

Gascoyne Country Zone Minutes

21 November 2025

**Hosted by the Shire of Carnarvon
5 Francis Street, Carnarvon**

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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)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Zone Delegates were requested to provide sufficient written notice, wherever possible, on amendments to recommendations within the State Council or Zone agenda to the Zone Chair and Secretariat prior to the Zone meeting.

Agenda Papers were emailed 7 days prior to the meeting date.

Confirmation of Attendance An attendance sheet was circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes of previous meeting
2. November 2025 Update – Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety
3. Status Report
4. President's Report

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The WALGA Secretariat assumed the Chair to open the meeting and conduct the Zone elections.

Mark Bondietti opened the meeting at 10:02am.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

1 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

Shire of Carnarvon

Cr Paul Kelly
Cr Burke Maslen (observer)

Shire of Exmouth

Mr Ben Lewis, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate

Shire of Upper Gascoyne

President Cr Jimmy Caunt
Mr John McCleary, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate

Shire of Shark Bay

President Cr Peter Stubberfield
Cr Mark Smith (Observer)
Ms Michelle Fanali, Acting Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Mr Brian Galvin, Works Manager

WALGA Secretariat

Mr Mark Bondietti, Policy Manager Transport and Roads

GUESTS

Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne	Hon Hannah Beazley MLA (Teams) Mr Jacob Mitchell, Policy Advisor (Teams)
Gascoyne Development Commission	Mr Tim Bray, Chief Executive Officer
Regional Development Australia – Mid West Gascoyne	Mr Mark Holdsworth, Executive Officer (Teams)

1.3 APOLOGIES

Shire of Carnarvon	Amanda Dexter, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Exmouth	President Cr Matthew Niikkula
Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure	Hon John Carey MLA
Main Roads	

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the delegates of the Gascoyne Country Zone acknowledge the traditional owners of this land that we are meeting on today and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

3 ELECTIONS

Pursuant to the WALGA Constitution, the Secretariat continued as Chair for conducting the election of office bearers, State Council Representatives and Deputy State Council Representatives.

3.1 ELECTIONS OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE GASCOYNE COUNTRY ZONE

The election for the Chair and Deputy Chair was conducted and the term set at two years expiring in November 2027, in line with the terms of State Council representatives and in sync with Local Government Elections.

Zone Chair

Prior to the Zone meeting, President Matthew Nikkula contacted the secretariat and withdrew his nomination in support of Cr Kelly.

The following written nomination was received for the position of Chair.

- Cr Paul Kelly Shire of Carnarvon

Further nominations were called from the floor. No further nominations were received.

DECLARATION

That Cr Paul Kelly, Shire of Carnarvon is elected as Chair of the Gascoyne Country Zone for the term of 2 years, November 2025 to November 2027.

Deputy Zone Chair

No written nominations were received for the position of Deputy Chair.

Nominations were accepted from the floor. The following nomination was received.

- Cr Peter Stubberfield Shire of Shark Bay

DECLARATION

That Cr Peter Stubberfield, Shire of Shark Bay is elected as Deputy Chair of the Gascoyne Country Zone for the term of 2 year, November 2025 to November 2027.

3.2 ELECTIONS OF STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES AND DEPUTY STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GASCOYNE COUNTRY ZONE

In accordance with sub-clause 9(3) of the WALGA Constitution, representatives and deputy representatives to the State Council shall be elected by Zones of the Metropolitan and Country constituencies for two (2) year terms, commencing from the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025 and concluding on the day before the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2027.

For the Gascoyne Country Zone, there is one (1) representative position on State Council and one (1) deputy representative position.

State Councillor

The following written nomination was received for the position of State Council Representative:

- Cr Matthew Nikkula Shire of Exmouth

Further nominations were called from the floor. No further nominations were received.

DECLARATION

That Cr Matthew Nikkula, Shire of Exmouth is elected as State Council Representative of the Gascoyne Country Zone for the term of 2 years, December 2025 to December 2027.

Deputy State Councillor

The following written nomination was received for the position of Deputy State Council Representative:

- Cr Paul Kelly Shire of Carnarvon

Further nominations were called from the floor. No further nominations were received.

DECLARATION

That Cr Paul Kelly, Shire of Carnarvon is elected as Deputy State Council Representative of the Gascoyne Country Zone for the term of 2 years, December 2025 to December 2027.

Cr Paul Kelly assumed the Chair.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Zone Delegates must declare to the Chair any potential conflict of interest they have in a matter before the Zone as soon as they become aware of it. Zone Delegates and deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Zone and State Council. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

Nil.

5 DEPUTATIONS

5.1 HON HANNAH BEAZLEY MLA

Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne, Hon Hannah Beazley MLA was online via Teams and provided a brief update to the Zone.

The following issues were raised during discussion:

- OAG Report on road maintenance
- Rating of mining camps
- Water Corp charges for new developments
- Asset maintenance costs for historical infrastructure
- Practicality and costs associated with ARICs

Noted

5.2 WALGA PRESENTATION

Mark Bondietti, Policy Manager Transport and Roads provided a presentation on WALGA and the role of Zone Delegates.

Noted

6 AGENCY REPORTS

6.1 GASCOYNE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Chief Executive Officer, Tim Bray, provided an update to the Zone.

Noted

6.2 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY

The November 2025 report from the Department of Local Government, Commerce, Industry Regulation and Safety (DLGIRS) was provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

Noted

6.3 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

Executive Officer, RDA Mid-West Gascoyne, Mark Holdsworth, provided an update on Regional Roads.

Noted

7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Jimmy Caunt
Seconded: President Cr Peter Stubberfield

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Gascoyne Country Zone held on 22 August 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

8 BUSINESS ARISING

8.1 STATUS REPORT

A Status Report outlining the actions taken on the Zone's resolutions was enclosed as an attachment to the Agenda.

Noted

9 ZONE BUSINESS

9.1 SUBMISSIONS TO THE SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL REMUNERATION INQUIRY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND ELECTED MEMBERS

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

BACKGROUND

The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an annual inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member remuneration.

SAT generally advertises its intention to receive submissions in December for its inquiry and Determination in relation to the following financial year. The Tribunal will invite individual Local Governments, the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulations and Safety, WALGA, Local Government Professionals WA and other interested individuals to provide information or submissions.

SAT will likely publish its Determination for 2026-2027 in April 2026.

COMMENT

In preparation for the inquiry to be undertaken early next year, a draft submission from WALGA has been prepared making recommendations to SAT on behalf of the sector in relation to Elected Member fees and allowances, Chief Executive Officer remuneration, the Regional/Isolation Allowance, and independent audit, risk and improvement committee member fees. The draft WALGA submission is contained in the December State Council Agenda for Zone and State Council consideration.

Local Governments can also put forward a submission, particularly in relation to their own circumstances, including requests to be classified in a different Band.

WALGA encourages all Local Governments to make a submission to SAT.

Noted

9.2 POLYPHAGOUS SHOT-HOLE BORER UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2025

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Since the State Council Agenda and Item for Noting was developed, there has been a further development relating to PSHB management.
- On Friday 14 November, the State Government [gazetted](#) changes to the zones within the Quarantine Area for Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB).
- This change sees a significantly larger portion of the metropolitan area, and all 30 Local Governments, having responsibility for managing PSHB infestations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to [advocacy positions](#) 4.4 Post Border Biosecurity and 4.7 Polyphagous shot-hole borer.

BACKGROUND

On Friday 14 November, the State Government [gazetted](#) changes to the zones within the Quarantine Area (QA) for Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB). Figure 1 shows a comparison of the previous and new areas.

Previously the QA included Zone A and B; with DPIRD undertaking limited activity in Zone A and some tree removal and surveillance in Zone B. Zone A and B have been renamed the Management Zone and Containment Zone, respectively. Zone A, now the Management Zone, has been expanded to cover all 30 Local Governments in the metropolitan area. Previously, Zone A completely covered 15 Local Government areas and partially included 6. The new Management Zone covers 23 Local Governments completely and parts of a further 7 Local Governments.

All Local Governments and other landowners and managers in the Management Zone are now responsible for managing borer-affected trees on their land. The Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) has discontinued tree removal and pruning in the Management Zone – except where trees were already designated for removal or pruning during the eradication phase of the response.

The Containment Zone is the area between the Management Zone and the outer boundary of the QA. Under the Transition to Management Plan, DPIRD's response will now be limited to pruning and removal of trees in the Containment Zone that pose a risk of spreading the borer outside of the QA.

WALGA met with the DPIRD on Thursday 13 November regarding these changes and requested an urgent briefing for Local Governments in the QA – this was held on Tuesday 18 November. A recording of this session will be made available to Local Government. DPIRD are hosting a more extensive briefing on Monday 8 December.

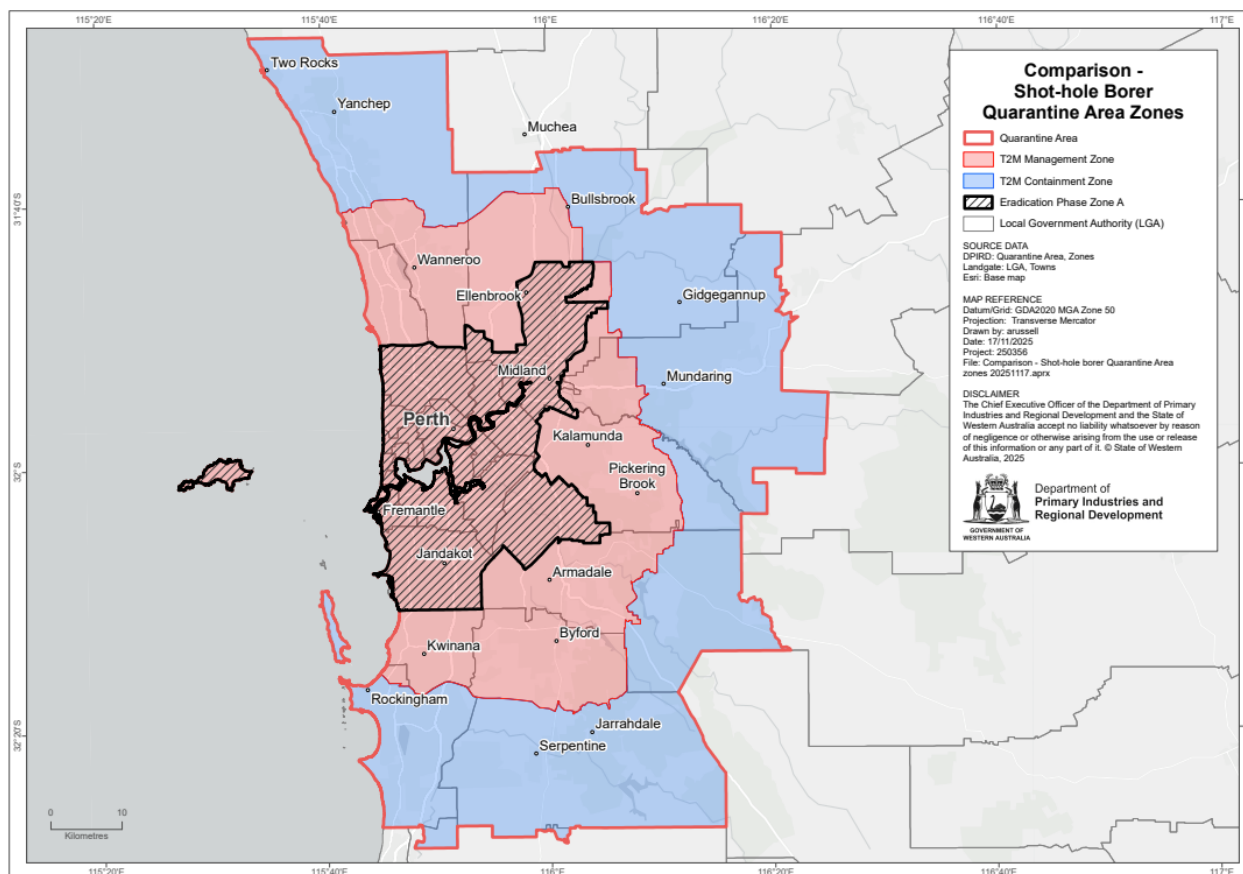


Figure 1: Quarantine Area, with Management and Containment Zones, compared to previous Zone A and B

COMMENT

WALGA was not consulted on these changes, which have immediate and unanticipated impacts for Local Governments that are now in the Management Zone and ongoing impacts for Local Governments who have been managing PSHB since the Transition to Management commenced in July 2025.

WALGA has expressed its concerns to DPIRD regarding the impact of these changes for the spread of PSHB, on Local Government and the urgent need for further financial support.

To assist Local Governments undertaking management activities, WALGA is hosting capacity building webinars and events.

Noted

10 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.

10.1 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.1)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 23 September.
- The meeting resolved for WALGA to act in relation to four Member Motions:
 - Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
 - Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
 - Rating Exemption Advocacy Motion
 - Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses
- The action proposed to be taken in relation to each of the resolutions has been summarised for State Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA 2025 Annual General Meeting Minutes](#)

BACKGROUND

The 2025 WALGA AGM was held on 23 September 2025. 220 Voting Delegates were in attendance, with 124 Local Governments represented.

Five Member Motions were considered, with four being supported by Members at the AGM, as follows.

7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments

That WALGA calls on the Western Australian Government and WA Grants Commission to:

1. *increase the total funding and then the Medical Facilities Cost Adjuster component of the Financial Assistance to Local Governments; and*
2. *recalculate distributions to those Local Governments that are providing block cash payments to attract and retain general practitioners to allow affected Council to redirect ratepayer funds to Local Government responsibilities.*

7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions

That WALGA advocate to the State Government to provide culturally appropriate short-term accommodation options and wrap-around support services that provide sustainable homelessness solutions in all Local Governments across Western Australia.

7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position

That WALGA, in addition to its current advocacy positions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 relating to rating exemptions, advocate to the WA Government for the introduction of a reimbursement model, whereby the WA Government repays Local Government the greater of:

- 1. 75% of the value of rates lost in applying the charitable purposes exemption; or*
- 2. 1% of the total revenue of the Local Government.*

7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses

That WALGA:

- 1. Formally oppose any move by the Local Government Minister to introduce amendments to the Local Government Act to restrict the application of rates on Miscellaneous Licences.*
- 2. Develop an advocacy position on sector consultation prior to any amendment to the Local Government Act.*
- 3. Undertake a financial analysis of the cost to the Mining Industry of the rating of Miscellaneous Licences compared to the benefit to the Local Government sector.*

COMMENT

Comment on each of the 2025 AGM resolutions is below.

In considering these resolutions, State Council and the relevant Policy Teams are guided by Clause 22(7) of the [WALGA Constitution](#), as follows:

Where the State Council considers that a direction or decision from an Annual General Meeting has been made without information or a material nature or in circumstances which have materially altered and such direction or decision is not in the best interests of the Association, the State Council may decline to follow that direction or decision and, in that event, the Chief Executive Officer by notice shall advise the Ordinary Members of the decision of the State Council and the reasons for that decision.

Members will be informed of progress on the above issues through Policy Team Reports in future State Council Agendas and through the AGM Status Report in next year's AGM Agenda.

7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments

A revised Rural and Remote Healthcare Services Advocacy Position was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. The AGM resolution and WALGA's ongoing advocacy align on the need for financial reimbursement for Local Government support for essential primary health care services. WALGA's approach does not specify how reimbursement to Local Governments should be undertaken, or which Local Governments should be eligible. This approach aims to provide flexibility to achieve the same outcome, such as utilising the upcoming renewal of the National Health Reform Agreement.

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the People and Place Policy Team.

7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions

WALGA is currently reviewing the Homelessness Advocacy Position as part of a regular advocacy position review process. To inform the review, WALGA will survey Local Governments to gather information on the extent of Local Government engagement with homelessness and the extent of services, including accommodation options, available within their Local Government areas.

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the People and Place Policy Team.

7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the Governance Policy Team.

7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licences

An Advocacy Position on Rating of Miscellaneous Licences was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. WALGA will continue to advocate for a broad review on all rating exemption categories and oppose legislative amendments that seek to exempt occupied miscellaneous licence land from rating.

It is recommended that this resolution is endorsed.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. the following resolutions from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the People and Place Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
 - 7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
2. the following resolution from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the Governance Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position
3. the following resolution from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed:
 - 7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licences

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly

Seconded: President Cr Jimmy Caunt

That the Gascoyne 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

10.2 2026 SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL REMUNERATION INQUIRY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND ELECTED MEMBERS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.2)

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member remuneration annually.
- In preparation for the Inquiry to be undertaken early next year, WALGA has prepared a draft submission to SAT that makes recommendations in relation to Elected Member fees and allowances, Chief Executive Officer remuneration, the Regional/Isolation Allowance and independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) member fees.
- The 2026 submission recommends:
 - an increase to Elected Member fees and allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) of 3%;
 - an increase to Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands of 3%;
 - an increase to the Regional/Isolation Allowance payable for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities;
 - the publication of clear guidance to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings; and
 - an increase to the current fee range for independent committee members, including ARIC members and chairs; and
 - a higher fee range for independent ARIC chairs, in recognition of the additional skill, knowledge and time commitment of the role.
- SAT will publish its determination for 2026-27 in April 2026.
- The Governance Policy Team considered the submission at its meeting on 29 October and recommended that it be included in the December Agenda for State Council endorsement.

ATTACHMENT

- Draft WALGA submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry – Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current Advocacy Positions relating to this submission are [Position 2.10 Elected Member Remuneration](#), [Position 2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees](#), [Position 2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration](#), and [Position 2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance](#).

2.10 Elected Member Remuneration

The Local Government sector supports appropriate remuneration of Local Government Elected Members on the basis of:

1. *Vibrant democracy and good governance: fees and allowances payable to Elected Members should be sufficient to ensure that a diversity of candidates from a range of backgrounds seek election to Local Government leadership positions;*
2. *Demands of the role: as the complexity of Local Government increases, and community expectations placed upon Elected Members grow in the social*

- media age, the remuneration paid to Elected Members for their significant time commitment must compensate them for the personal and opportunity costs of taking on significant community leadership positions;*
3. *Skills and training: with the implementation of the State Government's universal Elected Member training policy and the increasing expectation for Elected Members to undertake training, the time that Elected Members spend on professional development should be recognised by the fees and allowances framework; and*
 4. *Economic conditions: Elected Member fees and allowances must be considered within the surrounding economic environment. The value of fees and allowances paid to Elected Members should keep pace with the increasing costs of living and rates of inflation, to ensure that the relative value of Elected Member fees and allowances does not erode over time.*

2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees

The Local Government sector:

1. *supports Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC) having a clearly defined role with an Elected Member majority;*
2. *supports the option for smaller Local Governments to share ARIC to reduce the burden on their resources;*
3. *does not support the requirement for the chair of the ARIC to be an independent member. The appointment of the chair should be at the discretion of the Local Government; and*
4. *supports the payment of meeting fees or defined reimbursements to independent ARIC members. The fees payable should be set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal within a separate fee category and at a suitable level that recognises the skills and knowledge required for such a role.*

2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration

The Local Government sector supports appropriate remuneration of Local Government Chief Executive Officers on the basis of:

1. *Importance of the role: the role of the CEO within Local Government is undeniably one of importance. The efficient operations and accountability of Local Governments is dependent on the appointment of a suitably qualified CEO.*
2. *Attraction and retention: Local Governments must compete in the broader labour market to attract and retain CEOs with the requisite qualifications and experience.*
3. *Demands of the role: the skill, workload and time commitment required from the role of a Local Government CEO must be fairly compensated.*

2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance

The Local Government sector:

1. *values the Regional/Isolation Allowance payable to Chief Executive Officers as an important means for Local Governments, particularly those that are remote or isolated, to supplement remuneration and attract suitably qualified Chief Executive Officers; and*
2. *supports greater transparency regarding methodology of application for the Regional/Isolation Allowance.*

BACKGROUND

The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an annual Inquiry into Local Government Elected Members' fees and allowances and Chief Executive Officers' remuneration. SAT invites submissions from Local Governments and other stakeholders.

SAT are yet to invite submissions for the 2026 Inquiry, however in anticipation of the upcoming end of year closure period and noting that the next ordinary meeting of State Council will be in March, the submission has been drafted early for consideration by Zones and State Council.

Local Governments are also encouraged to make their own submission to SAT, particularly in relation to their individual circumstances including requests to be classified in a different Band.

The content and recommendations in this submission were shaped by existing advocacy positions, previous submissions and feedback from individual Members since the 2025 Determination was published earlier this year.

The 2025 SAT Determination broadly aligned with WALGA's submission on behalf of Members, including:

- 3.5% increase to CEO remuneration band ranges (plus the 0.5% additional Superannuation Guarantee);
- 3.5% increase to the fee band ranges and some allowances for Elected Members (exclusive of superannuation where relevant);
- reduction of the four band ranges for independent committee members to one band, with the range to be from \$0 to \$450; and
- for the first time, provision for reimbursement of expenses for independent committee members.

The Tribunal also made two commitments in relation to:

- conducting a comprehensive survey of Local Governments in the latter half of 2025, the results of which will assist SAT in reviewing the quantum and effectiveness of the Regional/Isolation Allowance; and
- determining the rates for the independent chair of the audit, risk and improvement committee at a future date, to coincide with the commencement of the legislative changes.

COMMENT

WALGA's submission for the 2026 Inquiry makes six recommendations:

1. That Elected Member Fees and Allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) are increased by 3%.
2. That the Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands are increased by 3%.
3. That the maximum payable Regional/Isolation Allowance be increased for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities.
4. That clear guidance be published to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings.
5. That the current fee range for independent committee members be increased to recognise the level of skill and knowledge required of independent audit, risk and improvement committee members, and to attract suitably skilled individuals to the role.

6. That a higher fee range be determined for independent chairs of audit, risk and improvement committees to recognise the additional skill, knowledge and preparation required to fulfil the role, and to attract suitably skilled individuals.

In relation to Recommendation 1: Elected Member Fees and Allowances, the submission:

- Reiterates WALGA's current advocacy position.
- Points to the current economic conditions putting pressure on households, including those of Elected Members and potential candidates, which lends itself to an increase in fees and allowances. Noting that CPI is currently at 2.1% and WPI 3.7%

In relation to Recommendation 2: Chief Executive Officer Remuneration, the submission:

- Summarises WALGA's current advocacy position in relation to the importance of the role of Chief Executive Officer, including the skill, workload and time commitment required from the role, and the difficulties of attracting and retaining suitable candidates in a competitive labour market.

In relation to Recommendations 3 and 4: Regional/Isolation Allowance, the submission:

- Underlines the importance of the Regional/Isolation Allowance for attracting and retaining quality Chief Executive Officers to some Local Governments that are particularly isolated or remote.
- Recommends both a review of, and publication of guidance about, the methodology, criteria and weightings for the Allowance to provide clarity for the sector.

In relation to Recommendations 5 and 6: Independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Member Fees, the submission:

- Recognises the 2025 Determination went some way to help attract, retain and adequately compensate suitable individuals to the roles of member and chair of ARICs.
- Notes that the current maximum rate of \$450 is not adequately competitive when trying to recruit members and chairs within the broader labour market and should be increased.
- Reinforces WALGA's existing position that a separate, higher fee range needs to be established for ARIC independent chairs.

On 29 October, the Governance Policy Team considered the submission and recommended that it be included in the December State Council Agenda for endorsement.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly

Seconded: President Cr Jimmy Caunt

That the Gascoyne 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

10.3 TOURISM ADVOCACY POSITION UPDATE (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.3)

By Saul Cresswell, Principal Policy Advisor Economic Development

BACKGROUND

The visitor economy is an important driver of economic development for metropolitan and regional Local Governments in Western Australia. Comprising people travelling for leisure, business events, education, and those visiting friends and relatives, the visitor economy contributed \$18.3 billion to the Western Australian economy in 2023-24. Approximately 45 per cent of this spend took place in the regions.

In 2015, WALGA undertook research and consultation on tourism, developing a *Local Government and Tourism Discussion Paper* that included recommendations. As part of the recommendations, Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism was endorsed by State Council in March 2017.

Local Governments are instrumental in maintaining the amenity of destinations, a critical factor in safeguarding tourism reputation and repeat visitation. There has been a growth in demands on Local Government resources to meet gaps in service delivery from other levels of Government or the private sector and to align with changes in community expectations (see [WALGA's submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Financial Sustainability](#)). The WA Government's [Diversify WA](#) economic framework considers tourism and events a priority sector in the diversification of the state's economy. The *WA Visitor Economy Strategy* (WAVES) sets a vision for a \$25 billion visitor economy by 2033.

The State Government, through Tourism WA and the Regional Tourism Organisations, have developed regional tourism strategies, known as Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs), to identify the challenges and opportunities across demand, supply and capability. TDMPs are the most informed articulation of a shared tourism vision undertaken to date, yet have no funding mechanism to implement them.

Tourism emerged as a key topic in WALGA's 2024 Economic Development Survey, with visitor attraction a focus area for Local Government economic development efforts. Responding to the findings, WALGA undertook a Tourism Survey in June 2025, which received 36 Local Government responses from a diversity of regions, with 92% of respondents stating that tourism had medium or high importance to their Local Government.

WALGA developed the *Role of Local Government in Tourism Discussion Paper*, which outlined the constraints and opportunities for Local Governments, and was distributed for Member and stakeholder feedback in September 2025. It also included a draft revised advocacy position. Feedback was received from 28 Local Governments, plus Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA and Regional Tourism Organisations. Local Government responses were received from each of the five tourism regions: Australia's South West, Australia's North West, Australia's Coral Coast, Australia's Golden Outback and Destination Perth.

The consultation provided unanimous support for the overarching intent of the draft advocacy position. Nearly half of respondents proposed amendments, which were considered and incorporated into the revised draft advocacy positions.

Key sector feedback during WALGA's consultation, included:

- Inadequate recognition of the pivotal role Local Government plays in providing community infrastructure and services that underpins amenity for visitors, and the need for sustainable funding mechanisms.
- Continued confusion about the roles of tourism agencies across WA and who to turn to for support.
- The prohibitive costs of accessing data relating to tourism in Local Government areas.
- Impacts of a difficult regulatory environment at all levels of government on tourism and events.
- The need for support addressing tourism literacy and the visitor economy.

The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the updated advocacy position at its meeting on 22 October 2025, with the inclusion of an additional point requesting resourcing for emergency management and medical services that face significantly increased demand during peak tourism periods.

ATTACHMENT

- [The Role of Local Government in Tourism - 2025 Research Paper](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's **current** position:

That WALGA:

1. *Continues to advocate for a Local Government tourism strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes;*
2. *In the short-medium term, advocates that the State Government:*
 - a. *Produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, Elected Members and Local Government officers;*
 - b. *Provides guidance for Local Government on marketing small projects including events and attractions;*
 - c. *Directs Regional Development Commissions to facilitate the coordination of tourism stakeholders to provide strategic support where required for Local Government; and*
 - d. *Provides funding to Local Government for tourist infrastructure.*
3. *In the long term, advocates that the State Government:*
 - a. *Articulates the lead agency and defines the roles of other agencies in tourism, to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State and to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism in WA;*
 - b. *Defines and communicates how it provides destination marketing support to Local Governments and communicates how Local Governments can most effectively direct their resources;*
 - c. *Develops a sustainable State Government tourism funding mechanism for both regional and metropolitan Local Governments which is clearly communicated to Local Governments;*
 - d. *Implements and invests in Regional Investment Blueprints and delivers through appropriate funding models such as Royalties for Regions and federal funding opportunities which are clearly communicated to Local Government;*
 - e. *Continues funding to support sustainability of visitor centres;*

- f. Undertakes improvements to tourism-related infrastructure and technology including mobile signals and WIFI in regional areas; and*
- g. Undertakes measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services.*

It is proposed that the position **be replaced** with:

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

- 1. Fund the implementation of the WA Visitor Economy Strategy and the supporting Tourism Destination Management Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies, including for:*
 - a. maintenance and renewal of Local Government assets and services that underpin a positive visitor experience*
 - b. new and existing tourism infrastructure*
 - c. improving telecommunications infrastructure*
 - d. measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services*
 - e. accredited Visitor Centres.*
- 2. Ensure that tourism destinations with significant seasonal influxes of visitors have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications.*
- 3. Articulate a clear tourism governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.*
- 4. Adequately consult and consider Local Government when undertaking strategic tourism planning across Western Australia.*
- 5. Provide improved access to affordable, timely and granular data that delivers LGA-level insights on visitation, spend and event impacts.*

COMMENT

Since the current advocacy position was adopted, tourism across the State has continued to evolve and change, including post pandemic visitation growth, changing tourism behaviour, and the increasing costs of doing business.

Many challenges identified in the current advocacy position persist and remain part of the new draft advocacy position. These include:

- a lack of clarity in tourism organisation roles and responsibilities
- ineffective coordination efforts
- lack of capacity building opportunities for Local Government
- and inaccessible and expensive data, often missing a localised focus.

The suggested revision to Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism aims to provide a consolidated and contemporary position on the important role Local Government provides for tourism in WA and how best to capitalise on opportunities to benefit their communities.

The proposed updates to the advocacy position seek to:

- Align State Government investment and support with the contemporary Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs).
- Reiterate the need for clear tourism governance across the State, without reference to which agency should lead the work.
- Reiterate and further clarify the need for accessible data to support informed decision making.
- Emphasise the pivotal role the Local Government sector plays in supporting the visitor experience, and advocate for adequate consultation and funding to ensure this role can be sustained.

WALGA will continue to work with State Government agencies and support the Local Government sector, including sharing the updated tourism research paper which provides context around tourism and the diverse roles Local Government can play.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism with an updated position as follows:

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

- 1. Fund the implementation of the WA Visitor Economy Strategy and the supporting Tourism Destination Management Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies, including for:*
 - a. maintenance and renewal of Local Government assets and services that underpin a positive visitor experience*
 - b. new and existing tourism infrastructure*
 - c. improving telecommunications infrastructure*
 - d. measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services*
 - e. accredited Visitor Centres.*
- 2. Ensure that tourism destinations with a significant seasonal visitor influx have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications.*
- 3. Articulate a clear tourism governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.*
- 4. Adequately consult and consider Local Government when undertaking strategic tourism planning across Western Australia.*
- 5. Provide improved access to affordable, timely and granular data that delivers LGA-level insights on visitation, spend and event impacts.*

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Jimmy Caunt
Seconded: President Cr Peter Stubberfield

That the Gascoyne 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

10.4 WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVOCACY POSITIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.4)

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has been undertaking a process of reviewing and updating Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements.
- There are three Waste Management Advocacy Positions (7.2 State Waste Strategy, 7.3 Waste Authority and 7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement) which have been recently reviewed.
- It was determined that these positions are either no longer relevant or have been incorporated into other positions and it is therefore recommended they be retired.
- To ensure a clear Local Government position on all relevant waste management matters, WALGA is also undertaking a policy position gap analysis to inform the development of future Advocacy Positions.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed retiring the three Advocacy Positions at its meeting on 15 October 2025.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The item retires the existing [Advocacy Positions](#):

7.2 State Waste Strategy

Local Government requires leadership and clear direction from the State Government in relation to waste management. As such, Local Government supports the development and implementation of a comprehensive State Waste Strategy which:

- 1. Is consistent with the content, purpose and objective of existing legislation and policy at both a state and national level;*
- 2. Clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Waste Authority in regard to the development and implementation of the Strategy, as outlined in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007;*
- 3. Is reviewed, with Stakeholder input, within 2 years of implementation; and*
- 4. Includes achievable targets for all waste streams and focuses on waste reduction, resource recovery and the diversion of waste from landfill. Targets should be based on accurate baseline data and clearly identify roles, responsibilities and funding for each target area.*

7.3 Waste Authority

Local Government considers that an independent and effective Waste Authority is required. The role of the Waste Authority should be of a collaborative, facilitative and strategic nature. Specific activities should include:

- 1. Developing, administering, monitoring and reviewing the State Waste Strategy;*
- 2. Developing a Priority Waste List (for Extended Producer Responsibility) as required in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007; and*
- 3. Developing and implementing an annual Business Plan that delivers the objectives of the Waste Strategy.*

7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement

The Local Government sector supports the initiation of a State Local Government Partnership Agreement on Waste Management and Resource Recovery.

BACKGROUND

The process to review and update Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements relating to waste management is nearing completion. Three Advocacy Positions remain which have recently been reviewed:

- *7.2 State Waste Strategy* - The substance of this position is covered in the [Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation](#) which was endorsed by State Council in March 2025, and outlines requirements for State and Australian Government Waste Strategies.
- *7.3 Waste Authority* - This advocacy position is no longer required, as the Waste Authority's legislative requirements are defined under the WARR Act, and other aspects of waste management are addressed through Policy Position 7.1, endorsed by State Council in March 2025.
- *7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement* - Partnership agreements have not continued and advocacy efforts are being pursued through a variety of other approaches.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the retirement of the three Advocacy Positions at its meeting on 15 October 2025.

COMMENT

A review of all existing Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements has been progressed over the last two years. The three remaining advocacy positions are covered or included in other advocacy positions or have become dated and are no longer a relevant focus of advocacy. The Officers Advisory Group supported retiring the Advocacy Positions acknowledging that they are either incorporated into other existing positions or have become outdated. The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed retiring the three Advocacy Positions and supported a gap analysis of advocacy positions.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire Advocacy Positions:

1. 7.2 State Waste Strategy;
2. 7.3 Waste Authority; and
3. 7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly

Seconded: President Cr Jimmy Caunt

That the Gascoyne 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

10.5 ELECTORAL MATERIAL – AUTHORISATION STATEMENT ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.5)

By Felicity Morris, Manager Governance and Procurement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Authorisation requirements for electoral material are intended to protect the transparency and accountability of the electoral process.
- The mandatory publication of a street address, often the candidate's home, raises privacy and safety concerns, potentially deterring participation in Local Government elections.
- Other Australian jurisdictions offer more flexible approaches, such as allowing post office boxes or partial addresses, which maintain transparency without compromising safety.
- It is proposed that WALGA advocate that only the locality is included in the authorisation statement.
- The Governance Policy Team revised and endorsed the new advocacy position at its meeting on 20 October.

ATTACHMENT

- [Jurisdictional comparison - Electoral material authorisation requirements](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this report is to provide a new advocacy position for endorsement. WALGA has several existing advocacy positions regarding election matters, but none dealing with electoral material.

BACKGROUND

Section 4.87 of the *Local Government Act 1995* requires all printed, published or distributed electoral material to include the name and address of the person who authorised the electoral material. The address cannot be a post office box. Printed electoral material must also include the name and business address of the printer.

In recent electoral cycles, concerns have been raised regarding the requirement to publish a physical address, often the residential address of the candidate. Members increasingly raised these concerns in the lead up to the 2025 Ordinary Local Government Elections, including at the Mayors and Presidents Forum at the 2025 WALGA Convention.

COMMENT

Authorisation requirements for election advertising are designed to enhance transparency and accountability in the electoral process. By clearly identifying the individual or organisation responsible for electoral communications, these rules ensure that voters can assess the source, credibility, and intent behind campaign materials. This transparency helps voters make informed decisions, discourages misinformation, and prevents "irresponsibility through anonymity". Authorisation also enables regulatory bodies to trace and address any breaches of electoral laws, reinforcing the integrity of democratic participation.

However, the obligation to publish a candidate's physical address raises significant privacy and safety concerns. Candidates for Local Government elections in Western Australia do not typically have official campaign headquarters. They may not have a business or other suitable address to use and are often required to list their personal residence. The internet

and social media have increased the accessibility and permanence of personal information, making it easier for individuals to be targeted. Publicly disclosing a residential address can expose candidates and their families to risks such as harassment, intimidation, or unwanted contact, particularly in contentious or high-profile elections. These concerns are especially acute for candidates from vulnerable groups or those campaigning on polarising issues. This may deter individuals from standing for election, thereby limiting diversity and participation in local democracy.

A review of the requirements in other Australian jurisdictions has been carried out and is provided as an attachment. While many jurisdictions have similar requirements to WA, others have more flexible approaches:

- PO boxes satisfy the address requirement in Local Government elections in South Australia and Victoria.
- The locality (town/city) is sufficient for material that is published by an individual in Local Government elections in the Northern Territory, while a full address is required for material published by an organisation.
- The street name and locality are sufficient for material published by an individual in Territory elections in the Northern Territory, while a full address is required for material published by an organisation.
- Only the name of the person authorising the material is required for ACT Territory elections.

This demonstrates that there are a range of options for identifying the person responsible for the material, without needing to provide their address. The Returning Officer and regulatory bodies have access to candidates' contact and nomination details, ensuring that any breaches can be investigated and enforced without compromising personal privacy. The draft advocacy position recommends that the requirement is limited to the name and locality of the person authorising the material.

It should be acknowledged that elected Council Members may be required to disclose their addresses in Primary and Annual Returns, which are available for public inspection. Similarly, a disclosure of a proximity interest in Council Meeting documents may allow a Council Member's address to be identified. However, these materials are not circulated as widely as electoral materials or subject to the heightened electoral context.

As a final matter, if candidates print materials at home, the WAEC advises that no separate statement of the printer's address is required, as this is satisfied by the authorisation statement. Many Australian jurisdictions do not require the printer's name or address on printed electoral materials. Increasingly, printing may be done through companies operating online only, without physical addresses. The review of authorisation requirements provides an opportunity to remove the requirement to include the printer's details.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government to amend section 4.87 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to:

1. Replace the requirement to include the name and address of the person authorising the electoral material, with a requirement to include the name and locality of the person authorising the material.
2. Remove the requirement for the name and business address of the electoral material printer to appear at the end of the electoral material

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly

Seconded: President Cr Peter Stubberfield

That the Gascoyne Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.5 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

10.6 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.

Nil.

11 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

11.1 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mark Bondietti, WALGA representative presented the President's Report. The report was attached within the Agenda.

Noted

11.2 STATE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO THE ZONE

The WALGA State Councillor report will be provided at the next Zone meeting.

Noted

12 OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 OAG REPORT – MAINTAINING REGIONAL LOCAL ROADS

Shire of Upper Gascoyne

Mr John McCleary raised for discussion the report from OAG that has been previously circulated to members on maintaining regional local roads.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Jimmy Caunt

Seconded: Cr Paul Kelly

That the Gascoyne Country Zone supports the recommendations made by the OAG in the Performance Audit: Maintaining Regional Local Roads report.

CARRIED

12.2 MEMBERSHIP OF STATE ROADS COMMITTEE (SAC)

Shire of Upper Gascoyne

Mr John McCleary raised for discussion his concerns regarding the WALGA membership of the State Road Funds for Local Government Advisory Committee (SAC) and the lack of representation for the remote northern Shires.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Jimmy Caunt

Seconded: Cr Paul Kelly

That the Gascoyne Country Zone recommends that the WALGA members of SAC comprise of the below:

- WALGA CEO
- City representative (Metro)
- Regional cities representative
- Rural representative (South)
- Remote representative (North of the 26th parallel)

CARRIED

13 UPCOMING MEETING DATES

13.1 PROPOSED ZONE MEETING DATES – 2026

The following table lists suggested Zone meeting dates for 2026, taking into account the State Council meeting dates:

Zone Meeting	Type	Location
10:00am, Friday 20 February	In-Person	Carnarvon
10:00am, Friday 24 April	<i>Teams</i>	
10:00am, Friday 19 June	In-Person	Exmouth
10:00am, Friday 21 August	<i>Teams</i>	
10:00am, Friday 20 November	In-Person	Carnarvon

Following the same format as previous years, two online meetings and three in-person meetings have been included. Two in-person meetings per year are hosted by Carnarvon with the third rotating between Exmouth, Shark Bay and Upper Gascoyne.

In summary, the last ten Zone meetings have been rotated as follows:

- 2017 – Shark Bay
- 2018 – Exmouth
- 2019 – Upper Gascoyne (Mt Augustus)
- 2019 – Regional State Council Meeting – Shark Bay
- 2020 – Exmouth
- 2021 – Upper Gascoyne (Gascoyne Junction)
- 2022 – Shark Bay
- 2023 – Exmouth
- 2024 – Upper Gascoyne (Gascoyne Junction)
- 2025 – Shark Bay

13.2 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Gascoyne Country Zone will be held on Friday, 20 February 2026 at the Shire of Carnarvon commencing at 10:00am.

14 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:03pm.