

Western Councillor



ISSUE 112 | FEB/MAR 2021



P4 STATE ELECTION
CAMPAIGN

| P18 150 YEARS
IN PICTURES

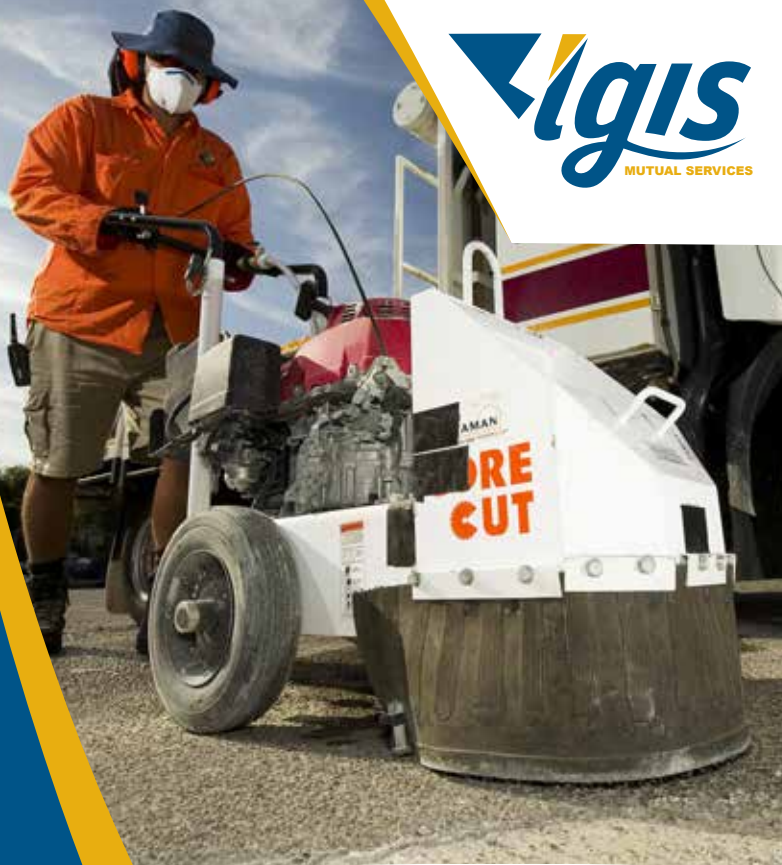
Local governments working together.

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.



BRINGING CLARITY TO COMPLEXITY

Civic Legal is one of the leading law firms in Western Australia's Local Government sector.

Our team of highly experienced lawyers strive for clarity and excellence in our legal advice to our clients.

Speak to us today to find out how our team can prevent, manage and solve the legal issues that face your Local Government.

Contact us today

For any queries, contact
admin@civiclegal.com.au
ph: 9200 4900

An international member of

AllyLaw



> www.civiclegal.com.au



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

Opportunity to comment

The State Government has released a discussion paper on the Child Abuse Royal Commission's recommendation for local governments to designate child safety officers from within existing staff profiles, and is seeking comments.

www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/CSODiscussion

Deadline Friday 2 April 2021.

Email: childsafeguarding@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

Contents

ISSUE 112 | FEB/MAR 2021

- 02 From the CEO's Office
- 02 President's Report
- 03 State Agency Update
- 04 State Election Campaign
- 05 RoadWise Reports
- 06 Around The Nation
- 08 Around The State In Pictures
- 18 150 Years in Pictures
- 22 The People of Local Government
- 23 New Electricity Solutions tailored to match LGA needs
- 24 Procurement Update
- 24 What's your happy place?
- 25 A Focus on Flexibility
- 26 Local Government Profile Cr Tony Dean
- 27 LGIS Update
- 28 Legal Update
- 29 State Council Briefs

Welcome to Issue 112 of Western Councillor

COVER:

Pop up activation at Cottesloe Beach on Sunday, 20 December.



GINGIN



MANDURAH



SERPENTINE JARRAHDALE



Chief Executive Officer
Nick Sloan

FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

West Australians are fond of saying we live in the best place in the world. We all feel a sense of pride when WA is mentioned on the world stage and so it was when ESPN broadcaster Steve Levy sent the following message to the world during the broadcast of the 2021 Super Bowl.

"We just want to say we're thinking about all the people impacted by those bushfires in Perth, Western Australia. A lot of lost property, impacting people's lives. We want you to know we're thinking about you and wishing for the best to get through this whole thing."

Western Australia experienced an unprecedented cascade of emergencies in the first week of February. A fire ignited in the Wooroloo area in the Shire of Mundaring rapidly escalated to a level 3 event, burning for almost a week and crossing two Local Government areas, with emergency warnings extended to many more. Simultaneously a Tropical Low moved down the coast, providing relief for the fire-affected areas late in the week, but resulting in flooding in the Upper Gascoyne, Derby-West Kimberley and Carnarvon regions. Complicating emergency responses to these situations was the overlay of a COVID-19 lockdown of Perth, Peel and the South West necessitated by the first case of community transmission in close to a year.

Steve Levy was right – we were all thinking about the impact the fires were having across the City of Swan, Shire of Mundaring and neighbouring districts but the leadership shown by Local Governments in response to these events was outstanding.

Throughout these concurrent emergencies, WALGA maintained awareness of the situations through

frequent engagement with District Emergency Management Advisors, the State Recovery Team and attendance at the All Hazards Liaison Group (AHLG) meetings convened by DFES. The AHLG includes representatives from all agencies involved in emergency management in Western Australia, and provides a weather and intelligence briefing, as well as an opportunity to raise issues for cross-agency discussion. WALGA liaised with the affected Local Governments to offer assistance in escalating issues to the State level if needed, and responded to members offering donations and support.

My position on the State Emergency Coordination Group and State Emergency Management Committee ensures local issues and concerns are put on the table with key decision makers and addressed as a priority.

During the lockdown and additional week of restrictions, WALGA's COVID-19 Coordinator was embedded in the State Health Incident Control Centre (SHICC) as Local Government liaison, enabling discussions with relevant agencies in response to Local Government enquiries. Throughout the pandemic and State of Emergency WALGA has attended weekly Incident Support Groups, where any issues reported by Members are raised. WALGA also provides weekly reports to the State Emergency Coordination Directorate on these matters.

By the second week of February, Local Governments affected by the Wooroloo bushfire and the floods transitioned to recovery, working in collaboration with the State Recovery Team. Dr Ron Edwards was appointed as the State Recovery Controller for the Wooroloo bushfires; and the State Recovery Coordination Group, comprised of State and Local Government representatives and not-for-profit organisations, commenced regular meetings. WALGA has provided support to all impacted Local Governments and keeps in close contact with the District Emergency Management Advisors to ensure situational awareness throughout the recovery process.

Our capacity to support Members during these times may be challenged with the complication of overlapping events but 2020 has made us nothing if not adaptable. I'd like to acknowledge the work of elected members, staff and volunteers across the State whose selflessness is something we should all take great pride in.



Mayor
Tracey Roberts JP

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As you are aware, our national representative body, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) represents the Local Government Associations around Australia and through them our collective 537 member Councils. I have had the privilege of being elected ALGA Vice President by State and Territory Association representatives and would like to provide you with an update on what's happening through this forum.

ALGA provides an important voice for the sector at the Commonwealth level, in particular around negotiating Financial Assistance Grants and road funding for Councils, and we recently put forward a Pre-Budget Submission to Federal Treasury, which sets out the sector's priorities for spending in the forthcoming May budget.

Through this submission, we sought to reinforce the important role Local Governments can play in working with the Commonwealth to drive our economic recovery following COVID-19.

Now more than ever, Federal Government support for Local Governments to assist our communities is vital for creating local jobs and strengthening community wellbeing.

The sector welcomed the support that was provided in last year's Federal Budget, which helped deliver the targeted short-term stimulus critical to the nation's economic recovery.

ALGA is calling for further investment in Local Governments in the year ahead, and in its

submission has set out 13 priorities, which will create a cumulative job increase of 31,222 and contribute \$4.65 billion to the national economy.

Infrastructure investment is an important focus of the submission, and ALGA is seeking additional funding for critical programs such as the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, Roads to Recovery, Local Roads Investment Program and the Black Spot Program. When engaging with Western Australian members of Federal Parliament, I have been highlighting what support for each of these programs would deliver in Western Australia. For example, we have identified roads that are the first mile of significant freight routes in mining and rural areas that have not been funded through other programs despite needing upgrades that will optimise supply chains for these critical industries.

The submission also seeks funding to support a range of important programs to support better community and environmental outcomes, including disaster mitigation, health and activity initiatives, improved digital connectivity in the regions, enhancing the sector's work with Indigenous communities and providing ongoing support to the Arts and Culture sector so severely impacted by COVID-19.

You can download a copy of the Pre-Budget Submission from the ALGA website at www.alga.asn.au.

We encourage Local Governments and Elected Members to raise these issues with their local Federal Member of Parliament and I will continue to keep you updated national issues and achievements through this forum as they occur.

STATE AGENCY UPDATE



Acting Executive Director
Local Government
Gordon MacMile

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (the department) has been working with the Australian National Development Index (ANDI) to explore the development of a Western Australian Development Index.

The purpose of the index would be to show the State's societal progress,

using local data. The index would also provide an important communication and advocacy tool for the community, local and State Government to engage with each other.

Development of the index would rely on collective engagement of members of the Western Australian community, and ongoing, it would be informed by community input and extensive research in social areas. These areas would include justice, health, environment, education, and life satisfaction.

ANDI is part of a growing international movement believing that the current, most influential measure of national progress, Gross Domestic Product (total output of the economy), is not reflective of a society's overall wellbeing.

ANDI partners with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and other governments through the Centre on Wellbeing, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE). WISE was established by OECD following declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WISE is generating new data and solutions to improve people's wellbeing and reduce inequalities. It is working towards refining the 'Better Life Index', which endorses the notion that wellbeing cannot be represented by a single indicator.

Updates will be provided via the WALGA State Council.

The department is also playing an important role in the implementation of several recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse (Royal Commission).

The Royal Commission was established to investigate failures of public and private institutions in protecting children from sexual abuse and made more than 400 recommendations. The intent of the recommendations is to support survivors, improve responses to alleged abuse if it were to occur and to prevent harm and abuse occurring in the future.

One of the recommendations is that Local Governments, with support from Federal and State Government, should designate child safety officer positions from within existing staff profiles.

The Royal Commission proposed that child safety officers fulfill four key functions including providing support to local community organisations undertaking child related work or activities.

The department is working with the Department of Communities to lead consultation with the Local Government sector about

implementation of this recommendation, and has released a discussion paper which is available at www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/CDODiscussion

The deadline for comments on the Royal Commission recommendation on Local Government child safety officers is 2 April 2021. Comments should preferably be endorsed by Council before submission.

For more information email childsafeguarding@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

Priority reforms aimed at improving accountability, transparency and procedural fairness in Local Government processes have been introduced through regulations bringing into effect the remaining sections of the Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019.

Model standards for CEO recruitment and selection, performance review and termination have been enacted as part of these reforms, along with a model code of conduct for elected members, committee members and candidates.

New regulations dealing with requirements for Local Government employee codes of conduct have also been introduced.

The following regulations were gazetted on 3 February 2021:

- The *Local Government (Administration) Amendment Regulations 2021*.
- The *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*; and
- The *Local Government Regulations (Employee Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*.

The new regulations impose requirements on Local Governments to undertake specific actions by 3 May 2021.

The Model Code of Conduct and CEO Model Standards must be adopted by absolute majority, either as written, or with additional provisions that meet the specific needs of the Local Government. This is provided they are consistent with the regulations.

Until this time, the Model Code and CEO Standards apply as prescribed in the Regulations.

The Model Code of Conduct regulations also require Local Governments to appoint a person to handle complaints of behaviour breaches and approve a form for lodging complaints.

This should be done at the earliest possible opportunity. The department has developed a template complaint form that can be downloaded from the website.

A policy for dealing with behaviour complaints should also be developed, or an existing complaints policy should be modified.

Chief Executive Officers are advised to review their current employee code of conduct and revise in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct Regulations. This is recommended to be undertaken in conjunction with preparing to adopt the Model Code.

Further information, including explanatory notes and guidelines are available on the department's website www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au.

OUR IMPACT

STATE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

By Jo Burges, Intergovernmental Relations and Risk

WALGA's 2021 State Election Campaign sought to leverage the important connections between Local Governments and their communities.

Importantly the campaign needed to:

- Elicit commitments to nine priority policy and advocacy issues
- Complement local and regional advocacy
- Leverage the influence of members to enhance advocacy effectiveness, and
- Enhance relationships between Local Government leaders and Members of Parliament.

Notwithstanding further COVID-19 interruptions by way of a five day lockdown and the unique political environment, it has been heartening to have experienced a positive and engaging response to the campaign.

All candidates were invited to meet with the President to discuss sector priorities, the value of working collaboratively to progress these important issues for the benefit of the Western Australian community and to share their vision for Local Government in the next term of Government.

The resultant engagement encompassed the Political landscape with face to face meetings with key members of the major parties including:

- Hon Bill Johnston MLA
- Peter Katsambanis MLA
- David Michael MLA
- Hon David Templeman MLA
- Shane Love MLA
- David Honey MLA; and
- John Carey MLA

A written response was received from The Greens WA to each of the priority areas.

Formal commitments to the Campaign priorities included:

Protecting our Coast

Nationals

- \$50 million by making Royalties for Regions funding available to protect WA's coastline from erosion.

Labor

- \$5 million

Sport & Recreation

Labor

- \$2 million increase to Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)

Liberal

- \$7 million increase to CSRFF

Nationals

- \$15 million Community Pools Revitalisation Program

The sector has also been working hard at the local level achieving significant commitments by candidates and their parties to local projects, particularly Sport and Recreation infrastructure. A number of news outlets have provided a comprehensive overview of all promises made during the State Election 2021 - search 'promise tracker State Election 2021' to view.

Members can expect to see continued engagement with Government into the future including those in opposition and at both the State and Commonwealth level.



DIGITAL SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

WALGA has been running a digital campaign to increase public awareness of the sector State Election campaign and the policy priorities in which we are seeking candidate support.

Facebook advertising and digital display advertisements were scheduled to run over a six week period, with an estimated reach of more than 200,000 across these platforms.

Placements were run concurrent with WALGA's activity to engage with candidates, with the call to action for members of the public being to make their local candidates aware of their support for those initiatives they find important.

ROAD TRAUMA REPORTS HELP TO PRIORITISE ROAD SAFETY EFFORT

Local Governments working to improve road safety on the local road network are taking advantage of the WALGA RoadWise Road Safety Performance on Local Government Roads Report series.

The report series allows Local Governments to monitor road safety performance on the local road network (by region), benchmark against other regions and understand road safety priority areas based on road crash types.

Each report is intended to be read in conjunction with more detailed supporting notes, which also provide examples of crash treatments by crash type.

With a simple, visual and concise format, the reports are designed to help Local Governments:

1. measure the road safety performance of the road network they manage,
2. monitor changes (positive or negative) in the safety performance of the local road network over time,
3. establish road safety improvement targets, and
4. identify and prioritise the work that will lead to improved road safety outcomes for communities.

Local Governments can use these reports to:

- benchmark and monitor road safety performance and progress
- prioritise and progress evidence based safe system interventions
- set road safety targets.

Most Local Governments have seen the first edition of this annual report series, which was largely presented through Regional Road Groups. The second edition will provide an opportunity for comparison and analysis, the value of which will increase over time.

BENEFITS OF NETWORK-LEVEL CRASH DATA

There are significant benefits for the Local Government sector in being able to monitor serious crashes on the local road network.

Information about crash types gives road owners and managers the opportunity to pinpoint the types of crashes occurring on their network. It allows road infrastructure managers to identify priorities and develop strategies that relate specifically to the unique needs of their region, and can assist Local Governments to prioritise their time, resources and effort towards implementing road safety interventions which target the crashes that are killing and injuring the most people in their area.

If Local Governments focus their efforts on these priority crash types, road trauma reduction targets can be met more effectively.

Similarly, information about the types of road user groups involved in killed and serious injury crashes on local roads helps target road safety efforts.

The data can also assist Local Governments to allocate funds to road program budgets for the installation of safe system treatments and projects likely to result in the greatest benefit.

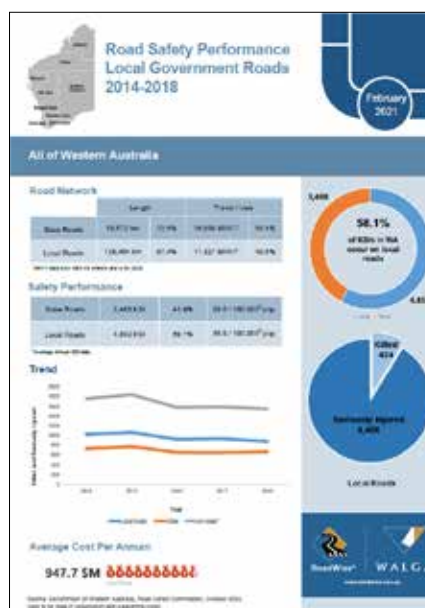
In Western Australia 4,832 people received fatal or serious injuries as a result of road crashes on Local Government managed roads between 2014 and 2018.

The average annual cost to the community of these crashes was \$947.7M. This figure is based on the Willingness to Pay (WTP) method, which is derived by calculating the amount that people are willing to pay for reducing the risk of becoming a fatal victim or of suffering a serious injury.

Source: Rizzi, L & Ortuzar, JDD 2005, 'Estimating the willingness-to-pay for road safety improvements', *Transport Reviews*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 471-485.

ACCESS THE ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROADS REPORTS

To download a copy of the *Road Safety Performance Report - All of WA 2014-18* and the relevant Road Safety Performance Report for your region, visit the WALGA RoadWise website, www.roadwise.asn.au. All reports should be read in conjunction with the relevant Road Safety Performance Report Supporting Notes.



If you have questions about the reports, or would like further information or support, please contact your closest WALGA RoadWise Road Safety Advisor.

Around the Nation

News from State Associations across the country

NSW



Councils Welcome the New 24-hr Economy Commissioner

Sydney's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic had taken another step forward with the appointment of the city's first 24-hour Economy Commissioner, Local Government NSW (LGNSW) said today.

LGNSW President Linda Scott congratulated Time Out Managing Director Michael Rodriguez on his appointment to the role and welcomed his commitment to implementing the NSW Government's Sydney 24-Hour Economy Strategy.

"This strategy formally recognises the important role of councils in supporting and enabling vibrant, safe and sustainable night-time economies and we look forward to working with Michael to bring the Strategy to life," Cr Scott said.

"The arts, music, hospitality and entertainment have been among the hardest hit by the COVID pandemic, so it is particularly fitting that we bolster the broader economic recovery by helping them get back on their feet.

"There can be no doubt the cultural creativity of a city is an important economic driver and job creator – but the individuals and organisations who make up this sector also bring a great deal of joy to our existence."

Cr Scott called for the Metropolitan Strategy to be complemented by a Regional Strategy, to ensure the benefits were experienced state-wide.

And she also called on the Government to establish a new Parliamentary Secretary responsible for the night-time economic portfolio.

"LGNSW and our councils stand ready to support a new Parliamentary Secretary through the establishment of an advisory group involving councils and representatives of the arts, hospitality and entertainment sectors," Cr Scott said.

"It would be a natural continuation of the work we started in 2016, when LGNSW and a range of councils established a Night Time Economy Councils' Committee.

"The night-time economy consists of a wide range of activity in town and city centres between 5pm and 6am, including pubs, clubs, cafes, restaurants, retail, cinemas, theatres or concerts, art and other community events.

"Historically, it has accounted for nearly 10% of all Australian employment, with flow-on benefits for the tourism industry as visitors flock to vibrant cities and regional hubs.

"Strong night time economies balance the competing demands of economic development, public safety and quality of life through an effective partnership between local businesses, councils, residents and the emergency services sector.

"That is why we are so looking forward to working with Commissioner Rodriguez when he takes up his position next month."

NT



New Leadership Team for LGANT

The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) Annual General Meeting has elected a new leadership team for the next two years that include President Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis.

The LGANT Secretariat looks very much forward to working with the new President. He has a track record of getting things done, is an expert negotiator with an extensive network within the Territory and across Australia and will have a focus on equity, fairness, and good governance.

There are six first-timers on the Executive drawn from all parts of the Territory, all bringing a unique set of skills and experience, with Mayor MacFarlane, Deputy Mayor Pangquee and Councillor Wunungmurra re-elected from the previous Board.

The LGANT Executive will meet every month and has on its agenda advocacy on issues such as water security, housing, climate change adaptation, cyclone shelters, connectivity, infrastructure funding and working with the Territory and Commonwealth governments, Councils, land Councils and communities to assist in the progression of closing the gap targets.

The election in Alice Springs marked the end of the tenure of Mayor Damien Ryan as President after ten years on the Executive and eight of those as President. LGANT wishes him well in the future and thanks him sincerely for his contribution.

QLD



State Budget to Fund Council-led Job Creation

Thousands of jobs will be created or supported across Queensland following a State Budget commitment to the successful Works for Queensland program and a funding package for South East Queensland (SEQ) councils.

Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) President and Sunshine Coast Council Mayor Mark Jamieson welcomed funding commitments announced in today's State Budget including:

- \$200 million for Works for Queensland
- \$50 million in economic stimulus for SEQ councils
- \$280 million over four years for the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS).

Mayor Jamieson said the LGAQ would continue advocating on behalf of its 77 member councils for the Government to permanently fund the Works for Queensland program at \$100 million a year going forward, as well as \$50 million a year in ongoing stimulus funding for SEQ councils, to ensure

these programs can continue to support local jobs and communities at this critical time.

"Queensland councils, as the grass roots level of government, are at the centre of the State's economic recovery," Mayor Jamieson said.

"Local government knows where job-creating stimulus needs to be spent and how to spend it to ensure it makes the biggest impact.

"This has been proven through the success of the Works for Queensland program which, combined with the special COVID-19 allocations announced in response to the LGAQ's Battleplan for Queensland Local Communities, has created more than 26,000 jobs while at the same time delivering local communities the infrastructure they need.

"This Budget commitment will mean this critical stimulus funding will continue to create jobs where they are needed most, from the Cape to Coolangatta."

Mayor Jamieson said the LGAQ and its member councils would continue to advocate for funding for other critical programs like a \$500 million program to guarantee safe drinking water for rural towns across Queensland, and a 10 per cent increase to State Government Financial Aid (SGFA) to First Nations Councils.

"A 10 per cent lift to SGFA would only cost the State an extra \$3.5 million a year but its impact would be lifechanging for First Nations councils and their communities, helping to not only retain workers but to boost employment and training opportunities," Mayor Jamieson said.

Councils will also continue to advocate for an increase in the amount of funding allocated to the Transport Infrastructure Development Fund to ensure local government can continue to roll out much-needed road maintenance and upgrades at a level the Queensland community expects.

"Without a funding increase, this program will no longer be able to keep up with the demand for safer, more productive roads throughout regional and remote Queensland," Mayor Jamieson said.

TAS



Local Government Welcomes a Container Refund Scheme for Tasmania

Local Government welcomes the State Government announcement on the design of a Container Refund Scheme for Tasmania. A Container Refund Scheme is an essential part of a good waste management system and something the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) has been recommending for some time.

The President of the Tasmanian Local Government Association Mayor Christina Holmdahl said: "As the main provider of rubbish removal and recycling for Tasmanian communities, Councils know a Container Refund Scheme will both reduce the burden of plastic litter in our environment and increase recycling rates, for the benefit of our whole community".

LGAT commends the State Government on choosing a split-governance model for Tasmania's Container Refund Scheme, which separates

responsibility for running the scheme from operating the container collection network, similar to the model currently operating in NSW. Under this model, the network operator is motivated to capture as many containers as possible, which is a win for the community and the environment.

"A split-governance model is likely to result in many more accessible collection points than the alternative model, making it easy for community members to return their containers and receive their refund" Mayor Holmdahl said. "By separating running the scheme from the network the State Government can guarantee consumer convenience and therefore high rates of container return. The more containers returned means a lower cost scheme for the community and better environmental outcomes" Mayor Holmdahl continued. LGAT looks forward to continuing to work with the State Government on improving waste management and seeing the benefits for all Tasmanians and our local environment.



Staying on Top of Water Safety This Summer

Every day, visitors flock to Victoria's 811 kilometres of ocean beaches, 259 kilometres of bay beaches, 85,000 kilometres of rivers, 13,000 natural wetlands and 588 public and commercial swimming pools.

Many of these spaces are managed by Local Governments who help community members safely engage in recreational aquatic activities including swimming, boating, fishing and other leisure activities.

Sadly, the latest drowning statistics from Life Saving Victoria (LSV) reflect this. On 29 December, LSV reported 35 people lost their lives between 1 July to 28 December 2020. This is the worst six months from July to December Victoria has recorded since drowning records began.

Toddlers and children aged 0 – 14 are the most at risk with 12 recorded drownings or 34% of the six-month total. Although tragic, this data is not surprising with 145,000 children per week missing vital swimming lessons.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has continually advocated for mandatory registration and inspection regime for pools and spas. After consultation with Councils, MAV made a submission on the Regulatory Impact Statement for Swimming Pool and Spa Safety Standards in September 2019.

New regulations were introduced on 1 December 2019 meaning owners must apply to register their existing pool or spa with their local Council.

During a COVID-19 year, Councils have still undertaken inspections and reminded their communities to register their pool before the deadline so there are more protections over

the summer.

Pools are a predictable water safety zone.

Rivers, beaches and other in-land waterways can also be dangerous, especially due to the currents and weather changes.

The increase of rain due to the La Nina weather patterns has led to more flood waters across regional Victoria. Floods cost Victorians more than \$460 million every year, and can cause significant damage to homes, businesses, and community infrastructure.

Victoria's State Emergency Services (VICSES) has developed flood guides to help communities plan and prepare for flood. They also have a local flood information map to see what's happening in your municipality. VICSES work closely with the Bureau of Meteorology and local Councils so communities can be as prepared as possible for flooding in their areas. Setting aside the weather impacts, the most popular sites for water recreation is along our coast. The influx of people to beaches and other popular rivers and lakes over the summer holidays has increased the risk of accidents.

Councils know their communities and environment best and have the tools to communicate effectively to target the most vulnerable people. Councils are sharing simple messages such as stay between the flags, follow signs, avoid alcohol, don't swim alone and wear a lifejacket which can help save a life. We must still socially distance, wear masks and keeping records this summer whether we're inside or outside. The latest outbreak has shown coronavirus has not left us yet. We need to be COVID and water safe and consider how the last few months may have affected our strength or habits since last summer.

It is more important than ever this summer to be vigilant and increase community awareness and actions around water safety.

This opinion editorial was published on Saturday, 9 January and appeared in the Ballarat Courier, Bendigo Advertiser, Border Mail and the Warrnambool Standard.



An Effective Covid-19 Vaccine Program Hinges on Protecting Front-Line Workers

To ensure the Covid-19 vaccination program is delivered safely and efficiently, the Federal Government should include frontline Council workers in the cohort receiving the first shots, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) says.

Councils employ a significant number of aged care and disability care staff and ALGA is pleased this cohort has already been identified by the Morrison Government as being eligible to be first in line to get the vaccines – along with health care workers, first responders, aged care residents, and other seniors.

ALGA has written to Federal Health Minister

Greg Hunt asking for his support to include essential frontline workers in Local Government among the groups getting the vaccine first.

With the logistical details of the vaccination program still being finalised, ALGA President Linda Scott said other frontline Council workers need to be defined as priority groups.

Speaking ahead of Friday's National Cabinet meeting, Cr Scott said: "These are workers who have significant daily contact with members of the public.

"People such as waste services staff, building and compliance officers, rangers, and food and environmental health workers.

"To protect them – and the many people they engage with each day – they should be classified as being eligible for priority vaccine access."

Councils also employ customer service staff to provide essential services to residents and ratepayers – many of whom are elderly or vulnerable – and Cr Scott says these individuals should also be considered for early access to the vaccine.

Cr Scott said: "Local Government has played a significant role in ensuring businesses and public spaces operate in a Covid-safe way in the past 12 months.

"Councils have kept in touch with vulnerable people in isolation, delivered meals and library books, and worked in countless ways to keep our communities as safe as possible."

Local Government has cooperated closely with state and territory governments to support the implementation of Covid response measures and recovery – and the sector is ready to play its part in the vaccine rollout.

"Councils will help promote the program and educate local communities about efficacy and safety of the vaccine," Cr Scott said.

"We can provide spaces suitable for mass vaccinations with waiting areas that allow for physical distancing. All these will be factors in ensuring the highest possible immunisation rate.

"It makes good sense to protect the frontline personnel helping direct these efforts," Cr Scott said.

She added that any discussion by the National Cabinet of regional or rural locations for Covid quarantine facilities needs to consider the Local Government perspective.

"To open new facilities with minimal public consultation risks compromising the integrity of the quarantine program as well as potentially spreading Covid-19 to local communities.

"Quarantine camps in regional areas will have a direct effect on Local Government.

"These impacts would be better understood and appreciated if Local Government was represented in National Cabinet."

Cr Scott said Councils are prepared to work closely with the states and Commonwealth to ensure the quarantine load is shared equally, and the best way to do this is through National Cabinet with Local Government represented at the table.

FEB/MAR 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](mailto:blawyat@walga.asn.au) at the WA Local Government Association via email: blawyat@walga.asn.au



ALBANY

Twilight markets, a dog's day out, emergency services fun day, a popular outdoor movie and a ninja warrior course were all part of the City of Albany's Middleton Beach Festival presented by LiveLighter.

The City has been running this Festival for a number of years now which is always popular, so it was great to have the support of our local entertainers, musicians, small businesses and emergency services this year.

ARMADALE

COVID-19 didn't put a stop to the annual Christmas Carols held in Minnawarra Park, Armadale. Nor did it quell the COVID-safe festive cheer experience as nearly 3,000 residents joined to celebrate the first major event since the beginning of the pandemic.

With around 200 performers including the Aboriginal choir from Willandra Primary School, the evening kicked off with We Are One, sung in both Noongar and English.

The City was proud to host the only inclusive carols event in Perth for 2020, with AUSLAN interpreters and songbooks available in Braille which meant everyone could join in with great gusto to sing along and welcome in the festive season.



AUGUSTA MARGARET RIVER

Locals and visitors alike have welcomed the major upgrade to Margaret River's town centre. The \$10 million plus project, made possible with at \$8.74 million investment from the State Government, took about 11 months to complete involving a total replacement underground stormwater infrastructure, three new roundabouts to improve traffic flow and safety at intersections, nine crossing points to improve pedestrian safety and walkability, wider footpaths and a new 'Festival' Precinct creating a space for the community to come together. Other improvements include new outdoor seating areas, additional trees planted, new landscaping and street lighting.



BELMONT

The City recently launched the Belmont Business Park Infrastructure Upgrade Project that has transformed the area from its previous industrial character to a more diverse business park with an investment friendly environment. The infrastructure upgrade included the creation of an additional 800 parking bays; the undergrounding of power on Belmont Avenue; upgrading Belmont Avenue cycle and pedestrian paths; the upgrade of bus stops and shelters; and enhanced streetscape landscaping. The \$12 Million project was delivered thanks to the Federal Government's \$6 Million contribution, as part of the Australian Government's National Stronger Regions Fund.

BOYUP BROOK

This year's Australia Day breakfast hosted by the Shire of Boyup Brook saw over 250 people gather in Sandakan Park. A Citizenship Ceremony was held for Carolyn Mader who proudly made her pledge to become an Australian Citizen in front of her family, friends and community. After the Citizenship Ceremony, two awards were presented, the first being the 2021 Kevin Henderson Memorial Award for volunteering which went to Angela Hales. Angela is highly respected and active volunteer of the Boyup Brook Community. The 2021 Citizen of the Year was presented to Lyn Willett. Lyn was instrumental in the planning of the Blooming Wild weekend in 2020 and recognised for her many years at the Boyup Brook Golf Club, Tourism Association and Community Resource Centre.

Pictured: Lyn Willett and Angela Hales.



BROOME

Broome's Australia Day celebrations were held on Tuesday, 26 January at the newly transformed Town Beach precinct, with outstanding local residents granted awards and 27 new citizens welcomed to the community.

The Town Beach Foreshore Redevelopment is a \$24 Million project jointly funded by the Shire of Broome and State Government, with the scenic setting a fitting location for the town's first community gathering of 2021.

Pictured: Broome's Community Citizen of the Year Award winners with Deputy Shire President Desiree Male and Chief Executive Officer Sam Mastrolembo.

BUSSELTON

In a small but important ceremony, the City of Busselton acknowledged a local family, the Readings, for gifting Lot 174 Kaloorup Road to the Vasse community. The land, which abuts a community hall, was formerly owned by Robert and Dorothy Reading. It is now held in perpetuity by the Vasse community thanks to their daughter, Susanne Munro, son Ross Reading and his wife Kate.



BUNBURY

A fresh and authentic approach to promoting Bunbury, using the words and stories of Bunbury locals has launched.

Bunbury Brighter and the associated campaigns work to identify and promote what is real, meaningful and different about Bunbury.

The initial campaign will focus on lifestyle, balance, community, arts and culture while further promoting some of Bunbury's great events in 2021.

It also involves local ambassadors sharing what they love about living in Bunbury.

"I love the creative culture we
have generated here in
Bunbury and I feel privileged
to live here"



COCKBURN

A bunch of impressive locals were recognised for their outstanding citizenship in the Cockburn community as part of the City of Cockburn's annual Australia Day Community Citizen of the Year Awards.

The 2021 awardees received their accolades from Mayor Logan Howlett, assisted by Deputy Mayor Lara Kirkwood, as part of the City's annual Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony where 80 new Australian citizens also pledged their commitment to our country on the 72nd anniversary of Australian Citizenship.

Pictured from left to right: Layne Dixon (Community Citizen of the Year – Youth), Louise Keep and Dan Robinson (joint overall Community Citizens of the Year), Mayor Logan Howlett, Deputy Mayor Lara Kirkwood, Jean Bruce (Community Citizen of the Year – Senior), Carol Zhang and Sherry Xie (representing the Cockburn Chinese Association – Active Citizenship Group or Event).



COOLGARDIE

Coolgardie Shire President Malcolm Cullen is pictured with the Coolgardie group of nominees and overall winners at the Shire's Australia Day celebrations.

CHITTERING

The Chittering community had the privilege of welcoming five new citizens to our Shire and by extension, to Australia at our recent Australia Day event.

Many members of the community were treated to a barbeque breakfast, hosted by our Councillors. Members of the Bindoon Entertainment, Arts and Theatre group were on site to entertain the crowd throughout the morning with a selection of Australian themed songs.



COTTESLOE

When Carols by Candlelight 2020 was postponed due to COVID, the Town of Cottesloe wanted to come up with a fun way to bring some Christmas cheer to our community. We organised a pop up activation at Cottesloe Beach on Sunday, 20 December – Santa and three elves on camels, walking along the grass terraces and up the beach to North Cottesloe, followed by a fun Christmas themed circus show! People at the beach that afternoon got a big surprise and loved seeing Santa and his elves on the back of a camel, walking up the beach.



CRANBROOK

On Friday, 5 February the Shire of Cranbrook President Phil Horrocks, DFES Superintendent Wayne Green and Tunney Captain Baz Marshall opened the new Tunney Fire Shed. This project was funded by DFES, the Shire of Cranbrook and the Tunney Community. This facility is a wonderful structure for the Tunney Fire Brigade and the community would like to thank DFES who without this would not have been possible.

DANDARAGAN

Recently the Shire of Dandaragan hosted a sod-turning event to highlight the beginning of construction of a new state of the art Skate Park in Jurien Bay, with local politicians, Shire Councillors and staff, and members of the Shire's Foreshore Community Working Group in attendance.

Construction of the skate park, situated at the northern end of the Jurien Bay foreshore, is well underway and due for completion in March.



EAST FREMANTLE

In January the Town of East Fremantle secured a \$20 Million election commitment from both major political parties to redevelop East Fremantle Oval with upgraded facilities for WAFL, lawn bowls and croquet plus child and health services and gym, café and function room/learning space. Co-designed with community input, the site will be opened up for community use including dog exercise areas, adventure playground, playing courts and skate zone.



GINGIN

The first week of 2021 was spent battling two bush fires which collectively burnt through 10,300 ha. Following the Yanchep Fire last summer which also affected the Shire of Gingin, it's proven just how large the role is that a Local Government agency has to play during an emergency level bush fire. From communications to supplying personnel and machinery to assist in the firefighting effort to liaising with other government agencies and to the recovery period afterwards – it's a real challenge which requires considerable commitment from Shire staff and Council to support our community through this type of event.

Photo credit: Cr James Morton, Gingin West Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

GOSNELLS

New apprenticeships and traineeships are providing secure employment opportunities for young people as part of the City of Gosnells' ongoing response to COVID-19.

Remy Raven and Jordan Mills were recently appointed to the City's Environmental Services team. An apprentice painter and community services trainee will be appointed soon.

Mayor David Goode said the program was a tangible and responsible way for the City to contribute to the community's economic recovery.



DERBY WEST KIMBERLEY

At the Australia Day Breakfast 2021, the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley President Geoff Haerewa presented a rare Royal Lifesaving Association WA Gold Cross Bravery Award to Derby local Tristan Judd.

In 2017, Tristan was living in the Goldfields, when he was a passenger in a fully loaded semi-trailer, and the driver suddenly collapsed from a heart attack. Tristan took control of the vehicle, prevented a collision and saved the driver!



GREATER GERALDTON

Seafood, culture and adventure is on the agenda for Geraldton's newest signature event Shore Leave which has received significant funding.

Presented by Tourism Geraldton Midwest, the newly announced festival will take place over four days in Geraldton from 6-9 May – with a massive program celebrating all things 'Midwest'.

The event proposal includes elements such as seafood markets, a long-table Abrolhos Islands dining experience, walking tours and a swag of family-friendly events.

JOONDALUP

67 candidates from all parts of the globe were sworn in as Australian citizens as the City of Joondalup held a more personal, COVID-safe Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony for 2021.

The City's 2021 Community Citizen of the Year Awards were also presented at the ceremony, and Jenny Davis OAM, Finalist, WA Senior Australian of the Year 2020, shared her message of inclusivity, community and integrational storytelling as the Australia Day Ambassador.



KARRATHA

City of Karratha held their annual Australia Day Awards, celebrating grassroots heroes and community members that have made outstanding contributions throughout the year. With 33 nominations received across six awards categories, the awards are a great opportunity to highlight and acknowledge the strong community spirit across all City of Karratha towns. Ross Humphries was named 2021 Citizen of the Year for his dedication to the community and supporting grassroots sports.



KULIN

At Kulin Shire Council's Australia Day celebrations, Council presented Mr Harold Proud with a plaque to recognise his 100th birthday and contribution to the Kulin community.

Mr Proud was born on 9 December 1920 and grew up on the family farm in Kulin. He served as a Shire Councillor on the Kulin Shire Council from 1964 to 1973, 1976 to 1982 and 2005 to 2007, actively contributing to the Kulin community.

MANDURAH

Mandurah enjoyed four days of festivities and celebrations as part of Mandurah's Longest Australia Day Weekend from January 23-26. The community was able to reflect, respect and celebrate with events spread throughout the city centre including Water Laser Light Spectacular displays, live music, a big Aussie barbecue, a car show, cricket competitions and citizenship awards. Mandurah also welcomed more than 120 new citizens who took the pledge. The City is also planning other COVID-safe smaller 'endless weekends' events for the coming weekends.



MERREDIN

The Shire of Merredin would like to congratulate the nominees and winners of the Community Awards that were presented at the Australia Day breakfast on Tuesday, 26 January. All of the nominees are brilliant achievers who are driven to succeed by determination to help their fellow Australians and make Australia a wonderful place for all.



MOUNT MAGNET

The Shire of Mount Magnet is the proud winner of the Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities State 2020 Award in the Heritage and Culture category. The Award presentation is due recognition for the collaborative work between the Mount Magnet Police, the local indigenous Badimia Elders group and the Shire, together with community artists and organizations in the Reconciliation Wall project. The Reconciliation Wall mural is situated outside at the Mount Magnet Police Station.

Pictured left to right: Tidy Towns Judge Peter Kenyon, former OIC Mount Magnet Police Sgt Todd D'Souza, Cecilia Kelly and Mount Magnet Deputy CEO Ms Ina Edwardson.

NAREMBEEN

The Shire of Narembeen were very excited to host Dr Craig Challen SC OAM – cave diver, rescuer and 2019 Australian of the Year as part of the Australia Day Ambassador Program.

Craig captivated the audience with his Australia Day opening address, it was inspiring to hear his story. The Shire of Narembeen were honoured to have Craig and his partner Heather celebrating Australia Day with local residents.



PERTH

From Friday, 22 January to Tuesday, 26 January, more than 40,000 Western Australians attended family-friendly events across the City of Perth's Australia Day Festival.

Delighted by roving entertainment, music, concerts, food and culture, attendees enjoyed the beautiful community vibes.

The launch event - Shining the Light: The Story of Us – told the story of the Traditional Owners of the land, the Whadjuk Nyoongar people, in the form of a captivating light and water projection at Elizabeth Quay.



PORT HEDLAND

On Saturday, 12 December 2020, the Town of Port Hedland held the official opening of the new JD Hardie Youth and Community Hub. This milestone represents a significant amount of hard work to bring this site up to a world class standard, creating a space for young people to come together to learn, grow and play, as well as housing community organisations and providing shelter space during cyclones.



STIRLING

The City hosted a combined ceremony on Australia Day to welcome more than 200 of our newest citizens and to celebrate local winners in the 2021 Community Citizen of the Year Awards.

Mayor Mark Irwin congratulated inspiring locals Gary Hale, Kaye Liddelow and Akash Parekh as well as representatives from The Good Chat Foundation. The recipients excelled in developing local sports clubs, youth advocacy, community safety and supporting youngsters with mental health challenges.



SERPENTINE JARRAHDALE

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale residents celebrated Australia Day in true Aussie fashion with a spirited game of backyard cricket. Children and adults alike turned out to enjoy a bat and a bowl, with the game being played shortly after a classic BBQ breakfast. The Shire also welcomed its new citizens with open arms on the day.

SOUTH PERTH

The historic Old Mill in South Perth has reopened after a major restoration project. At 186 years old, the Old Mill is the second oldest building in Western Australia, producing 680kg of flour per day in its prime. The community celebrated with a reopening event on Saturday 30 January where the second floor was open for the first time in almost 20 years.



SUBIACO

City of Subiaco's popular sunset@subi concert series saw over 5000 people attend across five summer evenings. The family-friendly free outdoor concerts covered a range of genres from pop and Aussie rock to rhythm and blues, and everything in between. An Auslan interpreter was present at select shows to allow people of all abilities to immerse themselves in the entertainment.

Pictured: Concert goers enjoying Diamond Road cover band at Market Square.



WANNEROO

The City of Wanneroo showcased a host of local attractions when WA Governor Kim Beazley visited on Wednesday, 20 January. Mr Beazley's tour included the Wanneroo Botanic Gardens, Yanchep National Park, Yanchep Lavender Farm (pictured), The Marina Mindarie and Jindalee's The Beach House for a spot of lunch. Wanneroo Mayor Tracey Roberts said it was a fabulous opportunity to promote the variety of experiences on offer across the City of Wanneroo.

Pictured from left to right: WA Governor Kim Beazley, Karla Champion from Yanchep Lavender Farm, Wanneroo CEO Daniel Simms and Wanneroo Mayor Tracey Roberts.

WAROONA

The Waroona Shire Council awarded the very prestigious Local Government award of Honorary Freeman to Mr John Twaddle known locally as "the Captain". It is only the fourth time in the Shire's long history that this award has been bestowed. The Shire President advised the award was for his outstanding volunteer service, including more than 60 years of service to Waroona Agricultural Society, more than 50 years of service to Waroona Volunteer Fire & Emergency Services with 45 years as Captain, more than 40 years service as a Shire Bush Fire Control Officer, with over 20 years as Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. A very surprised and delighted John Twaddle accepted the award from the Shire President and thanked Council for receiving this award.



YILGARN

The Shire of Yilgarn celebrated Australia Day 2021 by holding a community breakfast featuring a Citizenship Ceremony and the announcement of the Citizenship Awards by the Shire President. It was extremely pleasing to see the strong community turnout.

A sincere thank you to everyone who helped set-up early in the morning, those that cooked the wonderful breakfast, and to everyone for attending to make the event such a great success.

150 YEARS IN PICTURES



Sunday, 21 February marked the official sesquicentenary of Local Government. The next pages show images of Local Governments over the years and the changing face of WA communities over this time.



ALBANY



BASSENDAN



BUNBURY



BELMONT



BUSSELTON



CARNARVON



CARNAMAH



CRANBROOK



FREMANTLE



DALWALLINU



GOSNELLS



GREATER GERALDTON

AROUND THE STATE IN PICTURES - A HISTORICAL LOOK



HARVEY



KWINANA



MINGENEW



NEDLANDS



NORTHAM



PINGELLY



PLANTAGENET



SWAN



TAMMIN



TRAYNING



VINCENT



WEST ARTHUR

THE PEOPLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As part of an ongoing feature to celebrate 150 years of Local Government, Dr Chris Berry shares the next biography in his 'Hall of Fame' of key people influencing the sector since its inception.

1940s- ALBERT EDWARD (BERT) WHITE MBE, 'MR LOCAL GOVERNMENT'

Born in WA in 1905, Bert White started in Local Government as a District Clerk in South Australia before moving back to WA. In 1933 he was Assistant Secretary of the Greenmount Roads Board and by 1937 he was Town Clerk of Busselton. He moved around a bit, subsequently serving as Secretary-Engineer to the Mukinbudin Roads Board, and Town Clerk-Engineer at the Busselton, York and Midland Junction Municipal Councils. In 1940 White joined the Public Works Department as assistant municipal auditor and inspector. Later, he served as Assistant Secretary (12 years), and then Secretary for Local Government (3 years) (the equivalent of today's Director General).



Photo published in the West Australian 18 April 1950, p.3. Bert White is third from right.

The newspaper photo caption read: The Members of the Royal Commission on Local Government examining the Local Government Bill when the commission continued its sitting in Perth yesterday, 17 April 1950. Left-right, standing: A. M. Buller, A. Bierman and R. B. James. Sitting: W. W. Abbett, W. P. Griffiths, A. E. White (chairman) and Cr. W. Beadle

He was a man of many talents. By attending night classes at UWA he graduated with a BA, majoring in economics and history. This interest in history was often reflected in his addresses to Local Government, where he would sometimes reflect on the evolution of Local Government in ancient and medieval times before outlining its development in Australia. He was an Associate of the Australian Society of Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and the Australasian Institute of Cost Accountants, also holding certificates by examination as Municipal clerk and auditor for both Victoria and South Australia and health inspector from the Royal Sanitary Institute.

He helped write the Local Government Bill 1949 and then chaired the Royal Commission that was established by Parliament on the Local Government Bill 1950. This work culminated in the Local Government Act 1960, then WA's bulkiest piece of legislation, bringing the administration of all councils under the one Act for

the first time. He saw this as his greatest achievement, and was particularly pleased with the provision made for regional councils. As a principal author of the Act, he was well placed to lecture and author the text on Local Government law, used for qualifying examinations for municipal officers. He addressed the first Local Government Week conference in 1958 on Local Government rating and revenue.

After retiring from the Department he was appointed in 1965 as joint Secretary to the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Country Shire Councils Association (CSCA) in what was then supposed to be a part-time position. An assistant was eventually appointed to assist him in 1974. He was also a member of the Town Planning Appeals Board.

Retiring in August 1974 aged 69, he said it was time for younger ones to come to the fore. He also indicated that personally he would have liked the LGA and CSCA to have amalgamated, something that was not to come to full fruition until nearly 30 years later. Reflecting on what the future of Local Government might hold, he suggested that one only need to look at the Commonwealth book 'Australian Government Assistance to Local Government projects' to see the encouragement given to Local Government to expand into social activities. At the same time, he was concerned about the power Canberra was going to influence through control of grants.

Bert White was appointed as a Commissioner to enquire into metropolitan boundaries, presenting the Report on Perth Municipal Boundaries to Local Government Minister Fraser in 1953. He proposed a reduction in the number of metropolitan Local Governments but like other boundary reports it was shelved by the State Government. He considered the failure to rationalise Local Government into fewer, bigger stronger local authorities to be his greatest disappointment.

Awarded an MBE in 1971, he was, as one associate is reported to have said, 'Mr Local Government.' LGA President Ern Clark (1967-1973) said he did not know of anybody more knowledgeable of Local Government matters. Kenneth Gifford, the editor of the Western Australian Local Government Handbook, in acknowledging Bert White described him as 'one of the ablest administrators with which Local Government in Australia has been blessed'.

He never stopped trying to improve the position of Local Government. A 1972 article, for example, on 'The dollars and sense of Local Government' described the difficulties of financing the work of councils, and stressed the need to explore other avenues of raising revenue.

His work was not quite finished, being appointed Commissioner at the Shire of Bayswater when the council was sacked in 1978. He died aged 91 in 1997. Long-time Perth Town Clerk Reg Dawson remembered Bert White's terrific sense of humour and described him as the most outstanding Local Government figure he encountered over the course of his career. Former Main Roads engineer Clive Shepherd had a similar view, remembering visiting him as Association secretary in a tiny office surrounded by files with just an old typewriter and a Gestetner machine. How the Association has grown since Bert's day!

One of his grandsons - Jason Whiteaker - is a current Local Government (Shire of Northam) CEO!

References:

¹ The Municipal and Road Board Gazette, August 1946 p17.

² Local Government Journal of WA January 1966

³ Local Government Journal of WA December 1974, p16.

⁴ Local Government Journal of WA October 1972, p13.

⁵ Local Government Journal of WA March 1972, p10.

NEW ELECTRICITY SOLUTIONS TAILORED TO MATCH LGA NEEDS

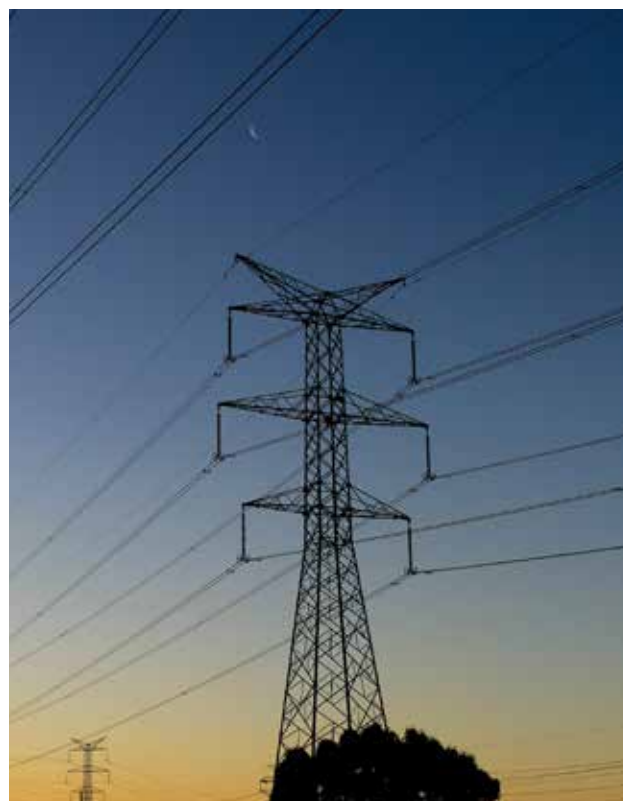
Devastating bushfires, the ongoing impact of a global pandemic and a series of weather events including flooding and heatwaves were some of the many challenges Western Australians faced in the summer of 2020/21.

December 2020 was Perth's second warmest December on record, second only to December 2019, with several days where temperatures exceeded 40°C. According to Synergy LGA Account Manager, Ana Farla, hot weather generally creates a spike in electricity use, which can lead to higher electricity bills.

"Generally, as the temperature rises, air conditioners are often switched on earlier, for longer periods of time and the systems have to work harder – this can lead to a bill spike," said Ms Farla.

Synergy is helping business customers, including Local Government authorities, explore new ways to manage their energy consumption, tailoring solutions to each customer's unique energy needs.

"We're always working on finding the right solutions in response to what our customers need most," said Ms Farla. "Many Local Government authorities are already taking a new approach to their energy management and exploring new ways to improve their energy and cost efficiencies."



Business Flexi Plus	
On peak	Weekdays: 3pm - 9pm (excludes public holidays)
Off peak	Weekdays: 9pm - 9am (excludes public holidays) Weekends and public holidays: All hours
Midday Saver	Weekdays: 9am - 3pm (excludes public holidays)
<p>Synergy Business Flexi Plus is a new "time of use" product. Terms and conditions apply. This table shows the default time periods for each of the three energy consumption rates.</p> <p>The applicable time periods for each energy consumption rate and prices vary between customers. Customers need to refer to their agreement with Synergy for applicable time periods for each energy consumption rate and prices.</p>	

One of the new energy solutions offered is Synergy Business Flexi Plus, which is a time of use electricity product.

"Time of use products, as the name suggests, offer different rates according to the time of day when electricity is being used. By switching to the Synergy Business Flexi Plus product, a council could take advantage of lower energy rates during the middle of the day."

"This product is generally suitable for a council who is able to shift the majority of their electricity consumption on weekdays to between the hours of 9am and 3pm. It offers a competitive price compared to the on-peak and off-peak prices."

To learn more about Synergy Business Flexi Plus or other energy solutions, please contact Ana Farla, LGA Account Manager, on (08) 6212 2001 or anazia.farla@synergy.net.au

PROCUREMENT UPDATE

WALGA ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY AND RENEWABLES PROJECT

Andrew Blitz, Commercial Development Manager

WALGA has embarked on an ambitious whole of sector Energy project that aims to support renewable energy policy targets and reduce the cost of electricity, gas, and carbon offsets for the sector.

WALGA initially released a Climate Change Policy Statement in July 2018 calling for strong climate change action, leadership and coordination at all levels of government. In August 2019, the Western Australian Government set aspiration of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for WA by 2050 under the WA Climate Change Policy.

Current to February 2021, forty-four Western Australian Local Governments have made declarations acknowledging that climate change is occurring and that climate change will continue to have significant effects on the WA environment, society and economy and Local Government sector. Many of these Local Governments have adopted environmental policies with carbon neutral targets included. There is an evident and emerging movement towards sustainability across all levels of Government across Australia.

With this in mind, WALGA is seeking to evolve a Power Purchase Agreement that is scalable. By initially aggregating existing contracts into a volume predicated energy supply arrangement cost savings can be immediately realised. The dual objective of renewable generation can then be phased in as new sources of renewable generation enter the grid. The collective WALGA project load profile can thereby be incrementally offset against Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU's). These units represent one cubic meter of carbon dioxide

sequestered and are used to offset emissions to achieve the net-zero target. This element of the project will assist Members to achieve and evidence their emission reductions according to their individual timeframes and policy commitments.

WALGA will be providing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) proposals to Members with a request to commit to the project by the end of August 2021. Market quotation and procurement processes will then be progressed with initial contract commencement dates envisaged to be April 2022. Under the structure of the MOU WALGA Members will not be obligated to commit to proceed to Contract until such time as contract offers have been evaluated and recommended.

WALGA's Corporate Strategy 2020-2025 set a sector vision in which Local Governments enhance community wellbeing and enable economic prosperity. The proposed Energy Sustainability and Renewables Project encapsulates this vision by leveraging the economic scale of the WALGA Membership to deliver a longer-term solution.

By pioneering a sustainability buying group in Western Australia WALGA is facilitating positive change in the Western Australia, supporting both National, State and Local Government level commitments to climate change. It remains clear that if our supply developments are not sustainable Local Government will face unpredictable challenges in future generations.

For more information about the Energy Sustainability and Renewables Project, or to obtain a copy of the project brief, please contact **Toby Costanzo, Contract Manager** on tcostanzo@walga.asn.au.

SECTOR PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

WHAT'S YOUR HAPPY PLACE?



Following the State Elections on 13 March, WALGA will launch a new sector promotional campaign highlighting the abundant positive experiences available through Local Government facilities such as parks, pools, libraries and recreation centres.

The Happy Place campaign features four TV commercials with sporting celebrities sharing their use of, and appreciation for Local Government facilities and services

TRAINING UPDATE

A FOCUS ON FLEXIBILITY

FLEXIBLE TRAINING DELIVERY

In response to the new legislative training requirements and in recognition of the differing needs of Local Governments across the State, 2021 will see a continuation of the provision of a range of delivery methodologies for our training courses. Our aim is to provide viable options for all Elected Members from the introductory training, right through to the Diploma of Local Government.

All training is tailored to continue to develop and maintain your professional capabilities. Following the challenges we all faced in 2020, we recognise the importance of making training accessible and flexible.

UPDATES AND NEW COURSES

Having consulted with industry advisory groups, WALGA is continuing to invest in the development of contemporary learning resources to keep up to date with changes in legislation, codes of practice, operational guidelines, industry and good governance practice. WALGA's Training Team is currently reviewing all courses and updating, replacing and adding courses where needed. Our priority is to ensure quality learning experiences for all.

IN-HOUSE TRAINING (FACE-TO-FACE) AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

We recognise that our Members are located all over the State and therefore can offer all scheduled courses on-site. If you want to save time, save money and customise your training, we encourage you to take up the option of in-house training. Similar to the training delivered face to face at WALGA's West Leederville offices, we provide a specialist trainer to come to your Local Government. We encourage you to invite neighbouring Councils to share the training cost. Contact WALGA Training for a quotation.

Training Delivery Methods

Face to Face Training @WALGA

LV1, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville

Face to Face Training @ your Local Government

Contact WALGA Training to discuss your needs and for a quotation

Virtual Class Room via ZOOM

This methodology is also an excellent option for regional councils.

Self-Paced

Some Learners like to learn in their own time by reading their learner guides and making notes as they go.

eLearning

WALGA has developed a range of courses available as interactive eLearning courses.

How to Register

Website: www.walga.asn.au/training

Telephone: (08) 9213 2088

Email: training@walga.asn.au

For more information about the training courses on offer and the delivery methods, visit our website www.walga.asn.au/training to download the latest copy of the 2021 Training Directory, or contact one of our friendly Training staff members on (08) 9213 2000.

and will be supported by print, digital and social advertising placements. It aims to increase awareness of Local Governments' contribution to the community's quality of life by demonstrating the diversity of low, or no cost facilities provided by Local Government and reinforce the idea that Councils are about more than just roads, rates and rubbish.

An extension to the campaign will roll out in May with an Instagram competition to encourage community participation with further advertisements to be created as a result.

Find out more on the campaign site
www.walga.asn.au/happylace



LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFILE

COUNCILLOR TONY DEAN

SHIRE OF NANNUP



Shire of Nannup President Cr Tony Dean is also a WALGA State Councillor representing the South West Country Zone. He has extensive experience in both Local Government and State Government, and shares his experiences in both spheres of Government with Western Councillor.

WHAT IS YOUR “DAY JOB” AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO YOUR ROLE AS AN ELECTED MEMBER?

I am currently working full time as a retiree with six grandchildren to keep entertained. However, before that, I was a teacher of science and agriculture, deputy principal and principal of senior high schools. I also owned and operated a liquor store for 12 years. In all that I have done in the last 42 years, people and children have been at the forefront of my daily interactions.

YOU WERE A STATE MEMBER FOR BUNBURY IN 2001 – IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH ROLE IS MORE FULFILLING – STATE MEMBER OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTED MEMBER?

I was the Member for Bunbury in the Gallop Government from 2001 to 2005. In hindsight, I don't recommend anyone standing for a marginal seat. The cost to family is enormous.

Before that, I had been on the Bunbury City Councils for seven years serving in various roles, including being the Chair of the following committees: Back Beach Reconstruction, The Airport Advisory and Bunbury Rec Centre Reconstruction.

In Parliament, I was a humble back bencher working hard for the people in my electorate. The role between a back bencher and a Councillor can be vastly different. In many ways, being a Councillor is far more demanding. You do not have the “party machine” to hide behind, where a lot of policy decisions are already made, with or without your influence. As a Councillor you must have a position on virtually everything that comes before you and you must be prepared to vote and defend that position.

I greatly enjoy my role as Shire President of Nannup, although it is sometimes demanding and not always possible to please all the people all the time.

WHAT SAW YOU BEGIN A CAREER IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR?

In 1994, there was continued rapid expansion of the City of Bunbury with the consequent clearing of Tuart Forest to cater for a growing population. In the area where I lived, West Ward, there was an area of relatively untouched Tuart Forest. This was called the West Withers Tuart Forest.

I placed the conservation of this forest as a major priority in my election campaign, got elected and am very pleased to say this area is still in relatively pristine condition, nearly 30 years later.

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT? HOW HAS THE SECTOR CHANGED/ EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

I was first elected in 1994 to the City of Bunbury exiting in 2001 for State Parliament. After relocating back to Nannup, my hometown, I was elected to the Shire of Nannup in 2007. This means I have served well over 20 years in both localities.

I was first elected under the previous Local Government act so by the time I retire I would have seen three Local Government Acts. Way too many!

My first experience under the pre-1995 Act was that Councils were involved with too much day-to-day detail and failed to focus on the broader picture. I believe the evolving of the Local Government sector to focus on broader community strategies is a good thing although some people would not agree saying it has gone too far or not far enough.

The current system of public accountability delivers and predominately has the needs of the community at heart. Councils have become more professional. Councillors must be aware of the long-term ramification of all decisions.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED DURING YOUR TIME AS AN ELECTED MEMBER?

The biggest challenge facing all Councillors is the gap between public expectation and on-ground delivery. I have seen it numerous times where the sudden expectation of a freshly Elected Member grinds to a halt when they realise they are part of a team, with one vote, and it is the team they must convince, not the public.

When the team is on side, great things can be achieved. As Shire President, the major challenge is to persuade and convince Councillors that the energy they have must be put to the common good and society must be the beneficiary.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE REGION YOU WORK IN AND SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING IN THIS REGION?

I live and work in Nannup, a town in which I was born and raised. My grandchildren are the sixth generation to live here. I have lived and worked around Western Australia as a teacher for 23 years but this place is always home.

I am lucky living in the South West region. It has a pleasant climate, nature is wonderful, communities are tight, resources (natural and human) are

SCHEME RENEWS RISK PROGRAM AND FOCUSES ON WHS

By Jonathan Seth, CEO, LGIS

plentiful. Geographic isolation is not a problem and the region attracts many new settlers that want to make it home.

As Chair of the WALGA South West Zone, I get a firsthand insight into this region. It is an exciting time to be here at the start of the 21st century. I can think of no other region in Western Australia I would want to spend my declining years.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT WHILST WORKING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

Bunbury and Nannup, although at opposite ends of the Local Government spectrum, have afforded me many opportunities. In Bunbury, and I must emphasise again as part of a team, my achievements have stood the test of time. Some of such projects include: the back beach restoration, recreation centre upgrade, final approval of Town Planning Scheme No. 7, and saving West Withers Tuart Forest. I must also include the Bunbury 2020 plan, which was a plan taken to the 2001 election. It was an election manifesto based on my experiences as a City Councillor and carried many expectations of fellow Councillors.

Nannup's future is firmly based on eco-tourism, festivals, and intensive agriculture. For example, Nannup's Music festival attracts 10 times the population base of Nannup, all over one weekend. There are not many places in Western Australia which can boast that.

There is not one specific project or undertaking which I could list as my proudest moment. What I am proud to say is that I have facilitated many good people to get on and do the job while always being there to support so they can achieve for the community.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WISHING TO BECOME AN ELECTED MEMBER?

My advice to someone who is seeking to be elected office is don't hesitate, get on and do it. You will find it immensely satisfying and worthwhile. That's not to say there won't be tears and recriminations along the way but the journey is worth it.

2021 has not given us the respite that we were all perhaps hoping for. We've had a snap, hard lockdown which thankfully resulted in zero community transmission cases of COVID-19 and at the same time contended with the Perth Hills Bushfires.

The Perth Hills Bushfires is the largest bushfire event to occur in Western Australia since the Yarloop fires in 2016. More than 9000 hectares of bushland has burned with significant loss and damage to properties around Tilden Park, Gidgegannup and Wooroloo. Insured value of claims stands at \$40 Million and continues to grow.

Our members bushfire volunteers, protected by LGIS, were vital – working with emergency services to save lives and properties. Our members have been stretched, stepping up during this catastrophe to support their communities and start the long journey of rebuilding following the fires devastation.

Our thoughts are with our members and the residents in their communities who have been impacted by the fire. LGIS will do everything that we can to assist and support our members in rebuilding and repairing their community facilities so that they can get on with the job of serving their rate payers.

SCHEME RISK PROGRAM ADDS VALUE

In early February the LGIS Board of Directors approved the 2021 Scheme Risk Program which gives every members across the state the resources and knowledge to proactively manage many of their risks.

Our risk program is a critical part of the Scheme, recognising that when our members work together to manage risks, claims are contained, the mutual indemnity scheme is protected and everyone benefits.

This year in addition to the usual suite of risks services we'll be focused on:

- **Supporting elected members** to assist councillors in managing the competing demands associated with the role.
- New **Work Health & Safety (WHS)** legislation and how it impacts our members.
- Changes to local governments' obligations to **volunteers** under new WHS legislation
- Addressing **human resource risks** exposures which are increasing across the sector with services such as leadership skills development, workplace behaviours, conflict resolution and mental health.
- Coastal hazards planning, asset transfer and their associated liability risk with our **professional risk services**.
- **Liability risk** especially public safety at water compensation basins that are near member's recreation facilities.
- Supporting regional members in the development of their **Local Emergency Management Arrangements** and delivery of a targeted volunteers project in collaboration with WALGA and Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members would've received their LGIS Liability and LGIS Scheme renewal questionnaires in mid-February. Please remember to get your questionnaires completed and returned to LGIS by 17 March for LGIS Liability and 31 March for LGIS Scheme and Non-Scheme.

LGIS Account Managers will be visiting members over the coming weeks to discuss membership renewal and answer any questions.

For more information about Scheme risks services or any other queries about LGIS please contact me on 9483 8855 or your LGIS Account Manager on 9483 8888.

CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MinterEllison

By Nada Raphael, Sarah Barker and Sandra Eckert

Local Governments will have to address risks to physical assets and infrastructure, economic transition issues and litigation factors arising from the effects of climate change.

We consider the 'new normal' of climate change related pressures facing Local Governments, as they attempt to balance political and financial considerations with community expectations.

KEY POINTS

- Local Governments need to strategically plan for not only damage to their own assets and built infrastructure, but also additional demands from damage to private assets.
- Local Governments will need to balance the economic transitional risks to their budgets, with the possibility of declining revenues with increases in expenditure.
- Local Governments may also need to manage increased exposure to litigation where climate change risks have not previously been taken into consideration.

PHYSICAL RISKS

Extreme weather events and other environmental disasters cause direct damage and risks to infrastructure, water supply, landforms and, most importantly, human health. These events can be either acute (including natural catastrophe risks compounded by climate change, such as bushfires, heatwaves, drought and inland floods), or gradual onset (such as sea level rise and increases in average temperatures).

Local Governments will need to strategically plan for potential physical risks of climate change on their assets and infrastructure, as well as how the impact of climate change on private assets may lead to demands being made on Local Governments.

ECONOMIC TRANSITIONAL RISKS

Economic transition risks are the responses of financial markets and the real economy to climate change related impacts. Local Governments need to consider how economic transition risks associated with climate change may affect their financial stability.

Examples of relevant economic transition risks for Local Governments include:

- potential restrictions on the availability of adequate insurances; and
- stranded assets, being those that materially devalue before the planned end of their useful life.

LITIGATION ARISING FROM THE RISKS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- Local Governments are particularly exposed to litigation arising from the risks of climate change. Claims might be made against Local Governments in the future in relation to:
- development approvals and conditions that do not have due regard to climate related considerations;
- development conditions that seek to address future climate change risks which applicants view as unduly 'onerous'; and

- a failure to implement strategies for the protection of properties and assets from physical climate change risks.

There have already been appeals in other States on the basis of Local Governments failing to adequately consider climate change in planning decisions.

WHAT SHOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BE DOING?

Local Governments need to be actively considering the impacts of climate change on all aspects of its operations including:

- integration into governance frameworks, and its strategic community plan and corporate business plan;
- strategic planning and risk assessment and management;
- review of planning schemes and policy documents to support planning decisions, and to ensure provision of up to date information;
- review of its liability exposure;
- review of current and proposed infrastructure and assets investments; and
- review of emergency response plans.

Local Governments need to consider how climate change may impact its budgets, including whether there may be increased expenditures on:

- health, community care and emergency response capabilities;
- adaptation and resilience works on public infrastructure and Local Government owned buildings, infrastructure and facilities in order to maintain service levels or protect assets (such as from coastal erosion);
- waste disposal – collection, landfill and recycling;
- stormwater and sewerage upgrades to respond to more extreme downpours; and
- potential litigation.

Local Governments also need to consider how climate change may lead to a potential reduction in revenue streams, including rates, arising from declining property values or adverse impacts on industries.

The impact of climate change risks will differ for each Local Government and the questions that need to be considered to assess potential impacts on its financial stability will be unique. In all cases, scenario planning against the range of plausible climate change futures will be critical to the efficient identification and management of the financial risks for Local Governments.

CONTACT US

We would be pleased to share our experience in this field with you. Our unique team of lawyers and auditors work closely with scientists, economists, financiers and international regulators to give our clients the benefit of global thought leadership in this dynamic risk area.

For further information, please contact Nada Raphael, Sandra Eckert or Sarah Barker on (08) 6189 7800.

The information contained in this article should not be relied on without obtaining further legal advice.

STATE COUNCIL BRIEFS

The following resolutions were made at the State Council meeting held on Wednesday, 3 March at WALGA's West Leederville office.

EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT AND INTERVENTION – AUTHORISED INQUIRIES AND SHOW CAUSE NOTICES

That WALGA:

1. Continues to advocate for the State Government to increase resourcing of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries particularly by engaging experienced and qualified staff to conduct timely inquiries and interventions when instigated under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1995; and
2. Requests the Departmental CEO, of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to engage with affected Local Governments in order to attempt to resolve identified issues, improve performance and achieve good governance before considering an intervention under Part 8 of the Local Government Act 1995; and
3. Requests the Minister for Local Government to:
 - a. Provide written reasons prior to issuing any Show Cause Notices;
 - b. Require regular progress reports to be provided to any Local Government that is the subject of any Authorised Inquiry; and
 - c. Require that any Authorised Inquiry be conducted within a specified timeframe that may be extended with the approval of the Minister.
4. Advocates for legislative change to ensure that Show Cause Notices are required to contain reasons.

COST OF REVALUATIONS

That WALGA advocate to the State Government for the equal distribution of valuation costs for properties where the Water Corporation, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Local Government require the valuation.

ELIGIBILITY OF SLIP ON FIRE FIGHTING UNITS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS SCHEME FUNDING

That WALGA:

1. Supports the inclusion of capital costs of Trailer Fire Fighting Units and Slip On Fire Fighting Units including for Farmer Response Brigades (for use on private motor vehicles) on the Eligible List of the Local Governments Grants Scheme (LGGS).
2. Requests the Local Government Grants Scheme Working Group to include this matter on the Agenda of their next Meeting (expected March 2021).
3. Requests WALGA to work with the Local Government Grants Scheme Working Group to develop appropriate operational guidelines and procedures for the safe use of Slip On Fire Fighting Units funded in accordance with the LGGS.
4. Supports the update of the WALGA membership of the Local Government Grants Scheme Working Group to include one Local Government Elected Member and one Local Government Officer, with these appointments determined through the WALGA Selection Committee process.



WALGA

WORKING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

State Council

Mayor Tracey Roberts JP.....	President
President Cr Karen Chappel	Deputy President / Northern Country 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 Ehrhardt	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 Ronnie Fleay	Great Southern Country Zone
Cr Chris Mitchell JP.....	Kimberley Country Zone
Cr Les Price	Murchison Country Zone
Mayor Mark Irwin	North Metropolitan Zone
Cr Russ Fishwick JP	North Metropolitan Zone
Cr Frank Cvitan JP	North Metropolitan 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
Rt Hon the Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas	City of Perth