

Western Councillor



ISSUE 126 | JUL/AUG 2023

LEGACY OF DARKNESS

The Total Solar Eclipse
numbers shine a bright
light on the future of
dark sky tourism

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Busselton's
new underwater
sculpture park

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Bruce Rock,
where friends
become family

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Derby Floods, the worst
of times brings out the
best in people

Local governments working together.

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

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

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

We believe that's worth protecting.



To find out how you can get the most out of your LGIS membership, visit lgiswa.com.au or call 9483 8888.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Peer Support Team

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

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

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

The key objective is to assist Local Governments resolve these issues

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

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

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

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
PEER SUPPORT
TEAM HOTLINE
NUMBERS

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CEO
LG Professionals WA
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Have your say Local Government Elections 2023

More information:

dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/council-elections



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission

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COVER: Exmouth hosted the Total Solar Eclipse and Dark Sky Festival that has catapulted a legacy for the future of dark sky tourism.

Photo: Jarrad Seng

Welcome to Issue 126 of Western Councillor

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SOUTHERN FOREST



BUSSELTON



BRUCE ROCK



FROM THE MINISTER

After being a reader of *Western Councillor* for almost twenty years, it is a little surreal to be writing a column as the newly-appointed Minister for Local Government.

I had the same feeling when I returned to address WALGA State Council last month - seeing many familiar faces in the room, while also seeing the Association continue the important work of representing our essential third tier of government.

I am committed to working with the sector, particularly through the delivery of important reforms introduced recently by the Cook Government. I know that past experience of change in local government attempted by previous State Governments has left many with a lingering feeling of discomfort at the prospect of change. But I also know that the sector has worked really effectively with the McGowan and Cook Government, and that I have become Minister midway through a very constructive process of practical reforms. Of course, the reforms draw heavily on the 2020 Panel Report, and I am excited to see many of the important changes that are coming into place, following years of research and consultation.

I have also been immersed in my other portfolios, including Ports, Road Safety and elements of Transport. I am particularly looking forward to working with councils and the Association to prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roads. This is a shared responsibility, and I believe we will achieve the most progress in saving lives by continuing to work together.

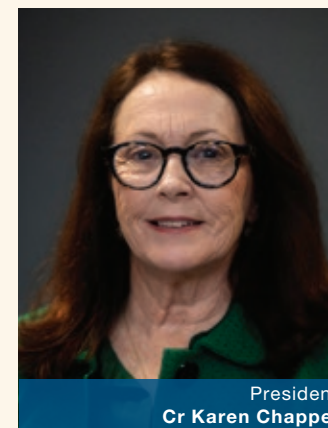
Like the previous Minister, I come to the role with several years of experience in local government, as the City of

Stirling Osborne Ward Councillor, and as a WALGA State Councillor. I am looking forward bringing this experience to ensuring that the delivery of reform works across the immensely diverse range of councils present in WA. I am particularly keen to ensure that the new Council Plans can facilitate the benefits that come with Integrated Planning and Reporting. Improved planning and reporting does not need to be complicated, and councils of any size can bolster the way they plan to ensure that precious time and attention is best focussed on delivering for the community. Ultimately, these reforms will ensure that councils are informed and involved throughout the critical budgeting and oversight of local government services and projects.

From my engagements with the Association and meeting councils across the State, I have been grateful to hear of the many challenges and opportunities faced by councils today. The range of issues in a State as large of WA is always varied – but I appreciate that there are reforms, like simplifying model financial statements, that will have flow-on benefits for the yearly auditing cycle, for councils from Esperance to the Kimberley.

Local government is public service to the community. As the Minister, I am committed to working with you to deliver the best results for our communities across Western Australia.

Hon David Michael MLA
Minister for Ports; Local Government; Road Safety;
Minister assisting the Minister for Transport



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The words of Shire President Geoff Haerawa, our colleague in Derby-West Kimberley, in this issue, “the worst of times brings out the best in people” capture what so many Local Governments know to be true.

Being at the frontline of response and then recovery and rebuild when communities are faced with hardship, be that an accident, the loss of a local business, a human tragedy or a natural disaster, is what Local Governments do.

It also means we’re in the front row to witness the very best of human kindness and resilience.

WALGA CEO Nick Sloan and I visited the Kimberley recently to see first-hand how these communities are working to return services and infrastructure following the devastating floods of last year. After the Federal and State teams leave the region it is left to Local Government to support and rebuild local communities.

I was struck by the extent of the damage to the Highway between Broome and Derby and the impact this was having on the local community. The impact of the flood on the region and the local economy is enormous. But there is also the impact on the Local Government Elected Members and officers who supported and are continuing to support some of our State’s most vulnerable communities in the aftermath of the floods. Amanda Dexter, the Shire of Derby West Kimberley CEO spoke to us in detail about that aspect of response, recovery and rebuild and it is something many of us would never experience in our day-to-day or working lives.

More broadly, the issues being faced by Local Governments in the Kimberley are monumental, yet they tackle the task with vigour and great spirit. Attracting and retaining staff, removal of primary health care services, maintaining and building back better damaged

“

While we may be separated by geography, we’re united in our efforts for Local Government to continue to succeed in providing safe, liveable, thriving communities.”

infrastructure, housing affordability and availability, and of course, providing a basic level of amenity for their residents and the tourists that visit their towns.

In perhaps the cruellest twist, with unseasonal rain during the dry season, the real concern now is that with flood waters still evident, the wet season just around the corner could be just as bad.

To all of our colleagues in the Kimberley – while we may be separated by geography, we’re united in our efforts for Local Government to continue to succeed in providing safe, liveable, thriving communities.

Over 18 years in Local Government and personally seeing so many examples of Local Governments supporting their communities through countless social and economic challenges, you can be assured that WALGA will continue to advocate on behalf of our Members to both the State and Federal Government to recognise the increasing number and extent of challenges and assist with appropriately resourced, tangible solutions.

I took the opportunity to highlight the issues faced by Local Governments following natural disasters in giving evidence to the House of Representatives Standing Committee undertaking an Inquiry into the implications of severe weather events. We must continue to highlight these issues and offer practical, considered pathways for the State and Commonwealth to assist in the critical role Local Government plays on the ground.

In addition to the story on the floods in the Kimberley, this edition of *Western Councillor* also contains other stories on the incredible work being done by Councils and the resilience shown by our communities.

I hope you enjoy this uplifting edition of *Western Councillor*.

Karen Chappel
WALGA State President.

ALBANY – NEW INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE



Picture: O'Connor MP Rick Wilson, Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington, Great Southern Regional Cricket Board Chair Greg Stocks, Albany MLA Rebecca Stephens, Albany Agricultural Society president Rob Wright and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries Julia Scriven

BUILDING FOR THE COMMUNITY IS A TEAM EFFORT

Coming together for a common goal has resulted in a new indoor sports centre in Albany, set to reap rewards for the Great Southern seaside town.

The collaboration between City of Albany, the Albany Agricultural Society, the Great Southern Soccer Association, Cricket Great Southern, Cricket Australia, the Albany Cricket Association and the State Government came to fruition with the 1,800 square metre multi-use indoor sports centre opening in late July.

City of Albany Councillor and Cricket Great Southern Chair Greg Stocks said that the Albany Indoor Sports Centre was identified as a need by the community.

“Albany is a fantastic place to live, work and play, however, it can present a challenge for sports enthusiasts with its potential for inclement weather,” Mr Stocks said.

“Transforming the Albany Agricultural Society’s pavilion into this remarkable multi-use sports centre was no small feat, but it will undoubtedly enhance the possibilities for Albany and the wider region.

“The enthusiasm from local cricketers and soccer players as they explored the state-of-the-art facility at our soft launch event was a clear testament to the importance of this project.

“While the centre provides the prime opportunity for avid players to improve their skills, it will also encourage those who may have never played before to try something new.

“This indoor sports centre is not just a venue, but represents the power of collaboration, dedication, and the shared belief in creating spaces that enhance the quality of life for our community.

“Congratulations to everyone involved. Together, we have made a lasting and positive impact on the City of Albany.”

The fit out includes a spring tensioned perimeter and roof netting, internal retractable and sliding nets purpose-built for cricket, artificial turf flooring and cricket pitches. Lighting was upgraded to bring it in line with Cricket Australia standards.

The design is specifically in two halves with all netting retractable to open-up the entire facility. One half focuses on cricket, with an enclosed cage for indoor cricket as well as four cricket pitches and bowling machines.

The other half of the facility is a multi-purpose design that includes line markings for soccer/futsal, with the ability to play on one large soccer pitch, or with netting that can be converted into two smaller soccer pitches.

AUGUSTA-MARGARET RIVER

LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY TOGETHER

A team of Undalup Rangers has recently spent a week removing weeds and planting over 1000 local, mixed, native seedlings to help improve biodiversity.

The Augusta-Margaret River Shire has worked with four Rangers from the Undalup Association to protect two important sites along Wooditjup Bilya (Margaret River), namely, the Yalgardup Falls and the Margaret River Mouth.

Both are picturesque and popular areas that have significant Aboriginal cultural and environmental values. Their beauty and popularity however had resulted in the sites suffering degradation due to more people visiting them.

Wadandi Cultural Custodian and Chairperson of the Undalup Association Zac Webb said that looking after Country together, especially along the Margaret River, is important.

“The Margaret River or Wooditjup Bilya, is very significant as water is life and it’s also a storyline that connects us to the land,” Mr Webb said.

“When we work together in collaboration to look after Country, we can keep it a healthy environment that we can all enjoy - sitting, walking, talking and using the river sustainably.”

“Projects like this are a great opportunity for our Rangers to share their cultural and western science knowledge out

on Country while working with the Shire and their Friends of Reserves Groups,” he said.

“We need Country, caring for Country is health. If you look after Country, it looks after you.”

The coastal revegetation works by the Rangers included restoring dune areas and defining the coastal walkway access path, which are part of the Shire’s Prevelly Gnarabup Foreshore Management Plan.

Shire President Paula Cristoffanini said the partnership with the Undalup Rangers stems from a long-standing relationship with local Wadandi Elders and Traditional Custodians

“We highly value working together with the Undalup Association and its Rangers to protect the local culture and environment on Wadandi Boodja,” Cr Cristoffanini said.

The landscaping at the waterfall was planned carefully in consultation with Traditional Custodians, to preserve the biodiversity, Aboriginal heritage and the landscape values of this site.

“We must tread carefully and respect these significant areas,” she said.

The project for both sites was partly funded by a CoastWest Grant (Margaret River Mouth) and the Augusta-Margaret River Shire.



Picture: Undalup Rangers, Joe Burgess-Adams, Meeka Rees, Kaylene Gray and Josie Percival at Yalgardup Falls.

LGIS DELIVERS FOR THE SECTOR, DESPITE A TOUGH YEAR FOR THE SCHEME.

By James Sheridan, CEO, LGIS



2022/23 Was a challenging year for WA local government’s mutual indemnity scheme, LGIS. There were however, some improvements, especially in regards to return on investment, on the previous year, which was one of the toughest years in the Scheme’s history.

Globally and at home conditions have been difficult –with inflationary pressures, global uncertainty and natural catastrophes, especially floods placing pressure

on commercial insurance markets. Against this backdrop LGIS continued to deliver sustainable long term protection to the Western Australian local government sector.

Pleasingly, all WALGA Members maintained their LGIS membership in 2023/24. The LGISWA Scheme now protects \$19.2 billion worth of assets; 15,000 motor vehicles; 19,820 local government workers; and 17,107 volunteer bushfire fighters.

Compared to costs in the commercial insurance market, gross contributions for LGIS membership in 2022/23 had moderate increases. This year our indemnity partners continued to be cautious with restricted risk appetite. At home for the Scheme, the year provided a challenging set of circumstances with high workers’ compensation claims and significant inflationary impacts on property and motor claims. Fortunately our investment performance turned around this year and improved returns have contributed to the bottom line.

It’s pleasing, that despite the year’s challenges, the financial results for 2022/23 will fall within budget – a positive result for the mutual Scheme which doesn’t operate to make a profit, but rather to serve and protect the local government sector. Our prudent financial management and long-term focus has placed the Scheme in a strong financial position. We remain within our target capital range, ensuring that your LGISWA remains strong and ready to respond when needed.

SECTOR RISKS IN FOCUS

The LGIS Board of Directors, on behalf of WALGA, recognises that all members benefit when risks are consistently managed across the sector, ultimately reducing incidents and injury while protecting the Scheme.

The Scheme’s commitment to proactive risk management was demonstrated this financial year with a number of initiatives including:

Psychological safe program:

In response to changes in work, health and safety legislation we developed a range of new resources and refreshed services to support the sector in meeting their obligations.

The psychological safe program was launched in August 2022 and has already been accessed by 76 members and 492 staff.

Health and wellbeing reinvigorated:

Our always popular health and wellbeing program was refreshed in 2022/23 with new services focused on mental health, including new financial wellbeing seminars accessed by 1,051 local government staff across the state.

Cyber risk pilot program

Successive audits by the Office of the Auditor General have highlighted the sector’s cyber vulnerabilities. Fortunately the WA sector hasn’t reported a major attack, but it’s a risk that isn’t going away. 15 LGIS members participated in the first phase of a cyber-risk program which benchmarked the sector’s capability and capacity. Phase two will continue into 2023/24 and will see resources developed, informed by phase one’s findings, to support more consistent management of cyber risks across the sector

Improving fleet management

17 LGIS members participated in the 2022/23 motor fleet pilot program to identify gaps in fleet management across the sector, develop strategies to reduce member at fault claims, and improve risk management consistency across the sector. In 2023/24 the motor fleet risk management program will be available to all LGIS members to reduce incidents and increase safety.

Sharing knowledge, LGIS events

Risk focused events including the Risk Forum and Mayors and Presidents Forum were delivered in the past 12 months. Both events explored topical issues including emergency management; managing the results of climate change; cyber risk; and the impacts of new work, health and safety legislation on the management of volunteer bushfire fighters. August 2023 will see Bunbury hosting the South West WorkCare Forum which will explore fitness for work and worker’s compensation issues.

For more information about your Scheme’s achievements for 2022/23 please see the companion reports ‘A Year in Review’ and ‘Annual Financial Report’ to be published in October 2023.

If you have any questions on your Scheme’s performance in 2022/23 or the services we provide please contact me on 0409 185 420 or talk to your LGIS account manager. Our dedicated team is also available to present to your entire council and address any questions.



SOUTHERN FORESTS AND VALLEYS NEW TOURISM WEBSITE

It’s now easier for locals and visitors to uncover the hidden gems in the Shires of Manjimup, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Boyup Brook, Donnybrook-Balingup and Nannup with the launch of a new website, www.southernforestsandvalleys.com.

The Shires formed the Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils (WBAC) in 2013 which has led the progression of a collective tourism brand to undertake marketing for the region, namely Southern Forests and Valleys.

Manjimup Shire President Paul Omodei said it was a great example of pooling resources to deliver a better outcome for a common goal.

“I believe the Southern Forests and Valleys website is an outstanding outcome of the alliance led by Executive Officer Katie McDonnell with input from the five participating Councils. I look forward to seeing it expand tourism in the Lower South West,” Mr Omodei said.

The new website is an enticing gateway to explore the wonders the breathtaking region which aims to promote tourism, showcase the region’s beauty, and encourage visitation.

The comprehensive resource is designed to captivate visitor interest while promoting tourism in the area. Packed with information on local attractions, accommodation options, upcoming events, and outdoor adventures, visitors can plan their dream itinerary with ease and convenience.

Nestled amidst nature’s embrace, it boasts an abundance of natural treasures. From towering forests, cascading waterfalls, and scenic valleys to charming towns with rich cultural heritage, the region offers many unforgettable experiences.

Katie McDonnell, Executive Officer of Southern Forests and Valleys Tourism said the new website serves as a digital showcase of the region’s natural beauty and vibrant culture.

“We believe it will inspire travellers to immerse themselves in the diverse experiences the Southern Forests and Valleys have to offer. This website is a testament to our commitment to industry growth and supporting the local community,” Ms McDonnell said.

Features of www.southernforestsandvalleys.com:

EXPLORE HIDDEN GEMS:
Unearth the region’s best-kept secrets and discover off-the-beaten-path locations, ensuring an authentic and immersive experience.

EVENT CALENDAR:
A comprehensive list of events including festivals, markets, and community gatherings.

ACCOMMODATION:
A diverse range of accommodation featured from cosy bed-and-breakfasts to luxurious homesteads, suitable for every traveller’s preference and budget.

ADVENTURE AWAITS:
Adventure seekers can find a myriad of outdoor activities, such as hiking trails, mountain biking, 4WD trails, fishing spots, and more to quench their thirst for excitement.

CULINARY DELIGHTS:
Get a taste of the region’s culinary delights, featuring fresh local produce, gourmet experiences, and charming cafes.

ON THE ROADS - AN UPDATE

A FIRST: \$1 BILLION SPENT ON WA ROADS

Local Government road investment exceeded \$1 billion per year for the first time in 2021/22, outside the metropolitan area nearly 75 per cent of expenditure on Local Government roads was funded by Federal and State Governments. There has been a significant increase in road construction costs over the past two years, and the network is also under increasing pressure as trucks get bigger.

MORE TRAINED CHILD CAR SEAT FITTERS

Since inception, WALGA's RoadWise has trained nearly 1,200 Fitters who have collectively inspected and installed 35,000 child car seats correctly. The accredited course in Type 1 Child Car Restraint (CCR) Fitting has been revamped in 2022-23, offering students a more refined learning experience. During the year, 23 new Fitters completed their training and are now qualified to offer fitting services to the community.

LG STARS – SAFETY RATINGS TOOL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROADS

With Commonwealth funding from the Office of Road Safety, WALGA has designed a Safety Ratings Tool for

Local Governments that provides an easy-to-use, reliable and cost-effective method for assessing the safety of Local Government managed roads. The tool will provide Local Governments with an assessment and understanding of the safety standard of local roads. This will assist and support the inclusion of road safety considerations in long-term works programs and investment decisions.

NEW ROADWISE

WALGA's RoadWise has been undergoing an important transition, refocusing from a community-based promotional activity aimed mostly at individual road users, to being solely focused on Local Governments who register as RoadWise Councils. RoadWise Councils, which will launch in early 2023-24, is a fresh approach by WALGA to proactively, engage, motivate, prepare and position Local Governments to make an effective and sustainable contribution to the achievement of road safety goals and targets in WA.

This approach will also involve a new initiative to formally recognise and showcase better road safety practices by Local Governments.



BIN CURIOUS?

WALGA, working with Local Governments and Regional Councils, has been delivering the Bin Tagging Program since 2015.

The Program focuses on behaviour change at the kerbside bin level by giving household individualised feedback about what is in their bins (through a tag placed on the bin). This feedback provides residents with information and motivation to increase resource recovery and reduce contamination.

The current WasteSorted Bin Tagging Program is supported by the Government of Western Australia and administered by the Waste Authority.

WALGA delivers the Program and most recently worked with the Western Metropolitan Regional Council, Resource Recovery Group, City of Joondalup, South Coast Alliance (City of Albany and the Shires of Denmark and Plantagenet), Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council, City of Vincent and City of Bunbury to implement the Program for nearly 13,000 households. Through this intervention recycling contamination rates reduced by up to 25% and the already low Garden Organic (GO) and Food Organic Garden Organics (FOGO) contamination rates also declined.

WALGA has launched the next phase of the Program with Expressions of Interest due **26 September 2023**. Local Governments can access up to \$10,000 to assist with the implementation of the Program.

For more information visit the WasteNet website www.wastenet.net.au or call WALGA and ask for the Waste Team.



BUSSELTON JETTY UNDERWATER ART WORLD

A DEEP DIVE DOWN TO
A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Jutting 1.8 kilometres out to sea is the longest wooden jetty in the southern hemisphere.

The Busselton Jetty is iconic to the south west coastal city drawing half a million visitors every year. Now, visitors can have a fully immersive experience diving and snorkelling amongst 13 underwater sculptures at the end of the WA heritage listed jetty.

Installed in June, the underwater sculpture park delivers a triple bottom line in terms of benefits.

It provides tourism benefits for visitors and water enthusiasts with a unique experience, it will attract more visitors creating an economic benefit, and it acts as an artificial reef attracting hundreds of marine species and sea sponges which keep the ocean clean and absorb carbon, generating environmental benefits.

Managed by non-for-profit Busselton Jetty Inc without funding from the State Government, each visitor ticket sold contributes 25 percent of gross revenue to the Jetty Maintenance Fund. It is a unique business model.

City of Busselton Mayor Grant Henley said the City manages the dedicated Jetty Maintenance Reserve.

“The Jetty Maintenance Reserve receives a significant proportion of funding from the business activities on the jetty, so it’s important to maintain that income through new and innovative projects that ensure visitation remains strong,” the Mayor said.

“The underwater sculptures, which form part of the current scope of works, will undoubtedly prove a powerful drawcard into the future to secure the sustainability of the Jetty.”

Last financial year, \$1.1 million was made from tickets sales, going to the City of Busselton’s dedicated reserve.

The jetty itself is one of Australia’s greatest artificial reefs and over 158 years, the submerged timber and steel piles have become colonised with a beautiful array of marine invertebrates, creating a vibrant and diverse habitat for over 300 species.

Busselton Jetty CEO Lisa Shreeve said that within hours of the first sculpture being installed on the ocean floor, new inhabitants moved in.

“The first sculpture installed was the shipwreck replica of SS Pericles and within hours, a giant school of trevally came by

swimming through it and within days invertebrate life started forming on it, it was incredible to witness,” said Ms Shreeve.

“Clean oceans account for 70 percent of the air we breathe and more marine life living on the sculptures means more sponges cleaning the ocean. The Sculptures will then help us educate people about the marine life and its importance to the environment.”

The Busselton Jetty Inc put out an Expression of Interest for the sculptures and received over 60 submissions. From a short list of 20, 13 were chosen. All 13 artists are Western Australians with seven from Perth and six from the south west.

“All artists were paid for their work and during the pandemic, that was a lifeline for some of them,” Ms Shreeve said.

The 500-square-metre underwater art gallery intentionally positioned the sculptures positioned away from the existing Underwater Observatory to protect the established marine life there and to disperse visitors.

The sculptures are eight metres below the surface but some of them are two or three metres tall and are visible snorkelling from the surface.

Ms Shreeve said that the sculptures and the environment will be continuously monitored.

“Six weeks after they were installed, the bronze mermaid has been covered in bright red growth – and she looks absolutely striking.

“The 13-tonne concrete octopus has long tentacles and is fitted with over 80 glow-in-the-dark, solar-activating stones that will absorb sunlight throughout the day and glow at night.

“And the three-metre tall postmaster sculpture is a nod to Andrew Stonehouse Thompson Jr, the Postmaster General and Customs Officer who used to ride his bike to the end of the jetty in the 1940s and 50s to check cargo and collect mail from oncoming ships.”

“The kiln in which the Postmaster was fired in belongs to local ceramicist Ian Dowling who happens to be the grandson of Andrew Stonehouse Thompson - the original Postmaster General and Customers Officer – talk about serendipity!”

Future plans include periscopes to view the submerged sculptures from the jetty and QR codes located adjacent to the sculptures that connect to underwater webcams.

The Sculptures

The Shark and The Crab by ShoreGaze

The 2.3-metre-long Shark and the 2-metre-long Crab are made from 6mm and 10mm plates of mild steel, designed and cut using brand new splicing software from ShoreGaze. Both sculptures are inspired by local marine life and have been designed to maximise marine life growth within the underwater environment, with the sculpture design providing an ideal substrate for sponges, barnacles and other marine species to live and grow on.



The SS Pericles Replica by Shorewater Marine & Busselton Jetty Inc

A 4 x 3 metre steel-hulled ship was repurposed and refitted to resemble the Steam Ship Pericles. The original SS Pericles left London on her maiden voyage to Australia in 1908 (built by the RMS Titanic ship builders). On 31 March 1910, five days after leaving Melbourne, the Pericles struck an uncharted rock 9.7km south of Cape Leeuwin, sinking the ship. The wreck lies 5.6km south of Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse at a depth of 35 metres.

The Southern Right Whale by Alan Meyburgh

The 10-metre long, 3-metre high ‘Southern Right Whale’ is fabricated from 100 percent mild steel. The sculpture has been specifically created to maximise marine and reef growth while acting as an under and above water viewing attraction.



The Bronze Mermaid by Cerys Heyring

The Bronze Mermaid measures approximately 3.2 metres long by 2 metres wide. What makes her unique is her Humpback Whale tail instead of a traditional fish tail – a truly amazing addition that will maximise the potential marine life growth by creating a large surface area for corals and sponges to attach to.



Ophelia the octopus by Brendan Booth

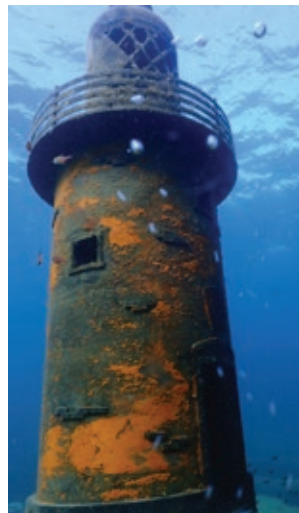
‘Ophelia the Octopus’ – a 13-tonne concrete octopus made from a high sulphate resistant concrete/composite mix with the addition of glass fibre reinforced concrete. Built in 5 separate sections due to its weight, Ophelia has over 80 glow-in-the-dark, solar-activating stones that will absorb sunlight throughout the day and glow at night.



The Mermaid’s Muse by Daniel Fisher

Welded together over a 6 month period, The Mermaid’s Muse is made up of hundreds of individual mild steel rods, heated to the point that they can be bent and sculpted together using a welder to create the flat, finished look with the playful and theatrical sculptural features designed to interact with the local underwater environment.

BUSSELTON JETTY UNDERWATER ART WORLD



**The Lighthouse
by David Barbour**

The 2.8-metre Lighthouse is a mild steel replica of the Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse that sits on a marine grade concrete base that has been poured into a rock mould to look like a rocky outcrop. The mild steel has been sandblasted back to its raw form to increase marine life growth and the small entry points make a perfect habitat for the smaller marine creatures.



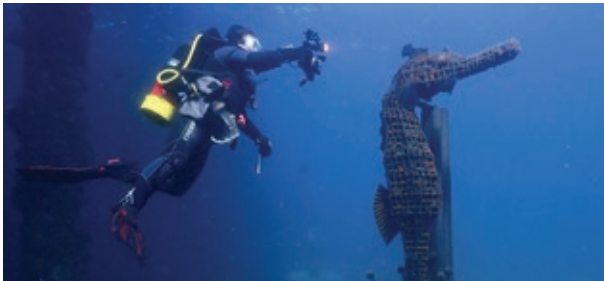
**The Postmaster
by Georgia Zoric**

The Postmaster, a 3-metre tall, 1.3 tonne ceramic sculpture is dedicated to 1940s and 1950s Postmaster General and Customs Officer who rode his bike up and down the Jetty each day to check cargo and collect mail from oncoming ships. In the torso lies a porthole for snorkellers and divers to use to take photos, while the 25+ bottles at its base will provide habitats for the marine creatures.



The Seahorse by Jake Coghlan

The Seahorse is a 3-metre-tall, 500kg mild steel replica of a West Australia Seahorse that sits above a seaweed habitat made from 12mm rebar and reused metal mill balls. The body of the Seahorse itself is made from hundreds of 10mm rods, welded together in a gabion structure over the span of 6 months, with rocks filling the inside (similar to a gabion wall) to act as additional marine habitats.



The Divers Helmet by Gavin Cochrane

The 3-metre-tall Diver's Helmet weighs 3.5 tonne and is a mild steel replica of an old-school diver's helmet. The 5V geodesic sphere that makes the helmet has been constructed using over 600 metal triangles and countless hours of welding.



Queen of the Bay by Scott Michell

The Queen of the Bay is a 3-metre tall, 1.5-tonne bespoke designed fish sculpture that has been fabricated from 100 percent mild steel over the span of 6 months. In the heart of the Queen of the Bay is a "HH" metal plaque dedicated to Hunter Madden and the Hero Hunter Foundation that support families battling childhood cancer, a beautiful gesture from Scott and a great cause.

JUL/AUG
LOCAL LENS

The following pictures celebrate the achievements of Local Government in Western Australia. Any WA Local Government that has held an event or function and wants to have it featured in Western Councillor is encouraged to contact the *WALGA Communications Team* via email: communications@walga.asn.au



SOUTH PERTH

A \$4,200 Community Development Grant from the City of South Perth helped Manning Rippers Football Club host a First Nations Community Day at James Miller Oval on 10 June 2023. The City was proud to support the event to celebrate the long-standing contribution of local Aboriginal players. It recognised the Manning Rippers' commitment to inspire and grow participation of people from all backgrounds in local sport. The City's grants are open all year-round to assist sporting clubs, community groups and other organisations to run projects that benefit the City of South Perth community.

GOSNELLS

Hakas, traditional songs and dances, and a delicious hangi were highlights of the first City of Gosnells event to celebrate Māori culture and people. Held in July, Te Iwa O Matariki Lights Up Gosnells celebrated the Māori New Year and the reappearance of the Matariki cluster of stars in the night sky. The event delved into the rich Māori history and culture through entertainment and storytelling. The Mayor's speech was translated into Māori and community members joined in the dancing and Haka.



KWINANA

Located at Calista Oval in the City of Kwinana, this new playful facility has been designed to educate primary school aged children about safe cycling behaviours. The Calista Bike Skills Track includes a set of mini traffic lights, traffic signs, speed bumps and park and play areas. It even includes a play charging station to 'top up' that bike or scooter. The project was funded by the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as part of the election commitment grant program, secured by the Hon Roger Cook as Kwinana MLA, and RAC WA.

STIRLING

The 'Boorloo Hustle' dance group, part of the 'Corroboree For Life' group is dedicated to coming together to celebrate the survival of ancient culture through dance, arts, and performance. The group performed at the recent 2023 Mirrabooka NAIDOC Week Event at the Herb Graham Recreation Centre.



HARVEY

The Shire of Harvey celebrated receiving \$25,000 in WA Trail Planning Grants Program funding with Sport and Recreation Minister the Hon. David Templeman MLA in July. Minister Templeman met with Shire of Harvey Deputy President Cr Michelle Campbell, Director Sustainable Development Simon Hall and Manager Economic Development Anissa Williams at Lake Brockman Tourist Park for afternoon tea and a photo. The funding will advance the Munda Biddi Harvey Spur Trail, identified as a key priority in the Harvey Region Trails and Adventure Master Plan. The grant was matched by Alcoa.

GERALDTON

Up, up and away! There was cause for celebration at Geraldton Regional Airport in July as Western Australia's newest regional airline was welcomed. Nexus Airlines now conducts regular flights linking Geraldton, Karratha, Port Hedland and Broome as well as providing an alternative for those wishing to travel between Geraldton and Perth. The increased connectivity will greatly benefit both locals and visitors alike.

More information is available at www.nexusairlines.com.au.



THREE SPRINGS

The Shire of Three Springs, a small town situated 315 km north of Perth, unveiled their Silos Projection Project on April 15, 2023. The 56 x 45 metre CBH Silos were transformed into Western Australia's largest outdoor cinema screen, showcasing the top-grossing movie of 2022, 'Top Gun: Maverick'. The event mesmerised attendees with live music, delectable food, captivating face painting, and engaging games, creating an unforgettable experience for all.

Photo by NavigatorPhotografix



EXMOUTH

Exmouth Shire President Darlene Allston and CEO Ben Lewis received the Lotterywest grant certificate for \$300,000 from Peter Foster MLC on behalf of Council. The grant will be put towards the Exmouth Recreation Precinct revitalisation project for youth and support a skatepark extension, including new seating and a viewing platform connecting the activity areas. The upgrades will provide additional safety and maintenance benefits to the existing facility and, following the extension, will be suitable for skating workshops and competitions for improved inclusivity, connectivity, fitness and well-being.

WANNEROO

In July, the City of Wanneroo marked the passing of Margaret Cockman OAM, a true City stalwart who dedicated more than five decades to working in local government. A Freeman of the City of Wanneroo, she was actively involved in, and founded, several groups that continue to make a difference to the community today, including the Wanneroo Agricultural Society and Wanneroo and Districts Historical Society. The City honoured her immeasurable contributions and flew Civic Centre flags at half-mast, hosted an online book of condolences and hung a portrait of Margaret in Wanneroo Library and Cultural Centre.



PLANTAGENET

The Shire of Plantagenet Parks and Gardens team completed a makeover of the Mount Barker Visitor Centre gardens in July. Thank you to local banksia experts Kevin and Kathy Collins who supplied the banksia plantings and their expertise. The new garden beds complement the recent installation of solar-powered lights on the façades of the Visitor Centre, Mitchell House Arts Centre, Harvest Church, and Old Police Station & Folk Museum, all situated along Albany Highway, as part of ongoing efforts to improve the amenity of the Mount Barker town centre for locals and visitors alike.

Pictured left to right: Banksia expert Kevin Collins, with Shire of Plantagenet Parks and Gardens staff Terry Williams, Karen Bleach and Clayton Walton. Credit: Mount Barker Visitor Centre

GINGIN

On 5 July, the Shire of Gingin hosted its 'For Our Elders' event in celebration of NAIDOC week at the Guilderton Foreshore. Yued Elder Darryl Dawson facilitated the Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and sharing of indigenous history of the region. He also shared his personal connection to the area and performed a Didgeridoo presentation. Members of the community braved the winter weather and enjoyed the opportunity for learning as well as the free sausage sizzle, Aboriginal artwork stall, and special craft activities for the kids.

Picture: Yued Elder Darryl Dawson performing the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.



VINCENT

An 80m long mural dedicated to the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ has been launched at Dorrien Gardens. The City of Vincent and Tourism WA commissioned artists Sioux Tempestt and Seantelle Walsh to create the mural that celebrates women in sport, multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion at the home of the Perth Soccer Club. The design is based on FWWC2023's official theme, Beyond Greatness, and combines Tempestt's abstract style with Walsh's Aboriginal symbols and iconography. More than 70 locals, including players from Perth Soccer Club, helped complete the mural at a recent community painting day.

Picture: A Perth Soccer Club player and other volunteers painting the mural





ARMADALE

The City of Armadale hosted its very first Welcome Baby to Noongar Boodja Country in late June 2023. Welcoming a baby into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a cultural practice that involves the whole community, acknowledging an infant's connection to the traditional lands on which they are born, and celebrating their birth. Families were welcomed by local Elder Vivienne Hansen, followed by an Aboriginal dance performed by Demar Djookins Dance Group to cleanse the land of bad spirits and prepare it for the attending babies to take part in the Smoking Ceremony conducted in traditional Noongar language.

PINJARRA

The Shire of Murray recently celebrated the installation of the Bindjareb Maar artwork at the Pinjarra Town Square which included a smoking ceremony and traditional dance by the Bindjareb Middars. The Bindjareb Maar – Maar means five – are five stunning interpretive poles containing imagery collected and created by the local community. They were created through a collaborative process involving local people and tell stories of the community's past, present and future, showcasing the rich culture of the local Nyungar people.



CUNDERDIN

The Shire of Cunderdin recently completed a \$1.4 million refurbishment of the O'Connor Park, funded by Lotterywest, Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program and the Shire. It features a flying fox, skate bowl, half-court basketball, ninja warrior course, dedicated area for small children, rope climbing frame, nature play area and a variety of other swings and play equipment. These are complimented by a large, grassed area, barbeque shelters, native gardens, and an all-access stage for events. The park also includes cultural interpretative signs painted by artist Miranda Davis which explain the six indigenous seasons.

Photo credit: Sam Pimlott
The Park was officially opened by Darren West MLA, Mia Davies MLC and Shire President Alison Harris.

CUE

On 7 July, the Shire of Cue celebrated NAIDOC Week supported by grants from National Indigenous Australian's Agency, Horizon Power, and Westgold Resources. Special thank you going out to the many volunteers that helped throughout the day. Everyone enjoyed boomerang painting, face painting and the community BBQ. All this excitement leading to the grand final which was the Colour Run. At the end of the day there were rainbow-stained clothes and hair everywhere. Smiles lasted for days, much like the hair colours.



BROOME

Go Fish! Dozens of children and their carers braved a relatively cold Broome July morning to get down to Guwarri Town Beach for the Kid's Fishing Competition. Organised by the Shire's Place Activation team, the fun morning featured a host of activities including a scavenger hunt and of course fishing. It was great seeing children who had never fished before using one of the rods provided to try their luck on the jetty with some of the seasoned regulars.

Picture: Queen Tide Creative



BUSSELTON

The Old Busselton Cemetery laid to rest many of the district's prominent families up until the 1930s. The first recorded burial was Mr Patrick Hurley in 1858 and there are over 250 recorded burials, although 550 individuals have records associated with the cemetery. The historical site also contains a memorial rock for Samuel Isaacs - an Aboriginal man who famously rescued passengers from the Georgette shipwreck when it ran into trouble in 1876. The community is invited to help provide some of the missing links such as dates and family stories for additional interpretation via Cultural Development Officer Jacquie Happ at jacquie.happ@busselton.wa.gov.au by 1 November 2023.

Picture: From L-R; Jodie Goss - the late Annie Faithfull's daughter; Jacquie Happ – City Cultural Development Officer; Judith Murray – local historian; and Brad Reynolds – Parks and Environment Coordinator.

NEDLANDS

The City of Nedlands' prestigious 2023 Emerge Youth Art Awards surpassed expectations with a record of 172 entries received. The awards, open to Western Australian artists aged 12 to 25 years, carried a prize pool of \$2,250. The Open Award First Prize was won by Kate Boulton for her moody landscape oil on canvas 'Woodside Vista' (not pictured). The Resident's Award went to Aisling Sharkey for her soft-focus scene titled 'Stillborn' and a commendation went to Julius Yu for his 'Bobtail Squid'. The Under 18 Award went to Dale Watt for his captivating composition "Tea for One". The winners are pictured with Deputy Mayor Leo McManus.



ESPERANCE

The Shire of Esperance's inaugural Winter Wonderland festival was a roaring success. The brainchild of Community Development staff, this fun idea to engage local youth during the cold season was enthusiastically backed by Council and lauded by community members. Many drove their kids in from regional areas for the chance to experience snow. In an effort to reduce waste in our community, this was a Waste & Plastic Free event. Food vendors and stall holders were keen to support this initiative, encouraging the public to BYO plates, cutlery and travel mugs.

Picture: Shire of Esperance – Winter Wonderland 2023





BRUCE ROCK: WHERE FRIENDS BECOME FAMILY

The motto of the small wheatbelt Shire of Bruce Rock, is “Where friends become family” and it’s a motto that is lived and breathed by the 980 residents.

On 25 March 2020, as pandemic panic was taking its grip across the world, the Bruce Rock supermarket, the town’s only store, was burnt to the ground.

Bruce Rock Shire President Stephen Strange said he remembers the night like it was yesterday.

“This was the time when we were getting twice daily COVID updates from the Premier and people didn’t know if they were going to live or die,” Mr Strange said.

“Just before the fire, the supermarket shelves were quite bare – there was a lot of panic buying and stockpiling, not only from locals, but people driving hours from Perth.

“When the fire happened, volunteers came out from everywhere including neighbouring towns to help put it out –the fire could’ve wiped out the main street. They saved our town.

“The CEO Darren [Mollenoyux] and I were both there with everyone helping to evacuate people and bring the fire under control, and it was there and then that we planned to set up a temporary store in the Town Hall.”

With a few quick calls and texts, the Bruce Rock Council fully supported converting the Town Hall into a temporary supermarket.

“We decided Darren’s role was to set up the store and my role was to get the store stocked,” Mr Strange explained.

“We had a lot of donations. A local farmer lent us shelves, and someone else lent us a refrigerated sea container. So many donations and offers to help from across the State, it was incredible.”

Within 36 hours, the temporary supermarket was set up, complete with extra generators, staff and some stock. And it’s still operating today.

Mr Strange said it was a huge challenge to source food with shortages across the state including shortages at the major supermarket chains.

“Residents were scared, they were worried about food security,” he said.

“The ex-Mayor of Wanneroo and past WALGA President Tracey Roberts organised a delivery of truckload of fruit and veg donated from a Wanneroo market gardener.

“Councillors, council staff, police and volunteers all helped divide the vegetables into care crates and we delivered them to the locals. It really helped the community feel safe and cared for and provided relief and reassurance that food was coming in and that everything was going to be ok.

“We then created an oversized shopping list for Woolworths who supplied an emergency truck of food just to get us started and get us through – mind you, there’s no Woolworths in our region so it was just fantastic what they did.”

The Bruce Rock Progress Association set out to fund raise to help contribute towards the \$5 million project to rebuild the supermarket.

“They have raised close to \$450,000 from cake stalls to grain donations and cash donations – it’s been an immense effort,” he said.

On the original supermarket site and spanning two blocks, The Shire has built a state-of-the-art supermarket and hardware store with doors set to swing open in October.

“The Shire owns the land and building and we’re in the process of appointing a lessee who’ll operate it as their own business,” the Shire President said.

“It’s a unique model, but it works. We’ve done it in the past, built factory units and leased them out to those who want to start their business like the physio, cabinet maker and the auto electrician.”

Bruce Rock is a farming district, mostly grain and livestock and has solid manufacturing businesses building road trains, sheds and more.

The small town with a big heart has a charming country hotel with counter meals, a District Club, coffee shop, a school with 120 students from kindergarten to Year 10, a day care centre, aged care village, and a unique model for medical staff. Along with a 24-hour hospital, there’s a full-time doctor and the Shire employs the medical staff. There’s also a full-time dentist (who is also a Councillor).

According to Mr Strange, the jewel in Bruce Rock’s crown is their sporting facilities.

“In winter there’s hockey, football, and netball, all played on the same day, town against town, and many people here are involved in sport often three generations of the same family,” Mr Strange said.

“You could be playing footy one minute and blowing a whistle umpiring the next.

“In summer, there’s lawn bowls, tennis, and basketball. Plus, there’s indoor cricket, a 24-hour gym, a big outdoor swimming pool and water slide and barbeques on the grounds nearby.”

The recently upgraded Recreation Centre caters for indoor sports including volleyball, squash, badminton and indoor cricket and outdoor sports including cricket, and the oval has flood lights to encourage night training and competitions.

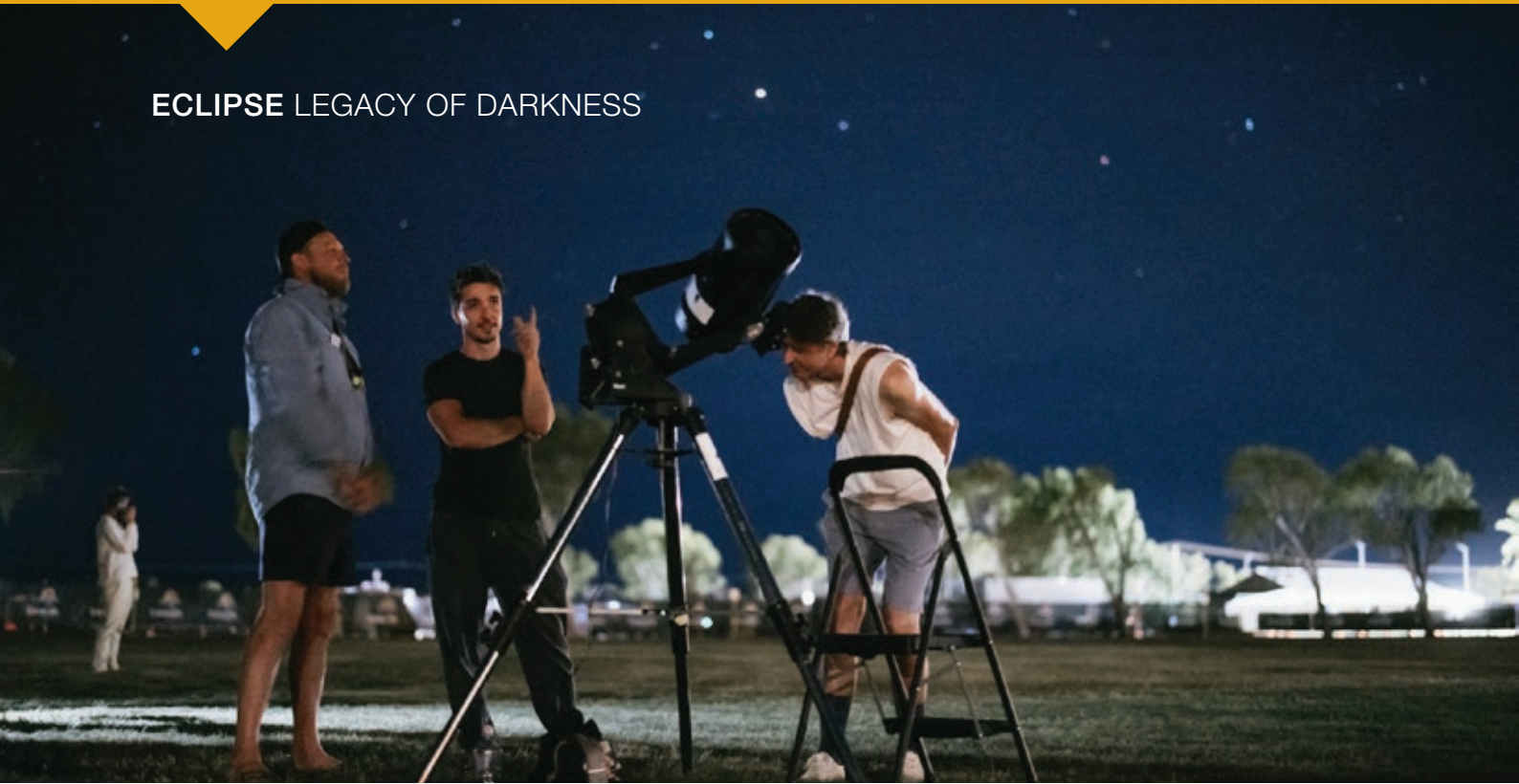
The caravan park is adjacent to Aquatic Centre, where entry is just \$4.50 for adults or \$2.50 for children.

Sounds like a great place for a holiday.



**Scan the
QR code to
watch a video
of this story**





ECLIPSE LEGACY OF DARKNESS

LEGACY OF DARKNESS
62 SECONDS OF TOTALITY

The total solar eclipse created a huge buzz in and outside of Western Australia.

While a Total Solar Eclipse occurs somewhere on Earth every 18 months, it is incredibly rare that it happens over land.

Located perfectly under the path for a 100 per cent solar eclipse, Exmouth, in the World Heritage-listed Ningaloo region, was the epicentre of Astro excitement. At 11:29am on Thursday 20th April, the sun, moon and Earth perfectly aligned to create total darkness for 62 seconds.

Onslow and Coral Bay experienced 99 per cent darkness while Carnarvon experienced a 95 per cent eclipse.

Over 250 staff and performers descended into Exmouth and Onslow on 37 different flights including three charters, with nine road trains and four semi-trailers of festival and concert production equipment needed for 102 activations in 13 different venues to create the Dark Sky Festival. It was the largest logistical entertainment event that has been staged across the Shires of Exmouth and Ashburton.

The Total Solar Eclipse went global with the Time and Date website broadcasting a live feed that attracted over 10.5 million views. There was significant media interest around the world with a dozen national and international media outlets sending crews to Exmouth to cover the event. Stories ran in The New York Times, Forbes, CNN, BBC, TIME and National Geographic. Nationally, the Total Solar Eclipse featured in 968 media items across print, radio and television between April 18 and 21, 2023.

With 80 per cent of the world’s population now living under light-polluted skies, Western Australia is in a unique position when it comes to Dark Sky tourism.

Carol Redford, CEO and founder of Astrotourism WA said Western Australia’s night sky is an asset worth protecting.

“Communities around WA are working to keep the night sky as dark as possible by reducing light pollution. While we’re protecting our night sky, we’re inviting visitors from around the world to share its beauty. At the same time, we’re growing our understanding of how stargazing brings people together.”

The Total Solar Eclipse is just the beginning of a legacy for the ongoing and future dark sky tourism in the Shires of Carnarvon, Ashburton and Exmouth.



The Eclipse in Numbers

- 10.5 million website views of the live stream of the eclipse (Time and Date website)
- 15,000 Exmouth’s population swelled from 3,000 to 15,000
- 4,700 people used the Exmouth shuttle bus
- 1,300 people through the doors of Milyering Visitor Centre in Cape Range National Park, the highest number on record
- 250+ artists, performers, and staff travelling to and within WA to location
- 176 portaloos
- 102 performances and activations
- 62 seconds of totality
- 37 commercial flights and 3 charter planes
- 35 market stalls
- 31 food trucks
- 24 event vehicles
- 13 venues programmed
- 9 road trains
- 5 outdoor event sites
- 5 medical vehicles
- 4 semi trailers



Shire of Exmouth CEO Ben Lewis

“Being able to witness the Total Solar Eclipse was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that brought our town together in a way we had never seen before. It showcased the beauty of our region and highlighted the potential for future events and tourism growth. It served as a catalyst for us to explore new ways to attract visitors and capitalise on our unique destination and has left an indelible mark on our community. We are excited about the prospects it has unveiled for our town’s future.”

Ashburton Shire President Kerry White

“Through the purposeful utilisation of Onslow’s facilities and working closely with local hospitality, accommodation, and market vendors, the festival highlighted the capabilities and potential of the town, offering attendees a once-in-a-lifetime experience whilst positioning Onslow as a future hub.”

“The Onslow Eclipse Festival also put the Shire on Astrotourism WA’s ‘Tourism Towns’ map, highlighting the region as a key location for Astrotourism, Dark Sky Tourism, and Astrophotography. This development has allowed the Shire to clearly identify and define new audiences for our tourism initiatives. On the back of the Eclipse, we look forward to further promoting the Shire of Ashburton - which encompasses not only Onslow but also Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Pannawonica, Millstream Chichester and Karijini National Parks and the Mackerel Islands - as a must-visit destination through our Visit Ashburton tourism brand.”

Shire of Carnarvon President Eddie Smith

“Carnarvon’s Eclipse event was a great success. All planned events went off with a bang! The main streets transformation was amazing to see, and the turnout was fantastic. The Symphony of Music was a great way to entertain the community throughout the day and night. The Shire was proud to deliver this high-quality event for our community and visitors.”

THE WORST OF TIMES BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE

New Year's Eve is a day most people celebrate, but in 2022 for those in and around Derby in the Kimberley region, it was the day their world was washed away.

The rain didn't stop. The Fitzroy River kept rising peaking at almost 16 metres swallowing cars, houses, livestock and wildlife. To put that into perspective, there was enough water coming down the Fitzroy River in one day to supply the Perth metro area for 20 years.

Shire of Derby-West Kimberley President Geoff Haerewa said that despite the traumatic time, he's never been prouder of the community.

"I have to give a huge shout out to those involved in first two weeks of flood, they are the unsung heroes, the ones who put their hand up and did what needed to be done to make sure people were safe," Mr Haerewa said.

"They got into dinghies, rescuing people from their flooding houses in dangerous situations, flood waters were rising, and powerlines were still live.

"There were so many unselfish actions, all done without a second thought to help those that needed it, particularly the elderly and children.

"All the local agencies came together and shared resources and knowledge and supported each other.

"That was one of the highlights, seeing the human response to help under very trying circumstances.

"It was an incredible effort all done while under pressure of limited food, fuel, and vehicles and at a time when the area

Image courtesy of DFES



Image courtesy of DFES

was drained of workers and services providers who were away taking a break for Christmas."

Rob Cossart, WA Recovery Coordinator, told ABC's 7.30 Report that the water was rising at a rate that it could fill Sydney Harbour every two and a half hours.

"There are areas of recovery going well, and areas that need a lot more focus and lot more attention," Mr Cossart said.

One of those areas, according to Mr Haerewa, is a plan for this coming wet season.

"We can't just hope it won't rain like that again, we have to have a State and Federal Government plan for it," the Shire President said.

"Much of the water has dried, but there is still some surface water with the water tables replenished, so if it rains, the ground won't be able to soak up, that's what concerns us the most."

More than 118,000 square kilometres of the Kimberley region was underwater, that's bigger than Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland combined.

The floods meant the area was completely isolated and cut off for six weeks. About 300 Australian Defence Force personnel came in to aid during the floods and in the immediate aftermath.

"The ADF was amazing. They had 27 spartan aircraft delivering food, dry goods and generators, as well as utilising the barge facilities from Broome to Derby to barge goods across as fast as they possibly could," he said.

Mr Haerewa said that the recovery includes the rebuilding of houses and of the vital Fitzroy Bridge which is the only access for fresh food and fuel to get into town.

"At the moment, freight relies on a low-level crossing that's already been washed away once since."

There are still 150 residents in temporary accommodation and Mr Haerewa said that it will take approximately three years for the region to fully recover.

Despite the long road to recovery ahead, Mr Haerewa said that he loves living in the region.

"The most amazing thing about living here is the people and the sheer beauty and ruggedness of the area – it's God's own country," he said.

"You can make a difference in whatever you do, it's quite profound what an individual can do to make a positive difference to the community."

Mr Haerewa is in contact with the State and Federal Governments to progress recovery efforts and is pushing for a plan to be in place ahead of wet season.





Picture: City of Kwinana Mayor Carol Adams, Good Sammy Chief Executive Officer Kane Blackman, Good Sammy Hospitality Manager Ben Taylor and Good Thanks Head Barista Tomsie.

‘GOOD THANKS’ - NEW GOOD SAMMY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CAFÉ

Iconic Western Australian disability employment and training organisation Good Sammy has opened a social enterprise café in the City of Kwinana.

It’s the first time Good Sammy has extended its cafe model into the community which has only operated from its Canning Vale headquarters until now.

Good Sammy was selected by the City of Kwinana through an Expression of Interest process to take over the existing premises and operate a café within the Kwinana Recquatic.

City of Kwinana Mayor Carol Adams said that the City was very excited to award the contract to Good Sammy and align the values of the two organisations.

“This partnership helps both the City of Kwinana and Good Sammy to achieve their goals of embracing diversity and creating employment opportunities for people living in their local communities with a disability,” Mayor Adams said.

“The café is the first opportunity for Good Sammy to extend their social enterprise café model, run from their Canning Vale headquarters, into the community. We are thrilled to have the café model benefit the Kwinana community and the patrons of the Kwinana Recquatic,” she said.

For locals with disability, the Good Thanks café offers an inclusive environment to refine their skills in the café industry.

“I’m excited to work at the Good Thanks café. I’ve always felt passionately about working in hospitality to show that my disability doesn’t affect my capability to work in an industry I love,” said Good Thanks barista, Tomsie.

Good Sammy Chief Executive Officer, Kane Blackman, thanked the City of Kwinana for their leadership in seeking to deliver disability employment outcomes in their community with the café employing up to 15 locals, of which 50 per cent would be people with disability.

Almost 50 per cent of the entire Good Sammy workforce comprises of people with disabilities.

“We are strongly focused on transforming workplaces and society by creating employment opportunities for people with disability, and the hospitality sector is a great place to deliver those customer-facing roles,” Mr Blackman said.

“The Good Thanks café brand has been established to foster a sense of inclusiveness and belonging for customers and employees. We are committed to curating spaces where everyone is welcome.

“Customers should expect to receive quality barista-made coffee, fresh local produce and friendly customer service,” he said.

Kwinana Recquatic is located on the corner of Skerne Street and Robbos Way, Kwinana.

TRAINING UPDATE

WALGA TRAINING

COUNCIL MEMBER ESSENTIALS TRAINING

With the upcoming election on 21 October 2023, the WALGA Training and Governance team are hard at work to update the five Council Member Essentials Training modules. Each module focuses on a different topic, building the knowledge and skills required of Elected Members in a step-by-step approach, developing a deeper understanding over time, filled with practical tips and tools for Elected Members to perform their role and responsibility as defined in the Local Government Act 1995.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT REFORM

To ensure Elected Members receive up to date training, our team started in March 2023 to undertake a systematic and detailed review of all our training resources to incorporate the significant reform changes to the Local Government Act 1995. All legislative changes are captured where available in all training and a regular factsheet will keep learners updated for changes not yet available. These will include regulations which are expected to take effect after the election date. After the election, training will be available face to face at WALGA or at your Local Government, virtually via ZOOM or via eLearning.

If your Local Government is planning to have some training delivered On Site, consider liaising with your neighbouring Councils to arrange suitable dates after the election. This cost and time effective solution has been very popular after the last election, particularly in regional WA. Elected Members enjoyed that they could access the training close to home and learn with other Councillors the knowledge and skills required to perform their new role and better understand their responsibility and transition from private citizen to Elected Member.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SMOOTH INDUCTION FOR NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS AT YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The first months after an election is a period of considerable upheaval and ensuring that all Council Members are sufficiently or appropriately aware and prepared for their roles and responsibilities is of primary concern for a Chief Executive Officer.

First impressions have a lasting effect and impact on the development of relationships. Assisting Council Members to feel informed and included in activities is manifestly important as well as a wise and beneficial investment of your time.

Enabling Council Members to settle into their representative role with knowledge of how and when they are able to have input into the decision-making process of the Council will reduce misunderstanding and potential non-compliance.

WALGA Training offers a 1/2 day face to face and virtual classroom program, designed to assist the Local Government CEO’s and their Executive Team to develop and implement an Induction Program for Council Members and ensure that Council Members understand the key aspects of their role and responsibilities including the significant legislative requirements, how the organisation is structured, the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF), Planning and Development Functions of the Local Government and more. The program includes an Induction Manual template (e-version), allowing individual Councils to contextualise and brand their own resources whilst offering a structured induction program. It will assist the CEOs to inform all Council Members of expected standards and emphasising their role as community leaders.

Book now to avoid disappointment via our website www.walga.asn.au/training. You can also contact the WALGA Training team via training@walga.asn.au or on 9213 2088.

Upcoming Dates: Preparation Program to Induct Newly Elected Members

- Thursday, 31 August (Face-to-Face)
- Wednesday, 13 September (Via ZOOM)
- Monday, 2 October (Face-to-Face)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2023

As we progress towards the elections this year, you will see advertising and promotional campaigns encouraging individuals to run as new elected members.

The campaigns are a collaboration between WALGA, the WA Electoral Commission, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, also aimed at getting people to vote in the elections.

MANDURAH

REBUILDING AFTER
A GIANT TRAGEDY



In May, six months after affable Giant Vivi Cirkelstone was tragically torched and burnt to the ground, her older brother Yaburgurt Cirkelstone took up residence on the Coodanup foreshore, settling into his new home.

Located on the land of the Bindjareb Noongar people, the Yaburgurt giant has been named in consultation with Bindjareb Elders, and Aboriginal stories are woven throughout the outdoor exhibition.

There are six Giants, all made with recycled timber. The heads, hands and feet were built in Denmark and their bodies were built in Mandurah by a team of master carpenters and local volunteers. It took more than 800 wooden pallets to create the six bodies.

Sam Norgard, a Primary teacher at Peel Language Development School, was one of the volunteers who worked on Vivi and the newest Giant, Yaburgurt Cirkelstone.

“I had taken my Year 2 and 3 class on a school excursion to see Vivi and show them the work I’d done assembling her right

thigh, and then the following day she was burnt down, it was really upsetting, just awful,” Ms Norgard said.

“It was quite nice to be a part of the team who made her brother, Yaburgurt, it became a part of the healing process.”

Ms Norgard said she learnt many new skills while volunteering on the Giants project.

“We were given ear plugs and goggles and using tools I’d never touched before – there were tubs of cordless power tools like drills and circular saws,” the Falcon resident said.

“Put it this way, I know a lot of about dismantling pallets now and how to use a crowbar and a jigsaw!

“The location of each Giant was secret, so we were sent a GPS location the morning that we went to work on the site.

Ms Norgard said she enjoyed community involvement.

“With our eight-year-old twins, we volunteer as a family on local clean up days and tree planting days, The City of Mandurah is really good at organising those kinds of activities,” she said.

“I keep an eye out for volunteering opportunities in their newsletter and website; it’s a real shame the Mandurah Mail has folded, it was such a community resource and that’s where I saw the call out to volunteer on the Giants.

Ms Norgard said she’d like to thank Thomas Dambo for sharing vision and bring wonderful Giants to Mandurah.

Creator of the Giants, world-renowned Danish artist Thomas Dambo, told ABC that he invents mythology around his larger-than-life creations to inspire audiences to follow clues and seek out his hidden giants.

“It’s that classic saying: it’s not about the destination, it’s about the journey,” Mr Dambo said.

“By hiding a sculpture, that becomes the breadcrumb that brings people out into the reserves and exploring nature. They must open their senses.”

Each giant was designed with holes for birds to nest in and eventually, the Giants will degrade back into nature.

Mandurah Mayor, Rhys Williams said that Thomas Dambo’s Giants have very quickly become a significant part of Mandurah’s story.

“We are immensely proud to be Australia’s home for this worldwide sculpture trail and it is not just our local community that has embraced the wonder of these sculptures, with Mandurah Visitor Centre seeing a massive 400 per cent increase in visitation since we launched this project.”

“The best thing about the Giants of Mandurah is how it captures the imagination and creativity of not just little people but big people too,” the Mayor said.

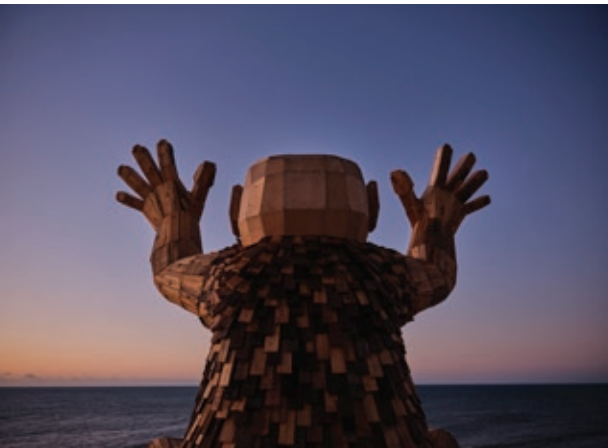
The Giants of Mandurah has been initiated and produced by FORM Building a State of Creativity and delivered in collaboration with the City of Mandurah. The project is supported by the WA Government through Tourism WA’s Regional Events Program, Lotterywest, and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; as well as the Alcoa Foundation and the City of Subiaco.

The Giants of Mandurah will be on display at least until 12 November 2023. A number of free resources are available to help plan your adventure and discover the Giants, including the official Traveller’s Companion, which can be downloaded at the giantsofmandurah.com.au.

“

The best thing about the Giants of Mandurah is how it captures the imagination and creativity of not just little people but big people too”

Mandurah Mayor Rhys Williams



WALGA STATE COUNCIL MEETING, JULY 2023

RESOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

REVIEW OF URBAN FOREST ADVOCACY POSITION

That WALGA endorse a new Advocacy Position 4.6 Urban Forest as follows:

To promote the growth of Western Australia's urban forest the State Government should:

1. Identify a lead agency with responsibility for setting the strategic direction and oversight of urban forest initiatives.
2. Provide recurrent funding for a comprehensive and accessible Urban Greening Grant program to support Local Government investment in public realm planting, focusing on high urban heat areas and enhancing biodiversity outcomes.
3. In consultation with Local Government:
 - a. Develop a state-wide Urban Forest Strategy, based on the overarching principles of a resilient, connected, expanded and equitable urban forest including:
 - i. a minimum tree canopy target of 30% by 2040 for the Perth and Peel regions,
 - ii. robust and contemporary data to inform decision making,
 - iii. funding mechanisms to support growth in urban canopy.
 - b. Develop contemporary legislative and policy mechanisms to enable the protection and growth of urban forest, including:
 - i. an effective and efficient regulatory mechanism that allows Local Government to consider the removal or alteration of a significant tree as a form of development,
 - ii. incentivising the provision and retention of trees on private property within the state planning framework,
 - iii. prioritisation of trees and vegetation as a key structural element in the design of new neighbourhoods to facilitate climate resilient and liveable communities,
 - iv. reconsideration of public realm design to maximise opportunities for tree retention and new planting consistent with any tree canopy targets.
4. Work with Local Government and other stakeholders to increase community awareness and promote behaviour change in relation to urban forest growth and retention to support State and Local Government targets and action.

LANDFILL BANS ADVOCACY POSITION

That WALGA endorse the following Landfill Ban Advocacy Position:

Landfill bans are only supported in the presence of effective product stewardship schemes, or other funding mechanisms, for products which would be subject to the ban.

AUDIT EXPERIENCE SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY AND ADVOCACY POSITION

That:

1. State Council note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary; and
2. WALGA advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to reform the audit process for Local Governments by seeking:
 - a. Audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.
 - b. That the OAG review the requirements for pre-audit information with a view to reducing the need for additional information where possible;
 - c. That the OAG review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit cost increases;
 - d. That the OAG provide a breakdown on the cost of the audit and justification for any variance to the estimate to the Local Government as part of the final billing process;
 - e. That auditors be required to improve their communication and information management and avoid repeated requests for information that has already been provided or that is publicly available;
 - f. That Local Governments only be required to communicate with contract Auditors (unless the OAG is directly auditing the Local Government) and the onus be placed on the contract Auditors to confirm their advice with the OAG before instructing the Local Government;
 - g. In-conjunction with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, review the application of Fair Value principles in the context of the audit; and
 - h. Seek an opportunity for Local Government to make representations in relation to any adverse findings prior to the publication of the report.

ADVERTORIAL

NEW INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT CUSTOMERS IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

As more households across WA experience ongoing financial hardship, it is becoming increasingly challenging for many to meet the rising cost of groceries and household expenses, including utility bills.

According to Synergy Account Manager Bec Elshaw, Synergy is working with a range of organisations, including government agencies, on a range of initiatives to help support customers and the WA community through this cost-of-living crisis.

PAYMENTS FOR ENERGY BILL SUPPORT

"One way we're supporting our customers is through working closely with both the WA State and Commonwealth Governments to roll out the National Energy Bill Relief Offset for eligible customers," said Ms Elshaw.

Funded by both the Commonwealth and WA State Governments, this offset will see eligible residential customers receiving a minimum of \$400 and eligible small business customers receiving a \$650 (both paid over two instalments) account credit on their electricity bill.

SHARING THE BENEFITS OF SOLAR ENERGY

Synergy has also introduced a Community Energy product, offered by Synergy directly to customers who are experiencing ongoing financial hardship. Eligible customers who are offered the Community Energy product can access the benefits of solar energy without the need or cost of their own installation.

"We've giving eligible customers 10 units of zero-cost electricity between 9am and 3pm each day, which equates to around three quarters of an average household's daily electricity usage. When fully utilised, we estimate that those customers will be able to save between \$200 to \$500 a year on the Community Energy product."

The Community Energy product also helps supports the stability of the electricity grid by incentivising customers to shift their electricity usage away from evening peak times to the middle of the day when there is high solar generation in the grid.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT WITHIN THE SWIS

Synergy's Community Giving Fund is now in its second year, with the recipients for 2023 to be announced in September. "Through this fund, we're supporting eligible charities and not-for-profit organisations to make a positive impact on people and the environment across our area of operation, the South West Interconnected System – or SWIS."

"We're also fostering strategic partnerships in locations which are part of WA's energy transition. In Kwinana for example, the home of our Big Battery

project, we're partnering with OzFish Unlimited helping to restore the seagrass in Cockburn Sound."

"We're also supporting the Collie Just Transition through a range of activities and events. Our Collie Small Grants Initiative is run annually and supports grass-roots projects with funding grants of up to \$5,000 available for individual projects, programs, initiatives, or events that maximise Collie's social, environmental, and economic strengths."

Synergy is here to help power local communities and help customers take more control of their electricity accounts. For more information, please contact Bec Elshaw at bec.elshaw@synergy.net.au or on 0457 199 222.

Watt's your plan?

My Account gives you more power, over your power. It's an account management tool that lets you track your electricity usage, manage and change payment options, and it's full of simple energy saving tips.

synergy.net.au/myaccount



State Council

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Cr Paul Kelly	Deputy President/Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Ken Seymour.....	Avon-Midland Country Zone
President Cr Phil Blight	Central Country Zone
Cr Helen Sadler	Central Metropolitan Zone
Cr Catherine Ehrhardt	East Metropolitan Zone
Cr John Daw	East Metropolitan Zone
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Ex-officio:	
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Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas.....	The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor, City of Perth