

East Metropolitan Zone Minutes

19 February 2026

**Hosted by the City of Belmont
Function Room, 215 Wright Street,
Cloverdale**

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety Update Report
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Zone Status Report
4. President's Report
5. East Metropolitan Zone Standing Orders

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

Zone Chair, Cr George Sekulla opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Local Government
Town of Bassendean	Mayor Kath Hamilton (Deputy) Cr Ken John Mr Cameron Woods, Chief Executive Officer - non-voting
City of Bayswater	Mayor Filomena Piffaretti (Deputy)
City of Belmont	Cr George Sekulla (Chair) Cr Bernard Ryan Mayor Robert Rossi (observer) Mr John Christie, Chief Executive Officer - non-voting
City of Kalamunda	Mayor Margaret Thomas Cr Sue Bilich (Deputy) Mr Nathan Ritchie, Director Development - non-voting
Shire of Mundaring	President Paige McNeil Cr Ben Heptinstall
City of Swan	Cr Cate McCullough Cr Rod Henderson Mr Stephen Cain, Chief Executive Officer - non-voting
WALGA Secretariat	Mr Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure Ms Meghan Dwyer, Governance Specialist Mr Niju Matthew, Policy Advisor Planning

1.3 APOLOGIES

City of Bayswater	Deputy Mayor Elli Petersen-Pik Cr Michelle Sutherland Mr Jeremy Edwards, Chief Executive Officer - non-voting
Town of Bassendean	Cr Hayden Long
City of Kalamunda	Cr Brooke O'Donnell Mr Anthony Vuleta, Chief Executive Officer - non-voting
Shire of Mundaring	Mr Jason Whiteaker, Chief Executive Officer - non-voting

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

President Paige McNeil provided an acknowledgement of Country.

The Zone members acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community. We embrace the vast Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including Boorloo (Perth), on the land of the Whadjuk Noongar People, where this meeting is being held and we acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past and present.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 DEPUTATIONS

Nil.

5 AGENCY REPORTS

5.1 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY UPDATE REPORT

The February report from the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (DLGIRS) was provided as an attachment within the Agenda.

Noted

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The previous meeting Minutes of the East Metropolitan Zone were circulated to Zone Delegates and was provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ben Heptinstall
Seconded: Mayor Margaret Thomas

That the Minutes of the meeting of the East Metropolitan Zone held on 20 November 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED 11/0

7 BUSINESS ARISING

7.1 STATUS REPORT

A Status Report outlining any recent updates and/or actions taken on the Zone's previous meetings resolutions for both State Council and Zone items was enclosed as an attachment. These item updates will remain on the Status Report until completed or no further action is required by WALGA.

Noted

8 ZONE BUSINESS

8.1 2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HONOURS AWARDS

By Kathy Robertson, WALGA Manager Association and Corporate Governance

The Honours Program recognises and celebrates the outstanding achievements and lasting contributions made by Elected Members and officers to their respective Local Government, the Local Government sector, WALGA and the wider community.

There are five awards in the 2026 Program:

1. Local Government Medal
2. Life Membership
3. Eminent Service Award
4. Merit Award
5. Young Achievers Award

All Local Government Elected Members and officers are eligible for nomination for each award. Nominations are open now and will close at **5:00pm on Thursday, 2 April 2026**.

Further information about the 2026 Honours Program, including the nomination form and guidelines for preparing nominations, are available on the [WALGA website](#).

All awards will be presented later this year at the WALGA Local Government Awards event. More details about the event will be announced shortly.

For more information contact Habiba Farrag, State Council Governance Officer, on 9213 2050 or via email honours@walga.asn.au.

Noted

8.2 WATER MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER UPDATE

By Rebecca Brown, WALGA Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has developed a Water Management in Western Australia Discussion Paper exploring issues for Local Governments in managing water resources.
- To inform the Discussion Paper, WALGA undertook research and direct engagement with the sector and reviewed existing Water Advocacy Positions and feedback from WALGA Zones.
- Based on this consultation, the Discussion Paper identifies water security and water efficiency as key themes.
- Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform the development of a new water management advocacy position.
- Zones and Local Governments are encouraged to provide comments to WALGA by 12 March 2026.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#) 3.1.1 Service Delivery to Aboriginal Communities, 4.3 Clearing Permits and Water Licenses and Permits, 6.10 Public Open Space (POS) and 6.14 Planning for Water.

ATTACHMENT

- [Water Management in Western Australia Discussion Paper](#)

BACKGROUND

Local Governments contribute to the management of water through strategic planning, land management, development approvals, community behaviour change and, in some cases, direct water service provision. Local Governments' role in water service provision includes drainage, water use and re-use and aspects of wastewater and sewerage services. The challenges for future water management are escalating across Western Australia due to population growth, climate change and increased competition for limited water resources.

To inform the Discussion Paper WALGA reviewed its existing Water Advocacy Positions and motions, feedback from WALGA Zones and undertook research and direct consultation with the sector. Consultation included workshops with both metropolitan and non-metropolitan Local Governments, an online session with 40 officers focused on water security and efficiency and a regionally focused session with 30 Local Government representatives exploring the barriers to being waterwise in a regional setting. In addition, WALGA conducted 14 one-on-one interviews with officers from 22 metropolitan, regional and remote Local Governments to better understand key issues. Further insights were gained through meetings with officers from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Water Corporation, as well as internal discussions with WALGA.

COMMENT

From consultation and research WALGA has undertaken with Local Government, two key themes consistently emerged - water security and water efficiency.

Water security relates to the reliable availability, adequate quantity and acceptable quality of water needed to support human health, economic development and environmental amenity. Issues identified include:

- Infrastructure: Funding to repair and upgrade aging Local Government water infrastructure including irrigation, drainage and stormwater systems and to improve reliability of State-managed assets.
- Alternative Sources: Diversifying water supply through non-traditional sources such as recycled water, stormwater harvesting, or desalination to support community assets.
- Licensing: Reforming the current water licensing system, including equity, access and regulatory enforcement.
- Access: Addressing barriers to equitable water access, particularly for regional and remote communities.
- Use: Planning for water allocation and consumption across sectors.

Water efficiency is focused on reducing unnecessary water loss through better practices, technologies and infrastructure. Issues identified include:

- Technology: Adopting waterwise technologies to enhance water efficiency.
- Water Literacy and behaviour change: Increasing water literacy within Local Government and the community to support change management and adaptation within communities.
- Water Sensitive Urban Design: Improving understanding to encourage the adoption of efficient technologies and design standards to reduce water consumption across public and private infrastructure.

Local Governments across Western Australia are addressing water security and efficiency through various actions across strategic infrastructure planning, innovative water management practices and community awareness. A new Water Management Advocacy Position will ensure WALGA can effectively advocate on behalf of the sector in relation to this issue. The Discussion Paper includes options to address these issues and questions for the sector relating to each of the key areas.

Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform the development of a new water management advocacy position. All Zones and Local Governments are encouraged to provide comments to WALGA by 12 March 2026.

Noted

East Metropolitan Zone Members provided comments during the meeting on the Discussion Paper. These comments will be provided to the WALGA Policy Portfolio.

8.3 CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY POSITION

By Rebecca Brown, WALGA Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA is undertaking consultation on a revised Climate Change Advocacy Position.
- This Draft was developed following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team of State Council.
- Since WALGA's current Advocacy Position and Policy Statement were endorsed in 2018, there have been significant legislative, policy, technological and scientific changes.
- An updated Climate Change Advocacy Position, which complements other WALGA Advocacy Positions, will provide a sound basis for WALGA's advocacy.
- WALGA is seeking Council endorsed feedback by 1 May 2026.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item is intended to replace WALGA's 2018 Climate Change [Advocacy Position](#) and [Policy Statement](#).

ATTACHMENT

The Consultation Paper is available [online](#).

BACKGROUND

Climate change, and related legislation, policy and action, have implications for many aspects of Local Governments' operations and services. More frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves, bushfires, extreme rainfall events and warming, rising sea levels are increasing the costs and complexity of delivering critical services, infrastructure and ensuring community wellbeing.

In 2018, State Council endorsed a [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and advocacy position, following extensive sector consultation. Since this Advocacy Position was adopted there have been significant legislative, policy, technological and scientific changes, including:

- The national Climate Change Act 2022 and the Western Australian Climate Change Bill 2023.
- The Local Government Amendment Act 2023, which expanded Western Australian Local Governments' general function to include planning for, and mitigating, the risks associated with climate change.
- The release of the Australian Government's National Climate Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Plan in 2025.
- Escalation of the transition to renewable energy, uptake of electric vehicles and energy efficiency standards under the National Construction Code.
- Climate science and projections (international, national and WA specific) have also become clearer regarding the risks posed by climate change and the need for action to address the consequential impacts.

COMMENT

It is important that the WALGA climate change advocacy position is updated to reflect these changes and the consequent needs and priorities of Local Governments. An updated climate change advocacy position, which complements other WALGA advocacy positions, will provide a sound basis for WALGA's advocacy.

Following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team, WALGA has developed a revised, draft Climate Change Advocacy Position for Local Government feedback.

WALGA Environment and Waste Team members will be attending Zone meetings in April 2026 to support zone discussions on the draft Advocacy Position.

WALGA is seeking Council endorsed feedback on the draft Climate Change Advocacy Position by **COB Friday, 1 May 2026**. Feedback can be provided to environment@walga.asn.au.

Following consideration of this feedback a final draft Advocacy Position will be developed and provided to Zones and State Council for consideration, expected to be in July 2026.

Noted

8.4 DISASTER READY FUND: ROUND 4 ANTICIPATED TO OPEN IN MARCH 2026

By Rachel Armstrong, Policy Manager Emergency Management

The Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is the Australian Government's key funding program to support projects that reduce disaster risk and strengthen community resilience.

Round Four of the DRF is expected to open in March 2026 with approximately \$200 million available nationally. A strong focus on *construction-ready*, infrastructure-based mitigation projects with clear risk reduction benefits is expected. This is similar to Round 3 which prioritised infrastructure-based projects such as flood levees, cyclone shelters, warning systems. A list of Round 3 projects funded is available at [Disaster Ready Fund | NEMA](#)).

WALGA is providing early notice to Zones and member Local Governments to consideration of both individual and collaborative project opportunities, and pre-planning ahead of the formal announcement.

The DRF is administered by DFES, in Western Australia. Further information is available at [Disaster Resilience Grants - Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) and by emailing DisasterResilienceGrants@dfes.wa.gov.au.

DRF Round 4 is likely to be released in March 2026, and encourage Local Governments to consider shared or individual disaster risk reduction projects

WALGA will advise the Sector when the DRF is formally announced.

Noted

8.5 REQUEST TO PRESENT

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zones Governance Officer

Kolbang Yanginy – Local Government Reconciliation Resource.

WALGA and Reconciliation WA are offering presentations to Zones on the new [Kolbang Yanginy website](#), a collaborative project between Reconciliation WA, WALGA, and State Agencies with support from Lotterywest.

The online platform is designed to support Local Governments across Western Australia to build strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Focusing on key themes like reconciliation, partnerships and placemaking, Kolbang Yanginy provides advice, resources, case studies and an interactive map to build capability across Local Governments.

The website also provides information about legislative, regulatory and policy requirements with respect to Aboriginal heritage and native title, with links to further information from State Agencies.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Cate McCullough

Seconded: Mayor Margaret Thomas

That the East Metropolitan Zone does not support a deputation on the Kolbang Yanginy website at a future meeting.

CARRIED 11/0

8.6 LATE ITEM - WALGA SUBMISSION TO APVMA ADVOCATING FOR WITHDRAWAL OF SECOND GENERATION ANTICOAGULANT RODENTICIDES (SGARS) FROM PUBLIC SALE

By Town of Bassendean

BACKGROUND

The Town of Bassendean supports the APVMA's proposed suspension of products containing second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), so that stricter controls around their use can be implemented quickly.

However, the Town requests that additional controls are implemented to permanently withdraw all SGAR products from public sale and restrict their use to licensed, trained professionals under strict regulatory controls.

While the APVMA are proposing that some of the high-risk SGAR's formulations (such as liquids and concentrates) may be cancelled, and baits more tightly controlled through updated packaging information to improve user compliance, these measures do not go far enough especially with almost no ability to monitor compliance in the use of baits once purchased by members of the public.

Given SGAR baits are a notable source of secondary poisoning where birds like owls ingest poisoned rats/mice and die, the only way to truly protect birds and wildlife is to permanently remove SGARs from public use, restricting them to licensed professionals instead.

The requested withdrawal of SGARs from public use is consistent with a Resolution of the Bassendean Council from the 25 March 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting, as below.

Reference Material: [Special Gazette, 16 December 2025 | Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority](#))

Town of Bassendean Council Resolution – Item 13.3

MOVED Cr Kathryn Hamilton, Seconded Cr Jamayne Burke

*That Council approves the following motion calling for **restrictions on the availability and use of** Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs), to be submitted to the National General Assembly on or before the 31st of March 2025, in preparation for the NGA Conference to be held in Canberra from 24-27 of June 2025:*

NGA Motion

This National General Assembly:

1. Requests the Australian Government to take urgent action to legislate to restrict the sale nationally of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs).

*2. Requests the Australian Government, as a priority, to curtail the use of SGAR's in all **Commonwealth** national parks, reserves and property administered by the government and/or it's agents as a first step towards a legislative ban or restricted sale of SGAR's.*

Voting requirements: Simple Majority

OCM 2025-03-25/37

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

For: Cr Jamayne Burke, Cr Kathryn Hamilton, Cr Jennie Carter, Cr Paul Poliwka and Cr Ames.

Key Arguments

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) are referred to as 'single-dose anticoagulants'. A lethal dose can be ingested in a single feeding, making SGARs substantially more potent than First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs). SGARs are slower to break down than FGARs and pose a higher risk of secondary poisoning to non-target animals (source: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority).

Non-target animals including domestic pets, owls, eagles, magpies, kookaburras, lizards, ravens, snakes and other native wildlife are at risk of secondary poisoning by anticoagulant

rodenticides. A study by BirdLife Australia found SGARs in the livers of nearly all deceased Owls that they analysed. It is important that the risks associated with using Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) are acknowledged together with their impact on non-target species.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Authority (APVMA) commenced a 'reconsideration of anticoagulant rodenticide' in 2022 to reassess the risks associated with the use of these products and consider whether labels carry adequate instructions to protect the health and safety of people. Anticoagulant rodenticides; warfarin, coumatetralyl, diphacinone, brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum, difethialone and flocoumafen were all nominated for review. In the intervening years there has been a significant volume of scientific evidence highlighting the negative impacts to native wildlife through secondary poisoning associated with the ease of access and widespread use of SGAR's.

Communities, wildlife organisations, and numerous local authorities across Australia have been advocating for a ban on the public sale of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) for several years. It is both appropriate and timely for the members of the WALGA Eastern Zone to lend their support to this important initiative.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

WALGA is currently preparing correspondence to the APVMA regarding their consultation on Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) and welcomes the feedback from the Town of Bassendean on this matter. The impact of SGARs has been raised with WALGA, including by the Central Metropolitan Zone in 2022, and WALGA has provided information to Local Government on actions they can take and been actively monitoring the APVMA review which was scheduled to be completed in July 2025.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Kathryn Hamilton

Seconded: President Paige McNeil

That the East Metropolitan Zone requests WALGA submits feedback to APVMA by the 16th of March outlining the following position:

- 1. Support for the APVMA's proposed suspension of products containing second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), so that stricter controls can be implemented.**
- 2. That the introduction of stricter controls includes the permanent withdrawal of all SGAR products from public sale, and**
- 3. Restrict the use of SGARs to licensed, trained professionals under strict regulatory control.**

CARRIED 11/0

9 WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

Zone Delegates are invited to read and consider the WALGA State Council Agenda which can be found via the link [here](#).

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

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

9.1 AVIATION ADVOCACY POSITIONS

By Negar Nili, Policy Officer Transport and Roads

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Two new Advocacy Positions are proposed to strengthen WALGA's aviation advocacy framework and to inform WALGA's response to future inquiries and/or consultation relating to aviation.
- The aim of the new positions is to provide clearer and more contemporary guidance on:
 - the sustainability and ongoing viability of Local Government-owned regional airports; and
 - the affordability, reliability and accessibility of regional and remote air services for Western Australian communities.
- The proposed positions will assist WALGA to advocate more effectively on behalf of its Members by:
 - clearly articulating the essential service role of aviation in regional, rural and remote Western Australia;
 - strengthening WALGA's capacity to engage with State and Commonwealth governments on aviation policy and funding; and
 - supporting Local Governments facing regulatory, financial and service-delivery challenges associated with regional aviation.
- The development of the proposed Advocacy Positions has been informed by engagement with a sample of Local Governments, which highlighted shared concerns regarding high regional airfares, service reliability, capacity constraints and the role of aviation in supporting health access, emergency response and regional economic development.
- WALGA currently has two existing aviation Advocacy Positions; however, feedback from Local Governments clarified that the inclusion of additional, targeted policy positions is essential to better reflect contemporary challenges and to strengthen support for Councils.
- The proposed positions build on existing WALGA policy and provide a stronger basis for:
 - sector advocacy;
 - engagement with State Council and Zones to seek feedback; and
 - informing WALGA's potential submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Regional Airfares.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#) relating to Aviation are positions 5.9 Aviation and 5.9.1 Airfare Pricing in Regional Western Australia. The proposed new positions would be in addition to these existing positions.

5.9 Aviation

Position Statement *The Local Government sector supports the Department of Transport's State Aviation Strategy 2020, with more focus required on non-RPT airports to ensure it is representative of all of WA, more focus on general aviation development across WA and noting that the preferred ownership and governance of Local Governments is Council Controlled Organisations. The Local Government sector advocates for a clear position on the economic benefit of airports in regional areas to be included in the future state wide Airports State Planning Policy.*

5.9.1. Airfare Pricing in Regional Western Australia

Position Statement *The Local Government sector supports:*

- 1. An evidence-based assessment commissioned by the State Government to determine the degree to which market structure and other factors influence the cost of providing air services on each route, the pricing structure offered and the actual prices paid.*
- 2. The State Government providing oversight of airfares ensuring transparency, encouraging partnerships between Local Governments and airline carriers to grow the market and the provision of subsidies in some situations.*

BACKGROUND

Aviation plays a critical role in Western Australia, particularly for regional, rural, and remote communities, by providing essential connectivity for access to healthcare, education, employment, and social engagement. Reliable and affordable air services are also vital to regional economic development, workforce mobility, and community resilience, especially where alternative transport options are limited.

WALGA's advocacy on aviation is underpinned by its existing policy framework, which emphasises the need for safe, reliable, and cost-effective air services across regional and remote Western Australia. These policies highlight the critical role of aviation in enabling regional connectivity, supporting service delivery, and contributing to economic development, while recognising the operational and regulatory responsibilities faced by Local Government-managed airports.

WALGA has also contributed to State-level policy development including the State Aviation Strategy 2020. This strategy supports key initiatives including regulating certain routes to support a sustainable service, the Regional Airfare Zone Cap, Regional Airports Development Scheme and regulation of closed charters in some situations. It is anticipated that the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure will review and refresh the State Aviation Strategy in 2026-27.

At the national level, WALGA engaged in consultation processes leading to the Green and White Papers on Regional Transport and Aviation, representing Local Government perspectives and regional needs.

Two recently initiated inquiries — the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the determinants of regional airfares and the Senate (Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee) Inquiry into the State of Australia's Aviation Sector and its ability to deliver reliable and affordable services to rural, regional and remote communities — provide important opportunities to review and improve policies supporting regional aviation. Both inquiries have overlapping focus areas, including affordability, government intervention, and impacts on regional communities.

To inform its responses to both inquiries, WALGA has engaged with a sample of Local Governments to understand their experiences, challenges, and priorities for regional air services. This engagement has clarified the needs of Local Governments and communities, forming the basis for developing two proposed new Advocacy Positions to support Members and advocate for improved connectivity, affordability, and service sustainability across regional Western Australia.

NEW ADVOCACY POSITIONS

Regional Airports

Position Statement *WALGA supports the sustainable operation of Local Government owned regional airports and advocates for proportionate regulatory frameworks, targeted funding, and operational guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and resilient airport infrastructure and services.*

Background Regional airports are vital for connectivity, economic development, tourism, health access, and emergency response in Western Australia. Local Governments operating regional airports face increasing regulatory and operational pressures, including aviation security requirements, compliance obligations, ageing infrastructure, and limited staffing capacity. Many Council-owned airports cover day-to-day operating costs but lack sufficient capital to fund major infrastructure renewal or security upgrades. Airports that support both community access and FIFO activity can face additional funding constraints despite their ongoing role in servicing regional communities. These challenges highlight the need for regulatory settings and funding arrangements that reflect airport scale, risk profile, and regional operating conditions.

Regional and Remote Air Services

Position Statement *WALGA advocates for reliable, affordable, and equitable regional air services, calling for greater oversight of airline pricing practices, including transparent fare structures and equitable access to discounted and lower-cost fares, to mitigate the impacts of limited competition and dynamic pricing on regional residents, businesses, and essential travel. WALGA also promotes the continued viability of essential routes and recognises regional aviation as an essential service supporting community access, workforce mobility, and regional economic development.*

Background

Regional communities rely on air services for essential travel, including access to health care, employment, education, and family connections, particularly where alternative transport options are limited. High airfares, limited availability of lower-cost seats, and opaque pricing structures reduce affordability for residents and businesses, even in markets with more than one airline. Regional air services are also vulnerable to sudden service reductions or route withdrawals, which can isolate communities and disrupt economic and social activity. These challenges underscore the importance of policy settings that support affordability, service continuity, and equitable access.

COMMENT

Engagement with a sample of Local Governments operating airports with Regular Passenger Transport (RPT) services highlighted operational, financial, and service delivery issues affecting both Council-owned airports and regional air services.

Key matters raised by Councils include:

- Airline pricing and equitable access: Complex, opaque, and highly variable fare structures; limited availability of lower-cost seats; competition does not always deliver affordable or equitable outcomes.
- Aviation security requirements: Standards designed for larger airports impose significant operational and financial burdens, with outdated equipment, regulatory ambiguities, and high upgrade costs creating compliance challenges.
- Funding and resource constraints: Many Councils operate airports with limited staff and capital; while day-to-day operating costs may be covered, major infrastructure renewal or expansion and security upgrades are often unfunded.
- Service continuity and reliability: Regional air services are fragile, with sudden route reductions or withdrawals impacting essential travel, community connectivity, and local economies.
- Coordination across governments and industry: Fragmented policy, regulatory, and funding arrangements limit Local Governments' ability to respond quickly to changes, highlighting the need for improved collaboration.
- Regional aviation as an essential service: Airports and air services underpin health access, emergency response, tourism, economic development, and social cohesion, demonstrating their broader value beyond transport alone.

Based on these issues and priorities identified through Local Government engagement, WALGA has developed the two proposed Advocacy Positions above on aviation – one focusing on regional airports and the other on regional and remote air services – to address the challenges of affordability, accessibility, operational sustainability, and service continuity for regional communities.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse two new Advocacy Positions on Aviation as follows:

1. Regional Airports
WALGA supports the sustainable operation of Local Government owned regional airports and advocates for proportionate regulatory frameworks, targeted funding,

and operational guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and resilient airport infrastructure and services.

2. Regional and Remote Air Services

WALGA advocates for reliable, affordable, and equitable regional air services, calling for greater oversight of airline pricing practices, including transparent fare structures and equitable access to discounted and lower-cost fares, to mitigate the impacts of limited competition and dynamic pricing on regional residents, businesses, and essential travel. WALGA also promotes the continued viability of essential routes and recognises regional aviation as an essential service supporting community access, workforce mobility, and regional economic development.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Filomena Piffaretti

Seconded: President Paige McNeil

That the East Metropolitan Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 9.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED 11/0

9.2 OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

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

10 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

10.1 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Cr Karen Chappel presented her Report. The report was enclosed as an attachment within the Agenda.

Noted

10.2 STATE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO THE ZONE

President Paige McNeil provided an update on the activities of State Council since the last Zone meeting, on behalf of the Zone's State Councillors.

Noted

11 OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 NOTICE OF MOTION FOR WALGA ZONE MEETING 23 APRIL 2026 - RATING OF SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING APRIL

By Town of Bassendean

Current Situation

Under the *Local Government Act 1995* (the LG Act), all land within a district is rateable land, except as provided for under section 6.26, which provides that certain land is not rateable land, including paragraph (g), which states: "*land used exclusively for charitable purposes*".

Regarding exclusivity, some incidental use does not destroy exclusiveness of the use of the land for charitable purposes. Where land is used for a charitable purpose, a profitable by-product incidental to that use does not destroy the charitable purpose.

'Charitable purposes' is not defined in the LG Act but is generally accepted to include "*relief of poverty, sickness or the needs of the aged*".

The SAT has consistently found that housing for the aged provided by a charitable or not-for-profit entity, notwithstanding the payment of market rates, is not rateable land.

Property owners may apply to the Town for a 'rates exemption' where they consider the land may be non-rateable under section 6.26 of the LG Act, and the Town will assess the application in accordance with its Rates Exemption Policy.

The Town typically provides a rates exemption to around 40 properties at any given time, amounting to around 1% of its rates revenue.

Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA) has a long-standing advocacy that the broad rate exemption provisions, including s.6.26(2)(g), require review as a substantial number of properties; schools, universities, churches, crown land etc; together with land used exclusively for charitable purposes is having a significant impact on the revenues of Local Government in WA.

The impact on the Town's revenue will only grow more significant with the pipeline of social and affordable housing projects funded by the State government. While the Town seeks to encourage social and affordable housing within its district, it has limited sources of revenue and limited growth opportunities for rates revenue. Residents of social and affordable housing use the same local government services as other residents, yet the Town derives no rates revenue to help offset the cost of providing those services. Consequently, it is the owners of rateable land within the Town who subsidise the provision of social and affordable housing, rather than the State government as the responsible authority.

Preferred Future State

The Town seeks to derive rates revenue from affordable housing provided within its district, regardless of the provider. This can be achieved by the State government including appropriate provision for payment of local government rates in its funding model with housing providers, and agreement that housing providers will be liable for local government rates on the affordable housing component of housing developments.

The relevant Ministers are the Minister for Housing the Hon. John Carey MLA and the Minister for Local Government the Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA.

Background

Historically, community housing was provided by the Housing Authority and then the Department of Communities. Although exempt from local government rates, the State government generally elected to pay local government rates for these properties. With a shift toward social and affordable housing and the transition away from direct provision by the State, to provision through a not-for-profit housing provider or other form of charitable organisation, local government rates are being eroded as these organisations do not elect to pay rates, but actively seek exemptions. This is despite many housing agreements between the State and housing provider including clauses to the effect that the provider is responsible for all costs associated with and incidental to the land, including local government rates. Put simply, local government rates have been avoided using an intermediary as the housing provider.

What is yet to be tested is whether a mixed development, such as that proposed for Park Lane in Bassendean, with 20% social housing and 80% affordable housing, results in the land being rateable or non rateable. If affordable housing is considered a charitable purpose (relief of poverty), the land will almost certainly be regarded as non rateable. If only the social housing component is considered a charitable purpose, the land may be rateable.

Proposed Recommendation

That WALGA:

1. Obtain legal advice as to whether the provision of affordable housing is likely to fall within the meaning of the relief of poverty for the purposes of section 6.26 of the LG Act. If not, obtain legal advice as to whether the minority provision of social housing within a mixed social/affordable housing development alters the position.
2. Request WALGA to seek interest of like-minded local governments to identify and fund a suitable test case through the SAT and potentially Supreme Court.
3. Request WALGA to advocate to the State government to agree to require all Community Housing Providers fund the payment of local government rates for affordable housing.

11.2 WALGA PRESIDENT, CR KAREN CHAPPEL - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Zone requests the Chair writes a letter on behalf of the Zone to the WALGA President acknowledging her contribution to WALGA and the Local Government sector during her time as a member of State Council, including as WALGA President.

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the East Metropolitan Zone will be held on Thursday, 23 April 2026 at the City of Belmont commencing at 6:30pm.

13 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7:24pm.