

# **Central Country Zone Minutes**

**14 February, 2025**

**Hosted by the Shire of West Arthur**

**Commenced at 9.30am**

## Table of Contents

<b>ATTACHMENTS TO THE MINUTES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Opening.....	5
1.2 Housekeeping – Zone Chair .....	5
1.3 Attendance.....	6
1.4 Apologies .....	8
<b>2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3 HOST COUNCIL PRESENTATION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4 ANNOUNCEMENTS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5 GUEST SPEAKERS / DEPUTATIONS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Speakers for the August Zone Meeting.....	9
5.1.1 Department of Planning, Lands & Heritage	9
5.1.2 Telstra	9
5.1.3 Main Roads	9
<b>6 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7 AGENCY REPORTS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
7.1 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries .....	10
7.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission.....	10
7.3 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt .....	10
7.4 Main Roads Western Australia .....	10
7.5 CBH Group.....	10
<b>8 MINUTES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
8.1 Confirmation of Minutes, Central Country Zone, 15 November 2024.....	11
8.2 Business Arising from the Minutes, Zone Meeting 15 November 2024 .....	11
8.2.1 (Item 9.1.1) South West Native Title Settlement – Noongar Land Estate	11
8.2.2 (Item 9.1.2) Aboriginal Heritage Act – State Government Inputs	12
8.2.3 (Item 9.1.3) Native Vegetation Clearing Issues Paper	12
8.2.4 (Item 9.1.4) Advocacy Request – PetsWA Centralized Pet Registry Scheme	13
Revenue	13
Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting, 4 February 2025 .....	14
8.3 Business Arising from the Minutes, Executive Committee, 4 February 2025.....	14
8.3.1 (Item 7.5.3) Ministerial Speakers	14
<b>9 ZONE BUSINESS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
9.1.1 Cost Shift and Compliance project update	14
9.1.2 Road Safety Policy and Vision Statement	15
9.1.3 Support for Public Ownership of WA Freight Rail Network	16
9.1.4 Telstra Closure of 3G Services	19
9.1.5 Draft Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance	20
Responsibilities: Rural Regions	20
9.1.6 Consultation on Regulations for CEO KPIs and Public Registers	23
9.1.7 Cooperation & Shared Services	24
<b>10 ZONE REPORTS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
10.1 Chair Report .....	24
10.2 Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC) .....	24
10.3 Wheatbelt Interagency Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Group.....	25
10.4 WALGA RoadWise .....	25
<b>11 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
11.1 State Councillor Report.....	25
11.2 WALGA Status Report.....	26

11.3	WALGA President's Report.....	28
<b>12</b>	<b>STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS – 5 MARCH 2025.....</b>	<b>28</b>
12.1	STATE COUNCIL Matters for Decision.....	29
12.1.1	Climate Change Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.1)	29
12.1.2	Waste Management Legislation Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.2)	34
12.2	POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS.....	37
12.2.1	Infrastructure Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.1)	37
12.2.2	People and Place Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.2)	38
12.2.3	Governance Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.3)	39
12.2.4	Environment Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.4)	40
12.2.5	Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report (State Council Agenda item 9.5)	42
12.3	MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION .....	43
12.4	KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS .....	44
12.4.1	Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.1)	44
12.4.2	Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio Report (State Council Agenda item 11.1.2)	49
12.4.3	Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.3)	52
12.4.4	Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.4)	57
<b>13</b>	<b>EMERGING ISSUES.....</b>	<b>61</b>
13.1	Letter to the Minister for Regional Development .....	61
13.2	Band 4 Roundtable update .....	61
13.3	Free 1-Day Workshop for CEO's & Senior Professionals .....	61
<b>14</b>	<b>NEXT MEETING .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>CLOSURE .....</b>	<b>62</b>

## Policy and Advocacy Prioritisation Framework

The Central Country Zone adopted the Framework on 12 April 2024.

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.

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

## ATTACHMENTS TO THE MINUTES

The following are provided as attachments to the Minutes

1. Item 3 Host Presentation
2. Item 5.1.1 Department of Lands and Heritage Presentation
3. Item 5.1.2 Telstra Presentation
4. Item 5.1.3 Main Roads Presentation
5. Item 10.4 WALGA Roadwise Report
6. Item 13.3 1-Day workshop flyer

## 1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

---

### 1.1 OPENING

---

The Chair declared the meeting open at 9.30am.

---

### 1.2 HOUSEKEEPING – ZONE CHAIR

---

1. **Welcome:**  
The Zone Chair, President Cr Des Hickey, welcomed Zone members and provide OSH/bathroom/exit information to those in attendance.
2. **Share your name and Local Government:**  
Delegates were reminded to ensure that they call their name and Local Government when taking the floor to allow for accurate Minutes to be recorded.

---

### 1.3 ATTENDANCE

---

<b>Shire of Beverley</b>	President Cr David White Deputy President Cr Dee Ridgway Mr Simon Marshall, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Brookton</b>	President Cr Katrina Crute Cr Tamara de Lange Mr Gary Sherry Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Corrigin</b>	President Cr Des Hickey (Chair) Deputy President Cr Sharon Jacobs
<b>Shire of Cuballing</b>	Deputy President Cr Rob Harris Cr Adrian Kowald
<b>Shire of Dumbleyung</b>	President Cr Amy Knight Mr Gavin Treasure Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Kulin</b>	Mr Alan Leeson Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Lake Grace</b>	President Cr Len Armstrong Mr Alan George Chief Executive Officer, non-voting Deputy President Stephen Hunt
<b>Shire of Narrogin</b>	President Leigh Ballard Mr Dale Stewart Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Pingelly</b>	Deputy President Cr Peter Wood Cr Bryan Hotham
<b>Shire of Quairading</b>	Cr Jo Hayes Ms Natalie Ness, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Wagin</b>	President Cr Phillip Blight Deputy President Bryan Kilpatrick Mr Kenneth Parker, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Wandering</b>	President Cr Ian Turton Deputy President Cr Sheryl Little Mr Ian Fitzgerald, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

<b>Shire of West Arthur</b>	Deputy President Cr Karen Harrington Cr Robyn Lubcke Mr Vin Fordham Lamont, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Shire of Wickepin</b>	President Cr Julie Russell Ms Kellie Bartley, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Williams</b>	Cr Jarrad Logie Mr Peter Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

#### **GUESTS**

Wheatbelt Development Commission	Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer
Main Roads WA	Mohammad Siddiqui, Director Wheatbelt Region Suvrat Patel, Network Manager
Water Corporation	Michael Roberts, Regional Manager Goldfields & Agricultural Region
Department of Planning, Lands & Heritage	Glenn Shaw - Manager Partnerships and Agreements   Heritage and Property Services
Telstra	Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager
Department of Water and Environmental regulation	Sandy Turton-Parkinson, Senior Natural Resource Management Officer – Rural Water Planning

#### **WALGA**

Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services  
 Naoimh Donaghy, Governance and Organisational Services Officer  
 Rodney Thornton, Regional Road Safety Advisor  
 Marnie Harrington, Governance Specialist

---

## 1.4 APOLOGIES

---

### MEMBERS

Shire of Beverley	Steve Gollan, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Corrigin	Ms Natalie Manton Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Cuballing	President Cr Eliza Dowling
Shire of Cuballing	Mr Chris Paget Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Dumbleyung	Deputy President Cr Grant Lukins
Shire of Kulin	President Cr Grant Robins
Shire of Kulin	Cr Robbie Bowey
Shire of Narrogin	Cr Clive Bartron
Shire of Pingelly	President Cr Jackie McBurney
Shire of Pingelly	Mr Andrew Dover Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Quairading	President Cr Jo Haythornthwaite
Shire of Quairading	Deputy President Cr Trevor Stacey
Shire of Wickepin	Deputy President Cr Wes Astbury
Shire of West Arthur	President Cr Neil Morrell

### GUESTS

Department of Local Government, Sport, & Cultural Industries	Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Manager Wheatbelt
CBH Group	Kellie Todman, Manager Government and Industry Relations
Department of Planning, Lands & Heritage	Leah Murphy, Project Officer
Regional Development Australia WA	Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development

### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt  
Hon Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe  
Hon Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Steve Martin MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region  
Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor  
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Darren West MLC, Member for Agricultural Region

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Elected Members must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they have in a matter before the Zone as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors 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**

### 3 HOST COUNCIL PRESENTATION

As President Cr Neil Morrell was an apology for this meeting, Deputy President Cr Karen Harrington, Shire of West Arthur, extended a welcome to delegates and guests and provided a presentation on projects and issues facing the Shire of West Arthur - **Attachment No.1**

### 4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

NIL

### 5 GUEST SPEAKERS / DEPUTATIONS

*All Deputations had a time limit of 20 minutes, which includes questions time.*

---

#### 5.1 SPEAKERS FOR THE AUGUST ZONE MEETING

---

##### 5.1.1 Department of Planning, Lands & Heritage

*Glenn Shaw, Manager Partnerships and Agreements / Heritage and Property Services : South West Native Title Settlement*

Glenn provided this presentation with the Agenda, attached again (**Attachment No.2**)

**NOTED**

##### 5.1.2 Telstra

*Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager*

Boyd Brown presented to the Zone on *Round 8 of the Mobile Black Spot Program*. His presentation is attached (**Attachment No.3**)

**NOTED**

##### 5.1.3 Main Roads

*Suvrat Patel, Network Manager*

Suvrat Patel presented on the *Operational Procedure 113 Rural Regions Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities* draft paper which was later discussed in Item 9.1.5. His presentation is attached (**Attachment No.4**)

**NOTED**

## 6 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

No Members of Parliament attended this meeting.

**NOTED**

## 7 AGENCY REPORTS

---

### 7.1 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

---

*Samanta Cornthwaite, Regional Director Wheatbelt*

The DLGSC report will be distributed when received.

**NOTED**

---

### 7.2 WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

---

*Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer*

Rob Cossart presented to the Zone.

**NOTED**

---

### 7.3 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT

---

*Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development*

Josh Pomykala was in apology, a report was attached to the Agenda.

**NOTED**

---

### 7.4 MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

---

*Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt*

Mohammad Siddiqui gave a verbal report at the meeting.

**NOTED**

---

### 7.5 CBH GROUP

---

*Kellie Todman, Manager - Government & Industry Relations*

Kellie Todman was an apology for this meeting.

**NOTED**

*The meeting took a break at 11.10am, recommenced at 11.26pm.*

## 8 MINUTES

---

### 8.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2024

---

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on 15 November 2024 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: President Cr Ian Turton**

**That the Minutes of the meeting of the Central Country Zone held on 15 November 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.**

**CARRIED**

---

### 8.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FROM THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2024

---

#### 8.2.1 (Item 9.1.1) South West Native Title Settlement – Noongar Land Estate *Shire of Dumbleyung*

##### **BACKGROUND:**

At the November meeting, the Zone Resolved;

*Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute*

*Seconded: President Cr Amy Knight*

*That the Central Country Zone write to DPLH outlining the above concerns (1-4) raised in this item and seek a Zone briefing by a senior DPLH officer in relation to this matter.*

- 1. Limited timeframe capacity for Local Government to properly engage the community.*
- 2. No DPLH feedback given once a Local Government considers and responds to each land transfer request.*
- 3. Clarification required on how Local Government Rating Charges will be able to be facilitated once each land is transferred, particularly land set aside for economic use.*
- 4. Increased transparency on the overall engagement requirements (under the Land Administration Act 1997); noting it currently feels like a one sided 'tick the box' exercise.*

Glenn Shaw provided this report earlier in the meeting.

#### **NOTED**

## **8.2.2 (Item 9.1.2) Aboriginal Heritage Act – State Government Inputs**

*Shire of Dumbleyung*

### **BACKGROUND:**

At the November meeting, the Zone Resolved;

*Moved: President Cr Amy Knight*

*Seconded: Deputy President Karen Harrington*

*That the Central Country Zone:*

*Write to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Dr Toni Buti to seek clarification on:-*

- 1. Whether State Government instructions or guidance has been given to lead agencies to take a more proactive approach to managing Aboriginal cultural and heritage matters in their dealings with proponents, and if yes, what is the approach.*
- 2. Seek Minister's support for a new instruction to be issued to lead agencies using a site by site risk based approach for assessment of Aboriginal cultural and heritage impacts on specific projects.*
- 3. Seek Minister's support for the provision of State Government funding for those LGAs seeking to undertake whole of Registered Site Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage survey assessments to secure (once off) clearance of those sites.*

On behalf of the Zone, the attached letter to the Agneda was sent to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. We are awaiting a response.

**PLEASE NOTE** - Additional supporting documentation was provided by the Shire of Dumbleyung for the Zones information.

### **NOTED**

## **8.2.3 (Item 9.1.3) Native Vegetation Clearing Issues Paper**

*By Sarah Coles, Environment Policy Officer - WALGA*

### **BACKGROUND:**

At the November Zone meeting it was resolved;

*That the Central Country Zone:*

- 1. Note the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations Issues Paper.*
- 2. Request Local Government's submit their written feedback directly to WALGA for consideration.*
- 3. Request further emphasis on road safety, that there is an exemption provided in the Road Safety Act.*
- 4. That WALGA Advocate for:*
  - I. Amendment of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 and associated Regulations to exempt the extension, widening or realignment of an existing regional or local distributor road from requiring a clearing permit for permitted purpose of road safety. Major projects involving clearing outside the agreed clear zone such as major road corridor realignment, additional lanes or minor local road may still require clearing permit.*
  - II. The development of an approved policy as described in the Environmental Protection Act 1986 Schedule 6 2 (v) permitting clearing of all hazards in the clear zone or within 8 metres of the centre line on regional and local distributor roads based on the road safety principles and Austroads Guide to Road Design.*
  - III. The Department Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) to implement changes to the standard clearing permit conditions to remove unnecessary red tape and compliance cost burden on local government based on a perceived risk by a third party rather than evidence of actual non compliance of revegetation by the permit holder.*

- IV. *Simplification of the clearing permit process to clarifying ambiguous terms and provide clearer guidelines to enhance understanding and compliance with conditions while maintaining high environmental standards.*
- V. *A whole landscape approach to maintaining habitat for black cockatoos including management of crown reserves, bush fire prevention and salinity control.*

Secretariat Comment:

WALGA received a range of feedback from Local Government on the Issues Paper and thanks for the Zone for its input. The points raised will be used as input into the development of an Advocacy Position and to inform WALGA's ongoing engagement with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

**NOTED**

**8.2.4 (Item 9.1.4) Advocacy Request – PetsWA Centralized Pet Registry Scheme Revenue**  
*Shire of Narrogin*

**BACKGROUND:**

At the November Zone meeting it was resolved;

Moved: *Cr Jonathan Hippisley*  
Seconded: *President Cr Jackie McBurney*

1. *That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to;*
  1. *advocate to the Government of Western Australia that 100% of the revenue derived from pet registrations (both dogs and cats) continue to be returned directly to Local Governments to effectively administer the Dog Act 1976 and Cat Act 2011.*
  2. *recommend that the new centralized PetsWA Pet Registry Scheme, administered by the State Government, should not retain any commission or portion of the registration fees for its operations, as the current fee structure does not adequately cover the costs associated with pet management at the local government level.*
2. *That the Central Country Zone invite a representative to speak to this initiative.*

Secretariat Comment:

The Executive Officer has written to the Minister for Local Government, we are awaiting a response.

This item has also been referred to WALGA's Governance Policy Team.

**NOTED**

---

### 8.3 MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2025

---

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 4 February were provided as an attachment.

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved: Deputy President Cr Karen Harrington**

**Seconded: President Leigh Ballard**

**That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 5 November 2024 be endorsed.**

**CARRIED**

---

### 8.4 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FROM THE CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2025

---

#### 8.4.1 (Item 7.5.3) Ministerial Speakers

The Executive Committee discussed Speakers for the April and remaining Central Country Zone Meetings of 2025.

The Executive Committee directed the Executive Officer to invite the following Ministers to a 2025 Central Country Zone meeting to discuss their priorities for the next 12 months;

- Minister for Local Government
- Minister for Transport
- Minister for Agriculture

These letters have been sent to the current Ministers.

Hon Hannah Beazley and Hon Jackie Jarvis have advised us to resubmit this request following the election.

#### NOTED

## 9 ZONE BUSINESS

#### 9.1.1 Cost Shift and Compliance project update

*Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services - WALGA*

##### BACKGROUND:

At the August meeting of the Zone it was resolved;

*That the Executive Committee resolution be endorsed by the Central Country Zone.*

*"That the Zone engage an independent consultant to review the figures of the top four Cost Shift Items and top four Compliance Costs, following which the Item will be brought back to the Executive Committee for further action."*

*The Zone authorises the Executive Committee to engage an independent consultant within the constraints of the Central Country Zone budget.*

150SQUARE provided a progress report. Please note at the time of distribution, 150SQUARE were awaiting responses from four (4) Local Government's.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: Deputy President Cr Sharon Jacobs**

**Seconded: President Cr David White**

**That the Central Country Zone receive the Progress Report.**

**CARRIED**

### **9.1.2 Road Safety Policy and Vision Statement**

*Shire of Narrogin*

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Shire of Narrogin recently adopted a Road Safety Policy and Vision Statement. These documents follow the principles promoted by WALGA and Rod Thornton, WALGA Road Safety Officer, and aligns with the Shire's commitment to road safety through the WALGA RoadWise program.

This policy underscores the Shire's proactive approach to improving road safety, aligning with state-wide efforts to reduce road trauma and enhance community welfare. We believe it serves as an exemplary framework for other local governments within the region.

The Shire have presented this item to instigate the creation of further Road Safety Policies by Central Country Zone member Local Governments, in order to unify the Zone's collective efforts to promote safer transport networks across the region.

The Shire of Narrogin's policy, adopted on 23rd October 2024, may serve as an effective example of a strategic commitment to road safety. A copy of this policy and supporting documentation was attached for reference and adaptation by officers of member Councils.

The Shire of Narrogin propose the following Zone Recommendation.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Leigh Ballard**

**Seconded: Deputy President Karen Harrington**

**That the Central Country Zone;**

**Encourages all member Local Governments to consider adopting a formal Road Safety Policy and Vision Statement, based on the model recently adopted by the Shire of Narrogin, as promoted by WALGA and the WALGA Road Safety Officer, Rod Thornton. This initiative will align with the ongoing efforts of WALGA's RoadWise Program, supporting a consistent approach to improving road safety within our communities, reducing road trauma, and enhancing the welfare of all road users across the region.**

**CARRIED**

### 9.1.3 Support for Public Ownership of WA Freight Rail Network

*Shire of Narrogin*

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Shire of Narrogin seeks the Central Country Zone's support to endorse the Cook Government's commitment to negotiating the return of Western Australia's freight rail network to public ownership. This transformative initiative is anticipated to deliver substantial benefits for regional communities, including economic growth, job creation, road safety improvements, and environmental advantages. The Shire urges WALGA's advocacy on behalf of the 15 member local governments to ensure this project prioritises the needs of the Wheatbelt region.

The freight rail network, privatized in 2000, has faced significant underinvestment, particularly in Tier 3 rail lines critical for the Wheatbelt's agricultural and industrial sectors. The Cook Government's recent announcement to commence negotiations to return the network to public hands is a historic opportunity to address longstanding challenges. Public ownership is expected to enable targeted government investment, improved infrastructure, and increased rail utilisation, thereby reducing reliance on road transport and enhancing economic competitiveness.

The Shire of Narrogin, like many other wheatbelt towns, with their rich rail heritage and strategic locations, stands ready to support the revitalisation of the network as a regional rail hub. This initiative aligns with the Shire's vision for sustainable development and regional collaboration.

Government announcement of 23/1/25 here: [Cook Government to enter negotiations to secure control of the freight rail network | Western Australian Government](#)

#### **a) Consultation**

Consultation has been undertaken with:

- Shire President and Elected Members of the Shire of Narrogin
- Executive Leadership Team

Feedback underscores strong community and industry support for increased public investment in the freight rail network and the potential for Narrogin to play a central role in its redevelopment.

#### **b) Statutory Environment**

- **Railways (Access) Act 1998 (WA):** Governs access arrangements for private operators on the freight rail network.
- **Local Government Act 1995 (WA):** Provides the framework for local governments to advocate for regional priorities.

#### **c) Policy Implications**

The proposal supports WALGA's long-standing advocacy for improved freight infrastructure and sustainable transport networks. Public ownership aligns with policies promoting regional development, road safety, and environmental sustainability.

#### **d) Sustainability Implications**

- **Economic:** Revitalisation of the freight rail network will support agricultural and industrial sectors, create local jobs, and stimulate economic growth.
- **Environmental:** Increased rail transport will reduce road freight, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and road maintenance costs.
- **Social:** Improved rail infrastructure will enhance community connectivity, safety, and access to services.
- **Climate Change:** Transitioning to rail-based freight supports climate change mitigation efforts by reducing the carbon footprint of regional transport.

#### **e) Financial Implications**

The Shire of Narrogin anticipates economic benefits through job creation, increased local business activity, and reduced road infrastructure maintenance costs. Advocacy efforts will

require minor resource allocation but are expected to yield significant long-term financial returns for the region.

**f) Strategic Implications**

The proposal aligns with the Shire of Narrogin's Strategic Community Plan goals of fostering regional collaboration, supporting economic growth, and enhancing infrastructure. It also supports WALGA's strategic objectives of promoting sustainable regional development and improved freight logistics.

**g) Risk Implications**

Failure to support public ownership of the freight rail network may result in continued underinvestment and inefficiencies, exacerbating challenges faced by regional industries and communities. Delays in negotiations or implementation could diminish potential benefits.

**h) Comment/Conclusion**

The Shire of Narrogin commends the Cook Government's initiative and seeks WALGA's support to ensure the Wheatbelt's needs are prioritised during negotiations. Public ownership of the freight rail network represents a critical opportunity to address longstanding issues, foster regional development, and enhance the competitiveness of Western Australia's agricultural and industrial sectors.

The Shire requests that the Central Country Zone endorse this position and advocate for the project's timely progression and strategic focus on regional priorities.

**i) Voting Requirements**

Simple Majority

The Shire of Narrogin propose;

That the Central Country Zone of WALGA:

1. Endorse the Shire of Narrogin's support for the Cook Government's negotiations to return the freight rail network to public ownership.
2. Advocate to WALGA and the State Government for prioritisation of the Wheatbelt's infrastructure needs, particularly the revitalisation of Tier 3 rail lines.
3. Request WALGA to actively engage with member local governments and relevant stakeholders to ensure the project's benefits are maximised for regional communities.

Executive Committee Comment:

At the February meeting of the Committee, it was resolved that:

*That the Executive Committee write to Major Parties seeking their position and commitment on the public ownership of WA's freight rail network, with a requested response date to be prior to the Zone meeting on Friday 14 February.*

These letters have been sent.

Secretariat Comment

*WALGA's Executive Manager Infrastructure, Ian Duncan, provides the following Comments:*

Over an extended period of time the WALGA State Council has adopted a range of advocacy positions in relation to freight rail. State and National freight and supply chain strategies and plans including the *Strategic Grain Network Report* (December 2009) and the Productivity Commission Inquiry into National Transport Regulatory Reform (2020) were the context for these position statements.

WALGA's advocacy principle is that freight should be moved on rail where this is technically and economically feasible. Efficient rail freight offers lower costs, lower environmental impact, better safety and greater reliability than road transport. Increased use of rail lowers road maintenance costs incurred by Local Governments.

WALGA State Council endorsed advocacy statements include the Local Government sector supports:

1. keeping grain freight (Tier 3) rail lines open (August 2007 – 247.4/2007)
2. the recovery of costs to upgrade and maintain local roads to meet the increased grain freight task if the grain freight rail is closed.  
(December 2006 – 44.6/2006)
3. a defined network of preferred routes for heavy vehicles. (December 2010 – 138.6/2010)
4. National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities  
(September 2017 - 99.9/2017)

WALGA provided submissions and gave evidence to the Western Australian Parliament Economics and Industry Standing Committee 2014 *Inquiry into the Management of Western Australia's Freight Rail Network* in line with the endorsed advocacy positions.

The findings and recommendations from this Inquiry highlighted serious shortcomings in both the provisions of the rail network lease agreements and their administration over time.

At least since 2000, WALGA State Council has not considered whether public or private ownership of the rail network is best aligned with the outcome sought – to maximise the use of rail to move freight.

The State Government has announced that it will negotiate with the current freight rail network lease holder, Arc Infrastructure, to bring the network back into Government hands. The initial 49-year lease still has 24 years to run. Over the coming years, the end of lease and conditions under which the network is returned to the State will increasingly influence capital investment and maintenance priorities.

The Government highlights <sup>1</sup>that public control would allow for greater and more targeted Government investment, and increase usage of the freight rail network, delivering significant benefits including:

- increasing the use of the rail network to meet the demand being driven by new resource projects and growth in output from the agriculture sector, supporting future WA jobs;
- improved safety on roads, by reducing the amount of trucks;
- cost savings for industry through the more efficient movement of grain and commodities to and from the State's ports, to ensure WA remains globally competitive;
- ability to improve the frequency and journey times for regional rail services, like the Australind, with the Government being able to upgrade tracks, and build passing loops;
- greater flexibility for regional communities, who have been prohibited and limited in relation to what activities they can undertake in close proximity to rail corridors;
- greater involvement and potential partnerships with local WA businesses; and
- more opportunities for tourism investment, particularly tracks that are underutilised or under care and maintenance.

While not directly delivering on the freight task, WALGA has sought to support Local Governments utilise and activate disused rail corridors, with limited success.

There is a significant overlap between the benefits now sought from public ownership and the benefits sought from the earlier decision to sell Westrail's freight business and lease the freight rail network. As detailed to Parliament<sup>2</sup> these included:

---

<sup>1</sup> [Cook Government to enter negotiations to secure control of the freight rail network | Western Australian Government](#)

<sup>2</sup> Hon Hendy Cowan, MLA, Deputy Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 3 June 1999, p 8771.

1. the introduction of an efficient, innovative specialist private rail operator committed to the sustainability of rail transport in a competitive market and willing to make the necessary investments to improve rail's market share;
2. a renewed stimulus for increased rail freight tonnages, better services, decreased freight rates and increased investment in rail infrastructure and rolling stock;
3. a reduction in the 'community costs', such as 'the environmental costs of greater fuel use and the resultant pollution, higher road maintenance costs and the social costs of road congestion and road crashes;
4. the potential for rail to capture as much as possible of the forecast greatly increased bulk freight demand over the coming decade and so 'avoid a massive increase in heavy truck traffic; and
5. the 'potential to capture or recapture freight from road transport'.

It is currently unclear whether it is possible for the State Government to negotiate the early termination of the current lease and operate / maintain the network on terms that support a viable rail freight network able to compete with road transport to grow share of the freight task.

#### **Proposed Recommendation:**

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Leigh Ballard**

**Seconded: President Cr Phil Blight**

**That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to:**

1. **Support State Government efforts to ensure the on-going sustainability and growth of freight rail in Western Australia;**
2. **Seek a commitment from the in-coming State Government to:**
  - a. **focus on ensuring a competitive freight rail network and services reduce freight on roads; providing road safety, environmental benefits; and**
  - b. **work with Local Governments and other stakeholders to maximise the local economic growth opportunities provided through effective management of the rail network and corridors.**

**CARRIED**

---

#### **9.1.4 Telstra Closure of 3G Services**

---

*Shire of Dumbleyung*

#### **BACKGROUND:**

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024, Telstra closed its 3G network across Australia. A new 4G network replaced this 3G service. Telstra advise that the reason for closing the 3G network was to:-

*'Provide a better experience for its customers'.*

Telstra further advise:-

*'When we launched 3G in 2006, we used our mobile devices for calls, texting and accessing basic information online. Since then, technology and customer usage has changed significantly, and so too must our network.*

*The Telstra Mobile Network is Australia's largest, with 4G reaching 99.7 per cent of the Australian population and 5G to over 89 per cent, providing a more reliable coverage experience in more places across Australia. This will continue to grow as we repurpose 3G spectrum to further advance*

*both 4G and 5G networks, which will further increase overall network capacity and improve service quality for many customers.'*

Further, Telstra state:-

*'We've upgraded our 4G network to match the coverage of our 3G network, as outlined in our [network coverage maps](#).*

*Now that 3G is closed, compatible devices will use the available 4G network, as well as the 5G network if using a 5G compatible device.'*

#### Comment

The purpose of this agenda item is for the WALGA CCZ to give consideration to undertaking a region wide survey to assess the impacts of Telstra's decision to close its 3G network.

The Shire of Dumbleyung commissioned a community survey to seek feedback on the impacts of this 3G network closure. The survey process was instigated resulting from anecdotal feedback that mobile telecommunications and internet connectivity had deteriorated since the 3G closure. The survey format was similar to the one used by the Shire of Gnowangerup.

The results of this Shire of Dumbleyung community survey process is attached for member reference. The survey responses seem to indicate a significant deterioration in services throughout the Shire of Dumbleyung.

If this reduction in servicing is being experienced in other parts of the CCZ region, it is worthwhile considering assessing these impacts to gain a more comprehensive understanding at a regional level. Then follow up steps can be considered by the CCZ at its next meeting.

The Shire of Dumbleyung present the below Recommendation for Zone consideration:

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Amy Knight**

**Seconded: Deputy President Stephen Hunt**

**That WALGA Central Country Zone instigates a region wide survey on the impacts of Telstra's 3G network closure on its residents and report back on the results of the survey at its next April 2025 meeting.**

**CARRIED**

---

#### **9.1.5 DRAFT OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE 113: OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND ASSET MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES: RURAL REGIONS**

---

*By Mark Bondietti, Policy Manager, Transport and Roads and  
Max Bushell, Senior Policy Advisor, Road Safety and Infrastructure*

#### **BACKGROUND:**

WALGA has received a draft copy of the MRWA *Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities, Rural Regions* (OP 113) for review and comment. The purpose of OP 113 is to provide principles and practical guidance for determining how the responsibility for maintaining the different parts of highways and main roads is to be allocated between Main Roads and Local Governments. As such, the document provides essential guidance

for the limits of maintenance responsibilities for Local Governments and will be relied on to resolve disputes between the parties. It is therefore of high importance and careful scrutiny is encouraged.

OP 113 will effectively supersede the *Operational Responsibility for Public Roads in Western Australia, 2009* (OP 2009) which was the result of extensive negotiations between Main Roads WA, IPWEA and WALGA and covered both Metropolitan and Regional scenarios. This document was never formally adopted but has nevertheless guided decision making over the years.

In 2019, *Operational Procedure 112: Operational Boundaries and Asset Responsibilities, Metropolitan Region* was published by Main Roads after consultation with Metropolitan Regional Road Groups and WALGA. Operational Procedure 112 and 113 draw heavily on the content of the 2009 document and will effectively supersede it.

The document outlines the limits of responsibilities in the following situations:

- Highways in Built Up Areas
- Highways in Rural Areas
- Bridges, Pathways, and Drainage Structures
- Stormwater Infrastructure
- Lighting
- Public Transport Facilities
- Roadside Facilities
- Signs & Traffic Control Devices
- Fences
- Graffiti
- Vegetation Control in Built Up Areas
- Vegetation Control in Rural Areas.

Indicative drawings are also provided, indicating limits of responsibility.

## COMMENT

The principles set out OP 2009 were broadly agreed by all parties at the time and WALGA has therefore reviewed OP 113 relative to OP 2009. Much of the text in OP 113 has been drawn directly from OP 2009 and the documents are in general alignment. However, WALGA has noted some discrepancies and concerns summarised below:

### 1. Introduction

Refers to additional works to be funded from the SRFLGA. Additional works are not defined, and any funding changes would be for SAC approval. WALGA recommends this principle be removed.

### 1.7 Maintenance Responsibility Guidelines

The draft OP 113 states that the “tangent point area” of a Local / State Road intersection will remain the responsibility of the LG. This principle was previously disputed and has not been tested. If the parties agree that Main Roads will maintain this area in accordance OP 113, then there is no necessity to include this statement.

Point (3) refers to funding for reseal works of the tangent area to be provided from the SRFLGA. Any changes to funding arrangements would be for SAC approval. For certain specified projects, funding could be allocated through Strategic Initiatives

#### 2.1.4 & 2.2.5 Driveways

States that Main Roads is not responsible for the maintenance of private driveways. Main Roads is responsible for approvals and the private owner is responsible for maintenance. In built up areas Local Governments may be responsible to issue work permits. This clause needs to be expanded to confirm the role of Local Government.

## **2.5 Lighting**

Add an additional section stating the costing arrangements as per OP 2009. In particular the principle that Main Roads will subsidise 50% of the installation, maintenance and operating cost when Local Governments install lighting on ordinary highways in built up areas.

## **2.6.2 Bus Passenger Facilities**

Part (2) add "in accordance with the partnership agreement between WALGA and the PTA"

### **Figures 6,7,8,9,10,11,12 &13**

The key to these figures states, "Main Roads Responsibility (resurfacing)", resurfacing to be replaced with "maintenance". According to the text and definitions, maintenance is defined as all works of any description required to keep the road serviceable, not just resurfacing.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Zones are requested to scrutinise OP 113 and provide feedback to WALGA in the following areas.

- Does current and desirable practice correspond to the principles outlined in the OP 113?
- Are there any areas of responsibility or principles not addressed in the OP 113?
- Do any of the proposed allocations of responsibility entail substantial budgetary impacts to Local Governments?
- Any additional concerns or comments.

Discussion at the Zone meeting is encouraged. Any written feedback should be provided by Friday, 28 February, to [infrastructure@walga.asn.au](mailto:infrastructure@walga.asn.au).

This document and draft OP 113 have also been provided to all regional CEOs and Infrastructure Directors providing opportunity for feedback directly to WALGA.

Following the February 2025 round of Zone meetings, WALGA will collate all feedback and provide a consolidated submission back to Main Roads WA.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: President Leigh Ballard**

**That the Central Country Zone;**

- 1. Notes Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Management Responsibilities, Rural Regions;**
- 2. Notes that Local Governments may submit written feedback directly to WALGA for consideration by 28 February 2025.**
- 3. Provides the following comments on Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities at the Zone Meeting;**
  - a) 1.Introduction**

Refers to additional works to be funded from the SRFLGA. Additional works are not defined, and any funding changes would be for SAC approval. WALGA recommends this principle be removed.
  - b) 1.7 Maintenance Responsibility Guidelines**

The draft OP 113 states that the "tangent point area" of a Local / State Road intersection will remain the responsibility of the LG. This principle was previously disputed and has not been tested. If the parties agree that Main Roads will maintain this area in accordance OP 113, then there is no necessity to include this statement.

- Point (3) refers to funding for reseal works of the tangent area to be provided from the SRFLGA. Any changes to funding arrangements would be for SAC approval. For certain specified projects, funding could be allocated through Strategic Initiatives
- c) **2.1.4 & 2.2.5 Driveways**  
States that Main Roads is not responsible for the maintenance of private driveways. Main Roads is responsible for approvals and the private owner is responsible for maintenance. In built up areas Local Governments may be responsible to issue work permits. This clause needs to be expanded to confirm the role of Local Government.
  - d) **2.5 Lighting**  
Add an additional section stating the costing arrangements as per OP 2009. In particular the principle that Main Roads will subsidise 50% of the installation, maintenance and operating cost when Local Governments install lighting on ordinary highways in built up areas.
  - e) **2.6.2 Bus Passenger Facilities**  
Part (2) add "in accordance with the partnership agreement between WALGA and the PTA"
  - f) **Figures 6,7,8,9,10,11,12 &13**  
The key to these figures states, "Main Roads Responsibility (resurfacing)", resurfacing to be replaced with "maintenance". According to the text and definitions, maintenance is defined as all works of any description required to keep the road serviceable, not just resurfacing.

**CARRIED**

---

## **9.1.6 CONSULTATION ON REGULATIONS FOR CEO KPIs AND PUBLIC REGISTERS**

---

*By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services*

The *Local Government Amendment Act 2023* (Tranche 1) was assented to in May 2023. A number of the Tranche 1 provisions are yet to commence.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries recently commenced a consultation process on the introduction of Tranche 1 amendments relating to CEO Matters and Online Registers. In addition to the Consultation document, the Department released the [Local Government Regulations Amendment Regulations 2024](#) that will give effect to the amendments.

The Department's Consultation process includes commentary on CEO Matters and Online Registers, which are summarised below.

CEO Matters include:

- CEO Selection Panel
- CEO Recruitment, Termination and Certification
- CEO KPIs

Online Registers include:

- Leasing Register
- Grants and Sponsorship Register
- Development / Applicant Contributions Register
- Goods and Services Contracts Register

WALGA seeks feedback from Local Governments to assist in the composition of a sector-wide response to the Department's Consultation. WALGA circulated an Infopage to CEOs on 29 January,

including brief Discussion Paper summarising the proposed regulatory amendments, together with commentary for each Local Government's consideration.

To inform an item for the May 2025 meeting of State Council, feedback is requested by **19 March 2025**. Local Governments will also be able to provide feedback through the April round of Zone meetings.

**For more information, please contact Tony Brown on 9213 2051 or Felicity Morris on 9213 2093 and responses to [governance@walga.asn.au](mailto:governance@walga.asn.au)**

**NOTED**

---

### **9.1.7 Cooperation & Shared Services**

---

*Tony Brown, WALGA*

Attached was the latest version of the Cooperation & Shared Services document. This document was created to capture the collaborative work between Local Governments, showcasing ways to maximise resources to deliver outcomes that would be difficult to achieve alone. Local Governments have contributed to this resource and will be consulted again next year for further updates/modifications.

All CEO's have received this document and were encouraged to share with Councillors and staff to fully display all collaborative work happening within Local Government.

WALGA will be promoting this to Government agencies to display the collaborative work that happens in our sector.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact Tony Brown or Naoimh Donaghy.

**NOTED**

## **10 ZONE REPORTS**

---

### **10.1 CHAIR REPORT**

---

*President Cr Des Hickey*

The Chair did not have a report for this meeting.

**NOTED**

---

### **10.2 GREAT SOUTHERN DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DEMC)**

---

*President Jackie McBurney*

President Cr Jackie McBurney was an apology for this meeting.

**NOTED**

---

### 10.3 WHEATBELT INTERAGENCY HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

---

*President Jackie McBurney*

President Cr Jackie McBurney was an apology for this meeting.

**NOTED**

---

### 10.4 WALGA ROADWISE

---

Rodney Thornton, Regional Road Safety Advisor provided an update - **Attachment No.5**

**NOTED**

## 11 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

---

### 11.1 STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

---

*Cr Phillip Blight*

The February State Councillor report was attached to the Agenda.

**NOTED**

## 11.2 WALGA STATUS REPORT

By Tony Brown, Executive Officer

# COMPLETE ZONE STATUS REPORT February 2025

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Central C	26 August 2023 Zone Agenda Item 9.2 Water Corporation – Non-Standard Water Services	That the Central Country Zone: 1. Rejects Water Corporation attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service' (unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority); 2. Formally writes to Water Corporation and the Minister for Water confirming this position; 3. Requests that WALGA supports the position of the Central Country Zone and rejects the Water Corporation's attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service'; and 4. Requests WALGA to engage with the Minister for Water to retain the current services, unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority.	WALGA is developing a Background Paper and reviewing its Water Advocacy Position and has included the need for equitable access to drinking water as a key pillar.  Ongoing	February 2025	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
Central C	15 November 2024 Zone Agenda Item 9.1.4 PetsWA Centralized Pet Registry Scheme Revenue	That the Central Country Zone request WALGA; 3. advocate to the Government of Western Australia that 100% of the revenue derived from pet registrations (both dogs and cats) continue to be returned directly to local governments to effectively administer the Dog Act 1976 and Cat Act 2011. 4. recommend that the new centralized PetsWA Pet Registry Scheme, administered by the State Government, should not retain any commission or portion of the registration fees for its operations, as the current fee structure does not adequately cover the costs associated with pet management at the local government level.	WALGA responded to the issue of registration fees raised in the February 2024 Marsden Jacob 'Stop Puppy Farming – Proposed Fees and Charges' Consultation Paper in the following terms:  - a full cost recovery model for dog registration fees be implemented to redress the disparity between State Government and Local Government being fully funded to manage their respective responsibilities under the Dog Act 1976 incorporating the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Act 2021 ; and - the cost recovery model for dog registration fees to include biennial indexation relative to the Local Government Cost Index.  This response reflects current WALGA advocacy that current dog and cat registration fees are not predicated on a cost recovery model and as a consequence animal management services provided by Local Governments is directly subsidised from general rate revenue.	February 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director, Member Services 9213 2051 tbrown@walga.asn.au

			<p>WALGA's Advocacy position on Puppy Farming (2.12, WALGA Advocacy Positions Manual)</p> <p>2. The Local Government sector advocates that:</p> <p>a) any additional costs incurred by a Local Government in administering the Dog Act be paid by the State Government; and</p> <p>b) the Fees and Charges set in Regulations are reviewed bi-annually and at minimum, be adjusted by the Local Government Cost Index.</p> <p>The Zone has written to the Minister outlining this position and the Zones position is being referred to the Governance Policy Team for consideration and a response will be provided to the Zone</p>		
<b>Central C</b>	19 November 2021 Zone Agenda Item <b>12.1 Sector ICT solution</b>	That the Zone request WALGA to research providers and the viability of an in-house IT system.	<p>Work continues to be undertaken to support Members seeking ICT solutions.</p> <p>A project to scan and enhance the PSP panel has been initiated, with an Infopage distributed to Members in late 2024 (as <b>attached with the February Agenda</b>).</p> <p>It is intended consultancy resources will be utilised to support the preparation of scope of service documentation and related tools to support procurement processes through the PSP.</p>	<b>February 2025</b>	<p><b>Tony Brown</b>  <b>Executive Director,</b>  <b>Member Services</b>  <b>9213 2051</b>  <b>tbrown@walga.asn.au</b></p>

### Zone Comment

This is an opportunity for Member Councils to consider the response from WALGA in respect to the matters that were submitted at the previous Zone Meeting.

### RESOLUTION

**Moved: Deputy President Karen Harrington**

**Seconded: President Cr David White**

**That the Central Country Zone, WALGA Status Report for February 2025 be noted, and in respect to the item on Non-Standard Water Services, WALGA be requested to review their position to consider the strategic water needs of the regions.**

**CARRIED**

---

### 11.3 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

---

The WALGA President's Report was attached to the Agenda.

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: Deputy President Sharon Jacob**

**That the Central Country Zone notes the WALGA President's Report.**

**CARRIED**

### 12 STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS – 5 MARCH 2025

#### BACKGROUND:

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure.

Zone delegates to consider the Matters for Decision contained in the WA Local Government Association State Council Agenda and put forward resolutions to Zone Representatives on State Council

The full Agenda can be viewed [HERE](#).

---

## 12.1 STATE COUNCIL MATTERS FOR DECISION

---

### 12.1.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.1)

*By Jade Mains, Senior Policy Advisor Environment*

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace the 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change with the following advocacy position:

*Climate Change significantly impacts Local Governments' operations and responsibilities, as well as their communities.*

*Local Government is committed to taking climate action, including by:*

- *reducing operational emissions in line with Australian and Western Australian Government 2050 net zero targets*
- *providing leadership and support to their communities to reduce carbon emissions*
- *embedding climate risk management into their operations to enhance adaptation and build community resilience to the impacts of climate change*
- *working with other levels of Government and key stakeholders to ensure policy and on-ground programs are effective, equitable and targeted.*

*WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to:*

1. *Ensure Australia and Western Australia meet net zero emissions targets through:*
  - a. *enacting legislation which sets clear, measurable targets for emission reduction*
  - b. *developing and funding coordinated emissions reduction policies, guidance and programs*
  - c. *acknowledging the role of Local Government as an implementation partner in emissions reduction policy and planning.*
2. *Empower Local Government to accelerate adaptation and build resilience in their communities through:*
  - a. *ensuring the roles and responsibilities set out under the Council of Australian Governments Roles and Responsibilities for Climate Change Adaptation in Australia are implemented and adequately resourced*
  - b. *providing up to date, consistent and accessible data to enable evidence-based decision making and investment*
  - c. *developing national guidance on adaptation responses to facilitate coordinated and equitable planning and implementation.*
3. *Provide funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable on-ground implementation, including for:*
  - a. *the implementation of the Regional Climate Alliance Program across Western Australia*
  - b. *the establishment and maintenance of corporate emission inventories and action plans*
  - c. *providing transformational investment to facilitate emission reduction activities*

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>d. <i>undertaking climate risk assessments and the development of adaptation action plans</i></li><li>e. <i>a dedicated adaptation fund to address localised climate risks and build climate resilience.</i></li></ul> |
|--|

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's current climate change [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) were endorsed by State Council in 2018.
- There have been significant legislative and policy changes at both the Australian and State Government level since that time. The impacts of climate change are also being increasingly felt across Western Australia, putting Local Government in a challenging position with limited resources and support to mitigate emissions and adapt.
- Feedback from the sector through climate surveys, undertaken every two years, and targeted consultation confirms that significant resourcing and funding gaps exist for Local Government to effectively respond to climate change.
- The updated Advocacy Position focuses on the urgency and scale of climate impacts and calls for a comprehensive framework, and action, to enable Local Government to manage the impacts of climate change and build resilient communities.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the Advocacy Position at their 11 December 2024 meeting.

## ATTACHMENT

- [Climate Change Legislative and Policy Context](#)

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The revised advocacy position is intended to be an overarching sector position on climate change. Other advocacy positions, including Urban Forest (4.5), Renewable Energy (6.16, 6.17, 6.18), Emergency Management (8.1, 8.2, 8.11) and Coastal Planning (6.8) provide a sector position on specific climate related matters.

The **existing** [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) is:

### 4.1 Climate Change

*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.*

It is proposed that the current advocacy positions be **replaced** with:

### **Climate Change**

*Climate Change significantly impacts Local Governments' operations and responsibilities, as well as their communities.*

*Local Government is committed to taking climate action, including by:*

- *reducing operational emissions in line with Australian and Western Australian Government 2050 net zero targets*
- *providing leadership and support to their communities to reduce carbon emissions*
- *embedding climate risk management into their operations to enhance adaptation and build community resilience to the impacts of climate change*
- *working with other levels of Government and key stakeholders to ensure policy and on-ground programs are effective, equitable and targeted.*

*WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to:*

1. *Ensure Australia and Western Australia meet net zero emissions targets through:*
  - a. *enacting legislation which sets clear, measurable targets for emission reduction*
  - b. *developing and funding coordinated emissions reduction policies, guidance and programs*
  - c. *acknowledging the role of Local Government as an implementation partner in emissions reduction policy and planning.*
2. *Empower Local Government to accelerate adaptation and build resilience in their communities through:*
  - a. *ensuring the roles and responsibilities set out under the Council of Australian Governments Roles and Responsibilities for Climate Change Adaptation in Australia are implemented and adequately resourced*
  - b. *providing up to date, consistent and accessible data to enable evidence-based decision making and investment*
  - c. *developing national guidance on adaptation responses to facilitate coordinated and equitable planning and implementation.*
3. *Provide funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable on-ground implementation, including for:*
  - a. *the implementation of the Regional Climate Alliance Program across Western Australia*
  - b. *the establishment and maintenance of corporate emission inventories and action plans*
  - c. *providing transformational investment to facilitate emission reduction activities*
  - d. *undertaking climate risk assessments and the development of adaptation action plans*
  - e. *a dedicated adaptation fund to address localised climate risks and build climate resilience.*

### **BACKGROUND**

There have been significant legislative and policy changes since WALGA's 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement and Advocacy Position were endorsed. The Australian Government enacted the *Climate Change Act 2022*, setting targets for greenhouse gas emissions: a 43% reduction below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050. The WA Government introduced the *Climate Bill 2023*, aiming for an 80% reduction in WA Government emissions by 2030 and a state target of net zero by 2050. The State and

Australian Governments have also released a suite of policies addressing mitigation and adaptation action.

Climate science and projections are also becoming clearer about the risks posed by climate change and the need for action. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [2023 Report](#) states that climate change poses a significant threat to human well-being and planetary health, emphasising the need for urgent action to secure a sustainable future and an integrated adaptation and mitigation effort.

Local Governments and their communities are on the frontline of dealing with increasing climate risks and the associated impacts. 60 WA Local Governments are signatories to the [WALGA Climate Change Declaration](#) which represents over 87% of the State's population. Making a declaration demonstrates a Local Government's ongoing commitment to locally appropriate climate action to both mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

However, Local Government continues to face substantial challenges in addressing climate change due to limited funding and support from the Australian and State Governments. Funding and capacity constraints can make undertaking emissions reduction and adaption actions particularly challenging for smaller regional Local Governments, whose assets and communities may be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events.

In 2021-23, WALGA was successful in securing State Government funding to deliver a [Regional Climate Alliance \(RCA\) Pilot Program](#), an initiative under the [Western Australian Climate Policy](#). Modelled on successful programs in other jurisdictions, two groups of Local Governments, the South Coast Alliance and Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils focused on accelerating climate action at the regional scale. WALGA continues to [advocate to the State Government](#) to reinstate the program and expand it statewide.

To develop the updated Advocacy Position, WALGA ran a workshop with Local Government officers to establish the parameters for the review. Climate Change survey data, collected in 2020, 2022 and 2024, also informed the development of the updated Advocacy Position. WALGA also participated in an evaluation of the RCA Pilot Program with State Government. The themes from the survey data, consultations and Pilot evaluation, were:

- in addition to signing WALGA's Climate Change Declaration, many Local Governments are embedding climate change considerations into their strategic community plans, policies and operations
- of the 139 WA Local Governments, 110 (80% of Local Governments) are taking at least one significant action relating to climate change
- the biggest barrier to accelerating action at the local level is the lack of targeted funding and support. This is particularly significant for regional Local Governments.

The draft updated Advocacy Position was provided to relevant Local Government officers for comment and their feedback was incorporated.

## **COMMENT**

The updated Advocacy Position builds on the 2018 position, acknowledging the substantial shift in policy development and public sentiment on climate change. The updated Position therefore focuses on the practical actions that will enable a coordinated and strategic framework to reduce emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change.

Local Governments continue to demonstrate leadership in climate action by responding and managing impacts at a local scale, however, the position reflects the need for greater funding and support from the Australian and State Governments.

The updated Advocacy Position, together with climate change-related advocacy positions in the areas of emergency management, urban forests, renewable energy, coastal planning, and water resources (upcoming), will provide a sound basis for WALGA's ongoing climate change advocacy and policy development.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Phil Blight**

**Seconded: President Cr Ian Turton**

***That State Council replace the 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change with the following advocacy position:***

***WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to:***

- 1. provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to deliver a climate change response that improves and maintain quality of life for all Western Australians for generations to come***
- 2. provide funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable local communities to respond to the effects of climate change***

**CARRIED**

## 12.1.2 Waste Management Legislation Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda item 8.2)

*By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste*

### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation with the following advocacy position:

1. *Local Government supports Australian and State Government waste management legislation which:*
  - a. *includes requirements for national and state waste strategies which support Local Governments to implement the strategies and achieve targets*
  - b. *focuses on coordinated action and clear roles and responsibilities*
  - c. *establishes a lead agency for waste management*
  - d. *establishes and maintains a regulated product stewardship framework for all products entering the Australian market*
  - e. *includes provisions to optimise market development and participation in waste processing.*
2. *Local Government calls for the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 to be amended to include:*
  - a. *Waste education in the definition of Waste Services*
  - b. *Circular Economy principles.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's current [Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) were adopted in 2004.
- The Policy Statement outlines Local Government's position on waste management legislation in Western Australia and sets out the key objectives waste management legislation should achieve.
- WALGA used the Waste Management Policy Statement to inform advocacy on the development, and reviews, of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act).
- The current Advocacy Position, and many of the elements in the policy statement, are no longer relevant as they have been achieved.
- The revised Advocacy Position focuses on both Australian and State Government legislation and reflects the shift in focus from traditional waste management towards a circular economy approach.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the new Advocacy Position at its meeting on 11 December 2024.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The existing [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) is:

*Local Government supports waste management legislation that references the principles of Sustainability and the Waste Hierarchy.*

*To be effective, waste management legislation should include the following primary objectives:*

- 1. Protection of human health and the natural environment;*
- 2. Minimise resource consumption;*
- 3. Minimise waste; and*
- 4. Effect the transition to a waste-free society.*

It is proposed that the current advocacy positions be **replaced** with:

- 1. Local Government supports Australian and State Government Waste Management Legislation which:*
  - a. includes requirements for national and state waste strategies which support Local Governments to implement the strategies and achieve targets*
  - b. focuses on coordinated action and clear roles and responsibilities*
  - c. establishes a lead agency for waste management*
  - d. establishes and maintains a regulated product stewardship framework for all products entering the Australian market*
  - e. includes provisions to optimise market development and participation in waste processing.*
- 2. Local Government calls for the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 to be amended to include:*
  - a. Waste education in the definition of Waste Services*
  - b. Circular economy principles.*

## **BACKGROUND**

WALGA used the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement as a reference point in the development, and both reviews, of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act). There have not been any significant changes to the WARR Act since it was enacted.

The national waste legislation, the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020* (RaWR Act), is being reviewed currently. The development of an updated Advocacy Position will assist in providing input to the review.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the new Advocacy Position at their meeting on 11 December 2024.

## **COMMENT**

Local Government feedback, through both reviews of the WARR Act and in the development of this Advocacy Position, identified key areas to include in the revised position. These areas reflect the changes in approach to waste management since 2007, when the WARR Act was introduced, including a shift of thinking in relation to waste management, particularly with the advent of circular economy principles, and the increased understanding of the importance of waste education and behaviour change.

The Advocacy Position focuses on the importance of waste strategies (at the national and state level), coordinated action, clear roles and responsibilities, a lead agency for waste management and effective product stewardship provisions. Specifically, for the WARR Act, amendments are suggested to include waste education and circular economy principles.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: Deputy President Dee Ridgeway**

**That the Zone supports Item 12.2 as contained in the March 2025 State Council Agenda and as listed above.**

**CARRIED**

---

## 12.2 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

---

### 12.2.1 Infrastructure Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.1)

*By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager, Infrastructure*

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team for the 5 March 2025 meeting.
2. Determine to:
  - a. Delete Advocacy Position 5.2.8 (Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2008 – 2020).
  - b. Amend the title of Advocacy Position 5.2.7 from Road Safety Strategy (Imagine Zero) to Driving Change Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030.
  - c. Delete the fourth dot point in Advocacy Position 5.2.7 "...the retention of WA's Default Open Speed Limit at 110 km per hour and opposes the proposed reduction to 100 km per hour..."

*The Infrastructure Policy Team includes the following subject areas:*

- *Transport*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Road Safety*
- *Underground power*
- *Street lighting*

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting held on 27 November 2024.

#### 1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

WALGA's advocacy positions are reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain contemporary. The Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2008 – 2020 was superseded with "Driving Change, Road Safety Strategy for Western Australia 2020 – 2030". Advocacy Position 5.2.7 refers to this, the current strategy.

Advocacy Position 5.2.7 was endorsed by State Council during the consultation phase of the current road safety strategy. At that time the name of the strategy had not been determined. The proposed title change reflects the final name of the strategy.

In May 2023 WALGA's State Council adopted advocacy position 5.2.3 Speed Management Reform which provides a set of principles for guiding WALGA's advocacy on the many and varied aspects of the complex topic of travel speeds in the context of the road networks managed by the 139 Local Governments in WA. It is proposed that this May 2023 advocacy position replaces the previous position in scope, currency and utility.

The previous position was established on the basis of consultation and feedback (by a consultant on behalf of the WA Government) from some Local Governments in the early 2000s. Both the consultation question and the position are narrow and specific in scope.

## 2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team progressed actions and advocacy in relation to:

- Regional telecommunications service levels, including impact of closure of the 3G network.
- Development of contemporary advocacy positions relating to active transport.

## RESOLUTION

**Moved: President Leigh Ballard**

**Seconded President Cr Katrina Crute**

**That the Central Country Zone:**

1. **Note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team for the 5 March 2025 meeting.**
2. **Determine to:**
  - a. **Delete Advocacy Position 5.2.8 (Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2008 – 2020).**
  - b. **Amend the title of Advocacy Position 5.2.7 from Road Safety Strategy (Imagine Zero) to Driving Change Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030.**
  - c. **Retain the fourth dot point in Advocacy Position 5.2.7 "...the retention of WA's Default Open Speed Limit at 110 km per hour and opposes the proposed reduction to 100 km per hour..."**

**CARRIED**

### 12.2.2 People and Place Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.2)

*By Nicole Matthew, Executive Manager Policy*

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the People and Place Policy Team meeting report for the 5 March 2025 meeting.

*The People and Place Policy Team includes the following subject areas:*

- *Community*
- *Emergency Management*

The People and Place Policy Team have not had a meeting since the last State Council meeting in December 2024.

### 12.2.3 Governance Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.3)

*By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services*

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Governance Policy Team meeting report for the 5 March 2025 meeting.

*The Governance Policy Team includes the following subject areas:*

- *Governance (Local Government legislation)*
- *Local Government Reform/Regional Service Delivery*
- *Local Government Revenue*
- *Local Government Elections*
- *Employee Relations/Industrial Relations*
- *Training*

The Governance Policy Team have not had a meeting since the last State Council meeting in December 2024.

The next meeting is scheduled for March.

## 12.2.4 Environment Policy Team Report (State Council Agenda item 9.4)

*By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy*

### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Environment Policy Team meeting report to the 5 March 2025 meeting.

The Environment Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- *Climate change*
- *Native vegetation and biodiversity*
- *Biosecurity*
- *Water resources*
- *Sustainability*
- *Planning and building*

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Environment Policy Team at its meeting held on 11 December 2024.

### **1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION**

The Environment Policy Team agreed to recommend that State Council replace WALGA's existing Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change (see [item 8.1](#)).

### **2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING**

[Item 10.5](#): Polyphagous shot-hole borer Update

The Policy Team discussed the following matters referred by Zones:

- Whale carcass management: Goldfields Esperance Country Zone requests that WALGA advocate for a government policy change to allow towing of whale carcasses before they wash ashore. WALGA notes the feedback and will investigate if there is further action on the issue.
- Service Stations / Sensitive Land uses: South Metropolitan Zone requests that WALGA supports the review of the EPA and advocates for the review of the GS3. WALGA will raise the need for a review of this Guideline through its representation on the EPA Stakeholder Reference Group, then consider further advocacy on this matter.
- State Planning Policy 3.6 - Infrastructure Contributions (Community Infrastructure Cap): North Metropolitan Zone recommends that WALGA advocate to the State Government for indexation of the community infrastructure cap defined in the State Planning Policy. WALGA made a submission strongly opposing the introduction of a contribution cap. WALGA is also working with the Growth Alliance Perth and Peel Local Governments to develop a set of advocacy positions in relation to the development contribution plan arrangements.

### **3. PORTFOLIO UPDATES**

WALGA staff provided the Policy Team with updates on:

- Polyphagous shot-hole borer
- Review of the DAP advocacy position
- Avian Influenza (H5 Clade 2.3.4.4b)

- National Water Agreement.

The Policy Team also noted that the development of an updated Water Advocacy Position is underway.

## 12.2.5 Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report (State Council Agenda item 9.5)

*By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste*

### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Municipal Waste Advisory Council report to the 5 March 2025 meeting.

This report provides an update on matters considered since the last State Council meeting by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC), at a meeting held on 11 December 2024.

### 1. **MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION**

MWAC agreed to replace the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation (see [item 8.2](#)).

### 2. **MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING**

MWAC considered the following matters:

- Circular Economy Advocacy Position: WALGA's advocacy in relation to circular economy has identified that action is required from all levels of Government. The development of an advocacy position on Circular Economy is far broader than the waste management considerations. Comprehensive consultation on the advocacy position is planned for 2025.
- E-Cigarette Collection Study: Following the successful completion of the Collection Study, MWAC discussed advocacy options to ensure the community access to safe disposal/recycling avenues for e-cigarettes, with a focus on minimising risks to waste management collection and processing infrastructure.
- Waste Processing Contingency Planning: WALGA has consistently advocated for effective contingency planning for waste management, most recently as part of the review of the State Waste Strategy. Several recent issues have highlighted the challenges facing the sector and the limited options for processing of some materials. MWAC discussed governance models and contingency planning options for Western Australia.

### 3. **UPDATES**

MWAC noted the following updates:

- Policy Statement Review Update
- Better Practice Document Review Update
- Review of DWER Waste Education
- Review of Recycling and Waste Reduction Act
- Review of Local Government Waste Reporting Requirements
- Queensland Fruit Fly (Qfly) Outbreak
- MWAC 30 Year Anniversary.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr David White**

**Seconded: Cr Tamara de Lange**

**That the Zone:**

- 1. Notes all Policy Team and Committee Reports as contained in the March 2025 State Council Agenda;**

**CARRIED**

---

## **12.3 MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION**

---

- 2025 Federal Election (State Council Agenda item 10.1)
- 2025 State Election (State Council Agenda item 10.2)
- Large Scale Renewable Energy Update (State Council Agenda item 10.3)
- 2024 CoastWA Local Government Survey (State Council Agenda item 10.4)
- Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer Update (State Council Agenda item 10.5)
- December 2024 Economic Briefing (State Council Agenda item 10.6)
- Flying Minute Submission on the Productivity Commission Inquiry – Opportunities in the Circular Economy (State Council Agenda item 10.7)

## **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**Seconded: Deputy President Karen Harrington**

**That the Zone notes all Matters for Noting/Information as contained in the March 2025 State Council Agenda.**

**CARRIED**

---

## 12.4 KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS

---

### 12.4.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.1)

*By Rachel Horton, Executive Manager Advocacy*

#### **WALGA RECOMMENDATION**

**That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Advocacy Portfolio to the March 2025 State Council meeting.**

*The Advocacy Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

- *Marketing*
- *Communications*
- *Media*
- *Events*

The following outlines the activities of the Advocacy Portfolio since the December 2024 State Council meeting.

#### **1. ADVOCACY**

WALGA's combined State Election Campaign through paid and earned media and political engagements has been successful in securing commitments for a number of important initiatives aligned with WALGA's advocacy in The West at its Best policy platform.

Paid media has resulted in 4.6m impressions served across social, digital, out of home and outdoor media across WA.

The dedicated election campaign microsite has received 37,210 visits over the reporting period, driven from paid advertising and direct visits.

In terms of issues, the public has resonated strongly with four of the five issues that the paid campaign has focussed on (Connected and Inclusive Communities - with Sport & Recreation achieving the highest interest, Safer Roads, Climate Resilience and Disaster Ready). Low Carbon has received the least engagement across the social and programmatic campaign and are the least searched key words in Google.

WALGA's 2025 Federal Election Priorities has been developed and distributed to Members of Parliament, Elected Members and other key stakeholders.

Please see [item 10.2](#) for more detail on the State Election Campaign and commitments made by major parties in line with WALGA's advocacy.

## **2. MARKETING**

### **Brand**

The internal graphic design resource is providing enormous value enhancing the quality of materials, increasing the speed of production and driving brand consistency. Over 50 documents and reports have been published in the reporting period including the Federal Election Priorities document, Road Safety reports and refreshed Western Councillor magazine.

All WALGA e-newsletters have been re-branded to be consistent with the main WALGA corporate news (the LG Direct), enhancing our brand narrative around our key pillars of Influence, Support and Expertise plus providing cross promotion opportunities between newsletters.

### **Website**

The WALGA website has performed well over the reporting period. Comparing quarterly statistics there has been a 13% increase in active users and a 41% increase in direct traffic. As the only variable for direct traffic, this is likely due to the Election Campaign driving interest in the WALGA website.

Another highlight is the number of WALGA newsletter subscriptions. There was a 26% increase from 673 to 846 over the last quarter.

## **3. COMMUNICATIONS**

Multiple internal and external communications were published throughout the reporting period including:

- Twelve LG Direct weekly newsletters distributed to over 2,000 Elected Members and senior staff
- The November 2024 edition of the Western Councillor Magazine
- Q4 Tailored Quarterly Report compiled and distributed to all Members
- WALGA's 2025 Federal Election Priorities.

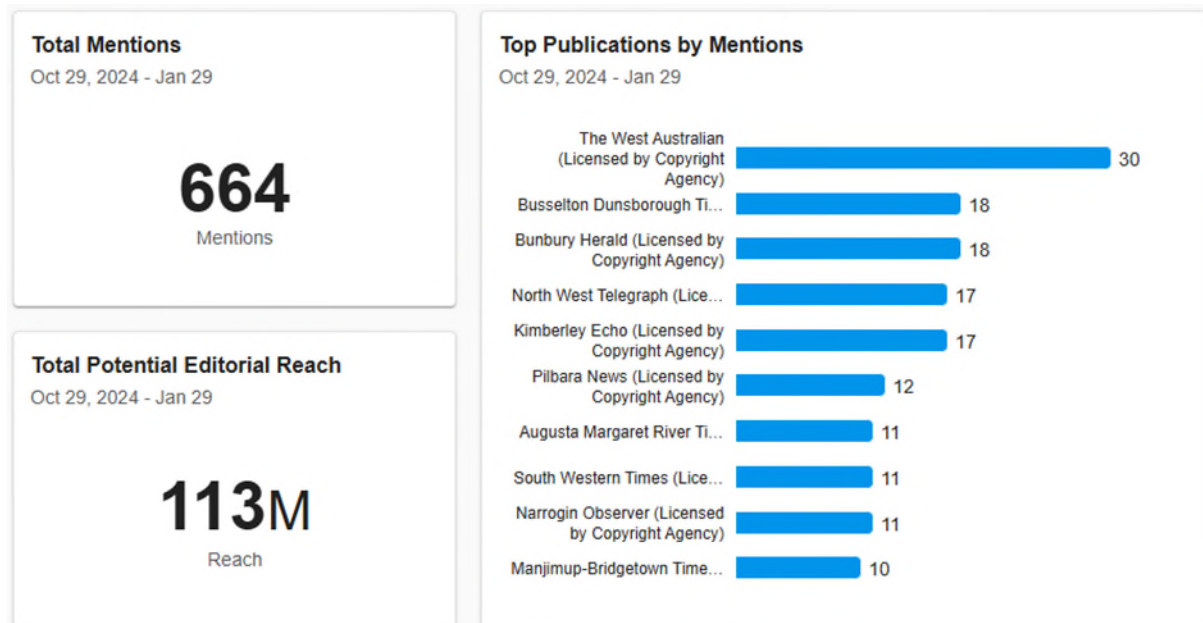
### **EARNED MEDIA**

WALGA has generated significant media activity throughout the reporting period with 664 mentions of WALGA and President Karen Chappel. This equates to seven mentions a day.

One of the online articles with the highest reach (5.6m) was WALGA's response to Premier Roger Cook's negative comments on the Local Government sector including the headline comment from the WALGA President, "Unbecoming of the Premier."

Items that gained publicity in response to WALGA press releases include Renewable Energy, the Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer, plus Showcase in Pixels and Local Government Elections.

The media has sought comment from WALGA on sector issues over 30 times including on issues such as Population Growth, First Past the Post Voting, Coastal Management and the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer.



### Media Releases & Opinion piece

- [Local heroes showcased through community art](#) – 29 November 2024
- [WALGA welcomes the Nationals commitment to Emergency Services funding](#) – 13 December 2024
- [Karen Chappel: Local must have input in renewable plans and the answer is blowing in the Wind](#) (WALGA Renewable Op-ed) - 5 January
- [WALGA welcomes Nationals' renewable energy announcement](#) – 14 January
- [Labor responds to WALGA's call to rebuild our urban forest](#) – 15 January
- [WALGA commends Labor's commitment to women's sport and urges long-term sporting investment](#) – 17 January 2025
- [WALGA welcomes Labor funding commitment to improve regional road safety](#) – 24 January
- [WALGA's response to Nationals CSRFF announcement](#) – 30 January
- [WALGA's advocacy reflected in new elected member superannuation provisions](#) – 31 January

### Social Media:

200 social media posts were placed in the reporting period across LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. (This is separate to paid campaign posts.) A decrease was seen in engagement across all channels so this will be monitored as it could indicate too many posts are being placed. Over 2,000 engagements were achieved on LinkedIn which is encouraging as the key professional platform, and despite lower engagement, brand awareness has benefited from serving 150,000+ impressions across the three major platforms.

## LinkedIn:

### Top posts



Yesterday, WALGA hosted Local Government Minister Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Housing and Planning Minister Hon John Carey MLA and Urban Development Institute of Australia WA CEO Tanya Steinbeck as they joined CEO Nick

**1,313** clicks



On Wednesday 18 December, WALGA hosted our end-of-year 'WALGA Wrap' event at Perth City Farm. The event provided an opportunity to celebrate a great year of delivering better outcomes for WA Local Governments and

**1,038** clicks



"Thanks to Shane, we're going to build a great \$600,000 fire shed for our town brigade..." Shane Harris, a Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) who serves the Shires of Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, and

**589** clicks

- 71 posts
- 2,093 post reactions (8% increase)
- 118,177 post impressions (5% increase)
- 7.1% post engagement rate (18% decrease)

## Facebook:

- 56 Posts
- 18,922 post reach (20% decrease)
- 20,116 post impressions (23% decrease)
- 5.89% post engagement rate (4% decrease)

## Instagram:

- 11,224 post reach (16% decrease)
- 11,752 post impressions (13% decrease)
- 4.55% post engagement rate (8% increase)

## PAID MEDIA

The 2025 State Election campaign is gaining strong engagement through targeted advertisement placements and messaging across social media, digital, out of home and outdoor media, generating a combined reach of 4.6 million.

## Social Media

2.4m of the total 4.6m impressions have been served through carousels, stories and polls on social media. Carousels displaying the 'under stress' and swipe right to see 'at its best' messaging has the highest engagement with people commenting and 'liking' posts (56,000+).

Polls running on Safer roads and Urban Canopy have the highest Click Through Rate (CTR). In terms of engagement by issue, Climate Resilience and Safer Roads have gained the most interaction in terms of comments, but when voting for action from the State via the polls, 'Better sports facilities' has gained the highest votes from the public with 98% of respondents supportive, followed by 'More support for Volunteer fires' with a supporter rate of 92%.

## Programmatic Display Advertising

The custom segments responding to display advertising are those classified as 'Green Living', 'Family Focussed' and 'interested in Local/Political news'. That said, all segments are outperforming benchmarks with a CTR of 0.7 compared to an average of 0.06 for

standard display advertising. (Display click through rates are typically much lower as the user isn't actively seeking the product/advert, it is being displayed in a passive manner.) The strongest results have been generated from the Safer Roads keywords at 0.9% CTR and Climate Resilience with a 0.74% CTR.

### **Google Search Engine Marketing**

In terms of words actively searched in Google, the strongest results have been policy-searches related to the election, for example 'Regional Sporting Election' which achieved a CTR of 14.9% (benchmark 3%). The highest engagement in Google is from the 25-34 year old age group. From a geographic perspective, the highest volume of keyword searches is being generated in Belmont, Vincent, Victoria Park and Stirling.

### **Out Of Home Media (OOH)**

Approximately 1.2m impressions have been served across OOH media (predominantly in the Perth Metropolitan area), including billboards in high traffic areas (e.g. Leach Highway). Other OOH placements include shopping centres, bus shelters and health care centres.

### **Campaign Microsite**

There has been a relatively similar number of page visits to three of the issues sponsored through the paid campaign, with Disaster Ready, Climate Resilience and Safer Communities generating an average of 33% of traffic each. 'Connected and Inclusive' has seen the least microsite page visits at 1% of traffic. However, microsite page visits are not reflective of engagement with topics across the board, with issues under the 'Connected and Inclusive' category achieving significant engagement through polls and Google search engine marketing.

## **4. EVENTS**

### **WALGA Wrap**

The WALGA Wrap end of year function held at Perth City Farm on 18 December, provided an opportunity to highlight the successes of 2024 and thank the 150 stakeholders and suppliers in attendance for their partnership throughout the year.

A themed menu showcased local produce from around Western Australia, with dishes dedicated to The Goldfields, The Coral Coast, The Wheatbelt and The South West together with music from WAAPA Alumni Evan Ayers.

### **Urban Forest Conference**

The 2025 Urban Forest Conference is sold out with 365 main registrations and 57 registrations for field tours.

The event will be hosted at the Boola Katitjin building at Murdoch University, creating a unique indoor/outdoor presentation for the main sessions and Sundowner. New initiatives this year include the 'Village Green' where key suppliers and stakeholders can exhibit in the greening space, plus a dedicated Field Tour program held the day prior to the main conference.

Planning is now also underway for the 2025 Aboriginal Engagement Forum on 10 April and the 2025 Local Government Awards.

## 12.4.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio Report (State Council Agenda item 11.1.2)

*By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure*

### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Infrastructure Portfolio for March 2025.

*The Infrastructure Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

- *Roads*
- *Funding*
- *Urban and Regional Transport*
- *Utilities*
- *Road Safety*

The following outlines the activities of the Infrastructure Portfolio since the last State Council meeting.

### 1. **ROADS**

#### **Local Government Transport and Roads Research and Innovation Program**

Guidelines for the use of crumbed rubber modified asphalts, sprayed seals, reclaimed asphalt pavement and a catalogue of standard pavement profiles are scheduled for publication in the next quarter. Work has commenced on an investigation into available technologies for best practice road condition assessments and data collection and the development of a road safety rating tool for intersections.

#### **Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance**

The condition assessment survey of significant roads in the Pilbara and Gascoyne regions is nearing completion. The condition survey work for the Kimberley region will commence in March/April 2025, following the wet season in the Kimberley region.

#### **Road Rail Interface Agreements**

Rail Interface Agreements are a requirement under the *Rail Safety National Law (WA) Act 2015*. Each metropolitan Local Government with road/rail crossings with PTA electrified network was recently sent an Interface Agreement for review and execution. All nine Local Governments have now signed this updated agreement. For road/rail interfaces on the Arc Infrastructure network, a model *pro forma* agreement between Local Governments and Arc Infrastructure is nearing the end of negotiations and should be available for Local Government review and action soon. WALGA will begin a process to liaise with each relevant affected Local Government to provide advice around the new agreement, once the *pro forma* agreement has been finalised.

#### **Update of User Guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks**

Due to recent escalation in road construction costs, WALGA has initiated an update of the unit rates that are used to underpin the methodologies in the User Guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks on sealed and unsealed roads. NTRO have

been appointed to update the guides and to compile an online calculator and the project is scheduled for completion in February.

#### **Operational Boundaries and Asset Responsibilities in Rural Regions**

Main Roads have released a draft policy document that defines the operational and maintenance boundaries between State and Local Roads outside of the Metropolitan Region (a policy for the Metropolitan Region was published in 2020). WALGA has initiated a sector consultation process and will provide feedback to Main Roads.

## **2. ROAD FUNDING**

#### **Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) Model Revisions**

The WALGA Infrastructure Team is working with the Regional Road Groups to harmonise the MCA models used by Regional Road Groups to prioritise projects for Road Project Grant funding. The proposed changes to the MCA models reflect the new focus areas of the State Roads Funds to Local Governments Agreement, while still allowing for flexibility to recognise the significant differences between regions. Six out of nine Regional Road Groups have commenced the MCA revision process, while the remaining three Regional Road Groups will begin the process in the upcoming months.

## **3. TRANSPORT**

#### **Bus Stop Infrastructure**

WALGA State Council sought some amendments to the draft Bus Stop Infrastructure Partnership Agreement 2025 to 2029 at the December 2024 meeting. The Public Transport Authority has provided an initial response to these matters and further discussions are progressing.

#### **Active Transport and Micromobility-Discussion Paper**

The discussion paper has now been completed. WALGA proposes to host a forum and workshop with Elected Members and key stakeholders, followed by a workshop with the Local Government Active Transport Reference Group. The aim of these sessions is to engage high-level strategic stakeholders in shaping actionable and strategic policy positions for WALGA in active transport. This forum presents a valuable opportunity to collaboratively develop practical and effective policy outcomes that address Active Transport challenges at the local, state, and national levels.

## **4. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

#### **Road Assets and Expenditure Report Update Project**

Tango IT has completed a final report detailing the current processes used to develop the RAE Report and identifying options for improvement in data collection, interpretation, and presentation. The consultant has also prepared final Request for Proposal documentation for WALGA to use in going to market to undertake the suggested improvement works.

## **5. UTILITIES**

#### **Underground Power**

A template Co-funding Agreement between a Local Government and Western Power was completed and has been distributed to Local Governments with projects in the current Targeted Underground Power Program. This Agreement deals only with funding. Other project related matters such as consultation and communications protocols need to be

addressed using an MOU or exchange of letters. The diverse needs of Local Governments meant that this was too difficult to address in a common template.

Representatives from Local Governments with projects in the Targeted Underground Power Program met during December to provide feedback on the template and discuss a range of other matters arising during program development.

The Targeted Underground Power Program Steering Committee received a presentation on the modelled costs to the State Government, Western Power and property owners of options to reduce the risk of projects failing due to high costs. Currently costs of converting to underground power vary significantly between suburbs. The Committee is examining options including capping the property owner contribution. Work on a guide to the Pensioners and Seniors Rebate schemes is also progressing.

### **Streetlighting**

Following publication of its Public Lighting Asset Management Strategy V1 in early July Western Power has now engaged with WALGA regarding the process to develop V2 for completion in mid-2025. The Association is seeking to ensure that the second version considers important issues raised by Local Governments during the consultation phase including environmental impacts (dark sky, native animals and humans), smart technology controls and response to cable faults.

Work is also progressing on identifying criteria and data to design the program of work to deliver the first tranche of 50,000 replacement LED luminaires over a 30-month period commencing in mid-2025. Both programs of work are at risk of delay as a result of caretaker provisions prior to the State Government election.

## **6. ROAD SAFETY**

### **RoadWise Councils**

As of 1 January, there were 74 Local Governments registered as a RoadWise Council. There is a spread of RoadWise Councils across all ten Regional Road Group regions. In terms of road safety activity, 81% (60) of registered RoadWise Councils recorded 237 local road safety activities in the period October and December 2024.

### **RoadWise Recognised**

The RoadWise Recognised Advisory Committee last met in November 2024. Points, which signify road safety actions undertaken, were allocated to 62 RoadWise Councils. The Points that were allocated reflected actions delivered across the different areas of the [RoadWise Framework](#). This then converted to Ribbons which were awarded in recognition of a holistic approach to road safety across governance, management, and operations. In this way, the allocation of Points and Ribbons is designed to encourage local road safety toward better and ultimately best practice.

### 12.4.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.3)

*By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services*

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Member Services Portfolio to the March 2025 State Council meeting.

*The Member Services Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

- *Association and Corporate Governance*
- *Commercial Contract Services*
- *Commercial Development*
- *Commercial Management*
- *Employee Relations*
- *Governance and Procurement*
- *Training*

The following outlines the activities of the Member Services Portfolio since the December 2024 State Council meeting.

## 1. **ASSOCIATION AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

### **WALGA Strategic Plan 2025-2029**

At the last meeting in December 2024, State Council endorsed a new organisational Strategic Plan for WALGA. State Council, as the governing body of WALGA, is responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of the Association, which includes endorsing the Strategic Plan.

Development of the Strategic Plan was an involved process of consultation and discussion over the course of the past year. Supported by Keogh Consulting, key inputs into the development of the Strategy included facilitated workshops with State Council and WALGA staff, targeted consultation with a sample of Members at the CEO and Mayor/President level and individual engagement with external stakeholders including Directors General and senior public sector decision makers.

The new Strategic Plan has been distributed to all Members and is available to view on the WALGA website [here](#).

## 2. **COMMERCIAL**

### **Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) Development**

Approximately 120 new Preferred Suppliers across all panels are being contracted to the program, to be completed by February. Member endorsements are assisting to pivot the PSP towards a more relevant and active supplier base. It is also resulting in more engagement with regional suppliers and Small to Medium Enterprise (SME). The next Preferred Supplier tender is currently scheduled for release in March.

New categories for Architectural Services (32 suppliers) and Aboriginal Heritage Surveys (7 suppliers) have been implemented.

Enhancements to PSP categories are being made for Recycled Construction & Demolition Materials, Project and Operations Management, and Leisure Centre Equipment Supplies.

New PSP category development and development research is being undertaken in the areas of:

- PSP008 - Facilities management
- PSP005 – Mobility and Accessibility Equipment supplies
- PSP005 – Swimming Pool inspection services
- PSP005 - Provision of HACCC and social services
- PSP002 – Environmental Health consultants
- PSP003 – Building Inspection Services

A legal review of the current Member Conditions will be undertaken. A focus on enhancing the presence of Aboriginal business on the PSP panels will also be progressed.

With many Members currently engaged in Council Business System and ERP reviews and procurement, WALGA's PSP Panel for Business Systems Software and Services has contractual options available. Resources to raise awareness and support the use of the Panel are under development.

Phase two of the WALGA Sustainable Energy Project is currently being contracted for a new three year term commencing in April. The new term of the project involves 52 WALGA Members and incorporate a diversification strategy to further support sustainable energy infrastructure development. WALGA is also in the process of implementing a Carbon Reporting Tool to support the project analytics.

Preliminary research and scoping for an investment services project will progress during 2025

### **ARENA Future Fuels Grant Project**

WALGA has been working with 22 participating Members to complete delivery the final Electric Vehicles and charging infrastructure in line with contracted milestones. The project then moves into an evaluation and knowledge-sharing phase, extending for approximately 12 months. Work is also continuing to explore potential further opportunities for similar initiatives. WALGA has supply options available for EV charging infrastructure and related services.

### **3. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

WALGA ER continues to represent the sector in a number of applications in the WA Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC):

- Applications CICS 5, 8 and 9 of 2023 - Union demarcation dispute. In response to sector feedback, WALGA successfully applied to intervene in these applications. These applications relate to a dispute over coverage of Local Government employees between three unions, the Western Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union of Employees (WASU), Local Government, Racing and Cemeteries Employees Union (LGRCEU) and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union of Workers (CFMEUW). Essentially the WASU is seeking an order that it cover Local Government outside employees to the exclusion of the CFMEUW. The matter is ongoing and has had 20 hearing days in July and October, with the CFMEUW

evidence still to be completed. During the hearing in October 2024 the CFMEUW made a number of applications. One application was to dismiss the matter, which the Commission rejected and dismissed. Another application was for discovery of documents from WALGA and the WASU, which the Commission ordered and WALGA and WASU complied with. The CFMEUW also made a second application for discovery of documents from WALGA, WASU and the LGRCEU. A directions hearing on this second application was held on 16 December 2024 and the parties were directed to file any formal applications to dismiss the CFMEUW's second application and written submissions by 14 February, with this matter to be determined on the papers (without oral argument). Following the Commission's decision with respect to the CFMEU's second application, the matter will be listed for a further directions hearing to determine next steps and list the substantive application for further hearing dates.

- Applications APPL 3 and 4 of 2023 – concerned award variations sort by the WASU to the Local Government Officers' (WA) Award 2021 (LGO Award) and the Municipal Employees Award (WA) 2021 (ME Award) as follows:
  - increase casual loading from 20% to 25%;
  - conversion of casual employees who have worked for more than 12 months to permanent employment;
  - increased regional redundancy entitlements for employees working outside Perth;
  - an additional week of entitlement to annual leave for shift workers;
  - preferential treatment of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons in Local Government employment processes;
  - up to 5 days of Cultural and Ceremonial Leave for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons in the LGO Award; and
  - inclusion of Flexible Working Arrangements.

As a result of new State IR legislation, a consent position was reached in relation to the 25% casual loading and flexible working arrangements. The matter was heard over 6 days concluding on 29 November 2024 before Commissioner Walkington and the decision has been reserved.

- Application APPL 164 of 2024 has been made by the WASU through s80BH of the *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (WA) (IR Act) to be named to the Local Government Industrial Award – Industrial Agreement (LGIA-IA) which is an instrument that transitioned to the State Industrial Relations system. If WASU is named to the LGIA-IA it is then able to take action to enforce the instrument, but more importantly the WASU could 'retire' it under s. 41(7) of the IR Act and the state awards (LGO and ME Awards amongst others) would then apply. Sixty Local Governments have been named to APPL 164 of 2024 and WALGA will be directly representing the Shire of Dundas (lead Local Government) as their industrial agent in this matter and assisting other Local Governments with their responses to oppose the application on the ground that it does not correctly identify the LGIA-IA and that some Local Governments were incorrectly named to the Application because they do not apply the LGIA-IA. The decision for WALGA to only directly represent the lead Local Government was taken so that WALGA did not get 'conflicted out' of the proceedings as has occurred in other matters. The Commission granted an extension of time for filing of responses to 24 January, and most Local Governments have already filed their responses.

### **New IR Legislation**

The Minister for Industrial Relations the Hon. Simone McGurk introduced the *Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2024* into WA Parliament 18 September 2024. It was

passed by WA Parliament on 6 November 2024 and received Royal Assent on 13 November 2024 (IRLA Act)

IRLA Act is part of the Government's review of the State IR system that commenced with the 2018 Ministerial review. The IRLA Act will amend the:

- *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (IR Act)
- *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993* (MCE Act)
- *Health Services Act 2016*
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*

The IRLA Act:

- Redefines the terms "employee" and "employer" and "casual employee".
- Establishes a fit and proper person test for a union official to obtain a right of entry permit under the *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (IR Act).
- Amends the *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993 (WA)* (MCE Act) to increase the statutory minimum casual loading from 20 to 25% and amend public holiday minimums.
- Establishes a new employee right to request a flexible working arrangement consistent with the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* (FW Act).
- Enables the *Local Government (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2024* to be enforced under the IR Act.
- Introduces a new prohibition on sexual harassment in connection with work, as contained in the FW Act.
- Increases the penalties for contravening State employment laws. The maximum penalties will increase from \$65,000 to \$93,000 for a body corporate and \$13,000 to \$18,000 for an individual.

Most of the changes came into effect 31 January. WALGA held a webinar for Local Governments on 3 December 2024 to prepare for the changes and will continue to provide resources and assistance.

#### **4. GOVERNANCE AND PROCUREMENT**

##### **Local Government Legislative Reform**

The Local Government Amendment Bill 2024 was Assented to on 6 December 2024.

Some of the items have come into effect immediately are:

- Clarified Roles and Responsibilities of Council, Council Members, Mayors and Presidents and CEOs
- Local Law Reforms
- Unreasonable / Vexatious Complaints
- Changes to Local Government Borrowing Powers.

Regulations relating to Superannuation for Elected Members have recently been gazetted. It is worth noting that Superannuation came into effect on 1 February 2025 as discretionary for Local Governments. Local Governments will need to make a decision by Absolute Majority if they wish to pay superannuation to Elected Members.

The regulation to mandate Bands 1 and 2 to pay superannuation to Elected Members will take effect from 19 October 2025.

Therefore, those Band 1 and 2 Local Governments that have not resolved to pay superannuation, will be required to pay superannuation from 19 October 2025.

Other items will require regulations and further work: including:

- Development Assessment Panel (DAP) Functions
- Office of the Local Government Inspector
- Local Government Monitors
- Independent Member and Chair of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- Clarified Regional Subsidiaries Provisions

In addition, regulations relating to Tranche 1 amendments are still required:

Amendments yet to commence include:

- Council Plans
- Standardised Meeting Procedures
- Communications Agreement
- Community Engagement Charter and Surveys
- Publication of CEO Performance Review (consultation has commenced)
- New Lease and Contract Registers (consultation has commenced)

In respect to CEO Matters and Online Registers, WALGA circulated an Info Page and Discussion paper, seeking feedback on draft regulations. Responses are requested by 19 March and will inform a State Council Agenda item to go through the April round of Zone meetings.

## **5. TRAINING**

The Training Team has recently undertaken the validation of our nationally recognised program. The team held validation meetings over 4 full days with relevant trainers/assessors and subject matter experts to ensure that all our training resources and assessment tools are up to date. Identified changes are then checked, improved and implemented throughout the relevant resources and assessments on our Student Portal. Accurate recording of those changes is a key RTO compliance requirement which has been overseen by the RTO Compliance team.

The February intake of the Certificate III in Local Government has received good enquiries so far and we are currently enrolling students for a 5 February start. We also prepare for the virtual Graduation ceremony on 25 February where we celebrate the achievement of six successful graduates.

2025 has started with a bang for on-site training with eight workshops confirmed for delivery across WA before April. Short course enrolments are starting to come in with the new Residential Design Codes (R – Codes) being very popular again followed by a range of Governance and Employee Relations workshops.

We are working to launch the Diploma of Local Government for Officers, including the specialisation for Planning with the first delivery starting in late April/ early May.

We are also working with our Training Council, the Financial, Administrative and Professional Services WA and the State Training Board to have the Diploma of Local Government made available as an existing worker Traineeship.

## 12.4.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio (State Council Agenda item 11.1.4)

*By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy*

### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Policy Portfolio to the March 2025 State Council meeting.

*The Policy Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

- *Economics*
- *Environment and Waste*
- *Planning and Building*
- *Emergency Management*
- *Community*

The following outlines the activities of the Policy Portfolio since the December 2024 State Council meeting.

### 1. **ECONOMICS**

#### **Economic Briefing**

In December, WALGA released its latest [Economic Briefing](#) (see [item 10.6](#)). The next Economic Briefing will be released in March.

#### **Renewable Energy**

WALGA is progressing its advocacy and initiatives to support Local Governments since State Council endorsed three energy transition advocacy positions in September 2024 (see [item 10.3](#)).

### 2. **ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE**

#### **Native Vegetation**

WALGA is progressing with actions identified in the Native Vegetation Issues Paper considered by Zones in December 2024, including the development of a range of capacity-building activities and advocacy to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation regarding challenges impacting Local Government. Three more Field Days are being planned to assist Local Governments with managing native vegetation in road reserves.

#### **E-waste Transport Rebates**

Following the commencement of the e-waste landfill ban on 1 July 2024, WALGA has been successful in securing State Government funding to assist regional and remote Local Governments in the cost of e-waste transportation for recycling. The [E-waste Regional Transportation Support Scheme](#), (ERTSS) administered by DWER, will provide rebates for eligible Local Governments of up to 50 per cent of transport costs. \$766,000 has been allocated for the ERTSS, which will run until 30 June 2025.

### **Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer**

WALGA having escalated PSHB advocacy and political engagement over the last year, is currently preparing a submission to the National Consultative Committee on key priorities for inclusion in the PSHB Response Plan (see [item 10.5](#)).

## **3. PLANNING AND BUILDING**

### **Urban Forests**

#### *WALGA 2025 Urban Forest Conference*

Tickets for the WALGA 2025 [Urban Forest Conference](#) being held on 14 February at Murdoch University have sold out, with more than 380 registered to attend. The theme of the Conference is **Raising Resilience**, focusing on the unprecedented threats to urban forests from clearing for development, climate change, pests and disease. The Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action, Hon Reece Whitby MLA and the Shadow Minister for the Environment Hon Neil Thomson MLC will address the Conference.

#### *Urban Greening Grants*

Round Three recipients of Urban Greening Grants were [announced](#) in December 2024. A total of \$1.6 million was awarded to 16 Local Governments: Bayswater, Belmont, Cambridge, Canning, Cottesloe, Fremantle, Gosnells, Joondalup, Kalamunda, Kwinana, Melville, Mundaring, Murray, Rockingham, Serpentine Jarrahdale and Swan. These Local Governments will plant over 5,400 trees and 238,700 understorey species in winter 2025.

The Urban Greening Grant Program has now closed. A total of 26 Local Governments secured funding under the Program to plant over 33,000 trees and 260,000 understorey plants by winter 2025.

#### *Labor Election Commitment*

[WALGA's 2025 State Election campaign](#), calls for an additional \$40 million over the next decade for an expanded, statewide urban forest program.

WA Labor has committed to double Perth's tree canopy cover to 30% by 2040, including a new urban canopy growth program (\$10 million) and 'treebates' to encourage Western Australians to plant native trees (\$6.9 million) if re-elected.

While welcoming the announcement, WALGA stressed that these programs should be extended statewide and that the Government must take measures to address the loss of existing trees on private land as part of its promised Urban Greening Strategy (see WALGA's media statement [here](#)).

### **Coastwest Grants**

Applications for the [2025-26 Coastwest grants](#) opened in January. WALGA will host an information session for eligible Local Governments on 12 February in partnership with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and the Department of Transport. Grant applications close on 14 April.

## **4. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

### **Disaster Ready Fund Round Three**

\$200 million is available under Round Three of the Australian Government's [DRF](#) which opened on 22 January. DRF is a significant funding opportunity for the sector, with 17 WA Local Government projects receiving more than \$23 million in Round Two, including for fire

danger rating signage, community education, evacuation centre improvements and infrastructure projects.

Local Governments are encouraged to review the [guideline changes for Round Three](#) before submitting their project proposals. Proposals must be submitted to DFES via the [online application portal](#) by 5pm (AWST) on 2 April.

### **Emergency WA App**

The State Government [launched the Emergency WA App](#) on 21 December 2024. The App, available in the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#), delivers instant notifications of warnings, incidents, Total Fire Bans and elevated Fire Danger Ratings on mobile devices. Users can set multiple custom watch zones for their homes and locations important to them and opt-in to receive push notifications relevant to them. This will be extremely helpful for both the community and visitors to stay in the know about hazards near them.

### **Local Emergency Management Arrangements Improvement Program**

WALGA has submitted its LEMA Recommendations Report to DFES which will inform the development of new LEMA guidelines and resources. WALGA is leading a Local Government LEMA Working Group, with representatives from 10 diverse Local Governments co-designing fit-for-purpose LEMA templates and supporting resources to be tested in a 2025 pilot program.

### **Bushfire Risk Management Coordinators**

WALGA will continue to host two Bushfire Risk Mitigation Coordinators (BRMCs) until June 2028 under a funding agreement with DFES. BRMCs work with WALGA, DFES and Local Governments to develop and implement Local Government bushfire mitigation programs, focusing on building capacity for Local Governments with limited capacity and expertise to manage their ongoing mitigation program using in-house resources.

### **State Emergency Management Committee**

The SEMC met on 4 December 2024, attended by WALGA CEO, Nick Sloan. The meeting communique can be found [here](#).

### **State Bushfire Advisory Committee**

WALGA Executive Manager Policy, Nicole Matthews is a member of the State Bushfire Advisory Committee, which met on 3 December 2024. The meeting communique can be found [here](#).

### **Election Commitments**

The Nationals and Labor have made a number of election commitments aligned with WALGA's emergency management State election priorities (see [item 10.2](#))

## 5. COMMUNITY

### **WALGA 2025 Aboriginal Engagement Forum**

The WALGA 2025 Aboriginal Engagement Forum will be held on 9 April at the State Reception Centre in Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park), with the theme "Stepping Up: Taking local Aboriginal engagement and Reconciliation to the next level". Program planning is underway and being informed by a reference group of Elected Members and officers. State Council members are strongly encouraged to attend and promote the event within their zones.

### **Public Health Act**

Consultation on the [draft State Public Health Plan 2025-2030](#) was held in early February. WALGA made a submission aligned to previous submission relating to the implementation of Stage 5 of the Public Health Act. The submission emphasised the role Local Government provide in the protection and enhancement of health and well-being within their communities across various responsibilities and functions. The submission also stated the need to ensure sufficient support and expertise within State agencies to support the preparation of Local Public Health Plans, especially in relation to the new climate change priority. The development of the submission was guided by the WALGA Public Health Plans Reference Group.

### **Regional Primary Health Services**

Following its tabling at the December 2024 State Council meeting, the Local Government Primary Healthcare Survey Report has been shared with Local Government CEOs. WALGA's advocacy on this issue is being informed by the survey results and additional feedback from Band 4 Local Governments who have collectively identified access to GP services as a key priority. Advocacy to the Australian and State governments is focussed on measures to increase access to GP services in areas of need and reduce the financial impost on Local Government, particularly in the context of the upcoming state and federal elections and the renegotiation of the National Health Reform Agreement and bilateral agreement between WA and the Commonwealth.

### **Access and Inclusion**

#### *Most Accessible Community Western Australia (MACWA) Awards*

On 5 December, WALGA joined the Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister for Disability Services, the Department of Communities and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) at the annual [MACWA Awards](#) celebrating Local Government's efforts to create accessible and inclusive communities. Award winners included the Shires of Augusta Margaret River and Pingelly and the cities of Kalamunda, Swan and Greater Geraldton.

#### *WALGA Forum*

On 20 February WALGA will host an Access and Inclusion Forum, a commitment under the [State Disability Strategy 2020 - 2030, Second Action Plan](#). The Forum theme is 'Building on your Disability Access and Inclusion Plan - embedding awareness across Local Government functions to respond to emerging issues'. The Forum aims to support sector building capacity and increase collaboration across the broad remit of Local Government.

### **Child Safeguarding**

WALGA hosted a Child Safeguarding CEO Breakfast on 12 December. The DLGSC session, facilitated by the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS), focused on the role of CEOs in managing child safeguarding risks and promoting child safety and wellbeing within Local Governments. The session forms part of DLGSC's commitment to delivering tailored child safeguarding resources and support for the Local Government sector over the coming year.

### **Arts and Culture Infrastructure Grants**

The State Government launched [Creative WA: A 10 year vision to grow and sustain our creative ecosystem](#) in December which includes \$30 million towards refurbishment and equipment needs for arts and culture centres. Local Governments can apply now through [Lotterywest](#).

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Amy Knight**

**Seconded: Deputy President Rob Harris**

**That the Zone notes all Key Activity Reports as contained in the March 2025 State Council Agenda.**

**CARRIED**

## **13 EMERGING ISSUES**

---

### **13.1 LETTER TO THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Shire of Dumbleyung suggested that the Zone write the letter of thanks and acknowledgment to the Minister for Regional Development on Wheatbelt Development Commission efforts to coordinate and submit a successful \$32.8M Wheatbelt Regional Housing Initiative proposal through the Federal Government Housing Support Program (Stream 2).

This recommendation was supported by the Zone.

### **RESOLVED**

---

### **13.2 BAND 4 ROUNDTABLE UPDATE**

The Shire of Wandering requested an update on the Band 4 Roundtable discussions which commenced late last year. A report will be provided at the April one meeting.

### **NOTED**

---

### **13.3 FREE 1-DAY WORKSHOP FOR CEO'S & SENIOR PROFESSIONALS**

The Shire of Dumbleyung shared a 1-Day workshop for CEO's and Senior Professionals, focusing on ICT Risk Management, ERP Selection & Microsoft 365 PowerApp Essentials. This is now attached (**Attachment No. 6**)

### **NOTED**

#### **14 NEXT MEETING**

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on 1 April 2025 commencing at 7.30am, via MTeams.

The next Central Country Zone meeting will be held on 11 April 2025 commencing at 9.30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Wickepin.

#### **15 CLOSURE**

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.34pm.