

Peel Country Zone Minutes

20 February 2025

Hosted by the Shire of Serpentine
Jarrahdale
6 Patterson Street, Mundijong

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes of previous meeting
2. Zone Status Report
3. President's Report

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

WALGA Secretariat assumed the Chair. Nick Sloan, WALGA CEO opened the meeting at 2:20pm.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

City of Mandurah

Mayor Caroline Knight
Ms Casey Mihovilovich, Chief Executive Officer (Deputy)

Shire of Murray

Cr Douglas McLarty

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

President Cr Rob Coales (online)
Mr Paul Martin, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate

Shire of Waroona

President Cr Michael Walmsley
Mr Mark Goodlet, Chief Executive Officer (Deputy)

WALGA Representatives

Mr Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer
Ms Kirsty Martin, Manager Commercial Management

Guest Speaker

Office of the Homelessness
Department of Communities

Ms Gayle Mitchell, A/Executive Director

1.3 APOLOGIES

City of Mandurah

Cr Amber Kearns

Shire of Murray

President Cr David Bolt

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale	Cr Tricia Duggin
Shire of Waroona	Cr Naomi Purcell
Shire of Boddington	President Cr Garry Ventris Cr Eugene Smallberger Ms Julie Burton, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
Shire of Murray	Cr Steve Lee Mr Dean Unsworth, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 STATE COUNCILLOR AND CHAIR REPRESENTATIVE – EXTRAORDINARY ELECTION

Following the recent resignation of Mayor Rhys Williams from the City of Mandurah, nominations were sought from Zone Delegates for the extraordinary vacancy for State Council representative and Chair for the Peel Country Zone.

4.1 ELECTION OF STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Important information for those nominating: Following the election, the new State Councillor will be invited to attend a short induction to WALGA, and a briefing on the next State Council Agenda. The next State Council meeting will be held at WALGA on Wednesday, 5 March.

A call for nominations was distributed to Zone Delegates via email on 22 January 2025.

The term of office for this position will commence immediately following this election and will conclude the day before the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025.

In accordance with the guidelines endorsed by State Council, candidates will be afforded the opportunity to make a two-minute election bid prior to the secret ballot being taken.

Nominations received prior to the meeting.

- Mayor Caroline Knight City of Mandurah

Further nominations were called from the floor and none received

DECLARATION

That Mayor Caroline Knight be elected as State Council Representative of the Peel Country Zone for the remaining term until December 2025.

4.2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

The term of office for this vacancy will commence immediately following this election and will conclude the day before the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025.

Nominations received prior to the meeting.

- Mayor Caroline Knight City of Mandurah

Further nominations were called from the floor and none were received.

DECLARATION

That Mayor Caroline Knight be elected as Chair of the Peel Country Zone for the remaining term until December 2025.

Mayor Caroline Knight assumed the Chair.

5 DEPUTATIONS

5.1 OFFICE OF THE HOMELESSNESS

Gayle Mitchell, A/Executive Director from the Office of the Homelessness provided an overview of the Office of Homelessness and the All Paths Lead to a Home strategy; priority work; and some data on homelessness.

Noted

6 AGENCY REPORTS

6.1 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE REPORT

No report from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) was provided.

Noted

7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Michael Walmsley
Seconded: Mr Mark Goodlet

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Peel Country Zone held on 21 November 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

8 BUSINESS ARISING

8.1 STATUS REPORT

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

Noted

9 ZONE BUSINESS

9.1 SEWER INFILL PROGRAM DEMAND ASSESSMENT & ADVOCACY POSITION

By Shire of Waroona

BACKGROUND

Sewer infill gaps in Western Australian towns and cities remain as a significant constraint on subdivision, housing development, health values and environmental values. This report seeks the Western Australian Local Government Association's (WALGA) support for an assessment of the extent of the problem across Western Australia and an advocacy position in favour of a renewed State Government sewer infill program.

Terminology

The phrases "deep sewer", "sewer infill" and "reticulated sewer" are used variously in literature and consequently in this report, to represent the provision of a piped sewer system that collects sewerage at the property and delivers it to a treatment facility. The Water Corporation is responsible for the vast majority of these systems in WA. A "septic system" on the other hand is a system that treats sewerage on the property and allow is to infiltrate into the ground.

1. Sewer Infill Program History

The Water Corporation delivered the first sewer infill program under the State Government's direction, commencing in 1994 and, at the time, for a ten-year program period. This was driven by health and environmental concerns about the effect of onsite septic systems ([Alexander, MLA, 25 August 1988, in Government Sewerage Policy, Explanatory Notes, 2019, pg.4](#)).

The various shortcomings of this program are detailed in the [Report 18 Standing Committee On Environment and Public Affairs Inquiry Into Deep Sewerage in the Cockburn Area](#),

presented By Hon Brian Ellis MLC (Chair) December 2009. In short, a lack of State Government funding for the ongoing program was the key issue and while this report dealt with City of Cockburn's specific deep sewer issues, it also examined this as a state-wide problem as part of it's brief.

Two key findings of this report are pertinent to this discussion.

- *Finding 14: The Committee finds that the lack of deep sewerage inhibits development in many areas in Western Australia, including Port Hedland and a number of regional areas.*
- *Finding 15: The Committee finds that the completion of the Infill Sewerage Program is of the highest priority.*

Of note is that the report cites three primary reasons for recommencing this program, namely - health, environment and development. A series of recommendations from this report seek to have the infill program restarted and in fact, expanded across WA.

2. Consultation on Demand for a New Sewer Infill Program

This report author has been involved in land subdivision for in excess of 20 years, both as a client-side civil engineer bringing subdivisions to the market and as a local government executive in metropolitan and regional locations dealing with the regulatory and policy objectives of developing towns and cities in WA. This experience coincided with the period when the sewer infill program was being implemented and now informs this discussion around the need and benefits of a new sewer infill program.

A straw poll of local government chief executive officers was conducted to see whether sewer infill is a continuing pressing issue and a constraint on housing provision in WA. The following comments were made when local government CEOs were asked about this via Facebook. 33 comments were received, including –

Mount Magnet is also held to ransom by this, as are all LGs north of the city (with a few exceptions) Its terribly unfair to implement a blanket sewerage policy that is predicated in the availability of infill when its not an option for much of the State (Dale Stewart).

We have joined up with Mundaring and possibly Gosnells, Swan and Armadale to advocate for a utilities headworks program and for a infrastructure coordination / committee of sorts as we also face the same issues. I agree WALGA might be useful as well (Anthony Vuleta).

Yes, Busselton has issues close to the Vasse River. Many homes/LIA properties leaching sewerage into it. Would happily support a WALGA advocacy push to get these programs back up and running again and funded appropriately. Not just health but an environmental issue too with high water tables (Tony Nottle).

Boyup Brook also has no development potential due to the lack of deep sewer (Leonard Long).

Darkan in the same boat as Boyup Brook and it is limiting infill development significantly (Vin Fordham Lamont).

All of the Peel local governments are all affected by infill sewer gaps. **Appendix A** – Peel Local Government Areas Without Reticulated sewer provides maps of the locations in Peel region towns that lack reticulated sewer and are constrained as a result.

The work conducted by WALGA for the Report 18 for the standing committee in December 2009 yield 55 local government responses on this issue.

COMMENT

Sewer infill is not a headline issue; rather it is a fundament and essential utility needed to enable urbanisation. The criticality of reticulated sewer is recognised in the State's Government Sewerage Policy 2019 which enunciates the health and environment imperatives that underpin this policy. However, the policy also exposes the problem that this essential utility has lagged behind development in WA, by limiting subdivision where reticulated sewer is absent. The policy position is effectively the defensive response to address this lag in many towns and cities across WA. A better solution is to address the sewer infill deficit.

1. Isn't This the Developer's Problem?

One argument made against the sewer infill program is that the cost of providing the utilities should be born by the developer, who after all, will be making money from the subdivision. As a general principle this holds true. Many developers subdivide large suburban fringe land holdings that have been rezoned from agricultural to residential land. The land immediately lifts in value due to its rezoning and the economies of scale of bringing a large number on new houses to the market allow the developer to absorb the cost of new reticulated sewer and other utilities into the retail cost of the lots when sold.

This does not translate in the instance of already subdivided land residential in towns and cities across Western Australia that often have power, water and telecommunications infrastructure, but for historical reasons did not get reticulated sewer at the time of subdivision.

In the first instance the land value yield in the already subdivided residential lots which move from say R10 to R25 is real, but not large, in comparison to the lift in value derived from agricultural land being rezoned onto residential land. The margins are therefore immediately smaller.

Secondly, economies of scale are not achieved because the land is not owned by one landowner/developer. Rather development occurs on a lot by lot basis and the individual developer is very unlikely to be able to afford the sewer infill costs needed to extend the sewer pipe. While in theory the developer is able to recoup these costs from other developers when they eventually connect their properties to the new sewer pipe, in reality the upfront costs and the time taken to recoup the outlay for the developer mean that this is not a realistic financial option.

Despite the above, the 2019 WA State Government Sewer Policy makes the statement (p5.) that *"the requirement to connect to reticulated sewerage services does not undermine land supply", and "the continued growth of the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions, and other regional towns demonstrates land supply has not been adversely affected"*. This is true. Provided greenfield land continues to be opened up and urban sprawl remains the dominant and preferred housing model, then given the vast land of Western Australia, this can continue indefinitely. This is at odds, however, with the environmental impacts dilemma created because of urban sprawl and the sustainability issues at stake.

Getting the developer to pay for everything is also a short to medium term financially attractive option, but this ultimately fails to take advantage of the financial economies of providing utilities and infrastructure in higher density and the ultimate savings this provides a city or town. Beyond this urban sprawl does not compete well with the financial benefits of the time and travel savings that infill provides, meaning less efficiency and return on investment for the infrastructure in place.

2. Sewer Infill and Housing Affordability

As discussed, power, water and telecommunications infrastructure is mostly in place in towns and cities. It is sewer infill that remains a significant cost barrier to further subdivision and housing development in towns and cities in Western Australia.

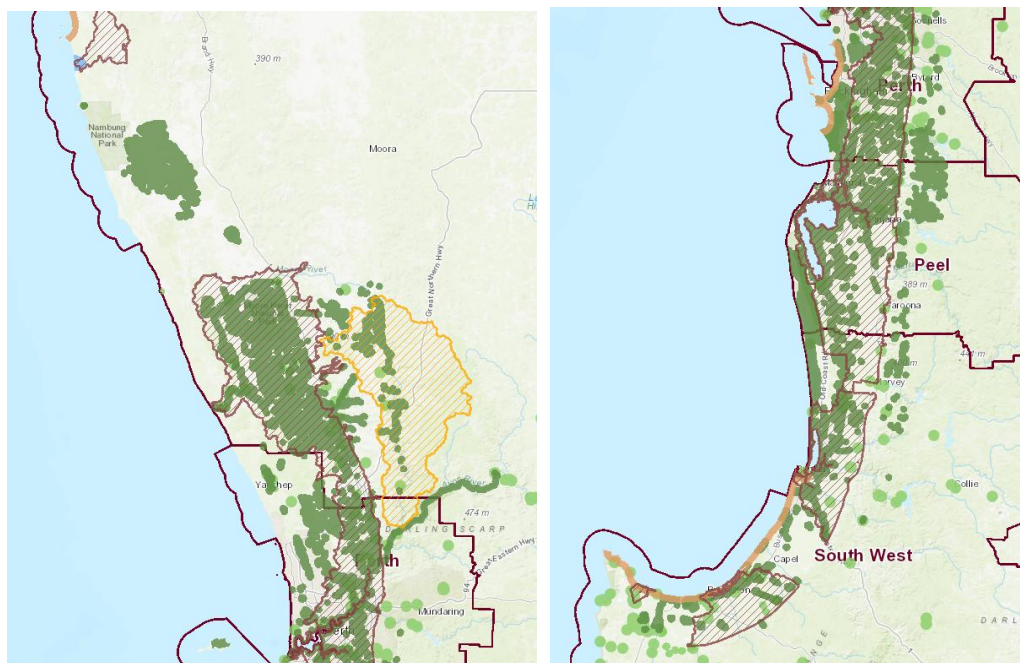
Because of this barrier the economics of affordable housing come into play – housing price affordability is contingent on land development cost affordability. Many towns and outer suburban fringe areas have reasonably affordable land, making the prospect of providing more affordable housing realistic were it not for sewer infill costs.

3. Sewer Infill as a Health and Environmental Solution

The development of the Government's Sewerage Policy 2019 centres on the position that "on-site systems are not to be considered as a comparable alternative to reticulated sewerage provision". While this position is true the policy has now led to a situation where a number of towns are effectively un-subdividable despite having residential zonings that support subdivision.

The reddish hachured areas on the map below denote "sewer sensitive areas" from north of Lancelin to Busselton. Unsewered land in this area cannot be subdivided below 1 hectare without reticulated sewer, making many (with a few exceptions) of the residential codes meaningless for lots with higher density than R1.

The green solid areas below are particularly sensitive in that they are wetlands. Separation to the water source distances apply to subdivision in these locations.



Figures 1 & 2 Sewer Sensitive Areas Mapping for Lancelin to Busselton

In the Shire of Waroona's case the Town of Waroona is a sewer sensitive area and Preston Beach town is entirely in a wetland area, meaning it has further restrictions.

The extent of the environmental issue is clear from the Government Sewerage Policy mapping. Infill sewer will help alleviate the constraints on development due to environmental issues.

4. Sewer Infill's Contribution to the State and Federal Governments' Agendas on Affordable Housing

The WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030 aims to increase housing stock, increase housing diversity and remain affordable. Sewer infill as a program will help to deliver on Focus Area 1: Supply. One of the five levers to be pulled in achieving housing supply is to "*strategically unlock and optimise land*".

A sewer infill program is less prescriptive than the grants schemes now in place which target specific demographic housing outcomes. The sewer infill program addresses a key underlying element of the jigsaw puzzle that is housing. If implemented it will bring housing stock online and will address the pressing health and environmental problems that come with onsite sewerage disposal.

The Federal Government's Housing Support Program is one initiative supporting the National Housing Accord. The Housing Support Program is described in the following terms.

\$500 million is available for state, territory and local governments over 2023-24 to 2024-25 to support the delivery of increased housing supply by funding projects that seek to deliver enabling infrastructure and provide amenities to support new housing development or improve building planning capability. More specifically the program will support:

- *Infrastructure projects that support new housing, such as connecting essential services like water, power, sewage, and roads.*
- *Infrastructure projects that provide amenities to support new housing, including shared facilities like community centres and parks.*
- *Building planning capability, including resources to support increased delivery of new housing and master planning to support increasing housing in well-located areas.*

It is suggested that the infill sewer issue is so extensive and wide-spread that a State Government and Federal Government collaboration is needed to deal with this as an infrastructure program, in addition to individualised projects being supported with grants under current arrangements.

5. WALGA to Assess the Problem and Advocate

To validate the need and benefits of a sewer infill program, the collection of hard data on the extent of the sewer infill gap, the potential yield for further housing and the likely cost, would aid an evidence-based advocacy position. It is therefore recommended that that WALGA undertake an assessment of the matter to better inform the development of an advocacy position on sewer infill in WA towns and cities.

A very good starting point for this assessment could be the work done by WALGA to contribute to the Report 18 Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs Inquiry into Deep Sewerage in the Cockburn Area (pg 32-37). WALGA provided the views of its 55 of its members at that time and contributed to the report, an extract of which is provided below.

Because of the subdivision and development limitation for unsewered areas, regional centres and peri-urban townsites have been unable to grow to their full potential. Even within the metropolitan area, infill development has been blockaded due to the lack of reticulated sewerage and continuous deferral of the Infill Sewerage Program.

This causes many issues for regional towns and out-metro centres which are denied economic opportunities that would come with growth and sustainable development. It has long been acknowledged that higher density development is the way forward for Western Australians to cater for its increasing population. Higher density brings with it more social interaction, services and opportunities for community. Many of these regions wish to expand their town centres and are being prevented because there is either no deep sewerage available or it is only available to limited areas.

This issue is increasing property costs in the country. The extra costs of installing large septic tank and leach drains systems often makes development unviable or too costly for homebuyers. Development costs in regional areas can also increase considerably if developers wish to install alternative sewerage treatment systems or provide connections to existing deep sewerage in the area.

Provision of community facilities like child care centres, school and aged care homes are being affected because of the lack of deep sewerage. In some cases, aged care facilities have been granted an exemption but overall these high density facilities are discouraged in areas without deep sewerage. The implication this has on the communities affected is widespread.

ADVOCACY POSITION IMPLICATIONS

There is a existing WALGA [Advocacy Position](#) on the high cost of development of regional areas and the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks.

2.4.6 Cost of Regional Development

Position Statement The Local Government sector supports the State Government addressing the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.

Background

This was a member motion supported by members at the 2021 AGM, and later endorsed for action by State Council in December 2021.

The Association has worked with senior officers from Development WA to understand the effectiveness of and changes required to the Regional Development Assistance Program that was designed to address the market failure in towns where the cost of land development exceeds the value of the land made available to market.

*State Council Resolution December 2021 – 294.7/2021
Supporting Documents WALGA AGM Minutes 202*

A new sewer infill advocacy position compliments the above-mentioned WALGA advocacy position in that it deals with a specific utility component of the cost of development of land. However, it is noted that the sewer infill problems also exists in metropolitan areas as well as regional towns in WA and so this new advocacy position would capture both cities and towns where this problem exists.

CONCLUSION

A sewer infill program addresses a key underlying element of the jigsaw puzzle that is housing. If implemented it will bring housing stock online and will address the pressing health and environmental problems that come with onsite sewerage disposal. Many regional towns and cities are limited by the lack of reticulated sewer, limiting growth and limiting their ability to provide affordable housing. The prevalence of this issue across WA means that WALGA's support and advocacy is appropriate as a sector advocate. In providing this support it is hoped that WALGA may be able to influence the State Government direction in a way that also meets the State Government's desire to unlock sustainable development and housing. It is also hoped that WALGA may be instrumental in bringing together the State and Federal governments in addressing this issue, as sewer infill is a fundamental and essential utility needed to enable urbanisation.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Michael Walmsley
Seconded: Cr Douglas McLarty

That the Peel Country Zone requests WALGA to undertake an assessment of the extent of the sewer infill gaps in Western Australian towns and cities and develop an advocacy position supporting a new State Government sewer infill program to assist with subdivision, housing, health and environmental values.

CARRIED

9.2 2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HONOURS AWARDS

The Honours Program recognises and celebrates the outstanding achievements and lasting contributions made by Elected Members and officers to their respective Local Government, the Local Government sector, WALGA and the wider community.

There are five awards in the 2025 Program:

1. Local Government Medal
2. Life Membership
3. Eminent Service Award
4. Merit Award
5. Young Achievers Award

All Local Government Elected Members and officers are eligible for nomination for each award.

Nominations opened on Tuesday, 4 February and will close at **5:00pm on Friday, 18 April 2025**.

Details on the 2025 Honours Program, including the nomination form and guidelines for preparing nominations, are available on the [WALGA website](#).

All awards will be presented at the WALGA Local Government Awards event, to occur on 19 July (venue to be announced).

For more information contact Meghan Dwyer, Executive Officer Governance, on 9213 2050 or via email at honours@walga.asn.au.

Noted

9.3 DRAFT OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE 113: OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND ASSET MAINTENANCE

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

A copy of Operational Procedure 113 was provided to Zone Members with the Agenda.

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.

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: Cr Michael Walmsley

Seconded: Cr Douglas McLarty

That the Peel 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:
 - Not enough time has been afforded for adequate consideration of the Procedure.
 - There is a lack of clarity in respect to how this may impact Local Government.
 - There is concern that the State Government is passing on responsibilities to Local Government.
 - The City of Mandurah is receiving a briefing from Main Roads in March and will be in a better position to provide feedback subsequent to this.

CARRIED

9.4 CONSULTATION ON REGULATIONS FOR CEO KPI'S 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

Submissions may also be made direct to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries until 21 March 2025 to actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au, with Departmental information visit the [Department's website](#)

Noted

10 STATE COUNCIL AGENDA – MATTERS FOR DECISION AND NOTING

Zone delegates to read and consider the March 2025 WALGA State Council Agenda, which has been provided as an attachment with this Agenda.

The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation that will then be presented to the State Council for consideration.

10.1 STATE COUNCIL MATTERS FOR DECISION

10.1.1 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*
- 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.*

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: Mr Mark Goodlet

Seconded: Cr Michael Walmsley

That the Peel Country Zone supports the WALGA Climate Change Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda Item 8.1) subject to the following amendments underlined:

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.*

in a manner that does not compromise Western Australian productivity or impose an increased cost of living burden on Western Australians.

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.*

WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to undertake these actions in a manner that does not compromise Western Australian productivity or impose an increased cost of living burden on Western Australians.

CARRIED

10.1.2 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: Cr Michael Walmsley
Seconded: Cr Douglas McLarty

That the Peel Country Zone supports State Council Item 8.2 subject to the amendment to point 2 b. and an addition of point c. as underlined below:

- 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 including Waste to Energy*
 - c. Exemptions for landfill levies for Local Governments who have Waste to Energy facilities*

CARRIED

10.2 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

10.2.1 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: Mr Mark Goodlet
Seconded: Cr Douglas McLarty

The Peel Country Zone supports State Council Agenda Item 9.1 subject to the following change to item 2c underlined below:

- 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..." subject to further consultation with WALGA Members.

CARRIED

10.2.2 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.

10.2.3 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.

10.2.4 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.

10.2.5 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: Cr Michael Walmsley

Seconded: Cr Douglas McLarty

That the Peel Country Zone notes all other Policy Team and Committee Reports as contained in the March 2025 State Council Agenda.

CARRIED

10.3 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)

RESOLVED

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

10.4 KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS

10.4.1 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.

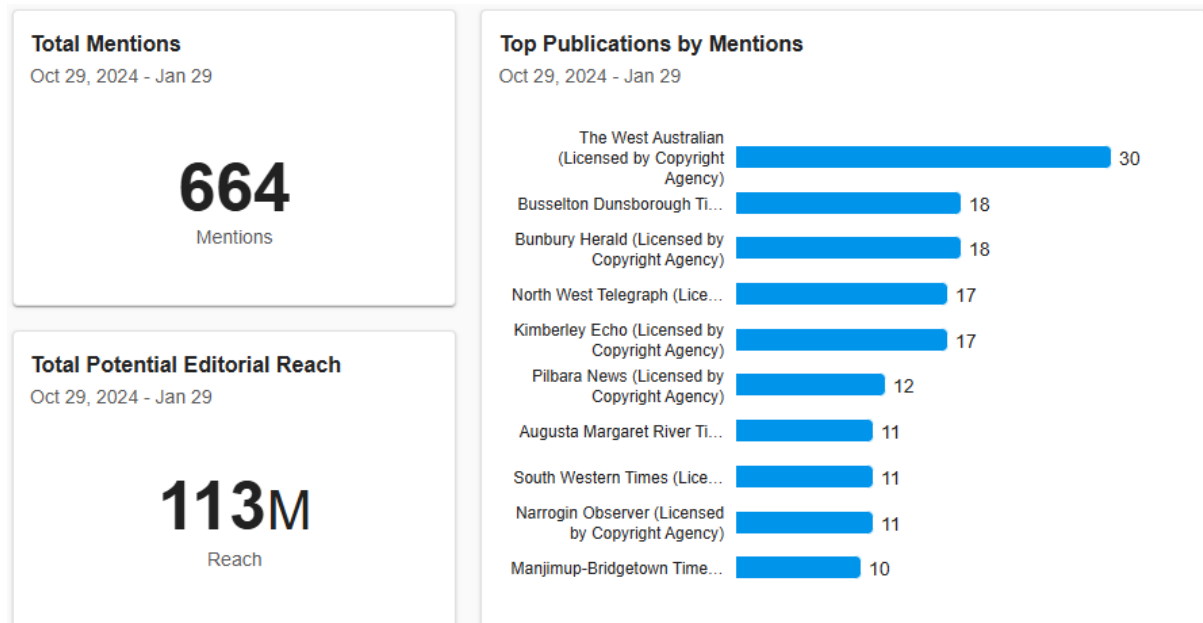
EARNED MEDIA

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.

10.4.2 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.

10.4.3 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.

10.4.4 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: Cr Michael Walmsley
Seconded: Cr Douglas McLarty

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

CARRIED

11 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

11.1 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALGA CEO, Nick Sloan presented the President's Report. The report was attached within the Agenda.

Noted

12 OTHER BUSINESS

Nil.

13 NEXT MEETING

13.1 APRIL ZONE MEETING

Please note that the date scheduled for the **April meeting has changed** due to consecutive long weekends that fall in the same timeframe.

The next meeting of the Peel Country Zone will be held on Wednesday, 16 April via MS Teams commencing at 2pm.

14 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 3:30pm.