



Regional Road Group Report

January 2021



Roads

Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance

Funds have been provided through the *State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement* to perform condition surveys of all the Roads of Regional Significance. For the first phase, Talis Consultants have been engaged to survey roads in the Mid West region including recording video of regionally significant unsealed roads. This project is nearing completion and Talis will deliver a presentation to the Mid West Regional Road Group at their next meeting.

The Great Southern and Goldfields – Esperance Regions will be surveyed in the next phase that is scheduled for the first half of 2021. A RFQ has been issued through the WALGA preferred supplier panel. WALGA will liaise with the RRG Technical Groups before work commences.

ROADS 2040: Development Strategies for Regionally Significant Local Roads

The criteria for roads to be included in the development strategies for regionally significant roads are under review. Outside the metropolitan area, only these roads are eligible for Road Project Grant funding through the *State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement*. A draft revision to the selection guidelines was provided to all Regional Road Groups for feedback. Feedback indicates that the guidelines need to be flexible enough to account for the different regional environments and to provide autonomy for the Regions to make appropriate decisions. Feedback will be incorporated into a second draft for further comment. When finalised, the Regional Road Groups will be tasked to review their roads and strategies for development of the next version of this important strategic document.

Transport and Roads Forum 2021

The next Transport and Roads Forum will be held on Thursday, 11 February 2021. This biennial event is jointly presented by WALGA and Main Roads WA, attracts nearly 200 delegates, primarily Local Government Councillors, Chief Executive Officers and senior managers as well as other key stakeholders in the transport sector across Western Australia. Registration through the WALGA website is essential.

Funding

Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program

The Federal Budget allocated \$1 billion to Phase 2 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. Funding Allocations for Phase 2 were determined by formula based on road length and population. The eligibility criteria were also amended. Under Phase 2, Eligible Funding Recipients are required to maintain their overall capital spending on roads and community infrastructure, funded by their own revenue, at or above their 2020-21 capital spending level. Some Local Governments that significantly brought forward planned capital expenditure from 2021/22 and 2022/23 into 2020/21 in order to provide economic stimulus to assist recovery from COVID-19 restrictions are unable to maintain this level of capital expenditure from own source revenue. The Association has been working through ALGA to seek an arrangement that recognises the “additionality principle” adopted by the Commonwealth and the fact that 2020/21 capital expenditure programs are artificially high.

Underground Power Programs

Following a workshop involving 27 Local Government representatives with officers from Western Power and Energy Policy WA, a policy position regarding future Underground Power Programs was developed and adopted by WALGA State Council in December 2020.

The policy position has been communicated to Energy Policy WA and the Minister for Energy, Hon Bill Johnson. An incoming State Government will need to prioritise underground power program arrangements to avoid a gap following completion of the current program in late 2022.

Drones

The Association is represented on the WA Government's Drones Reference Group, which also includes WA Police, Main Roads WA, Department of Transport, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Matters of concern that have been raised with this group include the lack of capability to manage the privacy and noise impacts of drone use, including recreational drones. WALGA also responds directly to the Federal Government with respect to drone regulation issues, as appropriate.

WA Local Government Grants Commission's Asset Preservation Model

WALGA has begun a review of the WA Local Government Grants Commission's Asset Preservation Model, which is used to allocate State and Federal Government road grant funding in Western Australia. The first stage of this review was to prepare a manual, providing an overview of the principles and structure of the model. The findings contained within this manual were presented to the Infrastructure Policy Team, and an options paper is being drafted for consideration by the WALGA Zones.

Urban and Regional Transport

Review of taxes and government spending on WA motorists

WALGA is developing estimates of the taxes charged on WA motorists by Federal and State Governments, and the expenditure on roads and other benefits to motorists. Data collection and modelling is currently in progress. Preliminary discussions are being planned with advocacy organisations that have aligned objectives in relation to this matter with a view to combining resources and advocacy efforts.

Road Safety

Road Safety Council Update

The Minister responsible for road safety, the Hon. Michelle Roberts MLA, addressed the Road Safety Council at the November 2020 meeting. The Minister spoke about the Government's newly released *Driving Change* road safety strategy for WA 2020-2030 with its target to reduce the number of people killed, severely or seriously injured in WA by 50 – 70%, by 2030. The need to develop a speed reform plan, in the context of the Strategy, was discussed as was opportunities to engage with Local Governments around promoting key road safety messages.

RoadWise Activity

To find out more about RoadWise activities, view the monthly newsletter at <https://www.roadwise.asn.au/roadwise-road-safety-newsletter.aspx> and visit the RoadWise Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WALGARoadWise/>.

Preferred Supply Program

WALGA has undertaken a revitalisation and restructure of its Preferred Supplier Program. Changes have been made to modernise the Preferred Supplier contracts, recognising the need to provide greater agility, ease of access, and broader market reach.

Updates regarding the transition process can be found at:

<https://walga.asn.au/Procurement/Preferred-Supplier-Program/Preferred-Supplier-Directory>

The process to transition the existing Roads PSP (C017_18 Road Building Contractors, Materials & Related Services) into the new structure (PSP009 Roads Infrastructure and Depot Services) is nearing completion. During this transition period buyers are reminded to select both C017_18 and PSP009 when selecting suppliers for quotations.

A review of the suite of Specifications contained in the Preferred Supply Panel for Roads will be undertaken mid-year 2021.

Local Government buyers are urged to ensure they adhere to their Purchasing policies when seeking quotations including consideration of any funding requirements where applicable.

For further information on the Preferred Supply Program for Roads, please contact Craig Grant on cgrant@walga.asn.au.