan, rural, and regional GPs and related services.
2. current state and former Government reforms to outer metropolitan, rural and regional GP services and their impact on GPs, including policies such as: the stronger Rural Health Strategy,
 - a. Distribution Priority Area and the Modified Monash Model (MMM) geographical classification system,
 - b. GP training reforms, and
 - c. Medicare rebate freeze.
3. the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on doctor shortages in outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australia; and
4. any other related matters impacting outer metropolitan, rural, and regional access to quality health services.

COMMENT:

Chronic shortages of adequate medical and related workforce in rural and regional areas of Western Australia is a significant, long standing issue which continues to impact on the health outcomes and viability of local communities.

In 2018 WALGA conducted the *Regional Health Services in Western Australia Survey of Local Governments*. 161 responses were received from 91 WA Local Governments, representing 66% of members. The survey results highlighted issues with:

1. **Workforce** challenges in recruiting and retaining doctors, nurses and allied health staff (health professionals).
2. **Distance** to travel to see a health professional.
3. **Access** to health professionals (Hours of operation or number of staff providing service).
4. **Aged care** services for people to stay within their region as they age are limited.

17 Regional and 1 Metropolitan Local Governments provided input to WALGA's Submission, and 1 Local Government made a submission directly to the Committee. The feedback received was consistent with the themes identified in the 2018 survey. The Submission highlights the challenges Local Governments face as the 'provider of last resort', with the high cost of subsidising health service provision and ongoing workforce challenges in recruitment and retention of health professionals. Many rural and regional Local Governments have found it necessary to enter contracts for medical services and/or general practice support services. There is a strong view expressed by the sector that this should not be the responsibility of Local Government and that Local Governments should not be required to provide incentives such as housing and medical centre facilities, especially as there is no opportunity to recoup these expenses.

Regional and rural Local Governments are also concerned about the quality and accessibility of essential health care for their communities and call upon the Commonwealth and State Governments to urgently improve coordination in the planning and provision of GPs and related primary health services in regional and rural areas.

Local Government Respondents via WALGA Submission

Trayning	Three Springs
Lake Grace	Greater Geraldton
Murray (and submitted to the Committee)	Kondinin
Pingelly	Manjimup
Chittering	Morawa
Gingin	Armadale
Nannup	Corrigin (and submitted to Committee)
Karratha (and submitted to the Committee)	Irwin
Dumbleyung	Yalgoo

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA submission to the Senate Inquiry into Provision of General Practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

7.6 Wooroloo Independent Review Letter of Support (05-024-03-0011 SM)

WALGA Recommendation

That the Letter of Support to the Wooroloo Bushfire Independent Inquiry be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) commenced an Independent Review (Independent Review) into the Wooroloo Bushfire on Friday, 20 August with submissions open to the public and closing Friday, 8 October 2021.
- WALGA obtained an extension of the submission deadline to Friday, 15 October 2021 to enable the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring to explore opportunities for a joint submission and enable the endorsement of their submission/s at their respective Ordinary Council meetings.
- WALGA provided a letter of support to the Independent Review highlighting key issues identified in WALGA Policy Positions and in submissions to recent emergency reviews and inquiries.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [2021 Wooroloo Independent Review Submission letter](#)
- [City of Swan submission](#)
- [Shire of Mundaring submission](#)

BACKGROUND:

The Wooroloo Bushfire started on Monday, 1 February 2021, during a COVID-19 lockdown, and devastated over 10,000 hectares of land and destroying 86 homes.

The Terms of Reference for the Independent Review are as follows:

1. Evaluate the first stage of the review of the Wooroloo Bushfire and undertake independent analysis across the range of focus areas examined, including response to the Wooroloo Bushfire, fuel management and processes for access into the fire affected areas.
2. Examine the effectiveness of the use of heavy earthmoving equipment in the fire suppression effort including the systems, processes and capability that supports this.
3. Examine the effectiveness of interagency coordination during the response and initial recovery phases of the incident.
4. Consider the effectiveness of the impact assessment processes employed in informing early and timely recovery efforts and consider the effectiveness of the recovery function post response phase.
5. Consider the extent, geographic range, method, effectiveness and duration of public warnings.
6. Examine the effectiveness of the 'Animal Welfare in Emergencies' program as implemented by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.
7. Consider the meteorological aspects of the fire as examined by the Bureau of Meteorology.
8. Provide a means for members of the public and other interested parties to make submissions to the Review and give these due regard in compiling its report.
9. Consider any other matter that the Review Team identifies in its course of activities.

Given the short time frame provided and significant role of Local Governments in supporting their local communities during bushfire response and recovery, WALGA sought an extension of the submission deadline to Friday, 15 October, which enabled the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring to have their submissions endorsed at their respective Ordinary Council meetings.

COMMENT:

WALGA's letter of support highlights key issues identified in relevant WALGA Policy Positions and in submissions to recent emergency management reviews and inquiries that are of relevance to the Wooroloo Bushfire.

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, Local Governments are responsible for managing recovery following an emergency. Local Governments also have significant roles across preparedness, prevention and response, including supporting community disaster resilience.

Common practice following an emergency is for the hazard management agency to undertake an evaluative review of the activities relating to the emergency response. In incidents where a significant loss (human, environment or economic) occurs, a review or inquiry may ensue to examine response

activities and provide recommendations to improve the capacity and capability of key agencies. Given Local Governments unique position as the level of government closest to the community and its roles and responsibilities across the emergency management spectrum, Local Government input into such reviews and inquiries is essential for the improvement of emergency management arrangements in WA.

Key recommendations included in the letter are:

- calling for a response from the State Government to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements;
- the development of an assurance framework to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of recommendations arising from all public inquiries and reviews;
- more effective agency interoperability during the response and recovery phases of emergencies;
- addressing the administrative burden and lack of timeliness of funding accessible to Local Governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFA-WA);
- increasing funding to support the replacement or restoration of damaged assets to a more resilient standard following an emergency; and
- the commitment to specific funding programs by the Commonwealth and State Governments to enable Local Governments to undertake essential physical mitigation programs to further reduce the exposure of communities to the impacts of natural disasters and to ensure the protection of essential community infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA Letter of Support to the Wooroloo Bushfire Independent Inquiry.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora

Carried

7.7 State Budget Outcomes (05-088-03-0001 DT)

WALGA Recommendation

That the update on the 2021 State Budget be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The 2021-22 State Budget, handed down on 9 September 2021, contained little direct funding for Local Governments, with most of the spending focussed on the delivery of election commitments and big-ticket programs.
- A larger than expected surplus of \$5.6 billion in 2020-21- mainly due to record high iron ore prices and forecast surpluses over the forward estimates - has provided the capacity for the Government to embark on major new spending programs, focussed on health and mental health, COVID-19 response and social housing.
- While these are important priorities, only one of the nine initiatives identified in WALGA's "Immediate Priorities for the State Government" received (partial) funding. Advocacy efforts will continue throughout this term of Government.
- The Budget also demonstrated Western Australia's strong economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Treasury estimates Gross State Product (GSP) grew 3.25% in 2020-21 and is forecasting further growth of 3.5% in 2021-22, in contrast with a national recession in 2020 and the global economic slowdown.
- After losing more than 100,000 jobs at the start of the pandemic, the WA economy recovered to regain these jobs and more as the unemployment rate fell from 6.1% pre-COVID to 4.9% in the June quarter. With job vacancies at levels comparable to that experienced during the mining boom, employment growth is expected to see another 34,000 jobs created in 2021-22. This tightening in the labour market along with subdued population growth is leading to skills shortages in some sectors.
- Further detail about the State Budget can be found in the Budget summary documents and WALGA Economic Briefing.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [WALGA State Budget Review](#)
- [WALGA State Budget Submission](#)
- [October 2021 Economic Briefing](#)

BACKGROUND:

The Premier has framed the Government's fifth budget – the first of its second term – as a budget that sets Western Australia up for the future, built on the back of its success in keeping Western Australians safe and the WA economy strong during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A larger than expected surplus of \$5.6 billion in 2020-21 – mainly due to record high iron ore prices and forecast surpluses over the forward estimates – has provided the capacity for the Government to embark on major new spending programs. The headline new announcements in the Budget were:

- \$1.9 billion in new funding to help address the unprecedented demand on WA's health and mental health system;
- \$1.8 billion for the construction of a new Women and Babies hospital;
- \$1 billion for additional support to respond to COVID-19 (taking the State's total investment in COVID-19 response and recovery to \$9 billion);
- A new \$750 million social housing investment fund;
- Establishment of a \$750 million Climate Action Fund; and
- \$400 million for the new Westport Project.

The Budget also includes a record \$30.7 billion asset investment program, with \$9.1 billion of this allocated to projects in regional areas.

Reflecting the limited capacity in the civil and building construction industries, \$2.6 billion in project spending from 2020-21 and 2021-22 has been deferred into later years. This may ease some pressures in the industry and enable Local Governments to deliver projects, particularly time-bound Commonwealth funded projects.

COMMENT:

While the Government is to be commended for focussing spending to areas of need, WALGA considers that the State's strong financial position offered an opportunity to go further in areas that address important community priorities, deliver positive outcomes in terms of creating new jobs, make WA's environment more liveable, transform our infrastructure, and support local communities.

Ahead of the State Budget, WALGA developed a policy document "Immediate Priorities for the State Government" to advocate for funding key initiatives in this term of Government that will strengthen the economic recovery from COVID-19, address key environmental challenges and support local communities.

These priorities included:

- Expand the Coast WA Program
- Create an Urban Greening grant program
- Extend the State Underground Power Program
- Support the construction of FOGO Processing Infrastructure
- Extend the Small Business Friendly Approvals program
- Support the transition to the State Industrial Relations System
- Address the shortage of Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH)
- Homelessness Outreach Services
- Regional telecommunications infrastructure

Of the nine "Immediate Priorities for the State Government", the Budget only contained modest funding for the management of coastal erosion hot spots. These are initiatives that WALGA will continue to pursue with Government during this term.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the 2021 State Budget.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

7.8 Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow – Submission to the Draft State Infrastructure Strategy (05-001-03-0018 ID)

WALGA Recommendation

That the WALGA submission to Infrastructure WA in response to the draft State Infrastructure Strategy, Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow, be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- Infrastructure WA was established in 2019 and following extensive stakeholder engagement, research and analysis has released a draft 20 year State Infrastructure Strategy titled [Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow](#) for consultation.
- The draft Strategy makes 88 recommendations across:
 1. seven themes: Digital connectivity and technology; Aboriginal cultural heritage, wellbeing and enterprise; Climate change and sustainability; Regional development; Planning and coordination; Infrastructure delivery; Asset management; and
 2. nine sectors: Energy; Water; Waste; Transport; Social and Affordable Housing; Health; Education; Arts, culture, sport and recreation; Justice and public safety.

The WALGA submission supports the strategic approach to infrastructure planning and management proposed by Infrastructure WA and the vast majority of the recommendations. However, the draft strategy makes little reference to the significant role that Local Governments play in the planning and delivery of infrastructure. The submission highlights that without explicit consideration of these functions, it is difficult to take a state-wide approach to infrastructure development. It is also not clear from the Draft Strategy how it will align and connect with existing Local Government Strategic Community and infrastructure plans.

Across the identified themes and sectors the submission seeks to highlight:

- the importance and value of maintaining local decision-making;
- constraints on Local Government's capacity to raise own sourced revenue and the need to avoid transferring unfunded responsibilities onto the sector; and
- the need to continue genuine consultation with Local Governments in finalising, implementing and ultimately reviewing the strategy.

The submission is based on the structure of the draft State Infrastructure Strategy. No comment is provided for recommendations that are not relevant to the Local Government sector or where the draft recommendation is supported without further clarification.

Key recommendations of concern that the submission opposes, seeks significant amendment or draws attention to are:

Regional Development

- Highlights that resourcing will be a critical consideration for developing any new regional service delivery model. To the extent that Local Governments are expected to play a greater role in facilitating and supporting place-based integrated service models, adequate funding must be provided to the sector to deliver on any additional responsibilities.

Planning and coordination

- Opposes extension of changes to Part 17 of the Planning and Development Act 2005 that give effect to the State Development Assessment unit beyond the current end date.
- Identifies practical examples of the failure of current arrangements to facilitate infill development where this is actively sought by Local Governments, to ensure proposed changes resolve the existing constraints.
- Extend the recommendation to identify and secure strategic sites through a recurrent fund for regional land acquisition to include support for delivery of infrastructure projects by Local Governments.

Water

- Seeks that the need for water to sustain public spaces is recognised

Waste

- Opposes state-wide application of the Waste Levy.
- Calls for all the funds generated from the Levy to assist in the implementation of the State Waste Strategy.
- Seeks waste to energy infrastructure and strategic location of waste facilities be identified.

Transport

- Opposes the proposal to amend the existing hypothecation of motor vehicle licence fee revenue, specifically to use this funding for public transport operational expenditure. Motor vehicle licence fee revenue is currently hypothecated to Main Roads WA under legislation and a portion of this provided under agreement for the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of roads under the control of Local Governments.
- Seeks regional aviation infrastructure be considered amongst strategic transport planning needs.

Health

- Funding for and clarity of the key role for Local Governments envisaged in the Sustainable Health Review is required. This is critically important in regional WA where there is a lack of GP and allied health services.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Submission: Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

This submission draws on and consolidates policy positions previously endorsed by State Council.

BACKGROUND:

WALGA has advocated for and supported development of a long term State Infrastructure Strategy since at least April 2006. At the time, the Association provided a submission to the State Government development of a State Infrastructure Strategy focused on the key issues of planning, development, renewal, preservation and funding of the infrastructure that is vital to the economic and social development of the people of Western Australia. The Association provided comment on the Green Paper considering a State Infrastructure Strategy towards the end of 2006.

Infrastructure Australia was established in 2008 and State based infrastructure advisory bodies were established or revitalised in the following years.

In 2015 the WALGA State Council again endorsed a recommendation to advocate to the State Government to develop a long term State Infrastructure Strategy. Local Governments sought engagement with the State and Federal Government in transparent processes leading to efficient long term infrastructure planning.

The *Infrastructure WA Act (2019)* came into effect in July 2019, establishing Infrastructure WA for the principal purpose of providing advice and assistance to the Government on matters relating to infrastructure. Through a consultative process Infrastructure WA staff under the direction of the Board have developed a draft State Infrastructure Strategy titled *Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow*.

Once finalised, the State Infrastructure Strategy will be submitted to the Premier later in 2021. The *Infrastructure WA Act (2019)* sets out the timetable for the Premier to respond and table the strategy and government response in Parliament.

All Local Governments have been invited to contribute to the development of the draft strategy through consultation forums, surveys and direct input. WALGA has participated in the External Stakeholder Reference Group and other topic specific workshops.

The draft State Infrastructure Strategy was released for consultation on 21 July 2021. The Association prepared an analysis and framework to facilitate engagement with and feedback from Local Government officers. This was published on 6 August with Local Governments and Regional Councils providing feedback over the following three weeks.

Input was received from 7 metropolitan and 4 non-metropolitan Local Governments.

- Augusta – Margaret River
- Belmont
- Canning
- Chapman Valley
- Dundas
- Esperance
- Gosnells
- Kalamunda
- Kwinana
- Rockingham
- Serpentine-Jarrahdale
- Vincent

Advice was also provided by East Metropolitan Regional Council.

The limited time frame made meant that some were unable to respond during the time period, particularly those for who the Infrastructure WA workshops were scheduled after the WALGA State Council meeting date.

Eighty four percent of the responses were provided by Band 1 or Band 2 Councils.

Due to the timing of the consultation period, the draft submission was considered and endorsed by WALGA State Council as an item under separate cover on 3 September 2021.

COMMENT:

High quality infrastructure underpins our economic prosperity and many aspects of the lifestyle enjoyed by West Australians. This public infrastructure is provided by State and Local Governments. The establishment of Infrastructure WA in 2019 has opened the opportunity for a whole of State Government approach to the development of infrastructure proposals. However, it should also open the opportunity for stronger and structured engagement between State and Local Government to align the needs and opportunities at a regional and local level. Consequently Local Government should continue to contribute to the development of sound State infrastructure planning and delivery processes.

The draft State Infrastructure Strategy focusses on State Government managed infrastructure and State Government Department and agency responsibilities and processes. The Local Government sector could choose to not participate in the consultative processes, including this opportunity, offered by Infrastructure WA. However, Local Government typically relies on funding from State and Federal sources to contribute to infrastructure development and renewal. More importantly, regional and local economic development is closely linked to the provision of essential infrastructure-based services. For these reasons the Local Government sector through WALGA and directly should actively participate in the development of infrastructure strategies and plans.

Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow identifies few capital investment projects. The specific projects noted are high profile and are most already on a development path. It is acknowledged that some Local Governments may be disappointed not to see specific projects that are key to unlocking the development potential of their area identified. However, this Infrastructure WA document is a high-level strategy. If adopted and successfully implemented, it will guide the processes to ensure greater value from future infrastructure investments.

The attached submission draws on advocacy positions previously adopted by WALGA State Council. The cross-cutting themes of Planning and Coordination and Regional Development are likely to have the most far-reaching implications across many aspects of Local Government.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA submission to Infrastructure WA in response to the draft State Infrastructure Strategy, Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

7.9 Regional Telecommunications Review 2021

WALGA Recommendation

That the endorsed submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review 2021 Committee be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- A Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee, established under the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999*, sought submissions from stakeholders to inform a review into telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.
- A submission was developed based on:
 1. unresolved issues identified in a 2019 consultation with Local Governments regarding risks to emergency management capability that arise due to failure of telecommunications services during emergency conditions;
 2. strategic and specific issues identified by Local Governments; and
 3. matters raised during consultation at WALGA Zone meetings.
- Local Governments identified weaknesses in the telecommunications service:
 1. coverage (BlackSpots);
 2. capacity (to meet growing and seasonal demands);
 3. resilience (specifically during power outages); and
 4. cost (lack of price competitive options).
- These issues were found in peri-urban and some metropolitan areas as well as regional and remote parts of the State.
- The submission to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee identified 15 recommended solutions that if effectively delivered will provide improved equity in the level of telecommunications services delivered across Australia.
- The draft submission was endorsed by State Council by Flying Minute on 29 October 2021.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Flying Minute: Regional Telecommunications Review 2021 Submission](#)

BACKGROUND:

In late 2019 WALGA collated examples and case studies highlighting the long-standing issue of telecommunication failures, particularly in regional and peri-urban areas and specifically during emergencies. Matters identified included:

- Blackspots (areas with no mobile phone coverage);
- Battery backup failures (both mobile towers and telephone exchanges);
- Outages (which have led to loss of landlines and mobiles during emergency situations);
- Telstra Notification Systems (that mean the telecommunications carrier is reliant on customers to advise there is no service)

Importantly these issues identified the inextricable link with power supplies in the provision of reliable telecommunications service.

A Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (the Committee) is established every three years under Part 9B of the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999* to conduct a review into telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.

The Committee for the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review was appointed on 1 June 2021 and submissions were open until 30 September 2021.

In developing the submission, the Association sought the views of all Local Governments. Submissions were received from eight Local Governments and one Regional Council. Telecommunications issues were discussed at 16 WALGA Zone meetings during August 2021 with five Zones contributing formal resolutions.

WALGA staff attended and contributed three online consultative sessions conducted by the Committee during August and September. Local Government representatives also took the opportunity to provide input to the Committee's consultation sessions.

The Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee is particularly interested to hear views on:

- The reliability of local mobile and broadband services
- The role of telecommunications during COVID-19 and natural disasters
- The effectiveness of Government programs like the Mobile Black Spot Program
- How telecommunications can support regional development
- The potential of emerging communications technologies
- Ways to help regional consumers get connected, stay connected and use their connection

A submission was endorsed by State Council by Flying Minute on 29 October 2021.

Total invited to survey:	24
Total finished survey:	14

Endorse the Recommendation:	12
Endorse the Recommendation subject to comment below:	2
Do not endorse:	0

Additional information was added to the draft submission in response to the comments provided.

COMMENT:

Feedback from members articulated very similar themes across rural, regional and remote WA, and peri-urban Perth.

15 recommended solutions were provided that address the key issues identified by Local Governments:

1. To ensure the requirements and accountabilities of the Universal Service Guarantee (USG) are met, immediate attention to the capability of Telstra's existing copper and wireless networks is required to address the core issues being faced regionally.
2. Investigate mechanisms to increase competition in the delivery of telecommunication to reduce the current monopoly experienced by a large areas of regional Australia.
3. Partnerships including all levels of government and industry to investigate and trial emerging technologies with the potential to deliver cost-effective mobile communications and power reliability ensuring trials are not constrained by the limitation of funds available via government programs.
4. Ensure that the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Bill 2020 expanded scope of the Act includes telecommunications critical infrastructure and that any new technologies that enable significant change to the delivery of telecommunications services in regional Australia need to be cognisant of the ongoing and real threat of cybersecurity on the security of infrastructure, personal and commercial data.
5. When developing funding programs ensure that power supply (including improved back up and Stand Alone Power Systems) is a key consideration to any solution sought, and that a collaborative approach between power and telecommunication providers is essential to any funding application.
6. Guarantee engagement with Local Governments as a pre-requisite for input, particularly in regards to identification of local blackspots and optimum infrastructure locations.
7. Where approved signal boosters or enhanced telecommunication products are recommended by telecommunication carriers as the solution to achieve mobile connectivity, this equipment should be technically evaluated and funded rather than the consumer having to take all of the risks and fund this inequity.
8. A comprehensive community education program is required to ensure it is not assumed that the mobile phone network, land line telephones or nbnco based internet services can be relied on

during or in the aftermath of emergencies. This program should offer solutions such as transistor radios that at least allow the community to receive (although not send) information during emergencies.

9. Leverage major regional road upgrades, such as the Tanami Road, to install fibre optic cable as part of integrated earthworks. This will lower the overall costs, increase accessibility and, in the case of the Tanami Road, potentially provide an alternative from the single line currently servicing northern Western Australia.
10. Broaden both the deployment and application of nbnco satellite services to all evacuation centres to ensure access to telecommunication not only during an emergency but to provide backup redundancy when fixed lines connections are experiencing outages.
11. Investigate the technology that facilitates quicker service restoration including locally or regionally located generators and the ability to connect them to telecommunications facilities, Cells on Wheels (COWs) and mobile exchanges on wheels (MEOWs). Analyse the transferability for a broader scale, long term solution.
12. Establishment of an independent telecommunications committee to address black spots and telecommunications issues in peri-urban and metropolitan areas.
13. Call upon the Commonwealth Government to:
 - a. fund the extension of fibre deeper into regional communities based on products similar to the Nbnco Enterprise Ethernet business product, and
 - b. ensure guaranteed prices charged by service providers are equivalent to those in a city CBD.
14. Request the Federal Government to fulfil the commitment of full mobile coverage on the North West Coastal Highway.
15. Request the Federal Government to ensure that the drawdown of data, particularly from autonomous vehicles used by the mining sector, doesn't compromise the quality and reliability of service.

Local Governments have clearly identified that telecommunications infrastructure is fundamental to basic service provision and economic development in all parts of the country. The proposed solutions go some way towards ensuring that choice, equity and sustainability of telecommunications services are provided to rural, regional and remote Western Australia.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA endorsed submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review 2021 Committee.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Ron Chambers, Shire of Esperance*

Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Carried

7.10 WALGA submission on Guideline: Native Vegetation Referral, Part V Environmental Protection Act 1986 (05 095-03-0001 GM)

WALGA Recommendation

That the endorsed WALGA submission on the draft Guideline: Native Vegetation Referral be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- On 5 July 2021 the Department of Water and Environment Regulation (DWER) released the draft [Guideline: Native Vegetation Referrals \(the Guideline\)](#) for consultation by 30 July. WALGA was granted an extension to 6 August 2021.
- The Guidelines relate to a new clearing referral process introduced as part of the *Environmental Protection Act Amendment Act 2020* passed in November 2020 which removes the requirement for a clearing permit for low impact proposals. Referrals considered low impact are not subject to public consultation and no fees are payable by proponents to DWER for the assessment of referrals.
- The Guideline provides information on this new referral process for approval of low impact native vegetation clearing. This new process could, in some circumstances, assist some Local Governments with more timely delivery of minor infrastructure projects and reduce costs associated with clearing permits.
- WALGA's submission reiterates its support for this referral process for which an exemption does not apply, on the proviso that environmental outcomes are not negatively affected. It also recommends that Guidelines need to provide greater clarity regarding the type of clearing that would be considered low impact to avoid confusion and delays to projects.
- The final submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute (resolution 207.FM/2021).

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Flying Minute – Guidelines Native Vegetation Referral, Part V *Environmental Protection Act 1986*](#)
- [WALGA's final submission on Draft Guidelines: Native Vegetation Referrals](#)

BACKGROUND:

On 5 July 2021 the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) released the draft [Guideline: Native Vegetation Referrals \(the Guideline\)](#) for consultation by 30 July. WALGA was granted an extension to 6 August 2021.

The draft Guidelines provide information on the new clearing referral process introduced as part of the *Environmental Protection Act Amendment Act 2020* which removes the requirement for a clearing permit for low impact clearing and seek to help with the interpretation of the criteria set out in the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) for the assessment of these referrals.

To facilitate sector engagement on the draft Guidelines, WALGA distributed an InfoPage on 9 July, inviting comments from the sector by 22 July. Local Governments were encouraged to join in the DWER's on-line information session held on 19 July.

Officer comments on the draft Guideline were received from one Local Government, the City of Joondalup.

The final submission is consistent with WALGA's previous submissions on native vegetation regulation, in particular the [Environmental Protection Act 1986 \(EP Act amendments\) submission](#) endorsed by State Council in January 2020 and the [Native Vegetation in Western Australia Issues Paper submission](#) endorsed by State Council in February 2020.

The final submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

COMMENT:

In reviewing the draft Guidelines, WALGA focused on whether the Guidelines provide adequate detail on what type of clearing activities could be considered low impact and how DWER would determine the outcomes of the referral.

WALGA's Submission noted that the new referral process has the potential to improve the efficiency of meeting the regulatory requirements for some essential clearing activities undertaken by Local Governments, such as small scale road upgrades, improving sightlines, the extension of crossovers or other minor infrastructure projects.

However, the format and content of the draft Guidelines was found to be confusing, and recommendations were made to provide further detail in the Guidelines on the criteria for determining what is low impact clearing.

The Submission also acknowledged that the determination criteria are designed to ensure that only low impact clearing activities proceed without a clearing permit and that some Local Governments, particularly those on the Swan Coastal Plain and in the Wheatbelt, will be less likely to be able to utilise the new referral pathway. In this context WALGA reiterated its documented position on the need for further improvements and efficiencies to the regulatory process for native vegetation clearing, including:

- increased State Government investment in the collection and provision of better information to support regulatory processes;
- the implementation of a more strategic approach to the management of native vegetation in Western Australia, particularly for priority bioregions such as the Swan Coastal Plain and the Wheatbelt; and
- the allocation of dedicated staff within the Department to assist Local Governments with the native vegetation clearing referrals and permits process (noting the sector is second only to the State Government in the number of clearing permit applications submitted annually).

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the endorsed WALGA submission on the draft Guideline: Native Vegetation Referral.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Seconded: *Mr Kevin Hannagan, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku*

Carried

7.11 WALGA submission on Draft Native Vegetation Policy for Western Australia (05-095-03-0001 GM)

WALGA Recommendation

That the endorsed submission to the Department of Water and Environment Regulation on the Draft Native Vegetation Policy for Western Australia be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The State Government has released for public comment a Draft Native Vegetation Policy for Western Australia (Draft Policy) on 30 August 2021.
- Whilst it is primarily aimed at State Government agencies and developing a whole of government approach to native vegetation management, many aspects are of interest to, or have implications for, Local Governments.
- A draft submission was prepared and sent out to the sector for comment, with some changes made to the draft.
- Comments on the revised draft submission were sought from members of the Environment Policy Team by Thursday, 14 October 2021.
- The submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute (resolution 211.FM/2021).

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Flying Minute: WALGA Submission on Draft Native Vegetation Policy for Western Australia](#)

BACKGROUND:

The draft [Native Vegetation Policy](#) for Western Australia was released on Monday, 30 August. This policy is one of four key initiatives in the 2019 [Native Vegetation in Western Australia Issues Paper](#). The Department of Water and Environment Regulation (DWER) also released a document [summarising feedback on the Issues Paper, submissions](#) and [Explanatory Notes](#) on how feedback on the Issues Paper is reflected in the Draft Policy and including answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

To facilitate sector engagement, WALGA:

- Alerted the sector to the release of the discussion paper and draft Bill in November 2019 via an article and InfoPage in WALGA newsletters and by direct email to key contacts;
- Facilitated an information session with DWER on 7 September 2021, which was attended by 61 Local Government staff representing 43 Local Governments from 10 different Zones. The information session was followed by a workshop, where participants were asked to respond to the following questions:
 - How could the Draft Policy be strengthened to support Local Governments to manage native vegetation?
 - What aspects of the Draft Policy are problematic for Local Government?
 - What is missing from the Draft Policy?
- Provided a draft submission to the sector on 21 September, for feedback by 5 October. The submission considered matters raised in past submissions (listed in the attachment) and comments made by participants at the workshop held on 7 September.

Officer comments were received from eight Local Governments: City of Busselton, City of Cockburn, City of Greater Geraldton, City of Kalamunda, Town of Mosman Park, Shire of Murray, Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale and the City of Vincent. Changes were made to the draft in response to this additional feedback, including comments received after the draft submission was sent to the Environment Policy Team.

The draft submission was considered by the Environment Policy Team out of session and endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

COMMENT:

The Draft Native Vegetation Policy seeks to provide mechanisms for coordinating whole-of-state government management of native vegetation by defining the guiding principles, strategies and approaches to achieving the proposed outcomes.

Whilst it is primarily aimed at State Government agencies and on developing a whole of government response, many aspects are of interest to, or have implications for, Local Governments.

The Draft Policy provides a further opportunity to realise some of the changes in the current practice of native vegetation management advocated for in WALGA's submission on the Native Vegetation Issues Paper and other forums.

WALGA's submission focuses on the aspects of the policy which are of interest to or have implications for Local Government. WALGA's draft submission provides comments on the format of the Draft Policy, raising concerns over its complexity, lack of clearly defined objectives and makes 19 recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the endorsed WALGA submission to the Department of Water and Environment Regulation on the Draft Native Vegetation Policy for Western Australia.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Seconded: Mr Kevin Hannagan, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku

Carried

7.12 Submission on Cost Recovery Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 – assessments by the Environmental Protection Authority

WALGA Recommendation

That the endorsed WALGA submission to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation on Cost Recovery under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 – assessments by the Environmental Protection Authority be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- Changes made to the Environmental Protection Act 1986 (EP Act) earlier this year included a Head of Power for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) to establish a cost recovery mechanism for proposals subject to assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).
- DWER has released a discussion paper and draft Regulations setting out the proposed cost recovery model for comment by 22 October 2021.
- WALGA's submission provides two case studies that demonstrate that the proposed cost recovery fees would have a significant financial impact on Local Government projects requiring EPA assessment.
- It is also argued that most Local Government proposals requiring environmental assessment are for the community and broader public benefit, are consistent with State Government Planning, Strategies and Policies, and are not for profit.
- On this basis the submission recommends that cost recovery fees for these Local Government projects should be waived.
- The final submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute (resolution 209.FM/2021).

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Flying Minute – Submission on Cost Recovery Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* – assessments by the Environmental Protection Authority](#)

BACKGROUND:

Recent amendments to the EP Act have included a head of power to allow the EPA to impose cost recovery fees on proponents for carrying out environmental assessments of their proposals (not including assessment of planning schemes). DWER is seeking feedback and comment on the [discussion paper implementing this cost recovery as well as draft Regulations](#), by 22 October 2021.

To facilitate sector engagement WALGA:

- Alerted the sector to the release of the discussion paper and regulations on 23 September 2021, inviting them to register for the webinar and workshop and contribute to WALGA's submission; and
- Hosted a webinar and workshop attended by officers from 21 Local Governments on Friday, 1 October 2021, where DWER officials provided further information on the proposed cost recovery model.

Officer comments were received by 10 Local Governments: City of Bayswater, City of Bunbury, City of Cockburn, Shire of Dardanup, Shire of Denmark, Shire of Harvey, City of Joondalup, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku, Shire of Wandering, and Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. An Elected Member from the Shire of Toodyay also provided comment.

The draft submission was considered by the Environment Policy Team out of session and endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

COMMENT:

Most Local Government proposals have not historically required EPA assessment under Part IV of the EP Act - since 1991 there have been 28 proposals by Local Governments that have been subject to EPA assessments, including for road constructions, waste disposal sites, and coastal infrastructure. However, WALGA's submission includes two case studies of Local Government proposals that were and are currently being assessed by the EPA that demonstrate that the fees to be imposed would likely range from \$200,000 to over \$500,000. There are also charges for changes to conditions and proposals after assessment which range from \$60,000 to \$90,000.

The submission notes that the imposition of cost recovery fees of this scale could impact the cost/benefit analysis of Local Government projects to such an extent that a project that provides a public good may not proceed due to the additional charges.

Further, WALGA's submission argues that most Local Government proposals that could be subject to an EP Act Part IV assessment are for the provision of essential public infrastructure. These projects are for public, not private, benefit, are endorsed activities either through State and Local Planning (e.g. roads and waste treatment facilities) and provide benefits beyond the local area at a regional and State level.

The submission strongly recommends that cost recovery for these proposals should be exempt from cost recovery and fees should be waived.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the endorsed WALGA submission to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation on Cost Recovery under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 – assessments by the Environmental Protection Authority.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Mr Kevin Hannagan, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku

Carried

7.13 Student Transport Assistance Policy Framework Inquiry – WALGA Submission (05-005-03-0013 ID)

WALGA Recommendation

That the endorsed submission to the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy Framework be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- Changes made to the Environmental Protection Act 1986 (EP Act) earlier this year included a The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee is leading an inquiry into the current Student Transport Assistance Policy (STAP) framework.
- This submission examines the relationship of the STAP to Local Government, with a focus on:
 - Restricted Access Vehicles;
 - Local Road Maintenance;
 - Turnaround Facilities;
 - Use of Local Government Property;
 - Students with Physical Mobility Issues; and
 - Population Decline and Economic Development.
- Policy recommendations are developed as part of this submission.
- The draft submission has been reviewed and supported by the Infrastructure Policy Team and endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Flying Minute – Student Transport Assistance Policy Framework Inquiry](#)

BACKGROUND:

The Public Accounts Committee of the WA Legislative Assembly is conducting an inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy (STAP) framework. The STAP framework is applicable to students receiving Western Australian State Government transport assistance under the following conditions:

- Students live in rural areas and attend mainstream government and non-government schools, or
- Students have special needs and attend education support schools and centres provided by government and non-government agencies.

Submissions must be made by the Friday, 29 October and can address specific elements of the STAP Terms of Reference or the issues generally.

COMMENT:

In brief, the policy recommendations in the draft submission are as follows:

1. Effective processes should be in place to ensure that Local Governments and Main Roads WA Heavy Vehicle Services are made aware of proposed changes to school bus routes.
2. The value of re-establishing school bus advisory committees or an alternative formal process for regular (perhaps annual) engagement between the PTA Contract Officer, Local Government, school and bus contractors should be evaluated.
3. The principles set out in the Agreement between WALGA and the Public Transport Authority Defining Roles and Responsibilities for Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Bus Stop Infrastructure (2018) should guide the approach to provide access for students with physical mobility issues.
4. The policy should provide guidance concerning how the health of a town (district) or remote community is considered in developing and applying the policy.
5. The inquiry should consider the option of providing students the choice of reliably accessing bus services, where these exist, to schools other than the closest school.

This draft submission has been reviewed and supported by the Infrastructure Policy Team and was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the endorsed WALGA submission to the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy Framework.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Seconded: *Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*

Carried

8. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Organisational Key Activity Reports

- 8.1 Report on Key Activities, Commercial and Communications (01-006-03-0017 ZD)
- 8.2 Report on Key Activities, Governance and Organisational Services (01-006-03-0007 TB)
- 8.3 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure (05-001-02-0003 ID)
- 8.4 Report on Key Activities, Strategy, Policy and Planning (01-006-03-0017 NM)

GVROC COMMENT:

GVROC note the Organisation Key Activity Reports as provided.

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Mr Brian Joiner, Shire of Menzies*
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

9. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Policy Forum Reports

The following provides an outline of the key activities of the Association's Policy Forums that have met since the last State Council meeting.

Recommendation

That the report on the key activities of the Association's Policy Forums to the December 2021 State Council Meeting be noted.

Policy Forums

The following Policy Forums have been established

- Mayors / Presidents Policy Forum (Refer to attached WALGA President Report for December 2021)
- Mining Communities Policy Forum
- Economic Development Policy Forum

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the Policy Forum Reports update

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*
 Seconded: Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies

Carried

10. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda – State Council Status Report

10.1 Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions - To the December 2021 State Council Meeting

GVROC COMMENT:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the Complete State Council Status Report to the December 2021 State Council meeting and the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*
Seconded: *Mr Shane Burge, Shire of Esperance*

Carried

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

11.1 Local Government Legislative Reform

WALGA Recommendation

That the update on the Local Government Legislative Reform be noted.

ATTACHMENT: Detailed Local Government Reforms Table

BACKGROUND:

The Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Carey, MLA announced Local Government legislative reform initiatives on Wednesday 10 November 2021.

The reform proposals are based on the following six major themes:

1. Earlier intervention, effective regulation and stronger penalties
2. Reducing red tape, increasing consistency and simplicity
3. Greater transparency and accountability
4. Stronger local democracy and community engagement
5. Clear roles and responsibilities
6. Improved financial management and reporting.

The reform proposals are based on consultation undertaken over the last five years, and have been developed considering:

- The Local Government Review Panel Final Report (mid 2020)
- The City of Perth Inquiry Report (mid 2020)
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) consultation on Act Reform (2017-2020)
- The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 and other State Acts
- The Parliament's Select Committee Report into Local Government (late 2020)
- Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) Submissions
- Direct engagement with local governments
- Correspondence and complaints
- Miscellaneous past reports.

The information on the reform initiatives can be found [here](#) and are attached.

The State Government have advised of a 3-month consultation period ending on 4 February 2022.

COMMENT:

Many of the initiatives outlined as a part of this package have been informed by engagement between our Members and the Minister for Local Government. The Local Government sector will welcome the tiered approach to many requirements according to the differing size and scale of Local Governments.

The Local Government sector has been advocating for the following reform initiatives including:

- introduction of a contemporary intervention framework
- greater clarity of roles and responsibilities of Elected Members and Chief Executive Officers
- tiered compliance approach to financial reporting requirements according to size and scale of Local Governments
- model financial statements and fit for purpose financial ratios
- improved processes relating to regional subsidiaries to facilitate collaborative service delivery
- reducing unnecessary red-tape and a more flexible approach to enable resource sharing
- retention of current election cycle for Elected Members, and
- simplification of strategic planning processes and community engagement models.

WALGA will prepare information to the sector analysing the proposals against current sector positions and recommending positions on proposals that currently do not have a formal position. Sector feedback will be requested with a view to providing a sector response to all of the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the WALGA update on the Local Government Legislative Reform.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie**
 Seconded: Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora

Carried

11.2 **Work Health and Safety (WHS) Legislation Update**

WALGA Recommendation

That the update on the Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation be noted.

IN BRIEF:

- The *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS legislation) was passed by the West Australian Parliament in November 2020 and is expected to come into effect in January 2022 with the Regulations and transition period still to be finalised.
- The new WHS legislation introduces a number of new legal terms and concepts, including the term Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU). Further, volunteers are now included in the definition of Workers.
- The Local Government sector has expressed concern with the new WHS legislation, particularly around the implications for the management of volunteer bushfire brigades (BFBs).
- A Duty of Care may be shared with others, and if more than one person has a duty in relation to the same matter, they must consult, cooperate and coordinate their activities, which adds additional complexity in the case of BFBs.
- WALGA and LGIS are working to provide support and resources to the sector to assist with the transition to the new WHS legislation.

BACKGROUND:

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* was passed by the West Australian Parliament in November 2020 and is expected to come into effect in January 2022 with the Regulations and transition period still to be finalised.

The main changes in the new legislation are:

- The primary duty holder is the 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) which is intended to capture a broader range of contemporary workplace relationships;
- A broader definition of 'worker' which specifically includes volunteers, including BFB volunteers;
- Broader and overlapping duties of care attach to those who have the capacity to exercise influence and control over health and safety matters and a duty to consult with other duty holders;
- A positive duty of due diligence for officers of a PCBU; and
- Increased penalties for offences under the WHS legislation and the introduction of industrial manslaughter provisions;

On 31 August WALGA and LGIS delivered a webinar on the new WHS legislation which was attended by more than 140 people from 80 Local Governments. A panel of presenters from LGIS, Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), McLeods Barristers and Solicitors, and the City of Mandurah shared their knowledge and experience in relation to the new legislation, WHS obligations, and BFB volunteer training and management. The webinar is available on the WALGA [website](#) and a FAQ document is being developed jointly by LGIS and DFES. LGIS has also prepared a Volunteer Handbook and CEO Briefing Note on the WHS legislation available on their website.

COMMENT:

WALGA and LGIS are continuing to liaise with DFES and DMIRS on these issues, recognising the need for further information and clarification regarding the implications and requirements of the WHS legislation for the sector's management of bushfire brigade volunteers. Other activities that WALGA is undertaking include:

- Meetings with the Workplace Commissioner Darren Kavanagh and other groups responsible for Volunteer organisations and DFES to discuss the concerns being raised by volunteers and relevant organisations.
 - This was a positive meeting with all wanting to put in place reasonable and practical measures to assist Local Governments and Volunteers. The Workplace Commissioners' department DMIRS has released [a Guide to Work health and safety for volunteer organisations](#) which WALGA provided feedback on.
 - On 12 November DMIRS delivered a webinar for volunteers and volunteer organisations;

- LGIS is obtaining legal advice about which Local Government officers are considered 'officers' for the purposes of the WHS legislation which will be provided to the sector;
- WALGA is developing a scope of works for a WHS consultant to develop additional tools and resources to support the sector; and
- WALGA will advocate to the Minister for the commencement of the WHS legislation for Local Governments to be delayed until June 2022 to allow additional time to ensure that safe work practices are implemented for volunteers.

To inform its advocacy on this and sector emergency management issues more generally, WALGA is also undertaking an Emergency Management Survey of Local Governments to ascertain the sentiment of the sector to their emergency management obligations, and to understand how they are undertaking their management of BFBs. The survey includes questions about the types of additional support that Local Governments require in order to comply with the WHS legislation. Preliminary survey feedback indicates:

- Local Governments need more information on Work Health and Safety and Guidelines and templates to support compliance with the legislation;
- Further work is needed to ensure that Local Governments are well prepared to meet WHS requirements in relation to:
 - Providing up to date Standard Operating Procedures and directives for incident response;
 - Training for use of vehicles and equipment use;
 - Ensuring Bush Fire brigade stations do not present a risk to health and safety; and
 - Providing for volunteer fatigue management and access to welfare services; and

Local Governments generally feel well prepared in relation to WHS regarding provision of personal protective equipment for volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the WALGA update on the Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Paul Warner, Shire of Menzies*
Seconded: *Cr Peter Craig, Shire of Leonora*

Carried

12. FUTURE MEETINGS

With the continuing and evolving situation of the COVID-19 “Corona Virus” scheduling of future meetings as in person is a watching brief. This will be reviewed at each meeting by GVROC and decisions made on whether the meetings are held as in person meetings or conducted through Zoom video conferencing.

In noting the above, the following suggested dates in 2021/2022 have been set for the remaining GVROC meetings.

- 26 November 2021 (Kambalda - Shire of Coolgardie)
- 4 February 2022 (Esperance - Shire of Esperance)
- 1 April 2022 (Norseman - Shire of Dundas)
- 27 May 2022 (TBC)
- 29 July 2022 (TBC)
- 30 September 2022 (TBC Perth – aligned to LGA week and WALGA AGM)
- 18 November 2022 (TBC)

The following are the WALGA State Council meeting dates in 2022 with suggested GVROC Zoom video conference meeting dates prior to these to inform the GVROC’s representatives attending the meetings with relevant input for State Council Agenda Items:

- 2 March 2022 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **18 February 2022**
- 4 May 2022 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **22 April 2022**
- 6 July 2022 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **24 June 2022**
- 8-9 September 2022 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **26 August 2022**
- 7 December 2022 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **25 November 2022**

13. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:35am.