

# Western Councillor



ISSUE 114 | JUN/JUL 2021



P4

FINDING THE RIGHT  
TOOL FOR THE JOB

P25

2021 WA LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
CONVENTION

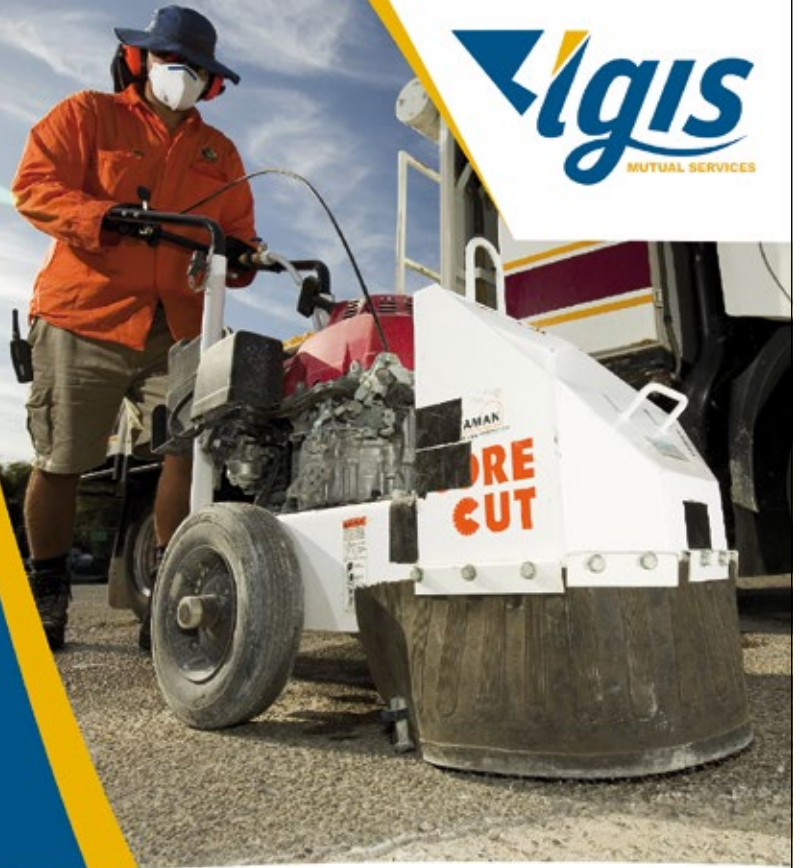
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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# 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 one of the team on the Hotline 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





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**Welcome to Issue 114** of Western Councillor

## COVER:

The City of Kwinana marked the first day of National Reconciliation Week with a Flag Raising Ceremony on Council Green.



BROOME



MOSMAN PARK



SHARK BAY

## FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE



**The 2021-22 State Budget is being handed down at a time when Local Government is responding to a unique set of challenges.**

The Western Australian economy is outperforming other States however growth is still expected to remain below the long-term average over the next four years. There are also pockets of industry and the community that are suffering, while others are feeling the effects of emerging pressures – particularly from the resurgence in the housing and broader construction market.

It is within this context that WALGA has framed its 2021 State Budget Submission. This year's submission is focussed on initiatives that leverage off the State's windfall surplus through infrastructure investment that will stimulate the economy and deliver enhanced productivity and wellbeing going forward. The Association is also focussed on the need for an increase to recurrent spending focussed on support for vulnerable groups in our community.

In developing a submission for 2021-22 it is important to acknowledge the commitment the State has already made to delivering priorities identified by the sector, including investments in roads; waste management; coastal infrastructure, tree planting and sport and recreation facilities. WALGA's 2021-22 submission will seek to further leverage off these successes.

Central to this year's submission are a number of strategic initiative areas.

These include:

### **\$66 MILLION OVER THE THREE YEARS FROM 2022-23 TO 2024-25 FOR EVOLVING THE STATE UNDERGROUND POWER PROGRAM**

Funds will be invested in high priority projects identified on the basis of the need to invest in the electricity distribution network. Greater financial support should be provided for projects in areas with lower property values (lower economic capacity) and specific support provided to individual property owners within project areas based on their financial capacity (e.g. pensioners).

### **\$14 MILLION FROM 2022-23 TO 2024-25 FOR FOOD ORGANIC GARDEN ORGANIC PROCESSING INFRASTRUCTURE (FOGO) AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT**

To be provided from revenues generated by the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy this funding to be allocated to Local Government and private sector operators

through a competitive application process, to be used for the construction of FOGO processing infrastructure and market development.

### **\$15 MILLION FROM 2021-22 TO 2024-25 FOR SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO TRANSITION TO THE STATE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (IR) SYSTEM**

If legislation to mandate the transition from the Commonwealth to State IR system is reintroduced into Parliament, it will be critical for Local Governments to secure State Government funding, resourcing and assistance to ensure the transition is smooth and positive for Local Government employees, and to minimise the financial impact on ratepayers.

### **ONGOING ANNUAL STATE INVESTMENT OF \$50 MILLION TOWARDS POWER SOLUTIONS AND ENHANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONNECTIVITY AND RESILIENCE.**

Building resilient telecommunications systems will address inequity of access to services in regional areas and improve safety during emergencies.

### **\$55 MILLION OVER FOUR YEARS 2021-22 TO 2025-26 FOR COAST WA TO MANAGE COASTAL EROSION AND INUNDATION HOTSPOTS**

The program is an expansion of the State Government's existing Coast WA program and a key response to the Assessment of Coastal Erosion Hotspots report.

### **\$20 MILLION FROM 2021-22 TO 2024-25 FOR THE URBAN GREENING GRANT PROGRAM**

The provision of a grant program to support urban greening aims to accelerate and enhance the tree canopy in the metropolitan area and regional towns across Western Australia, to reduce the impact of urban heat on vulnerable communities and increase liveability of suburbs and activity centres.

Along with other priority areas across the Local Government sector including Housing, Red Tape Reduction and support for Small Business, WALGA will seek to leverage off the collective strength of 139 Local Governments through the budget process to secure outcomes that will benefit the entire State.

# FROM THE MINISTER



Since the last edition of the Western Councillor Magazine, my team and I have been busy working on the next major tranche of reforms for the local government sector.

As the level of government closest to people, local government has immense potential, and through reform, I am confident we can deliver even better results for the communities we serve.

In the McGowan Government's first term, we carried out a significant review of the Local Government Act, which was essential to ensuring our laws remained fit for purpose. This review paved the way for critical legislative reforms such as the introduction of minimum standards covering the recruitment, selection, performance review and early termination of Chief Executive Officers, and a mandatory code of conduct for council members, committee members and candidates.

In the coming term, I will be looking to build on that work.

For those of you who attended the WALGA Breakfast in May, you'll recall I spoke about my desire to deliver major reforms, focussed on five key themes:

## REDUCING RED TAPE

We need to make life easier for small business and people in the community by removing the unnecessary burden of red tape.

Too often I hear from ratepayers and businesses, who face difficult permit and approvals processes. More often than not, these processes differ from local government to local government. We need to find opportunities to drive more consistency and where possible, streamline approvals and regulations. In this regard, I have established a red tape reduction working group with local government professionals from both metropolitan and regional councils to help drive practical and meaningful change.

## GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

I have always been a strong advocate for greater transparency and accountability, and that will be a key area of reform in the coming term of government. This means stronger online reporting with key council data for ratepayers, as well as making council meetings more open and accessible, like mandated live streaming for Tier 1 and Tier 2 local councils.

## EARLY INTERVENTION, STRONGER REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

We need earlier intervention to provide more support and direction to local governments who are not performing well. I have been clear in saying I want to avoid authorised inquiries. They carry a heavy cost in disruption, staff morale and public trust. I strongly believe addressing issues early, before they become large problems is the best outcome. We also need to ensure that any early intervention model is backed by enforcement powers when required.

## CLEARER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Too often I hear of dysfunction creeping into local governments when communication and engagement between elected members and the CEO breaks down. On many occasions this has related to a lack of understanding about roles and responsibilities.

We need better definitions of key roles, especially between elected members and the CEO, and greater regulation of this relationship.

A positive, supportive culture that encourages ideas and innovation, affirmative leadership and increased community engagement will contribute most to effective relationships.

## STRONGER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND TRACEABILITY

Ratepayers are increasingly demanding clear information on budgeting and expenditure and I know local governments have been calling out for financial metrics to be made more appropriate for the diversity of local government accounts across the state, especially for smaller councils in the regions.

We need greater consistency in financial reporting across local governments. This consistency would help make staff transfer and resource-sharing much easier – especially for smaller regional local governments who may seek support from larger metro councils for help with their accounts.

As we progress this work, there will be opportunities for you to provide input and ideas on how we can drive the local government sector forward through these reforms.

In the coming month, I will be hosting a webinar facilitated by the Department of Local Government. I hope many you can take part and I look forward to hearing your ideas on how we can generate positive and lasting change in the sector.





Mayor  
**Tracey Roberts JP**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the Vice President of the Australian Local Government Association, I have just returned from Canberra where I joined an impressive gathering of WA delegates at the recent ALGA National General Assembly (NGA).

This year's NGA was much anticipated as last year's event had to be cancelled due to COVID-19; and as we enter another lockdown we are grateful to have had the opportunity to attend and that most delegates were able to return to WA without too much impact.

The Deputy President, CEO and I were able to combine the NGA with the ALGA Board meeting, capitalising on our presence in Canberra.

The Regional Co-operation and Development Forum held for Rural, Regional and Remote delegates on Sunday 20 June included presentations on Rural Health and the upcoming Regional Telecommunications Review. The Association has made it clear to the Chair of the Review Committee, The Hon Luke Hartsuyker, we are keen to ensure the sector is heard and will be providing a submission to this important review. It is good to know that WA is represented on the review committee by Sue Middleton.

We also heard from The Hon Mark Coulton MP in what was to be his final presentation to the sector as Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communication and Local Government. Interestingly, this trend was to continue the next day when delegates heard from the then, Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon Michael McCormack

MP just prior to him proceeding to Parliament House for the last time as Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of The Nationals. Truly, a remarkable time to be in Canberra, particularly for those delegates who found themselves at Parliament House as the spill was occurring.

Other presentation topics included COVID-19 featuring health and infectious disease specialists; Recovery and Resilience; and Leadership, Human Rights and Persistence. I also joined a panel session with other Mayors from around Australia, sharing initiatives from the City of Wanneroo contributing to local employment and economic stimulus.

WALGA again hosted a Political Breakfast for WA delegates to facilitate engagement with WA Parliamentary representatives, which this year included Melissa Price MP Member for Durack, Patrick Gorman MP Member for Perth, Rick Wilson MP Member for O'Connor, Senator Slade Brockman and Senator Sue Lines. Representatives provided WA delegates with their thoughts on Local Government and topical issues they see for the sector.

With over 100 Motions to consider, it was remarkable to have such consensus in the room. Matters considered included:

- Local Government representation at the National Cabinet
- Restoring funding for Local Government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue
- Recognising a 'pandemic' under the definition of an 'eligible disaster' under the Disaster Recover Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Guidelines to enable Local Government costs to be claimed in line with other 'disaster' events.

Overall, an engaging and informative event and we look forward to driving progress of these policy initiatives at the national level.



Shadow Minister for Local Government  
**Hon James Hayward MLC**

## FROM THE SHADOW MINISTER

It is with great pride and pleasure to write my introductory article for the Western Councillor. I am a newly elected Member of Parliament and the Shadow Minister for Local Government in the National and Liberal Party's opposition alliance.

Up until my election to the Legislative Council, I had served as a City of Bunbury Councillor for more than 7 years. First elected in 2013, my time in Local Government has been a fulfilling and enlightening experience. My wife Lee, and our youngest son Ashton live together in Bunbury and have worked as in television as a journalist and producer for more than 20 years.

My passion for politics begun during my time working as a TV Journalist in the Northwest. It was there that I met a charismatic bloke called Brendon Grylls and heard of his ground-breaking program to revitalise regional areas using mining royalties, which later became Royalties for Regions. This program allowed many Local Governments to achieve infrastructure goals which were sometimes considered impossible for small regional Councils.

It is often not understood that the growing pressures from the State Government and Legislation means the role of Council is far more than 'roads, rates and rubbish'.

I strongly believe that Local Government plays the most important role in grassroots community engagement and delivery of services that directly impact the community. Local Government, especially in regional areas, is often the key provider of local facilities, roads and Government services, filling the gap where the State Government has not delivered.

Now, just some months into this job, it has been an honour to meet with several Local Governments, WALGA and community groups to understand the positions and challenges faced by the sector.

Most recently, we have seen the reintroduction of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 with some small adjustments. However, it still fails to address the new responsibilities, costs and workloads that will be forced upon Local Governments. Particularly by the introduction of a 'approvals to breed' requirement, along with the (for now free) centralised registration system. Councils will also need to amend and strengthen their Local Laws to provide them strong ground if facing the State Administrative Tribunal regarding 'approvals to breed'.

I am glad to say that as Shadow Minister for Local Government, I have recommended to my alliances colleagues that we not support this Bill in its current form.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to let Elected Members and others in the sector know that my office is open, and your input and conversation is always welcome.

I promise to do my best to represent in opposition Local Government in the 41st Parliament of Western Australia and look forward to the opportunity to meet many of you over the coming years.

## RATES CAMPAIGN

# COMMUNITY COMPETITION TO ENCOURAGE RATES KNOWLEDGE



WALGA has joined with The West Australian in a campaign to encourage greater awareness about how Council rates are calculated.

Independent research commissioned by the Association revealed 22 per cent, or one in five ratepayers can identify the correct method of rates calculation, that being as a portion of each Local Government's annual budget.

Of the remainder, 32% believed rates were calculated similar to stamp duty, with another 14% linking rates directly to the housing market.

The competition, run in the West Australian newspaper between 20 June and 4 July gave readers a chance to win one of 10 prizes of having residential rates paid up to \$3500 by choosing the correct calculation method from three options.

It is hoped the competition will help educate more people as to how rates are calculated, in response to the independent research findings that 73% wanted to better understand the process.

The survey of 1000 West Australians from across the State also found that 69% of people wanted a greater say on their rates; while about 40% would be prepared to either pay higher rates for more services, or accept a cut to services for lower rates.

### HOW ARE RATES CALCULATED?

As part of WALGA's annual research program, a survey of 1000 West Australians from across the State revealed their current knowledge of Local Government rates.

**32%** Similar to stamp duty on Property – in that they are charged at a percentage of the individual value of each property

**22%** As a share of the Council budget – with each property allocated a share to pay based on the defined value of the property

**14%** Based on local real estate prices – and adjusted at the same rate as the average movement in the local property market

**32%** Unsure how rates are calculated

# Facts About Your Rates

SPONSORED CONTENT

#### How a boom can affect rates

During a boom, Councils increase employee wages to retain staff in a competitive jobs market, increasing budget requirements, which is to be recovered through rates.

#### How other charges affect rates

Services Councils pay for, such as street lighting, are often subject to price increases. These costs are passed on to councils which increases budget requirements, which in turn increases rates.

#### Home improvements can affect rates

If the comparative value of your home increases through renovations or an extension, the share of Council budget you pay in rates may increase.

#### Housing market movements do not affect rates

General changes in the Western Australian housing market have no impact on your comparative share of rates, due to all properties being affected.

#### Property rental values are independently set

The State's Valuer General sets values used to calculate individual rates according to the Gross Rental Value (GRV) a property could raise if rented. In many country areas, unimproved values (UV) are used according to land value.

#### How new Council projects affect rates

Councils strive to meet community requests for new facilities such as recreation centres, increasing Council budget requirements, which will be recovered through rates.

#### How costs of services affect rates

Did you know your rates may also pay for Council security vehicles, seniors programs, disability access and inclusion programs, rangers, community events, waste services and health inspections?

#### How community facilities affect rates

The local community determines priorities for services and facilities, which impact upon Council budget requirements, which in turn, increases rates.

[www.walga.asn.au/rates](http://www.walga.asn.au/rates)



# A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO LEGAL ADVICE



A collaboration between 28 Local Governments, WALGA and LGIS has resulted in the development of a critical information tool for Local Governments and dramatically reduced legal advice costs.

Legal advice can be an important resource for Local Governments. It can be used to understand sector responsibilities, provide guidance on different legal instruments and help make important decisions; however, the cost of sourcing comprehensive advice can be costly, and in many instances, unfeasible.

Collaborative funding models might be the key to reducing these costs.

In 2020, WALGA, LGIS and Local Governments combined their resources to engage certified legal services, to prepare a report on coastal hazard planning (see breakout box) using an equal contribution model.



This model has saved the sector approximately \$1.5 million in legal fees and each Local Government involved upwards of \$60,000.

The model also allowed Local Governments with a smaller revenue base to gain access to advice that may have been difficult to fund otherwise.

“The Shire has gained significant value from this project,” said Aaron Cook, Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Gingin. “It would have been very difficult to allocate the funding to seek the amount of advice we did in such a short period of time had we not worked with WALGA, LGIS and other Local Governments.”

“Furthermore, the report has enabled our Officers and Council to have more confidence in the decisions we make, not just because of the advice itself but also knowing that 27 other Local Governments who are trying to address the same problems are reading from the same page.”

This funding model could be used in other contexts and demonstrates the opportunities for Local Governments when they work together to address common issues.

The legal report is a confidential document owned by the organisations who contributed funding and resources to seek the legal advice, which include the participating Local Governments, WALGA and LGIS.

**For more information contact Ashley Robb, Senior Policy Advisor, Planning (WALGA) on 08 9213 2000 or at [arobb@walga.asn.au](mailto:arobb@walga.asn.au)**





## PLANNING FOR COASTAL HAZARDS

Planning for the effects of a warming climate in coastal areas is a new responsibility for governments that many across the world are grappling with.

In Western Australia, Local Governments in coastal areas are required to prepare plans that address sea level rise, warming ocean temperatures and changing storm conditions.

In 2019, WALGA, LGIS and the Local Government Coastal Hazard Risk Management and Adaptation Planning (CHRMAP) Forum, a group of Local Government officers who meet regularly to discuss and address coastal hazard planning challenges, prepared an issues paper that considers nine coastal adaptation scenarios common to Local Governments in WA.

Each scenario raises a number of questions, mostly of a legal nature. The CHRMAP forum determined that a qualified legal response to these questions was needed, to clarify Local Government responsibilities and potential legal liabilities in each scenario, and help Local Governments prepare and revise CHRMAPs, which Local Governments are required to prepare under State Planning Policy 2.6: State Coastal Planning Policy.

In 2020, WALGA, on behalf of the forum, released an expression of interest to Local Governments with coastal

or estuarine lands to co-fund the legal report. 28 Local Governments responded and formed a collaborative funding partnership (see article at left) to engage a qualified legal firm. McLeods Barristers and Solicitors was selected by a governing subcommittee of collaboration representatives. The report was completed in April this year.

The legal report is the first of its kind in any state or territory in Australia and puts participating Local Governments on the front foot in supporting their communities to prepare for the changes posed by increasing storm intensities and rising sea levels.

"The report provides a clear and consistent set of advice that should help facilitate a consistent approach to how Local Governments address coastal hazards through their planning frameworks," said Paul Camins, Executive Director Infrastructure, Development and Environment at the City of Albany. "Using similar approaches across Western Australia will reduce complexity for communities, landholders and developers, which will be critical for addressing the challenges that sea level rise presents across the State."

The LG CHRMAP Forum, WALGA and LGIS will now consider the findings of the report to identify matters beyond the powers or resources of Local Governments to address and that require collaboration with State or Commonwealth governments.

# Around the Nation

## News from State Associations across the country

### NSW



#### NSW Councils' Calls Have Been Heard in the Waste Strategy

NSW Councils finally have a way forward dealing with the growing waste crisis with this week's release of the State Government's long-awaited 20-year waste strategy.

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) President Linda Scott said she was pleased the NSW Government had listened to Local Government in developing its Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy and accompanying NSW Plastics Plan.

She said the plan recognised LGNSW's call that dealing with the waste problem was also an opportunity to create brand new jobs in the sector and drive the transition to a circular economy.

"LGNSW has been calling on the Government for a number of years now through our Save Our Recycling action plan to address the growing crisis of waste and recycling in NSW, to go beyond seeing it as a problem but to embrace the opportunity to create a vibrant, job-creating sector," Cr Scott said.

"Our call includes Government working with Councils, that are on the frontline of dealing with waste and recycling, to develop regional waste plans and reinvestment of the \$800 million Waste Levy it collects annually into infrastructure.

"I am pleased that the Government has taken some of our key recommendations on board, such as developing a 10-year infrastructure plan to promote investment in strategic waste infrastructure and jobs growth.

"I also welcome the proposed program to tackle food and green organic waste (FOGO) to meet the national target to halve organic waste sent to landfill by 2030.

"We are pleased to see this move is being phased in over time, which will help smooth the financial impact of any changes to the bin system.

"LGNSW also called for a focus on government procurement decisions with an emphasis on recycled material to drive a circular economy, which is reflected in today's Government plan."

Cr Scott said the Government's Plastics Plan will finally bring NSW into line with other States that have already banned single use plastics.

However, the plan falls short in a number of areas.

"According to a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry in 2018, about 13 per cent of the Waste Levy revenue was reinvested in waste and regulatory programs, while a further 13 per cent went to environmental programs," Cr Scott said.

"There is still so much more than could be done, both to reduce waste and create jobs, if the full \$800 million collected by the Waste Levy each year was targeted towards the purpose it is raised for."

However, she said overall the Government's new waste strategy was a crucial step forward, as it sets the direction for all stakeholders and helps Councils tackle critical waste and recycling issues.

"We look forward to working with the NSW Government in partnership to implement the actions under the strategy to ensure the best outcomes for the community."

### QLD



#### Councils Ask State to Stop Spinning Around on Waste Levy Plans

The Palaszczuk Government should stop spinning around and come clean on its waste levy tax plans.

Local Government Association of Queensland CEO Greg Hallam said contrary to Treasurer Cameron Dick's comments today that Councils "should be so lucky" to take credit for the State's waste levy, all Councils wanted was to make sure the Palaszczuk Government was keeping its promise to Queenslanders and not slugging them with a bin tax.

"This subsidy was a promise made by Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk to ensure the Government's waste levy does not become a wheelie bin tax," Mr Hallam said.

"We call on the Premier to put her hand on her heart and tell Queenslanders her promise will be kept because the five million residents living in her government's waste levy zone have got to be certain they will not have to pay more come July next year.

Tuesday's State Budget revealed the advance waste levy payments to Councils to fund the government's household subsidy are only guaranteed to Queenslanders for one more year and will end on June 30 next year.

"The waste levy was designed to stop interstate dumping and to foster new technologies and industries to help local households ultimately place less waste in landfill," Mr Hallam said.

"To remove the household subsidy before the State has helped ensure Queenslanders have the necessary recycling and recovery options available to them would be a premature and counterproductive move.

"You only have to read the recent Auditor-General's report on Council financial sustainability to see how unworkable it would be for the State to try to push this impost on to Councils.

"We don't want this to be just another State tax added on to the Council rates bill.

"We want to see meaningful investment in waste resource recycling and recovery, and we look forward to discussing this in more detail with the State."

### TAS



#### Community is the Key to Healthy, Happy Tasmanians

Throughout the pandemic, Tasmanians demonstrated their commitment to keeping the people in their community safe and healthy. We must now build upon this commitment to each other, ensuring we are all supported to live health, happy and productive lives. That is why the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) are calling on our political leaders to invest in the wellbeing of all Tasmanians, by providing communities with the tools, resources, and education they need to stay well.

Through their election campaign, 'A Tasmanian State of Mind', the Mental Health Council have put forth a plan based on four key pillars, designed to empower communities to look after and support each other. One of the key pillars of the plan involves partnering with Local Governments to build the capacity of our communities by leveraging existing local connections and expertise.

MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, said we must take a preventative approach to mental health, by building upon the strength of Tasmania's communities, with a holistic focus on wellbeing.

"Rather than waiting for someone to reach for support, we must be proactive, and embed mental wellbeing as a core value, wherever we live work or play. Whether it be through community groups, sports clubs, local events and activities – we must increase the opportunity for Tasmanians to understand and engage with their mental health, by providing everyone with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to stay well," said Ms Digolis.

Local Governments will play a vital role in building the strength and resilience of the people that live within their communities. Leveraging their local leadership will be key in delivering a coordinated approach to mental wellbeing at a community level through a partnership with LGAT and local Councils across the state.

LGAT CEO, Dion Lester, said, "Positive mental health and wellbeing starts at a community level. By building upon the existing connections and expertise of our local Councils to provide education and resources within their community, we empower all Tasmanians to support each other and take ownership of their wellbeing."



MHCT and LGAT urge Tasmania's political leaders to prioritise the wellbeing of all Tasmanians, by adopting 'A Tasmanian State of Mind'.



### Investment in Mental Health and Jobs Welcomed

A spotlight on mental health and jobs as the two key areas of investment in the 2021/22 Victorian Budget has been welcomed by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

MAV President, Cr David Clark, expects the Local Government sector to respond positively on the aspects of the budget that support the wellbeing of Victorians as well as the planned spending on services and infrastructure.

"We were pleased to see \$3.8 billion in funding to transform the mental health system – this investment will benefit all Victorians," Cr Clark said.

"The emphasis on new services and attracting more health professionals to rural and regional areas is particularly welcomed.

"We would like to see Councils funded to implement the social connectedness programs as recommended by the recent Royal Commission report and accepted by the Government.

"What we know is that Victorian Councils already have deep ties to their community and local service providers. There is a real opportunity for the Victorian Government to work closely with Councils to ensure these community connections are fully utilised."

Another good news story is the continued funding for several ongoing programs such as \$41.1 million over two years for the school crossing supervisor program.

"This funding gives communities much needed certainty, however, this commitment to the equitable sharing of costs between state and Local Government should be ongoing," Cr Clark said.

"While modest, the roadside weed and pests program being guaranteed for four years will be a great relief for rural and regional Councils.

"We are pleased the Growing Suburbs Fund has been continued for another year, it remains at \$50 million despite the number of eligible Councils increasing."

Cr Clark welcomed the extension of funding for universal access for early childhood, as this is an issue MAV has consistently and strongly advocated for over many years.

"It is also pleasing to see that our Councils that are Early Years Managers will receive additional funding to support their ongoing high-quality kindergartens as well as the

additional investment in children experiencing vulnerability and trauma.

"Similarly, spending on road network and road safety initiatives is positive, and will help Councils provide the infrastructure necessary for economic activity and safe mobility.

"Funding for Victoria's creative and tourism industries will help these important sectors recover from the impacts of COVID.

"Again, \$1.8 million for community leadership training program for women in Local Government will support increased diversity. It would be a positive step if broader funding to assist Councils in meeting their new obligations under the Gender Equality Act and the Local Government Act was provided by the government."

Cr Clark concluded that Councils are committed to working with government, on behalf of their communities, to improve outcomes for all Victorians.



The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has welcomed the Federal Government's endorsement of the key role Councils are playing in creating jobs and supporting local communities by leading a locally led economic recovery from the COVID pandemic.

ALGA President Councillor Linda Scott said the key measures outlined in last night's Federal Budget, including a \$1 billion investment in Local Government community infrastructure and road projects, via the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program, will enable Local Governments to ramp up their locally led economic development work, creating more jobs and enhancing community wellbeing for the public good.

"Local Government capacity to create jobs and support Australians during the pandemic has been on display since last March when we put measures in place to protect and support our most vulnerable residents from the pandemic while rolling out shovel-ready infrastructure projects to cushion local economies," Cr Scott said.

"The Australian Government's decision to boost investment in Council-led infrastructure, roads and transport shows they have listened and responded to ALGA's advocacy, and that they value the work that Local Government has undertaken over the past 15 months – on its own and as a preferred partner with the Commonwealth," she said.

Communities are also increasingly demanding Local Government action to address dangerous climate change, and Cr Scott said the sector was heartened by

Budget measures establishing a new national recovery and resilience agency, with \$600 million to invest in disaster preparation and mitigation.

This funding will support resilience projects across communities, including building flood levies, hardening telecommunication infrastructure, and building more bushfire and cyclone-proof buildings.

"One dollar spent on mitigation can save at least \$2 in recovery costs. Councils will continue advocating for the creation of more Federal Government funding for local action to address climate change, and a disaster mitigation fund of \$200 million a year over four years," Cr Scott said.

Cr Scott commended the Government for allocating \$250 million in new Budget funding for Building Better Regions (BBRF). This is \$50 million more than previous allocations, and the largest funding commitment to Councils to date.

"Our communities understand that while the Commonwealth brings a much-needed national perspective to economic recovery, support and stimulus measures must be tailored to meet the unique circumstances of each place and each community.

"Councils have the capacity and the local knowledge to deliver the place-based solutions that communities expect,"

Cr Scott said.

The Budget announcement that \$1.3 billion of Financial Assistance Grants will be prepaid is also welcome news for the many Councils now facing budget shortfalls as a result of going above and beyond for their communities over the past 15 months.

"While we welcome the Commonwealth Government's decision to bring forward its Financial Assistance Grants, Local Governments need to see significant increases in this untied funding to boost locally led jobs growth in Australia," Cr Scott said.

"We will continue to strongly advocate for a return of Financial Assistance Grants to 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue, in order to support Local Governments and our communities," she added.

# FINDING THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

## LGCI VS CPI IN COUNCIL BUDGET PROCESS

Local Governments often come under pressure to limit rate increases to movements in the consumer price index (CPI).

The CPI is a useful measure to help ratepayers understand why the cost of living for households is rising. However, it does not accurately reflect price movements faced by Local Governments.

The CPI is designed to measure movements in the cost of a basket of goods and services commonly purchased by households – such as food, clothing, furnishings and housing to name a few.

However, the mix of goods and services purchased by Local Governments is different from households.

Local Governments don't spend on clothing, household furnishings or personal care. Instead, they spend on wages; the construction of buildings, roads and footpaths; professional services; and vehicles. Given these costs tend to rise at a higher rate than the CPI, it is often not realistic for Local Governments to limit rate increases to CPI without having an adverse impact on the level of programs and services provided to the community.

To provide Local Governments with a more appropriate benchmark for expected price movements, WALGA produces the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI).

The LGCI performs a similar function to the CPI, but is specific to costs typically incurred by Local Governments in WA. It uses 10 cost components based on the sector's spending

patterns, and combines these to produce an overall estimate of the general price pressures faced by the sector.

There are however, some limitations to the index. In particular, it does not take into account local or regional issues that may affect costs for individual Local Governments. Therefore, the LGCI should be used as a reference point for planning their budgets and setting rates and individual Local Governments should take into account information about their own local conditions.

Looking forward, WALGA's latest estimates show that the LGCI is expected to rise by 3.2% in 2021-22, and 2.8% in 2022-23.

The increase in costs is due to the strengthening in the WA economy and capacity constraints that are emerging in the construction sector, which will see higher construction costs for roads and bridges, non-road infrastructure and non-residential buildings.

However, there still remains some certainty around the economic outlook due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of Government stimulus programs – particularly those related to the housing market. Based on recent responses to tenders and requests for quotation, some Local Governments have indicated that they are facing significantly higher costs. This means that there is a chance that the LGCI will be revised higher in coming months.

**WALGA will continue to monitor cost pressures and revise its forecasts for the LGCI as more information becomes available.**

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT COST INDEX



Employee costs



Materials and contracts



Furniture



Non-residential building



Machinery and equipment



Non-road infrastructure



Road and bridge construction



Utilities



Insurance expenses



Other



# JUNE/JULY 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@walgas.asn.au) at the WA Local Government Association via email: [blawyat@walgas.asn.au](mailto:blawyat@walgas.asn.au)



## ALBANY

In celebration of the 150th year of Local Government in Western Australia, the City of Albany held its May Ordinary Council Meeting at the newly refurbished Town Hall for the first time since 1967.

Some of the guests were past Councillors and Mayors that were among the 465 residents that served as Elected Members on the municipality's council over the past 150 years.

## ARMADALE

After a successful debut in 2019, the Arts Bush Trail was back in 2021 as part of the Armadale Arts Festival, bringing the local community together through nature, art and culture.

This year the trail was held in the area surrounding the Settlers Common Environmental Centre and consisted of various artworks created by both local artists and school groups utilising the natural materials of the area.



## AUGUSTA MARGARET RIVER

Margaret River HEART served as this year's festival hub for the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival, created and presented by Arts Margaret River.

The venue welcomed the likes of Pip Williams, Julia Baird, Craig Silvey and Natasha Lester, who presented to sold out crowds on the Main Stage and Readers & Writers rooms.

Surf writer and journalist Tim Baker – pictured in the HEART foyer with his surf anthology, *Australia's Century of Surf* – proved a big hit in the coastal mecca of Margaret River.





## BAYSWATER

Hillcrest Primary School Year 3 students Netayah Simpson, Ayrton da Silva and Rose Bolleter learn the importance of creepy crawlies in composting at the Compost Critters incursion with City of Bayswater Mayor Dan Bull and Waste is My Resource waste educator Robyn Brown.

The incursion is part of the Organics Matter program, funded by the City of Bayswater, to support schools in composting organic material on site and reduce their waste sent to landfill.

## BELMONT

The City of Belmont's Wilson Park was transformed into The Imaginarium over four days in May, treating residents to more than 40 free fringe-like performances amid a carnival atmosphere. Professional WA artists and entertainers took to the stage with a range of performances with audiences enjoying anything from stand-up comedy, circus, cabaret, magic, to burlesque and drag shows. The Imaginarium organised by the City of Belmont was supported by Lotterywest and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.



## BASSENDEN

In celebrating National Volunteer Week and welcoming the Town of Bassendean's newest Australian Citizens, the 2021 Community Awards and Citizenship Ceremony was held at a special function at the Swan Districts Football Club on Sunday, 23 May.

Seven categories of the Community Awards were presented.

Pictured: Winners of the 2021 Community Awards. Photo credit: Matt Biocich

## BROOME

The Shire of Broome hosted the 2021 Chinatown Discovery Festival on Friday, 28 May to Sunday, 30 May, with the community coming together for an action-packed weekend of fun.

The theme was Growing up in Chinatown, with a program full of events that recognise and celebrate Broome's amazing multi-cultural heritage and history.

The highlight was the Pearlers' Games, with a big audience enjoying the excitement of the tug-of-war and lots of nautical-themed challenges.







## BUNBURY

Free overnight rest areas for those travelling to Bunbury in fully self-contained vehicles are here to stay!

Following a successful two-year trial of the rest areas, Bunbury City Council supported implementing the concept on an ongoing basis.

The initiative allows those travelling in self-contained vehicles or caravans to stay up to 48 hours at one of two locations.

The trial received overwhelming support and positivity, both from the community and visitors to Bunbury.

## BUSSELTON

Volunteer Week provided the perfect opportunity to celebrate and thank City of Busselton volunteers. Across the City there were many special morning teas and community functions to acknowledge the efforts of volunteers in local groups, clubs and organisations.

Pictured: Volunteers at the City of Busselton Volunteer thank you function.



## COCKBURN

Reconciliation Week is a popular celebration at the City of Cockburn with an annual flag-raising ceremony, traditional performances, a Run for Reconciliation at Bibra Lake and a separate Sorry Day event. This year's flag-raising was well attended including members of the local Nyungar community, local industry, students from Perth Waldorf School, City staff and Elected Members turning out for the event.

Musical performances were provided by the City's youth centre activities officer Tim Kelly on the didgeridoo and youth dancers from Koolangas Kreate.

Pictured: Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett (third from left), Cr Phoebe Corke (second from left) and Cr Chontelle Stone (far right) with staff and guests at the City's Reconciliation Week flag-raising ceremony.

## CAMBRIDGE

Wembley Golf Course General Manager, Josh Madden, was awarded the West Australian PGA's Management Professional of the Year Award in 2019. That honour then saw him judged against the winners from each state in that category at the virtual 2020 Greg Norman Medal Ceremony, the Premier Awards of the Professional Golfers Association of Australia.

Due to the COVID-19 disruptions in 2020, the awards ceremony was postponed until late May.





## COOLGARDIE

Seniors in the Shire of Coolgardie enjoy an afternoon of bowling as part of the Seniors Staying Connected program which provides activities free of charge to local seniors. The program has been successfully attended since its inception in May.



## COTTESLOE

As part of National Volunteer Week last month, the Town of Cottesloe acknowledged local volunteers for their time and dedication at a special event at Cottesloe Tennis Club. National Volunteer Week is a wonderful opportunity for the Town to thank these amazing people for the valuable contribution they make to our community. The Town thanks the volunteers for their ongoing commitment and support each year.

## CRANBROOK

On Friday, 14 May the Cranbrook Community Precinct was completed. The Precinct features a water sensory play area, disability access basket swing and flying fox, obstacle course that features a balance bridge climbing boxes, monkey bars and log hoppers. The outer area features lawn, shade shelter, BBQ area and shared path. The Council would like to thank the Australian Government whom without, this project would not have been possible.



## DERBY WEST KIMBERLEY

Approximately 150 people attended the Derby ANZAC Day commemorations on Sunday, 25 April.





## DOWERIN

Dowerin was the host for the 2021 Regional Conference for Town Team Movement – ‘Dowerin Do Over’. The Dowerin main street underwent a mini revamp during the conference. There were more than 100 attendees with sponsors including RAC, NEWROC, Regional Art WA, Shire of Dowerin, and Town Team Movement.

The event was followed by a Street Party with live music and kids activities. A big thank you to the Community Resource Centres who assisted in organising the street party.

## EXMOUTH

The Shire of Exmouth recognised the outstanding efforts of the town's volunteers and sports stars at an awards presentation evening at the Ningaloo Centre. Ninety-five people attended the 2021 Shire of Exmouth Community Volunteer and Sporting Awards, which recognised the contribution of volunteers in all community areas, with awards presented in seven categories.



## GOSNELLS

Competing against more than 180 diverse entries, Simon McArdeall took home the \$5000 acquisitive first prize in the City of Gosnells 2021 Community Art Exhibition and Awards.

The event offered a prize pool of \$10,000 across 10 categories. Winners were announced on Friday, 21 May and the free public exhibition was open for the following week.

Pictured: McArdeall's painting, Ghost, will now form part of the City's art collection.

## FREMANTLE

Fremantle Council has voted to change the name of Kings Square to Walyalup Koort – a Whadjuk Nyoongar name meaning ‘Heart of Fremantle’.

The Council made the decision following an extensive engagement process which showed the name Walyalup Koort was the clear preference among Fremantle's Traditional Owners and the broader community.

The name will now be referred to Landgate for formal approval.







## JOONDALUP

Joondalup Mayor Albert Jacob recently opened the City's Walk of Fame in Central Walk. The Walk of Fame was first proposed by Deputy Mayor Russ Fishwick, who wanted to publicly recognise members of the Joondalup community who have achieved success at an elite level. Four of the inaugural inductees attended the unveiling - Jessica Bratich Johnson (karate), Casey Dellacqua (tennis), Michael Malone (business) and Matt Priddis (Australian Rules football).

## KWINANA

The City of Kwinana marked the first day of National Reconciliation Week with a Flag Raising Ceremony on Council Green. Kwinana enjoys a higher percentage of Aboriginal residents than Perth's average, and the ceremony was organised as a result of local Reconciliation Action Plans. Gilmore College and Peter Carnley Anglican Community School students raised four flags, Kwinana Citizen of the Year Lynn Coomer spoke, and Koya dancers welcomed good spirits.



## KELLERBERRIN

The staff and committee of the Kellerberrin Community Resource Centre were pleased to host the Volunteers Sundowner held at the Kellerberrin & Districts Club. This event was organised to bring the community together, celebrate the volunteers' hard work and dedication to our town. Their tireless efforts provides services essential to the well-being and safety of our community.

To the volunteers of Kellerberrin and surrounding communities – we thank you!



## MANDURAH

Mandurah's community services sector, in partnership with the City of Mandurah, has united to deliver a collaborative approach to support homeless and street present people in the city.

The Homelessness and Street Present Strategy, launched on May 19, aims to break the cycle of homelessness for people living rough in Mandurah, and support vulnerable people in the community.

People experiencing homelessness in Mandurah have shared their lived experiences in helping to put the Strategy together.







## MOSMAN PARK

The Town of Mosman Park has joined forces with Friends of Mosman Park Bushland and Mosman Park Men's Shed to install a unique timber bird hide along the Swan River. A wonderful environmental conservation initiative, the bird hide was funded partially through the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction's Riverbank Grant Program. The bird hide aims to educate and encourage people to appreciate local fauna and is the first of its kind in Perth's western suburbs.

Pictured: Penny Taylor, Robert Grocke and Mayor Brett Pollock



## MURRAY

Construction is underway on the State's first food innovation Precinct, with the sod officially turned for the Western Australian Food Innovation Precinct on Thursday, 20 May. This is a major milestone for Western Australian food growers, producers and manufacturers as well as Murray and other regional communities. The state-of-the-art facility, located within the Peel Business Park in Nambelup, will foster industry innovation to drive growth and export and will transform the state's food and beverage manufacturing sector. For further information visit [murray.wa.gov.au/wafip](http://murray.wa.gov.au/wafip).

Photo credit: Josh Cowling Photography

## MOUNT MAGNET

The Murchison Geo Tourism project is a collaborative venture between the seven Murchison Shires of Mount Magnet, Sandstone, Yalgoo, Murchison, Cue, Meekatharra and Wiluna, and the Mid West Development Commission. Representatives from the Murchison Geo Region set up a Conference Booth at the WA Regional Tourism Conference held in Geraldton from Monday, 3 May to Wednesday, 5 May.



## NARROGIN

The Shire of Narrogin partnered with Narrogin's peak Indigenous representative body KEEDAC – Kaata Koorliny Employment and Enterprise Aboriginal Development Corporation, to host a Welcome to Country and Afternoon Tea to recognise Reconciliation Week 2021 – More Than A Word. KEEDAC Chief Executive Officer, Leanne Kickett said KEEDAC is proud of the opportunity to partner with the Shire for this event. This partnership demonstrates the willingness of both parties to listen, and take action - speaking to this year's Reconciliation Week theme.







## PLANTAGENET

Empowering Plantagenet Seniors (EPS) is an organisation staffed by passionate and caring local volunteers, that has made a positive difference to the lives of others in the Plantagenet community - so much so they have been recognised at the national level with a Special Commendation Award by Relationships Australia in the Neighbour Day 2021 Communities Connected Initiative.

The Shire of Plantagenet thanks EPS and the huge number of volunteers making the community a better place.

## PORT HEDLAND

The Hedland community came together on Saturday, 1 May, celebrating the opening of Strike Park, coinciding with the 75th Anniversary of the 1946 Pilbara Aboriginal Strike. This Strike involved over 800 Aboriginal pastoral workers walking off large pastoral stations in the Pilbara for better working conditions. The Strike is regarded as one of the most significant industrial strikes in Australian history, paving the way for Aboriginal rights across the country.

Pictured: Mrs Doris Eaton, Eileen McKenna-Rule and Alfred Barker



## ROCKINGHAM

Coinciding with National Reconciliation Week, the City of Rockingham formally launched its new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021 - 2023 in late May with a morning tea involving local Aboriginal elders and representatives from its Aboriginal Advisory Group.

Pictured: City of Rockingham Mayor Barry Sammels with Aboriginal Advisory Group members Doreen Nelson, Doris Getta, Cheryl Martin, Ashley Garlett and Deputy Mayor Deb Hamblin at the launch of the RAP.

## SERPENTINE JARRAHDALE

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale celebrated a successful six months since the opening of the Watkins Road Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Centre on Wednesday, 26 May. The station has played a key role in the Shire's efforts to grow a cleaner and greener environment, with 40 per cent of hard waste processed at the facility diverted away from landfill and recycled.

Pictured: Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Director of Infrastructure Reza Najafzadeh, Shire President Cr Michelle Rich and Manager Waste and Fleet Mathew Pennington.







## SHARK BAY

On an unexpectedly cold Sunday morning on Sunday, 2 May, 28 entrants turned out bright and early to swim, cycle and run in Denham's first Triathlon. The Shire of Shark Bay partnered with Geraldton Triathlon Club to host the event. There was a great turn out with spectators enthusiastically cheering on all the competitors, volunteers and local police officers who assisted with marshalling the course.

## STIRLING

Bina Parkland in Balga was awarded Park of the Year at the Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) WA Awards of Excellence in May.

The contemporary parkland includes a skate plaza, BMX tracks, multi-courts, parkour area, playground, public art, extensive car-parking, BBQs, grassed picnic areas and public toilets.

Bina previously won a High Commendation from PLA in 2016 for exceptional engagement with the community and innovative planning approaches.



## SWAN

The City of Swan's Beechboro Community Hub was awarded Community Facility of the Year for its innovative features of design, development and operation at the Parks and Leisure Australia Regional Awards on Wednesday, 12 May.

City of Swan Mayor said the prestigious award was a considerable accomplishment for the City and its community.

## THREE SPRINGS

Wednesday, 26 May saw around 25 people gather at the Three Springs Golf Club for their third astrotourism event. Two members from the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR) joined with Astrotourism WA to hold a great night where participants could view the lunar eclipse and blood moon through the four telescopes provided.





## WANNEROO

Happy Birthday Play School: Celebrating 50 Years exhibition opened to great fanfare on Wednesday, 26 May at the Wanneroo Gallery.

City of Wanneroo is the only metro council in Western Australia to host the hugely popular travelling exhibition that features famous props and characters from the show.

The experience, to be held until Saturday, 14 August, has proven to be a hit with children and adults alike who have all grown up on this iconic program.



## WOODANILLING

Kenmare Hall is a beautiful stone hall built in 1921, located approximately 15km west of the Woodanilling town site on the corner of Reschke Rd and Douglas Rd - celebrating its centenary in September. The hall is owned by Shire of Woodanilling and managed by the voluntary Kenmare Hall Committee – consisting of local primary producer residents.



## WYALKATCHEM

The Shire of Wyalkatchem has successfully completed a community led project to combine its tennis courts, bowling green and Community Club at a single location. Under this CSRFF supported project, three new courts and lighting, including lighting for the bowling green were delivered. The project creates a vibrant sporting hub, makes effective use of existing infrastructure and creates a welcoming space that is a source of community pride.

## YORK

Ballardong Noongar Elders Phil Bateman and Audrey Narkle-Nettle with Shire of York President Cr Denese Smythe were at the unveiling ceremony of two new brass plaques at the summit of Wongborel/Mt Brown to commemorate the Ballardong Noongar and settler heritage of York.





# INTRODUCING THE NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL

Taking on the position of interim Director General at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) is an exciting challenge.

Already, a number of key themes regarding the way Local Government in WA operates are emerging.

These themes include a focus on enhanced Local Government accountability and integrity, planning and financial management, and better community engagement and inclusion.

Most Local Governments in Western Australia do a fantastic job. They deliver much more than 'roads, rubbish, and rates'.

They deliver vital public services and are at the heart of what makes our communities great places to live, work and do business in.

Local Governments have in recent times, played a key role in our communities' recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Their response in working with all levels of government in the recovery has been remarkable.

I acknowledge that there is much to be done to enable Local Government to operate as efficiently as possible.

That's why I have been working with the Local Government team at DLGSC to ensure that we have our priorities in order.

I am looking closely at DLGSC's role, to ensure that its resources and focus are aligned to our intent – to enable Local Government to act in the best interests of the communities it serves.

It means that we are shifting DLGSC's focus to address common vulnerabilities before they become entrenched issues.

For example, effective financial management and reporting is high on the agenda. We will also seek to clarify the role between council and administration in the legislation.

The DLGSC team is working on a package of reforms to improve Local Government governance and regulation, which will improve outcomes for communities.

DLGSC will prioritise reforms that streamline processes and ensure consistency across Local Governments in matters such as planning.

By prioritising correctly and improving early interventions by DLGSC we anticipate that the need for Authorised Inquiries will reduce – these should be a last resort.

The bottom line is that we need to concentrate on what Local Government is there for – to deliver public value.

What I have seen in my first few weeks as Director General is that DLGSC and its partners in the Local Government sector are on the same road. There is a willingness throughout the sector to move forward and get the job done.

I am looking forward to making the journey with you.

**Lanie Chopping**  
Director General



## Have your say on planning changes

The State Government is supporting changes in the planning system, including red tape reduction and better decision making across all levels of government.

If you would like to have a say, please head to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage website: <https://www.dplh.wa.gov.au/planning-reform>

If you have a specific suggestion relating to local government reform, please email [actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au)

# LGIS RETURNS \$60 MILLION TO MEMBERS SINCE 2007



By Jonathan Seth, CEO, LGIS



This year LGIS is very pleased to return \$2.2 million in contribution credits to our members. Given the year that we've all had – the significant events of Tropical Cyclone Seroja and the Wooroloo fires, and the impact of COVID-19 on our investments – this modest return is incredibly pleasing in a tumultuous year.

The \$2.2 M is a direct result of prudent management of your Scheme and the combined efforts of the whole local government sector to proactively manage risks and reduce claims.

When added to previous returns it means that since 2007 LGIS has returned \$60.2 M to members.

Returning funds to members is one of the key ways that LGIS, as a mutual indemnity scheme, is different to commercial insurers. It's a reflection of our mutual philosophy and the fact that our members are also owners. Any surpluses are either retained by the Scheme or returned to members.

You may have noticed that we've changed our language when we talk about LGIS. We've done this to more accurately reflect what we do, and highlight how we're different from commercial insurers.

## WHAT IS A MUTUAL INDEMNITY SCHEME?

A mutual indemnity scheme is a specialist financial vehicle for the management and financing of risk. It's important to note that the Scheme is not insurance – it's an alternative risk financing strategy.

Mutuals are established by organisations with a common purpose (in the case of LGIS, WA local governments). Other well known examples of mutuals include CBH, RAC WA and HBF.

Scheme members pay contributions to create a Fund, or a 'pot of money', which is used to manage the primary layer of risk (Pooled Cover). The Scheme buys a variety of 'insurance' (indemnity covers) in excess of these Pooled Covers to provide members with the protection they require.

As funds are administered for the benefits of members there is a clear relationship between the successful execution of risk improvement strategies, which lowers risks and losses, and the increased financial strength of the mutual. This leads to greater member benefits – stability in pricing and coverage; risk services to support members, which in turn provides, in the case of LGIS, a \$60 M return of dividend to members since 2007.

## THE POWER OF DISCRETION

The unique feature of a mutual which sets it apart from insurance is discretion.

The power of discretion rests in the hands of the members via the LGIS Board. The Board has sole and absolute discretion over all claims for loss. As a member based organisation, the Board will act in good faith and in the best interest of all members.

Practically LGIS uses our discretion in a variety of ways, most recently in our response to Tropical Cyclone Seroja. After the LGIS team had visited members impacted by the cyclone we decided to fast track the release of \$1 million to assist with restitution prior to loss-adjustment assessments being completed.

The power of discretion allows LGIS to be nimble and agile to the needs of our members, acting quickly when our assistance is most needed.

## 100% OF MEMBERS RENEW

As you read this we're either at the tail end of our membership renewal, or 1 July has passed. I'm very pleased to advise that once again 100% of WA local governments have chosen to continue their membership of LGIS.

Unlike the Pacific region commercial insurance market which had composite insurance price increases of 29%, LGIS members have received modest increases in their contributions for 2021/22 – confirming the benefits of a collective mutual approach to protection.

I'd like to thank all of our members for their continued support of LGIS. It is our members that make us strong, and by working together WA local governments ensure that the sector has sustainable, long-term protection that meets all of their legislative and regulatory requirements now and into the future.

**As always if you would like more information about the Scheme please contact me on 9483 8855 or your LGIS Account Manager.**



# THE PEOPLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By Dr Chris Berry



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.

## 1960s - EVELYN HELENA PARKER OBE, FIRST FEMALE MAYOR IN WA

Evelyn Parker was born in 1907 in Hangkow, China where her parents were missionaries. She migrated to Australia with her family in 1921. Her father had died in 1920 and she saw her mother as 'one of the pioneers' of the world who decided to bring her young family to Australia. Parker attended schools in China and Sydney before finishing her schooling at Perth College. After gaining her Leaving Certificate she was a teaching monitor at Brookton. Here she found that women monitors had to teach the 'three s's', sewing, singing and Scripture as males didn't like doing any of them'. From 1928 to 1929 she completed her Teaching Certificate at Claremont Teachers' College.

## YEARS OF SERVICE

From 1930 to 1951 Evelyn Parker taught in many schools, including many rural schools where she was the only teacher. During World War II, she played a major role in the operations of the Red Cross and the service canteens. She was also a supporter of Sister Kate's Home and was on the committee of WA's first free children's library and engaged in many hospital and club activities. In 1951 she was promoted to first mistress at Subiaco Primary School where she stayed until retirement in 1967. While teaching, Parker was elected as a Councillor of the City of Subiaco in 1953, the third woman councillor at Subiaco at a time when most councils still had never had a woman councillor. She served for 24 years until 1977 and was elected Mayor by the electors of Subiaco from 1975 to 1977, beating three male candidates. With this result, she became the first woman in Western Australia to be elected Mayor, and sharing with Cr Alma Venville of the City of Stirling (elected Mayor by the council just a few days later) the honour of being Western Australia's first women mayors in what was then International Women's Year. Evelyn Parker led the way, encouraging other women to enter local government, with women mayors Heather Henderson and Penny Taylor following her example in Subiaco in later years.



Evelyn Helena Parker OBE, first female Mayor in WA

*Photograph courtesy SLWA 8292B/34554-11F*

## SERVICE TO SUBIACO

Evelyn Parker was a supporter of providing services for the aged, being a key driver of the Subiaco senior citizen centre (opened 1967) and an inaugural executive member of the Subiaco Historical Society. 'The men on the council were more interested in sport than activities for the children and I was more concerned for the very young. There were not nearly enough kindergartens, playgrounds and infant health centres, and nothing for senior citizens. So I took the two extreme ends [of the population] and got a tremendous amount of support from everybody.' Taking over from long serving Mayor Abrahams who led the fight to preserve Subiaco's identity, it was natural for her to carry on the Subiaco tradition of being a defender of the City boundaries in the turmoil of the Royal Commission on metropolitan boundaries of 1974.

## EVELYN HELENA PARKER HONOURED

Evelyn Parker was made a Justice of the Peace and awarded an OBE in 1977. In 1975 she was named Western Australia's Citizen of the Year and in May 1986 she became a Freeman of the City of Subiaco. In 1990 the Evelyn H Parker Library in Subiaco was named in her honour, 'conspicuously celebrating her significant contribution to public life.' Evelyn Parker Place in Belconnen ACT is also named in her honour. She died in 1993.

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> 'Interview with Evelyn Parker by Hilary Rumley', in Lynne Hunt and Janina Trotman (eds), *Claremont Cameos, Women Teachers and the Building of Social Capital in Australia*, Interview Transcript, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia, 2002, pp. 59 – 70.
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0568b.htm> accessed 25 May 2018

# RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS

WALGA's Governance and Procurement Team have recently developed a number of resources to assist Members:

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATION AMENDMENT 2021

The *Local Government Regulation Amendment 2021* became effective on 3 February 2021 introducing; Council Member Model Code of Conduct Regulations; CEO Standards for Recruitment, Performance Review and Termination; and Employee Code of Conduct requirements. As a consequence, WALGA's Governance and Procurement Team developed a range of new resources to assist Local Governments implement the requirements. The new resources prepared and made freely available to all Member Local Governments on the WALGA website include:

- **Local Government Regulation Amendments Guidance Note, together with:**
  - Template Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates
  - Template Standards for CEO Recruitment, Employment and Termination
- **Policy Development Framework – Code of Conduct Behaviour Complaints Management Policy, together with:**
  - Template Code of Conduct Behaviour Complaint Form
  - Template Behaviour Complaints Committee Terms of Reference
  - Template Behaviour Complaints Committee Delegation
  - Template Behaviour Complaint Statutory Declaration

In addition, a new Template Employee Code of Conduct was made freely available on Friday, 4 June and a WALGA Webinar on the Council Member Code of Conduct is scheduled for Thursday 8 July.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Other recently developed resources arising from the *Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019* include the following templates that relate to compulsory policy obligations:

- Template Policy – Temporary Employment or Appointment of CEO [s.5.39C]
- Template Policy – Council Member Continuing Professional Development [s.5.128]

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2021

The Governance and Procurement Team also presented a WALGA Webinar on Thursday, 15 April on the topic of 'Local Government Elections – Owner and Occupier Legibility Claims' to explain how best to use the associated resource available in the online Governance resources. A recording of this webinar together with responses to questions raised on the day can be found on the Training section of the WALGA website [walga.asn.au/Training/Webinars](http://walga.asn.au/Training/Webinars)

The Governance and Procurement team are continuing to receive a high volume of enquiries regarding the impact of the new legislative and regulatory changes and Members are encouraged to continue to contact the team for assistance – [governance@walga.asn.au](mailto:governance@walga.asn.au) or 9213 2514.

### ELECTORAL REFORM

The State Government announced on Friday, 30 April the establishment of a Ministerial Expert Committee to advise the Government on electoral reform with the terms of reference to review the electoral system for the Legislative Council and provide:

1. Recommendations as to how electoral equality might be achieved for all citizens entitled to vote for the Legislative Council, and
2. Recommendations for the distribution of preferences in the Legislative Council's proportional representation system.

The Panel was provided eight weeks to receive submissions and make recommendations to Government. Given the timeframe a State Council Policy Forum was convened to consider and develop a submission on the issues to be addressed by the Ministerial Panel's Terms of Reference: The Policy Forum consisted of nine (9) State Councillors representing all electoral regions.

The Policy Forum, supported by executive and senior WALGA staff, met on two occasions and deliberated extensively on the direction of this submission recommending:

- That Group Ticket Voting be removed from the Legislative Council electoral system, and reforms be adopted modelled on the Senate reforms of 2016.
- That a regional system be retained, and the whole state electorate option be rejected.
- That the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform be required to consider the importance of political representation for rural and regional Western Australia.

Further, the submission detailed the need for Regional, Rural and Remote Representation, emphasising that Legislative Council representatives play a critical role in the regions, particularly as there are fewer members of the Legislative Assembly outside of Perth.



2021 WA LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONVENTION

# LEADING THE WAY

Themed Leading the WAY: Looking Forward, Looking Back, the 2021 WA Local Government Convention program will this year be held at Crown Perth on Monday, 20 and Tuesday 21 September. Commencing with the Association AGM, the Convention program has been designed to support and encourage Local Government representatives facing unusual circumstances.

The event will be taking place against the backdrop of generational change for the sector with the reform of the Local Government Act, as well as the unprecedented level of uncertainty experienced in areas such as local and international politics; the economy; the environment, together with the ongoing impact and evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Former Foreign Minister and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the Honourable Julie Bishop will join the program as a keynote speaker and Australian of the Year Grace Tame will deliver the closing keynote speech.

A political focus features across a number of sessions, with one featuring the Federal and Shadow Ministers for Local Government and another with renowned journalists Anthony de Ceglie and Paul Kelly all providing insights into State and Federal politics.

ABC Broadcaster Glenn Mitchell, former Wildcats champion Greg Hire and former Cabinet Minister and Sex Discrimination Commissioner Pru Goward form a panel discussing the important issue of mental health, with concurrent sessions focused on a range of topics of interest to the sector including emergency management, governance, economic resilience and waste.

Former tennis world number 4 Jelena Dokic will be the Convention Breakfast speaker, and will share her courageous story of the meteoric rise through the ranks of tennis during her teens and combatting the abuse she suffered at the hands of her tyrannical father and coach.

As in previous years the Convention program is accompanied by a Trade Exhibition featuring a wide range of organisations relevant to Local Government operations and complemented by a partners program. Additional field trips are also available post conference on Wednesday, 22 September.

This year the annual Gala Dinner is taking place on the evening of Monday, 20 September at Optus Stadium and will celebrate the sesquicentenary of the Local Government sector. The winners of the #shoWcAse in Pixels competition will also be announced, with artworks displayed prior to the dinner on the giant screens at the stadium.

Convention registration is now open, with the registration brochure available for download from the WALGA website at [www.walga.asn.au/lgc21](http://www.walga.asn.au/lgc21).



**HON JULIE BISHOP**



**GRACE TAME**

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFILE

# MAYOR RUTH BUTTERFIELD

## CITY OF ARMADALE



City of Armadale Mayor Ruth Butterfield is a WALGA State Councillor representing the South East Metropolitan Zone. A close shave on a road 16 years ago was the starting point of her career in Local Government, prior to her election as Mayor in 2017. She shared with Western Councillor her experience of being an Elected Member.

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

Currently I am the Mayor of the City of Armadale, which is a full time job. I have a Bachelor’s Degree and a Post graduate Diploma in Education and taught as a high school teacher prior to becoming so involved with Council. Good communication is key to effective teaching and also important to being an effective Elected Member. The value of education and training can’t be underestimated, and taking on the role of Councillor takes time, effort and ongoing learning.

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

Prior to running for election, I was involved with several community groups (treasurer of the local playgroup, member of the Community Advisory Committee for the Armadale Hospital and the local land care group,) where I had contact with the City of Armadale. At the same time, I saw a deterioration in the general appearance of the area and felt I could effectively represent the residents. One day, when I was pushing my newborn baby along the road (as there was no footpath) the front wheel broke off the pram and we ended up in the rough gravel on the road edge, just as a car was approaching at speed. I managed to drag the pram away from the road edge as the car went around the corner. It was a close shave, but the incident highlighted the need for the provision of basic infrastructure, such as footpaths.



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

I have been an Elected Member since 2005 and have noticed many changes over the years. Notably, the diversity and number of people willing to put their hand up to become a Councillor has increased significantly, signifying the positive move toward Councils being more reflective of society. The sector has become more compliance driven, and now Local Governments operate in a similar way to corporations or large service organisations (without the profits!). Financial sustainability and asset renewal provisioning has come into sharp focus, as the sector grapples with 'cost shifting' from other spheres of government, combined with dwindling external grant opportunities.

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

My biggest challenge and what causes me the most sleepless nights, is trying to balance the needs and wants of the community, with the need to keep rates down. Most of my City's income comes directly from residential rates and this puts extreme pressure on the budget process every year, as extra projects compete for funding. Having to say 'No' or 'We can't do that right now' to community groups and ratepayers is difficult.

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

The City of Armadale covers a large area on the south eastern edge of the Perth metro area. It stretches from the Perth Hills (Darling Range) down to the sandy plains, where the pace of development has seen Armadale ranked in the top three growth suburbs in WA for the last five years. This growth and development has been a challenge, particularly in delivering community infrastructure and new services whilst being mindful of the needs of our older suburbs. Armadale has an amazing diversity of landscape and biodiversity, with rivers, dams, wetlands, jarrah forests, banksia woodlands...and also a wide range of housing and lifestyle options.

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

I'm proud to have been part of a Local Government who was at the forefront of addressing the diminishing urban tree canopy by adopting one of the first Urban Forest Strategies in Perth. The strategy has meant planting thousands of extra street trees to mitigate the heat island effect being felt by our new suburbs. Being able to work side by side with environment volunteers to revegetate degraded land and river banks is also a very special experience.

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

Be passionate, be committed, and be willing to bend without breaking!



## Changes to local council energy prices.

The State Government has recently announced changes to the regulated electricity tariffs, effective from **1 July 2021**. These changes are part of an annual review to reflect the cost of generating and transporting electricity, as well as ensuring the electricity network is safe, secure and sustainable.

At Synergy, we do our best to minimise the costs we can control, and we're always working on ways to supply cleaner and more sustainable energy for our customers.

### **We're here to help you manage these changes.**

There are several ways Synergy can help you manage your electricity costs. From providing energy savings tips to help improve your energy efficiency in your business, to flexible payment options. We're here to support our customers whatever circumstances they are in.

To find out more about the 2021 price changes and the range of support services available to you, visit [synergy.net.au/pricechanges](https://www.synergy.net.au/pricechanges)

# UNDERSTANDING COMPETITIVE MARKETS

Andrew Blitz, Commercial Development Manager

Without the disciplines imposed by competitive markets, business has little incentive to reduce costs and prices, produce new innovative products or use resources as efficiently as possible.

Local Governments often encounter markets in key activity that are an oligopoly or even verge on monopolisation. When taking into account dynamics such as local presence, security of supply, network availability and risk, there are often limited practical market options for Local Government, despite a competitive and open procurement process. Examples of markets where there can be a limited number of supplier options include Fuel, Council Business Systems, Telecommunications, Energy, Waste Management and Banking. Oligopolistic free markets often lack transparency, particularly in regard to fair and equitable pricing to the detriment of the consumer. Markets with high liquidity such as energy, carbon and banking stand to benefit most from regulated market transactions.

It is in the interests of Local Government to have a broad option of suppliers and competitive market tension. Take for example an industry where there are a large number of suppliers, but one may be dominant with their Local Government offering. Continual renewal of that offer on the basis that transition is too much of an administrative burden may have longer term consequences of removing alternative options which no longer remain in the market when they are needed the most. It is not in anybody's interest, least of all Local Government to monopolise markets.

Embedded into the principles of Australia's National Reform Agenda (formerly National Competition Policy, and now represented by the National Cabinet Reform Committees) is competitive neutrality, which requires that the prices charged by Local Government operations should aim to recover the full costs of a business activity. The intent is to avoid artificial subsidies that do not provide for commercial operators to compete.

There are occasions where a large scale project can adversely impact the competitive market, yet at the same time deliver broader economic and social benefits. Once such example is the WALGA Sustainable Energy Project.

To proceed with this project, an application with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for authorisation (including an interim authorisation) is currently pending.

WALGA is seeking an authorisation for a period of 15 years in order to allow Members to pool their aggregate forecast demand for, prepare and issue tenders in respect of, negotiate terms, jointly acquire under contract and jointly manage contracts for Energy. The authorisation also includes Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGCs), Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs), Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs), and similar renewable energy certificates and carbon credits aimed at reducing proposed Members' energy consumption to net zero emissions.

Legal guidance and substantial Member input from the Sustainable Energy Project Steering Group has set out the complex application. In anticipation of approval, this application is a ground breaking first for the Western Australian Energy Market (WEM). Although similar projects have been approved for the National Energy Market (NEM) in the Eastern States, to WALGA's knowledge no similar whole of energy buying group has yet been formalised in our State. The significance of this relates to Local Government's ability to secure best pricing, drive greater transparency to commodity markets and to lock in the limited capacity of renewables generation ahead of an anticipated surge in demand.

The Procurement Plan for Phase One of the WALGA Sustainable Energy project, to aggregate supply costs of energy based on the whole of sector load has been approved. WALGA has reserved capacity for a single or multiple supply options to emerge, depending on the responses to the market process. As an attractive proposition to the market there could well be a sole supply offer that sits within the approval of the ACCC authorisation.

For more information about the WALGA Sustainable Energy Project and the ACCC authorisation please contact **Toby Costanzo, Contract Manager** on **tcostanzo@walga.asn.au**



# STATE COUNCIL BRIEFS

The following resolutions were made at the State Council meeting held on Wednesday, 5 May via Zoom and at WALGA's West Leederville office.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL RATIOS

That WALGA:

1. Advocate to the Minister for Local Government to amend the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* to prescribe the following ratios:
  - a. Operating Surplus Ratio,
  - b. Net Financial Liabilities Ratio,
  - c. Debt Service Coverage Ratio, and
  - d. Current Ratio.
2. Recommend that Local Governments consider including Asset Management ratios in their Annual Report.
3. Request the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to review the Asset Management ratios in consultation with the Local Government sector.
4. Continue the Local Government Financial Ratios Working Group as a reference group for the development of a Model set of Financial Statements and Budget Statements, and to establish new financial indicators.

## ROADS ASSET PRESERVATION MODEL REVIEW

That WALGA:

1. Seek support from the WA Local Government Grants Commission to provide presentations on the inputs, operation of and outputs of the Road Asset Preservation Model at Zone or Regional Road Group meetings where requested.
2. Advocate to the WA Local Government Grants Commission to improve the formatting and labelling of the model and make it available via the Commission's website.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

That the development and implementation of the Western Australian Development Index, led by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, be supported, subject to:

1. WALGA and the Local Government sector being represented on the governance group providing oversight to the project, and
2. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries committing to provide further consultation opportunities to the Local Government sector as the project progresses.

## REVIEW OF THE STATE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

That WALGA:

1. Seek confirmation from the State Government on whether it intends to re-introduce legislation for Local Governments to operate solely in the State Industrial Relations System.
2. If the State Government reintroduces legislation to require all Local Governments to operate within the State Industrial Relations System, continue to advocate for the State Government to:
  - a. Amend the *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (WA) to include additional provisions to modernise the State IR system; and
  - b. Provide adequate funding and resourcing to ensure Local Governments are equipped with the appropriate tools and training to enable a smooth transition.



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