Western Councillor

ISSUE 105 | DEC/JAN 2020

P06 UWA SELF-GOVERNING COMMUNITIES PROJECT

P09 COCKBURN’S CUTTING EDGE ACCESSIBILITY HELPS ONE AND ALL
Local governments working together.

At LGIS, protecting our local government members is what we do.

We make sure our members have the right cover to suit their needs. If disaster strikes, our local government specialists help get them, and their community, back on their feet as soon as possible.

It’s our members who make Western Australia such a great place to live – their roads get us around, we meet in their libraries and recreation centres, they manage our waste, and provide connection for the elderly. Every day they provide the countless services and support which makes us a community.

We believe that’s worth protecting.

To find out how you can get the most out of your LGIS membership, visit lgiswa.com.au or call 9483 8888.
Welcome to Issue 105 of Western Councillor

COVER:
‘Guerrilla Grannies’ for Seniors Week, Victoria Park.
ROADS DILEMMA
A HEAVY BURDEN

Heavy vehicle operators pay large registration fees and excise on fuel which together are calculated to theoretically add up to the additional amount spent on roads across Australia as a result of wear from trucks. Why then, do we consistently hear complaints about the quality and safety of roads in this State?

In some cases this impact on the road is the result of a large freight task on a single route. Depending on the roads being used, a single business may have a very major impact on the cost of maintaining roads in the local area. There are plenty of examples around the State where an individual business adds hundreds of thousands or in some cases millions of dollars per year to the road maintenance costs in the Shire. The critical question is who should bear these costs? There are not many choices.

Through fuel excise and other motoring related national taxes, the WA motoring public contributed nearly $3 billion to the Commonwealth last year. Of this, only around 45 cents in the dollar was provided to the State and individual Local Governments to upgrade and maintain roads across our State. While fuel excise rates are indexed twice a year, there is no formal agreement or direct link between the revenue raised by the Commonwealth and that which is passed on to WA State and Local Government for roads. When more freight is moved in WA, it does not necessarily mean that there is more funding from the Commonwealth to maintain roads.

Similarly, the State Government collected around $946 million in vehicle licence fees last year – all of which is used to maintain and upgrade WA roads. However, less than a quarter of this was used to maintain or upgrade roads that are the responsibility of Local Governments. Most is directed to fund maintenance of State highways and freeways.

When you consider Local Governments maintain 80% of the State’s road network, and face a backlog of renewal and maintenance requirements, it’s no wonder that Local Governments are feeling the pinch.

If it were not for the $500 million contributed by ratepayers each year, the State’s road network would be in a significantly worse condition. So should ratepayers pick up the additional road maintenance costs that arise as a result of increased road freight?

Even if this was considered to be fair, in much of the State it is not practical. Take for example a typical Shire in the pastoral and mining region of the Mid West. With a permanent population of a few hundred people and around 1000 kilometre of Local Government managed roads, each ratepayer is responsible for funding four or five kilometres of road. This is about 100 times as much as the ratepayer of a regional city and 1000 times more than a ratepayer in an inner metropolitan area. In these regions, which generate significant export earnings for the State and provide important employment opportunities, it is typical that two-thirds of the Council’s annual operating expenditure is spent on roads, with the majority of this funded by Federal and State Government grants. But an increase in maintenance required as a result of heavy vehicle movements is not accompanied by an equal increase in external funding. This can prove crippling for a Council’s budget.

So Local Governments have had to look elsewhere to keep their roads in a safe condition without bankrupting local residents. Road User Cost Recovery refers to a cash or in kind contribution from those industries generating large freight tonnages towards maintenance and upkeep of local roads affected by their extraordinary use.

These are specific arrangements between individual Local Governments and local industry. These have been in existence for a long time and generally work well until one or two individuals want to be exempt. This is then seen as providing an unfair advantage and in absence of strong legislation the arrangements may break down.

When considering road user charging Councils are very conscious of potential impacts on local business, economic development and support local jobs growth. Right now, in specific situations where there is a major impact for specific businesses, recovering the extraordinary costs from the business generating the freight is arguably the least worst solution.

What would be a better solution? In our view, until an effective heavy vehicle road user cost recovery arrangement is in place across Australia with the revenue being returned to the road managers, then a larger proportion of taxes collected from motorists, including diesel fuel excise, must be returned to maintain and upgrade roads in Western Australia. A larger proportion of the registration fees collected by the State Government should be available to maintain Local Government roads. The regulatory and policy settings should support simple and effective ways to recover the costs of extraordinary road wear from those whose business operations trigger these costs.

Competitive freight is a key success factor in many of WA’s most important industries and business; together with all spheres of government must come together to work on the right solution.
STATE OF THE STATE

FROM THE MINISTER

Another year has passed and another festive season is upon us as we head into a new decade. It has been a full and eventful year for the sector with elections in October and the introduction of our first phase of reforms. By all accounts, the training program has been rolled out successfully, with more than 1500 candidates undertaking the online course prior to the election. Since then, the universal training has also commenced and elected members have been familiarising themselves with the various responsibilities and requirements of being in Local Government.

I was pleased to announce the formation of an expert panel to progress the development of a new Local Government Act in November. The Local Government Review Panel will consider and recommend high-level direction and guiding principles for the new Act and will continue to engage with the sector, community and stakeholders, to make recommendations on the requirements of a new Local Government Act to meet the future needs of Local Government.

The panel is chaired by Mr David Michael MLA, Member for Balcatta, and also includes Professor John Phillimore, Executive Director of the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy; Local Government expert, A/Professor Graham Sansom of the University of Technology Sydney; Ms Anne Wood, Partner at Kott Gunning Lawyers, who specialises in Local Government law; Mr Henry Zelones, the former long-serving mayor of the City of Armadale; and Mr Duncan Ord OAM, Director General, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

The panel will look at best practice models in Australia and overseas as well as feedback from the recent consultation on WA’s Local Government Act 1995.

The Councils and the sector have been familiarising themselves with the various responsibilities and requirements of being in Local Government. I wish to thank the community members, Local Governments and others who have supported the reform process to date, and whose input is helping transform Local Government in Western Australia.

We have had a particularly hot start to summer this year and I know that bushfire preparation is front of mind for many Local Governments. Local Government takes an active and important role in helping communities prepare for the bushfire season. It is getting warmer and drier in WA and significantly damaging bushfires are becoming more common. With 92 per cent of Western Australia bushfire prone, we need to work together across all levels of government and the community to manage the risk. Your work in undertaking planned burns, weed control, mechanical clearing, maintaining fire breaks and access roads is invaluable. I applaud your efforts – I know many of you will be volunteering in multiple capacities over the summer months to keep our communities safe. Thank you for all that you do, it is so important.

Next year will be a big year with the preparation of a green bill for a new Local Government Act and further consultation after that, as well as further progress on our election commitment to stop puppy farming. I wish all of you a safe and happy Christmas with family and friends and look forward to working together again in 2020.

FROM THE SHADOW MINISTER

With the recent elections now complete I would to thank everyone who put themselves forward as a candidate to take on a difficult and sometimes thankless role. The competition that occurs during an election makes the field of candidates work harder, and provides residents with greater options to select candidates that they believe will represent their interests.

Indeed, the more people that get involved in Local Government, the better the sector will become.

I would of course also like to congratulate all successful candidates who by now have been sworn in and are deliberating on issues that were no doubt raised during candidacy. The public places an enormous amount of trust in the representatives working on their behalf and I hope all councillors remain cognisant of this when working on the vast range of matters that Local Government deals with.

I am sure that new councillors are aware of the financial pressures being experienced by residents and will take this into account when deciding on allocation of expenditure during this period. I recently met with representatives from a metropolitan council and discussed their goals and methods they use to achieve economies. It is not easy, however it is achievable.

A report tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the Cat Act and the Dog Act will likely be of considerable interest to Local Governments. The report has given a number of findings that will warrant further discussion within the Local Government sector, given the role it plays in both Acts. I understand there is still work to be done in this area and I look forward to providing input into any changes considered by Parliament.

I have been continuing to monitor the public proceedings of the Select Committee into Local Government and note the significant amount of work already done. There is still much for the committee to go through, however, I am confident that the final report (due next year) will provide constructive and meaningful options for reform to the Local Government sector.

The hot summer we are experiencing makes me extremely grateful for all the hard work done by both career and volunteer fire services. The support provided by Local Governments cannot be over-emphasised as it also plays a significant role in the aspect of emergency administration and I wish to extend my deepest thanks those who assist in this vital area.

Finally, I would like to wish a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous new year to everyone in the Local Government sector.
Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector’s key priorities for the State Government’s upcoming Budget.

The sector’s 2020-21 State Budget Submission has been framed within the overarching theme of State and Local Government collaboration. This is in recognition that the Local and State Government sectors have complementary strengths, while having the shared goal of economic, social and environmental development in WA’s communities.

The Budget Submission acknowledges the challenging economic context that the State Government is currently operating in, and that recent downgrades to economic forecasts have put at risk the State’s future fiscal position (see Figure 1). In this regard, the Submission does not present an extensive ‘shopping list’ of the sector’s funding ask. Instead, we have put forward 20 initiatives totalling $297 million over four years that will deliver value for money outcomes for the State.

The Submission clearly outlines the benefits of each of the initiatives put forward, while also outlining the costs to implement them. In addition, we have outlined how we believe the initiatives should be funded. In alignment with the State Government’s goal of fiscal responsibility, we have recommended a reprioritisation of expenditure from existing specific sources of funding for the majority of initiatives asked for in order to ensure that future Budget surpluses are maintained.

In further appreciation of the State’s fragile economic recovery, many of the high spend initiatives recommended in the Submission can be implemented relatively quickly and would provide significant support to the domestic economy in the immediate term. Given the unexpected economic softness that has been experienced in the past 12 months in the construction and services sectors, and in household consumption, this should be a priority for the WA Government.

Our Submission is strategically aligned with the priorities set out in the McGowan Government’s Our Priorities document, which sets out a range of whole of Government targets aimed to deliver better outcomes for all Western Australians. The targets set by the McGowan Government relate to the below key areas of:

- A strong economy
- A safer community
- Regional prosperity
- Aboriginal wellbeing
- A bright future
- A liveable environment

In aligning with these priorities, we have separated our Budget Submission into four key strategic themes:

1. Empowering Local Government to contribute to the State’s priorities
2. A strategic approach to economic development in WA
3. Investing in important local infrastructure
4. Ensuring a sustainable environment for our communities

The table on the next page provides a snapshot of the 20 initiatives that are contained within the above four themes.

Although the Submission has now been handed to the Minister for Local Government, the best form of advocacy is collective. In the lead up to the State Government’s May Budget and the 2021 State Election, WALGA encourages every Elected Member, in their own dealings with Ministers and Government officials, to refer to the Budget Submission and the initiatives that are of particular interest to their communities.

Addendum: State Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement

The State Government released its Mid-year Financial Projections Statement (Mid-year Review) in late December, which provided an update to the economic assumptions and financial projections detailed in the 2019-20 State Budget (released in May 2019).

From a Budget standpoint, the Mid-year Review provided some very positive news to close out the year. Forecast revenue for 2019-20 went up $1.2 billion on the back of higher than expected iron ore royalties as forecast expenditure increased by just $163 million. The end result of this is a forecast operating surplus of $2.6 billion for 2019-20, compared to $1.5 billion when the Budget was handed down in May 2019.

Although the higher than expected surplus will allow the Government to start paying down the State’s debt, which peaked at June 2019 at $37.5 billion, downgraded forecasts for the domestic economy will necessitate spending on infrastructure and competitive boosting initiatives. WALGA’s 2020-21 State Budget Submission provides a pointer to the areas the State Government should consider in this regard.
## Empowering Local Governments to contribute to the State’s priorities

1. **Provide sufficient funding and resourcing for the drafting and development of the new Local Government Act**  
   **Cost:** $1 million over two years (2020-21 and 2021-22)

2. **Conduct an Inquiry to review Local Government responsibilities and income sources**  
   **Cost:** Absorbed by the ERA’s existing budget for inquiries

3. **Provide funding for Elected Member Universal Training**  
   **Cost:** $3.6 million over the 2020-21 Budget forward estimates period

4. **Provide funding to WALGA via a Service Level Agreement to provide capacity building support to the Local Government Sector**  
   **Cost:** $600,000 per annum

5. **If the State Government enforces the transfer of all Local Governments to the State Industrial Relations (IR) system, provide funding for associated transitional costs and to modernise the State IR system**  
   **Cost:** $1 million over two years (2020-21 and 2021-22)

### A Strategic approach to economic development in WA

6. **Develop and implement a Framework for Regional Development**  
   **Cost:** $200,000 in 2020-21

7. **Pilot a place based, localised approach to regional economic development**  
   **Cost:** $300,000 in 2020-21

8. **Strengthen existing economic development structures in WA**  
   **Cost:** Negligible

### Investing in important local infrastructure

9. **Consult appropriately with Local Government to better inform Infrastructure WA’s 20-year State Infrastructure Plan**  
   **Cost:** Absorbed by Infrastructure WA’s existing Budget

10. **Increase the funding provided to Local Governments as part of the State Roads Fund to Local Government Agreement from 20% to 27% of motor vehicle licence fee revenue**  
    **Cost:** Nil – Adjustment of funding share between state and local roads

11. **Extend the existing Agriculture Commodity Freight Routes Fund for a further two years**  
    **Cost:** $10 million over two years (2021-22 and 2022-23)

12. **Develop and implement a Regional Run-off Road Crash Program for Local Government Roads**  
    **Cost:** $15.3 million over four years (2020-21 to 2023-24)

13. **Increase the annual amount of grant funding available in the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) to $25 million and develop a long-term, Regional Sports Facilities Investment Strategy**  
    **Cost:** An additional $10 - $12 million per annum for the CSRFF and an additional $2.3 million over four years (2020-21 to 2023-24) for the Regional Sports Facilities Investment Strategy

### Ensuring a sustainable environment for our communities

15. **Develop and implement a State Urban Forest Strategy for WA**  
    **Cost:** $30 million over four years (2020-21 to 2023-24)

16. **Aggregate and increase the existing level of resourcing for coastal management activities, rebranding future activities under the banner of the CoastWA Program**  
    **Cost:** $55 million over four years (2020-21 to 2023-24)

17. **Engage a suitably qualified consultant to undertake activity based costing of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services’ (DFES) operations**  
    **Cost:** $100,000 in 2020-21

18. **Implement a program to promote and coordinate the management of vegetation in rural road reserves in WA**  
    **Cost:** $4 million over four years (2020-21 to 2023-24)

19. **Fund the implementation of waste management initiatives that are focussed on reducing contamination and increasing resource recovery from the kerbside recycling bins**  
    **Cost:** $15 million in 2020-21

20. **Establish a grant funding program for the construction, or upgrade, of recycling sorting and processing infrastructure in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas**  
    **Cost:** $16 million over two years (2020-21 to 2021-22)
The framework will begin with a story of the original 1871 councils, connecting the City of Perth (the oldest Local Government in Australia) with the urban municipalities and the rural shires. The next phase will focus on detailed local council histories, grouped as successors to their original 1871 Local Governments. This will create a series of inter-connected regional histories covering the whole State. Every Local Government has a place in the story, a story that is both unique to each community but also part of a larger state-wide story.

There are many significant and under-researched questions around how Local Governments have been shaped by, and in turn have shaped, a diverse range of political, environmental, economic and social forces over 150 years. Rather than a simple chronology, the histories will focus on several key themes in local self-governance: fostering citizenship; environmental stewardship; opportunities for Aboriginal self-governance; the roles of arts, heritage and culture in shaping local identities; service and business models for Local Government; the continuities and changes historically evident in resilient local governance, and whether there are particular Western Australian characteristics that make our Local Governments distinctive.

Did you know that in 2021 Western Australians will have an opportunity to celebrate, and reflect upon, 150 years of comprehensive Local Government in Western Australia?

Comprehensive, because in 1871 Western Australia was the first jurisdiction in Australasia to set up a system of Local Government across its entire territory – at least on a map. In that year, 29 urban municipalities and rural road board districts were created. The smallest was the 293 hectare Town of Guildford, the largest the Nicol Bay Road District covering everywhere north of the Murchison River.

The City of Perth, and some of the municipalities, succeeded earlier town trusts dating back to 1838, but the Municipal Institutions Act 1871 and the District Roads Act 1871 really were something new in their scope and ambition, not just here but across the British Empire. Today, while just 17 of the original 29 survive with their original name, all 139 Local Governments can trace their lineage back to one or more of the original 29. It is a fascinating and complicated family tree in which every Local Government has a place.¹

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The Centre for Western Australian History at UWA (CWAH), with the support of the Hon David Templeman MLA, is commencing a project to explore the stories of Local Government for the 150th anniversary, or sesquicentenary, in 2021 and is inviting all Local Governments to participate. The Self-Governing Communities project aims to develop an overarching history, and a series of linked local histories, encompassing the historical development of Local Government in Western Australia.

LEGACIES:
THE 1871 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS STILL OPERATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBANY</th>
<th>MURRAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEVERLEY</td>
<td>NORTHAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUNBURY</td>
<td>PERTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSSELTON</td>
<td>PLANTAGENET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANNING</td>
<td>SWAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREMANTEL</td>
<td>TOODYAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERALDTON</td>
<td>VICTORIA PLAINS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRWIN</td>
<td>WILLIAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOJONUP</td>
<td>YORK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Except for Cocos (Keeling) Island and Christmas Island shires, which have different pre-1992 genealogies. For the Self-Governing Communities project, Western Australia includes the two Indian Ocean territories.
The project is called Self-Governing Communities to emphasise how communities form and learn to care for their own affairs, to be as autonomous as their resources will allow. Western Australian Local Government can trace roots back to ancient communal self-governments such as the medieval boroughs of England and burghs of Scotland. It has similarities with old European and colonial city-states such as Venice or Singapore. And there is a need to understand how Aboriginal ideas and practices of self-governance, before and since colonisation, can and are shaping models of local self-governance. Charting the development of local self-government is central to understanding how people ‘belong’ to a place, and how they make it ‘home’, wherever they have come from.

These histories have the potential to energise the ways communities can know themselves and strengthen local identities and senses of belonging and place, from newest to oldest. They can throw light on why some Local Governments survive but not others. They will help reviewing Local Heritage Surveys under the new Heritage Act for the 21st century. Local Governments can also use them to position themselves and the sector as significant stakeholders in the lead-up to, and during, Western Australia’s 200th anniversary in 2029.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED
• Watch the CWAH Self-Governing Communities project page at www.cwah.uwa.edu.au
• Watch Western Councillor and other WALGA publications for updates and news
• Become involved in developing the Self-Governing Communities research and publication online portal
• Take a lead in setting-up your own local community-based 150th anniversary committee
• Check your Local Heritage Survey (Municipal Inventory) and Planning Scheme Heritage List for Local Government places, including places from ‘ancestor’ Local Governments

The overarching history will form the first volume, to be published online in 2021. Subsequent volumes will be developed between 2021-2028, grouping successors to their original 1871 councils. For example, the Town of Geraldton and the Geraldton and Greenough roads board districts created in 1871 formed a ‘waistband’ across the middle of Western Australia, from the coast to the South Australian border. Today, after various separations and amalgamations, six shires and one city occupy wholly or partially this same space and can trace a lineage back to at least one of those three original Local Governments. Each of these districts will be able to link their history, through the overarching history, to showcase their individual stories as both distinctively local and also as part of a larger story.

WHY DO THE PROJECT?
All Local Governments, whatever their foundation date, have a venerable history back to 1871, or even earlier for the older towns. Local histories can sometimes obscure the role of Local Government, the sphere of governance that has, arguably, been of greatest importance and impact in people’s everyday lives. Over 150 years, Local Government has many achievements to celebrate, as well as failures from which lessons can be learned. Understanding the ‘why’ of these achievements and failures will help Local Governments today chart ways to the future.

English local historian David Dymond wrote in 2011
Local history can genuinely contribute to the life of whole communities. When sound local history is published, or promoted in other ways, the community in question (whatever its size) can never be the same again: it now knows more about itself, its place in history, how far it shares characteristics and far it is unusual or unique.\(^2\)

Diamond emphasised the need for “sound local history”. He meant history based on solid research, by researchers and historians trained in using archival materials, skilled in analysing the records produced by Local Governments, and able to write the stories in engaging and meaningful ways. The project will draw on both professional and community historians to create legacies from the bottom up to create ‘sound histories’.

\(^2\) David Dymond, ‘Does local history have a split personality?’, in Christopher Dyer et al (eds), New Directions in Local History since Hoskins, University of Hertfordshire Press, Hatfield 2011: 24
PROCUREMENT UPDATE

NOVATIONS CONSIDERED
NEW CONTRACTS

WALGA has received legal advice stating that there is no provision for Local Governments to novate a contract, within the current wording of the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996.

Novation usually occurs where a Local Government has established an original contract with a contractor and that particular contractor is subsequently restructured, or, alternatively, goes into administration and is then acquired by another entity. In a novation, the original contract is terminated, and a new contract is formed between the Local Government and the new incoming entity.

Essentially, by novating, the Local Government is forming a new contract and consequently the Regulations mandate that this new contract be subject to the tender process, unless an exemption applies under the Regulations.

If a Local Government would normally novate a contract to a new party, it is now needs to comply with the Regulations and its own purchasing policies to properly establish the new contract. This will apply where the consideration remaining under the contract will be (or is expected to be) worth more than $150,000 – the threshold for Local Governments being required to go to market.

EXEMPTIONS

The exemptions to the above are where the Local Government creates a contract under an exempt process: such as the Preferred Supplier Arrangements; or through its own Prequalified Supplier Panel, on the basis that the new entity is part of those panel arrangements.

The other instance where a novation may be able to occur is where the replacement supplier is “as a matter of substance” synonymous with the original supplier - for example where it is practically the same supplier with the exception of a new ABN/CAN. If a Local Government is considering this latter option, it is advised to seek legal advice.

WALGA recognise this creates a conundrum for Local Governments, especially those who are part way through an infrastructure related contract. We are seeking additional information from the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries.

Further information will be provided to Members as it comes to hand.
Technology and trends are rapidly reshaping the communications landscape, prompting Local Government to improve their websites so they are more accessible and inclusive than ever before.

And it’s not just people with disability benefitting from a more intuitive user experience.

It helps older readers, people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, residents living in areas of lower bandwidth and even those just wanting to tab through on their mobile or tablet with one hand instead of using a mouse and cursor.

The City of Cockburn is believed to be the only Local Government to achieve the highest level of website accessibility compliance in WA.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said offering an inclusive and accessible website experience for the community went far beyond the 20 per cent of people in Cockburn identified in the Census as living with a disability.

“Our annual Community Scorecard shows the City’s web page as the number one tool residents use to find out what is going on in their community,” Mayor Howlett said.

“As a City we put great importance on inclusivity and accessibility, being named the Most Accessible Community in WA by the Regional Capitals Alliance of WA in 2018, and in 2019 winning the metropolitan category for a second time.

“Our website offers read speaker, tabbing, and our mapping system is accessible.

“People are using their mobile phones more, so instead of always putting a full document on the website as a PDF, we are increasingly laying out the information in other more accessible forms.”

Website Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 includes 17 additional criteria, above and beyond the WCAG 2.0 level the Council achieved in 2017.

“WCAG 2.0 is an 11-year-old standard and the new compliance level focuses on the needs of people using mobile phones and tablets, given the first iPhone was released in 2007,” said Web Key IT operations manager Amanda Mace.

“Eleven years is a very long time in the tech industry and some potential solutions needed more time to develop so the other two major areas covered affect people with cognitive and low-vision disabilities.”

Web Key IT conducted the technical audits for each of the City’s webpages against all 78 success criteria in WCAG 2.1.

Usability testing is also conducted through Web Key IT’s in-house user testing groups comprising people with disability who are experts in their respective assistive technology fields.

“Digital accessibility plays an important part in not just the provision for people with disabilities, but for all users,” Ms Mace said.

“When we design for inclusive access, we make the whole experience better for everyone.”

City of Cockburn Digital Communications Officer Leezelle Cornejo said the City of Cockburn developed a Website Content Management and Governance Plan and the website project team held monthly review meetings.

A collaborative relationship between the business systems and communications department enabled a decentralised model for content generation, with a centralised approvals process.

The City of Cockburn continues to use a digital strategist and in-house website developer, to improve efficiency and savings.

Key tips from the City’s Digital Communications Officer include:

• Understand website accessibility is never perfect so it should be continually reviewed and improved
• Be aware of web accessibility providers who say they understand accessibility – ensure they are accredited, and are licensed to provide your accreditation
• Get properly accredited and communicate the return on investment to executives, as it can involve a significant outlay
• Permeate the organisation through regular training
• Train to address common errors, gather staff feedback and promote new developments
• Be aware of new software to see what people are searching for online in relation to your Local Government, and
• Regularly test usability with the community via email groups specifically set up for user testing.
Planning overhaul must not compromise safety, transparency standards

NSW Councils have warned that the State Government’s planned overhaul of the planning system to ‘slash assessment time frames and reduce red tape’ must not be at the cost of lowering transparency or community standards.

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) President Linda Scott said Councils agreed with government on improving transparency, timeliness and certainty of the State’s planning system, but it should not come at the cost of reducing the capacity of Councils to ensure quality developments and protect the amenity of communities.

“Councils are absolutely committed to working with the State Government to develop changes that will improve the planning system, but this week’s announcement provides little detail about how that would happen and there has been no consultation with Councils,” she said.

“The NSW planning system must ensure the best possible outcomes for communities.

“Sadly, in NSW, we’ve seen what happens when the process doesn’t go right, with disasters such as the Opal and Mascot towers.

“Councils and their skilled planning workforce are right at the coalface of balancing development applications with other critical issues such as local environment, services and amenity on behalf of their residents and businesses.

“Before mandating the use of e-Planning for Councils, the State Government must rule out the system to raise revenue. This is something the government has consistently refused to do.”

Cr Scott said the Premier’s planning reform announcement came when Councils were still implementing changes the government introduced in 2018.

“Those changes called for all Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for their areas, referred to as Local Strategic Planning Statements,” she said.

“Councils are working hard to implement them by March 2020 for Councils in Greater Sydney and by July 2020 for regional Councils.

“Constant reviews and ‘reforms’ risks putting the interests of developers ahead of the community, which undermines confidence in the planning system and are not an effective use of resources.”

Cr Scott also sounded a note of caution as to who would be left to carry the cost of the changes.

“Some of the proposed changes have the potential to add to cost-shifting from state to Local Governments, which already cost Councils $820 million in 2018-19 alone and about $6.2 billion over the past 10 years.

“While I am pleased the Premier has promised consultation on planning reforms, it has not been made clear to this point whether Councils would be included in that process.”

NSW Planning overhaul must not compromise safety, transparency standards

Queensland Towns from Drought to Disaster

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is calling on all State and Federal Government leaders to unite as eight new Shires and Councils are drought declared in the south east corner.

More than two-thirds of Queensland’s land area is now drought declared, affecting almost three million people.

LGAQ Chief Executive, Greg Hallam, has today written to the Prime Minister and Queensland Premier urging them to drive a unified approach to water security.

“Queensland towns like Stanthorpe, Clifton, Bell, Canungra and Dayboro are now relying on water carting to provide what we in the city take for granted,” Mr Hallam said.

“The Federal Government’s move to provide drought funding for non-farm businesses and extra funding for councils in drought-affected regions was a huge win for Queensland communities. Similarly, the State Government’s funding for upgraded water infrastructure in towns like Stanthorpe is welcome.

“What is missing, however, is a strategy for rural towns water supply, agreed to and supported by all three tiers of government. This should be the highest priority for COAG (the Council of Australian Governments) and needs to occur in a spirit of collaboration, innovation and without blame – and it needs to occur urgently.”

There are now 41 Councils and four part-council areas drought declared, and 16 Individually Droughted Properties (IDPs) in a further five Local Government Areas, representing 67.4 percent of the land area of Queensland.

LGAQ is urging all leaders to consider its drought and water security strategies.

“It’s time politicians put aside their differences and stood shoulder to shoulder with Queensland Councils who are at the frontline of this creeping disaster. The greatest gift we can give the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders this Christmas is that someone is listening and delivering real solutions to water security, a basic human need,” Mr Hallam said.

LGAQ has spent the past week documenting the devastating effects of the drought on the people living with it every day on the land and in struggling towns. The confronting four-part video series based in the Southern Downs and Burnett regions can be viewed below.

“Ageing water and sewerage infrastructure in Queensland is a looming and urgent issue. A water pipe busts every 80 minutes in rural towns due to the age of the reticulation network. The Federal Government holds the key to the coffers: 80 percent of our nation’s taxes,” Mr Hallam said.

Local Government Supports Key Findings of Legislative Council Select Committee Report on Short Stay Accommodation In Tasmania

The Local Government Association of Tasmania welcomes the release of the report on short stay accommodation in Tasmania by the Legislative Council Select Committee.

LGAT President Mayor Christina Holmdahl said, “the Local Government sector has been calling for the opportunity to regulate this form of visitor accommodation for some time.

Councils need the flexibility to ensure a balance between the economic and tourism needs with local liveability and housing availability and affordability”.

“We welcome Select Committee Recommendations 3 and 4 enabling Local Government to have discretion around permits for short stay accommodation as the current regulations do not enable intervention from any level of government when housing supply issues arise” Mayor Holmdahl said.
Local Government also supports the Committee’s recommendation for the development of a comprehensive data collection and analysis programs, covering both short stay accommodation and the private housing market. Mayor Holmdahl said “comprehensive data collection is important as while the Short Stay Accommodation Act 2019 provides a useful starting point, there is still a poor understanding of the extent to which short stay visitor accommodation is contributing to housing availability and affordability”

“If the expansion of short stay accommodation in Tasmania is not monitored and controlled, it may negatively impact neighbours and reduce housing supply, ultimately impacting on affordability” Mayor Holmdahl said.

VIC

Council rates need reform to deliver fairness & equity

The Municipal Association of Victoria’s (MAV) submission to the Victorian Government rates review has called for system reforms to improve fairness and equity for all ratepayers. Currently, many outdated rates exemptions are provided under State legislation for commercial activities, fee-for-service providers and private sector activities. Many of these exemptions are received by organisations who no longer just serve the local community, and cannot be justified as fair and equitable. Community members are unfairly cross-subsidising those who don’t pay rates, including organisations that compete in and supply to statewide, national and international markets.

Additional reforms have also been proposed to improve community understanding and fairness of rates, including simplified rates notices, minimum and maximum rates, rating of residential village homes and a tourism levy option in declared tourist destination municipalities.

The MAV and Councils also seek urgent Victorian Government action to assist small rural and regional Shires facing a mismatch between their financial capacity and their asset and service responsibilities. Smaller Councils collect less rate revenue and are more reliant on government grants.

The Commonwealth Government collects 80 per cent of total taxes while Local Government collects 3.6 per cent of all taxes nationally. Despite this disparity, Councils manage one third of the nation’s total infrastructure (valued at $445 billion) including three quarters of the total road network across Australia.

Cr Coral Ross, MAV President said the current rates system is not fair or equitable for all ratepayers. “No system of taxation is perfect, but a review of Local Government rates is long overdue given that property rating began in Victoria in the mid-19th Century.

*State laws currently provide rates exemptions to electricity generators, solar and wind farms, universities and private schools, mining land, Crown land used for commercial purposes, RSL and gaming venues on Crown land, and religious property holdings used for commercial purposes.

*“Mum and dad home owners and small businesses are paying their Council rates. Exempt private and commercial activities should also be paying a fair and equitable share of rates.

*“Smaller rural and regional Shires don’t have the population base to raise enough revenue to provide the essential services and infrastructure required by their local communities. For these Councils, equity cannot be achieved through the rating system.

*“We call on the State to urgently establish a small Councils funding program or review road and bridge responsibilities split between Councils and VicRoads.

*“Our submission also proposes allowing rural Councils to set minimum and maximum rates in consultation with their communities to improve fairness for farmers who rely on their land holdings to earn an income.

*“The State’s rates review provides an important opportunity to correct the imbalances within the current system to ensure all property owners contribute their fair share towards Council rates. We look forward to working with the Victorian Government to deliver a more equitable property rates model,” she said.

ALGA

National transport reforms too slow: draft report

Eight years of efforts haven’t achieved the safety or productivity gains expected by proponents of reforms to Australia’s transport sector, and changes have been “disappointingly slow”, the Productivity Commission said.

Speaking after releasing its draft report on National Transport Regulatory Reform on 12 November, the Commission said the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) was “inflexible” and had an outdated attitude to road safety, rather than using risk management.

“The Commission supports moves to make the HVNL less prescriptive and more focused on results than rules,” it said in a statement.

Productivity Commissioner Paul Lindwall said creating national regulations and laws was ambitious and had taken longer than anticipated.

“Achieving the productivity gains predicted in 2011 will require much more than regulatory reform of safety,” he said.

“Governments need to continue and, in some cases accelerate, broader reforms to infrastructure investment, its use and management, and pricing of access.”

The draft report is open for comment and submissions until 15 January 2020, with public hearings planned in five capital cities in January and February.
DEC/JAN
AROUND THE STATE IN PICTURES

The following pictures celebrate the achievements of Local Government in Western Australia. Any WA Local Government that has held an event or function and wants to have it featured in Western Councillor is encouraged to contact Brenda Law-Yat at the WA Local Government Association via email: blawyat@walga.asn.au

ARMADALE
The City of Armadale’s redeveloped Champion Centre features a recently designed mural featuring the faces of local Aboriginal children and the Canning River by Australian renowned artist Matt Adnate and local Aboriginal artists Rohin Kickett and Bradley Kickett. The collaboration artwork brings contemporary and traditional together, and really brings the centre to life. The redevelopment of the Centre was made possible by a $4million grant from Lotterywest.

BAYSWATER
Bayswater is becoming an even better place to live and visit for older adults after being named Western Australia’s Age Friendly Local Government at the 2019 WA Seniors Awards. The City’s Age Friendly Ambassador program (pictured) was highlighted as a standout initiative, comprising eight passionate volunteers aged between 52 and 85 years old, who have taken a leadership role in the community.

BROOMEHILL-TAMBELLUP
Tambellup Cranbrook Community Bank Branches celebrated their 20th Anniversary of Community Banking on Monday, 11 and Tuesday, 12 November. Residents were invited to enjoy a cuppa, cake and giveaways to celebrate a fantastic milestone of 20 years banking in both communities.

Thank you to the Tambellup Cranbrook Bendigo Bank for supporting our local communities with sponsorships and donations back in to the communities.
BUNBURY

In 2012 the Apex Club of Bunbury Koombana approached the City to revitalise Bellemore Park.

The club’s vision for the park included resurfacing the track as well as adding road markings and signage to educate children about the road rules and how to be responsible cyclists.

That vision has been brought to reality thanks to local businesses and the City of Bunbury.

All services were provided free of charge and the park is popular with local children.

BUSSELTON

The Busselton Tennis Centre was officially opened on Saturday, 23 November by former World Tennis No.1 Margaret Court. Delivery of this first-class facility is the culmination of years of planning, collaboration and hard work. Built under budget and ahead of schedule, the Centre is a testament to the great working partnership between the City of Busselton, the Busselton Tennis Club and its community. This $4.25 million project has been described by tennis enthusiasts as the best regional tennis centre in Australia.

Pictured: City of Busselton Mayor Grant Henley, Margaret Court AO MBE, Busselton Tennis Club President Hon Barry House AM and Tennis West CEO Michael Roberts.

CANNING

The City of Canning hosted its Muddy Hands Festival again in October, getting kids to unplug, get muddy, be active and enjoy nature at the Kent Street Weir.

Almost 6000 people attended the event with kids having fun building cubbies and forts, taking part in mud play and creating nature crafts.

CLAREMONT

Claremont’s seniors celebrated Seniors Week 2019 with a busy series of events, activities and workshops developed to create opportunities for social participation, health, learning and inclusion for people aged 55 and over. The program included: yoga sessions, a walking tour, a music concert, a twilight cruise, specialist health checks, knitting group, a special story time with grandkids and social lawn bowls.
COOLGARDIE

The Shire of Coolgardie is excited to announce the launch of its new brand identity on Wednesday, 20 November to the community. The Shire of Coolgardie’s uniqueness and diversity is to be reflected in this identity, rightfully recognising Coolgardie as the ‘Mother of the Goldfields’. Coolgardie is renowned for being the birthplace of the great gold rush of 1892, and Kambalda is recognised as Australia’s first nickel town.

CUE

On Thursday, 21 November the Annual Murchison Cup Calcutta was celebrated in Cue, prior to Cue Parliament the following day. Barbara Thompson from Regional Development Australia Midwest Gascoyne in conjunction with the Shire of Cue organised the event to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Association. A total of $1060 was raised, with Tim Lane, WALGA’s Manager Strategy and Association Governance, taking home the cup.

CORKRIN

At a dinner held at the Corrigin Recreation and Events Centre on Saturday, 23 November for retiring Councillors, newly elected Shire President, Des Hickey, made a special presentation to Lyn Baker with the awarding of an Honorary Freeman of the Shire, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Shire of Corrigin and devotion to the local community.

COCKBURN

Some of Port Coogee’s most experienced knitters helped brighten a bike rack in Cockburn Central for the inaugural WA Bike Month Challenge in November.

Crafty knitting circle residents from Regis Port Coogee Aged Care helped City of Cockburn TravelSmart Officer and Cockburn Bicycle Users Group founder Jillian Woolmer yarnbomb a life-size bike rack.

It took 12 hours to hand-stitch the design onto the bike rack, which is now being photographed and used more often.
DANDARAGAN

Art lovers from near and far recently attended the 2019 Cervantes Art Festival biennial event for an evening of colour and variety.

Attended by the Minister for Local Government, Heritage; Culture and the Arts, the Hon. David Templeman MLA officially opened the new extension to the Cervantes Multipurpose Recreation Centre before attendees enjoyed the night viewing over 600 entries, making this one of the largest art shows in Western Australia.

CUNDERDIN

The Shire of Cunderdin hosted a free six week Mixed Social Netball program for the community. The sessions were enjoyed by all and gave everyone the opportunity to meet new people and stay active and healthy physically and mentally. The last session finished off with a sausage sizzle for the community, which was enjoyed by all!

EAST FREMANTLE

Town of East Fremantle employee Terry Paparone (Manager of Finance) was recently farewelled by staff and elected members after almost 46 years of service at the Town. Commencing as a rates clerk in 1974 Terry saw many changes to the way Local Government does business. In his speech, Mayor Jim O’Neill commended him for his commitment, professionalism and hard work at the Town, and on behalf of the Town wished him all the very best in his retirement.
EAST PILBARA
Two of the Shire of East Pilbara’s youth services employees have been recognised for their excellence working with young people at different awards ceremonies held in Perth this month.

Kirsten Parker Youth Engagement Officer was awarded the top prize in her category taking home the award for the Mission Australia Regional Youth Worker 2019. Furthermore, the Shire’s Coordinator Youth Services Kaitlyn Berry was announced as runner-up Emerging Leader of the Year for her outstanding service and dedication to the young people of Newman at the 2019 Local Government Professionals WA Honour Awards.

ESPERANCE
The Shire of Esperance had a great site meeting with Seeka Play at the new Adventureland Playground space. Ben & Holly from Seeka Play shared their excitement and passion for play spaces, with Charlotte and Ewin from the Adventureland Park Committee and Dylan our Parks & Environment Manager. The playground installation is expected to commence early March.

EXMOUTH
Exmouth took part in the national Children’s Week™ and celebrated the right of children to enjoy childhood, while demonstrating their talents, skills and abilities – all with a big truckload of Pindan and some water during a Messy Mud Play Day! Shire President Cr Matthew Nilkkula joined in to the fun and pointed out the importance of a fun & healthy environment all year round.

GNOWANGERUP
The Shire of Gnowangerup recently held the closing event for the SunSmart 2019 Bloom Festival at the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Museum and Keeping Place. This year’s theme for the event was ‘stories from the keeping place’, the evening was filled with stories from local Aboriginal women, Aboriginal dancing, a fantastic didgeridoo performance and of course great food.
GREATER GERALDTON

Those enjoying the new and improved Beresford Foreshore in Geraldton will have even more to appreciate following the installation of an award-winning sculpture. The 1.5metre sphere named “Horizon” by artist Lucy Humphrey comes highly regarded and with a number of Sculpture by the Sea accolades. Visitors and residents have been praising the new piece of public art, and it has become a must-see when in Geraldton!

Photo Credit: Steve Pidgeon.

GOSNELLS

Fabulous fireworks, delicious food and fascinating cultural performances wowed over 15000 people at the City of Gosnells Fusion Food and Culture Festival, presented by LiveLighter on Saturday, 9 November.

The free event featured international performances over two stages, roving performers, Youth and Children’s Zones and a Global Village with cultural activities.

The celebration of the City’s diversity culminated in a fireworks finale that lit up the sky above Mills Park.

HARVEY

The Yarloop Community Centre was officially opened by Premier of Western Australia Mark McGowan on Friday, 22 November. Harvey Shire President Cr Paul Gillett and MLA Robyn Clarke revealed the plaque with the Premier in front of the new building. The Yarloop Town Hall was destroyed in the 2016 fires and the original façade of the building was the only part left standing and this was restored as part of the rebuild.
JOONDALUP

Pedestrians will soon enjoy safer passage between the suburbs of Burns Beach and Kinross with works commencing on the installation of a signalised pedestrian crossing on Marmion Avenue.

Premier Mark McGowan joined Joondalup Mayor Albert Jacob and other key stakeholders to announce the long-awaited project, co-funded by the City and the State Government, would be going ahead. Works are expected to be completed in time for the 2020 school year.

KALAMUNDA

The City of Kalamunda’s 2019 Seniors Week celebrations ended with a rousing afternoon of bingo on Friday, 15 November wrapping up a jam packed two-week program of events.

The events and activities kicked off on Friday, 1 November with a special exhibition at the Zig Zag Gallery titled ‘Reimagined’. The exhibition showcased the art of City of Kalamunda senior residents and remained on display until Sunday, 10 November, drawing locals and visitors to the gallery.

More than 150 seniors celebrated Melbourne Cup in style at the Woodlupine Family and Community Centre dressing to impress while enjoying a morning of race day entertainment, fashion parade and long lunch.

The Supper Club Variety Show on Thursday, 14 November was a massive success, maxing out the High Wycombe Recreation Centre where seniors were treated to an evening of performance, dance and music and quickly took over the dancefloor!

Pictured: Attendees of the Supper Club Variety Show had a wonderful time.

KARRATHA

The City of Karratha welcomed the Developing Northern Australia and WA Regional Tourism Conferences to the Red Earth Arts Precinct earlier in the year with more than 700 delegates in attendance collectively. These were excellent opportunities to showcase the area and highlight the growing potential of the regions resources, aqua-cultural, agricultural and tourism industries.

KELLERBERRIN

During the week of Monday, 21 October to Sunday, 27 October Kellerberrin participated in the McGrath Foundation Pink Up your Town initiative to raise awareness to breast cancer. Kellerberrin turned all shades of Pink for the week and held a number of community events during the week. Our little town raised over $7000 for the McGrath Foundation. Funds raised will go towards placing McGrath Breast Care Nurses wherever they are needed across Australia.
MELVILLE

The City of Melville has received the Communication Engagement Success of the Year Award at this year’s Waste and Resource Recovery (WARR) awards, for its unique approach to waste education and the successful Food Organics, Garden Organics (FOGO) 3-bin roll out.

City of Melville Mayor the Hon George Gear JP said the award was a great step towards helping maintain a clean and green City and is a testament to how the community have embraced the system with open arms.

LAKE GRACE

The Lake King Community celebrated the opening of their much anticipated new Community Playground on Saturday 2 November. The playground includes a combination of structured play equipment and nature play environments, and is suitable for the whole family to enjoy. The project was made possible through Lotterywest grant funding, community fundraising, and contributions from the Shire of Lake Grace.

KWINANA

The City of Kwinana had a visit from Paul West of ABC TV fame as part of our Grow It Local 2019 campaign. Paul presented Edible Garden tips to a crowd of over 150 attendees from as far afield as Dwellingup and Byford. Photo: Grow It Local co-founder Darryl Nichols and author Paul West, courtesy of Darryl.

MANJIMUP

On Monday, 11 November the Manjimup Shire President Paul Omodei signed the Welcome Scroll.

Currently the Welcome Scroll is on a national journey, visiting Refugee Welcome Zone Councils (RWZ). There are 161 RWZs across the country.

The Welcome Scroll, now almost seven metres long, with the logos of 113 Refugee Welcome Zone Councils.
PORT HEDLAND

Port Hedland’s Gratwick Aquatic Centre (GAC) has reopened to the community after 14 months of closure, giving local residents a picturesque place to cool off in the Summer months. In addition to new filtration, the facility has undergone upgrades to its ablutions, tiling, pool infrastructure and signage. The GAC includes a lap pool, dive pool, children’s pool, playground and plenty of space to unwind for a picnic.

MURRAY

Redevelopment works are transforming Pinjarra’s Murray River Square and adjacent foreshore into a high quality, public space - a focal point for the town. While enhancing the character of Pinjarra, the works are integrating surrounding sites to encourage activity, longer visitation and a diverse range of activities.

With ongoing main street building facade upgrades and the sale and redevelopment of the former Exchange Hotel, Pinjarra is receiving a much-needed facelift that will attract tourists looking for an authentic, historic yet vibrant country town experience.

PLANTAGENET

Plantagenet celebrated seniors week with more than 120 seniors attending three events (a Seniors Expo, a Movie Afternoon and an Afternoon Tea) in Mount Barker. Pictured: Local seniors enjoying delicious afternoon tea at the picturesque Mount Barker Police and Folk Museum.

PERTH

The City of Perth’s All You Want for Christmas campaign is pictured in full swing featuring the return of the popular Twilight Hawkers Market to Forrest Place on Friday nights and Christmas Lights Trail. With 27 magical stops to explore throughout Northbridge, the CBD and East Perth, the trail shone bright from 6pm every night until Boxing Day.
ROCKINGHAM

The City of Rockingham successfully secured a $985,000 grant from Lotterywest to assist with refurbishment of the new Rockingham Youth Centre.

Premier Mark McGowan presented City of Rockingham Mayor Barry Sammels with the grant on Tuesday, 12 November.

The new Rockingham Youth Centre is set to be a multipurpose facility that gives young people aged 12 to 24 a space to connect and learn new skills.

STIRLING

Taking a quick quiz about the City’s three-bin system has paid off for three local primary schools. The recent Wonder of Waste contest shared lots of handy recycling messages with students. St Peter’s Primary School logged the most responses and won a $1,000 for school waste and recycling services, Coolbinia Primary School placed second with an $800 prize and Our Lady of Lourdes School took the third prize of $400.

Pictured: Mayor Mark Irwin with St Peter’s Primary School students.

SUBIACO

The City of Subiaco’s annual Photographic Awards celebrate creativity in Subiaco and offer photographers a chance to showcase their original works. Two young Subiaco residents took out the 2019 competition, with winning black and white entries. The People’s Choice Winner was ‘Train at Dawn’ by Glenn Casey, which collected the most votes during the exhibition period at Subiaco Library, and the overall winner was ‘Flight’ by Kay Cypher (pictured).
SWAN

Perth Scorchers’ fans flocked to Lilac Hill Park in the Swan Valley for two massive WBBL double headers against the Sydney Sixers and Hobart Hurricanes. Now in their fourth year, the Lilac Hill games are a favourite among players and spectators alike due to the festival atmosphere and scenic riverside location.

UPPER GASCOYNE

Our local school, Gascoyne Junction Remote Community School hosted the annual Pink Stumps day which is held every November and is a highlight on the social calendar for our region.

Councillors Jim Caunt, Hamish McTaggart and Ray Hoseason-Smith and families participated in the event along with our ACEO Ian Fitzgerald who was the umpire for the day. A big thank you must got to Cr Blanche Walker who organised this great event.

Pictured: Left to Right - Cr Jim Caunt in blue, ACEO Ian Fitzgerald Umpiring in stripes

VICTORIA PARK

As part of Seniors Week, the Town of Victoria Park delivered ‘Guerrilla Grannies’, a free and interactive street art workshop at the Victoria Park Centre for the Arts.

Led by urban artist Lady Bananas, participants learnt spray paint and stencil techniques, and how to use paint markers. The Town wanted to host something different and encourage intergenerational learning. All grannies (and grandpas) at the workshop had lots of fun!
VINCENT

Breaking a little from tradition, the City of Vincent has installed two eco Christmas Tree Sculptures this year, created by local artists.

Artist Sioux Tempestt’s creation, made out of plastic toys donated by the Vincent community, is on show at North Perth Common. While the toys serve as an attraction, they also encourage people to be mindful of what they purchase at Christmas and how it will impact the environment. The arts team from REmida Perth have created their tree at Mary Street Piazza using donated materials, including lids from Turkish soap tins and discarded Christmas baubles from a shopping centre.

WOODANILLING

After 14 years of service to the Shire of Woodanilling the first two as Councillor and the remaining as Deputy Shire President Cr Trevor Young has hung up his Council responsibilities.

Trevor played a major role in the building of the seven Well Aged Housing Units and chaired the WW Landcare Management Group, the 4WDL and the Woodanilling Community Development Committee.

Pictured: Cr Trevor Young and his wife Jackie

YILGARN

On Thursday, 17 October the Shire President, Cr Onida Truran, acknowledged the service of Robert Bosenberg, Council’s Executive Manager Infrastructure, on 45 years of continual service with the Shire of Yilgarn. Robert commenced with the Shire as a Grader Operator on 28 October 1974 and rose through the ranks to become a Works Supervisor before being appointed to Manager for Works on 26 April 2000, the position he currently holds albeit through a number of title changes. Cr Truran, in presenting a small gift to Robert for this significant achievement, spoke glowingly of Robert’s commitment to the Shire over this long period.

WANNEROO

Jennie Pell (pictured left) from Show West, which provides fairground rides, received the Mayor’s Visionary Award from City of Wanneroo Mayor Tracey Roberts JP, at the City of Wanneroo Business Awards. The event is in its 17th year and was also a 20th anniversary celebration for the Wanneroo Business Association and the City of Wanneroo becoming a City. The evening was opened with a Welcome to Country by Dennis Simmons.

Photo Credit: Courtesy Perth1Media
I’m sure everyone is now well and truly in the midst of festive cheer. It’s a joyous, happy time to spend with family and friends, providing us all with an opportunity to reflect on the year that is concluding and take time to celebrate the festive season. From everyone at LGIS I’d like to wish all of our members, their staff and families, a safe and merry Christmas and New Year.

It’s been another busy year for your Local Government insurance Scheme. In 2019 the LGIS team, across every area of the organisation, from claims management and risk services to injury prevention and member services have provided members with tailored solutions to their individual Local Government’s needs. The numbers speak for themselves; we’ve visited members 495 times, highlighting our face-to-face Local Government focus, and a commitment to building strong working relationships to really understand your business.

495 one-on-one member visits
11,000 + hours of consulting and client services
$13.7 M Workers’ compensation claims incurred (2018/19)
1,824 New liability and property claims managed

Personally I’ve really enjoyed my recent visits to members to discuss Scheme benefits and our 2018/19 surplus distribution. It’s provided an excellent opportunity to meet elected members and their executive teams on the ground. I’ve been particularly pleased to see so many councillors and to chat about the issues in your area. If you’re interested in more information on your Scheme the LGIS team are available to present to Council on a range of topics.

STAY SAFE IN THE WATER THIS SUMMER

December is the start of summer, and for many Australians, this means they’ll be using your Local Government facilities. They’ll spend days at the beach, by the pool, along the river, or at the lake. Aussies love water, but recent years have seen the number of drownings increase, with a peak in Summer 2018/19, up 51% from the previous year.

At LGIS we’re committed to keeping your communities safe in the water which is why we’ve partnered with Royal Life Saving WA (RLS WA) for over 17 years. Through this partnership all members have RLS WA conduct safety audits to improve safety standards at their aquatic facilities as part of Scheme membership.

The safety audits cover areas of management, design and operations based on the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations, Australian Standards and State legislation. This includes administration, chemical safety, water treatment, first aid, technical operations, facility design, water features, general supervision, and learn to swim programs.

With record high temperatures expected this summer, Royal Life Saving Australia have warned that the number of drownings may increase this year, so it’s important that your aquatic facilities have the right safety practice in place.

If you have any queries about LGIS, would like us to make a presentation to your Council, or are after information about RLS WA safety audits contact me on 9483 8855 or your LGIS Account Manager on 9483 8888.
As the mercury rises across WA at this time of year, so does our collective demand for electricity. According to Synergy’s LGA Account Manager, Ana Farla, Synergy has launched a notification service to help Local Government authorities manage their electricity use on Peak Demand Days.1

“It’s no secret that the highest demand for electricity generally occurs during the hottest days of the year,” said Ms Farla. “What some customers may not know is that the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) pays generators a capacity payment for making their generation available to meet peak demand. These capacity payments are passed onto large energy consumers, which includes Local Government authorities, in the form of capacity charges.”

Ms Farla advised that those customers, including those Local Government authorities affected, may be able to take action and attempt to lower capacity charges for the following capacity year which are determined by reference to the customer’s demand on Peak Demand Days.

“Synergy can now provide notifications for predicted Peak Demand days,” she said. “If you have signed up to the Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service, we’ll email you to advise you of the forecasted peak demand day. We’ll also share a seven-day forecast showing whether we consider there’s a high, medium or low chance of it being a Peak Demand Day.”2

Feedback on the Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service has been positive so far. The City of Cockburn participated in a notification trial last year and, according to Cockburn ARC Manager Brett McEwin, the trial was a great success.

“Synergy’s Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service is a perfect tool to assist the City of Cockburn to manage its power demands at its major community facilities as part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability,” he said. “Participating in the trial last summer, the City has been able to implement a range of operational improvements to manage peak demands at its regional sport and recreational facility, whilst reducing operational costs.”

While registrations for notifications have closed for this year, Ms Farla invites Local Government authorities to get in touch with her to discuss the service. She also recommends visiting synergy.net.au/capacitycharges to learn more about how capacity works and its role in WA’s energy supply.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY ACCOUNT

All Synergy customers, including Local Government authorities, can register or login to MyAccount to explore where their usage peaks are and help manage their energy consumption.

LGA customers can also book a one-on-one account management consultation with Synergy’s Ana Farla. Each consultation can be tailored to the needs of a particular council, such as:

- Efficiency and sustainability
- Innovation in the energy industry
- Using all My Account features
- New products and trials
- Tariff optimisation
- Rooftop solar and solar farms
- Interval meters
- Electricity demand and consumption

To book a session or learn more about energy education for your team, please contact Ana Farla, LGA Account Manager, on (08) 6212 2001 or anazia.farla@synergy.net.au

---

1 Terms and conditions apply. See Synergy Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service Terms and Conditions at synergy.net.au/terms. Peak Demand Days are the four days that have the highest maximum demand in the South West Interconnected System between 1 December and 31 March each year.

2 Notifications provided as part of Synergy Peak Demand Notification Subscription Service are distributed solely for information purposes and general guidance only and are not intended as advice of any kind and should not be relied on as such.
The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) has selected WALGA as an Approved Training Provider for the development, delivery and management of the Council Member Essentials program for Elected Members.

This training program consists of all five of WALGA’s Stage One training courses that all newly Elected Members will be required to complete within 12 months of being elected.

Structure and Recommended Pathway:
- Understanding Local Government
- Conflicts of Interest
- Serving on Council
- Meeting Procedures
- Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE COUNCIL MEMBER ESSENTIALS
Participants will receive a Certificate of Achievement after successfully completing each course and assessment within Stage One.

Assessments for each individual training course will be released upon course completion.

ENROLMENT INFORMATION
Download and complete the Council Member Essentials Registration Form via the WALGA website and submit to training@walga.asn.au.

This can be found in the Training area of the website or simply search for Council Member Essentials.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
With a wide range of training and development opportunities to choose from, including a nationally accredited Elected Member Skill Set and Diploma qualification, WALGA are here to assist Elected Members to maintain and develop their professional capabilities.

WALGA’s Learning and Development Pathway has been specifically developed to deliver the essential skills and knowledge required by an Elected Member to perform their role as defined in the Local Government Act 1995.

To view the Elected Member Learning and Development Pathway, visit walga.asn.au/training.

New laws proposed that will remove muzzles from pet greyhounds, making them more desirable as pets. For more information visit: www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/greyhounds
In a recent review of a structure plan refusal, the State Administrative Tribunal applied climate change modelling for sea level rise over the next 100 years to determine coastal planning requirements.

The decision of Two Rocks Investment Pty Ltd and Western Australian Planning Commission [2019] WASAT 59 makes a number of significant findings regarding coastal foreshore planning, the nature of structure plans and the ceding of land, that are relevant to coastal and other Local Governments across the State.

**COASTAL FORESHORE RESERVE – PURPOSE, LOCATION AND SIZE**

This case was the first to consider State Planning Policy 2.6 - Coastal Planning (2013), which provides for the creation of coastal foreshore reserves to ensure that current values, functions and uses are available for future generations. Importantly, its provisions about ‘coastal processes’ are based on a 100-year timeframe. In this case it was predicted that, over that time, the Indian Ocean was likely to occupy the whole of the existing foreshore reserve (adjacent to the site) as well as some 9.93 hectares of the subject land itself.

The SAT found that the Two Rocks Local Structure Plan No. 91 was inadequate in terms of the location and size of coastal foreshore reserve. Additional reserve was required to allow for (a) coastal processes, and (b) values and functions such as biodiversity, visual landscape, public access and recreation, should the predicted coastal processes be realised.

**CEDING OF LAND**

The current foreshore reserve was ceded to the Crown free of cost 25 years ago by the previous owner as a condition of subdivision. The SAT found that further land should be required to be ceded free of cost on future subdivision or development as “a consequence of climate change and resulting sea level rise and other coastal processes and developments in climate science and planning policy since the existing coastal foreshore reserve”.

The landowner argued that requiring land to be ceded soon to protect something for a population that may be there in 100 years’ time, would be unreasonable and not fairly and reasonably related to the development. The Tribunal disagreed. It also noted that, while there was a short-term cost to the developer, there were long term economic, social, and environmental benefits in maintaining the values of the foreshore.

**DELAYED VESTING AND INTERIM LAND USE**

Two novel features of the decision were that the SAT allowed a ‘delayed vesting’ of two areas of foreshore, and interim private uses of those areas. The ceding of these portions was to be delayed until a ‘trigger event’ in the shoreline indicated that vulnerability to sea level rise was imminent. At that point, the landowner would be required to remove all development, rehabilitate the land and cede it. Until then, it was to be designated as ‘Interim Uses - Special Use Coastal Zone’. Approvals for interim development were to be capped at 30 years, with the potential to extend. The structure plan itself was approved for a period of 15 years, rather than for the default period of 10 years.

**SAT REVIEW OF MODIFICATIONS**

The SAT clarified that, where the WAPC or a Local Government requires modifications to a structure plan, this amounts to a decision not to approve the structure plan. Local Governments should now be aware that requiring modifications will generally trigger a right of review.

**SCOPE OF STRUCTURE PLAN**

The decision sets out the legislative framework applicable to structure plans and is a useful reference in that regard. Under the Deemed Provisions in the Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme Regulations) 2005, a structure plan may only be prepared in certain circumstances, generally where the land is zoned ‘Urban’ or ‘Industrial’ under the local planning scheme.

In this case, the SAT found that parts of the structure plan were not valid and could not be approved, as they involved changes to regional reserves and Bush Forever sites that were not zoned under the local scheme.

**CONCLUSION**

This case provides some useful guidance for Local Governments as to the nature of structure plans. It demonstrates both preventative and adaptive responses to climate risk, supporting a longer-term risk management approach in planning policy.

At a broader, longer-term strategic level, it is possible that the approach of imposing current requirements to address future risks, including the ceding of further land free of cost, may have application for other policy areas, such as bushfire planning, groundwater protection and biodiversity conservation. Accordingly, the case confirms the need for scientific rigour and careful consideration as to how the burden is allocated in respect of policy changes in the public interest.

For further information please contact Mark Gregory or Merinda Logie on 9486 7665 (or m.gregory@cglawmediation.com.au or m.logie@cglawmediation.com.au). The information contained in this article should not be relied upon without obtaining further detailed legal advice.
The following resolutions were among those carried at the State Council meeting held in West Leederville on Wednesday, 4 December.

**STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION**

That WALGA’s submission to the State Government in advance of the 2020-21 Budget be endorsed, with the following amendments:

1. The last sentence of the ‘Recommendation’ paragraph for Initiative 19 changed to say ‘Initiatives that encourage behavior change and increase the implementation of better practice approaches to waste management should be the primary area of focus.’

2. The last sentence of the ‘Why’ paragraph for Initiative 19 changed to say ‘Both behaviour change initiatives and the adoption of better practice approaches to waste management increase resource recovery and reduce contamination. In implementing better practice approaches it is important the Government is cognisant of existing contractual arrangements.’

(see Economic Update pp4-5)

**MANDATORY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCIL MEMBER, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CANDIDATES – SECTOR FEEDBACK**

That WALGA:

1. Request the Mandatory Code of Conduct Working Group be reconvened by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries;

2. Refer the following matters to the Working Group for further consideration:
   
   (a) Part A – Principles - Supported
   
   (b) Part B – Behaviours
   
   i. ensuring principles of natural justice can be adequately upheld in all circumstances;
   
   ii. training opportunities that will assist Council Members determine complaint outcomes under Part B;
   
   iii. development of a template Complaints Management Policy;
   
   iv. reconsider the purpose of allowing ‘any person’ to make a complaint;
   
   v. ensuring Committee Members and Candidates are included in Part B; and
   
   vi. re-naming ‘Rules’ to an appropriate term throughout Part B.
   
   ii. Develop a complaint process that is carried out by DLGSC or another party (which must be external of the Local Government). For any breach of the Code (being part b or part c) and where the Council, Mayor/President or CEO are not the decision makers in determining whether the breach has or has not occurred and/or whether any action is required.

   iii. Review the appropriateness of the elements of the rule of conduct to only apply to a person who is a Council Member or Candidate both at the time of the conduct and at the time of the panel decision.

3. Recommend the Working Group develop an endorsed Mandatory Code of Conduct for further consultation with the Local Government sector.

**STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR CEO RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION, PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND TERMINATION – SECTOR FEEDBACK**

That WALGA:

1. Request the CEO Recruitment and Selection, Performance Review and Termination Working Group be reconvened by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; and

2. Refer the following matters to the Working Group for consideration:

   (a) Removal from the Model Standards the requirement to readvertise CEO positions after 10 years of continuous service;
   
   (b) Encouraging, rather than mandating, the involvement of an independent person in the CEO Recruitment and Selection Process;
   
   (c) Reconsideration of the proposal for independent review of the recruitment process;
   
   (d) Support the role of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as the regulator for monitoring and compliance; and

   (e) Further investigate a role for a Local Government Commissioner.

3. Recommend the Working Group develop endorsed Model Standards for further consultation with the Local Government sector.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL RATIOS**

That the item on Financial Ratios be deferred and that WALGA form a Sector Reference Group to further review the ratios including all Zone feedback and provide recommendations to the May 2020 State Council meeting.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDITS
That WALGA:

1. Write to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) advising of the cost increases to the Local Government sector in respect to financial audits over the first 2 years of the OAG audits and request:
   a) Constraint on the audit cost increases in the future
   b) Information in relation to the additional scope, testing and review requirements under the OAG in order for Local Governments to understand the increase in costs.

2. Write to the Office of the Auditor General seeking a formal commitment that audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.

3. Write to the Office of the Auditor General seeking to include in the “Audit Results Report” for each financial year, a report on the effectiveness and additional value to Local Governments that the responsibility of Financial Audits being assigned to the Office of the Auditor General has provided.

4. Write to the Minister for Local Government seeking formal commitment that Performance Audits carried out by the Office of the Auditor General are the financial responsibility of the State Government.

MEMBERSHIP OF DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PANELS
That WALGA advocate to the Minister for Planning, that the composition of Development Assessment Panels (DAPs) be modified to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members, in accordance with the original objectives of the DAP system to enhance the decision making process by improving the balance of experts.

SUBMISSION ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA ISSUES PAPER
That the WALGA submission on the Climate Change in Western Australia Issues Paper be endorsed, with the following amendments to be included:

1. Greater emphasis on transitioning affected workers in the Collie region and support the diversification of the Collie and South West economies;
2. Increase the investment of funding for the restoration and management of the Swan River foreshore;
3. Use money collected from the landfill levy to assist Local Governments in investigating and remediating former landfill sites which were operated in accordance with best industry best practice at the time;
4. The inclusion of an additional bullet point under the heading ‘protecting biodiversity’ providing ‘recognise the significant role that native forests have as carbon stores and valuing these assets accordingly’.

REFORMS TO THE BUILDING APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SINGLE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA
That WALGA:

1. Advise the Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) that Option 3 of the Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement, improvements to the single residential building approvals process, is supported in principle, subject to the following matters being addressed in consultation with the Local Government sector:
   a) Prior to any regulatory changes, a review of the building fees and charges is essential, to ensure that any costs associated with the approval of building work, implementation of mandatory inspections, compliance and enforcement actions, and record keeping requirements for the Local Government sector, will result in full cost recovery
   b) The Independent Building Surveyor who signed the Certificate of Design Compliance should be responsible for undertaking the inspections, therefore, Local Government would not be solely responsible for mandatory inspections
   c) The State Government’s registration process for the Builder should be strengthened to ensure that the builder fulfils their obligations for compliance with the National Construction Code
   d) Implementation of mandatory inspections should be undertaken by properly qualified and independent personnel, at the following stages (at a minimum) of the construction process
      1. Foundations and footings
      2. Slab/reinforcement of bearers/joists
      3. Waterproofing
      4. Roof, and
      5. Occupancy or final completion
   e) The occupancy or final completion inspection must ensure that the bushfire construction and energy efficiency requirements have been complied with, and
   f) The removal of the proposed ‘fast track approval’ concept, as is not warranted nor properly justified as an improvement option.

2. Advocate for the Building Commissioner to provide an appropriate level training for Local Government building inspection officers;

3. Endorse the submission of this State Council report to the DMIRS, as the Association’s submission on the Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement.
State Council

President Cr Lynne Craigie OAM ................................................................. President
Mayor Tracey Roberts JP ............................................................... Deputy President North Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Ken Seymour ................................................................. Avon-Midland Country Zone
President Cr Phil Blight ................................................................. Central Country Zone
Cr Jenna Ledgerwood ................................................................. Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Paul Kelly ................................................................................... Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Cate McCullough ........................................................................ East Metropolitan Zone
Cr Catherine Erhardt ........................................................................ East Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Cheryl Cowell ................................................................. Gascoyne Country Zone
President Cr Malcolm Cullen ............................................................... Goldfields Esperance Country Zone
President Cr Stephen Strange ................................................................. Great Eastern Country Zone
Cr Ronni Fleay ................................................................................ Great Southern Country Zone
Cr Chris Mitchell JP ........................................................................ Kimballey Country Zone
Cr Les Price .................................................................................. Murchison Country Zone
Mayor Mark Irwin ........................................................................ North Metropolitan Zone
Cr Russ Fishwick JP .......................................................................... North Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Karen Chappel ............................................................... Northern Country Zone
President Cr Michelle Rich ................................................................ Peel Country Zone
Mayor Peter Long ........................................................................... Pilbara Country Zone
Cr Julie Brown ................................................................................ South East Metropolitan Zone
Mayor Ruth Butterfield ...................................................................... South East Metropolitan Zone
Mayor Carol Adams OAM ................................................................ South Metropolitan Zone
Mayor Logan Howlett JP .................................................................... South Metropolitan Zone
Cr Doug Thompson ........................................................................ South Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Tony Dean .................................................................... South West Country Zone
Ex-officio:
Mr Jamie Parry ................................................................................ LG Professionals
Mr Andrew Hammond ...................................................................... Commissioner, City of Perth