

Western Councillor



ISSUE 124 | MAR/APR 2023

GREENING THE STREETS

How Local Governments are working to
protect and grow our urban canopy

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National disaster agency
boss' tips to better use
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How rising inflation and
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The small Goldfields
Council leading the
way for road safety

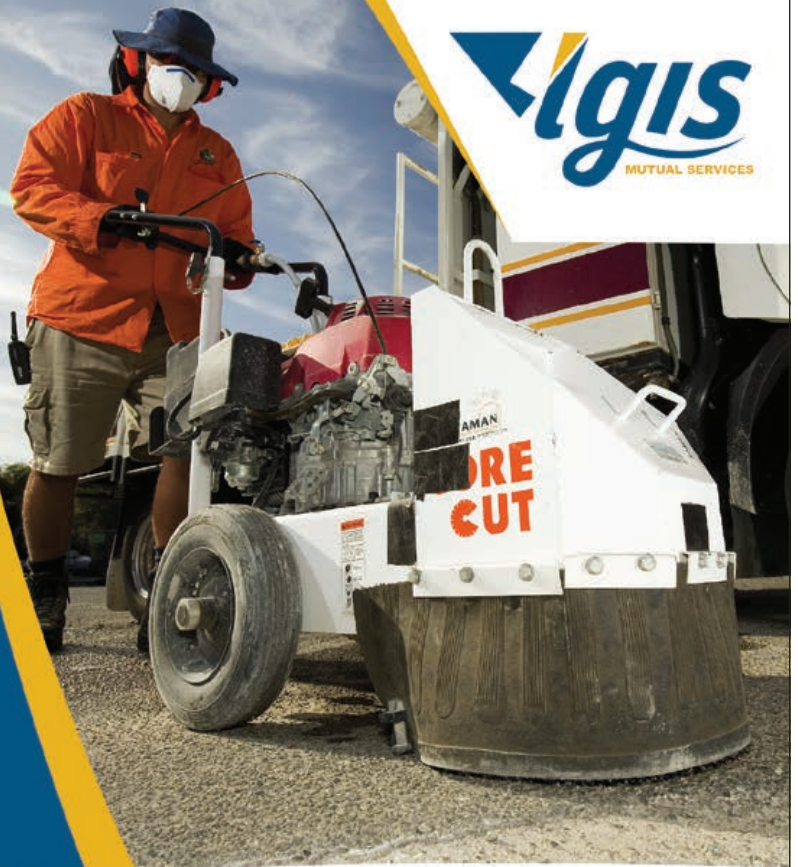
Local governments working together.

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 lgisw.com.au or call 9483 8888.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Peer Support Team

A practical way to provide mediation and conciliation support to Local Governments in Western Australia.

The Peer Support Team is an initiative between the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Professionals WA.

The team was formed to provide conciliation, negotiation and mediation support to Local Governments that identified issues of relationship conflict between Councillors, or between Councillors and senior staff.

The key objective is to assist Local Governments resolve these issues

of conflict and reduce the need for formal investigations or enquiries.

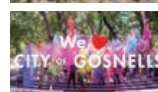
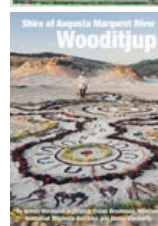
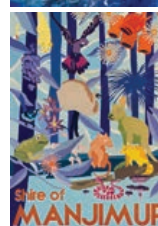
The team will meet with the affected Councillors and staff individually, as well as in a group setting, allowing all parties to freely express their views in a neutral environment. The team will then assist the Local Government to develop outcomes and a path forward that is suitable for all involved.

So, to head off possible conflict or for the best resolution in situations where it already exists, call Nick Sloan or Candy Choo on the numbers below.

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
PEER SUPPORT
TEAM HOTLINE
NUMBERS

Nick Sloan
CEO
WALGA
Tel 9213 2025

Candy Choo
CEO
LG Professionals WA
Tel 9271 1136



WALGA

Showcase in Pixels 2023

WALGA's popular Showcase in Pixels competition is back for 2023.

The annual exhibition of artwork from Local Governments will be displayed on the 45-metre high digital tower at the heart of Yagan Square in Perth City.

Expression of Interest:

Thursday, 15 June

Artwork Deadline:

Thursday, 10 August

Winners Announced:

WALGA Convention, 18-19 September

For more information or to submit expressions of interest and artwork, email communications@walga.asn.au

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Welcome to Issue 124 of Western Councillor

COVER: Perth has the lowest canopy coverage of all capital cities in Australia. WA Local Governments are trying to change that, but there are many hurdles to address. So what needs to happen? WALGA's Urban Forest Conference fuelled the conversation, and that was just the beginning.



DALWALLINU



KENT



SOUTH PERTH



Chief Executive Officer
Nick Sloan

FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

WALGA's in-house economics team have been busy crunching the numbers to produce the latest Quarterly Economic Briefing in recent months.

The product has become a hallmark of our work – it combines unique data and insights, including our tailored Local Government Cost Index, to give members valuable insight into price trends specifically related to Local Government services and infrastructure.

This quarter's snapshot comes at a crucial time, amid a backdrop of escalating costs and labour pressure as Local Governments prepare budgets for the next financial year.

As you can read on pages 4-5 of this edition, the economic environment is tough, however there is potentially light at the end of the tunnel when it comes to construction material costs.

Rising construction costs have been a key issue since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 and remain so, however, the Briefing suggests some relief may be in sight as supply constraints ease,

stimulus-led demand slows down, and the impact of interest rate rises takes effect.

One insight captured by the report caught my eye as it plays into a strength of working for Local Government.

Staff attraction and retention has been tough for a few years now and this trend does not seem to be letting up, which will place further pressure on wages and services.

Wage growth is accelerating in Australia, and employers need to do more than just offer an attractive salary to attract the best staff – Local Governments have known this for a long time.

This pressure makes it more important than ever for Local Governments to continue leading the way in providing the supportive, flexible and rewarding workplaces highly sought after by today's jobseekers.

If you haven't already, I strongly encourage you to download the full report under the policy and advocacy section on WALGA's website.



Minister for Local Government
Hon John Carey MLA

FROM THE MINISTER

The delivery of the McGowan Government's Local Government reform has now hit a major milestone, with the Parliament currently considering the first tranche Bill, in time for key election reforms to be put into place for the upcoming October Ordinary Elections.

Our Government's reform agenda is clear – we are strengthening the transparency, accountability and efficiency of Local Governments, and this set of electoral reforms will enable stronger local democracy and community engagement.

As Local Government Minister I've written to all Local Governments outlining the implications of the reforms for each council, and pathways for implementing required changes.

Since then, the majority of impacted Councils have been working to consider how best to transition in changes, and I thank them for their proactive action in implementing the reforms.

The passage of the Bill through the Legislative Assembly is the latest milestone in the continued delivery of the McGowan Government's significant Local Government reforms.

The benefits of key reforms, like the new backfilling provisions to reduce the need for extraordinary elections, have been widely recognised – including in debate in Parliament.

I think it is also fair to say that there is broad acceptance that electoral reforms like the direct election of Mayors and Presidents for larger (band 1 and 2) councils, and abolishing wards for smaller (band 3 and 4) Councils, are

common-sense changes reflecting long-term trends across the sector. These will significantly strengthen local democracy at Council elections.

There has also been widespread recognition that reforms like parental leave for Council Members and enabling Local Governments to contribute to the education expenses for Councillors will be a major step-change in supporting a diverse range of people serve on their local Council.

While legislative changes are in train, other work is continuing to transition in reforms.

I know that the Department and the Local Government Advisory Board have been working through a record number of Ward and Representation Reviews, to finalise them well ahead of the key dates for elections later this year.

Many Councils have now also finalised arrangements for the Western Australian Electoral Commission to run elections, or for the Local Government to run the election using software licensed from the Commission.

I strongly urge any Council which has not finalised these arrangements to do so as soon as possible.

The Department is also working hard to develop templates and guidance material to help Local Governments implement reforms.

For instance, templates and examples will be available in advance of reforms like new Community Engagement Charters and Communications Agreements coming into effect.

I'm grateful for the input of WALGA and Local Government Professionals WA in the process of developing these supporting materials.

The Department is also continuing to engage with the sector on the next tranche of legislation, to deliver reforms such as the establishment of the new Local Government Inspector and Monitors.

In March, I also reached the milestone of two years as the Minister for Local Government.

It has been a very busy two years in the Local Government portfolio, and I do not take a single day for granted. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with WALGA and with Local Governments across the State to deliver results for all Western Australians.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Do you remember walking to school back in the day? As a child, my journey was a 120km round trip, and I envied those that could walk to school.

But for those lucky enough to walk or ride, you would probably start the journey with your sibling, knock on a few doors along the way, and end with a group of boisterous mates playing with sticks and chatting about what you were going to do for recess.

As you grew up, the walking shoes were likely traded for a bicycle because that was the cool way to rock up to school as a teenager – at least until you got your P plates.

Today, active transport to and from school has dropped as low as 20 per cent in some Perth catchment areas.

Declining active travel can have far-reaching consequences – from obesity and chronic disease to skills development and self-efficacy.

The Department of Transport has formed an Active Travel to School working group to get children walking and riding to school again.

Local Government has an important role to play here in designing the communities we want to raise our children in.

WALGA will this year lead consultation with members to identify local challenges, amend and develop new planning guidelines with a view to tackling issues such as pedestrian connectivity, parking demand, road safety and public transport access.

This effort backs up what we heard at WALGA's Transport and Roads Forum, where Department of Transport's Michelle Prior noted active transport to school nationwide had plummeted from 75 to 25 per cent in the past four decades as she spruiked the Your Move program which hopes to reach 450 schools in WA by 2026.

Speaking of the forum, after four attempts since 2020, it was wonderful to see the event finally come to fruition. There was a strong emphasis on disaster relief and access to Disaster Ready Funds.

It was pleasing to hear National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Coordinator-General Brendan Moon say the State Government has been asked to work closely with Local Governments.

He said agencies are looking how to resource local groups and organisations, such as Community Resource Centres, upfront rather than waiting for a disaster to occur.

In his overview of Commonwealth categories of assistance, he identified and emphasised Category D in the Exceptional Circumstance Assistance Packages, for Local Governments to use for Betterment – that is, building assets back better than they were.

Closer to home it is always heartening to see Local Governments working together, and nowhere was that more evident than in planning for the Ningaloo Eclipse on April 20.



**Local Government has an important role to play...
in designing the communities we want to raise
our children in.**

KEY ECONOMIC DRIVERS IMPACTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGETS THIS YEAR

By WALGA Economist, Daniel Thomson

Local Governments in WA are preparing their 2023-24 budgets amid a backdrop of a challenging economic climate.

Inflation continues to be the main concern, although the rate of growth in the Australian monthly CPI slowed in both January and February, suggesting the peak has passed.

Confirmation of this will come in late April when the quarterly CPI figures are released.

While spikes in inflation are often driven by particular commodities or events, it is important to note current inflationary pressures are spread throughout the economy.

Looking forward, the RBA expects inflation to ease, but it isn't until June 2025 inflation is expected to fall to 3 per cent.

After ten consecutive rate rises, the RBA Board decided to pause at 3.6% in April to evaluate the impact of the rate rises to date. In his Statement following the monetary policy decision, Governor Philip Lowe emphasises that the RBA Board still expects some further tightening and reiterated their determination to bring inflation back to the target range.

Local Governments have experienced sharp increases in their cost base, with the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) accelerating for the past two years.

However, there are signs the rapid cost increases experienced by the sector are easing.

After stabilising in the September 2022 quarter the LGCI has started to slow, although it remains above the long-term average.

The index has now eased in annual terms for the past two quarters. Looking ahead, Local Governments should experience some relief with growth in the LGCI expected to have peaked in 2021-22.

After an increase of 6.4 per cent in 2021-22, Local Government costs in WA are expected to rise by 4.5 per cent in the 12 months to June 2023.

The Index is then expected to slow further to 2.9 per cent in 2023-24.

The spike in construction costs – growing at unprecedented rates as a result of supply chain constraints, COVID-19 stimulus induced demand, and labour shortages – has been the key driver.

Some relief can be expected in coming years as supply constraints begin to ease and demand slows as stimulus is unwound and interest rate rises take effect.

However, construction prices are unlikely to return to 2020 levels.

Wages are finally starting to pick up in line with inflation.

In WA, the Wage Price Index (WPI) grew by 0.8 per cent during the December quarter and 3.6 per cent over the year.

This represents the largest increase in annual terms in a decade.

Local Governments are watching this index closely as wages form the largest component of the LGCI.

The labour market in WA remains tight.

The number of people employed in WA has been flat for nine months with few net jobs created.

Advertised job vacancies are unable to be filled with the number of jobs on offer still close to record highs and above the number of unemployed people in December 2022.

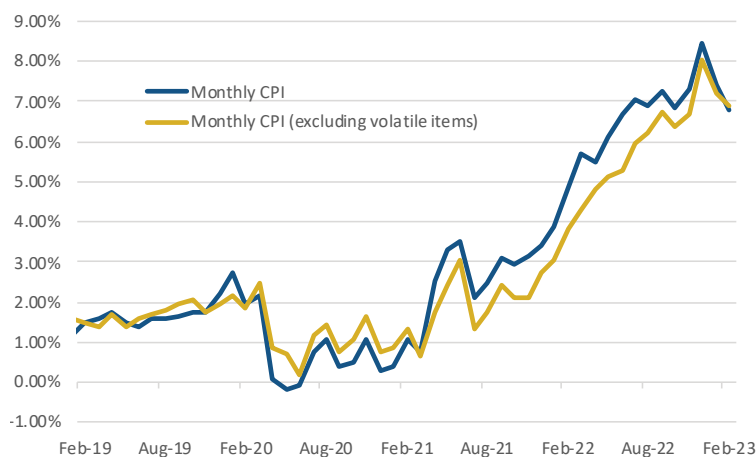
High commodity prices, the solid construction pipeline, high job vacancies and robust business confidence suggest the WA labour market will remain tight over the near term and is well-placed to weather an economic slowdown that may come from efforts to dampen household spending and rein in inflation.

To read the full economic briefing or to subscribe, head to <https://walga.asn.au/economics>.

CHARTS

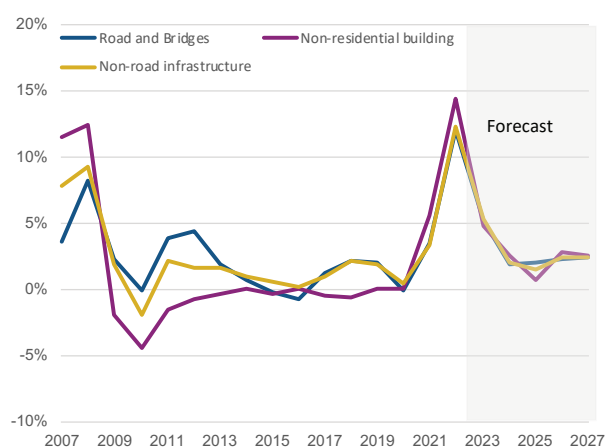
1. Monthly CPI (updated)
2. Construction Cost Indexes
3. LGCI Forecast table

MONTHLY CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, AUSTRALIA, ANNUAL % CHANGE



SOURCE: ABS; WALGA

CONSTRUCTION COST INDEXES, WA, ANNUAL % CHANGE



SOURCE: ABS; MACROMONITOR; WALGA

LGCI TABLE

Component	Weighting	2021-22 (a)	2022-23 (f)	2023-24 (f)	2024-25 (f)
Employee costs	35%	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.0
Materials and contracts	28%	5.7	4.1	2.1	1.9
Furniture	1%	7.5	1.1	1.4	1.3
Non-residential building	5%	14.4	4.8	2.5	0.7
Machinery and Equipment	5%	12.2	4.7	1.0	1.0
Non-road infrastructure	9%	12.2	5.3	1.9	1.5
Road and bridge construction	10%	12.0	5.2	1.8	2.0
Utilities	3%	1.4	2.5	2.5	2.5
Insurance	1%	7.0	3.8	2.8	2.8
Other	3%	5.9	5.0	2.5	2.5
LGCI	100%	6.4	3.9	2.3	2.2

NB: NUMBERS ARE YEAR-ON-YEAR PERCENTAGE INCREASES FOR LGCI COMPONENTS

HARD MARKET THE BACKDROP FOR 2023/24 LGIS MEMBERSHIP

By James Sheridan, CEO, LGIS



With a new financial year just around the corner, it's a good time to look at what's happening in the broader insurance market, and trends within your Scheme. In 2023/24 LGIS, as a mutual indemnity scheme, will be able to insulate our members against the sharp peaks of the commercial insurance market.

MARKET UPDATE

Insurance pricing in the Pacific region continues to increase with the frequency and severity of natural disasters having an impact.

Indemnity providers are using coverage levers to moderate price increases with a focus on property and liability exposures. They're looking for client commitment to risk improvements as an indicator of 'good business'. In this respect the Scheme and sector is well positioned with LGIS' proactive risk services program delivered to all members.

In Australia, inflation is growing and factors such as increased construction costs, labour charges, equipment costs, and supply issues all impact the value of covered assets.

EARLY INDICATORS FOR LGIS

Last year we reported a claims spike across multiple classes of cover and this year looks to be the same. LGIS is committed to sustainable, long term protection of the WA Local Government sector and in 2023/24 will revisit contributions to ensure that pooled funds reflect the sector's changing claims performance. We pride ourselves on stability of pricing, and are driven to ensure that increases are moderate compared to the dramatic fluctuations experienced by the commercial insurance market.

Natural events from cyclone, bushfire, and flooding have impacted the sector and the LGIS Property Scheme. In addition the Scheme consecutively breached its pooled cover in the past three years due to several large losses. 2023/24 will most likely result in coverage restrictions particularly in areas such as flood and bushfire.

Liability claims and the costs of defending them has increased. We continue to vigorously defend claims where the member is not liable to ensure that costs are contained and that member's liability protection remains broad and sustainable.

Proactive risk management remains the number one priority in containing claims, ensuring comprehensive protection

and minimising contribution increases. Indemnity providers are looking to the sector to make sure that risk audit recommendations are actioned – especially in the areas of bushfire, flood, ageing infrastructure, child and aged care.

Cyber-mitigation is an area of focus and members need to mature in this area so that they can demonstrate better risk controls; 2023/24 will see prices increase for this protection. The LGISWA Board is currently considering the best approach to assist the sector with managing cyber-risks.

In WorkCare the number of claims are falling, unfortunately while there's fewer claims, the cost per claim continues to climb. Average claim costs for LGIS members has increased by 47% since 2017 and we envisage this trend will continue.

Bushfire volunteer personal injury protection continues to present challenges for the Scheme. The reinsurance market for bushfire volunteer's personal injury excess of loss is limited due to the benefits afforded to the volunteers. With three quarters of the volunteer base over 50 years of age, it is likely that the risk profile will continue to deteriorate impacting contributions and retention limits.

LGIS VISITING MEMBERS ACROSS THE STATE

Account managers are now visiting members to discuss protections for 2023/24. In these meetings we focus on your risk profile, covering the key risks that have been identified through LGIS assessments and the data provided to us. It's vital that LGIS has the most up-to-date information about your organisation.

LGIS continues to respond proactively through the risk services team and regional risk program in assisting our members address risk and mitigation strategies.

If you have any questions on or would like to discuss your Local Government's issues please contact me on 0409 185 420 or talk to your LGIS account manager.

REFORESTING OUR STREETS

Perth has the lowest canopy coverage of all capital cities in Australia.

WA Local Governments are trying to change that, but there are many hurdles to address.

So what needs to happen? WALGA's Urban Forest Conference fuelled the conversation, and that was just the beginning.

READ MORE PAGES 8-11 ►

WALGA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION

\$20m between 2023-24 and 2026-27 to develop a State Urban Forest Strategy and expand the Urban Canopy Grant Program to facilitate the planting of 60,000 trees

URBAN FOREST CONFERENCE 2023

MILLION TREES PROJECT GREENS GREATER GERALDTON

Planting trees to beautify spaces, reduce urban heat and increase the tree canopy has been on the City of Greater Geraldton's agenda for more than a decade.

In 2011, planting more trees and greening the City was identified as a top community priority during the 2029 and Beyond sustainability project. In response, the City launched the Million Trees Project knowing this ambitious goal would only be possible if residents, community groups, business, industry, and the City worked together to achieve it.

Eleven years later, more than 513,000 plantings have been registered towards the project via the City's online portal.

During the fall and winter planting season the City promotes the project and encourages anyone who has planted native and non-native perennial trees, shrubs, decorative grasses and ground cover plants in the City region to register them with the project.

Geraldton's harsh semi-arid climate which features minimal summer rainfall and strong southerly winds makes planting trees very challenging. Counting shrubs, grasses and ground cover plants in the project still aligns with the community's aspiration for the City region.

The thousands of plantings the City undertakes every year in public open spaces along with 200 trees planted in the annual Verge Tree Program, in which homeowners can request a tree be planted on their verge, are also counted.

Currently, the City's tree canopy percentage is being calculated. Although the need for more trees is evident, before any large-scale plantings can take place the need for irrigation to ensure survival, the growing salinity of bore water and the increasing cost of scheme water must be taken into consideration.

Even though the Million Trees Project is popular with the community, converting support to registered plantings is not without its challenges. The increased use of social media in recent years has certainly helped.



PHOTO: City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Shane Van Styn and Veronica Foster among the 50 trees and shrubs she planted, registered with the Million Trees project and reached the 500,000th planting milestone.

BATTLE TO TURN COMMUNITY SENTIMENT INTO ACTION TO SAVE URBAN TREES

City of Stirling Mayor Mark Irwin has laid bare the struggle Local Governments face with developers and their own communities as they try to increase tree canopy across their suburbs.

Mr Irwin told guests at the WALGA Urban Forest Conference at Curtin University on Friday developers had cleared about 135 hectares of canopy in the City in recent years, completely negating the 130ha planted by the City.

Compounding issues in WA's largest Council was a lack of community willpower to protect trees on private land – including their own properties, Mr Irwin said.

Of about 244,000 residents, Mr Irwin said the City had not received a single registration to its significant tree register and had received negative media coverage for its efforts.

"We have consulted with the community and talked about retention of trees on private land," he said.

"It is not that unpopular when you talk about it in general, but as soon as you point to someone and say it is your house... it is a different story."

Mr Irwin said the above concerns sat in stark contrast to public consultation which found valuing environment and trees was the number one message from the City's community.

The City spends \$6m per year on tree planting, employs a dedicated team and supports 12 community environment groups in an effort to boost its 12.5 per cent canopy cover.

NEDLANDS, SOUTH PERTH DRAW LINE IN THE SAND TO PROTECT TREES ON PRIVATE LAND

Could the City of Nedlands and City of South Perth set a precedent as the first Local Governments in Western Australia to bake tree protection on private land into local planning regimes?

That is the hope after both Councils on March 28 voted in favour of motions to require development approval for removal of large trees.

About 75 people crammed into Nedlands' Council chambers to watch the Council endorse *Scheme Amendment 12 and Local Planning Policy – Trees on Private Land* which will regulate the removal of large trees from private land zoned R20.

Of 11 deputations for the policy, only one was in opposition. Supporting statements came from academics, scientists, community groups and children.

Scheme Amendment 12 and Local Planning Policy – Trees on Private Land

60A: No person shall cause or permit the removal, destruction, or damage to any tree that meets the following criteria on a lot zoned Residential with a density code of R20 or below unless development approval has been granted in accordance with Part 8 of the Deemed Provisions:

- Canopy diameter of 6m or greater; or
- Height of 8m or greater; or
- In the case of a tree with a single trunk, a trunk circumference of 1.5m or greater, measured 1.4m above the ground; or
- In the case of a tree with multiple trunks, a total trunk circumference of 1.5m or greater, with an average trunk circumference of 625 millimetres or greater, measured 1.4m above the ground

City of Nedlands Mayor Fiona Argyle thanked community groups, staff and Councillors who had driven the policy over the past two years.

"The protections are very low level... but we have to start somewhere," she said.

"It seeks to avoid a situation where R20 blocks are completely devoid of trees.

"We are not the guinea pig; we are leading the state on tree protection."

Nedlands' policy would not require development approval to remove unwanted species or to undertake pruning within Australian Standards.



At the same time across the river South Perth Councillors voted in favour of Local Planning Scheme 7, under which development approval would be required to remove a tree over eight metres in height.

Similar safeguards as Nedlands will be in place for unwanted species and pruning.

Both policies will now go to the Western Australian Planning Commission for approval.

WAPC has previously argued the case for significant tree registers to be used instead, a policy which has been criticised by several Local Governments leaders, including the City of Stirling and City of Nedlands at WALGA's Urban Forest Conference.

Research conducted by Nedlands found fewer than 70 trees had been added to registers across eight Local Governments where they were in place.

Nedland's Scheme Amendment has support of 91 per cent of those surveyed, including 79 per cent of those who would be directly impacted by the policy.

South Perth's meanwhile has about 80 per cent support.



IN THIS SA CITY, RESIDENTS CAN WIN TREES AND GET CANOPY DATA ON RATES NOTICES

Competitions to win trees, canopy cover on rates notices and conservation grants are among the out-of-the-box ideas one Adelaide Council has enacted to meet State Government targets.

The City of Unley in 2013 had a canopy coverage of 26 per cent and, under the SA Government's 20 per cent canopy increase by 2045 plan, needed to boost that to 31 per cent.

Like many Local Governments across Australia, canopy on public land was significantly higher than that of private land, but with private accounting for 80 per cent of land ownership the fight to increase canopy by utilising public space alone was a challenge.

A key tool in the City's arsenal has been the win a tree voucher program, which has accounted for about 600 new trees in two years.

Lower canopy suburbs are given a leg-up with extra entries to boost their chances of winning.

The City also included property-level canopy coverage per cent on rates notices sent to 19,000 property owners,

with encouragement to retain existing and plant more trees where possible.

LiDAR data is used in the notices and a section of the City's website contains information on health canopy levels, targets and how the data is measured.

Conservations grants for maintenance of significant and regulated trees, extra green bins and support for aged care clients is also available through the City.

Support for existing trees comes through innovative thinking such as diverting rainwater from properties and roads which would otherwise go down the drain to slow-release pits in nature strips.

Challenges for the City are familiar to many planners – a preference for large buildings with low maintenance gardens, reduced private open space and a propensity to clear a whole block prior to redevelopment.

The City noted in an SA Government Urban Forest Inquiry submission it does not have enough public open space left to offset losses on private land.

The submission contains myriad challenges and ideas to explore and can be found on its website.

Today, despite continued challenges preventing canopy loss on private land, the City of Unley's canopy has increased to 28 per cent.

UNLEY SUCCESS STORIES

Young Street

13 mature press planted on-road with no on-street parking loss

Duthy Street

Kerb and footpath reconstruction with permeable material around trees

Richards Terrace

Negotiation with strata body to plant mature trees on private land where public footpath was too narrow

Clifton Street

Pocket Parks established on closed side streets

King William Road

Over 70 deciduous trees planted in reimagined precinct where road had reached end of life

HOW AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST CITY IS REGAINING ITS URBAN FOREST

Ambitious targets backed by strong State Government planning controls and a willingness to plant native and exotic species are behind the remarkable re-growth of tree canopy among inner Sydney's concrete jungle.

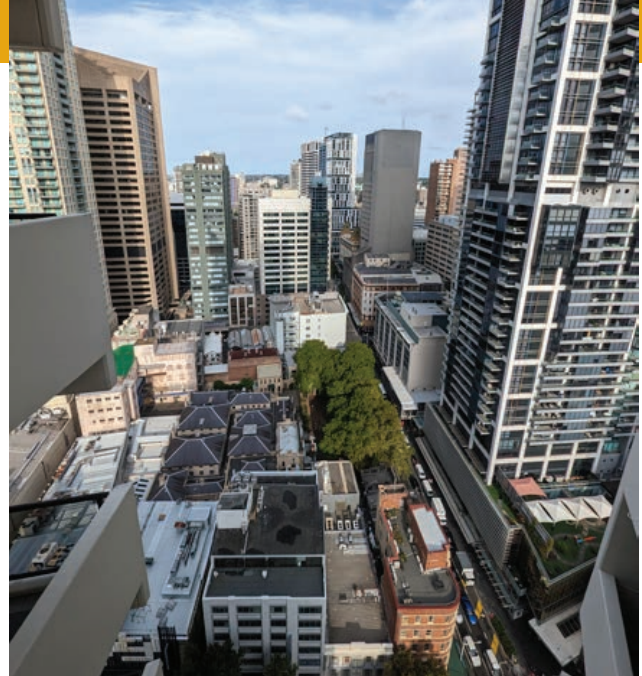
That was the message from City of Sydney Urban Forest Manager Karen Sweeney as she charted the course her Council took "turning grey to green" to regular applause in her keynote address to WALGA's Urban Forest Conference at Curtin University.

Since 2008 the City has embarked on an ambitious greening project to increase canopy cover from 15.5 per cent to a minimum 27 per cent by 2050 amid significant urban renewal in the heart of the global city.

Today the City's tree canopy stands at about 20 per cent and the Council wants to achieve its goal by targeting 34 per cent cover on streets, 46 per cent in parks and 20 per cent on properties. A combined 40 per cent green cover would include grass and small plants.

Ms Sweeney said the City planted the largest tree possible in each location and was changing the narrative to have trees seen as essential infrastructure, not just amenities for properties, parks and streets.

"Equity is key – ensure all of the community contribute and have access to canopy cover," she said.



"Some of the areas with the highest canopy increase are the areas of urban renewal, such as Victoria Park in Zetland, and the Harold Park development in Glebe which used to be an old racecourse.

"Now it has well-planned streets and parks – it feels like a parkland – you hardly notice the apartments."

One key factor missing in WA which has helped the City of Sydney is strong planning controls which restricts the removal of any tree more than five metres in height without consent, a rule which was legislated by the NSW Government four decades ago.

A 15 per cent canopy cover requirement for development applications has had mixed success and is now being converted to a tree replenishment rate which is seen as easier to understand.

The City of Sydney spends some \$2.5m per year planting 1,000 trees per year, split 50/50 between planting and maintenance – a cost Ms Sweeney attributed to the fact they were planting large trees.

A MODEL FOREST FROM ABROAD

Have a tiny space in your community which could use a makeover? A Miwayaki Pocket Forest could be the answer.

The pint-sized forests can be planted in a space as small as a tennis court and are fast-growing.

The method out of Japan has been rolled out to seven sites in WA by Murdoch University Research Fellow Dr Grey Coupland and Carbon Positive Australia.

Pocket forests have a density of three to five plants per square metre, compared to traditional reforestation methods of 1 to 2 plants, and are started by enriching soil with local waste collected from sites such as schools.

"Children can recycle but can't see the benefits – so what we do is get children

to collect lunch scraps and contribute to compost," Dr Coupland said.

"What better way to engage them in climate action than to plant their own forest."

Dr Coupland said temperatures inside pocket forests were found to be up to 22 degrees cooler than the surrounding environment, and plant survival rate was nearly 90 per cent.

Carbon Positive Australia CEO Louise Tarrier said pocket forests created a sense of community ownership.

"At the Brookton Community Centre where they came to us and said

we would love to plant a Miwayaki Forest – the girl guides were involved, the local community garden was involved," she said.

"They will take care of that pocket forest for many years into the future.

"There is a yarnning circle in the middle of the forest so it is also a place where the community can meet and yarn away about life."

Ms Tarrier said Local Governments or other groups interested in planting a forest could contact Carbon Positive Australia or Dr Coupland.



ALGA FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION



ALGA President Linda Scott

LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

The ask: Making the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program permanent with ongoing funding of \$500 million per year, with funding indexed annually.

Why: Failure to invest in building and maintaining community and transport infrastructure will reduce the lifespan of these facilities and transfer the cost of renewal onto future generations.

FAIR INCREASES TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

The ask: A fair increase of additional funding to restore Financial Assistance Grants to at least one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue and to meet the Government's election commitment to a fair increase in Financial Assistance Grants.

Why: Many councils are facing significant financial sustainability challenges, impacting on their capacity to support their communities. Inadequate funding of Local Government places an unfair and inequitable financial burden on local communities and frustrates their realistic needs, priorities and expectations.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE RECOVERY PROGRAM

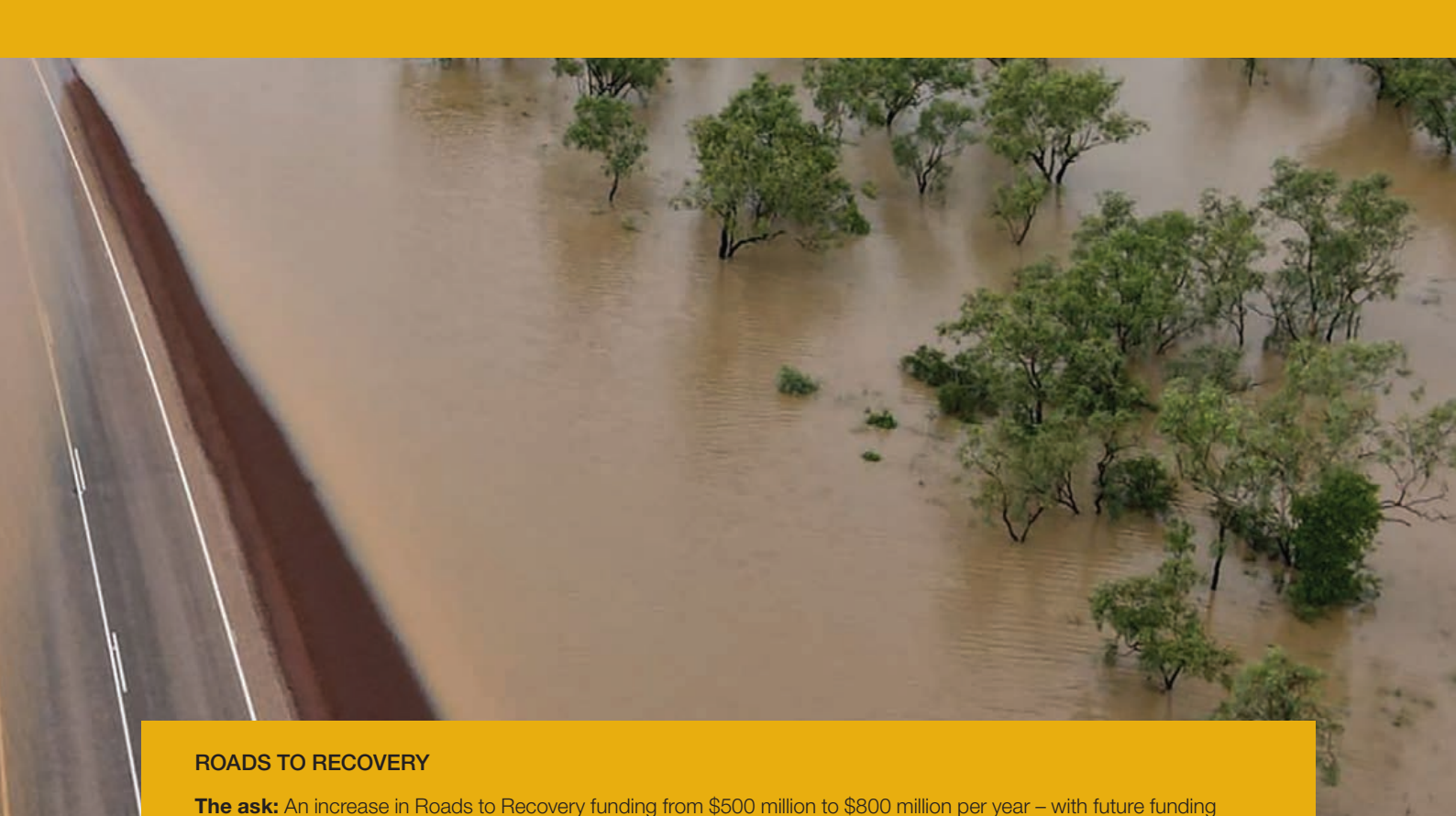
The ask: \$250 million per year over four years on top of Disaster Recovery Funding to immediately enable disaster-declared regional councils to support communities, repair infrastructure and rebuild to a more resilient standard.

Why: Building back infrastructure to be more resilient against future disaster events will save all governments money in the long term.

FREIGHT PRODUCTIVITY

The ask: \$300 million per year for Local Governments to improve freight productivity on their road networks and support the implementation of Heavy Vehicle National Law Reforms.

Why: The effective implementation of Heavy Vehicle National Law Reforms is vital to increasing Australia's productivity, and local roads are an integral component of Australia's freight network.



ROADS TO RECOVERY

The ask: An increase in Roads to Recovery funding from \$500 million to \$800 million per year – with future funding indexed annually.

Why: Over the past 12 months, widespread flooding across the country has caused billions of dollars in damage to Australia's local roads network and exposed the systemic underinvestment in maintaining these roads. The Government's commitment to maintain Roads to Recovery funding at \$500 million per year is appreciated, but inflationary pressures are reducing the buying power of this funding.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CYBERSECURITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The ask: \$10 million to scope Local Government's preparedness to deal with cyber-attacks and data breaches.

Why: Local governments collect and hold a significant amount of sensitive information, including credit card information, plans for buildings, information about essential infrastructure, and connections through to state government IT systems.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

The ask: \$7 million over four years to employ a network of Indigenous Affairs Policy Officers including at the Australian Local Government Association as well as all state and territory Local Government Associations.

Why: As the closest government to communities, councils can play a vital role in reducing Indigenous disadvantage, achieving better outcomes for First Nations people, and supporting reconciliation.

LOCAL JOBS, SKILLS AND TRAINING PROGRAM

The ask: Support for Councils to employ up to 5,600 additional apprentices, trainees, cadets and graduates over the next ten years.

Why: Australian councils are facing significant jobs and skills challenges, and increased investment in training and upskilling the next generation of workers is vital.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

The ask: \$100 million per year for four years for Local Governments to reduce kerbside waste collection contamination and increase resource recovery.

Why: We are running out of landfills, and recycling collection costs that are borne by all Australians continue to rise.

EMISSIONS REDUCTION

The ask: \$50 million per year for four years to support Local Governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deliver community aspirations for increased climate action.

Why: Councils can play a key role in helping the Federal Government deliver on its emissions targets.

HOUSING CRISIS

The ask: \$100 million per year over four years for a Local Government-specific grant program to help councils facilitate the delivery of affordable and social housing in their communities.

Why: The lack of affordable housing is having significant social and economic impacts in cities and towns across Australia, including in regional and rural communities.

MAR/APR LOCAL LENS

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 the [WALGA Communications Team](mailto:communications@walga.asn.au) via email: communications@walga.asn.au



ASHBURTON

The site of Onslow's Ocean View Caravan Park Overflow is progressing nicely. Works commenced earlier this year, with funding from the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science, and Innovation, which enabled the Shire of Ashburton to deliver additional overflow sites for self-contained travellers in time for the 2023 Eclipse in April.



BAYSWATER

The City of Bayswater celebrated its multicultural community with a range of Harmony Week events. Broun Park in Embleton came alive with the colours, music and aromas of the world on March 18. Later in the week, the City's libraries hosted origami and sushi-making workshops for young children, and an intergenerational drumming workshop where all ages practised playing the Taiko. With almost half of the City's population born overseas, these free family-friendly events brought the community together to learn more about the culturally diverse groups that call the City home.

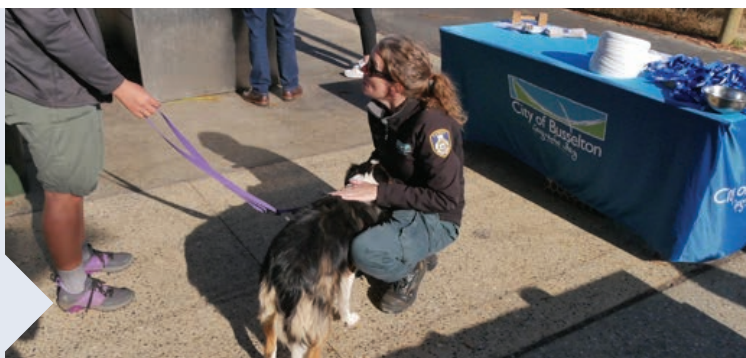
BROOME

Former Broome Shire President Harold Tracey laying a wreath to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the first Broome Air Raid that resulted in the deaths of at least 88 people, including Dutch civilians who had just arrived from Indonesia in flying boats, which were strafed by Japanese Zero fighters on Roebuck Bay. The event was attended by Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Marion Derckx, Japanese Consul General to Western Australia Yasushi Naito and British Consul General to Western Australia Tina Radshaw.



BUSSELTON

In March the City of Busselton hosted a “Dog’s Breakfast” where City rangers joined Birdlife Australia and Geo Bay Dog Training in providing an opportunity for dog owners to learn about shorebirds on local beaches via demonstrations and requirements for keeping control of dogs on beaches. Whilst dog owners enjoyed a sausage sizzle, dogs didn’t miss out receiving treats and taking home new dog leads, water bowl frisbees and poo pouches.



CAMBRIDGE

The \$3m Perry Lakes Replenishment Project aims to restore historic water levels at the much-loved reserve. Mayor Keri Shannon and acting CEO Kelton Hincks gathered with ex-Environmental Protection Authority CEO Barry Carbon, UWA Hydrogeologist Adjunct Professor Don MacFarlane and representatives from Civcon and Newman College to celebrate the launch of the project in February. It is expected a prolonged impact on water levels due to the project will be measurable from spring this year.



CAPEL

The town of Capel enjoyed Captivate Capel 2023 in March. Glenda Humphries opened the ceremony with a beautiful Welcome to Country followed by a day of musical talent from Maya Ixchell and James Wilson. Bunbury MLA Don Punch assisted Masterchef’s Brendan Pang with a cooking demonstration whilst hundreds of residents enjoyed the free family event.



CANNING

For the 12th year in a row, Cannington Leisureplex hosted Youth Fest. The free event included a series of fun-filled activities including pool access, pool inflatables, water slides, photo booth, live DJs, free food, body art and even a bombie pool. Following the City’s Strategic Community Plan to build a cohesive community where diversity is welcomed, valued, and cherished, Youth Fest is vital in supporting the City’s mission to initiate a forward-thinking and energetic community.



CARNAMAH

The Carnamah Youth Space has been designed by the Carnamah youth and wider community. The bobtails guard the entrance of the nature play area that will be part of the next stage of the Carnamah Youth Space development. This project is being delivered in partnership with RAC, through its Reconnect WA initiative, which aims to create vibrant streets and public spaces for Western Australians to interact and connect with each other.

COTTESLOE

On January 26 the Town of Cottesloe hosted a combined event with the Town of Mosman Park and Shire of Peppermint Grove to welcome new citizens and recognise outstanding community members through the annual Community Citizen of the Year Awards. The event featured a smoking ceremony, Welcome to Country, a performance by the Wadumbah Aboriginal Dance Group, a performance by A Cappella West Chorus, and an exhibition from Japingka Aboriginal Art.



DALWALLINU

More than 100 people attended a Retro Bingo Music night hosted by the Shire of Dalwallinu in March to fundraise for the new Multi Purpose Early Learning Centre which is nearing completion. It has been funded by the Federal Government and the Shire of Dalwallinu. Local businesses and contractors to the Shire were very supportive of the event and donated over 40 prizes. Margot Fox-Slater and Murray Whyte are pictured posing against a restored FC Holden outside the Dalwallinu Recreation Centre.

FREMANTLE

The City of Fremantle's Leisure Centre 25m indoor pool reopened after the replacement of the roof. The new roof is made of thermally insulated panels rather than the previous lightweight polycarbonate sheeting, which will make the pool environment warmer in winter and provide better UV protection in summer. The project has given new life to the centre, providing community members with a comfortable facility that has a fresh new look and feel.



GERALDTON

Developing practical and social skills with bikes proved a big hit with Mullewa's youth. As part of the City of Greater Geraldton's School Holiday Program, young people were given the opportunity to refurbish bikes donated by Kennards Hire Foundation with the return of the popular BikeRescue program. BikeRescue is delivered by Dismantle, a social enterprise enabling young people to reach their potential. The City of would like to thank program partners Kennards Hire Foundation, Synergy and Dismantle for making BikeRescue possible.



GOSNELLS

City of Gosnells projects have won five awards and received two high commendations at the 2023 Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia WA Excellence Awards – including the prestigious GK Watters Local Government Engineering Excellence Award, for Robinson Park. The Robinson Park subdivision and park development also won the Best Public Works Project Greater than \$5 million Award (Metro), Excellence in Innovation Award (Metro) and Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Award. Mayor Teresa Lynes said the awards acknowledged the high calibre of work undertaken by the City.

JOONDALUP

The Joondalup Festival was back bigger and better than ever in 2023. This year's program entertained and engaged local residents and visitors from far and wide. Member for Hillarys Caitlin Collins presented a cheque to Mayor Albert Jacob at the launch event on behalf of Lotterywest, who have been a supporter of the Festival since its beginning in 1998.



KENT

Alongside its annual Thank a Volunteer Dinner, the Shire of Kent and its residents celebrated the opening of a new bouncy pillow at the Pingrup Pavilion. In attendance was Federal Member for O'Connor Rick Wilson, who partook in the day's fun and festivities. This facility is used by the local playgroup weekly, and throughout the year hosts various events including the Pingrup Races and winter sport fixtures. The pillow was purchased and installed through grant funding from the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.



KONDININ

On March 10 Kondinin held the annual Gourmet in the Garden with a Balinese Twist. Chef Sophie Budd returned to cook for 120 guests this year. Mint Events Collective's beautiful caravan bar and singer Sunny Day kept the crowd entertained. The garden looked great thanks to a massive volunteer effort from community members in the lead up to the night. Thank you to all the people who helped in the kitchen during the day, all those who came to help set up the marquee and the festoon lights, and all the staff at the Shire who helped in so many ways.

KWINANA

The Alcoa Children's Festival at Calista Oval in the City of Kwinana made a welcome return after a three-year hiatus with a wonderful turnout to the family-friendly event on 11 March. The superhero theme inspired children under 12 years with plenty of free activities on offer, live entertainment, and food trucks. The event was sponsored by Alcoa, Lotterywest and bp.



MEEKATHARRA

Meekatharra is creating a Cemeteries Management Plan which will apply to both the current cemetery as well as the five historic cemeteries in the vast shire. Not only will the plan address the physical aspect of the cemeteries such as drainage, fencing and access, it will also assist in preserving heritage. With graves dating back to the gold rush era of the late 1800s, many old stories and headstones are being dusted off and captured in the Shire's records.

Pictured: Heritage Stonemason Nick Lukacs, Cemetery Consultant Helene Bartleson and Shire of Meekatharra Rural Roads Supervisor Stephen Hoare at the historic Nannine Cemetery.

MOUNT MARSHALL

Community members gathered at the Mt Marshall Aquatic Centre on February 25 to complete the Virtual Rottnest Channel Swim which is 788 laps of the Mt Marshall Pool. The event was organised by the local police who worked with the Bencubbin Community Resource Centre and the Shire of Mt Marshall.





MUKINBUDIN

On a scorching hot afternoon in the Wheatbelt, the community of Mukinbudin came together on Australia Day to reflect, respect and celebrate all things Australian. Children played water games on the oval, and the slippery slide and bucking bull were a hit. Adults enjoyed local band The Robinson Brothers, whilst local caterer The Farmhouse Kitchen provided delicious salads. Roast meats were cooked on site by Perth's The Golden Roast and drinks were served by the Muka Football Club. To complete an enjoyable day, Rob With The Hat encouraged locals to have a go at karaoke which was a hit and revealed some hidden talent among the community.

MURRAY

The Shire of Murray recently celebrated the official opening of Western Australia's first Food Innovation Precinct Western Australia. Agriculture and Food Minister Jackie Jarvis opened the precinct alongside Regional Development Minister Don Punch, South West MLC Alannah MacTiernan, Murray-Wellington MLA Robyn Clarke, Shire of Murray President Cr David Bolt, Peel Development Commission Chairman David Doepel, Murdoch University Vice Chancellor Andrew Deeks and Future Food Systems CRC FTF Project Management Group's Dr Tash Teakle.



NANNUP

Deputy President Cr Vicki Hansen at the YARN Mental Health Expo at Manjimup Senior High School. Cr Hansen engaged with youth about the effects of alcohol on brain development. Cr Hansen sees the Nannup Local Drug and Alcohol Group work as important. She says the kids give back a lot of energy and it's great to meet them where they are at.

PLANTAGENET

A Great Southern Designated Area Migration Agreement is one step closer. The 11 Local Governments in the Great Southern, Great Southern Development Commission and Regional Development Australia Great Southern will jointly fund a business plan to submit to the Department of Home Affairs. The formal DAMA application is anticipated to be lodged in July and, if successful, will allow local businesses to sponsor skilled overseas workers in specific industries that they have been unable to fill by advertising locally.

Pictured: RDAGS CEO Cimon Lyas, GSDC Deputy CEO Jarrad Gardner and WALGA GS Country Zone President Chris Pavlovich. Credit: RDAGS



PORT HEDLAND

The Town of Port Hedland hosted Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and 18 Federal Cabinet Ministers at a civic reception at the Gratwick Hall on February 21. More than 120 community members attended the function following the historic cabinet meeting at the Port of Port Hedland. Mayor Peter Carter presented Mr Albanese with a gift on behalf of the Town after a meeting with the PM.



SCARBOROUGH

A crowd of approximately 700 people gathered at the Scarborough foreshore on Australia Day to honour local champions and welcome new Australian citizens. The event saw 184 new citizens, from 42 nationalities, pledge themselves to Australia and they in turn witnessed the City honouring the contributions and values of members from the community they are part of. The passionate celebrations of six Brazilians captured the attention of attendees and the media.

SERPENTINE JARRAHDALE

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale launched Shape our Future – SJ 2033 in March, a comprehensive community engagement campaign designed to inform the development of the Shire's Strategic Community Plan. Shire staff have been busy connecting with residents in the community as part of the campaign over recent weeks, gauging their feedback and finding out what matters most to SJ locals.



SOUTH PERTH

Mindeerup on South Perth Foreshore played host to a giant maze over five fun-filled days during Southside Summer. A first for the City of South Perth, the maze was free to explore and accessible to people who use wheelchairs, walking aids and for parents with prams. Part of Fringe World, Southside Summer brought different family-friendly experiences including live entertainment, pop-up activities and giant games to South Perth Foreshore.

SUBIACO

Timber decking at Shenton Park's Lake Jualbup has been given a makeover, the result being a brand-new viewing deck complete with composite decking and laser-cut screens which feature images of a variety of fauna, including black swans, frogs and turtles, found in and around the lake.



TAMMIN

On March 13 the Tammin community gathered to celebrate the Southern Link project which saw a new road constructed to allow heavy vehicles to bypass the town centre. It has been many years in the making and a win for community safety. Federal Senator Louise Pratt cut the ribbon on the road together with Shire of Tammin Freeman Joan Button. What does one do with a new road with no traffic on it yet? Play some street cricket of course! It was a hotly-contested match between North Tammin and South Tammin with the official match result being reported as a draw.



VICTORIA PLAINS

Shire of Victoria Plains CEO Sean Fletcher opened the Monsterball Giant Water Slide at the NADC-funded Australia Day breakfast at the Bolgart Sports Club.

Photo credit: Colleen Dew



VINCENT

The City provides funding to events that make Vincent a lively and connected place for everyone to enjoy. Applications are now open for the year-round event sponsorship 2023-2024, where applicants can apply for up to \$40,000 in funding. The City provided funding to 11 events in the last financial year, including the St Patrick's Day Festival, which was held in Leederville on 18 March.

Pictured: a family dressed in green and rainbow colours at the recent St Patrick's Day Festival in Leederville.

WANNEROO

The Perth Symphony Orchestra delivered some spectacular takes on Aussie rock hits in front of thousands of families at the Kingsway Regional Sporting Complex in Madeley. Symphony Under the Stars provided a fantastic opportunity to bring residents together and connect the City of Wanneroo community. The audience was also introduced to the City's Search for a Star competition winner Indigo Ellis, a 17-year-old Aboriginal singer/songwriter, who was given the honour of performing some tracks with the orchestra.



WAROONA

The Waroona community took advantage of the glorious weather to hold two open air movie night events, with Clifford the Big Red Dog being enjoyed at the Preston Beach Gold Club and The Black Cockatoo Crisis screening at Drakesbrook Wines.



KARRATHA

City of Karratha's golden girls slung on their pearls and the men dressed their best to celebrate the Seniors High Tea & Perth Festival's Blueback movie screening at the Red Earth Arts Precinct on Sunday 26 February. Prizes were won for the best underwater-themed costume and some rather interesting ideas were shared amongst the group.

GINGIN

On 18 February and 8 March, the Shire of Gingin hosted two expert workshops for community groups focusing on attracting and retaining volunteers, and overcoming challenges faced by community group office bearers. With volunteering numbers in decline in WA, community development experts Peter Kenyon from Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and Caroline Robinson from 150Square provided attendees in Lancelin and Woodridge with creative solutions and practical approaches to issues faced by many volunteer-run community groups in the Shire.



VICTORIA PARK

A new mural commemorating past local resident and hero Private Alec Bell, who died attempting to save his mates during the Vietnam War, has been painted with the help of the community at Alec Bell Park in East Victoria Park. The Hampshire Community Group secured an Arts Grant from the Town for the mural, which was painted under the direction of artist Rozanna Johnson. In addition to the mural, the group's efforts to improve the park have included the planting of native vegetation provided under the Town's Urban Forest Strategy, and the installation of a Little Free Library.

TOODYAY

Signed, sealed, and soon to be delivered: the Shire of Toodyay's Alma Beard Medical Centre will once again take care of the community, with a contract for the provision of GP and allied health services endorsed by Council and signed off by Shire CEO Suzie Haslehurst, incoming GP Dr Akeem Lawal, and Shire President Cr Rosemary Madacsi in March. Since the centre's closure in November 2022, the Shire has been firmly focused on acquiring new services to fill the space. Dr Lawal, who has previously worked locally and is no stranger to many Toodyay residents seeking high-quality health care, will take over the practice following a comprehensive tender process and contract negotiations. Services are expected to resume at Alma Beard in late May 2023.



HAROLD TRACEY STEPS DOWN AS SHIRE OF BROOME PRESIDENT

Shire of Broome Councillor Harold Tracey's six-year run as President has ended, announcing in February he would step down due to family reasons.

Cr Tracey was first elected to Council in 2013 and became Shire President in 2017 after serving as Deputy Shire President for three years.

Under his tenure several of Broome's key attractions including Chinatown and Town Beach have undergone multimillion-dollar redevelopments.

Cr Tracey intends to remain on council until at least October 2025, when his current term ends.

He said it had been a privilege to represent the Shire of Broome as President for the past six years, but leaving now was important for his family.

"This is the hardest decision I have ever made because I have loved the job," Cr Tracey said.

"I'm a very proud Broome boy and I believe we have achieved an incredible amount during my tenure."

Shire of Broome CEO Sam Mastrolembro said Cr Tracey had been a tireless advocate for Broome.

"He has been the public face of the Shire and Council and a tremendous leader in his time as Shire President," he said.

"He has also worked incredibly hard behind the scenes to lobby other tiers of Government for the benefit of our community."

"There have been many achievements and successes including advocacy for funding for major projects and a



shake-up of resources and policies to address youth crime, alcohol-related harm, housing and many other community priorities."

Cr Tracey ended his tenure as President on March 30.

His successor, Desiree Male, will be in the role until the October 2023 Local Government election, when a popularly-elected President will be voted in.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS CALL TIME

Three more long-serving Local Government identities have also announced looming retirements at the end of their respective terms.

City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington revealed he would step down in October after 12 years at the helm and 23 years on Council.

Mr Wellington has led Albany through the Anzac Centenary commemorations and advocated strongly for developments such as the Albany Ring Road and renewable energy.

"It's an incredibly difficult decision I've reached, but the time is right to pass

the baton to someone else to continue the job," Mr Wellington said.

"Council is full of passion and energy for the future of Albany which fills me with confidence."

After 16 years City of Stirling CEO Stuart Jardine will pass the baton on at Western Australia's most-populous Local Government.

"It has been my absolute privilege to lead this wonderful organisation and I look back with immense pride and fulfillment on what we have achieved for our community," Mr Jardine said.

Mr Jardine has overseen the \$100m Scarborough Foreshore

redevelopment, election of the City's first popularly-elected Mayor and eight consecutive Australasian Reporting Award golds for the City's annual report.

He will resign at the end of his contract in April 2024.

And finally Shire of Dardanup President Mick Bennett revealed in late March he would also step down in October after more than two decades in the role across two stints.

Cr Bennett has been active in formal planning processes for the new City of Wanju and contributed significantly to a vision for the area as a state-leader in sustainable living.

WA IN MIDST OF 'HISTORIC' \$4.5BN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

More than 170 guests gathered at Crown Perth on Wednesday March 8 to hear from transport industry insiders and experts about the past, present and future of the sector at WALGA's Transport and Roads Forum.

The forum was kicked off by Jess Stojkovski, Parliamentary Secretary to Transport Minister Rita Saffioti, who revealed telling insights into the mammoth transport task in the flood-ravaged Kimberley to get residents, supplies and industry moving.

Ms Stojkovski said 153 flights had carried 2891 passengers between Broome and Derby over a six-week period, and that work on replacing the destroyed Fitzroy River bridge was due to begin in May.

WA Transport Director Peter Woronzow followed Ms Stojkovski to highlight the exciting "once-in-a-generation" investment in transport.

WALGA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION

Return the Local Government share of motor vehicle licensing revenue to **27 per cent** over the course of the next State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement.

That asset investment entails a \$4.5bn spend not only split evenly between roads and rail, but also evenly between metro and regional.

Questioned by Shire of Coolgardie President Cr Malcolm Cullen on the Great Eastern Highway, which he said was "falling to bits", Mr Woronzow said his Department was aware of the problem.

"A significant amount of money has been allocated to that highway," he said.

"We are seeking funding to upgrade the Great Eastern Highway now. Until we can get funding to upgrade the whole highway, we are doing what we can with maintenance."

Mr Woronzow highlighted Main Roads' efforts to bring maintenance back in-house.

"One of the great things about bringing maintenance back in-house is Main Roads will have a workforce to respond to natural disasters quickly," Mr Woronzow said.

"It provides opportunities for regional development and for Aboriginal people to have a full-time employment."



IS IT TIME FOR PERTH TO EMBRACE MID-TIER TRANSPORT?

Eighteen metropolitan Local Governments have banded together to lobby for a mid-tier transport strategy in Perth, which could start with a "Knowledge Loop" tram or light rail service connecting UWA, Curtin University and ECU's future CBD campus.

City of Canning City Planning Manager Sergio Famiano (pictured) presented to WALGA's Transport and Roads Forum on the initiative, which seeks to gain WA Government support to develop a strategy while Metronet is being rolled out.

"We need to start planning for mid-tier now, so that it can commence (construction) when Metronet is complete," Mr Famiano said.

"Metronet won't support transit-oriented development because most stations are in suburbia (with low land value)."

Stage 1's 29km Knowledge Loop would be followed by a 35km link between the CBD and Scarborough Beach, with trackless trams or light rail options for both.

Further stages would seek to fill in gaps between Metronet's heavy rail network where commuters rely on Perth's "clunky, unreliable" bus network.

Mr Famiano said Transport Minister Rita Saffioti had agreed to work with Local Governments to identify potential routes and a strategy.

In its 2022-23 State Budget Submission, WALGA called for \$10 million funding for a high-level Mid-Tier Public Transport and Strategy for greater Perth, including cycling and walking connections.

WALGA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION

\$10m between 2023-24 and 2024-25 for a high-level Mid-Tier Public Transport Plan and Strategy for greater Perth (including cycling and walking connections) to support Metronet, in consultation with relevant Local Governments.

HOW YOU CAN MAKE THE DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS WORK FOR YOUR COUNCIL

Australia's foremost disaster recovery expert urged Local Governments to take a fresh approach to a disaster relief funding pool plagued for years by criticism of delays and red tape, limiting resilience efforts when rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

Speaking at WALGA's Transport and Roads Forum, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Coordinator-General Brendan Moon (pictured) made a strong case for the much-derided Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) as a "flexible vehicle" to support recovery.

Mr Moon described the DRFA as a safety net which – while not the complete answer – was workable if Councils approached it with a long-term view to recovery.

"Betterment is available under the DRFA," he said.

"(You can) build back to current engineering standards, not past standards.

"There's also room for place-based/evidence-based solutions that are based on local knowledge, and Local Governments have that knowledge... about certain treatments that are value for money."

Mr Moon used the example of a water treatment plant in the Queensland town of Gayndah which was destroyed days after being restored in the same location by flooding.

The plant was then relocated and cost just \$65 to replace a lock on the gate in the next flooding event. He also canvassed bridge replacement in Queensland following major flooding and fire events.

"We had a situation where we lost big portions of our bridge network following floods and also fires – they were timber," Mr Moon said.

"The current engineering standards gave us a much more resilient outcome, all funded under the DRFA."

On accessing DRFA, Mr Moon made the case for evidence-based policy, having a sound understanding of treatment options and price benchmarks, and not waiting for all the ducks to line up.

"Get money out of the door quickly; provide that resource to council so they can start design, start procurement and get works done that way," he said.

"It is really changing that thinking about we just can't wait until everything comes in and then approve and say 'here it is', it is that rolling body of work.



"Use your teams to actually make the case about why this works for your place and we are eminently perceptive to having that conversation, it would be eligible under our approach."

Mr Moon discussed the benefits of having identified treatments and benchmark costs established prior to disaster striking.

"During the assessment and approval process, we just get your engineer and he identifies what is the most appropriate treatment out of that list, what's your benchmark cost and that's your indicator," he said.

"We would look at funding 30 per cent of the value of a submission upfront."

On questioning from City of Karratha Mayor Peter Long about Local Governments' inability to ensure building compliance with construction standards in disaster-prone areas, Mr Moon was circumspect.

He said Local Governments should be funded to check compliance, but questioned whether imposing higher standards was wise at a time of crippling housing and labour shortages.

"Do we retreat?" he asked.

"This is the conversation coming at Australia over the next 50 years as climate change and rising sea levels start to impact some of our most highly populated areas.

"There is a partnership with insurance companies in Queensland so availability and premiums do respond to upgraded standards. But how we fund this, given all our exposures across the nation, and also the pressing issues we have in relation to availability of housing for people, is a wicked challenge."

Mr Moon also questioned Australia's jurisdictional approach to emergency management, noting many natural disasters crossed Local and State Government boundaries.

WALGA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION

\$16.9m increase between 2023-24 and 2026-27 in Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGs) funding to meet the current and future emergency response capability needs of Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES), to prepare a comprehensive asset management plan for Local Government emergency services facilities and equipment and to meet increased work health and safety requirements.

MARCH WALGA STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

PROPOSED ADVOCACY POSITION ON CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

That WALGA:

1. Supports respectful conversations about constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the Voice to Parliament.
2. Requests that the Commonwealth Government ensure that Local Governments and communities are kept informed on the proposal.

COMMUNITY DISASTER RESILIENCE STRATEGY SUBMISSION

That the Submission on the draft Western Australian Community Disaster Resilience Strategy be endorsed, incorporating the following points:

1. Guidance on donation management during a disaster, recovery from a disaster and ongoing;
2. Additional detail on the State's role, the funding that is required and how support can be accessed;
3. Acknowledgment that the role of volunteer bush fire brigade members is focused on response, and that resilience training is better targeted to support agencies and community groups assisting with disaster recovery. Any training requirements for brigade members should be voluntary.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING ADVOCACY POSITION

That the Child Safeguarding Advocacy Position as follows be endorsed:

Child Safeguarding

1. Local Government supports:
 - a. the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017, in particular Recommendation 6.12 which can be achieved by Local Government implementing and embedding child safeguarding across its functions with support from Governments at the national, state and territory levels; and
 - b. the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Humans Rights Commission).
2. The State Government through an Independent Oversight Body should provide financial, resourcing and capacity building support to Local Governments to implement and embed child safeguarding across its functions, through the provision of:
 - a. supporting materials such as template policies, procedures and guidelines;
 - b. consistent key messaging and resources to promote and share in venues and facilities and online;

- c. examples of best practice, including case studies;
 - d. self-assessment tools to assist Local Government;
 - e. ongoing training and skills development for Local Government staff, including online training options;
 - f. funding for the delivery of the child safeguarding function within smaller, less well resourced (Band 3 and Band 4) Local Governments; and
 - g. expert officers within each region to provide support and guidance to Local Government on child safeguarding.
3. The Local Government sector supports Local Government participation in the State's National Redress Scheme, with full financial coverage by the State.

SUBMISSION ON DRAFT GUIDELINE MINIMISING NOISE IMPACT FROM OUTDOOR COMMUNITY BASKETBALL FACILITIES

That WALGA:

1. Note that the Environment Minister has withdrawn the Draft Guideline: Minimising noise impact from outdoor community basketball.
2. Write to the Ministers for Environment, Local Government, Sport and Planning requesting the formation of a cross Government working group, including relevant representative bodies, to consider and develop solutions to balance urban density and infill, public recreation and noise management.

MAIN ROADS DRAFT ROADSIDE ADVERTISING POLICY AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. That WALGA endorse the Main Roads Draft Roadside Advertising Policy and Applications Guidelines in full; and
2. That the WALGA administration draft a submission to reflect its support.

BEST PRACTICE GOVERNANCE REVIEW FINAL REPORT

That:

1. The Best Practice Governance Review Stage 3 Final Report be received;
2. The proposed changes to WALGA's governance structure as per the revised Model 1, detailed in the Stage 3 Final Report, be noted;
3. Members be engaged on the detail of the model and a Final Report be presented to the May 2023 State Council meeting for consideration;
4. Any recommendation to the 2023 AGM include Option 5 as the Current Model and Option 1 as an alternative to the Current Model; and
5. Subject to points 1, 2, 3 and 4 above, constitutional changes be developed for consideration by State Council.

LEONORA A LEADING LIGHT IN ROAD SAFETY

The remote Goldfields community of Leonora is proving you don't have to be big to make a difference when it comes to road safety.

The Shire of Leonora formed the #SaferLeonora Committee in April 2022, the only one of its kind in the Goldfields-Esperance region.

In February this year the Shire adopted the Committee's road safety action plan to promote safe road use, roads and vehicles in collaboration with WALGA's RoadWise Program.

Under the plan the #SaferLeonora Committee will advocate for funding to purchase digital message boards encouraging drivers to slow down, book WALGA RoadWise courtesy speed display signs, promote community reporting of hazards, run education and monitoring campaigns, and develop incentives to reduce overcrowded and unroadworthy vehicle use.

Specific campaigns for Aboriginal communities and tourists will form part of the strategy, as will a photo voices campaign for National Road Safety Week in May.

That plan is now being replicated by the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils.

The #SaferLeonora Committee sees police and the Shire engage with the community and pool resources to drive crime prevention and safety measures.

"While the police have a significant role in ensuring community safety, we realise the benefit of supporting and encouraging our community to be part of the solution," Shire of Leonora President Cr Peter Craig said.

"Providing the community with an opportunity to work in partnership with police also builds greater trust and value in policing."

Committee members include representatives from the departments of Health and Education, non-profits, mining industry and the Wongatha community.

The full Road Safety Action Plan can be accessed in the Shire of Leonora's February Council Meeting Agenda.

Keep an eye on their social media in the coming weeks as the Shire's National Road Safety Week campaign goes live.

National Road Safety Week runs from May 14 – 21.



#NationalRoadSafetyWeek2023
#SaferLeonora

**"Safer cars mean safer families.
How safe is your ride?"**



Goldfields-Esperance Region working together for road safety

PASSING THE TEST

WALGA Training would like to congratulate Shire of Esperance Cr Ronald Chambers and Shire of Armadale Cr Melissa Northcott on their recent completion of the LGA50220 Diploma of Local Government – Elected Members. We also welcome new students Cr Dakota Krispyn from the Shire of Harvey and Cr Jordan Wright from the City of Wanneroo.

Cr Melissa Northcott, Shire of Armadale

HAS COMPLETING THE DIPLOMA INCREASED YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO SERVE MORE CONFIDENTLY ON COUNCIL?

Completing the Diploma has increased the knowledge but also enhanced what I knew and re-enforced that there is more to Local Government than people realise. It enhances confidence as an Elected Member and gives you more drive and appreciation for what not only Elected Members, but Officers and LGs are tasked with and what is expected. It helps you network with other Elected Members, therefore forming better relationships.

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED COMING TO THE WORKSHOPS?

Listening to incredible trainers that have experience, examples, and knowledge of Local Government operations. The experience from the trainers provided amazing insights and contributed to engagement and inclusive learning. They made the workshops extremely enjoyable and beneficial. Whilst there were long days, they were very rewarding and informative.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CHALLENGES?

Long days. Keeping the concentration. Over-committed. Some assignments questions were strange. As with all education, price is always challenge. But all these challenges only strengthen a person to make more determination and commitment to do it and succeed.

WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE OTHER COUNCILLORS TO DO THE COURSE AND WHY?

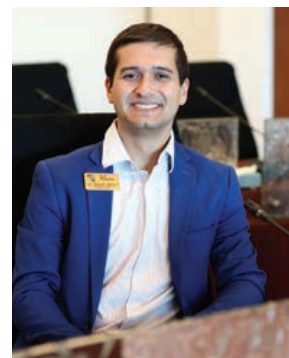
I would encourage others; it is so worthwhile. You get great engagement with other Elected Members, lessons you can



Cr Melissa Northcott



Cr Ronald Chambers



Cr Jordan Wright



Cr Dakota Krispyn (centre)

use to better not only your own LG but the sector, and of course you join a group of incredible individuals by doing the Diploma.

REGISTER FOR THE NEXT INTAKE

Places in the LGA50220 Diploma of Local Government – Elected Member program are highly sought after so if you are interested or have any questions, contact the WALGA Training team. Do not miss out on starting this valuable opportunity for you and your local community. WALGA Training can be contacted via training@walga.asn.au or (08) 9213 2088.

RTO Code 51992

RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT ACROSS WA'S MAIN ELECTRICITY NETWORK

The State Government has announced an investment of \$3 billion through Synergy into renewable energy generation and energy storage over the coming years.

According to Synergy Account Manager Bec Elshaw, while large gas and coal-fired generators are still generating electricity to meet demand across the South West Interconnected System (the SWIS), the way we generate, store and use electricity is changing rapidly.

"Rooftop solar, community batteries and wind farm technology are playing an increasingly significant role in the transition to more renewable energy," she said. "By optimising existing assets and building new renewable energy generation assets, we can help reduce our environmental impact and take a step closer to a potential decarbonised future."

"Our Synergy coal-fired generation will be phased out over the next five to seven years, to help reduce our carbon emissions by 80% by 2030, compared to 2021 levels. This is a major step towards helping achieve the State Government's emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050."

INVESTMENT IN WIND FARM AND BATTERY STORAGE

According to Ms Elshaw, wind energy currently supplies around 17% of total electricity in the SWIS.

"We're working on building new wind farms, and acquiring and expanding existing farms to tap into more wind power for WA."

At certain times of day, the combined generation from rooftop solar systems across the SWIS can generate three times as much electricity as the Muja Power Station, WA's largest power station.

Upcoming renewable energy projects

- Plans for a wind farm in the Shire of Kondinin, with a capacity of up to 150 megawatts, have already received development and environmental approvals.
- Plans for at least 400 megawatts of new wind generation capacity to be added to the SWIS by 2030.
- Plans to build the equivalent of 11 more battery energy storage systems the size of the Kwinana Big Battery by 2030.
- The Synergy Schools VPP Pilot Project includes ten operational virtual power plants (or VPPs) with seven more under construction.

"The Big Battery project which is being built in the City of Kwinana will be capable of storing up to 200MWh of excess energy generated by rooftop solar systems during the day. This energy can then be used during times of peak demand for electricity, such as in the evening."

Synergy's Schools Virtual Power Plant (VPP) Pilot Project and the existing Alkimos Beach Battery Energy Storage System have already been activated to help ease evening peak electricity demand in the SWIS.

"Combined, the operational assets in the Synergy Schools VPP Pilot Project

and the Alkimos Beach Battery Energy Storage System are capable of providing the SWIS with up to 7.2 MWh of stored energy, which is enough to power 500 average homes for a day."

"Synergy is working with LGAs to support WA's transition to a more renewable energy future and help to meet the changing needs of the SWIS."

For more information, please email Bec Elshaw at bec.elshaw@synergy.net.au or call 0457 199 222.

Watt's going where?

Get more visibility of your business's electricity use in My Account.

synergy.net.au/myaccount

synergy



State Council

President Cr Karen Chappel JP	President/Northern Country Zone
Cr Paul Kelly	Deputy President/Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Ken Seymour.....	Avon-Midland Country Zone
President Cr Phil Blight	Central Country Zone
Cr Helen Sadler	Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Catherine Ehrhardt	East Metropolitan Zone
Cr John Daw	East Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Cheryl Cowell.....	Gascoyne Country Zone
President Cr Laurene Bonza	Goldfields Esperance Country Zone
President Cr Stephen Strange	Great Eastern Country Zone
President Cr Chris Pavlovich.....	Great Southern Country Zone
Cr Chris Mitchell JP.....	Kimberley Country Zone
Cr Les Price	Murchison Country Zone
Cr Frank Cvitan JP	North Metropolitan Zone
Cr Russ Fishwick JP	North Metropolitan Zone
Cr David Lagan	North Metropolitan Zone
President Cr Michelle Rich.....	Peel Country Zone
Mayor Peter Long	Pilbara Country Zone
Mayor Patrick Hall	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:	
Ms Annie Riordan.....	LG Professionals
Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas.....	The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor, City of Perth