

Great Southern Country Zone Minutes

Friday, 24 April 2026

Hosted by the
Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup
held at Tambellup Sports Pavillion
on East Terrace, Tambellup

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

- If the majority of the factors are towards the left column, the issue is a high priority.
- If the majority of the factors are towards the middle, the issue requires action, but is not a high priority.
- If the majority of the factors are towards the right column, the issue is a low priority.

Impact on Local Government Sector Impact on Local Government sector without intervention	High	Medium	Low
Reach Number of member Local Governments affected	Sector-wide	Significant (multiple regions, Zones, or bands)	Few
Influence Capacity to influence decision makers	High	Medium	Low
Principles Alignment to core principles such as autonomy, funding, general competence	Strong	Partial	Peripheral
Clarity Policy change needed is clear and well-defined	Clear	Partial	Unclear
Decision-maker support Level of support among decision-makers (political and administrative)	High	Medium	Low
Public support Level of support among the public or other stakeholders	High	Medium	Low
Positive consequences for WALGA Prospect of positive consequences for WALGA. E.g. enhanced standing among members or leverage for other issues.	High	Medium	Low
Negative consequences for WALGA Prospect of negative consequences for WALGA for not undertaking the advocacy effort. E.g. diminished standing among members or other stakeholders.	High	Medium	Low
Partnerships Potential for partnerships with other stakeholders	Yes (3+)	Possibly (1-2)	No (0)

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

Zone Chair, Cr Scott Crosby opened the meeting at 10:05am

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council
City of Albany	Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry Cr Craig McKinley CEO Andrew Sharpe (non-voting)
Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	President Cr Doug Barritt Cr Sara Robinson Cr Michael White (observing) CEO Karen Callaghan (non-voting)
Shire of Cranbrook	President Cr Perin Mulcahy CEO Linda Gray (non-voting)
Shire of Denmark	President Cr Aaron Wiggins Cr Janine Phillips
Shire of Gnowangerup	President Cr Kate O'Keeffe Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan CEO David Nicholson (non-voting)
Shire of Jerramungup	President Cr Nathan Brown Cr Paul Barrett CEO Martin Cuthbert (non-voting)
Shire of Katanning	President Cr Kristy D'Aprile Cr Ian Hanna CEO Peter Klein (non-voting)
Shire of Kent	President Cr Kate Johnston Cr Scott Crosby - Chair CEO Christie Smith (non-voting)
Shire of Kojonup	Cr Edwin Radford (Deputy Delegate) Cr Kerryn Mickle CEO Grant Thompson (non-voting)
Shire of Plantagenet	President, Cr Len Handasyde Cr Joshua Leibeck CEO's representative Anthony Middleton (non-voting)
Shire of Woodanilling	President Cr Russel Thomson Cr Sally Vermeulen

GUESTS

Members of Parliament

Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, Member for Roe

Agencies

Great Southern Development
Commission

Natasha Monks, Chief Executive Officer

Regional Development Australia –
Great Southern WA Inc
CBH Group

Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development
Renee Tan, Research officer
Mr Timothy Roberts, Lead – Planning &
Approvals
Ms Celia Gardner, Manager - Network Planning

WALGA

Mr Mark Irwin, President
Mr Nick Sloan, CEO
Ms Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer
Ms Rebecca Hicks, Policy Advisor Community

Guest Speaker/s

Nil.

1.3 APOLOGIES

Shire of Cranbrook

Cr Daisy Egerton-Warburton

Shire of Denmark

CEO David King (non-voting)

Shire of Kojonup

President, Cr Roger Bilney
Cr Michael Mathwin

Shire of Plantagenet

CEO Julian Murphy (non-voting)

Shire of Ravensthorpe

President, Cr Rachel Gibson
Cr Bill Auburn
CEO Nicole O'Neill (non-voting)

Shire of Woodanilling

CEO Anika Serer (non-voting/Deputy)

Members of Parliament

Hon Reece Whitby MLA; Minister for Police; Road
Safety; Tourism; Great Southern
Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural
Region
Mr Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor
Mr Bevan Eatts, MLA Member for Warren-
Blackwood
Mr Scott Leary MLA, Member for Albany

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the Great Southern Country Zone of WALGA acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture, and community. We embrace the vast cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including the Noongar People as the Traditional Custodians of this land, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. WALGA is committed to supporting the efforts of WA Local Governments to foster respectful partnerships and strengthen relationships with local Aboriginal communities.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 DEPUTATIONS / GUEST SPEAKERS

Nil.

5 AGENCY REPORTS

5.1 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA GREAT SOUTHERN WA INC (RDA-GS)

Report by Simon Lyas, Chief Executive Officer and Renee Tan, Research Officer

Renee Tan presented on the Workforce needs survey:

- 91% of employers identified an immediate shortfall in applicants
- 30% of employers offer accommodation
- 50% accessing skilled migration
- 13% of employers endorsed for DAMA (200 positions)
- Department of Home Affairs offering one to one meetings with employers on 11 June. Contact the RDA-GS to reserve a meeting time.
- RDA-GS in discussion to become the local representative for the WA DAMA.

Simon Lyas presented on the Back on Track proposal for restoring and improving the Great Southern rail network.

- Back on Track proposal was distributed with the Zone agenda.
- RDA-GS has been supporting advocacy to State Government and key stakeholders.
- No update from State Government on its proposed buy back of the ARC lease over the rail network.
- Final stages of an agreement with Curtin University for PHD students to develop a feasibility study.
- Encouraged Local Governments to consider the benefits set out in the proposal and advocate for State Government action where possible.



An Australian Government Initiative



GREAT SOUTHERN WA

WALGA Southern Country Zone 24 April 2026, Tambellup

Agency Report

1. 2025 Workforce Needs Assessment Survey Results

- RDA Great Southern initiated a Workforce Needs Assessment Survey over 6 weeks in November / December 2025. The survey results were circulated prior to the Southern Zone meeting. An overview and analysis of the results and relevance will be discussed at the meeting.
- The survey was undertaken to gain a better understanding of current employment needs and gaps in industry across the region.
- RDA wishes to thank LGA's for their assistance in distributing the Survey questionnaire.

• Statewide Dedicated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) Update

- LGA's will recall the State DAMA that was awarded to the WA Government in July 2024 and is managed by the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) in Perth.
- RDA has maintained regular contact with DTWD and Home Affairs on skilled migration issues and continues to receive weekly enquiries on migrant employment matters from individuals and industry.
- Recently, DTWD has advised they will be seeking assistance from the RDA network in WA to support the DAMA via a service contract or similar arrangement soon. The terms of any such contract are yet to be negotiated.

2. Back on Track – Great Southern Rail Discussion Paper

For the information of Zone members, we are pleased to table the **Back on Track** rail discussion paper. This document is intended to stimulate discussion on the future role of rail to the Great Southern and Wheatbelt regions of WA.

In essence this is a conceptual advocacy paper and provides insights on the problems, issues and potential solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the GSR as a critical infrastructure and transport network to southern WA.

While RDA recognizes the importance of rail for grain freight as the highest current priority to the region, our proposal sets out a bold and integrated vision for the future of the network by shortening the distance between Perth and Albany for maximum productivity, evaluating strategic Tier-3 lines, and considers the potential reintroduction of a Perth – Albany passenger service.

Simon Lyas
Chief Executive Officer

5.2 MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT – MR PETER RUNDLE MLA

Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, Member for Roe

- Thanked Zone Members for the work they undertake.
- Congratulated WALGA President Mark Irwin on recent election and acknowledged Nick Sloan, WALGA CEO.
- Noted complexities in recent governance audits and challenges with increased cost of Local Government governance requirements.
- Acknowledged Mining Licencing Bill currently going through Upper House.
- Congratulated the Rural Health Alliance on their advocacy and provided his support.
- Provided support for the legislation of community renewable benefit scheme.
- The Shire of Kojonup has recently experienced the RDAP process and acknowledged the challenges that this process includes.
- Acknowledged Simon Lyas' contributions to the Region as CEO of Southern Development Commissions as Simon steps down from this position in the near future.

5.3 GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL ROADS GROUP

Report by Cr Len Handasyde, Shire of Plantagenet

Noted that GS Local Governments appear to be substantially on track for acquittal of the majority of funded capital works.

No report as the Great Southern Regional Roads Group will meet week of 27 April.

5.4 WALGA STATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

** Brought forward from Item 9.2.1

Attachment No. 4 [WALGA State President's Report](#)

WALGA President Mark Irwin provided an introduction and took the President's Report as read.

Noted.

5.5 GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (GSDC)

Natasha Monks, CEO update:

- Acknowledged that current GROH streams are limited and encouraged applications to demonstrate unmet needs.
- Acknowledged oversubscription of the Regional Economic Development grants, however encouraged applications to demonstrate areas of unmet need.
- In lights of the GSDC new Strategic Plan, there will be engagement with the Local Government sector to understand infrastructure needs of the sector.
- GSDC will be advertising for a Community Board Members shortly.
- The regional State Budget briefing will be held the morning of Tuesday, 12 May. Attendees are encouraged to send their questions through in advance.
- The GSDC were asked to provide a future update to the Great Southern Country Zone on the GSDC's strategic priority to coordinate State Government infrastructure delivery necessary to enable housing development e.g. water, power supply, electrical etc.

5.6 LGIRS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION

Attachment No 1 [LGIRS Update – April 2026](#)

5.7 CBH UPDATE

Tim Roberts, Planning and Approvals and Celia Gardner, Network Planning

CBH provided an update on expected harvest tonnage, likely impact on road network.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: President, Cr Kate O'Keeffe
Seconded: President, Cr Len Handasyde

That the Minutes of the Great Southern Country Zone meeting held on 20 February 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

6.1 Business Arising from the Minutes

Nil.

6.2 ZONE RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS STATUS REPORTS

6.2.1 Zone Status Report

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 2 [Zone Status Report April 2026](#)

The Status Report provides an update on Zone resolutions referred to WALGA State Council. Status Items identified as 'Completed' will be removed following this meeting. Zone Members are asked to review responses.

6.2.2 Zone Action Items Report

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 3 [Zone Action Items Report April 2026](#)

The Action Items Report provides an update on Zone resolution for action by Zone members or the Zone Executive Officer. Action Items identified as 'Completed' in this Report will be removed following this meeting. Zone members are asked to review responses.

RESOLUTION (Items 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 combined)

Moved: President Cr Kate Johnston
Seconded: President Cr Russel Thomson

That the Great Southern Country Zone NOTES the:

1. Status Report for April 2026, as detailed in Attachment No.2, and
2. Action Items Report for April 2026, as detailed in Attachment No.3.

CARRIED

Zone Status Report – April 2026

The Zone secretariat was requested to follow up with the People and Place Policy team, for feedback as to why the Zone's position (proposed by Shire of Katanning at GSCZ 20 February 2026) regarding Emergency Management Act Consolidation was not taken up as part of WALGA's advocacy.

7 ZONE BUSINESS

7.1 ZONE REPORTS

7.1.1 Zone Financial Report

By Ms Nilpa Shah-Smith, WALGA Finance Manager

Zone Financial Report for 8 months ending March 2026

(All amounts are excluding GST unless otherwise specified)

Financial statements for the zone have been prepared on an accrual basis and include an income statement and a balance sheet.

Table 1: Statement of Income and Expenditure – period ended 31 March 2026

01 July 2025 to 31 Mar 2026			
	Note	Actual \$	Budget \$
Income			
Subscriptions	1	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Other			
Total Income		\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Expenses			
Bank Fees		\$ 90	\$ 150
Meeting Costs (Catering)	2	\$ 2,634	\$ 4,000
Total Expenses		\$ 2,724	\$ 4,150
Surplus/(Deficit)		\$ 3,276	\$ 1,850

Notes

- Subscription fee of \$500 per Zone Member excluding GST, invoices have been sent to members in September and all received and transferred to GSCZ Bank Account.
- Aug 2025 Zone meeting catering (\$1,331.81), Nov 2025 Zone meeting catering (\$572.73), Feb 2026 Zone meeting catering (\$811.82) and adjustment on GST on purchase to be recovered from ATO (\$82.00).

Table 2: Balance Sheet presenting the Zone's financial position as at 31 March 2026

Balance Sheet as at 31 Mar 26		
	Note	Amount
Assets		
Bank		\$ 10,764
Debtors		
Total Assets		\$ 10,764
Liabilities		
Creditors		\$ -
GST Payable\ (Receivable)		-\$ 222
Total Liabilities		-\$ 222

Net Assets	\$ 10,986
Equity	
Members Funds B/F	\$ 7,710
Current year earnings	\$ 3,276
Total Equity	\$ 10,986

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kristy D'Aprile
 Seconded: Cr Paul Barrett

That the Great Southern Country Zone receives the Zone Financial Report for April 2026.

CARRIED

7.1.2 Zone Chairperson's Report

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chairperson

Noted WALGA's advocacy and sector representation to State Government on fuel crisis implications and specifically impacts for regional districts.

7.2 ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

7.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities Workshop Outcomes

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

Zone Members participated in a workshop at the February 2026 Zone meeting (Plantagenet). The workshop outcomes are presented below in descending order of priority based on member voting in the workshop.

Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks	VOTES	21
Comments <i>Broomehill-Tambellup / Kojonup</i>	Workshop comments	

<p>¹Local governments are increasingly expected to absorb responsibilities that sit more appropriately with the State or Federal Government, often without clear legislative frameworks or adequate funding. This includes growing expectations around housing supply for State Government workers, emergency management responsibilities, social and community pressures, and the local impacts of the energy transition. In particular, the State Government's net-zero emission by 2050 commitment has not been matched with a clear and legislated planning framework for renewable energy, leaving local governments to manage land use conflict, community concern, and assessment risk without policy certainty. There is a clear need for earlier, coordinated, and genuine partnership between all tiers of government before priorities are implemented at the local level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of connection with and to state agencies • Health – how often do ratepayers pay for this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ rates ○ taxes ○ at the GP ○ or funding • Education • Housing • Economic development • Coastal protection -fed issue – pushing cost shifting into LG planning scheme • Airport services – Fed fund for regional airports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Medical Care costs; costs of compliance of new regulations and so-called reform. • Increases workload and local government/community cost to be compliant and provide basic services. 	

Firefighting / Funding/ WHS Obligations / BF Act outdated		VOTES	14
Comments: Kent / Kojonup / Woodanilling	Workshop comments		
<p>LGs are increasingly exposed to inappropriate WHS obligations in the bushfire space. Treating volunteer firefighters as “workers” under the WHS Act 2020 places an unreasonable duty of care on LG CEOs, many of whom are not trained emergency management professionals. This responsibility represents a significant and unpriced risk, particularly for small LGs (Band 4 LGs). These LGs are constrained by salary caps determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal and are therefore unable to remunerate CEOs at a level that reflects the scale of legal, personal, and operational risk being imposed. The result is a role where risk is materially disproportionate to remuneration and organisational capacity, creating a strong disincentive to CEO recruitment and retention in rural and regional local governments. This also diverts limited executive capacity away from core community service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bushfire risk mitigation funding • ESL – Greater transparency • Increase ESL (LGGS) to better meet cost incurred by LGs • Private vehicle fire gear – obligations for own staff – WHS Vs Shire rules • Long term funding for fire prevention • ESL funding to be administered by independent body (take fox out of hen house) • BFB volunteers not deemed workers (remove industrial manslaughter risk held exclusively with LG CEOs) • Incentify licencing /stamp duty concession – purchase of heavy equipment used to fight fires (graders, rippers, speed tiller etc) • More concession farmer response vehicles. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bushfire Act is outdated and needs an update to be relevant in contemporary environment. • Emergency Services consolidated Act – priority 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding for fire and emergency management and resilience activities to reflect increasing cost • The risk to CEOs being the PCBU for volunteer bush fire brigades and its consequences under the current WHS Act. 			

Transport & Road Network		VOTES	13
Comments: Albany / Cranbrook	Workshop comments		

¹ Comments from the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup were incorrectly recorded in the agenda. The comments above are corrected.

<p>Develop a long-term dedicated capital works program. Key Priorities for the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavement Renewal: Replace aging surfaces to meet modern load and durability standards. • Capacity Upgrades: Widen and strengthen corridors to accommodate increased freight, larger vehicles, and passenger volumes. • Safety Enhancements: Improve intersections, shoulders, and roadside infrastructure to reduce crash risk. • Priority Sections/Projects Include: Improvements to Albany Highway including a commitment for an annual program of passing lanes South Coast Highway – Wellstead to Esperance • Albany Ring Road – Chester Pass/Menang intersection flyover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term plan not cyclical • Need for Main Roads Great Southern to have a capital maintenance budget funding. • Albany Highway & South Coast Hwy are State Roads that provide key transport & freight link • Better links when diversion needed • Need more funding and strategy for upgrade • Fed/State funding • GS highway – tyre wrecking potholes • Issues to be addressed across the whole region • Grant funding complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important for economic development and support of current businesses. • Future development - improved accessibility will stabilise our rate base and grow industries like tourism. 	

Residential and Industrial Development	VOTES	11
Comments: <i>Albany / Gnowangerup / Jerramungup / Katanning / Plantagenet</i>	Workshop comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct Range Road to provide road access to expanding areas • Mercer Road Realignment to reduce residential access congestion • Utility Trunk connections to increase affordability of development • Strategic planning - preparation of the North Albany District structure plan and north McKail structure plan • Delivery of affordable lots for development at McAlpine Rise • Sewer 		
<p>To help regional towns grow and alleviate the shortage of houses, Council believes the State needs to release more residential and industrial land. This will allow developers and / or future homeowners to build their own home, and businesses to be established. This will also help take some pressure off Perth metropolitan area and reduce urban sprawl.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South Coast region is experiencing renewed interest as a desirable place to live, work and invest. • This presents both opportunities and challenges: servicing population growth requires careful planning for affordable, diverse and sustainable housing, while protecting community character and natural beauty. • Collaboration is central to attracting investment, unlocking land, and building liveable communities for all. • The Shire of Jerramungup views increasing housing availability as a significant priority requiring partnerships with private and public sectors. • Advocating with essential service providers to improve priority utility services in line with housing growth is also important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise native title settlement • Excessive headwork costs • Delivery of power/water services in a timelier manner 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of industrial and residential land • Delivery of working housing and short-stay accommodation 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding availability to progress large scale projects • Headworks costs impeding private development • Time taken for Western Power to cost and design any upgrade works • Headworks costs barrier to economic and industry development. 		

Funding for Infrastructure Growth / Renewal	VOTES	8
Comments: <i>Denmark / Katanning / Kojonup / Plantagenet</i>	Workshop comments	
<p>Denmark anticipates rapid growth over the coming decade, which presents a significant challenge for infrastructure delivery in the current construction climate. While larger developing metro suburbs can effectively implement Developer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of headworks, roads inhibitive 	

Contribution Plans to assist, these plans are impractical and ineffective for small regional local governments like ours. As a result, we require additional external funding to meet the community's needs and support sustainable growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough planning from the state level to keep pace with growth rates in regional shires • Grant funding inequitable - \$\$ going to metro • Untied grant funding • Asset Management capability to be shared resource
Expanding power and water supply capability - especially to service industrial opportunities.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headworks • Major community assets such as pools etc), • Need more untied Grants for large foundational capital infrastructure projects (similar to the LCRIP program). 	
Community asset renewal – rapid increasing cost of construction has created large funding gap.	

Sustainable Waste Management		VOTES	4
Comments: <i>Albany</i>	Workshop comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in Innovative Solutions to deal with waste streams locally at a regional or local level • Diverting Waste from Landfill: Maximise resource recovery by increasing green waste, FOGO, and recycling diversion rates, reducing pressure on landfill sites. • Develop Regional Processing Solutions: Establish shared processing infrastructure for green waste, FOGO, and recyclables, ensuring local solutions for local waste streams. • Reduce Environmental Impacts: Cut greenhouse gas emissions and protect soil and water quality through better waste handling and resource recovery. • Build Community Capacity: Invest in education, innovation, and outreach to empower residents and businesses to participate actively in waste reduction. • Enhance Economic Opportunities: Support the creation of regional jobs and new markets for recycled materials, mulch, and compost products. • Future-Proof Waste Infrastructure: Plan and invest for long-term growth and technological change, ensuring that waste solutions remain resilient, adaptable, and compliant with regulatory requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfills closing e.g. 2032 • Need direction – State controlled landfill • No regional landfill levy • Community education – less in landfill • Viability for small GLs • Regional colab • State level direction • BIOCHAR – state support for local ideas • Paradigm shift needs to be funded by State Government • Discussion around regional collaboration towards min landfill regional transfer station 		

Waste Management – Recycling /Rehabilitation		VOTES	3
Comments: <i>Gnowangerup</i>	Workshop comments		
<p>The Shire has three waste facilities that have finite lives. The liability to rehabilitate each will be well beyond the financial capacity of a small LG.</p> <p>In addition, Council recognises the importance of recycling especially in relation to lithium batteries and see this as an opportunity to collaborate with the State and neighbouring Shires.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biochar • Innovation required • State Govt waste levy • Seasonal peaks of rubbish • Regional solution for recycling - Tyres / Mattresses / Fencing wire • FOGO • Location, Location, Location 		

Local Essential Services / Health		VOTES	3
Comments: <i>Cranbrook / Jerramungup</i>	Workshop comments		
<p>Relates to liveability and attraction and retention of population in our Shire. Example - lack of accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Power changing farms to the “modular grid” with little or no consultation • Medical / health care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities – Rural education offers • Vocational opportunities • Volunteer support, recognition, retention and funding (SES, SJA) • Cost shifting • Worth/spend per capita city vs country 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National data shows that people in rural and remote areas have poorer health outcomes than those in major cities. 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to primary care, and particularly GPs, is central to this disadvantage. Across Australia, people now see a GP about 6.2 times per year on average, but the number of GPs per head of population falls as remoteness increases. • For some Shires, GP subsidy funding commitments equate to up to 16% of total rates revenue, making it one of the largest non-core expenditure items in their budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary to have a well-funded regional health service / hospital • Push back to state govt level or clarify on who is responsible • No funding for implementation of public health plans • Cost to upgrade for infrastructure - Currently property has not power but have access when modular goes through – farmer will have to pay.
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Unsustainable funding model and growing grant dependency		VOTES	3
Comments: <i>Broomhill-Tambellup / Kent / Woodanilling</i>		Workshop comments	
<p>LG has the smallest and least flexible revenue base of any tier of government, yet community expectations and service demands continue to increase.</p> <p>Rate growth is constrained, Financial Assistance Grants have not kept pace with cost growth, and LGs are increasingly reliant on complex and resource-intensive grant programs to deliver essential infrastructure and services.</p> <p>For small shires, administrative burden associated with grants is significant and disproportionate to the funding received. This model increases financial risk, delays delivery, and in some cases, entrenches inequity between metropolitan and regional communities.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding • More united funding • Grant application complexity/conditions • Lack of awareness of funding opportunities • 1% of Fed tax revenue allocated to LGs • Greater certainty about funding 	
<p>LGs are at the frontline of escalating pressures including housing shortages, workforce gaps, energy transition conflicts, disaster response and growing social issues. Despite having the smallest revenue base of any tier of government, local governments are increasingly expected to lead and absorb these challenges without additional funding or resources.</p> <p>The loss of flexible funding programs has left a major gap, and without appropriate funding pathways, rural communities are being left behind. Small towns are the backbone of regional Australia – once they decline, they do not return. Rural communities matter, and urgent action is needed.</p>			
<p>The increasing gap between State/Federal funding (e.g. FAGs) and the real cost of local government operations and business -seek reform of indexation method.</p> <p>FAGs are getting lower each year in real value whilst cost of maintenance, maintaining service levels are getting higher.</p>			

Mobile phone / communication blackspots		VOTES	1
Comments: <i>Woodanilling</i>		Workshop comments	
<p>Mobile phone / communication since removal of 3G with significant blackspots throughout region.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Emergency response compromised • Enforce universal service obligation • Low level satellite service options (Low Earth Orbit and SkyLink) 	

Compliance burden and leadership sustainability in small rural LGs		VOTES	1
Comments: <i>Broomehill- Tambellup</i>		Workshop comments	
<p>Small LGs required to meet almost identical legislative, governance, audit, planning, financial management and WHS obligations as large metropolitan authorities, despite having a substantially smaller workforce and revenue base. Rather than reducing red tape, the cumulative compliance burden continues to grow and consumes a disproportionate share of executive and staff capacity.</p> <p>In small organisations, this diverts limited resources away from project delivery, community outcomes, and strategic leadership. It is also increasingly undermining the sector's ability to attract and retain capable senior staff and CEOs. High personal and organisational risk, constrained remuneration settings,</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource sharing – opportunity • Small LGs same burden as Band 1 • Same compliance level if Band 1 or Band 4 • Band levels constraints recruiting CEOs 	

<p>and limited internal support create a role that is increasingly unattractive and unsustainable. This is a structural issue that requires reform at a system level, not incremental adjustments.</p> <p>Small rural LGs also face ongoing difficulty in maintaining a full complement of capable staff across the organisation. Limited local labour markets, housing availability, remuneration constraints and workload intensity often result in prolonged vacancies and reduced organisational resilience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State to provide a case study into the benefits of LGs working together more closely i.e. where are the major wins
--	--

Road Maintenance Safety / Transport		VOTE	1
Comments: Gnowangerup / Jerramungup		Workshop comments	
<p>Council is concerned about the poor condition of the Shire's roads and feel in part this is due to the State prioritising metropolitan road work to the detriment of the regions. This is another example of cost shifting, where LG is having to bear costs that should be met by the State and is resulting in regional roads that are unsafe and causing damage to vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient, safe & sustainable transport systems are crucial for connecting communities, facilitating growth, and supporting economic activity. Focusing on safe state road networks, it is important to note that the Great Southern region has the oldest pavement in Western Australia, far exceeding its useful life. This aging infrastructure is unable to cope with the demands of freight tasks, which is a major concern. The mixing of freight with tourist traffic further exacerbates the issue, creating safety hazards and inefficiencies. South Coast Highway, from Wellstead to Esperance, is a priority section for the Shire of Jerramungup, requiring pavement renewal, capacity upgrades and safety enhancements. By addressing these challenges, the South Coast region can develop a transport system that not only connects communities but also supports economic growth and sustainability. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More \$\$ "Bang for buck" - increase cost of civil works has caused challenges in keeping pace with maintenance requirements Need more external funding increases for road assets Grant funding complexity VLF % increase the allocation for road funding Cost and availability of housing is a roadblock 	

Renewables		VOTES	1
Comments: Cranbrook		Workshop comments	
<p>Can be so divisive to a community.</p> <p>Land use - relates to plantations and the impact on the Shire's rate base and delivery of services (FPC)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Framework to be mandatory not a guideline- statewide Commercial expediency over community concerns – change planning to consider community concerns Lack of control for LGs Advocate for social benefit funds (mandate) State based planning happenings Power infrastructure not there yet Lack of regulation regarding decommissioning. 	

Sustainable Tourism Management		VOTES	0
Comments: Denmark		Workshop comments	
<p>Tourism is a cornerstone of South Coast's economy. Managing tourism sustainably ensures the region's unique natural and cultural assets are preserved while local communities benefit equitably.</p> <p>Sustainable tourism management involves balancing visitor growth with environmental stewardship, infrastructure investment, and authentic local experiences. The Western Australian Government's tourism strategy, "Waves 2033," aims to increase visitor spending in WA by 60%. Target to be</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding does not recognise tourism / seasonal surge Albany Hwy – Nov-Mar higher risks South Coast Highway Visitor servicing predictable but numbers vary & LGs can't deal with surge Accommodation in other locations Air BNB controls 	

<p>achieved by increasing average spend per visitor & boosting domestic, intrastate, & international visitor numbers.</p> <p>The Great Sthn, a key tourism destination within WA, is already struggling with high visitor numbers, reaching the carrying capacity at several popular sites. Current mechanisms for generating revenue from tourism for LG are limited and ineffective. To support sustainable tourism growth, investment by State or development of new revenue models is essential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking and popular locations – damage to roads by influx • Government to: Fund ASW to support Great Sthn & not cost shift to LGA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Tourism is not LGA function • No bypass for Kojonup
--	--

Red Tape, Governance Burden and the Future of LG Leadership		VOTES	0
Comments: <i>Kent</i>		Workshop comments	
<p>Despite claims of reduced red tape, regulatory and compliance requirements on local governments continue to increase. At the same time, LGs have been required to reduce the number of elected members, resulting in fewer councillors carrying greater workloads and responsibilities.</p> <p>This growing burden risks making elected office unattractive, particularly in small rural communities. Without reform, the sector will struggle to attract and retain capable candidates. Consideration must be given to reducing compliance duplication and exploring appropriate incentives or remuneration flexibility beyond current Salaries Tribunal constraints.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness projects – navigating red tape • Western power ie – trying to build hold ups • CEO retention – loss due to compliance 	

COMMENT

It is proposed that the Zone's Strategic priorities are presented for the Zone's further consideration and action at the following Zone meetings:

Meeting: April 2026 (<i>this meeting</i>)	Priority Topic: Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks (21 votes)
June 2026	Firefighting / Funding/ WHS Obligations / BF Act outdated (14 votes)
August 2026	Transport & Road Network (13 votes)
November 2026	Residential and Industrial Development (11 votes)

For consideration at this meeting is the top priority identified by Zone member voting (21 votes) in the February Workshop: **Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks**

The following WALGA Advocacy Position has relevance to this topic:

2.1.14 Fees and Charges

Position Statement That a review be undertaken to remove fees and charges from legislation, and Councils be empowered to set fees and charges for Local Government services.

Background Local Governments are able to impose fees and charges on users of specific, often incidental, services. Examples include dog registration fees, fees for building approvals and swimming pool entrance fees.

In some cases, Local Governments will recoup the entire cost of providing a service. In other cases, user charges may be set below cost recovery to encourage a particular activity with identified

community benefit, such as sporting ground user fees or swimming pool entry fees.

Currently, fees and charges are determined according to three methods:

- *By legislation*
- *With an upper limit set by legislation*
- *By the Local Government.*

Fees determined by State Government legislation are of particular concern to Local Governments and represent significant revenue leakage because of:

- *Lack of indexation*
- *Lack of regular review (fees may remain at the same nominal levels for decades)*
- *Lack of transparent methodology in setting the fees (fees do not appear to be set with regard to appropriate costs recovery levels).*

Examples of fees and charges of this nature include dog registrations fees, town planning fees and building permits. Since Local Governments do not have direct control over the determination of fees set by legislation, this revenue leakage is recovered from rate revenue. This means all ratepayers end up subsidising the activities of some ratepayers.

When fees and charges are restricted by legislation, rather than being set at cost recovery levels, this sends inappropriate signals to users of Local Government services, particularly when the consumption of those services is discretionary. When legislative limits allow consumers to pay below 'true cost' levels for a discretionary service, this will lead to overprovision and a misallocation of resources.

Under the principle of 'general competence' there is no reason why Local Governments should not be empowered to make decisions regarding the setting of fees and charges for specific services.

The Zone may wish to discuss options for advancing advocacy on **Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks.**

MEETING NOTES

Zone members discussed a range of matters intersecting with their consideration of "cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks" including:

- Concern that GSCZ is not getting the traction with WALGA State Council.
 - Consider advocacy to other Zones so that State Council has evidence of an issue affecting more than a single Zone.
- Zone members may review matters raised by other Zones in the WALGA State Council Minutes.
- Noted necessity to quantify cost shifting impacts, with specific examples by which advocacy can be facilitated (evidence based).
 - Central Country Zone has recently engaged a consultancy to collate a report on cost shifting to Local Government.

- Suggested GSCZ members could attend other Zone meetings and present on the strategic priorities identified in this Zone – opportunity to build sector wide support for WALGA advocacy action.
- Suggested Zone delegation to meet with relevant Ministers.
- Bush Fire Brigade volunteers as workers under WHS Act and increased personal liability for CEO's – GSCZ may wish to consider alternative strategies by which the personal liability risk for CEO's could be mitigated (other than removing these volunteers as workers).
 - Optional transfer of LG responsibility for Brigades to DFES. Currently not enabled under Bush Fires Act provisions. May be contemplated as part of the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Act – differing views as to this option.

RESOLUTION/DECISION

It was AGREED for the Zone to:

- 1. Write to all WALGA Zones advising of the GSCZ's position on cost shifting and responsibility for transfer without transfer of funding or policy frameworks and seeking their support for WALGA advocacy.**
- 2. Request Department of Fire and Emergency Services provide a senior officer* to speak on the status of the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Act, including proposals for optional or alternative arrangements for management responsibility of Bush Fire Brigades.**
- 3. Liaise with the Central Country Zone to request:**
 - a. A copy of the consultant brief they used to engage a consultant to prepare a report on cost shifting to Local Government.**
 - b. Details of the costs incurred by Central Country Zone for this consultancy.**
- 4. Request Zone CEOs to provide the Zone Secretariat with examples of cost shifting to Local Government, including \$value and resourcing impact details where possible.**
- 5. Request the Zone Secretariat prepare an item for consideration at the June Zone meeting, detailing the options for the Zone to fund and facilitate a consultancy to prepare a report on cost shifting to Local Governments.**

*Nick Sloan, WALGA CEO indicated he would liaise with DFES Commissioner to seek support for a suitable senior DFES officer to present at the next Zone meeting.

7.3 MATTERS FOR ZONE NOTING AND DECISION

7.3.1 Request to Present - Telstra

Boyd Brown, Telstra Regional General Manager WA, is seeking members support to attend the June 2026 Great Southern Country Zone meeting to provide updates on the following topics:

- Mobile Network upgrades
- Co-investment programs
- Satellite to mobile
- Network resilience
- Any other topic of interest

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Scott Crosby
Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnston

That the Great Southern Country Zone does not support a presentation from Boyd Brown, Telstra at the June Zone meeting.

CARRIED

7.3.2 Consultation on Draft Climate Change Advocacy Position

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA is undertaking sector consultation on a revised draft Climate Change Advocacy Position.
- This draft position was developed following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team of State Council.
- WALGA is seeking **Council endorsed feedback by 1 May 2026**.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's 2018 Climate Change [Policy Statement](#) and Advocacy Position state:

Local Government acknowledges:

1. *The science is clear: Climate change is occurring and greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the dominant cause.*
2. *Climate change threatens human societies and the Earth's ecosystems.*
3. *Urgent action is required to reduce emissions, and to adapt to the impacts from climate change that are now unavoidable.*
4. *A failure to adequately address this climate change emergency places an unacceptable burden on future generations.*

Local Government is committed to addressing climate change.

Local Government is calling for:

1. *Strong climate change action, leadership and coordination at all levels of government.*
2. *Effective and adequately funded Commonwealth and State Government climate change policies and programs.*

The draft Advocacy Position in the Consultation Paper is:

1. *Local Government acknowledges the risks associated with, and is committed to, addressing climate change.*
2. *WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to provide:*
 - a. *the necessary climate leadership, coordination and action to ensure an orderly transition to achieve emission reduction targets and address the impacts of climate change*
 - b. *dedicated funding, guidance and practical support to assist Local Governments to undertake emissions reduction and adaptation actions.*

ATTACHMENT

The WALGA Climate Change Advocacy Position Consultation Paper is available [online](#).

BACKGROUND

Climate change, and related legislation, policy and action, have implications for many aspects of Local Governments' operations and services. More frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves, bushfires, extreme rainfall events and warming, rising sea levels are increasing the costs and complexity of delivering critical services, infrastructure and ensuring community wellbeing.

In 2018, State Council endorsed a [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and advocacy position, following extensive sector consultation. Since this Advocacy Position was adopted there have been significant legislative, policy, technological and scientific changes, including:

- The national *Climate Change Act 2022* and the Western Australian Climate Change Bill 2023.
- The *Local Government Amendment Act 2023*, which expanded Western Australian Local Governments' general function under Part 3 s3.1(1A) of the *Local Government Act 1995* to:
 - a. to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the district; and
 - b. **to plan for, and to plan for mitigating, risks associated with climate change;** and
 - c. in making decisions, to consider potential long-term consequences and impacts on future generations.
- The release of the Australian Government's [National Climate Risk Assessment](#) and [National Adaptation Plan](#) in 2025.
- Escalation of the transition to renewable energy, uptake of electric vehicles and energy efficiency standards under the National Construction Code.
- Climate science and projections ([international](#), [national](#) and [WA specific](#)) have also become clearer regarding the risks posed by climate change and the need for action to address the consequential impacts.

COMMENT

Following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team, WALGA has developed a revised, draft Climate Change Advocacy Position for Local Government feedback which is currently out for consultation with feedback due by 1 May 2026. WALGA has received feedback from some Councils and understands a number of Councils will be considering this matter in April. Zone delegates are encouraged to take this item to their Councils.

The Central Country Zone passed a motion at its February 2026 meeting which included writing to all other zones highlighting its alternative Advocacy Position (proposed in March 2025). WALGA worked to incorporate the Central Country Zone feedback prior to the release of the Consultation Paper.

WALGA is seeking **Council endorsed feedback** on the draft Climate Change Advocacy Position by **COB Friday, 1 May 2026** to environment@walga.asn.au.

Following consideration of this feedback a final draft Advocacy Position will be developed and provided to zones and State Council for consideration.

Noted.

7.3.3 Forest Products Commission (FPC) Rates Equivalent Payments – Treasury Remittance Uncertainty and Local Government Budget Impacts

By Shire of Cranbrook

BACKGROUND

In September 2025, Forest Products Commission (FPC) contacted each local government in which it owned land, to advise that it would no longer be paying rates. Previously under its legislation, it was required to pay rates on all leased land as it was not allowed to purchase land outright. This changed with the Forest Products Amendment Bill 2021 which allowed the FPC to purchase land.

The flow on effect from that decision was that under the *Forest Products Act 2000*, FPC owned land was no longer rateable and, to keep it competitive within the industry, FPC had to pay to the Treasurer in respect of each financial year an amount equivalent to the sum of all local government rates and charges that, but for subsection (2) and section 6.26 (2)(a)(i) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Commission would have been liable to pay in respect of that financial year.

The Shire of Cranbrook contacted the Shire of Boyup Brook in September 2025, seeking more information on the issue, and then became part of a broader group of local governments seeking compensation for the loss of revenue due to FPC's non-payment of rates.

The Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils (WBAC), comprising of the Shires of Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Donnybrook-Balingup, Manjimup and Nannup together with the Shires of Cranbrook and West Arthur, then attended a meeting in Perth in January 2026, with the Minister for Forestry, the Hon Jackie Jarvis, MLC, to advise of the immediate impact of this decision on the 2025/26 Budget of each local government.

Indicative 2025/26 impacts identified in January 2026 were as follows:

- Boyup Brook: \$135,000
- Bridgetown-Greenbushes: \$21,540
- Donnybrook-Balingup: \$9,383
- Manjimup: \$55,000
- Nannup: \$40,000
- Cranbrook: \$28,000
- West Arthur: \$35,000

On Friday 20 March 2026, in response to the January meeting, a letter was received from the Minister, the Hon Jackie Jarvis, MLC, to advise that FPC would contribute to the communities in which it had purchased land through a sponsorship funding agreement for two years. The sum payable was approximately the rates due to the Shire of Cranbrook for 2025/26 FY and 2026/27 FY. (\$60,000). The Shire was advised that beyond this term the FPC would be "seeking feedback from the Shires on opportunities for FPC to contribute to specific services that will support the plantation industry." Whilst we are appreciative of the Minister's response in the short term, the long-term response creates an unstable and increasingly unpredictable revenue environment for small regional local governments and makes it more difficult for councils to make responsible decisions regarding service delivery, asset renewal, workforce planning, and capital investment.

Under the State Government's \$350 million funding commitment to planting pine, the impacts will increase with every additional property acquired by the FPC unless a clear and reliable mechanism is established to return equivalent payments to affected local governments.

Local governments also remain responsible for maintaining infrastructure and services relied upon by plantation operations, including local roads, emergency management capability, community facilities, and broader local services. The removal of this revenue, without a corresponding remittance mechanism, places increased pressure on remaining ratepayers and undermines the long-term financial sustainability of affected councils.

WBAC, together with the Shires of Cranbrook and West Arthur, has sought the establishment of a cross-portfolio process involving Local Government, Forestry and Treasury to determine a fair and sustainable mechanism for 2026/27 and future years, including forward modelling in respect of future FPC land acquisitions.

This matter now presents not only an immediate budget impact, but an ongoing structural funding risk for affected local governments. Urgent advocacy is therefore required to secure clarity, certainty, and a fair long-term solution prior to the finalisation of 2026/27 local government budgets.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

WALGA recognises the impact that the Forest Products Commission's (FPC) change to the payment of rates equivalent amounts has on Local Governments within the Great Southern Country Zone (GSCZ), particularly given the timing of the application of the change prior to the 2025/26 financial year.

WALGA understands that the GSCZ and affected Local Governments, have already engaged directly with the Minister for Forestry on this matter and supports the GSCZ in seeking timely resolution of the immediate 2025/26 impacts and longer-term certainty for future financial years.

WALGA acknowledges the significant impact that rating exemptions have on Local Government revenue, and their ability to provide essential community services.

This matter aligns with longstanding [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#) regarding rating, including the following:

2.1.1 Rating Exemptions Review

A broad review be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under Section 6.26 of the Local Government Act 1995.

2.1.4 Rating Exemptions – Rate Equivalency Payment

Legislation should be amended so rate equivalency payments made by LandCorp and other Government Trading Entities are made to the relevant Local Governments instead of the State Government.

WALGA's current Advocacy Position *2.1.4 Rating Exemptions - Rate Equivalency Payments* (above) directly relates to the Forest Products Commission rate exemption through the [Forest Products Act 2000](#) section 43 provisions.

Additionally, [WALGA's 2026-27 State Budget Submission](#) calls for an independent organisation to undertake a broad review of rating exemptions.

A number of concerns regarding rating and rating exemptions have emerged across the sector, particularly over the past 6–12 months. WALGA is undertaking scoping work to consider the most effective way to address these matters through a coordinated, overarching and sector wide advocacy approach.

The Shire of Cranbrook's recommendation seeks action to obtain financial compensation specific to the loss of revenue arising from the Forest Products Act rate exemption.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Perin Mulcahy

Seconded: Cr Janine Phillips

That the Great Southern Country Zone request WALGA to advocate, as a matter of urgency, to the Western Australian Treasurer, Minister for Forestry and Minister for Local Government to:

- 1. Establish, prior to the finalisation of 2026/27 local government budgets, a clear, transparent, and ongoing mechanism for the calculation, remittance, and payment of those rates-equivalent amounts to affected local governments for 2026/27 and future financial years.**
- 2. Work with WALGA and affected local governments to develop and implement a fair and sustainable long-term solution, including policy and legislative reform if required, to ensure local governments are not financially disadvantaged by future Forest Products Commission land acquisitions.**

CARRIED

7.3.4 Late Item - RAV Network Accredited Mass Management Scheme (Level 3) – Ministerial Decision Enabling Heavier Loads on Selected Local Roads

By Zone Chair, Cr Scott Crosby

BACKGROUND

The Zone Chair, with support of the Zone Deputy Chair requested this Late Item for consideration by the Great Southern Country Zone at its 21 April 2026 meeting.

This item was originally proposed by the Shires of Corrigin and Kulin and was considered at the Central Country Zone meeting on Friday, 17 April 2026. The Central Country Zone item is presented, inclusive of the Central Country Zone's decision.

In March 2026, the Minister for Transport announced a temporary upgrade of Restricted Access Vehicle (RAV) networks to Accredited Mass Management Scheme (AMMS) Level 3, enabling heavier vehicle loads for fuel, fertiliser and lime on selected State and local roads in regional Western Australia. Details are outlined in the [Media Release](#) and [6-2026 v3 | Main Roads Western Australia](#) .

Local governments support the government initiatives to maintain a reliable fuel and fertiliser supply to the region as part of a range of measures in response to concerns raised about fuel security amid conflict in the Middle East.

Local governments and WALGA were not consulted prior to the announcement, despite local governments being the responsible road managers for affected local roads.

Any change to heavy vehicle access conditions on local roads has direct implications for road safety, pavement, culvert and bridge capacity, asset condition, maintenance

and renewal costs and local government liability. Existing access arrangements are based on assessed road condition and safety considerations.

The upgrade coincides with the wetter part of the year and is expected to accelerate pavement deterioration, particularly on rural roads, increasing maintenance costs and reducing asset life. There is already a significant gap between amount of funding required for road maintenance, renewal and upgrade and funding availability.

Local governments across the wheatbelt have experienced frustration with the limited compliance with the Main Roads Heavy Vehicle access permits and operating conditions despite the recent increase in heavy vehicle compliance activities.

The tables below show the RAV and AMMS categories and weight limits for the heaviest category across many shires in the Central Country Zone.

Table 1 Tandem Drive Prime Mover, Trailer Combinations Restricted Access Vehicle (RAV) Categories



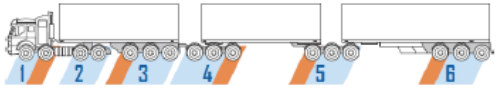
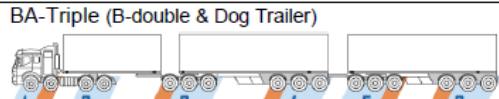
Category 7 RAVs				
Category	Vehicle Description	Length	Max. Mass	Approved Network
7A	AB-Triple (Prime Mover, Semi Trailer & B-Double) 	>27.5 m ≤36.5 m	108.5 t	RAV Network 7
7B	BA-Triple (B-Double & Dog Trailer) 	>27.5 m ≤36.5 m	108.5 t	RAV Network 7

Table 2 Prime Mover, Trailer Combinations AMMS Categories

Category 7 RAVs						
Cat.	Vehicle Description	Length	AMMS Level	Max. Gross Mass	Max. Modified Mass	Approved Network
7A	AB-Triple (Prime Mover, Semi Trailer & B-double) 	>27.5 m ≤36.5 m	Level 1	115 t	7 t	N7.1
			Level 2	119 t	11 t	N7.2
			Level 3	123.5 t	15 t	N7.3
7B	BA-Triple (B-double & Dog Trailer) 	>27.5 m ≤36.5 m	Level 1	115 t	7 t	N7.1
			Level 2	119 t	11 t	N7.2
			Level 3	123.5 t	15 t	N7.3

More information on the specific combinations is available on the Main Roads WA website below.

[prime-mover-trailer-combinations-operating-conditions](#)

[Orders/tandem-drive-prime-mover-trailer-combinations-restricted-access-vehicle-categories.pdf](#)

[AMMS accredited-mass-management-scheme-amms-tandem-drive-prime-mover-trailer-combinations-restricted-access-vehicle-categories.pdf](#)

[AMMS accredited-mass-management-scheme-amms-prime-mover-trailer-combinations-operating-conditions.pdf](#)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Central Country Zone:

1. Notes the Ministerial decision to temporarily upgrade RAV networks to AMMS Level 3 on local government roads.
2. Expresses concern that the decision was made without consultation with local governments or WALGA.
3. Requests WALGA advocate to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads Western Australia seeking clarification on:
 - a. risk assessments without route-specific road safety or asset capacity assessment for local government roads,
 - b. compliance and enforcement arrangements,
 - c. duration and process for revocation of the upgrade,
 - d. opt-out options for local government roads, and
 - e. additional funding support for impacted local government road assets.

The Central Country Zone decision endorsed the above recommendation inclusive of an amendment for that Zone to write to the Minister for Transport.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Scott Crosby

Seconded: President Cr Len Handasyde

That the Great Southern Country Zone:

1. Notes the Ministerial decision to temporarily upgrade RAV networks to AMMS Level 3 on local government roads.
2. Expresses concern that the decision was made without consultation with Local Governments or WALGA.
3. Requests WALGA advocate to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads Western Australia seeking clarification on:
 - a. risk assessments without route-specific road safety or asset capacity assessment for local government roads,
 - b. compliance and enforcement arrangements,
 - c. duration and process for revocation of the upgrade,
 - d. opt-out options for local government roads,
 - e. when the intervention will cease to apply; and
 - f. additional funding support for impacted local government road assets.
4. Requests GSCZ Secretariat write to the Minister for Transport expressing the Zone's concerns and requesting clarification as detailed in parts 2 and 3 above.

CARRIED

8 WALGA STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS

8.1 ZONE STATE COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone State Councillor

8.2 STATE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA – MATTERS FOR DECISION

9 WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

Zone Delegates are invited to read and consider the WALGA State Council Agenda, which has been provided as an attachment with this Agenda and can be found via the link [here](#).

The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation on any of the items, including the items for noting. The Zone comment will then be presented to the State Council for consideration at their meeting.

The State Council Agenda items requiring a decision of State Council are extracted for Zone consideration below.

9.1.1 Protecting Council Member and Employee Privacy Advocacy Position

By Meghan Dwyer, Governance Specialist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The South East Metropolitan Zone resolved to request WALGA advocate to amend s.5.95(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* to specify that the right to inspect Primary and Annual Returns (Returns) contained in the Register of Financial Interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the residential address of the relevant person.
- Returns may include residential addresses, which are then made publicly accessible, creating privacy and safety risks.
- Council Members and employees are increasingly reluctant to disclose residential addresses due to safety and security risks, demonstrating that current legislation no longer aligns with contemporary expectations of privacy.
- Recent parliamentary scrutiny of similar requirements for Members of Parliament led to recommendations to remove full residential address disclosures, which the Government supported.
- In addition to Returns, Council Members must also provide a residential address when making their declaration of office.
- It would be appropriate for a review of all public disclosure requirements under the *Local Government Act 1995* to occur to ensure that they remain contemporary, effective, and aligned with modern standards of accountability and personal security.
- The Governance Policy Team endorsed the proposed advocacy position at its meeting on 23 March 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- Jurisdictional Comparison – Address Information in Council Member Returns and Declarations of Office (included below).

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The proposed advocacy position aligns to the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

- Influence – Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
- Support – Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation is for State Council to endorse a new [Advocacy Position](#).

Protecting Council Member and Employee Privacy

That WALGA advocates to the State Government to:

- 1. Undertake a review of disclosure requirements for Local Government Council Members and employees under the Local Government Act 1995.*
- 2. Undertake the necessary legislative amendments to strike an appropriate balance between transparency, personal safety, and contemporary community expectations of privacy, including:*
 - a. Amend section 5.95(1) to prescribe that the right to inspect primary and annual returns contained in the register of financial interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the full residential address of the relevant person, and is instead limited to the suburb or locality.*
 - b. Amend Form 7 of the Local Government (Constitutional) Regulations 1998 to remove the requirement to disclose a full residential address when making the declaration of office.*

BACKGROUND

At the 3 December 2025 meeting, State Council adopted new Advocacy Position 2.5.20 Electoral Material - Authorisation Statement Address Requirements in response to significant privacy and safety concerns arising from the obligation to publish a candidate's physical address on electoral materials.

When considering this item at the preceding round of Zone meetings, the South East Metropolitan Zone (SEMZ) resolved to request WALGA advocate to amend s.5.95(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) to specify that the right to inspect Primary and Annual Returns (Returns) contained in the Register of Financial Interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the residential address of the relevant person.

State Council resolved to refer the SEMZ comments to the Governance Policy Team.

The Governance Policy Team endorsed the proposed advocacy position at its meeting on 23 March 2026.

COMMENT

Public disclosure regimes must strike an appropriate balance between public transparency and personal safety. The inclusion of personal identifying information in publicly accessible documents has become increasingly problematic. As digital publication and internet search capabilities have expanded, material that once had limited circulation can be copied and distributed with ease. This environment has reinforced the need to carefully consider how much personal information is necessary to make publicly available, and the risks that may arise when doing so.

Local Government Act

The Act establishes a range of public disclosure obligations designed to promote transparency and accountability. However, digital publication, increased data availability, and heightened personal safety concerns have created new risks that were not contemplated when these provisions were first drafted.

Returns require relevant persons to disclose personal financial information. Information disclosed includes the address of each parcel of real property, located in the district or in an adjoining district, in which the person had an interest and the nature of the interest in each parcel of real property (s.5.79). In practice, this often results in the disclosure of a Council Member or employee's residential address.

Returns are required to be included in the register of financial interests. Section 5.94(b) of the Act requires any register of financial interest to be made available to the public, and s.5.96 requires the Local Government to provide copies upon request.

Although s.5.93 of the Act establishes penalties for the improper use of information, information can now be copied and distributed almost instantly. In many cases, the harm may occur well before any investigation or action can be commenced.

In addition to the requirement for Council Members to disclose interests in real property as part of their returns, s.2.29 of the Act, together with Form 7 of the *Local Government (Constitution) Regulations 1998*, requires each Council Member to provide their full residential address when making their statutory declaration of office. Although this declaration is not required to be made publicly available under s. 5.94(b) of the Act, some Local Governments livestream or publish recordings of the proceedings. As a result, full residential address details become publicly accessible.

Emerging risks and issues

Local Governments have observed increasing reluctance from Council Members and employees to provide their residential address. Reasons include:

- being registered as a silent elector under the *Electoral Act 1907*,
- experiences or risks of family or domestic violence,
- concerns that leave of absence approvals may signal when a residence may be unoccupied,
- role-related risks, such as potential targeted harassment by dissatisfied community members.

Disclosure of personal residential addresses can also expose individuals to cybersecurity and identity-theft risks, as this information can be combined with other data to build detailed personal profiles. Publicly accessible addresses may make individuals more vulnerable to targeted scams, social engineering, and unwanted contact, increasing both digital and physical security risks.

Parliamentary disclosure obligations

The disclosure of the residential addresses of Members of Parliament in their Primary and Annual Returns has recently been considered by the [Legislative Assembly Procedures and Privileges Committee in Report No.1: Protecting privacy and other reasons to update the Members of Parliament \(Financial Interests\) Act 1992](#).

The Committee recommended that the Government review the relevant legislation, "with a view to addressing the requirement for the disclosure of full residential addresses and to consider broader legislative updates necessary to ensure the Act remains contemporary, effective, and aligned with modern standards of accountability and personal security."

The [Government response](#) supported this recommendation.

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing

The objectives of the new *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024* (PRIS Act) include promoting responsible and transparent practices in the handling of personal information and balancing the public interests of protecting the privacy of personal information with the free flow of information by agencies.

Most privacy provisions in the PRIS Act come into effect on 1 July 2026.

The following sections of the PRIS Act intersect with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995*:

- The information privacy principles do not apply to information that is already publicly accessible. This includes information in documents that are either generally available to the public or made available for public inspection under another written law (s.22).
- An individual may request a public entity to remove their personal information from a public register if making the information publicly available would substantially affect any individual's safety or wellbeing. If the public entity is satisfied that the grounds exist, the public entity must comply with the request unless the public entity is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining public access to the information outweighs any individual interest in the information not being made publicly available (s.77).

While this appears to provide a mechanism for individuals to address specific safety and privacy concerns, it would be preferable to ensure that the legislative requirements avoid unnecessary risks to all Council Members and employees.

WALGA will seek to engage with the Information Commissioner and Deputy Privacy Commissioner to clarify the way in which these and other PRIS Act provisions will apply to Council Members.

Review and amendments to the Local Government Act

As Local Government Council Members and employees share the same safety concerns as Members of Parliament it would be appropriate to echo the Procedures and Privilege Committee and advocate for a broad review of all public disclosure requirements under the *Local Government Act 1995* to ensure that they remain contemporary, effective, and aligned with modern standards of accountability and personal security. A review would allow a clearer, risk-aware framework to be established that protects individuals while preserving appropriate transparency.

Within this broader reform, several targeted amendments are necessary. It is proposed that s. 5.95(1) be amended so that the right to inspect information in the register of financial interests under s. 5.94(b) is limited to the suburb or locality of each property, rather than the full residential address of the relevant person. Additionally, the requirement for Council Members to provide their full residential address in the statutory declaration of office should be removed. These amendments are consistent with practices adopted in other Australian jurisdictions and reflect the approach now being reconsidered for Members of Parliament.

Importantly, these changes would not weaken transparency or accountability. Council Members and employees would still be required to disclose their full residential address in Returns, and would continue to declare direct financial, indirect financial, proximity, and impartiality interests when they arise in decision-making processes. This ensures that relevant interests remain publicly recorded when they matter, without unnecessarily exposing personal residential details. By limiting public access to only what is necessary, the legislative framework can better protect individual safety while preserving the integrity of the disclosure regime.

ATTACHMENT: JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON – ADDRESS INFORMATION IN COUNCIL MEMBER RETURNS AND DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE

DISCLOSURES IN RETURNS	
<p>Victoria Local Government Act 2020 Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020</p>	<p>CEO must prepare summary of personal interests information disclosed in the last personal interest return.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the town or suburb, but not the street address or number of the land that is the place of residence <p>Other matters to be included or excluded are prescribed.</p> <p>Includes that a specified person may request in writing information not be included if the CEO consider including the information would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be reasonably likely to place the personal safety of any person at risk, or unreasonably expose a business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage <p>Summary of personal interest returns available to members of the public.</p> <p>Detailed personal interests returns are only available to certain persons.</p>
<p>New South Wales Governance Information (Public Access) Act 2009</p>	<p>From the <i>Information Access Guideline 1 - For Local Councils on the disclosure of information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returns should be made publicly available on the council's website unless there is an overriding public interest against release or to do so would impose unreasonable additional costs on council. A consideration against disclosure is where release of the information may expose a person to a risk of harm or of serious harassment or serious intimidation. In the circumstances where council decides that there is an overriding public interest against disclosure, consideration should then be given to whether it is practicable to release an edited copy of the record (for example redacting the individual's signature or residential address) If it is practicable to do so, then the information should be deleted from a copy of the record and the remainder of the return made available on the council's website. Where information is deleted from a return, council should keep a record indicating, in general terms, the nature of the information redacted.
<p>Queensland Local Government Regulation 2021</p>	<p>Suburb or locality of the land is required (not full address).</p>
<p>South Australia Local Government Act 1999</p>	<p>Personal addresses are not to be published nor are any addresses where the CEO is satisfied that the inclusion in the Register of the address of a person would place at risk the personal safety of that person, a member of that person's family or any other person.</p>

Tasmania	Currently does not require councillors to lodge a personal interests return. The Tasmanian government is implementing a new framework to strengthen the management of local government councillor conflicts of interest, with reforms expected before the 2026 elections.
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INFORMATION IN COUNCIL MEMBER DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE	
Victoria Local Government Act 2020 Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020	Address not required.
New South Wales Local Government Act 1993	Address not required.
Queensland Local Government Regulation 2021	Address not required.
South Australia Local Government (General) Regulations 2013	Address not required.
Tasmania Local Government (General) Regulations 2025	Address not required.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the following new Advocacy Position:

Protecting Council Member and Employee Privacy

That WALGA advocates to the State Government to:

- 1. Undertake a review of disclosure requirements for Local Government Council Members and employees under the Local Government Act 1995,*
- 2. Undertake the necessary legislative amendments to strike an appropriate balance between transparency, personal safety, and contemporary community expectations of privacy, including:*
 - a. Amend section 5.95(1) to prescribe that the right to inspect primary and annual returns contained in the register of financial interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the full residential address of the relevant person, and is instead limited to the suburb or locality.*
 - b. Amend Form 7 of the Local Government (Constitutional) Regulations 1998 to remove the requirement to disclose a full residential address when making the declaration of office.*

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Russel Thomson

Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnston

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

9.1.2 Water Management Advocacy Position

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A new Water Management Advocacy Position and the retirement of position 6.14 Planning for Water is proposed.
- The new Position has been developed following consultation and feedback on WALGA's *Water Management in Western Australia Discussion Paper*.
- 28 Local Governments provided more than 200 comments on the paper, with the main issues being:
 - equitable access to consistent and reliable water;
 - water licensing and allocation;
 - integrated regional and catchment-scale water planning;
 - water for Public Open Space (POS);
 - funding
 - for critical infrastructure - drainage and irrigation, alternative water sources and sewerage infill and headworks.
 - for water efficiency and water sensitive urban design initiatives.
 - expanding and improving the Waterwise Council Program;
 - access to data and information to inform decision making; and
 - addressing the impacts of stormwater runoff.
- The outcomes sought in 6.14 Planning for Water have been realised in the recently released State Planning Policy 2.9.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed retiring the position and the new position at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- [Water Management Discussion Paper](#)
- [Water Management Consultation Summary Report](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following WALGA Strategic Pillars:

- Influence
 - Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
 - Empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support - Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the following new [Advocacy Position](#) be **endorsed**:

Water Management

1. *Access to consistent, reliable and adequate water supplies is critical for Local Government operations, community health, amenity, environmental sustainability and economic activity.*
2. *WALGA is calling on the State Government to:*
 - a. *Modernise water management legislation and regulation, including:*
 - i. *Undertaking a review of the water licensing and allocation system to ensure equitable access and prioritise high value community use including for public open space.*
 - ii. *Developing a State-wide framework for integrated regional and catchment-scale water planning.*

- b. *Adequately, sustainably and equitably fund critical water infrastructure programs for Local Government, including:*
 - i. *Drainage and irrigation upgrades.*
 - ii. *Alternative water sources (recycled water, stormwater harvesting, desalination and groundwater replenishment) and disused water asset transfer.*
 - iii. *Small-scale sewerage infrastructure headworks and infill sewerage.*
- c. *Expand the Waterwise Council Program statewide and provide:*
 - i. *Increased support and resources to assist Local Government in delivering water efficiency measures.*
 - ii. *Incentives for Local Governments to undertake water efficiency initiatives.*
- d. *Improve water data access and capability for Local Governments to ensure evidence-based decision making.*
- e. *Provide effective leadership, guidance, education and enforcement to address the impacts of stormwater runoff.*

It is proposed that the following Advocacy Position be **retired**:

6.14 Planning for Water

As part of the Water Management Report endorsement process, formal support from the relevant Local Government should be required where:

1. *It is intended that the Local Government will become the infrastructure asset manager; or*
2. *The proposed location of water infrastructure assets will impact Local Government assets or facilities.*

The outcomes sought in Position 6.14 have been realised in the recently released [State Planning Policy 2.9](#).

BACKGROUND

WALGA identified the need to consolidate and expand on current Water related [Advocacy Positions](#) and has undertaken initial consultation, through targeted engagement and consideration of issues raised by the sector previously. To inform the development of a new Advocacy Position, WALGA developed a Discussion Paper to gain feedback from the sector on their current challenges and needs in relation to water management across the state.

WALGA released the Discussion Paper for comment in late November 2025, with an initial deadline of 15 January 2026 for comment, however based on feedback from the sector this deadline was extended to Thursday, 12 March.

28 Local Governments have provided feedback, 14 of those Council/CEO level feedback. The feedback provided by Local Governments was comprehensive, with over 200 individual comments received across the submissions. WALGA acknowledges the significant time and consideration given by Members in providing that level of feedback.

The main themes of the feedback reflect those explored in the Discussion Paper and are consistent across Local Government:

- Legislation which is inequitable and outdated, particularly for licensing and allocation.
- State legislation should align with the National Water Agreement, particularly strategic, long term integrated planning and equitable access to drinking water.
- Aging and insufficient water infrastructure.

- Support and resourcing needed to explore and mainstream alternative water sources.
- Reactive approaches to headworks and sewerage servicing constraining development, particularly in regional and high-growth areas.
- Public Open Space (POS) in relation to planning decisions not accounting for the water needed to sustain these areas.
- Statewide expansion of the Waterwise Council program and improvement in program support and design.
- High interest in improving and supporting water efficiency and water sensitive urban design outcomes.
- Water data gaps and poor data sharing limits sound decision making.
- Water quality as an emerging and under-recognised issue.

WALGA has consolidated the feedback into a Consultation Report which summarises the main themes and issues raised by the sector and how it has been addressed in the draft Advocacy Position.

COMMENT

The new Position has been informed by the information, issues and priorities identified in feedback received from Local Governments on the WALGA Discussion Paper.

A new Advocacy Position is timely given the release of [Made Possible by Water](#) by the State Government on 21 March 2026, a document outlining WA's water future. A comprehensive Advocacy Position on this issue will be essential to assist WALGA's advocacy and influence how the Government delivers the priorities identified. Some of the matters identified in the draft Advocacy Position are reflected in Made Possible by Water, including expansion of the WaterWise Program and delivery of new water sources.

The Environment Policy Team endorsed the new Advocacy Position and the retirement of Position 6.14 at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Endorse the following new Advocacy Position:

Water Management

1. *Access to consistent, reliable and adequate water supplies is critical for Local Government operations, community health, amenity, environmental sustainability and economic activity.*
2. *WALGA is calling on the State Government to:*
 - a. *Modernise water management legislation and regulation, including:*
 - i. *undertaking a review of the water licensing and allocation system to ensure equitable access and prioritise high value community use including for public open space*
 - ii. *developing a state-wide framework for integrated regional and catchment-scale water planning.*
 - b. *Adequately, sustainably and equitably fund critical water infrastructure programs for Local Government, including:*
 - i. *drainage and irrigation upgrades*

- ii. *alternative water sources (recycled water, stormwater harvesting, desalination and groundwater replenishment) and disused water asset transfer*
- iii. *small-scale sewerage infrastructure headworks and infill sewerage.*
- c. *Expand the Waterwise Council Program statewide and provide:*
 - i. *increased support and resources to assist Local Government in delivering water efficiency measures*
 - ii. *incentives for Local Governments to undertake water efficiency initiatives.*
- d. *Improve water data access and capability for Local Governments to ensure evidence-based decision making.*
- e. *Provide effective leadership, guidance, education and enforcement to address the impacts of stormwater runoff.*

2. Retires Advocacy Position 6.14 Planning for Water.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Barrett
 Seconded: President Cr Len Handasyde

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

9.1.3 Off Roads Vehicles Advocacy Position

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Advisor Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.12 Off Road Vehicles (ORV) be retired.
- The *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Vehicles) Act 1978* (the ORV Act) provides the legislative framework for the use of off-road vehicles within permitted areas in WA.
- Nine Local Governments own and maintain Off Road Vehicle (ORV) areas.
- Advocacy Position 3.12 Off Road Vehicles was adopted by State Council in 2018 in response to concerns from Members about the use of permitted ORV areas.
- Amendments to the ORV Act in 2025 address the core objectives of the ORV Advocacy Position, particularly as it relates to registration and enforcement.
- The retirement of the ORV Advocacy Position was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- [*Control of Vehicles \(Off-road Areas\) Amendment Act 2025*](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Retiring this Advocacy Position aligns with the following WALGA Strategic Pillars:

- Influence
 - Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
 - Empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support

- Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that Advocacy Position [3.12 Off Road Vehicles](#) be **retired**.

Legislation relating to off road vehicles should be reviewed to align registration and licensing of off-road vehicles with other vehicle types and users. In addition, educational resources should be developed in consultation with users, regulators, and vendors relating to safety, regulatory compliance and other associated matters.

BACKGROUND

The *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Vehicles) Act 1978* (the ORV Act) prohibits the use of Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) in areas outside of permitted areas and makes provisions for the use of ORVs in permitted areas. The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) is responsible for administering the legislation and providing [information and support](#) to users and Local Governments. The legislation defines ORVs as including, but not limited to, trail bikes, quad bikes, beach buggies and road licensed vehicles such as four-wheel drives when used in off-road locations.

The use of ORVs outside of permitted areas can have impacts on Local Governments and communities including community safety in public spaces, road safety and environmental impacts. These issues fall under the scope of other legislation.

Nine Local Governments currently maintain and operate permitted areas: the Cities of Greater Geraldton, Karratha, Kwinana and Swan and the Shires of Carnarvon, Dandaragan, Gingin, Port Hedland and York.

WALGA's Advocacy Position was adopted by State Council in 2018, in response to Member concerns regarding the use of permitted ORV areas.

The ORV Act was amended in 2025 to align penalties and enforcement expectations with other WA transport legislation. The *Amendment Act* includes provisions to introduce online and label registrations and increase penalties for existing offences. The majority of the ORV Amendment Act commenced with immediate effect in August 2025. Sections of the legislation relating to registration labels are dependent on system design changes to the online registration platform. The legislation regulations and commencement date are expected by the end of 2026.

In 2024, the [State Government announced \\$4.8 million](#) in grant funding for Local Governments to develop new and upgrade existing ORV areas. This funding recognises the key role Local Government plays in the upkeep and management of ORV areas.

COMMENT

The ORV Amendment Act addresses the core objectives of the WALGA ORV advocacy position, particularly as it relates to registration and enforcement. As the intended outcomes of the advocacy position have been achieved, it is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.12 Off Road Vehicles be retired. WALGA will work with LGIRS to provide advice and support on the commencement of the Act regulations for Members managing permitted areas.

WALGA has engaged with Members that currently manage ORV permitted areas. Six Local Governments have responded and provided their support for the retirement of the advocacy position.

WALGA will continue to monitor emerging issues associated with ORVs, with a particular focus on usage outside of permitted areas.

The proposed retirement of the ORV advocacy position was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire Advocacy Position 3.12 *Off Road Vehicles*.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Russel Thomson
Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnston

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.3 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

9.1.4 Homelessness Advocacy Position

By Hannah Godsave, Manager Community Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that the 2019 Advocacy Position 3.11 Homelessness be updated.
- While responding to homelessness is a State and Australian Government responsibility, the impacts of homelessness intersect with multiple areas of Local Government service delivery and requires them to manage community expectations.
- Western Australian Local Governments are reporting increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness, including Local Governments that have historically experienced minimal impact.
- WALGA undertook a survey of Members in early 2026 to better understand the impact on the sector and inform a review of the current Advocacy Position.
- The updated Position reflects the sector's view that the Australian and Western Australian Government should provide leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular specialist services, social and affordable housing and wraparound services.
- The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the revised position at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following WALGA Strategic Pillars:

- Influence
 - Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
 - Empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support
 - Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the **existing** Advocacy Position [3.11 Homelessness](#):

WALGA recognises that Local Government through its planning, health, community development and regulatory powers can facilitate positive local and regional responses to end homelessness, however does not see that it has a lead role. Rather, Local Government's role is one of a stakeholder that requires early engagement in the understanding of collaborative approaches that improve the quality of life for people experiencing homelessness in all of its manifestations.

be **replaced** with a new Advocacy Position as follows:

WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to provide leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular:

- 1. Ensuring specialist homelessness services are responsive to need, place-based and people-centred.*
- 2. Investing in social and affordable housing and wraparound services.*

BACKGROUND

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines homelessness as when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
- has no tenure, or tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The ABS Census of Population and Housing provides the authoritative data source on people experiencing homelessness. The 2021 Census reported 9,729 people experiencing homelessness in WA. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare provides more contemporary data based on interactions with specialist homelessness services. In 2024-25, almost 289,000 (1 in 115) people engaged with specialist homelessness services in WA, of which 47% were accessing homelessness support for the first time.

While responding to homelessness is a State and Australian Government responsibility, the impacts of homelessness intersect with multiple areas of Local Government service delivery, including the maintenance of public spaces, planning and zoning for appropriate services and revenue-related functions such as rates and grants administration. Local Governments must also manage community expectations about how they will respond to homelessness.

WALGA's current advocacy position was adopted by State Council in 2019 in the lead up to the release of [*All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030*](#) (the Strategy) released by the State Government. The Strategy sets out a vision for a whole of community response, led by the Department of Communities, working towards ending homelessness in Western Australia. The Strategy identifies a predominantly supportive role for the Local Government sector in addressing homelessness, while also acknowledging that some Local Governments directly provide homelessness and accommodation services. Suggested sector contributions in the Strategy include facilitating local partnerships, identifying rough sleepers, sharing local area knowledge to inform State Government resourcing decisions, and connecting people to specialist services. This supportive role for the Local Government sector is reflected in the current Advocacy Position.

At the National level, the [*National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness*](#) provides a five-year funding and accountability framework between the Australian and State/Territory Governments to support social housing and homelessness services until

June 2029. The bilateral schedule for Western Australia sets out a \$165.9 million homelessness funding contribution from both parties.

COMMENT

Local Governments have been reporting increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness, including Local Governments that have historically experienced minimal impact. Local Governments have shared that they are facing growing pressure to meet both their defined obligations and community expectations for comprehensive responses, including specialist homelessness services triage, investment in housing and support service provision.

To better understand the issues being raised by Members, WALGA conducted a sector survey on homelessness in early 2026. 68 responses (49%) were received, 26 metropolitan and 42 regional, with representation from all WALGA Zones. Key findings from the survey include:

- 74% of respondents report an increase in the significance of homelessness in their Local Government area in the last two years.
- 60% of respondents report an increase in enquires from community members regarding homelessness in the last two years.
 - Key issues raised in community enquiries are rough sleeping and persons living in vehicles.
- 23% of respondents consider there is no role beyond defined responsibilities for Local Government in response to homelessness.
- 61% of respondents consider preventative measures to reduce homelessness and facilitating connections to specialist service providers as an appropriate role for Local Government in response to homelessness.
- 83% of respondents rank State and Federal Government funding as the highest or second highest priority enabler to respond to homelessness.
- 51% of respondents report that current specialist homelessness services are not adequate within their Local Government area.
- Respondents rank affordable housing as the top priority for support/services to address homelessness, followed by wraparound services and specialist support services.

Informed by survey responses and acknowledging the support role of Local Government identified in the State Strategy, the updated position calls on the Australian and Western Australian Government to provide the necessary leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular specialist services, social and affordable housing and wraparound services.

The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the revised position at its meeting on 19 March 2026 meeting.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace Advocacy Position 3.11 Homelessness with the following:

WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to provide leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular:

- 1. Ensuring specialist homelessness services are responsive to need, place-based and people-centred.*
- 2. Investing in social and affordable housing and wraparound services.*

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rebecca O'Meehan
Seconded: Cr Ian Hanna

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.4 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

9.2 OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

Zone Delegates are invited to raise for discussion, questions or decision any of the items in the State Council Agenda, including the items for noting, Policy Team and Committee Reports or the Key Activity Reports.

10 EMERGING ISSUES/COLLABORATION

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

- Advised Stage 1 of their Caravan Park has been opened with good levels of occupancy. Further staged development will include additional cabin accommodation.

Shire of Gnowangerup

- Advised they are seeking opportunities at the ALGA National Assembly to advocate for Local Governments nationally to join the Health Alliance.
- Rock climbing event (Stirling Ranges) with approx. 80 persons participating - event organiser had not liaised with the Shire until just before the event, requesting Shire support with event support (rangers, bins, use of Shire property). Shire encouraged better regional communications and coordination of events, where likely to have cross jurisdictional impacts.

Shire of Kojonup

- Recent Regional DAP (RDAP) considered a windfarm project (\$750M). Shire provided the Responsible Authority Report (RAR), which include advice on application of the Shire's Local Planning Policy. RDAP resolved to set aside the RAR and rejected the value / application of the Local Planning Policy to the application, approving the application with conditions. Proponent is appealing the conditions on approval to SAT.

Shire of Jerramungup

- Shire values involvement in the Health Alliance and appreciate the work of the Shires of Gnowangerup and Lake Grace.
- Council Plan recently adopted.
- New Shire branding in progress of being implemented.

Shire of Kent

- Dealing with impact of increased operational and capital expenditure costs, in preparing budget.

Shire of Katanning

- Accommodation and leisure centre project approved.
- Early childhood hub on track to completion – childcare centre lease in progress.

- Shire's Bush Fire Brigade radios no longer compatible with DFES – Significant cost to replace, with no funding available for this type of equipment.
- Working toward a service agreement with several community groups for their management of reserve land.

Shire of Denmark

- Community survived school holiday influx of tourists
 - Noted some tourists cancelled due to uncertainty around fuel supplies.
- Subdivision structure plan – creating 420 lots – development to be finalised within the next 2 years.
 - Some concern that lots are being obtained for short term accommodation purposes.
- Liaising with State Government regarding FOGO and proposed Biochar mobile plants.

Shire of Woodanilling

- CEO Anika Serer has left the Shire and CEO recruitment in progress.
- Regional Road Group funding expended and in progress to acquittal.

Shire of Plantagenet

- CEO Julian Murphy has advised his resignation – Shire preparing for CEO recruitment
- Swimming pool project business case to be finalised.
- Noticing increased loading on the Shire's road network.
- Housing availability continues to be an issue.
- President is proposing to write to Zone Local Governments to start a conversation about local collaboration.

Shire of Cranbrook

- CEO Linda Gray has advised her resignation – Shire preparing for CEO recruitment.
- Cost escalation pressures – including fuel as a major factor.
- Amity Health – early learning funding for after-school care and positive programs.

City of Albany

- Airport runway upgrade project progressing – costs substantially increased (fuel crisis).
- Road construction cost escalations (fuel crisis) impacting Capital Works Budget planning.
- EBA negotiations in progress.
- ATCO Gas – funding changes to bottles – City undertaking advocacy.
- WAPC decision – Westshore infrastructure plan – disappointing. City working to come up with an alternative.
- Middleton Beach Hotel – Development WA some issues being worked through.
- Middleton Beach unit development will be submitted soon.

11 OTHER BUSINESS

WALGA Zone Secretariat was asked to provide Zone Members with a link to WALGA's Cooperation and Shared Services report (July 2024). This information may be useful to the Shire of Plantagenet's preparation of an advocacy letter seeking to initiate opportunities for regional cooperation.

12 NEXT ZONE MEETING

The next meeting of the Great Southern Country Zone will be held Friday, 19 June 2026 at the Shire of Cranbrook commencing at 10am.

13 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:21pm.

LGIRS Local Government Division Report – April 2026

[Back to Item 5.4](#)

OFFICIAL



Department of Local Government,
Industry Regulation and Safety

Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety

Local Government Division Report

March 2026

Local Government Reforms

Local Government Inspector

- The Office of the Local Government Inspector (the Inspector) formally commenced operations from 1 January 2026.
- The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) also commenced regulations to support the functions and role of the Inspector at this time.
- Parts 8A and 8B introduced by the *Local Government Amendment Act 2024* were proclaimed concurrently to enable these regulations to take effect from 1 January 2026.
- The Inspector regulations deal with:
 - new requirements for complaints handling;
 - the appointment of monitors;
 - powers of authorised officers of the Inspector; and
 - offences under the *Local Government Act 1995* that may be infringeable.
- A number of consequential amendments have also been made to other regulations as a result of these changes.
- Local governments are reminded that they need to readopt their Code of Conduct in accordance with section 5.104(2) of the *Local Government Act 1995* by 31 March 2026.
- Local government CEOs also need to update the employee Code of Conduct to require the disclosure of secondary employment.
- Local governments should also ensure familiarity with the new requirements for closed meetings which took effect on 1 January 2026.
- The Regulations Working Group (RWG) provided valuable feedback in the development of these regulations that support the operational requirements of the Inspector.
- For further information visit the Department's website – [Inspector Regulations](#).

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC)

- New requirements for Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARICs) took effect on 1 January 2026.
- The ARIC must have an independent chair and a deputy to the chair, to ensure a level of independence and provide impartial oversight.
- The functions of an ARIC include the:
 - review of reports related to compliance audits and systems reviews;
 - making of recommendations to council on improvements, where applicable;
 - review of actions a local government has taken to improve the effectiveness of its operations in accordance with its compliance obligations.

For further information, visit the Department's website – [Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees](#).

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Other Reforms

- LGIRS continue to work on developing regulations to implement other reform projects including regulations dealing with:
 - Rates and Revenue Policy;
 - Communications Agreements;
 - Standardised Meeting Procedures;
 - Online Registers;
 - Council Plans (IPR).

Reform updates

- LGIRS conducted a webinar on 17 December 2025 to explain the abovementioned changes related to the commencement of the Inspector and the new requirements for ARICs.
- The webinar is available on the LGIRs website and contains an update on the status of other local government reforms – [Webinar 15:17 December 2025](#).
- The RWG will continue to assist with providing feedback on the various regulations reform projects.
- The IPR Working Group will continue to assist with developing regulations and supporting materials for council plans.
- Further updates on the status of local government reforms will be made ahead of implementation.
- Regarding local government local laws and the Standardised Meeting Procedures Regulations, local governments are encouraged to continue to make local law changes where required for practical or operational purposes. Once the Regulations are finalised, they will apply uniformly across the sector and will override any inconsistent provisions in existing local laws. LGIRS will provide implementation guidance to the sector on these matters when the Regulations take effect.
- The LG Act Reform team can be emailed directly at actreview@lgirs.wa.gov.au.

Model Financial Statements (MFS)

- The sector was invited to provide feedback on the 2024-25 model financial statements and guidance materials by Friday, 6 February 2026.
- The feedback received is now being considered for the 2025-26 revisions, due for release in April 2026.

Non-Financial Asset Valuation Guidelines

- The [Non-Financial Asset Valuation Guidelines](#) were published on 5 March 2026.
- An LG Alert will soon be published, with a webinar scheduled for Tuesday, 14 April 2026.

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Local Government Grants Commission

Financial Assistance Grants funding

- The total funding allocation to WA local governments for 2025-26 is \$423,375,700 (consisting of \$261,451,711 in general purpose funding and \$161,923,989 in local road funding and special projects) compared to \$400,140,692 in 2024-25. This total includes the advance payment provided in June 2025 to local governments.
- Local governments received their first three quarterly payments of remaining 2025-26 funds in August and November 2025 and February 2026. The final payment will be made in mid-May. The grant schedule is available on the Grants Commission website.
- No advice can be provided regarding the likelihood of an advance payment of 2026-27 funds.
- If local governments have any other questions regarding their grant allocation, the methodology or wish to make a submission regarding the process of allocation finds, they can be directed to grants.commission@lgirs.wa.gov.au.

Local Government Advisory Board

- While it is still some time away, local governments are reminded that ward and representation changes and district boundary adjustments, must be received by 31 January 2027 if they want to ensure changes are in place for 2027 local government elections.
- It is important for local governments to factor in whether there is a need for public consultation (which needs to occur prior to submission) when considering a proposal to the Board.
- The Board requests that local governments provide proposals as early as possible to allow sufficient time for implementation.
- Documents outlining the requirements and processes are available on the Advisory Board's website, or alternatively you can email advisoryboard@lgirs.wa.gov.au for guidance.

Child Safeguarding Project

- LGIRS commenced delivery of an initial series of in person workshops focused on capability uplift in child safeguarding practice within a local government context. Providing participants the opportunity to increase their awareness and understanding on contextual adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Two workshops were hosted on 9 March and 12 March 2026 targeted to metropolitan local governments. A further 8 workshops will be promoted for delivery prior to 30 June.
- The Local Government Child Safety Network Project Reference Group continue to assist with ensuring the engagement approach and identified engagement methods are suitable and relevant to the sector.
- LGIRS are working with the Ombudsman Western Australia as they develop their Scheme of independent oversight for organisations engaged in child related work who will be mandated to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

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Stop Puppy Farming

- On 26 May 2025, only pet shops that hold pet shop approval can sell dogs and puppies that are sourced from holders of a dog supply approval.
- Further regulation changes are being developed in relation to implementing the Stop Puppy Farming reforms.

PetsWA

- The PetsWA project is in a reset phase, with Government considering the options for the future of the project.
- Local governments will need to continue existing pet registration programs and engagement with pet owners for annual registration and renewal processes.

Cat Containment

- The Cat Amendment (Local Laws) Bill 2026 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly in February 2026.
- The Bill provides for the power for local governments to make local laws in relation to cat containment. It is awaiting debate and passage through Parliament.
- The [Cat Act Review](#) has also now commenced, with submissions closing on 5 pm, Monday 31 August 2026.

Off-Road Vehicles

- The State Government is progressing key reforms arising from the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Act 2025*, which was assented to on 22 August 2025.
- The reform program will deliver the following milestones:
 - proclamation of the remaining sections of the ORV Amendment Act;
 - commencement of the ORV Amendment Regulations to give effect to the relevant provisions of the ORV Amendment Act;
 - deployment of DoTDirect system upgrades to enable all ORV transactions, including registration, renewal, and transfers.
- Further information on these changes, including proposed commencement dates, is expected to occur in the coming months.
- Local governments with projects approved under the \$4.8 million Off-road Vehicle Areas Grants Program continue to receive scheduled payments in line with project milestones and funding agreements.
- This includes development of new ORVAs and upgrades to existing areas.

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LGIRS Contacts

LG Support and Engagement Includes MyCouncil queries	lghotline@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Statutory Approvals (Differential rates, budget and audit extensions)	legislation@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG Policy and Legislation	LGpolicy@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Stop Puppy Farming	stoppuppyfarming@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Local Government Child Safeguarding Project	csproject@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Grants Commission – Financial Assistance Grants	Grants.commission@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG accounting or financial enquiries	LG.accounting@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG Act Reform	actreview@lgirs.wa.gov.au
LG Advisory Board	advisoryboard@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Off-Road Vehicles	orv@lgirs.wa.gov.au
Local Government Child Safeguarding Project	csproject@lgirs.wa.gov.au

Zone Status Report – April 2026

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Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update Last Provided	WALGA Contact
21 November 2025 Zone Agenda Item 8.3.3 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960 – Review	<p>That the WALGA State Council advocate for the State Government to comprehensively review the <i>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960</i> to achieve at least, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. broaden the Act's scope and establish contemporary provisions addressing all modern interfaces between landowners, local governments and the public, 2. establish penalties to create a meaningful disincentive for landowner non-compliance with provisions of the Act, and 3. enable a local government to impose penalties against livestock owners who consistently allow their livestock to stray and create a nuisance, without the need to first create a local law or initiate a prosecution. 	<p>This item will be referred to the Governance Policy Team for consideration.</p> <p>The Zone will be informed of the outcome.</p>	April 2026	<p>Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager Member Services kmartin@walga.asn.au 9213 2051</p>
20 February 2026 Zone Agenda Item 7.3.1 Emergency Management Act Consolidation	<p>That the Great Southern Country Zone requests WALGA, as a matter of urgency request that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The State Government reprioritise and expedite the consolidation of the State's emergency management legislation to address the escalating operational and risk issues arising from the current outdated framework; 2. The consolidated acts establish a clear framework to enable the transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do so; and 3. Local Governments at the WALGA Zone level be consulted prior to release of the exposure draft bill. 	<p>DFES has advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work on the development of an Emergency Services Exposure Draft Bill is ongoing, that the drafting process is legally technical, time-intensive and the practical considerations are complex. • DFES is investing time and effort to produce new legislation that is fit-for-purpose for the many stakeholders involved in emergency management. • Once finalised, the Exposure Draft Bill will be released for public comment. Until then, targeted consultation may be undertaken by DFES on discrete matters. <p>WALGA has not received an update on expected timing for release of a consultation draft and will continue to advocate for involvement of the sector in scoping and co-design of the legislation, aligned with Advocacy position 8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Legislation.</p> <p>WALGA participates in Cabinet in confidence consultations on the CES Act through the State Bushfire Advisory Committee and Bushfire Operations Committee. Through these forums WALGA continues to advocate for a mechanism to establish a voluntary</p>	April 2026	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039</p>

ATTACHMENT 2

		<p>transfer framework for Bush Fire Brigades and to ensure adequate funding and a sustainable future operational model of management of Bush Fire Brigades including consideration of an independent Rural Fire Service model.</p> <p>WALGA will be commencing a review of its emergency management advocacy positions during 2026. This work will ensure that sector advocacy remains contemporary, evidence-based, and aligned to emerging risks and operational realities.</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>		
<p>21 November 2025 Zone Agenda Item 8.3.4 Work Health and Safety Act 2020 – Statutory Review</p>	<p>That WALGA State Council advocate for the introduction of relevant amendments to the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i> so that Bush Fire Brigade volunteers are not deemed as a Local Government “Worker” (as defined in the WHS Act).</p>	<p>The WALGA submission to the Statutory Review of the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i> was submitted to WorkSafe on 12 December 2025.</p> <p>The draft submission was endorsed by the Governance and People and Place Policy Teams at a joint meeting on 1 December 2025.</p> <p>The draft submission was endorsed by State Council by Flying Minute on 10 December 2025, RESOLUTION 256.FM/2025.</p> <p>The submission was submitted to WorkSafe on 12 December 2025.</p> <p>The comments provided by Great Southern VROC were considered in the final submission, however, as the majority of members endorsed the Submission, the recommendation proposed to remove bush fire brigade volunteers from the definition of “worker” under the Act was not adopted.</p> <p>WALGA does not have an advocacy position on amending the WHS Act 2020 to exclude Bush Fire Brigade volunteers from being considered Local Government “workers” under the Act. This would have implications for bushfire protections provided through LGIS and for the over 18,000 Local Government BFB volunteers across the State.</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>	<p>April 2026</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039</p>

Zone Action Items – April 2026

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Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
2025, 11 April Item 7.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities	<p>The Great Southern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates for the Minister for Great Southern to attend meetings of the Zone and if the Minister agrees to attend, then at the first meeting attended the Zone Secretariat is to coordinate with Zone members a presentation at that meeting on the Zone's Strategic Priorities for discussion with the Minister. Writes to responsible Ministers advocating for the Zone's Strategic Priorities. <p>NOTE: Secretariate to send GSCZ's Regional Education submission to the Minister for Education.</p>	<p>Action deferred until after Minister attends June Zone meeting.</p> <p>August 2025: Minister's office has remained in contact with the WALGA Secretariat and has been advised of the Zone's 2025 meeting schedule. The Secretariat will advise the Minister's office of the 2026 meeting schedule, once determined by the Zone.</p> <p>November 2026: Minister Whitby's office has advised that he will attend the June, August and November Zone meetings for 2026.</p>	Ongoing	Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

President's Report

May 2026

Introduction

As the newly elected WALGA President, I am proud to represent our 139 Member Local Governments and advance the sector's priorities at both the State and National level.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of outgoing President Karen Chappel AM JP and Deputy President Paul Kelly. As a sector, we have benefited from the selfless and determined leadership demonstrated by Karen and Paul across the last four years.

As your President, I am committed to maintaining strong, collaborative relationships across all levels of Government, ensuring the perspectives of Western Australia's Local Governments are reflected in policy development, and engagement occurs at the times it matters most.

I also acknowledge the election of WALGA Deputy President Chris Antonio from the Shire of Northam, and I look forward to working closely with him to progress WALGA's strategic objectives and reinforce the strong voice of Local Government in Western Australia.

Political Engagement

Since commencing in the role, I have been humbled by the messages of support I have received from all levels of Government. I have made it a priority to engage with key State Government Ministers, Members of the Opposition and Federal Members of Parliament to seek early meetings and explore opportunities for constructive collaboration.

Strengthening these relationships is a priority, and I am focused on ensuring WALGA is well positioned to engage proactively on matters of importance to the Local Government sector.

Media Engagement

In my first weeks as President, I have actively engaged with media on relevant matters. I have spoken to a range of outlets on topics including Renewable Energy, Local Government reform, State Government priorities and the long-term challenges facing the sector, as well as attending pertinent events.

Media has included interviews with the ABC Radio and TV, 6PR, and The West Australian, emphasising the importance of community benefit, protecting local voice, and ensuring Local Governments are not required to absorb costs arising from major policy and infrastructure decisions.

I have also had the opportunity to share my vision for WALGA and how I plan to build on the success to-date, working with the State Government to ensure the best outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities.

On Tuesday, 10 March, I attended the Energy Exchange Australia event with Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA where Premier Hon Roger Cook MLA announced the State of Energy initiative.

On Thursday, 12 March, I attended UDIA WA's first industry breakfast for 2026 where Deputy Premier and Treasurer the Hon Rita Saffioti MLA delivered a keynote address emphasising housing supply without increasing demand and the importance of community engagement. This provided an opportunity for me to discuss with her the critical role Local Governments play in supporting new housing developments across WA.

It was also great to see Minister for Local Government the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA acknowledge WALGA's new leadership and the work of the Association in Parliament.

Fuel Security

Fuel supply constraints continue to impact Local Governments across Western Australia, particularly in regional areas, and WALGA has remained actively engaged in the State's coordinated response. WALGA has been meeting regularly with Mr Rob Cossart, the State Fuel Security State Controller, which has provided the opportunity for information sharing, and the provision of on-the-ground feedback regarding fuel availability and impacts.

Feedback from the sector highlights ongoing supply disruptions, particularly from independent suppliers, affecting Local Governments' ability to maintain adequate reserves and plan operations with certainty. Emerging delays to waste collection and landfill services have prompted contingency planning across several communities. Members have also reported supplier-driven cost increases and workforce challenges, including staff unable to travel or undertake fuel-dependent duties.

WALGA will continue to meet weekly with the State Controller and provide timely updates to the sector as the situation evolves.

Electoral Reforms

Following the electoral reform announcement made by the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government at 2025 WALGA Convention, WALGA distributed a Discussion Paper to ensure the current Advocacy Position still reflects the sectors views.

WALGA received over 100 submissions from Members and the results will be utilised to update existing advocacy positions.

Sector wide engagement with Aboriginal Elected Members and communities

In my first week as President, I participated in WALGA's second Aboriginal Elected Member Roundtable, followed the next day by the annual Aboriginal Engagement Forum. Established and newly elected Aboriginal Elected Members from twelve Local Governments joined myself, WALGA's Senior Executive Team and the Director General of the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) to share their experience of leading and representing their communities on Council. It was a great opportunity to listen to Aboriginal Councillors from vastly diverse communities across WA and gain a stronger understanding of their experience as Elected Members and community and cultural leaders.

Representatives from LGIRS also joined the Roundtable to hear directly what support is required to enable Aboriginal Elected Members to thrive in their Council roles. These insights will enable WALGA to work collaboratively with LGIRS to fulfil the Department's commitment to support Aboriginal Elected Members made at the 2025 Aboriginal Engagement Forum.

2026 Aboriginal Engagement Forum

The 2026 Aboriginal Engagement Forum was held at the State Reception Centre, Kaarta Gar-up | Kings Park, on 18 March 2026. The program theme was Empowerment in Action | Kaarditjin kwop Koorliny and focused on opportunities for Local Government to build pathways to employment, business and leadership. The event sold out with approximately 250 attendees, and a record number of Aboriginal Elected Members, Aboriginal Local and State Government officers and community partners. I would like to thank my fellow State Councillors who attended the Forum and helped to promote the event.

Large Scale Renewable Energy Projects - Community Benefit Framework

The State Government's release of the Community Benefits Guideline for Large-scale Renewable Energy Projects in the South West Interconnected System marks a key step in ensuring regional communities share in opportunities created by the energy transition.

The Guideline follows strong advocacy from WALGA for meaningful local benefits and builds on the release of WALGA's Renewable Energy Community Benefits and Engagement Guide in July 2025.

These community benefits arrangements have the potential to deliver and accelerate priorities of local communities. The Guideline will establish the development of Community Benefits Plans and the formation of Community Benefits Advisory Groups.

Local Governments will have a central role in developing Community Benefits Plans and as part of the Community Benefits Advisory Groups to be established to ensure that the plans align with community priorities.

This is a significant advocacy outcome, however the focus on ensuring these benefits remain distinct from the way Local Governments apply rates to land that has undergone a change of use, which is essential for cost recovery, will continue.

Finally, I'd like to extend my best wishes on behalf of WALGA to the communities impacted by Tropical Cyclone Narelle. This event is a sobering reminder of the destructive power of these natural events across the State. I am in awe of the strength and resilience of our sector during these events, and I'd like to acknowledge State Councillors Matt Nikkula, the Shire of Exmouth President and Audra Smith the President from the Shire of Ashburton. Audra and Matt, along with every other Elected Member and officer in communities impacted by TC Narelle make us all proud and we will continue to do everything in our power to support them during the long recovery ahead.

Mark Irwin
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 4 March 2026 and scheduled before 8 May 2026 are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne
- Hon John Carey MLA, Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure
- Housing Industry Roundtable with Deputy Premier, Hon Rita Saffioti MLA and Hon John Carey MLA
- Ride Safe Inquiry Briefing with Hon Hannah Beazley MLA and Hon Jessica Stojkovski MLA
- Ms Kirrilee Warr MLA, Shadow Minister for Local Government
- Labor Leaders Forum lunch with Premier, Hon Roger Cook MLA
- Labor Leaders Forum lunch with Hon Paul Papalia MLA
- 500 Club Event – Basil Zempilas – A Vision for 2026 Luncheon and Q&A
- Leader of the Opposition, Vasil Zempilas MLA and Shadow Minister for Housing, Sandra Brewer MLA
- Department of Energy and Economic Diversification & Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety
 - Director General, Rebecca Brown (DEED)
 - Coordinator of Energy, Jai Thomas
 - Director General, Lanie Chopping (DLGIRS)
- Ms Lanie Chopping, Director General, Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety
- Mr Leon McIvor, Director General, Department of Housing and Works

Zone Meetings

- Murchison Country Zone
- Northern Country Zone
- South East Metropolitan Zone
- Pilbara Country Zone
- Peel Country Zone
- East Metropolitan Zone
- Kimberley Country Zone
- Great Southern Country Zone

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - State Council Meeting, 4 March
 - State Council Information Forum, 1 April
 - Finance & Services Committee
- **ALGA**
 - Board Meeting, 19 March

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- Energy Exchange Australia 2026
- Regional Capital Alliance WA meeting (RCAWA)
- Safe Systems for Local Government Workshop
- WALGA Aboriginal Elected Member Roundtable
- 2026 WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum
- WALGA 2026 Mayors and Presidents Forum
- Property Council of Australia – Lunch with the Treasurer